



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Lou Ferrusi of Fortino's Crowned Ontario's Finest Butcher in the 11th Annual Competition

GUELPH, ON – October 28, 2024– Ontario's Finest Butcher Competition hosted by Meat & Poultry Ontario, now in its 11th year, is a celebration of the craft of butchery and the outstanding skills of Ontario's artisans. This year's competition featured top butchers from across Ontario who displayed their exceptional talents and creativity with the final competition taking place this past weekend at the Meat Industry Expo with the winner being announced at the Meat & Poultry Awards Gala.

The competition was fierce, with three talented butcher finalists, including Lou Ferrusi from Fortinos Stoney Creek, Dylan Miedema from Townsends Butchers, and Sully Hakimi from Halenda's Meat. Inspired by the theme of 'Global Inspiration' each of the three final contestants were challenged to transform three surprise proteins into stunning displays inspired by global cuisines and flavours from around the world in 45 minutes. Judged on details of workmanship, and merchandising each butcher infused their creations with personal touches, showcasing the rich traditions and flavours from different cultures and presented to the crowd and judges. It was a masterclass in skill and creativity by each contestant. Their displays highlighted the quality of Ontario meats and invited customers to explore new culinary adventures, reminding us that every cut has a story to tell.

It was Lou Ferrusi's seasoned and skillful butchery skills, creative storytelling and excellence in presentation and time management that set him apart, securing his position as this year's champion. The products - boneless chuck roll, a whole chicken, and boneless pork loin - for the finals were donated by Abate Packers, Ontario Beef, and Domingos with pantry items supplied by Malabar Ingredients.

Fortino's is proud to congratulate Lou Ferrusi, winner of the 2024 Ontario's Finest Butcher competition. Starting in a small family operation he was trained from "hoof to plate" and has now been a meat manager with Fortinos for the past 20 years. "A butcher for over 40 years, Lou mentors new meat cutters and plays an essential role in our in-store meat cutter training program. Well done, Lou!" says Guido Alfonsi, VP of Merchandising and Marketing, Fortinos.

Lou showed his appreciation by saying "It's an honour for me to win an award for something that I've truly enjoyed doing for the past 40 years. Thanks to Meat & Poultry Ontario, for organizing a great competition, and to all my colleagues and competitors. A big thanks to Fortinos for supporting me through this competition!"

Franco Naccarato, the Executive Director for Meat & Poultry Ontario (MPO), expressed his enthusiasm, stating, "This competition highlights the exceptional skill, dedication, and artistry that butchers bring to their craft. Lou Ferrusi's performance was inspiring, demonstrating the mastery and creativity that sets Ontario's finest apart. His commitment to excellence and his ability to honour traditional techniques while embracing innovative flavours is what truly makes this competition a celebration of the best in Ontario."

The first elimination round took place at Handtmann Canada in Waterloo on September 9th. In that round each competitor was given 30 minutes to break down a pork bone-in leg, butt, and loin. Competitors were judged on specific core competencies such seaming, tying, slicing, boning and trimming and frenching in addition to professionalism and workmanship. The degree of boning and the choice of retail cuts from the remaining materials was the competitor's choice. The pork used in the elimination round was graciously provided by Conestoga Meat Packers and over 700 lbs was generously donated on their behalf to Second Harvest.

This year's judges included six well-respected industry professionals including, Mario Henry from The Yes Group, Steiven Canclini from Reiser Canada, Stefan Seher of Handtmann Canada, Peter Baarda of J & G Quality Meats, Jamie Waldron from Jamie Waldron's Butchershop, Gerhard Metzger from Metzger Meats.

In addition to donning the official champion's jacket, Ferrusi took home a prize package valued at over \$3000 including a Minimax Big Green Egg™ Ultimate Kit, Eno La Plancha Grill, a \$250 cash prize from The Yes Group and a Marriott gift card.

In case you missed it, this year's competition footage can be watched on [youtube](#) and also follow MPO on [Instagram here](#)

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**Competition proudly supported by:**





## **ABOUT MPO**

Meat & Poultry Ontario (MPO) is the representative voice of Ontario's meat industry. Our members are independent businesses proud to serve the communities they live and work in. The association is comprised of meat and poultry processors, wholesalers, and retailers; industry suppliers; and not-for-profit organizations that support MPO's objectives.

Ontario's meat and poultry sector employs 25% of Ontario's food and beverage processing industry — the single largest manufacturing employer in Ontario — and generates \$11.2 billion of the province's \$45 billion food and beverage processing industry revenue.

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