

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **MARK TILLING CROWNED The UK Chocolate Master!**

You could cut the tension in the air with a knife! On the 18<sup>th</sup> September at the Restaurant Show at Olympia, London four expert chocolatiers battled it out to become the UK Chocolate Master and go onto to represent the UK in the World Final in 2008.

Brian Turner and James Martin watched over as the competitors put their skills to work.

The theme of the competition was 'National Myths and Legends' and the competitors had to create showpieces, dipped and moulded pralines, pastries and desserts around this theme.

The four competitors were:

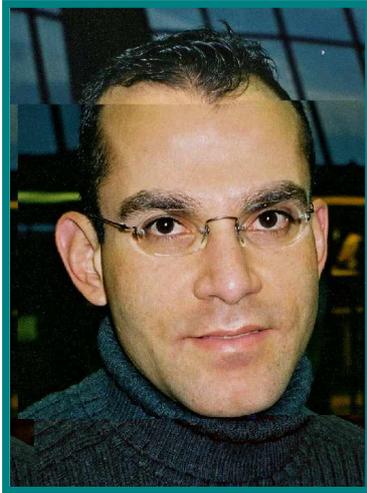
*John Costello*



John works as a lecturer in chocolate production at Slattery's. He has worked in the chocolate industry for over 15 years both in the UK and abroad.

John has entered various competitions over the years including winning Live Torte two years in a row and coming second place in Student Baker of the Year and UK Bakers of the Year competitions.

*Javier Mercado*



Javier has gained most of his experience in the USA but moved over to the UK in 2003 and perused a career in teaching at Westminster Kingsway College.

You may recognise Javier from last years World Chocolate Masters where he won the 'Most Creative' Award.

*Mark Tilling*



Mark works as the head pastry chef at Lainston House Hotel, in Winchester. He has worked at various hotels as well as managing a delicatessen / patisserie and working as a chocolatier making hand-made chocolates and wedding cakes.

Mark has gained various qualifications and achievements through out his career including chocolate – gold award, best in class and best in show at the Bournemouth Hotel and Catering Exhibition.

*Dirk Schonkeren*



Dirk had his own successful business in Ireland called Helena Chocolates which produces hand made chocolates which are sold to restaurants, gift shops and hotels.

Dirk has worked in several hotels in Belgium and Ireland and this year is the President of Toastmasters in Westport, Ireland.

The panel of judges was made up of a number of extremely talented people including the last UK Chocolate Master, Tony Hoyle.

Gary Hunter – Head of Culinary Arts, Westminster Kingsway College  
Angus Thirwell – Founder, Hotel Chocolat  
Bertrand Espouy – Owner, Plaisir du Chocolat Ltd  
Keith Hurdman – Executive Pastry Chef, Rocco Forte Hotel  
Thierry Dumouchel – Owner, Dumouchel Patisserie, Garforth.  
Beverly Dunkley – Head of Callebaut UK Academy  
Hilary Armstrong - Restaurant Magazine

The first thing the competitors had to produce was their showpieces. This proved a very nail biting time for the growing crowd of spectators. Everyone held their breath as John Costello put the top section onto his sculpture.

After this nerve racking start to the competition the four hopefuls went on to create their pralines, pastries and desserts.

The judges had their work cut out by trying to select the out and out winner.



Tensions mounted as Brian Turner announced the overall 2006 UK Chocolate Master as **Mark Tilling**.



Mark with his winning centre piece.

Mark demonstrated delicate chocolate spraying and good use of colour plus moulding from his own prepared bespoke moulds.



Simon Harris, the UK Gourmet Business Manager of Callebaut said 'The tension and excitement in the air was remarkable! All four showpieces were amazing and clearly demonstrated their skills and use of chocolate.' Mark's technical ability shone through and we are delighted he will be representing the UK in the finals in 2008"

Judges comments; "Mark's techniques that he demonstrated were finely executed, it was a pleasure to watch him skillfully work with chocolate"

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