

Chantel judges and mentors chef's competition

Renowned and multi-awarded Chantel Dartnall, Patron-Chef of the Restaurant Mosaic at the Orient Boutique Hotel in Elandsfontein, was one of three African jury members from the Middle East and Africa in the local line-up of the Saint Pellegrino Young Chef 2016.

In addition, she mentored Chef Grégoire Berger, the regional winner of the competition, for the global final in Milan that is taking place this week.



Moroccan Chef Meryem Cherkaoui, Grégoire Berger, the regional winner of the Saint Pellegrino Young Chef competition for Africa and the Middle East, Chef Chantel Dartnall and Chef Chris Lester of the prestigious OIM Restaurant Group.

The annual Saint Pellegrino Young Chef global culinary talent-search aims at finding the best young chef among thousands of hopeful candidates from more than 90 countries around the globe.

Five South Africans and three young chefs from Dubai were in the running for this coveted title during the regional finals held in Cape Town earlier this year, where Grégoire walked away with the laurels

with a composition of Patagonian toothfish with cured goose, Ponzu, Jerusalem artichoke, black truffle, and tarragon.

Chef Chantel, who was twice voted Saint Pellegrino Chef of the Year at the Eat Out Awards in 2009 and 2014, accompanied Grégoire, a French-trained chef who currently works in Dubai, to Milan where he is taking on the winners from 19 other regions around the world.

As mentor Chantel's aim was to improve the young chef's perspective and context — to assist in the evaluation of the composition elements and components of the dish and offer recommendations and suggestions on how the dish could be enhanced, focusing on concepts such as what story the chef wants his dish to convey to guests.

Chantel is sharing her expertise with the talented young chef, advising him on how to enhance his signature dish and helping him prepare for the final competition.

Chantel says: "As a young chef you have to invest in your own future, it is important to gain as much practical experience in a variety of kitchen environments where you can develop your skills and palate. It takes years of experience before you will become confident enough to start developing a unique personal style that will represent your personality on the plate." Even though African and the Middle East are relative newcomers to the world of fine dining, Chantel believes that they continuously deliver young chefs with exceptional talent, who can gain valuable exposure through this competition and lay a strong foundation on which they can build their reputations.

Today (Thursday) all the Young Chef finalists gather in Milan for the final phase, which consists of a two-day intense cooking competition in front of the international panel of judges, which includes David Higgs of Marble in Johannesburg.