

# CERN's scientists bask in joy of 'God Particle' Nobel

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Scientists at the lab which discovered the "God particle" popped champagne Tuesday, ecstatic over the [Nobel Physics Prize award](#) for its theoreticians Peter Higgs and Francois Englert.

Scores of staff at the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN) massed to watch the announcement by the Nobel jury on a live-feed, erupting into applause as the two physicists' names were read out in Stockholm.

"It's a great day for [particle physics](#). It's a huge achievement," said Rolf Heuer, head of the lab which straddles the French and Swiss borders on the outskirts of Geneva.

After heaping praise upon Britain's Higgs and Belgium's Englert, Heuer raised a glass to the crowd assembled in CERN's cafeteria.

"It's your work that allowed the Nobel academy to give this prize. You should give some applause to you guys," he said, beaming.

"I'm really proud of you guys."

Experiments at CERN's 27-kilometre (17-mile) circular lab, which lies 100 metres (325 feet) underground, last year identified what is believed to be the Higgs Boson—the long-sought maker of mass, theorised in the 1960s.

CERN's Large Hadron Collider (LHC) flushed out the elusive particle by crashing proton beams together to create snapshots of the Big Bang, producing a bewildering amount of data.

"Everybody should be happy that we discovered this particle, because now we know why we exist, at least partly," Heuer later told reporters.

Joe Incandela, spokesman for on the CERN teams that helped identify the boson, said all concerned were "elated".

"We don't go into this expecting a Nobel prize," he added.

CERN's experiments involved over 3,000 people from around the world.

The team members included John Paul Chou, a professor of particle physics from Rutgers University in the United States, who has been undertaking research at CERN for the past five years.

"It's a great day," 33-year-old Chou told AFP, as he brandished two bottles of champagne.

"The prize goes to two people, but at the same time it's a recognition of physics done by dozens of others. Hundreds, and even thousands of people worked together to make this happen. So in a sense we all share in this prize. I'm stuck for words to express the significance of it."

Many of CERN's researchers are PhD students.

Among those celebrating Tuesday was Kelly Beernaerts, 25, who has been at the lab for three years.

"I wasn't expecting this at all," Beernaerts, who like Englert is from Belgium.

"I'm very proud to be part of this," she told AFP.

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