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APRIL 2023

THE MAGAZINE CHEFS LOVE TO READ

# gulf gourmet

volume 18, issue 4

## DASH OF THE DECADE

Witness the decade-long whirlwind success of Executive Chef **Dwarika Bhatt** of Zero Gravity Dubai

### SALON RULES

EXCLUSIVE LISTING  
OF THE RULES AND  
REGULATIONS FOR THE  
LARGEST CULINARY  
COMPETITION IN  
THE REGION

### OANJO'S GUARDIAO

Chef Sergio Cruz shares what makes him OAnjo's guardian angel



### Q&A

Exclusive interview with **David Anderson**, Executive Chef of Black Tap



### THE ZEN OF PASTRY

Pastry Chef **Sudath Rodrigo** brings a sweet recipe made with patience to learn and relish



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# president's station

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Dear fellow chefs, ladies and gentlemen,

I hope everyone is enjoying a good Month of Ramadan and hope you all have some quality time to spend with your families and friends. Wishing all our Muslim Friends, Colleagues and Supporters a Blessed Holy Month.

I recently returned from Delhi where I was invited to head the Jury for the Culinary Competition of AAHAR, the International Food and Hospitality Fair. I want to congratulate Chef Davinder Kumar and Vivek Saggarr for the show's success. Around 500 competitors from all over India displayed their outstanding skills. Again, congratulations to the whole ICF Team for the stellar show.

While in Delhi, I was also invited to the Global Millets Conference. I would like to congratulate Manjit Gill and the IFCA Team for the successful launch of Milletology, a book full of great millet recipes. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be part of it.

At this stage, I also want to thank Chef Majed Al Sabagh and the Team from the Syrian Guild for their tremendous support and work in Syria in the earthquake-stricken area. We will share more information in our May issue.

Meanwhile, we have entered the final stage of our European Legumes Competition. We received many great videos of traditional and modern recipes prepared with Canned European Legumes. Good luck to all the competitors.

I am certain many of you are training for our International Salon Culinaire in Sharjah, 29 -31 May 2023. If you still need to register, register asap, as



special Live Cooking Classes are filling up fast. Make sure to take advantage of this opportunity; we also expect many international competitors. Find all classes, rules and regulations in this issue. Please register with Madam Josephine at [emiratesculinaryguild@gmail.com](mailto:emiratesculinaryguild@gmail.com)

I am personally looking forward to some of our New Classes and Relaunch Classes, like Pasta by Barilla, Butchery class by MLA, Potatoes USA, the Vegan Class by Violife, and many more. We are also especially looking forward to our New Classes for the Culinary Students Trophy.

This Class is only offered to culinary students, interns, and kitchen helpers.

Do not miss witnessing all our young international chefs who will compete for the Alen Thong Trophy, supported by Mr. Rajan and the Team at JM Foods, and

of course, the Global Chef Semi-Finals, where the chefs in 4 categories vie for the final space for Singapore 2024, the World Final during the Worldchefs Congress.

Please visit [www.emiratesculinaryguild.net](http://www.emiratesculinaryguild.net) to browse our magazines' previous issues and see the latest happenings on the events calendar. And visit [www.facebook.com/wacsyongchefs](https://www.facebook.com/wacsyongchefs) for young chefs to be in contact with over 4000 chefs across the globe.

Do not miss to watch and subscribe our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/c/TheEmiratesCulinaryGuild>

Please make sure to check out the company profile of our corporate members. We sincerely appreciate your support. Also, look at the Friends of the Guild pages to discover about all our supporters.

Thank you to Chef Belal Kattan and Southern Sun Hotel Abu Dhabi Team, who hosted our March Meeting.

Culinary Regards,  
**Uwe Micheel**  
President, Emirates Culinary Guild





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# Chairman'snote

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**A**pril sees us in the holy month of Ramadan in the region, and we wish all our members and supporters Ramadan Mubarak. The industry is going from strength to strength in the region, and we see more and more business opportunities throughout the region, which is great news for us all.

We still see a strong demand for talent, and the industry needs to look very carefully at talent, retention, and recognition of its key asset: its people. We will be bringing you in the coming months some more insights on this topic. The awards season is upon us, and we see some great recognition of our homegrown brands across many award platforms. Congratulations to all the teams that have been recognised this season. In our upcoming issues, we will also be talking about tech within the industry and our own Foodverse platform soon.

How often has someone advised you to "follow your passion"? This ubiquitous phrase has filled the words of multiple orations and advertisements, but the underlying meaning behind it often goes unnoticed.

However, many do indeed understand the power of these three words. Bringing this adage to reality are the incredible life stories of two chefs, who are putting the UAE on the global culinary map. At



age 43, Chef Sergio Cruz is the Chef de Cuisine of the contemporary Portuguese Nikkei restaurant. Anyone who visits OAnjo restaurant cannot leave without a handful of memories and mouthful lingering tastes from Japanese and Portuguese cuisine. Read about his account of what it takes to become a chef in the late 30s; the surprising answer lies within the pages of this copy.

We also have inspirational words from Executive Chef Dwarika Bhatt, who, in contrast to Chef Sergio, started his culinary journey at a young age and shares his insights on achieving consistency on his plate and in life by creating unique dining experiences.

The fact that they both like being in the kitchen unites them in a special way. All they wanted was to slake their thirst for culinary knowledge.

Also featured in the Pastry Mastery story is Chef Sudath Rodrigo from Madinat Jumeirah C&I. He shared with us a delectable dessert recipe combining coconut, white chocolate, lime, mango, and raspberry as he spoke about the importance of maintaining patience and achieving zen when it comes to cooking in the cold kitchen.

This issue also includes a brief, extraordinary interview with Executive Chef David Anderson of Black Tap and a collection of images from various events in and around the Middle East.

We have also introduced new contacts for the magazine; please email us at [info@gulfgourmet.org](mailto:info@gulfgourmet.org) for any information you would like to know.

If you are a young, talented chef reading this, we hope you will be participating at the Salon Culinaire 2023. Do read the rules and regulations of the Competition, which are exclusively listed in this issue. And to the young boys and girls participating in the competition, we wish you the very best. Keep learning and enjoy reading the issue.

**Andy Cuthbert**  
*Chairman and Editor*



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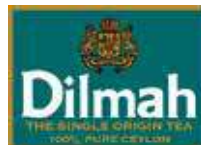
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The extraordinary success of Siniora's well-established and long-standing brand traces its heritage back to its founding in Jerusalem in 1920, the immortal city with which Siniora has been synonymous for almost a century. In 1992, and due to the growing demand for Siniora's superior-quality delicatessen meat products, a factory was established in Sahab, Jordan, under the name of Siniora Food Industries. After decades of success, in 1996, the Arab Palestinian Investment Company (APIC) acquired Siniora's two branches. Through APIC's substantial investments, Siniora witnessed an exponential increase in resources and capacities that allowed it to add new product lines and integrate the latest technologies that exceeded the highest standards of quality in food production, supplying markets beyond Jordan and Palestine into Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, Omar, Yemen and Bahrain. Today, Siniora operates some of the most advanced factories in the world within the processed meat industry.

In 2011, the company bought Unium, consolidating Siniora Food Industries as the dominant market leader within Jordan and Palestine for both canned meats and cold cuts.

In 2015, production lines were upgraded to include frozen foods, which complement the company's large assortment of cold cuts and canned meat, including mortadella, turkey, roasted meats, luncheon meats, salami, sausages, canned meats, frozen meats.

In 2016, Siniora acquired the Dubai-based Diamond Meat Processing Company (Al-Masa) located in UAE, a move that further increased the company's reach in the GCC market.

In 2021 Siniora acquired the Turkish company "Tarakya company for the manufacture and trade of meat" with a brand called "Polonez" to add a new Milestone in its growth strategy to tackle new markets.

By 2021 Siniora expanded product portfolio to satisfy the diversified needs of customers and produced "Badeel" Gluten free and soya free plant – based brand.

# newsbites



## Dhiraj Kumar is promoted to Director of Food and Beverage

Fujairah Rotana Resort and Spa, Al Aqah Beach, has promoted Dhiraj Kumar as the director of food and beverage. He will be in charge of all hotel food and beverage operations in his new position. With more than 14 years of experience in the industry, he will be managing the banquet business as well as Waves, Sharkeys, Tropicana, BarMuda, Al Falaj Lounge, and Mozaïque.

His prior employment history includes stints at the Westin Hyderabad, Westin Delhi, Westin Abu Dhabi, Le Méridien Dubai, Sheraton Bahrain, Marriott Jaipur, YOLO Experiences Ghana, and Salalah Rotana Oman, among other hotels.

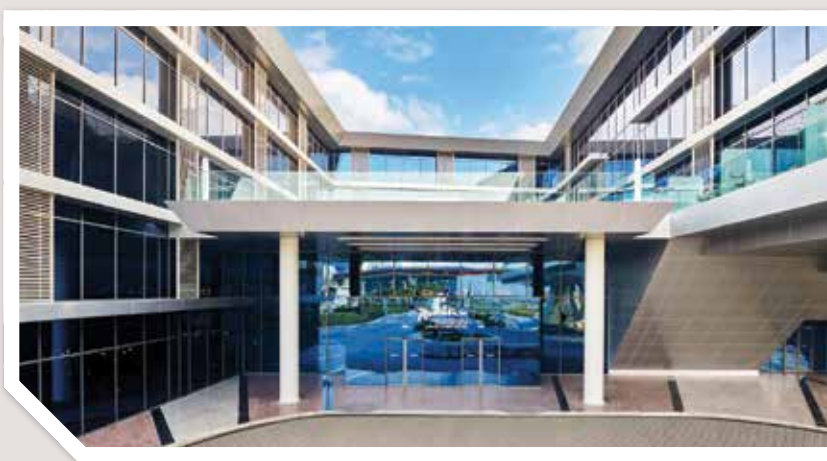
## Radisson Hotel Group announces the opening of the Radisson Blu Hotel, Riyadh Convention & Exhibition Center

Located in the capital city of Saudi Arabia, within walking distance of the city center, the Radisson Blu Hotel, Riyadh Convention & Exhibition Center in Riyadh will form an integral part of the group.

"I am delighted to lead the dedicated team of this new hotel. We are proud of our dynamic and multi-cultural team that welcomes all guests with true Saudi Arabian hospitality as we build genuine relationships with our guests and create memorable moments," Aldert van Zyl, General Manager of the Radisson Blu Hotel at the Riyadh

Convention & Exhibition Center, said in a statement.

The hotel will offer two food and beverage venues. A range of coffees from a nearby roastery, Camel Step, in addition to an international cuisine with some local flavours will be served at the Al Diriyah Restaurant and Lounge. For those wishing to enjoy a night out with gourmet and barbecue comfort meals in a tapas-style setting while watching significant sporting events from around the world on a big screen, The Terrace restaurant, which is located on the second level, would be the ideal choice.



## Crowne Plaza Resort Salalah appoints Anthony Najm as F&B manager

In his new position, Anthony Najm will work to enhance the hotel's offerings to include more activations.

He began his career as a waiter and worked his way up to cluster

operating manager in charge of food and beverage at the Crowne Plaza and Holiday Inn in Kuwait. Since then, he has amassed a wealth of experience, having worked in both Kuwait and Lebanon.







## Gargash Group appoints Luigi Vespero as F&B Group Director

**L**uigi Vespero has been appointed Group Director of Food and Beverage by Gargash Group. As the new F&B director, he will oversee the operations of the outlets, including Hotel Cartagena, Weslodge Business Bay & City Walk, Farzi Dubai, AMG Kaffeehaus, and The Artisan, and handle the vertical development through expansion.

Prior to his current role, he worked as the F&B/Culinary Director at the Waldorf Astoria DIFC. He has also won an impressive array of awards over the years, including "Chef of the Year" at the BBC Good Food Middle East Awards 2018, 'French Specialty Chef' at the Pro Chef Middle East Awards 2017, and more. In his current role, he will also launch new concepts and steer the growth of multi-outlet culinary operations.



## Mondrian Hotels set to debut in Riyadh in 2026

**M**ondrian Riyadh Al Malga Hotel and Residences will open in Riyadh with innovative culinary and mixology experiences in the Kingdom, including three new restaurants and lounges designed by Ennismore's in-house F&B concept studio, Carte Blanché.

The hotel will also have 25 one-bedroom, 35 two-bedroom, and 10 three-bedroom serviced apartments

in addition to the 130 conventional rooms and suites. Mondrian Riyadh Al Malga is under construction with owner Olayan Financing Company (OFC) and is scheduled to debut in 2026.

According to reports, Mondrian Riyadh Al Malga, owned by Olayan Financing Corporation (OFC), will partner with Ennismore to expand on their vision and alliance by introducing Ennismore lifestyle brands to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

## Online food delivery platform Talabat launches an experiential dine-in concept

**P**opular online food delivery platform Talabat has opened its innovative, two-story dine-in concept in Dubai following its success at Expo 2020 Dubai.

The Talabat Kitchen delivers an interactive user journey in modern surroundings, reflecting the company's vision for the future of cloud kitchens. Guests can order their food via "SmartDine," Talabat's own "Scan, Order, and Pay" dining solution, and pick it up from contactless smart lockers using special QR codes, offering a digital and cutting-edge experience.

"The innovative Talabat kitchen is

our first in the region to offer dine-in settings to customers outside of Expo 2020 Dubai, where our two-storey cloud kitchen served hundreds and thousands of visitors during the six months of the show. It is built with the consumer in mind to give them access to over 25 brands in a contemporary-designed space while allowing them to enjoy a convenient and tech-oriented dining experience. The spacious seating area can welcome more than 160 visitors. We look forward to showcasing the future of food delivery and to bringing this concept to new areas," Samrat Sharma, MENA Director of Kitchen Operations at Talabat, said in a statement.

To get your chef or company related news featured in this section, email [editor@gulfgourmet.org](mailto:editor@gulfgourmet.org)



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# OAnjo GUARDIÃO

Since joining OAnjo restaurant, Chef **Sergio Cruz** has already made inroads by bringing together an eclectic blend of Japanese and Portuguese. Growing up in Lisbon, the cultural shift was tremendous. But he was drawn to the idea of learning and didn't want the quality of fusion dishes to be lost in translation



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After spending years as a marketing manager, Sergio Cruz decided to shift gears and study culinary arts. Looking back on his colorful career - from working for sports newspapers to serving as a project manager, his heart ultimately led him to the passion he found in the kitchen. "I was in my late 30s at the time, but I was fueled by the desire to learn something new," he reminisces, reflecting on his past with no regrets.

Transformed by his exploration in the kitchen, Chef Sergio's vibrant and bold personality shines through in his dishes. His resilience and adaptability exemplify his zest for life, allowing him to reinvent himself continually and emerge from challenges. His story serves as an inspiration, making it clear that it's never too late to chase your dreams.

Chef Sergio's love for cooking can be traced back to his childhood memories of family gatherings in Lisbon. As a young boy, he was captivated by the celebratory atmosphere, engaging in cooking activities and savoring the delectable seafood dishes that came with it. The aroma of barbecued fish and meat filled the air, delighting his senses.



A series of experimentation goes behind the ideas. The flavor is most important, and the dish has to align with the concept

These cherished memories of witnessing his aunts and mother prepare his favorite desserts in the kitchen sparked his curiosity about the creative process and ingredients involved. With a solid nostalgic connection to the bustling kitchens of his youth, it was no surprise that a teen Sergio Cruz eventually gravitated towards laying the foundation of his future passion.

Years down the road, he works to express his love of food through his role at OAnjo restaurant as the Chef de Cuisine, where he delves deep into the gastronomic psyche of his customers to

put the best flavors blending east and west in his menu.

### MEDLEY OF MENU

OAnjo, which translates to "angel" in both Japanese and Portuguese, on the rooftop of Sheraton Mall of Emirates, beckons guests to make them feel as if they are touching the sky. Exuding the essence of Asian-Oriental with a hint of Southern European influence, the Portuguese Nikkei concept restaurant draws inspiration from the rich traditions and histories of these two cultures to craft a menu that awakens the memories of the respective lands.

"While there has been a recent influx of Japanese-Peruvian concepts in Dubai, in this case, the concept was inspired by both Portugal and Japan as they had things in common, from tempura to castella," says the 43-year-old chef.

The fusion menu at OAnjo and its serene space will surely throw you for a loop. However, amidst this vibrant dining atmosphere, you'll discover the menu doesn't solely spotlight fusion dishes. Be it seafood rice, duck rice, or octopus Nikkei, every dish involves a fusion of techniques and ingredients.

Recasting traditional ideas in modern style while simultaneously catering to different tastes without diluting the authentic flavors requires one to know the nitty-gritty of lesser-known cooking styles. "Each dish here is designed to transport guests back to either Portugal or Japan, allowing them to savor a harmonious combination of flavors for a few enchanting hours in the evening."

One particular standout for Chef Sergio among the many pleasing favorites on the menu is the seafood rice, as it harkens back to his childhood. Now he brings the recipe to life at OAnjo, providing an authentic taste of tradition with a contemporary touch in every bite. "My mother and grandma used to make the Portuguese-style duck rice in a tray and bake it until it's crispy on the top. Here, we





employ a distinct method whereby a stone bowl is warmed, cooked rice is added, and the rice is mixed in the bowl until crispy in front of the guests, reminiscent of how my grandparents prepared it."

Given that the casual fine dining restaurant must deliver a diverse palette, developing concepts that reflect the right cost plan is imperative. As a chef de cuisine, he often faces a myriad of challenges, including menu development, revenue growth, and execution of the business.

In between the hustle and bustle of the kitchen, balancing revenue generation and production cost comes naturally to Chef Sergio. His vision has allowed him to create fusion dishes without losing money on concepts. "Food costing is what I have been doing the past week," smiles chef Sergio as he explains how he constantly keeps tabs on food percentages to price the menus, minimizing waste and reducing inefficiencies.

"To determine effective food costs, it is essential to have a sales report. So, one has to keep a check on quantity and quality. Say, while buying a frozen octopus or other seafood, it could be six kilos but eventually boil down to yield around two to three kilos, representing a challenge. The menu must constantly evolve, resonating with diners, incorporating new techniques to stay ahead in this competitive industry."

Ever the risk taker, he counts on his discerning taste palate and thought processes to develop the dishes. Never one to shy away from a challenge, he eagerly took the lead in launching the lunch concept at the venue, envisioning ideas and collaborating with chefs to learn about interesting additions to the dish that garners curious food enthusiasts to the restaurant. "A series of experimentation goes behind the ideas. The flavor is most important, and the dish has to align with the concept. When I think about a dish, a process starts with cooking, analyzing potential



## A chef needs to pay heed to even smaller details in the kitchen

additions, reviewing my presentation sketches, and finally, plating the dish."

During this thoughtful process, he incorporates guest feedback and strives to understand their preferences. "In these four months, I have got a picture of the market, what the guests preferred, and their take on the blend of cuisine. To me, introducing Portuguese cuisine and culture to this eclectic culinary hub is truly an honor."

Tying this knowledge together, as a pragmatic leader of a six-member team, he believes in training and giving the chefs all the tools they need to thrive in their roles. "A chef needs to pay heed to even smaller details in the kitchen, as sometimes you don't realize them but they are equally important to have

consistency in the food so the next time the guest visits again, the dish should taste the same."

## COURAGE TO FOLLOW TRUE CALLING

Growing up in Lisbon's alleyways and bewitching structures, the thought of becoming a professional chef never crossed his mind in his early years. After high school, teen Sergio pursued a BA in Marketing Management, and upon graduation, he started working as a Marketing Manager.

However, deep down, the excitement he craved from his career was absent. "I had a promising start in my professional life, working as a project manager and eventually reaching a management position shortly after graduation." Then, something changed; he began yearning for a break from the mundane 9 to 5 routine with the eagerness to learn new things as he felt some kind of inexplicable excitement stirring inside him for cooking.

Facing the challenges of the culinary world head-on, young chef Sergio was no stranger to the stress that often enveloped the kitchen. He recognized the sacrifices involved in pursuing a

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career as a renowned chef, which included grueling hours of effort. However, this did not deter him – the prospect of crafting inventive, out-of-the-box dishes and tantalizing the taste buds that invigorated his decision to become a chef.

Upon solidifying his career choice, he wasted no time leaping into action. Although he began his journey later than most aspiring chefs, never once did he consider renouncing his culinary ambitions. Armed with a clear goal in mind, he diligently researched various courses, seeking the ideal program that would provide a strong foundation in culinary basics and emphasize practical, hands-on training experiences.

"I first started with washing dishes, so stewarding is equally important to me. Working and understanding various roles, I knew the next stop for me was choosing the right internship for a head start in a career."

After studying for a year, he interned at a five-star hotel in Lisbon. That meant he found himself on an age-diverse team,



**When I think about a dish, a process starts with cooking, analyzing potential additions, reviewing my presentation sketches, and finally, plating the dish**

where different perspectives came into play while preparing dishes and making decisions. "Despite different ages, we shared a common drive to pursue what truly made us happy, and that's what brought us together as a team."

"Young people might have the advantage of starting early, whereas those who start later work twice as hard and absorb the knowledge much faster. At the same time, we have

life experience, which helps," he elaborates as he recalls working with a chef who was more or less his age and shared similar career experiences. It has been a way of life for him to compete for jobs and opportunities, but he always succeeded in tackling challenges despite the generation gap in the workplace.

Aside from his tenacity, Chef Sergio attributes his success to many chefs he has worked with. "Even today, I am in touch with the team, and I always stick to my superior chefs and mentors for advice."

After a brief sojourn as an intern at Sofitel Lisbon Liberdade and growing through the ranks of a demi chef, he was given a chance to join a Michelin-starred luxury hotel.

"I joined there as a chef de partie. The sprawling luxury hotel location included seven to eight restaurants. We were a limited team, but the standards were high."

When a recruitment drive for Germany was running from city to city, a vacancy for a four-star hotel caught Chef Sergio's eye, and he responded to the advertisement. He got through, leaving the sun and sand en route to work at Victor's Seehotel in Germany.

"During the four-month stint, I learned the German language and expanded my culinary expertise. Soon, I was offered the role of chef de partie in one of my must-visit countries, Switzerland."

To obtain a sense of the global work culture, Chef Sergio had brief stints in Switzerland, from 5-star hotels to a Michelin-star restaurant in Gstaad, where he learned the ropes of modifying recipes, giving them a contemporary spin. "My experiences while working in St. Mortiz, Zermatt, and Zurich gave me a diverse range of culinary skills, from discovering the peculiarities of seasonal ingredients to learning ayurvedic food concepts, helped me create a distinctive style of cooking."



A year later, his life took another 180-degree turn when he was offered to explore quintessential dining experiences in Dubai.

### INQUISITIVE GOALS

When he moved to Dubai, he took Lisbon along with him. Being a quick learner has helped Chef Sergio shine at his current workplace. Even when both the concept and he were new to the cityscape of gastronomy, he was up to confront the obstacles. With these attributes, Chef Sergio is someone everyone wants on their team.

But this happened gradually as he progressed towards his goal, consolidating knowledge and learning



To determine effective food costs, it is essential to have a sales report. So, one has to keep a check on quantity and quality

through every course that brought him from being in the kitchen to running it.

As for his personal goals, he shows no sign of fizzling out. Believing that age

is merely a number, he continues to run culinary marathons and take on new challenges with ease. Learning is a lifelong process, and his plan, even for the future, involves mastering new cuisines and techniques. "My goal is to grow as a chef but not too quickly, working with high-quality ingredients and grasping skills. Keeping a positive attitude and learning, as learning should never stop."

Ultimately, with unshakable determination and a zest for constant improvement, Chef Sergio's future in the culinary world appears brighter than ever. As he continues to expand his repertoire and grow both personally and professionally, he remains an awe-inspiring figure for aspiring chefs and food enthusiasts alike.

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# Tasting the American Story

In an exclusive interview Executive Chef **David Anderson** of the acclaimed craft burger and gourmet shake restaurant - Black Tap, shares his inspiration behind some of the restaurant's most popular menu items, his life beyond the kitchen, and advice for aspiring chefs

The hustle and bustle of the kitchen, coupled with the heat and long hours, make a chef's job challenging. Yet, mastering and embracing those hurdles, paves a path to success, believes Chef David Anderson. As the Executive Chef of Black Tap, he reveals about the trials and tribulations he dealt with to ascend the epicurean ladder.

## Could you tell us about your childhood and your parents/siblings?

I was born and raised in Milwaukie, Oregon into a family of seven – and I am the youngest of six boys and one girl.

For me, meals make memories – and my passion for food was ignited from a young age thanks to many mealtimes spent with my parents and siblings.

Growing up, we shared many precious moments around the table and each meal brought new conversations, laughter, memories, and more – especially the bigger family & friend gatherings, birthdays, and holiday celebrations.

I strongly believe food unites loved ones – and I pursued my culinary journey at the early age of 15, whereby I began working in a delicatessen and Italian restaurant in New Jersey, U.S.

## How were the early years as a chef? Was it a struggle?

A career as a chef is appealing to so



For all hungry newcomers, I would say, come eager, energetic, and with the willingness to learn. The art of cooking and creating is an evolution, not a revolution

many people because of its exciting and challenging environment in the kitchen. Plenty of mistakes were made, but mastering and embracing those mistakes humbly paved the way to my success.

## Tell us about your journey to becoming an Executive Chef.

After working at a delicatessen and Italian restaurant in New Jersey at the age of 15 and with a strong interest in moving up the culinary ladder, I spent the following years pursuing my dream, traveling around the coast of North America and honing my craft in a range of different set-ups, from concession stands to fast-casual outlets such as The Cheesecake Factory.

Over the last decade, I held senior

positions and steered restaurant openings all over the world, including the United States, Europe, and the Middle East (UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Lebanon, and Iraq).

Now, with over six years at Black Tap alone, I successfully launched 15 restaurants for the brand in the Middle East, leading pre-opening training and staff development. Moreover, I also supported restaurant opening operations when the first Black Tap debuted in Switzerland.

## What are the challenges of being an Executive Chef?

Challenges for any chef include maintaining consistency and developing as well as coaching the staff and managers alike. For both chefs and restaurateurs, my advice would be to let passion drive creativity and most importantly, maintain standards. The ultimate goal is to continue attracting more customers and create a loyal following in this competitive industry. The only way to do this is by ensuring every dish is delicious, memorable, and consistent!

## What is your advice to young chefs?

For all hungry newcomers, I would say, come eager, energetic, and with the willingness to learn. The art of cooking and creating is an evolution, not a revolution. Also, stay humble, positive, and most importantly, trust the process and have fun along the way, as the

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Most concepts today are flashy, bright, colorful, and futuristic. Plus, with so many openings across Dubai alone and competition is stiffer than ever before



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journey to success is more important than the destination itself – it's not a sprint; it is a marathon!

### **Tell us about your family.**

I'm 37 (years old and young), have been happily married for nearly four years, and have two beautiful children who call Dubai home.

### **Over the years in the F&B industry, what are your thoughts on the unique concepts behind a restaurant's success in Dubai?**

Everything is to the nines! Most concepts today are flashy, bright, colorful, and futuristic. Plus, with so many openings across Dubai alone and competition is stiffer than ever before, F&B professionals must keep abreast of the latest trends in 2023 to stay ahead of the curve.

At Black Tap, for example, we continue to offer great burgers as part of an extensive menu that caters to all tastebuds, which is quite unique for a burger joint. As a brand, we stay true to our concept and identity, but also constantly innovate to stay relevant to market trends. Black Tap generally is famous for dishing up the most eclectic burgers, and we don't compromise on taste or quality. For instance, two of our most popular Craft Burgers include the 'Cuban Burger' which takes up to 4 hours to roast, and 'The All-American Burger' made with a 200-gram quality beef patty and finished with a special sauce, lettuce, tomato, and deli pickles.

### **When did you decide to become a chef and particularly in the field of American cuisine, what inspired you?**

It was years of hard work, dedication, and passion that paved the way for where I am today. Cooking is my therapy, and I'm 100% committed to all things food – especially American cuisine as that's where my roots lie.

Never one to rest, I love to challenge myself, and I'm currently developing an exciting new menu at Black Tap that will be rolled out soon.



### **What is your favourite dish to prepare and that everyone loves?**

That's a hard one! At home, I love to make quick, easy, wholesome, and balanced meals. I also constantly experiment and play with flavors. My favorite things to prepare are sauces and or rubs. To me, the marinade is the king as it penetrates the meat to bring out rich flavors and tends to make it juicier.

### **What are some cooking tools you can't live without?**

Every chef has certain tools they simply can't live without. For me, a good sharp knife in the kitchen is indispensable.

### **As a passionate Executive Chef of an American restaurant, do you have a special technique in preparing bestsellers and innovative dishes?**

I'm an expert at making simple food but with a wow factor, and Black Tap is where I shine. Black Tap is real food for real people. It means we use the freshest locally sourced produce and ingredients wherever possible. We also champion signature homemade sauces for our award-winning burgers and whip up lighter-than-air whipped cream to complete our over-the-top CrazyShakes®.

### **What is your secret behind the success and how do you give back by training the staff?**

I'm passionate about teaching, I dedicate a lot of time to nurturing young talents. I constantly foster an atmosphere in which my team can grow and thrive. As a testament to this, members of my team who started out as stewards have worked their way up the ranks with my support and now hold more senior positions in Black Tap Riyadh, Abu Dhabi, and Erbil.

### **What is your inspiration behind the biggest Black Tap menu in the world?**

People want options here, and at Black Tap, our biggest selling point has been gathering resources from the US markets and implementing them to fit our consumer needs in the Middle East. We do this by introducing regional dishes that represent both Black Tap and the Middle East. This has shown tremendous success, especially in the UAE, as it currently holds the biggest Black Tap menu in the world, being a melting pot of various cultures.

### **As almost 40% of the menu is exclusive to only the Middle East, how do you create specials inspired by the traditional dishes of the region?**

We try to take Black Tap favorites from around the world and adapt them to fit local flavors. For example, not everything from America works here and vice versa, so it's about knowing your market and what your customers desire, to adapt whilst staying true to brand identity.






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# Dash of the Decade

Chef **Dwarika Bhatt** meticulously retraces his tumultuous journey as a teenager, the past 10 years as the Executive Chef at Zero Gravity Dubai, and how his amiable yet bold personality stamped his culinary game



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Upon encountering him, one might initially perceive Chef Dwarika Bhatt, with an array of thematic tattoos adorning his arms, as a rebellious culinary artist. However, this stereotype quickly dissipates as one discovers his tranquil and composed demeanor. Not only that, the other thing that surprises one is his lengthy list of resume comprising Dubai's esteemed hotel groups, showcasing his extensive and unparalleled expertise in the gastronomic realm.

This calm, soft-spoken chef was hand-picked for a pre-opening position in August 2013, and since then, he has skillfully managed an array of beach clubs, restaurants, and kitchen operations, deftly navigating large-scale events and ultimately ascending to the esteemed role of executive chef.

With an unwavering yet tender approach, he expertly guides his team of 28, inspiring them to consistently present their finest work, whether tasked with curating idyllic weekend brunches or executing day-to-night dining concepts. Despite his operational focus, Chef Dwarika remains an active presence within the kitchen, dealing with marketing meetings, legalities, and production planning for the vivid lifestyle venue. "My typical day involves meeting customer demands, watching the markets for the latest trends, and coordinating with the suppliers. It is majorly about constantly researching and exploring to deliver better products that push the guests to visit us again and keep the venue alive as we have kept it for the past 10 years," he says recalling his progressive and positive work experience.

The ultra-modern party venue's menu features several crowd-pleasing dishes. "The menu is designed to accompany the relaxed atmosphere where people are having fun, so we have a range of dishes where one can enjoy nicely cooked brisket that you can eat while dancing to



My typical day involves meeting customer demands, watching the markets for the latest trends, and coordinating with the suppliers

the tunes or delicious food-friendly meals at your table. The venue also caters to brunch for almost 1,000 people in one day, and in a typical three-day weekend, the number reaches 3,000 people.

"Usually in the peak season, we cater 2,000 plus brunches, which we do not

deliver like hotels. We have multiple stations placed on every corner, from the beach, garden area, and poolside, making our operations much more convenient and easier to deliver as people can avoid queues." The success of different ideas and strategies is due to a combination of hard work, the support of customers who appreciate quality food, and, most importantly, the freedom that creativity requires.

Chef Dwarika admits to being blessed in terms of financial aspects. "Our prime focus here is quality rather than cost. While the costs are maintained, we are lucky enough to be given the freedom to prioritize quality and consistency over the cost."

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resonates with a quiet, calming power—lie remarkable events that transform the very essence of one's life.

Chef Dwarika was born and raised in the calm serenity and beauty of the Dehradun valley, enjoying mostly home-cooked meals made from natural produce. The youngest of the siblings, he often found himself being pushed into the kitchen when his mom was not around, taking his first lessons there.

As he reached his teenage years, Chef Dwarika picked up the bug to learn more about cooking and moved towards pursuing a degree in hotel management from New Delhi. Campus recruitment followed graduation, and he got selected as a commis by Madinat Jumeirah. "I didn't even plan to come to Dubai. Initially, I had my sights set on a position with a hotel group in India, but with the amazing opportunity from Jumeirah Group, the next thing I knew, I was in Dubai."

At 23, he made his first foray into fine dining at the Napa restaurant. With a dynamic multicultural team, working with them was a learning curve for him. "To gain the understanding about cuisines of different countries in school, to witness that food actually on the ground was pretty different," he shares as he animatedly talks about different cuisines with a special twinkle in his eyes. Cooking risotto and working with scallops to enhance the texture—while



The success of different ideas and strategies is due to a combination of hard work, the support of customers who appreciate quality food, and, most importantly, the freedom creativity requires

the first few months were intimidating, the role was instrumental in setting the stage for the coming years.

A good two years passed by until Chef Dwarika flew to Oman for the pre-opening of the fine-dining restaurant Sultana at Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah Resort. Joining as a chef de partie, he handled the proteins and grill section while collaborating with the energetic team of young chefs. That intensity of being in a restaurant, being in a kitchen, where passionate chefs show their best side by proving themselves, was just one of the most rewarding learning experiences for him.

Thereafter, he returned to Dubai when he was offered an opportunity in the

main kitchen at Le Méridien Mina Seyahi Beach Resort. As its senior chef de partie, he handled the buffet and à la carte menus for the 180-seat coffee shop as well as the banquet functions of the hotel and clubs. The end of 2008 heralded a new change as Chef Dwarika then took his skill sets to the award-winning restaurant Mokha Cafe in the Grand Hyatt Muscat. After working there for nearly two years as a sous chef, he felt the pull of returning to Dubai. "I got married around that time and planned to head to Dubai; so I contacted one of my old chefs from Madinat Jumeirah and came back to join the fine-dining restaurant PierChic in 2010."

Nearly a year later, he made an exciting move to the renowned Pisces restaurant. During his helm as a chef de cuisine; the restaurant managed to dazzle critics and patrons alike, ultimately being crowned Timeout's Best Seafood Restaurant that very year. As time went on, his culinary prowess only became more evident, and he soon found himself overseeing a diverse range of dining establishments, including the lively Barzaar, Al Rukn Courtyard, Jambase, and the captivating Souk Amphitheatre.

Then, as fate would have it, in 2013, while he was passionately working as an acting executive sous chef at the prestigious Al Qasr, a knock on his door heralded a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. "The resort chef took me for a promenade to introduce me to Zero Gravity, showing me the place. He asked if I wanted to be a part of opening a new project, which would be a lifestyle venue." And since then, he has been running the culinary operations as his own. In a market filled with thousands of high-end restaurants and lounges, Zero Gravity has managed to uphold its place even after ten years.

#### DRAWING ON EXPERIENCES

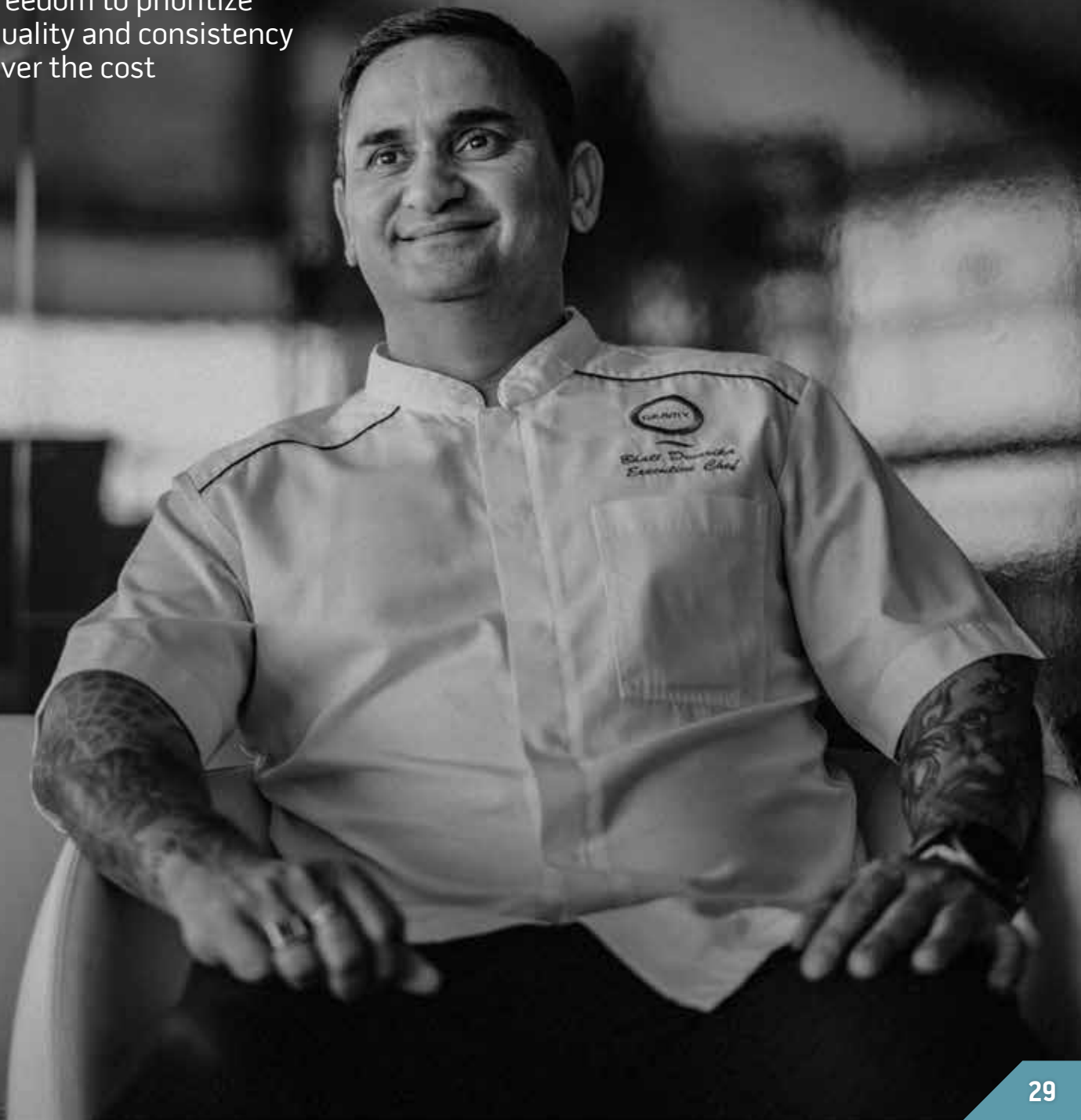
In the modern era where job hopping has become the norm, it has become rare to see chefs evolving in one place. Chef Dwarika relays that he has been able to







Our prime focus here is quality rather than cost. While the costs are maintained, we are lucky to be given the freedom to prioritize quality and consistency over the cost



stick with the workplace for the last ten years because of the creative freedom that his current employment provides. He acknowledges that his team and managers have his back, whether in terms of experimenting with new ideas, approvals for promotions, or concept ideations for events.

A venue like this is like a speedboat, as opposed to the more cumbersome cruise ships that larger hotels represent. This agility helps my team to navigate challenges and swiftly bring fresh concepts to life, staying ahead of the curve. Whereas in terms of hotels, by the time a concept is finalized, it might become dated. The right execution of the approvals procedure is equally crucial, though," he continues.

Working in a kitchen, a chef may face situations where, at the eleventh hour, one may need to navigate obstacles to execute a seamless process and deliver concepts on time. "Yet, if you embrace such situations with patience, one can get the task done with a positive outlook," adds Chef Dwarika.

When it comes to hiring for such a vibrant concept, sometimes it proves to be tough. So, Chef Dwarika looks for a strong foundation and positive attitude among budding chefs. "It is not that you will always hire the right skillset; you also look for the right attitude.



**Knowledge can be shared, but the main thing is having a positive attitude at the workplace as it cannot be given**

Knowledge can be shared, but the main thing is having a positive attitude at the workplace as it cannot be given."

Advancing in the profession is also equally crucial for him while hiring. Hence when it comes to retaining employees, the executive chef doesn't try to hold them back from better opportunities. "One must grow in their profession, and that will happen only if your knowledge is increasing. Just as one invests money in the bank to reap the benefits, learn to become a competent chef by investing in your skills."

With the internet dramatically revolutionizing fields, the new generation has much more means of learning by going digital. As a manager, Chef Dwarika understands that, unlike in the past, the younger generation is blessed with technology. Access to

the internet has changed the way we cook, making them more capable and advanced than us.

"I prefer to take my team along with me rather than through orders. Collaborating and considering everyone's ideas before making decisions can make the chefs feel more empowered; the budding chefs are beaming with new ideas every day. They see the world through their hearts, and if you have created a valuable space in their minds, then they will dedicate themselves to growing the team together."

#### **RICH TAPESTRY OF GASTRONOMY**

Quiet a social person and an effective manager, this approach helped him establish strong work relationships, with several chefs returning to his team after job hopping, and even if they are not on his team, they will still come by to drop a quick hello whenever they see him.

When it comes to growing, there is no better way for a chef to improve their expertise than to put their knowledge and skills to the test in a competition. In his early years as a chef, Chef Dwarika himself took home a few medals from the Salon Culinare, among other awards.

"I won a gold medal and trophy (the Yi-Yin Cup) in the first international culinary competition held in Beijing, China, in June 2012, where 33 countries and more than 200 chefs participated. I have also done competitions with the Emirates Culinary Guild. These days, it's all about encouraging young chefs and guiding them to go out and perform in competitions. This year, again, I have nominated 12 chefs from my team."

Recently, it was announced that Chef Dwarika will be assuming the designation of Chairman of the Emirates Culinary Guild's Dubai Chapter. Since the day he joined the guild in 2017, as a senior member, he has pushed the idea of recognizing outstanding chefs in the community and has been doing it ever since, bringing some of the most





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talented chefs he has worked with to the competitions. As a thriving hub for culinary excellence, he strongly concurs that the guild is a platform to channel and exchange knowledge.

"I am excited to collaborate with chefs and build the community. Everyone is curious to understand why one should join the guild. Ergo, it is vital for them to know that the guild is the best portal to see where we stand, and it is better to stand united and achieve our goals. Additionally, being a part of the guild provides access to valuable resources and networking opportunities that can help individuals grow professionally."

Being a fiddler of interests, he pursues working out and running as a hobby. "I spend a good time exercising when I am not working. Just a few days ago, I trained my son for a 10km marathon in the city."

His tryst with food transcends his vocation. He makes an effort to relish the entire process of cooking in his personal life too. That's why gardening came easily to him—from growing sweet potatoes to pumpkins, he indulges in creating dishes made from fresh produce from his backyard.



The budding chefs are beaming with new ideas daily. They see the world through their hearts, and if you have created a valuable space in their minds, then they will dedicate themselves to growing the team together

Ask him if the executive chef enters the kitchen after returning home. "That depends on the lads," he replies instantly. Despite a holiday, he goes into the kitchen to cook delicious meals for his two sons (one is 12 and the other is seven years old). "Surprisingly, they remember my day off and plan a list of meals they want to eat. They enjoy my cooking, and I enjoy cooking for them."

Meanwhile, the pressures of his profession are understood by his wife,

who is the regional health and safety manager for a hospitality group. She is his staunchest ally, supporting him unreservedly, be it in all of his culinary undertakings or putting in efforts to cook his favorite seafood specialties despite being a vegetarian. "Once, my wife cooked fish curry for me. The moment I saw the dish, I noticed the fish had scales," he chuckles, noting that, despite the scales, he appreciated the effort she put into preparing the dish, and they both had a good laugh about it.

For the next decade, his plans are straightforward. He plans to be in Dubai, working in the hospitality industry, "maybe working for someone or having something of my own," he remarks.

Regardless of the language we use, we can stir the pot to create something that we can all appreciate. The universal language that overcomes borders is sharing dishes and recipes.

As expounded by Chef Dwarika, his philosophy centers on food and flavors that not only enliven our taste buds but also connect us with other ways of living. "When you return home after visiting a place, the second thing you may remember is the milieu or the people, but the first thing you will recall is the food you enjoyed there. Food connects us. It is the easiest basis for connecting with people of different cultures and delivering unforgettable experiences."

This is why he impresses young chefs that they should keep playing with the ingredients. "Keep trying without giving up. As they say, chefs don't make mistakes; they make new dishes. Most of the dishes in the past were created through this so-called mistake."

Indeed, as said by Chef Dwarika, food serves as a bridge between cultures. So, let us continue to relish these culinary adventures and celebrate the power of connection that transcends beyond our plates.





One must grow in their profession, which will happen only if your knowledge increases. Just as one invests money in the bank to reap the benefits, learn to become a competent chef by investing in your skills







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# THE ZEN OF PASTRY

A pastry chef will often tell you that no matter the dessert, patience is the key to an incredible dessert. Even in unanticipated moments, Chef **Sudath Jayasantha Rodrigo** brings zen to a dessert that lies in balancing flavors, textures, and temperatures, staying true to the art of pastry making with patience and precision

In the small club in Colombo in 1996—a professional kitchen with several workstations, plate staging areas, top-notch appliances, and a team of chefs working on mise-en-place and studying recipes—was where Chef Sudath Rodrigo came to work every day after finishing his culinary lessons at the hotel management school.

Here, the 18-year-old Sri Lankan teen would work part-time with his teammates to finish a variety of tasks, from cooking to even serving.

"I grew up watching cooking videos and being around friends who were in the hospitality industry. I was passionate about diving into this industry to become a chef, so it was a natural choice to enroll for a year's diploma at a hotel school.

It was a start that showed promise, from his humble beginnings as a kitchen helper to blurring the line between borders and overcoming obstacles, rising to the position of executive pastry chef at one of the UAE's most versatile event complexes.

For the last four months, 45-year-old chef Sudath has been working in the cold kitchen, stepping into a different routine as he heads the pastry production for all the outdoor and indoor events catering for over 2000 to 3000 people, along with banqueting functions.



I grew up watching cooking videos and being around friends who were in the hospitality industry

Chef Sudath was 19 when his mother, who was then professionally working in Dubai, asked him to explore opportunities at the global gastronomy hub.

After applying for multiple jobs, he landed an opportunity as a kitchen helper at Dubai Marine Beach Resort and Spa. The role gave him the chance to work and observe kitchen operations from a direct perspective. The zeal to be a chef did not go unnoticed, and eight months later, he was promoted to the position of commis in the pastry kitchen.

"I stayed there for five years before joining a restaurant at Jumeirah. In 2004, I went back to Sri Lanka, got married, and stayed there for a couple of years."

In 2007, when he was offered a role as a demi chef de partie at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Dubai Deira Creek, he didn't

think his stint would mark a turning point in his career.

"Within six months of working there, I got promoted to Chef de Partie, and eventually grew up through the ranks to become the Assistant Pastry Chef at the hotel. This happened with my dedication and the support of the chefs. Chef Uwe has always had my back and still guides me; he is like my second father."

In the ensuing years, he switched to work for different hotels, where he meticulously made desserts and planned the production. It was in 2018 when he was summoned back to the Radisson Hotel, now with the role of head pastry chef. "It was a great experience, preparing new and exciting desserts to renew menus that pique the interest of customers."

The next stint was at City Center Rotana in Doha during the FIFA World Cup. After finishing his tenure there, he got the opportunity at Madinat Jumeirah C&I as an Executive Pastry Chef, fulfilling a long-held desire.

A good team makes all the difference. Chef Sudath has managed to build a team that is now his strong support system. "I have a fantastic team of six who can handle large events, catering for the morning, afternoon, and night. The challenges are plenty, but they take it in stride."



Cooking with  
attention while  
doing your best can  
help you achieve  
your goals

Perhaps what inspires the team members is the approach he takes to simplify the daily routine. "It is all about planning without compromising on quality. If we have a function tomorrow, we plan a day before to stay ahead of the curve, allocating the menus and dividing the desserts to achieve the target on time."

It's a plausible plan. Having seen the hustle and bustle of large catering operations up close, Chef Sudath is cognizant of focusing on recipe methods and planning to ensure a seamless process without missing deadlines. He believes young chefs should strategize their careers in the same way: focus on the recipe, time, and plate with positivity, and everything will fall into place.

In the case of pastry, indeed, patience is a virtue whose fruit is sweet. Having patience in the pastry kitchen while respecting the timing of each process is what Sudath preaches. When in the kitchen, he likes to keep an eye on the techniques and flavors in his creations. "Young cooks nowadays should concentrate on recipe methods because everything is ready-made today, whereas in our day we made everything from scratch."



**Young cooks nowadays should concentrate on recipe methods because everything is ready-made today, whereas in our day we made everything from scratch**

The combination of Coconut Passion White Ganache, Lime Sorbet, Raspberry Cream Cheese Cremeux with Agar Agar Mango, and Cocoa Crumble, a dish that he made for the readers features his focus on curating an ideal harmony of ingredients on the plate.

During his 20-year career, Chef Sudath has gone on to win a number of medals, including at major international competitions such as the East Coast International Culinary Event and the Hospitality Chef 2021 Awards.

"Budding chefs should be willing to

compete without worrying about winning since learning is just as essential as winning. Cooking with attention while doing your best can help you achieve your goals."

With a family of three and his wife, he treasures quality time with his family as a way to bond and create lasting memories together. "At times, on my day off, I cook for my wife and our three sons. On the other days, I enjoy what my wife cooks, especially Sri Lankan food."

As for his own ambitions, he has two plans in the works. Years down the line, you will either see him with his family basking in the sun near the soft-sand beaches of Perth or back in his hometown sharing his experiences with the students at his culinary school.

"I have already built my hotel school in Colombo, with almost 75 percent of the work done. The only thing that has to be done is for me to settle there and run the school. Meanwhile, my kids are planning to pursue their studies in Australia. Decades later, the future might well be in Australia, or it might be in Sri Lanka."

Regardless of where he settles, he is sure to exude the sweet scent of success.

## **Coconut Passion White Ganache Lime Sorbet Raspberry Cream Cheese Cremeux with Agar Agar Mango and Cocoa Crumble**

### **COCONUT PASSION WHITE GANACHE**

White Chocolate	224 gm
Coconut Milk	84 gm

### **Arla Pro High Stability**

Whipping Cream - 35%	180 gm
Passion Puree	60 gm

### **Method**

- ♦ Melt chocolate in a double boiler and cool it to 90F.

- ♦ Add coconut milk and passion puree and after mixing it well, keep the mixture aside and let it set up.
- ♦ Place the bowl on top of a double boiler until thoroughly warm.
- ♦ Then beat the mixture until it's smooth and creamy. Add the Arla Pro High Stability Whipping Cream - 35% and mix it well.
- ♦ The consistency should be like a spreadable frosting. And now it's ready.

### **LIME SORBET**

Water	200 ml
Sugar	200 gm
Lime Juice	200 ml
Lime Zest	1tsp

### **Method**

- ♦ Bring the water, sugar, and lime juice to a simmer in a medium saucepan over medium heat.
- ♦ Stir constantly to help the sugar dissolve.
- ♦ Once all the sugar has dissolved, remove the mixture from the heat and cool it to room temperature for about one hour.
- ♦ Stir the lime zest into the sorbet mixture. Chill the mixture for at least two hours.
- ♦ Pour the chilled sorbet base into our ice cream maker and churn it according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- ♦ Once churned, transfer it to a freezer-safe container and freeze it until it's time to serve.





### RASPBERRY CHEESE CREAM CREMEUX

Raspberry Puree	250 gm
<b>Arla Pro Frost &amp; Bake 30%</b>	130 gm
Egg Batter	55 gm
Egg Yolk	55 gm
Sugar	120 gm
Gelatin	5 gm
<b>Arla Pro Butter</b>	80 gm

#### Method

- Start by heating the raspberry puree in a pan, and then in a separate bowl, whisk together the eggs, egg yolks, and sugar.
- Pour a little of the warm raspberry puree into the mixture to temper.
- Stir the entire egg mixture into the warm puree, then continue to cook over low heat.
- Keep stirring until it is thick enough. Then remove from heat and add Arla Pro Frost & Bake 30%
- Squeeze the gelatin leaves, then stir them into the warm raspberry mixture until it is dissolved.
- Pass the mixture through a fine sieve

into a clean bowl, and then vigorously whisk in the Arla Pro Butter until emulsified.

- Pour the mixture into an 8cm doughnut mold, and place it in the freezer for at least two hours.

### AGAR AGAR MANGO

Mango puree	250 gm
Orange juice	115 ml
Water	240 ml
Agar Agar Powder	6 gm
Sugar	75 gm
Lime juice	to taste

#### Method

- Blend the mango cubes and orange juice until it's smooth.
- In a small pot, add water, agar-agar powder and stir. Bring to a full boil, and keep stirring to make sure that all the agar agar powder is dissolved. Add sugar and mango puree and whisk till it's smooth.
- Remove from heat, and add more sugar/ lime juice if needed.

- Pour the mixture into a mold. Add 1cm mango cubes into the mango base. Ensure the mango cubes are distributed evenly, and also make sure they are submerged into the mango base.

### COCOA CRUMBLE

<b>Arla Pro Butter</b>	100 gm
Sugar	200 gm
Flour for all purposes	250 gm
Cocoa Powder	90 gm

#### Method

- Preheat the oven to 350F. Line an 8-inch square pan with aluminum foil and spray using cooking spray. Flour the pan. Then set it aside.
- In a medium microwave-safe bowl, melt the Arla Pro Butter for about 1 minute on high power.
- Then add sugar, all purposes flour, and cocoa powder, and using a fork stir it lightly to combine.
- Stir the mixture with a fork until sandy small pebbles, and crumbly bits form, then set aside.

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**CHEESE**



# Rising Star

Celebrating Alumni - The ICCA Dubai Culinary Scholarship Program. **Roopa Menon**, Content & Communications Manager, ICCA Dubai speaks to Chef **Racquel Lanuevo**

Food and cooking have always been at the centre of Racquel Lanuevo's family. Celebrating special occasions with the most delectable dishes and lavish family dinners has always been the norm in the Lanuevo household.

With her grandmother owning a

bakeshop and her aunt running a local restaurant, it may have seemed natural for Raquel to embrace a culinary career. However, to her family's surprise, this young Filipina did not leap at the possibility of a culinary career.

"While I enjoyed food and cooking, I was convinced that a 9-5 steady job

was not for me, so I pursued a degree in computer science."

However, while pursuing her computer science degree, she soon realized her heart was not in it. She often remembered how pleased she was when she cooked and loved spending time preparing dishes in her family kitchen as a child. By the time she completed her degree, she was convinced that cooking and hospitality were her true passions.

## Journey to becoming a Chef

Back in 2016, Racquel started her career in the hospitality industry by being part of the service team. Even though she enjoyed it, that inner voice always told her to focus on cooking.

"During my free time, I would get into the kitchen area to assist the chefs, and soon, I started preparing sushi, which I began to enjoy; experience and expertise in sushi over time led me to apply formally as a sushi chef formally. And I was able to advance my career from waitress to chef, and now to my current role as a Kitchen Supervisor at Hampton by Hilton Dubai Al Barsha."

As a Kitchen Supervisor, she oversees the F&B, Kitchen, and Stewarding teams. Her responsibilities include the breakfast operation, menu planning, ordering kitchen & food supplies, inventory, and HACCP Audits.

## The life-transforming ICCA Dubai Culinary Scholarship Program

Culinary education is one of the building blocks of any aspiring chef's culinary journey. One cannot undermine its







If you have that dream, nurture it in your mind, then go for it, work on it, and believe in it!

importance and role in enhancing one's career. When Racquel realized that a career in the culinary arts was her calling, she decided to put in the time necessary to broaden her culinary knowledge. She would look for prospective avenues and enrol in several cooking workshops to enhance her food knowledge.

During her quest for a solid culinary education, she stumbled upon the ICCA Dubai Scholarship Program application.

"I remember the excitement I felt when I scoured the ICCA website. A whole new world of possibilities had opened up. Without wasting a minute, I filled out the application, and soon I was called for an interview, translating into the most wonderful opportunity to gain an internationally recognized qualification."

Every day at ICCA Dubai was a revelation, she says, smiling. Exposure to the many new aspects of cooking, creative plating, and insights into a range of cuisines from around the world helped her build her skill set and confidence in herself.

"Besides the knowledge and learnings, the program also helped me connect and network with Chefs from other hotels, helping broaden my horizon in the culinary field," she added.

Even today, when Racquel walks into the kitchen to start prepping for the day, she utters a small prayer of thanks for what she has received.

"I am very grateful to the ICCA, especially Mr. Sunjeh, Ms. Shanaaz,



Chef Uwe, Chef Andi, World Chefs, and Emirates Culinary Guild for creating and offering the Scholarship Program, and also to my Hampton Family for being supportive and flexible with my schedule throughout the year of my school; words are not enough to say how thankful I am for this opportunity."

For scholarship graduates like Racquel, this program is an excellent opportunity to become more efficient and effective in their current role and a platform to support and inspire young chefs looking to pursue their culinary dreams.

Sharing her advice for aspiring chefs, she says, "Today, when I see aspiring chefs at a crossroads, struggling to

decide between pursuing what they love and what is practical, I tell them never to stop pursuing their dreams. If you have that dream, nurture it in your mind, then go for it, work on it, and believe in it!"

*Every month, Rising Star features inspirational stories of talented chefs who have dedicated their lives to perfecting their craft and continuously pushing the boundaries of culinary excellence. This initiative is executed in strategic partnership with the Emirates Culinary Guild (ECG), the World Association of Chefs Societies (WorldChefs), and City & Guilds, London.*



## The Guild Meet

Executive Chef **Belal Kattan** and the Southern Sun Abu Dhabi team hosted the March Emirates Culinary Guild meeting. The assembly began with a moment of silence in memory of Chef Alan Pedge. Later, the upcoming Salon Culinaire was discussed, and several new senior members were inducted into the guild.









April 2023 **Gulf Gourmet**



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**EXPO Culinaire**  
FOOD & EQUIPMENT FOR CHEFS | PASTRY CHEFS | BAKERS | BEVERAGE PROFESSIONALS  
FEATURING THE 26TH EMIRATES INTERNATIONAL SALON CULINAIRE  
29-31 MAY 2023 | EXPO CENTRE SHARJAH, UAE



**PURPLEkitchen**  
EVENTS  
Organiser | Management | Consultancy

## THE EMIRATES SALON CULINAIRE 2023

### Briefs of the Classes for Entry

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### PASTRY AND BAKERY

#### Practical Pastry

#### Class 01: Cake Decoration – Practical by Master Baker



- 1. Two hours duration.
- 2. Decorate a pre-baked single cake base of the competitor's choice.
- 3. The Theme of decoration for the cake decoration will be to the competitors choice
- 4. The cake base must be a maximum size of 25cm X 25cm or 25cm Diameter.
- 5. The cake can be brought already filled without coating – ready to decorate.
- 6. The cake must be delivered and set up hygienically with cold box or dry ice storage. Not up to hygiene food product will not be judge.
- 7. All decorating ingredients must

be edible and mixed on the spot. (Chocolate/Sugar/Marzipan/Fondant) minimum height is 30cm, it should be able to enhance and harmonize with the overall presentation

- 8. Natural colors and flavoring only to be used nonchemical.
- 9. Gold, Silver, bronze, copper, pearlescent, metallic, lustre, glitter, mica and titanium dioxide powders or liquids are not allowed unless used as none edible, removable decoration such as cake top or centrepiece
- 10. No pre-modelled garnish permitted.
- 11. Chocolate and royal icing can be pre-prepared to the basic level,
- 12. Competitors must provide all ingredients, cake base, utensils, and small equipment required.
- 13. A standard buffet table is provided for each competitor to work upon.
- 14. Water, electricity and refrigeration might not be available.
- 15. The cake will be tasted and cut by the Judges, as part of the judging criteria
- 16. Ingredients maybe supplied by the sponsor and shall be mandatory to be used,
- 17. Information shall be sent to competitors in advance of the competition for supply of ingredients if being supplied. 50 Points will be deducted for noncompliance
- 18. All recipes must be provided for the judges on the day of the completion including all finishing items such as glazes and decoration ingredients to be mentioned.





## Pastry Displays

### Class 02: Elegance Stylish Wedding Cake –Three Tier Powered By Pristine



All decorations must be edible and made entirely by hand.

1. Pillars or stands may be inedible but, unless decorated by hand, must be plain and unadorned.
2. Fine, food-quality wiring is allowed for the construction of flowers but must be properly wrapped and covered with flower tape or paste.
3. Royal icing, pastillage, pulled sugar, etc., may be used in the construction, but the finished display must not be dependent on these items.
4. The bottom layer of the cake must be edible. A section of the finished edible cake should be cut for the judges' inspection
5. The cake will be tasted by the judges.
6. Inedible blanks may be used for the two top layers.
7. Typewritten description and recipes are required.
8. Maximum area w60 cm x d75 cm.
9. Maximum height should not exceed 1 meter (including socle or platforms)
10. Pristine Ingredients supplied by the sponsor may be used if these are supplied, competitors must use if instructed by organizers.
11. Information shall be sent to competitors in advance of the competition for supply of ingredients.
12. 50 Points will be deducted for non-compliance where mandated ingredients are not used.

## Class 03: Plated Dessert Powered by Kerry



1. Prepare four different types desserts each for one person.
2. Displayed cold, each portion for one person, suitable for a la carte service.
  - a) 1 x Hot and Cold dessert composition
  - b) 1 x Vegetarian without eggs and animal fat
  - c) 1 x Arabic Dessert Free Style creation
  - d) 1 x Dessert serve in glass
3. Practical and up-to-date presentation is required.
4. Typewritten description and recipes are required.
5. Tasting will be part of the judging process if deemed necessary to determine quality and authenticity.
6. Maximum area w90 cm x d75 cm
7. Showpieces are allowed but will not be judged.
8. Each dessert must have 15% of KERRY product in the recipe
9. 1 dessert must be with rhubarb
10. 1 dessert must be lingon berry
11. All the plates must use 15% Kerry Fruit products compulsory in the preparation.
12. All Kerry Fruit, purees and IQF fruits are mandatory to be used and no other fruit purees or IQF fruits are to be used if others used then 50% reduction in points will be applied.
13. All Kerry fruits shall be supplied by the sponsor

## Class 04: Pastry Showpiece

1. To display a showpiece of either
  - a) Chocolate
  - b) marzipan/sugar / pastillage
  - c) dough/bread dough
  - d) Asian dough figurine

No frames, moulds or wires are allowed. Points will be deducted for non-compliance.

2. Edible media may be used, singly or in mixed media. Sponsors

products may be available to be used. Information shall be sent to competitors prior to the competition

3. Written description required.
4. Maximum area w90 x d75cm.
5. Maximum height 90cm (including base or socle).

## Class 05: Baked Goods and Baked Bread Showpiece Powered by Master Baker



The entire exhibit must comprise baked goods and must include the following:

1. A baked bread showpiece.
2. Three types of bread loaves 200-300 grams (competitor's choice) two pieces of each loaf to be displayed.
3. Three types of bread roll 25-40grams (competitor's choice)) three pieces of each roll to be displayed.
4. Three types of baked sweet breakfast items 25-40grams (competitor's choice) three pieces of each item to be displayed.
5. Three types of baked savoury breakfast items 25-50grams (competitor's choice) three pieces of each item to be displayed.
6. One extra piece of each variety to be displayed on a separate platter for judges' tasting. Tasting shall make up 30% of the marks
7. All breads & dough must be baked at own workplace as fresh as possible and delivered to the competition venue for judging.
8. Poor hygiene standard of handling bakery products will not be judged.
9. Typewritten products description and recipes are required.
10. Maximum area w90 x d75cm
11. Ingredients may be supplied by the sponsor these shall be mandatory to be used, information shall be sent to

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competitors in advance of the competition

- The focus of this class is on the quality and flavour of the bread rolls and loafs presented. The centre piece is judged however only 20% of the marks are attributed to the centre piece.

### Class 06: Petites Four & Pralines Powered by Master Baker



- Exhibit 4 varieties.
- Six pieces of each variety (24 pieces total) plus one extra piece of each variety on a separate small platter for judges' tasting. each piece to weight between 6-14grams)
- Freestyle presentation and theme
- Present the exhibit to include a small showpiece.
- Showpieces should enhance the presentation and will be judged.
- Written description mentioning the theme is required.
- Typewritten products description and recipes are required.
- Maximum area w90 cm x d75 cm.
- Ingredients may be supplied by the sponsor these shall be mandatory to be used, information shall be sent to competitors in advance of the competition
- Different Flavours ,textures and cooking techniques will be looked for in the items presented

## SHOWPIECE ARTISTIC DISPLAYS

### Artistic Displays

#### Class 07: Chocolate Carving Showpiece

- Free-style presentation.To be carved from a single block
- Natural colouring and minimal glazing is allowed.
- No frames, moulds or wires are allowed.
- Points will be deducted for non-compliance.

- Maximum area: w60 cm x d75 cm.
- Maximum height 30-35cm (including base or socle).
- Written description mentioning the theme is required

### Class 08: Fruit & Vegetable Carving Showpiece Powered by Barakat



- To bring in already prepared one display of fruit and / or vegetable carving, no visible supports are permitted
- Freestyle presentation.
- Light framing is allowed, but the construction of the piece must not depend upon it.
- Maximum area w60 cm x d75 cm.
- Maximum height 55 cm (including base or socle).

### Class 09: Open Showpiece (Free Style Showpiece)

- Freestyle presentation.
- Only showpieces made of edible food material will be accepted for adjudication.
- Frames and wires support are allowed but must not be exposed.
- Maximum area w90 cm x d75 cm.
- Maximum height 75 cm. (including base or socle).
- Special note:** To enhance the overall level of competition and to aid competitors to demonstrate superior modeling skills, it is permitted to use, frames and supports .i.e. Styrofoam support must not pre-molded and simply sprayed, a round cylinder to form the base of a body is permitted, under no circumstances will pre-carved detailed Styrofoam of any other media be permitted. If the judging committee deems that the finishing has been aided by excessive moulding work it may not be judged.

## GOURMET STATIC DISPLAY

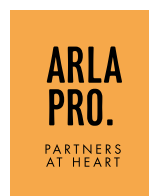
### Gastronomic Creations

#### Class 10: Five-Course Gourmet Dinner Menu Powered by USMEF



- Present a plated five-course gourmet meal for one person
- One of the courses for the meal must contain US Beef as the main ingredient. Proof of purchase needs to be brought to the Competition for all the Beef Products if proof of purchase is not brought then 50% of the judging marks shall be reduced
- The meal to consist of:
  - > **A cold appetiser,**
  - > **A soup,**
  - > **A hot appetiser,**
  - > **A main course with its garnish**
  - > **A dessert.**
- Hot food presented cold on appropriate plates.
- Food coated with aspic or clear gelatin for preservation.
- Total food weight of the 5 plates should be 400/500 gms.
- Typewritten description and typed recipes required
- Maximum area w90 cm x d75 cm.

#### Class 11: Sustainable Three-Course Vegetarian Lunch Menu Powered by ARLA PRO



- Present a plated three-course vegetarian meal for one person.
- Suitable for lunch service in a high-end restaurant
- The meal consists of:
  - > **An appetizer or soup**
  - > **A main course**
  - > **A dessert**



4. To be prepared in advance and displayed cold on appropriate plates.
5. No meat, chicken, seafood, or fish to be used, (meat-based gelatin glaze to enhance presentation is accepted).
6. Ovo-Lacto products are allowed. Chefs are to apply sustainable product selection for ingredients and ensure food wastage is reduced through this meal.
7. The following Arla Pro Products must be used, Cream Cheese, Cream, Butter. Proof of purchase needs to be brought to the Competition for all the Arla Pro Dairy Products if proof of purchase is not brought then 50% of the judging marks shall be reduced
8. Total food weight of the four plates should be 500/600 gms.
9. Typewritten descriptions and recipes required.
10. Maximum area w75cm x d75cm.

### Class 13: Four Plated Chicken Dishes –Powered by USAPEEC



1. Prepare 2 different appetizer and 2 different main course dishes each for 1 person using USAPEEC chicken as the main protein items in all dishes
2. All 4 dishes must use USAPEEC Chicken in their creation
3. Each of the dish's plate must contain ingredients as stipulated by the sponsor
4. Proof of purchase needs to be brought of sponsors ingredients to the Competition for all the USAPEEC chicken if proof of purchase is not brought then 50% of the judging marks shall be reduced
5. Practical and up to date presentation is required
6. Hot food presented cold on appropriate plates.

7. Food coated with aspic or clear gelatin for preservation.
8. Recipes and ingredient list (typed) of each dish required.
9. Maximum area 60cm x 80 cm

### Class 23: HUG AG – Savory Creations



1. This is a static class featuring savory HUG pastry shells suitable for dinner service.
2. Only savory HUG pastry shells are to be used.
3. Pastry shells will be supplied by ARAMTEC.
4. Present four different savory dishes on individual plates, 1 of each dish, using two savory HUG shells per plate (i.e. exhibit eight shells in total).
5. To be prepared in advance and displayed cold on appropriate plates and appropriate garnishes to represent a dish suitable for dinner service in a restaurant ala carte style.
6. Typewritten description and recipes required.
7. Maximum space available: 75cm x 75cm.

### Class 24: HUG AG – Sweet Creations



1. This is a static class featuring dessert HUG pastry shells suitable for dinner service.
2. Only dessert HUG pastry shells are to be used.
3. Pastry shells will be supplied by ARAMTEC.
4. Present four different pastry dishes on individual plates, 1 of each dish, using two dessert HUG

shells per plate (i.e. exhibit eight shells in total).

5. To be prepared in advance and displayed cold on appropriate plates and appropriate garnishes to represent a dish suitable for dinner service in a restaurant ala carte style.
  6. Typewritten description and recipes required.
- Maximum space available: 75 cm x 75 cm

### Class 28: Four Plated Vegan dishes –Powered by Violife Professional



1. Prepare 2 different dessert dishes and 2 different savoury dishes each for 1 person
2. All 4 dishes must be 100% vegan
3. Each of the dish's plate must contain vegan ingredients as stipulated by the sponsor
4. Vegan products will be supplied by Violife Professional
5. Practical and up to date presentation is required
6. Typewritten description and recipe in English is required
7. This is a static class; plates must be prepared with Aspic hot food to be displayed cold.
8. Maximum area for display is w92cm and d75cm.

### Class 34: Potatoes USA – Dessert/Baked Creations



1. This is a static class featuring Potatoes from USA suitable for restaurant service. NO Sweet potatoes to be used. A dessert or sweet dishes utilizing the wide variety of Potatoes from USA. Potatoes from USA products including Fresh, Frozen and Dehydrated must be utilized.
2. NO Sweet potatoes to be used.



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Potatoes from USA MUST be used in all preparations and be the main ingredient used in the dish, Potatoes from the USA, Fresh, Frozen and Dehydrated these are the only Potatoes to be used and are mandatory failure to utilize these products then 50% of the judging marks shall be reduced

3. Present three different pastry dishes on individual plates, 1 of each dish, using Potatoes from USA, Potatoes as the main ingredient per plate.
4. To be prepared in advance and displayed cold on appropriate plates and appropriate garnishes to represent a dish suitable for dinner service in a restaurant ala carte style.
5. Typewritten description and recipes required.
6. Maximum space available: 75 cm x 75 cm.

### Class 38: Syrian Cuisine Traditional and Modern- Plated Display Powered by Boody's



1. Present one main course as main course item from Syrian cuisine for one person in two style:
2. One Traditional style and the other Modern style presentation (international with Syrian touch)
3. To be prepared in advance and displayed cold on appropriate plates.
4. Food coated with aspic or clear gelatin for preservation.
5. Present the main courses on individual plates with appropriate garnish and accoutrements.
6. Total food weight on each plate should be 160-180 grams.
7. Typewritten descriptions and recipes required.
8. Maximum area 75cmx75cm.

### Class 39: Syrian Three Plates of

### Kibbeh Plated display Powered by Boody's



1. Prepare three different kibbeh, each for one person.
2. Traditional style presentation
3. Each plate presented individually on an appropriated plate.
4. Total food weight of one plate should be 100/120gms.
5. Hot/cold food Presented cold
6. Typewritten description and recipes are required.
7. This is a static class; plates must be prepared with Aspic for hot food to be displayed cold
8. Maximum area 60cm x 60cm.
9. One participant per entry is allowed

## PRACTICAL ARTISTIC CARVING

### Practical Artistic

#### Class 15: Individual Ice Carving

1. Freestyle.
2. 90 minutes duration.
3. Hand carved work from one large block of ice (provided by the organizers).
4. Competitors to use own hand-tools and gloves.
5. A non-slip mat is mandatory.
6. Before the competition starts, competitors will be allowed 30 minutes to arrange and temper the ice block.
7. The use of power tools is allowed to slice blocks only.

#### Class 16: Ice Carving Team Event

1. Freestyle.
2. Two persons per team
3. 120 minutes duration.
4. Hand-carved work from three large block of ice (provided by the organizers).
5. Competitors to use own hand-tools and gloves.
6. Non-slip mats are mandatory.
7. Great care must be taken with

health and safety considerations. If an exhibit becomes in any way unstable or dangerous to competitors or public, it will be dismantled and destroyed by the organizers.

8. The use of power tools is allowed to slice blocks only.

### Class 17: Practical Fruit & Vegetable Carving Powered by Barakat

## Barakat

1. Freestyle.
2. 120 minutes duration.
3. Hand carved work from competitor's own fruit\ vegetables.
4. Competitors to use own hand-tools and equipment.
5. No power tools permitted.
6. Pre-cleaned, peeled material is allowed, but pre-sliced/carved will result in disqualification.
7. Each competitor will be supplied with a standard buffet table on which to work.

## PARCTICAL COOKERY

**Notes on the Practical Cookery  
Classes - These notes pertain  
to all practical cookery  
classes. They must be read in  
combination with the brief of  
the class entered.**

1. The preparation, production and cooking skills of each competitor must be demonstrated during her/his time in the kitchen.
2. Waste and over-production will be closely monitored. Please refer to the ECG Sustainability Guidelines on the website
3. Competitors are to avoid the use of single use plastics, acceptable items are reusable, recyclable, compostable, bio-degradable, items for ingredient containers etc., reusable tasting spoons to be used.
4. There is a point penalty deduction for wastage or over-production.



5. Timing is closely monitored.
6. There is a 2-point penalty deduction for each minute that the meal is overdue.
7. All food items must be brought to the Salon in hygienic, chilled containers: Thermo boxes or equivalent.
8. Failure to bring food items in a hygienic manner will result in disqualification.
9. All dishes are to be served in a style equal to today's modern presentation trends.
10. Portion sizes must correspond to a three-course restaurant meal.
11. Dishes must be presented on individual plates with appropriate garnish not exceeding 250g total food weight excluding sauces.
12. Unless otherwise stated, competitors must supply their own plates/bowls/platters with which to present the food.
13. Competitors must bring with them all necessary mise-en-place prepared according to WORLDCHEFS guidelines in the hot kitchen discipline ([www.worldchefs.org](http://www.worldchefs.org)).
14. Competitors to ensure they read the latest Food safety guidelines from Worldchefs'
15. Competitors are to provide their own pots, pans, tools and utensils.
16. All brought appliances and utensils will be checked for suitability. The use of any additional equipment must receive prior approval before the competition from the organizers.
17. The following types of pre-preparation can be made for the practical classes:

**EXPLANATION** (what foods are permitted to be brought into the kitchen)

- a) *Salads – cleaned, washed, not mixed, or cut.*
- b) *Vegetables – cleaned, peeled, washed, not cut, must be raw.*
- c) *Fish may be scaled and filleted, and the bones cut up.*

- d) *Meat may be de-boned, and the bones cut up*
- e) *Stocks – basic stock, not reduced, not seasoned, no additional items (garlic, etc.). Hot and cold samples must be available for the judges.*
- f) *Pastry sponge, biscuit, meringue, basic dough's – can be brought in but not cut.*
- g) *Basic pastry recipes can be brought in weighed out but no further processing.*
- h) *Fruit pulps – fruit purees may be brought in but not as a finished sauce.*
- i) *Decor elements – 100% must be made in the kitchen.*
18. No pre-cooking, poaching, marinating etc. is allowed.
19. No ready-made products are allowed.
20. No pork products are allowed.
21. No alcohol is allowed.
22. If a farce is to be used for stuffing, filling, etc., at least one of the three portions of the farce must be prepared in front of the judges to show the competitor's skill
23. Within 10 minutes after the end of the competition, competitors must have the kitchen thoroughly cleaned and tidied and ready for the next competitor to use.
24. Two copies of the recipes - typewritten - are always required.
25. Submit one copy of the recipe/s to the clerk when registering.
26. Submit one copy of the recipe to the duty marshal at the cooking station.

## Practical Cookery

### Class 19. Mezzeh – Practical Cookery Powered by Rahma Olive Oil



1. Time allowed: 60 Minutes
2. Prepare and present for two persons: Two types of hot mezzeh and three types of cold mezzeh.

3. Only one (if any) of the following types of mezzeh may be displayed: homous, tabouleh, babaganough, fatouche, moutabel.
4. The mezzeh can be representative of any of the following countries:
  - > **Lebanon**
  - > **Syria**
  - > **Jordan**
  - > **Morocco**
  - > **Egypt**
  - > **Tunisia**
5. Dishes must represent a variety of cooking methods and the use of ingredients as used in the Arabic restaurants of the UAE. All Mezzeh should be prepared during the competition with very minimum of pre-prepared ingredients as per Worldchefs Guidelines please read the overview in this document for practical cookery .
6. Rahma olive oil must be the only olive oil used in the creation of these dishes and will be available in the competition venue
7. Present the mezzeh in two equal portions.
8. One portion will be presented and one portion will be presented to the judges.
9. Typewritten recipes are required.

### Class 20: Fish & Seafood - Practical Cookery

1. Time allowed 60 minutes
2. Prepare and present three identical main courses using fish and or shellfish as the main protein item of the dish.
3. All ingredients including the fish/ seafood must be provided by the competitors and any type of fish can be used. In the event of fish being supplied by the sponsor then this fish is only to be used.
4. Weight of fish per portion on the plate to be 150grams
5. Present the main courses on individual plates with appropriate garnish and accoutrements.
6. Hulala Cream and Rahma olive oil

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will be supplied and must be used in the kitchen

7. Typewritten recipes are required.

### Class 21: Beef - Practical Cookery Powered by USMEF



1. Time allowed 60 minutes
2. Prepare and present three identical main courses using US Beef as the main protein item. Proof of purchase needs to be brought to the Competition for all the US Meat Products if proof of purchase is not brought then 50% of the judging marks shall be reduced
3. Any cut of beef with the exception of tenderloin, rib eye and sirloin, can be used.
4. Weight of beef per portion on the plate to be 150grams
5. Present the main courses on individual plates with appropriate garnish and accoutrements.
6. Hulala Cream and Rahma Olive oil shall be supplied and must be used in the kitchen
7. Typewritten recipes are required.

### Class 22: Emirati Cuisine - Practical Cookery

1. This class is designed to ensure that the tradition of Emirati Cuisine is preserved and promoted through professional chefs. Prepare and present two plated portions each of three Emirati dishes according with the following criteria:
2. Prepare and present two plated portions of any one of the following dishes:
  - > **Balalit**
  - > **Kabeesa**
  - > **Assedat Bobal**
3. Also prepare and present two plated portions of any two of the following of the competitor's choice main course. The following dishes are as a guide only and are not mandatory:

- > **Margougat Al Khudar**
  - > **Thareed Laham**
  - > **Margougat Al Dijaj**
  - > **Maleh Biryani**
  - > **Machboos Samak**
4. Emirati cuisine with traditional presentation and serving as would be found in a family home of the United Arab Emirates.
  5. **Young Chef of the Year competitors must cook Balalit as one of the dishes.**
  6. Competitors must bring their own plates/bowls for presentation and all necessary mise-en-place for the meals
  7. All Competitors must use (Sponsors ingredients if provided) in one of the dishes, this is mandatory, and failure will result in 50 point reduction.
  8. The judges will check appliances and utensils for suitability
  9. Typewritten description and recipes are required
  10. Time allowed 60 minutes to present all three recipes

### YOUNG CHEF OF THE YEAR ENTRIES

Entrants for The Young Chef of the Year trophy must enter the following classes and no others.

In addition to classes **25 & 33** here below competitors must also enter for **class 22** Emirati Cuisine Practical Cookery one dish must be Balalit

### Class 25: Dressed Chicken – Dressed Fish - Supplementary Class

1. Practical Butchery Fish and Chicken Class for Young Chef of the Year Trophy.
2. Competitors are to supply their own whole fish and whole chicken **MUST BE USED**, all utensils and chopping boards.

Time allowed 1 hour in 30-minute sections as below:

#### Chicken

1. Time allowed 20 minutes
2. Take a whole fresh chicken and

prepare from it the following:

3. One breast skinless.
  4. One breast skin-on.
  5. One whole leg, skin-on, and tunnel-boned, ready for making a ballotine.
  6. One thigh boneless.
  7. One drumstick.
  8. Two wings prepared for pan frying/grilling.
  9. Carcass prepared for stock.
- 10. After 20 minutes**
11. 10 minutes to explain to the judges the method of preparation of a classical chicken stock.
- 12. Fish:**
13. Time allowed 20 minutes.
  14. Take a whole fresh Sherry or other sustainable fish species of the Arabian Gulf waters.
  15. No imported type of fish is to be used.
  16. Gut, clean and fillet the fish.
  17. One fillet with skin on.
  18. One fillet skinless.
  19. Cut each fillet into as many 140gr size servings as possible.

### 20. After 20 minutes – 10 minutes to:

21. Explain to the judges the usage of any leftovers.
22. Explain to the judges the method of preparation of a classical fish stock

Competitors will be marked on knife skills, clean bone work, meat left on carcass, wastage, basic knowledge of questions asked about the preparations of stocks.

### Class 27: Chicken - Practical Cookery Powered by USAPEEC



1. Time allowed 60 minutes
2. Prepare and present three identical main courses using USAPEEC Chicken Quarters. The chicken shall be supplied by the organizers in the competition venue on the day of the competition.





3. The bones of the chicken are to be kept for inspection by judges
4. Present the main courses on individual plates with appropriate garnish and accoutrements.
5. Typewritten recipes are required
6. Weight of chicken per portion on the plate to be 150 grams
7. All of the above rules are applicable for the competitors entering Best Arab National Cuisinier trophy. The main course for those competitors ONLY must be a Traditional Chicken Arabic main course, from any Arab country.
8. All other competitors are not to follow Point 7

### Class 30: Pasta - Practical Cookery powered by Barilla



1. Time allowed 60 minutes
2. Prepare and present two identical main courses using Barilla Pasta and Sauces only, 1 main course suitable for a Bistro or coffee shop and to be vegetarian, 2 plates to be presented one for judges one for presentation, 1 main course suitable for a fine dining restaurant to the competitors choice, 2 plates to be presented one for judges one for presentation.
3. Barilla Pasta and Sauces shall be available in the competition venue and these are the only sauces and Pasta to be used and are mandatory failure to utilize these products then 50% of the judging marks shall be reduced.
4. Present the main courses on individual plates with appropriate garnish and accoutrements.
5. Limited kitchen equipment will be provided, in the form of 2 rectangular work benches with 2 induction units and 1 additional power 13amp socket. Water will be provided.

6. Typewritten recipes are required
7. Weight per portion on the plate to be 150 grams

### Class 33: Potatoes USA – Savory Creations Practical cookery



1. Time allowed 60 minutes
2. Prepare and present three identical main courses using Potatoes from USA, Fresh, Frozen or Dehydrated, to the competitor's choice, 3 plates to be presented two for judges one for presentation. The dish must have a minimum of 3 potato recipes using potatoes from the UAS, Fresh, Frozen or Dehydrated.
3. Potatoes from USA MUST be used in all preparations and be the main ingredient used in the dish, Potatoes from the USA, Fresh, Frozen and Dehydrated these are the only Potatoes to be used and are mandatory failure to utilize these products then 50% of the judging marks shall be reduced.
4. Present the main courses on individual plates with appropriate garnish and accoutrements.
5. Typewritten recipes are required
6. Weight per portion on the plate to be 150 grams

### Class 34: Potatoes USA – Sweet Creations



- 1 This is a static class featuring Potatoes from USA suitable for restaurant service. NO Sweet potatoes to be used. A dessert or sweet dishes utilizing the wide variety of Potatoes from USA. Potatoes from USA products including Fresh, Frozen and Dehydrated must be utilized.
- 2 NO Sweet potatoes to be used.

Potatoes from USA MUST be used in all preparations and be the main ingredient used in the dish, Potatoes from the USA, Fresh, Frozen and Dehydrated these are the only Potatoes to be used and are mandatory failure to utilize these products then 50% of the judging marks shall be reduced

- 3 Present three different pastry dishes on individual plates, 1 of each dish, using Potatoes from USA, Potatoes as the main ingredient per plate.
- 4 To be prepared in advance and displayed cold on appropriate plates and appropriate garnishes to represent a dish suitable for dinner service in a restaurant ala carte style.
- 5 Typewritten description and recipes required.
- 6 Maximum space available: 75 cm x 75 cm.

### The Student Challenge Powered by IFFCO OOH Plant Based Open to Culinary school students and kitchen trainees/interns only Classes 35 and 36 only



Entry to the class must be accompanied by a current student card issued by a recognized culinary school or letter from Human resource department stating trainee or culinary intern

### Class 35: Plant based Practical cookery appetizer and main course

1. Prepare and present 1 appetizer hot or cold and 1 main course hot, 2 identical plates of each (1 for judge; 1 for feedback)
2. Total of 60 minutes for both creations
3. Present the dishes on individual plates with appropriate garnish and accoutrements.

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4. Each of the preparations must be totally plant based and only plant based ingredients are to be used.
5. IFFCO out of home THRYVE products are to be used and a combination of the plant based protein item MUST be used in both dishes.
6. The sponsor shall provide a catalogue of Plant based items that are to be used and explanations of each item will be provided to the competitors.
7. Typewritten recipes are required
8. Weight per portion on the plate to be 150 grams
9. Limited kitchen equipment will be provided, in the form of 2 rectangular work benches with 2 induction units and 1 additional power 13amp socket. Water will be provided.

### Class 36 Soup and Sandwich Practical cookery

1. To prepare a hot or cold soup
2. Any cuisine any style
3. 2 identical plates, cups or.... (1 for judge; 1 for feedback)
4. Hot or Cold Sandwich
5. Competitor's style and choice
6. 2 identical plates (1 for judge; 1 for feedback)
7. Limited kitchen equipment will be provided, in the form of 2 rectangular work benches with 2 induction units and 1 additional power 13amp socket. Water will be provided.

### Class 37 Dressed Lamb - Practical Butchery This class is subject to change competitors will be advised



1. Prepare a whole, fresh, dressed lamb carcass TBC into various ready-to-cook joints and pieces, some as required by the organisers, the others to competitor's choice.

2. Make a presentation of the finished cuts and off-cuts for exhibiting to the judges.
3. Competitors must use the fridges provided to store their finished cuts prior to judging
4. Cuts/joints can be suitable for foodservice or suitable for a retail butchery display.
5. Organisers will supply the dressed lamb for this class.
6. Each competitor will have two stainless steel tables (supplied by the organisers) on which to work.
7. No power tools permitted.
8. Competitors to supply their own:
9. Tools and knives
10. Twine or netting
11. RED cutting boards (this is a municipality requirement and will be strictly enforced)
12. Garnishing
13. Display trays
14. Sundries
15. Time allowed: two hours
16. All tools and sundries will be inspected to ensure that they are hygienically suitable for food use.
17. Cuts required by the organisers are:
18. Neck slices or Neck boned.
19. 1 x shoulder, boned and rolled, tied or netted ready for roasting.
20. 3 pieces shoulder chops.
21. Spare ribs.
22. 1 x 8 rib Frenched rack.
23. Mid-loin chops from a short loin
24. 1 x Eye of Loin.
25. 1 x Tunnel-boned leg tied or netted for roasting.
26. 1 x Seam-boned leg trimmed into its 4 primal cuts plus its bone-in shank.
27. Sustainability is a key part of our jobs as chefs and judges will be looking at this as part of the judging criteria to see wastage on bones, competitors knowledge of usage of off cuts and other usable parts, they will be expected to explain to the judges what can be done with any waste seen by judges.
28. Nutritional facts, competitors

are expected to be able to tell the judges what is the difference between beef and lamb from a nutritional stand point.

## VENUE, ENTRY FEES, JUDGING AND THE AWARDS SYSTEM

### VENUE & ENTRY FEES:

1. The Emirates Salon Culinaire will be held during the Expo Culinaire 2023 from May 29th till 31st May 2023.
2. The venue is at the Expo Centre Sharjah
3. The entrance fee for all single entries is Dhs.100 (AED. One Hundred) per person per class, unless otherwise stated in the Rules and Regulations or the Class Briefs.
4. The fee for entry to the trophy classes is as follows:
  - i. **Best Cuisinier – The Emirates Salon Culinaire- Dubai 2023 AED:500/- per person**
  - ii. **Best Pastry Chef – The Emirates Salon Culinaire- Dubai 2023 AED:400/- per person**
  - iii. **Best Artist – The Emirates Salon Culinaire- Dubai 2023 AED:500/- per person**
  - iv. **Best Arab National – The Emirates Salon Culinaire- Dubai 2023 AED:300/- per person**
  - v. **Young Chef of the Year – The Emirates Salon Culinaire Dubai 2023 AED: 300/- per person**

### CLOSING DATE:

5. Closing date for entries is May 15th 2023 However, many are often fully subscribed and closed well before the closing date.

### TROPHY ENTRY:

Entrants to a trophy class must enter and finish in all and only those classes that pertain to the trophy for which they are entering. No other classes may be entered into by a trophy entrant.



Trophies are awarded on the highest aggregate judging points from all classes pertaining to the trophy being awarded.

The required classes are:

#### **BEST CUISINIER:**

- i. *Class #10. Five-Course Dinner Menu*
- ii. *Class # 21. Beef Practical Cookery*
- i. *Class # 27. Chicken Practical Cookery*

In order to qualify for inclusion in the points tally for Best Cuisinier Trophy a competitor must win three medals, at least one of which must be a gold medal.

#### **BEST PASTRY CHEF:**

- i. *Class # 01. Practical Cake Decoration*
- ii. *Class # 03. Four Plates of Desserts*
- iii. *Class # 06. Friandises, Petites Four*

In order to qualify for inclusion in the points tally for Best Pastry Chef Trophy a competitor must win at least two medals one of which must be a gold medal.

#### **BEST ARTIST:**

- i. *Class # 07. Chocolate Showpiece*
- ii. *Class # 09. Open Showpiece*
- iii. *Class # 15. Individual Ice Carving*
- iv. *Class # 17. Practical Fruit & Vegetable Carving*

In order to qualify for inclusion in the points tally for Best Artist Trophy a competitor must win at least three medals one of which must be a gold medal.

#### **BEST ARAB NATIONAL CUISINIER**

- i. *Class # 27. Chicken – Practical Cookery Arabic Style*
- ii. *Class # 19. Arabic Mezzeh - Practical Cookery*
- iii. *Class 22: Emirati Cuisine - Practical Cookery*

- iv. *In order to qualify for inclusion in the points tally for Best Arab National Trophy a competitor must win at least one Gold medal and be an Arab National.*

#### **YOUNG CHEF OF THE YEAR**

See Classes for Entry Document.

#### **JUDGING AND THE AWARDS SYSTEM**

A team of WorldChefs (The World Association of Chefs Societies) approved international Judges will adjudicate at all classes of the competition: using Worldchefs-approved methods, criteria and documents [www.worldchefs.org](http://www.worldchefs.org)

After each judging session, the judges will hold a debriefing session at which each competitor attending may learn something of the thinking behind the judges' decision.

Competitors will not be competing against each other: rather, they will be striving to reach the best possible standard. The judges will then apportion marks that accord with their perception of the standard reached. The competitor will then receive an award commensurate with his/her points tally for the class.

In theory, therefore, everyone in a particular class could be awarded a gold medal. Conversely, it could be possible that no awards at all are made.

#### **The scaling for awards in all classes is as follows:**

Points	
100	Gold Medal with Distinction with Certificate.
99 – 90	Gold Medal with Certificate.
89 – 80	Silver Medal with Certificate.
79 – 70	Bronze Medal with Certificate

- 60 – 69 Certificate of Merit  
Thereafter Certificate of Participation

#### **Corporate and Establishment Trophies**

The corporate and establishment trophies available are:

#### **Best Effort by an Individual Establishment – The Emirates Salon Culinare**

This trophy is awarded to the establishment whose competitors gain the highest total combined points from the medals won from all their entries.

#### **Best Effort by a Corporation – The Emirates Salon Culinare**

This trophy is awarded to the corporation whose competitors gain the highest total combined points from the medals won from all their entries.

**THE STUDENT CHALLENGE** open to Culinary school students only a Special Trophy to be given to the best effort of a single Culinary School, classes open only to culinary students from bona fide culinary schools can enter these classes

#### **Point Value of each Medal Won:**

Gold Medal with Distinction 6 Points  
Gold Medal 5 Points  
Silver Medal 3 Points  
Bronze Medal 1 Point

Winners where a sponsored trip is awarded are restricted to winning the trip once per lifetime. In a case where the overall winner has participated in a sponsored trip previously the trip shall be awarded to the 2nd place winner.

If no Gold Medals are awarded to competitors in the trophy classes, then there shall be no trophy given at the competition.



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# THE EMIRATES SALON CULINAIRE 2023

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## Application Membership

Date of Application:

Family Name: (Mr./Ms./Mrs.)		
First Name/s:		
Nationality:	Civil Status:	Date of Birth: dd/mm/yy
Name of Employer:	Address in Home Country:	
Work Address:	Tel:	
Web Address:	Email:	
Telephone Office:	Professional Title:	
Fax Office:	Type of Membership Required: (Please tick one)	
Tel. Home:	Corporate <input type="checkbox"/>	Senior Renewal <input type="checkbox"/>
Fax Home:	Senior <input type="checkbox"/>	Junior <input type="checkbox"/>
Email:		

Declaration to be Signed by all Applicants

I wish to join the Emirates Culinary Guild. I have read the ECG Constitution and By-laws. I agree to be bound by the requirements of the constitution. If elected, I promise to support the Guild and its endeavors, to the best of my abilities.

Signed:.....

Proposed By:

Sig:.....

Seconded By:

Sig:.....

### FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Remarks:

Payment received?		
Certificate Given.	Pin Given.	Medal & Collar Given
Approved	Approved	
President.....	Chairman.....	

Fees:

Young Member: Junior members will receive a certificate.

Senior Members: Above the rank of chef de partie (or senior chef de partie on executive chef's recommendation).

Dhs.350/=joining. Includes certificate; member-pin, member medal and ECG ceremonial collar. Dhs. 150/=per year thereafter.

Affiliate Member: Dhs.350.00 for the first year. Dhs.300 per year thereafter.

Corporate Member Dhs. 20,000 per year

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April 2023 **Gulf Gourmet**

# newmembers



Jihad Harfouche, HORECA Manager, Lifco International, receiving Emirates Culinary Guild Membership certificate from ECG President Chef Uwe Micheel

**LIFCO** originated from the vision of Mr. Mohamed Salim Hassan in Venezuela in early 1950s. Since then, the company has developed into a group of pioneering companies covering different market categories across international borders. Below are the FMCG distribution operations in the UAE where LIFCO is one of the top five distributors in Dry, Chilled and Frozen.

We started in the UAE in the early 1970's as a pioneer in retail. It didn't take long for LIFCO to set its sights on becoming one of the most professional and efficient distribution and marketing operations in the region for multinational brands. With complete dedication and commitment, today LIFCO is one of the leading distributors in the region, covering several markets in the GCC and Levant area.

LIFCO's impeccable history in quality food product distribution and marketing



has earned the highest ranking by all the top retail chains in the country. As one of the largest consumer food distributors in the UAE since 1975, LIFCO offers a state-of-the-art distribution infrastructure for the importing, storing, distribution and marketing of dry, chilled and frozen consumer products.

Every day, LIFCO services every store category in the UAE, including hypermarkets, supermarkets, grocery stores, restaurants and food service outlets. We also have the exclusive distribution rights within the UAE to a dozen international brands.

With a well-trained staff of more than 1,000 employees, we rely on the

most modern sales and marketing management tools to reach our goals. Our entire logistic network is HACCP-certified (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points), and complies with local health regulations and international standards. We believe in data retrieval, and in sharing it with our partners. Accordingly, our ERP system supports the entire network of import, sales, distribution and marketing, and helps to deliver orders within 24 hours to the client from our centrally located, purpose-built warehouse network in Dubai Industrial City.

Our relationship with business partners is built on trust, mutual understanding and respect with a view toward long-term commitment. We find that working closely with our existing partners offers new opportunities for growth and development that helps us to create new lines in view of changing market trends.



**Ashlea Daniel, Business Development Manager, Emirates Macaroni Factory - MADA FMCG, receiving Emirates Culinary Guild Membership certificate from ECG President Chef Uwe Micheel**

**MADA General Trading LLC** (MADA FMCG), is the internal distribution company of Emirates Macaroni Factory (EMF) and Ibra Food Industries (IBRA), for its own brands, partner brands, and private label production.

EMF is the pioneer of pasta manufacturing in the entire Middle East region, producing superior quality pasta in the United Arab Emirates since 1979. IBRA, established in 2012, produces various kinds of sauces, condiments, dressings, syrups and powder milk that further compliments the range.

Each brand produced by EMF and IBRA is well known for its consistent high quality and mouthwatering tastes. Brands include Emirates Macaroni, Dubai Macaroni, Al Worood, Hat, Verda and Lubna).

The portfolio holds a vast range of creative pasta shapes, types and



innovations, with over 40 items in the pasta category and over 30 in the sauces and dairy ranges.

Emirates Macaroni is the market leading brand across the GCC, with a market share of 42% in the UAE. (RA Nielsen SEP 2022). The products are also well represented in more than 50 countries globally, spanning over all the 6 continents. New innovations are available with Gluten Free, Kids shapes and instant Pasta.

Verda is the newest and freshest

premium brand created by EMF and IBRA, specifically for FoodService and Out of Home requirements and gourmet retail channels with pasta, sauces, and condiments as the core range. Verda pasta is made with top grade Canadian 100% Durum Wheat Semolina, providing the superior quality. Coming soon are pasta varieties Bronze, Wholewheat and Gluten Free.

Hat pasta and sauces are designed for high volume catering consumption with flour as the main ingredient for pasta.

For both Verda and Hat we can cater to certain package sizing requests and both are available in bulk quantities.

The organization is ISO 9001:2015, ISO 22000: 2018, HACCP, Halal and Kosher certifies and is registered with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, pursuant to the Federal Food Drug and Cosmetic Act.



April 2023 **Gulf Gourmet**

# EAT, PRINT, LOVE

With technology touted as the future of food, **Shreya Asopa** hopes at least one 3D-printed dish will become a regular feature on the menu

In today's world, how we produce and consume food is at the heart of modern ecological challenges. In light of rising global food insecurity and scarce resources, we are implored to look beyond and consider - what will the world's population eat in the future?

One such groundbreaking innovation disrupting the food industry is 3D food printing. The Star Trek-esque vision of the future with your food fantasy conjuring onto your plate within minutes is steadily becoming a reality offering a promising possibility of simultaneously meeting individuals' diverse taste and nutritional preferences.

Once a mere figment of sci-fi imagination in the early 2000s, 3D printing has since evolved into an intriguing reality. The principle, however, has been the same. The process usually involves pulverizing raw ingredients, akin to a food ink, being added in the cartridges which are then loaded into printers and strategically deposited in thin layers through a nozzle. Simply put, imagine icing a cake with meticulous precision, layer by layer.

Recently, Rutgers scientists made a groundbreaking discovery, formulating healthier low-fat chocolate that can be produced with a 3D printer. Soon, when guests request a low-fat, customized chocolate dessert, chefs will confidently respond, "On the way, just printing it!"

But it doesn't end with confections and cold dishes; main courses are also joining the 3D-printed food revolution. Succulent, 3D-printed meat morsels are capturing the attention by offering culinary experience strikingly similar



to traditional meats in terms of taste, texture, and aroma.

The other way startups are using it to alleviate global food waste, which currently amounts to a staggering 1.3 billion tonnes – by printing from leftovers or discarded food, considered as ugly.

## THE BIGGER QUESTION

Reports suggest that Food 3D Printing Market Size is estimated to reach \$15.1 billion by 2031. No longer a far-fetched emerging idea, it has reached Michelin-starred chefs. Chef Paco Perez at Miramar and Joel Castanyé at La Boscana in Spain have used the 3D printer Foodini made by Natural Machines to produce intricate accents for some of their dishes.

In an interview given to BBC, Chef Perez highlighted he has little stress over machines and competing against each other. He added, "Creativity is shaped by what technology can do."

The other buzzword on the food scene

is affordability. Some schools of thought also talk about the potential for contamination due to extruding of materials. However, with the introduction of food-grade BPA-free parts and FDA-approved filaments, the risk of contamination has been significantly reduced, making it a more viable option.

## WAVE OF DIGITAL GASTRONOMY

Envision a world where food design is accessible to all through user-friendly software – where even those without programming experience can craft delicious meals. The rationale behind 3D printers is that you take control of the design process and decide what goes into your meal.

As futuristic as it may seem, we're not quite there yet. But it promises us a tantalizing glimpse of future kitchens that will empower chefs. So, stay tuned as we explore all the delectable possibilities that lie ahead in this mouthwatering union of gastronomy and technology.

# Home of the best ingredients



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