

**"EROSKI BCC Onenak 2024 Recognition" event**

**EROSKI AND BASQUE CULINARY CENTER RECOGNISE THE TALENT OF GRADUATES WHO PROMOTE GASTRONOMIC PROJECTS FOCUSED ON LOCAL PRODUCTS, SUSTAINABILITY, INNOVATION OR HEALTH**

- **The chefs Axel Smyth and Claudia Merchán (Simpár restaurant in Santiago de Compostela), Juan Carlos Caro and Eva Hernández (Zelai Txiki restaurant in Donostia) and José María Martín Miguélez (Chacino in Cáceres) have been the awardees in this new edition of the event**
- **This recognition seeks to highlight the talent of graduates from Basque Culinary Center who are committed to entrepreneurship and whose values and initiatives reflect a way of working shared by EROSKI and Basque Culinary Center**
- **The collaboration between EROSKI and Basque Culinary Center aims at promoting projects that transform the way to understand food and gastronomy**
- **The event brought together over one hundred professionals from the agrofood industry as well as representatives from institutions, associations and mass media**

**Donostia-San Sebastian, 15 November 2024.**- [EROSKI](#) and [Basque Culinary Center](#) have recognised today three projects by graduates from this institution who are transforming the way to understand food and gastronomy and whose entrepreneurial projects are developed in the areas of sustainability, local products and innovation. The chefs Axel Smyth and Claudia Merchán ([Simpár](#) restaurant), Juan Carlos Caro and Eva Hernández ([Zelai Txiki](#) restaurant) and José María Martín Miguélez ([Chacino](#)) have been the awardees in this new edition of the "EROSKI-BCC Onenak 2024 Recognition" event held today in Basque Culinary Center in Donostia-San Sebastian.

This recognition reflects the values shared by both organisations: the promotion of healthy eating, focusing on local and proximity products, fostering wealth and positive impact on the environment and supporting environmental as well as local sustainability. It also highlights the joint effort to promote the talent of graduates as change agents in the area of food and gastronomy.

A group of experts from Basque Culinary Center selected the candidates from Bachelor's and Master's degrees as well as professional programmes. With a comprehensive view of gastronomy, consideration was given to various profiles that complied with the requirements of having projects of their own or entrepreneurial projects focused on sustainability, local products and health.

**The protagonists**

Axel Smyth and Claudia Merchán, from Simpar restaurant in Santiago de Compostela, are noted for their dedication to the technique and use of local Galician products, with an approach that combines tradition and modernity. Their gastronomic proposal strikes a balance between technique and flavour and reflects the richness and the quality of Galician products, with dishes that stand out for their authenticity and creativity.

Juan Carlos Caro and Eva Hernández, from Zelai Txiki restaurant in Donostia-SanSebastian, have implemented sustainable practices such as the use of wood-fired ovens, the use of pellets as a source of renewable energy and organic waste composting systems, amongst others, in order to reduce their carbon footprint. Hence, their proposals are tasty, technical and environmentally-responsible dishes. In fact, their commitment to the environment and to the local gastronomy has earned them a Michelin green star.

José María Martín Miguélez, from Chacino in Caceres, has transferred the *'terroir'* concept of traditional cold meats to plant-based gastronomy, seeking to reproduce the unique flavours of cold meats in vegetable alternatives. His work has been recognised for its innovative and sustainable approach. Last May, José María was included in the list of the 100 young talents of Basque Culinary Center 2024.

During the event, the awardees had the opportunity to present their projects and were also in charge of designing and executing the gastronomic experience enjoyed by the guests to the event.

### **Award ceremony**

This new edition of the "EROSKI-BCC Onenak 2024 Recognition" event brought together a hundred key figures of the agro-food value chain, from producers to distribution, including the processing industry. It was also attended by institutional representatives, mass media, associations in the sector and leading social organisations.

*"At Basque Culinary Center we are really proud that an initiative such as the EROSKI BCC Onenak Recognition becomes consolidated with a fourth edition. Throughout these years we have had the opportunity to recognise and give visibility to some of our students' projects and it is a pleasure for us to do so in collaboration with an organisation such as EROSKI, which has been a member of the Board of Trustees of Basque Culinary Center for over 14 years. This recognition evinces our strong commitment to enhancing the value of local products, sustainability, health and innovation, areas of work into which both organisations put much effort and to which we firmly believe that the new generations can make a substantial contribution",* the BCC director, Joxe Mari Aizega, said during the event.

Moreover, EROSKI's CEO, Rosa Carabel, pointed out that *"this recognition restates EROSKI and Basque Culinary Center's joint commitment to sustainable and proximity gastronomy, which not only highlights the value of local products but also promotes innovation. The collaboration between the various actors of the food chain is key to addressing sustainability and competitiveness challenges; we are proud to collaborate with Basque Culinary Center, an international reference in gastronomy, and contribute to building a more prosperous future together. We stand firm in our commitment to promoting initiatives that offer sustainable and transforming solutions for the current food challenges. The projects that have been recognised today show how innovation, the use of local products and respect for the environment may come together to generate a positive impact on society".*

### **About EROSKI**

EROSKI is the first distribution group of the cooperative type in Spain and one of the leaders in the northern Spanish market – from Galicia to the Balearic Islands – with a 12.8 % market share in this area; it is the leader in the Basque Country, Navarre and Galicia and co-leader

in the Balearic Islands. Its commercial network, at the end of 2023, comprised 1,533 stores, including supermarkets, hypermarkets, cash & carry and online supermarkets; as well as petrol stations, sports shops and other non-food businesses. Moreover, it has more than 6.4 million Customer Members and over 27,400 cooperative and worker members, in addition to the group of workers of the over 620 franchised stores.

EROSKI has been part of Basque Culinary Center's Board of Trustees since it was established thirteen years ago.

### **About Basque Culinary Center**

Basque Culinary Center is a unique ecosystem where education, innovation, research and entrepreneurship coexist with the aim of developing and promoting gastronomy, understood as the reasoned knowledge of what we eat and how we eat. Our mission is based on values such as passion, innovation, excellence and social commitment. Located in San Sebastian since 2011, Basque Culinary Center is a pioneering institution made up of the Faculty of Gastronomic Science and BCC Innovation, gastronomy technology center: an interdisciplinary research centre that does research and innovates in the design of products and services while at the same time supporting companies, new entrepreneurs and young people with significant projects.

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