

press release

“Spain's Iberian Ham, Ambassador of Europe in the World” celebrates the II edition of the International Iberian Ham Slicing Competition in Paris

- The Iberian Pig Interprofessional (ASICI), with the support of the EU and through the campaign "Iberian Ham from Spain, Ambassadors of Europe in the World", is promoting the II edition of the International Iberian Ham Slicing Competition for students in the hospitality industry
- The grand finale at Le Méridien Etoile de Paris brought together 10 of the best students of the professional workshops held last year around Iberian ham and the art of slicing at the most important hotel schools of Barcelona, Paris and Berlin, and crowned the Spaniard Maic Rovira as the “Best Iberian Ham Slicer”
- This activity, which is part of the European Iberian ham promotional campaign, has as its main purpose the publicizing and promoting the work of professional cutting and the transmission of the characteristics of Iberian ham

Madrid, March 2023.- Iberian ham already has its new "Best Iberian Ham Slicer" . Catalan Maic Rovira was crowned the grand winner of the II edition of the International Final of Iberian Ham Slicing 2023 for Hospitality School Students, held at Le Méridien Etoile de Paris. The event, **promoted by the Iberian Pig Interprofessional (ASICI) with the support of the EU and through the "Ibérico Hams from Spain, Ambassadors of Europe in the World" campaign**, seeks to promote the figure of the professional cutter in an international context as a means to spread the culture of Iberian ham.

"I am very happy and proud to be here and to represent my school with a product like ours, the Iberian ham," said **Maic Rovira** after receiving the award, who also wanted to recognize the qualities of the product: "We are lucky to have such an emblematic product in our gastronomy. We are talking about a unique product of excellent quality, whose versatility gives us endless possibilities, making it very easy to work with," he says.

Maic Rovira from the Hoffman School in Barcelona beat his schoolmates Albert Llibre and David Ruhnkem from the OSZ - Hospitality School Brillat-Savarin School in Berlin, who were awarded second and third prizes respectively. For their selection, the technical direction of the competition, led by Jesús Pérez Aguilar, Communications Director of ASICI, carried out some demanding tests in terms of the cut, the aesthetics of the cutter, the presentation, the weight or the creativity of the dishes that the participants were confronted, imposed restraint and determination for more than two hours.

The competition consisted of a practical test divided into 2 phases, a first focused on cutting and presenting 10 plates and weighing 3 100 gram plates; and a second judging the cutting and presentation of a creative complimentary dish. In the first phase, to choose the winner, aspects such as the contour of the piece, the style, the cleanliness, the straightness, the size of the slice or the presentation of the dish were evaluated. The free plate was evaluated for aspects such as the creativity, placement or design of the dish, as well as its defense, explanation and/or presentation by its author.

The expert jury consisted of Jesús Pérez, the chef with a Michelin star and ambassador of Iberian ham in France, Amandine Chaignot, the French Sylvain master tailor Focaud and the

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director of the Hotel School Jean Drouant in Paris, Ludovic Robar. According to Pérez, “The commitment to training is one of the strategic pillars of the international advertising campaigns that the Interprofessional has carried out in recent years. The goal is nothing other than to value the figure of the cutter as one of the best prescribers of our product, since in many cases they are the ones who transmit the different values of Iberico to the final consumer. he agrees.

Three hospitality schools, ten participants and a single winner

Brillat Hospitality Schools were held. Savarin in Berlin, Lycee Jean Drouant in Paris and the Hofmann School in Barcelona last year. Of the students who took part in these training cycles, only the best of them were selected to take part in the grand finale in Paris. According to Ludovic Robar, “this type of competition is a great idea to generate more interest in Iberian ham, puts the protagonist of the ham slicer in the spotlight and contributes tangibly to the dissemination of product knowledge and its values”.

Amandine Chaignot wanted to assess the need for such an action in order to get to know the product in depth, especially for the youngest: “It is a great opportunity for them to put themselves to the test and learn to work with a product as unique as the Iberian ham and that has so much potential in our gastronomy. As a chef, I enjoy it very much in my kitchen. I love all the possibilities it offers.”

The importance of education in an industry that never stops growing

These training activities, in addition to publicizing and promoting the work of professional cutting and transmitting the distinctive and unique qualities of Iberian ham, aim to identify the best cuttings in Europe and the world in order to spread their culture everywhere.

For the Iberian sector, this type of training is essential, since it contributes significantly to its growth and international development, thus becoming an essential means of disseminating and promoting this unique gourmet product in Europe and the world. Also worth mentioning is the figure of the master tailor, which is very present in all the conferences, as it helps to convey the importance of one of the professions that has grown the most in recent years. The character of the cutter, who has become one of the best prescribers, contributes to spreading the universe of Iberian ham to all parts of the world.

About ASCI

The Iberian Pig Interprofessional Association (ASICI) is a non-profit Agrifood Interprofessional Organization (OIA) in which more than 95% of the organizations in the production sector (animal breeders) and more than 95% of the transformation sector (industry) are represented Iberian pig. It was founded in 1992 and recognized in 1999 by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food as the intersectoral agri-food organization for the Iberian pig sector.