

## Lexington crowns winners of BakeStar and BariStar 2024 event

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Corporate B&I contract caterer [Lexington](#) hosted its BakeStar and BariStar event this week, which saw 6 finalist bakers and 6 finalist baristas battling it out in two parallel competitions held at BT One Braham, London. Tim Fisher, pastry chef, from Lexington's Subsea 7 contract won the BakeStar 2024 award, and Samantha Polmear, barista from Lexington's Schroders contract won the BariStar award.

BakeStar, in its inaugural year, and BariStar, in its 10<sup>th</sup> year, were co-hosted to raise the profile of the contract caterer's baking talent and to enhance the guest experience combining bakery and patisserie with coffee. Aligning with [UK Coffee Week](#), the event also raised funds for [Project Waterfall](#), supporting clean water for coffee-growing communities.

The BakeStar competition, focused on plant-based baking adding an extra layer of challenge to the competition. Contestants prepared tray bakes during the qualification round, and eight identical afternoon tea-sized cakes for the final.

Tim Fisher's award-winning creation was a sweet pastry tartlet with layers of British apple, cobnut dacquoise, vanilla cream, caramel and cobnut brittle. Fisher's concept will be rolled out across Lexington's client sites.

The baked goods were judged on flavours, textures, decoration, workflow, neatness and the locality of ingredients. BakeStar judges included: international pastry chef, Clare Clark MBE; Graham Hornigold, co-founder and director at Small Batch Bakery, Longboys; Lexington's head pastry chef and 2023 Bake Off: The Professionals contestant, Margo Kujawa; and Lexington's Natalie Sheridan, head pastry chef and 2020 Bake Off: The Professionals contestant.

The BariStar competition is designed to assess participants on the art of coffee science and preparation, from mastering machine settings for perfect espresso extraction to milk texturing.

Samantha Polmear's award winning coffee was a banana bread latte crafted with steamed Minor Figures oat milk. A fusion of sweetness and warmth, the hot beverage combined flavours of freshly baked banana bread thanks to its spiced banana syrup, with a rich espresso base. Polmear's winning banana bread latte will be served across all Lexington client sites for one season.

The final measured creativity, presentation, and execution quality. Judges included: James Hennebry, co-founder of Rosslyn Coffee, boutique specialty coffee company in London; Luis Caicedo Redin, Lexington's head barista and winner of BariStar 2019; Stephanie Rodriguez, coffee experience manager, Lexington; Lexington MD, Matt Wood; Lexington director, Katharine Lewis; and Elior's corporate business development director, Julia Edmonds.

Matt Wood, managing director of Lexington Catering, said: "We are so proud of the talent we have at Lexington and the amazing achievements of our winners, Tim and Samantha. Their award wins are testament to their incredible expertise and baking and barista skills, as well as the delicious creations they craft for our clients and customers, every day. All of our contestants were fantastic and the bar was certainly set high."

Tim Fisher, pastry chef, Lexington said: "I'm honoured to have won the 2024 BakeStar competition, not only for myself but for my client Subsea 7 too. I was especially pleased to welcome the plant-based criteria. Plant-based options are increasingly in demand and this competition provided a good platform to get creative with flavours."

Samantha Polmear, barista at Lexington said: "I'm very passionate about great coffee and I'm so proud that my banana bread latte has won this competition. Coffee is a really important part of people's daily routines and there are so many ways it can be creative. I believe every cup of coffee should be crafted with exceptional care and quality."

The Lexington BakeStar and BariStar event was organised by a female led team who are inspiring a new generation of pastry chefs and baristas within the B&I catering business. The event management team included Lexington's head pastry chefs Natalie Sheridan and Margo Kujawa, operational support & coffee experience manager Stephanie Rodrigues, and head of creative projects and partnerships, Jesse Bliss.