

Etihad Airways honoured with Mercury Award

Etihad Airways has won the 2012 Mercury Award for On Board Service for its innovative inflight culinary programmes, first class chefs and the Mezoon Grille.

The prestigious awards, recognising accomplishments in travel catering, were presented during the International Travel Catering Association (ITCA) gala dinner on November 27 at the Shangri La Hotel Qaryat Al Beri in Abu Dhabi.

The award ceremony coincided with ITCA Abu Dhabi, which took place from 26 to 28 November at Abu Dhabi National Exhibitions Company. ITCA Abu Dhabi is the travel industry's pre-eminent food and beverage event in the region.

Peter Baumgartner, Etihad Airways chief commercial officer, said: "We are delighted to receive the much sought-after Mercury Award for on board service innovation, as this is an area that is core to our guest experience and brand. Our approach - putting culinary professionals in airline jobs, as opposed to airline professionals in culinary jobs - truly sets us apart.

Competitors are not the benchmark

"We do not benchmark our product and services against our airline competitors, but rather against the top restaurants and hotels around the world. This is what inspires us to introduce innovative concepts such as our first class chefs and our food and beverage managers in business class, bringing a restaurant-quality experience to our premium passengers while delivering more choice and personalised attention in the economy cabin."

Menus have also been revolutionised with the introduction of the Mezoon Grille concept in Diamond First class, offering guests unparalleled choice from prepared-to-order grill dishes or even the unique opportunity to have the chef create side dishes and sauces to their individual taste.

First class chefs are provided with a pantry stocked with sauces, par-cooked items, spices, raw organic eggs and freshly chopped vegetables, as well as the airline's custom-designed 'protein box' filled with chilled prime cuts of meat, to execute a true à la carte experience.