

Press release
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Accor rewards talented young people at the final award ceremony of the Europe, Middle East and Africa Professional Challenge



For the eighth year running, the EMEA Professional Challenge (Europe, Middle East, Africa) paid tribute to the professional skills of young employees from all over the world in the final award ceremony held this year on 14 and 15 December 2010 in Paris.

Organized every year by the Accor Operations Human Resources team, the Professional Challenge represents real recognition of the potential of young hotel industry professionals. Aimed at young employees working in Sofitel, Pullman, Novotel, Suite Novotel, Mgallery, Mercure, Ibis and Lenotre hotels, the challenge is structured around four key professions in the hotel and catering business – reception, cooking, table service and, for the first time this year, bartending.

For this year's event, 16 countries selected young people with high potential, in some cases after holding national challenges, to represent their country in their specialty in the EMEA grand final in Paris.

Almost 1000 employees took part in the regional and national heats this year, in Germany, Austria, Belgium, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Hungary, Italy, Morocco, Poland, Qatar and Switzerland.

The 53 finalists are all either on apprenticeship contract or employed in one of the Group hotels, and depending on their age competed in either the 17/21 or the 22/26 category.

For the Europe, Middle East and Africa final, the candidates defended their specialty and skills in real-life runoffs on 14 December, at the Saint Quentin en Yvelines hotel school for the cooking challenge, and the Mercure Paris Suffren Tour Eiffel for the reception, table service and bartending challenges.

Candidates were expected to outdo themselves in a real-life challenge before a jury composed of human resources managers, hotel managers and professional experts in the different specialties.

The award ceremony took place on 15 December at the Odyssey head office in Paris, attended by Yann Caillère, Chief Executive Accor Europe, Middle East and Africa – Chief Executive Sofitel Worldwide – in charge of Hotel Design and Construction Worldwide and Evelyne Chabrot, Accor Human Resources and Operations Director, who organized the event.

A wonderful opportunity too to spend two days with colleagues from three continents, discover life in Paris and build up a store of unforgettable memories thanks to this unique experience.

In short, the event allows the young candidates to win the recognition of professionals while at the same time enabling Accor to nurture a "stable" of future high-fliers.

2010 challenge winners:

Cooking:

- **Matthieu Marti**, from France, Pullman Paris Bercy, 17/21 category.

- **Rennel Basco** from the UK, Novotel London West, 22/26 category.

The candidates were asked to present the jury with a dish prepared from a set basket of ingredients known in advance and personalized with spices from their country, and a starter to be invented from ingredients presented to them on the day of the challenge.

Reception :

- **Stefanie Böhmer**, from Germany, Mercure Berlin Tempelhof Airport, 17/21 category.

- **Estefania Ortega**, from Spain, Novotel Barcelona City, 22/26 category.

The candidates were asked to welcome guests, present and sell the hotel's services to them and respond to requests for concierge services.

Table service:

- **Barbora Levocka**, from Switzerland, Novotel Zurich Airport Messe, 17/21 category.

- **Anais Wicht**, from the UK, Mercure Parkside Milton Keynes, 22/26 category.

The candidates were asked to set a table from a selection of tableware and decorative elements, welcome guests and present, suggest and sell products from their hotel's menu.

Bartending:

- **Julia Hornung**, from Germany, Mercure Schweinfurt, 17/21 category.

- **Federico Tomasselli**, from Italy, Sofitel Roma Villa Borghese, 22/26 category.

Candidates were asked to mix cocktails drawn by lot from a selection proposed by the International Bartender Association, and to demonstrate their ingenuity by making a cocktail of their own invention.

Accor, the world's leading hotel operator and market leader in Europe, is present in 90 countries with 4,100 hotels and close to 500,000 rooms.

Accor's broad portfolio of hotel brands - **Sofitel, Pullman, MGallery, Novotel, Suite Novotel, Mercure, Adagio, ibis, all seasons, Etap Hotel, Formule 1, hotelF1 and Motel 6**, and its related activities, **Thalassa sea & spa** and **Lenôtre** - provide an extensive offer from luxury to budget. With **145,000 employees** worldwide, the Group offers to its **clients and partners** nearly 45 years of know-how and expertise.

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