

CHRISTMAS ARRIVES EARLY AS CHEF GENNARO GETS WELSH CALL UP

Immediate: December 18, 2007

Talented young chef Gennaro Adaggio (pictured) has received a dream early Christmas present by being selected to represent Wales in a major international culinary competition.



The 24-year-old sous chef, who lives in Welshpool and works in the family restaurant, La Dolce Vita in Shrewsbury, will line up with the Welsh National Culinary Team in the Battle for the Dragon contest against double Olympic champions Sweden and Italy, who are ranked 10th in the world and recently won the Kremlin Cup in Moscow.

The competition, part of the Welsh International Culinary Championships at Coleg Llandrillo Cymru, Rhos on Sea from February 12-14, will be a forerunner to the Culinary Olympics in Germany next October.

“I couldn’t believe it at first when team manager Graham Tinsley called to say I had been selected,” said Gennaro, who is 14 days too old to qualify for the junior Welsh at the Culinary Olympics.

“I wasn’t very hopeful of making the team because other chefs attending the selection meeting had up to 30 years’ experience, so I thought it would be a good learning curve for me.

“I have entered competitions before but nothing on this scale and to be competing at international level is fantastic. I am very proud and so is my family.”

Gennaro caught the eye of team manager Graham Tinsley at last year’s Welsh International Culinary Championships when he won awards for his game main course and the best senior chef. He was also runner up in this year’s Welsh Food Scholarship.

“Gennaro brings new blood into the team, which is what we have been looking for,” said Tinsley, co-owner of the Castle Hotel, Conwy and Nant Hall, Prestatyn. “There is fresh, vibrant feel to his food and he has shown a strong desire to get into the team.

“I have always said that any chef can get into the team provided they have the skills, dedication and are committed to practicing.”

Wales will be defending the Battle for the Dragon trophy, which they won last year against Canada and Cyprus, but they could not have selected much tougher opponents than Sweden.

The Welsh team, which is packed with experience, will be captained by Wayne Roberts, head chef at The Imperial Hotel, Llandudno with Nick Davies, of Cambrian Training Company, vice captain. The other team members are: David Kelman, of Lower Slaughter Manor, Stow-on-the-Wold, Mike Bates, executive chef at St David’s Hotel and Spa, Cardiff and Toby Beevers, of Inventive Leisure, Ashton-under-Lyne.

“We have gone for experience because we are up against the Culinary Olympic champions in Sweden and need to turn up the pressure if we are going to get anywhere near them,” said Tinsley.

The Welsh team will be holding dress rehearsal for the Battle for the Dragon contest by preparing the same three-course menu at a dinner to be held at The Fourcroft Hotel, Tenby on January 25.

The Battle for the Dragon contest, which is sponsored by the Welsh Assembly Government and Hybu Cig Cymru, is endorsed by the World Association of Chefs' Societies (WACS) and run over three days.

The Welsh International Culinary Championships, which are organised by the Welsh Culinary Association (WCA), are sponsored by the Welsh Assembly Government to promote the food and drink industry brand 'True Taste'. The championships at Coleg Llandrillo Cymru are open to the public free of charge from 9am to 4pm each day.

Designed to celebrate the nation's culinary skills and food, the championships are packed with exciting competitions, including the National Chef of Wales Final on February 12.

For more information about the Battle for the Dragon contest and the Welsh International Culinary Championships visit the Welsh Culinary Association's website at www.welshculinaryassociation.com

The Welsh team is sponsored by the Welsh Assembly Government, C&C Catering Equipment Ltd, Brakes, Unilever Foodsolutions UK, Catering Engineers (N.W.) Ltd, Hybu Cig Cymru/ Meat Promotion Wales, Gourmet Classic Ltd, Villeroy and Boch, Friedr. Dick, Germany, Snowdonia Cheese Company and Metcalfe Catering.

Ends

For more information please contact Graham Tinsley, Welsh National Culinary Team manager, on 07765 404950 or Duncan Foulkes, public relations consultant, on 01686 650818.