

WIN A WORK PLACEMENT AT RAYMOND BLANC'S MICHELIN STARRED LE MANOIR AUX QUAT'SAISONS

- THE SEARCH BEGINS TO FIND THE NORTH WEST'S BEST YOUNG CHEF

THE winner of this year's North West Young Chef of the Year competition will get to work at Raymond Blanc's Michelin starred hotel Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons.

Organisers, North West Fine Foods, have officially launched this year's search for the region's best young cooking talent and revealed the ultimate much sought after prize.

The competition, which is sponsored by Cheshire-based stock and jus maker Essential Cuisine, has become the highest profile contest for young chefs in the region with finalists battling it out each year in front of some of the country's top chefs.

Nigel Crane, professional chef and founder of Essential Cuisine, said: "We are delighted to be supporting an initiative which raises the bar for young chefs as well as encouraging them to appreciate the wealth of fantastic produce that is available locally. We are really looking forward to seeing what dishes they dream up."

The contest, now in its fifth year, requires each young chef to come up with a three course menu for two for under £20, using seasonal produce from the region.

Applications are now being accepted and chefs must enter by **April 24**. A downloadable version of the application form is available from the Essential Cuisine website www.essentialcuisine.com.

Regional heats will take place throughout June, culminating in the finals in September.

The young chefs will have to perform in front of some of the country's top chefs including Simon Rimmer, Paul Askew, Duncan Collinge and Simon Radleigh.

As well as a work placement at Raymond Blanc's Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons in Oxford, the winner will take home prizes of over £3000, including a gastro trip to one of the world's top foodie destinations.

For further information about the competition please contact Sandra Allwood at North West Fine Foods on Tel: 01695 732 734 or email sallwood@nwff.co.uk

Notes to Editors:

North West Young of Chef of the Year 2005

Kirk Haworth, 17, was crowned North West Young of Chef of the Year 2005 after a hard fought battle at the finals in September last year.

Citing the competition as a "great experience" and "a big confidence booster", Kirk has become a major supporter of the initiative along with his dad, Nigel Haworth of Blackburn's Northcote Manor and The Five Fishes fame.

Kirk won the day with a mouthwatering menu of pan seared west coast scallops, yellow beetroot, cress salad and pumpkin seed, which was followed by potato wrapped breast of Goosnargh chicken, wild mushrooms, braised celery and celeriac puree. A new season orchard plum soup with elderflower cream finished off his inspirational menu.

Key Dates:

Deadlines for entries: **24 April**

Regional Heats:

6 June **Merseyside**

8 June **Manchester**

12 June **Cumbria**

20 June **Lancashire**

27 June **Cheshire**

About the sponsors Essential Cuisine:

When he couldn't find a high quality manufactured stock that met all his requirements, Nigel Crane decided to make his own instead. He founded Essential Cuisine in 1995 and now his range of stock, jus and glaces are enjoyed by restaurant-goers across the UK. Nigel Crane trained under world famous chef Anton Mossiman at the Michelin starred Dorchester Hotel in London. He is a member of the exclusive Dorchester Sous Chefs club and has cooked for royalty. As well as a distinguished career working in some of the country's top kitchens, he has more than 15 years experience in technical product development. Over the last decade, the company has built up a portfolio of customers including leading London hotels, gourmet restaurants, Premiership football clubs and major British entertainment venues.
www.essentialcuisine.com

- Ends -

For further information or visuals please contact Louise Davies at Mason Media on 0151 707 4515.