

# BEEF + LAMB

## NEW ZEALAND

23 JULY 2018

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### CHEFS SHARPEN UP FOR BEEF AND LAMB EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Applications have opened for the Beef and Lamb Excellence Awards – the country's longest running culinary awards – showcasing the very best New Zealand restaurants have to offer in beef and lamb dishes. The Excellence Awards are open to restaurants nationwide – anyone interested in applying should head to [nzexcellenceawards.co.nz](http://nzexcellenceawards.co.nz) for more information.

The Excellence Awards – which are entering their 23<sup>rd</sup> year – are an institution in New Zealand's food scene, bringing deserved recognition to restaurants who are delivering quality as well as driving innovation and creativity with New Zealand beef and lamb.

This year, over 170 restaurants were awarded with the accolade – and the iconic gold plate which has become synonymous with the Excellence Awards – and it is expected that number will grow in 2019.

In addition to the Excellence Award itself, each year five chefs who excel during the assessment period are selected as Ambassador Chefs by Beef + Lamb New Zealand. Freddie Ponder, Head Chef at Tables Restaurant in New Plymouth, is a 2018 Ambassador Chef.

“I have really enjoyed my time as an Ambassador Chef – I was honoured to be asked. You only have to look at the calibre of previous chefs who have received the award to know I am in esteemed company.

“As a Head Chef I see so many benefits from being part of the Excellence Awards. Whether that's the prestige of having the instantly recognisable gold plate on the wall, encouraging originality in the dishes you serve or simply that the assessment provides crucial feedback on how you are performing as a team in the kitchen.”

Kate Fay, Head Chef at Cibo Restaurant in Auckland, has been involved with the Excellence Awards since their conception. This year Kate was recognised as a Platinum Ambassador Chef – a lifetime recognition after being selected as an Ambassador Chef for her fourth time – an achievement only equalled by eight other chefs and was the first woman to do so.

“The Awards drive ingenuity, innovation and even collaboration. There is now a network of like-minded chefs who want to learn from each other and share ideas to push the boundaries and drive excellence.”

Following the closing date of the applications on 24 August, there will be a rigorous assessment process carried out by culinary trained assessors who will scour the country and assess on all elements of the beef and lamb dishes. Recipients of the 2019 Excellence Award will then be announced in early December along with the 2019 Ambassador Chefs.

*The Beef and Lamb Excellence Awards application period is open from 23 July to 24 August. Any establishment open to the general public serving New Zealand beef and lamb dishes can apply for the 2019 Beef and Lamb Excellence Awards. For more information please [nzexcellenceawards.co.nz](http://nzexcellenceawards.co.nz).*

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**For more information please contact:**

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### **Additional information**

New Zealand is renowned for its world class beef and lamb by Kiwis and visitors alike. Our intention is to further extend our remarkable New Zealand story by acknowledging the great work our chefs do to contribute to this, by directing them into high quality restaurants to experience innovative meals that will inspire and excite.

Beef + Lamb New Zealand are inviting all restaurants nationwide to apply for the 2019 Excellence Awards, an opportunity for all establishments to have their innovation, creativity and overall flair of their beef and lamb dish assessed.

Restaurants are anonymously assessed, with assessors looking at key areas of the dish to ensure it meets the high standard expected. The four key areas are; presentation and composition; taste; preparation and cooking; and overall creativity.

Recipients of the 2019 Award will be announced in early December.

To apply for the 2019 Awards, find out more information, or see the current directory for 2018 Award holders go to [nzexcellenceawards.co.nz](http://nzexcellenceawards.co.nz).