

Press Release  
(For immediate release)  
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## Golden medal haul for Invercargill chef

A trio of delectable delights earned Ascot Park Hotel pastry chef Bernadette Kean an impressive haul of gold medals at the prestigious Southern Lights Salon Culinaire staged in Cromwell last weekend.

Ms Kean, 30, won gold for her masterpieces in the Special Occasion Cake, Decorated Gateau and Cold Dessert classes.

She's no stranger to culinary success having won the junior chef title at the event twice previously.

Relishing the challenge of competing against her peers, Ms Kean will enter the national culinary fare in Auckland next month with the aim of defending the gateau section she won last year and claiming gold in the special occasion cakes.

"Competition for me personally is about extending yourself and pushing your limits," she said. "I'm a pretty competitive person so I really enjoy that side of things."

Ms Kean's Special Occasion Cake entry, dubbed "A pastry chef's birthday cake – a collection of well-worn books", took her 20 hours to craft.

"I was learning new skills as I went ... with food you never know it all so you have to continually evolve with it," she said.

"The cake features all cookbooks that I love. I wanted it to appeal to the judges and knew straight away it would grab their attention."

When it comes to creating scrumptious desserts, Ms Kean embraced the phrase "eat with your eyes".

"I like to think of them as a form of art ... dessert is your last impression of a meal," she said.

"It's great working here up to your elbows in cream every day."

Ascot Park Hotel executive manager Peter Ridsdale said Ms Kean's success continued a proud tradition for the Invercargill establishment.

"We've been lucky enough over the years to have a number of chefs who have done well in regional competitions," he said.

"That award-winning quality is reflected in the meals served here. Our desserts are exceptional and it's great to have Bernie as part of the team with her passionate approach."

Continuing its success, the Ascot Park Hotel earned its seventh consecutive Beef and Lamb award recently.

In other results from the Cromwell fixture, the title of Southern Light Open Chef went to Joseph Clarke, of Glenorchy's Blanket Bay Lodge, who also took out three gold medals for the Chocolate Fantasy, Salmon Dish, Seafood Market Basket classes.

Ethan Flack, of Queenstown's Millennium Hotel, won the Southern Light Commis Chef of the Year title.

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