

Media release 13 SEPTEMBER 2018

Viking Line becomes the new main co-operative partner for the Finnish Chef of the Year and Waiter of the Year competitions

Viking Line has begun a three-year collaborative project with the ELO Foundation for the Promotion of Finnish Food Culture, which organises the annual Chef of the Year and Waiter of the Year competitions. As the main partner for the competition, Viking Line seeks to highlight the important work and high level of expertise of kitchen and service personnel. Altogether 220 chefs and more than 300 waiters and waitresses work aboard Viking Line's vessels. Culinary and restaurant experiences are a vital part of the overall cruise experience.

The Chef of the Year and Waiter of the Year competitions are Finnish championships for professionals, with the aim of bringing appreciation and visibility to these fields. The competitions also benefit the participants by serving as a stepping stone to further their own careers. The competitions will be a visible element on Viking Line ships in the form of, for example, a menu designed by the Chef of the Year and drink recommendations by the Waiter of the Year, as well as visits by the reigning champions on selected cruises. The ships' own personnel are also encouraged to participate in the Finnish competitions.

“We are proud of the culinary and dining experiences we provide. We want to nurture and further develop the professional expertise with which our chefs and waiters create experiences for our passengers every day of the year. The Chef of the Year and Waiter of the Year competitions are a great way to bring attention to these individual professions,” states Janne Lindholm, Restaurant Manager at Viking Line.

“We are ecstatic about this new partnership with Viking Line, which will create a diverse framework for the promotion of food tourism. Together we will further strengthen the reputation of the Finnish food and drink culture and bolster interest in our restaurant and catering industry on both the national and international level,” says Bettina Lindfors, Executive Director of the ELO Foundation.

Viking Line is a significant employer within the restaurant and catering industry. Altogether 220 chefs and 320 waiters and waitresses are permanently employed by Viking Line, and this figure doubles aboard our ships during the peak seasons. Our aim is to invest in the development of expertise, since inspired and motivated professionals play a vital role in creating satisfying cruise experiences and increasing the interest in food tourism.

Our employees are offered, among other things, opportunities to learn from top chefs and to participate in industry competitions in Finland and abroad. Viking Line also works closely with Finnish culinary institutes.

Organised since 1995, the Chef of the Year competition is a highly esteemed event within the industry. The Waiter of the Year competition has been held since 2013. The reigning Chef of the Year 2018 is Kalle Tanner and the Waiter of the Year 2018 is Noora Sipilä. The winners for 2019 will be announced as part of the Spring Fair at Messukeskus Helsinki, Expo and Convention Centre on 4-7 April 2019.

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Kalle Tanner, Chef of the Year 2018 and Noora Sipilä, Waiter of the Year 2018