



Six Colleges Headed for Zest Quest Asia Cook-off as Finalists Announced for 2018

(London, 30th Nov 2017) Cyrus Todiwala announces the finalists of the fifth Zest Quest Asia competition after the completion of a tough round of paper judging.

Student teams from Colchester Institute, North Hertfordshire College, Sheffield Hallam University, The Sheffield College, University of West London and Westminster Kingsway College will advance to the cook-offs on February 12th 2018, to be held in Mr Todiwala's Kitchen, the signature restaurant of gold sponsor, Hilton London Heathrow Airport Terminal 5. The winners will be announced at a gala dinner later that evening.

Inspired by the experience of previous years' champions, whose main prize was a 10-day, once-in-a-lifetime, gastronomic journey to an Asian culinary capital, this year's finalists hope to impress the judges enough in terms of their skills, knowledge and cooking techniques of Asian cuisines to bag what is generally considered one of best culinary competition prizes on offer. So far, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Japan have all been covered, but participants are kept in suspense until the next destination is revealed on the night of the gala dinner.

Zest Quest Asia itself was set up in 2013 by Cyrus and Pervin Todiwala, with the support of The Master Chefs of Great Britain, to help combat the reality of skills shortages and gaps in the knowledge of traditional Asian cookery brought about by the government's stricter immigration policies and a general lack of awareness of Asian cuisine as a viable, long-term career.

To-date, two dozen colleges have competed in the Zest Quest Asia contest, with entries increasing year on year and Zest Quest Asia has gone on to forge associations with related programmes serving the training, development and career needs of the wider hospitality industry, such as Springboard FutureChef.

Todiwala said, "After four years, the relevance of Zest Quest Asia as a channel for future talent in Asian food industry cannot be greater. The popularity of Asian cuisine among consumers is still evident, yet every year it gets harder and harder to find trained Asian chefs, so we need to cultivate home grown chefs who are well versed in cooking authentic Asian food. Every college that has fielded a winning

Zest Quest Asia team; Westminster Kingsway College, University College Birmingham, Farnborough College and Milton Keynes College, has told us that their success did have a positive impact on their overall attitude and approach to Asian cuisine. Therefore, I am still hoping that one day we will achieve one of Zest Quest Asia's aims of embedding classical Asian cooking within the curriculum."

Zest Quest Asia is open to all full-time, UK resident students and students with a leave to remain in the United Kingdom. The industry continues to lend its support with Tilda, Panasonic, Koppertcross, Hilton, Regale, Cobra Beer, Bidfood and Glengoyne once again pledging to sponsor the competition alongside many other supporters.

Tickets for Zest Quest Asia's gala dinner will go on sale on January 2nd 2018.

