



## Press Release

**Innovation, Young Talent, Entrepreneurship. The INTERNORGA Awards showcase who is driving the industry forward**

- Applications for the INTERNORGA Future Award are open until 10 January 2027
- Young culinary talents can apply for the NEXT CHEF AWARD until 31 December 2026
- Deutscher Gastro-Gründerpreis: application deadline already on 23 November 2026

Hamburg, 27 October 2026 – The application phase is currently open for all three awards of the leading trade show. Companies can apply for the INTERNORGA Future Award 2027 until 10 January 2027. Young chefs have until 31 December 2026 to enter the NEXT CHEF AWARD. Founders can apply for the Deutscher Gastro-Gründerpreis until 23 November 2026. All three awards will be presented during the trade show, taking place from 12 to 16 March 2027 in Hamburg. Together, they highlight those shaping the future of hospitality and foodservice.

The need for new solutions is significant. Skilled workers are in short supply, sustainability and digitalisation are changing processes, and guests' expectations are evolving. The awarded companies, concepts and talents provide answers to precisely these challenges. Each award focuses on a distinct future-oriented theme: the INTERNORGA Future Award recognises innovation, the NEXT CHEF AWARD promotes young talent, and the Deutscher Gastro-Gründerpreis celebrates entrepreneurship. Together, they spotlight developments before they become industry standards.

"Our awards are deliberately designed to foster entrepreneurship and innovation," says **Matthias Balz**, Director INTERNORGA. "Behind them are businesses, founders and young talents who do not wait for answers but create them themselves. We consciously want to provide a stage for this commitment."

### **INTERNORGA Future Award: An independent jury decides the winners**

Since 2011, the INTERNORGA Future Award has recognised companies that are shaping the future of hospitality and foodservice with innovative, sustainable and economically viable solutions. The winners are selected by an independent expert jury. The jury evaluates not only ideas but above all market-ready concepts with measurable benefits for the industry. This independence is precisely what makes the award credible and a trend indicator for the entire out-of-home market.

The 2026 winners demonstrate how tangible these solutions can be. Hamburg-based goodBytz addresses the shortage of skilled workers with an autonomous robotic kitchen. Servicegesellschaft Nordbaden has achieved an organic share of more than 20 percent in institutional catering. ALGENWERK supplies fresh spirulina from Dresden as a functional food ingredient.



Companies can apply in the categories Technology & Equipment, Food & Beverages, and Hospitality & Hotels. Participation is free of charge. All application information: [internorga.com/awards/internorga-zukunftspreis](https://internorga.com/awards/internorga-zukunftspreis)

#### **NEXT CHEF AWARD: More than ten years of providing a stage for young culinary talent**

The NEXT CHEF AWARD focuses on emerging talent. With the shortage of skilled professionals continuing, promoting young chefs has become increasingly important. The competition was launched in 2016 together with **Johann Lafer**. Chefs up to the age of 30 from Germany, Austria and Switzerland are eligible to participate. A completed culinary apprenticeship is required. Applications can be submitted until 31 December 2026 via the form on [internorga.com](https://internorga.com).

A total of 18 participants will be selected from all applications. They will compete live in front of an audience in three challenges on 14 and 15 March 2027. Their performances will be judged on-site by a jury of renowned chefs including **Marco Müller**, **Robin Pietsch**, **Cornelia Poletto** and **Tim Mälzer**. The six best participants will advance to the final on 15 March 2027 at INTERNORGA. There, they must recreate a dish by **Johann Lafer** as accurately as possible without a recipe. Prizes include high-end kitchen equipment from Pacojet, a premium knife set from KAI and much more. The NEXT CHEF 2026 title was won during the competition's tenth anniversary by **Katharina Aichhorn**, then a chef at Brenners Park Hotel in Baden-Baden.

"If you place trust in young chefs, you secure the future of our kitchens," says **Johann Lafer**, co-initiator of the competition. "At the NEXT CHEF AWARD, they demonstrate live what they are capable of: creativity, craftsmanship and the courage to prove themselves in front of an audience. These are exactly the talents the hospitality industry needs."

#### **Deutscher Gastro-Gründerpreis: An early look at new business models**

The Deutscher Gastro-Gründerpreis is aimed at founders and entrepreneurs. It provides an early indication of the ideas and business models that could shape the gastronomy sector in the future. The award is initiated by INTERNORGA, Leaders Club Deutschland and orderbird. Adults operating a business in Germany, Austria or Switzerland are eligible to apply. The business must have opened after 1 April 2025 or be scheduled to open by the end of 2027. The application deadline is 23 November 2026.

The jury evaluates innovation, economic viability and entrepreneurial personality. The ten best applicants will present their concepts in person, after which the jury will select five finalists. Each of these teams will receive a founder package worth more than €10,000. On 12 March 2027, the five finalists will present their concepts live at INTERNORGA and via livestream. The overall winner will then be chosen by audience vote, either online or on-site. The prize package is worth €100,000 in total, including €50,000 in prize money. In 2026, the Deutscher Gastro-Gründerpreis was awarded to NOI from Cologne. The Italian restaurant uses digital tools and AI to manage staff and menu planning, purchasing and table allocation.



### **About INTERNORGA**

INTERNORGA is the leading international trade show for hospitality and foodservice. As the annual meeting place for the hotel, restaurant, bakery and confectionery sectors, it will take place from 12 to 16 March 2027 at Hamburg Messe und Congress. National and international exhibitors present their products, trends and innovations for the entire out-of-home market to professional visitors, accompanied by internationally attended conferences, supporting events and industry competitions.

Further information can be found on the website [www.internorga.com](http://www.internorga.com) and on the INTERNORGA [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [Facebook](#) social media channels.

Press material for download: [hmc.canto.de/b/NUF44](http://hmc.canto.de/b/NUF44)

Press releases: <https://www.internorga.com/en/infos/press/press-releases>

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