



PHOTO: The chair of the Regulatory Council, Antoni Figuera, and the minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food, Teresa Jordà, with the competition winner.

ANDREU BERTRAN, FROM THE FORN MISTRAL, IS DECLARED WINNER OF THE BEST CATALAN *PA DE PAGÈS* COMPETITION 2019

The judging panel for the final of the Best Catalan *Pa de Pagès* competition, chaired by the minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food, Teresa Jordà, declared Andreu Bertran, from the Forn Mistral (Barcelona), the winner during a ceremony held at the old Damm Brewery that was attended by some 250 people.

The Best Catalan *Pa de Pagès* competition is organised by the Regulatory Council of the PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) *Pa de Pagès Català*, which aims to draw the public's attention to the professionalism of the bakers who produce the traditional Catalan farmhouse loaf *Pa de Pagès Català*. This is the only bread in Catalonia to have been granted the EU PGI status.

At the age of 34, Bertran, is the sixth generation of his family to work in the family business, the Forn Mistral, one of Barcelona's most famous bakeries that has been based on the Ronda Sant Antoni since 1879.

The Forn Mistral is renowned for its mini croissants and famous spiral pastries, *ensaimades*.

The young baker who won the Best Catalan *Pa de Pagès* competition 2019 had been one of the runners up in the three previous competitions. In this respect, the chair of the Regulatory Council of the PGI Catalan *Pa de Pagès*, Antoni Figuera, highlighted the fact that "this proves his commitment to making quality bread".

Bertran took home a cash prize of 2,000 euros and an engraved plaque.

The runners-up for this year's competition were Marta Bosser (ArtBó, Sabadell), Xavier Pàmies (Forn Sistaré 1910, Reus, Best Catalan *Pa de Pagès* 2016), Miquel Guich (Forn del Passeig, Barcelona, Best Catalan *Pa de Pagès* 2017) and Emilio José Ojeda (Forn de Pa Artesà Luna, Sant Joan Despí).

The five finalists were decided in the qualifying round held at the Andreu Llangués Bakery School in Sabadell (Barcelona) on 28th May which saw 27 bakers taking part.

Members of the panel of judges were the minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food, Teresa Jordà, who acted as chair; Antoni Figuera, chair of the Regulatory Council of the GPI Catalan *Pa de Pagès*; Toni Vera, baker and winner of the Best Artisan Butter Croissant in Spain competition 2016; Pere Fabregà, bread-maker and baking advisor, and the winner of the Best Catalan *Pa de Pagès* competition 2018, Josep Miquel Canut.

The panel of judges made their decision based on a blind tasting that takes into account aspects like colour, smell, flavour, cooking, weight and how well the bread keeps over a 24-hour period (their assessment is based on a loaf made the day before the final and another baked on the day). The panel awards a score of 0 to 10 to each of these aspects.

Each loaf was awarded a final score of 1 to 5 during a draw held by the secretary of the Regulatory Council, Alfredo M. Verdegay, who is the only person who knows the number allocated to each finalist. These scores are handed to the chair of the panel in a sealed envelope before the panel begin their deliberations. After the vote, the chair of the panel opens the envelope and reveals who has made the bread that has been awarded the top score.

A truly magical competition

The Best Catalan *Pa de Pagès* competition is an event that is open to the public and while the panel were making their decision, there were many surprises in store. This year, Màgic Marc amazed us with his magic tricks associated with the world of bread, using his magic yeast and his magic bakery, that allows us "to have bread at any time if we've run out".

At the close of the ceremony, the minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food highlighted "the love of good bread and skill in making the loaves I've had the opportunity to taste today". She added "I've just done a crash course in baking and

I'm going home happy".

This was the sixth final of the Best Catalan *Pa de Pagès* competition. Previous winners were Ernest Riguetti (Riguetti Forners, Gavà), Sílvia Marqués (Patisserie Marqués, Alfarràs), Xavier Pàmies (Forn Sistaré 1910, Reus), Miquel Guich (Forn del Passeig, Barcelona) and Josep Miquel Canut (Forn Codina, Vilaller).

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