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## The Ritz hotel London

### THE JUDGES

**Geoff Booth**,  
director for the School  
of Hospitality,  
Westminster Kingsway  
College

**Charles Boyd**,  
chief executive,  
Chester Boyd

**Paul Hackett**,  
key account  
executive/senior  
inspector,  
AA Hotel Services

**Peter Hazzard**,  
chairman,  
Chaddlewood  
Consulting

**John Mackle**,  
general manager,  
the Granary Beefeater  
and Peterborough  
(Ferry Meadows)  
Premier Inn

**Stephen Moss**,  
chairman,  
Springboard UK

Legendary hotelier Cesar Ritz and culinary genius Auguste Escoffier set the pace back in 1906 when they launched the Ritz hotel's iconic restaurant – and, remarkably, 100 years later their exacting standards are still being met. Behind its success is the service provided by the restaurant team, who have to live up to its reputation on a daily basis.

Under the direction of manager Simon Girling, the team maintain the restaurant's status by working together – and excelling individually. There is also a crucial understanding between the restaurant staff and executive chef John Williams's kitchen brigade that both front and back of house need to work in harmony.

Notably, it's the restaurant team's range and delivery of service skills that set them apart. For instance, the restaurant offers a culture of palace-style food and service that means they have to be skilled at preparing and presenting a variety of dishes at the table.

Girling, who has 23 years' experience, trains his staff so that he is able to ensure consistent service and promote from within. For instance, two commis waiters have risen through the ranks over a number of years and were recently made assistant restaurant managers.

The Ritz stands out as one of the few

landmark London hotels in family ownership, which gives staff scope to take the initiative. Despite the traditional atmosphere, the team are not afraid to embrace change to improve financial performance. For instance, in response to pre-theatre dining, the restaurant has opened earlier, resulting in a 15% increase in business. Similarly, following a staff review of food and service quality at breakfast, they succeeded in boosting revenue by 3.6%.

### What the judges said...

● “The performance of the Ritz restaurant team was outstanding this year, owing to their ability to diversify their service and product while continuing to exceed guest expectations in a five-star environment. It proves that even at this level you need to be aware that every penny counts in today's economic climate.”

*John Mackle, general manager Granary Beefeater and Peterborough (Ferry Meadows) Premier Inn*

● “An extremely talented team has established a culture of excellence and consistency, delivering exceptional service to a discerning clientele.”

*Geoff Booth, director for the School of Hospitality, Westminster Kingsway College*

### THE SHORTLIST

**Malmaison Hotel**,  
Aberdeen

**Michael Caines at  
Abode Manchester**

**The Balmoral Hotel**,  
Edinburgh

**The Ritz**, London

**Village Wirral**

**Restaurant Team**,  
Village Hotel & Leisure  
Club, Wirral

### FORMER WINNERS

**2007** Galvin at  
Windows, Hilton at  
Park Lane, London

**2008** The Granary  
Beefeater and  
Peterborough (Ferry  
Meadows) Premier Inn