

Frying for victory – Thanet’s young chefs rose to the challenge!

25th March 2013

They chopped, boiled, fried and baked their way to victory – three talented young chefs have taken the title of ‘Champion’ in the Thanet Schools Recipe Competition for 2013.

The Restaurant at East Kent College was filled with chattering excitement and mouthwatering cookery smells as the finalists in the schools recipe competition did culinary battle in the college’s professional kitchens.

Each finalist submitted their own original recipe and were worthy winners from schools right across the Thanet district. Just reaching the finals was a significant achievement, and each was rewarded with a Sam Stern cookbook from Walker Brothers.

The chef tutors and college catering students were on hand as ever to reassure and assist in the college kitchens, and our judges – Jason Freedman (The Minnis), Dev Biswal (The Ambrette), Craig Edgell (East Kent College), Steve Deeble (Tesco) and Robert James (Thanet Earth Marketing) – were keen to watch the preparation of the dishes and taste the finished recipes.

The three winners received a trophy and will have their recipes printed on a special card to be distributed in Tesco Extra at Westwood Cross. They also each won a handy £250 in Tesco vouchers for their school to spend on cooking equipment.

Thanet Earth is the driving force and one of the sponsors behind this schools recipe competition. As Robert James, Technical Manager for Thanet Earth Marketing explains, “Everyone wants children to eat more healthily and to develop a love of fruit, vegetables and salad crops that lasts throughout their lifetime. We’ve established this competition three years ago to help us engage with schools and introduce our delicious, healthy products to their pupils in a fun, creative way. By asking them to experiment with recipes that use our crops, they’re experiencing the versatility of the ingredients first-hand. And we get to taste some absolutely incredible food!”

WINNERS:

Age 6 to 8
Phoebe Bullard (Minster C E Primary School)

Age 9-11
Cameron MacRae
(St Nicholas at Wade C E Primary School)

Age 12-15
Siana Wells (Dane Court Grammar School)



The Winning Recipes

Phoebe Bullard's 'Healthy Heart Warmer'

Ingredients

2 tbsp olive oil
1 red onion (chopped)
1 clove of garlic (finely chopped)
2 large red peppers (seeds removed and chopped)
600g ripe tomatoes (quartered)
1 tin of chopped tomatoes
1 litre of chicken or vegetable stock
Half a baguette, sliced into coins
100g grated cheese
Fresh basil

Method

Heat the oil and fry the onion, garlic and red pepper for 5 minutes. Add the fresh tomatoes and cook for a further 3 to 4 minutes. Add the tinned tomatoes, the stock and 250ml of water. Bring the saucepan to the boil then reduce the heat and simmer for 15 minutes. Puree in a blender and season. Grill the baguette coins, turn them over, sprinkle the cheese on top and grill to melt. Put the soup into bowls and top with the baguette coins and some fresh basil.



Cameron MacRae's 'Spicy ginger prawns with red pepper and choy sum'

Ingredients

125g medium egg noodles
150g prawns (cooked or raw)
1 red pepper (coarsely chopped)
100g choy sum (coarsely chopped)
15g (or 3cm³) fresh ginger (finely chopped)
Half a small red chilli pepper (finely chopped)
Two garlic cloves (crushed and finely chopped)
120g mushrooms (coarsely chopped)
1 tbsp sesame seeds
2 tbsp soy sauce
1 chicken stock cube
1 tsp chilli infused oil
1 tbsp vegetable oil
Fresh coriander to garnish

Method

Cook the noodles according to instructions and drain.
Cook the garlic, ginger and chilli in the vegetable oil until the garlic begins to brown.
Add the prawns, pepper and mushrooms and cook for 3 minutes.
Add the chilli infused oil, the sesame seeds and the soy sauce.
Crumble in the stock cube and stir well.
Add the choy sum and cook for a minute, stirring well.
Add the noodles and mix well. Serve with a garnish of fresh coriander.



Siana Wells' 'Pesto chicken with tomato relish'

Ingredients

1 chicken breast
Green pesto
2 tomatoes
Half a cucumber
1 red pepper
Handful of green beans
1 tspn balsamic vinegar
1 tspn of virgin olive oil
Pinch of salt and pepper
Pinch of oregano

Method

Dice the cucumber, pepper and tomatoes, place altogether in a bowl and toss to mix.

Add the vinegar, oregano, oil, salt and pepper. Toss to mix and set aside.

Slice the chicken breast, thicker side down, cutting about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through. Wrap the chicken in heavy duty plastic wrap, and using a meat mallet pound the chicken to a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thickness.

Open the plastic wrap, and spread the chicken with about 2 tbsp of pesto. Using the plastic wrap, roll the chicken breast, and use some string or cocktail sticks to hold it together.

Heat some oil in a pan and place the chicken down carefully and cook until golden brown on each side.

Place the chicken on a baking tray, and place the tray in an oven at about 180°C.

Put the green beans into boiling water and cook until tender.

Once the chicken has been in the oven for about 10 minutes, take it out and leave to stand for 2 minutes. Arrange the plate so the chicken is sitting on a bed of relish and place the green beans neatly next to the chicken.



Information for Editors

About Thanet Earth

Making the most of the coastal setting and amazing natural light in Thanet is a development of greenhouses near Birchington. Inside these immense glass structures, expert growers are producing delicious speciality tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers for sale to the public through the UK's multiple retailers.

Thanet Earth is the UK's newest and largest facility of its kind. Not just a grower and packer of salad crops, the site is also a power station, housing Combined Heat and Power technology that's generating electricity for homes in Thanet every day. An environmentally-friendly site that makes use of rainwater harvesting, water recycling and natural pest control, Thanet Earth has a very low carbon footprint.

The site currently houses 4 greenhouses having begun production in 2009. The site will eventually be extended to a total of 7 greenhouses, all growing either tomatoes, peppers or cucumbers.

Tomatoes are grown all year round, using lights in the winter months to aid plant growth. Cucumbers and peppers are produced for 10 months of the year, from February to November.

More information from www.thanetearth.com

JUDGES

Chefs

Dev Biswal, The Ambrette

Craig Edgell, East Kent College

Jason Freedman, The Minnis Bar and Restaurant

Steve Deeble, Technical Manager for Salads, Tesco

Robert James, Technical Manager, Thanet Earth Marketing Ltd

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