

# BaxterStorey Celebrates Record-Breaking Graduation at Chef Academy

2 years ago



[BaxterStorey](#) toasted a record-breaking year at its prestigious Chef Academy graduation ceremony on Friday, May 24th. An impressive 89 chefs, including 27 women, donned their caps and gowns, marking the culmination of their intensive culinary journey.

The graduation, held at IET London: Savoy Place, was a vibrant celebration attended by over 300 guests. BaxterStorey's commitment to nurturing future culinary leaders was evident as graduates – including female chefs and Project Knead bakers Mel Andrews, Denise Dowling, and Asia Michelis – shared their inspiring experiences at the Academy.

Great British Menu 2024 champion and BaxterStorey chef partner, Kirk Haworth, offered a captivating guest address. Sharing valuable advice and reflecting on his own career path, he emphasized the importance of fostering a positive kitchen culture. "Great food comes from happy people," he declared, "and it's our responsibility to create a future where everyone feels valued and empowered."

BaxterStorey's Chef Academy boasts a comprehensive 12-month program. Students delve into the world of food through hands-on sessions at the Obsessed Lab, supplier visits to local farms and fisheries like Mossigel Milk and Chalkstream Trout, and masterclasses led by renowned chefs like Josh Eggleton and Kirk Haworth.

Level 4 graduate Albert Addison, now a chef manager at Hilton Seafood in Grimsby, enthusiastically reflected on his Academy experience. "I learned so much," he said. "From perfecting classic casseroles to mastering bread baking, the Academy has equipped me with invaluable skills. The program also played a key role in my promotion, something I wouldn't have achieved without the support of John, Rik, and the

entire team."

Rik Razza, Head of Chef Development, beamed with pride as he addressed the graduating class. "Tonight is about celebrating this incredible group of individuals, all achieving an exceptional distinction rate of over 80%," he announced.

Greg Bramwell, director of food and beverage added: "Our Chef Academy reflects the Obsessed culture of our business where we champion individuality and innovation. It gives me great honour to see so many chef jackets in the room today, as you wear them with pride and passion. When you leave this room you celebrate, but it's what happens when you go back to your locations with all the wonderful work you've learnt, as you keep investing in yourself, your team and the business, to delight your customers".

The evening's festivities continued with a culinary extravaganza curated by FUEL traders. Guests reveled in a variety of delectable dishes, from slow-cooked pork belly and BBQ gochujang chicken rice bowls to Kolkata kataifi rolls, waffle sticks, and cheesecake ice-cream. Dan Fellows, Jana Slamova, Chloe Walsh, and Extract, BaxterStorey's resident mixologist masters, kept the energy high with refreshing mocktails and innovative cocktails like the Ascara Negroni tonic and Long Island iced coffee.

Ronan Harte, CEO commented: "I've been coming to the Chef Academy graduation for fifteen years and I have never failed to be completely and utterly blown away by the spirit that exists every single time. To have 89 chefs graduating tonight is astounding and reflects the resounding success of the Academy. I'm always humbled to be here, so thank you to the commitment you've shown and the hard work you do to balance your day jobs with the training. I am incredibly proud of you all".