



MATCHMAKERS CHAMPIONS CROWNED



The Gosset Matchmaker champions for 2026: Chef Tadhg McCabe from Pavillon and Sommelier Jack Stalker of Restaurant St Barts.

Announced at the final in London on Monday 21 September, after a tense morning of cookery competition at CORD by Le Cordon Bleu in London, the winning team triumph with their two dishes and a winning combination of skill, knowledge, presentation and teamwork embodying the roots of the Gosset Matchmakers competition.

Chosen for what judges described as a daring duck dish that had layered flavours, technical ambition and created a balanced pairing with Champagne Gosset's Blanc de Blancs. They won with this dish alongside an invention dish created on the day that featured mystery ingredient Loch Duart salmon paired with the Zero Dosage by Champagne Gosset.

The judges noted the winners were a natural team with confident service and technical prowess. Alongside their food and champagne pairings, the judges praised Tadhg and Jack for also being one of the strongest chef-sommelier pairings of the day.



Their leading performance ultimately scooped the title in a field of strong competition. Notable runners up were Chef Ben Smith and sommelier Emilio Luiso, from The Ritz – London, whose preparation, knowledge and impeccable service was evident throughout the day.

After judging the competition, Cleverson Cordeiro, Chef Proprietor at Frog by Adam Handling, commented: “The competition standard overall was really, really good. I wasn’t expected for it to be that high. The chefs were incredible; they were all so professional. I watched them from the moment they arrived in the kitchen, every single one, and they are all so professional.”



Judges left to right:
Cleverson Cordeiro, Chef Proprietor, Frog by Adam Handling; **Jordan Sutton**, Head Sommelier, L’Enclume;
Kathryn Cumming, Brand Manager, Champagne Gosset; **Joe Lutario**, Deputy Editor, Restaurant Online

Also judging this year, Jordan Sutton, Head Sommelier at L'Enclume was keen to add: "Overall, the competition was very strong this year. I think there was a clear sense of people shooting for that perfect pairing, and really not doing so in a safe or an unoriginal way." He said: "What tipped it over the edge for us in deliberation was that the winning duck dish was so ambitious - using the Champagne Blanc of Blancs to really cut through that sublime fat of the duck, but also using that fruitiness, that ultra fruit, to really let those peaches pop. Their mystery dish as well was a great example of grace under pressure, on-the-fly, coming up with something that really highlights the best qualities of the Zero Dosage. Amazing!"

To have this competition every year and get everyone together is unbelievable. It is something that we need to continue, to help all the young generation coming through and for them to get involved - that's what hospitality needs right now."

Their comments were endorsed by Chair Judge and Senior Brand Manager for Champagne Gosset Kathryn Cumming: "It was both a pleasure and a privilege to judge the 2026 Gosset Matchmakers competition. The calibre of entrants was excellent, and the professionalism, technical skill and confidence demonstrated by the chef and sommelier teams were truly inspiring. As the competition marks its 11th year, it is wonderful to see it continuing to grow in popularity and resonate so strongly across the hospitality industry."

Cummings continued: "Championing emerging talent is deeply embedded in both Hallgarten Wines' and Maison Gosset's DNA, and we are delighted to continue to support the next generation of hospitality professionals while debuting the new Gosset Zero Dosage cuvée as this year's mystery wine."

The full Champagne Gosset portfolio is distributed in the UK exclusively by Hallgarten & Novum Wines.

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For more information and images

Contact: Angeline Bayly angeline@bespokedrinksmedia.com or 07780 708454

Gosset Matchmakers is a food and wine pairing competition for rising chefs and sommeliers, each with under five years professional experience.

The competition, now in its eleventh year, represents the pinnacle of Champagne and gastronomy pairing.

Each year the competition attracts the very best from around the UK with the final taking place at the prestigious kitchens at Cord by Le Cordon Bleu in September. Organised in partnership with Hallgarten & Novum Wines and Sommelier Edit, winners are invited to visit the historic cellars of Champagne Gosset for a VIP tour, tasting and stay.

Chef Tadhg McCabe, from Pavillon by Yannick Alleno, and sommelier Jack Stalker, from Restaurant St Barts, London

Tadhg and Jack were chosen as finalists for their dish 'Duck, Green Szeuchan Peppercorn and Peach', introducing that: "The dish is a bold play of power and precision, pitting dry-aged duck breast and a decadent, iron-heavy offal boudin right against Gosset's standout acidity."