

Chef Jack receives special award

Chef Jack Coghill is highly commended at Scottish Excellence awards.

On his very first time of entering, Jack Coghill, the 24-year-old Head Chef of Jack 'O'Bryan's Bar and Kitchen in Dunfermline, has received a Highly Commended Award in the Scottish Excellence Young Chef of the Year Award announced at a glittering ceremony at Edinburgh's Sheraton Grand Hotel & Spa.

Although Jack just missed out on the main award, his wide skills set – including being a Head Chef at just twenty four – impressed the judges so much that he was given the special Highly Commended Award.

Jack, who covers every discipline within the kitchen of his family run restaurant, along with being an extremely skilled pastry chef and chocolatier, is also delighted to reveal that he has been approached by Sainsbury's Magazine, and, in an exciting collaboration, is to have two of his desserts – a burnt basque cheesecake, and a delicious BBQ Cinnamon Pineapple – featured in the June edition of the magazine.

[The Scottish Excellence Awards](#), which are widely considered to be Scotland's premier hospitality awards, include a wide range of categories, from Chef of the Year and Restaurant of the Year, to Restaurant Newcomer, Best Sustainable Business, Pub Excellence, and Employer of the Year.

Jack said: "I am delighted to receive this Highly Commended

Award for Young Chef of the Year, all the more so since I have learned that Highly Commended is a category that is not always given out.

“The judges can choose a winner from the shortlist, with the other chefs on it receiving nothing all at, so it’s really nice to find out that they wanted to acknowledge just where I have got to in my career at this age. These awards really mean something because they are judged by other chefs, together with a wide range of industry professionals. They are a respected accreditation, and will really help me build my profile moving forward.

“I was up against two very talented young chefs. It’s been really tough for young chefs since the pandemic. We’ve all had to work extra hard to catch up on training, mentoring, and all sorts of opportunities.”

Jack was trained and mentored by renowned pastry chef Mark Tilling, the winner of “Bake Off Crème de la Crème and reflected on his good week.

He said: “Sainsbury’s Magazine had read a lot of the recent press on myself as Scotland’s answer to Willy Wonka, and also how I work with my dad, and that he was my original mentor and teacher. They have a Father’s Day feature coming up in June and wanted to run some recipes from me that are meaningful to Dad and myself. It was a perfect fit for me, enabling me to talk about how I was brought up in Spain and Portugal where our family had other restaurants and hotels. The food of the Iberian region is a shared passion between Dad and myself. The two desserts I have chosen reflect that, as well as being summery and colourful. Not forgetting it was dad that originally encouraged me to study pastry, which is a challenging discipline, as he wanted me to really push myself. Let’s just say, I am so glad he did.

“The Magazine will be coming out in June. It’s going to be my

biggest piece of national profile yet! And who knows what other future collaborations with Sainsbury's this could lead to, not to mention the other leading supermarkets."

Jack is full of other future plans too, which include the family launching a second restaurant. With dad Bryan stepping back to write a family cookbook, Jack will be leading everything.

He said: "Yes, we also have expansion plans which should ensure 2024 is very busy.

"It's straight back into the kitchen though – we had the night off to attend the awards – my mum, dad, sister, fiancée Sarah were all there, including Sous Chef, Tomasz, our most loyal and long serving staff member who has been with us for eight years. We had a brilliant night celebrating and networking with the other hospitality professionals who were there."

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