

# Women chefs rule

The Unilever Foodsolutions Chef of the Year was this year won by women in all four categories, disproving the theory that only men make good chefs.



At the event in Durban on Friday 11 September 2009, Dilene Cranna, a self-employed pastry chef walked away with the title of Senior Chef of the Year and overall title of Unilever Foodsolutions Chef of the Year 2009, while Belinda Angelo of the 1000 Hills Chef School in Durban was awarded the Junior title. The Radisson Blu Hotel in Port Elizabeth won the Team of Four award and Jodi-Ann Pearton of the Food Design Agency won the prestigious By Invitation Only category, earlier this year.

The competition attracted entries from some of the most promising Junior and Team of Four chefs in the country, as well as international talent in the Senior category for the first time ever, as chefs from Egypt and Dubai were among the six Senior finalists. The standard of entry in all three categories was exceptionally high as these talented chefs compete for their share of R90 000 in cash!

Each category of the competition took the form of a mystery basket competition, in which contestants had just half an hour to come up with their menu and then three hours to prepare a starter, main course and dessert to present to the local and international accredited judges.

Head judge for all three categories was Andrew Atkinson, local competitions director of the South African Chefs Association and kitchen judge was Garth Shnier, international competitions director of the South African Chefs Association and executive chef of the Sandton Sun.

## Senior Chef competition

Winning R15 000 cash prize, Cranna produced a starter of pickled butternut mat topped with a baby corn salad, cured kingklip, scallop custard topped with grilled scallop. Main course was honey & soy basted veal loin on onion and potato puree with a melange of vegetables, quail roulade and a tomato jus. Dessert, Dilene's speciality, was striped sponge topped with a berry frozen dessert base, warm ginger rice pudding with a mixed berry and citrus salad.

Sharmaine Dixon of the 1000 Hills Chefs School in Durban placed second, winning R10 000, and Candice Philip of the Saxon Boutique Hotel & Spa in Johannesburg came third, winning R5 000.

Judges were Stephen Billingham (president of the South African Chefs Association), Andrew Atkinson (executive chef at the Michelangelo Hotel in Johannesburg), Andreas Kurfurst (Dubai) and Mohamed El Saadany (Egypt).



Winning senior and junior chefs, Dilene Cranna and Belinda Santos.

## Junior Chef competition

Angelo made the winning starter from a trio of seafood (mussels and shrimp ragout served with a Thai seafood velouté accompanied by seafood pasta and seafood salad). Main course was lamb loin stuffed with cheddar and bacon on mash served with Brionaise carrots and mushrooms with a demi-glace mango and apricot sauce. Dessert was a strawberry soufflé ice cream wrapped in a ribbon sponge and a chocolate dome with a berry chocolate ganache with berry sauce and finished off with a crisp tuille.

The prize was worth R6 000, with R4 000 going to Tiaan Langenegger of the Wild Mushroom Boutique Hotel in Cape Town and third prize of R2 000 to Gareth Walford of the Michelangelo Hotel in Johannesburg.

Judges were Leon Hatton Jones (Exquisite Cuisine), Trevor Boyd (HTA School of Culinary Art) and Nicholas Froneman (Elangeni Hotel).

## Team of Four

Winning R20 000, the team of chef Rozanne Dos Sates, team manager Stuart Cason, junior chef Clarice Biljohn and waiter Sangren Moodley presented a starter of exotic Thai chicken stuffed calamari on fragrant couscous, teriyaki prawns on grilled sweet potato marinated vegetable salad. Main course was BBQ pork fillet medallions on apple pear rösti, roulade of chicken, sautéed mange tout, pumpkin puree, tomato onion sauce. Dessert was chocolate brandy mousse, macadamia semi-freddo and strawberry mint salsa.

Compass in Durban got the second prize of R12 000 and Western Province Caterers in Cape Town took third prize of R8 000.

Judges were Mervyn Davies (Sublime Catering), Wynand Schoeman (HLM Sibaya) and Jackie Cameron (Hertford Manor).

## High standards



“The standard of this year's competition was one of the highest we have seen in recent years and the female contingent clearly demonstrated their professionalism, creativity and competitive spirit,” says Craig Elliot, executive head chef of Unilever Foodsolutions SA. “We are honoured to have had chefs of the calibre of our contestants enter and compete in this year's competition.

“Having international finalists this year truly attests to the evolution of this prestigious annual competition. The inclusion of the multi-national component in the Senior category exposed our chefs to global culinary standards and challenged them to prove that South Africa can hold their own among the best culinary talent in the world.

“Congratulations to all the winners; we look forward to seeing these three chefs grow in stature within the profession,” concludes Elliot.

For more on the competition, go to [www.unileverfoodsolutions.co.za](http://www.unileverfoodsolutions.co.za).

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>