

Norwegian saithe shines at Le Cordon Bleu cooking competition

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The kitchens of Le Cordon Bleu Paris were alive with innovation as newly graduated chefs took part in a unique culinary challenge centred around Norwegian saithe, a versatile white fish from Norway's cold, clear waters. The competition, organised by the Norwegian Seafood Council, aimed to inspire French chefs to explore the rich diversity of Norwegian seafood.

Guided by leading Norwegian chefs, including Kristian Vangen, Executive Chef at Gaptrast, and Morten Tungesvik, Executive Chef at Hotel Charmante, the young contestants showcased their technical precision, creativity, and understanding of the featured fish through inventive dishes that combined Nordic ingredients with French finesse.

“Our goal with this cooperation with Le Cordon Bleu Paris and the competition has been to showcase the uniqueness and versatility of Norwegian saithe,” said Sigrid Louise Philippart, Country Director for France at the Norwegian Seafood Council. “The creativity of the candidates has shown us new and wonderful ways of cooking this tasty fish, proving that it deserves a place even in haute cuisine.”

A distinguished jury featuring culinary experts from both France and Norway, including Fredrik Hald, Eric Briffard (Executive Chef, Le Cordon Bleu), and Jean-François Roquette (Executive Chef, Park Hyatt Paris) evaluated the dishes on taste, presentation, and technique.

After an intense and flavourful competition, the winners were announced:

1st Place: Fabien Tavares (Chef de partie, Potel et Chabot)

2nd Place & Special Mention for Technique: Thomas Verdier (Commis, Restaurant Gaya)

3rd Place: Javier Jimenez (Chef & Owner, The 3 Musketeers, Paris)

The winning creation, Norwegian saithe confit with spices and almonds, potato gnocchi with preserved lemon, marinière foam, Normandy sauce, seaweed tartare, and a smoked fish tuile impressed the jury with its balance of texture, flavour, and innovation.

For winner Fabien Tavares, the experience was as enlightening as it was rewarding. “I’m just discovering the amazing qualities of saithe,” he said, reflecting on the fish’s potential in modern gastronomy.

The competition not only highlighted saithe’s culinary versatility but also underscored the growing collaboration between Norway’s seafood industry and the next generation of French chefs, a partnership that promises to bring new flavours and sustainable seafood options to fine dining tables around the world.