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THE MAGAZINE CHEFS LOVE TO READ

MARCH 2024

gourmet

volume 19, issue 3

CHECK OUT THE
COMPLETE LISTING OF
RULES AND
REGULATIONS FOR
**SALON
2024**

MADE FROM SCRATCH

In an age where shortcuts abound, Chef **Kuldeep Singh** explores the joy inherent in creating dishes from scratch, underscoring that old school is still cool

TAREK'S TAO

Chef **Tarek Mourieess** reminds us of the beauty behind humanity



DREAMING DESSERTS

Chef **Prameesh Kondoth** is this month's challenger for the Arla Pro Pastry Mastery Competition



QUOTE MARSHAL

"You are your only competition," explains Chef **Randel Menil Elsisura**



بومي Pomì

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

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

◆ Pomì Passata: increasingly a classic

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◆ Pomì Organic: Naturally different

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◆ Pomito Chopped Tomatoes: Heavenly fresh

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president's station

email editor@gulfgourmet.org

Dear Members and Partners,

We are proud of our team's triumphant return from the Culinary Olympics in Stuttgart, where they brought home 69 medals (41 gold and 28 silver). An outstanding effort by all the team members. Three chefs who received medals with distinction will grace our next cover.

The team of 20, along with our team of helpers, are featured in the March and April editions of the magazine. You can view their winning creations on our social media feeds as well as in Gulf Gourmet. A big thank you to the team's sponsor, Mr. Karim Al Azhari of Sounbula Mills, whose generous support enabled the team to travel and raise the UAE flag high on the podium once again. Well done, chefs. Let's gear up for the upcoming 2026 Luxembourg World Cup.

The Luxembourg World Cup will showcase the talents of our fantastic artistic team as they vie for victory. Additionally, we are hoping to enter a culinary team event called community catering in Luxembourg. Stay tuned for updates on this exciting endeavor!

The city was once again pumping with big events every week, showing us the industry is robust and heading in the right direction. A focus on food and beverage echoed across the city through a series of public events and tradeshow in both Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Our partner, ICCA, was prominently involved in all these events, particularly in the burgeoning Food Verse movement that is gaining momentum. We will be sharing more in the months ahead, featuring this in the upcoming ExpoCulinaire in Sharjah from May 20 to 22, 2024.

We wish our members and partners Ramadan Kareem as we approach March and the Holy Month of Ramadan. Food waste and associated topics are brought to light during Ramadan every year.

Technology is also making significant inroads into the food waste sector by recording and measuring food waste.

While it is a great topic to focus on, we should do it daily to truly make a difference and minimize waste in the long run. The topic is so broad that it should be examined in all areas of the industry. In our kitchens, we must ensure that young chefs are trained so that they can use 100% of the ingredients that are ordered. We also need to work with suppliers to assist in reducing our waste even before it enters the kitchens, whether it be through the use of pre cut meats, ready-prepared vegetables and fruits, or anything else. Whatever the case may be, we should consider what is affordable for the operation. Every operation is different. There is no cookie-cutter approach that fits all. Since the buffet is available for the entire meal period, can we use smaller bowls and guest plates with reduced sizes to prevent plates from being overfilled? Do we also encourage serving multiple, smaller amounts on plates?

Even for us in the ECG, we need to be mindful of what we do in our competitions. Food waste is a matter we have adopted in the judging guidelines, and it is evaluated and monitored during the competitions. Chefs are encouraged to only cook and bring what they need for mise en place. For example, if the regulations specify that there should be 150 g of protein, then you should not bring two kg to the competition since you would be penalized. In addition, we have introduced more practical cooking events where food will be eaten at the 2024 Salon Culinaire. One such event is the Alan Thong Young Chef's Golden Coffee Pot Challenge, which features an edible buffet for 24 people. The bread for this event is made fresh every day for the competition by our newest addition, the Sounbula Artisan Bakery Arena, meaning that even with our new classes, there will be zero food waste.



There are special practical cookery classes for students with Thryve from our partner, IFFCO Professional, where they will cook with plant-based products to promote sustainability around non-meat products and also to offer choices to our customers on our menus.

These small initiatives that we are taking now are aligned not only with the UAE Federal Guidelines on Sustainability but also with the United Nations and our own Worldchefs guidelines. These small steps, which we hope will help later on, will also provide our chefs with an education and allow them to compete in competitions.

The Guild's social media platforms are very active, and we encourage all our members to visit our Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Young Chefs pages. There you will discover great events that our Young Chefs Club organizes every month and a summary of their past events and forthcoming activities. They visited ICCA Abu Dhabi in February to receive equipment education. In March, they will travel to Bustanica to observe what is grown and available at its largest vertical farm.

I urge our partners to use the opportunity to introduce your production facilities to both the senior and the young chefs. We would like to thank Abu Dhabi Country Club for hosting our February meeting, and a big thank you to Chef Randal Elsisura and his team for their hospitality.

Once again, I wish all members, partners, and their families Ramadan Kareem and wish you all a peaceful holy month.

With Regards,
Andy Cuthbert
President and Editor



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CREDITS

EMIRATES CULINARY GUILD

Andy Cuthbert
President
+971 4 340 3128, theguild@eim.ae

Uwe Micheel
Past President

EDITORIAL

Andy Cuthbert
Editor

Amaresh Bhaskaran
Associate Publisher
amaresh@amareshbhaskaran.com
+971504568161

Vahiju PC
Art Director

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CONTRIBUTORS

Shreya Asopa
Atim Suyatim

PUBLISHED BY SALES ENQUIRY

Emirates Chefs Guild, Dubai, UAE
info@gulfgourmet.org

A Culinary Journey: From Passionate Beginnings and Beyond

Chef **Helen** on defying doubts and dedication to her culinary dream

Continuing from our January edition, I was a mere 15 years old when I decided to pursue a career in the culinary arts. Envisioning myself clad in the iconic white chef's attire, the tall hat, and blue checkered trousers, my excitement knew no bounds. I recall sitting upright in class, eagerly awaiting my turn to share my career choice. When the moment arrived, my declaration of aspiring to be a chef was met with a dismissive response from a teacher who deemed it a path requiring no formal qualifications. The teacher suggested that a career in culinary arts lacked prestige—a stark dismissal that could not dampen my spirits, especially considering my academic standing in the A-stream cohort (it was not about qualifications).

Unbeknownst to her, this profession held much more prestige and challenge than she acknowledged. Thankfully, my family and friends celebrated my decision and understood the value and dedication required for such a career.

This support propelled me into a two-year culinary program that required a daily journey involving multiple modes of transportation, taking over an hour—a testament to my dedication. Especially in those cold UK winter months! My course was full-time for over two years. It meant attending college five days a week with classes scheduled throughout the day and during a period when catering courses were extensive and immersive and not constrained by funding.

The initial challenge of mastering knife skills under a strict ex-military instructor tested my resolve. His favorite tool was



his ruler. Those vegetable cuts were measured for precision but did nothing for my confidence in the first few weeks. My first week was tough, and I doubted my choice. Yet, as the weeks passed, my proficiency grew, affirming my passion for the culinary arts. I loved the course: the culinary practice, restaurant operations, including wine and flambé service, and a fully operational revenue-generating restaurant.

The operational restaurant kitchen meant French was the only spoken language, and if we defaulted to English, we were abruptly reminded of that. No one ever questioned why we spoke in French; we just instinctively knew that was the professional way of 'how things were done.'

Perhaps the videos we watched featured French chefs, known to be the best in the world then. I learned French cuisine from scratch, and to this day, I have my Cesarani and Kinton practical cookery books. I love to glance through the Repertoire de La Cuisine and still enjoy a classic Lobster Thermidor. No foam, no gels, no dehydrated products, just a classic, unadulterated Thermidor. It was, after all, a classical time for food. I loved the camaraderie in the kitchen. There is something special about a kitchen brigade; it is a bond, an understanding, and little did I know that in some months, it becomes your second family. It was hard for people to understand your dedication to your work, the long hours, or working when most people are not. It was a passion, not a job.

Reflecting on this journey brings a smile to my face, not only for the memories of camaraderie but also for the humorous mishaps, like the time a classmate's flambé service accidentally set the restaurant curtains ablaze. Or when a classmate arrived red-faced from opening a steamer at work and burning his face while staring in at the same moment (lessons to be learned).

There are physical scars from burns and cuts that became badges of honor and symbols of our shared experiences. But I wouldn't change a single thing. Stay tuned for our next issue, where I'll delve into the various jobs I undertook while studying that shaped my culinary education and how each experience contributed to my development in this dynamic field.

Ramadan Kareem, in Advance,
Chef Helen

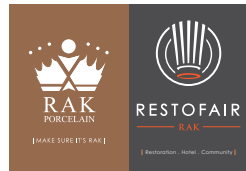
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YOU REQUIRE FLEXIBILITY, WE ADAPT ACCORDINGLY.

YOU CHOOSE, WE SUPPLY



We have the expertise to select the most premium fresh produce and tie up with the best partners to ensure reliable service. More than just providing fresh ingredients, we offer tangible ways for more wholesome, nutritious meals that are flavorful and satisfying to save you time in the kitchen. Together with you, we seek to contribute to the health of a whole generation.

newsbites



photo credit: Hoteliers Web

New Executive Sous Chef at Anantara World Islands Dubai Resort

Chef Christopher Bromund has recently joined the team at Anantara in Dubai after his successful tenure at Radisson Blu. Chef Christopher brings over two decades of experience to Anantara World Islands Resort, as reported by Hoteliers Web.

With an impressive culinary career that includes roles in countries such as the Netherlands, Austria, and New Zealand, Chef Bromund has shown his skills in leading teams, catering for large events, and managing multiple restaurants. Prior to his current stint, he also worked for Le Meridien and Radisson Blu in Dubai.

A Cut Above

First-of-its-Kind Woman-Led Butcher House in Riyadh

Meats & Cuts, the UAE's premier artisan butcher shop and deli, is expanding its reach into Saudi Arabia with a new branch in Riyadh's Tahlya district. This location will be the first woman-led butcher house in Riyadh, with women taking charge of the front office and sales.

Alongside this exciting development, two new branches have opened in Dubai at Arabian Ranches and New Meadows Village. All branches are expected to be up and running by the beginning of March.

With plans to open over 14 new branches across the GCC within the next two years, this expansion is poised to redefine the butchery experience.

"Our expansion represents more than just the success of Meats & Cuts; it is a celebration of culinary craftsmanship, innovation, and inclusivity. The resounding success of our very first venue in Dubai has paved the way for this luxurious expansion. We are here to

redefine the butcher shop experience, infusing tradition with modernity to create a symphony of flavors that transcends borders," said Khaled El Wazzan, Founding Partner and CEO of Meats & Cuts.

He further stated, "This marks a significant chapter in our journey, and we are excited to offer an unparalleled experience to our patrons—a symphony of premium meats, culinary expertise, and a commitment to fostering a sense of community through the joy of fine dining. As we venture into new territories, we carry with us the passion that has defined Meats & Cuts, and we look forward to becoming an integral part of the rich culinary tapestry of these vibrant locales."

Meats & Cuts is an upscale concept of a butcher retail shop that utilizes traditional dry aging methods. The brand crafts premium cold cuts and sausages prepared to offer a clean, natural, and additive-free indulgence.





Banyan Tree Dubai launches a new concept

Banyan Tree Dubai has unveiled its new dining concepts: Alizée and AlizéePool & Beach. The contemporary restaurant, Alizée, will highlight the cuisine of the Mediterranean with Southern French flair.

The restaurant has an indoor and alfresco setting that will offer an array of dishes. Its menu is centered around vibrant, fresh ingredients and rustic presentations that

embrace creativity without sacrificing authenticity. A wide variety of options are available, including fresh grills, pasta, exotic seafood, healthy salads, and food directly from the wood-fired oven.

Meanwhile, Alizée Pool & Beach will offer a specially curated selection of culinary delights ranging from sandwiches, appetizers, salads, flatbreads, and grilled fish.



photo credit: Shangri-La Qaryat Al Beri

Shangri-La Qaryat Al Beri, Abu Dhabi, appoints Samuele Baudoino as the new Executive Chef

According to a recent post on the Shangri-La Qaryat Al Beri's LinkedIn account, Chef Baudoino has recently joined the team at the Shangri-La and Traders Hotel in Abu Dhabi.

Chef Baudoino brings with him years of experience from hospitality brands like Rosewood, Intercontinental, Viceroy, and Four Seasons. His impressive culinary skills have been showcased at events like Formula 1. He has also led pre-opening task forces for hotels in Hawaii, Anguilla, Hong Kong, and Bali.

Souk Deeritna @ RAW Coffee

RAW Coffee Company, in collaboration with Dish Catering & Events and Deeritna Catering, has announced their upcoming Iftar event called Souk Deeritna @ RAW Coffee.

The menu will feature authentic Levantine and Palestinian cuisine. From live cooking stations to traditional salads, cold and hot mezza, and main courses prepared right at the table, the menu aims to cater to

diverse tastes. In addition, the event will host kids' workshops on weekends post-Iftar, featuring storytelling, arts and crafts, and face painting.

This Iftar experience with the theme "Let's Bloom in Hope" will take place six days a week throughout the holy month of Ramadan. A portion of the sales will be donated to Tarahum for Gaza through the Red Crescent UAE.



Forbes Travel Guide's 2024 Star Awards

The Forbes Travel Guide revealed the winners of its 2024 Star Awards, with the Middle East region emerging at the forefront with an impressive number of new five-star awards.

Atlantis the Royal has secured the five-star award within just one year of its grand opening. This triumph is accompanied by Atlantis, The Palm's feat of earning the four-star award for the third consecutive year.

Joining the ranks of excellence, the Address Beach Resort in Jumeirah Beach Residence, Dubai, was awarded a new five-star rating. Additionally, The St. Regis Dubai, The Palm, was awarded as a new five-star hotel, with its Iridium St. Regis Spa securing an impressive four-star rating.

In Qatar, the Four Seasons Hotel Doha and Raffles Doha earned five-star ratings. While in Kuwait, Waldorf Astoria emerged as the winner in two categories: Best Art-Deco-Influenced Hotel and Best Spa.

Back in Dubai, the list also included renowned establishments such as The Bulgari Spa Dubai, Armani Hotel Dubai, Four Seasons Hotel Dubai International Financial Centre, The Ritz-Carlton, Dubai, and others. Visit their official website for the complete list of 2024 winners.



Traditional Turkish feasts and a range of Iftar options at Rixos The Palm Dubai

Rixos The Palm Dubai Hotel & Suites is set to enhance the Ramadan experience with its wide range of Iftar offerings. Guests can explore a unique spice market, indulge in Turkish ice cream, and enjoy traditional Turkish desserts.

An authentic Iftar buffet will be available at A La Turca and Turquoise, with a variety of appetizers including hummus, meat kibbeh, and traditional soups. The main course includes dishes like Orman Kebab and Hammour Sayadieh, as well as a live station serving roast chicken and Oriental rice.

The Ladies Radiance Iftar will be held

at the Executive Grand King Suite Penthouse Terrace. The event offers a special VIP buffet with Turkish and Middle Eastern dishes, including traditional soups such as Ezme with Walnuts, Spoon Salad, Hunkar Begendi, Lamp Tandoori, Turkish Mix Kebab, and Turkish style mix Baklava.

And if guests want to indulge in a grand iftar with their team, then a corporate iftar buffet is also available, featuring hot and cold mezze such as hummus and meat sambousek, along with main courses like lamb Biryani and Turkish butter rice, and a selection of delicious desserts including Basbousa, Sekerpare with Almon, and Rose Mhallabia.

Fusion Ramadan Menu

The Culinary Director of Fouquet's Abu Dhabi, Chef Balveer Balkisoon, and his talented culinary team have curated a menu that combines traditional Arabic dishes with authentic French ingredients and flavors from across the globe.

The fusion Ramadan menu spans four exquisite courses. Guests can savor a

range of delectable options, including fruits, nuts, laban, and apricot juice, to break their fast. The menu highlights include a creamy red lentil soup with garlic croutons and crispy leeks, as well as a variety of other options such as crispy Omani prawns with chickpea purée and zaatar salad, beetroot hummus with feta cheese, guacamole, and falafel.

Worldchefs Offers Co-Branded Digital Badges for National Association Members

In an exciting development, Worldchefs has announced an opportunity for its association members worldwide. Worldchefs is offering co-branded digital badges to individual members of participating associations at absolutely no cost.

The initiative aims to enhance recognition, professionalism, and visibility for members, while also fostering a sense of pride in their national association affiliation. These digital badges, adorned with both the association's logo and Worldchefs branding, serve as a symbol of membership validity and professional achievement within the global culinary community.

"We're delighted to present this exclusive opportunity to our valued association members," says Ragnar Fridriksson, Managing Director of Worldchefs. "These co-branded digital badges not only validate membership but also elevate the professional profile of culinary experts worldwide."

Each digital badge, valid for one year, showcases the association's emblem alongside the distinguished Worldchefs logo. By leveraging these co-branded digital badges, culinary professionals can amplify their presence, credibility, and impact on a global scale, setting new standards of excellence within the industry.

The United Arab Emirates Guild national membership digital badge serves as a prime example of this collaborative effort, embodying the essence of partnership and professional excellence.

Benefits of these digital badges extend



beyond mere validation. They provide members with enhanced credibility, recognition, and exposure within the culinary industry. Moreover, they offer a tangible representation of professional affiliation, bolstering the individual's reputation and fostering trust among peers and clients alike.

"Digital badges have become increasingly instrumental in today's digital landscape, offering a convenient and impactful way to showcase credentials and achievements," adds Thomas Gugler, Worldchefs President. "We believe this initiative will empower our association members, enabling them to stand out in a competitive field while also reinforcing the value of their association membership."

To take advantage of this unprecedented

offering, Presidents or representatives of Worldchefs' national association members are encouraged to contact the Worldchefs office team. **This offer is valid through April 31, 2024.**

WHAT ARE WORLDCHEFS CREDENTIALS?

Worldchefs Credentials are digital badges that translate qualifications and capabilities into verified skills. Digital badges represent concrete evidence of learning outcomes and achievements, allowing earners to showcase their skills confidently.

With secure digital verification, each credential can be verified in real-time, providing the proof needed to build a professional profile to propel opportunities and unlock careers.

To get your chef or company related news featured in this section, email editor@gulfgourmet.org



Golden GLORY

27 teams, 69 medals, 1 Diploma! The UAE cast a glow of victory at the IKA Culinary Olympics

"The United Arab Emirates flag was seen flying high on the podium every day, establishing the country as a standout with the highest number of individual medals. "We, as the Guild, take great pride in this achievement," said Andy Cuthbert, Emirates Culinary Guild President and General Manager, Jumeirah Creekside Hotel and Madinat Conference Centre.

Greece displayed the ideal Olympic excellence, bringing the tradition of games to life. Meanwhile, Dubai showcased how to bring competitive spirit and elevate the UAE's culinary reputation

to unprecedented heights at the 26th edition of the IKA Culinary Olympics.

The Emirates Culinary Guild sent a team of 27 chefs from the UAE to compete at the IKA Culinary Olympics in Stuttgart from February 2 to 7. The UAE team confidently returned home with an impressive total of 69 medals and one diploma after competing in various competitions. Their outstanding performance included three golds with distinction, 39 golds, and 27 silvers, solidifying them as the top-performing team in this year's competition.

"To lead such a great team of young men

and women and be rewarded with so much recognition from the international culinary community is very rewarding personally and professionally. It was with pride to fly the UAE flag high again for the fourth time in the Culinary Olympics," stated Uwe Micheel, Guild Past President, who led the team.

The team, consisting of 20 artists and pastry chefs, competed against over 45 international culinary teams from around the world, including top teams from Singapore, Sweden, Norway, South Korea, and Taiwan.

Talking about the experience, President



Meet the Winners:

Al Bateen Palace	Mr.	SANDARUWAN BANDARA	Panamaldeniya mudiyanselage	1 Gold 2 Silver
Al Bateen Palace	Mr.	DILAN ASANKA	Gajaman Arachchige	3 Gold
Al Jawaher Reception & Convention Center	Mr.	THILINA PRADEEP	Kallamullage FERNANDO	2 Gold 1 gold distinction
Atlantis the Palm	Mr.	Pathma Madushanka	Kuma Hennemidge	3 Gold, 1 Gold distinction
Bateel International	Mr.	Lewis Philippe Bernard	Charles	5 Silver
BKRY	Mr.	Kameel Rasyid	Eril	2 Gold, 1 gold distinction
Dubai World Trade Center	Miss.	DWIYANTHI	Cintaningrum	2 Silver, 1 Gold
Five JVC	Mr.	Iroshan Madusanka Silva	Maggona	3 Silver
Hilton Dubai Jumeirah	Mr.	ERANDA SAMPATH KUMARA	Liyanage	3 Gold, 1 silver
Jumeirah Beach Hotel	Mr.	Kavinda Isurumal	Amarasinghe Arachchilage	3 Gold, 1 Silver
Keita Catering	Mr.	Tharishma Madushanka mendis	Mutuwahandi	2 Gold, 1 silver, 1 diploma
Misterbaker	Mr.	SAMEERA MADUSHANKA	Dahanayakage	4 Gold
Pullmann Hotel DCC	Mr.	Dammika	Herath Mudiyansele	1 Gold .2 silver
Radisson Blu Yas Island	Mr.	Dilip Kumara	Rajapaksha	1 Gold, 2 Silver
Radisson Blu Yas Island	Mr.	Nishan Nayana Kantha	Kuruppu mudiyansele	2 Silver
Taj Exotica the Palm	Mr.	SHAJAHAN	Mampally	2 Gold, 1 Silver
The Palace Downtown Hotel	Mr.	RUWAN KUMARA	pihille gerdara	2 Gold, 1 Silver
W Hotel The Palm	Mr.	SAMAN SAGARA	Welikende gamage	3 Silver
Zaabeel Palace	Mr.	Pathum Priyankara	Walpola Liyanage	5 Gold, 1 silver
Zaabeel Palace	Mr.	Thusitha Kumara Wijerathna	Siya Mudiyansele	4 Gold

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Andy Cuthbert explains that chefs and the guild went through an intense six-month preparation process to bring home gold. From securing and packing 12,500 kilos of cargo to the relief of unloading and checking into the hotel with the assistance of the executive chef and team at the Erickson Hotel in Stuttgart, the moments leading up to the competition were both thrilling and surprising.

Three chefs, Thilina Pradeep Kallamullage Fernando, Pathma Madushanka Kuma Hennedige, and Kameel Rasyid Eril, achieved gold medals with a distinction score of 100 points each.

Led by Emirates Culinary Guild Past President Chef Uwe Micheel, the Olympic team received support from renowned chefs including Karl Heinz Ney, Harald Oberender, Rabeh Amer, Saeed Fawaz, Chamil Sanjeewa, Shyju Varghese, Dinesh Kinson, and President of the Syrian Chefs Guild Majed Al Sabagh. They were also backed by Annette Micheel, Josephine Cuthbert, and Othmar Schneider.

"We would like to thank all the hotels that assisted with the competition and for allowing their chefs to be part of this great event," expressed ECG President Andy.

He also gave special mention to the general managers and executive chefs for allowing the teams to train in their hotels and for their unwavering support



of the Emirates Culinary Guild and chefs of the Emirates.

"Additionally, I want to express my gratitude towards the organizers of the IKA and the President of the German Chefs Association, Daniel Schade, for their involvement in making the event a success."

President Cuthbert also thanked Mr. Karim Al Azhari, from Sounbula Mills for their unbelievable sponsorship support to the Guild and the Chefs.

Reflecting on the accomplishment, the

Managing Director of Sounbula Mills, Mr. Karim Al Azhari said, "It is with such pride that I can help these chefs show off their skills to the world, and I am proud that as an Emirates-based company, we can help them to realize their dreams and perform at the highest level."

So what is in the pipeline? "We will return in 2028," replies Chef Andy. However, prior to that, the guild has set its sights on the 2026 Luxembourg World Cup, assembling a young chef team alongside talented pastry artisans and culinary creatives who are eager to join in the journey ahead.





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“

It was like receiving a new baby. The win has given me a full circle, where all my experiences came to fruition in one beautiful competition

Tarek's Tao

A leaf from Chef **Tarek Mouries**'s life diary brings forth his raw emotions about grief, joy, and all the poignant moments that define him as a good human being. Through his tao, he imparts simple professional lessons, reminding us all about the beauty behind humanity

If the name Chef Tarek Mouries struck a chord with you at Salon Culinaire 2023, it is likely not just because of his familiar face in the industry but also because of his team's success in winning multiple medals at the competition. A team ready to rough it out in competition, they took in the timeless lessons of resilience and fighting the uphill battle under the tutelage of Chef Tarek, who himself has personally embraced these emotions throughout his life.

The winning moment pulled him back to the matrix of all the bridges he had built over the years with the chefs and all the times they trusted his judgment on the recipe, color, portion, and team dynamics. Halfway through, as images of the glorious moment faded a little bit, a gleam of emotions gets into his eyes and he says, "It was like receiving a new baby. The win has given me a full circle, where all my experiences came to fruition in one beautiful competition."

Chef Tarek has gone through unprecedented hardships. With one hand carrying a barrel full of all the reasons that make our lives meaningful and the other holding the weight of loss dealt at different stages of life, he is maintaining the equilibrium to learn and enjoy the profession he loves the most, and all with simplicity.

Hailing from Egypt, Chef Tarek experienced the depths of grief quite early when he lost his father while still a student. How his destiny ebbed and



Keep interacting with different people and build bridges with them

flowed was out of his hands but not the nature of his hard work. The first sign that fate heard his perseverance was when he became more determined to study at the Cairo Technical Institute of Hotels at Helwan University in 1981.

In just six months post-graduation, he went up the kitchen ladder, rising from a busser to a kitchen staff. "I started as a trainee waiter at the Mena House Oberoi and gradually rose through the ranks until I got an opportunity in 1984 to move to Switzerland to work for Hotel Nova Park in Zurich."

Before coming to the UAE, he then jetted across the continents, with roles such as chef in charge at Cairo or kitchen instructor at Hotel Schools located in Bouveret. Chef Tarek has clear images of his arrival in Al Ain in 1989. That start with the Hilton Group still dwells deeply within him, as it was the property that refined him with training and new learnings.

"I was 29, handling multiple

assignments, and within two years, I was promoted to Executive Sous Chef at the Dubai Hilton Trade Center," he says.

BRIDGE BUILDER

When he first took over as team leader, he toured the road in a military management style. It did not take long for the realization to dawn on him that the path ahead would be closed if he kept heading in the same direction. The facets of his personality changed over time, as did his ways of understanding people.

"Keep interacting with different people and build bridges with them. Had I not learned it, I was certain that people at the workplace would have indicated that I could not continue. And I am thankful to learn this way early," he answers with honesty reflecting in his words.

Understanding people is his philosophy that touches on broader issues of listening to the team by putting aside egocentric responses just because one is wearing a white jacket. The way he nurtures people has made him the go-to person for guidance, and even now, employees from his previous jobs use his name as a reference on their resumes.

Many have missed the point about adding human elements to a chef, he says, underlining the importance of empathy. "Your goal may be corporate and result-oriented, but that doesn't mean you slide on the human side. How do you want to be remembered in life? Not just for your work but also for how you treat people," he retorts.

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This new and improved leadership saw him promoted to Executive Chef, working across properties such as Hilton in Al Ain and Hilton International at Ras Al Khaimah. The 22-year-long stint with the Hilton Group trained him to see the bigger picture, including the management's point of view, rather than just fixating on the kitchen. "One of the most important things I did was develop young chefs, training them to grow from commis to chef de partie. Some are even holding executive positions."

To this day, Chef Tarek revisits the learnings from Hilton and puts them all into practice for future roles. After working for two decades with them, Chef Tarek yearned to conquer new shores. And adventures awaited at the Fujairah Rotana Resort, Al Aqah. "The stint at Rotana was a mix of harvesting the lessons of my struggling days when I started my career to finally walking the walk, applying that knowledge, and learning something new every day," he explains.

The next few years saw him carrying his intellectual compass, bringing change to the culinary scene, working across properties, including Danat Al Ain Resort and Tilal Liwa Hotel in Abu Dhabi, and ascending to higher executive roles.

"It was in 2021 that I started to work at the Main kitchen of the Dubai World Trade Center, and since then, I have continued to look after the internship program and motivate young chefs for competitions."

For those not in the know, his team took home eight gold medals and the title of the best establishment at the Salon Culinaire 2023. This achievement stemmed from the chefs' prowess across various categories, such as preparation of a four-course meal, butchery skills, plated desserts, live cake making, plated set menu, and crafting a showpiece for pastry. The win was different as the team's culinary virtuosity was built on their cooking skills without the involvement of kitchen artists.



Your goal may be corporate and result-oriented, but that doesn't mean you slide on the human side

Taking on the mentor role, he imparted all his accumulated experience to the team. Occasionally, the chefs would gaze at him in astonishment, finding it hard to believe his strong culinary skills. The solid know-how can be traced back to his young age when he was self-reliant while dealing with the pressure of handling massive operations.

Unfortunately, these days, getting young chefs to listen can be difficult, but Chef Tarek sees it as part of winning them back. He walks them through the 80's era when he learned how to make connections and create a healthy balance in the relationships within the team.

LOVE & LOSS

Four years ago, Chef Tarek's wife passed away unexpectedly, changing his outlook on the familial aspect of chefs' lives. The ongoing discourse about chefs often losing connection with their families amid the hectic pace of their professional lives prompted him to cogitate highly on the matter.

"It scares me to see my friends depart.

Some say it's written in the books, and some say you have to live with memories. But in efforts to serve as an example for others, many of us are forgetting what's important," he argues.

He feels that the older chefs in his generation become unduly engrossed in the hustle and bustle of the kitchen. That's why he has personally undergone a transformation, redirecting some attention to life beyond the demands of work.

How does one set their priorities right, considering the nature of the hospitality sector, where one can never have enough time for close ones? "Generally speaking, when it comes to family matters, most of us tend to have an IQ level of zero. We leave our house worried about banqueting and preoccupied with kitchen operations, and at the end of the day, when somebody asks us, we say we do it for the family. Until we lose someone, it's at that moment that we value the time we could have spent with our children, wife, and parents. So make sure to respect it when they are alive. Just be there for them."

Another big problem is the lack of a solid cooking foundation among young chefs. He notes that the fundamentals are crucial when blending various cuisines and facing transformative technology in an industry.

"Our times were based on trial and error. Now, you can add the prompt to the system, and artificial intelligence will find the recipe for you. And some chefs, as they say, just 'tweak' around it and make the recipe their own," he says. "But then the soul of cooking is missing," he retorts with a riposte.

When we interviewed Chef Tarek years ago, he had beef over what he refers to as "confusion" food that was centered around dishes with mismatched flavors and tastes. Precisely ten years later, he still maintains that if the fundamentals of cooking are not followed, fusion can quickly devolve into confusion.

"No matter the cuisine, if you present it innovatively, keep the traditional touch so that it never loses its integrity."

He goes on to explain, "A dish cooked in tandoor and visually presented on a plate will retain its authentic taste. Innovate, but keep it relevant. And you can only elevate your cooking to a new level with a solid foundation."

While the glass may be half full for young chefs in terms of ramping up their foundational skills, it is undoubtedly full when it comes to them figuring out that there is a life outside of work. "The younger generation values the family slightly more. They concentrate on their lifestyle and how many overtime hours they are investing. They might not have great skills yet, but they appreciate life more, unlike us, who once viewed being a chef as glamorous and all-consuming."

Every morning, Chef Tarek starts his day with gratitude. "At that moment, you're not just starting another day; you're expressing gratitude for your eyesight, the ability to walk, and everything else. You feel blessed, and that energy is a divine gift that needs to be handled with care."

While he recognizes that everyday stress obscures the path to happiness, he strongly views true happiness can still be found in the little things in life. For him, it comes from receiving a wedding invitation from a commis or witnessing a trainee ascend to the position of an executive chef.

"A few weeks ago, a junior chef who had previously worked with me received a promotion, and he informed me that it was also because of my faith in him. The worth of those words is so important that no treasure will equal it."

If Chef Tarek is not poring over the recipe pages, he loves to catch up with nature. His personal life is now filled with meditating, feeding birds, going for long walks, and sitting near a cascading waterfall, mapping his past and present.



Our times were based on trial and error. Now, you can add the prompt to the system, and artificial intelligence will find the recipe for you

His other love in life is his two sons. "The elder one, Daniel, and the younger Sharief are the apples of my eye," he says.

Like any chef who harkens back to their childhood for their favorite recipe, Chef Tarek travels back in time to share his grandmother's recipe.

"My favorite was when she used to prepare stuffed vegetables such as marrow, capsicum, and potatoes, which we savor alongside rice seasoned with onion, parsley, and tomato. She did not include meat due to our financial

constraints and limited budget. But it was a delectable dish topped with a ladleful of fresh tomato juice and simmered for three hours, cooked using traditional techniques.

He adds, "Throughout those three hours and a half, she would occasionally feed us tomatoes and cucumbers. I distinctly recall being seven years old at the time, and the mere recollection of these memories makes my mouth water once more."

Talking about the future, he prefers keeping his plans to himself, but he does express his belief in doing good deeds.

"Teach as much as you can. This may sound like another social media guy giving suggestions, but do a good deed, keep smiling, and good will return to you in some way or another."

As his penchant for a simpler life continues to predominate, he shares his gratitude for the second chances life has given him in his career. "A lot of people don't understand that you may be good at your job, but you have to be good as a human, or, as simple as saying, you are a good chef only when you are a good human."

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MADE FROM SCRATCH

Meet **Kuldeep Singh**, the straight-talking, old-school chef from the East Coast. In a candid chat, **Amaresh Bhaskaran** figures out the backdrop behind the montage of his life



*Kuldeep Singh
Executive Chef*

In a culture where society is obsessed with capturing every moment of their lives, there are rare moments when one pauses to appreciate what

truly lasts. One such moment occurred when photographing Chef Kuldeep for the feature; his personality conveyed his storied past—how his love for cooking led him to places in some of the most challenging environments.

Looking back, he takes me to 1991, a significant event in Chef Kuldeep's life when he boarded the plane from Delhi to Bahrain. He was taken aback to find himself among the only six passengers on the flight to the destination. Throughout his journey, he watched the co-passengers disembark at their respective stops. "Two passengers bid farewell in Muscat, followed by another duo in Abu Dhabi, and finally the remaining in Qatar. Even the stewardess and several members of the crew departed, leaving me as the solo traveler heading towards the country amidst the tumultuous period of the Gulf War," Chef Kuldeep recalls.

Upon arriving at his final destination, thousands of people congregated outside the airport. Amidst the disorder that ensued, he steeled himself for the forthcoming adventure, all to fulfill his love for cooking and his role at the Sheraton Hotel. If one were to believe that only this expedition expressed his spirited nature, then he quells the doubts by recounting further escapades.

Delhi is a city that maintains ostentatiousness both in its culture and cuisine. Born and brought up in the capital of India, Chef Kuldeep's first bet on his culinary dreams harks back to the days when the hotel industry was shrouded in mystery, and while the common public noticed its glamor aspects, they never wondered about the tedious hours of hard work that played behind the scenes.

In his childhood abode, the teenage age was a near miss for his cooking



Once you acquire proficiency in cooking, you will never be satisfied with other people's jobs

ambitions. His mother strictly mandated that he wash his hands and feet before entering the sacred domain of her kitchen, so being near the spices and sizzling stoves never crossed his mind.

Contrary to the expectations of his parents, who, like any typical Indian parent, hoped their son would make a career in engineering or medicine, he decided to pursue the hospitality industry. "But being a chef was also not on the cards; it only happened as I finished my diploma from the Institute of Hotel Management (IHM) Pusa."

After he graduated, he took six months of immersive industrial training, and his career took off as a commis at the newly opened Le Meridien Hotel in Delhi. He nostalgically recalls the demanding days: "We used to work from 6 in the morning until late in the evenings. As one shift concluded, the next would beckon me to strain copious liters of consommé for the soup preparation, meaning I had to leave late at night and report early in the morning."

It was also during this three-year stint that the art of both theory and practicals fell into place. Along with the daily tasks, Chef Kuldeep learned from the prominent chefs hailing from France, Germany, and the Middle East. In contemporary times, he employs a similar approach while coaching his team, breaking from standard practice by combining practical and theoretical teaching for young chefs.

The upgraded skills during the arduous

training were effectively utilized after he arrived at the Holiday Inn Salalah. Moving from Delhi to Oman came to him as a cultural shock. "In those days, Salalah was much like a village, with only one hotel. So it was an entirely different experience," he articulates.

Two years and some months later, he was offered an opportunity at the Sheraton Bahrain. Getting there for the stint involved an unforgettable journey through the skies. Commencing his role as a Demi Chef de Partie at the establishment, he still recalls possessing a kit comprising tools and torches necessary for unforeseen circumstances that came up during the Gulf War. As he settled into the role, the next six years saw him embrace the chance to grow his skills while simultaneously witnessing the country's remarkable transformation as a financial hub.

In 1996, he set foot in Dubai as a chef in charge of the Hilton International. It was also when he met his senior chef, Andy Cuthbert, and ever since, the two have worked on multiple projects together. In his three-year tenure, he oversaw a fine dining restaurant, Al Fahidi, an all-day dining place, Garden Café, and many other outlets. Stints at the Al Bustan Palace Hotel and the Emirates Towers in Dubai followed.

After excelling for a decade at the Emirates Tower and growing to the position of Executive Sous Chef, he was offered to join Madinat Jumeirah C & I. As the executive chef; the position encouraged him to engage in tasks encompassing both culinary and operational aspects. He was responsible for banqueting events for 50 to 15000 covers and has handled catering operations for several events, such as the Dubai World Cup, royal weddings, the opening of the Meydan Grandstand, film festivals, and more.

After years in the industry, he decided to opt for a more tranquil rhythm. A few months later, he was approached by the Radisson Blu Resort in Fujairah.



It becomes your responsibility to impart your unique style and timeless technique to the new generation of chefs



The prospect held immense pull, not solely because it was close to his home in Fujairah but primarily because it presented the most significant change in his skills: to learn about the operational intricacies of kitchen management. "It's going to be five years here," he says. From heading 17 to 18 restaurants at one time in his previous stints to three restaurants, the tasks have been a cakewalk. "But I am learning something new every day: maintaining the budget and putting cost-effective strategies into place," he adds.

One way he has implemented an effective value-conscious strategy is by analyzing his team's potential and allocating tasks among his cohort of 33 chefs, compared to his previous roster of 43 chefs.

He also puts his hand into menu design, plating, and cooking. "Once you acquire proficiency in cooking, you will never be satisfied with other people's jobs. It becomes your responsibility to impart your unique style and timeless technique to the new generation of chefs."

Chef Kuldeep turns up his nose at the idea of shortcuts in the kitchen. He shares that young chefs should give their dishes time to cook properly and attain



If you do it for survival, do not waste your time in the kitchen. But if you take it as your passion, you will rise in the kitchen, learn from the basics, and then the sky's the limit

the desired taste and texture, a feat that only happens with a solid foundation. To get their basics correct, besides training every colleague a minimum of six hours per month, he also cooks with them, guiding them with the techniques of dressings and main courses.

Other than a solid bedrock of basics and talent, when it boils down to recruiting budding chefs, he looks for interest. He seeks out chefs willing to learn and ready to leverage the platform. "If you do it for survival, do not waste your time in the kitchen. But if you take it as your passion, you will rise in the kitchen, learn

from the basics, and then the sky's the limit," he points out strongly.

Curious Case of Restaurant Running

As the photography session concluded, we perused the images across the table. It was soon apparent that many admired his larger-than-life figure, both in his frame and spirit. Yet beneath exists a demeanor doting with kindness that is always trying to cheer up those around him.

As his radiating joie de vivre philosophy recedes into the background, his leading side within the Guild gains prominence. Talking about his new position as the Vice President of the East Coast for the Emirates Culinary Guild, he states that it has been a big challenge yet a unique experience.

An active member of the Guild since 2005, he has been a known face in guild meetings as well as in competitions, garnering several gold medals and certificates. His presence lends a bridge essential to the Guild in unifying chefs separated due to geographical divide.

"I plan to bring chefs from the East Coast to the Guild, where aspiring chefs can participate in competitions and senior chefs can exchange ideas and foster connections. It gets difficult because of the distance, but I aim to involve and introduce as many chefs as possible in guild activities and grow it."

Till the time he breathes, he declares, he will, one way or another, contribute to his culinary profession. "In due course," he ponders, "I might even establish an Indian or Italian restaurant in my native land." The rationale behind the preference for a location stems from several reasons. From the ability of restaurants to generate profit within the saturated food and beverage landscape of Dubai, intense competition to take-away services setting up their clout, altogether winding up to a scene where restaurants are bleeding money.

"I used to call the JLT area the graveyard





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of restaurants," he says, admitting that apart from the numerous factors that prevent him from considering the opening there, he also understands the dark side of running a business in the competitive market.

"There is nothing called 'it is my passion to run a restaurant.' It is a passion to cook, but running a restaurant in Dubai is something I have seen people go down unless endowed with a surplus of fortune," adds Chef Kuldeep.

His modus operandi in addressing

these concerns veers in two directions. Having a business brush goes along with cooking, as the issue lies in the chef's desire to put the best on the plate without considering whether the guest will be able to pay for it.

The second strategy for addressing the restaurant growth problem is making a mark within the chunk of restaurants already running on a name. "You will be ready to have a Caesar salad at a high price at a known place, albeit available at a more affordable rate at other restaurants. The reason that you would not mind

paying more for it is because you love the taste and the restaurant," he elucidates.

Chef Kuldeep also gives an account of the putative three-year threshold concept of restaurants, where people would enjoy any new concept for three years before wanting a change. He further explains that if restaurants offering innovative, tasty, and affordable dishes are dying, then the competition will only intensify.

As I parse the resolute leadership style that chefs of his age bracket usually possess, it comes as a surprise that he opted for a mentoring technique. Collaborating with chefs who are half his age and some with mature years of experience, rather than exhibiting authority, he endeavors to establish an environment promoting open dialogue, readily available for clarification, and willing to revisit concepts with the young chefs patiently. "But that doesn't imply that you are working with a friend and can do whatever you want. They still have to respect and maintain a professional attitude," he smiles.

The Singh Saga Continues

As the world seems more technological, the ready-made food debate has also received fresh attention. But Chef Kuldeep remains averse to the premise



I plan to bring chefs from the East Coast to the Guild, where aspiring chefs can participate in competitions and senior chefs can exchange ideas and foster connections



There is nothing called 'it is my passion to run a restaurant.' It is a passion to cook

of the ready-made, noting that the industry will undermine the culture of creating things from scratch if it continues in this direction.

Although he appreciates the Guild bringing new chefs through competitions that emphasize cooking from scratch, he sees a dismal future for the industry given the small number of people pushing this line of thinking and the large number of hotels utilizing pre-cut vegetables for stock and sauces.

So, what's stopping the hotels from using a machine? "This is exactly what the industrialization of the industry would be," he answers. "Change is inevitable, but they would soon understand that these practices would kill talent. And we need people who will keep the old-school style alive as long as possible," he adds.

He imparts familiar sage words to his 23-year-old son, a baker who studied at the same institute, Pusa Institute of Hotel Management, walking in his father's shoes. "He is currently practicing bakery, and when I asked him what he had learned, he said most of the food arrives ready-made; all you have to do is cook and serve it. And that's why I want him to show the real world of cooking."

Having studied the old-school style, progressing from Garmage, Entremetier, and Saucier, Chef Kuldeep acknowledges the indispensable role of returning to classic techniques when dabbling with different sections of the kitchen. In his kitchen, he still bakes everything with basic flour. Whether croissants or Danish

pastries, every creation is meticulously handcrafted from scratch.

"If you go back to old-school style, you had versatile chefs, proficient in every department rather than one. Unlike today, where you might be saving time with ready-made options, the consequences are worrisome as future chefs may lack fundamental knowledge in areas such as demi-glace, traditional technique, and baking," he says with a serious tone and evident anxiety for the future.

At 63, Chef Kuldeep leads a quintessential life, enjoys his work, and appreciates how things have panned out for him. "Now, I also have some time to work on myself. I used to be 130 kilos.

Now, I have lost around 22 kg. So I am delighted to be home with my family and focus on my health."

His son will soon join him in Fujairah to focus on some real cooking skills. Meanwhile, his daughter is working at Westford University, handling its media operations, and aspires to pursue a PhD in teaching in the same field.

Looking at the two-dimensional depiction of his smiling photos was, in fact, like viewing the diorama of his life, reminding us that he made every decision during the testing times devoid of any shortcuts or ready-made patterns; rather, he made his breakthrough from scratch with tenacity and kindness.



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The Automation: Refining Efficiency in Food Service Sector

Is a kitchen both high-performing and highly imaginative attainable in the future? Chef **Carl Shi** explores

The hospitality industry is no stranger to the relentless pursuit of excellence. With the advent of automation, this quest has taken a futuristic turn, promising a blend of precision and efficiency that could redefine the very essence of food service. As we stand on the cusp of this robotic renaissance, let us whisk through the implications of this technological trend on labour costs, productivity, food hygiene, and standardization.

Soaring labour costs have long been a thorn in the side of the hospitality industry. The reality is stark: high labour costs are simply not sustainable, whether it is for a grand hotel or a quaint corner bistro. The margins in food service are notoriously tight, and every additional dollar spent on staffing can be the difference between profit and loss. Automation presents a viable solution to this economic puzzle. Robots and automated systems require an initial investment, but they operate at a fraction of the cost of human staff over time. By streamlining operations with automation, businesses can ensure financial sustainability without compromising quality.

Productivity in the kitchen is the heartbeat of any food service operation. It is essential for meeting the dynamic demands of hungry patrons. Automation steps onto this fast-paced stage as a



Chit-Chat with Chef Carl

tireless performer, capable of handling repetitive tasks with unmatched speed and accuracy. This allows human chefs to focus on what they do best—infusing dishes with creativity and finesse. The result? A kitchen that's both high-performing and highly imaginative, delivering culinary experiences that are memorable for all the right reasons.

Food hygiene is non-negotiable in our industry. It is the foundation upon which consumer trust is built. Automated systems are designed to meet stringent hygiene standards, operating with a level of consistency no human can replicate. With their help, the risk of contamination is dramatically reduced, ensuring that every meal is delicious and meets the highest safety standards.

Standardization is synonymous with

reliability in food service. It is an assurance that your signature dish will taste the same across all branches and services. Automation shines in this arena, executing recipes with robotic precision to deliver a consistent product every time. This reliability cements a brand's reputation, encouraging customer loyalty and setting the stage for long-term success.

As we wrap up our culinary exploration, let us consider the symbiotic relationship between automation and human touch. The final plating of a dish is where a chef's expertise shines—it is an artful expression that machines cannot replicate. Automation does not replace this artistry; it enhances it by taking care of the groundwork, allowing chefs to elevate their craft with personal flair and finesse. Embracing the benefits of automation allows for a harmonious kitchen where technology and tradition create a feast for the senses.

Automation in food service is not about replacing the human element but about augmenting it, creating a space where technology and talent thrive together. As we move forward, let's blend the efficiency of machines with the irreplaceable creativity of chefs to serve up a future that is both innovative and inspiring.

Chef Carl

From Sydney

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The Guild Meet

The guild meeting was hosted at The Country Club, Abu Dhabi, on the 13th of February 2024. We thank Chef Randel Elisura and his team for hosting the meeting



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DREAMING DESSERTS

Chef **Prameesh Kondoth** is this month's challenger for the Arla Pro Pastry Mastery Competition

If creating desserts is like painting the sky with flavors, Chef Prameesh has already colored it with every shade imaginable. Inside the busy Dubai airport terminal, the 36-year-old assistant pastry chef

sees the icing pen as his wings; the proofer becomes his compass as he creates comforting pastries for travelers in need of a sweet escape.

Handling the pastry operations of a

600-room hotel, five restaurants, and three lounges at the Dubai International Hotel is no easy task. From catering for room service, whipping up dishes for elite passengers to making sure that the hotel's culinary offerings are top-notch across all outlets, the assistant pastry chef has to always be on qui vive, constantly preparing new offerings to take the gastronomic experience to soaring heights.

"I also supervise the picking and sourcing of ingredients to ensure timely delivery, provide briefings on daily covers to the team, and accommodate special requests for cakes or desserts in the lounge," says Chef Prameesh.

Preparing every pastry from scratch and training a brigade of 15 chefs demands the ability to adapt on the fly. Chef Prameesh has risen to the occasion time and again by planning everything well ahead.



Here, we work on a huge scale, creating hundreds of servings of each dish. The preparation and execution of menus and recipes require strategic planning





We have our established recipes along with pictures to capture the visual presentation. So we follow all the SOPs that help us maintain consistency, quality, and timely service



"Here, we work on a huge scale, creating hundreds of servings of each dish. The preparation and execution of menus and recipes require strategic planning. We have our established recipes along with pictures to capture the visual presentation. So we follow all the SOPs that help us maintain consistency, quality, and timely service."

What is Chef Prameesh's passion today was born from the memories of his late father's restaurant. The sight of the now-sold restaurant and his mother's stories sparked a fire within ten-year-old Prameesh. After his father's untimely demise, he shouldered family responsibilities alongside his hard-working mother and two sisters. "I used to assist my mother on the farm tending to the cows, and eventually, I began taking on the odd jobs of baking and preparing coffee snacks for the local marriage celebrations." The Malappuram-

born chef then spent a year studying pastry and finishing his course in Kerala.

He arrived in the UAE, taking up his first pastry and baking job at a north Indian restaurant in Sharjah, and six months later, he moved to Dubai to continue creating desserts for the Emirates Grand Hotel.

The year 2015 was a season of change for Chef Prameesh. He had applied for a job at the Radisson Blu Dubai Deira Creek with a keen desire to work with Chef Uwe, and following a series of interviews and trials, he got the role of Demi Chef.

For five years throughout that tenure, he contributed to the catering and a la carte services, skillfully creating desserts for the various restaurants and banquets and pulling sleepless nights during Gulfood competitions while also working at the hotel.

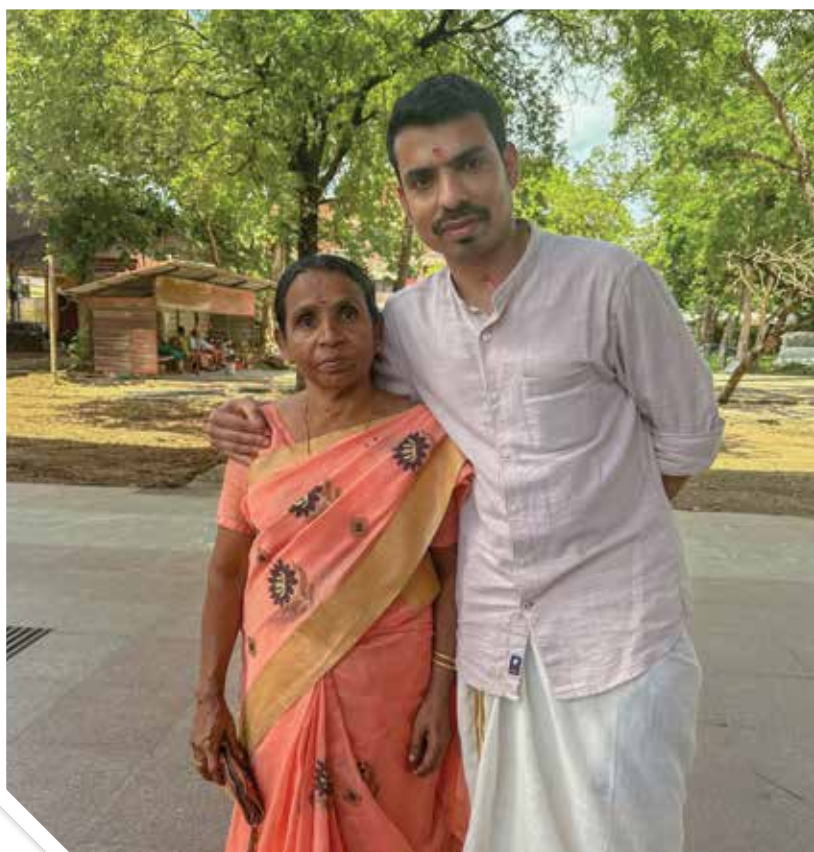
"At that hotel, you work wherever you can. You can work anywhere. With solid training, you can even close your eyes and work. And a special thanks to Chefs Uwe and Dammika, who not only changed my life with their support but also encouraged me to compete. I won quite a few medals at the culinary competitions. Throughout his career, Chef Prameesh has earned numerous accolades in culinary competitions, including several silver medals at the Salon Culinaire and a gold medal for a three-plate Arabic dessert.

Taking chances and giving chances have a special significance for Chef Prameesh. His resolve to do something on his own has always been a catalyst, which led to an opportunity at the Dubai International Hotel. That is why, when considering potential hires, he prioritizes their work ethic and attitude, allowing them to prove themselves.

"They are novices in the field, just as I once was when senior chefs took me under their wing. If a young chef has interest and has what it takes to be in the kitchen—a willingness to forego celebrations, hospitality towards guests, and eagerness to learn; then I am ready to mentor them. No one is perfect when they start. Everyone deserves a chance. It will also help you identify their hidden talents."



I used to assist my mother on the farm tending to the cows, and eventually, I began taking on the odd jobs of baking and preparing coffee snacks for the local marriage celebrations



For the contest, he focused on bringing out something healthy and organic. He has experimented with pandan coconut, pairing it with mousse, complemented by raspberry sorbet and mango. "I wanted to create something new and innovative," he remarks.

Not one to complain; he loves the job and is always willing to learn and create something of his own. Apart from channeling his energy towards educating young chefs about competitions and participating in them, he also aspires to make a difference in the area of nutritious desserts. "I want to create healthy and delicious desserts in light of the rising number of people who are suffering from food allergies," he says, explaining that the future is bright for creating healthy dessert innovation.

Chef Prameesh is happily married to his work. With his mother and sister back in India, his passion for baking has consumed every waking moment since arriving at the airport nearly five years ago. Even in his dreams, he plans on perfecting his pastry recipe. Pastry dreams fly high.



Pandan Coconut

PANDAN MOUSSE

Pandan leaves	75g
Milk	150g
Egg yolks	36g
Sugar	125g
Gelatin	4.6g

Arla Pro High Stability

Whipping Cream 35% 75g
Method

- ◆ One day ahead of time, infuse the milk with pandan leaves.
- ◆ While the infusion of milk is boiling, beat the egg yolk with sugar. Return the mixture to a boil and stir in some warm milk.
- ◆ Once it becomes thick, add the gelatin that has been soaked and set aside to cool. Whisk the cream.

- ◆ While the infusion of milk is boiling, beat the egg yolk with sugar. Return the mixture to a boil and stir in some warm milk.
- ◆ Once it becomes thick, add the gelatin that has been soaked and set aside to cool. Whisk the cream.

TUILE

Arla Pro® Unsalted Butter

82% melted	50g
Powdered sugar	50g
Flour	50g
Egg whites	40g
Red color	

Method

- ◆ Combine all the ingredients. Put the mixture in the mold and bake it at 180°C

COCONUT MOUSSE

Coconut puree	250g
Sugar	36g
Gelatin	5g

Arla Pro High Stability

Whipping Cream 35% 250g
Method

- ◆ Heat the sugar and coconut puree together.
- ◆ After adding the soaked gelatin, set it aside to cool. Add the whipped cream and fold.

GLAZE

Sugar	50g
Potato starch	7g
water	50g
Gelatin	5g
Coconut puree	50g


Arla Pro High Stability
Whipping Cream 35%

92g

Method

- ◆ Heat the water to 103°C, add the sugar, and puree the coconut.
- ◆ Boil the cream and potato starch in a separate pan.
- ◆ Stir the two mixtures together until the glaze thickens. Then blend in the soaked gelatin

DACQUOISE

Egg white	120g
Sugar	25g
Coconut desiccated	100g
Icing sugar	100g
Flour	25g

Arla Pro® Unsalted Butter 82%

5g

Method

- ◆ Beat the sugar into the egg whites.
- ◆ Combine flour, powdered coconut, and icing sugar.
- ◆ Mix the dry ingredients into the meringue. Bake for about 15 minutes at 170°C.

SORBET

Yuzu	70g
Water	250g
Stabilizer	1.2g
Glucose	16g
Sugar	55g

Method

- ◆ Bring the water and sugar to a boil.
- ◆ Mix the stabiliser and sugar together.
- ◆ When the water is boiling, add the sugar mixture. Add the yuzu at last and

combine thoroughly. Once it has cooled, transfer it to an ice cream maker and store it in the freezer.

MANGO PASSION COMPOTE

Mango	8g
Passion	5g
Mango puree	4g

Method

- ◆ Reheat the pureed mango. Take it off the heat, allow it to cool, then stir it in the mango and passion.

PRALINE CREMEUX

Cream	20g
Praline paste	30g
Cream cheese	10g

Method

- ◆ Bring the cream to a boil, then pour it into the praline paste. Gently fold in the cream cheese. And fold it all together again.

RASPBERRY JELLY

Raspberry puree	50ml
Sugar	7.5g
Gelatine	2.5g

Method

- ◆ Heat the puree and stir-fry. Add the gelatin that has been soaked.

BAKLAWA

All Purpose Flour	240g
Salt	5g
Vinegar	9ml
Extra Virgin Olive Oil	9ml

Warm water

175ml

Cornstarch

160g

Method

- ◆ Combine flour, oil, vinegar, salt, and warm water; knead into a firm dough.
- ◆ After kneading for 30 minutes to 1 hour, divide the dough into 30 equal balls and sprinkle cornflour. After each ball reaches the size of a palm, stack them and continue rolling until the balls are thin.
- ◆ Transfer it to a plate dusted with cornflour and cover it with a moist towel. Repeat the same with the remaining dough.

ALMOND NOUGATINE

Sugar	20g
Almond flakes	10g

Method

- ◆ Caramelize the sugar and stir in the almond crackers.
- ◆ Pour it into the silicon mat, cut it, and arrange it according to size.

BERRY COMFORT

Mixed berry	10g
Raspberry puree	5g

Method

- ◆ Add the fresh mixed berries to the warm puree.

FOR ADDITIONAL GARNISH

- ◆ Mint leaves
- ◆ Edible flowers



*Andros Chef
Lemon Puree*

*Bakbel
Lemon Yuzu
Fruit filling*

*Schreiber
Cream Cheese*

*Backaldrin
Base Mix*

LEMON CHEESECAKE



INDULGE IN THE BRIGHT FLAVORS OF OUR LEMON CHEESECAKE: CREAMY SCHREIBER CHEESE, TANGY ANDROS LEMON PUREE, AND ZESTY BAKBEL YUZU TOPPING ON A CRISP BACKALDRIN BASE. A SLICE OF CITRUS BLISS!



March 2024 **Gulf Gourmet**



QUOTE MARSHAL

You are not competing against each other, but with yourself, is Marshal and Chef **Randel**'s advice to competitors

Chef Randel Menil Elisura, who hails from Quezon City in the Philippines, never imagined that cooking was his calling. All until he decided to take on the interesting trail of debit and credit. One interest opened doors for another, but it unveiled its latent passion this time. At just 14, he dipped his toes in the hospitality industry, holding a job while studying.

"I got a dishwasher role in a catering company. By the time I completed my bachelor's degree, majoring in banking and finance, I was assuming different small kitchen roles. During this time, I realized I liked the kitchen, prompting me to take another course, and it was obviously in culinary arts," reminisces the now-seasoned 49-year-old chef.

In the following years, he focused on polishing his theoretical understanding of the basics and gaining practical experience while working for the same catering company, progressing from a cook helper to a senior cook.

The turns of events and pines for the possibility of having global experience found its way, and he came to Abu Dhabi. "It was 2002 when I arrived in the UAE after I got a role at the Al Diar Gulf Hotel & Resorts. After that, I moved to the Sands Hotel as a senior chef de partie, where I worked for another three years before joining the Abu Dhabi Country Club as a Sous Chef," he narrates from his more than two decades of work profile in the country.

Across the 14 years at the property, he



Keep learning, and work professionally, working and studying in tandem, just like an architect or engineer would

has been wearing multiple hats, Head Chef being one of them at the moment. He does, however, go above and beyond in his role, even shouldering responsibilities similar to those of an executive chef.

From crunching numbers, costing, menu engineering, and effectively overseeing all culinary operations in

the club outlets, banquets, and events catering with an efficient kitchen staff of 40 to 50, he has been an all-rounder. "We have fine dining, coffee shops, and semi-fine dining options. We also run large-scale banqueting operations focused on catering to a 1,000-person capacity. Besides that, we also provide special off-site catering services featuring international cuisine for high-profile clientele."

Like a picture of calm in chaos, glance in any direction in the heat of the kitchen, and you will find Chef Randel mentoring the team as he gently waves his baton. According to him, working in the kitchen is not only about spatulas and skillets but also about the math and science of cooking: managing the cost of ingredients, budget, communication, and organization.

"Still, a majority of staff in the kitchen don't study culinary. They come to the kitchen with no idea of growth. So, I advise them to find someone to mentor them and give them hope. Keep learning, and work professionally, working and studying in tandem, just like an architect or engineer would."

Apart from the support from management and staff that motivated him to avoid job hopping, he equally credits the workplace gift of balance, which left no second thoughts about staying put. "Sometimes you have to think about balancing work and family. You cannot simply jump from one country to another or company

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to another. When you have a family, stability is better," the statement sparkles amidst the importance of defining an equilibrium in the industry that often puts chefs at a crossroads between career growth and family.

The other reason he shows up for work every day at the same place is because he's in his element at the company, which has constantly encouraged him to upgrade his skills and gives him room to get involved in the Guild's activities.

The Emirates Culinary Guild and Chef Randel's connection has run as long as his stint in Abu Dhabi. "I first learned about the Guild when I was a commis, and Chef Das, one of my seniors, recommended that I find out more about the Guild in order to have a platform to exchange ideas with seasoned chefs and expand my knowledge. But it was only in the later period of 2015–2016 when I joined the Guild while working in the country club."

An active Guild member, Chef Randel is also an all-heart Marshal, dealing with hundreds of chefs during the three to four days of competitions. An inevitable word in competitions is pressure. A part of this pressure also stems from the unfamiliar setup and environment. "However, if the chefs have worked in the kitchen for a long time, they would not find adjusting to a new environment difficult. And marshals are also there to help boost your spirits," adds Chef Randel.

A MASTER AT MARSHALING

High chances of errors coexist with competition. From potential fire hazards to hygiene-related hazards, Chef Randel nevertheless skirts such pitfalls by closely monitoring the cooking stations. His role involves guiding the young chefs in such a way that they adhere to the established guidelines without stifling their creative freedom.

"I have seen participants bring ready-made stuff. But we have ensured checks, and when you see that, you know it's not allowed. Often, in haste, young chefs



You cannot simply jump from one country to another or company to another. When you have a family, stability is better

prepare uncooked food. So we also take up the task of giving them a heads-up about unhygienic or uncooked food that cannot be served. Then you also clock the time; keep reminding them of the minutes left as they have their heads buried in their dish while cooking, and ensure the safety of the participants through checking on the equipment as you don't want to escalate the problem."

If a dish goes wrong and a chef requires an additional few minutes to resurrect it from failure, Chef Randel displays a modicum of leniency and lets them fix their case. He adds, "Then there will also be a deduction in points. But it's better to deduct those points than to spoil the dish that can make the judges sick."

Be relaxed and prepared is his advice to the young competitors. A lot, he explains, is known from body language. Confidence reflects the light of subtle determination

shining through in a crowd. In contrast, first-time competitors with haste would refract beams of mistakes, indicating that accidents will likely occur at those stations.

"You are not competing against each other but with yourself. The judges will evaluate you based on how well you execute your job, so do it right and with attention to detail," he counsels the young chefs.

Concerning his next move up the ladder of competition, he says he has already begun his judging training and intends to preside over his two favorite categories, the hot kitchen and the static display.

Chef Randel met his wife during his college days in Manila. After a few years, they moved to the UAE, where his wife found a job in a different industry. "We have two kids, and family is my pillar," he says. At home, his wife is in charge of cooking. While Chef Randel lends his gourmet touch during special dining occasions, he prefers his wife's cooking because it tastes different from the monotony and, even though it's simple, it's delicious.

In the long run, he says he would like to return to the Philippines and have different plans. But for now, he feels gratitude for his country. The country is like a second home, "maybe first home because I have been here for 11 months, and the Philippines is far away," he corrects quickly with a smile.



You are not competing against each other but with yourself. The judges will evaluate you based on how well you execute your job, so do it right and with attention to detail



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 20-22 MAY 2024 | EXPO CENTRE SHARJAH, UAE

AN OVERVIEW OF THE THE EMIRATES INTERNATIONAL SALON CULINAIRE 2024

May 20th till May 22nd 2024
Expo Centre, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

The Emirates Culinary Guild (ECG) (www.emiratesculinaryguild.net) is the association of professional chefs of the UAE. It is a non-profit-making organisation, organised by volunteers dedicated solely to the advancement of culinary art in the UAE.

The aims of the ECG, broadly, are:

- To encourage and inspire young chefs through training and competition.
- To enhance internationally the culinary prestige of the UAE.
- To encourage UAE nationals to consider a career within the hospitality industry.

The Emirates International Salon Culinaire (ESC) is a series of practical and display-based culinary competitions; entry to which is open to professional chefs, pastry chefs, cooks and bakers and culinary students.

Some of the competitions are designed for entry by a single competitor; others are designed as team events. Each competition is called a class.

The ESC shall take place in during the Expo Culinaire exhibition for Chefs,

Bakers, Pastry chefs and cooks and which will once again be the home of the Emirates Salon Culinaire and is a fully endorsed competition from Worldchefs. To exhibit or sponsor at Expo Culinaire please visit <https://www.expoculinaire.com/>, All this - coupled with three days of real-time, hectic, and thrilling cookery competitions - fought against the constraints of time, makes the salon a stimulating event that will become a major attraction at the Expo Culinaire exhibition for Chefs, Bakers, Pastry chefs and cooks. This year the education arena is not to be missed as a special feature of the exhibition. Demonstrations and interactive sessions will be another highlight of the Expo Culinaire exhibition.

Social media plays a large part in the Guilds self-promotion and the *Gulf Gourmet* magazine drive awareness around the globe. www.emiratesculinaryguild.net/, www.facebook.com/Emirates-Culinary-Guild-763644223697376/timeline/, www.facebook.com/gulfgourmet?fref=ts, follow these links for more information on the Emirates Culinary Guild.

In 2024 the Emirates International

Salon Culinaire and Expo Culinaire exhibition shall run alongside the Alen Thong Golden Coffee Pot Challenge for International teams of young chefs which shall take place with teams from around the world competing. All this activity will make this the chefs event of the year.

Membership of the ECG is open to all of those professionally and solely involved in the preparation of food.

Anyone interested in the Emirates Salon Culinaire to compete or sponsor, please contact us below.

The Emirates Culinary Guild
 PO Box 454922 – Dubai – UAE
 Tel: + 971 56 8014089.
emiratesculinaryguild@gmail.com
 10062023

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Briefs of the Classes for Entry

Resume Of Classes for Entry

Class No. - Class Description

Pastry and Bakery

- 01 Cake Decoration – Practical
Powered by Felchlin Switzerland
- 02 Wedding Cake Three-Tier-
Powered by Pristine
- 03 Four Plates of Dessert –
Powered by Arla Pro
- 04 Pastry Showpiece
- 05 Bread Loaves and Showpiece
Powered by CSM ingredients &
Schapfen Muehle Germany
- 06 Petites Fours, Pralines Powered
by Marguerite & Candia
Professional France

Showpiece Artistic Displays

- 07 Chocolate Carving Showpiece
Powered by Veliche Chocolate
Belgium
- 08 Fruit & Vegetable Carving
Showpiece Powered by Barakat
- 09 Open Show Piece

Gourmet Static Display

- 10 Five-Course Gourmet Dinner
Menu Powered by USMEF
- 11 Sustainable Three-Course
Vegetarian Lunch Menu
- 13 Four Plated USAPEEC Chicken
Dishes –Powered by USAPEEC
- 23 Savory tartelette Creations
Powered by HUG
- 24 Sweet tartelette Creations
Powered by HUG
- 28 Four Plates Vegan dishes
- Powered by Violife 100%
Vegan
- 34 Sweet Creations Powered by
Potatoes USA

Practical Artistic Carving

- 15 Individual Ice Carving
- 16 Ice Carving Team Event
- 17 Practical Fruit & Vegetable
Carving Powered by Barakat

Practical Cookery

- 19 Arabic Mezzeh - Practical
Cookery Powered by Rahma
- 20 Fish & Seafood - Practical

- Cookery Powered by The Deep
Seafood Company
- 21 Beef - Practical Cookery Powered
by USMEF
- 22 Emirati Cuisine – Practical
Cookery
- 25 Dressed Chicken & Dressed Fish
Practical Butchery
- 33 Savory Potato Creations
Practical Cookery Powered by
Potatoes USA
- 27 Chicken - Practical Cookery –
Powered by USAPEEC
- 30 The Student Challenge Powered
by THRYVEPlant BasedOpen
to Culinary school students
and kitchen trainees/interns
only Classes 35 and 36 only
competitors must enter both
classesEntry to the class must
be accompanied by a current
student card issued by a
recognized culinary school or
letter from Human resource
department stating trainee or
culinary intern.
- 35 Plant based Practical cookery
appetizer and main course
- 36 Soup and Sandwich Practical
cookery Powered by Chefs Palette
- 37 Lamb Primal Cuts Practical
Butchery TBC
- 38: Syrian Cuisine Modern Main
courses Practical cookery
Powered by Boody's
- 39 Syrian Three Plates of Kibbeh
Plated display Powered by
Boody's
- 40 Sounbula Mills Artisan Bakery
Arena Practical Cookery

ADDENDUM – The Emirates Salon Culinaire 2024

VENUE & ENTRY FEES

- 1. The Emirates Salon Culinaire
will be held during the Expo
Culinaire 2024 from May 20th
till 22nd May 2024.
- 2. The venue is at the Sharjah
National Exhibition Centre
- 3. The entrance fee for all single
entries is Dhs.100 (AED. One
Hundred) per person per class,

unless otherwise stated in the
Rules and Regulations or the
Class Briefs.

- 4. The fee for entry to the trophy
classes is as follows:
 - i. **Best Cuisinier – The Emirates
Salon Culinaire- Dubai 2024
AED:500/- per person**
 - ii. **Best Pastry Chef – The
Emirates Salon Culinaire-
Dubai 2024 AED:400/- per
person**
 - iii. **Best Artist – The Emirates
Salon Culinaire- Dubai 2024
AED:500/- per person**
 - iv. **Best Arab National – The
Emirates Salon Culinaire-
Dubai 2024 AED:300/- per
person**
 - v. **Young Chef of the Year – The
Emirates Salon Culinaire
Dubai 2024 AED: 300/- per
person**

CLOSING DATE:

- 5. Closing date for entries is April
28th 2024 However, many are
often fully subscribed and closed
well before the closing date.

TROPHY ENTRY:

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

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

The required classes are:

BEST CUISINIER:

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

In order to qualify for inclusion in

March 2024 **Gulf Gourmet**

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the points tally for Best Cuisinier Trophy a competitor must win three medals, at least one of which must be a gold medal.

BEST PASTRY CHEF:

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

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

BEST ARTIST:

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

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

BEST ARAB NATIONAL CUISINIER:

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

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

BEST BAKERY TEAM

1. Class 40 Sounbula Artisan Bakery Arena Class "The SOUNBULA UAE Bakery team of 2024"

YOUNG CHEF OF THE YEAR

See Classes for Entry Document. Classes

JUDGING AND THE AWARDS SYSTEM

A team of WorldChefs (The World Association of Chefs Societies) approved international Judges will adjudicate at all classes of the competition: using Worldchefs-approved methods, criteria and documents www.worldchefs.org After each judging session, the judges will hold a debriefing session at which each competitor attending may learn something of the thinking behind the judges' decision. Competitors will not be competing against each other: rather, they will be striving to reach the best possible standard. The judges will then apportion marks that accord with their perception of the standard reached. The competitor will then receive an award commensurate with his/her points tally for the class.

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

The scaling for awards in all classes is as follows:

Points	
100	Gold Medal with Distinction with Certificate.
99 – 90	Gold Medal with Certificate.
89 – 80	Silver Medal with Certificate.
79 – 70	Bronze Medal with Certificate
60 – 69	Certificate of Merit
Thereafter	Certificate of Participation

Corporate and Establishment Trophies

The corporate and establishment trophies available are:

Best Effort by an Individual Establishment – The Emirates**Salon Culinaire**

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

Best Effort by a Corporation – The Emirates Salon Culinaire

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

Point Value of each Medal Won:

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

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

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

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ECG Corporate Member directory

Aalst Chocolate - A Cargill Company

Daniele Masini, Business Development Manager
G&D- IMEA, Mob: +971 54 799 2130,
daniele_masini@cargill.com,
www.aalstchocolate.com

Abu Dhabi Farmers' Services Centre

Martin Aguirre, Commercial & Operations Director
P.O. Box 62532, Abu Dhabi, UAE
Direct Line: +971 2 813 8400.
Phone: +971 2 813 8888, Fax: +971 2 813 9999
Mobile: +971 56 685 4836

Agthia Consumer Business Division

Dinusha Gamage, Brand Manager - Food category
Consumer Business Division
Agthia Group PJSC, P.O Box 37725, Abu Dhabi.
dinusha.gamage@agthia.com, www.agthia.com

Al Islami Foods

Rasheed Chirakkal,
Area Sales Manager- Food Service,
Mob: +971 50 5188 391, Off: +971 4 8853 333,
rasheed.chirakkal@alislamifoods.com,
www.alislamifoods.com

Al Kabeer

Chandan Chakravarty,
Research & Development Chef
Mob: +971 56 6616 864, Off: +971 6 5333 999
chandan@al-kabeer.com, www.al-kabeer.com

Al Maya Hospitality

Mohamad Hajj Ali, Sales Manager
Mob: +971 50 1550998, Off: +971 4 3473500
Email: mohamadh@almaya.ae, www.almaya.ae

Alto Shaam, Inc

Gabriel Estrella Talenti, Director of Sales,
Tel: +971 4 321 9712, Mob: +971 50 8531 707
gabriele@alto-shaam.com, www.alto-shaam.com

Americana Foods

Laurent Stevenart, Plant Based Food Director,
Mob: +971 52 1354 732,
lstevenart@americana-food.com,
www.americanafoods.com

Arab Marketing and Finance, Inc. (AMFI)

Simon Bakht
Tel: +961-1-740378 / 741223 / 751262
Email: SBakht@amfime.com

Arabian American Technology (ARAMTEC)

Edgard Chalhoub, General Manager,
Tel: +971 4 380 8444, Mobile: +971 50 597 9516,
edgard@aramtec.com, www.aramtec.com

Arla Foods

Marc Hayes, Application Manager - MENA,
Tel: +971 6 534 6767, Mob: +971 56 417 3310
marc.hayes@arlafoods.com,
www.ArlaPro.com, www.arlafoods.com

Bakemart FZ LLC

Syed Masood, Director of Sales
Mob: +971 55 609 7526, Tel: +971 4 56708
masood@bakemart.ae, www.bakemart.ae

Barakat Group of Company

Kenneth D'Costa, Managing Director
Neil Ranasinghe, Head Culinary Innovation
Tel: +971 4 8802121

Barilla Middle East FZE

Duygu Ozpaksoy, Food Services Sales Manager,
Tel: +971 4 882 0488, Mob: +971 56 933 0909
duygu.ozpaksoy@barilla.com,
www.barillagroup.com

Bayara - Gyma Food Industries

Yassine EL Allam, Key Account Manager,
Tel: +971 4 8857 478, Mob: +971 56 2448 259
yassinea@savola.com, www.bayara.com

Del Monte Foods (U.A.E) FZE

Hany Shamseldeen, Mob +971 50 146 7400,
hali@freshdelmonte.com,
https://me.freshdelmonte.com/

Diamond Meat Processing Co.L.L.C

Kamparath Suresh, Assistant General Manager
Business Development, Mob: +971 50 655 4768
wnedal@siniorafood.com, www.almasadubai.com

Dilmah Tea

Vivette, Mob +971 508181164,
vivettea@dilmahtea.com

dmg events

Hassan
Tel: +971 4 4380355, Mob: +971 56 8360993
aysehassan@dmgeventsme.com,
www.thehotelshow.com

Emirates Snack Foods

Marwan Hussein / Feda Saimua,
Horeca Division Head / General Manager
Tel: +971 4 285 5645, Mob: +971 56 526 7181
marwan.hussein@esf-uae.com, www.esf-uae.com

Essity Hygiene and Health AB

Lara Haddad, Customer Marketing
Manager - MEIA, Mob: +971 5 276 3887
tork.meia@essity.com, www.torkmeia.com

Faisal Al Nusif Trading Co. L.L.C

Thomas Das, Managing Director
Tel: 04 3391149, thomasdas@fantco.net,
Web: www.fantco.net

Farm Fresh

Feeroz Hasan, Business Development Manager
Al Quoz, P.O Box 118351, Dubai, UAE
Office No: +971 4 3397279 Ext: 253
Fax: +971 4 3397262, Mob: +971 56 1750883

German Icecream Factory

Boris Mueller, Mob: +971 50 108 9030
boris@drmuellers1969.com
www.drmuellers1969.com

Greenhouse Foodstuff Trading

Edgard Abounader, UAE Sales Manager - HORECA,
Tel: +971 4 8170000, Mob: +971 56 442 4608,
Edgard.Abounader@greenhouseuae.com,
www.greenhouseuae.com

Ginox Swiss Kitchen

Tiziana Ricottone,
Personal Assistant & Communications
Manager,
Mob: +971 50 5091 689,
tiziana.ricottone@ginoxgroup.com,
www.ginoxgroup.com

Golden Dunes General Trading LLC

Sulemana, Head Of Sales,
Mob: +971 50 125 01 376,
sulemana@golden-dunes.com,
www.golden-dunes.com

Hamid and Kumar Enterprises LLC

Sunil Ahluwalia, General Manager,
Tel: +971 4 3474712, +971 4 3474571
dry@hkfoodgroup.com, www.hkfoodgroup.com

HK Enterprises LLC

Andjelka Pavlovic, Trade Marketing Manager,
Tel: +971 4 2486 000, Mob: +971 50 8347 662
andjelka@hkfoodgroup.com,
www.hkfoodgroup.com

HMNY DMCC

Shigeru Tachiki, Managing Director,
Mob: +971 568 747 60,
shigeru.tachiki@gmail.com

Hospitality by Dubai World Trade Centre

Georg.Hessler, Director - Culinary Operations,
Tel: 04 3086571, Georg.Hessler@dwtc.com,
https://www.dwtchospitality.com/en/

HUG AG

Riyadh Hessian, 6102 Malters / ,
food-service@hug-luzern.ch,
www.hug-luzern.ch, fb/hugfoodservice
Distribution UAE and Oman: Aramtec, PO
Box 6936, Al Quoz Industrial Area No. 1, Near
Khaleej Times Office, Mob +971 507648434,
www.aramtec.com

IFFCO

Mary Rose Lopez,
Associate Customer Service Manager,
Mob: +971 506719882, 065029025 / 6264
mlopez@iffco.com, www.iffco.com

Indoguna Dubai LLC / Indoguna Productions FZCO

Ana Elena Saenz, Juancho Capistrano,
Regional Business Dev Manager,
Group Sales and Marketing,
Mob: +971 58 2469 330, +971 54 3934 123
ana@indoguna.ae, juancho@indoguna-dubai.ae
indogunadubai.com, indogunaproductions.com

JM FOODS LLC

Rajan J.S. / Maikel Cooke / Grace Renomeron
Management, Tel: +971 04 883 823,
Tel: +971 50 551 6564, sales@jmfoodgulf.com,
www.jmfoodgulf.com

Johnson Diversey Gulf

Marc Robitzkat
Mob: 050 459 4031, Off: 04 8819470
marc.robitzkat@johnsondiversey.com

Kerry Taste & Nutrition MENTA

Simon Martin, Executive Chef
Tel: +971 52 450 0845
simon.martin@kerry.com, www.kerry.com

Kibsons International LLC

Kumail Feyzee, Sales Manager
Tel: +971 4 320 2727, +971 50 595 3501
Kumail.feyzee@kibsons.com, www.kibsons.com

Koppert Cress

Franck Pontais, Country Manager
Tel: 31174242819, 447960700538
franck@koppertcress.com,
www.koppertcress.com

LG FMCG TRADING LLC

Joel C. Peñafiel, Trade Marketing Manager
Tel: +971 56 993 5175,
joel.cortez@lalsgroup.com,
www.lalsgroup.com/brand/81/fmcs

LIFCO INTERNATIONAL

Jihad Harfouche, Horeca Manager,
Tel: +971 4 561 2164, Mob: +971 56 681 9788
jihad.harfouche@lifco-international.com,
www.lifco-international.com

Lowe Refrigeration LLC

Mark Wood, General Manager
Tel: +971 4 8829440, Mob: +971 52 8693695
mark.wood@lowerental.com, www.lowerental.com

MADA FMCG (Mada Genmeral Trading LLC)

Ashlea Daniel, Business Development Manager
Mob: +971 50 568 6150
ashlea@madafmcs.com, https://madafmcs.com

MEH GCC FZCO

SOHEIL MAJD, MD
Tel: +971 4 8876626, +971 4 8876636
s.majd@mehgcc.ae, www.mehgcc.ae

Masterbaker Marketing FZCO

Sanket Shah, Sales Manager
Tel: +971 4 8239 800, Mob: +971 50 4516 459
info@uaw.switzgroup.com,
www.masterbakerme.com

Meat & Livestock Australia

Damon Holmes,
Business Development Manager,
Tel: +971 52169 4743, dholmes@mla.com.au,
https://www.lambandbeef.com/

MEIKO Middle East FZE

Jay Dhanrajani, Sales Manager
Tel: +971 4 3415 172, jay.kumar@meiko.ae,
www.meiko.ae

Meyer Group Ltd

Anjana Vaswani Kavasseri,
General Manager - Middle East,
Tel: +971 50 5950 772, anjana@meyeruk.com,
www.meyergroup.co.uk

Middle East Fuji International Trading LLC

Vipin Sidharthan, Sales Manager
Mob: +971 52 926 1559,
vipin@mef.ae, www.mef.ae

MKN Maschinenfabrik Kurt Neubauer GmbH & Co.KG

Elias Rached, Regional Director Sales
Middle East & Africa, Tel: +971 4 358 4000,
Mob: +971 50 558 7477
rac@mkn-middle-east.com, www.mkn.com

Nestle Middle East FZE

Elie Lteif / Luma Karadsheh, Culinary Advisor /
Commercial Development Manager,
Mob: +971 55 4427 010, 55 3437 632 (Elie)
elie.lteif@ae.nestle.com, luma.karadsheh@ae,
www.nestleprofessionalmena.com

Nina Pita

Shan Oved,
VP of Export and International Marketing,
Tel: +972 54 6372 123, +972 54 6372 123
shan@ninapita.com, www.ninapita.com

NRTC Group

Iyad Nouneh, Regional Head of Digital Marketing
& E-Commerce Manager, Tel: +971 4 320 8889,
marketingmanager@nrtcgroupp.com
www.nrtcgroupp.com

Nyum Meals

Tarryn-Leigh Green, Co-founder,
Mob: +971 52 477 7731,
tarrynleigh.green@nyummeals.com,
www.nyummeals.com

One Foods

Ayman Akram Arnous, Food Service Manager
Mob: +971 50 1592594,
ayman.arnous@brf-me.com

Peachtree Foods ME

Cindy Storm, GM of Ops,
(TEL) +971 58 587 6877, +971 4 517 7275
meadmind@popcakesa.co.za,
www.popcakesa.co.za

Pear Bureau Northwest

Nina Halal, Director
Mob: (Lebanon) +961 3664088,
(UAE) +971 58284 0008
halal@cyberia.net.lb

Potatoes USA

Victoria Hassani, Managing Director,
Mob: +971 50 1013 541
potatoesusa@gmadubai.com,
www.usapotatoes.com

RAK Porcelain

Sadik Variyathodi, Director of sales,
Mob: +971 50 4868 141, +971 4 3335 474
sadik@rakrestofair.ae, www.restofair.ae

Restofair RAK LLC

Sadik Variyathodi, Director of sales
Mob: +971 50 4868 141, Tel: +971 4 3335 474
sadik@rakrestofair.ae, www.restofair.ae

Robot Coupe

chandrakanth pathi, Area Manager-UAE
Tel: +971 54 4894896,
pathi@robot-coupe.com
www.robot-coupe.com

Royal Foodstuff LLC

Harry Bhalla, General Manager
Tel: +971 55 554 6661, +971 4 420 3686
mail@royalfoodstuff.com,
www.royalfoodstuff.com

SHARIF HASSAN ALI TRADING LLC. (SHALI)

Lanie S. Paguyo, Manager,
Mob: +971 52 136 0210, +971 54 791 7293
lanie@shalidubai.com, www.shalidubai.com

Skinny Genie

Lucy Mwangi, Sales Executive
Mob: +971 56 411 8287, +971 56 411 8287
lucy@skinny-genie.com, www.skinny-genie.com

Sounbula Mills

Karim Al Azhari, Ceo & Owner Sounbula Mills
karim@sounbulamills.com

Switch Foods

Robert Hazzam, Sales Manager
Tel: +971 2 6759 555, Mob: +971 52 8979 062,
rhazzam@switchfoods.com, switchfoods.com

Taaza Quality Food Stuff Trading LLC

Jeyaram S, CEO
Tel: 04 4216660 Mob: 0504514274
jeyar@taaza.ae, www.taaza.ae

UNOX Middle East DMCC

Matthew Roberts, Managing Director
Tel: +971 4 5542146, Mob: +971 52 304332,
info.uae@unox.com, www.unox.com

Upfield Middle East Limited FZCO

Melanny Lopez,
Marketing Lead MENA - Foodservice,
Tel: +971 4 2674 430, +971 56 6812 914
melanny.lopez@upfield.com
https://www.upfieldprofessional.com/en-ae

USA Cheese Guild

Angelique Hollister, Senior Vice President,
Global Cheese Marketing,
Tel: 703 528 3049
ahollister@usdec.org,
https://www.usacheeseguild.org/

US Meat Export Federation

Bassam Bousaleh,
Tel: +971 50 3589197, +971 50 358 9197
Bassamb@ams-me.com

USA Poultry and Egg Export Council Inc (USAPEEC)

Jena Gress, Global Marketing Manager
Tel: 14048823920, www.usapeec.org

US Poultry

Andrew El Halal, Marketing Manager
Mob: (Lebanon) +961 3200332,
(UAE) +971 52 135 1405
andrewh@amfi-me.com

VITO AG

Ms Lorena Schmidt, Export Sales Manager
Mob: 497461962890
info@vito.ag, www.VITO.ag

Waterfront Market LLC

Mohammad Al Madani, Center Manager,
Tel: +971 4 707 1580, Mob: +971 52 607 9595
Mohammad.Almadani@Waterfrontmarket.ae,
waterfrontmarket.ae

Welbilt

Rakesh Tiwari,
Mob: +971 56 406 1628,
rakesh.tiwari@welbilt.com

THE EMIRATES CULINARY GUILD

APPLICATION FORM



WCC
- Women's Culinary Chapter -

Family Name:	First Name/s:	Ms/ Mrs/ Mr/ Other:
Nationality:	Civil Status:	Date of Birth: dd/mm/yyyy
Employee/ Business Owner:	Name of Business:	Designation:
Work Address:	Email Address:	Contact Number:

Type of Membership: (please tick)		
Corporate Member	AED20,000.00 per year Includes certificate; member-pin, member medal and ECG ceremonial collar	
Senior: (Above the rank of chef de partie/ senior chef de partie on executive chef's recommendation).	AED350 joining fee/ AED150 renewal fee Includes certificate; member-pin, member medal and ECG ceremonial collar	
Young member: (under 28 years)	Free Includes certificate; member-pin	

Declaration to be Signed by Applicant:

I wish to join The Emirates Culinary Guild in collaboration with The Women's Culinary Chapter.

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' endeavours to the best of my abilities.

Signature:

Proposed By:

Signature:

Seconded By:

Signature:

For Official Use Only

Remarks:

Payment Received?

Certificate Given

Pin Given

Medal & Collar Given

Approved by President:

Signature:

Approved by Chairman:

Signature:

Note: The membership is only applicable to those who are working in the UAE as professional chef or with a background related as Chef in the hotel and restaurant industry.

The WCC is in collaboration with the Emirates Culinary Guild, which is a member of the World Association of Chef's Societies

LET'S GO BANANAS

Future is GMO or Organic?

By **Shreya Asopa**

Maybe the future holds a smoothie of genetically modified bananas. Just in February, Australian regulators approved the first genetically modified variety of a Cavendish banana, designed to resist a harmful fungal disease known as TR4. If the food ministers do not request a review within 60 days, the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code will be amended to permit the sale and use of food made from the banana, as stated by FSANZ.

If you're tired of banana smoothies, we also have purple tomatoes. It's not a trick of the camera; these tomatoes are actually purple. As per a Fox Weather report, these purple tomatoes, developed by professor and founder of Norfolk Healthy Produce, Cathie Martin, are anticipated to make their debut in select grocery stores for the first time starting in late spring and early summer.

Branching off from horticulture, a recent innovation has surfaced in the form of genetically modified petunias that emit a green glow in darkness. Dubbed Firefly Petunia, these are now available for purchase within the United States. It reminds me of the mystical world portrayed in the film *Avatar*.

Tinkering with crops through genetic modification—rendering them resilient to harsh climates, growing them in size, imbuing them with vitamins, and conferring upon them immunity to pests—is not the first attempt to create a stir in the traditional code of sustenance. We have already seen remarkable GM crops of soybean, potato, corn, papaya, and how can I forget



golden rice, that have been given the green light in several countries.

Genetically modified engineering involves altering the genomes of organisms in a laboratory using recombinant DNA technology, unlike traditional breeding techniques. Genetic engineering has opened the door to something not less than miracles in the field of medical science: gene therapy. But if you're pondering why GMOs turn into a hot potato whenever they touch the crystal ball of food and agriculture, know that your curiosity is shared by many. According to a recent Pew Research Center survey conducted between October 2019 and March 2020, roughly half of people in 20 countries worldwide believe these foods are unsafe to eat.

Apprehensions regarding the introduction of GM crops to indigenous or other cultivated plant varieties top the labyrinth of uncertainties. A great deal of throwing this shade involves allergens. Nonetheless, it is only imperative to recognize that there are already a plethora of naturally occurring

foods that cause allergies in the world of cuisine. Then, some have a bone to pick with this technology and its model of agriculture. Critics are skeptical about the monopolizing of the GM seed game by a few bigwig companies, potentially risking long-term food security that eventually reaches the farmers.

But the truth is that we hardly contemplate the genetic composition of our everyday food. Thinking about DNA in the various plants and animals we consume is a task that seems impossible. Perhaps if we let this innovation take some space, we'll also end up with exciting innovations like a gooseberry that tastes like a pineapple but looks like a pear.

While there may be some skeletons in the closet regarding GM foods, they are only one aspect of a bigger problem. We have a lot to do before we integrate these resilient crops into our supply chains. Why not tackle the urgent challenges at hand? For starters, why not diminish food waste and champion local produce?

March 2024 **Gulf Gourmet**

newmembers



Jude Varghese, Hospitality Manager, Tramontina, receiving the Guild Membership Certificate from the President of the ECG Chef Andy Cuthbert

Tramontina stands as a leading provider of comprehensive solutions for the hospitality sector. With a rich legacy dating back to 1911, this Brazilian company has evolved into a cornerstone for distributing premium hospitality goods. Our diverse range encompasses top-notch cookware, precision cutlery, quality dinnerware, kitchen accessories, professional kitchen tools, and furniture.

With over 110 years of industry expertise, Tramontina maintains unwavering quality standards, boasts a diverse brand portfolio, and operates with an innovative supply chain. Our dedicated team of over 10,000 employees enables

TRAMONTINA

us to manage a global presence, with 17 distribution centers worldwide.

The variety in our range, supported by the 10 factories in Brazil, along with the brand's steadfast commitment to quality, makes Tramontina a go-to destination for all hospitality needs. We stand as the definitive one-stop solution, offering exceptional products and unparalleled service.

At Tramontina, we take pride in our

unique capabilities, meticulously honed to surpass industry expectations. We eagerly anticipate the opportunity to enhance your hospitality experience with our exceptional products and an enduring commitment to excellence!



Del Monte's Food Service Sales team receiving the Guild membership from Chef Harald Oberender

We are one of the world's leading vertically integrated producers, distributors, and marketers of fresh and fresh-cut fruits and vegetables. Our products include prepared fruit and vegetables, juices, beverages, snacks, and desserts, and are sold in more than 90 countries around the world.

After many years of being present in the Middle East, Del Monte opened in 2007 its Regional Headquarter in Dubai, fortifying the proximity with its consumers and partners.

Leading the way to healthy eating, Del Monte® has been a symbol of product innovation, quality, freshness and reliability for over 130 years. Since 2007 in the Middle East, Del Monte® is a trusted source of healthful food, providing high-quality fresh fruits, vegetables and ultra-fresh juices in the region. Bringing the expertise of a multinational company to the MENA community, Del Monte® seeks to bring you the freshest foods available to meet your needs.

Because we grow our own fruits and vegetables instead of just selling



them, we understand the difference. Furthermore, we have the expertise to select the most premium fresh produce and tie up with the best partners to ensure reliable service. More than just providing resources, we offer tangible ways for more wholesome, nutritious meals that are flavorful and satisfying, thereby redefining what healthy eating looks and tastes like. Together with you, we seek to contribute to the health of a whole generation!

Del Monte sets the trends by creating fresh, healthy products conveniently packaged to meet customer's needs. Our state-of-the-art facilities include banana ripening and cold storage, fresh-cut fruits and vegetable operations - fresh or frozen, ultra-fresh juice lines and prepared food production. Del Monte has launched the HONEYGLOW™ pineapple, which is SCS sustainability grown

certified. HONEYGLOW™ pineapples are carefully handpicked at our farms to ensure the optimal taste and color.

Each day, we produce 70 tons of fresh-cut fruits and vegetables, 12,000 litres of fresh juices, 8000 sandwiches, 7000 of salads and 15,000 trays of canned juices.

All our products are produced following the most stringent food safety standards and all our operations are audited and certified by independent certification bodies.

Del Monte products are not only distributed to retail customers but also Business to Business in the hospitality and Quick Service Restaurant sectors. Mastering each step in the supply chain is critical to ensure strict control over the quality of our products and maintain consistency.

March 2024 **Gulf Gourmet**

**Chef
Simon
says...**

Culinary Trends Express

Simon Martin, Executive Chef at Kerry Taste & Nutrition (Food Service), has been sharing trends for our region since 2016

Welcome back to Trends Express. Without further ado, let's jump on board the "Trends Express" and see what's hot and appearing in our region. Remember, **"LIKE IT, BUY IT, SNAP IT, SHARE IT."**

They're not complicated, but just a few simple ingredients will rock your culinary planet

Nearly all tasty and delightful foods we all love tend to come from the magic six. Yes, the magic six: **"CRUNCH, SOFT, SWEET, SOUR, HOT, COLD"**. Yes, this month, heading the trends is magic six, the humble sandwich and it is only becoming big. I am not talking about the club sandwich; I am looking outside the box here. Think of an ice cream sandwich. Toasted white milk bread, caramel ice cream, crushed biscoff biscuits, a shake of Ovaltine or similar, pomegranate molasses with a sprinkle of salt, and chopped nuts...**WOW, I hear you say**. I have seen crispy spaghetti bolognese sandwiches and even toasted garlic hotdog sandwiches loaded with melted marshmallows. To my surprise, pizza toasties...**OMG**...even pine nut tarator and cabbage. This region is exploring tastes from around the globe and bringing the best bites to our customers. Sweet and savory bread, hot or cold...it makes me feel like a kid in a sweet shop: **"I WANT TO TRY EVERYTHING,"** and allegedly we owe this to John Montagu, the 4th Earl of Sandwich, who in 1729 created the sandwich from bread and salt beef. (I am going to take that with a pinch of salt.)

This time of the year, we are seeing the humble **APRICOT** (*Prunus Armeniaca*), full of vitamins A, C, and E, potassium, beta-carotene, lutein, zeaxanthin, and fiber. Both dried and fresh, it noses its way across menus, from breakfast juices and cereals to snacking, grilled with cheeses, as a marinade or chutney. It has an amazing taste, almost like a cross between a plum and a peach; it is both sweet and tart but not too juicy. We have seen it with lamb and salmon dishes, on desserts, and in mocktails and sorbets. Even in Umm Ali to cut the sweetness. Mixing sweet and savory is a winner in our region, and the use of apricot compote with a pate or parfait seems to be a big hit now.

NEUROGASTRONOMY is now helping to define and shape trends in our region. What a mouthful! I hear you say, and what is it? Well, in brief, it is a new science that allows us to perceive



how our brains process smell, taste, touch, and sound in food. This then affects cognition, sensation, and memory. It was pioneered by Gordon Shepherd of the Yale School of Medicine. So, by changing lighting, plating, and even seating, you can deliver a better dinner experience. As the men and women in the white jackets, we need to take a more holistic approach to the food we serve. I ask you a question: the scented hand wash in your customer washrooms is of a food enhancer odor like honey, or lemon, or it has a powerful floral scent that is working against your food which you still smell on your hands during the dining experience?? **SOMETIMES** to set trends, we need to walk in the customer's footsteps and help them on their journey to enjoy our food and beverages.

I am going to try eating my dinner this month with uptempo tunes and see if it affects the taste experience. What will you do differently this month?

Finally, our corporate partners at the Emirates Culinary Guild are also helping define the landscape of trends with their visions. Their foresight to avail their latest products to us at our monthly meetings, reflects both innovation and current market trends. Stay ahead of the curve, talk to them, and try their products. Join them and us in driving the trends in our region.

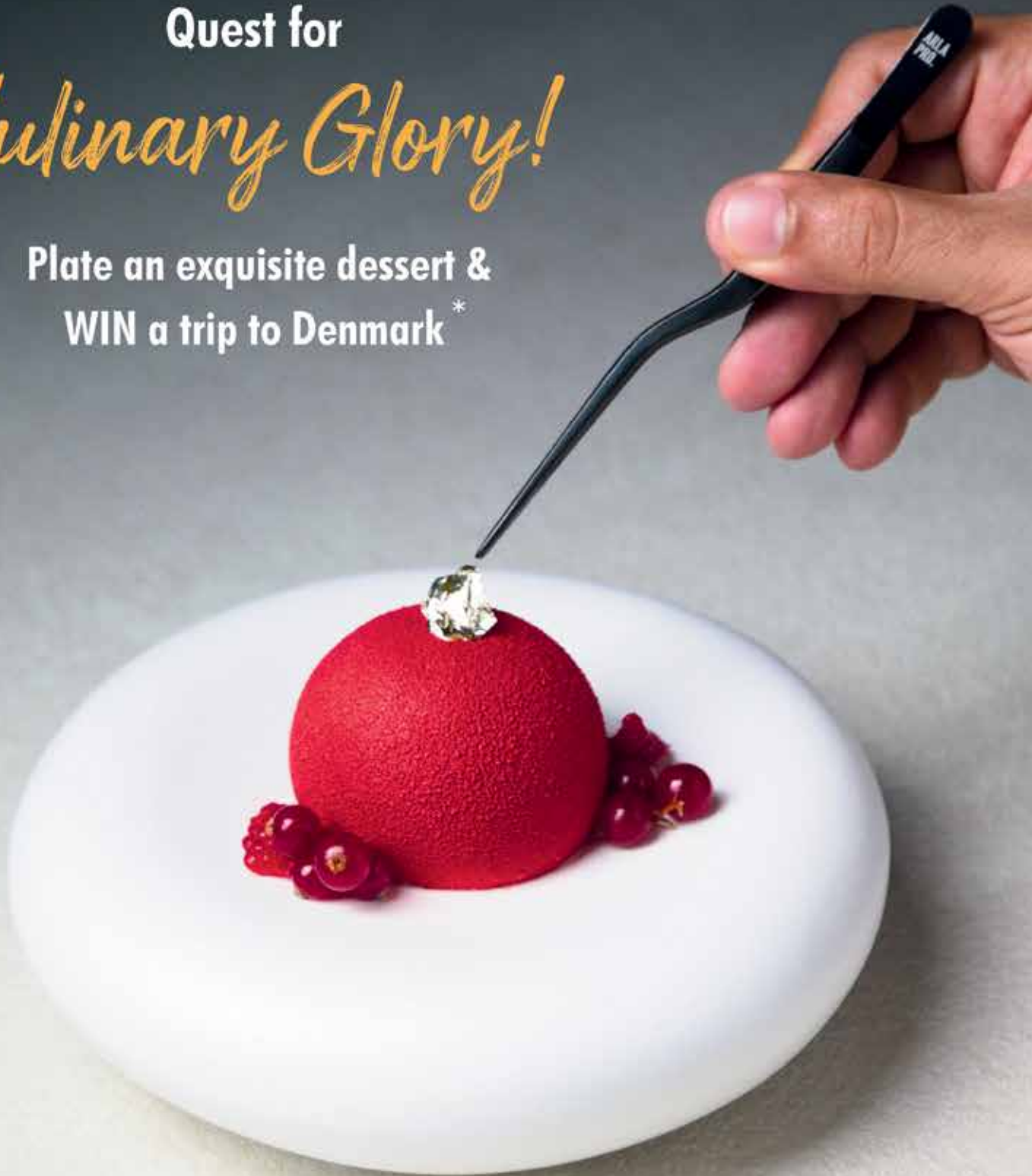
Kerry Foodservice provides custom-made solutions (coatings, sauces, beverages, etc.) and branded solutions such as Chef's Palette and DaVinci Gourmet to global and regional chains, QSRs, and casual diners across the region.

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