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# gourmet

volume 18, issue 2

## CULINARY COMMANDER

Tracing the unconventional journey of  
**Simon Peter Martin**, Executive Chef at  
Kerry Taste & Nutrition

### MAESTRO MOMENTS

Chef **Juan Ramon Sobero** of Masterchef, the TV Experience, reveals how his menu captures the essence of the show



### FARM CHARM

Executive Chef **Muchineripi Masunungure** shares how he rises above all odds to curate vibrant dishes



### GREEK CUISINE

**Antonis Melas**, Head Chef of AMMOS Greek Restaurant talks about his unique perspective towards Greek cuisine







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**WORLD CHEFS  
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ABU DHABI  
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30 MAY-2 JUN 2022**

Dear fellow Chefs, ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to the February issue of our Gulf Gourmet. Most of us experienced a very strong start in the United Arab Emirates. Lots of our colleagues are struggling because their teams have shrunk and business is fully back. Dubai is at present busy with big trade exhibitions and lots of big sporting events.

Your Emirates Culinary Guild Team just finished the Dates Connection Online Competition, lots of great videos. Make sure you don't miss them on the Emirate Culinary Guild YouTube Channel, watch the videos and make sure you subscribe and like our channel as these help us to make our subscribers grow. "Congratulations to all the chefs who prepared a date recipes and video, good work everyone."

We have just launched the European Legumes online competition. Super prizes to be won, from a Trip to Italy to Cash Prizes and product hampers. We look forward to receiving your videos. I am waiting for the first video by a Pastry Chef. Chefs be creative. Good luck everyone. Send your registration and videos to [emiratesculinaryguild@gmail.com](mailto:emiratesculinaryguild@gmail.com). This competition is open to professional and amateur chefs.

We use the Salon Culinaire at ExpoCulinaire as a chance to qualify for the Team to go to the Culinary Olympics in Stuttgart in February 2024.

**May 29-31**

## ExpoCulinaire and Salon Culinaire – United Arab Emirates

In addition to the Exhibition, International Salon Culinaire and Education Area, we will have 2 more big events. We are hosting the Middle East Africa Global Chefs Final, Senior Chefs, Junior Chefs, Pastry Chefs and the first time the Best Vegan Chef. The winner of each category will represent our region at the Worldchefs Congress in Singapore



2024. Our Continental Director and very own Chairman Andy Cuthbert is currently finalizing all the details.

I am also pleased to confirm that we will host Alen Thong Trophy for Young Chefs National Teams. Mr. Rajan from J.M. Foods our longtime supporter has confirmed his support for the same. Thank you to Rajan and the J.M. Foods Team. Watch this space for more news and update.

If you have any questions for any of our events please do contact myself or Mrs. Josephine Cuthbert in the Guild Office at [emiratesculinaryguild@gmail.com](mailto:emiratesculinaryguild@gmail.com)

## THANK YOU ALL

Please visit [gulfgourmet.net](http://gulfgourmet.net) to

browse through previous issues of this magazine and see latest happenings on the events calendar. Check out [facebook.com/wacsyoungchefs](https://facebook.com/wacsyoungchefs) for young chefs to be in contact with over 4,000 chefs across the globe.

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

Thank you to Adilet Tashenov and Hilton Ras Al Khaimah Beach Resort Team, who hosted our January meeting.

Culinary Regards,

**Uwe Micheel**  
President, Emirates Culinary Guild

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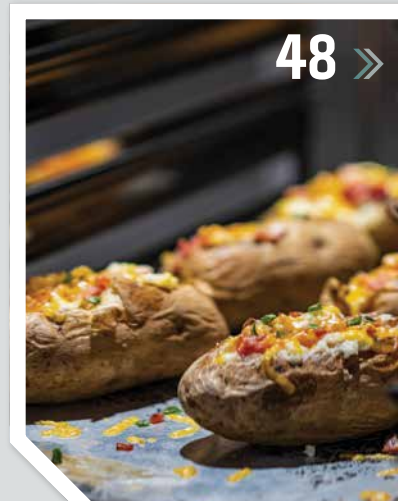
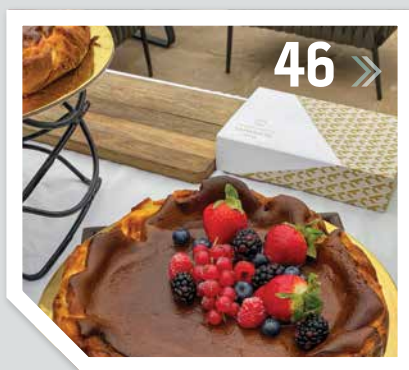
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# editor'snote

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This is such an amazing issue you are holding in your hands. It is packed with stories of successful chefs from around the world – from Greece to Zimbabwe and from England to Spain. The best part is they are all decision-makers supporting the growth of the UAE culinary scene and putting cities like Dubai on the global culinary map.

Our cover story features Simon Peter Martin, Executive Chef (MENAT) at Kerry Taste and Nutrition. The man brings a plethora of experiences to his role and the impact of his work can be tasted across hundreds of culinary destinations in this region.

We have two chefs from Zimbabwe too in this issue. One senior and one junior. The senior chef is Muchineripi Masunungure, the Executive Chef of The Farm, Al Barari that has been receiving rave reviews for its experiential dining experience. Chef Muchi's menu is rooted in fresh produce and cuisines without borders. If you know, you know.

The junior Zimbabwean is Alleta Ruvimbo Ziwachi, the scholarship graduate for the Class of 2022. The ICCA-run initiative in support with the Emirates Culinary Guild helps young chefs with the potential but without

the means to get high-quality training and globally recognized certification. Read about her story of how when life gives you lemons, you make lemonade.

The strategic partnership between Arla Pro to highlight Pastry Chefs and their contribution to the culinary landscape continues. This month we feature Prasath Chaturanga of Jumeirah Creekside Hotel and his recipe for a delicious cold cheesecake. Do check it out.

Then there are interviews with Chef Antonis Melas and Chef Juan Ramon Sobero. Both run independent restaurants in Dubai and are known for creating great menus that placate the palatable desires of their guests. Read about the career path and to understand how they go to where they are today.

This issue also has exclusive images from the Guild's January meeting held in Ras Al Khaimah and the special training for young chefs organized by US Potatoes.

All this and more in this edition. Until next time, enjoy the read and keep cooking with passion.

**Aquin George**  
Editor-at-large



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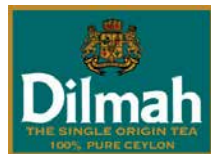
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# newsbites



## Chef Nicolas De Visch named Executive Chef at InterContinental RAK

InterContinental Ras Al Khaimah Mina Al Arab Resort & Spa has appointed Nicolas De Visch as its Executive Chef. He will oversee all the culinary teams across the six different outlets.

Chef Nicolas brings to Ras Al Khaimah a wealth of knowledge and experience gained over the course of more than 35 years working in some of the greatest kitchens in the world, including those in France, Scotland, Dubai, the Philippines, South Korea, and Mauritius.

He formerly held a variety of prominent roles at restaurants and hotels all around the world, including the Peninsula Manila, the St. Regis Mauritius, the Intercontinental Fiji, and the W Hotel Taipei.

In 2021, he joined The Grand York in the UK as the Executive Chef. A year and a half later, he joined InterContinental Ras Al Khaimah Resort & Spa.

## Chef Mohamad is Executive Chef at Millennium Airport Hotel

Mohamad Chabchoul has been named Executive Chef at Dubai's Millennium Airport Hotel.

After nearly 16 years in the hospitality industry, working for prestigious hotel chains including Fairmont, IHG, Ritz Carlton, Four Seasons; Chef Chabchoul has made quite a name for himself.

The 37-year-old chef is a graduate of Damascus University, where he studied hotel management. Chef Mohamad arrived in Dubai in 2007. Today, he is a senior member of the Chaîne des Rôtisseurs, Emirates Culinary Guild Association, and Dubai Chef Collective Committee. He believes that "if you can organize your kitchen, you can organize your life."

In his new role, he will be tasked to delight the guests of the Millennium Airport Hotel Dubai through offering exquisite dishes served with



international flavors and unique charisma acquired over the years of his experiences from Lebanon, UAE, GCC and other parts of the world.

## New F&B Director at Hilton for Middle East, Africa & Turkey



Dean Murphy joins Hilton as Senior Director, F&B Development, Operations & Openings, Middle East, Africa & Türkiye. He previously worked as the Director of Operations at Sunset Hospitality Group. He also held leadership roles at Jumeirah Restaurant Group.

In his new role, he will manage the regional operations, and oversee the development of openings of F&B venues that are in the pipeline.



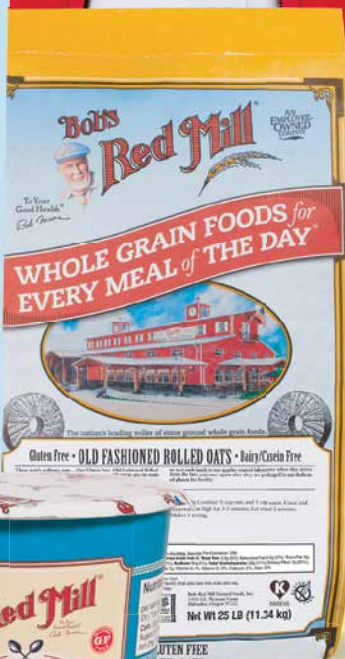
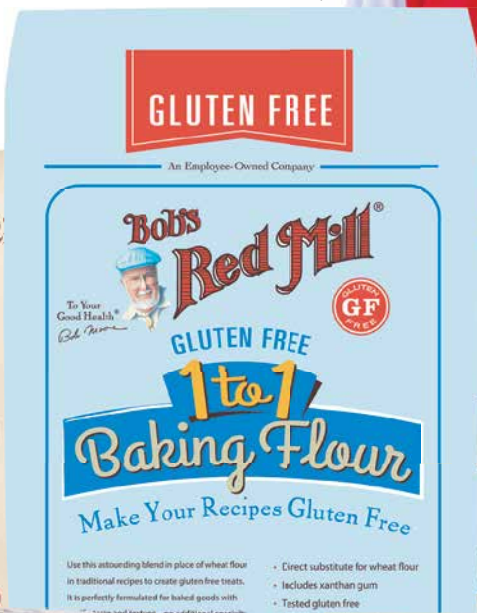


**This is Bob**  
(yes, he's real)

Bob has a lot of passions:



He makes a  
lot of wholesome  
foods at his mill  
in Milwaukie,  
Oregon.



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## Yamanote Atelier Opens New Branch in Mirdif Hills

Homegrown Japanese artisanal bakery and café concept, Yamanote Atelier, has opened a new branch in Mirdif Hills, Dubai.

Inspired by Japanese minimalism and pastel colors, the outlet is designed to offer a modern yet cozy setting.

The menu offers a wide selection of bakeries, sweets, and savoury items. The sun shining breakfast palette includes Yamanote's Avocado Toast, Egg Cube, Eggs Benedict, French Toast, and so much more.

One can match that up with one of Yamanote's specialty coffees, such as their Aeropress, Chemex, V60, Cortado, or Piccolo.

Guests can also try a range of Yamanote's best-selling desserts, including Yamanote's Hello Kitty, Cheesecake, Custard Pie, Red Fruit Bar, and Cheese Tart.

A variety of bakery selections are also



available at the café. The selection of carefully curated bakeries includes Yamanote's freshly made croissants, including the Yamanote Croissant, Everything Croissant, Rose Croissant, and Almond Croissant.

Yamanote Atelier, which opened its doors to the public in 2013, has quickly expanded to include 13 branches all around the UAE, building up an undisputed reputation for irresistible bakeries, desserts, and savoury dishes.

## Francisco Paco Morales joins SLS Dubai

SLS Dubai Hotel & Residences has named Chef Francisco Paco Morales as the Executive Sous Chef.

After proving his mettle in some of the best kitchens around the world during 16 years of his culinary career, he has joined the hotel.

He was an executive chef at the Palocortado restaurants and the Blue Marlin Ibiza Sky Lounge, a five-star hotel in Spain, where he played a key role in the successful launching of two new restaurants.

In addition to his work at prestigious restaurants like L'Atelier de Joel Robuchon and Abantal, each of which has its own Michelin star, Chef Francisco's experience also extended to London, where he played a significant role as the head sushi chef at Sushi Samba Covent Garden.



## Gault&Millau to launch in Turkey in 2024

Turkey will soon become the 17th country where the famous Gault&Millau restaurant guide will be available. The guide, which will be released early next year, will be published in Turkish and English.

According to reports, the inspectors in Turkey plan to visit 500 restaurants, including the best 300 in the guide. The Turkey guide restaurants will include restaurants from Marmara, Aegean, Mediterranean and South East regions.

Last year, the reputable culinary critique moved into the UAE, bringing its worldwide reach to 16 nations.



# chef's palette



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## Thierry Perrot is Cluster GM of Four Properties across Radisson and Wyndham Hotels

Valor Hospitality Partners Middle East has appointed Thierry Perrot as the Cluster General Manager.

In his new role, he will oversee the four hotels that have transitioned to be managed by Valor Hospitality Partners while continuing to work under their existing brands.

The successful transition will see his role as Cluster General Manager for the Wyndham Deira hotels evolve to include the Radisson Blu Dubai Deira Creek, Dubai's first-ever 5-star hotel, which opened in 1975.

With the new position he will now comprise a portfolio of 800 plus keys and more than 20 food and beverage outlets, covering two, three, four and five-star ratings across the four properties, with one of the most diverse scale of properties in the market.

Perrot's most recent role was as a Cluster General Manager for the Wyndham Dubai, Deira, Days Hotel by Wyndham and Super 8 by Wyndham.



He was responsible for 515 keys for the three properties located in the Deira Enrichment Project.

He has stewarded the transition, renovation, and delivery of hotels and clusters to maximum performance throughout the course of his more than 40 years of worldwide expertise in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.

## Three-Michelin-star restaurant Noma to reinvent as Food Lab

One of the world's best and three Michelin starred restaurants, Noma run by Chef René Redzepi, is closing its doors for regular service. Noma, a word play of the Danish words "nordisk" (Nordic) and "mad" (food), opened in central Copenhagen in 2003.

The restaurant's Instagram page stated that "To continue being Noma, we must change. Therefore, dear guests and friends, we have some exciting news to share. Winter 2024 will be the last season of Noma as we know it. We are beginning a new chapter; Noma 3.0."

"In 2025, our restaurant is transforming into a giant lab—a pioneering test kitchen dedicated to the work of food innovation and the development of new flavors, one that will share the fruits of our efforts more widely than ever before," it stated on its website.



## Michelin-starred Chef Jason Atherton to Open Three Venues at Grosvenor House

Celebrity chef and owner of two Michelin-starred restaurants in London, Jason Atherton, plans to open his three-venue rooftop dining and drinking concept on February 3.

The three-venue dining and drinking concept called City Social, 7 Tales, and a yet-to-be-revealed venue will span the top three levels of Tower 2 at Grosvenor House, a Luxury Collection Hotel in Dubai.

City Social, the latest culinary concept

from Jason Atherton, will offer modern-European cuisine, keeping with the dining style of City Social's sister property in London.

The menu will include some of the dishes for which Jason is most well-known, as well as some mouthwatering new dishes, like Scottish Salmon with King Crab, Cucumber, Dill and Trout Eggs, Shellfish Ravioli with Seaweed, Roasted Sea Bass with Shellfish Ragout and Seaweed Butter, and Pistachio Soufflé with Dark Chocolate Ice Cream, among others.

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



# “Nice to see you again and again and again.”



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# FARM CHARM

Doing whatever it takes is more than just an attitude. Few know it better than the Executive Chef of The Farm, Al Barari, Chef **Muchineripi Masunungure**. A perfect mix of jovial and resolute, the Zimbabwean chef rises above all the odds to curate vibrant dishes that can make one go green

"It's a unique place. Working in the ambiance of rich foliage and a tranquil creek, I feel at home," says the 44-year-old chef Muchineripi Masunungure.

The Farm, Al Barari, truly lives up to its name, offering serene views of lush landscape and cascading waterfall, reflecting wilderness and an oasis of peace that one experiences on a field with golden crops swaying and conversing with the wind.

Given that Chef Muchineripi grew up amidst the natural splendor of Victoria Falls, untamed savannahs, and mighty rivers, it is no surprise that the restaurant has made him feel like he never left Zimbabwe.

The standalone restaurant, founded by the Al Barari group, has expanded to have a 350-seat capacity and can also host events in the back garden for around 100 to 120 people. "We've hosted weddings, family functions, and corporate events for well-known brands. People frequently visit here with their families, socialize, or hang out, spending time on their laptop, and enjoying the delicacies."

For the past five years, Chef Muchineripi has maintained a head-on approach to balancing the whole system. "I handle the F&B operations, ensuring the finances are running according to the budget." Thanks to his firm yet friendly approach, the restaurant has bagged several accolades



Our menu changes every year as per the season. For example, now that we are heading towards Ramadan, we have already begun tweaking our menu, testing and balancing new dishes

in recent years, including the title of Restaurant of the Year and the Best Family-Friendly Eating Award.

A soothing place to dine, the experience at the restaurant is made even more pleasant by the delicious food that is curated by Executive Chef Muchineripi and his team. Whether it is International, Middle Eastern, Asian, Indian (both north and south), or Thai, whoever visits is likely to find the dish they had in their native country.

While deciding what new recipes go on this cross-border menu and keeping up with current F&B trends, Chef Muchi confesses he enjoys being a hands-on chef. "Our menu changes every year as per the season. For example, now that

we are heading towards Ramadan, we have already begun tweaking our menu, testing and balancing new dishes."

## A DOWN TO EARTH START

Despite the hustle and bustle of everyday activities, Chef Muchineripi acknowledges that pursuing his passion was indeed the right decision. After he finished his A Levels, he took a job as a steward. It was during this time that he experienced an awakening call. "It was fascinating to watch the zeal and the way chefs worked in the kitchen. I knew I belonged in the kitchen, and so I shifted into the role of staff cook."

It wasn't hard to see his talent and commitment. When the hotel started a food programme, Chef Muchineripi was chosen to attend a three-year course at a hospitality school to become a professional cook.

"I used to go back to work after school, employing and studying at the same time. I was lucky to have this experience, and shortly I had the opportunity to come to the UAE."

When Chef Muchineripi moved from Bulawayo to Dubai, he was a Sous Chef. Despite rising to high rank quite early in the day, he decided to start with a clean slate. A down to earth chef, he started working as a commis at the Express Holiday Inn in Jumeirah. "After a year, the chefs saw my passion and promoted me as Chef de Partie."





It was fascinating to watch the zeal and the way chefs worked in the kitchen. I knew I belonged in the kitchen, and so I shifted into the role of staff cook



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During the four years at the hotel, there was never a dull moment. He often came across situations that demanded him to do the impossible. "I remember that while one of Dubai's floating hotels was being renovated, 400 people from that project booked with us. As most of the staff were on a project in South Africa, I and my team of five were running the kitchen making breakfast, lunch, and dinner. It was a great experience."

The next stop in his career was Habtoor Grand Resort and Spa. He was the head chef there until 2016, when he joined the pre-opening team of a fish and chips restaurant. After multiple stints as a concept development chef and group chef, he moved to The Farm.



**The owners and team are like family. They take a hands-on approach to support and discuss new ideas**

#### GREENER PASTURES

"I joined the farm some five years ago as a head chef. It was completely different from the places I previously worked at, but I overcame the initial challenges and adapted to the workplace culture."

After demonstrating his ability to deliver under pressure and going above and beyond to complete the tasks, he was soon promoted to Executive Chef. Even though his work now is more managerial — be it leading the kitchen team of 35, overseeing logistics, or menu planning, Chef Muchineripi continues to provide words of guidance to his team.

In addition to the confidence boost for the team, the restaurant also contributes in creating an eclectic workplace environment. "The owners and team are like family. They take a hands-on approach to support and discuss new ideas."

Chef Muchineripi extends the same attitude to those who work under him. "As much as I do my best, I make sure to support my team and train the juniors so that they can grow with us. Once you do that, they will enjoy working in a positive setting, and they can also trust that they can grow within the company and strive to give their best."

Speaking of experiences, does Chef Muchineripi have any unique incidents to share from his career? "I steer clear of office politics. There was a time when I met a chef who tried to criticize me behind my back. This created a negative work environment, and I decided to leave the place."

However, such instances are pale in comparison to the amiable atmosphere he has ensured at The Farm. "The other thing I always do is promote transparency by immediately resolving issues face to face."

Being a leading light means caring for your team. Naturally, showing concern for your people looks so simple. However, Chef Muchineripi shows concern for his team both through his words and deeds.

As someone who has already been in their shoes and has a thorough understanding of workplace dynamics, he encourages trust and collaboration among the team. Luckily, I have a





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fantastic team. We stand by one another. I will do anything for them, even if it means leaving; as long as no one touches my team," he says with a smile.

His faith in his team is so strong that even while recruiting, he would only prefer to hire someone if the position requires a certain skill; otherwise, he is a big believer in training his in-house team with different skills and encouraging them to do their best.

"During my first meeting with the team, I told them I am not going to hire any Commis until they have improved their expertise and positioned themselves well. Over the past five years, all the young Commis, who joined my team, have become skilled chefs."

Surely Chef Muchineripi understands that skills can add more value in the age of technology. In the wake of automation, there is a direct impact on the workforce. "But there will always be the relevance of a chef in the kitchen," he adds.

### SOUL RECIPE

According to Chef Muchineripi, cooking is done by the passion of the person who is touching the plate, not by a machine. Automation may become commonplace for fast food chains, but fine dining restaurants will always demand chefs who can elevate the dish.



The chef industry is growing and diversifying; so young chefs should be optimistic about the future. They should put in their best efforts and love what they do, success will surely follow



With not just restaurants but many other segments opening their doors to chefs, the number of opportunities has grown. "The chef industry is growing and diversifying; so young chefs should be optimistic about the future. They should put in their best efforts and love what they do, success will surely follow," asserts the chef.

Someday in the distant future, Chef Muchineripi plans to work in similar roles. A small restaurant back home is also a possibility. But for now, he is over the moon with his current workplace.

"The place has given me the space to flex my muscles, learn, and grow. Thanks to the support from my bosses, it is possible," he says.

Support and happiness also come from his family. Despite the time pressures,

Chef Muchineripi tries to spend quality moments with his wife and their two kids whenever they visit him in Dubai.

He first met his wife in 2001, when she was a front-of-the-house intern at one of the restaurants where he worked. His wife is currently in Zimbabwe with their children, who are currently enrolled in school there.

His advice to young chefs is not to pursue their goals only for the chance to be rewarded. "Food needs to have the correct taste, and texture and your love for cooking will bring that. I can give you my recipe, ingredient by exact ingredient, gram by gram, but the taste might differ because it's all about bringing soul to the recipe."

Wise words that helped Chef Muchineripi fulfill his dreams.



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# 10 Questions

With **Antonis Melas**, Head Chef of AMMOS Greek Restaurant

## Could you tell us about your childhood?

I grew up in a middle-class family with one brother and one sister. My father was a chef and a fisherman, but to be honest, as a child, I had different plans. Becoming a chef became apparent when I realised that cooking and experimenting in the kitchen was more than a hobby – it was my true passion!

## How were the early years as a chef?

When one begins training, they often face a lot of stress and anxiety, so the early days are always a challenge. Many of my friends quit because of it. However, this motivated me, as I was determined to make my dream come true.

## What are the challenges of being a Head Chef? What is your advice to young chefs?

There are no big challenges, only small ones faced daily. Younger chefs should only look at these as an opportunity to become more reliant and resilient.

Being a head chef is a privilege and an honour, and I'm happy to lead a team willing to make a culinary difference.

If I could give one piece of advice to new chefs, it would be to give it your all every day until you are happy with your results and achievements. There is no easy or quick path to success.

## Tell us about your family.

My brother became a baker in Greece. He is my true best friend, and we speak every day, exchanging ideas



Greece itself has so many different gems to experiment with, such as spices, other ingredients, and more. So, I decided to focus on this cuisine and elevate it with my touch

and thoughts on how to incorporate creativity, flavor, and flair into our world.

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

Cooking is evolutionary, so there is no secret behind success. Restaurants and culinary chefs alike need to constantly be on the lookout for new trends, and learn and experiment every day with flavours and techniques.

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

When I started as a young chef, I was handling several international cuisines.

Eventually, I realised that Greece itself has so many different gems to experiment with, such as spices, other ingredients, and more. So, I decided to

focus on this cuisine and elevate it with my touch. Believe it or not, I am still learning and discovering new ways to bring fresh ideas to the plate. I often travel to Greece for just that too.

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

I love fish in general, so I would pick the Shi Drum with the wild greens. The preparation itself makes my mouth water when the beautiful aromas are released while cooking. It is also one of the best representatives of seafood dishes in Greek cuisine.

## What are some cooking tools you cannot live without?

Good knives are always a game-changer! I keep updating my collection ever so often.

## As the Head Chef of a Greek restaurant, do you have a special technique in preparing the bestseller and authentic Greek dishes?

This is funny because I get this question a lot. Greek cuisine is a combination of good ingredients and tenderness. There's no special technique, but rather the love that you put into the dish – just like art.

## What was the inspiration behind reinventing the menu ahead of the restaurant's recent relaunch?

When we decided to change the menu, I wanted to transport our guests to Greece with authentic flavours. AMMOS Greek Restaurant is packed with Greek products, and we use traditional recipes in an effort to become a small island escape from one's daily.



# CULINARY COMMANDER

In the sea of culinary challenges are plenty. But taking one challenge at a time with his tactical and friendly demeanor is what Chef **Simon Peter Martin** has learnt throughout his culinary career. This is the tale of a chef who swims against the tide to bring taste and nutrition together





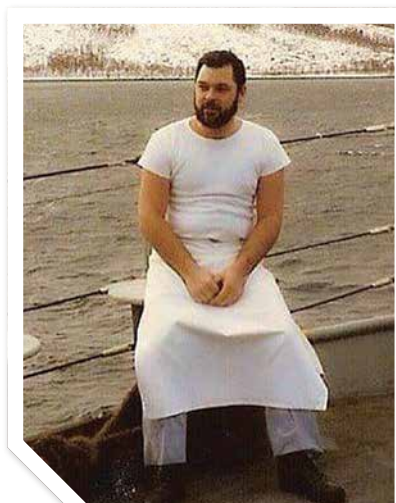
Perhaps to make your fast-food chain's chicken nuggets a hit you might want to find a secret sauce recipe locked and hidden behind a vault armed with laser tags and requires a special key. Or you can calm your jitters just by meeting Chef Simon Peter Martin.

The world of food is not easy. A lot goes behind the scenes than merely just plating the delicate balance of textures and flavors.

Working behind the scenes yet staying at the forefront is Chef Simon, who strives to design new flavor combinations that one might soon see on the shelves of the neighborhood grocery store or at your favorite pizza joint.

As the Executive Chef (MENAT) at Kerry Taste and Nutrition, Chef Simon runs the show, leading the culinary teams and providing holistic food and beverage solutions, including coatings, marinades, flavors, wet condiments, and nutritional products, to the company's both local and international customer base.

"For instance, if you look at a food joint's menu, then the binding for the beef, sauce, plant proteins, ice creams—almost everything that's on the menu involves us," explains the chef as he talks more about his role.



**I can get specific insights on protein soy chicken in the city and map out the spike in consumer usage using AI, as well as predict trends that will emerge in the next two years**

In what appears to be a job that involves both a creative and scientific approach, Chef Simon considers himself lucky since he only has to focus on the culinary aspects of the product. "Every day here for me is a learning day. I have a fantastic team of scientists who understand the chef's perspective and whom I can approach with questions about what makes a certain flavour profile or what can make the coating of the nuggets crispier, and they will teach me."

So, what are the secret ingredients to running successful taste and nutrition development operations? "One of them is Artificial Technology (AI)," he says. "We have bespoke channels that can help us gain insights on the trends. AI also provides us with current social media trends. I can get specific insights on protein soy chicken in the city and map out the spike in consumer usage using AI, as well as predict trends that will emerge in the next two years."

Chef Simon admits to being quite ahead of his game. He has already begun working on 2024, meeting with various clients and keeping up with the most recent taste trend discoveries. "We want to create a system that is ready to launch and be ahead of the curve. Then one would easily beat the trend and take off at the correct time."

Food trends change year after year. The

ongoing shift in consumer tastes has led to a number of trends, including vegan cheese, climate-friendly crops, honey substitutes, and non-alcoholic drinks. Dominating this trend list are plant-based food items.

Plant-based meats have created a paradigm shift for consumers. Clean-label products and plant proteins have gone mainstream, with products now finding places on menus and kitchen shelves. "Globally, it is here for people to take the plunge. Fast food chains are now opting for plant-based menus. After taking that leap, it could progress from just being a plant-based burger to plant-based cheese and so on. The appetite for plant-based options is growing phenomenally," says chef Simon.

### THE SHELLBACK

For someone who has done catering for trains, cruises, airplanes, and restaurants, the milestones can tend to go over one's head. But staying grounded comes effortlessly to Chef Simon. Talk to anyone who knows him, and they will describe him as a people's person—optimistic even under trying circumstances, amiable and polite.

Going back to the 1980s in England. While the rose-tinted glasses colored the memory of a decade filled with bustling street life and fascinating food. It was also the time of the global economic downturn, which increased unemployment and resulted in long queues of people waiting to receive the 'dole', where a number of people were unemployed and relying on the government for benefits.

Despite leaving his school early due to the unrest brought on by rising dole queues and with no qualifications in hand, Chef Simon never abandoned the road of education. He just wanted to learn but grew up perhaps oblivious to the deep inside liking for cooking.

"That time one of the colleges that were accepting me was Highbury college





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where I did a three-year professional cookery diploma," he says.

Halfway through his first year of college, learning the fundamentals of cooking and visiting industrial meat markets, he realized that he had a knack for catering, and the love of food was born.

After being one of 26 from a batch of 300 who graduated from the course, he set off for the shining lights of London to work in the Café Royal, and then the famous Lanagan's Brasserie.

Chef Simon found the actual chef's lifestyle to be even more thrilling and enjoyed every second of it. "I recall having the book *Le Répertoire de la Cuisine* with me at the time because I had just graduated. It was motivating to learn from Chef Richard Shepherd, one of the first British cooks to get a Michelin star, and to understand the subtleties of classical training."

A young chef, he was keen to hone his craft by putting his skills and knowledge to the test in competitions. "At that time, the guys who seemed to win most competitions were the members of the naval forces. That's when I decided to join them to help get back into competitions."

In 1989 he handed in his travel warrant at the station and began a career that would span over twelve years, six months, and two days. "Joining the royals navy was a fantastic experience, the learnings that were imparted from the experience still support me today."

As a royal navy chef and caterer, Chef Simon developed menus, maintained budgets, followed hygiene practices, did craft skill training, and prepared meals to a high standard even under unusual and difficult conditions at sea. A part of the expedition has never left him.

Traveling around the world, on ships to places like Diego Garcia, Belfast, and the Falklands, catering for Admirals, British Ambassadors and on warships,



**We want to create a system that is ready to launch and be ahead of the curve. Then one would easily beat the trend and take off at the correct time**

he worked to provide a full range of routine and formal meals of between 36 and 2500 covers per meal. "I have experience in the real world of cooking, having successfully catered for formal and diplomatic events while working during wars like the First Gulf War or the Bosnian War. I have served food to the president, the prime minister, and the royal family. There was even an occasion when they flew me to Washington so I could work on a cocktail party for the royal guests."

#### **RETURN TO BASE**

After sharpening his knife and roughing it out on the ships, Chef Simon then returned to the UK to work at Epsom Downs Racecourse. "There, I looked after catering for five race courses and six London hotels, as well as for the Eurostar trains."

The year 2003 brought new opportunities. He joined the De Vere Grand Harbour, a five-star hotel, as the Executive Sous chef responsible for all seven outlets. A big fan of classic cooking techniques that were handed down by chefs and learned through books, chef Simon found himself spending countless hours with the team to create traditional cuisine for the guests. Then he decided to learn and delve into the nuances of spa cuisine and took a job at Grayshott Hall.

After spending a year working alongside







state-registered dieticians to create Spa Cuisine with total fat and calorie counts for two restaurants and devising menu ideas, he was approached to join LSG Sky Chefs by Lufthansa.

Ecstatic at the thought of experiencing a different world, Chef Simon accepted the role of Head Chef in London Heathrow, where he was responsible for the moving to and starting of a new unit producing around 52,000 Oriental/Asian and European meals daily. "I was handling the other unit producing Halal meals and worked on menu development for 46 different airlines, with 200 chefs producing 185,000 meals a day."

Working for over 18 years in the industry, growing and learning; Chef Simon then came to a point when he decided to chart a different course by giving something back to the industry. The circle of life brought him back to the same college from where he graduated to enrich the current trends among the budding chefs.

"As a lead chef assessor, I assessed diploma students, young apprentices, and foundation and BA degree students. I took a night course to get my teaching qualification and my assessors' courses. At Highbury College, I also taught international cuisine and molecular gastronomy to the students."

Then the travel bug bit again, and Chef Simon headed to Moscow to work at one of the biggest independent café chains in the capital city. While working at Correa's and developing meal solutions for the Russian market, he had a little sense of stardom. "Many people were amazed to see international cuisine on the table that was never seen in Russia before."

Two years into that job, chef Simon returned to the UK. Instead of taking the conventional route by taking the next step towards hotels and restaurants, he decided to fully immerse himself in the culinary environment by joining Nature's Way Food, one of the UK's top



## We were among the first to introduce quinoa, and I even traveled to South America to study everything there was to know about it

manufacturers of salad leaves and fruit. During his four years there, he worked as the development chef for a prominent clientele and frequently visited nearby farms and fields to learn more about the local produce, harvesting practices, and fruit quality. "We were among the first to introduce quinoa, and I even traveled to South America to study everything there was to know about it."

### AHEAD FLANK

A few years later, Chef Simon again felt the stirrings of exploring new horizons and culinary projects. He traveled to Oman to join AATCO Food Industries, one of the Middle East's and Asia's biggest wet condiment manufacturers. In 2018, he took up a job at Kerry Taste and Nutrition.

For an Executive Chef who has worked in different fields of culinary, he has now progressed into something more akin to a general practitioner, where instead of coordinating healthcare, he is providing full solutions, both direct and indirect, to food service and retail customers based on market data-driven trends. "At Kerry's, I am like a general practitioner, I assist the clients in offering innovative cross-functional solutions. The scientists can add the technical details while I can talk about the culinary bit."

Dealing with a range of tasks every day, preparing sauces one day and beverages the next, Chef Simon's hands-on managerial attitude and insatiable sense

of curiosity make him the glue that holds everything together.

For creating fascinatingly complex tastes, one may head directly to high-end restaurants for inspiration, but for chef Simon, that was not the case. Most of his inspiration came from street food that he ate around the world. "I have learned about molecular gastronomy in different formats and worked with it, but what also inspires me is street food. For me, everything is a reinvention. Little things could be reinvented and presented in a new way. It is a big culinary world, and everything is in a big circle."

Indeed, some of the tastiest and most distinctive dishes are now being created on the streets. However, to take those street flavor profiles and lift them a notch requires a person who is willing to take chances, and Chef Simon is most certainly that guy.

"Look at everyday people's food, and see if you can elevate that and make it into something that everyone can enjoy and something that hits home," he says with a humble smile.

Another way in which he stays up-to-date is by spending hours strolling around and examining almost every food product in the supermarket. "I am terrible; my partner doesn't want to come shopping with you, you know," laughs the chef.

While his partner might be reluctant to tag along with him to the supermarket, she has unquestionably walked with him through the booms and busts of his culinary career. The duo is currently living a happy life in Dubai.

### OVER THE HORIZON

Much has happened in Chef Simon's life. But the future also looks promising for the exceptional chef.

Today, he also holds the position of Culinary Consultant to the Saudi Arabian skills sector and a consultant for City & Guilds of London. Additionally, he



Fast food chains are now opting for plant-based menus. After taking that leap, it could progress from just being a plant-based burger to plant-based cheese and so on







also serves as a culinary advisor to the Universal Infant Free School Meals Initiative for the UK.

At the moment, Chef Simon, who is now at the pinnacle of his career, is content with his life in the UAE. Going forward, he is eager to do more in his current role. "I do not want to be a pen pusher and be stuck behind the desk. I want to learn and

explore. For me, this is the future; this is the place where the future is happening, where you are learning every day."

A cookbook is also on the list of accomplishments. Last year, he contributed to the Royal Navy Charity Cookbook, where, unlike the chefs who shared fine-dining recipes, he resorted to representing local, non-complicated food.

Coming back to the bigger question of whether he won any competitions during his tenure with the Royal Navy, for which he joined the job, "Yes! We won a gold medal at the Luxembourg Culinary World Cup Competition," says the chef, beaming proudly as he reminisces about his larger-than-life culinary journey.



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February 2023 **Gulf Gourmet**



# MAESTRO MOMENTS

Gulf Gourmet caught up with Chef **Juan Ramon Sobero**, Head Chef at the Masterchef, the TV Experience Restaurant, to find out how he is working to bring the popular competitive cooking show concept from TV to the diner's table

**P**icture a spacious restaurant where a wooden box containing a mix of spices, proteins, condiments, and vegetables is presented on the table. Once the guests choose the mystery ingredient, they hand it over to the chef, who combines the ingredients to prepare a meal for you in just 30 minutes.

You are not mistaken if you believe you have seen this scenario play out on the long-running competitive cooking show MasterChef. Bringing this reel experience to real life is the MasterChef, TV Experience restaurant located in the Millennium Place Marina Hotel in Dubai Marina.

Anyone who has ever binge-watched one of MasterChef's seasons no longer has to experience the joy of cooking vicariously through the dishes featured on the program.

"The concept is very different. We tried to make the MasterChef TV show inside the restaurant so that when people dine here, they feel like they're part of the show," says Head Chef Juan Ramon Sobero.

You won't like the meal any less, even if you don't know who your favorite MasterChef champion is. The casual restaurant that offers an a la carte menu of the champion's dishes also has a challenging mystery box menu that has generated quite a stir among patrons.



**We tried to make the MasterChef TV show inside the restaurant so that when people dine here, they feel like they're part of the show**

"The mystery box experience is a set menu where we will have three mystery ingredients selected by guests. The meals will be reimagined as a three-course feast that delights the palate with a riot of flavors. Guests will then have to guess the mystery ingredients from the dishes," explains Chef Juan.

Nowadays, cooking involves more than simply just preparing meals. Unlike three decades ago, when chefs were mostly hidden behind the kitchen doors, Chef Juan tries to bring chefs to the spotlight by setting an example by running the restaurant, contributing to the concept's development, and raising the stakes a little bit so that the guests learn and discover the recipes.

"The dish here from the champions has a history. It is essential for me and my team to understand what led to its

creation. When we make the dish, I not only explain the history to the staff in the kitchen but also the service so that they can keep the guests well informed about how the dish was born and how it has evolved since it came to MasterChef."

When it comes to determining which MasterChef champion's dish will be on the menu, Chef Juan admits that it involves a lot of teamwork. While he adheres to the company guidelines and discusses them with the F&B director, he also has the full backing of his team.

"My team trusts me. We constantly exchange ideas and collaborate to provide the best service possible. We even work together with our suppliers to find the best quality. Let's take a burrata meal as an example. It's not only the ultra-rich and creamy burrata that is fresh but the tomatoes and herbs also bring in super fresh flavors."

In the meantime, the execution and selection of champion dishes happen through a platform. The recipe of every MasterChef winner is available on the restaurant's platform. Once every six months, Chef Juan selects the recipes, and after devising the menu, he trains the kitchen to plate the dishes the same as the winners.

The vibrant concept demands that a chef present himself out there just like any other MasterChef contestant, as



every guest in the room enters with the expectation of being a part of the show.

"It was slightly difficult to find a chef and staff who understood the concept well and understood what I wanted. But the team that I have here strives hard every day to do their best and create memories for the guests," says the 39-year-old chef.

### SPAIN IN THE VEINS

A Spaniard venturing outside of his land of rich seafood, magnificence architecture, and thriving culture to discover a foreign land is very rare. Chef Juan, however, did precisely that, flying to the Middle East at a time when most people were still finding their bearings.

"I was born in Valencia. Living in a food-loving family, every Sunday we used to eat paella, enjoying the traditional meals. So, my childhood was all about having gastronomy in our hearts." Unbeknownst to him, the art of making paellas and patatas bravas was ingrained in Chef Juan from childhood.

Studying for an aircraft maintenance course, chef Juan was all set to become an airplane mechanic. A twist in destiny made him choose pots and pans over flaps and fuselage.

While studying for an aircraft course, he took a job as a waiter at a family-run traditional restaurant known for serving



We constantly exchange ideas and collaborate to provide the best service possible. We even work together with our suppliers to find the best quality



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one of the best paellas in the city. "I saw the chefs planning menus, mixing flavors and textures and I had an epiphany that I was doing wrong by waiting tables, and I enrolled to learn at a culinary school," he says, retracing his journey so far.

After graduating from the hospitality school, he interned at several renowned restaurants, including Leixuri Restaurant and Bodegas Vegamar. Things moved pretty swiftly for Chef Juan. Within months of starting as a commis, he rose through the ranks to become Chef de Partie. "It was a learning curve for my career. The lessons gave me a solid foundation since now I understand the perspective of a commis chef and if they get stuck, I can guide them as I have been in their shoes before."

Chef Juan did whatever he was given, from preparing mise en place to assisting in food presentation. In his quest to comprehend the ethos of cuisine, he soon discovered a veiled aspect of it. It was culture.

A few years down the line, he decided to pack his bags and explore different culinary cultures. "I always wanted to check out the Mexican food scene. And then my career changed completely because I had the opportunity to work with one of the best chefs in the world at J by Jose Andreas."

During his two-year stint in South America, he grasped the dynamic mix of sophisticated cuisine that led him toward his ultimate calling. "I discovered my true passion for bringing Spanish gastronomy to the world."

In his early 30s at that time, he decided to return to Europe with a job at the award-winning Quisitas restaurant in Florence. It was exhilarating for Chef Juan Ramon Sobero to tinker with the tastes and develop a dynamic tapas menu that appealed to the foreign tourists who regularly visited Florence since the rich cultures of Spain and Italy got along well.



## I always wanted to check out the Mexican food scene. And then my career changed completely because I had the opportunity to work with one of the best chefs in the world at J by Jose Andreas

After spending a few years in Italy, Chef Juan was approached to bring his expertise to Qatar and open the world's first LaLiga Lounge restaurant in the Sheraton Grand Doha. A different world awaited him. "A lot of experience was gained through traveling and trying my hand at different spectrums of cuisine. After Qatar, I went to Amman, Jordan, to open the first authentic Spanish restaurant in the city. For me, it was like a great opportunity to channel all of my global expertise in one place."

As a head chef, preparing Southern Spain's Andalusian cuisine, including the art of Paella, Chef Juan Ramon Sobero managed to get the restaurant first position on Tripadvisor in less than six months.

"I spent two years there. Then, unfortunately, I had to come back to Spain due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, I saw this as an opportunity to pursue a master's degree in food and beverage management while waiting for the next right opportunity."

### PERSONAL ARCHIVES

In little more than five months, Chef Juan returned to the Middle East when the opportunity at Dubai Creek Golf & Yacht Club presented itself. "They were looking for a head chef for a Spanish restaurant, Casa de Tapas. They wanted to revamp the concept by putting a

stronger emphasis on Spanish cuisine with a little contemporary touch. And it was a fantastic opportunity."

Then, at the end of 2021, he called a halt to the Spanish cuisine side and joined Masterchef, the TV experience, where he has been learning many different dishes from other countries for nearly two years.

Chef Juan has always been a multi-cuisine expert. When it comes to his favourite dish on the menu, he prefers the charcoal-flavour ribeye steak that is perfectly seasoned. "I love meat, and the ribeye we have is dry-aged, and we prepare it on the charcoal jasper grill, which enhances the flavor."

The other favourite is mashed potatoes. As simple and homely as it may appear, the dish involves complex techniques to be on par. "Even the simplest dish on our menu will taste the same every time you try it. This is due to the fact that we scale the ingredients — potato, butter, and cream — and accurately weigh them to ensure consistency. I have a team of 10 chefs here. Each one of us has training sessions every week to make sure the consistency of the dish always meets the standard."

Outside of work, Chef Juan enjoys dining out and exploring the menus of other restaurants with his wife, who also shares his love for food. "I met my wife when she was working as a pianist in San Andreas (St Andrew). We are now happily married and live in Dubai," he says.

As for his own future, Chef Juan hopes to move into a more managerial and operations role on the food and beverage side. "Some 19 years from now, I would like to be in the industry, maybe as an F&B director. I think Dubai may be one of the perfect places for growth."

After an incredible journey, an exciting voyage awaits. Whatever the next chapter may hold, Chef Juan Ramon Sobero is sure to win immunity pins in every challenge he faces in his quest to become the MasterChef.







# Rising Star

Meet young Zimbabwean Chef **Alleta Ruvimbo Ziwachi**

Success awaits any aspiring culinarian who comes with a singular focus on getting the job done well. Chef Alleta Ruvimbo Ziwachi is one such chef. Add her talent and diligence to the mix and you know exactly why she's a scholarship graduate for the Class of 2022.

Hailing from Zimbabwe, Alleta has always been in awe of food that has been meticulously prepared and presented. For her, food has a language of its own and comes with a message of assurance and satisfaction. It is this wholesome admiration for food that drew her into the world of cooking.

As an adolescent, she spent hours experimenting with food recipes. "There were financial struggles at home, but I would seek refuge in cooking, and preparing local dishes. It gave me a purpose and most importantly it would fill my heart with a warm glow of hope," she says with a smile.

Raised by a single mother, the eldest of three children faced several financial hardships along the way. Alleta, however, remained undeterred when pursuing her culinary dreams. With a high-level of self-motivation and determination, she began her culinary journey eight years ago in South Africa, where she worked as a kitchen helper and waitress.

Long working hours and a highly demanding environment never once stopped her. On the contrary, it only fuelled her ambition to become a chef.

Then came her move to Dubai, where she secured her first job preparing sandwiches and salads. "It was my very first experience in a professional kitchen and I was terrified. That was when I realized how basic my cooking skills were.



I can honestly say I have learned more than I could have ever imagined, and I remain excited to keep learning

Without scholarship or experience, I was scared and didn't know what to expect. I simply humbled myself and learned and grew both as a cook and a person."

## The Life-transforming ICCA Dubai Culinary Scholarship Program with Emirates Culinary Guild

Even though Alleta enhanced her learning and skills at work, she yearned for a culinary education. She would constantly be on the lookout for courses by industry stalwarts to enrich her knowledge. That is how she stumbled upon the ICCA Dubai Culinary Scholarship Program organized with the backing of the Emirates Culinary Guild.

Says Alleta, "I was scrolling through LinkedIn on my day off, looking for websites that offer free courses for people in the hospitality industry, when I chanced upon the Hospitality.com website where the scholarship was posted. I simply took a leap of faith and have not looked back since."

Even today, she vividly remembers her first day at the award-winning ICCA facility. She remembers walking down the spotless corridors, and the sheer awe she felt of the facility, the classes, and the mentors. But, for her, the education

she received was far more than learning valuable culinary skills. It is here where she realized how being a chef is more than just cooking.

"The training I received here taught me the importance of always having a positive attitude in preparing each meal, no matter how chaotic the situation may be. Being organized and never allowing oneself to crack or panic under pressure is a work ethic that I have learned during the scholarship; one which will help me stand out from other chefs," she says.

The young Zimbabwean Chef recounts her participation in the 2022 USA Cheese Specialist Competition, menu development, better time management, working with a diverse team in a challenging kitchen environment, and in-depth insights into the business side of the culinary industry as among her finest learnings from this program.

"I can honestly say I have learned more than I could have ever imagined, and I remain excited to keep learning. Every moment I spent in the kitchen has been well worth it."

Currently working as a Demi Chef de Partie at Bungalo34, a newly opened concept on Pearl Jumeira from Tashas Group, Alleta's career journey is proof that following one's dreams is never easy and that while there's always a new obstacle, or someone else saying or making one feel it's impossible; in the end, all that matters is that if one can dream it, one can do it. And it is of utmost importance to remember to smile always and be humble.

As for her advice to young aspiring chefs who like her, are looking to pursue a culinary career, she says, "Never stop learning because life never stops teaching."



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# A PHILOMATH OF PASTRY

Meet **Prasath Chathuranga**, the chef who is a lover of learning. For the past ten years, he has been with the Jumeirah Creekside Hotel. This is his account of how his plate of pastries can take over all your senses

The small island of Sri Lanka is full of surprises. The never-ending beach lines, sandy stretches, quintessential lifestyle, and cuisine delights the senses, drawing on the fresh produce of the land and sea.

These elements and cultural heritage are expressed even louder when a Sri Lankan chef curates pastries. Hailing from this Land of Helas is Chef Prasath Chathuranga, whose desserts can astound even the most seasoned sweet tooth. At 36, the Junior Sous Chef, Pastry Section, oversees all day-to-day operations of the pastry section of the Jumeirah Creekside Hotel Dubai.

A native of Negombo, situated in the western province of Sri Lanka, Chef Prasath didn't have to give much thought to deciding on a profession. "I had a very happy childhood. I was very interested in art and colours. So, I was inclined towards learning about desserts and pastries."

Most chefs get their passion for food from their mothers. Chef Prasath spiraled into the cooking world, facilitated by his brother. When asked about his inspiration, the chef can't help but mention his cousin brother. "My cousin brother used to work as a chef, and whenever he shared his experiences, it seemed thrilling. I wanted to become a chef like him, but I didn't get any chance when I was in Sri Lanka."

As he finished high school, Chef Prasath



Since I liked art, the pastry kitchen gave me the freedom to work with chocolate and colors; for that creativity, I chose pastry

got a chance to come to Dubai with a job at the Jumeirah Creekside Hotel. It was a steward's job, but it only took Chef Prasath six months to persuade his managers that he belonged in the pastry kitchen. "I completed my cross-training, and a year later I got a double promotion."

There was no doubt that when the time came for him to choose between a cold or hot kitchen, he opted for his love for pastries. "Since I liked art, the pastry kitchen gave me the freedom to work with chocolate and colors; for that creativity, I chose pastry."

Just in a year, he got promoted to the position of first commis. Almost over four years of creating pastries, mise-en-place, garnishing cakes, plate presentations, and refining his culinary forte of chocolates, showpieces, as well as buffet desserts, he was promoted to the role of Demi Chef de Partie. "After serving as a Demi Chef de Partie, I

received a double promotion and was elevated to Junior Sous Chef."

In the pastry kitchen, Chef Prasath handles tasks that go above and beyond those of a sous chef. Working here has allowed Chef Prasath to harness his creativity and develop new concepts, play with flavors, experiment with chocolate garnishes, and even cater events. "I have a team of four to five junior staff, and we all work together for corporate events, staff parties, and the Dubai Duty-Free Tennis Championship. We also have one outlet, called Nomad. So, I do pastries over there as well."

The ten years spent at the Jumeirah Creekside Hotel have pushed Chef Prasath to explore his culinary potential, giving him the opportunity to continually improve and innovate to create unique experiences for customers. "This place is now like my second school and second home. Because everything I learned was here on the job."

Being adept at desserts, the affable chef leads his team and constantly exchanges ideas and suggestions with the budding chefs. For the readers, he has created a very intricate plate of frozen cheesecake with a delicious blend of cheese, cream, and fruit coulis. Every chef prefers their favorite ingredients while preparing their creations. For this creation, Chef Prasath recommends Arla's cream cheese, which adds great texture to the dessert. "The dish contains cheese,

butter, and whipped cream. The crunchy cheesecake base is made from digestive biscuit crumbs. Furthermore, the fruits are aligned in such a way that the cheesecake stands out as a centerpiece."

Aside from the flavour profiles, it

is hard to deny the appeal of the exquisitely designed plate that he creates. The artistry and love of color on his plate are evident in spades. "I always keep it simple and colorful. A composed plate with colours surely highlights the dessert."

Inspiration for his creations comes from keeping abreast of trends, observing the environment, and through social media. Often, he also takes up online training in chocolate and dessert classes to refine his skills.

When he is not putting together the elements of desserts or brainstorming pastry ideas at home, you will still find him in the kitchen making his favorite spicy chicken or Sri Lankan sambol.

As for the future, the father of the six-year-old girl plans to become a pastry chef. "I like to try new things and want to learn a lot about this industry. However, I am in no rush now. I am not planning to move at the moment until I get another challenge." Taking a course to delve deeper into the world of chocolate and learn more about desserts is also on his goals list.

Even after spending several years in the kitchen, Chef Prasath has not left chasing knowledge. The seasoned chef occasionally encountered situations in which he struggled to find the ideal texture in a complicated recipe or with challenges to make sugar garnishes more colorful and stable, but his inquisitive inner child drove him to dabble every obstacle.

His tireless enthusiasm to learn and seek opportunities to further his skills and craft set him apart from others. What better proof that there is no better catalyst to success than curiosity.



I always keep it simple and colorful. A composed plate with colours surely highlights the dessert



## Arla Pro Cold Cheesecake

### CHEESECAKE FROZEN

Sugar	100g
Water	35g
Egg Yolk	105g
Gelatin	7g
Arla Pro Frost & Bake	350g
Arla Pro High Stability Cream	320g
Orange Zest	1g

#### Method

- ◆ Boil water and sugar together till 122°C.
- ◆ Whisk the egg yolks and add the boiled sugar & water syrup to the egg yolk mix.
- ◆ Mix gelatin to the mixture.
- ◆ Next mix the cream cheese and orange zest.
- ◆ Lastly, pour the whipped cream into the mixture.
- ◆ Fill up in the mold and let it freeze overnight.

### CHEESECAKE BASE

Digestive Biscuit Crumbs	100g
Lurpak Butter	25g

#### Method

- ◆ Mix the biscuit crumbs with butter and form the base. And bake it for 5 minutes at 180°C.

### FRUIT COULIS

Fruit Puree	400g
Simple Syrup	100g
Agar Agar	5g

#### Method

- ◆ Combine the ingredients.
- ◆ Heat until boiling point.
- ◆ Keep in the fridge until totally set.
- ◆ Mix with an immersion blender or Vitamix until smooth.

### VELVET CHOCOLATE SPRAY

Pettina White Chocolate	300g
Cocoa Butter	250g

#### Method

- ◆ Heat the cocoa butter / chocolate or cocoa butter colouring mixture to 50°C before pouring it into the spray gun. Use fine strainer. Otherwise, it may clog up in the gun.
- ◆ Use a fat-soluble coloring if you are creating a colored cocoa butter mixture.
- ◆ Apply the spray gun mixture directly on to cakes and pastries frozen at -18°C.
- ◆ Use the mixture between 45°C to 50°C only.
- ◆ If it's less than 45°C the chocolate mixture will crystalize too quickly, causing it to peel off.
- ◆ Make sure to spray a thin layer only. Too thick will create a peel off.





## US Potatoes Innovation Session

**O**n January 16, the Emirates Culinary Guild Young Chefs Club collaborated with US Potatoes to put together a powerpack session covering the humble yet versatile ingredient “potato”.

Chef RJ Harvey started the session by explaining the types of potatoes, how to store them and maintain their shelf life, as well as the nutritional benefits of potatoes. He introduced the young

chefs to a variety of products, such as dehydrated potatoes and potato flour. Young chefs have seen the magic that happens at the Spud Lab Test Kitchen in the USA, where culinary experts have created over 300 recipes using potatoes.

Gradually, the young chefs saw how a single ingredient could be prepared in so many different ways using different cooking techniques. Just a few to recall: using dehydrated potatoes to make light

and fluffy gnocchi, crispy crunchy hash browns, potato shawarma, and ending on a sweet and spicy note with potato churros and chilli chocolate ganache.

The session concluded with a few Q&As from our inquisitive young chefs. Not to mention the selfie with Chef RJ Harvey and his team. All in all, our young chefs left with their minds steaming with ideas to create something new the next time they cook potatoes.



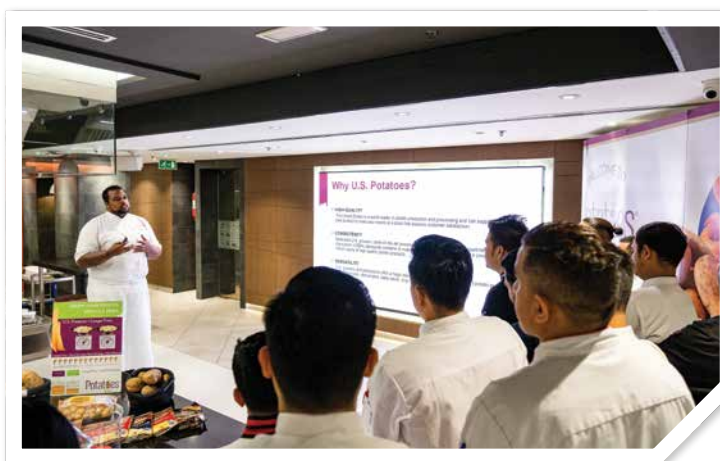


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## The Guild Meet

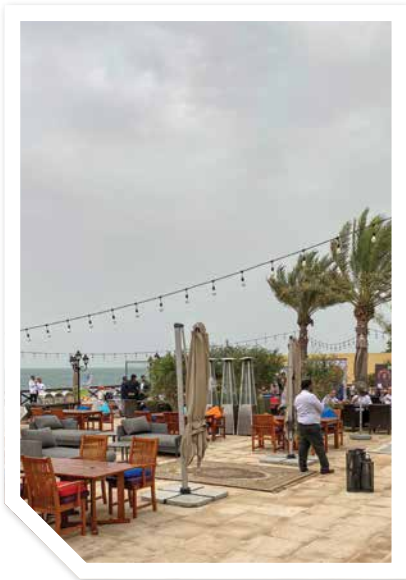
Adilet Tashenov and the Hilton Ras Al Khaimah Beach Resort team hosted the Emirates Culinary Guild meeting last month. Special transport arrangements were made by the Guild to get members from Dubai and neighbouring areas to travel to the meeting destination and back in comfort. Senior members of the Guild, young chefs and corporate members were out in full force. In-depth discussions were made on upcoming events and supporting young chefs in the country.













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# newmembers



**Suresh K.P. business development manger, receiving Emirates Culinary Guild Membership certificate from ECG President Chef Uwe Micheel**

**Al Masa** is a leading meat processing company based in Dubai, with over two decades of experience. Today, our stellar reputation has rendered our champions of the meat processing industry, exporting countless halal flavors and sumptuous combinations to over 15 countries across the globe. It was acquired by the leading regional meat processing company Siniora Food Industries.

- Al Masa brand is synonymous with Quality, Trust and Flavor
- With our two decades expansion, Diamond Meat Processing LLC has reached out to 15 countries
- We procure our raw materials direct from the source with high-quality vendors utilizing the latest technology. and we make sure that all the certificates are in line with



the countries requirement especially Halal slotted

- Diamond Meat Processing is rewarded with a certificate of ISO 22000, and we are SFDA, Subway, and Emirates Flights Catering approved.
- Our Processing facility states the art is up to date.
- in 2016, 70% of Diamond Meat Processing shares were acquired by a leading regional meat processing company from Jordan by the name Siniora Food Industries. Siniora Food

Industries is a subsidiary of the pan Arabian investment group Arab Palestinian Investment Company (APIC).

- After Siniora acquired the company they have invested heavily in the facility, due to this reason we get approval for every audit conducted.
- We are one of the few companies in UAE who is having in-house lab facilities and high standards of Quality
- We have a market share of 30%-35% in the retail segment and we do private label for Lulu international across GCC with 90 SKUs's approx.
- As a part of the innovation of the portfolio, we have launched a 100% plant-based product in the brand name Badeel.





**Mr. Jibu Mathews, AGM, Middle East Fuji and Vipin Sidharthan, Sales Manager, International Trading, receiving Emirates Culinary Guild Membership certificate from ECG President Chef Uwe Micheel**

**MEF** aims to consistently exceed customer expectations by providing exceptional and personalized service through our commitment to innovation, excellence, and continuous improvement

Established in 1993 as Middle East Ship stores, offering chandlery services to ships calling at UAE ports. Since the year 2000, MEF became part of Fuji Trading Group Japan through our formal joint venture agreement is accredited and certified to ISO-9001, ISO-14001, ISO-45001, ISO-22000 and HACCP. As an industry leader in the supply of Food Supplies, Our mission is to provide right products and services to business needs to build and maintain a quality atmosphere for customers. We have garnered a reputation for supplying major five star hotel chains with a wide array of seasonal fresh produce and frozen foodstuff. We supply fresh fruits and vegetables, fresh and frozen meat products, specific



Japanese, Thai and Oriental food & beverages, and various exotic dry items. We are the first authorised importer of Kobe beef in UAE and to top it up, we source on Halal Kobe beef.

As a trusted partner, our procurement division is diligent to only source food and grocery items that are the most fresh and of outstanding quality. By sourcing directly from local and international producers, we eliminate hefty margins and also cater to specific customer requests. Following food hygiene regulations and food safety procedures

is our paramount objective and maintaining a high caliber of quick and reliable service delivery. We also offer full line chandlery and quality supply cold chain which are acknowledged by our customers, i.e. Cruise lines, Merchant vessels, Armed forces and offshore units. We are proud to have a diverse range of products which enables us to satisfy any requests from our customers specialised in French, Italian, Spanish, English, Japanese, Chinese, South American or any other type of Cuisine as well as restaurants specialised in meat, seafood or vegetarian options. We accept the foundation of our victory lies in our progressing commitment and fixation with client benefit. Our company caters more than 1,000 customers in the UAE, Qatar and Oman. We also provide the same exceptional quality of service and products to customers in locations such as the Indian Ocean, Africa, CIS Countries and the Sub Continent.

# newmembers



**Tarryn-Leigh Green and Warren Bond, Co-founders of nyum meals, receiving Emirates Culinary Guild Membership certificate from ECG President Chef Uwe Mischeel**

**Nyum meals**, is a family-run, proudly UAE business, which is passionate about making great home-style restaurant quality meals. These are frozen at their freshest, ready for hotels and restaurants to heat and serve.

Nyum's primary focus is its kids range, which enables outlets to provide top quality kids meals to their guests, while freeing up their chefs to focus on what they do best, rather than spending their time making kids meals.

Also, each of these meals contains one of their 5 a day fruit and veg. This enables hotels and restaurants to provide a wellness menu for kids. With more and more parents being health conscious and demanding these wellness options for their kids, it allows outlets to meet this demand without the hassle of having to make these meals.

Further, with nyum providing these meals in a ready to heat format, this significantly reduces the wastage in the kitchens.

Nyum's range of kids and adult meals includes many home favourites,



including. (check out [nyummeals.com](http://nyummeals.com) for the full range):

## Kids meals

- ♦ Shepherd's pie with root vegetable mash
- ♦ Fish pie with cauliflower mash
- ♦ Roast chicken & vegetable with sweetcorn mash pie
- ♦ Spaghetti bolognaise
- ♦ Cowboy mince and rice
- ♦ Macaroni cauliflower cheese
- ♦ Beef lasagne
- ♦ Chicken lasagne
- ♦ Tomato mascarpone spaghetti
- ♦ Cottage pie with sweet potato mash
- ♦ Cheese and tomato sweet potato pizza bear
- ♦ Turkey ham and cheese sweet potato pizza bear
- ♦ Chicken and cheese sweet potato pizz bear

## Adult meals:

- ♦ Three cheese macaroni cheese

- ♦ Shepherd's pie
- ♦ Creamy fish pie
- ♦ Beef lasagne
- ♦ Vegetable lasagne
- ♦ Spaghetti bolognaise
- ♦ Spaghetti vegetable bolognaise
- ♦ Butter cauliflower paneer makhani with fragrant rice
- ♦ Tikka chicken with fragrant rice
- ♦ Thai Panang chicken curry with rice

Moreover, all nyum meals are blast frozen, - which locks in all the goodness and flavour.

nyum meals come in sustainable packaging that is suitable for the oven, microwave or air fryer, along with simple cooking instructions.

We guarantee our meals will not fail to impress, as we are a passionate team with an equal love for eating delicious food and feeding those we love.

For more information on how nyum meals can help your hotel or restaurant contact Tarryn on [tarrynleigh.green@nyummeals.com](mailto:tarrynleigh.green@nyummeals.com)





**Lara Haddad, Customer Marketing Manager - Middle East India and Africa, Essity Hygiene and Health AB and Kirsty COLLARD, Sales Manager Middle East & India, receiving Emirates Culinary Guild Membership certificate from ECG President Chef Uwe Micheel**

The Tork brand offers professional hygiene products and services to customers worldwide ranging from restaurants and healthcare facilities to offices, schools and industries. Our products include dispensers, paper towels, toilet tissue, soap, napkins, wipers, but also software solutions for data-driven cleaning.

Through expertise in hygiene, functional design and sustainability, Tork has become a market leader that supports customers to think ahead so they're always ready for business. Tork is a global brand of Essity, and a committed partner to customers in over 110 countries. To keep up with the latest Tork news and innovations, please visit: [www.torkmeia.com](http://www.torkmeia.com)

Tork is the leading global brand in workplace hygiene. We are passionate about helping you improve your business – from raising the bottom line, to making your working life better.



**Think ahead.**

Within the hospitality industry, a loyal guest is a great guest. To create a repeat guest base, a restaurant doesn't just need to meet guest expectations, it needs to exceed them. It's often the small details that set a venue apart from the competition. In order to attend to the details, restaurant teams need to be one step ahead - always.

Based on input from professionals in the foodservice industry, Tork designs services and products to meet your guests' needs. We know the many pressures that come with improving guest experience, establishing hygiene routines in operations, and creating the conditions for optimal efficiency. You will find content and solutions to

help you and your team to maintain hygiene, work smarter, and cater to satisfied guests who will gladly return again and again.

Tork products are designed to ensure that you comply with kitchen hygiene regulations and meet sustainability expectations of consumers. Sustainability goes beyond offering 100% recycled products. Controlled and one-at-a-time dispensing systems enable just the right amount of product to be delivered, reducing overall footprint and waste. Our hygiene solutions are easy-to-use and effective for your staff, letting them concentrate on delighting customers. Our solutions boost your image and operations.

We always strive to be on top of your needs and getting all the important details in place. This is the ambition that drives our people and cutting edge innovations, every single day. Let's get ready for business.



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**Winterhalter ME**

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## Application Membership

Date of Application:

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

Declaration to be Signed by all Applicants

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

Signed:.....

Proposed By:

Sig:.....

Seconded By:

Sig:.....

### FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Remarks:

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

Fees:

Young Member: Junior members will receive a certificate.

Senior Members: Above the rank of chef de partie (or senior chef de partie on executive chef's recommendation).  
Dhs.350/=joining. Includes certificate; member-pin, member medal and ECG ceremonial collar. Dhs.  
150/=per year thereafter.

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

Corporate Member Dhs. 20,000 per year



# Barakat



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Ready to Eat



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Fresh Fruits



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Daily Delivery. Custom Recipe/Requirement.  
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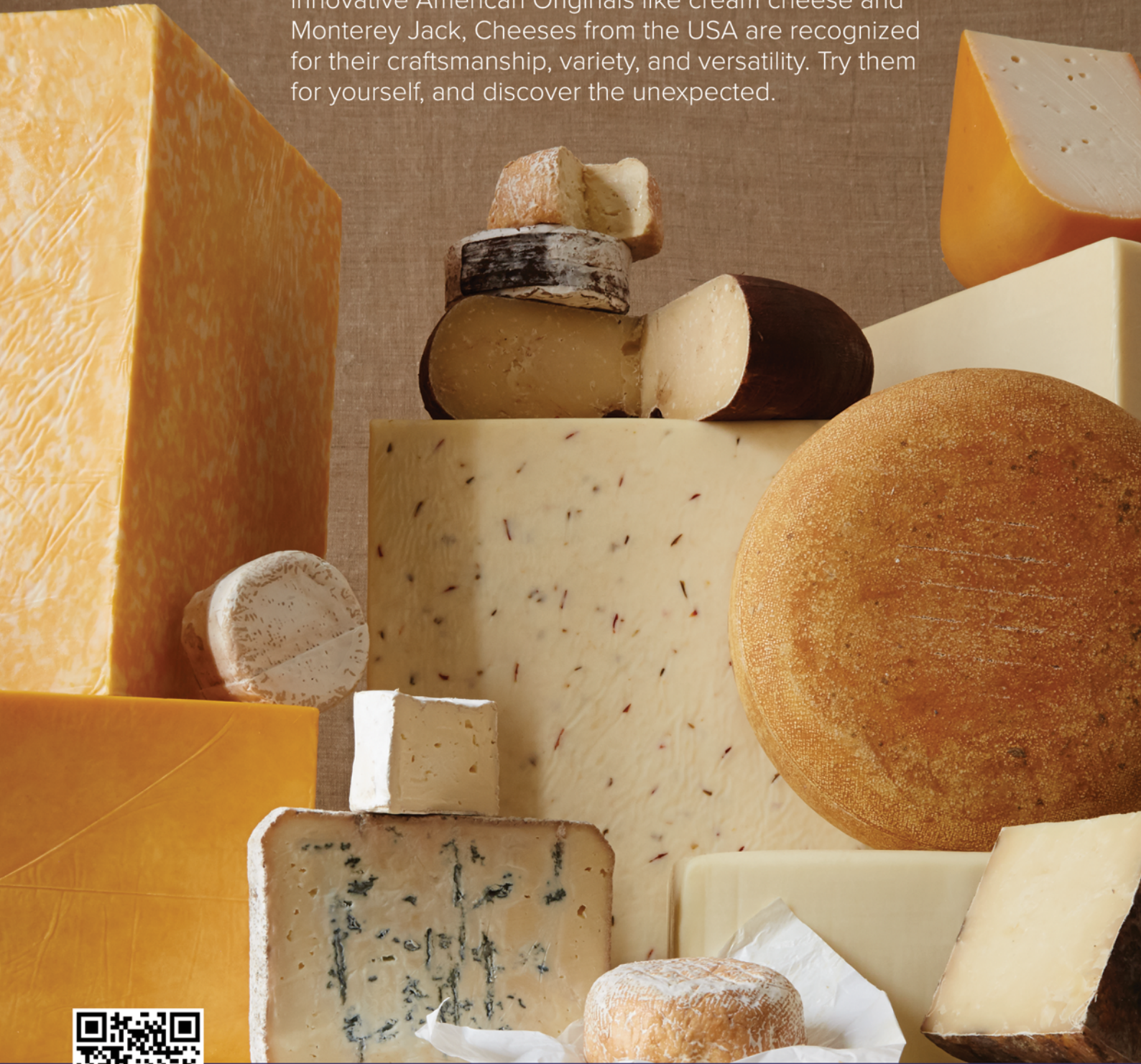
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+971 4 239 3333, +971 4 333 5666 [contact@barakatgroup.ae](mailto:contact@barakatgroup.ae)





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