

Businesses across Europe lend support to young Chef

Young Chef Luke Thomas is no stranger to hard work, since winning FutureChef in 2009 at just 15. Luke now 17, has his sights firmly set on becoming the youngest Chef in Britain to win a Michelin Star.

Helping Luke to achieve his ambitions are an array of people and businesses from the catering, retail and business world. This support is vital to Luke and has already enabled him to secure work experience with some of the UK's most outstanding Chefs, including Heston Blumenthal, Gary Rhodes, Brian Turner and Simon Radley.

Recently, Luke has also been appointed as an ambassador for FutureChef, helping to promote FutureChef to other young Chefs.

Sponsorship has come from Villeroy and Boch, Bragard, F.Dick Knives of Germany, Hawarden Estate Farm Shop, Meat Promotion Wales, Desique Digital, Springboard UK, Steve Vaughan Butchers and 2PhotoYou.

Claudia Scholz-Knobloch from Frieder. Dick comments, 'Friedr. Dick is proud to be sponsor of such a young and talented guy as Luke Thomas. With his abilities he will probably reach his own aim to become one of the best chefs in the world in no time. As we all know, besides ambition and talent, high-quality equipment can be quite helpful. That's why we support Luke Thomas with our products.'

Alan Downes, from Hawarden Estate Farm Shop comments that, 'it is a pleasure to be associated with such a determined, creative and talented young person. His passion for food is shown through his cooking demonstrations at the Farm Shop and his flair for creating recipes, with our seasonal produce. We are proud to support his career development.'

Along with sponsorship, Luke also has numerous mentors who provide invaluable support and advice. His mentors include, Simon Radley at The Chester Grosvenor, Aiden Byrne at The Church Green, Brian Turner CBE, Anne Peirce MBE from Springboard UK, Richard Seller from the Welsh Assembly Government, Caroline Sanger-Davies from Aero Media & Marketing and Nick Vadis of Compass Group.

Brian Turner comments, 'Luke is one of the best self-motivated young cooks I have ever met, this along with his great talent for cooking will make him a star of the future.'

Aiden Byrne complimented Luke by saying, 'A young man with ambition, passion, drive and determination who I'm sure will take my title and become the youngest chef to ever win a Michelin Star'

In this current climate, it is extremely important that businesses support young ambitious people to develop themselves and realize their full potential. With all this help and support for Luke and his sheer hard work and determination the future seems very bright for Luke and the Michelin Star is within his grasp.

Of the support he has received from businesses, Luke says, 'the assistance I receive from these companies cannot be underestimated, and without this my goals and ambitions would be harder to achieve. I am very grateful for the investment made in me by the industry.'

For more information about Luke Thomas, or to arrange an interview please contact Caroline Sanger-Davies on 07854 835171 caroline@aero-media.co.uk

Since winning FutureChef 2009 at just 15, Luke Thomas, now 17, has gone on to secure opportunities to work with some of the UK's most outstanding chefs, including Heston Blumenthal,

Gary Rhodes, Brian Turner and Simon Radley. Born in North Wales, Luke mixed his school studies with weekend and evening jobs in the kitchens of the five star Chester Grosvenor Hotel & Spa, the acclaimed restaurant Soughton Hall, and alongside award-winning butcher Steve Vaughan. Setting his sights high, Luke went on to secure further work experience under Bryn Williams at Odettes, and at La Gavroche (2008), Marcus Wareing at the Berkeley, Gary Rhodes W1, and La Pergola in Rome (2009) and most recently at The Fat Duck (April 2010). After his success in FutureChef 2009, when he came out tops above 7500 entrants, he was named Runner Up in the Final of the National Chef of Wales 2010, proving that Luke is heading straight to the top of his profession. Enjoying every opportunity he finds, Luke has already cooked for Prince Charles, at the Princes Trust Celebration Dinner at the Duke of Westminster's Estate in March 2009. He also cooked for Princess Anne at the opening of Liverpool One in October 2008, and had the pleasure of cooking alongside Brian Turner in May 2009 in Back to the Kitchen with Springboard FutureChef Competitors.

Villeroy and Boch Villeroy & Boch is the world's largest manufacturer of ceramics, from fine china to bathrooms and tiles. Whilst well known for their china they also produce a wide range of quality crystal, cutlery and accessories <http://www.villeroy-boch.com/en/gb/home.html>

F. Dick Knives of Germany Friedr. DICK is a German cutlery manufacturer founded 1778 in Esslingen, Germany. Specialising primarily in butcher's knives and tools, where it is regarded as a market leader in both Europe and North America. F. Dick is known for its ultra-wide range of high quality sharpening steels and is also renowned for its chef's knives, where it is a respected manufacturer in the professional sector, but less established for the end user <http://www.dick.de/en/index.php>

Bragard Founded in 1933, Bragard is the leading supplier of Chefs uniforms. <http://www.bragard.co.uk/index.php?PAYS=GB&sid=5>

Hawarden Estate Farm Shop Hawarden Estate Farm Shop opened in March 2008. Descended from the small but successful Hawarden Castle Fruit Farm, established over twenty years ago, the Hawarden Estate Farm Shop is the vision of Charles Gladstone, great great grandson of Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone. The ethos of the Farm Shop is real food, sourced with passion. As well as fruit and vegetables grown on the farm the shop also sells produce from the estate's tenant farmers, other local producers, and a selection of other UK suppliers all hand-picked because of the high quality of their products. The Farm Shop has won the Wales True Taste Retailer of the Year Award for both 2008/9 and 2009/10 and has recently been shortlisted for the third year <http://www.hawardenestate.co.uk/>

Meat Promotion Wales An industry-led organisation responsible for the development, promotion and marketing of Welsh red meat <http://www.hccmpw.org.uk/index.aspx>

Desique Digital An Award winning Graphic Design & Website Design company based in Flintshire, North Wales. <http://www.desique.co.uk/>

FutureChef FutureChef, run by The Springboard Charity, is a four stage nationwide culinary programme helping young people aged 12-16 to learn to cook. It inspires them to explore food and cooking as a life skill, helps to develop their culinary talent and informs them about entry routes into the hospitality industry. The FutureChef programme is endorsed by The National Skills Academy and supported by a host of generous sponsors <http://futurechef.springboarduk.net/>

Steve Vaughan Butchers An award winning, family run butchers from North Wales. 2PhotoYou Wedding and Portrait photography in Chester and North Wales <http://www.2photoyou.co.uk/>