

# Carme Rusalleda, Àlvar Ayuso and Grup Balfegó, winners of the 2016 National Gastronomy Awards

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The **Catalan Academy of Gastronomy and Nutrition** hosted the **National Gastronomy Awards** on Thursday 16th February at the **Palau Reial de Pedralbes**. During the ceremony the awards were given in recognition of the chefs, restaurants, professionals, groups and institutions associated with the world of Catalan gastronomy who have made outstanding contributions to cuisine throughout the year.



The awards ceremony was opened by the journalists **Mònica Terribas** and **Jordi Basté**, followed by a **welcome address by the chair of the Academy, Carles Vilarrubí**. The **president of the Catalan Government, Carles Puigdemont**, presented the 2016 National Gastronomy Prize to **Carme Ruscaldeda**. An ambassador for Catalonia European Region, **Ruscaldeda is the only chef in the world to hold seven Michelin stars**: three for her restaurant **Sant Pau** in Sant Pol de Mar; two for **Moments at the Hotel Mandarin Oriental in Barcelona**, and two more for **Sant Pau in Tokyo**. After receiving the prize, the chef thanked her “family, team, customers and the media for their loyalty and support”.



The 2016 Revelation Chef Prize went to **Àlvar Ayuso** and was presented by **Josep Poblet**, the **president of Tarragona Provincial Council**. Àlvar Ayuso trained at Bellart and Hofmann, after working in the kitchens at **Michel Bas, Saüc, Gaig** and **Dos Cielos**. He opened his Barcelona restaurant **Alvart** two years ago at the age of just 25. It has recently been refurbished and extended. Ayuso highlighted the fact that “Because of my family origins and my

Swedish mother, I've always tried to do something different, always with a Scandinavian influence”.



This year's other prize winners included the **Grup Balfegó**, which won the 2016 Special Prize. It was presented by the **president of Barcelona Provincial Council**, Mercè Conesa, to the **co-chairs of the group, Pere-Vicent Balfegó and Manel Balfegó**. The group hails from Ametlla de Mar and combines tradition and innovation. It is known around the world as the purveyor of red tuna to the most prestigious restaurants.

In his closing address, the president of the Catalan Government, **Carles Puigdemont**, highlighted “the amazing success of Catalan cuisine on a worldwide scale” and stated that “Catalonia doesn't need great armies because it has chefs, artists and creative people”.

#### **A very well-attended event with wide media coverage**

The awards ceremony took place during a dinner hosted by chef **Carles Gaig**. More than 300 people attended, including academics, business people and eminent figures from the world of Catalan cuisine and politics. The event was also attended by more than 20 journalists from the main Catalan media outlets.