

SA's Top Restaurants Named

Last night saw the glitterati of South Africa's restaurant industry gather to celebrate the top 20 who had been nominated for the Eat Out DStv Food Network Restaurant Awards for 2011.

Cellars-Hohenhort restaurant The Greenhouse was given top honours - the first time the restaurant has made first place in the few years that the awards have been running.

The gala ceremony was held at The Rotunda at The Bay Hotel in Cape Town where guests sampled gourmet creations from award-winning chefs.

Eat Out 2011 Top 10 restaurants of the year are:

1. The Greenhouse, Chef Peter Tempelhoff (Cape Town)
2. The Test Kitchen, Chef Luke Dale-Roberts (Cape Town)
3. The Tasting Room, Chef Margot Janse (Cape Town)
4. The Roundhouse, Chefs PJ Vadas and Eric Bulpitt (Cape Town)
5. Overture, Chef Bertus Basson (Stellenbosch)
6. Terroir, Chef Michael Broughton (Stellenbosch)
7. DW Eleven-13, Marthinus Ferreira (Johannesburg)
8. Jordan Restaurant, Chef George Jardine (Stellenbosch)
9. Nobu, Chef Hideki Maeda (Cape Town)
10. La Colombe, Chef Scot Kirton (Cape Town)



The chef of the year went to the innovative Luke Dale-Roberts of Test Kitchen in Woodstock. Dale-Roberts is known for his gastronomic experimentation with flavour.

Over the years the awards have been accused of favouring Cape Town restaurants. This year's results will add more fuel to the fire, with only one restaurant outside of the Western Cape being awarded a place in the top 10.

Though New Media Publishing had announced that Eat Out would be using only one single judge (Eat Out Editor Abigail Donnelly) for the awards in 2011, the restaurant guide said that the 20 nominees were judged on recommendations from Eat Out's national panel of professional restaurant reviewers, as well as their very vocal online audience of 75 000 users. This, along with "stringent scoring criteria" were taken into account by Donnelly.

Restaurants are judged on food, service and ambience and other aspects that make or break the eating out experience.

As the top 10 include only the very best in fine dining, the Eat Out team decided to introduce a few new categories in order to acknowledge the excellence being achieved by restaurants that show "passion and authenticity." Best Asian restaurant was awarded to Kitima in Hout Bay, known as a landmark for fine Asian cuisine.

Best Italian restaurant went to 95 Keuroom - known for its excellent carpaccio amongst many other dishes. Owner and chef Giorio Nava also contributed to the evening by baking excellent breads that were served on the tables.

Next amongst the new categories is The Table at De Meye recognised as Best Country-style restaurant. Considered rustic, farm-style eating, this restaurant has made its name through using only fresh, local ingredients.

Best Steakhouse went to Johannesburg franchise The Local Grill for its excellent meat preparation and for being full of personality.

Lastly, the best Bistro went to Bizerca Bistro in Cape Town for its French dishes prepared with South African flare.

Boschendal Style award went to the quirky **Makaron** in Paradyskloof, Cape Town which an Eat Out reviewer described as "sophisticated, yet playful".

Lastly, Joburg's 44 Stanley Road breakfast nook, Salvation Café, was recognised for its mouthwatering morning dishes through the City Press ViP Sunday Breakfast Award.

Sponsor Food Network EMEA's Managing Director Nick Thorogood told the audience that the company was pleased to be supporting local industry, "as they really showcase the very best of South Africa's culinary delights".