

RCL Foods Young Chef & Baker Challenge 2023 winner announced

After months of intense preparation and practice in kitchens across the country, excitement reached its pinnacle as the nation's talented young chefs and bakers battled it out at the RCL Foods Young Chef & Baker Challenge 2023.

The grand finale, held on 12 October in Umhlanga, was a showcase of South Africa's culinary excellence, where 18 of South Africa's top chefs under the age of 25 went head-to-head for coveted titles.

An intense day of competition by the young chefs in which they were required to prepare a starter, main course and dessert from a mystery basket of ingredients culminated in the announcement of the three winning teams of two by the panel of esteemed SA Chefs Association judges.

Catherine Sainsbury and Robert Zituta from Silwood School of Cookery in Cape Town secured the first-place position. Their exceptional skills and outstanding performance in the competition earned them a well-deserved prize of R30,000, equally split between the two participants. The duo wowed the judges with their culinary creations, making them the reigning champions of the RCL Foods Young Chef & Baker Challenge 2023.



Catherine Sainsbury and Robert Zituta (Silwood School of Cookery) in Cape Town. Image supplied

The runner-up position was secured by Amaara Sulaiman and Lalana Santana Pillay from Capsicum Culinary Studio in Durban, who won R20,000.



Amaara Sulairan and Lalana Santana Pillay from Capsicum Culinary Studio in Durban. Image supplied

In the third-place spot, Marna Brandt and Macaela Ntuli from Chefs Training & Innovation Academy (CTIA) in Gauteng walked away with R15,000.



Marna Brandt and Macaela Ntuli from CTIA in Gauteng. Image supplied

Chef Bradley Kavanagh, Head Chef of RCL Foods, remarked, "Culinary competitions are more than just a showcase of culinary talent, particularly when they are aimed at the youth. Through the extensive feedback that is shared with competitors and the seed it plants in young minds to strive for better results and to perfect their craft, this competition helps to uplift standards in our hospitality industry and sets ambitious young chefs on a path to a successful, goal-driven career."

This year's competition saw a stellar showcase of talent, with the National Finals judged by a panel of qualified South African Chefs Association judges consisting of Chef Candice Adams (Capscium Culinary Studio), Chef Warren Franz (uShaka Marine World), Chef James Khoza (President of SA Chefs), Chef Oliver Reddy (Fedics) and Chef Luke Reddy (Tsebo Solutions).



Stewart Jones, channel executive at RCL Foods with the winning teams. Image supplied

The participants impressed the judges by creating exquisite dishes using RCL Foods, Rainbow, Sigalo Foods, and LiveKindly ingredients.

Chef James Khoza, President of SA Chefs, says, "The competition's success and the impressive performance of the winners underscore the importance of culinary competitions in developing young talent in South Africa's culinary industry."

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