

Adejoké Bakare announced as Female Chef of the Year at 2024 SquareMeal & AYALA Awards

Submitted by: Square Meal

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SquareMeal and Champagne AYALA are proud to announce Adejoké Bakare as the winner of this year's Female Chef of the Year award.

High res images (<https://bit.ly/3zZIEiQ>)

This major industry award was first launched in 2018 to celebrate the huge contribution female chefs are making to the UK restaurant industry. The Female Chef of the Year award aims to shine a spotlight on those women, whose achievements are proving an inspiration to everyone involved in this vibrant sector - making a positive name for themselves within the industry, while acting as positive role models for young women considering a future career in this arena.

This year's highlighted chefs also included Harriet Mansell from Lilac in Lyme Regis, Adriana Cavita of eponymous restaurant Cavita in Marylebone, April Lily Partridge – Roux Scholar and sous chef at three Michelin-starred The Ledbury in Notting Hill, and Stosie Madi - chef patron of The Parkers Arms in Newton-in-Bowland.

Adejoké Bakare's incredible story started at home, hosting dinner parties for friends. She launched her restaurant Chishuru in 2020 as a pop-up after winning a cooking competition, and quickly found a foothold as one of the most exciting, distinctive chefs in the city. Four years later, she became the first black woman to win a Michelin star in the UK – an achievement that has launched her to stardom and gathered significant coverage all over the world. Now permanently housed in Fitzrovia, Chishuru continues to be one of London's most thrilling restaurants, driven by Joké's unique artistry and perspective on West African cuisine.

She becomes the latest in an impressive lineage of past winners, which includes the likes of Roberta Hall-McCarron in 2023, Lisa Goodwin-Allen in 2022, Sally Abé in 2021, Skye Gyngell in 2019, and Angela Hartnett in 2018. Both Abé and Hall-McCarron were part of the six-person judging panel that selected Bakare for the award, which also included judges from SquareMeal and Champagne AYALA.

Commenting on Bakare's win, SquareMeal Managing Editor Ellie Donnell explains: "When deciding who should take the crown of our Female Chef of the Year Award 2024, Adejoké's achievements this year shone especially bright. Not only has she etched her name in the history books by becoming the UK's first black, female Michelin-starred chef, but her reimagining of West African food for a London audience renders her a true pioneer in the cheffing world. Chishuru's stratospheric rise is evidence enough of Joké's peerless cooking and it is a pleasure to be able to celebrate her talent and impact in our annual awards."

Laurence Alamanos from Champagne AYALA adds: "At Champagne AYALA, excellence is at the heart of everything we do, and as such, we are proud to be supporting the SquareMeal AYALA Female Chef of the Year Award, celebrating the remarkable talent and contributions these chefs make, both in their restaurant kitchens and in their communities."

It is an honour to present this year's award to the outstanding Adejoké Bakare, who is not only a rising star in the industry but also a true inspiration to a future generation of chefs and innovators."

High res images (<https://https://bit.ly/3zZIEiQ>)

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