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DECEMBER 2021

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gourmet

volume 16, issue 10

PROUD TO BE EMIRATI

Chef Musabbah Al Kaabi, Chef Saud Al Matrooshi and Chef Mohammad Al Banna are the Emirati trailblazers of our culinary world

GOLDEN CHEF'S HAT AWARD

JW Marriot Marquis and Kitopi cloud kitchen are the final teams competing in Season 9



CULINARY CONNOISSEUR

The inspiring journey and learnings of Chef **Elie Lteif**, Culinary Advisor, Nestlé Professional



COMMUNITY TABLE

Le Pain Quotidien founder **Alain Coumont** on how to be a successful chef and business owner





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Dear fellow chefs, ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to December issue of our Gulf Gourmet, the last issue of a turbulent 2021. Many of our colleagues around the world had major challenges and still have – with infection numbers going up again, we can see it's far from over.

We in the United Arab Emirates are at the moment in a good situation when it comes to new infections, which are only in the 60s and 70s for now. This does not mean we should be careless now. Please keep sanitizing and wearing masks, please look after yourself, your family, friends and the humans of our world.

To all of us who are celebrating Christmas, wishing you a Merry Christmas and I hope all our colleagues and friends find the time to spend with their family and friends before the year ends. I wish everyone a healthy, happy and successful start for 2022, we all pray for a better year to come.

Your Emirates Culinary Guild will close the year with a great competition. Read all about it in this issue, cooking with Great Canadian products. The registration is open now, we are ready to receive your videos. I actually already look forward to the final where the best selected recipes will be cooked live. Don't miss it, wishing you all the best.

The next competition is also in the pipeline, at the beginning of the year, we will cook with European Vegetables (ANICAV), watch this space.

Have you already registered on the chefID app? The only app for chefs, this is done for us for the chefs around the world. If not registered yet. I recommend to do it now. And use the app, it is from us for us. Any question that you may have please do not hesitate to contact Aquin Geoge at editor@gulfgourmet.net

Our main focus is the Big Show in Abu Dhabi 2022

We will have 7 events under 1 roof



1. Worldchefs Congress
2. Global Chefs Competition
3. Billy Gallagher Young Chef Forum
4. Young Chef African Cup
5. Expo Culinaire
6. Salon Culinaire
7. Education Corner

We look forward to these amazing events and welcoming chefs from around the world. I am really looking forward to show case our Emirati Culture and Food at the same time learning from colleagues.

Please pass the word around, we still have spaces for the Exhibition, contact the ECG at emiratesculinaryguild@gmail.com or Purple Kitchen at joanne.cook@purple-kitchen.com directly to book your space, don't miss it. We are expecting chefs from more than 100 countries to be with us.

The Congress registration is open now at worldchefscongress.org. Do not miss out on the Early Bird Discount

Please visit gulfgourmet.net to browse through previous issues of this magazines. Visit emiratesculinaryguild.net to see

latest happenings on the events calendar. And visit facebook.com/wacsyoungchefs for young chefs to be in contact with over 4,000 chefs across the globe.

Please do not miss the company profile of our corporate members. We really do appreciate your support. Also do look at the Friends of the Guild pages to check all our supporters.

Thank you to Chef Bijendra Singh Ramola and Jumeirah Creekside Hotel Team for hosting the November meeting

I have to close my message on a very sad note. Our colleague and friend Patrick Lannes passed away in his homeland – France. Chef Patrick was an Emirates Culinary Guild member, and member of the Board for many years, a great supporter for our Young Chefs. Patrick I (We) will miss you. May your soul rest in peace. Our condolences go to his wife Renee and his family.

Culinary regards,
Uwe Micheel
President of Emirates Culinary Guild

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Your first steps towards a culinary career.

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editor'snote

email editor@gulfgourmet.net

Following a successful pilot test of the chefID app earlier this year, we now have an integrated print and digital offering that is second to none in the market.

Going forward all our exclusive content and advertiser promotions will be featured both in Gulf Gourmet our print brand and on chefID our online community platform for chefs.

We are doing this because we were pleasantly surprised by the insights into how our digital content is performing.

OUR AVERAGE METRICS, for a single exclusive digital content posted, is 60,000+ impressions, 5,000+ engagement and 1,600+ likes and shares.

Combine this with our print readership of 11,000+ decision makers and influencers and you have the perfect formula needed as a foodservice company looking to reach the right audience.

What impresses us most is the engagement numbers. In a day and age where people are busy scrolling, we are able to get people to pause and click the link open. This truly excites us.

Another piece of news I am excited to share with you is that we have an all-



these young chefs work with for their recipe, email advertise@gulfgourmet.net. The package includes print ads, digital ads, link in the app's e-commerce marketplace and more.

This is the final issue for 2021 and it is a power-packed one. We have three Emirati chefs gracing our cover. These chefs have had to break societal norms to follow their dreams and they have paved the way for future Emirati chefs to create culinary wonders.

Our final two teams for the Golden Chefs Hat Award UAE Season 9 are featured in here and we will soon select the top 10 teams for the final cook-off. Watch this space for more.

If you are a chef looking to be an accredited culinary judge for cooking competitions, then this issue has the details on how you could be certified by Worldchefs.

All this and more in the issue you hold in your hands. Enjoy the read and keep cooking with passion.

Until next year, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Aquin George
Editor

new competition for young chefs in the magazine next year.

If you would like your hero product to be part of the bouquet of ingredients that

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newsbites

Sudath is Executive Pastry Chef at Rotana

Chef Sudath has been appointed Executive Pastry Chef at City Center Rotana. The talented pastry chef with 23+ years of experience, who has won numerous awards and accolades throughout his career, was working as Pastry Chef with the Radisson Blu Hotel Dubai Deira Creek before taking up his current role.



New Culinary Director at SLS Dubai

Portuguese celebrity Chef Cláudio Cardoso has been appointed as Culinary Director at SLS Dubai Hotel & Residences.

Born in South Africa, raised in Portugal, Cláudio's first foray with food was the blend of South African and Portuguese cuisines and flavours in his family home.

At the age of 15, Cláudio pursued his formal culinary education in Portugal, which led to multiple work opportunities at several five-star restaurants in Peru, Milan, South Africa, London and finally to Dubai. His impressive portfolio includes the Armani Hotel Dubai, The Ritz-Carlton in Lisbon, London's SUSHISAMBA where he was the Group Executive Chef, as well as the Michelin starred restaurant in The Ritz-Carlton, Midori, where he was the Executive Chef.

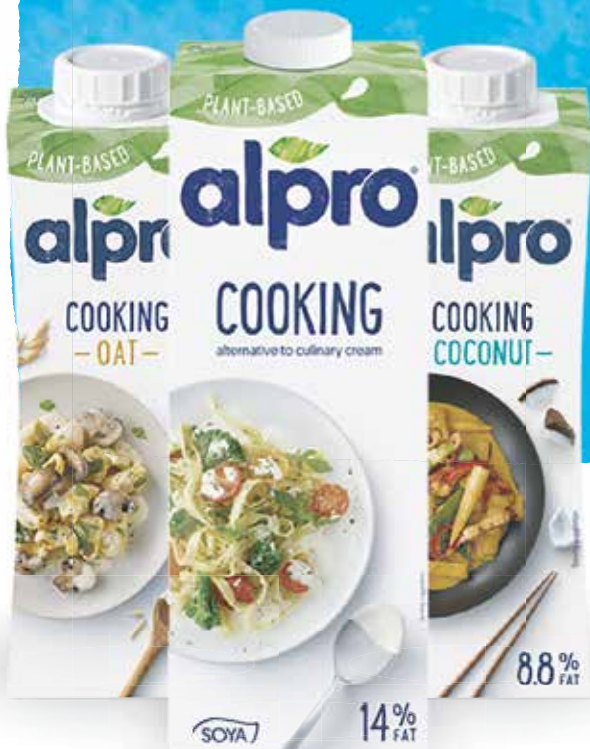
He will be working closely with Jaimie, Chef de cuisine of Carna and Sara, Chef De Cuisine of F'ilia.



Ruchi is Executive Sous Chef at Raffles

Raffles Hotel and Residences Doha has recently appointed Chef Ruchi Sheung Li Thammitage as their Executive Sous Chef. This marks a return to the Middle East for the Sri Lankan chef who worked with the Jumeirah group before heading to Singapore. In his prior role, he was the Executive Sous Chef with the Resorts World Sentosa in Singapore.





WHATCHA GOT COOKING?

DELICIOUSLY PLANT-BASED



Margarita joins The8 Palm

The8 Palm hotel has hired former MasterChef The TV experience head chef Margarita Vaamonde. She will lead the culinary team for all of the property's F&B outlets.

The Venezuelan chef, who spent time in Argentina, has previously also worked for the French gastronomic restaurant by Pierre Gagnaire in Dubai for Catch restaurants in Los Angeles and Dubai.

Chef Peter collaborates with JW Marriott Marquis

Chef Peter Lloyd, owner of London's Sticky Mango restaurant, has signed a two-year deal to collaborate with the JW Marriott Marquis City Centre Doha in Qatar.

He has developed a new menu at the hotel's pan-Asian restaurant, Shanghai Club, after running a pop-up earlier this year.

Lloyd's career spans more than 30

years in the hospitality industry and he previously worked with Marriott International when chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten appointed him executive chef at Spice Market at the W Hotel London in 2011.

"JW Marriott Marquis City Center Doha is extremely honored and thrilled to welcome back to Qatar one of the world's greatest chefs", said Esra Parin, general manager of JW Marriott Marquis City Center Doha.





Tala named region's best female chef

Bahraini chef Tala Bashmi is the winner of the first Middle East & North Africa's Best Female Chef Award. She will receive the award in Abu Dhabi next year at the first Middle East & North Africa's 50 Best Restaurants ceremony. She launched Baked by T, before joining the Culinary Arts Academy in Lucerne, Switzerland. She then worked at the Grand Hotel Les Trois Rois in Basel and Michelin-starred restaurant Prisma in Vitznau.

As the head chef of Fusions by Tala she creates modern interpretations of Bahraini dishes.

Four Seasons Kuwait hires Chef Thierry

Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait at Burj Alshaya has appointed Thierry Papillier as Executive Chef. The French chef from Brittany has worked with the Four Seasons for 12 years with his last role at the Four Seasons Resort Marrakech.

At the age of 29, Chef Thierry became the then youngest Executive Chef for any Four Seasons hotel in the world when he joined Four Seasons Hotel Cairo at Nile Plaza. He has also worked at their properties in Mauritius at Anahita and in Casablanca.

New Executive Chef at Radisson RED Chandigarh Mohali

Jagmeet Singh has been appointed as Executive Chef of Radisson RED Chandigarh Mohali.

Singh has over two decades of extensive culinary experience. He has worked his way through culinary discipline holding various positions across leading brands such as Burj-al-Arab-Dubai, Marriott, Leela, Shangri-La, amongst others.

In his new role, he will spearhead the multicuisine restaurant - Redhaba, the contemporary lounge - Jiggera Bar, signature bakery - Lavo & Go, in-room dining, and banquet operations. He is also training chefs to facilitate a collaborative environment in F&B operations.



Chef Coco showcases modern African cuisine

Chef Coco, known to be a promoter of modern African cuisine, is satisfying the taste buds of visitors to the Alkebulan dining hall at the ongoing Expo 2020 Dubai.

His contemporary take on traditional

dishes from across the continent has been appreciated world over. The chef grew up in his parent's restaurant in Kinshasa, has formally trained at the Ecole Hôtelière de la Province de Namur in Belgium and is an evangelist for modern African gastronomy.



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Nestlé
Golden
Chef's Hat
Award



Fresh and FABULOUS

The duo representing JW Marriott Marquis Dubai at this year's Nestlé Professional Golden Chef's Hat Award UAE are a study in contrast. One comes from the picturesque mountains of Northern Pakistan, while the other from the hustle and bustle of Indonesia's tropical capital. Despite their contrast, both possess an entrepreneurial spirit

Maurilla Elisha Janice Tendeau

The 21-year-old Indonesian has been the Commis 2 pastry chef for the last six months. "I'm in the a la carte and room

service section, second in charge for all the outlets and responsible for preparing all the desserts," says Maurilla.

Her love for cooking began at home,

and at a very young age. "I grew up in Jakarta. Both my grandmas liked to cook, especially pastries," recalls Maurilla. "I developed a passion for cooking and started to cook when I was eight or nine



Maurilla Elisha Janice Tendeau



Gulayaz Ahmed



years old. When I was in high school, I decided to become a chef, but my parents wanted me to be a doctor. Later, they agreed with me and allowed me to train as a chef.

Maurilla completed a three-year course, majoring in baking and pastry, at Indonesia's Bandung Institute of Tourism. "In my first semester, I did my internship at Fujairah Intercontinental. After my six-month internship had finished, I went back home and continued my studies. I graduated last year, in the middle of the covid pandemic. I joined here at JW Marriott Marquis five months ago."

When asked to compare her experiences at the two venues, Maurilla says, "Fujairah Intercontinental is a resort, so

it's very different from a business hotel like JW Marriott Marquis. The resort is busy on holidays and weekends, but the business hotel is busy every day. Also, we are in a premium hotel and one of the tallest hotels in the world!"

For the Golden Chefs Hat Award, Maurilla will be presenting a strawberry cheesecake. "It's a New York cheesecake with the strawberry sauce, white chocolate garnish and some crumbled pistachios. I also used some Nestlé products," she says with a smile.

Back home, her family consists of her father and an elder sister who works in the fashion industry. Sadly, her mother passed away not too long ago.

Looking into the future, Maurilla reveals

her entrepreneurial spirit. "My dream is first to be a pastry chef. I'm trying to learn and grow so that in five to ten years, I can have my own shop in Indonesia. Actually, when the pandemic happened, I was still a student in college, and I had to study from home. So, I started a small business with my sister and cousin to sell desserts online. My cousin also wanted to learn how to make pastries, so I taught her. We already have a business running, but it's a very small business, and I'm not there. After I get experience, I hope to be a proper entrepreneur."

Gulayaz Ahmed

Gulayaz Ahmed, the 28 years old Pakistani culinarian, has been a demi chef for the past ten months. "I do the mise en place, in charge of the pasta section. We create everything from

scratch, including homemade pasta of different types," says Gulayaz.

He was born in the picturesque Hunza valley, part of the mountainous northern extreme of Pakistan, close to its border with China. He says, "It's a beautiful place with high mountains, cool summers and freezing winters. I did my primary school there, and then I moved to Karachi."

Gulayaz's path to becoming a chef was a rather unusual one. "It's a long story," he says before recounting it. "When I moved to Karachi, one of my friends was always watching Gordon Ramsay videos. When I saw the kitchen and everything happening there, I decided to be a chef. I started working part-time at my friend's continental restaurant, while studying at the same time.

"Later, with the help of my elder brother, who was already here, I came to Dubai. Then, I had an interview at Crowne Plaza Dubai. In my mind, I thought I'd be hired as a steward, but the Italian chef asked me to cook. He liked it and asked me to join as a Commis 2. This was beyond my expectation."

For the Golden Chef's Hat Award, Gulayaz went with what he knows best - Pasta. "My chefs told me: make whatever makes you happy. And I'm most into pasta, so I tried to make pasta of different colours using natural colours - pepper for the red one and spinach for the green one. Also, I used Nestlé cream. I did four or five different platings, and the chef chose one."

Looking into the future, Gulayaz plans to return to his roots and cook up something special. "My native place is a popular tourism destination for Pakistani and foreign visitors. We have a distinct local cuisine that is not similar to Indian or Pakistani foods. We use natural, local ingredients like almond oil and walnut oil. My family has land where we produce fresh ingredients and oils. So, I want to open a kind of fusion restaurant using these fresh local ingredients."



Lobster and Pumpkin Cappellacci

POACHED LOBSTER

Lobster	600g
Lemon	1 pcs
Butter	60g
Seasoning	
Herbs	

Method

- ◆ Blanch the lobster, then de-shell it.
- ◆ In a pan add butter and glaze the lobster tail.

PUMPKIN CAPPELLACCI

Pasta Dough	12 pcs
Egg Yolk	125gm
Semoula Flour	250gm

Method

- ◆ Blanch the pasta in a boiler then glaze with butter.
- ◆ Mix the dough and rest, roll out through pasta machine and make a thin sheet.

PASTA STUFFING

Butternut Pumpkin	400gm
Ricotta Cheese	100gm



Sage	3gm
------	-----

Seasoning

Method

- ◆ Cut in to half, season it, then roast in the oven. After cooling down, pull out the flesh and mix with ricotta, sage.

ASPARAGUS PUREE

White Asparagus	300gm
-----------------	-------

Shallot	15gm
---------	------

Milk	150ml
------	-------

Butter	20gm
--------	------

Seasoning

Method

- ◆ Sauté the shallot, add asparagus, milk and butter. Bring to simmer, cook until it becomes soft, then blend to a fine puree.

LOBSTER BISQUE

Lobster Shell	80ml
---------------	------

Shallot, Garlic

Leeks, Carrot

Tomato Paste

Herbs

Method

- ◆ Roast the lobster shell. Cut all the

vegetables, sauté in a pot, then add tomato paste. Further add roasted lobster and add stock. Boil once, then put it to simmer for 3 to 4 hours. Strain, then reduce.

- ◆ Balance the seasoning and finish with butter.



STRAWBERRY CHEESECAKE

DIGESTIVE BISCUIT CRUMB

Digestive biscuit	50g
Melted butter	15g
Icing sugar	5g

Method

- ◆ In a food processor, blend the digestive biscuit to a crumble. Then add the icing sugar and melted butter. Bake at 180°C for about 5 minutes. Reserve aside.

CHEESECAKE MIXTURE

Cream cheese	150g
Butter	125g
Sugar	125g
Egg	150g
Lemon zest	1

Method

- ◆ Cream butter and sugar till creamy. Then add in the soft cream cheese. Cream the mixture and incorporate all together. Next, add in the eggs. One at a time. Last, add in the lemon zest. Pour mixture to the dish and bake at 110°C for about 30 minutes. Once baked, keep in the chiller before use.

VANILLA WHIPPED GANACHE

Cream	70ml
Glucose	7.5g
Trimoline	7.5g
White chocolate	100g
Vanilla bean	1

Cold cream	185ml
------------	-------

Method

- ◆ Boil cream, glucose, trimoline and vanilla bean. Once boiled pour the mixture onto the melted white chocolate. Last, add in the cold cream. Reserve in chiller for a minimum 8 hours before whipping.

STRAWBERRY COULIS

Strawberry puree	80ml
Sugar	8g
Balsamic vinegar	2g
Pectin nh	2g

Method

- ◆ Mix pectin and sugar and boil the puree. Once puree boils, add in the sugar pectin mix. Let it boil for 1 minute and remove from the stove. Lastly, add in the balsamic vinegar.

BERRY GEL

Strawberry puree	30g
Raspberry puree	30g
Sugar	5g
Agar	1.5g

Method

- ◆ Mix agar and sugar and boil the puree. Once boiled, add in the agar and sugar mix. Cook till mixture thickens. Reserve in chiller. Once cool, blend the mix to get a smooth gel.

TUILE

Binex powder	20g
--------------	-----

Method

- ◆ Sprinkle the powder onto a silpat and bake at 180°C for about 10 minutes or until golden brown. Let it cool and break it to desired shapes.

ROASTED PISTACHIO

Iranian pistachio	10g
Gold leaf	1

Method

- ◆ Roast the pistachio. Once roasted and cooled down, chop them into pieces.

پومبی Pomì



The tomato revolution
from Italy

A trademark, a territory and its people: how a pride of Italy is born.

It all began in 1982, when a company in the province of Parma who had specialized in processing tomatoes since the beginning of the century, and whose presence in the market dates back to the first half of the nineteenth century, applied for the first time ever, new production technologies for the packaging of Pomì tomato sauce.

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Leading the Emirati cuisine revolution

Chef Musabbah Al Kaabi, Chef Saud Al Matrooshi and Chef Mohammad Al Banna are the Emirati trailblazers leading the way in making Emirati food mainstream on the global culinary scene



In the 50 years since the founding of the UAE in 1971, the nation and its citizens have accrued an impressive list of accomplishments on the political, cultural and economic fronts - from record-breaking architectural marvels to managing one of the most prestigious brands in the world of sports, hosting mega-events or even sending a man to space.

Each of these achievements has its tale of hurdles overcome and valuable lessons learned. Few, however, would have faced the kind of societal objections as those faced by Emirati men wanting to be professional chefs.

"For three months, I did not tell my family I had taken up a chef's job. Then, a newspaper published an article about me. My family started calling me. Some were crying, some were just surprised, some offered me money, some were saying: you have everything, why do this, why kitchen?" - says Chef Musabbbeh Al Kaabi with simulated anguish.

Chef Musabbbeh, well-known and highly respected these days, became the first Emirati professional chef back in 2000 when he was hired by Jebel Ali Hotel. Others have followed in his footsteps since, but have faced similar hurdles.

To get a better sense of the challenges – both personal and professional - faced by Emiratis wanting to become professional chefs, and how they can be overcome, we journey through the lives of three highly accomplished men with distinct career paths - Chefs Musabbbeh, Saud Muhammed and Mohammad Al Banna.

Chef Musabbbeh Al Kaabi

Chef Musabbbeh grew up in the Hajar mountains of Hatta. Typical of the young men in the region, he would often spend time in the wadis with his friends, which often involved cooking, and a young Musabbbeh was often the designated cook.

"Sometimes the food was salty, sometimes overcooked, but we are in



Sometimes the food was salty, sometimes overcooked, but we are in the mountains, and it was the only food available, so we eat it, and no one complains

the mountains, and it was the only food available, so we eat it, and no one complained," recalls Chef Musabbbeh with his rustic sense of humour. He then adds, "But I never thought I would one day become a chef! I was a normal local. I thought I will work in a government job - army, police or something like this."

After serving seven years in the army, Musabbbeh Al Kaabi left looking for something new. "A year later," he recalls, "me and my friend came to Dubai to apply for some jobs. My work experience was only in the army, so all the jobs available to me was in security. My last interview was with Jebel Ali International Hotel. They offered me a chef's job. So I went back home and thought: You were in the army, now you will be in security, so it's the same! You always cook and love to cook, so this is a chance to grow. Do it!"

When Musabbbeh Al Kaabi joined work, his French Executive Chef asked him, "Are you serious about becoming a chef?" I said, "I want to learn." And that's how Chef Musabbbeh's career began in the butchery. "I was in that department for a year and three months."

The newspaper article that that blew the lid on Chef Musabbbeh's clandestine career choice was also a blessing in disguise. "Slowly, my story appeared on other newspaper articles. I began to appear on

TV. Then I started to do a full Ramadan program on the Dubai channel, Kuwait channel, Sharjah channel. I started travelling. I started judging, started doing international judging. I was the first chef from the UAE, second in the Gulf to do that. People started to accept me."

After spending three years at Jebel Ali, he was headhunted by the Jumeirah group. Another three years later, he moved to Dubai World Trade Center before moving to Kempinski Hotel, Mall Of The Emirates. He then spent some time in Abu Dhabi as a consultant Executive Emarati Chef where he helped launch a restaurant. And soon, his career went international. He flew to Kuwait to participate in a Ramadan program. These were followed by other local and regional media appearances. He has even represented the UAE in Kentucky (USA), Luxembourg, Italy, France and Spain.

Chef Musabbbeh, currently the Executive Oriental Chef at Jumeirah Zabeel Saray Hotel, feels a weight on his shoulders as the elder statesman of his chosen guild. "Now I have to throw light on Emarati cuisine on the global culinary scene. I think we have come halfway so far."

To realize his mission 100 per cent, Chef Musabbbeh has set himself two objectives. "First, I'm writing a book. It will be launched soon. This is necessary because until now, I don't know of any book showing authentic Emirati ingredients for any dish. There is always some mistake. There are ingredients like capsicum and mushrooms. We don't have this!"

Chef Musabbbeh's book will also explore the historical evolution and definition of what constitutes Emirati Cuisine. "I want to keep this book for the generation who come after me to understand traditional Emirati ingredients."

Chef Musabbbeh's second objective is travelling and presenting Emirati cuisine around the world. "It is known only in the UAE, and in the region, it hasn't flown



Now I have to throw light on Emarati cuisine on the global culinary scene. I think we have come halfway so far



December 2021 **Gulf Gourmet**

out. So, it's my dream to take it to new countries around the world."

On the flip side, Chef Musabbeh has the satisfaction of being a pioneer. "Now, young people have started choosing this as a career. So for me, whenever I hear there is a new Emirati chef, I feel

proud because I opened this door and I went through it. If someone follows me, it means I'm right. If no one follows me, that means I'm wrong. Now you see local chefs everywhere around UAE."

Chef Saud Al Matrooshi

One of the chefs following in the footsteps

of Chef Musabbeh is 36-year-old Chef Saud Al Matrooshi. Unlike his predecessor, however, Chef Saud wants to bring UAE cuisine to the world by creating fusion dishes that combine western techniques with Emirati inspired ingredients.

Chef Saud is in the right place to execute



From (l-r) Chef Musabbeh Al Kaabi, UAE's first Emirati chef and Executive Oriental Chef with Jumeirah Group; Chef Uwe Micheel, President of the Emirates Culinary Guild and founding chef of Aseelah - the first Emirati fusion fine-dining restaurant; Chef Saud Al Matrooshi, Executive Chef at Emirates Flight Catering; and Chef Mohammad Al Banna, food entrepreneur and Executive Chef.



Whenever I hear there is a new Emirati chef, I feel proud because I opened this door and I went through it. If someone follows me, it means I'm right



*Ali Kaabi
Emirati Chef*

his culinary goals. He is currently an Executive Sous Chef at Emirates Flight catering. When he joined in 2017, he became the first Emirati chef at the world's largest flight catering kitchen.

"One of the things I look after is menu development," says Chef Saud. "A new service that we are working on currently is called Serve Better, where we try to

offer unique and popular dishes made with the best quality ingredients. We try to cater food that matches the high service expectations that people have when they travel on Emirates."

Chef Saud is also involved in a project called Concept Development Kitchen, which is "a state-of-the-art kitchen designed by a team of chefs. We use

it as a lab to create new dishes and to cater to VVVIPs."

Chef Saud credits his passion for cooking to his father, whom he would often find cooking up something in the kitchen. While returning from his frequent travels abroad, Chef Saud's father would bring exotic ingredients to flavour his dishes. As he grew older, Saud Al Matrooshi





I started from stewarding. I did service. I did butchery. Then, I did Commis 3, Commis 2, Commis 1 and chef de partie



began to emulate his father, cooking for family and friends, experimenting with new ingredients and techniques.

While they were generous in complementing his cooking, they were not so supportive of his decision to become a professional, including his father. "When I first joined one of the culinary institutes, my father rejected it saying: you need to have a proper job," says Chef Saud. "Even now, some people think I go to work and cook every day."

Saud Al Matrooshi studied communications and media, and as per everyone's expectations, he began his career as a marketing manager at the Dubai Creek Golf and Yacht Club. The venue's kitchens proved to be a strong distraction for Saud, and he would often go missing in one of the kitchens. One day his boss suggested that he train professionally under the club's executive chef.

"The French chef designed a four-year program for me," recalls Chef Saud. "I was going to start at the bottom and earn my way up properly, not as an Emirati in fast forward mode. I started from stewarding. I did service. I did butchery. Then, I did Commis 3, Commis 2, Commis 1 and chef de partie."

"In the beginning, it was very hard, especially when I worked at service. If other Emiratis or some of my family members saw me, they offered me a 'proper job.' And I had to say: yes, I am doing service, but this is part of my training to become a chef."

"Later on, when they realised that I was working extra hard and that I was working with international brands in the UAE, they said: OK! He is doing something. He has a clear vision of where he is going. Then they started to support me. The biggest support came when I joined the Emirates."

In between, Chef Saud worked in other restaurants, travelled abroad, attended



I've gained quite a bit of experience in each field. But joining the biggest air flight kitchen of the world was a real challenge

courses, joined a well-known group as restaurant brand manager, where he was part of a few successful restaurant openings. He was procurement manager for a Food and Beverage company, and was an executive chef for a couple of sheikhs.

"Going through all that experience and protocol," he explains, "I've gained quite a bit of experience in each field. But joining the biggest air flight kitchen in the world was a real challenge."

"The challenge was to understand the culture of mass production kitchens. A restaurant may order around 50 kg of meat; in a hotel it's 100 kg. Here we are talking tonnes of meat. And it's not only that! You have to look out for what's happening in the travel market. You should have knowledge of each product. And because Emirates flies everywhere in the world, you have to understand different cuisines and different ingredients. Then you have to manage all the food that is cooked, stored, assembled and sent logistically. You have to have that background. I picked that up quite quickly, not just because of me putting extra effort, but also because I am working with a professional team."

Looking into the future, Chef Saud reveals, "I have two dreams. One is personal, and one is professional. My professional dream is to grow at Emirates Flight Catering because it's a very professional place to work, and I'm working with one of the strongest

brands in the world and the best airline in the world. So this is where I want to be because I'm enjoying my work here."

"The second one is to have my own supply company. Most chefs will tell you: I want to have my own restaurant. But if I have my own restaurant, it has to be very personal because my reputation is on the plate. So I have to be there 100% of the time, which is not what I want to do."

"I have noticed that there are some ingredients that are hard to get in the UAE, or maybe people are not paying attention to them. I want to expand this food scene in the UAE. I want restaurants to showcase more products, so people here don't have to travel to try the authentic dish abroad. They can have it here!"

Chef Mohammad Al Banna

Similar to Chef Saud, the third Emirati chef we are profiling was also inspired by his father and their travels together. Chef Mohammad Al Banna, like Chef Saud, seeks to fuse Emirati cuisine with exotic ingredients and cooking techniques. Unlike Chef Saud, however, Chef Mohammad took the entrepreneurial route rather than working for a recognised brand.

"My father likes to cook and invite people to come home and try the food. He cooked traditional dishes and BBQs," recalls Chef Mohammad. "I started cooking with family and father when I was nine years old. He taught me a lot of things. Also, we travelled to many countries around the world. The most important thing for me was to see the local restaurants, markets and their spices. I was lucky to experience different cuisines at an early age."

Chef Mohammad became the "family chef," and encouraged by the positive feedback he received, began to research new techniques and experiment with them.

While he was studying law at university, he also began exploring the idea of



I started cooking with my family and father when I was nine years old. He taught me a lot of things



becoming a professional chef. "No one believed me, and they would say: you are joking!" says Chef Mohammad.

His attempts to join a culinary school outside the UAE did not work out as planned and so in 2016, he launched an Instagram account. The popularity of the account got him an invitation to travel with a group to Bosnia. "They needed a chef from Dubai because they had an Emirati food festival."

When people began calling him 'chef', the urge to get a qualified degree became stronger.

"I completed a culinary course in Dubai and started my own business at home, with help from government support programs established for Emirati entrepreneurs. We produced seasoned meats like gazel jerky and camel jerky," he says.

As his business grew, he opened a factory to process and package the meat. His products are now available in supermarkets and petrol stations in the UAE under the Banna Brothers brand.

"I also opened a small shop selling seafood. Then I opened my seafood restaurant specialising in Emirati cuisine. It is in the Al Wasl Club, Jaddaf, with a capacity for 150 people. My restaurant's name is Al Banoosh, which is the name of a traditional fishing vessel, and also a combination of my family name with my wife's family name."

COME A LONG WAY

Over the past fifty years, Emirati society has undergone tremendous societal changes, along with the headline-grabbing achievements. From the life experiences of these three Emirati chefs, we can discern a pattern with regards to the societal acceptance of being a professional chef.

Chef Musabbbeh, as the first one, had to overcome the greatest hurdle on his journey to becoming a professional. However, he also enjoyed tremendous



Young Emiratis know what they want, and they want to do it properly. So, if you send them to do a basic course or something small, they don't want that

patronage as a result of being the first and only one. Chef Saud faced his own set of challenges but comparatively had a lower hurdle to overcome. Chef Mohammad had attained "celebrity" status among a select circle even before he had become a qualified chef. Now we have a number of young Emirati men and women entering the gastronomy scene, and they have earned their respect.

"Before anyone decides to be a chef," advises Chef Musabbbeh, "they must decide if they are serious or not! Don't say 'I wanna be a chef' just for social media or just to be something different from others. If you wanna be a chef, you must love to cook; you must be passionate. Only if you are serious, you will get support from others - from friends, colleagues, government and companies."

Chef Saud, similarly, places discipline at the top of his formula for success.

"We always talk about motivation and passion, and in all this, we cannot forget about discipline. If you come to this world saying: I'm Emirati, I'm not gonna do that, I'm not gonna clean that, I'm not gonna touch that, I don't know how to do that, I can't do the extra hours... then you are not ready.

"Discipline is the key to success in any career, but it's harder in this job because there is more labour work. When you start, you have to be there

on time, do what you are told, try to be creative when creating new menus and introducing new ingredients. You have to be an artist as well. For all this, I say: discipline is the key."

Chef Saud also identifies one major hurdle remaining. "A lot of young Emiratis are fearful of whether to become a professional chef or not because of lack of culinary institutes here. Young Emiratis know what they want, and they want to do it properly. So, if you send them to do a basic course or something small, they don't want that. They want to do it properly, they want their certificate to be authentic, to be certified worldwide, and they want to give 100%.

"Yes, we have good schools, but they are expensive. So maybe if there is a scholarship program that encourages them to join, and maybe if there is more awareness of what chefs do...this is what I'm trying to do now."

Overall, Chef Saud is positive about the future of his profession and the nation as a whole. This positivity is founded on the confidence he has in the nation's leaders. His confidence is based on personal experience.

"There was a point in my life when I had the honour of preparing lunch at a government summit, to both their highness Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid al Maktoum and Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed al Maktoum. After they had their meal, I explained what I had prepared for them, and they asked for one more serving!

"Then I asked Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid, if he liked the food and he said the food was good. Then I asked Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed, if he liked the food and he gave me a hug. Now that was the peak of my career.

"Our leaders gave me that motivation, gave me that push to have a goal of being the face of food in the UAE, and even the Middle East. So, I have high hopes in following them."

“

I want to expand this food scene in the UAE. I want restaurants to showcase more products, so people here don't have to travel to try the authentic dish abroad



BERRY DELICIOUS

Our pastry focus for this month is an unassuming young chef named **Dinidu Dasanayaka**

Chef Dinidu Dasanayaka is a 26-year-old Sri Lankan native, who was born and raised south of Colombo. The pastry maker is a baker at heart and works for Kitopi, the leading cloud kitchen brand.

He says, "My family is made up of my parents and my younger brother. Nobody in my family is a chef. My brother is currently studying."

When he began working at Kitopi as a Pastry Commis I, he admits that the starting few weeks were tough. He says, "My first day was not easy. It took a while to wrap my head around the fact that I am working for multiple brands. Prior to coming here, I was at restaurant, and at a hotel where they did not have so many brands."

But that struggle was short-lived and now he loves everything about his



My first day was not easy. It took a while to wrap my head around the fact that I am working for multiple brands

current workplace. Chef Dinidu says he is always learning something new and is always inspired because recipes are updated regularly allowing him to explore new ideas.

Ask him about the favorite part of his job and he frankly says, "Everything." He then elaborates by adding, "Because it's pastry, because I have a good salary, because I work with a great team and there is the constant opportunity to learn more, I am happy working here for more reasons than one."

The journey to culinary professionalism began early in his childhood. "Even as a child I had a bit of passion for pastry and bakery. So, when I turned 15 or 16, I went to a hotel school in Colombo and completed a one-year diploma in pastry and bakery," he says.

His parents never questioned his choice of profession as they have seen him trying to bake cakes and small pastry items at home.





His inspiration he says is his mother. Not because of her culinary prowess but more so because they are close to each other and so would work together in the kitchen.

Chef Dinidu soon found his first full-time job in Doha as a baker for a global chain of coffeeshops. "I was making normal cakes and croissant and some types of breads," he says.

He then went to Azerbaijan to study. "First, I started off by studying their language and then wanted to do a degree in hotel management over here. Just when I finished the language course, the pandemic happened."

He soon returned to working for a hotel in Dubai for a year and half before the opportunity at Kitopi presented itself. "I applied, had two days of trial and then got selected by Chef Vishnu," he says.

"My peers support me very well and that makes working here great. What's even better is that my Pastry Chef Harsha allows me to grow in my career by teaching new things that I did not know before coming here," he says.

The aspiring pastry chef hopes to not just get the top job but also start his own business someday.

For our readers, he has created a Blueberry cheesecake and red velvet cake. His says, "I used Arla cream cheese and butter and we made the sponge from scratch. In the finished product you will find more than just blueberries and it's plated with blueberry compote and chocolate."



My peers support me very well and that makes working here great



BLUEBERRY COLD CHEESE CAKE

CRUST

Lurpak Butter	80gm
Digestive biscuit	200gm

Method

- ◆ Crush the digestive biscuit, melt the butter and mix together by hand.
- ◆ Make a crust sheet.

CHEESE CAKE

Egg yolk	5nos
Sugar	75gm
Warm milk	1 cup
Vanilla essence	1 tsp
Gelatin	15gm
Arla Pro Cream Cheese	50gm
Blueberry filling	60gm
Arla Pro Whipping cream	100gm

Method

- ◆ Beat the egg yolk and sugar until it gets fluffy



- ◆ Add the warm milk and mix slowly
- ◆ Mix the gelatin and vanilla essence
- ◆ Add cream cheese and whipping cream and mix it slowly. Finally add in the blueberry filling.

RED-VELVET CAKE

All purpose flour	1kg
Salt	2tsp
Cocoa	60gm
Lurpak butter	452gm
Sugar	1200gm

Egg	9pcs
Vanilla essence	20ml
Butter milk	965ml
Red food color	120ml
Vinegar	20ml
Baking soda	4tsp

Method

- ◆ Take butter and sugar beat it first. Add egg one by one
- ◆ Once it gets fluffy, add all dry ingredients
- ◆ Add the buttermilk and food colour and the vinegar and mix it properly.

CREAM CHEESE ICING

Arla Pro cream cheese	908gm
Lurpak butter	302gm
Icing sugar	302gm
Lemon juice	15ml

Method

- ◆ Mix butter and cream cheese together until its get soft, then add icing sugar and lemon juice

'Always look for the best chef to learn from'

We caught up with **Elie Lteif**, to track the inspiring journey of the executive chef, who earlier this year joined Nestlé Professional as their culinary advisor

Almost everything Chef Elie Lteif touches turns to success. The Culinary Advisor at Nestlé Professional has effectively dabbled in everything from catering and hospitality management to menu development and conceptualising fine dining experiences. And this is just one part of the broad range of accomplishments he has accrued on his way to joining Nestlé this year.

Born and brought up in a small Lebanese town about an hour's drive from Beirut, Chef Elie Lteif is the second of seven siblings. His family struggled financially after his father passed away when he was around six years old. Understandably, Chef Elie's priority as he approached high-school graduation was to secure a means of stable income.

"To be honest, I love food, but I wasn't 100 per cent passionate about being a chef," recalls Chef Elie. "I needed something that would allow me to work in the evenings and study during the day. My twin brother John wanted to register himself as a chef in the culinary school close to our home. So I said: why not!"

"I was lucky because one of my instructors, who I am still in touch with, was managing a French restaurant in Beirut. The scene was booming at that time. Three months after I enrolled, he asked me to join his team as a Commis. This was in 2001. That's how my career started."

What was it about Chef Elie that made him stand out from his peers? "I was



My twin brother John wanted to register himself as a chef in the culinary school close to our home. So I said: why not!

one of those few students always researching," he says. "At that time, there was no internet like we have now, so I was buying one cookbook every single month. I had put a target for myself: every nine months, I would learn a new cuisine. Because I knew that if you don't learn, you won't grow! Even if you learn from chefs, you still need to learn by yourself," he says. Even to this day, you will find him buying books. The admittedly best student in his class, he would easily impress his chefs with his workplace ethic and hardworking nature.

Chef Elie graduated in 2004 from the National Lebanese Hospitality School with a Bachelor's degree in Kitchen Art. At that time, the chef who had offered Chef Elie his first job had moved to Buddha Bar, Beirut, and offered him a position there.

Buddha Bar was among the best restaurants in Lebanon at the time. Here he learnt how to be a "strong" employee and work for 18 hours a day without

calling it quits. "My chef was a strong person too, and he pushed me a lot. By the time I was 22, I was chef de partie, which is very rare.

He remembers his chef putting him in the wok section and asking him to manage it by himself. As expected, Chef Elie went to the bookstore and bought six books on woks. "I wanted to learn everything including the philosophy of the wok," he says. When he left, he says he was richer by 22 books.

Chef Elie moved because he wanted to work in a five-star property. "I was offered the role of a demi chef de partie and I accepted," he says.

He recalls how people around him could not understand why he took a lower pay and a lower position. However, there was sound reasoning behind this seemingly irrational move.

"By that time, I had experience in French, Asian and Italian cuisines. I had worked on a concept that was rare. But I was missing experience in two important areas: catering and hotel," he says.

Working for one of the biggest and most beautiful hotels in Lebanon, Chef Elie focused on learning rather than worry about the title. "I just wanted to learn the operations of a big hotel, how it works," he says.

The proverbial gamble paid good dividends. Chef Elie left the hotel as junior sous chef after three years. He says,



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"Every year I was promoted. I was handling banquet room service, royal lunches and one of the clubs at the age of 24."

At the age of 25, Chef Elie was hired as the Executive Chef to oversee the launch of a VIP bar in Beirut. Most would have been flattered, and so was Chef Elie, but he was also worried. "Here's where ego starts to play," he says with a knowing smile.

"I was always worried because I was growing fast. I was working more than 18 hours a day, taking care of every single detail because I wanted everything to be perfect."

He knew he had to keep himself safe because someone who rises fast could fall faster. And this is something he couldn't afford to let happen.

After overseeing the launch of several high profile venues and hosting VIP events, Chef Elie decided to join forces with his competitor/twin brother in 2008 to found Pomme du Ciel Catering. Thus, Chef Elie was now involved in the one area where he was lacking experience.

On the side, Chef Elie was also offering his expertise as a consultant, sometimes for free. "I did it to improve my portfolio," he explains. "My thinking was: let's do it right even if I am not getting paid. Today, I have more than 65 concepts in my portfolio, just because of my consultancy."

The year 2013 is a landmark year in the personal and professional life of Chef Elie. The outbreak of war in Syria massively disrupted the Lebanese economy. As a direct consequence, Pomme du Ciel Catering was forced to close. Chef Elie, who had been engaged since 2011, decided the time was right to get married. After which, the couple moved to Dubai.

Chef Elie was hired as the Executive Chef of the Ceder Dining Hospitality Management company. His first task was to oversee the launch of Nay Restaurant at DIFC, which ranked among the finest Lebanese dining experiences



I was always worried because I was growing fast. I was working more than 18 hours a day, taking care of every single detail because I wanted everything to be perfect

in Dubai. After a year, he was promoted to Corporate Chef, responsible for Nay and seven other restaurants.

After two years, he joined the Habtoor group's Metropolitan Hotel as an Executive Chef. "Hotel operation is in my heart," says Chef Elie. "I was away from it for almost six years, and I wanted to go back. It turned out to be one of the best jobs because I was so happy. I was involved from the pre-opening of the hotel. We started from scratch. The venue's Italian restaurant and bar become among the best in the UAE."

In 2016, Chef Elie became the Director of Cuisine for the Radisson Blu Fujairah and Naseema Royal hotel. Then, in 2019, he moved to the Accor Group, where he was given responsibility for two properties. In the meantime, he reveals, "I did lots of consultancy work in Dubai and in other countries because of my reputation - Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Jordan, Malaysia. I had reached 86 achievements or certificates in my career plus gold medals and trophies. He even got calls asking him to be part of the development of the French pavilion at Expo2020.

"For each month, I created three different menus, focusing on three different regions, and we got three celebrity chefs from each region to prepare the dishes.

The menu was not the only challenge. You cannot cook at the Expo. You can only serve pre-prepared food in sealed packing. So we had to think about logistics, production timing, and how to reheat the dishes on location without compromising on quality. It was a real challenge."

In the midst of the massive disruption caused by the Covid pandemic to the hospitality industry, Chef Elie resigned from his responsibilities at the Accor Group. "When Nestlé heard that I had left, they called me and said: it's time to join us," says Chef Elie.

Chef Elie wasn't planning to work in a corporate team, doing product demos and explaining about products. It was a big shift he admits. "I took feedback from senior chefs in the market. I then listed all the pros and cons, and the answer was clear.

"I had done everything a chef can do. After Director of Cuisine, what's next? It's not my passion to become an F&B manager or Director. It's also not my passion to be GM. I don't see myself there. The opportunity to work in a multinational company on the other hand is not something that comes your way often!

Even with all his experience, it was not easy to land the role. He had to go through more than six interviews to be selected from 100s of applicants.

"Being the Culinary Advisor means you get a lot of respect from people. There is also the fact that you wake up each day to a new challenge. You have to invite chefs, give demonstrations, and provide solutions.

Chef Elie loves to be perfect at everything he does. If he's presenting to a QSR [Quick Service Restaurant] chain on a new dessert idea, he will first read their history for a minimum of ten years if possible, find out what they missed, and understand their strengths and weaknesses. "That's a real challenge. It's not easy," he says.



After eight months at Nestlé, the results speak for itself. Chef Elie used his background in operations to go above and beyond to understand what his chef customers need. "I can communicate with chefs in the language they understand," he says.

His impressive list of achievements at a relatively young age has not stopped Chef Elie from having an ultimate long-term dream. A dream to have his own restaurant bearing his name.

"This is the dream of every chef. If you look at my portfolio, all the restaurants I have worked on are fine-dining, but my personal style is something different.

"Because I'm Lebanese, my signature plate will be based on Lebanese cuisine," The twist is that it will incorporate ingredients he has used over these 20 years but is not part of the culture, like tuna or ginger.

His pictures a restaurant where the menu is replaced with 20 signature dishes that change every two months. A place where you would want to go and a price point that is attractive to all people.

"Everyone can come to Chef Elie's



If you look at my portfolio, all the restaurants I have worked on are fine-dining, but my personal style is something different

restaurant and try the creations," he says with a hearty laugh.

The conversation soon moves to young chefs and he says, "I always advise my chefs: you've got the chance, don't lose it. Work hard to keep it. Be humble. Don't be a show-off. Focus on what you want to do, and don't limit yourself, even if you want to be the chef for a specific type of cuisine.

"When I was chef de partie or demi chef, I never said to my sous chef or executive chef: I don't know or I cannot. Put this in your mind and work on it. Today, you have the internet. It is easier for you to learn something new. I spent more than 20,000 dollars buying books. Today's generation has it for free.

"Even though my duty finished at six or seven, I would wait for my chef until midnight because I knew he was going to create a new sauce, and I wanted to learn! I still have the yellow papers on which I took notes. Many times I slept in my car when I finished late at night because I didn't want to drive back early morning. I was always first to come and last to leave.

"Always look at the best chef to learn from. For example, if you want to be a sushi chef, find out who is the best sushi chef in your area and work with them. This is what I always did.

"To become a great chef, no one can help you more than your team. If they love you, they will lift you up, and if they hate you, they will bring you down. So love your team, work with them and support them. Give your team opportunities to participate in exhibitions and competitions. I have paid from my pocket to give my team the chance to participate.

"Lastly, if you only work for money, you will lose your time. Work with people who value their time, and have a great reputation."

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WHO READS IT?

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Worldchefs Certified Judging Levelling Up to Support Skills Development

The Worldchefs Culinary Competition Committee (CCC) has expanded Worldchefs Certified Judge levels to support the highest standards in culinary competitions and juries. The new model has been developed as part of the CCC's mission to advance standards of excellence built on professionalism, leadership, and collaboration.

"The whole idea of the change was to modernize our approach to every changing aspect of the culinary world," says Rick Stephen, Worldchefs Culinary Committee Chairman. "Keeping up with

food and the world standards and the new challenges that face all food-related competitions with hygiene and food waste have been paramount."

The expanded levels will provide additional opportunities for skills development in culinary competition judging. Worldchefs Certified Judges can progress through the judging levels over the course of their career and culinary competition experience to reflect their commitment and expertise in the field.

The Culinary Committee has taken

a dynamic approach to incorporate mentorship and peer learning into the new model. A Learner Judge- or Rookie Judge-level has been introduced to advance the future of juries, encouraging competitions around the globe to take a more active role in supporting the new guard of international competition standards.

"We envisage the opportunity to feature more traditional cuisines from our members' regions and countries, but also to have these cuisines on the international stage and be judged by experts in that style of cuisine," says Stephen.





THE NEW CERTIFIED JUDGE LEVELS

- **Rookie / Learner Judge:** Qualifying candidates with the necessary endorsements can serve at a Rookie / Learner Judge level. Proof of participation as a Rookie / Learner Judge at Worldchefs Endorsed Competitions can be used as supporting documents in applications for all Worldchefs Certified Judge levels.
- **Sponsored Judge:** Qualified chefs recognized as experts from a reputable company or institution can serve at a Sponsored Judge level. Sponsored Judges are mentored by a Worldchefs Certified Judge prior to any event.
- **Worldchefs Certified Regional Judge:** The Worldchefs Certified Regional Judge level is designed for culinary competition jurors with a local scope, not just limited to regional, but also international regions where your language or cuisine may be featured. This is a stepping stone to the next level.
- **Worldchefs Certified Continental Judge:** The Worldchefs Certified Continental Judge level represents mid-level culinary professionals with some judging experience, including competitors with silver medal performance and/or a minimum of



The whole idea of the change was to modernize our approach to every changing aspect of the culinary world

two years in a high-end restaurant environment. The Worldchefs Certified Continental Judge level has replaced the former B Judge level.

- **Worldchefs Certified International Judge:** The Worldchefs Certified International Judge level represents senior-level culinary professionals with advanced judging experience, including competitors with silver medal performance and/or a minimum of five years in a high-end restaurant environment. The Worldchefs Certified International Judge level has replaced the former A Judge level. The new rules also allow for Worldchefs Certified International Judges to serve as observer judges.
- **Worldchefs Honorary / Life**

Judge: The Worldchefs Honorary / Life Judge level is awarded by the Worldchefs President for outstanding contributions to Worldchefs and competition programs. Recipients must be in good standing as a Worldchefs Certified Judge at any level.

Additional requirements for specialized credentials still apply for applications to judging categories: Culinary Arts & Hot Kitchen, Pastry Arts, Carving, Community Catering, and Vegan/Plant-Based Cuisine.

Current Worldchefs Certified Judges are encouraged to update their Worldchefs online profile to ensure the most up-to-date information on the Worldchefs Certified Judge Directory.

Want to Become a Worldchefs Certified Judge?

You can fulfill one application requirement by joining us for a Worldchefs Competition Seminar during Worldchefs Congress & Expo 2022! Register with Early Bird rates at www.worldchefscongress.org and learn more about the seminars at www.worldchefs.org/events.

It's Canada Calling

Chefs across the Emirates are invited to explore and discover Canada's finest ingredients as they create a culinary experience using Canada's world-class products!

Are you a chef in the UAE? Do you want the chance to showcase your culinary skills to the greatest chefs from select hotels and restaurants?

On February 1st, chefs will have the opportunity to do this in an in-person cook-off that will be judged by a panel of executive chefs from select hotels and restaurants in the UAE.

From beef to seafood, potatoes to wild rice and berries to maple syrup, Canada's vast and varied land, bounded by three oceans, nurtures a diverse range of high-quality food ingredients. Chefs will have access to these fresh, wholesome and nutritious Canadian products they can use to create recipes while showcasing their culinary talent and having the pleasure of working with Canadian ingredients.

Canadian food reflects the diversity of its land, its people, and its seasons.

From farming and fishing to high-tech processing, from manufacturers to after-market and technical experts, Canadian food is available as consumer-ready products, packaged under private labels, or as raw ingredients for processing or non-food products.

Backed by strong regulations which provide world-class production standards in every sector of the food and agriculture industry, Canadian products are internationally-recognized for their safety.

Quality is in our Canadian nature and our dedication to protecting our natural landscape and resources is unequalled.

Come join us for this unique and tasty challenge!

Taste the Canadian difference!

Below is a sample of the ingredients that chefs taking part in the cook-off will find on their ingredient table (and in the UAE!):

Lobster, scallops and mussels -- harvested from some of the cleanest most pristine waters in the world

From the finest restaurants to kitchen tables, Canadian seafood is known internationally for its variety, distinctive flavour, and quality.

Canadian seafood follows the most rigorous regulations for safe and sustainable harvesting of wild and cultured seafood. The industry is committed to careful stewardship of the ocean and freshwater environment. Much of its seafood is certified sustainable through globally recognized programs such as the Marine Stewardship Council, Best Aquaculture Practices, and Ocean Wise. It is processed in modern facilities that are registered to meet federal and international food safety and quality assurance standards.

The Canadian marine ecosystem is complex and varied. The icy temperatures, purity of our inshore waters, and sheer amount of coastline also create the perfect conditions for aquaculture that is recognized internationally for its quality and freshness.

Researchers and scientists contribute to Canadian fishing strategies and sustainable fish management, taking into account available biomass for each species, the timing of the fishery, and the number of licenses issued to fishers in every area.

Atlantic Canada is strategically located on the doorstep to the North American market and has easy access to Europe and Asia from year-round deepwater



ports and international airports. The seafood industry has years of experience in managing export logistics to guarantee top-notch customer service and easy access to premium products.

Canadian grain-fed beef – raised with care using sustainable practices

Canadian beef is known internationally for its delicious taste, tenderness and juiciness.

It starts with livestock from some of the finest genetics and breeds, such as Angus, that consistently produce well-marbled and flavorful beef found in the world's finest tables.

Canada has plentiful sources of fresh water and a vast land mass with wide-open grazing ranges and natural grasslands. While grass and forage are the foundation of our beef industry, feeding cattle with grains during the final months of production contributes to the distinctive taste, texture and aroma of Canadian beef.

Canadian high quality grades are selected for youthful maturity, marbling, meat color, texture, fat color

and fat cover standards. Canada AA, AAA and Canada Prime use the same marbling thresholds as the U.S. for Select, Choice and Prime.

In addition to providing quality beef to customers, Canadian beef products are among the safest in the world. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) monitors the whole supply chain to ensure food safety. A traceability program also ensures beef products can be traced all the way back to their farm of origin.



Canadian cattle are raised with care and pride using environmentally sustainable practices. All Canadian beef sold to the UAE adheres to Halal certification requirements and is available for purchase from a number of local food service distributors.

Maple syrup and blueberries – a true taste of nature

Maple syrup has been part of Canada's cultural fabric for centuries. The country's Indigenous peoples taught the early settlers how to harvest sap and boil it to make maple syrup. Technological advancements have enhanced efficiencies over the years but the unique wholesome flavour of pure maple syrup has not changed.

Enjoyed around the world, Canadian maple syrup products include traditional maple syrup, maple sugar, maple butter, candies, cookies and much more! Although delicious and sweet on its own, maple syrup has evolved beyond the traditional pancake and waffle markets and can now be found as a natural flavouring in products such as cereals, granola bars, baked goods and yogurt. Quality in maple sugar production is a source of pride for Canadians – a true connection to our unique natural landscape.

Canada's position as a world-leader in blueberry production is backed by farmers with several generations of growing experience. Blueberries are a delicate fruit, harvested with great care to ensure maximum quality, while advances in processing mean they are in top condition when they reach



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consumers. Blueberries are delicious fresh or in smoothies, pancakes, pies, tarts, muffins, sauces and more.

Chefs are invited to put their creative

hat on and submit their candidacy, in a video, by January 15, 2022, to emiratesculinaryguild@gmail.com. Selected chefs will be invited to participate in the cook-off on February 1st.







Nestlé
Golden
Chef's Hat
Award



Cooking on CLOUD 9

This final team competing for Season 9 of Golden Chef's Hat Award UAE are two young men from Kitopi

Chef Ishan Kavalekar

Chef Ishan Kavalekar is a 27-year-old Research and Development Sous Chef. Ask him what the role entails and he says, "As you know, Kitopi provides services for online brands. We are in charge of revamping these menus or coming up with new brands and concepts by working with the analysis and data teams. We see what could work in certain areas of Dubai. It could even be something as simple renaming the dish.

"It involves knowing what are fast moving items and what are not. It is beyond just working in the kitchen and it is pretty interesting."

He says that his work takes team effort. "When we're given projects, more often than not, there are multiple chefs working on the same project. You have to learn to take a step back if you feel like your colleagues' or your partner's idea is more viable for brand success or the situation you've been given.

"You have to be able to understand and be able to say, okay, you know what, let's go with your idea and they would do the same if things were reversed. At the end what matters is more revenue potential is created and a better image is built."

Chef Ishan never really wanted to be a chef. He was more into mechanics than

anything else. He even went to college in North Bristol, UK and studied finance with a minor in mechanics.

It was there that an opportunity – to cook over the Christmas period instead of going back home – presented itself. The experience was so good, he did a couple of cooking stints in the UK, then travelled to Mumbai with a degree in finance only to work for restaurants like Indigo there before coming to Dubai where he completed a course at the ICCA.

Prior to joining Kitopi, Chef Ishan worked for a couple of independent outlets in the city and even had the opportunity to work with felly by Nick and Scott, he says.



Ishan Kavalekar



Vishnu S



It has taken a while for Chef Ishan to find home. The Indian national grew up in Kuwait – a country where his dad too grew up. He spent some time in the US before heading to the UK for college, then Mumbai to get a sense of what his native land is all about, before looking at Dubai to further his culinary skills.

Talking about his future plans, he says, “I would like to get away from the glitz and glamour and start something of my own. Something that feels homey, but where the service is very intricate, elegant, and interesting. Food that’s playful and daring. People need to question themselves as to why they’re eating what they’re eating. I am quite inquisitive and I want to share that with my customers through food.”

For the competition he has created one of his favorite dishes to cook – octopus.

Chef Vishnu S

A 27-year-old Malayalee epicurean, Chef Vishnu works at Kitopi as a cake artist. “I focus on customized cakes. Mostly for a brand called Pastel Cakes. It’s one of the brands owned by Kitopi’s owner and his wife. It is a successful brand that gets a lot of orders, especially on weekends,” says the chef who was born and raised in Kerala’s capital city Thiruvananthapuram.

Like Ishan, Chef Vishnu too comes from a family with one brother. But financial circumstances mean the two chefs could not be more apart. “I come from a poor family. My father, who was a carpenter, passed away two years back. It’s just my mom and brother now.”

After grade 10, he could not study further and decided to move into tourism. An opportunity to visit a hotel made him realize the potential of becoming employable as a cook with minimum investment into education.

Chef Vishnu did not have focus on pastry during the early days. That is until he travelled to Bangalore to work for the Park Plaza. “I fell in love with pastry, especially sweets and cake making.

He then worked at a few more properties in India’s Silicon Valley before heading to Oman to work as a Pastry Chef for a café specializing in custom cakes.

The role required him to work independently and take decisions and that gave him the confidence to know that he can take the lead as and when needed.

“A year into my role, our cake artist left. The café owner asked if I could fill the gap. I just watched YouTube videos every day and would prepare the orders

at night. Two years of learning later I was a pastry chef and executive cake artist at the café,” he says with a smile.

After a total of four years in Oman he moved to Dubai to work for another cake shop until Covid hit. That’s when Kitopi came to the rescue.

As a cake artist, he says a critical attribute to success is the ability to stay calm. “You need to talk to customers at times to grasp their ideas and go through a back-and-forth process that includes sketches and finalizing the design.

“Most of our custom cake orders are quite challenging to make. For example, someone would like a 3D cake to look like an exact replica of an Airbus A380 or a ship,” he says.

For the competition Chef Vishnu has created an Avocado mousse. “Mainly it’s shaped like an avocado. Inside it is covered with the dark chocolate and pistachio sponge and on the top I kept avocado mousse. I used Docello’s creme brûlée and a hot chocolate chili sauce.

My goal is to save and study further about pastry and learn about creativity using chocolate.



Seared octopus with roasted sweet potato, potato foam, pickled beetroot and fennel cream

SEARED OCTOPUS

Seared Octopus 1 (2000 gm)

Method

- Bring a pot of water to a boil and submerge the octopus for 25 minutes at a rolling boil. After time has elapsed, turn off the heat and poach the octopus in the water for a further 25 minutes. When cooked, shock in ice water to stop the cooking.
- To serve, portion the tentacles to 180g per serving. Heat a frying pan and add extra virgin olive oil. When hot, add the octopus to the pan and sear until golden brown.

POTATO FOAM

Maggi Mash Potato Mix	100g
Full Fat Milk	250g
Whipping Cream 35%	250g

Method

- Add the milk and cream to a saucepot and bring to simmer. Next, add the mash potato powder and cook until smooth and creamy. Then transfer to a blender and puree to a paste. When slightly cooled, transfer the puree to a whipping siphon and charge with two Nitrous Oxide cartridges.

PICKLED BEETROOT

Beetroot	250g
Malt Vinger	500g
Kosher Salt	250g
White Sugar	250g
Dill Leaves	10g
Whole Black Pepper	10g

Method

- Wrap the beetroot in aluminum foil and bake at 200°C for 30 minutes. When cooked through, peel and thinly slice the beetroot and set aside. In a separate saucepan, add the malt vinegar, salt, sugar, dill, and black pepper and bring to a boil. Strain and pour the liquor onto the beetroot slices and allow them to pickle for a minimum of two hours and let cool.

FENNEL CREAM

Fennel bulbs	500g
Butter	20g
Whipping Cream 35%	50g
Truffle Oil	10g

Method

- Thinly slice the fennel bulbs and add to a saucepan with hot butter. Cook the fennel down on a low heat for 30 minutes until tender. Transfer the fennel to a blender, add the cream and blend until smooth. Transfer back to a clean saucepot and cook further on low heat until thick and glossy. Finally, add the truffle oil and fold into the cream.

ROASTED SWEET POTATO

Sweet Potato (peeled and cubed)	100g
Kosher Salt	2g
Crushed Black Pepper	2g

Method

- Peel and dice the sweet potato in 15mm cubes. Season with kosher salt and crushed black pepper and bake in the oven at 180°C for 12 minutes.



Avocado Paradise

PISTACHIO GENOISE

Egg white	500gm
Almond powder	200gm
Icing sugar	200gm
Pistachio powder	50gm
Icing sugar	200gm
Caster sugar	160gm

Method

- ♦ Mix egg white and caster sugar together until it fluffs up
- ♦ Add sifted icing sugar, almond powder and pistachio powder. Mix at slow speed.
- ♦ Pre-heat the oven to 170°C

AVOCADO MOUSSE

Pate a bombe	750gm
Gelatine	42gm
Whipping cream	1250ml
Vanilla stick	2 pcs
Avocado	430gm
Nestle cream	150ml

Method

- ♦ Fold in the pate a bombe avocado puree.
- ♦ Add gelatin and mix well.
- ♦ Add the nestle cream and whipping cream mix together.
- ♦ Pour it in the mold and freeze it.

LIME CREAM BRULEE

Milk	125ml
Whipping cream	62ml
Docello crème brulee powder	35gm
Lime	1nos

Method

- ♦ Pour the milk and cream in to a pan.
- ♦ Add lime zest and let it boil.
- ♦ Add nestle cream, crème brulee powder and mix it. Boil it again.
- ♦ Once ready, freeze it in a mold.

CHOCOLATE CHILLI SAUCE

Cocoa powder	50gm
White sugar	200gm
Water	120ml
Salt	1 pinch
Chili powder	0.5 gm

Method

- ♦ Boil water and sugar together.
- ♦ Add the cocoa powder and mix it until it dissolves.
- ♦ Add salt and chili powder mix.

CRUMBLE

Sugar	50gm
Brown sugar	50gm
Almond powder	200gm
Butter	100gm

Cocoa powder	50gm
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Method

- ♦ Mix all the ingredients together.
- ♦ Preheat the oven to 150°C. Bake it for 20 minutes.

DULCE DE LECHE GELATO

Fresh milk	1.6ltr
Trimoline	50gm
Whipping cream	50gm
Caster sugar	98gm
Glucose dry	150gm
Milk powder	65gm
Stabiliser	10gm
Fleur de sel	5gm
Dulce de leche	450gm

Method

- ♦ Heat milk, cream and inverted sugar in a pot and bring to 40°C.
- ♦ Weigh all ingredients in a container and put chocolate in a bucket.
- ♦ At 40°C, add the dry ingredients and bring to 82°C while stirring continuously.
- ♦ Cool down in a blast chiller. When it reached 50°C add chocolate and salt and blend it. Strain, cool down again and freeze.

'LPQ remains a strong advocate for healthy, nutritious, fresh food'

Interview with Le Pain Quotidien founder Alain Coumont

The story behind Le Pain Quotidien and Alain Coumont's passion for food began long before Alain's first bakery. As a child in Belgium, he spent countless hours perched on a chair, watching his aunt make bread.

As a young chef in Brussels, Alain searched for bread that lived up to his childhood ideal. Coming up empty-handed, Alain realized that the only way to satisfy his yearning for the rustic bread of his youth was to recreate it from memory.

Passionate about quality, he decided to return to his roots and open a bakery where he could knead flour, salt and water into the rustic loaves of his childhood.

The first Le Pain Quotidien opened on Rue Antoine Dansaert in Brussels, in those days an avant-garde quarter of Belgian fashion. At a local flea market, he found a long table where his guests could sit to eat together; it became Le Pain Quotidien's first communal table.

Alain believes that community is what nurtures, inspires and feeds the soul, and that there is a place for everyone at the table.

Here is an interview with the culinary success during his recent trip to Dubai.

Could you tell us the difference between the time you envisioned Le Pain Quotidien and what it is today?

My grandparents ran a restaurant and I used to bake bread in my spare time as a hobby. As a teenager I went to study in the USA, and that is where my passion for the culinary arts turned into a lifelong project.



The pandemic has made people more conscious of the health choices they make in their daily lives and that reflects in their eating habits

After graduating in Belgium, I wasn't happy with the bread I could find locally.

So, I began selling a handful of loaves made at the back of my first restaurant – before opening a tiny shop in central Brussels, with a single coffee machine, a communal table and a few pastries. It was an instant success - and thus Le Pain Quotidien was born.

Today, Le Pain Quotidien is present in 20 countries, and remains a strong advocate for healthy, nutritious, fresh food with a focus on high-quality ingredients to cater to your taste buds, as well as your overall health.

So in a sense, our core values have stood the test of time and proven to be an integral part of our success.

What has been the impact of the pandemic on your business and how do you see 2022 panning out?

The pandemic has definitely proven challenging for our business in some aspects, but I'm optimistic about our recovery and growth in 2022, especially in the Middle East. The pandemic has made

people more conscious of the health choices they make in their daily lives and that reflects in their eating habits.

Eating organic is part of a healthy lifestyle, and LPQ is committed to offering as many organic products as possible.

Our brand's mission of providing fresh, organic food is always a strong reason for our customers to keep coming back to us. Especially the younger generations that are more conscious and aware of their health.

People rarely recognize the struggles and failures that precedes the success of a company. Do you have any such stories to share of challenges you faced on your journey to creating and expanding LPQ?

I bought a quaint café in 1990 that served bread and sandwiches. I was not very satisfied with the quality of the bread, and I was looking for a way to cut the costs, so I started baking my own bread. I was delivering bread in my car at nights – it was a very small operation at the time.

However, within two months a customer proposed a franchise. She asked me if I would sell my bread to her if she opened her own restaurant. I agreed, and just like that, in just three years I had 16 franchise shops across Belgium.

The expansion of the business created a fresh problem – I required a bigger oven to keep up with all the orders. I was not able to get a loan from the bank, I had to reinvest faster than money was coming in, and thus I went into partnership with a local baker in Brussels.

It was not an ideal situation, but at the end of two years, I managed to exit the partnership while keeping the rights to the Le Pain Quotidien restaurants in France, the US and Japan.

I then tried afresh in New York, opening a Le Pain Quotidien there too, with just an oven in the basement. I spent the next few years growing the brand there.

By 2004, I was able to buy back the brand from my former partners. So you can say it's been a bit of a winding journey. Today, Le Pain Quotidien has expanded to many countries like Switzerland, Chile and Turkey.

Emerging markets can prove to be a challenge. My policy is this – I believe in creating a product or a concept that the consumer can validate. And then I believe in hiring people that are better than me to build the business.

How has your role as Chief Creative Officer shaped the menu of LPQ in the GCC?

When you are a chef, you love to give. You cook something, and it's an act of love, it's beautiful.

I look after the menu, the ingredients and the sourcing. Those factors are essential in any business. I prefer to talk to farmers and suppliers myself.

LPQ is also committed to a healthy, wholesome lifestyle, incorporating organic ingredients wherever we can. To us, the whole thought process behind focusing on 'organic' is not just to fit in with a trend. Our ingredients are expensive, and we invest a lot of time and effort in locating the right suppliers. Organic is a tough business, one that we have been in for the last 30 years.

In the GCC, our menu largely remains the same, and our bestsellers here are the tartines. We've incorporated some local favourite ingredients in the menu, like the 'Zaatar and Labneh' tartine. It's simple, it's healthy and we source

organic ingredients locally. These are the main qualities of the brand, and our goal is to stick to them while bringing our customers the best, daily.

What is your advice to all young chefs that read our magazine? Also, any added advice to those who want to open their own restaurant some day?

If you are keen on pursuing a specific goal, you should definitely take the first step towards it even if that means starting with a humble beginning.

When I opened my first LPQ restaurant, I purchased a long, wooden table from a flea market. This was the very

first 'communal table' where people reconnected and new friendships were forged. Those simple wooden planks have become a tradition.

Without this table we would not be where we are today. The oak floor, the communal table, the rustic décor – is now part of the brand DNA. What I mean to say is, every beloved element of LPQ today is rooted in our inception 30 years ago.

Building a career, a company and a life, is a conscious process. Dig deep and find out where your passions lie. When your vision and your work are in harmony, that's when the magic is created.





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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.

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Sig:.....

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PATRICK

YOU WILL BE MISSED

French Chef Patrick Lannes was a culinary stalwart, who called UAE home for a significant part of his career as a senior chef. He passed away in France at the age of 71. He is survived by his wife Renee and his family.

The former Chef Director at the Grosvenor House and Le Royal Méridien Beach Resort & Spa in Dubai was born in 1950, just after the war, when food was scarce and families had to try to be resourceful with recycling.

He grew up admiring his grandmother's cooking as she created "amazing food often using the same ingredients". The family meals in his childhood home were, in his words: a ceremony, something truly special.

Chef Patrick sported two passions during his five plus decades as a chef: provide culinary pleasure to guests and to mentor young chefs. "Food is an act of love; it should be a pleasure to create and provide," he once told in a magazine interview.

Cooking as a career first came to Chef Patrick's mind when he was bitten by the travel bug. "I wanted to work on a cruise ship so that I could see the world," he used to say. Cooking was the easiest way to make that dream happen, he believed.

Top on that list was visiting the Great Wall of China. Something he achieved in February of 1981 when he was invited by the Chinese government to showcase French cuisine.

"I conducted an exhibition on the Great Wall, wearing my chef uniform, using French products, which was a great moment for me that I will never



forget," he had said when recalling that experience.

His bet on cooking paid heavy dividends as it truly took him around the globe.

Reminiscing about the time he worked in Japan, he would say, "The country taught me the importance of simplicity. I would try to create complex dishes as a chef. But Japan taught me how to remove unnecessary elements. Making dishes as simple as possible is actually very difficult."

Chef Patrick learned the importance of team work not as a chef but as a rugby player during his younger years. He had once said that the game, "helped me a lot in my career because I understood that one man cannot do everything, it takes teamwork."

This is what led him to be a mentor and to support the growth of young chefs.

He was always on the lookout for ways to transfer his knowledge to young chefs in the most effective way possible.

His advice to young chefs was, "To be a good chef, one must be eager to listen and learn."

In his final years in France, he worked as a culinary consultant. Prior to that, in the UAE, he was an active member of the Emirates Culinary Guild and was a member of the Board for many years.

As someone who worked in the kitchens for over 50 years, he would say, "The day you stop learning is the day you are finished."

While Chef Patrick may not be physically present with us any longer, his culinary skills continue to spread across the world through his years of work and mentorship to young chefs.



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