

Kraftkar from Norway crowned World Champion Cheese 2016

Kraftkar, made by Norwegian producer Tingvollst, has scooped the coveted title of World Champion Cheese at the 29th annual World Cheese Awards, coming top among a record number of entries that were judged at the Kursaal Congress Centre in San Sebastián, during the first day of the International Cheese Festival.

The winning Kraftkar beat off competition from over 3,000 entries into the world's largest cheese-only awards scheme this year, with judge Nick Tsioros, owner of Olympic Cheese in Toronto, who championed this cheese, saying, "This 12-month aged blue cheese is wonderfully balanced, it has a great crumbly texture, but is soft and smooth on the tongue. The mould has developed nicely and comes across really well in the overall flavour of the cheese." The final International Super Jury, representing nations including Australia, Brazil, Denmark, Canada, France, Italy, Japan, Mexico, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, the UK and the USA, concurred, awarding Kraftkar the highest score of the final judging stage.

Gunnar Waagen from Tingvollst explained, "I have no words, this is marvellous news! We are a family-run farm and work long days to make our cheese. We get up early every day and go to bed very late to make the best cheese we can, and so to win this award, I am very proud."

Kraftkar was awarded 71 points out of a possible 80 by the Super Jury of 16 judges, just ahead of a Spanish duo in joint second place with 67 points; Cala Blanc from Lacto Industrial Menorquina and Cremositos Del Zujar from Arteserena.

John Farrand, managing director of the Guild of Fine Food, organisers of the World Cheese Awards, commented; "Hats off to Tingvollst for landing the top prize this year, when once again we've had a record number of entries. This cheese really is world class, having faced stiff competition from over 30 different countries. The World Cheese Awards has provided a wonderful spectacle, as our judges made their way through over 3,000 cheeses in a single day, bringing together the global cheese community to celebrate a timeless tradition that really does transcend borders. We would like to thank our hosts, Artzai Gazta and the Basque Country Government, for inviting us to San Sebastián this year, making cheese the biggest gastronomic spectacle during the city's tenure as European Capital of Culture."

Drawing entries from 31 different countries, from Australia to Italy and Mexico to Mozambique, cheese of all shapes and sizes made their way by bicycle, boat, plane, train, truck and car to the Kursaal Congress Centre in San Sebastián, via 12 consolidation points in all corners of the globe. 266 cheese experts from 26 different nations followed them to the Basque Country to taste, nose and grade over 3,000 cheeses in a single day, giving Bronze, Silver, Gold and Super Gold awards to worthy entries.

The final judging panel, made up of top names from the world of cheese, featuring cheese makers, buyers, retailers and writers, including Suzy O'Regan from Woolworths Foods in South Africa, Cathy Strange from Whole Foods in the USA, Roland Barthélemy, President of Guilde des Fromagers in France, and Mary Quicke from Quicke's in the UK, then debated the top 16 cheeses in front of a trade and consumer audience, broadcast live on World Cheese TV, before crowning this year's World Champion Cheese.

The 2016 World Champion Cheese will now be entered into a Champion of Champions contest on

Thursday 17 November, where it will be judged alongside the 28 previous winners of the World Cheese Awards.

Look out for further announcements of this year's special trophy award winners next week.

The International Cheese Festival is taking place at the Kursaal Congress Centre in San Sebastián from 16-18 November 2016. For more information, visit www.internationalcheesefestival.eus.

World Cheese Awards 2016 – the background

- The World Cheese Awards is organised by the Guild of Fine Food
- 2016 is the 29th year of the competition
- The planet's biggest 'cheese-only' competition – no yoghurt, cream, butter or other dairy
- 3,021 cheeses from 31 different countries entered – including Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, England, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Mozambique, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Scotland, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the USA and Wales
- 266 judges from around the world travelled from 26 different countries to 'nose' and taste the cheese
- Judging broadcasted live on World Cheese TV
- A Super Jury of 16 judges decided the final winning World Champion Cheese

How the judging works

Judges work in teams of four, identifying any cheeses worthy of a bronze, silver, gold – or no award. They are looking at the rind and the body of the cheese, its colour, texture, consistency and, above all, its taste.

Each of the 66 teams then nominates one exceptional cheese as the Super Gold from their table. These 66 cheeses are the best in the world and are judged a second time by the Super Jury of 16 internationally recognised experts, who will each select a cheese to champion in the final round of judging.

The Super Jury then debates the final 16 in front of a live consumer and trade audience, before choosing the World Champion Cheese live on World Cheese TV, with cheese lovers across the globe tuning in for the drama.

www.gff.co.uk/wca

International Cheese Festival

The International Cheese Festival 2016 is the most important gastronomic celebration in Donostia San Sebastián during its tenure as European Capital of Culture, and the World Cheese Awards 2016 was organised within the framework of this festival. The main goal of the festival is to promote and strengthen productive vocations linked to artisan cheese production, jointly boosting culture, gastronomy and tourism in the Basque Country.



The International Cheese Festival is bringing artisan-produced cheeses to a global audience of professionals, along with the highest quality gastronomic and cultural experiences, from tastings and workshops to conferences and other activities, promoting coexistence and supporting the hard work of artisan producers. Spaces are also available to do business among different producers and buyers.

Participants in the festival include PDO cheese producers from Spain and internationally renowned chefs, as well as artisans, universities and companies in the cheese and gastronomic industry. The festival is open to all, allowing the public to participate in this unprecedented celebration of cheese.

For further information about the International Cheese Festival, please contact:

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