

Association of Catering Excellence (ACE) reveals new chair and board appointments

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Laurent Lucas-Dufour has been appointed Chair of the Association of Catering Excellence (ACE) on the 5th February, and is joined by a host of new board members.

Sector Director at Company of Cooks, Laurent was appointed Vice-Chair of ACE last year and has been a board member since 2022. Laurent automatically takes over the chairmanship this year from predecessor Francois Gautreaux.

Natalie Mainwaring, Brand Experience Director at BaxterStorey, has been appointed Vice-Chair, with new board members including Emma Williams, Chief Operating Officer at Green & Fortune; Rebecca Hawkes, Director of Sales and Events at Searcys; Angela Ward, Venues Director at Graysons; and Alice Barrett, head of HR for Restaurant Associates Venues.

Laurent Lucas-Dufour, Chair of ACE, said: “My fellow board members and I are focused on driving ACE to be ready for the next generation coming into the industry, and building on the brilliant foundations established by our former chairs.

“Having hosted previous events in amazing locations such as 93 Feet East, Skylight and the House of Lords, we’ve got some brilliant venues already lined up for our upcoming events to continue providing exciting industry recognition opportunities including our beloved competitions, the ACE Robyns and Ready Steady Cook!”

ACE is a networking organisation tailored for professionals in the food service industry. ACE



organises culinary competitions, awards dinners, networking events and charity evenings year-round for operators, suppliers, students, consultants and industry veterans to connect, share insights, foster creativity, and cultivate valuable relationships.

Events include the ACE Robyns, an annual awards ceremony recognising the industry's most exciting and talented under-35s, regardless of job role; while its Ready, Steady, Cook! competition is inspired by the classic TV show with a street food slant. Teams of two of any kitchen ability are invited to compete against their peers in a fun environment.