



*Under embargo until 17<sup>th</sup> December – 6pm*

## Winners of the 2009 “Français of the Year” Awards Unveiled

London, 17 December 2009 – The winners of the third edition of the “Français of the Year” awards are announced today at an exclusive awards ceremony.

This year again more than 4,000 people voted online to elect the leading lights of the UK’s French community from the worlds of gastronomy, business, sports and the Arts.

The 2009 winners are:

- Sportsman of the Year:       **Nicolas Anelka** (Chelsea FC)
- Artist of the Year:           **Roland Mouret** (Fashion Designer)
- Chef of the Year:             **Raymond Blanc** (Le Manoir aux Quat’ Saisons)
- Businessman of the Year:   **Geoffroy de la Bourdonnaye** (Liberty)

Commenting on the awards, the winners said:

"I am delighted to join Arsène Wenger in the Français of the Year hall of fame. I am very grateful to all those who voted for me and hope to continue entertaining them both with the Blues and the Bleus."

**Nicolas Anelka**

"I am incredibly honoured to have won this incredible award and to be in such illustrious company. Whilst I live and work in London a piece of my heart will always be in France and when I started to show at Paris Fashion Week it was an incredibly exciting and important landmark for me. I hope that I can live up to such an auspicious accolade."

**Roland Mouret**

"During my many years in England, I have enjoyed sharing and expressing my French culture through my cuisine. I am pleased that I have been recognised by my fellow French compatriots for this award."

**Raymond Blanc**

"I am proud, as a Frenchman, to have played a part in re-establishing Liberty, one of the best loved British luxury brands, as the ultimate curator and incubator of avant-garde English and exotic talent in Fashion, Design and Beauty. Liberty has now swung back to near profitability by reconnecting to its roots of Love, Rebellion and Artistic Discovery."

**Geoffroy de la Bourdonnaye**

For more information please visit our website: [www.francais-of-the-year.com](http://www.francais-of-the-year.com)

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**The 2009 nominees were:**

**Chef of the Year**

Alain Ducasse (Dorchester)  
Alexis Gauthier (Roussillon)  
Claude Bosi (Hibiscus)  
Jean-Christophe Ansanay-Alex (Ambassade de l'Ile)  
Joël Robuchon (L'Atelier)  
Michel Roux Jr (Le Gavroche)  
Mourad Mazouz (Momo)  
Raymond Blanc (Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons)

**Artist of the Year**

Laurent Voulzy (Singer/Songwriter)  
Lou Doillon (Actress)  
Noémie Lenoir (Model)  
Roland Mouret (Fashion Designer)  
Stéphane Denève (Conductor)  
Sylvie Guillem (Ballet dancer)

**Businessman of the Year**

André Lacroix (Inchcape)  
Arnaud Bamberger (Cartier)  
Arnaud de Puyfontaine (National Magazine)  
Geoffroy de la Bourdonnaye (Liberty)  
Tidjane Thiam (Prudential)  
Xavier Rolet (London Stock Exchange)

**Sportsman of the Year**

Benjamin Kaiser (Leicester)  
Gaël Clichy (Arsenal)  
Julien Dupuy (Leicester)  
Nicolas Anelka (Chelsea)  
Patrice Evra (Manchester United)  
Serge Betsen (Wasps)

**Last year's winners were:**

Sportsman of the Year: **Arsène Wenger** (Arsenal)

Artist of the Year: **Eva Green** (Actress)

Entrepreneur of the Year: **Nicole Farhi** (Fashion Designer)

Chef of the Year: **Pierre Gagnaire** (Sketch)

Rising Star of the Year: **Hélène Darroze** (Chef, The Connaught)

CEO of the Year: **Jean-François Cécillon** (former Chairman & CEO, EMI Music International)

Banker of the Year: **Yoël Zaoui** (Head of the EMEA Investment Banking Division, Goldman Sachs)

Talent of the Year: **Anne Brugière** (Singer and songwriter)



## Nicolas Anelka

### Footballer, Chelsea FC

*Nicolas has excellent aerial ability and technique. He plays with personality and intensity. He has it all, he is a great player".*

Carlo Ancelotti, Chelsea manager

Nicolas Anelka currently plays as a striker for Chelsea in the English Premier League. He is also a regular player with the French national team.

### Career and Achievements

- Nicolas Anelka began his career at Paris St-Germain before moving to Arsenal at 17 in early 1997. He won the PFA Young Player of the Year Award the following season. Nicolas demonstrated his explosive pace and finishing ability, helping the team to the 'Double' in 1998, scoring in the FA Cup final victory over Newcastle.
- Real Madrid signed him for £23 million in 1999, a record fee. In his only season in Spain, Nicolas Anelka claimed the Champions League trophy, playing in the final Madrid 3-0 ran victory over Valencia.
- After just 12 months at the Bernabéu, Anelka returned to Paris St-Germain and, in 18 months, scored 18 goals before a loan spell at Liverpool under fellow Frenchman Gérard Houllier.
- Anelka set his eyes upon the English Premier League once more and joined Manchester City for the start of the 2002/03 season. Anelka found the net regularly, notching up 46 goals during his two-and-a-half year stay. A penalty, both won and scored by him in October 2004, was responsible for Chelsea's only league defeat in the club's first championship-winning season under José Mourinho.
- After three seasons in Manchester he moved to Fenerbahçe for a season before returning to England to join Bolton Wanderers. Nicolas's time at Fenerbahçe was very successful. He averaged a goal in just over every three games. His form remained consistent at the Reebok Stadium.
- Nicolas has been a regular member of the French squad over the last decade, scoring 11 times in 43 appearances. He was a key member of the France side that lifted the 2000 European Championship and part of the squad that played in Euro 2008.
- Nicolas Anelka transferred to Chelsea from Bolton for a three-and-a-half year deal in January 2008. The start of his first half-season at Chelsea involved plugging the large gap left by Didier Drogba's call-up to Africa, and he scored the winner in an FA Cup game at Wigan in his third appearance. The 2008/09 season started successfully as Nicolas raced to the top of the Premier League goal-scoring charts. Anelka's all-round game has drawn plaudits as he has dropped deeper and wider to provide assists, notably to Drogba against Liverpool in the Champions League and Fulham in domestic action.



## Roland Mouret Fashion Designer

Over the last nine years Roland Mouret has firmly established himself as a leading light in international design.

With awards including British Designer of the Year at the Elle Style Awards and a record three nominations at the Lycra British fashion awards, including designer of the year, his work is recognised and praised both within and outside the industry for its originality and his unique vision of women's sensuality.

Roland continues to draw upon his eclectic background for his inspiration and creative perspective.

### Career and Achievements

- Born in 1961 in Lourdes, this son of a French butcher has emerged from the fashion scenes of Paris and London working as an artistic director, model and stylist. He presented his first collection during London Fashion Week in February 1998 and received huge critical acclaim, with *Collezioni* giving him his first cover.
- Having initially been established as one of the leaders of the Demi-Couture movement, Roland evolved his technique of draping and structure to meet the growing demands of modern ready to wear. He and his team built Roland Mouret Designs Ltd. with worldwide recognition including his catwalk shows in New York, the famous "Galaxy Dress" and dressing numerous international stars including Scarlett Johansson, Nicole Kidman, Cate Blanchett and Demi Moore. At the beginning of 2006 Roland left Roland Mouret Designs Ltd.
- In September 2006 Roland Mouret entered into a new partnership with Simon Fuller's 19 Entertainment enabling him to rethink how, when and where to create and show his collections. In July 2007 his new 'RM' satellite collection was presented off schedule to press and buyers in Paris during Haute Couture. The timing of his show was chosen to enable clients to place their collection orders early on in the season and ensure the delivery of these clothes to the stores in the shortest timeframe possible. The RM collection consisted of the ultimate 21 'must have' designer pieces based around the designer's signature techniques.
- The second 'RM' collection was shown in Paris in January 2008, followed by the third in July 2008. For March 2009, Mouret returned to the RTW schedule to show his 'RM' line – a natural evolution for the label. However, in keeping with Mouret's desire to offer the customer a quicker delivery, the collection was sold in advance of the show. This means that Mouret's Autumn/Winter 2009 collection will be delivered in store within three months of having been shown on the runway. The concept is more apparent for Spring/Summer 2010, when the collection will be shown in October and deliver just a month later, in November.
- In October 2008, Mouret introduced a new collection – RM Bespoke Limited Edition. Based on a combination of the designer's signature draping techniques and his distinctive dress silhouette, a selection of key retailers were offered the opportunity to create their own limited edition dress in an exclusive colour and fabric. At the beginning of 2009, two new elements were also introduced to the RM collection: Edition and Jersey. Completing the womenswear offering, a knitwear collection was also shown as part of the AW09 collection, which will be on sale from June 2009. A menswear collection is in the pipeline.



## Raymond Blanc Chef

*"Like my father before me, I am a very passionate person, with boundless energy and tremendous willpower."*

Raymond Blanc is one of the UK's most respected chefs.

His hotel-restaurant in Oxfordshire, Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons, has two Michelin stars and scores 8/10 in the Good Food Guide.

### Career and Achievements

- Born in Besançon in eastern France, between Burgundy and the Jura mountains, Raymond Blanc started his career in England as a waiter before opening his first UK restaurant in Oxford, Les Quat' Saisons, with his wife Jenny in 1977. Raymond was inspired by his mother who used fresh and seasonal produce to prepare excellent meals for her family.  
Les Quat' Saisons was an overnight success, winning him Egon Ronay Restaurant of the Year, prestigious Michelin stars and a host of other distinctions.
- In 1981 Raymond Blanc opened a chain of bakeries and patisseries called Maison Blanc, which supply Harrods and many top London restaurants with authentic French bread and patisseries.
- In 1984 Raymond Blanc opened Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons in Great Milton, Oxford. Le Manoir is the only country house hotel in the UK to have retained two Michelin Stars for over 25 years. It "is as beautiful as a tale of Lewis Carroll" commented Gilles Pudlowski, a famous restaurant critic and journalist.  
In 1998 Raymond Blanc and top interior designer Emily Todhunter redeveloped Le Manoir's 15th Century Manor to meet the demands of the third Millennium.  
Sir Terence Conran commented that "Raymond Blanc has transformed his Manoir aux Quat' Saisons into a hymn of contemporary style. Gone are the heavy chintzes, billowing swags and over-gilded ornamentation and in their place is light and comfortable modernity".
- In 1991, Raymond established 'The Raymond Blanc Cookery School' which provides both enthusiastic amateurs and professional cooks the opportunity to develop their skills whilst learning some of Raymond Blanc's secrets.
- In 1996 Raymond Blanc opened his first Le Petit Blanc brasserie in Oxford. Another three brasseries were opened in the subsequent years. They became the only brasseries in the UK to achieve the Michelin Bib Gourmand.  
Le Petit Blanc Brasseries were later re-launched as Brasserie Blanc, offering French classic and modern dishes made with fresh, seasonal ingredients at affordable prices. There are now eight Brasserie Blanc in England.
- Over the past few years, Raymond Blanc has written a selection of best sellers, including 'Cooking for Friends', 'A Blanc Christmas', the Sunday Times bestseller 'Recipes from Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons', 'Blanc Vite' and 'Foolproof French Cookery'.



## Geoffroy de la Bourdonnaye CEO, Liberty

*"Everything we do is edited, exclusive and adventurous. Avant-garde means: if you can't beat them, don't join them."*

Geoffroy de la Bourdonnaye is the current CEO of Liberty, one of the UK's most exclusive and best loved fashion brands.

### Career and Achievements

- Geoffroy joined Liberty in July 2007 from LVMH where he had served 4 years as President of Christian Lacroix house which he revitalised before selling it to a third party.
- Geoffroy's strategy has been to unite the four arms of the business – Liberty art fabrics, Liberty of London, the flagship store, Liberty.co.uk – within a central brand allowing them to use each other's strengths. He restructured the company and put in place a world-class team of industry experts to revive Liberty's original ethos of creating a forum where the finest and the rarest incarnations of design can meet.
- In early 2009, Geoffroy masterminded Liberty's fashion renaissance. On 15th February, world-renowned actress Freida Pinto inaugurated the flagship store's three entirely refitted floors and brand new speciality areas including the scarf room, a fast-paced Bazaar for ultimate gift shopping, a fine fashion jewellery space and a completely redesigned womenswear international fashion offer.
- Ever since this renaissance, Liberty has defied gravity with sales growth of almost 20% in the first half of 2009, a remarkable feat in the midst of a worldwide economic downturn.
- Geoffroy's piece de resistance for autumn / winter 2009 was a collaboration with Hermes to create an ephemeral shop in the Liberty scarf room. This 'entente cordiale' saw Hermes creative director of silks Bali Barret create an exclusive line of scarves and ties marrying the fabric and prints of two of the world's most beloved brands and introduce them to a different audience using a number of exciting animations over a period of six weeks only.
- Geoffroy's long-term vision for Liberty is a focus on the inherent DNA of the brand, using its heritage as a platform for innovation. Love and Rebellion will be omnipresent in 2010 as Liberty embraces the themes of 'Flower Power'.
- Before joining LVMH, Geoffroy held general management, retail and marketing positions at L'Oreal, PepsiCo and The Walt Disney Company. In his 13 years at Disney, he was in charge of the Consumer products division for Europe and of the 60 stores and supply chain operations of Disneyland Resort Paris.
- A native of Lyon, Geoffroy is married with four children. He holds an MBA from Insead and a BA from both EM Lyon and HEC Montreal. His interests include football, fashion photography, food and wine and mountaineering.
- Geoffroy has lived in London for eight years and he is a board member of the Research Centre for Fashion at Central St Martins College of Arts and Design in London. He also teaches at IFM, the Paris-based fashion management school.