



CHAMPAGNE

TAITTINGER

Reims

17 November 2016

For immediate distribution

50th TAITTINGER INTERNATIONAL CULINARY PRIZE
AN EXCEPTIONAL EDITION WITH HONOURY PRESIDENT JOEL
ROBUCHON & PRESIDENT EMMANUEL RENAUT
2016 EDITION Wednesday 16 November 2016

At 6:30 am sharp, all the candidates were assembled at the Ferrandi Cookery School in Paris. As in previous years, a judicial officer supervised the drawing of lots for the allocation of the commis chefs, who would have the onerous task of assisting the young chefs over the course of these decisive hours.

Under the benevolent eye of the Director, Bruno de Monte, the renowned school's teams worked rigorously and enthusiastically to ensure that the competition's five hours ran as smoothly as possible.

The competition's theme, inspired by that chosen for the Taittinger prize's very first year, was the following: *"For 8 people, Homage to Michel Comby, first winner of the Culinary Prize, in the style of a Turbot à la Nantua"*. A 3.5 kg turbot, portioned and reassembled (without the head), two garnishes, one with a base of leeks, the other with celeriac. The candidates also worked on the set recipe for *Orange Tart*, with the interpretation remaining free.

Once again, the jury this year was magical. Made up of internationally renowned chefs, it no doubt contributed to the excellent level of the dishes presented. Presided over by Emmanuel Renault, the jury consisted of 14 chefs of various nationalities: Jean-Paul Bostoën of the Auberge de l'Ill, Michel Roth of the Président Wilson in Geneva, Pierre Résimont of l'Eau Vive in Belgium, Stéphane Decotterd of the Pont de Brent in Switzerland, Michel Roux of the Gavroche in Londres, Hiroshi Hojita of Mange Tout in Tokyo, Gérard Boyer former chef at the Crayères, Régis Marcon of Régis and Jacques Marcon in Saint-Bonnet-le Froid, Christian Le



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Squer of the Georges V, Stéphanie Le Quellec of the Prince de Galles in Paris, Guillaume Gommez chef at the Elysée, Michel Comby, the first winner of the prize, Arnaud Lallement of the Assiette Champenoise in Reims and Ulf Wagner of Sjomagasinet in Gothenburg, Sweden.

For this special edition of the Taittinger Prize, a location was required of exceptional dimensions, capable of embodying excellence, the highest level of expertise, and tremendous talent. The award ceremony took place in the Carré des Cariatides at the Opera Garnier, gracefully presented by Amandine Chaignot, chef at the Rosewood in London, one of the rare woman to have competed for the

“Taittinger”.



This year's victory went to French chef **Julien Richard**. First sous-chef in the kitchens of the Ile des Embiez, he produced a perfect-tasting and stunningly beautiful version of the dish. As result, he won by a substantial margin. How wonderful it was to hear the jury's exclamations when he presented his magnificent turbot! His execution of the set recipe was also worthy of his first place.

The Taittinger Medal was given to him by Paul Belmondo, the grandson of the sculptor who created it 50 years ago.

The ceremony ended with an emotional gathering of

dazzling chefs; among the 35 previous winners of the Culinary Prize, were Michel Comby (1967) and Joël Robuchon (1970). Pierre-Emmanuel, Vitalie and Clovis Taittinger, representing the Taittinger family, were delighted to be participating in this remarkable event.

Second place in the 2016 competition went to Nicolas Hensinger of the Taverne du Mont d'Arbois in Megève, while Japan once again took third place on the podium, in the form of



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Kenji Yoshimoto of the Intercontinental Hotel in Tokyo Bay.



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The other four finalists, Keng Vichianrat for Holland, Damien Facile for Switzerland, Rajkumar Holus for Great Britain and Xavier Bernes for Belgium, also produced sensational dishes and can go away proud of having given their all.



The Gala dinner, prepared by Potel & Chabot and created by four prize winners (Régis Marcon, Joël Robuchon, Jérémy Desbraux and Jonathan Zandbergen) took place in the beautiful large foyer that sparkled appropriately for the occasion.

This gastronomic excellence was complemented with a musical performance by some very talented singers. They brought a little extra magic with some gentle, melodious classics from the popular repertoire on the theme of love. Last but not least, Comtes de Champagne Blancs de Blancs and Rosé 2006, the year that Taittinger was repurchased by Pierre-Emmanuel Taittinger, was served to complete a superb array of flavours.

To launch another fifty years of haute cuisine required something special. There can be no doubt that it was provided by this spectacular event.



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To close the sumptuous feast, each guest was given a copy of a new book that presents the story of this magnificent culinary prize. It recounts how fifty men came to receive this prestigious award.

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