



BRIGHTON PIZZA CHEF CREATES AWARD-WINNING PIZZA

Winners of the annual competition to find Britain's best Pizza Chef announced



A pizza chef from Brighton has scooped the top prize at the Pizza Chef of the Year competition – a highlight of the annual Pizza, Pasta & Italian Food Industry Awards, which took place in a star-studded ceremony on Thursday, 9 November 2023.

Brigi Stamber, pizza chef and company manager at Pizzaface in Brighton, earned the accolade for a vegan cheese pizza, named 'The Return of the M.A.C' which included ingredients such as homemade vegan cheese sauce, vegan cheese, panko breadcrumbs and mixed herbs.

The annual Pizza Chef of the Year competition invites pizza professionals from across the country to enter by creating an innovative pizza using a selected sponsored ingredient as the key element and other food components of their choice. The five categories in the 2023 competition were sponsored by Futura Foods, Whitworth Bros., Danish Crown, Silbury and Dawn Farms.

Finalists went head-to-head to create the best-tasting, best-looking and most innovative pizza, all under the watchful eyes of the expert judging panel, including celebrity chef Theo

Randall, Marco Fuso, MFP Consultancy, Michael Eyre, product director at Jestic, Michele Pascarella, Napoli on the Road and co-founder of renowned Pizza Pilgrims restaurants, Thom Elliot.

Then, later that day, Theo Randall and comedian Adam Bloom revealed category winners and the overall champion during the gala evening celebrating the industry at the Royal Lancaster, London.

Talking of the accolade, Brigi said: "I am totally overwhelmed. I am still shocked that I have created the best pizza in Britain!

"I feel like my passion comes out in the food I create. Making pizza is like making art. It allows you to express yourself and change the food industry. Everything on the day of the competition went to plan, and I was so happy with what I created.

"The pizza industry is full of life and brimming with transformative ideas. It's been another tough year for everyone involved in making, creating, designing and owning pizza eateries. So, I stand here today extremely proud of myself!"

Brigi has been working in Pizzaface for almost a decade and fell in love with making pizza almost immediately. Ever since she started, she has been trying to develop herself and find her own style in the pizza-making world.

Over the last couple of years, she has been working on sustainability, not just in her cooking but as a business as well, by reducing waste, using only recyclable and compostable packaging. She is also continuously working on plant based and vegetarian recipes and ingredients. Her ethos is when people are given good meat-free options they will try something new.

This focus on plant-based pizza paid dividends as Brigi's was triumphant in the Whitworth Bros. Flour "Chef's Special" and the Dawn Farms Sustainable Topping categories of the competition, before claiming the overall title of Pizza Chef of the Year.

Jim Winship, director of the Pizza, Pasta & Italian Food Association (PAPA), said: "What we tasted at this event were no ordinary pizzas...with ingredients such as vegan parmesan, hot star honey and Chinese dragon chilli flakes, our chefs are continually pushing the boundaries of creativity within everyone's favourite slice. We've tasted some truly tremendous pizzas!

"Brigi's creations particularly stood out in the Whitworth Bros. and Dawn Farms categories. It truly shows how plant-based options can be a taste sensation. The judges were wowed by her entry, and everyone said we could've eaten it again and again."

"Every year, I can't wait to see what pizzas are placed before me. The entries were unbelievable," said Theo Randall, one of the esteemed judges.

"I was wowed by the diversity of flavours, textures, and toppings, including some delectable vegetarian ingredients that impressed.

"As always, it is a tricky job to narrow down the winners, but I always just look to the pizzas I still remember and want all over again. Brigi's pizza was just that! Even after 25 pizza slices, I remembered the very first one I tasted – an incredible take on Mac and Cheese!

A huge congratulations to all the winners this year. The country is clearly full of pizza talent, and I am proud to judge this competition every year.”

Jim continued: “This competition, and the wider PAPA Awards, are a highlight in the calendar. It is also a precursor to the annual [National Pizza Week](#), a seven-day celebration aiming to support the industry and celebrate the nation’s love of a good pizza. With all the events at this time of year, some say it’s pizza and pasta season in the industry. We just want to ensure that those pizza stars across the country are recognised for their hard work, creativity and passion in another challenging year.

Winners at the Pizza Chef of the Year competition:

Entrants competed over five categories, which were judged on their taste, base quality, presentation, commercial viability and innovative use of the sponsor’s product. Category winners were then put forward for the coveted overall competition winner title.

- Futura Foods YAMAS! Halloumi: Nicola Jackson Jones – Yam-Yasss!
- Whitworth Bros. “Chef’s Special”: Brigi Stamber – Return of the M.A.C
- Silbury Famously Authentic Pizza Sauce: Scott Holden – Pepperoni & Hot Honey Detroit
- Dawn Farms Sustainable Topping: Brigi Stamber – The Clucky Bird
- Danish Crown Supertops: Scott Holden – Sicilian Prawn

Brigi’s recipe:

HOW TO MAKE BRITAIN’S BEST PIZZA

The Return of the M.A.C. Recipe



Ingredients:

- 260g Whitworth Bros. Strong Pizza Flour
- 60g Vegan Cheese Sauce
- 50g Vegan Cheese
- 30g Vegan Parmesan
- 30g Oven Roasted Panko Breadcrumbs
- 20g Mixed Herbs (rosemary, chives, parsley and oregano)

Instructions:

1. To make the dough:
 - a. Add 620 g of cool water to the dough mixer and 2 large spoons of sourdough starter.
 - b. Start the mixer to mix the starter in and add 1kg of the Whitworth flour. Pour over 25g of extra virgin olive oil, and then 25g of salt and add 10g of sugar.
 - c. Mix for around 15 minutes, then cover and leave to rest in the mixer for 15 minutes.
 - d. Move to a surface, cover, and again rest for 30 minutes.
 - e. Cut the dough in 260g pieces and round into a ball.
 - f. Place in a dough tray and leave to rise for a few hours, dependent on the weather, then put in the fridge.
 - g. Leave for at least 24 hours, removing from the fridge at least an hour before use.
 2. To make the vegan cheese sauce:
 - a. Roast carrots, cauliflower, and a whole bulb of garlic in the oven until golden, seasoning with sea salt and black pepper.
 - b. Once roasted, add the carrots, cauliflower and garlic into a blender with oat milk and cashew milk and blend until smooth.
 3. Roll out the dough into a 12inch circle shape.
 4. Spread the homemade vegan cheese sauce evenly onto the base.
 5. Add the vegan cheese.
 6. Cook the pizza in a high-heat oven until the crust is golden.
 7. Once the pizza has been cooked, top with oven-roasted panko breadcrumbs, mixed herbs and vegan parmesan.
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For additional information, images, and interview requests, please contact:

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Editors Notes:**About the competition:**

The annual British competition invites pizza professionals from across the country to enter by creating an innovative pizza using the sponsor's ingredient as the key element and any other ingredients of their choice.

All contestants are asked to consider the judging criteria when creating their dish – which are taste, base quality, presentation, commercial viability, and innovative use of sponsors products.

The competition is also seen as the precursor to another annual event in the pizza calendar – National Pizza Week, which will be celebrated between 20th-26th November 2023.

About National Pizza Week:

National Pizza Week takes place from 20-26 November 2023. The annual event showcases the breadth, quality and innovation found within the UK's pizza sector. Find out more

<https://www.itspizzaweek.com/>

National Pizza Week is sponsored by The Pizza, Pasta & Italian Food Association member Stateside Foods: www.stateside-foods.co.uk/

Connect with us:

Website: <https://www.itspizzaweek.com/>

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About The Pizza, Pasta and Italian Food Association:

The Pizza, Pasta & Italian Food Association (PAPA) is the only formal trade body in the UK representing the broad pizza and Italian food and drink industry. Simply put, they help their members to do better business, whether it be in challenging legislation on their behalf, helping them to understand the impact of changing markets and legislation on their business or in bringing their members together to network and learn. They do all they can to boost the profile of and the opportunity in the pizza, pasta and Italian food market, giving their members – whether they are manufacturers, suppliers or restaurateurs – the best platform from which they can trade.