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FEBRUARY 2014

gulf

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gourmet

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE FOR CHEFS
volume 9, issue 2



POWER OF SIX

The region's most successful culinary competitors in over a decade have joined hands to make their mark on the world gastronomy map. Exclusive details inside...



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Dear fellow chefs, ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to the February issue of our Gulf Gourmet. This is a special issue for our International Salon Culinaire 2014 and we look forward to a great competition.

A team of 30 international judges led by Chef Otto Weibel, the Chairman, will be flying down for the competition and I would like to thank them for taking significant time off their busy schedule.

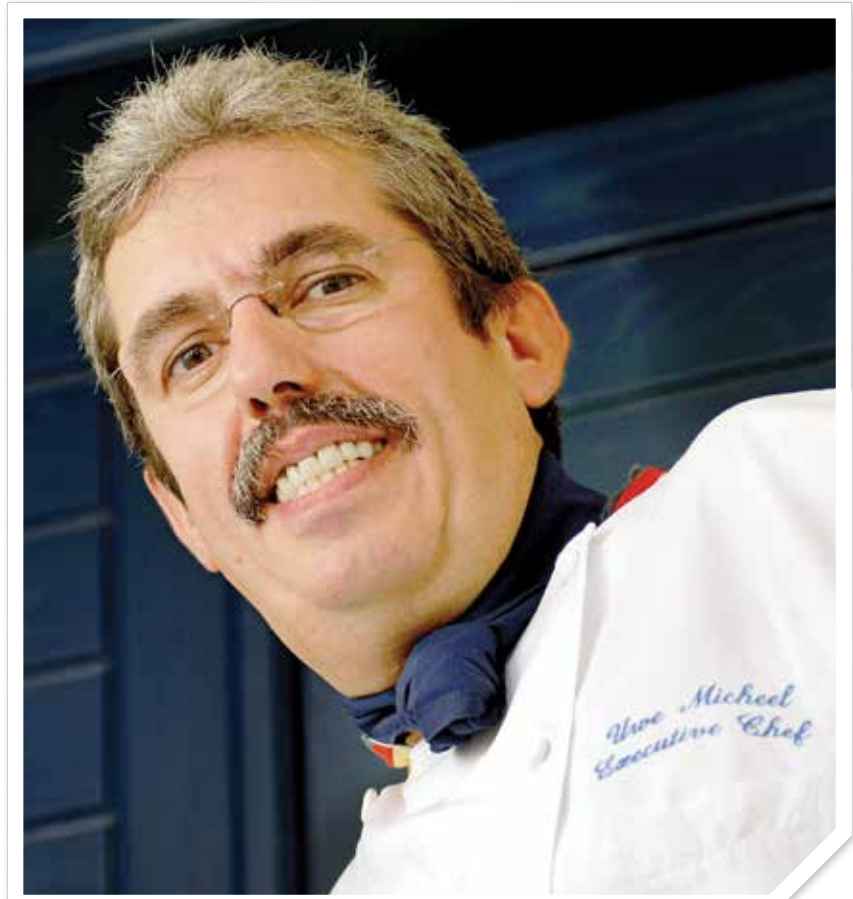
A big thank you also goes out to the Dubai World Trade Center, Manitowic-Convotherm, Ginox, Nestle Professional, Sadia, Meat Livestock Australia, Masterbaker, the US Dairy Export Council, Barakat, Mitras, Iffco-Rahma and many more for their support.

I do apologise if I have forgotten to mention any supporter including our Room and Food Sponsor. Do see the special page in our March issue.

Come February and our Egyptian friends will host HACE 2014 competition and we wish them the very best. On February 21-22, the Dubai Food Carnival at Dubai Festival City, a new event supported by Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing will be launched.

Like I have always said, winning a gold medal is very nice but not the most important thing in life. To learn, to train, to develop ourselves and at the same time enjoy, have fun and meet new colleagues and make new friends are the important elements of participation. All this is what the Salon Culinaire should give to us. Herewith wishing all the competitors good luck and hope you are enjoying the development phase already. Learn from your colleagues, from books, social media and most important learning by doing.

Thank you to our corporate members for putting on these seminars and if there are other corporate members who wish to conduct training session with the



products then please contact me and we shall help you set up the sessions.

I urge all members to log on to the Guild website to see what is happening on the calendar at emiratesculinaryguild.net and also to visit the WACS Young Chefs Facebook page on [facebook.com/#!/wacsyoungchefs](https://www.facebook.com/wacsyoungchefs) and encourage your young chefs to join that page so they can be in contact with over 4,000 chefs across the globe.

Please do not miss the company profile of our corporate members, the long-time supporters who have renewed their membership, as well the new ones. We

really do appreciate your support. Also, do look at the Friends of the Guild pages to check all our supporters.

And finally, a big thank you to Chef Michel, Chef Hossan and the Team from Coral Deira Hotel for hosting the February meeting. And also Chef Christian and the Team from Marriott Courtyard for hosting the January meeting.

Culinary Regards,

Uwe Micheel

*President of Emirates Culinary Guild
Director of Kitchens
Radisson Blu Hotel Deira Creek*

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"The smoky aroma of the monterey jack cheese makes the dish taste like the chicken has been roasted on a traditional wooden oven, and the texture of the cheese blends perfectly with the béchamel to give a pleasant elasticity to the final product."

—Chef Carlos Delos Mozos, Executive Chef,
Crown Plaza Dubai, Sheikh Zayed Road

U.S. Smoked Monterey Jack and Roasted Chicken Croquettes

Ingredients:

1 whole roasted chicken, reserving skin, meat, bones and drippings
 2 l of milk
 180 g butter
 ½ tablespoon olive oil
 210 g flour
 4 hard-boiled eggs, minced
 200 g smoked U.S. monterey jack cheese, cubed
 Flour, for coating
 Beaten egg, for coating
 Bread crumbs, for coating
 Sunflower oil, for frying

Procedure:

Reduce roast chicken drippings to sauce. Boil chicken bones with milk for 5 minutes. Remove from heat and cover for 4 hours. Strain milk and simmer with salt and nutmeg, keeping milk hot but not boiling. In a large sauté pan, create a béchamel sauce by melting butter with olive oil, adding flour and stirring continuously on low heat for 10 minutes. Add the hot milk in 4 portions, stirring continuously for another 8 minutes, then cook for 20-30 minutes. Add reduced chicken drippings, chopped meat and skin, and cook for 10 minutes. Add hard-boiled egg and cheese until melted. Place hot mixture on a non-stick or buttered tray, cover and refrigerate. Form chilled dough into golf sized balls, coat with flour, egg and bread crumbs, and chill for at least one hour. Deep fry in sunflower oil.

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editor'snote

email editor@gulfgourmet.net



As I write this note aboard a flight back to Dubai, I realise that there have been quite a few chefs I've met last month who have struck me with their inimitable mix of skill and passion.

To begin with, K.A.C. Prasad and Bybee Chacko – Executive Chefs at Miramar Al Aqah and Le Meridien Al Aqah respectively – opened their kitchen doors to reveal some of their secret in-house talent for two of our editorial sections. Read about them and check out their recipes (created just for Gulf Gourmet readers) in this issue.

Then there's Chef Uwe Micheel, who spoke to me at length about his personal drive towards sustainable cooking which I must admit was an eye opener. Just when you think you know the man, he surprises you with more leaving you completely awestruck. If you wonder why he wins so many awards globally for sustainability, the answer is within the pages of this mag.

Chef Omar Harbaly from Al-Safadi too is a great personality. If you get a chance I recommend you take a tour of his restaurant's kitchen, the way we did. It's well-lit with natural sunlight, bigger than many five-star hotel kitchens, you "feel" the cleanliness and the place has a happy vibe of sorts. He helps us this month in our quest to promote Emirati cuisine.

And last but not the least, I was lucky enough to see the entire UAE culinary team sitting around a table passing large sheets

of paper with drawings that look half architectural and half artistic. These were just some of the designs that could turn into culinary art at the upcoming chef competition in Singapore. This will be the first time that the UAE will put forth a national culinary team at an overseas contest.

Perfect timing I say, considering the team includes the individual competitors who brought back 16 gold medals from Erfut at last year's culinary Olympics. They have also proven their mettle as a team by bagging the silver at their inaugural outing during the Dubai World Hospitality Championship. Imagine, a 60-day old team winning a medal where the competition includes 60-year-old national teams like the USA!

Now that's called inspirational performance and their stories have been captured for you in this issue.

Before signing-off, the entire team at Gulf Gourmet would like to wish the 1,500-odd participants of Salon Culinaire, the very best. Remember, the people you see in this magazine were just like you years ago. Many of them did not even win medals when they started competing. Today they have hotels begging them to come on board. You could be in their shoes tomorrow.

Until next time, enjoy the read and keep cooking with passion.

Aquin George
Editor

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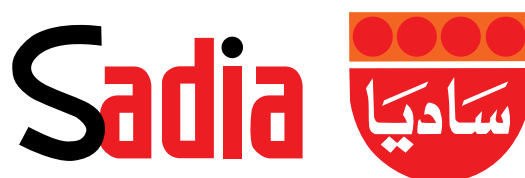
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February 2014 Gulf Gourmet

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the Gulfood exhibition, Dubai World Trade Centre
(Hall #9 - Stand H9-2), between 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

February 2014 Gulf Gourmet

newsbites



The Young Chefs that won

Chefs Mithun Chamika and Sachitra Danendra receiving their prizes from the Nestle Professional team – Naureen Ahmed, Alia Al-Nimer and Najoud Al-Jabri. The

winners of the Nestle Professional Young Chefs Challenge took home a Macbook Air each and received a full-tour of the Burj Al Arab and its kitchens followed by a five-course meal at the hotel.



KOREAN WEEK DURING GOURMET ABU DHABI AT PARK ROTANA HOTEL

Renowned for diversifying his country's traditional dishes by accentuating century-old favourites with a variety of Western and European techniques and ingredients, Masterchef Edward Kwon is a culinary star in Korea following several high-profile culinary ambassadorships, best-selling cookbooks and popular radio and TV stints.

Having held numerous senior chef positions in luxury hotels in South Korea, the United States and China, Chef Kwon is no stranger to the UAE having served as Head Hotel Chef at Dubai's iconic Burj Al Arab in 2009. The owner of two restaurants in South Korea – The Mixed One, a buffet dining outlet in Hannam-dong and the high-end Lab XXIV in Cheongdam – Kwon is revered for creating Korean-accented international cuisine.

Ted Espiritu, Executive Chef of Park Rotana, worked with Chef Kwon to deliver a memorable and fun-filled dining experience to the guests of Teatro. Signature dishes from the eight-course menu included Dotory Muk, Galbi Deop Bap, Hae Mul Tang and Bokbunja Mousse.



Chef Edward Kwon

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Mineral Water (Acqua Panna)

Sanpellegrino
Sparkling Fruit
Beverages

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Chocolate Peanut Butter
Cake (Sweet Street)

Spaghetti Pomodoro

Spaghetti (De Cecco)
Olive Oil (Chefmate)
Whole Peeled Tomatoes (Chefmate)

Grilled Rib-Eye Steak

Rib-Eye (Emerald Valley)
Beef Stock (Maggi)

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with Olive Oil
and Lemon**

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HELLMAN'S PRE-LAUNCH EVENT

The Hellmann's Real Mayonnaise pre-launch event took place recently at the Park Central cafe in Dubai. This event was led by Chef Jean Westhuizen, Executive Chef MEPS and Chef Marc Hayes, Executive Chef Arabia and consisted of a presentation about the history followed by the key benefits of the product which was further demonstrated.

The binding properties and heat were



showed off by demonstrating some coleslaw and potato salad and a grilled club sandwich. A blind tasting was also done between Hellmann's Real Mayonnaise and a competitor in the market and Hellmann's won majority of the time. Around 25 customers attended this event with a keen

interest in learning about the world's leading mayonnaise. At the end of the event, each customer was given a goodie bag with branded T-shirt, cap, apron, brochure and 1 gallon of Hellmann's Real Mayonnaise that would let them get accustomed to the product before its actual launch next month.

Dubai Food Carnival debuts this month

The first Dubai Food Carnival, a two-day, family-friendly food and beverage extravaganza organised by Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) – which is also home to Gulfood, the world's largest annual food and hospitality event – will be held under the banner 'Fun, Flair & Flavours' debuting at Dubai Festival City from 21-22 February, 2014.

A hugely-anticipated gastronomy social event, the Dubai Food Carnival will feature celebrity chefs conducting educational culinary masterclasses and workshops, dozens of enticing food pavilions, mouth-watering food tastings, and a multi-cultural feast of music.

With Manal Al Alem, a regional chef dubbed the 'Queen of the Arabic kitchen', Chef Silvena Rowe, star of BBC food show, Country Show Cook-Off, and



Chef Silvena Rowe

the new season of Chopped, the hit cooking competition programme, and Chef John Torode, the straight-talking co-host and judge of BBC food shows MasterChef, Celebrity MasterChef and Junior MasterChef, providing a sprinkling of star power, four additional cuisine artisans will join the famous trio for a head-to-head 'cook-off' in The Chefs Dome - a dedicated, live cooking demonstrations area.



Chef John Torode

The Carnival's central stage will host multicultural performances by a troupe of Brazilian Capoeira dancers, Japanese Bashi Championship sumo wrestlers, including three-time world champion, Nara, and one of the region's leading bilingual comedy acts, Ali Al Sayed.

Open from 10am to 11pm, tickets are AED 60 per person and children under 12 enter free.

To be featured in this section, email your Chef-related news or information relevant to those working in a professional kitchen to editor@gulfgourmet.net

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THE GREEN PARTY STARTER

After decades of plating up great food, **Chef Uwe Micheel** of Radisson Blu is now offering food for thought. His efforts for food sustainability are the talk of the town, with more hotels joining the chorus. In a chat, Chef Uwe tells **Aquin George** why all of us need to sing the Earth song...

Chef Uwe Micheel is out to save the world – one fish at a time. The director of kitchens at Radisson Blu Hotel is a man on a mission. He's been putting delicious food on people's plates for years. Now, Chef Uwe wants to ensure the plate always remains full, the world over.

Sustainability is a big sounding word, hardly something you would associate with the glitzy glamour of dining. But behind the scenes lurks the unspoken question of food shortage and high prices, issues that Chef Uwe is trying to start a conversation over.

With the world population burgeoning and fewer people choosing farming as an occupation, food shortage is staring us in the face, says the German-born Chef. The battle to turn people environment-friendly is long, but it's the small things that could eventually make a big difference. "Sustainability starts with small things," Chef Uwe says.

Two years ago, he took his first steps when realisation dawned that the Gulf's most-loved fish, Hamour, was fast on its way to extinction.

"In the Gulf today, we have just 8 percent of the Hamour population we had 15 years ago. That's an alarmingly small number! If we don't give nature a chance to produce, our next generations will never be able to enjoy what we did."



In the Gulf today, we have just 8 percent of the Hamour population we had 15 years ago. That's an alarmingly small number! If we don't give nature a chance to produce, our next generations will never be able to enjoy what we did.

Ask for Hamour at any of the Radisson Blu restaurants in Dubai and you will be politely told that it's gone off the menu. Nature lovers can thank Chef Uwe for this. Radisson became the first ever hotel chain to stop offering this fish at all its restaurants. "We believe in it and so we have implemented it strictly."

Which is more than you can say about some other companies that make a lot of noise about joining the 'Choose Wisely' campaign to save the Hamour but not staying true to their pledge. "At some of these hotels, if you ask for Hamour, you get Hamour. I went to a supermarket chain that has joined the campaign. At one corner was a sign of 'Choose Wisely' and at another corner, a Hamour promotion!"

It couldn't have been easy convincing the Radisson management to drop such a hot-selling item from its menus. Chef Uwe's arguments eventually proved to be strong. "I did the math and brought samples of other fishes that could replace the expensive Hamour. In some of our buffet menus, we have become more profitable because the fish we use now are not as expensive even though their quality is very good."

Most of the guests do not insist on Hamour. "Most people who eat fish would eat some other fish. Many people want fish filet and don't care which fish it is made of. If you replace Hamour with some other good quality fish, the taste does not change."

Some guests, however, are not so understanding. One even argued that Hamour is being served in local fish 'n chips restaurants. "We had to explain to him that it's not Hamour because at that price, you can't get Hamour. It's some other fish from Vietnam. A restaurant won't sell you a fish cheaper than the cost price," Chef Uwe says.

In Radisson Blu restaurants, a guest who orders a sustainable fish is entitled to a free birthday cake.

Chef Uwe considers Hamour one of the best fishes in the world. "You can poach it, fry it, grill it, do so much with it. You can use it in so many dishes. That's why



it is so important to save this fish."

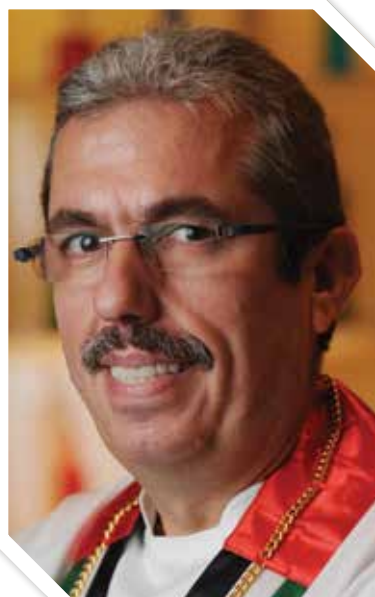
The hotel chain has not only struck Hamour off its menu but is also educating customers about why it has done so. "We reprinted a booklet about fishes. We give those to our guests. You have to educate consumers about the issues so they can make better choices."

Chef Uwe thinks that sustainability is something that the world needs to wake up to, and fast. "I think we need to do more because in a few years, we won't have enough to feed the world. If you need proof of what's coming, see the explosion in the prices of food. In Dubai, the government controls the retail prices of food products. But because of that, many items have gone off the shelves because companies can't sell at below their cost price."

A number of factors are to blame for disruptions in food supply. Food fads may give glossy magazines a lot to talk about but they are harmful in the larger scheme of things. From organic foods to exotic items from faraway locations, these fads come at a price. "You have to look at the carbon footprints of food products before you use them. I don't have anything against organic food but you produce a lot less when you use this system of farming."

Exotic items that are not sourced locally are a bigger problem. The carbon footprints of those foods are way higher than of local foods. "Many people want only fresh fishes and not frozen meats. If you really want to do something for the environment, you should not fly more fresh fish from Canada. Fresh fish that comes from far away uses energy for transportation and it's not as fresh as you think. Frozen fish is frozen as soon as it is caught. I would say its quality is better."

Come March and one more initiative will kick in at the Radisson Blu hotels. This one is aimed at reducing food wastage. Under the initiative, guests at lunch and dinner buffets will get a discount if they



60%

As much as 60 percent of the buffet items at Radisson Blu are available in smaller portions.

finish all the food on their plates. "My heart bleeds when I see big families at breakfast and the buffet shifts from the real buffet to their tables. You know half of the food on the table will be wasted. I think once the promotion starts, people will think twice before piling their plates with more than they can eat."

Given a choice, most of us would take a smaller portion of a food item at a buffet. Offering mini glasses, plates and bowls can encourage people to go with their natural instinct, in turn reducing wastage. As much as 60 percent of the buffet

items at Radisson Blu are available in smaller portions. Those who want more, ask for bigger bowls. But those are few and far in between, says the Chef.

For the waste that cannot be done away with, composting could be an option. While Chef Uwe admits his hotel's garden is too small for doing composting in a big way, he urges bigger hotels with massive lawns to consider it.

When the time comes, he may even dabble with the idea of turning composting into a sustainable business. "First, we have to identify the people who will buy our compost. If you will invest 20,000-30,000 dirhams in getting a composting machine, you have to ensure returns. We are a 'green' hotel company. This would be a big step in that direction. We will also save money on having our garbage collected. Hopefully, one day we will reach a stage where we can sell the compost to people with big gardens and farms, landscaping companies and others."

There are plenty of ways to go green. But first, people have to come out of their comfort zone and get more involved, says Chef Uwe. He wants to educate the younger generation and use them to spread the message. Food and related companies can also play a big role, taking a leaf out of Unilever's books.

The global company has several sustainability campaigns running. "I had a meeting with Unilever once and we realised we have a lot in common. We haven't really discussed concrete issues yet but we must. We have to find the time to do things that are important for the future."

The key, says Chef Uwe, is baby steps.

He likens the efforts to building a house. "If today you come to me and say, let's build a big house, I won't know how to do it. But if you say, let's build a beach tent, I will. We have to build a lot of small tents to reach the big house. And then a skyscraper. But tents first," he signs off.

BUSY KITCHEN...

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HAREES FOR HAPPINESS

From Lebanon to Dubai, **Chef Omar Harbaly** has come a long way. The Executive Chef of Al-Safadi Restaurants in Dubai started his culinary sojourn with Lebanese cuisine but today, he can give most Chefs a run for their money in Emirati cuisine. In a quick chat, Chef Omar tells us about himself and his favourite Emirati recipe...

Chef, what is the story behind your choice of career?

I liked cooking right from when I was a child. My mother is a great cook and I would help her in the kitchen. She taught how to cook Lebanese food. Then, I joined a hospitality school in Lebanon, the Bir Hassan Culinary Institute in Beirut, to learn professional cooking. It took me six years, including training at five-star hotels. I worked on my skills at these hotels and gained valuable experience. That's how my life as a Chef began.

How is easy or tough is this profession?

Being a Chef is hard work. You have a lot of responsibilities in the kitchen. You cannot afford to make any mistakes because you have guests to please. You have to be a good leader to your team and you have to show them how to cook great food that your customer likes. Everything in the kitchen has to be in top condition and there is no room for mistakes. It's a high-pressure job.

How long have you been working at Al-Safadi restaurants?

I worked at Al-Safadi's Lebanon

restaurant for two years. Then in 2000, I came to Dubai. We opened a restaurant here with staff strength of 27. Today, we have 327 people. I have been working with Al-Safadi Restaurants for 15 years now. I came to Dubai as an Executive Chef and I was just 22 years old at the time. Back then, I was responsible for 7-8 people. Now, I am responsible for around 120 people. We have now opened a new branch in Iraq, where we have a staff strength of 50-60 people.

Al-Safadi is renowned for its consistency in quality. What's the recipe?

We train our staff by putting them in the main kitchen, where there are set standards for cooking. We cook our main dishes here and then transfer them to the restaurants. So the taste does not change. Only basic things are made at the branches. We have high standards and we use only the best ingredients for our dishes.

When were you introduced to Emirati cuisine?

Around five-six years ago. I saw the locals make Harees but I did not know how to make it. So I asked some Chefs for help and they got the recipe for me from the locals. I added some of my own twists and came up with a recipe that even the locals appreciated. I don't have a very wide menu of Emirati cuisine but I have a certain line-up that has my touch.

Which is your favourite dish?

I love the Harees.



HAREES TALES

Harees, a porridge-like dish of broken wheat and meat or chicken, is commonplace in Middle Eastern countries. Legend has it that this dish was cooked only in affluent homes in the olden days. It was considered a dish of celebration, during festivals or weddings. According to folklore, the wealthy had to share the dish with the poor as an effort to involve them in their celebrations.

A distinguishing feature of Harees is that it is more a home-cooked fare than a restaurant offering. However, with traditions fast giving way to convenience, many restaurants have now added the dish to their menus.



HAREES BY CHEF OMAR

INGREDIENTS

Harees (whole wheat)	1 kg
<i>for best results, you will need to soak the harees overnight or for at least 8 hours.</i>	
Boneless lamb	1 kg
NONIONS - Sautéed Onion Paste	100 gms
Cinnamon	2 tsp
Black pepper powder	1 tsp
Salt	4 tsp
Water	3 litres
Ghee	100 gms

DIRECTIONS

- ◆ First of all, you will want to boil the meat until tender. Save the stock to use later on in this recipe.
- ◆ In a large pot, add the harees, cooked lamb, cinnamon, salt, pepper, and the stock. Add water if needed. The stock/water need to cover the harees by about 2 or 3 inches.
- ◆ Bring to a boil and then turn down the fire/heat to low. Add NONIONS - Sautéed Onion Paste
- ◆ Let it boil, boil, boil until it reduces to a watery oatmeal-like consistency. Total

cooking time will be about 1 hour. (Note: Be sure to check every 10 minutes and just stir the pot so that the harees won't burn at the bottom.)

- ◆ Now you are ready to blend the harees. Using a hand mixer, blend the harees in the pot until smooth.
- ◆ The harees when ready will have a thick consistency. Serve on a small platter 3 to 4 inches deep and cover with melted ghee on top to cover. Some people will decorate the top of the harees with powdered cinnamon in a simple pattern.

And how difficult is it for a professional Chef to cook the Harees?

Earlier, it would take a lot of time to cook it but we have devised a way to cut the cooking time without compromising on the taste. We use boneless pieces of meat. That cuts down the cooking time drastically.

What are the things to pay attention to while cooking Harees?

You have to keep stirring the pot for 2-3 hours. Don't leave it unattended at all. It's a simple dish but it takes time to cook.

Do you use Nonions in this?

Yes, I do. The sweetness of the onion adds a nice taste to the Harees.

Have you used Nonions before this?

Yes, I have. I really like the product

because instead of using 10 kilo onions, I have to use just 1 kilo Nonions. It also reduces the time required for cutting onions.

What is your advice to young Chefs?

Be patient. Learning takes time. Also, you can meet many Chefs from different cultures and see different kinds of foods but you must do your own kind of cooking, straight from the heart.

February 2018 Gulf Gourmet

MAKING KITCHENS **FULL OF LIFE**

Jean-Marc Lourau, the Chief Executive Officer of Bayara, has been married to the same company for more than two and a half decades. But that's about where his love for stability ends. From mechanical engineering to the food industry, the Frenchman has explored the world like few do. In his unmistakable French accent, Lourau tells **Aquin George** where his first love, Bayara, came from and where it is headed. Edited excerpts from an interview:

Can you tell us about Bayara's history?

It's a family business that was started by a Frenchman, Mr Gilbert Ducros, in the 1950s as a spices trade. You can credit him with having brought Asian, oriental and African flavours to Europe. No one even knew back then what 'curry' was. Fifty years ago, Europeans were using only salt and pepper as spices.

In 1992, he decided to set up operations in Dubai because it was a main hub for spices trade. The first company was set up in Jebel Ali as Gyma Enterprises. For the first 10 years, we were only into spices trading. That was the first stage of our growth.

The second stage came in 2000, when we saw the development of the fast-moving consumer goods market in Dubai. So we went from being a spices trading company to an FMCG company and we opened a second factory in DIP in 2007.

The third stage of our growth was in 2012, when we changed our name to Bayara to give a more Arabic flavour to our business. Bayara means 'orchard or plantation' in Arabic.

Has the name change affected your business in any way?

The Gyma brand was in Dubai for more than 20 years and was a leader in dry fruits and spices. Then, we changed our name. It was like asking Pepsi-Cola to change the name of its hottest-selling drink! But we transitioned the customer smoothly thanks to our marketing plan. The impact has been insignificant. We continued to grow comfortably at more than 15 percent even during the change.

How important is the food services

20

Bayara operates in
close to 20 countries,
inclusive of GCC

sector to your business?

We get as much as 20 percent of our total revenue from food services. This is significant, especially if you consider that we are in the food services business only in the United Arab Emirates.

You had to be blind to see supermarkets opening up in the last decade and not realise that hotels and restaurants will also grow fast. Today, we serve more than 400 customers in the HoReCa segment, mostly in the UAE.

You have a wide range of products. Which are the best-selling ones?

We have more than 1,600 products. Our main categories are dry fruits, nuts and spices. In nuts and dry fruits, almonds, walnuts, cashew, pine seeds, apricot and figs are the best sellers. In spices, black pepper, cardamom, coriander, and curry powder are the fastest moving.

We also have dates, snacks, olives, pulses, pickles and sauces.

These days, customers are very price-conscious. How are you fending off competition from smaller, cut-price

rivals in the food service industry?

Food services is a services business. We offer high quality and prompt service and understand our client's needs. These days, chefs know the difference between one product and another. One may cost more but gives you a better flavour and a better yield. Chefs save space and money by picking up the better product. And they are aware of that.

We also provide emergency service, a fact that our clients appreciate. Consistency is another strong point for us. We have managed to deliver on quality and service for 20 years. This is the reputation we have built.

Price is important, of course. And when our clients really need us to adjust our margins, we do it. Like in 2008, we had a special request from our clients, looking after cost saving, and we compromised on our margin back then. We adjust our strategy to suit the market conditions. 2008 and 2009 were demanding years for airlines and hotels.

How has your growth trajectory been? And what is the geographical composition of your business?

Since 2000, we have grown at 15 to 30 percent annually. Even during the recession of 2008, we grew at 15 percent.

As much as 80 percent of our business comes from the UAE. Around 15 percent is Gulf Cooperation Council countries - Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman. We entered Saudi Arabia recently because it took a while to find a partner. The remaining 5 percent comes from exports.

Bayara operates in close to 20 countries,

inclusive of GCC. The rest are export markets, mainly in North Africa, CIS and the Middle East.

What strategy have you chalked out for Bayara for the next three years?

We have started two new lines of products – snacks and dates. So that will be our focus for the next three to five years. In spices, we want to focus on mixes. People don't have time any more to buy spice seeds, get them ground and mix them. They want the perfect flavour in a packet. So we will launch regional mixes of India, Pakistan, UAE, Egypt, Lebanon, North Africa and so on, called "Authentic cuisine".

We are also expanding our facility. Currently, we have a 60,000 sq. foot plant that we are scaling up to 150,000 sq. foot. My team has till my birthday - April 1 – to gift me the new ramped-up facility!

Bayara is also seeking partners to expand outside the UAE.

Please tell us something about yourself...

I am 53 years old and married with three children. I met my wife in Africa in Cameroon. We have been married for 25 years now. My daughter is a student in Paris and my two sons are in Dubai.

By education, I am a mechanical engineer. I studied in France and then I was sent to Africa for a year as an engineering teacher in a school. For me, that was an eye-opener to the possibilities that exist beyond France. I was born in south France and I had never thought I would travel much. But after Africa, I knew I wanted to.

I returned to France for two years and got a masters in business administration in sales and marketing in a university in Marseille.

In 1984 Ducros, a spices trading company, came to my college looking for someone who is an engineer with some knowledge of commerce and experience in Africa. The company wanted to set up factories in Africa. It was like a tailor-made job for



me. The interview took 5 minutes and since then I have been with the company, that you today known as Bayara.

I started in Africa as the manager of one of the factories and then moved around in other African countries and even went to Vietnam. I stayed in New York for three years as well. Later, I moved to Togo to manage a farm. In 2001, I was sent to Dubai and I helped Gyma enter FMCG & the HoReCa business. Today, the company has more than 400 people from 20 different nationalities.

Doesn't your wife complain about your travel?

After 25 years of being married, she looks forward to me travelling! (Laughs) You need some time off each other after so long.

You have never worked anywhere other than Gyma. Do you regret not having explored much professionally?

Not at all! You don't feel the need to move when you are happy. I became a part of the Ducros family when I started working with them 25 years ago and still today I am very passionate and motivated to even consider working anywhere else. Some people change jobs for money, others do it because

they lose motivation. Both these things don't apply to me. I still feel motivated every morning and my harmony is more important than money.

Also, I am a loyal person by nature – I have been with the same company and the same wife always! (laughs)

Your recently became a member of the Emirates Culinary Guild. How do you see the relationship benefiting you?

We were planning to partner with Emirates Culinary Guild for long time and finally we became members in October 2013. So we are just in the beginning of our partnership. It will definitely help us to bring Bayara and our products even closer to Executive & Sous Chefs at Hotels where we are present and to increase our coverage in the 4-5 star Hotels and Restaurants.

Lastly, what are the key differentiators of Bayara that will help you to maintain your competitive edge for all the members & partners of Emirates Culinary Guild?

As mentioned before, we stand for high quality, unmatched service provided and most probably a widest range of products in the UAE!



AUSTRALIA 2011

AUSTRALIA 2012



AUSTRALIA 2012

NEW ZEALAND 2012



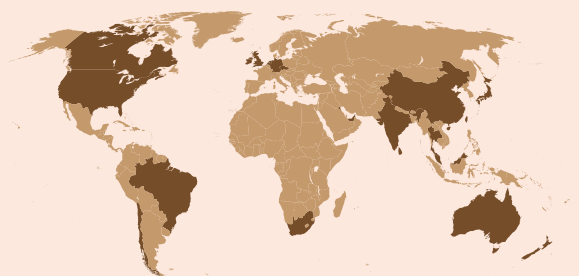
SINGAPORE 2012

NETHERLANDS 2013



AUSTRALIA 2013

AUSTRALIA 2013



The Dilmah Real High Tea Challenge began in 2007 as an exploration of a contemporary high tea. It has traversed continents with this quest, starting in Colombo, Sri Lanka and continuing through Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, UAE, Netherlands, Chile, Thailand, Hong Kong, Macau, England, Scotland, France, Malaysia... Not merely a culinary challenge, our Real High Tea demands an intelligent and creative approach to tea.



NEW ZEALAND 2013

CHILE 2013



Dilmah Real High Tea UAE

Congratulations to our winners!



Welcome to the global tea gastronomy elite!

Congratulations to the winners of the Dilmah Real High Tea UAE Haresh Mohihani and Michael Kitts from The Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management! Now that you have claimed the top spot in the national Challenge it's time to get ready to test your skills against those of a new generation of tea loving culinary geniuses from around the world at our Dilmah Global Challenge due to be held in Sri Lanka in 2014.

Passionate about the tea we produce, we see the Dilmah Real High Tea Challenge as an intrinsic part of the global tea renaissance, as the world looks to discovering the many fascinating and as yet underexplored facets of tea.

The Challenge is endorsed by WACS and began in 2007. The idea is to challenge culinary and hospitality professionals to discover the delicious luxury in tea.

The Challenge continues its journey as some of the world's finest chefs and hospitality professionals combine their ingenuity, flair and knowledge of food and tea in a series of national Challenges spread around the world, counting up to the Dilmah Real High Tea Global Challenge – the ultimate test of greatness in the company of the global tea gastronomy elite.



brought to you by



IT'S ALL MERRY AT **MIRAMAR**

The young chefs from Iberotel Miramar Al Aqah Beach Resort in Fujairah know what it takes to please the palate

This month's Nestle Professional Golden Chefs Hat Competition has two young boys who have spent the last year or so working at the scenic Iberotel Miramar Al Aqah Beach Resort in Fujairah. They have had prior experience working for resorts in Seychelles and Maldives; and though they may come from two different countries, their native towns are just about 90-odd miles apart separated by the Palk Strait.

Chef Kumara Dhas

Chef Kumara Dhas grew up in Kanyakumari, a place located on the southern tip of India's mainland. He joined a two-year diploma from the Nala Institute of Hotel Management and Catering in India on the recommendation of few friends. It was on completion of the course that he decided to focus on a career in the kitchen.

He says, "I thought all the other jobs were easy. However, I found cooking to be a very different career choice even from an ethical point of view. Everybody needs food. And being a chef is a noble profession as it allows you to fill stomachs with food that is delicious, nutritious and served with grace."

After college, he took up his first full-time assignment abroad in the scenic locales of Maldives. "I had to start off as a waiter in a small restaurant before landing a role in the kitchen.

He worked there until January 2011



Chef Kumara Dhas

before moving to the Taj Club House Hotel in his home state capital Chennai. He soon moved to his current role in Iberotel Miramar and has been here for nearly two years.

As a Commis I, he is yet to clearly define what he expects from his future. The one thing he is sure of though is that he wants to become like Chef Prasad and master the art of cooking.

Chef M. K. Dinesh Manjula

Chef Dinesh grew up in a place close to Colombo in Sri Lanka and spent his young days aspiring to become a Chef just like his brother. He completed his course in pastry and bakery production from the Swiss Lanka Hotel School and joined the pastry section of the Induruwa Beach Resort in Sri Lanka. Two



Chef M. K. Dinesh Manjula

years later he joined the Taj Vivanta also in Sri Lanka.

He took up his first overseas assignment as a Commis I working for the Le Domaine de L'Orangeie in Seychelles.

He joined as a member of Chef K.A.C. Prasad's kitchen army last August and has been in awe of how friendly all are at the hotel. The tall lanky chef loves playing volley ball and cricket and was even adjudged the best player at the Taj Vivanta.

He tried his hand at competing at last year's La Cuisine by SIAL in Abu Dhabi after being pushed by Chef Prasad. He says he's now more confident to do better and is looking forward to making a mark as a pastry chef.

**Nestle Professional®
Golden Chef's
Hat Competition**





GRILLED LAMB CHOP WITH ALMOND POTATO CROQUETTE, HEIRLOOM TOMATO & COCONUT HOLLANDAISE

INGREDIENTS

Lamb rack	160g
MAGGI® Mashed Potato	20g
Chef® Demi Glace	5g
MAGGI® Coconut Powder	5g
MAGGI® Chicken Stock Powder	250ml
Almond Flakes	5g
Fresh cream	15ml
Milk full cream	20ml
Baby Carrot	10g

Kenya Beans	10g
Hollandaise	5g
Butter (unsalted)	10g
Heirloom Tomato	30g
Rosemary	10g
Potato	2g
Baby Asparagus	5g
River salt flakes	5g
Table salt	5g

METHOD

- ♦ Grill the lamb, add river salt and herbs, and cook in the oven at 180°C until done.
- ♦ Heat the full cream milk in sauce pan and then add the mashed potato. Keep stirring until potato gets firm. Add butter and salt to taste, keep aside.

- ♦ Make the croquette by adding almond flakes, deep fry until golden brown
- ♦ Boil water in a small pot, add the chicken stock, and then boil the vegetables in chicken stock. Sauté with butter.
- ♦ Heat the demi glace with water until it reaches the desired consistency.
- ♦ Heat the pre-prepared hollandaise sauce, add the coconut powder, mix well.
- ♦ Grill the heirloom tomato and keep aside.
- ♦ Arrange the plate and garnish with rosemary and potato flakes.
- ♦ Serving temperature (>65°C).



TRIO OF DOCELLO PASSION

INGREDIENTS

COCONUT CRÈME BRÛLÉE

Coconut powder	50g
Fresh cream	250ml
Docello® Crème Brûlée Powder	65g
Milk full cream	250ml

SOURSOP PANNA COTTA

Fresh cream	100ml
Milk full cream	100ml
Docello® Panna Cotta Powder	30g
Soursop powder	10g
Raspberry	10g

CHOCOLATE MILLE-FEUILLE

Fresh milk	500ml
Chocolate cookies	250g
Docello® Chocolate Mousse Powder	50g
White chocolate chips	50g
Puff pastry	30g

METHOD

FOR COCONUT CRÈME BRÛLÉE

- ◆ Boil the milk and cream together with the coconut powder and add the crème brûlée powder to the mix. Keep the mix in the chiller.
- ◆ Burn the top with sugar on top (before serving)

FOR SOURSOP PANNA COTTA

- ◆ Boil the milk and cream together and

then add the panna cotta powder.

- ◆ Add raspberry, place it in a mould, then keep it in the chiller.

FOR CHOCOLATE MILLE-FEUILLE

- ◆ Mix the chocolate mousse powder with milk, then divide into two separate bowls.
- ◆ Add chocolate cookies and white chocolate chips respectively in each bowl.
- ◆ Place the puff pastry sheets and add the mousse individually
- ◆ Serving temperature (<5°C).

brought to you by



FLIRTING WITH CHOCOLATE

Our pastry celebrity of the month is **Sanjit Gupta**, Executive Pastry Chef at Le Meridien Al Aqah. He shares with us his story and an exclusive recipe for our aspiring chefs

Chef Sanjit Gupta, the Executive Pastry Chef at Le Meridien Al Aqah, is a dynamic young individual who exudes charm and personality from the second you meet him. He dons a high ranking hat at a relatively young age because of his hard work and dedication to the job. So committed is he that the eligible bachelor who looks forward to being a family man soon says, "I've remained a bachelor thus far just so that I can dedicate more time to my passion and my dream".

The Chef began his career soon after gaining a Bachelor's Degree in Hotel Management from Bangalore University. He even took time out to successfully pursue a Master's Degree in Human Resource Management from the prestigious Adam Smith University. His career has taken him to various cities around the Middle East and Asia including Kathmandu, Bangalore, Kolkata, Mumbai, Cambodia, Maldives and now the UAE. "I've been lucky enough to interact closely with different cultures, work on language barriers, overcome the climatic challenges, and please the palates of high profile clientele."

Chef Sanjit Gupta, who is currently working on reforming recipes, menus and standards at his hotel, says of his long association with the Starwood Group, "I have been with the Starwood Group for 8 years and during this period I have been exposed to various



Expectation is always high when you climb to a senior position; you realise that there is only one first impression for every first thing you do

Starwood brands including the Sheraton, A Luxury Collection, W Hotels and of course, Le Meridien."

Besides Starwood, Chef Sanjit has worked for the Taj Hotels, Palaces and Resorts as well as a resort property in Maldives. He has been involved in two very successful pre-openings and his culinary forte includes pastries, chocolates, ice cream, showpiece, buffet desserts as well as plated desserts.

Growth for Chef Sanjit has been a two-fold process. He says, "First way to grow is learning and the second is learning from mistakes. Consistency is very important for any progression and at every level from Commis till date I have made sure that I perfected my skills for each level."

Reaching the level of Executive Pastry Chef has not been easy. Says the Chef, "Expectation is always high when you

climb to a senior position; you realise that there is only one first impression for every first thing you do." However, for Chef Sanjit, position is not something he's craved for. "Every position is top as long as you do your best and perform from your heart by paying complete attention," he says.

Living and working in Fujairah has been a lively experience for the Chef. He says, "Working at a property surrounded by hills and oceans, which in its 10 years still stands at number 1 position is a great feeling. That fact that we are the best in Al Aqah is only due to the associates working here who believe in team work and have a keen eye for detail. Associates here are treated as in-house guests."

Working here has allowed Chef Sanjit to harness his creativity and to develop new concepts and play with flavour, create new garnishes and avoid repetition. "I find myself lucky as my Executive Chef Bybee Chacko gives me full freedom on menu making and baking. He believes in me and is extremely supportive of the entire kitchen team. He is highly demanding but I guess it's natural for the best chefs wanting to serve the very best in their venue."

His advice to aspiring Pastry chefs are based on his own life's lessons. "Young chefs should focus less on position and salary. With hard work, dedication and perseverance, the rewards will follow



soon. The amount spent surfing social websites must be utilised on reading culinary books and websites."

THE CAKE

Chef Sanjit has chosen to share his recipe for Chocoflirt because, in his words, "Raspberry and dark chocolate are like Romeo and Juliet. I specially designed this for the young readers of Gulf Gourmet. The recipe is so well

balanced that from sesame to sable, from fresh raspberry to chocolate-baked cream, from salted caramel to chocolate mousse, the culmination is a cake that is complete in every which way."

Talking about Fonterra, he says, "I first experimented with Fonterra's Anchor range of products during their demo. The butter, cream and milk are something I feel is a must for all pastry production

from a quality, taste and volume perspective. I rate it as a good product with the best part being its volume."

Chef Sanjit says, "I have used their products in this recipe as a thank you for helping pastry chefs get their due within the culinary media scene. I must say that trends are changing and that the pastry experience no longer ends at the dinner table these days."



CHOCOFLIRT

SABLE SESAME: MAKES 4 DISC

INGREDIENTS

Almond meal	50gms
Sugar	165 gms
Roasted white sesame seeds	60 gms
Anchor Butter	190 gms
Pasteurized egg yolk	100 gms
Anchor Cream	10ml
Flour	250 gms
Corn flour	5gms
Salt	pinch
Baking powder	7 gms

METHOD

- ♦ Mix almond meal, sugar, sesame and butter together. Add egg yolk and mix well add cream and mix well, fold dry ingredients all together, rest in chiller till its semi hard, roll it on sheeter 5mm cut it using 6 inch cake ring & bake at 180* Celsius for 12 to 15 minutes. Once cooled brush base with tapered white chocolate.

MUD CAKE SPONGE: MAKES 1 SHEET

INGREDIENTS

Anchor Butter	250 gms
Sugar	185 gms
Water	375 gms
Dark Chocolate couverture	250 gms
Flour	185 gms
Cocoa powder	40 gms
Bicarbonate soda	7 gms
Eggs	100 ml

METHOD

- ♦ Boil butter, sugar & water remove it from heat add dark chocolate and melt it, when mixture is semi cool add dry ingredients and mix it well at last add eggs. Line it on a tray & bake it at 180* Celsius for 15 to 20 minutes, once cool cut 2 numbers using 6 inch cake ring..

SALTED CARAMEL CHOCOLATE MOUSSE: 4 RINGS

INGREDIENTS

Sugar	175 gms
Anchor Cooking Cream	175 gms
Dark Couverture Chocolate	600 gms
Pasteurized Egg Yolk	6 nos.

Sugar	25 gms
Water	10 ml
Soaked Gelatin Sheets	4 no.
Anchor Whipping Cream	1 liter
Fleur de sel	5 gms

METHOD

- ♦ Caramelize sugar & add cream mix melted chocolate when caramel mixture is semi cool, make pate bombe with yolk, sugar & water fold it in chocolate mixture add fleur de sel, add gelatin Mix well.Fold in whipped cream. Make a la moment prior to layering.

RASPBERRY CHOCOLATE BAKED CREAM: MAKES 2 RINGS

INGREDIENTS

Anchor cream	500 ml
Sugar	85 gms
Salt	pinch
Vanilla bean	1/2 pod
Pasteurized egg yolk	80 gms
Sugar	65 gms
Melted dark chocolate	80 gms
Fresh raspberries	100 gms



1

Take 6 inch sable sesame



2

Coat tampered white chocolate on sable base, let it set



3

Apply raspberry jam on top using palette knife



4

Stick 6 inch round shape mud cake sponge on top of raspberry jam



5

Press sponge gently with your fingers in order to stick with raspberry jam



6

Soak sponge with light minted simple syrup



7

Place sable + sponge base in center (take 7 inch cake ring foil the base)



8

Pour salted caramel chocolate mousse first on the corner then gradually all above the sponge, level it & semi set it in chiller



9

Once semi set, place pre-frozen raspberry chocolate baked cream in the center of the cake



10

Pipe roughly salted caramel chocolate mousse mixture to stick second layer of mud cake sponge



11

Place pre-cut 7 inch round size mud cake sponge & press sponge gently



12

Soak sponge with light minted simple syrup



13

Level up ring with remaining salted caramel chocolate mousse mixture



14

Freeze it, de mould it. Spray or Glaze



15

Decorate as desired

METHOD

- ♦ Warm cream, sugar, salt & vanilla bean.
- ♦ Separately mix egg yolk and sugar together.
- ♦ Add both mixture together, add melted chocolate, mix it well and strain the mixture.
- ♦ Pour into 6 inch cake ring adding fresh raspberry on top, water bake at 180 * Celsius for 25- 30 minutes.
- ♦ Freeze it.

February 2014 Gulf Gourmet

SIX DEGREES OF **UNIFICATION**

Aquin George meets the founding members of the UAE National Culinary Team



Mentor Chef Michael Kitts with
the UAE National Culinary Team

Over the past 25 months we have featured many a young chef who has performed brilliantly at local and international competitions. And behind these young boys are the men who have been there and done that.

They now work relentlessly towards imparting their knowledge and skills for scores of young boys and girls to grow

within the culinary sphere. Today, they are back and have joined hands to create an undisputable force that will get the rest of the world to sit up and take notice.

The UAE's first national culinary team was formed on the side lines of the Dubai World Hospitality Championship. At their first shot they got the country a silver medal while competing against world leading culinary teams like the

US and Singapore. If a 60-day-old team can stand its ground competing against 60-year-old teams, one can only begin to imagine how powerful these guys could be in the coming 3-4 years.

We bring you an exclusive insight into the six men who are building the foundations for UAE's culinary pride in the years to come. Turn the pages to know about each one of these master chefs.



JURAJ KALNA

Being tasked with leading the UAE Culinary Team to global highs is enough to give sleepless nights to anyone. But not chef Juraj Kalna.

The Slovakian chef loves a good challenge. And he prefers the slow but steadier way to the top.

As the executive sous chef of Zabeel Palace Hospitality, chef Juraj is used to extracting the best out of his boys, a talent he picked up on his exciting journey as a chef. "For me, cooking came naturally. I always knew I was going to be a chef because I loved food from the very beginning. My mother was always cooking and baking and she's a great cook," says the 34-year-old chef.

At the young age of 14, he took to professional cooking. The travel bug bit chef Juraj at some point and he took up jobs in Germany and the United States, heading out to the UAE in 2000 at the age of 21.

Fourteen years have passed since, dotted with enviable jobs at the JW Marriott and Emirates Towers, among others. He even has to his credit the EDGE Dining and Lounge at DIFC in Dubai, for which he travelled extensively to understand the standards of Michelin-starred restaurants and implement them.

The adrenalin rush that chef Juraj needs regularly is provided in large doses by culinary competitions. "I started competing from the very beginning of my career. Early on, I failed miserably," he laughs.

Back in Slovakia, chef Juraj participated in four-five contests but managed to win just two medals. But perseverance and patience helped him keep adding medals to his kitty all along his career. "The first time I got only the participation certificate. Then a bronze, then a silver, then a gold. When it takes you time to win medals, you understand its value

better. Some people have beginner's luck and then, they let that go to their head."

For chef Juraj, competitions are more about being attentive, flexible and quick-thinking than about being better than other chefs. "Competitions are more a hobby. They give you a chance to show your creative side but I don't agree that they decide who is a good chef and who is not."

His UAE Culinary Team bagged a silver medal in the inaugural contest. Rather than feel sorry for missing the gold, chef Juraj sees this as a huge achievement, given the experienced people the team was up against. "We are a baby as a team. People more experienced than us are supposed to be better but we beat them. I am happy about what we did and how we did it."

Even though there are so many creative hats in the team – combined, the team members have won as many as 120 gold medals – there is no room for ego issues, says the proud leader. "We don't compete with each other. We teach each other. It's very thrilling to be representing your country in an international competition and not just yourself."

Next stop is Singapore, where the team will be taking on national teams of other countries. "Most of my team members have been to the Singapore competition in individual capacity and so we know how it works. We want to show the big boys that we are the big boys."

Chef Juraj wants the UAE team to be counted among the top teams of the world, like Switzerland and Sweden. He doesn't think his boys need more than three years to get there!

He says, "Each of us has six-eight years' experience. I want us to reach a stage that when we enter a contest, if participants know the UAE team is here, they know they don't stand a chance."



Each of us has six-eight years' experience. I want us to reach a stage that when we enter a contest, if participants know the UAE team is here, they know they don't stand a chance.



THUSHAN DON

As a youngster, there was just one thing that fascinated chef Thushan Don – food. Cooking it was as much fun for him as eating it.

A career in the culinary field was then of course a natural choice.

Now, he's one of the proud members of the UAE culinary team, set to accompany five others to Singapore to compete with some of the biggest culinary teams in the world.

The executive sous chef at The Address Downtown Dubai had no chef in the family to seek advice from. And yet, destiny played its card, showing him the path when his brother's friend in the neighbourhood joined a five-star hotel.

"He would talk to us about working in a five-star, the culture and the job. I was fascinated. I already felt a strong passion for food and after listening to him, I started thinking seriously about pursuing the same career," says the 38-year-old chef.

Thereafter, he enrolled in the International Hotel School in Colombo, passing out in 1993 and embarking on his culinary journey at the age of 18. "For three-four years, I worked at the Golden Beach Hotel Negambo in Sri Lanka. Then in 1997, I came to Dubai."

Chef Thushan joined the Al Busatan Rotana Hotel Dubai as a demi chef de partie, handling the banquet kitchen and the buffet preparations. A couple of years later, he moved to Burj Al Arab, working at the Al Mahara seafood restaurant. While learning the fine points of seafood cooking, he also devised new dishes and menu items at the restaurant, which was adjudged one of the top 10 hotel restaurants in the world in 2003.

After five years of service at the Al Mahara, chef Thushan moved on to The

Fairmont Dubai, handling the banquet and buffet arrangements at the hotel.

In his 17 years in the city, he has also worked at the Dubai Marina Yacht Club.

His tryst with competitions began as soon as he landed in Dubai from Sri Lanka. "In just six months of being here, I participated in a contest. I asked the executive chef to let me participate even though I had no idea what it was all about," laughs chef Thushan.

The first competition turned out to be more of a learning experience. "I didn't win anything but I observed people around me and I also got in touch with some people who participated regularly."

His second competition won him a medal, which turned out to be the first of the 40 odd medals he has won so far. "I spent a lot of time learning. I would do my shifts and then practise for 3-4 hours. People thought I was crazy but I did it because I was passionate."

All the experience he acquired, he is eager to share. Chef Thushan now trains young chefs on giving their best at contests. "You learn a lot in contests – techniques, styles and ingredients and how to bring the flavour out."

Talent apart, a chef also needs the commitment to sacrifice personal pleasures for preparing for the contest, he believes.

"I have three kids but I am not able to spend time with them when I am preparing for contests. These kind of sacrifices will have to be made."

For now, chef Thushan's focus is the Singapore competition. As the first national team of the UAE, this one has a greater responsibility, he believes. "We have to build a strong base for other budding chefs to join this team as future members."



We have to build a strong base for other budding chefs to join this team as future members



ACHALA WEERASINGHE

Never trust a skinny chef, they say. More so a skinny pastry chef.

But you can definitely trust chef Achala Weerasinghe.

He may not binge on his own creations but the executive pastry chef at The Address Downtown hotel in Dubai is so good that he's now a part of the UAE culinary team. His curriculum vitae is dotted with some of the top hotel brands in Dubai – Atlantis The Palm, Renaissance, Jumeirah Emirates Towers, Holiday Inn.

Not that life was always a cakewalk for chef Achala. His roots are humble, entrenched in a village a few hours away from Colombo in Sri Lanka.

Once the hotel industry bug bit him, chef Achala headed for Colombo to join a hotel management school.

"They had a seat only in the housekeeping course. So I joined it and after six months, I was sent to the Holiday Inn for training," he says. Along the way, he also applied for the international cookery course.

Once the course was over, chef Achala rejoined the Holiday Inn as second commis. "At the time, jobs were hard to find. But because I had trained there before and the officials there knew how my work was, I was hired."

Chef Achala was first assigned to the main kitchen, a place he worked for a week but decided was too hot for him to handle. "Sri Lanka itself is hot and I couldn't really handle the heat of the main kitchen. So I went to the executive chef and asked him if there was any vacancy in the pastry kitchen. The scent of baking has always fascinated me." A week or two later, his wish was granted.

The year was 1999.

As luck would have it, chef Achala found

a mentor in a chef who had returned from Dubai. This chef not only taught him the finer things about baking but also encouraged him to apply for a job in Dubai.

After four years of working in Colombo, chef Achala headed for Dubai. He got a break at the Jumeirah Emirates Tower, where he worked for two and a half years, before moving on to Renaissance.

There, chef Achala won the Salon Culinare pastry chef title for three straight years - 2009, 2010 and 2011.

So far, he has won as many as 30 medals at various prestigious contests. He also participated in the Culinary Olympics in Germany as a part of the Canadian team.

The 36-year-old chef is a self-made man.

His teachers have been good recipe books, which he doesn't mind splurging on. "I have even spent as much as 400 dirhams on a recipe book. I get a lot of ideas and then use my own ingredients and creativity to create some new dishes," he says.

All eyes are now on the Singapore contest, where the UAE culinary team will debut as the country's national team. "I want us to take the gold in both the team and individual events," the chef says, when asked about his expectations from the competition.

As for future plans, don't be surprised if you walk into his pastry shop in Australia someday. "I also want to open my own school someday," chef Achala smiles.

How's that for a sweet thought!



I have even spent as much as 400 dirhams on a recipe book. I get a lot of ideas and then use my own ingredients and creativity to create some new dishes.



ROSHAN FERNANDO

You can recognise chef Roshan Fernando easily. He will be the quiet guy at the contest keenly observing everyone without a word. But the voice of his work is deafening. The executive sous chef at the Atlantis Palm Jumeirah in Dubai believes commitment to your profession is as important as talent to succeed.

Interestingly, chef Roshan's own love affair with food started just by chance. The Sri Lanka-born chef had absolutely no idea what the hospitality industry is all about.

"I had other plans after school. But I had a three-month vacation and in that period, I met a manager of a five-star hotel who asked me to come for a training in his hotel," recalls the 39-year-old father of two kids.

That was Mount Lavinia Hotel in Colombo and the year was 1994.

At first, chef Roshan had absolutely no idea what was expected of him. Ever the experimenter, he took it up anyway. "The first two months were fantastic. There was a lot of food around and I enjoyed myself a lot. So I decided to stick to it and here I am today," he says.

Reality hit fast and furious. The work was hectic and the rewards, not so great. Chef Roshan admits there were times when he wanted to quit. "But when I saw successful chefs, I was motivated by them. It was interesting also because you get so many good tips from them when you stand around buffets."

Destiny took chef Roshan to Oman in 1998. At the Grand Hyatt in Muscat, he joined as a commis chef. For five years, he cut his teeth in the cold kitchen, Asian and Italian kitchens and the banquet kitchen, among others. In 2003, he moved on to Dubai's Shangri-La Hotel and then to the Atlantis Palm Jumeirah in 2008.

Along the way, he won a number of gold, silver and bronze medals in key competitions such as Emirates Salon Culinaire at Gulfood.

"During my training days, I was very interested in competitions. In Oman I didn't do much in terms of contests but I started again when I came to Dubai. I like to impart whatever knowledge I have and I like it when someone follows my style, standards and quality."

To prepare his boys for contests, the chef holds internal competitions. With 50 chefs battling it out, it's as good as the real thing, he believes. "I like to get feedback so I know what to do and what not to do at the contests."

From putting up a huge challenge to other chefs at competitions, to now grooming younger chefs to give their best at these contests, chef Roshan has come a long way. He wants to give younger chefs a chance to get the kind of exposure he got.

His mantra for success is simple. "You should really be interested in what you are doing. And practise, practise, practise. Sometimes, success takes time to arrive. But don't give up and it will happen."

Chef Roshan is now looking forward to putting the UAE on the world map at global contests. Seeing his drive and dishes, that shouldn't be too hard.



You should really be interested in what you are doing. And practise, practise, practise. Sometimes, success takes time to arrive. But don't give up and it will happen.



MARIO COELHO

When he was eight years old, Mario Coelho would hop out of bed and into the kitchen to watch his mother roll out chappatis, a flat Indian bread. He would smear jam on them, add more sugar and sweeten his mornings.

This early ritual was a precursor to a lifelong romance with food. Today, Mario is a chef de cuisine at Medzo Italian restaurant in Dubai and one of the UAE's six culinary ambassadors.

Born in Goa in India, Mario has love for good food in his genes. "I used to fry eggs and fish for lunch. I also cooked coconut pancakes the way my mother taught me. I then realised how much more I could do in the kitchen," recalls the 34-year-old chef.

After getting a hotel management degree from Goa, Mario trained in food and beverage at the Taj Aguada Hermitage. He became an apprentice chef at the hotel, working there for three years. "From Taj, I went to Titos, a famous nightclub in Goa. I was in charge of the kitchens there," Mario says.

Dubai called in 2003 and he answered, joining the Jumeirah Wild Wadi Water Park. Next stop was the Jumeirah Emirates Tower Hotel, where Mario was made the commis chef in the Rib Room steakhouse.

The impressionable young chef found a mentor in chef Juraj Kalna, who later whisked him away to The Edge fine dining restaurant.

Mario started participating in culinary competitions in 2004 and in 2009, became the first runner-up to the 'Chef of the Year' title at the Emirates Salon Culinaire. More accolades followed but 2012 was an especially good year. Mario won a gold medal at the IKA Culinary Olympics held in October in Germany that year.

What has been his recipe for success? "You have to learn from everyone. You have to be hungry for knowledge. Even if I see a young chef doing something differently, I learn from him."

Just like he learnt Italian cuisine at Medzo. Even without any special expertise in Italian cuisine, Mario excelled at the fine dining restaurant.

"Whenever I set a target, I go all out to ensure I reach it. My philosophy in life is that you do everything you can to achieve your goal or don't set any goals."

Mario admits he is not the kind of person to sit and wait for things to happen to him. He believes the UAE Culinary Team's drive will win it competitions the world over. "Dubai is gaining recognition everywhere. I love to be a part of the team that everyone knows about."

Ask Mario if ideological differences crop up when six creative chefs come together as a team and he replies in the negative. "Each one of us has different talents. Before competing as a team, we competed with each other. We even learned from each other by observing. Now, we know which team member is good at what."

Mario also knows high standard of work is expected from him because all his team mates are so talented. "You have to match the level of the chef you are paired with," says Mario.

This father has already given his 16-month-old son bragging rights!



Each one of us has different talents. Before competing as a team, we competed with each other. We even learned from each other by observing. Now, we know which team member is good at what.



ANUP PAWAR

As a child, Anup Pawar accompanied his father to the vegetable market for the chocolate such a trip brought. Little did he know then that he was waking up the culinary artist in him as he took in the freshness of the fish, the firmness of the tomato and the purple of the eggplant.

His father's business – pulling apart auto parts and putting them together again – did not excite chef Anup as much as his mother's pots and pans did. Luckily for him, a guardian saw his potential and pushed him down a road that eventually led to his passion. Years later, chef Anup is readying to represent the United Arab Emirates in Singapore as a part of the national culinary team.

"I came from a family with an engineering background. I loved the thought of the word 'chef' being attached to my name and the white coat and hat!" recalls the speciality senior sous chef de cuisine at The Address Downtown in Dubai.

What was a passing interest became a strong desire after a casual chat with a hotel management student. "He discouraged me saying that you will be working on holidays. But that excited me because everyone in my family would be home for the holidays. I thought how great it would be if they all missed me when I was working during festivals," he laughs.

After finishing school, chef Anup joined the Institute of Hotel Management in Goa, learning the nitty gritty of the hotel life. In 2004, he was offered a job by the Jumeirah in Dubai but he turned it down, instead choosing the Oberoi hotel in India. "It was two years of aggressive training. Many a time, I would not even go home. But I really enjoyed myself."

In 2006, Oberoi recognised his talent, sending him to its exclusive institute, Oberoi Centre for Learning and Development, for further honing his skills. "That was a turning point for me. They

taught us French and Spanish languages and groomed us as managers. At the age of 23 years, I became a sous chef."

After winning a gold medal at the end of his course, chef Anup was allowed to choose his posting. He opted for The Oberoi Udaivillas in Udaipur because that was "Condast's best hotel of 2008." Two years there later, he started his Dubai innings by moving to be with his long-time girlfriend and now wife. "My wife is a pastry chef here. That's why I moved to Dubai. She's been here since 2004."

At first, Dubai was a bit of a culture shock, admits chef Anup. The mix of nationalities, the cuisines offered and the exotic ingredients, all left him awestruck. "From Indian food, I went straight to Mediterranean food, cooked the things I never had." The first few months were tough. "I lost 9 kilos in three months!"

However, it all turned out to be worth the effort, with chef Anup now set to represent his adopted country. Indian food is his speciality but he tries to add a Mediterranean twist. While all the members of the UAE Culinary Team are masters of competitions, the way they work together will be the key to success in Singapore, feels chef Anup.

"Achala is good at pastries, Juraj is more into coming up with new ideas, props, organising and motivating us, Tushan is into fine details and he's the guy realistic about what can be done and what can't. Roshan is the go-to guy who gets the job done."

Chef Anup sees himself as the communicator of the team, the one with infinite patience needed under fire.

A veteran of competitions, he has just one advice for young chefs. "Competitions are just a platform to learn. If you win, get over it as soon as it's finished. Focus on your guest – your true audience."



Competitions are just a platform to learn. If you win, get over it as soon as it's finished. Focus on your guest – your true audience.



Breakthrough

FRYING SOLUTION

UAE-based distributor to launch American foodservice company's healthy oil and fats alternative at Gulfood 2014

Following the recent U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)'s announcement to ban partially hydrogenated oils (PHOs), UniPro, the US-based leading food service distribution cooperative has pioneered an alternative solution to meet the growing demand for healthy oils and fats.

The "alternative solution" is being launched in the region at Gulfood 2014 under the brand name NutriFry and will target both the trade and consumer markets.

Yanal Sulieman, Group CEO at Black Iris, the UniPro distributor in the UAE, says, "UniPro has pioneered a healthy oil and fats solution for its members and for its foreign markets, which we are proud to introduce to the region at Gulfood 2014. The new product addresses two critical requirements – it addresses the performance requirements of any oil and frying fat expected by the operator; and it satisfies the consumers of today in their quest for healthier food."

According to UniPro, the frying oil is a blend of soybean and high-oleic canola oils. The product has a high smoke point tolerating higher frying temperatures, is low in saturates, resists flavour transfer and has zero gram trans-fat per serving. "Most importantly, this solution has the right balance of fatty acids, without compromising the texture and taste of the end product," says Sulieman.

Based on recent scientific evidence, PHOs are not "generally recognised



as safe" for use in food, being a major source of trans-fat that is associated with a significant risk of coronary disease. Artery-clogging trans-fats increase the levels of low-density Lipoprotein (LDL), or "bad cholesterol," and reduce the levels of high-density Lipoprotein (HDL), or "good cholesterol" in the body.

PHOs are the result of adding hydrogen to vegetable oil (unsaturated fats) to make it more solid. Food manufacturers have traditionally used PHOs to improve texture, shelf life

and flavour stability of foods such as baked goods, fast food, margarine and shortenings – among others.

While some U.S. restaurant franchises have voluntarily been switching away from HPOs, with the new FDA regulation all food operators now feel the urgency to commit to a "complete removal of artificial trans-fat" from their menu items.

"Black Iris is also equipped to provide technical and informational assistance to the market about this breakthrough frying solution," says Sulieman.



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February 2014 Gulf Gourmet



The Jean Francois Arnaud Workshop

Fonterra Brands Middle East organised a two-day French pastry workshop at the Fonterra Collunarium in Dubai last month. The workshop was run by Chef Jean Francois Arnaud, Fonterra's French brand ambassador, along with Chef Manfred Kohlen.



Executive Pastry Chefs working in leading hotel chains around the Middle East came together for the workshop. They had the opportunity to experience and practice different pastry techniques revolving around French pastries with a modern twist.

The two-day event culminated with a private party at the Marco Pierre White restaurant housed inside the newly opened Conrad Hotel on Sheikh Zayed Road. Some of UAE's leading Executive Chefs also attended the gathering where Chef Jean gave the participating chefs a certificate of excellence and distinction.





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The Guild Meet

The Emirates Culinary Guild's last meeting was hosted by Chef Christian and the Team from Marriott Courtyard. The event saw a large turnout including corporate members from the industry. Here are moments captured at the event.





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BRIEFS OF THE CLASSES FOR ENTRY

THE EMIRATES SALON CULINAIRE

Class No. Class Description

1. Cake Decoration – Practical by MasterBaker
 2. Wedding Cake Three-Tier
 3. Four Plates of Dessert
 4. Pastry Showpiece
 5. Bread Loaves and Showpiece By Masterbaker
 6. Friandises Petites Four Pralines Nougatines By Masterbaker
 7. Chocolate Carving Showpiece
 8. Fruit & Vegetable Carving Showpiece by Barakat
 9. Open Showpiece
 10. Five-Course Gourmet Dinner Menu by Meat & Livestock Australia
 11. Four-Course Vegetarian Menu by U.S. Dairy Export Council
 12. Tapas, Finger Food and Canapés by U.S. Dairy Export Council
 13. An Arabian Feast
 14. Individual Ice Carving
 15. Ice Carving Team Event
 16. Practical Fruit & Vegetable Carving by Barakat
 17. Dressed Lamb - Practical Butchery by Meat & Livestock Australia
 18. Arabic Mezzeh - Practical Cookery by Rahma Olive Oil
 19. Fish & Seafood - Practical Cookery by Mitras
 20. Beef - Practical Cookery by Meat & Livestock Australia
 21. Emirati Cuisine – Practical Cookery
 22. HUG Savoury or Sweet Creations
- The following two classes (24 & 25) are for entry only by those competing for the Young Chef of the Year trophy.
23. Dressed Chicken & Dressed Fish
 24. Ovo-Lacto Vegetarian Three-Course Menu - by U.S. Dairy Export Council.

PRACTICAL PASTRY

Class 01: Cake Decoration – Practical by MASTERBAKER



1. Decorate a pre-baked single cake base of the competitor's choice.

2. Two-and-a-half-hours duration.
3. All decorating ingredients must be edible and mixed on the spot.
4. No pre-modelled garnish permitted.
5. Chocolate and royal icing can be pre-prepared to the basic level, e.g. tempered chocolate can be brought.
6. Competitors must provide all ingredients, cake base, utensils, and small equipment required.
7. The cake base must a minimum size of 30cm X 30cm or 30cm Diameter.
8. A standard work table with a 13 amp power socket is provided for each competitor to work upon.
9. Water and refrigeration will not be available.
10. The cake will be tasted as part of judging.
11. The Judges will cut the cake.

PASTRY DISPLAYS

Class 02: Three-Tier Wedding Cake

1. All decorations must be edible and made entirely by hand.
2. Pillars or stands may be inedible but, unless decorated by hand, must be plain and unadorned.
3. Fine, food-quality wiring is allowed for the construction of flowers and the like, but must be properly wrapped and covered with flower tape or paste.
4. Royal icing, pastillage, pulled sugar, etc., may be used in the construction, but the finished display must not be dependent on these items.
5. The bottom layer of the cake must be edible.
6. The cake will be tasted by the judges.
7. Inedible blanks may be used for the two top layers.
8. Typewritten description and recipes are required.
9. Maximum area w60 cm x d75 cm.
10. Maximum height 75cm (including socle or platforms)

Class 03: Four Plates of Dessert

1. Prepare four different desserts, each for one person.
2. Each dessert presented singly on an appropriated plate.
3. Presentation to include a minimum of one hot dessert (presented cold).
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.

Class 04: Pastry Showpiece

1. Freestyle display.
2. Edible media, marzipan, pastillage, sugar, pulled-sugar, croquant, etc., may be used, singly or in mixed media.
3. Written description required.
4. Maximum area w90 x d75cm.
5. Maximum height 90cm (including base or socle).

Class 05: Baked Good and Baked Bread Showpiece by MASTERBAKER



1. The entire exhibit must comprise baked goods and must include the following:
2. A baked bread showpiece.
3. Four types of bread loaves (competitor's choice) minimum of two pieces of each loaf to be displayed.
4. Four types of bread roll (competitor's choice) minimum four pieces of each roll to be displayed.
5. Four types of baked sweet breakfast items (competitor's choice) minimum four pieces of each item to be displayed.
6. Four types of baked savoury/salt breakfast items (competitor's choice) minimum four pieces of each item to be displayed.



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7. Doughs prepared and breads baked at place of work and brought to the competition for judging.
8. Tasting will be part of the judging criteria
9. Typewritten recipes are required.
10. Maximum area w90 x d75cm

Class 06: Friandises Petites Four Pralines Nougatines by MASTERBAKER



1. Present the exhibit to include a small showpiece; the showpiece is for effect only and will not be judged as part of the class.
2. Exhibit eight varieties.
3. Six pieces of each variety (48 pieces total) plus one extra piece of each variety on a separate small platter for judges' tasting.
4. Freestyle presentation.
5. Written description mentioning the theme is required.
6. Typewritten recipes are required.
7. Maximum area w90 cm x d75 cm.

ARTISTIC DISPLAYS

Class 07: Chocolate Carving Showpiece

1. Free-style presentation.
2. No frames or supports.
3. Natural colouring is allowed.
4. Minimal glazing is allowed.
5. No molded work.
6. Maximum area: w80 cm x d75 cm.
7. Maximum height 75cm (including base or socle).

Class 08: Fruit & Vegetable Carving Showpiece by BARAKAT QUALITY PLUS



1. Freestyle presentation.
2. Light framing is allowed, but the construction of the piece must not depend upon it.

3. Maximum area w60 cm x d75 cm.
4. Maximum height 55 cm (including base or socle).

Class 09: Open Showpiece

1. Freestyle presentation.
2. Only showpieces made of edible food material will be accepted for adjudication.
3. Maximum area w90 cm x d75 cm.
4. Maximum height 75 cm. (including base or socle).

GASTRONOMIC CREATIONS

Class 10: Five-Course Gourmet Dinner Menu by MEAT & LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA



1. Present a plated five-course gourmet meal for one person
2. One of the appetisers for the meal must contain Australian Lamb as the main ingredient.
3. The meal to consist of:
 - A cold appetiser,
 - A soup,
 - A hot appetiser,
 - A main course with its garnish
 - A dessert.
4. Hot food presented cold on appropriate plates.
5. Food coated with aspic or clear gelatin for preservation.
6. Total food weight of the 5 plates should be 600/700 gms.
7. Typewritten description and typed recipes required
8. Maximum area w90 cm x d75 cm.

Class 11: Four-Course Vegetarian Menu by U.S. DAIRY EXPORT COUNCIL



1. Present a plated four-course vegetarian meal for one person.
2. Suitable for dinner service
3. The meal consist of:
 - An appetizer

- A 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.
 7. Two types of AMERICAN U.S. CHEESES must be used in the creation of the menu.
 8. Total food weight of the four plates should be 600/700 gms.
 9. Typewritten descriptions and recipes required.
 10. Maximum area w75cm x d75cm.

Class 12: Presentation of Tapas, Finger Food and Canapés by U.S. DAIRY EXPORT COUNCIL



1. Exhibit eight varieties.
2. Six pieces of each variety (total 48 pieces)
3. Four hot varieties.
4. Four cold varieties.
5. Two types of American (U.S.) cheeses must be used in the creation of these dishes.
6. Hot food presented cold
7. Food coated with aspic or clear gelatin for preservation
8. Presentation on suitable plate/s or platter/s or receptacles.
9. Eight pieces should correspond to one portion.
10. Name and ingredient list (typed) of each variety required.
11. Maximum area 60cm x 80 cm.

Class 13. An Arabian Feast

1. Present a traditional Arabian wedding feast as it would be served at a five-star hotel in the UAE.
2. Suitable for 10 people.
3. Free-style presentation
4. The presentation to comprise the following dishes (both cold food



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- and hot food presented cold).
- Six cold mezzeh
 - Three hot mezzeh.
 - A whole Ouzi presented with rice and garnish
 - A chicken main course (Emirati Cuisine)
 - A fish main course (Emirati Cuisine)
 - A lamb main course
 - A vegetable dish
 - Three types of kebabs, one of chicken, one of lamb, one of beef, each with appropriate accompaniments.
 - One hot dessert (presented cold)
 - Three cold desserts.
 - Two of the above desserts (competitors choice) must be typically Emirati
 - Only the above dishes are to be presented, no other dishes are to be added.
 - Maximum available space for presentation is 180 cm x 75 cm.
 - Competitors must ensure their exhibit is presented neatly so as to fit the available space

PRACTICAL ARTISTIC

Class 14: Individual Ice Carving

- Freestyle.
- 90 minutes duration.
- Hand carved work from one large block of ice (provided by the organisers).
- Competitors to use own hand-tools and gloves.
- A non-slip mat is mandatory.
- Before the competition starts, competitors will be allowed 30 minutes to arrange and temper the ice block.
- The use of power tools is forbidden.

Class 15: Ice Carving Team Event

- Freestyle.
- Two persons per team
- 120 minutes duration.
- Hand-carved work from three large block of ice (provided by the organisers).
- Competitors to use own hand-tools and gloves.
- Non-slip mats are mandatory.

- 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.
- The use of power tools is forbidden.

Class 16: Practical Fruit & Vegetable Carving by BARAKAT QUALITY PLUS



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

Class 17: Dressed Lamb - Practical Butchery by MEAT & LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA



- Prepare a whole, fresh, dressed lamb carcass into various ready-to-cook joints and pieces, some as required by the organisers, the others to competitor's choice.
- Make a presentation of the finished cuts and off-cuts for exhibiting to the judges.
- Cuts/joints can be suitable for foodservice or suitable for a retail butchery display.
- Organisers will supply the dressed lamb for this class.
- Each competitor will have one banquet table (supplied by the organisers) on which to work.

- No power tools permitted.
- Competitors to supply their own:
 - Tools and knives
 - Twine or netting
 - RED cutting boards (this is a municipality requirement and will be strictly enforced)
 - Garnishing
 - Display trays
 - Sundries
- Time allowed: two hours
- All tools and sundries will be inspected to ensure that they are hygienically suitable for food use.
- Cuts required by the organisers are:
 - Neck slices or Neck boned.
 - 1 x shoulder, boned and rolled, tied or netted ready for roasting.
 - 3 pieces shoulder chops.
 - Spare ribs.
 - 1 x 8 rib Frenched rack.
 - Mid-loin chops from a short loin
 - 1 x Loin – eye.
 - 1 x Tunnel-boned leg tied or netted for roasting.
 - 1 x Seam-boned leg trimmed into its 4 primal cuts plus its bone-in shank.

Notes on the Practical Cookery Classes

These notes pertain to all practical cookery classes. They should be read in combination with the brief of the class entered.

Due to the fact that only one hour is given to complete the competition; competitors are allowed to bring with them an extensive mise-en-place; however, there are restrictions on how much pre-preparation the judges will accept. In all cases, the preparation, production and cooking skills of each competitor must be demonstrated during her/his time in the kitchen.

- All food items must be brought to the Salon in hygienic, chilled containers: Thermo boxes or equivalent. Failure to bring food items chilled will result in disqualification.
- All dishes are to be served in a style equal to today's modern presentation trends.



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3. Portion sizes must correspond to a three-course restaurant meal.
4. Dishes must be presented on individual plates with appropriate garnish not exceeding 250g total food weight excluding sauces.
5. Unless otherwise stated, competitors must supply their own plates/bowls/platters with which to present the food.
6. Competitors must bring with them all necessary mise-en-place prepared according to WACS guidelines in the hot kitchen discipline (www.wacs2000.org).
7. Competitors are to provide their own pots, pans, tools and utensils.
8. All brought appliances and utensils will be checked for suitability.
9. The following types of pre-preparation can be made for the practical classes:
 - Vegetables/fungi/fruits; washed & peeled – but not cut up or shaped.
 - Potatoes washed and peeled – but not cut up or shaped.
 - Onions peeled but not cut up
 - Basic dough can be pre-prepared.
 - Basic stocks can be pre-prepared.
 - Basic ingredients may be pre-weighed or measured out ready for use.
 - Fish may be scaled and filleted and the bones cut up.
 - Meat may be de-boned and the bones cut up.
10. No pre-cooking, poaching etc. is allowed.
11. No ready-made products are allowed.
12. No pork products are allowed.
13. No alcohol is allowed.
14. If a farce is to be used for stuffing, filling, etc., at least one of the four portions of the farce must be prepared in front of the judges to show the competitor's skill
15. 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.

16. Two copies of the recipes typewritten are always required.
17. Submit one copy of the recipe/s to the clerk when registering.
18. Submit one copy of the recipe to the duty marshal at the cooking station.

PRACTICAL COOKERY **Class 18. Mezzeh – Practical** **Cookery by RAHMA OLIVE OIL**



1. Time allowed: 60 Minutes
2. Prepare and present for four persons: Three types of hot mezzeh and three types of cold mezzeh.
3. Only one (if any) of the following types of mezzeh may be displayed: humus, 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.
6. Rahma olive oil must be the only olive oil used in the creation of these dishes.
7. Present the mezzeh in four equal portions.
8. Two portions will be served in the public restaurant and two portions will be presented to the judges.
9. Typewritten recipes are required.

Class 19: Fish & Seafood - **Practical Cookery by MITRAS** **COMPANY**



MITRAS
INTERNATIONAL TRADING L.L.C.

1. Time allowed 60 minutes
2. Prepare and present four identical main courses using fish/shellfish as the main protein item.
3. Present the main courses on individual plates with appropriate garnish and accoutrements.
4. Typewritten recipes are required.

Class 20: Beef - Practical **Cookery by MEAT & LIVESTOCK** **AUSTRALIA**



1. Time allowed 60 minutes
2. Prepare and present four identical main courses using Australian Beef as the main protein item.
3. Any cut of beef with the exception of tenderloin can be used.
4. Present the main courses on individual plates with appropriate garnish and accoutrements.
5. Typewritten recipes are required.

Class 21: Emirati Cuisine - **Practical Cookery**

1. This class is designed to ensure that the tradition of Emirati Cuisine is preserved and promoted through professional chefs.
2. Prepare and present two plated portions each of three Emirati dishes according with the following criteria:
3. Prepare and present two plated portions of any one of the following dishes:
 - Balalit
 - Kabeesa
 - Assadat Bobal
4. Also prepare and present two



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plated portions each of any two of the following dishes:

- Margougat Al Khudar
- Thareed Laham
- Margougat Al Dijaj
- Maleh Biryani
- Samak Mashwi
- Machboos Samak
- 5. Emirati cuisine with traditional presentation and serving as would be found in a family home of the United Arab Emirates.
- 6. Competitors must bring their own plates/bowls for presentation and all necessary mise-en-place for the meals
- 7. The judges will check appliances and utensils for suitability
- 8. Typewritten description and recipes are required
- 9. Time allowed 60 minutes to present all three recipes

Class 22: HUG AG - Savoury or Dessert Creations

1. This is a static class featuring savoury or dessert HUG pastry shells suitable for dinner service.
2. One or the other type of shell must be used exclusively: not both and not a combination of the two.
3. Pastry shells will be supplied by ARAMTEC.
4. Present four different plates using two HUG shells per plate (i.e. exhibit eight shells in total).
5. According to exhibitor's choice: All four plates are to be savoury HUG shells OR all four plates are to be sweet (dessert) HUG shells.
6. To be prepared in advance and displayed cold on appropriate plates.
7. Typewritten description and recipes required.
8. Maximum space available: 75cm x 75cm.

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 24 & 25 here

below competitors must also enter for class 22 Emirati Cuisine Practical Cookery.

Class 23: 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, all utensils and chopping boards.

Time allowed 1 hour in 30 minute sections as below:

Chicken:

3. Time allowed 20 minutes
4. Take a whole fresh chicken and prepare from it the following:
 5. One breast skinless.
 6. One breast skin-on.
 7. One whole leg, skin-on, and tunnel-boned, ready for making a ballotine.
 8. One thigh boneless.
 9. One drumstick.
 10. Two wings prepared for pan frying/grilling.
 11. Carcass prepared for stock.

After 20 minutes:

12. 10 minutes to explain to the judges the method of preparation of a classical chicken stock.

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.

After 20 minutes – 10 minutes to:

20. Explain to the judges the usage of any left overs.
 21. 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 24: Ovo-Lacto Vegetarian Three-Course Menu

1. Present a plated three-course vegetarian ovo-lacto meal for one person.
2. Suitable for dinner service
3. The meal to consist of:
 - An appetizer
 - 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. Total food weight of the four plates should be 600/700 gms.
7. Typewritten descriptions and recipes required.
9. Maximum area w75cm x d75cm.

ADDENDUM - THE EMIRATES SALON CULINAIRE 2014

VENUE & ENTRY FEES:

1. The Emirates Salon Culinaire will be held during the Gulf Food Hotel and Equipment Exhibition from February 23rd to 27th 2014.
2. The venue is at the Dubai International Convention & Exhibition Centre
3. The entrance fee for 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 2014 AED:500/- per person
 - ii. Best Pastry Chef – The Emirates Salon Culinaire- Dubai 2014 AED:400/- per person
 - iii. Best Artist – The Emirates Salon Culinaire- Dubai 2014 AED:500/- per person
 - iv. Best Arab National – The Emirates Salon Culinaire- Dubai 2014 AED:300/- per person
 - v. Young Chef of the Year – The



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Emirates Salon Culinaire Dubai
2014 AED: 500/- per person

CLOSING DATE:

5. Closing date for entries is 31st 2014 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 points from all three classes.

The required classes are:

BEST CUISINIER:

- i. Class #10. Five-Course Dinner Menu by Australian Meat
- ii. Class # 21. Beef Practical Cookery by Australian Meat
- i. Class # 20. Fish & Seafood Practical Cookery by MITRAS

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 by Masterbaker
- ii. Class # 03. Four Plates of Dessert
- iii. Class # 06. Friandises, Petites Four by Masterbaker

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 by Barakat Quality Plus

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:

- i. Class # 14. An Arabian Feast
- 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 medal.

YOUNG CHEF OF THE YEAR

See Classes for Entry Document.

JUDGING AND THE AWARDS SYSTEM

A team of WACS (The World Association of Chef's Societies) approved international Judges will adjudicate at all classes of the competition: using WACS-approved methods, criteria and documents 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 Culinaire

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

Best Effort by a Corporation – The Emirates Salon Culinaire

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

Point Value of each Medal Won:

Gold Medal with Distinction: 6 Points

Gold Medal: 5 Points

Silver Medal: 3 Points

Bronze Medal: 1 Point

RULES AND REGULATIONS

NB:

1. Please read the following regulations carefully. The instructions contained herein are mandatory. Non-compliance with any of the points mentioned could lead to loss of marks or complete disqualification.
2. The Briefs of the Classes for Entry document also forms part of these Rules and Regulations and must be read in conjunction with this document.
3. Other regulations relevant to a particular competition would appear on the last page/s of this document.



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PARTICIPATION:

4. Participation at competition is open to anyone professionally employed in the preparation of food.
5. Unless the organisers specifically mention a class as being a team event, all classes are for entry by a single competitor.
6. Competitors are restricted to one entry per class.
7. With the exception of those entering for the Best Artist trophy, competitors are restricted to entering a maximum of three classes.
8. Competitors entering to win a trophy must participate fully in every class entered in order to qualify.
9. Competitors must attend and participate on the date and at the time allotted to them.

COMPETITION ENTRY:

10. Please note that there are different forms for different types of entry; ensure that the correct form is being used.
11. Complete the entry-form according to the instructions on the form.
12. Completed photocopies of the entry-form are acceptable.
13. Submit the completed form to the organisers along with the requisite fee.
14. Fees must be submitted along with completed entry forms.
15. Fees are payable to:
 - > **Account Name: The Culinary Alliance FZ LLC**
 - > **Bank: Standard Chartered Bank - Bur Dubai (UAE)**
 - > **IBAN: AE400440000001207870301**
 - > **SWIFT Code: SCBLAEADXXX**
16. Entries are accepted strictly on a first-paid, first-accepted basis
17. No entry is accepted until the appropriate fee has been received.
18. Entry Fees are non-refundable.

CERTIFICATES AND LETTERS OF PARTICIPATION:

19. Ensure that your name (clearly

written in block capitals) appears on your entry-form exactly as you would wish it to appear on any certificate, letter of participation or posting of results.

20. Any applications for amendments to letters or certificates will necessitate: a) Return of the original certificate b) A written confirmation from the executive chef c) A pre-paid fee of Dhs: 100/- (AED: One-hundred) per certificate.

HYGIENE:

21. A professional food-safety company will oversee all aspects of hygiene practice at the competition.
22. It is quite possible that the Municipality Food Control Section will conduct its own hygiene inspections as and when it sees fit.
23. The organisers have no control over these two entities. Should either raise an objection to the standard of hygiene of any particular person or team, that person or team will not be allowed to compete

THE SECRETARIAT:

24. The Emirates Culinary Guild (ECG) is the body responsible for the creation, organisation and administration of the competition.
25. The competition is governed by and construed according to the rules of the organisers.
26. The organisers have sole authority to adjudicate on any matters pertaining to the competition.
27. Entrants' acceptances of participation in the competition are construed as confirmation of their undertaking to submit unconditionally to the jurisdiction of the organisers in regard to all aspects of the Emirates Salon Culinaire.
28. The address of the ECG for all correspondence and inquiries referencing culinary competitions is: The Emirates Culinary Guild, PO Box 71963 Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Tel: + (9714) 3403128.

Fax :+(9714) 3473742. Email: theguild@eim.ae

COMPETITORS AND HELPERS:

29. Each competitor is allowed one helper to assist with carrying equipment. No other help is allowed to a competitor within the preparation area.
30. A helper must be junior in rank to the person he/she is helping.
31. A competitor must wear full; freshly laundered chefs uniform with appropriate headgear and footwear when attending at the exhibition.
32. A competitor's helper must wear full; freshly laundered chefs uniform with appropriate headgear and footwear when attending at the exhibition.
33. Competitors that are incorrectly dressed at a competition will not have their exhibits judged.
34. Helpers that are incorrectly dressed will not be admitted to the exhibition.
35. Logos, marks and identifying colours provided by the organisers must be worn by competitor throughout the competition in the position indicated to them by the organisers at the time of registration.
36. Logos, marks and identifying colours provided by the organisers must be worn by helpers throughout the competition in the position indicated to them by the organisers at the time of registration.
37. A competitor entered in a practical competition must register at least thirty minutes before the commencement of the competition otherwise the competition slot will be given to a waitlisted competitor.
38. Any competitor not in place and ready to start at least five minutes before the time a competition commences, will be disqualified.
39. Competitors and helpers are forbidden from approaching or speaking with or at a judge without the express permission of the organisers.



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EXHIBITS:

40. Each exhibit must be the bona fide work of the entering competitor. It must be solely the work of the competitor and must be certified as such by his Head of Department or General Manager.
41. Each exhibit must be a completely original work, it must not have been displayed previously (in whole or in part) in any competition or exhibition whether private or public.
42. All exhibits must be of edible substance except for framing, socles and stands where they are allowed.
43. It is forbidden to use any living entity whatsoever as part of an exhibit (e.g. tropical fish).
44. It is forbidden to depict religious, nude, semi-nude or political themes in an exhibit.
45. All exhibits must be suitable for presentation as a decorative item in a restaurant or banqueting setting.
46. An exhibit must not carry any logo, label or mark of identification; however, competitors must be able to identify their exhibit if required.
47. Competitors are responsible for their exhibits and should ensure that they are available in their proper place for judging on the day and time specified.
48. No preparation or finishing of exhibits is allowed in any area except the designated preparation area at the rear of the competition area.
49. Finished exhibits must be placed in the position indicated by the organisers.
50. No interference with an exhibit is allowed once the organisers have deemed it as submitted for judging.
51. Competitors must leave the judging area as soon as their exhibits are in place or when instructed to leave by the

marshals, whichever is the sooner.

52. Exhibits may, at the discretion of the organisers, be moved to a separate enclosure, there to remain for part or for the duration of the exhibition.
53. Failure by a competitor to register or exhibit at the specified time could result in disqualification.
54. Exhibits which are removed by competitors without permission of the organisers will not qualify for any kind of award.

COMPETITION MARSHALS:

55. A Marshal-at-arms will be recognisable by a badge displaying the logo of the Emirates Culinary Guild and the legend 'Marshal'.
56. Marshals are charged with ensuring that the rules and regulations of the competition are observed by all concerned.
57. Competitors, helpers and visitors are all obliged to cooperate with the marshals - without question, at all times.

AWARDS:

58. Gold, silver and bronze medals and certificates and certificates of merit are awarded solely at the discretion of the judges.
59. The decision of the judges is final and each competitor is required to abide by it without comment.
60. Medals will normally be presented at 18:00 each day. This may change according to circumstance.
61. Any medal or certificate that is not accepted by the competitor or his/her helper at the presentation ceremony for that day will be forfeit, unless prior arrangements are made with the organisers.
62. A competitor or his/her helper must be correctly dressed as stipulated in the rules when collecting medals or certificates.
63. Incorrectly dressed competitors/

helpers will not be allowed access to the awards area.

COPYRIGHT:

64. All exhibitors and competitors assign all rights concerning videos, photographs, menus, recipes, exhibits, sound recordings etc. to the Emirates Culinary Guild.

DISCLAIMER:

65. The organisers are entitled to cancel or postpone the Salon, or to alter the duration, timing or schedule of any event.
66. The organisers reserve the right to cancel any classes or limit the number of entries or extend, modify or revoke any of the rules and conditions without being held liable for any claims for compensation whatsoever.
67. The organisers will not under any circumstances be held liable or responsible for the loss or damage of any exhibit, equipment, goods, persons or personal effects.

QUERIES:

68. All queries must be submitted by email to: theguild@eim.ae. The question and answer to each query will be broadcast to all entrants.

newmembers

Black Iris is one of the fastest developing companies in the trade and brand-building field, specializing in the trade and distribution of diversified goods locally, regionally and internationally through its six subsidiaries in UAE, KSA and USA. Black Iris is experienced in introducing and building new exclusive quality food brands and products across wholesale, retail, HORECA and Food Service segments. The company's entire business operation is HACCP certified, including substantial warehousing infrastructures and distribution fleets.

Established in the UAE in early 2010, Black Iris is one of the fastest developing companies in the trade and brand-building field, having rapidly grown into a group of six regional and international subsidiaries.

Our three main Black Iris subsidiaries are strategically located in the Jebel Ali Free Zone Area (JAFZA), Dubai Investment Park (DIP) and Abu Dhabi. Regionally, we have two sister companies in Saudi Arabia, as well as an international subsidiary in Florida, USA.

Black Iris and its subsidiary companies strive to be pioneers in trade and distribution to the Middle East. Our key focus areas include trading and distribution of exclusive products and private labels of frozen, chilled, fresh and dry foods.

We are experienced in introducing and building new exclusive quality food brands and products across wholesale, retail, HORECA and Food Service segments. Our brand portfolio includes over 900 SKU's of exclusive products from the Arab Region, Africa, Europe, America and Asia markets, including products from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey, Holland, Belgium and the USA.

To name a few, Black Iris is the exclusive agent for Fakieh Poultry Farms in the UAE and Oman. Black Iris has also been appointed as the official and exclusive UniPro distributor in the UAE,



Mr. Yanal Sulieman - Group CEO and Mr. Fadi Sulieman - Group MD receiving Emirates Culinary Guild Membership certificate from ECG President Chef Uwe Michael



BLACK IRIS
بلاك آيريس

with a long-term vision and strategic partnership to grow UniPro's business in the region. Moreover, California Garden's Chef Express private label has been granted exclusivity for Black Iris across the HORECA segment.

Through Black Iris's efforts and network, our exclusive brands gain strong local presence and exposure, enhanced equity and higher sales volumes in the region.

The company's entire business operation is HACCP certified, including substantial warehousing infrastructures and distribution fleets.

Our sizeable fleet in the UAE includes our own fully equipped distribution trucks, vans and warehouses for frozen and chilled products, and cars for the sales team and merchandisers. With this energetic network, our dedicated sales, distribution and merchandising teams cover all major hypermarkets and A-class supermarkets, as well as the retail, wholesale, catering, HORECA and Food Service segments.

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A collage of various dishes including roasted chicken, samosas, pizza, kebabs, rice, bread, and a chef standing next to a Rational SelfCookingCenter oven. The chef is wearing a white uniform and a tall white hat. The oven is a large, stainless steel, upright unit with a glass door and a control panel on the left side. The dishes are arranged in a grid-like fashion around the chef and the oven, showcasing the versatility of the cooking solution.

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The UAE alone has over 750 hotels.
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It ranges from AED 1 million - US\$ 3 million.

There are over 7,000 independent restaurants in the UAE.

Each restaurant has a Head Chef.
Each Head Chef has an annual budget.
It ranges from AED 100,000 - US\$ 1 million.

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- ▶ Officially supported by the Emirates Culinary Guild
- ▶ Highest circulation in its category at 6,150 copies per month
- ▶ Readership estimates of nearly 11,276 per month
- ▶ Positively influencing the UAE food industry since 2006
- ▶ Recognised by the World Association of Chefs Societies
- ▶ Circulated at top regional and international culinary events

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ECG Corporate member directory

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THE EMIRATES CULINARY GUILD



APPLICATION FOR 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 ☐ Senior Renewal ☐

Fax Home:

Senior ☐ Young Chef ☐
(under 25 yrs below)

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

Fred Fantastic

- ▶ **Name:** Jose Fred Famulag
- ▶ **Works at:** Bookmunch Cafe
- ▶ **From:** The Philippines
- ▶ **Been in Dubai:** 10 years
- ▶ **Position:** Head Chef
- ▶ **Age:** 38
- ▶ **Best:** I love creating new dishes. I also enjoy learning from experienced chefs.
- ▶ **Worst:** I get upset when proper food hygiene is not maintained in my kitchen.
- ▶ **Inspiration:** My wife and kids
- ▶ **Dream:** I've already started a small restaurant back in the Philippines and I dream to own another (bigger) one in the future!



PLAIN PANIC IN THE AISLES

I have covered wars, climbed mountains, even hunted the odd, elusive (thank goodness) tiger and never quailed. Always knew how to tackle the situation.

But put me into a supermarket where they have one of these girls testing new products and offering you a sample and I become a dithering idiot, incoherent and completely confused.

There you are, strolling along with your trolley, wondering if you should use the calculator on the handle or will someone think you are a cheapskate counting your cash when you turn the corner and there is this lady there behind a table and she says, excuse me, would you like to have some cream cheese on toast.

And you stop short and look a bit blank. And if isn't cream cheese on toast it is chicken pieces on toast or it is soya bean pieces with pineapple or a new ice cream flavour or another brand coffee, something she is offering you for free and now it is decision time.

If you say, no thank you and she is a good saleslady (they usually are) her face will fall and she will look so forlorn and lonely that you hate yourself for having rejected her offer. It is not as if she was asking you to pay for it, your alter ego will rasp at you, what sort of tactless unthinking person are you walking away from her, she's only doing her job.

I know, I know, you answer your alter ego, but I don't want to eat cheese with pineapple.

Not even to save her feelings, mocks

old Alter, one little bite to bring a little sunshine into her life?

So you stand there caught and bowled as she gives you this little swizzle stick and a tissue to go with it and now you are eating the stuff and you are getting all excited saying, uhmmm,uhmmm, because if you don't say uhmmm that would be exceptionally rude especially since you have eaten her flipping cheese and pineapple. For free.

And she says, do you like it and her eyes are shining with expectation.

Only Ivan the Terrible would say, well the cheese is a bit offish and it doesn't quite go with pineapple, but you are no Ivan so you say, abs super.

Trapped.

Now she drops her smiling act and says, so you will take a packet, Sir.

Who, me?

Yes, it's 16 dirhams.

Uh, oh, uh, yesss, uh no, let me think about it, I'll come back.

And you get out of there and spend the rest of the shopping spree feeling guilty and avoiding the lady behind the table. The weight of the cheese and pineapple debt lies heavy on the shoulder.

Then the same evening (it is always the same evening) you have to come back to purchase something else and sure enough by now you have forgotten the cheese lady and you turn the same corner

and she is there and she says, would you like to try some pineapple and cheese and you go red with embarrassment because you are sure she has recognised you.

And that little voice within is saying, go on take it, you rotten little freeloader, you took it in the morning and then you fobbed her off, go on take it again, then run.

When you come again to that supermarket you are almost paranoid. What if she is still inside giving away her little swizzle sticks? Once we stood outside a supermarket because I would not go in and my wife said why are we standing here?

And I said, that lady there, she's the one who gave us banana milk that day, remember and then we didn't buy a carton, we can't go in, what will she think?

So what do we do, my wife said, stand around waiting for her to leave, don't be silly. Come on, follow me.

As we slunk past her, pretending to be very busy studying the aisles, this voice rang out, hello, care for some strawberry milk?

We turned. She hadn't recognized us. Relief flooded into my face and I said, what happened to the banana milk?

Bikram Vohra has been the Editor of 11 newspapers including Gulf News, Khaleej Times, Bahrain Tribune, Emirates Evening Post and helped in setting up Gulf Today

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FoodService



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