

# Unilever Food Solutions Chefs of the Year announced

Winners for the [Unilever Food Solutions Chef of the Year](#) mystery basket national finals have been announced. Henrico Grobbelaar from Tsogo Sun's Southern Sun The Cullinan (Cape Town) emerged victorious in the senior category, and the junior category chef to take the title is Richard Ellis from 1000 Hills Chefs School (Durban).



Richard Ellis and Henrico Grobbelaar

Grobbelaar's top prize for the Senior Chef of the Year title is R20,000 and Ellis's prize for the Junior Chef of the Year title is R15,000. Second place went to Michaela van der Merwe from Kloof Street House in Cape Town with a prize of R10,000, and third place to Sydney Nyandeni from the South African embassy in Vienna, Austria, with a prize of R5,000 in the senior category. For Junior Chef of the Year, Aaron Subroyal from 1000 Hills Chefs School in KZN won R7,000 in second place and Amerae Vercueil from Ameroozle in Johannesburg won R5,000 in third place.

Participants in the junior and senior categories of this year's Chef of the Year were required to create recipes using Unilever Food Solutions products for a starter, main course, and dessert, with accompanying photographs. These recipes were assessed by an experienced judging panel and the regional finalists took part in the regional final cook-offs in July in Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban respectively, bringing the finalist numbers down to seven in each category.

"Our heartiest congratulations to all the finalists and particularly to the winning chefs in each category on what was a nerve-racking challenge producing world-class dishes," says Remco Bol, MD of Unilever Food Solutions South Africa. "Our theme for this year was 'A Cut Above' which by all accounts inspired chefs from all over the country to enter highly innovative and tasty recipes in the competition. The end result was a powerful line-up of top caliber chefs going head to head in both categories in the final cook-off, giving our judging panel the difficult task of identifying the top chefs."

The judges in the senior category included Garth Shnier (Executive Chef of Sandton Sun, InterContinental Johannesburg Sandton Towers and Sandton Convention Centre) as the head judge, Tony Kocke (Beverly Hills), Warren Frantz (Ushaka Marine World), and Shaun Smith (Fusion Cooking School) as the kitchen judge. In the junior category they were Desmond Davies (International Convention Centre, Durban), Nardia Adams (Fudart), Clinton Bonhomme (Southern Sun Elangeni and Maharani), and Sean Webber (Bravo Foods) as the kitchen judge.

## Senior chef of the year

Senior chef of the Year, Henrico Grobbelaar's winning dishes included a starter of soy seared tuna titaki, pan-fried

pancetta sage wrapped scallop, crumbed tentacles, blanched bok choy, cayenne paprika mayonnaise, apple, kiwi, celery and avocado salad, soy mushrooms with lemon hollandaise sauce; slow roasted lamb loin, pan fried kidney, roasted butternut and pear puree, fried onion mash, pickled carrot, mint infused baby marrow, milk poached cauliflower with tomato beef sauce on the side for the main course; and baked genoise sponge, soaked in strawberry syrup layered with chocolate mousse, Amarula sabayon, orange nut meringue sheet, nut praline with wild berry jelly and salad for dessert.



Grobbelaar is the current Captain of the South African National Culinary Team and will be leading the Team that will compete in the Culinary Olympics in Germany in October.

## Junior chef of the year

Junior Chef of the Year, Richard Ellis's dishes were pan fried salmon, scallop ceviche, tartare foam, thyme granita and vegetables finished in beurre monté finished in smoke for starter; braised pork belly, roast vegetables, cauliflower puree, pomme crumpet, rosemary caramel, beetroot jus and duxelles for the main course; and sable pastry tart, meringue and poached fruit with red wine melting peppered candy floss sauce for dessert.



Commenting at the prizegiving, head chef Garth Shnier, who is a member of the World Association of Chefs Societies' Culinary Guidelines Committee, which adjudicates competitions around the world, said, "The Unilever Food Solutions Chef of the Year is a WACS-accredited competition and, as such, these winners are considered to be at an international competition level. This is an exceptionally important competition for South Africa, in ensuring that our culinary standards

are on a par with the rest of the world. This year's competitors proved that South Africa's culinary skills, talent, and creativity can stand up against the very best."

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