



# The Akaroa Cooking School

## LOCAL JEWELLER WINS AKAROA'S FIRST MASTERCOOK FINAL



Esther's winning lamb dish

Esther Blythe, Manager of Akaroa jeweler shop Fire & Ice, took out this year's Akaroa MasterCook held at the Akaroa Cooking School. Her three course meal started with a Trio of Smoked Salmon including a sushi roll in tempura batter, a potato rosti with horseradish crème fraiche topped with smoked salmon and a pea and smoked salmon soup. Esther's main course was marinated rack of lamb with a roasted pumpkin, sundried tomato and chickpea stack, slivered beetroot and salsa verde and her meal concluded with her own creation called 'The Devils Passion' which was a glass layered with a berry jelly, topped with a white chocolate and cointreau mousse and finished off with macerated berries.



Esther Blythe

In a dramatic last minute twist to the final, Jules Faulls the local digger driver got stranded in Fiji unable to fly back to NZ. Thankfully Jane Cook, runner up in semi final one agreed to step in and compete in the final. Owner of local B&B L'abri in Takamatua, Jane Cook had less than three days to devise and practice her three course meal for the final. "This was an incredible feat and the standard of her food was unbelievable especially considering how much time she had to prepare" said Lou Bentley of the Akaroa Cooking School.

"It was by far the toughest judging decision we had to make over the past seven weeks" stated resident judge Steve Bradley, taking over

half an hour for the judges to make their final decision. “Esther’s originality, passion and attention to detail is what clinched it for her in the end, and we feel that she has a real future in food if that is what she decides to pursue” Lou says.



**Brett McGregor judging the final**

Guest judge – NZ MasterChef, Brett McGregor was blown away by the incredible quality and presentation of the food produced and was asking the competitors for some of their recipes. “I can’t believe in a town of only just over 500 people you have had 80 people in here each week supporting the competition” stated Brett. “It’s amazing to see the huge surge of interest in food across all of New Zealand recently and that’s filtering down to our younger generation which is just fantastic” Brett said.

“The competition has been a huge success and we already have five competitors booked in for next year’s competition” stated Ant Bentley. The locals are already talking about who could be crowned next years MasterCook.

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