

RCL's Young Chef and Young Baker winners announced

The winners in the RCL Foods Young Chef and the inaugural Young Baker competitions have been announced.



Image supplied: Nicole Bowes and Matthew Maree from Silwood School of Cookery

Following a gruelling final that tested a wide range of their cheffing and baking skills at the RCL Foods kitchens in Durban, each winner is taking home their share of the total R110,000 cash prize.

For the finals, Young Chef competitors submitted recipes for a restaurant main course and an innovation dessert course before the competition, which they then cooked in the finals, with a mystery basket starter, and Young Baker competitors submitted recipes for two types of breads and two types of baked confectionary, which they baked, along with a mystery basket element of six cupcakes and a flavoured buttercream.

The top team of two in the RCL Foods Young Chefs challenge are Nicole Bowes and Matthew Maree from Silwood School of Cookery in Western Cape, who achieved over 90% in the finals and won R15,000 each.

Brad Kavanagh, head chef of RCL Foods, said this was the first time in many years that a score above 90% was achieved. "For some years we have seen competitors do well, but not quite making it to the 90% gold standard. Well done to the winners!"

The first-ever RCL Foods Young Baker winner is Simthandile Nomandla from FBI Chef School and Patisserie Academy in

Gauteng, who took home the top prize of R20,000, against the odds.



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Kavanagh explained, “Simthandile missed her flight from Joburg that morning, but despite her late start, her passion and determination saw her not only catch up but win the top RCL Foods Young Bakers Challenge prize. We’re very proud of her excellent baking skills, as well as her problem-solving ability in the face of an extremely stressful situation.”

The Young Chef silver winners were Matthew Van Heerden and Shanuel Zimba from 1000 Hills Chef School in KZN who each won R10,000, and the bronze winners were Kelly Fletcher and Kara Venter from Silwood School of Cookery in Western Cape, who won R7,500 each.

Second place in the RCL Foods Young Baker Challenge went to Ameera Gani from Chefs Training and Innovation Academy in Centurion, Gauteng, and third place to Lynette Spykerman from 1000 Hills Chefs School in KZN, winning R15,000 and R10,000 respectively.



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The Young Chefs ‘Best Hygiene’ trophy for clean work, sponsored by Geochem, went to Leandre Mari Engelbrecht and Tebatso Antoinette Mamabolo from Guvon Academy in Gauteng. The Young Baker ‘Best Bread’ award, sponsored by Anchor Yeast, went to Ameera Gani, who won a Samsung Galaxy Tab A8.

The SA Chefs and SA Bakers associations ran the competition, with Adrian Vigus Brown, SA Chefs’ Competition director, as the overall head judge.

Kavanagh thanked all the contributors to the competitions, and particularly the SA Chefs-approved expert judges, for going the extra mile to ensure the participants were given feedback on their performance.

“Every entrant was scored professionally throughout the stages of the competitions, and the judges’ evaluations were made available to the entrants to enable them to assess their performance and boost their skills to be the best chefs and bakers they can be,” he said.

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