Thailand takes out Gold at international â€˜Young Chef Culinary Olympicsâ€™ in Tasmania

Thailand takes outGold at international Young Chef Culinary Olympics in Tasmania24 May 2012 The team from the Thailand CulinaryAcademy was last night announced as the winner of the 5th globalfinal of the Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) Black BoxCulinaryChallenge a prestigious international chefs competition thatbrings together the crme de la crme of young chefs from some of the world'smost highly acclaimed kitchens from five star hotels, restaurants, hotel andcatering schools.

First and second runners up in the competitionwere Indonesias Bvlgari hotel and Australias Henry Jones Art Hotelrespectively.

To reach this point, the 60 young chefs from 15countries have competed in grueling national heats conducted over the last 3years. The ecstatic Thai team has been awarded a $5,000 cash prize and theopportunity to working experience in highly regarded restaurant. They now jointhe stable of internationally acclaimed chefs including MasterChefs GeorgeCalombaris, who was a competitor in the global final in 2005.

For the Grand Finale on Wednesday, 23 May, 15finalist teams from countries including USA , Philippines, Australia,Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Cambodia, China, UAE, Mauritius,Malaysia, Korea, Vietnam andEgypt, were presented with a mystery BlackBox of Tasmanian fresh ingredients (including lamb rump, beef brisket, freshwasabi, ocean trout and King Island cheese) and given only one hour to devise afour-course menu, which was judged ontaste, creativity and artisticmerit.

According to Phonganan Sirisaengphaiwan,captain for Thai team they are incredibly thrilled to have won the global MLABlack Box Culinary Challenge final. This event has given us an unforgettableopportunity to represent our country, cook alongside top young chefs fromaround the world and experience Tasmanian produce first-hand and working withinnovative cuts of Australian beef and lamb has been an educationalexperience.

Since its inception in 1996 around 4,000 youngchefs from over 20 countries have prepared approximately 224,000 meals, cookedwith more than 6,000kg of Australian beef and flown 930,000 miles since theBlack Box Culinary Challenge was first introduced. Tim Kelf, MLAS Manager International Market Projects who has been involved with the event since itbegan said, The standard of this competition in Hobart was the mostcompetitive ever with the caliber of food being consistently high.

Part of the Savour Tasmania program, the MLABlack Box was designed to showcase Australias home-grown food bowl on aninternational scale. The Savour Tasmania program also features a Feast of Chefson Saturday, 26 May an event hosted by Iron Chef Australias Richard Cornish,where the international teams from the Black Box Challenge will present asignature dish from their home countries as the main course as well aspresenting a dessert.

The major sponsors of the Meat & LivestockAustralia (MLA) Black Box CulinaryChallenge were JBS Australia, QuestApartments, The Tasmanian Polytechnic, Tasmanian Salmon Growers Association,Moffatt Pty Ltd and Nestle Pty Ltd.

- Ends-

For more information or photography please contactCorrie McLeod or Nina Serova at Espresso Communications on 0419 526 848, 02 8016 2200 or corrie/nina@espressocomms.com.au.