

## Top chefs mentor students from Bournemouth and Poole College and Basingstoke College of Technology at Neo Bournemouth



Press release provided by [The Chefs' Forum](#)

When the original host venue had to be changed at two weeks' notice due to circumstances beyond their control, [The Chefs' Forum](#) team had to act quickly to ensure that the students from two catering colleges received the promised day of employer-led work experience that had been in the diary for the last six months.

The new venue for [The Chefs' Forum](#)'s spring event was [Neo Bournemouth](#), owned by the [Oceana Hotels Group](#). The Bournemouth hotel group has eight venues, [The Cumberland](#), [The Suncliff](#), [The Ocean Beach Hotel and Spa](#), [The Best Western Hotel Royale](#), [Mayfair](#), [Hermitage](#), [Trouville](#) and [Neo](#). As a prolific local employer with just under 600 rooms across the group, it was great for the group to host this important industry event, serving to bridge the gap between education and industry.

Operations Director Pat Green and Events Manager Helen Bull valiantly came to the rescue and offered the beautifully-designed circular bar as the new host venue for [The Chefs' Forum](#) and kindly offered the use of their kitchen for the students work with TV Chef Mark Lloyd, Matt Budden (Executive Chef, [Hilton Bournemouth](#)) and Christophe Baffos, Director of Learning for Service Industries at Bournemouth & Poole College.

Helen said:

"We are very proud and excited to be hosting [The Chefs' Forum](#) and welcoming the students to Neo. We have already taken several apprentices from Bournemouth and Poole College and it was great to meet teaching staff and students from [Basingstoke College of Technology](#)."

The event was a resounding success with Christophe Baffos commenting:

"Today has been excellent for the students. There was nothing prepared, so we had to make everything from scratch. The combined experience and leadership of Mark, Matt and myself in the kitchen made for a calm and well-organised learning environment from the moment the students arrived and they have enjoyed a great learning experience."

[Chefs' Forum](#) Founder Catherine Farinha added:

"It just goes to show what can be achieved in the face of adversity; I am truly humbled to be working with amazing hospitality industry professionals. A last-minute venue change meant that everyone had to work together to rescue an industry event that had been planned for months. The students, guest chefs and teaching staff were all extremely instrumental in contributing to and pulling-off an excellent event today. It is this hard work and team approach that shows our industry is in great hands, both today and tomorrow with the next generation."

The students had a very inspirational day, creating lamb Wellington and a canapé menu in the kitchen with Mark, Matt and Christophe. They were also invited to take part in both a breadmaking competition led by Demo Chef, Ron Hedicker of [Falcon Foodservice](#) and a cocktail masterclass led by Bar Manager Przemek Seczkowski and Assistant Alexandru Base.



Przemek created two [Neo](#) signature cocktails; A twist on the Negroni and a Bakewell Martini.

The chefs enjoyed tasting the cocktails made by the talented pair and the students then made very berry mocktails with crushed ice being used as a cradle for fruit!

Piddle Brewery installed their legendary 'event pop-up bar' at the event and served the chefs with brand new and unique Dorset pilsner, Breaking Wave and best-selling Amber Session ale. Both drinks were expertly-selected by Piddle Beer Sommelier and Director, Jon Lavers to compliment the beautiful Walter Rose spring lamb on offer.

Mike Logut of [Foie Royale](#) invited Chef Ollie from [RaviOllie](#) to demonstrate how the ethical alternative to Foie Gras can be used to make fresh ravioli. The chefs were then invited to come up to the demo stage and taste the delicious [Foie Royale](#) ravioli with freshly grated parmesan or olive oil to their taste – the general consensus was that this was delicious and many chefs were inspired.



Other highlights of the day included a fascinating lamb butchery demonstration in which Jack Cook of [Walter Rose](#) broke-down a whole Spring lamb and showcased various cuts.

Mark Lloyd then used the fillets to create a magnificent lamb wellington with nori, sea kale, asparagus, rosemary and redcurrant sauce. The students assisted on stage as Commis Chefs and expertly rolled the perfect Wellington to be cooked in the Falcon counter top convection oven.

The rest of Jack's expertly-butchered lamb cuts were transformed into a delicious BBQ showcasing both the Synergy Grill and the Locher Electric Steak Grill Rustica from Valentine Equipment.

[The Chefs' Forum](#) is proud to hold four events a year in Dorset and forty on a national level.

Any chefs or suppliers wishing to get involved should contact [catherine@redcherry.uk.com](mailto:catherine@redcherry.uk.com)

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