

Media Release

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Kiwi Chef Wins Top Title in Trans-Tasman Culinary Battle

New Zealander Gabby Sanders has proven to be the hottest rising star of the trans-Tasman culinary scene, after beating the best young chef talent from across Australia and New Zealand in the 2022 Nestlé Golden Chef's Hat Award.

Gabby aged 23 who works at The Monday Room in Christchurch and studies culinary arts at Ara Institute of Canterbury, powered through the live cook off held in front of a vast audience attending Fine Food Australia in Melbourne.

She went up against the top 11 young chefs from across Australia and New Zealand to deliver her triple gold winning dishes. Her menu comprised an entrée of leek, potato and smoked beurre blanc, nori and hazelnuts, and a main of glazed pork, caramelised soy dumpling and asian pork jus. Dessert was a chai spice cake, with caramel, coffee, walnut, pear and white chocolate.

Expert judges from [NZChefs](#) and the [Australian Culinary Federation](#) assessed the competitors' professional practices, presentation and the all-important taste factor to globally accredited standards.

Having battled it out in the regional heats which were held across Australia and New Zealand, Gabby secured her spot in Melbourne to represent the South Island in the grand finals. Olive Ona from Rotorua also competed at the event where she represented the North Island winning two silver and one gold medals.

Gabby said she was elated with the title win and \$10,000 cash prize as it was solid recognition of the hard work and effort she put into juggling work and study commitments, while also preparing for the competition.

"I'm passionate about food which my parents encouraged from an early age and I'm committed to constantly pushing myself to achieve excellence as a chef."

Gabby started out working in a supermarket where she was encouraged by a chef to train formally.

“That suggestion was a catalyst for change as it led me on to study at Ara Institute of Canterbury and ultimately pick up the challenge of competing on a live stage.”

Head Judge and Nestlé Professional Commercial Development Chef, Elke Travers says, “This award can only be won by the chef that demonstrates absolute attention to every detail. Putting your best dishes forward in a tight timeframe, all under the intense pressure and thrill of this live chef-to-chef competition, is daunting. But Gabby rose to the challenge and created a flawlessly executed and perfectly balanced menu that showcased her technical skills to a high level.”

It's not the first time that a New Zealander has won the prestigious award. Kiwi Sam Heaven took out the top spot in 2020 when Nestlé Professional New Zealand first became involved in the event.

As Australia's longest running culinary competition for young chefs, the [Nestlé Golden Chef's Hat Award](#) is now in its 57th year, supporting top emerging culinary talent to challenge themselves and kick start their careers.

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About:

The [Nestlé GOLDEN CHEF'S HAT AWARD](#) is celebrating 57 years this year and exists to offer the next generation of young chef talent a platform to accelerate their culinary careers and become the culinary leaders of tomorrow.

Fine Food Australia is the definitive trade event for the food and hospitality industry in Australia. Staged annually since 1984, it features over 1,000 exhibitors from Australia and around the world.

The **Australian Culinary Federation** is the peak industry organisation representing professional chefs, cooks, young chefs, apprentices, and culinary students across Australia. Committed to developing professional skills and industry knowledge, the award partnership extends to over two decades.

NZChefs has extensive involvement in the New Zealand foodservice industry and is dedicated to the continuing education and advancement of chefs through industry programmes and culinary competitions.