

Company of Cooks, Gather & Gather and Vacherin celebrate Well Grounded partnership and 2024 barista graduates

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Company of Cooks, Gather & Gather and Vacherin, together with social enterprise Well Grounded, have celebrated the achievements of the 2024 cohort of Specialty Barista Traineeship graduates and their longstanding partnership.

The impact of the three hospitality businesses' support of Well Grounded's programmes, which help people facing barriers to employment into work in the coffee and hospitality industry, represents the sponsorship or employment of 95 people and a total of over 4,000 work placement hours since the partnership began in 2017.

The 12 graduates who have successfully completed the ten-week programme, accredited by the Specialty Coffee Association, have gained their professional barista qualification plus Level 2 in both Customer Service and Food Safety and are now preparing to start their barista careers.

Their success was celebrated at a special graduation ceremony at the Royal Opera House, where they had the opportunity to showcase their skills through brewing and serving delicious coffee to guests and shared their inspiring personal journeys.

The Speciality Barista Traineeship programme provides technical coffee training and employability skills, with paid work placements at prestigious Company of Cooks, Gather & Gather and Vacherin London sites, plus guaranteed work within the three businesses on completion.

Rob Fredrickson, Managing Director for Company of Cooks, said: "Congratulations to the 2024 graduates

and newly qualified baristas! Along with my fellow MDs in Gather & Gather and Vacherin, we're incredibly proud of the professional and personal development they've shown over the ten-week programme, and are in awe of their energy, talent and determination to succeed. They embody the essence of hospitality, and all have very bright futures ahead of them.

"We're equally as proud of our longstanding partnership with Well Grounded and that together we've made a positive difference to the lives of some 95 people who have found their flair and home in hospitality. We're committed to doing the right thing for the communities we work in and with and to championing hospitality as an exciting career path, and this valuable partnership achieves just that."

Eve Wagg, Founder and CEO of Well Grounded, said: "We are incredibly proud and excited to be celebrating the graduation of our 2024 trainee baristas as part of our longstanding partnership with Company of Cooks, Gather & Gather and Vacherin. This partnership has provided employment to over 70 people over the last 6 years. But the partnership represents so much more than that. Together, through our wider work, we have been able to launch our first training Academy outside of London and raise vital funds, empowering hundreds of people into careers in specialty coffee."

Well Grounded is an award-winning social enterprise that provides accredited coffee training programmes, work placements and ongoing support to Londoners facing social and economic barriers to employment. Since conception in 2016, it has supported over 350 people into work, with 83% sustaining work for over 6 months.