

THE XCHEF CHALLENGE BY CERVEZAS 1906, THE 7TH ART OF KNIFE MEAT CUTTING NATIONAL COMPETITION 'EL ENCINAR DE HUMIENTA' AND THE 2ND GAZPACHUELOS GOURMET BY SABOR A MÁLAGA CHAMPIONSHIP TAKE CENTRE STAGE ON THE SECOND DAY OF SALÓN GOURMETS 2026

Andrés Torreiro, from D'Obra (Melide, La Coruña), with his recipe for roasted leek with koji hollandaise and a purée of smoked sardines and hazelnuts paired with 1906 Black Coupage, has been crowned the winner of the legendary– National Final competition, now in its sixth year; This competition recognises the most talented chefs in our country, through striking culinary creations paired with one of the beers from the 1906 family

The art of meat cutting has found its finest exponent in Ismael Peña, from the restaurant El Higuero (Marbella, Málaga), who has won first prize in the 7<sup>th</sup> Art of Knife Meat Cutting National Competition El Encinar de Humienta / Grupo Gourmets; after cutting up a beef sirloin, he had to prepare a steak tartare, which was judged on its presentation, originality and, of course, flavour

Sponsored by the Sabor a Málaga quality label, the 2nd Gazpachuelos Gourmet Championship recognises one of the signature dishes of Malaga's cuisine; Frutos Jiménez, from Restaurante La Marina Hermanos Palma (Málaga), was crowned winner of the best traditional gazpachuelo, whilst Miguel Ángel Expósito, from Restaurante Retama (Torrenueva, Ciudad Real), took the prize in the category for the best creative gazpachuelo



**Madrid, 14 April 2026.**– The 39th edition of Salón Gourmets, the world's leading fine food and beverages fair, hosted the national final of the XChef Challenge by 1906 Beer today, Tuesday. This competition has recognised the most talented and promising chefs in our country, who demonstrate their commitment to a community seeking to make a positive and

conscious impact on society. The six finalists, selected from candidates across the country, presented their culinary creations paired with one of the beers from the 1906 range. Andrés Torreiro, from D’Obra (Melide, La Coruña), with his recipe for roasted leek with koji hollandaise and a paste of smoked sardines and hazelnuts paired with 1906 Black Coupage, has emerged as the winner of this competition; in addition to the recognition, he has received a prize of €2,500 and a promotional package sponsored by Estrella Galicia. “I am proud to represent Galicia, small businesses, Melide and the produce of my region in this competition. We treated the roasted leek as if it were a calçot, keeping only the most tender part to roast; we added a chopped mixture of smoked sardines to give the dish that salty, smoky touch, and then accompanied it with toasted hazelnuts for a crunchy element. ‘The dish is finished with a hollandaise sauce—citrusy and 100% umami—and black olive powder. I knew exactly what to pair it with from the very first sip; it goes brilliantly with the dish because it has toasty notes, and that pairs perfectly with my recipe,’ said Andrés Torreiro after winning the award.

Second prize went to Miguel Vázquez, from Atípico Restaurante (La Coruña), for his recipe ‘Vigilia desde 1906’ featuring 1906 La Milnueve. Third prize, meanwhile, went to Ismael Torres, from Doña Petrona (Valencia), for his recipe ‘Buñuelo de all i pebre’ featuring 1906 La Milnueve. The other finalists were:

- Antonio Giménez, from Restaurante Cobarcho (Jaca, Huesca). Partridge stuffed with boletus and foie gras, served with ravioli made from its innards, paired with 1906 Red Vintage.
- Álex Marcos, from Los Álamos Laboratorio Gastronómico (Peñaranda de Bracamonte, Salamanca). UNTO 1906 paired with 1906 Red Vintage.
- Hugo Rosales, from Vita Vinum (Aracena, Huelva). Sierra and red malt paired with 1906 La Pelirroja.

A very close final, judged by a panel comprising Raquel Castillo, food journalist; Luis Veira, chef at Árbore da Veira (La Coruña); Sergi Aritzeta, chef at El Truc (Lérida) and winner of the 2025 edition of Desafío XChef by Cervezas 1906; and Xabier Cubillo de la Hoz, Head of Beer Culture at Hijos de Rivera.

## **7<sup>TH</sup> ART OF KNIFE MEAT CUTTING NATIONAL COMPETITION EL ENCINAR DE HUMIENTA / GRUPO GOURMETS**

This morning, the 7th Art of Knife Meat Cutting National Competition El Encinar de Humienta / Grupo Gourmets was also held at Salón Gourmets (SG). Ismael Peña, from the restaurant El Higuero (Marbella, Málaga), was crowned the winner in the art of meat carving, or ‘cisoría’ as it was formerly known; he received a prize of €1,000, a certificate accrediting him as the best in Spain in this speciality, and a set of knives. “I’m very happy with this prize; I felt very at ease throughout the competition and that showed in my performance. I’d like to thank Encinar de Humienta, the restaurant and my boss for the support they’ve given me during this time. For the steak tartare, I prepared a classic version with anchovies, chop fat, meat jus and piparra peppers, but, above all, I wanted to give the meat centre stage,” explained Ismael Peña, after receiving his award. Meanwhile, Khalid El Issati, from Restaurante Terraza Jardín Felipe (Navacerrada, Madrid), took second place.

The Art of Knife Meat Cutting National Competition El Encinar de Humienta / Grupo Gourmets highlights the importance of this fundamental yet difficult-to-master skill. In the first round, the contestants had to cut up a beef sirloin, with marks awarded for the cleanliness of the cut, technique, skill, speed and organisation. In the second phase, they prepared a steak tartare; here, the presentation, originality and, of course, the flavour were scored. The jury for this seventh edition consisted of chef Andrés Madrigal; David Lecanda, from El Pimiento Verde; Dennis Keller, from PFG Premium Food Group Beef by Tönnies; Dobrica Ene, from Alba Granados; Eduardo Collado, from the restaurant Egun – On; Gabriela Medina, from the restaurant Jimmy’s; Joaquín Capel, from Grupo con Fuego – Steak Burger Restaurants; and José Francisco Zarza, from Grupo Raza – La Vaca Argentina. In this edition, the competition has also taken things a step further with a striking production featuring Mas Mas Meat, in which the contestants had to wear gladiator helmets, blending spectacle and technique seamlessly.

## GAZPACHUELO FROM MÁLAGA IN GOURMETS

On the second day of SG, the two winners of the 2nd Gazpachuelos Gourmet by Sabor a Málaga Championship were also announced. As a new feature this year, the competition featured two categories: Traditional Gazpachuelo and Creative Gazpachuelo, which recognised the most traditional and the most innovative recipes for this iconic dish of Malaga's cuisine. Each category had three participants; in total, the six finalists prepared six identical dishes in 30 minutes. Although the choice of ingredients was unrestricted, all the dishes used broth and mayonnaise as their main base.

In the classic category, the winner was Frutos Jiménez, from Restaurante La Marina Hermanos Palma (Málaga), with his recipe 'Marengo'; whilst Miguel Ángel Expósito, from Restaurante Retama (Torrenueva, Ciudad Real), was recognised for his innovation in the Best Creative Gazpachuelo Recipe category with his dish 'Retama'. Both received a cash prize of €1,500. "For the creative gazpachuelo, I drew inspiration from the sea of vineyards in Castilla-La Mancha; my recipe features octopus stock, an emulsion of garlic from Las Pedroñeras and a touch of the sea with marinated prawns," said Miguel Ángel Expósito. "To make a good traditional gazpachuelo, the first and most essential thing is the ingredient, for example, a good rockfish such as a red gurnard, a ratfish, a spider crab, etc. What we do with that fish is cook it and remove the fillets, and in that fish stock we cook the potatoes and mix everything together whilst hot with a splash of lemon. The most important thing is to make sure it doesn't curdle," explained Frutos Jiménez on the secrets of traditional gazpachuelo.

In addition to the description of the dish, the expert judging panel assessed aspects such as the texture of the mayonnaise, adherence to the traditional recipe, the ingredients used, and the aroma and flavour, in the case of traditional gazpachuelo. In the case of creative gazpachuelo, the panel evaluated innovative technique and originality, the use of locally sourced ingredients and, of course, the aroma and flavour. Elena Arzak, chef and owner of the Arzak restaurant; María Jiménez, chef and culinary consultant; M<sup>a</sup> José San Román, CEO of Restaurante Monastrell; Mariano Rodríguez, winner of Gazpachuelos 2025; and Leonor García-Agua, director of Sabor a Málaga, made up the judging panel for this competition.

Another highlight of Tuesday morning at Salón Gourmets was the cooking demonstration by chef Aurelio Morales. During this event, he unveiled his innovative concept for The Bleu Table in Mercamadrid's new food market, a project that promises to revolutionise this key hub for food distribution in the capital. During the session, Morales showcased some of the creative themes that define his culinary concept; an approach that seeks to bridge the gap between the source of ingredients and haute cuisine. This cooking demonstration gave the public a first-hand insight into a project that is unprecedented to date, positioning Mercamadrid as a new gastronomic hotspot and reinforcing its role as a hub for fresh, high-quality produce.

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