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THE MAGAZINE CHEFS LOVE TO READ

volume 15, issue 5

WOMAN OF
STEEL

Alannah Francesca,
group executive
pastry chef, Sarood
Hospitality, and her
remarkable talent for
turning adversities
into opportunities

BY SAROOD
HOSPITALITY
Alannah Francesca

DESSERT MASTER

UAE's pastry hero, **Kapila Amaratunga** from W Dubai - The Palm, shares a sweet treat



YOUNG CHEFS

Madinat Jumeirah C&I and Five Jumeirah Village battle for the Golden Chefs Hat Award



WESTIN CLASS

Interview with **Steffen Aßmann**, Executive Chef, The Westin Abu Dhabi Golf Resort & Spa





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Dear fellow chefs, ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to the June–July issue of our Gulf Gourmet.

First, I would like to thank everyone who is supporting the Emirates Culinary Guild during this difficult period. Our Partners, Sponsors and Members thank you for your ongoing support.

Your Emirates Culinary Guild team was very busy with our own "Anyone Can Cook" virtual competition. The best videos are now on our Emirates Culinary Guild YouTube channel.

Read more about our YouTube Channel by our Chairman Andy Cuthbert in this issue.

Many hotels and restaurants have started reopening and we see the beach properties coming back a little stronger. A good sign that our residents are starting to take their families out again.

I request all of you, even if you are in a very difficult position, to please stay calm and positive. Hold on to your passion for our great profession and industry. Together, we will weather this storm. We will keep our heads held up high and rebuild our great industry together.

We will all have to choose different paths when we rebuild. This is because different companies have different visions in keeping with their rules and policies. Individual entrepreneurs will come up with different ideas. Those from various age groups and generations will have different opinions and it's all welcome.

Let us listen to each other and do it together, let us keep learning from sharing our experiences – both the good and not so good.

Use the many opportunities we have with online learning. Register to different webinars and keep yourself informed and updated.



We are working together with our longtime partner Mr. Bassam Bousaleh and the AMFI Team in Beirut on the "USMEF – ECG virtual cooking competition, Cook with US Beef". The competition was launched on 7th July. Find all details in this issue and a great chance to win amazing prizes. I am wishing everyone, professional and amateur chefs, good luck, may the best win. This competition is like all the others, a great chance to enhance our experience, learn, learn and learn. Good luck everyone.

We did not have our regular monthly meeting but the Executive Committee did virtual online meetings. The Chairman and I are cooking regularly with the products of our corporate partners for our YouTube channel.

Many of us had planned to travel this month to St Petersburg for the Worldchefs Congress which had to be cancelled. The Worldchefs bi-annual meeting will now be virtual on 15th

August. Please let us know if you want to be part of it.

Please visit www.gulfgourmet.net to browse through previous issues of this magazine. Visit www.emiratesculinaryguild.net to see our upcoming events calendar. And visit www.facebook.com/wacsyoungchefs for young chefs to be in contact with over 4,000 chefs worldwide.

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

Thank you to Chef Ramulo and Jumeirah Creek Side team for hosting the March meeting.

Culinary Regards,
Uwe Micheel
President, Emirates Culinary Guild
Director of Kitchens,
Radisson Blu Hotel Dubai Deira Creek

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editor'snote

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Nestle Professional and Gulf Gourmet have nurtured a 15-year long partnership and along the way found the perfect recipe to empower young chefs. It is called the Golden Chefs Hat Award. What makes this Award standout is that it is a year-round affair currently in its eight year.

That is right. Every month, over the past 90 months, the teams at Gulf Gourmet and Nestle Professional have been identifying bright young chefs in the hot kitchens and pastry kitchens of hotels across the country, and are providing them with a platform to showcase their culinary talent. We feature four chefs every month and challenge them to create innovative recipes that a customer will happily pay for.

Some of the chefs that participated in the first few years have now risen to the ranks of Corporate Chef and Executive Sous Chef for global foodservice and hospitality brands while some others have represented the national culinary teams of countries such as the UAE and Canada.

No other media-driven awards ceremony or digital campaign can come close to the impact we have had with our targeted campaign when it comes to creating **sustained brand recall** and



simultaneously offering chefs something that truly serves as a **career springboard**.

This makes me and everyone involved in this competition so proud. With Season 8 currently underway, winners of Season 7 recently received their trophies and a 7-day culinary tour of UAE's top fine-dining destinations. This will give them a first-hand experience of how the country's best restaurants are adapting to the new normal.

A luxurious journey that they can both savour as well as learn from in order to make their workplace better and more profitable.

Check out the winning team from Season 7, as well as some of the competitors' recipes from Season 8, in this issue.

As restaurants reopen in the months to come, some chefs may find themselves back in the kitchen while others will pivot and create something unique that will make them more successful. Trust me, I am from the print media and I have seen how a shrinking industry forced me to change tracks and come back stronger.

This issue is filled with quotes from chefs and motivational speakers. Our aim is to tell you the truth, without sugar-coating it, while at the same time letting you know that tough times can lead to surprisingly positive consequences.

Some great stories, features and exclusive images from the pre-pandemic era are filled in these pages.

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

Aquin George
Editor

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Team Pots, Pans and Boards

Ayça Koç, Food Business Manager–
MENA, Nestlé Professional

THE BIG WIN!

Kasun and Tiran win Golden Chef's Hat Award and a seven-day tour of UAE's finest culinary destinations

Chef Kasun Hirantha and Chef Tiran Rathugama of Pots, Pans and Boards in Dubai, were awarded medals, certificates, personalized knives, and an all-expenses-paid seven-day tour of UAE's finest culinary destinations for winning the Nestlé Professional Golden Chef's Hat Award UAE – Season 7.

The young men, from British chef Tom Aikens' restaurant, were felicitated at the Nestlé C.E.C. in Dubai by Ayça Koç, Food Business Manager– MENA, Nestlé

Professional and Chef Uwe Micheel, President, Emirates Culinary Guild.

Both Ayça and Uwe gave highly motivating speeches to the young chefs, who had made it to the finals during these unprecedented times.

The runner-up team was Mövenpick Hotel Jumeirah Beach with chefs Sanjay Singh Saud and Mohit Bisht.

The competition runs year-round and is open to all professional young chefs in the UAE. To be invited to Season 8 of

the competition, two chefs must apply as a team, and both chefs must work in the same hotel, restaurant, company, or culinary institute.

20 teams with the most innovative dishes will be invited to the semi-finals and their recipes published for all to see. Following this, the top 10 teams will be invited to a final cook-off early 2021, where the winning team will be decided.

To participate or to know more about Golden Chef's Hat Award, please email amaresh@gulfgourmet.net

Team Mövenpick
Hotel Jumeirah Beach



Golden Chef's Hat Award winners Chef Kasun Hirantha and Chef Tiran Rathugama with ECG President Chef Uwe Micheel and the Nestlé Professional team (from left-right) Tarun Thomas, Monica El-lamaa, Chef Mohammed Al Ghazzaoui, Ayça Koç and Dina Ayoub.



newsbites

Rethinking spaces to revive hospitality



As anti-Coronavirus regulations evolve, safety of staff and guests will remain a priority. Spaces and furnishings with dynamic formulas will become a must have.

Architect Simone Micheli has identified three concepts to define the world as it will be: alteration, hybridization and crossovers. He says, "We are becoming increasingly smart, and...this is just the beginning of the transformation in the way we interact..."

Special attention to check-in and check-out process, room access through guest devices, and limited interaction with in-room devices and controls will soon be the norm.

"By upgrading common spaces and opening structures to public, hotels can regain wide segments of the market using originality and quality service," says Franco Costa, president, Costa Group, which presented their innovative solutions at the last edition of HostMilano in Italy.

Mid-range hotels too will have to consider the adoption of modular

solutions and privacy through well-divided common spaces.

Marco Piva says fluidity is key to the future of spaces and services. "We have experienced a traumatic period of suspension from our habits, a period of uncertainty that still continues and we will have to review our habits and lifestyles."

WHAT COULD BE

Spaces may no longer be encoded as lobby, reception, restaurant, bar, etc. Rather they could become dynamic and interconnected with technology that ensures both security as well as personalization.

Architecture using materials and components that prevent bacterial accumulation and are easy to maintain and clean will soon rise in demand. Technologies aimed at environmental quality, especially in highly frequented spaces such as elevators, will gain traction.

Surface and air sanitation systems as well as lighting systems equipped with ultraviolet sources, will help reduce the agents' proliferation.

In China, as well as in Italy, modular Plexiglas panels seem to be the quickest way forward for the safe reopening of bars and restaurants. Stefano Zajotti, design & communication manager at EMU, says, "Our research centre developed a possible solution for clients working in the contract sector. It is a Plexiglas panel that allows a certain degree of social distancing and the highest number of places inside."

Florian Nardi, CEO, Nardi says, "Our catalogue includes ideas for furniture that are easy to move around, with folding chairs, and tables with fold-down tops. The answer is certainly positioning tables further apart but also, where possible, introducing movable partitions that create a physical barrier between the tables, and indicate routes that can be changed according to the needs. The requests we are receiving include those for products that are easy to sanitize repeatedly. In this sense polypropylene, the material we mainly use for our furnishing complements, is an excellent answer as it can be cleaned very frequently, and it is non-toxic, anti-static and completely recyclable."

Missing Miraton



Chef Michel Miraton bid adieu to the UAE and returns to France after a 40-year culinary journey across the world. Here are a couple of images from the farewell party held a few months ago.

Tolga Lacin promoted to Area GM

Marriott International announced the promotion of Tolga Lacin from complex general manager to area general manager. In his new position, Lacin oversees nine Dubai hotels including The Westin and Le Meridien Mina Seyahi, Le Meridien Dubai, Aloft and Elements hotels.

Lacin started out in 1992 with the Hilton

Hotel followed by Hyatt Regency, both in Istanbul. He has held F&B manager positions in Kazakhstan, Kanuhura and Maldives. In 2009 he joined The Westin and Le Meridien Mina Seyahi Beach Resort as complex general manager. After 11 long years he finally got the well-deserved break and it couldn't have come at a more challenging time. We wish him the best.



Have you subscribed to the ECG YouTube channel? What are you waiting for? **Subscribe NOW!**



Chef Nicolas to lead Brasserie Boulud

If you haven't already heard, New-York based French restaurateur and chef, Daniel Boulud, is opening his first Middle East restaurant in Dubai. Chef Nicolas Lemoyne, a French national as well, will run the day-to-day operations as Chef de cuisine. He has worked with Boulud at his Michelin-starred restaurant in the past.

The Dubai destination is called Brasserie Boulud and will serve the two Michelin-star chefs French-inspired cuisine. To be housed in Sofitel Dubai Wafi, both the hotel and restaurant, are expected to launch in September.

Boulud, is famous for reinterpreting French classics and is currently living in Bedford, New York. In an interview to Barron's, the man behind 'Restaurant Daniel-Manhattan', 'Cafe Boulud at the Surrey', and 'Boulud Sud' confirmed he had shut down all his restaurants and furloughed employees because of the outbreak.

US Beef Barbecue night

In collaboration with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) and the Emirates Culinary Guild, the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) held a U.S. Beef Barbecue night event at The Secret Garden at Jumeirah Creekside Hotel, Dubai on March 5, gathering a total number of 150 executive chefs, culinary experts, food and beverage decision makers from around the UAE in addition to key beef traders in the country.

Five cooking stations in addition to a barbecue grill station were featured. Attendees tasted a variety of succulent dishes such as beef tacos, smoked beef short ribs, slow roasted beef prime ribeye, gyros beef roll and barbecue cowboy beef burgers.

During the evening, a range of U.S. beef cuts along with their attributes were highlighted. There was focus on the marbling and grain-fed aspect

of the meat which is responsible for the juiciness and rich flavor. Other characteristics were also emphasized such as the product safety, Halal feature, quality and yield grades as well as the profitability attributes of underutilized cuts.

Reputable and prominent chefs including Chef Andy Cuthbert, General Manager of Jumeirah Creekside Hotel & C&I and Jumeirah Hospitality, Madinat Jumeirah and Continental Director of Africa and Middle East at Worldchefs alongside with Chef Uwe Mischeel, President of the Emirates Culinary Guild shared their expertise and knowledge about U.S. beef as well, while shedding light on cutting techniques and cooking methods for a variety of high quality and underutilized cuts.

Attendees praised the taste, tenderness and juiciness of U.S. beef and were excited to take part in a similar future event.





Thank you Restofair

Restofair RAK has been supporting professional chefs in the UAE and the Emirates Culinary Guild every step of the way.

The leading hotel and catering supplies company in the UAE has been providing

personalized plates for thousands of winners over the years at events in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah and Fujairah.

Here are some images we captured over the years at Salon Culinaire, La Cuisine du SIAL and East Coast Salon.



Restaurant Recipes at Home

Chef Bobby Geetha, who we interviewed last year as Corporate Executive Chef for Asha's restaurants, seems to have let the cat out of the bag. His third book recently self-published on Amazon shares the secrets of how to cook restaurant style cuisine at home. Priced at \$9.99, the book is titled 'Fine Dining Indian: Easy to Cook Restaurant Recipes at Home'.

He says, "I want to make fine cooking accessible to all households and Indian restaurants. These recipes were developed through my Indian food journeys inspired from my London and Copenhagen Michelin two-star restaurant trainings.

"Fine dining is not about eating in a posh restaurant. It is about choosing high quality ingredients and using expert cooking techniques. You can cook at home literally for 1/10th of the price you pay at fine-dining restaurants."

Recipes include achari octopus, samphire pakora, wild boar sausage, vada pav, tapioca poppadom, lamb sweet bread, shami kebab, duck egg naan roll, brioche shahi tukra, beetroot halwa and white chocolate.



THE GUILD GOES DIGITAL

The Emirates Culinary Guild has, like many other companies and associations, been pushed into the digital age in the last four months by the changing world we now live in

Social media presence for the Guild was limited to a small Facebook page of 25,000 followers, a limited Instagram page, and a website. However, like many, we have now found ourselves forced to be receptive to online meetings and learn new skills in digital meetings across multiple platforms we never knew existed. The way we as a Guild look at the digital world and social media space has changed forever.

We now see the President on Instagram every day, the website is developed, and the Guild's YouTube page has gone from being dormant for years to leaping ahead, gaining over 3,000 subscribers and being monetized.

This is where we as a Guild now need to focus, as we see the new situation lasting some time. And with the lack of face-to-face meetings happening, we need to be innovative. Chef Majed from the Syrian Guild has a huge following on social media, and he is one of our members that has really inspired us all. Chairman Andy Cuthbert does a show called Cuthbert Cooks on YouTube, so even the dinosaurs are giving it a go.

The Guild has now started a series of online virtual cooking competitions with Season 1 of 'Anybody Can Cook' running in the month of July. We have invited professionals, amateurs and children to compete in a competition where they present a dish in a 3-5 minute video. The response has been great with people



from all over the globe competing. This saw the reach of our YouTube and social media reach new levels that we would never even think about before.

The judging for the competition also includes social media parameters, so all contestants have been asked to subscribe, share and like and then of course encourage friends and family to view the video. Hits will form part of the judging points. This is where we see the Guild going in the future to keep our engagement levels up and we are now launching season one of the US Beef competition. In August we will see the results on both YouTube and Facebook.

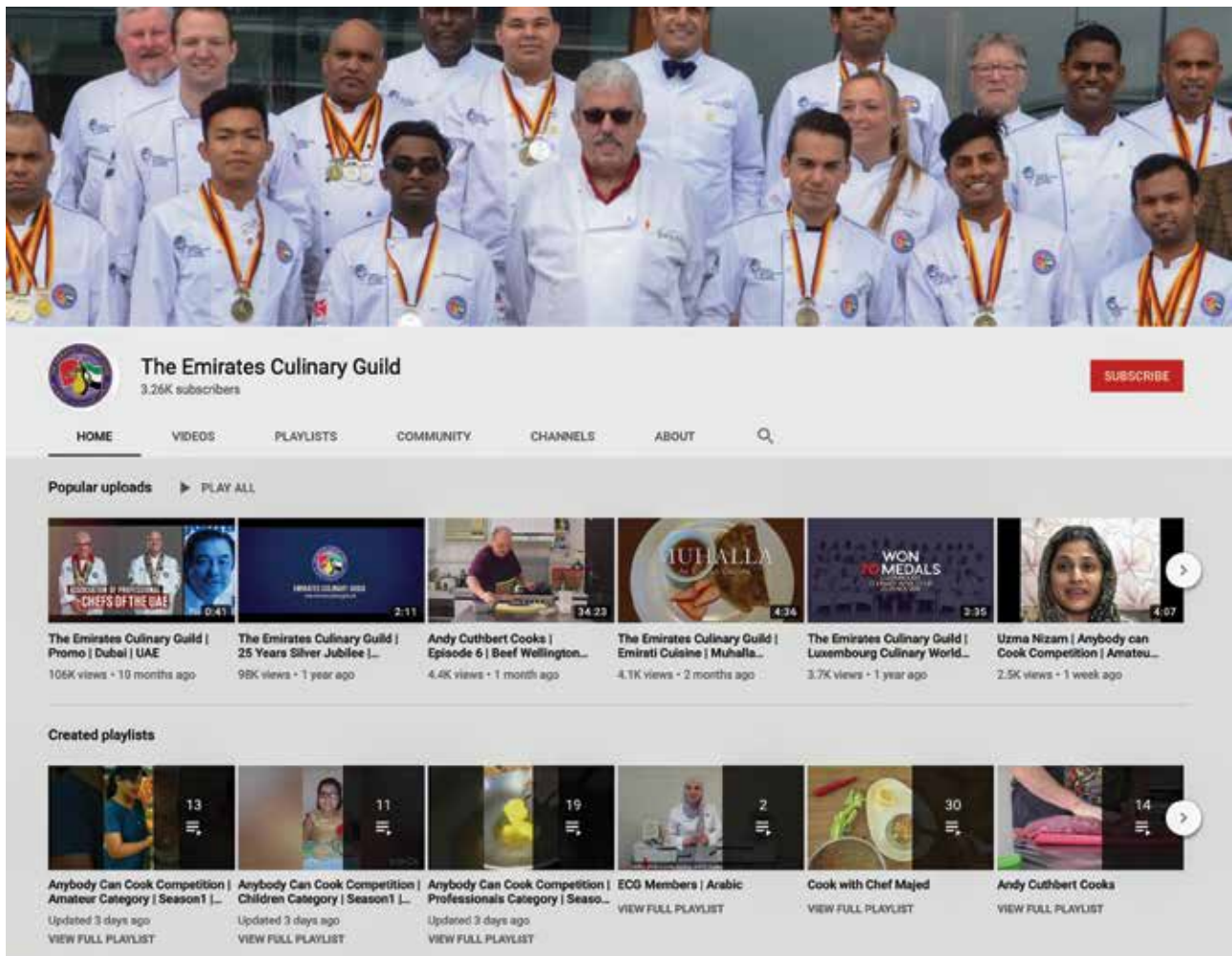
Most young chefs have a YouTube channel, and these young guys are who we need to be going after. Being open to it is the way forward. The reach of social media is unbelievable and the Guild has realized that if it doesn't change and embrace this, it will be left behind.

We will add more and more digital competitions to the calendar of the Guilds competitions along with our traditional competitions of Emirates Salon Culinaire and La Cuisine du Sial.

Digital WILL NOT replace live competitions, but it will be used to enhance skills and give chefs the opportunity to compete and gain exposure. It forms another new learning and skillset for chefs. The reach online gives us a chance to engage with the global chef community.

Meetings of course have been put on hold since March 2020 and we have not been able to have a meeting with members and corporate members since. Like any business and association, we have obligations to our membership base and corporate partners, so in August we shall launch the monthly meeting online.

We would normally not do a meeting in July and August. But with no one



traveling and some already out of the country, it is the perfect time to do an online Zoom meeting with our members. Giving people an opportunity to meet online, see each other and for partners to present special deals, etc. we need to support one another in this time.

There has never been a time as important as today where we need to support each other and support suppliers that have been loyal to us over the years. We need to ensure that we as the Guild give this opportunity to all. The meeting will cover Guild happenings and also give time for each and every corporate member to present live to the audience.

The ECG Chairman Andy Cuthbert being the Continental Director for Africa and Middle East of Worldchefs and Worldchefs congress Chairman, is conducting a Presidents meeting in July with the region's presidents, where they will meet online share updates from their countries and of course discuss the needs of the region and challenges.

This online version will have more Presidents present than any other Presidents' meeting in the past. That is the power we see of this online business and social media space. People will see each other in person, connect with each other, and many will see each other for the first time in years.

It is a powerful medium that we now are forced to use and can only be a benefit to all. The Worldchefs Congress for the first time in its 96-year history shall be virtual in August 2020 due to the pandemic forcing the cancellation of the St Petersburg Congress in Russia.

When a region such as Africa and Middle east can engage with each other, Andy Cuthbert stated he is excited at the prospect of what can come out of this meeting, "It is new ground and we need to take full advantage of it," said Continental Director Cuthbert. "Social media is just another example of making the world smaller and making the seemingly impossible possible."

The ECG has four major platforms, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and the website, all of which are now an important daily part of our communication to the membership base, in the region and globally. The challenge we face is that the content needs to update and stay relevant and timely.

With us being a voluntary organization, it takes commitment to drive this. We have good media partners in Gulf Gourmet that help and our web design company Icon Productions, so we have started to elevate the content and the activity on all platforms.

We will continue to drive forward with our online competitions and we hope that this will give our young chef members further exposure and also inspire some of our older generation of chefs like the Chairman and the President to push the social media platform envelope and ensure we keep the Emirates Culinary Guild relevant in this day and age of change and challenge.

EAT, SLEEP, GOLF REPEAT

Steffen Aßmann, Executive Chef, The Westin Abu Dhabi Golf Resort & Spa, talks about his journey from Germany to the Middle East and what he has learnt along the way

" I still remember, my grandmother and her friends preparing the geese during the late autumn months and removing the feathers to make pillows and bed sheets for us kids," says Executive Chef Steffen Aßmann of The Westin Abu Dhabi Golf Resort & Spa.

"My favorite childhood activity with my grandmother was preserving our harvest berries with jams, and the pickling of vegetables like cabbage and tomatoes for winter," he reminisces.

Raised in a small town near Leipzig in the eastern part of Germany, Chef Setffen grew up in lap of nature surrounded by the forest, green valleys and farms. His house, on the outskirts of the town, had a large yard that saw fresh vegetables and fruits like apple, plum and peach grow on trees.

The close-knit joint family, including his brother and grandparents, had their own poultry farm with chicken, ducks, geese and even a goat. Learning about food self-sufficiency was set early on in Chef Steffen's life. "For me, it was a natural thing to only eat freshly harvested food," he says.

You would assume that Chef Steffen had been bitten by the culinary bug early on in his life. Truth is, like most kids, his dream was to become an



Working with old-school chefs is more like a military drill with extremely strict rules. I asked myself a couple of times if I really want to become a chef

astronaut or scientist. As he got closer to finishing school, a career in astronomy seemed doubtful.

It was his grandfather who cleared the air and pointed him in the culinary direction. His simple advice was, "No matter what career you choose, your grandmother will not be there to cook for you all the time. You might first want to learn how to cook for yourself."

He took the advice to heart. Until then, he had some basic experience working for a small restaurant during the summer holidays. He leveraged it to get a chef apprentice position in Leipzig's best hotel. "It was called The Hotel Intercontinental and is today a Westin

property. Such an amazing coincidence," says Chef Steffen with a smile.

"The first three years of my career as an apprentice were quite tough. Working with old-school chefs is more like a military drill with extremely strict rules. I asked myself a couple of times if I really want to become a chef."

By the end of his apprenticeship, Chef Steffen had toughened up and began enjoying the chef life. He admits that the apprenticeship helped form his career and reinforces his belief that working for a good organization is the best way to learn.

"As a young Chef, I always worked in well-known restaurants in different cities within Germany and later in Austria, he says.

Chef Steffen trained himself in the art of combining ingredients to form textures that create unique sensory experiences. In the early 2000s he worked for fusion restaurant Hiscox Art where traditional German cuisine was given a touch of Asian flavours that included Japanese sushi as well as Mediterranean spices and products. "This was a really creative phase in my career that I am grateful for," he says.

After Europe he says he moved to Australia for a bit before spending a decade in the Middle East.



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His first years in Dubai with Jumeriah Group followed by Marriott International prepped him for his maiden stint as Executive Chef in Saudi Arabia. Those years further cemented his craft before he took on a similar mantle at The Westin Abu Dhabi last year.

"Managing a multireligious, multinational team is a formidable challenge, because your team determines your success in the culinary world. It is critical for any executive chef to build a strong team with the right chefs in the right position," says Chef Steffen when asked about the challenges faced by today's culinary leaders.

He adds, "When I hire, I look for chefs

who bring a "can do attitude" and a positive persona to the kitchen. This makes it easier to lead a team in a calm and motivated manner. It is also the secret to satisfying guests, associates and owners. All said and done, communication is the key to success."

As Executive Chef, Steffen manages a picturesque property located on Abu Dhabi's premier golf course. "The Westin Abu Dhabi Golf Resort & Spa is a vital part of the only true golf resort in the capital," he says. It has been the home of the HSBC Golf Championship for over a decade.

Chef Steffen manages six restaurants and bars including the famous Italian restaurant Sacci, the Retreat sports

bar, and The Lounge for a pleasurable afternoon tea experience overlooking the golf course. The Ballroom offers daylight and a separate terrace with 300 guest capacity as well as one of the largest green areas and lawns for weddings. As Executive Chef his role is to manage all culinary experiences including food theme nights, promotions and events.

What advice does he have for young chefs who would like to follow in his footsteps? Says Chef Steffen, "Do not take a job or a position only for the money. You stand a higher chance of gaining more in the long-term from quality experience."

"I did the same by listening to the advice of my previous Chef, who said, '...as long you work as a Commis, the Senior Chef will teach you. So, travel as much as you can to learn more before settling down and running your own restaurant."

During COVID-19 Chef Steffen is enjoying his time with his wife who he met in Dubai nine years ago. "Our son Johann is five and he is already an expert at making a 'sunny side up'. Especially now, we spend a lot of time together in the kitchen, preparing our favorite dishes from all around the world. I can say honestly that Johann has a talent," says the proud father.



When I hire, I look for chefs who bring a "can do attitude" and a positive persona to the kitchen. This makes it easier to lead a team in a calm and motivated manner





**Nestlé
Golden
Chef's Hat
Award**



DOUBLE THE DELICIOUSNESS

East meets Middle East as Chef **Hady Nabil Hussein** and Chef **Nitish Kumar** showcase the talent that runs through the corridors of the Madinat Jumeirah C&I. Who are they and what do they have for us this month's Golden Chef's Hat Award?

HADY NABIL HUSSEIN

The best of Egypt and the UAE comes together in Chef Hady Nabil Hussein, a commis chef at Madinat Jumeirah C&I. Hailing from an Egyptian family that made the UAE its home before his birth, Chef Hady was more interested in the medical profession than in the culinary arts when he was young. But fate had other plans and given his success in the professional kitchen, it's obvious that it is where he has always belonged.

Born in Ras Al Khaimah, Chef Hady tried initially to get into a medical college. "I wanted to follow my mother's profession. She's a nurse," he says. When he didn't quite make it to the admission list, he turned his attention to his other love – food. As a child, Chef Hady would even challenge his mother in the

kitchen. "I always insisted that I was the better cook between the two of us," he laughs at the memory.

There was no pressure from the family to choose one profession or another. His father worked for an electric vehicles company but Chef Hady couldn't see himself doing that for life. All four Hussein kids were free to decide for themselves what they wanted to do.

Once his mind was made up, Chef Hady went to Cairo to study hotel management at the Helwan University, graduating in 2014. He supplemented that with a diploma in culinary arts from the Culinary Training Centres, run by the Egyptian Chefs Association. To gain hands-on experience, he even worked at some casual dining restaurants in Cairo, including those at Radisson Blu and Novotel.

When army duty called, Chef Hady chose the section that appealed to him most – the military kitchen. A year later in 2016, he kickstarted his career properly with a job at Madinat Jumeirah.

A calm head and an ability to learn quickly make Chef Hady adept at adjusting to any environment. These attributes also help him deliver stellar performance at culinary competitions. One of his notable wins came in December 2018, when he won the 'Best Arabic Chef' title at the SIAL Middle East in Abu Dhabi. At the time, he was just 26. "I believe in keeping recipes simple and flavourful. Complicated ideas are best left for personal experimentation."

For the Golden Chef's Hat Award, he's making a beef and vegetables dish using several Nestle products such as cream, demi glace, beef stock and vegetable stock. The line-up of vegetables is colourful - green peas with mushrooms, pumpkin, carrots, red radish and leafy vegetables.

Other than Arabic cuisine, Chef Hady likes Italian and Mexican flavours in his creations. "But on my own plate, I prefer Egyptian food." Rooted in tradition but ready for new adventures, that's Chef Hady for you.

NITISH SHARMA

As a child, he was drawing and painting on paper. Then, he changed the canvas. The rest is history.

Chef Nitish Sharma has found immense



creative satisfaction in the pastry kitchen. The 29-year-old pastry chef from Mumbai in India is a demi chef de partie at Madinat Jumeirah C&I. For him, every win is sweeter today because he had to overcome family opposition to choose this particular vocation.

"I was inspired by the videos of cake decoration and designs. They fascinated me," he says when you ask him where his interest began. When Chef Nitish told his family that he wanted to study hotel management, the response was not what he expected. "I belong to a middle-class family and they just couldn't understand why I didn't want to do an office job instead. But I was clear that that kind of life was not for me." After all, a job you don't enjoy is a chore but a job you enjoy is a hobby.

Following through firmly with his decision, Chef Nitish signed up for a three-year apprenticeship program in food production and culinary sciences at the Westin Mumbai Garden City. "It was tough because you have to work while studying but you learn in a practical environment." Going through each department during his training, he learnt all aspects of food-related operations.

After finishing his education, Chef Nitish secured a job at the Lalit hotel, where he

**HADY NABIL HUSSEIN**

worked for a few months before getting a break at Etihad Towers in Abu Dhabi. "I came here in 2014. A chef from Westin Mumbai Garden moved and he asked me if I would like to join him."

It was an exciting time. Chef Nitish first saw what an international set-up looks like. He joined as a commis II chef but was promoted to commis I in less than two years. "By the end of 2017, I was demi chef de partie. A year later, when Madinat Jumeirah C&I had an opportunity, I moved to expand my knowledge base." Since then, he has worked on a number of large-scale events including Dubai Golf, Art Dubai, World Government Summit and Dubai World Cup.

The Indian-born chef is excited about the Golden Chefs Hat Award competition. His offering is a chocolate

**NITISH SHARMA**

dome with ice cream. "It has a galaxy theme. The dome is designed as a planet surrounded by a blue ring. The rose decorations on the planet indicate life on it and the milk chocolate represents soil."

His family has now reconciled to his career choice. "My brother made up for me by getting an office job. He was better at academics than I was anyway. So my parents are happy."

Still, Chef Nitish might end up following in his businessman father's footsteps at some point. He wants to open his own cake shop in Mumbai. "But I have to earn enough to realise that dream. So it's quite far away."

What's really close, is the competition. Good luck to both the talented chefs.

Beef tenderloin with demi-glace, herb crust cake, green peas puree, crunchy foie gras with nuts and sautéed vegetables (Wash hands and sanitize the area)

BEEF TENDERLOIN SOUS VIDE

Beef tenderloin	400g
Butter	80g
Black pepper	10g
Basil	25g
Rosemary	20g

Method

- ◆ Season the beef with salt and black

pepper, and put inside a vacuum bag with butter, rosemary and basil. Sous vide at 70°C for 30 minutes

- ◆ After sous vide is done, sear pan and paste it with butter, rosemary and basil. Rest the beef for five minutes and serve with demi-glace sauce.

SHORT RIB CAKE HERB CRUST

Short rib	200 g
Black pepper	20 g
Garlic	15g
Onion	50g
Nestle beef stock	400ml
Salt	15g
White pepper	10g

Method

- ◆ Marinate the short rib with black pepper, white pepper and salt, and sear to caramelize all sides.
- ◆ Dice the onion small and chop garlic.
- ◆ After removing the short rib from searing, in the same pan, add onion and garlic and de-glace the pan with Nestle beef stock.
- ◆ Add the short rib and cover with aluminum foil and put it in an oven for 45 minutes at 190°C.
- ◆ After cooking, shred the short rib. Press it, cut it and coat it with the herb crust.
- ◆ Blend the gravy, strain and boil until reduced.

HERB CRUST

English parsley	20g
Thyme	20g
Basil	20g
Rosemary	20g
Breadcrumbs	40g
Salt	5g
White pepper	5g

Method

- ◆ Blend all the herbs, parsley, thyme, basil, rosemary with breadcrumbs and season it with salt, white pepper.
- ◆ The sauce for short ribs reduces the gravy after straining.

GREEN PEAS PUREE

Green peas	170g
Basil	50g
Nestle Heavy crème	150 ml
Butter	40g
Garlic	10g

Nestle vegetable stock 100 ml

Method

- ◆ Boil green peas with vegetable stock for nine minutes until cooked and a minute before it's done, blanch the basil in it.
- ◆ Strain the stock, blend together and strain again. To get puree, add butter, cream, salt and stir.

PUMPKIN TORTELLINI

Pumpkin puree	50g
Egg	3 pc
Flour zero	120g
Oil	5g
Salt	10

Method

- ◆ Blend pumpkin puree with 3 eggs and add oil and salt.
- ◆ Strain the flour and put in a mixing bowl and make a gap in the centre. Add the puree and mix well by hand.
- ◆ Cover the dough and rest in a chiller for 15 minutes.
- ◆ Make the sheet by pasta machine and add the filling.

PASTA STUFFING

Mushroom	30g
Portobello mushroom	30g
Garlic	5g
Red onion	15g
Chives	5g

Maggi vegetable stock 30 ml

Method

- ◆ Dice the mushroom small, finely chop the onion and chop the garlic and chives.
- ◆ Add butter and onion to a heated pan. Add garlic and mushroom. De-glaze with vegetable stock.

**MUSHROOM FOAM FOR PASTA**

Nestle cream	50ml
Chanterelle mushroom	10g
Salt	3g
White pepper	3g

Method

- ◆ In a pan, add cream, mushroom, salt, white pepper and heat it until temperature reaches 75°C.
- ◆ Blend these ingredients using a hand mixer at an angle.

CROCKETT FOIE GRAS

Foie gras liver	100g
Cherry	4 pc
Onion red	40 g
Salt	5g
Butter	15g

Nestle cream 60 ml

Method

- ◆ Roast the foie gras at 130°C for six minutes, and blend after cooking with cream.
- ◆ Sauté the chopped red onion and season.
- ◆ Mix all together and make a ball shaped stuffing inside the cherry.

CARAMELIZED NUTS

Roasted peanut	30g
Roasted cashew nut	30g
Honey	15g
Nutmeg	5g

Method

- ◆ Roast the nuts in an oven.
- ◆ In a pan heat honey and roasted nuts.
- ◆ Rest the nuts and blend. Avoid soft chunks.
- ◆ Coated the foie gras ball with the nuts

VEG GLAZED

Carrot	4 pc
Wild mushroom	4 pc
Red radish	2 pc
Asparagus	4 pc

Method

- ◆ Cut the carrot and asparagus, and score the mushroom.
- ◆ Poach the carrot in water and butter the asparagus.
- ◆ Sauté the mushroom and red radish

**NESTLE DEMI-GLACE CARAMELIZE VEG
DEGLAZE BEEF PAN FOR TENDERLOIN**

Red onion	40g
Garlic	10g
Lemon leaves	3
Dry roast coriander	5g
Salt	3g
White pepper	5g
Nutmeg	5g
Flour	20g
Butter	20g

Nestle Cream 60ml
Basil oil 20ml**Method**

- ◆ Finely chop the onion and garlic.
- ◆ After searing the beef, de-glaze with red onion for a minute.
- ◆ Add garlic and lemon leaves. Then add cream.
- ◆ Strain the vegetables and press with spoon to mash all and season the sauce
- ◆ Make a row with butter and flour and add the cream mixture to the row. Mix by whisking and finish with basil oil.

GARNISH

Mix fresh leaves

Method

- ◆ Garnish with fresh leaves



Banana ganache, Banana compote, Devil sponge, Dulce filling, chocolate soil, Caramelize Procom and vanilla ice cream

BANANA GANACHE

Milk chocolate	180 gm
Cream	120 gm
Banana puree	80 gm
butter	20 gm
Fresh banana	80 gm
Gelatin leaf	3 gm

Method

- ◆ Boil cream and puree together in a saucepan.
- ◆ Take chocolate in a bowl. Pour the boiled mixture on the chocolate and mix it.
- ◆ Mash banana separately and later mix it in the ganache.
- ◆ Melt the gelatin and mix it in the ganache.

BANANA COMPOTE

Fresh banana	150 gm
Sugar	35 gm
Orange juice	70 gm
Pectin	2 gm
Vanilla pod	1 gm
Gelatin leaf	2 gm

Method

- ◆ Peel off fresh banana and chop it. Take the chopped banana and orange juice in a saucepan and cook it continuously in low heat.
- ◆ Mix vanilla pod, pectin and sugar in a separate bowl. Later add the sugar ingredients in the banana mixture and cook it until it gets thick.
- ◆ Once it is thick remove it in a separate bowl and add melted gelatin in it.

DEVIL SPONGE

Sugar	1120 gm
Flour	968 gm
Coco powder	212 gm
Baking powder	18 gm
Baking soda	18 gm
Salt	12 gm
Egg	220 gm
Milk	560 gm
Vegetable oil	276 gm
Hot water	560 gm

Method

- ◆ Whisk all the ingredients except hot water in a mixing bowl.
- ◆ Add water in the mixture. Whisk it for 3 minutes until lumps are gone.
- ◆ Once mixture is ready, put it on a baking tray with parchment paper. Bake for 15 minutes at 180°C.

DULCEY FILLING

Biskelia chocolate	130 gm
Cream	90 gm
Glucose	10 gm
Trimoline	10 gm

Method

- ◆ Take cream, glucose and trimoline in a saucepan and take it to a boil.
- ◆ Pour it on the biskelia chocolate.

CHOCOLATE SOIL

Chocolate	50 gm
Malto powder	150 gm

Method

- ◆ Melt the chocolate and mix the malto powder using a spatula until it resembles a crumble.

VANILLA ICE CREAM

Whip cream	284 ml
Full fat milk	300 ml
Castor sugar	115 gm
Vanilla pod	2 gm
Egg yolks	3 no.

Method

- ◆ Boil the cream, milk and vanilla pod in a saucepan.
- ◆ Mix sugar and yolk in a bowl. Pour the boiled mixture on the yolk while whisking it continuously.
- ◆ Pour the anglaise mixture in the ice cream machine and let it churn.

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**ARLA
PRO.**

DESSERT PATROL

He was a commis when he first won the 'Best Pastry Chef' trophy at Salon Culinaire. Since then **Kapila Amaratunga** has had many prestigious wins. The executive pastry chef of W Dubai tracks his extraordinary journey in a conversation with Gulf Gourmet...

Once upon a time, a rookie pastry chef made a mistake in the kitchen, the result of a 'shortcut' he had decided to take.

Punishment followed swiftly.

After a hard day's work, he was made to stay overnight and make 100 rose decorations. By the end of the process, he was exhausted beyond imagination. That day he vowed to always choose the right way over the easy way.

That attitude made him executive pastry chef at the age of 28, not an easy feat in an industry that prioritises experience over talent. Today, the Sri Lankan-born *culinaire* enjoys the enviable position of executive pastry chef at W Dubai, the Palm. During his 18-year career, he has won a number of medals and honours, some at internationally-renowned competitions.

His achievements are even more impressive when you consider the beginnings. Chef Kapila started out as a helper to financially assist his struggling family. "My father was paralysed and couldn't take care of the family," he recalls. "My mother earned some money through tailoring, which wasn't enough. I joined a 3-star hotel as a helper and worked from 7 AM to 6 PM daily. I wasn't too good in academics, so it was easy to start working."

A young Chef Kapila did not know much

about hospitality back then but he did figure out that chefs held a special position in the industry. "I went to help the pastry chef. After three months, the executive chef asked me if I wanted to join the pastry kitchen." Thus began his journey, as a pastry cook trainee in Palm Village Hotel in Sri Lanka, in early 2002.

His first brush with high-end hotels came soon after. "After a year, I joined the Pegasus Reef Hotel in Wattala as a commis III and then, the Trans Asia Hotel, which is now called Cinnamon Lakeside." Along the way, he picked up a certification in pastry and bakery from Sri Lanka's Asian International Hotel School.

Trans Asia is where the life-changing lesson was learnt. His boss was Chef Indika Pradeep Kumar, a strict but encouraging mentor. "Whatever I am today is because of him. He taught me everything I know, many times with punishments to ensure I take my work seriously. He's based in Australia now."

Even today, the two are in touch and Chef Kapila often turns to Chef Pradeep for advice.

A chance interview call won Chef Kapila an opportunity to build his career in Dubai. "There were interviews for a job in a cake shop in Dubai. Of the 200 people who were interviewed, they picked five and I was one of them." He joined Mister Baker towards the end of 2005 as senior

confectioner. "After a while, I realised I wasn't happy because I was making the same thing daily. I wanted to move to a hotel pastry kitchen." An opportunity at the Al Bustan Rotana Hotel was grabbed without hesitation. Around that time, he also got his first experience of culinary competitions, winning two bronze medals at the Salon Culinaire in 2007. He followed it up with 'Best Pastry Chef of the Year' title next year, winning two golds and a silver for cake decoration, pastry showpiece and five plated desserts. "If I am not mistaken, this was the first time in history that a commis had won this title." Since then, Chef Kapila has gone on to win a number of medals, including at major international competitions such as Culinary Olympics (IKA) in Germany and the Culinary World Cup in Luxembourg.

His first wins got him noticed by Dubai culinary experts. He left Al Bustan Rotana in mid-2008 to join Le Meridien Dubai Hotel & Conference Centre as junior sous chef but returned to the former in a couple of years as assistant pastry chef. During his second stint at Al Bustan Rotana, the Sri Lankan chef supplemented his qualifications with a degree in hotel management from the National Institute of Management, India.

2012 was a special year.

Chef Kapila joined the UAE National Culinary Team and represented his

adopted country at the Culinary Olympics in Germany. "Altogether, we won 18 gold medals. That was a first for the UAE."

The next year, he took one more step forward with the pastry chef designation at the Al Murooj Rotana Hotel. A year later, he became executive pastry chef at just 28. "That is rare in the UAE. I am grateful to Sheraton Dubai Creek Hotel for giving me that chance." Although he was happy to have reached the top of the ladder at such a young age, Chef Kapila was aware that he had a lot to learn still. That's why he stayed at Sheraton Dubai Creek for four long years. "I had a lot of freedom there and I also started training pastry chefs for contests. Some of my boys won awards at competitions and it was very satisfying." In the meantime, Chef Kapila also dabbled with the hot kitchen as he went about developing concepts for the hotel.

Two years ago, he made a lateral move when recruitments began for the pre-opening of W Dubai. "It was a different concept that appealed to me. At W Dubai, it's not just about the food on the plate but an entire experience. You have to mix the traditional with the modern and it's exciting." Giving customers what they want has the highest priority at W Dubai. But not everyone can deal with the pressure. In fact, just a few of the people including Chef Kapila are left over from the pre-opening team.

The 34-year-old chef shares a good rapport with his team, even though his management style is like that of his mentor Chef Pradeep. "I don't



Chef Kapila with his wife Jhaneen.

micromanage and I trust my team. I also make it a point to give them credit when they do a good job." Appreciative of his approach, his team members often reach out to Chef Kapila for training beyond work hours. "They are passionate and driven and they like to learn new things. Some of my former team members have got great jobs in other places. I must be doing something right!"

In the future, Chef Kapila would like to launch his own pastry shop, preferably with a small demo kitchen where people can learn pastry. "I've still not decided on a location. It probably won't be in Dubai." The newly-married chef will have support from his Filipino wife, who is also a professional chef in Dubai. "She works in the hot kitchen but is good with pastry." Chef Kapila also has an older brother, who is a computer engineer.

When in the kitchen, he likes to focus on just a few flavours in his creations. "Three flavours is a good target. Otherwise your dish becomes too confusing for the mouth." One of his signature dishes is pistachio passion, a honey pistachio cheesecake served with raspberry sorbet. He likes to use Arla Pro cream cheese in the dish. "It's not too heavy and has a nice flavour."

His message to budding chefs is simple – don't expect the real kitchen to be anything like culinary school. "You will have to learn from zero, especially how to handle pressure. Watching the clock will never get you ahead. It's easier to work hard at a young age and build the foundation for a successful career," he signs off.

Going by his achievements, it's hard to disagree with that philosophy.

Pistachio Passion Honey Cheesecake, Raspberry Honey Sorbet

ARLA PASSION CHEESECAKE MIX

Egg yolk	40gm
Sugar	40gm

Honey	100gm
Arla Pro cream cheese	230gm
Arla whipped cream 35%	500gm
Gelatine	20gm
Passion fruit puree	100gm

ARLA PISTACHIO CHEESECAKE MIX

Egg yolk	40gm
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Sugar	40gm
Honey	100gm
Arla Pro cream cheese	230gm
Arla whipped cream 35%	500gm
Gelatine	16gm
Pistachio paste	120gm

Cheesecake Method

- ♦ Beat the egg yolks until frothy in a clean



and sanitized mixing bowl. Add boiled sugar and honey mixture (114°C) and beat it until a smooth fluffy texture

- ◆ Fold in the cream cheese and the pistachio paste (passion puree for passion cheesecake) in turns into the egg mixture
- ◆ Gradually add the melted gelatin in to the mixture and mix well
- ◆ Finally, add the whipped cream 35% and mix well
- ◆ Pipe the cheesecake mixture to the mold with biscuits base and refrigerate

BISCUITS BASE

Digestive biscuits	400gm
Sugar	50gm
Salt	2gm

Lurpak butter 82% 90gm

Method

- ◆ Mix all dry ingredients together. Powder it coarse and mix well with melted butter.
- ◆ Flatten in a tray or mold where we make the cheese cake and bake at 160°C for 8 minutes.

HONEY RASPBERRY SORBET

Water	660g
Dextrose	340g
Honey	106g
Sorbet stabilizer	8g
Raspberry puree	880g

Method

- ◆ Hand-blend the water and honey with dextrose
- ◆ Put into a pan and bring to 40°C.
- ◆ Whisk in the sucrose with the stabilizer and bring up to 85°C.
- ◆ Take it off the heat and cool as quickly as possible.
- ◆ When the mixture is at 4°C, add the raspberry puree. Put in the fridge for 6-12 hours.
- ◆ Put into an ice-cream maker and churn according to the instructions.

PISTACHIO GLAZE

Arla whipped cream 35%	600gm
Fresh milk	300gm
Glucose	300gm
Sugar	750gm

Water	120gm
Corn flour	50gm
Gelatin	60gr
Pistachio paste	150gr
Natural food coloring green	

PASSION GLAZE

Arla whipped cream 35%	600gm
Passion fruit puree	300gm
Glucose	300gm
Sugar	750gm
Water	120gm
Corn flour	50gm
Gelatin	60gr

Natural food coloring yellow

Glaze Method

- ◆ In a saucepan boil water, sugar, glucose, cream and passion puree (pistachio paste for pistachio glaze)
- ◆ Soak the gelatin leaves on the side
- ◆ Once the mixture is boiled add corn flour and mix well and cook well
- ◆ Once it becomes a saucy texture remove from the fire and add soaked gelatin into it and add the food color as well

ON A WING AND A PRAYER

Developed countries see a surge in cloud, ghost and virtual kitchens, as traditional restaurants struggle to reopen and chefs wait with bated breath to be rehired

The worldwide sentiment in the HORECA industry these days can be best described by the term 'silent chaos'. People in the industry are navigating their way through uncharted paths as the terror unleashed by the pandemic hurts the sector.

New revenue models are coming into play faster than expected while chefs wait with bated breath to return to the workplace. Reopening dates have been pushed further down the road by hotels that were hoping to reopen next month. And 50 per cent of chef jobs are in peril in countries in the Middle East, Europe and in North America.

Chef Uwe Micheel, president, **Emirates Culinary Guild**, says, "Many hotels find it cheaper to keep their doors closed than take on the high costs associated with day-to-day operations when demand is extremely low. Decision makers are looking at different options on how to reopen and we must share



Uwe Micheel

experiences to find out what works best in the months to come. For young chefs that have lost their jobs, my advice is to use this time effectively to learn new skills online."

Ryan Marquis, president, **Culinary Federation of Canada**, says, "No one truly knows what the 'new normal' so to speak is going to look like. Laying off my staff has been the most difficult thing for me



Ryan Marquis

as they were my extended family. God forbid, if the second wave of COVID-19 hits Canada, then at least 50 per cent of restaurant owners might find it difficult to continue operations. Fixed costs such as mortgages remain, and it is next to impossible to sustain operations with just takeaways."

A 2018 Frost & Sullivan analysis predicted online food delivery to see significant growth by 2025. The prediction has proven true for some players. For the HORECA sector in countries still facing early stages of the pandemic, this is the only viable option.

Restaurateurs are trying delivery-only models such as **cloud, ghost, dark and virtual kitchens**. And these are making waves in many countries around the world.

A cloud kitchen is like a coworking space for two or more restaurant brands that work only with delivery platforms. A ghost kitchen works with delivery



Tony Fernandes



Bybee Chacko

**Andy Cuthbert**

platforms and develops their own delivery system such as Orderstack and Restolabs. The dark kitchen is a traditional restaurateur dedicating space to delivery. And a virtual kitchen is for established brands to enter a market where it is not present yet, through a franchise agreement.

"These temporary solutions can certainly not replace the concept of restaurant, but represent a momentary way to go, that may also continue in the future along with the actual restaurant business," says a spokesperson for **HOSTMilano, Italy**, the leading foodservice exhibition in a country, which was among the first to be severely impacted by the pandemic.

John Lettieri, founder, president & CEO of the **Hero burger chain** says he is promoting the virtual kitchen in Canada. "Virtual kitchens are set to disrupt the eatery industry in Canada. Revenue from food delivery is estimated to grow by 2.5 million per year at a rate of 23.3% for approximately 95,000 operators," he says. Benefits include the advantage of existing fixed assets, expanding franchise formulas without start-up costs and investments reduced to a minimum. The virtual kitchen gives access to new dining trends and changes consumer preferences.

Middle East countries, whose hospitality is recognized worldwide and accommodation facilities are a symbol of a futuristic architecture, are looking to the future with optimism. In order to re-open, restaurants and hotels are reimagining interior space by reducing the number of tables available and providing the customer a safer mise en place, using disposable products.

**Rahil Rathod**

Naim Maadad of **Middle East Restaurant Association** says that in the UAE, rules dictate social distance of two meters between the tables and operating with reduced capacity. Seating times are fixed within restaurants and the buffet system is no longer allowed.

Chef Uwe agrees and adds, "Unlike fast food restaurants, the demand for delivery from fine dining restaurants is limited and not sustainable. However, looking at the initial opening of beach resorts in Dubai I believe we will see a good response in the months to come. What is left to be seen is whether guests have enough of a disposable income to spend like they did during the pre-pandemic days."

Italy is showing encouraging examples in fine dining as it enters phase 3. Top-tier starred restaurants are enticing customers by offering 'restaurant bond' which is a 'pay one get two' voucher valid until the year-end. And some offer 20% discount on online bookings.

Tony Fernandes, executive chef and F&B director at **Crowne Plaza Toronto Airport** says, "After two decades of working in three countries and surviving two global recessions, this is unlike anything I have ever witnessed." He echoes the sentiments of his peers in other countries and believes that buffets are not coming back anytime soon as plated plates take its place.

Andy Cuthbert, **continental director for Africa and Middle East of Worldchefs and chairman for Worldchefs congress**, is preparing to conduct an online Presidents' meeting this month with the culinary presidents of national associations in the region. He says,

**John Lettieri**

"The Worldchefs Congress for the first time in its 96-year history will be virtual due to the pandemic forcing the cancellation of the **St Petersburg Congress in Russia.**"

Restaurant Chef Rahil Rathod, of **Delta Hotels by Marriott Beausejour in Moncton**, New Brunswick, and a representative of Culinary Team Canada, says, "Thanks to the multiplier effect, the F&B sector could be the last to recover from the pandemic. People no longer have the same confidence dining out and the take-out industry will evolve. I see potential for a lot of chef-driven menus for take out."

"The period from May to August are usually the busiest" says Sous Chef Bybee Chacko of **The Westin Harbour Castle, Toronto**, adding, "but this year is clearly different. Thousands of chefs are furloughed in every city around the world. Even those chefs who are financially comfortable are struggling because they have gone from working eight to twelve hours on their feet, to just sitting at home for months. As we reopen towards the end of the year, menus are going to get shorter."

Chef Uwe too echoes the sentiments that menus will get shorter as chefs find ways to curb wastage and save money. He however does see a light at the end of the tunnel. He says, "The industry will come back stronger and people will go out to hotels and restaurants faster than expected. It's just that the coming few months will be challenging and we have to get through this phase by supporting one another."

(with inputs from Aquin George, Vrunda Bhatt and HOSTMilano press office)

June - July 2020 **Gulf Gourmet**



WOMAN OF STEEL

Life gave her lemons. And she made lemon pie. **Alannah Francesca**, the group executive pastry chef of Sarood Hospitality, has a remarkable talent for turning adversities into opportunities. Meet the steel-spirited trainer of the UAE Junior National Pastry Team...

Growing up on the less-privileged side of the tracks and getting kicked out of college can derail any talented kid.

But not Alannah Francesca.

You see, the more challenges life throws at the lady, the more stubborn she gets about teaching life a lesson or two in persistence.

At just 30, she is already the Group Executive Pastry Chef at Sarood Hospitality, a full-service hospitality company with brands such as the Noodle House, Al Nafoorah, Flow, Pai Thai, Pierchic, Perry & Blackwelder's, Trattoria Toscana, The Duck Hook and Hillhouse Brasserie. Chef Alannah runs the pastry show at Sarood, from designing and developing menus to leading the transition of the restaurants to better experiences.

When you meet her, the first things you notice are her exuberant personality and easygoing demeanour. They mask the adversities that have shaped her. Beginning with a rough childhood in Luton in England to facing health problems at a young age, Chef Alannah has had a tough ride so far. But instead



I'm no stranger to working hard really. I started at the age of 14. We were a family of five kids and we needed money. I had to help out. I did washing and cooking to earn some money

of being demotivated, she pushes her boundaries, seeking the next challenge.

"I'm no stranger to working hard really," she says nonchalantly. "I started at the age of 14. We were a family of five kids and we needed money. I had to help out. I did washing and cooking to earn some money." As a child, the ambition was to become a graphic designer. That changed with the very first hour in college in the graphic designing class. "I realised I wanted to be a chef and I have not looked back since."

Not that it was a smooth sailing journey.

Although Chef Alannah enrolled in a culinary college in Luton, she couldn't get too far with the course. "I ended up in a fight with someone and I was kicked out of the college." Turns out, that was a blessing in disguise – she ended up joining the Westminster Kingsway College London, one of the most prestigious culinary colleges in the country.

"It was a lucky break. At a catering show, I got chatting to this lady who had a connection to the Westminster Kingsway College. I told her I was keen on joining their culinary course and she said there were 44 candidates in the waiting list. I managed to convince her to get me on top of the list and that's how it happened."

Perhaps the lady saw what is so obviously a part of Chef Alannah's personality – passion and drive. At 16, when most teens are busy having fun, Chef Alannah worked a full-time job at the Luton Hoo Hotel, attending college on her days off. She learnt pastry as well as flower and cake decoration. The most impressive part? There was no adult spurring her on.

"I'm still the same self-driven person." Always ready for a new experience, she took an unpaid job at the Royal Garden Hotel in Kensington to see what London was all about. It became easier then to bid adieu to Luton and moved to London as she hit adulthood.

"My executive chef at the Luton Hoo told me that I could never be a demi chef de partie before I was at least 22 years old. So, it was immensely satisfying to prove him wrong by joining the Landmark Hotel in London as demi chef de partie at age 18." It was a time of upheaval at Landmark. Many top-level chefs had left or were leaving. This gave Chef Alannah the opportunity to run the operations independently. "I was in charge of ordering, overseeing waiters and kitchen operations. We had three restaurants to look after and also room service." Despite these big responsibilities,





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money was tight. Chef Alannah slept in her car in the parking lot, single-mindedly focusing on learning.

In the two years spent at Landmark, she picked up valuable skills that came in handy when she moved to the Savoy hotel in April 2011. "I worked for three years at the 5-star hotel, starting as chef de partie." The British chef, who was the youngest in the team, ran the banquet pastry operations, which could sometimes go to 1,500 covers.

Describing herself as 'not a girly girl', Chef Alannah insists that she never faced any discrimination because of her gender. Maybe the fact that she grew up with four brothers made it easier for her to deal with male colleagues. It also made her very competitive, which won her a mentor in Chef Martin Chiffers. "He saw that I was driven and he encouraged me to join competitions when I was 18."

Chef Alannah tasted success with her very first competition. From there on, it was a series of fortunate events at contests. "I won gold in Salon Culinaire Londres Junior Decorative Exhibit in



I have hiked up Mount Kilimanjaro earlier. I don't have a lot of training in mountain climbing but I am a sporty person

both 2011 and 2012; the Association of Pastry Chefs Dessert of the Year 2011; the UK Junior World Chocolate Masters in 2012 as well as a gold and a silver at the Emirates Culinary Guild Pastry Showpiece in 2013." These are just a few from the long list of her wins.

A firm believer in paying it forward, Chef Alannah now trains the pastry chefs in the UAE's Junior National Pastry Team. The value of her contributions is obvious in the fact that the team won the African Culinary Cup in 2018 and 2019 and a silver in the 2020 Culinary Olympics. "There are two Sri Lankan chefs that I

have been training for two years. They are passionate and dedicated. Now one of them is too old for the junior team. So I might take a female pastry chef under my wings this time."

Her adventures have always started young. She was just 22 when Chef Alannah made her way to Dubai at the insistence of Chef Martin. "In early-2013, I joined the Address Dubai Marina as speciality sous chef for pastry. I had a team of 22 chefs and we were running a large banquet operation."

Two years later, she dabbled with entrepreneurship by joining Savarin FZ, a company founded by Jan Bijsterbosch, the former senior vice president of Emirates Flight Catering. "It was a B2B gourmet desserts company and we were producing and supplying desserts in bulk to hotels, coffee shops, cafes and restaurants." Having first declined the offer to join the company as a founder, she changed her mind and took the opportunity to try something new. "So far, it has been my best experience. After I packed the first brownie myself, it was unreal



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to watch the number of boxes that went to clients like Etihad Airways every day." The scale of the operations continued to excite the chef. Once, for an event in Abu Dhabi, the team was producing 10,000 cakes a day for 10 days straight. "My kitchen was in Sharjah and I was based in Dubai. There was no time to come back home daily. So I showered in the changing room and slept in the car for 10 days!"

However, Chef Alannah realised after a couple of years that she needed to move on if she wanted to stay on the creative side of things. "It was a bit disappointing

to not be able to see how the end product looks on a plate and how it is received by the customer. I missed not being creative."

About six months ago, Chef Alannah joined Sarood Hospitality. She oversees pastry for all the restaurants owned by the group. "The first thing I did when I came here was to assess the restaurants and review their pastry offerings. Some of them were sourcing desserts from outside because many restaurants don't have the resources to have full-time pastry chefs. As a first step, I set up a central pastry kitchen."

The coronavirus pandemic has slowed some plans. Chef Alannah encouraged her employers to do their bit for society by getting fruits and vegetables left over from the restaurants donated to health workers. "We supplied over 5,000 such packages to doctors and nurses on the front lines." Having seen the more disappointing aspects of life, Chef Alannah never hesitates to lend a helping hand. In fact, her long-term goal is to open a culinary school in Luton to give underprivileged children a chance. "I want to help kids who don't have the resources to build a better future." She rues the fact that most people



think white British children are always privileged. "Many of us are not."

Her empathy extends also to people with disabilities. "I was diagnosed with early osteoporosis. So I understand how difficult it is for people with physical challenges to manage day-to-day activities." Recently, when she was operated upon for a broken right hand, Chef Alannah taught herself to cook with her left hand.

However, the cause closest to her heart is help for people suffering from Alzheimer's disease. "I lost my grandma to it. She was

my inspiration." Chef Alannah plans to hike up Mount Everest in November to raise money for Alzheimer's. "I have hiked up Mount Kilimanjaro earlier. I don't have a lot of training in mountain climbing but I am a sporty person." Growing up, she played netball, football, rugby and even golf. "My mother was a business development manager at a golf course. She couldn't afford a babysitter, so we used to hang around the golf course. A pro player there taught me how to play and I was hooked." Chef Alannah even competed in tournaments until osteoporosis weakened her bones, making them vulnerable to fractures.

Eventually, she had to abandon the sport for the sake of health.

Despite the challenges, she's determined to use her hands to whip up culinary artworks. "My brothers and I love to work with our hands and so we are in vocational jobs. One of my brothers is a mechanic, another a bartender and yet another, a physiotherapist."

Indeed, there is magic in those hands. Combine that with the steel in her spirit and Chef Alannah is a remarkable personality. We're so looking forward to the next episode of her journey.



Nestlé
Golden
Chef's Hat
Award



A FUSION OF TALENTS

After the pandemic-induced break, the Golden Chef's Hat Award is back to test the talent of budding chefs. Chefs **Ashoka Yapa Bandar** and **Kondala Rao Yadagiri** from Five Jumeirah Village Hotel are set to challenge competitors with their delicious fusion creations...

Ashoka Yapa Bandar

He came to Dubai after college on the advice of his uncle, who was a waiter in a hotel here. Chef Ashoka Yapa Bandar has not looked back since. He's already been here for nearly a decade.

The 29-year-old junior sous chef from Five Palm Jumeirah is trying to hone his skills through competitions as he goes about building a career in the most exciting culinary hub in the Middle East. He initially joined the Le Meridien Dubai Hotel & Conference Centre as a steward. However, after witnessing the creativity of chefs, he was inspired to move into the kitchen. "Within six months, I started learning pastry from scratch," Chef Ashoka says.

"As a commis III, I had to do a lot of ground-level work initially but I enjoyed every moment."

A year and a half later, he moved to Sofitel, the Palm as a commis I. "I got a promotion within the first year to demi chef de partie. My executive chef was quite happy with my performance. So when he moved to Five Palm Jumeirah in 2017, he brought me along."

At the Five Palm Jumeirah, Chef Ashoka is a part of the team that makes desserts for all the outlets of the hotel. There is also a cake shop that the team caters to.

Chef Ashoka finds pre-openings especially challenging but also sees

them as a great opportunity to learn. "There is always a lot to do because you have to build things right from the bottom up. Also, there are so many teams to work with. So you learn the value of teamwork and also how to deal with different personalities."

He feels the same about competitions. So far, Chef Ashoka has won two bronze medals for live cake decorations at the Emirates Salon Culinaire Sharjah and Dubai.

For the Golden Chef's Hat Award, he is putting together a dessert that uses Nestle chocolate mousse, KitKat, milk chocolate and dark chocolate. "The KitKat will give it a crunchy feel. I have used the dark chocolate along with the milk chocolate to vary the sweetness and bitterness of chocolate. There's also raspberry mousse, sesame seeds and pistachio crumble. Finally, the lime confit adds some sourness to the sweetness. It's a fusion of different international tastes."

In the next 10 years, Chef Ashoka wants to have learnt enough to open his own pastry shop in Sri Lanka. "My two sisters and my mother want me to return. It was hard for them when I decided to leave the country. But I wanted new experiences."

He's especially grateful for his boss, Chef Adnan Khan, for encouraging him to participate in competitions. "He's very supportive and that makes a huge difference to my motivation levels. I hope to do him proud."



Ashoka Yapa Bandar



Kondala Rao Yadagiri

Kondala Rao Yadagiri

Chef Kondala used to be a reluctant chef. In fact, he gave up on hospitality at least twice before finding out that cooking could actually turn into a passion. Today, he's the junior sous chef at Five Jumeirah Village.

Born and raised in Andhra Pradesh in southern India, he wanted to be a pharmacist as a child. "I even worked in a hospital part-time when I was in school," recalls the 28-year-old. However, tragedy struck and his father passed away when Chef Kondala was just 14 years old. Struggling to deal with the shock, he went to stay with a friend in Hyderabad. "My friend suggested that we study hotel management. I didn't even know what that meant. I thought it was just front office work and I enrolled in a food production course." When a teenaged Chef Kondala realised it involved cooking, he abandoned the course and went back home.

A month later, his friend persisted in trying to convince him to return. "So I decided to give it another try. This time around, I finished college and the started with training in a hotel." The first experience was again disappointing. Spending 18-20 hours daily in training was too much for the young man.

"I left again but then when I thought



about it, I realised that I would have wasted the two years of college if I didn't go forward in this field." Taking up the challenge, he went to the Novotel hotel at Hyderabad airport to train. "Once I got into the professional kitchen, I started understanding the value of food. It has the ability to make people happy, to make them forget their problems for some time."

Chef Kondala then started learning about other cuisines, which deepened his interest. "I learnt about buffet, international cuisines such as Italian and Asian, cold kitchen, hot kitchen. Except pastry, I was exposed to all the exciting aspects of the professional kitchen."

A trainee there had a brother working in Abu Dhabi. He recommended that Chef Kondala try his luck getting a job in the

UAE. The attempt worked and he scored employment at the Intercontinental Abu Dhabi. "I came to the UAE in April 2013. After working there for two years, I moved to Pullman JLT Dubai as demi chef de partie and then to Five Palm Jumeirah as chef de partie." Chef Kondala went briefly to a pan-Asian restaurant at the Caesar's Palace Blue Waters Dubai but returned to the Five Palm Jumeirah fold in a year.

His dish for the Golden Chefs Hat Award competition reflects his love for diversity of taste. "I'm making a corn-fed chicken dish which mixes Asian and European flavours. It has honey from leatherwood tree, sundried tomato, purple potatoes, juniper berry sauce for the European flavours and edamame and coconut for the Asian element."

Sounds like a delicious experiment indeed.

Leatherwood Honey & Blueberry Caramelized Onion Stuffed Baby Chicken Leg, Edamame and Sundried Tomato Crust, Coconut Flavored Creamy Purple Potato and Jerusalem Artichoke, Baby Carrot, Hoisin Duck and Foie gras Filo Tartlets, Basil Snow, Cucumber Ketchup, Juniper Berry Sauce

LEATHERWOOD HONEY & BLUEBERRY CARAMELIZED ONION

Fresh blueberry juice	30 ml
Leatherwood honey	20 ml
Butter	10 gm
White sweet onion	80 gm

Method

- ◆ Sauté shredded onion in heated pan till the raw flavor goes then add fresh blueberry juice and cranberry juice. Reduce it and add honey and butter.

EDAMAME AND SUNDRIED TOMATO CRUST

Edamame	20 gm
Parsley	5 gm

Thai basil	5 gm
Breadcrumbs	10 gm
Dried tomato	20 gm
Garlic powder	2 gm
Onion powder	2 gm
Salt	3 gm

Method

- ◆ Place the dried edamame seeds, parsley, basil and dried tomato, toasted breadcrumbs in a bowl. Attach to the hand blender and blend till you find fine powder. Then add the rest of ingredients and blend well.

STUFFED BABY CHICKEN LEG

Baby chicken leg with bone	400 gm
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Caramelized onion	80 gm
Thyme	A spring
Garlic	4 cloves
Butter	15 gm
Salt	2 gm
Pepper	2 gm

Method

- Place the deboned and stuffed caramelized onion baby chicken into a vacuum bag and add the rest of ingredients into it. Place in a sous vide and cook for 40 minutes in 55°C. Once done, remove the chicken and keep the rest for sauce, sear the chicken with butter and coat with edamame and tomato crust.

MASH

Purple potato	160 gm
Jerusalem artichoke	20 gm
Maggi potato powder	10 gm
Maggi coconut powder	25 ml
Maggi chicken stock	20 ml
Clarified Butter	10 ml
Salt	4 gm

Method

- Prepare the mixture of combined mash of purple potato and artichoke. Add to coconut cream and chicken stock and cook till it's creamy. Finally, add butter and salt to taste.

HOISIN DUCK AND FOIE GRAS FILO TARTLET

Duck breast	80 gm
Foie gras	30 gm
Truffle oil	2 ml
Thai basil	5 gm
Onion	5 gm
Garlic	3 cloves
Hoisin sauce	10 gm
Dark soya	4 ml
Filo sheet	3 small sheet
Sun choke	6 gm

Method

- Sautee duck breast along with garlic and onion then add hoisin sauce. Cook well and finish with Thai basil and a drop of dark soya sauce. Take out the pan from the range and wait till it goes from hot to warm. Add precooked foie gras cubes and truffle oil into the duck mixture. Mix gently. Meanwhile prepare the filo tart and keep on the side, combine mixture with tart garnish with sun choke chips, fresh truffle slices.

BASIL SNOW

Basil	2 gm
Chives	2 gm
Coriander	2 gm
Maltosec	5 gm



Corn oil	5 ml
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Method

- Blanch the leaves and drain well. Blend it with corn oil till it's green and fine. Strain to remove the green flavored oil. Pour the oil into the maltosec and whisk it well and gently.

CUCUMBER KETCHUP

Cucumber	40 gm
Onion	5 gm
Green capsicum	5 gm
Mustard seeds	1 gm
Celery	10 gm
Turmeric	1 gm
Vinegar	5 ml
Salt	3 gm

Method

- Combine the cucumber, onion and green capsicum in a bowl. Sprinkle the salt and allow to stay in room temperature for 10 minutes. Rinse with water and drain well. Place the veggies back into a pot with the remaining ingredients. Cook over medium heat for 15 minutes then blend it fine. Serve warm.

JUNIPER BERRY SAUCE

Balsamic vinegar	10 ml
Demi glaze	40 gm
Bay leaf	1 leaf
Juniper berry	6 gm
Sherry vinegar	5 ml
Honey	5 ml
Shallots	5 gm
Garlic	2 gm
Beef stock	30 ml

Method

- Sautee shallots and garlic in olive oil. Add cinnamon, cloves, bay leaf, thyme and crushed coriander seeds and nutmeg powder. Add juniper berries and demi glaze. Cook on simmering fire for a few minutes and add balsamic reduction, sherry vinegar and honey.

To Assemble

- Place the potato mash on a warm and cleaned main course plate. Arrange the sautéed baby carrot then crusted baby chicken leg on top.
- Pour the juniper berry sauce around the chicken.
- Arrange the basil snow on a corner of the plate then place the garnished Hoisin duck and foie gras Filo tartlet on top.

KitKat Milk Chocolate Mousse with Devil Sponge, Pistachio Crumble, Raspberry Mousse, Chocolate Sauce, Sesame Tuile and Vanilla Crème Brûlée With Lime Confit and Neutral Glaze

KITKAT MILK CHOCOLATE MOUSSE

Pasteurized Egg	20 gm
Pasteurized Egg yolk	10 gm
Nestle sweet condensed milk	15 gm
Milk Chocolate	50 gm
Kit Kat chocolate	50 gm

Gelatin	1 sheet
Whipped cream	200 gm

Method

- ◆ Soak the gelatin in cold water
- ◆ Semi whip the cream
- ◆ Melt the milk chocolate and add fine chop KitKat
- ◆ Beat the egg, egg yolk and condensed milk (make sabayon)
- ◆ Fold sabayon with melted chocolate mixture
- ◆ Finally add the soaked gelatin into the sabayon mixture
- ◆ Lastly fold the semi whipped cream carefully with cut and fold method

DEVIL SPONGE

Caster Sugar	170 gm
Pasteurized egg	56 gm
Cake flour	110 gm
Cocoa powder	40 gm
Baking powder	2 gm
Baking soda	4 gm
Corn oil	80 gm
Boiling water	190 gm

Method

- ◆ Scale the sugar, flour, cocoa powder, baking powder and baking soda all together and sieve
- ◆ Boil water and combine with dry ingredients and mix well
- ◆ Add the egg and egg yolk into a mixer and mix well
- ◆ Last, add corn oil
- ◆ Set the oven at 160°C and bake for +/- 20 minutes

PISTACHIO CRUMBLE

Unsalted Butter	39 gm
Demerara sugar	39 gm
Cake Flour	39 gm
Almond powder	37 gm
Pistachio paste	10 gm

Method

- ◆ Mix all ingredients together
- ◆ Bake at 170°C until golden colour

RASPBERRY MOUSSE

Raspberry purée	125 gm
Caster Sugar	20 gm
Gelatin leaves	2 leaves
Semi Whip cream	150 gm

Method

- ◆ Soak the gelatin in cold water
- ◆ Semi whip the cream
- ◆ Boil the sugar and half raspberry puree, add remaining half into the mixture
- ◆ Add the gelatin into the raspberry mixture
- ◆ Fold the whipped cream gently, to avoid a split.

**CHOCOLATE SAUCE**

Nestle Milk	80 gm
Caster Sugar	40 gm
Cocoa powder	16 gm
Water	20 gm
Corn flour	2.5 gm
Dark Chocolate 65%	12 gm

Method

- ◆ Boil milk, sugar and cocoa powder
- ◆ Combine water and corn flour together and cook with the boiled mixture 4 to 5 minutes
- ◆ Pour it over the chocolate and hand blend

SESAME TUILE

Butter	15 gm
Sesame seed	15 gm
Glucose	15 gm
Flour T45	15 gm
Caster Sugar	18 gm

Method

- ◆ Mix all together (except flour) until combined
- ◆ Add the flour and mix well
- ◆ Bake at 170°C

VANILLA CRÈME BRÛLÉE

Cooking Cream	52 gm
Caster Sugar	10 gm
Pasteurized Egg	6 gm
Pasteurized Egg yolk	8 gm

Method

- ◆ Boil the cream with vanilla bean
- ◆ Mix egg, egg yolk and sugar together
- ◆ Add the boiled cream to the egg mixer and hand blend
- ◆ Bake at 130°C

NEUTRAL GLAZE

Water	141 gm
Gelatin mass (soaked gelatin)	103 gm
Caster Sugar	282 gm
Liquid Glucose	282 gm
Nestle milk	188 gm
Red Color	2 gm

Method

- ◆ Boil glucose, milk, sugar
- ◆ Add gelatin mass into the boiled mixture
- ◆ Add colour and hand blend

FLEX WHITE CHOCOLATE GANACHE

Cream	128 gm
Honey	34 gm
Agar agar	1 gm
Gelatin leaves	1 sheet
White chocolate	85 gm

Method

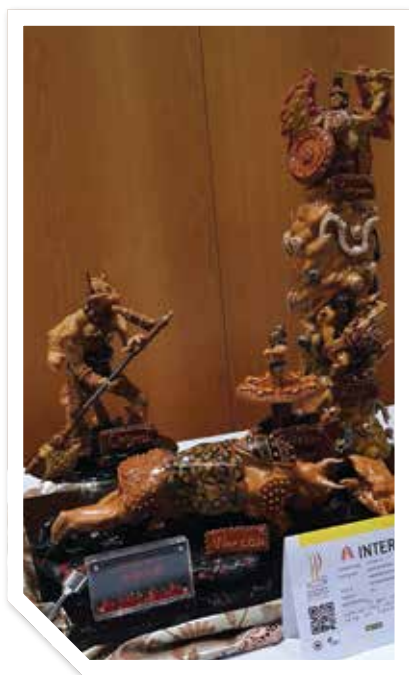
- ◆ Boil the cream, honey and agar agar
- ◆ Add the soaked and squeezed gelatin
- ◆ Add the white chocolate and blend

LIME CONFIT

Lime	3 pcs
Water	30 gm
Caster Sugar	30 gm

Method

- ◆ Bring lime zest and cold water to a boil. Repeat this thrice to take away the bitterness from the zest.
- ◆ Heat the 30 gm of sugar and 30 gm of water until sugar is dissolved
- ◆ Add lime zest and simmer for 10 to 12 minutes and take out from the heat and keep in room temperature

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UAE chefs + Culinary Olympics = 45 medals

In case you missed our previous issue, The Emirates Culinary Guild (ECG) selected a team of 27 chefs from all over the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to compete at the Culinary Olympics 2020 in Germany last February.

The team returned with 45 medals including 21 Gold and 16 Silver medals. The final tally is among the highest of any country that competed this year.

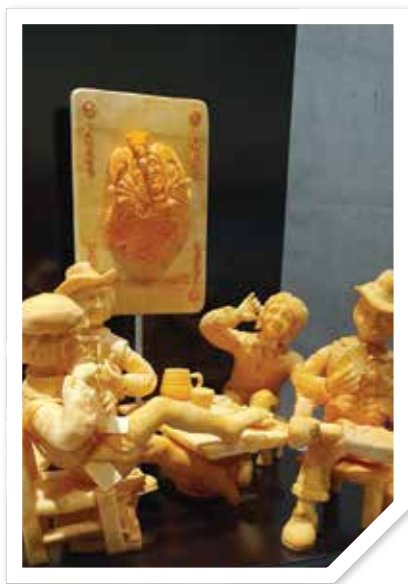
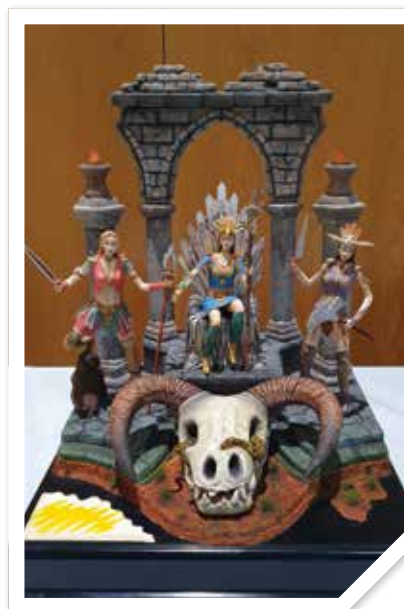
Our team included a Young Chefs Team and 12 Artists, who competed against more than 35 other international culinary teams from around the world including Singapore, Sweden and other top teams.

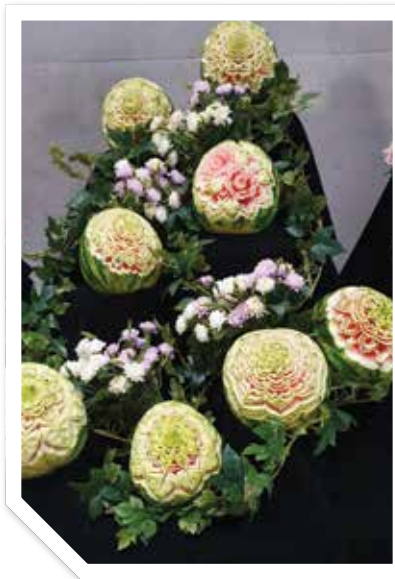
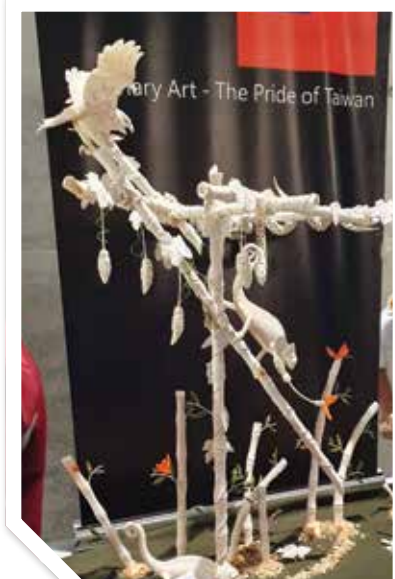
The Young Chef Team won a Silver medal for 'Restaurant of Nations' and a Bronze medal for the 'Chefs Table'. This is an outstanding achievement for the Young Chefs Team who competed

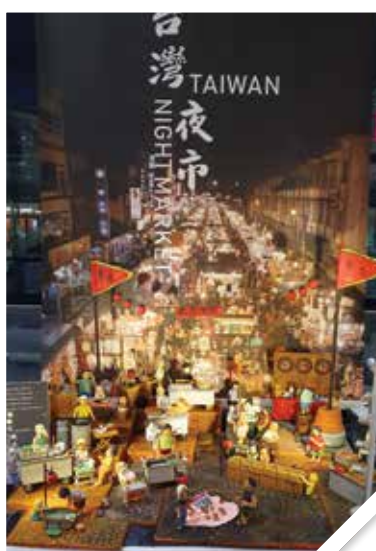
for the first time in the competition against seasoned teams with more than 20 years of experience.

The team was led by ECG President and Director of Kitchens – Radisson Blu Deira, Chef Uwe Micheel and was supported by Thomas Haller, Chef Norbert Girth, and President of the Syrian Chefs Guild Majed Al Sabagh. Here are more images from the Culinary Olympics.



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More from Salon Culinaire

We bring you more images from the world's largest single entry professional chefs competition held in UAE at the ExpoCulinaire Sharjah. This includes medal winners and more from our lensmen.



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Get cooking with US BEEF

Emirates Culinary Guild and the US Meat Export Federation
launch first US Beef virtual cooking competition in GCC

Emirates Culinary Guild is doing a cooking competition with US Meat Export Federation. So, what's new you ask? This is the first time that the competition is open to all categories including young chefs, senior chefs and even amateur chefs!

The competition is extended to residents of all GCC countries and is going to be virtual in what can only be called the year of the Zoom.

Chef Uwe Micheel, President of the Emirates Culinary Guild and Culinary Advisor for Radisson Blu Hotel Dubai Deira Creek said he is excited about the competition for a different reason. He says, "First, every culinary competition is a learning process for the competitor and second, the great prizes offered by US Meat Export Federation, trophies, books, knives and cash prizes for the winners, makes this exciting." Forty winners in four classes stand to win multiple prizes.

Andy Cuthbert, Chairman of Emirates Culinary Guild and General Manager for Jumeirah Creekside Hotel; Madinat Jumeirah Conference & Events and Jumeirah Hospitality said, "We are excited to launch our second online competition together with US Beef to all professional chefs and amateur chefs in the GCC. This competition will be a great platform for young and senior chefs as well as budding amateurs to virtually show their skills."

Chef Uwe added that he is looking forward to a great competition, as it is always enjoyable for professional or

amateur chefs to create recipes and work with top quality products like US Beef. "In this competition, the US Beef will be the star of every recipe. We are expecting amazing recipes from the very traditional to modern. It is open to every passionate chef, who is either a national or a resident in the GCC."

The competition opens July 7. Registration is open for one month through the Guild's website and social media channels.

RULES AND REGULATIONS USMEF - ECG Virtual Cooking Competition

"Cook with US Beef"

Calling all Chefs Professional and Amateurs in GCC, great prizes for the Top 10 in each of the 4 categories. The Competition has 4 different Categories – Classes

Class 1 US Beef Dish, Main Course or Starter – High Resolution picture and full recipe – For Professional Chefs

Class 2 US Beef Dish, Main Course or Starter – High Resolution picture and full recipe – For Amateur Chefs

Class 3 – US Beef Dish, Main Course or Starter – Video 5 -10 Minutes – For Professional Chefs

Class 4 – US Beef Dish, Main Course or Starter – Video 5- 10 Minutes – For Amateur Chefs

The competition is open from 7th July 2020. The registration is open for 1 month. Competitors can enter multiple recipes and videos.

There is no age limit, but competitors

must be resident of a GCC country. Awards and prizes must be collected in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The top 10 from each Class will receive the following.

Winner

Branded Trophy
Dh 3,000 Cash
Branded US Beef Knife
Book by Chef Uwe Micheel

2nd Place

Branded Trophy
Dh 2,000 Cash
Branded US Beef Knife
Book by Chef Uwe Micheel

3rd Place

Branded Trophy
Dh 1,000 Cash
Branded US Beef Knife
Book by Chef Uwe Micheel

4th – 10th Place

Branded US Beef Knife
Book by Chef Uwe Micheel
Winner will be featured by Gulf Gourmet magazine in print and online. The best video will be uploaded on the Emirates Culinary Guild YouTube channel. Judges will be professional chefs from the Emirates Culinary Guild and the decision of the jury will be final.

By sending your video and recipes, you agree that the ECG and US Beef reserve the right to use them freely.

DETAILS

Class 1 – Plated US Beef Starter or Main

**Dish (Professional Chefs)**

- a) 1 plate, bowl or any dish for 1 portion
- b) Written recipes in English – for 1 portion
- c) The main ingredient must be US Beef
- d) Any US Beef Cut can be used, but must be specified in the recipe
- e) Good quality photograph in colour
- f) For the US Beef must be the star of the dish hence must be seen on the picture as the key ingredient
- g) Judges will consider following points
 - ♦ Use of US Beef
 - ♦ Balance Recipe
 - ♦ Cooking Skills in the recipe
 - ♦ Presentation Skills
- h) Portion size must be suitable for lunch dish
- i) The best recipe and picture will be published in Gulf Gourmet Magazine
- j) Class 1 is open for any Professional Chef (any age, any position) National or GCC resident

Class 2 – Plated US Beef Starter or Main Dish (Amateur Chefs)

- a) 1 plate, bowl or any dish for 1 portion
- b) Written recipes in English – for 1 portion
- c) The main ingredient must be US Beef
- d) Any US Beef Cut can be used, but

- e) must be specified in the recipe
- f) Good quality photograph in colour
- f) For the US Beef must be the star of the dish hence must be seen on the picture as the key ingredient
- g) Judges will consider following points
 - ♦ Use of US Beef
 - ♦ Balance Recipe
 - ♦ Cooking Skills in the recipe
 - ♦ Presentation Skills
- h) Portion size must be suitable for lunch dish
- i) The best recipe and picture will be published in Gulf Gourmet Magazine
- j) Class 2 is open for any Non - Professional Chef, any Amateur Chefs – Cook (No age limit, must be GCC National or resident)

Class 3 – US Video (Professional Chefs)

- a) You the Chef must be seen in the video
- b) Show us all the ingredients
- c) Send the list of ingredients and method, how you prepare the dish in English
- d) Video should be 5 -10 minutes and must be in English
- e) Prepare 1 portion of your recipe
- f) Dish can be a starter or Main Dish can be a soup or a wrap
- g) Any US Beef Cut can be used, but the Beef must be the star of the Dish, must be the main ingredient.
- h) Video can be created using a

mobile or DSLR Camera

- i) Make sure you have good lightning it helps a lot for the video quality
- j) Film in Landscape for YouTube channel
- k) Class 3 is open for any professional Chef (any age, any position) GCC National or resident

Class 4 – US Video (Amateur Chefs)

- a) You the Chef must be seen in the video
- b) Show us all the ingredients
- c) Send the list of ingredients and method, how you prepare the dish in English
- d) Video should be 5 -10 minutes and must be in English
- e) Prepare 1 portion of your recipe
- f) Dish can be a starter or Main Dish can be a soup or a wrap
- g) Any US Beef Cut can be used, but the Beef must be the star of the Dish, must be the main ingredient.
- h) Video can be done mobile or DSLR Camera
- i) Make sure you have good listing it helps a lot for the video quality
- j) Film in Landscape for YouTube Channel
- k) Class 4 is open for any non-professional. Any Amateur Chef – Cook (no age limit, but must be GCC National or Resident.

Send your Registration to:
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June - July 2020 **Gulf Gourmet**

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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:.....

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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

Self-compassion during COVID-19

We hear stories all the time of people who lost everything and bounce back better than before. If you are severely impacted by COVID-19, in your personal or professional life, you can do it too.

Just don't beat yourself up. Rather treat yourself to some self-compassion.

Try these three exercises. They may look short and easy, but I promise you that they are powerful. Smile when doing these exercises and do your best to be in a place of silence.

1. Chant Your Name

Place your hand on your heart and chant your name slowly three, six or nine times.

Why? Because your name is the sweetest word you resonate with and this self-sound therapy technique emphasises it.

We hear other people call our name all the time, but we never call ourselves by our own name. Dale Carnegie once said, "A person's name is to that person, the sweetest, most important sound in any language."

2. Your Ho'oponopono

Place your hand on your heart and at a steady, calm pace, say "I love you" three, six or nine times.

Ho'oponopono is an ancient Hawaiian art that means "set things right" or "to make right". It is about letting go or erasing the unwanted and negative feelings within us. It tries to get us into a state of inspiration, love and excitement.

By saying "I love you," you are saying "Thank you for allowing me another opportunity to be who I am. Thank you for recognizing those pent-up feelings and setting me free from those

MORE THAN A CHEF

**ROHIT
BASSI**



emotions. Thank you for the divine intelligence and wisdom. And thank you for removing obstacles that hold me back."

Gratitude From You

Place your hand on your heart and say "Thank you for..." three, six or nine things you are grateful for.

Saying thank you to all that has happened to you, all that is happening to you and all that will happen to you, makes you humble.

Forbes reports that a study on 'Behavior Research and Therapy' published in 2006, found that Vietnam war veterans with higher levels of gratitude experienced lower rates of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder".

Remember, everyone is flawed, and everyone has problems. Just the degree varies. Gratitude allows us to see beyond the labels of inadequacies and failures.

Truth is genuine gratitude is often ignored by most of us. We should not.

Ancient cultures, spirituality and modern science, all promote the cultivation of gratitude.

And it costs nothing.

Rohit Bassi is the founder of 'ROI Talks' and works across industries to help employees outperform themselves. You can contact him on roi@roitalks.com



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