

gulf Gourmet

Volume 2 | Issue 2 | Oct - Nov 2007

From Us...For Us...

Alen Thong...

A much loved and respected member
of the ECG talks about his life,
work and WACS Congress 2008



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Chef Uwe Micheel

From the President's Station

Dear Fellow Chefs, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the October / November edition of the Gulf Gourmet.

First of all a big heart felt thank you to all of you who went to Al Wasl blood donation center and showed your friendship and support for our Alen Thong. It's great to see friends around when one needs help.

On a sad note I have to inform that our friend and colleague Chef Martino lost his wife last month. Please join me to pray for her and Martino. May her soul rest in eternal peace.

A special thank you to MLA, Convotherm and Frisch & Frost who helped Andy, Mike and I to promote our WACS Congress 2008 at the Anuga in Köln. See more about it in this issue.

As always, it's my pleasure to welcome new corporate members of the Guild. They are Boecker, Wet Fish, Barakat, Express Print, Elfab,

EMF, New Zealand Trade Office, Steelite, Unilever, MKN and IFFCO who have renewed their membership. Do look out for their introductions in the forthcoming issues of our magazine as well as look at the friend's page to see who is supporting the Emirates Culinary Guild.

Also, join me in welcoming Ms. Ronel Stembull who has replaced Ms. Nicola Bitossi at the New Zealand Trade Office. Nicola has gone back to New Zealand as she is expecting a baby soon. On behalf of the team I would like to thank Nicola for all the support she has given us over the years and wish her and her family all the very best.

As is necessary, I would once again like to remind everyone to assist in obtaining sponsors for the WACS Congress '08. Please also promote the Congress for delegate participation and invite your friends and fellow chefs from around the world to register soon. Most importantly, do not forget to register yourselves as well at www.wacs2008.com

A big thank you to chef Sudu and his team at the Traders Hotel for hosting the October meeting. The next meeting, scheduled for 11th November 2007 will be held at the Coral International in Barsha. The meeting will be hosted by Chef Michel Miraton and his team.

I look forward to see you all very soon.

Culinary regards,

Uwe Micheel - President Emirates Culinary Guild
Director of Kitchens
Radisson SAS Hotel, Dubai Deira Creek

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contents

OCT - NOV 2007



Back to the past

Peace, tranquillity and happiness best defines the emirate of Al Ain and which gives the Intercontinental at Al Ain its identity. From the General Manager to the doorman, they all give new meaning to the term smiling... Al Ain is perfect for a **Weekend Getaway**

Nestle FoodServices presents A to Z (Asparagus to Zucchini)

Its "melt in your mouth" Lamb this month in the **A to Z** section. Go on, enjoy these yummy dishes. You will keep going back for more!



32

16 From the land of Gods

At Dias, the speciality Greek food restaurant in Dubai, there is beauty, charm and an exotic ambience. And of course, food prepared from the freshest of produce. Which is why the Greek are so good-looking and hence the term "Greek God" perhaps? Go to Dias, our **Piping Hot** choice this month



Take the 08 plunge



He is passionate about his profession. Believes in team work. Is as precise as a Swiss watch but smoother than Swiss chocolate. He is Andreas Fluckiger, General Manager, Radisson SAS, Deira, our **Grill of the Month**

Turning the tables



60

You have seen him on Ready Steady Cook on BBC Food stirring up scrumptious dishes from a bag of secret ingredients. Now get to know Chef Brian's life's experiences as our special guest on **Guest Bites**

The excitement 24 begins...



Just as we were ready to go into print we heard that Alen had had a medical emergency. You will be thrilled to know, as are we at the Gulf Gourmet, that the smile you always see on his face and the spirit you feel in his words is back!

One of the pillars of the ECG, Alen is back home and is very well looked after by Josephine and Andy Cuthbert amongst so many others who were there for him in his time of need. Here is Alen in our **Cover Story**, talking about his life, work and the WACS Congress '08.

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46 These are a few of my favourite things...



It's all about food! Get to know your business associates better through their food habits, likes and dislikes as they have **Lunch with Laila**. This information may just make that next meeting with them a bit more productive for you.

Take the plunge

Life can be unpredictable, and Andreas Flückiger, general manager, Radisson SAS, Deira, has always challenged it head on. He sat down with Gulf Gourmet to share some of the lessons he has learned along the way

Umaima Tinwala

If there was one thing Andreas Flückiger regrets not doing, it's 'kissing the bride' at his wedding. But it wasn't cold feet that stopped him - rather the laws of the land where he got married. "Heidi and I got married in Kuwait because - and this may sound terribly unromantic - we needed a visa for her to stay on with me," he admits sheepishly.

But this kind of 'in the moment' passion is what drives Andreas, be it his personal life or professional. And it is this passion that has brought him to where he is, as General Manager of the Radisson SAS, Deira.

"To be offered this position in a hotel that has so much history, well, it's like a promotion. I was GM in Kuwait, but this position feels like a promotion really, because it has so many fresh challenges," he says.

And this from a man who, at 15, had no idea what he wanted to do. "In Switzerland, where I'm from, there is a lot more emphasis on practical learning than pure theory," he explains. So most people start their careers at the age of 15 or 16, go for work five days and class one day a week, and already have some experience on their resume by 18 or 20.

But Andreas was confused about what he wanted. "My sister had started her apprenticeship a year before, and she accidentally found herself in the kitchen. But she liked it, so I decided I'll go that way too. I really did not have any special interest in food at the time - I just chose it because my sister was already there. But I tried it, liked it, and worked in the kitchens of Switzerland and Norway for seven years," he smiles.

It was then that Andreas decided to formalise his career, and did a two-year course in food and beverage management. "I did my traineeship with SAS National Hotels, as it was called in those days - that was my first contact with the company - in Brussels," he says.

But his stint here was not in the kitchen. In fact, he admits, he did hotel management to get out of the kitchen. "I do love cooking and it will always be a passion. But I also figured I didn't want to spend all my life in the kitchen," he muses, adding cheekily, "And sometimes, I just take decisions in my life on impulse, without putting too much thought into it." And there are no regrets.

For Andreas, starting all over was not an issue he thought much about. His seven years of experience in the industry were washed away, and he started in F&B at a junior level. "Yes, today young people do come in at higher positions fresh from hotel school, but I firmly



Andreas Flückiger, General Manager, Radisson SAS, Deira, Dubai



“I actually prefer Kuwait, for the simple reason that there are fewer expats there, so the interaction between different communities and nationalities is more. Also, because of the restrictions, life is more streamlined,” he says, adding, “To give you a simple example, my son is having trouble making friends here because he is not British.”

believe that if you don’t know what’s going on in operations, then you don’t know what it feels for them when you get to a higher position. If you haven’t served, cleaned, moved furniture and got your hands dirty, you cannot understand what it takes. So yes, it is important to start from scratch,” he explains.

“I’m not saying one needs to spend forever doing this,” he adds, “But there is a middle ground between the two.”

With his basics down pat, Andreas moved to Ecuador, South America, as Asst F&B Manager for a Oliverde, a small Swiss company, whose name literally translates to mean ‘green gold’, signifying the importance of the banana fruit in the region. Two years down the line, Asia was the next destination.

The Amari Group, a Thai company, offered him a job in Phuket as Resident Manager. Six months later, he quit. “I did not like the philosophy of the company. I found myself apologising for a whole lot. And unfortunately, I did not have the means at hand to change anything. If I did, I would have stuck on and taken it as a challenge to reach that light at the end of the tunnel. But I did not have that position, so I felt it was better to leave,” he explains.

The next stop was China, with the Holiday Inn in Urumuchi, the most land-locked city in the world. “When I got there, I saw the strangest thing. All literature was in Chinese, and Arabic!” he exclaims. But he was to later understand that Urumuchi was the capital of the Xinjiang province, which is predominantly Muslim – East Turks who still read and write in Arabic.

The experience was interesting, with two cultures living next to each other, not together as one, but still fairly tolerant of the others presence. “The food was most interesting, with oriental food and bread ovens to make Iranian bread,” he smiles.

Fifteen months later, he received a call from the same company for which he had worked in Ecuador. “They offered me the position of F&B Director for a new hotel in Peru, as part of the opening team. That was something I had never done before, so I accepted and packed my bags again and moved to Peru,” he smiles.

It was three years that gave Andreas many memories for the future. For, this was the place where he met the woman who would be his wife. “I hired her actually,” he says mischievously. Heidi was hired as F&B Manager as part of his team, and romance blossomed much later.

But it was not all play. “The first week, I must admit, I would go to work and scratch my head and think, what am I going to do today? But eventually, things started rolling, with help and guidance from the GM and others, and it all worked out,” he says.

A position of such responsibility is tough at any time, but opening a new hotel is a whole different ballgame. “But it’s also a great learning ground. Because you are really setting the standards – the brand always has it’s own but you add to it,” he says.

That’s when Andreas started getting serious about his career. “I started looking at the offers I was getting with a little more concentration, and considered the future prospects they came with,” he says. But no, that had nothing to do with his girlfriend. “In fact, I never wanted to get married. We more or less split up when I moved out of Peru,” he smiles.

And he had a good choice. With four offers to consider, Andreas chose to go to Kuwait with the Radisson SAS group, where he was trained to take on a managerial position in the company. But there were other changes too. “I had decided when I was in Switzerland itself that I wanted to marry Heidi. So I sent her flowers and a note – she was still in Peru – and used a very common Spanish saying, and asked her, quite literally, if she would be the other half of my orange,” he smiles.

Needless to say, she said yes, and followed him to Kuwait a couple of months later. “In Kuwait, you can’t stay together if you are not married, and I also needed a visa to keep her there. So the only option we had was, well, to get married.

“There were two options. One was the





consular way, which would be too time-consuming, and the second was in the Ministry, which was simple and quick. So we found a bishop who gave us an NOC, got it translated, and with two male witnesses and 30 USD, we went to the Ministry of Justice and got married. And no, I could not kiss the bride," he says woefully.

The most unromantic wedding, as he puts it, did not end there. "The wedding party was dinner for two in the staff accommodation, and our marriage was only valid in Kuwait because the embassy was not involved," he says. But he did make it official with the consulates

eventually, with plans for a renewal of vows, "when the kids are old enough to really be a part of it".

Two years later, Andreas was promoted to operations manager, and moved back to a hotel in Switzerland. But the Middle East beckoned again, and he came back to Kuwait as General Manager.

"The first time I moved out of Kuwait, I actually never thought I'd go back. Some people were standing there waving their fingers at me, saying, yeah, I remember what you said. But I was there, and I stayed on for

"To be offered this position in a hotel that has so much history, well, it's like a promotion. I was GM in Kuwait, but this position feels like a promotion really, because it has so many fresh challenges," he says.

four years," he laughs.

The decision was inspired by the simple fact that the hotel was, and still is, a very important property for the company, since the current CEO was the first GM of the hotel. So turning down an opportunity to become GM was not an option.

And after four successful years, he moved to Dubai to take over the Radisson SAS Deira as General Manager.

For Andreas though, it's not the work challenges that worry him. "I'm not too happy with Dubai as a city. Yes, it has great facilities, you can go to bars and clubs, but it's not the kind of lifestyle I'd like," he shrugs.

With three little ones in tow - 5-year-old Alexis, 3 1/2-year-old Luca and 11-month-old Isabella - Andreas is more concerned about the kind of friends his family is making.

"I actually prefer Kuwait, for the simple reason that there are fewer expats there, so the interaction between different communities and nationalities is more. Also, because of the restrictions, life is more streamlined," he says, adding, "To give you a simple example, my son is having trouble making friends here because he is not British."

Which is why Dubai is not the last stop for Andreas, and as and when the offer comes along, he will consider the change. Meanwhile, he is busy ensuring the Radisson SAS lives up to its history, both in terms of the brand, and for the property it has taken over. Here's wishing him all the best.

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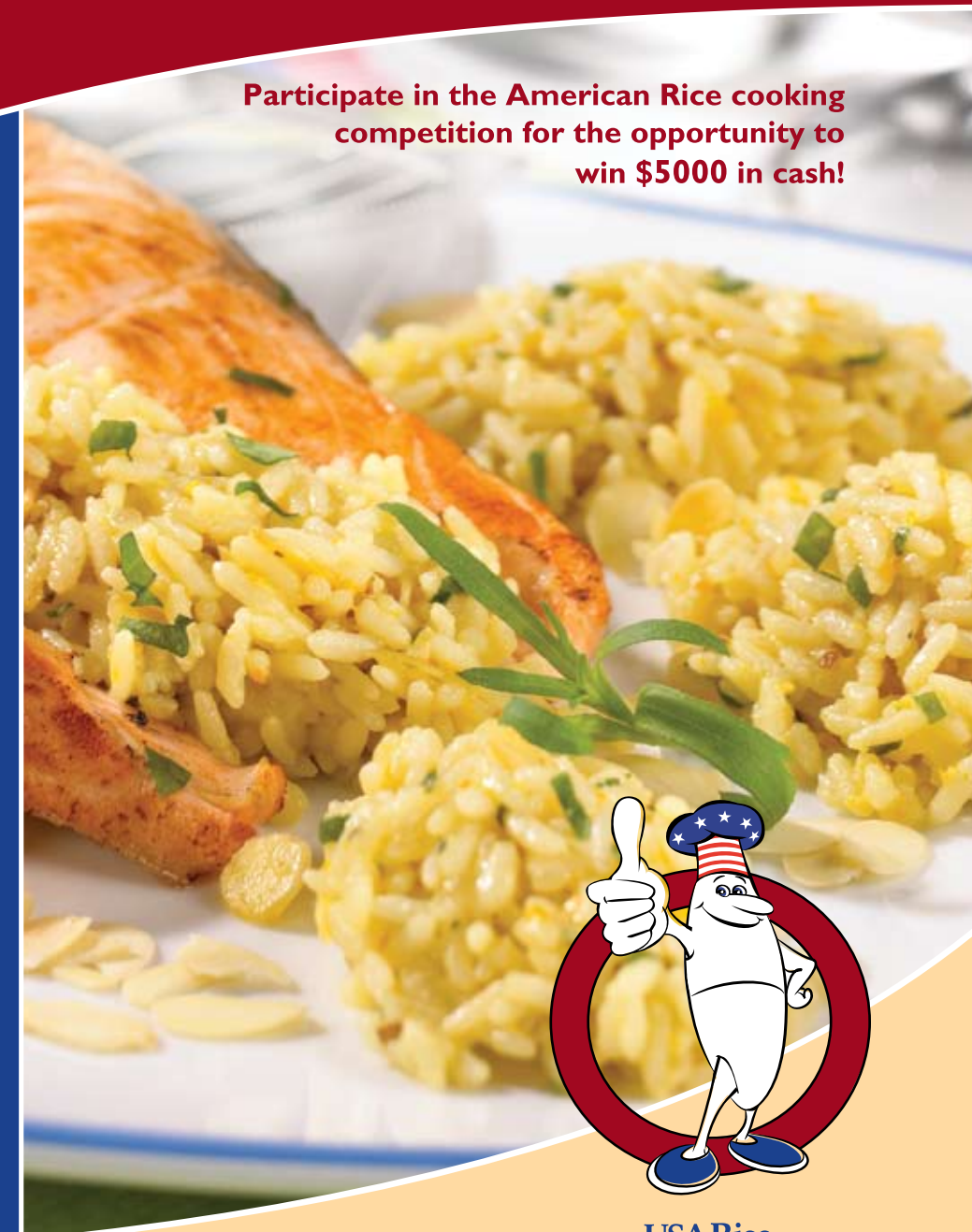
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A JURY, made up of some of the Middle East's most talented chefs, will select the finalists who will be required to cook their submitted recipes at a leading hotel in Dubai in early December 2007. All recipes received will become the property of the USA Rice Federation, and may be used for publicity purposes.

COMPETITION REQUIREMENTS, All personal information must be filled in, as well as the name of the restaurant where you work. The recipe must contain American rice as an ingredient. All recipe information and ingredients must be written clearly.

From the land of Gods

Dias, the Greek restaurant at Le Meridien Village, Dubai offers a feel of all things Greek, with food being only part of the experience

Naqiyah Moiz

It does not matter what you are thinking about, the moment you lay eyes on the imposing white statues that stand guard at the entrance to Dias, you realise you are in for an authentic Greek experience.

From the word go, Dias is a treat in Greek symbolism. From God and Goddess like statues set up at strategic points from the entrance to the bar, to intricate detailing on the staircases, every little aspect of the restaurant has been adorned or altered to add to the look.

Dias, which opened its doors to the public about eight months ago, is one of the few restaurants in Dubai that offers authentic Greek cuisine. Dining at Dias is like a lesson in Greek history and mythology. While the tables and chairs are set with traditional Greek patterns, the hosts and hostesses are dressed in traditional Greek outfits, complete with the wreath on their heads.

The imposing doors open into a world of fantasy, where large columns act as dividers to the different spaces in the restaurant, pedestals double up as small tables for a drink, and deep glass bowls are held up by grape vines carved in metal.



The elegant table setting at *Dias*



Chef Vasilys Tsantidis, one of the head chefs at *Dias*

“A local fish, for example, is so delicious by itself, that all you really need to add is a little lemon and a dash of olive oil. The idea is, why mess with a good thing?” he smiles. But mess he does. Or we would not have had the pleasure of indulging in the scrumptious Grilled Haloumi on baby leaves, pomegranate and tangerine dressing.



Haloumi Salad



Egg plant Rolls

When the menu arrives, it opens up with an introduction to what Greek cuisine is all about. From tastes to historical influences, it details what you can expect to find, and sets the mood and palate for what is going to be served.

Chef Vasilys Tsantidis, one of the two chefs who heads the kitchen, adds his own charm and zest to the meal by sharing his experiences, and his penchant for innovation. Chef Vasilys, who developed the menu, came to Dubai on a whim, as he puts it. “I read about Dubai in a magazine. I thought it would be a good place, so I packed my bags, bought a one-way ticket, and came here,” he smiles.

Dubai, however, was an eye-opener of sorts, a far cry away from the glossy images in the magazine. “I must say I was disappointed. It was not the land of dreams that one imagined it to be,” he says, shaking his head.

But, he quickly adds, that’s not to say it was

all bad. “I heard about this restaurant, and came by to try my luck. Initially, they were a little reluctant to hire me. But I suggested they give me a chance to cook, and when they sampled my cooking, they hired me to open the restaurant,” he smiles.

Young and dynamic, Chef Vasilys took it on as a challenge. A new country, new job, and the responsibility of opening a speciality restaurant may be daunting for some. But not for Chef Vasilys. For him, as long as he can remember, food has been a major part of his life. “We are a typical Greek family, with the love for good food being the only constant in our lives. Any holidays, celebrations, etc, meant the family getting together with tons of food to eat,” he smiles.

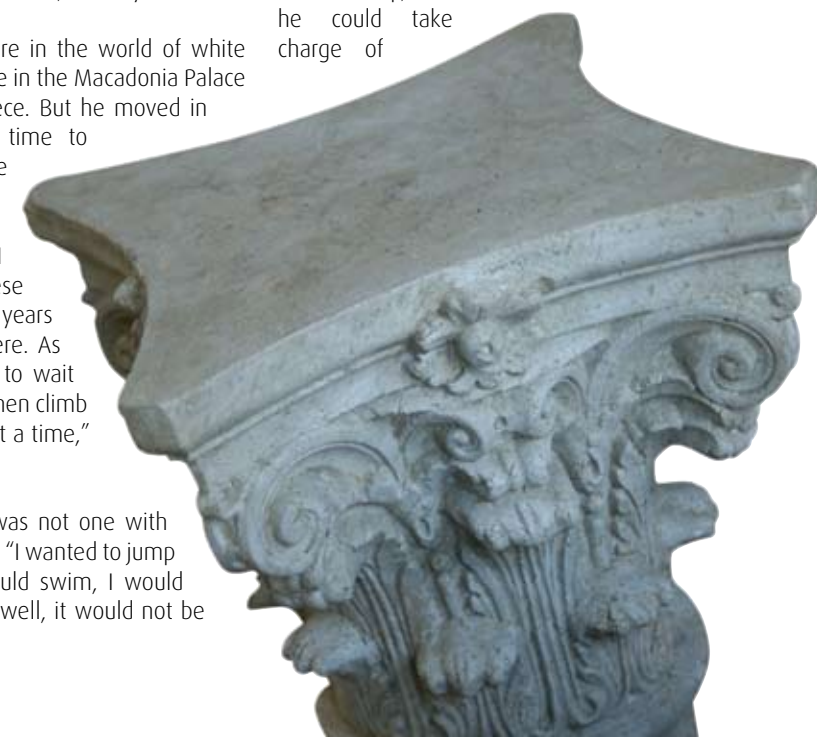
Hailing from a small town in Greece, Chef Vasilys always knew he wanted to cook. But as much as they loved good food, his parents were not happy with his decision. “I went to law college and studied cooking on the side.

But two years down the line, I realised I was happier cooking, and my parents finally had to accept my choice of career,” he says.

So began his future in the world of white jackets - as a commie in the Macadonia Palace in the south of Greece. But he moved in a short time, this time to a better hotel, the Electra Palace. “The hotel was good, but I realised that if I continued along these lines, it would be years before I got anywhere. As a commie, one has to wait to get spotted, and then climb the ladder on rung at a time,” he explains.

But Chef Vasilys was not one with that kind of patience. “I wanted to jump in the water. If I could swim, I would survive. If not, then well, it would not be

good,” he smiles. So he looked around for a small restaurant or bistro set-up, which he could take charge of





Chef Vasilys along with his super team of young chefs - Halva, Sadish, Saeida, Wuasaba and VJ

and show what he was all about.

"It was not easy. There was a lot of resistance. Because I wanted to move away from traditional Greek and look at Greek creative cooking. I wanted to experiment with flavours and textures, and combine the base of Greek cuisine with other cuisines," he says, his voice rising with passion.

At Dias, the menu is a mix of traditional Greek and Greek creative dishes. "We have a lot of customers who like to feel they are home. They want to eat the same dishes they ate as a child. And then there are the expats, who want to try something different, but great in taste. We cater to both segments," he says.

And when the dishes came out, each looking far stunning than the first, we believed every word he spoke.

"The thing about traditional Greek cooking," Chef Vasilys continued as we tucked into the Lemon Chicken and Egg consommé, "is that it is completely dependant on the quality of the ingredients." With the high quality of produce, from vegetables like potatoes and tomatoes, to fresh seafood and meat, the dish requires little else to taste good.

"A local fish, for example, is so delicious by itself, that all you really need to add is a little lemon and a dash of olive oil. The idea is, why mess with a good thing?" he smiles. But mess he does. Or we would not have had the pleasure of indulging in the scrumptious Grilled Haloumi on baby leaves, pomegranate and tangerine dressing.

Chef Vasilys focuses his efforts on popularising Greek cuisine, but with a twist. "It sounds clichéd to say fusion, but that's what it is. And I really believe that it would be better off for it," he states. So in come the



Pan fried Scallops



Amousha Boucha

fresh Mussels in white wine and Feta cheese. Of course, no Greek meal can be complete without the Mousaka, so a plate is set before us and we dig into what is probably the most well-known Greek delicacy.

Greek food has been influenced by so many cultures and cuisines over the years due to the invasions, it has a little of all of them. There's a Turkish influence, and sometimes even an Italian feel to many Greek dishes. Chef Vasilys rounded the meal off with a delicious sweet offering, created by the very talented pastry chef.

A tall glass of traditional Greek coffee gave us reason to chat with Chef Vasilys on life and all other things, bringing the experience to a perfect conclusion.

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The excitement begins...

Umaima Tinwala

This would not be Alen Thong's first WACS congress. He's been to many of them as a participant, quietly assessing and analysing the proceedings. While he won't confirm or deny either way, we're quite sure it was all leading up to this moment, when he's busy preparing for the upcoming WACS Congress 2008, to be held in Dubai.

"It's definitely going to be different. And different in a fun way. You can count on that at least," he smiles. Recovering from two operations, Thong is taking all the rest his doctor advises so that his energy meter stays in overdrive. For, come May next year, he will need all his strength to play his role as WACS Congress Director in its entirety.

Donning a different kind of hat to suit the occasion is something Alen is not unfamiliar with. Starting his career in the industry at 15 as a Chef, Alan has worked in the UK and many other places before moving to handling a food supply business in Dubai. "That was in 1982. But my first time in the Middle east was actually in 1976, when I moved to Oman to open a nightclub," he says.

While the idea may sound surprising to some, the actual place was not quite the way one would imagine it to be. "Things weren't as streamlined, and the 'club' in our name, Al Sabeer Club, actually put us under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Youth and Sport, who regulated sports and chess clubs," smiles Alen. Today, of course, the premises house a girl's school.

Alen Thong attended his first WACS Congress in 1994, and it was the most unforgettable, because it was just plain fun. And that's what he'd like to see happen at the upcoming WACS Congress 2008, to be held in Dubai on May 12-15.

Three years on, he moved to Bahrain. That's when he received a call from an old colleague. "He had come to Dubai to run the company I now own. He was getting kicked upstairs, and asked me if I wanted to come over and manage the company," shrugs Alen. But it didn't work out quite that easily.

"At the time, I could not think of being anything but a Chef. That's who I was. But I was curious, and had some leave coming my way,

so I decided to pay him a visit," he explains. And what he saw seemed interesting. "As a chef, you are used to working ten hours a day - that's fairly standard. Here, the lifestyle was completely different, where one could get home at six or seven in the evening and actually have a life," he explains.

Alen took the plunge, but realised shifting careers was about more than changing countries. "As a chef, you are in the service

area, where things have to happen as they have to happen, so authority is respected and obeyed. I was used to ordering people around. Here, I couldn't do that. And that was a big change for me. I had to change my mindset completely, which, with some difficulty, I eventually did," he smiles.

At John Holt Foods, Alan was one of three managers, who handled the company that specialised in fresh perishables. "The goods

were packed in the UK and shipped overnight. We then picked them up at Dubai airport in the morning and delivered them straight to the Chefs. Given the nature of the products, the cold chain had to be maintained, and we could only check the products once they were delivered," explains Alen.

And delivery could not be delayed, or missing. "The market was rather underdeveloped at the time, so we really had to think on



"That was just plain fun. We had all the events outdoors, with brilliant displays and innovative dishes. Everything was made more fun with props and costumes and the works. That's how I want the Dubai congress to be," says Alen, his eyes lighting up excitedly.



our feet, compensating here and there, and stealing from one Chef to give to another. This required personal interaction, which is how I got to know the Chefs so well," he smiles. The smile comes on because this friendship and camaraderie is what eventually led to the formation of the Emirates Culinary Guild.

"Abu Dhabi had a proper chef's society at the time, the Toque Blanche. But in Dubai, the gatherings were mostly informal, with families. I was lucky enough to be invited to those because I was close to most of the chefs," says Alen.

Then the Gulf Food exhibition came into being, and a Salon Culinare needed to be organised. Hilton, who was big on competitions at the time, took up the task. But most of the Hilton chefs walked away with top honours, and the situation became uncomfortable. "Hilton was big on competitions at the time, so they would have won anyway. But as if that wasn't bad enough, there was a floor manager who was just being nasty and he turned many people off," he says.

Alen, who was exhibiting at the time, was approached the next time round. "But when I gave the proposal to Toque Blanche, they sent a letter to the organisers, stating I wasn't a member and was making money for my own company," says a still-shocked Alen. The letter was eventually shared with the chefs in Dubai, and offended by the attitude, they decided to step up for their friend and take over the organisation of the Salon. That's when the ECG was formed.

The ECG is the UAE's chefs association, a non-profit organisation established in 1991. Among its primary goals are the promotion to the world of the interests of UAE culinary professionals and the promotion – through cuisine – of the country's rich heritage and culture.

The guild, which holds two major annual culinary events - The Emirates Salon Culinare and The Middle East Junior Chef of the Year competitions – is spearheaded by Chef Uwe Micheel, the president of the guild. Chef Uwe insists that the important thing that makes the organisation strong is teamwork - despite the competitive spirit among them as chefs, once they replace the chef's hat for the guild hat, they function as one.

The guild became a member of the World Association of Chefs Societies (WACS) in 1994. They face their biggest challenge yet with the 33rd biennial world congress at Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre. Hosting the WACS 2008 World Congress is a dream come true for the guild. "Initially, we thought we'd be holding it in 2010. But we

settled on aiming for 2008, and we've done that, and that makes us proud," says Alen.

Bagging the hosting priveleges wasn't difficult, says Alen, given the fact that Dubai chefs had already won many awards at previous Congress competitions. "Especially in Dublin, where we won everything. They were pretty sick of us then," he laughs.

The event, in addition to being a formal

gathering to tackle official WACS business, is also intended to showcase the UAE as a centre of culinary prestige and excellence. In order to keep that passion going, Alen has based the Congress on the first one he attended, the one held in Stevenger, Norway, in 1994.

"That was just plain fun. We had all the events outdoors, with brilliant displays and innovative dishes. Everything was made more fun with props and costumes and the works.



Alen at one of the many meetings held with Dubai officials to plan the WACS Congress '08. Here he is seen with Mr. Awadh Seghayer Al Ketbi, Director of the Dubai Convention Bureau.

That's how I want the Dubai congress to be," says Alen, his eyes lighting up excitedly.

So, he explains, there are more dinners than needed, more excursions, more common seminars for senior and junior chefs, and activities galore.

A pre-opening cocktail party at the DWTC majlis will set the stage for the four-day extravaganza, which will culminate in a gala dinner deep in the desert. "The women will be in abayas and the men will be in dishdashas. There'll be belly dancing and all kinds of things roasting on the fire," smiles Alen.

Over the years, most activities have seen

a separation of senior and junior chefs. This is another thing Alen intends to change. "There are some areas where both would be interested, and we've brought them together for those," he informs.

Then there's the Indian festival, which goes beyond curries, and a showcase of Thai cuisine from the experts themselves. In addition to the usual city familiarisation tours, there will be many seminars and cooking demonstrations running through the day. They will be repeated at different times, making it convenient for chefs to attend maximum events of their interest.

There is a special programme set for the

women, the better halves of the chefs, who will be accompanying them for the event. Shopping at the souks and spice markets, and soaking in the local culture is on the agenda.

In addition, WACS 2008 will have three competitions. The Black Box challenge, hosted by Australian Meat and held at the Madinat Jumeirah is one. The other is the Hans Bueschken challenge for junior chefs. Named after the ex-president of WACS, who passed away on his way to a Congress, the competition will see chefs from all over the world compete for the coveted title.

But of particular interest is the Global Chef challenge, held for the first time ever. The

competition will see seven chefs, one from each WACS region, compete for the title. Tough eliminations have been held and the finalists are busy preparing for what promises to be a unique and inspiring competition.

"I suppose the underlying theme of the congress, in addition to it being about the cuisines and culture, is also about the whole event being very non-European. We need to show the chefs that a world exists beyond their own, and it's a beautiful one at that," says Alen.

Dubai city, traditional culture, great food, enthusiastic hosts. All the ingredients are ready. It's time to bring it together.



presents

Asparagus to Zucchini

Melt in your mouth Lamb

This month, in our A to Z (*Asparagus to Zucchini*) section, *Gulf Gourmet* lauds the efforts of junior chefs of the ECG who continue to impart their wonderful recipes. In this issue, chefs from the Marco Polo Hotel, Dubai, have cooked up some scrumptious dishes with Lamb!

Lamb

While Lamb makes up only a fraction of the meat eaten, it is used in a myriad of wonderful recipes across the world. When lamb is labeled as “spring lamb” it signifies that Lamb that was brought to market during the spring and summer months which was formerly the season for fresh Lamb. However, Lamb is now available throughout the year, and the label “spring lamb” does not necessarily connote additional quality.

There is nothing better than flavor you can feel good about. Lamb is the perfect combination- deliciously flavorful and nutrient-rich.

Cooking with Lamb offers imaginative and unusual dishes that are easy to prepare.

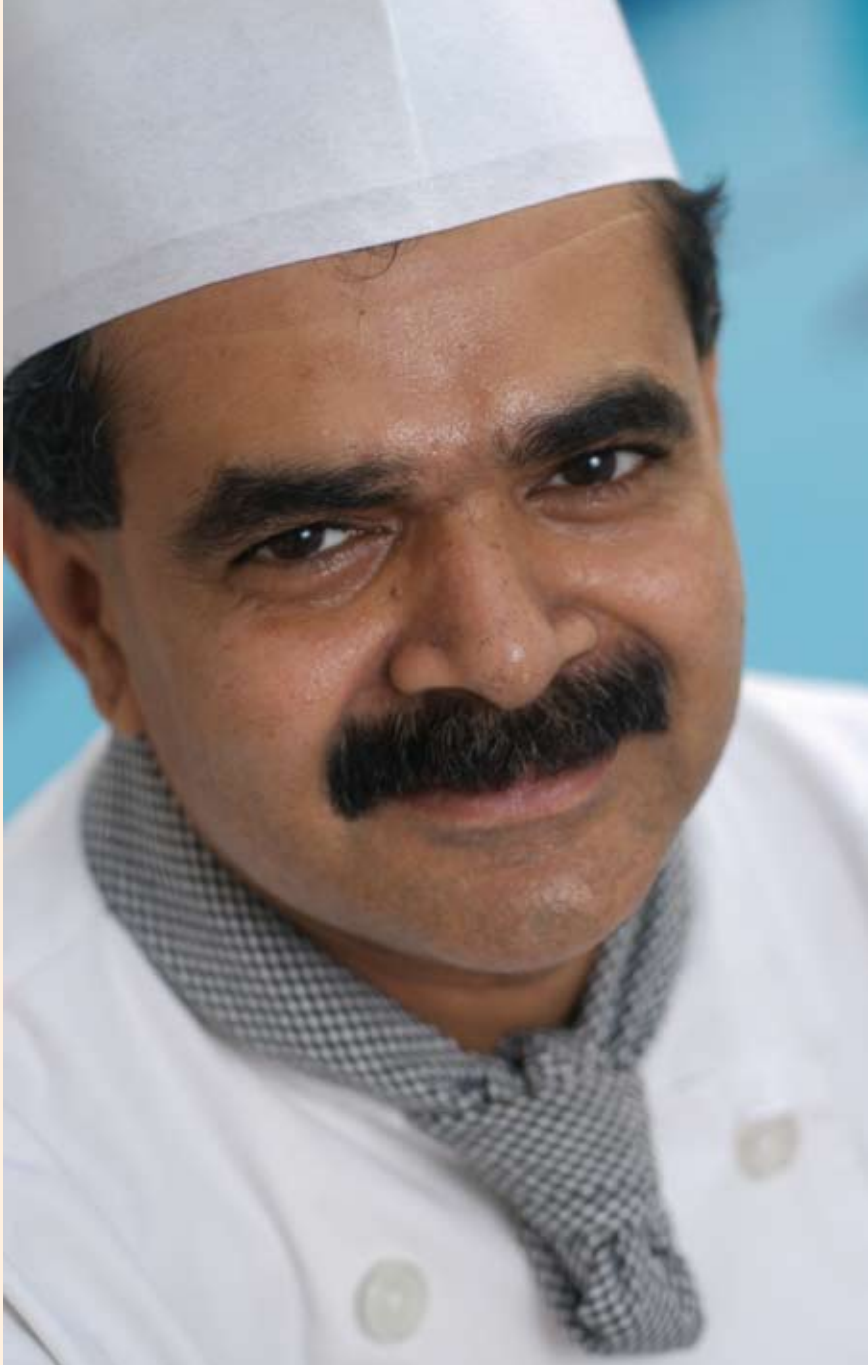
The meat has a wonderfully mild flavor that can be enhanced by a myriad of enticing marinades, simple herbs or robust spices, making it a perfect fit for today’s trend toward more flavorful and healthful food. Lamb can be used impeccably with today’s popular cuisines, such as traditional European, Asian and Indian dishes.

If you are trying to improve your diet and don’t want to compromise taste, consider Lamb. It’s a tasty and healthy alternative to other meats and proteins





KUNG POA LAMB



Chef Mohammed Iqbal
Marco Polo, Dubai

INGREDIENTS

Lamb Tenderloin, sliced	180gm
Soy Sauce	5 tsp
Sherry	5 tsp
Cornstarch	3 and 1/2 tsp
Salt	1/4 tsp
Red Wine Vinegar	1 tblsp
Chicken Broth or Water	2 tblsp
Sugar	1 and 1/2 tsp
Oil	3 tblsp
Salted Peanuts	1/2 cup
Hot Chilli peppers (dried) sliced	6
Ginger, minced	1 and 1/2 tsp
Green Onions, cut into 1 and 1/2 inch pieces	2

METHOD

Combine 2 teaspoons soy sauce, 2 teaspoons sherry, 2 teaspoons cornstarch and the salt in a large bowl, mixing well

Add the sliced lamb stir to coat well. Let stand for 30 minutes

Combine the remaining soy sauce, sherry, vinegar, chicken broth, sugar and the remaining cornstarch in a small bowl, mix well and set aside

Heat 1 table spoon oil in wok or large skillet over medium heat. Add peanuts and cook until golden. Remove from pan and set aside

Heat remaining oil over medium heat. Add chilli peppers and stir fry for 1 minute. Increase heat to high and add sliced lamb and mix. Stir fry for 2 minutes

Add ginger and stir fry another 2 minutes until Lamb is cooked through. Add onions and peanuts

Stir cornstarch mixture and add to wok. Stir constantly until the sauce boils and thickens

Goes well with Szechwan Fried Rice

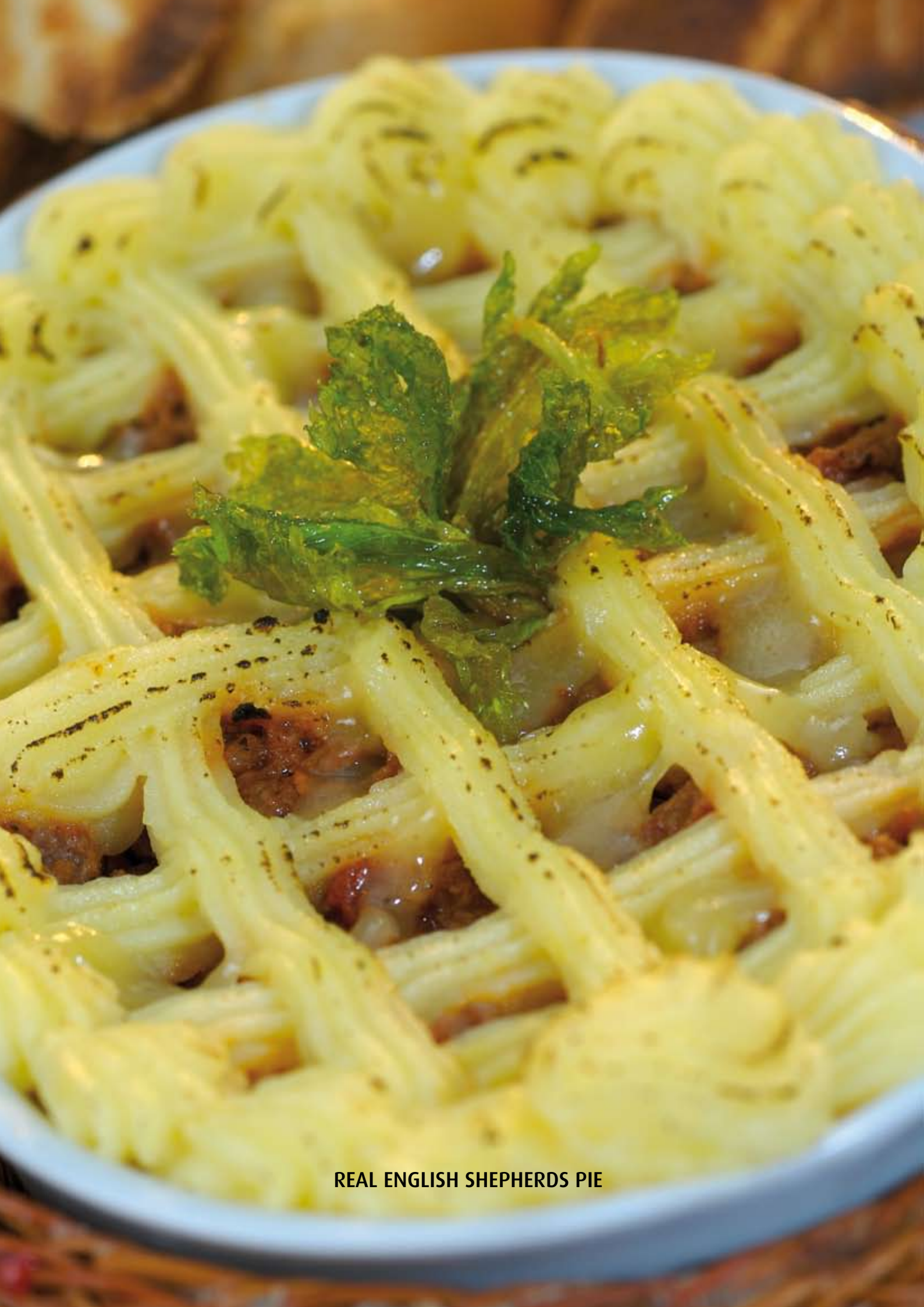


LEBANESE SHISH KEBAB



Chef Rajender Singh Negi
Marco Polo, Dubai

INGREDIENTS			
Lamb fillet or Leg of Lamb (de-boned)	1 lb	Pepper	1/2 tsp
Salt	1 tsp	Onions small (optional)	12
METHOD			
Cut meat into one-inch cubes		Broil under a very hot flame or over charcoal until outside is well browned and sizzling	
Season with salt and pepper and let stand for an hour		If broiled in the oven, sprinkle a little olive oil over meat before broiling so that it will not dry out	
Spear on to skewers, allowing six pieces of meat per person		Excellent accompaniments to this meat are Laban and the savory Arabic dips Hummus bi Tahini and Baba Ghannouj	
Alternate lean and fatty meat with onions			



REAL ENGLISH SHEPHERDS PIE



INGREDIENTS

Onion, diced	1
Olive oil	1 tblsp
Lamb, minced	1 lb.
Garlic, crushed	1 clove
Carrot, diced	1 large
Beef stock cube	1 pc
Tomatoes, chopped	1 lb.
Corn Flour	1 tblsp
Tomato Puree	3 tblsp
Salt and Pepper	1 pinch
Potatoes	2 lbs.
Butter	1 stick



Chef Vasanth Poojari
Marco Polo, Dubai

METHOD

Heat olive oil in a pan, add the onion, garlic and carrot and cook until soft

Add minced lamb and stock cube, cook until the mince is brown and shows a crumbly texture

Stir in the tomatoes and tomato puree, and add the corn flour.

Leave to simmer, stirring occasionally, for about fifteen minutes, or until thickened

Meanwhile, peel and chop potatoes and boil until soft, then mash them with the butter and salt and pepper to taste

Put the filling into a deep dish, then top with the mashed potatoes and put under a warm grill (broiler) until the top is brown and crisp

It is also delicious topped with melted cheese



NALLI GOSHT (LAMB SHANKS)



INGREDIENTS

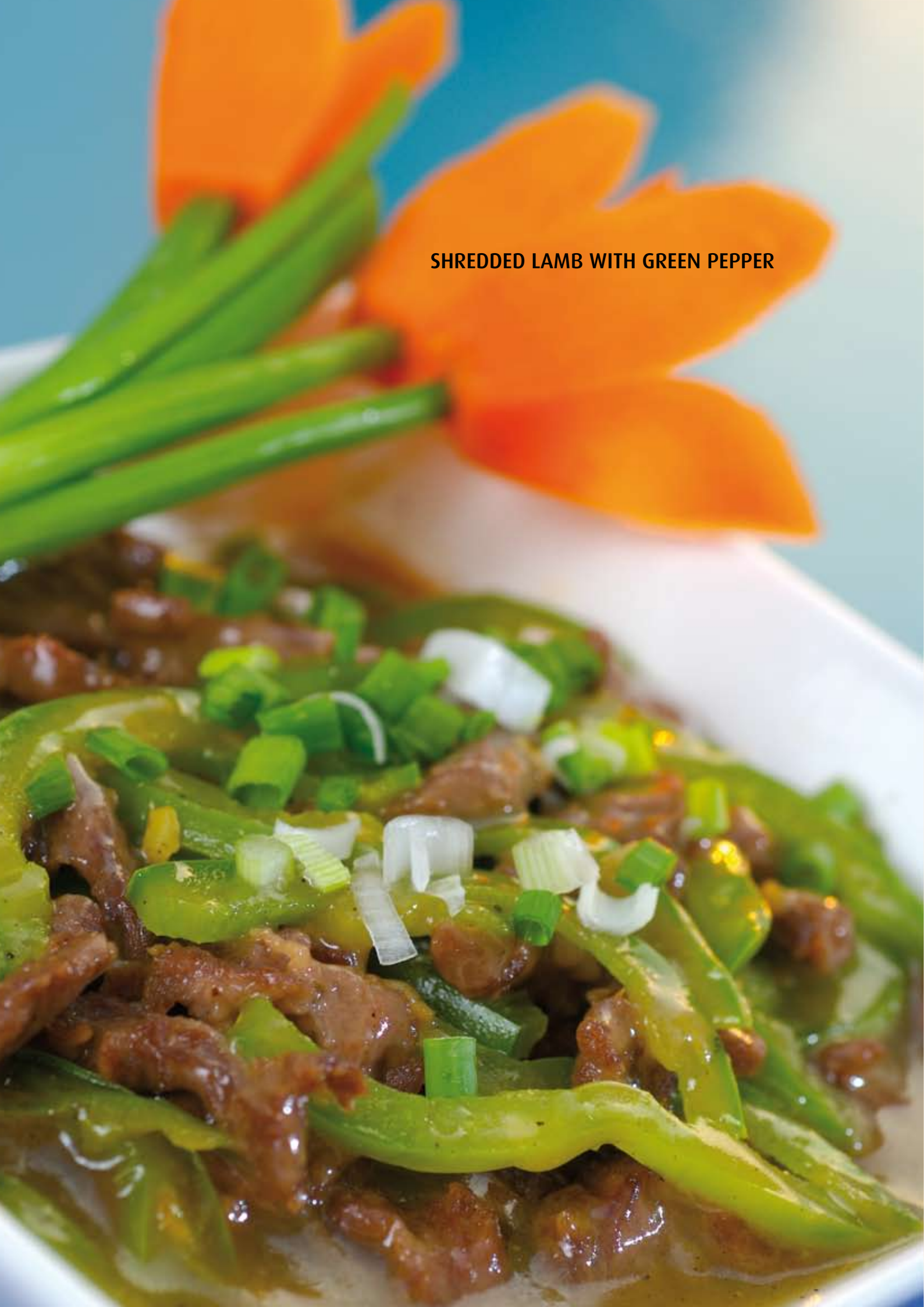
Onion, diced	1
Olive oil	1 tblsp
Lamb, minced	1 lb.
Garlic, crushed	1 clove
Carrot, diced	1 large
Beef stock cube	1 pc
Tomatoes, chopped	1 lb.
Corn Flour	1 tblsp
Tomato Puree	3 tblsp
Salt and Pepper	1 pinch
Potatoes	2 lbs.
Butter	1 stick



Chef Surender Singh Negi
Marco Polo, Dubai

METHOD

Boil the Nalli with green paste and salt till tender	Add chopped tomatoes and above powder masala and cook till oil separates	Garnish with chopped coriander leaves and serve hot with Nan
Heat oil, add whole garam masala and finely chopped onions and fry till light golden	Add boiled Nalli and cook on low heat for around 15-20 minutes	



SHREDDED LAMB WITH GREEN PEPPER



INGREDIENTS

Lamb, shredded	_ lb
Cornstarch	1 tsp
Soy Sauce	2 tblsp
Onions, (dry) shredded	2 pcs
Salt	1 tsp
Sesame Oil	1 tsp
Black Pepper Dash Oil	6 tblsp



Chef Eugene Dias
Marco Polo, Dubai

METHOD

Shred Beef and dredge with 1 tsp cornstarch and 1 tbsp soy sauce	Heat 2 tbsp oil and fry onions, adding salt. Remove to a plate	When meat changes color, add onions, 1 tbsp soy sauce, and dash pepper, stirring briskly
Shred green peppers	Heat remaining 4 tbsp oil. Pour sesame oil over shredded beef and fry	Taste's delicious with burnt garlic fried rice



ADRAK - KI – PANJE (TANDOORI LAMB CHOP)



Chef Dheeraj Tomar
Marco Polo, Dubai

INGREDIENTS

Lamb Tenderloin, sliced	180gm	Malt vinegar
Soy Sauce	5 tsp	Garam Masala
Sherry	5 tsp	Cumin
Lamb chops with deep slashes		Paprika
Greek yogurt (Hung Curd)	3/4 cup	Kashmiri Chilli powder
Heavy cream	1/4 cup	Yellow Chilli Powder
Lime juice		Nutmeg
Ginger, peeled and minced		Mustard oil
Garlic cloves		Butter

METHOD

Make marinade. Combine all the ingredients except the oil and the butter and whisk in with the yogurt and cream	Let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes before cooking	Brush both sides with butter
Add lamb chops and marinade overnight	Season each chop with salt and pepper and brown in a heated skillet for about 4 minutes per side	Cook for another 2 minutes on each side for medium rare
When ready to cook, add the oil to the marinade and toss with the lamb chops		

These are a few of my favourite things...

Nauman Ehsan, Business Manager, Food, Nestlé FoodServices, Nestlé, Dubai

In Lahore, Pakistan, there is this traditional restaurant that has stood the test of time and is now a heritage site... The owner/chef Mr. Abdul Rehman is by far one of the best cooks. I have had the pleasure of eating his specialities all my life and make it a point to visit him when I am in Pakistan on holiday...

Lunch is normally steamed Chicken or Pasta...

Seafood is a must have for me at least for one meal in the day so my dinner would have Fish or Prawns for sure ...

My indulgence is authentic Punjabi food... I specially love the Halwa's which are a sort of pudding...

My favourite Spice / Herb are Garlic & Mint

Begin my day with water...

The Blender / Mixer is definitely a favourite kitchen appliance of mine...

I am not lucky enough to find the time for breakfast...

Italian & anything in Seafood are my all time favourite cuisines...

Ravi (a small on décor but high on taste restaurant) Dubai, Spectrum on One, at the Fairmount, Dubai and all the F & B outlets at the Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah Resort & Spa, Muscat, Oman ... are some of my favourite places for food...



I hate food that has too much of spice and oil. I believe this takes away from the inherent flavour of the Meat or Fish or Veggies...



Comfort food for me is Muesli and Yogurt with a tall glass of a fresh fruit juice...

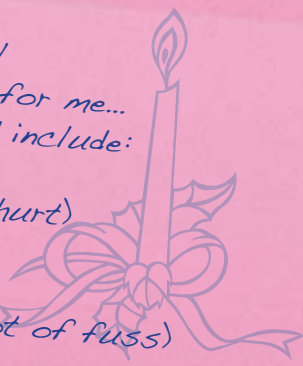
At a supermarket I simply cannot resist buying Yoghurt based products...



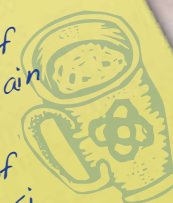
Yes, I have a sweet tooth too... My favourites are Carrot & Pathe ka Halwa...



My favourite dining companions are undoubtedly my wife Hina, daughter Marwa and a few foodie cousins and friends...



Most romantic meal would be a Brunch for me... And my menu would include:
Green Salad with Raita (flavoured yoghurt)
Clear Seafood Soup
Omani Lobster (cooked without a lot of fuss)
Baked Alaska



A Friday meal is almost always a lazy lunch of stuffed or plain Paratha's & a glass of chilled Lassi (Buttermilk)

Simple food is what I love the most. The dish should have few ingredients which would make it high on flavour. A special mention here would be of Chef Prasad at the Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah Resort & Spa in Muscat, Oman. His Seafood dishes are an absolute treat.

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Milk and various types of Cheese are always available in my refrigerator...

Back to the past

A charming old town dotted with the glitzy features of a big city. Al Ain is the perfect place to spend a weekend lazing around in the warm sun and indulging in some scrumptious food, at the InterContinental resort

Umaima Tinwala

It's part of a triangle, but not the dangerous kind. Al Ain, the fourth largest city in the United Arab Emirates, is one corner of the geographic triangle that includes Dubai and Abu Dhabi. A short drive from both

the metropolises, Al Ain is a quaint little town trying to pass off as a city.

The area, historically known as the Buraimi Oasis, has been continuously inhabited for more than four thousand years, and Al Ain is considered central to the cultural heritage of

the country. It is the birthplace of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the first president of the United Arab Emirates. Today, the name Buraimi refers to the Omani town whose urban area merges with that of Al Ain.

Al Ain is surrounded by magnificent red

sand dunes and overlooked by an impressive mountain range. Wide open spaces are the first thing that would strike a Dubai resident. With traffic flowing smoothly around one roundabout after another, driving in Al Ain was a sheer delight. And the sights along the way surely helped. At every junction, we came

across some fascinating roundabouts, each of which boasts themed sculptures, statues, gardens and fountains.

The many gardens and tree-lined avenues have given Al Ain the unofficial name of Garden City of the Gulf. Strict height controls

on new buildings - no more than four floors - emphasises the greenery of the city.

Other attractions include the Al Ain National Museum, the Al Ain Palace Museum, several restored forts and the Hili archaeological site, dating back to the Bronze Age. Jebel Hafeet,



Chef Shankar Kotian, Executive Chef

a 1340 metre high mountain dominates the surrounding area. A visit to the mineral springs at the base and a drive to the top of this mountain for sunset is so popular, that some people associate Al Ain with Jebel Hafeet.

The Al Ain Oasis in the city centre and

other oases in the area, the zoo, and Fun City, an amusement park, is a regular haunt for many families in and around the city. Al Ain also boasts a large amount of shops, from modern air conditioned malls with prices often lower than those in Dubai or Abu Dhabi, to specialised stores including one of the regions

largest gold souks.

Some may find it surprising that Al Ain regularly records the highest summer temperatures in the country. But the dry desert air makes it a welcome retreat from the coastal humidity of the larger cities. So much



Guzman Muela, General Manager



so, that many people love to take the drive to Al Ain and spend a weekend enjoying the great view and weather.

On our weekend away from the hustle and bustle of Dubai city, we chose to visit the InterContinental Al Ain Resort. Taking a detour into the city centre, we enjoyed some amazing sights on the way. From museums to a small mountain of sort's right in the middle of the city, to a arch-lined roundabout that created a stunning effect, it was worth the extra time.

Approaching the Resort, we were reminded once more of the sheer space that surrounded us. Wide roads merged almost seamlessly with endless sand, and up popped a little building here and there. The road curved, and we entered the massive gates that led us to the tree-lined entrance to the InterContinental Al Ain Resort.

Our diversion and sightseeing spirits had ensured we got there just in time for lunch, and hence we were quickly ushered into Tanjore the Indian restaurant. "Tanjore has nearly tripled its business in the last few months," says Chef Shankar A Kotian, Executive Chef proudly. He is equally quick at awarding credit where it is due - To Chef Anil Singh Rawat, who recently joined the Hotel.

Young and eager to make things happen, Chef Anil donned his signature hat and served us a meal fit for a King, or Queen, in this case. Creamy Chicken, lip-smacking roasted aubergines and a scrumptious Prawn Masala served with steamy rice and we knew we were coming back for more.

Eating is not just a routine, but an activity at the Resort. With different outlets offering a variety of cuisines, your real concern will be time, as you may not have enough of it. Take your pick from the superb array of restaurant choices, which includes oriental tastes from The Wok and Italian delights from LUCE. And there are many more flavours to appreciate whilst making your way through this little food paradise.



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“We endeavour to offer our guests an experience,” says the suave and dapper Guzman Muela, General Manager. “That’s what sets us apart. It’s going that extra mile for our guest, offering them a real holiday, not just a stay at the hotel.”

The facilities at the hotel stand testimony to this maxim. The Health Club is the only 24 hour gym in Al Ain that provides 4 Tennis Courts, 2 Squash Courts, 3 Swimming Pools and unique massage treatments. Specialised dance classes, networking meetings, and a crèche are just some of the added services offered by the Resort to make every weekend here unique and fun.

“We had some salsa classes for a short while, and surprisingly, it wasn’t just youngsters, but also many older people who came and enjoyed them. That encouraged us to explore this idea of doing something different and entertaining for our guests, and the residents of Al Ain.” explains Muela.

In this endeavour, he is ably supported by his staff. There are no employees or juniors at the InterContinental Al Ain Resort. “We’re a family. And in keeping with that spirit, we refer to each other as colleagues. We look after each other and fill in the gaps, if any. That’s how we ensure the Resort always functions at optimum quality,” informs Chef Shankar.

Chef Anil Singh Rawat



Chef Marc den Ouden



And this is an ideology echoed by everyone. “Personally, I don’t focus on the guests much. My efforts are geared towards keeping the staff happy. Because I know a happy staff is always going to work better, and in the end, ensure that our guests are satisfied with the service they are receiving,” explains Joynal Abedin, Training Manager.

The friendly, efficient and prompt service, and the caring disposition of the staff is attributed to the many excursions and activities undertaken by the management to ensure employees are never bored, and always rested and happy. Those are the smiles that greet you at the door, and the genuine concern that





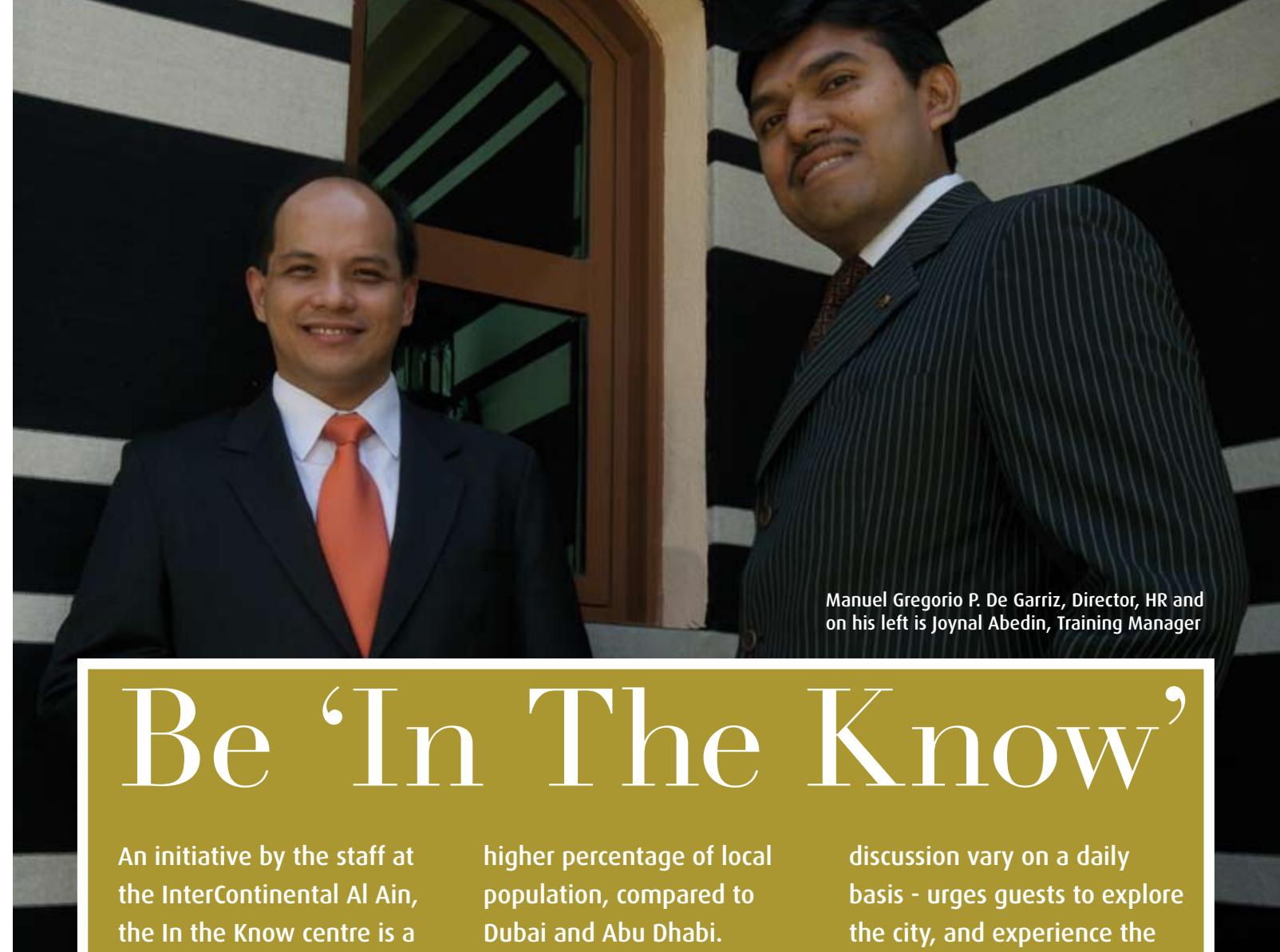
makes your stay at the InterContinental Al Ain an experience to remember.

This feeling of a community is extended to include new expatriates that move into Al Ain. Every year, the Resort hosts a networking evening for new residents, offering them the opportunity to meet like-minded people, make friends, and get to know the city they intend to call home.

"This was our sixth year, and the response is tremendous. We also give people the opportunity to present their products or services at these evenings so that the newbies can know what is available and where," smiles Muela.

The idea came about from personal experience, as many who come here find information a little difficult to come by. "Al Ain is a quiet city. It's growing though, and there are many new places that have opened up and are offering a variety of activities," says Chef Marc den Ouden, Jr Sous Chef.

"At the Al Ain InterContinental, we'd like to promote the destination, not just the Resort. The city beckons, with its golf clubs, amusement parks, therapeutic water springs, and stunning natural landscapes. We believe in promoting an experience, rather than the amenities, because any hotel can offer you the facilities, but only we have the experience," concludes Muela with his ever so charming smile. And so it is indeed.



Manuel Gregorio P. De Garriz, Director, HR and on his left is Joyanal Abedin, Training Manager

Be 'In The Know'

An initiative by the staff at the InterContinental Al Ain, the In the Know centre is a unique concept. "The idea is to promote Al Ain as a destination. Most people come for the weather and activities, but few know about the culture and traditions of the city," explains Muela.

The Centre aims to educate and enlighten guests and visitors about the city, its heritage, and the culture of the United Arab Emirates. Al Ain being the birthplace of the late President Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, is a significant city in the country. It retains the old Arab charm, having a much

higher percentage of local population, compared to Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

Set in a small room on the Resort complex, the In The Know centre is adorned with traditional Arabic knick knacks. Housing books and magazines and other literature about the country and the city, it's like being in a Bedouin tent. Guests are introduced to the city through a short video profile, and are then free to browse through the books and artefacts on display.

The In the Know centre, through workshops, seminars and presentations - from sand to dates, the topics of

discussion vary on a daily basis - urges guests to explore the city, and experience the 'real' destination outside the walls of the Resort. "The idea is simple. When we travel, it's to discover. And this initiative helps our guests discover Al Ain," says Manuel Gregorio P De Garriz, Director, Human Resources.

"The response has been tremendous. The Centre is open to all, and we almost always run full house during our special presentations. We hope to grow this idea and do it on a bigger scale, offering more experiences to our guests," avers Muela with an unmistakable sense of pride.



Turning the tables

Chef Brian Turner, star of 'Ready Steady Cook' and 'Saturday Kitchen' on BBC Food, was recently in Dubai to host a series of dinners for Steelite International, Middle East. We caught up with him for a coffee and conversation

Umaima Tinwala

It's hot," sighs Chef Brian as he sinks into a plush sofa at the Shangri-la Hotel in Dubai. "It takes a little time to get used to it, but once you do, it's a beautiful city," he continues, explaining his earlier statement.

When Chef Brian, star of 'Ready Steady Cook' and 'Saturday Kitchen' on BBC Food, was asked to come to Dubai, he did not have to think about it. "It was the age-old thing," he smiles, "I said, can I have ten seconds to think about it...yes, I'll do it." This opportunity, offered to him by Steelite International, Middle East, was one he had been waiting for.

"I had been invited to Dubai last year to comper the Festival of Taste, but was unable to make it due to prior commitments. I had

a show to do in Cape Town, and since I was contracted to do that, I could not get out of it," he explains. But this time round, everything was perfect, and Turner spent a busy four days in the city.

"I had heard a lot about Dubai, and it really met all my expectations. I was told it's an international city with great hospitality, and top-class food and service. I get here and I see it's like this big building site with cranes everywhere! It's like Las Vegas, but without the nightlife and gambling," he says excitedly, adding, "There are developed cities, and places that still have a long way to go. And here is Dubai, in the middle of nowhere, and it's just going zoom, zoom, zoom."

Being impressed by the city aside, Chef Brian is in Dubai to host a series of dinners to promote the Steelite International range of products – he is an unofficial brand ambassador for the company. "We use their products in two of our restaurants, and I have a very good relationship with them. Unlike many other brands, Steelite is made completely in the UK," he informs, affirming his commitment to the company and its products.

And this affirmation is an important one. For Chef Brian is not only a chef with over 40 years of experience, he is also a prominent television personality, a prolific businessman, and a great conversationalist. In fact, it is his penchant for making people feel comfortable and at ease that made all the dinners held in Dubai so successful.

"It was great fun. We met some wonderfully interesting people and I learned a lot about Dubai," he avers. The hectic scheduling did not give him a chance to take a culinary tour of the city, but he did manage to squeeze in a few visits to some old friends. "What I've gathered is that in Dubai, they bring over the best from all over the world and want to absorb them into their culture, making it a world-class city," he states.

"I visited the head of the Emirates Culinary Institute, an old friend of mine, and he put it very simply – When they do something in

Dubai, they do it properly. They want the best, and they are willing to spend to get that. They realise the value they are getting for their money, and, unlike other nations, don't stop great ideas mid-way for lack of funds. This is a major thing in this industry, where creativity and ideas are often crushed because of financial concerns," explains Chef Brian.

And he should know. Hailing from Yorkshire in England, his first tryst with food was at a young age, when his father, who had come home after the war was not happy working at the local mill. "My father opened a transport cafe, and I went along with him. In school, I took up domestic science, which basically meant cooking. In those days, a boy taking cooking classes, well, they thought you were kind of funny," he smiles.

But he got through, and then did something very few people in his town did. "I left," he says simply. It was off to London, to Simpson's in the Strand and The Savoy Grill, then to Lausanne, Switzerland, at the Beau Rivage Palace. "But I got homesick, so I moved back and soon found myself in London, working at the Claridge's," he says.

That was 1971. A call from an old colleague made him pack his bags again, this time to Capital Hotel in Chelsea, where he earned his first Michelin Star in 1975. Fifteen years later, Chef Brian had had enough of the employment scene, and decided to open his own place.

"In 1986, I opened Turner's at Walton Street. It did well, but unfortunately, chefs are not trained in business. We don't open restaurants to earn money, but to do what we love, which is cook food and make people happy. But I learned the hard way that one needs more than just passion for food," he smiles wryly.

A dishonest partner led to him losing money, and he eventually got rid of him. "That's when I started doing television, and I must say, it saved me," he sighs. His work on television paid his business, and kept it afloat. It also gave him a profile that kept people coming in to meet the man himself, and taste his culinary creations.



Unfortunately, his time away from the restaurant also meant that he had to hire people to manage the business, and that sent costs skyrocketing. Eventually, it just made sense to sell. "I didn't sell the business – just the property. Now I work for a company that takes care of all the costs and I just manage the business for them," he says.

And that's a good thing in more ways than one. In addition to the television commitments, it also allows Turner to travel around

the world, interacting with old and new industry professionals, updating himself on the trials and trends of the business of food.

Like in Dubai, his learning has been especially intense with regards to service. "I am just bowled over. Everywhere you go, you are greeted with a smile. Every time you enter or leave, people smile at you and wish you a good day or good night, and I just love that," he gushes, adding, "It's like they are genuinely happy to see you."

"Sometimes," he says on a more serious note, "we tend to forget we are in the hospitality business." And he insists this is one thing he intends to incorporate in his own work. Service with a smile, where, as goes a "silly saying in the UK, 'In a good partnership, just before I sneeze, you would take out the handkerchief'". In the UK, says Chef Brian, there is a dearth of smiling faces, something that he would actively want to change.

For now though, he is enjoying every single

day of his life. "The beauty of my life is I don't ever have to get bored. Because I am doing so many different things - and I love each one of them – every day is a new challenge, and I look forward to going to work," he smiles.

In addition to meeting people, doing interviews, special speeches, motivational talks, and demonstrations, Chef Brian also has the opportunity to use his celebrity status to do charity work. His fondest memories are of the time his show raised the fastest million in the

UK on television for the Children in Need charity. "And we did that by doing a spin on the group the Four Tops. We went on as the Four Chops, and did a full monty," he laughs.

Another important moment is the time when David Hasselhoff, the actor, came on a show and waved out to him. He remembered the chef from a show they had done together called Food and Drink, and at that moment, Chef Brian realised that what had started out as a shaky step with Antony Worrall Thompson

Now the only original chef at 'Ready Steady Cook', Chef Brian is glad that chefs today have better opportunities to represent the industry on a global platform. "It's great that the catering industry gets to show itself off to people. It's good when cooking shows tell people what actually goes on in kitchens. The downside comes when people go too far. I only get concerned when people forget what they actually wanted to do in life. Then the show becomes something entirely different" he states.

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That, he feels, does not help the industry at a time when the growth is exponential, and the number of skilled professionals is unable to keep up.

For Chef Brian, an ideal chef needs a few basics. "Genuine dedication, genuine passion, genuine understanding, and yes, some talent as a base to build up on," he says.

With that, he's off to Cape Town for another recording, sharing more wisdom and the secrets from his larder with his fans there.

Fans here though wait for him to visit Dubai again. Soon.



Express Print (Publishers) LLC

Having started in the early eighties, the publishing division of Express Group today has over two decades of experience and proficiency in producing directories, magazines and books pertaining to various commercial segments. Express Print (Publishers) LLC is a leading publisher in the region with their expertise extending to database compilation, management, updates, superlative printing and distribution. They have a proven reputation for providing a consistent and reliable first class service to clients and their customers and with an experienced and trained staff, are one of the market-leading publishers with an extensive portfolio of directories and special interest magazines on business, property, lifestyle, Bollywood, Cooking etc in the Middle East. An in house printing press and bindery lends them an edge in their search for excellence and quality. The selection includes numerous established and new titles, all catering to an ever-growing audience. The magazines are widely circulated in the UAE and the neighbouring countries.



Mr. Rakesh Puri, Chief Executive, Express Print (Publishers) LLC seen here with Chef Uwe Micheel, President, ECG receiving his membership certificate

The bouquet of magazines includes, TeleLIFE- the leading entertainment and lifestyle magazine for Sony Television, Pehla – Published on behalf of Arab Digital Distribution, Al Majlis – Bilingual property and lifestyle magazine, Business Quality Review –published on behalf of Dubai Quality Group, Dubai Rotary – Published on behalf of Dubai Rotary Club, What's cooking- published in association with Emirates Culinary Guild, Salaam Namaste on behalf of ARY and Moviemag international the popular Bollywood magazine.

Express print Publishers LLC have an extensive experience in publishing commercial and industrial directories for most of the UAE Chambers of Commerce and Industry and some of their accepted publications - past as well as current ones include the Yellow pages in UAE, Dubai Commercial Directory, Dubai Industrial Directory, Dubai Property Directory, Dubai Quality Group Directory etc to name a few.



Wet Fish Trading Co LLC



Ms. Jacky Allan, Executive Director, Wet Fish Trading LLC, receiving the membership certificate on behalf of her company from Chef Uwe Micheel, President, ECG

Mark and Jacky Allan arrived in Dubai in August 2004 intent on establishing a wholesale seafood company in the style of the operation that they owned, ran and sold in the UK. Seventeen years experience of supplying London and the South East's top Hotels and Restaurants had given the couple the incentive to ply their trade here in Dubai where they had spent several vacations over the past seven or eight years.

After some initial groundwork and market research before the family left Britain, there was a realization that there was indeed a gap in the market for such expertise as we possessed. We talked to numerous Chefs and purchasing departments to get a feel of the strengths and weaknesses of the place and saw many ways to improve quality and service initially with European imported fish. Wet secured a lease on a factory premises in D.I.P in Jebel Ali and designed and fitted a production area which could provide filleted and cleaned fish in a temperature controlled

environment. This was completed in early February 2005. We actually started our first orders with Nad Al Sheba during the 2005 World Cup which was very exciting and satisfying too that people were prepared to trust the company to supply. Jacky in particular worked extremely hard on establishing the customer base which we enjoy today combining this with being a full time mother of three children. The company has developed in the same way as Dubai has. A huge «spike» in the growth of the company as Wet has taken on existing supply work as well as some of the newer properties that have opened recently. The support of the clientele here has been fantastic and without it, we wouldn't have been able to project ourselves fully into the market place.

The culmination of the success of the company came in November 2006 when Wet Fish was voted the inaugural «Small Business of the Year» by the Lloyds Tsb Bank Group which recognizes the successes of the small and medium sized companies who work here. This is a platform that we hope we can move on further from and establish ourselves firmly as one of the premier choices for both local and imported fish. We have secured work all over the Emirate as well as in Abu Dhabi and we are proud to be associated with supply to two airlines.

Today, Wet Fish has evolved into a strong independent company with 7 staff, 3 vans and the ability and service level to accommodate anyone's needs. We are proud of our success, our staff and of being associated with such a high level of quality that is synonymous with Dubai and your vision of excellence. We are at your service at all times.





The WACS Congress '08 flyers were all over at Anuga

Anuga, one of the biggest food expos in the world, was a good platform to introduce and promote the WACS Congress '08. David Jones, who was for more than ten years looking after the Middle East and is now located in Brussels, and his team, supported the Guild a lot. A special thank you to him. Also a special thank you to Convotherm and Frisch and Frost for their support.

There are many food shows, but the world's most important and most international is Anuga in Germany. A biennial event, Anuga is a key event for new and existing exporters from

the food and food service sector who are keen to gauge response to their products in Europe and the rest of the world and to find new distribution partners.

Anuga attracts key food buyers and decision makers from Europe and the world. At last count there were 6,200 exhibitors from 90 countries and 1,60,000 visitors from 157 countries.

Our Emirates Culinary Guild was represented by President Chef Uwe Micheel, Chef Andy Kurfurst and Mike Wunsch from Barakat. It

was a good opportunity for them to re-connect with old friends and colleagues, partners and influencers, that helped promote the WACS Congress '08 to be held in Dubai. Roll ups were placed in different locations across the venue and other promotional material like flyers were available in abundance all over.

This was indeed an ideal opportunity to showcase our Congress and Dubai to the world.

A few pictures of their visit.



Chefs Andy Kurfurst, Gerhard Eichhorn and Uwe Micheel with the roll up banner at the Convotherm stand



Gretel Weiss the editor of Food Service Europe & Middle East magazine joined us; she will talk about the WACS in the next issue as well



Seen here are Chef Uwe Micheel, Hans Boettcher of Frisch and Frost, ECG corporate member, Ctefan Wohlfeil, President, VKD (German Chef's Association) and Chef Andy Kurfurst



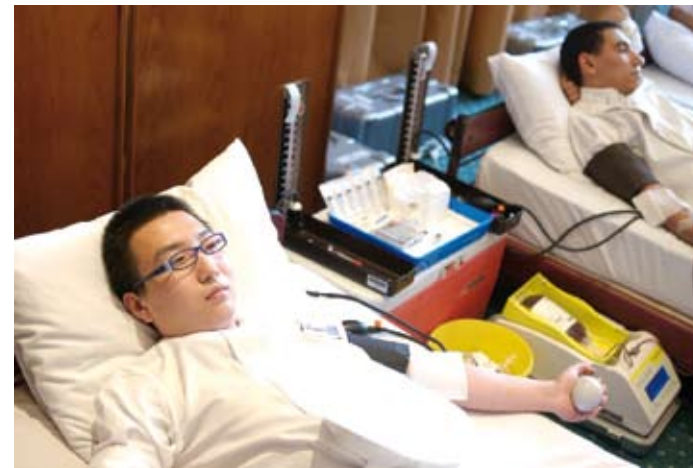
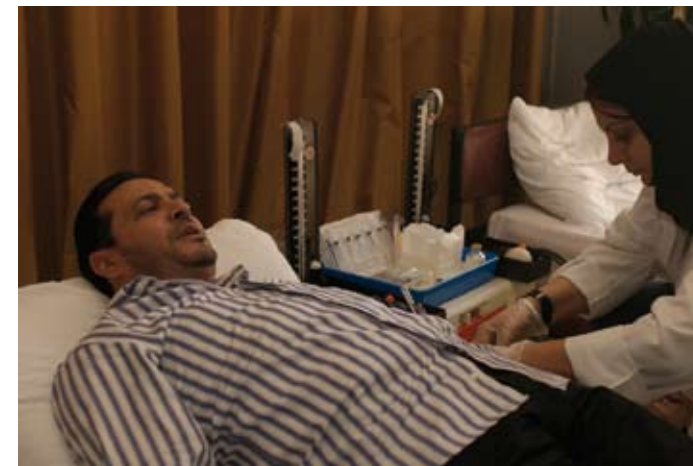
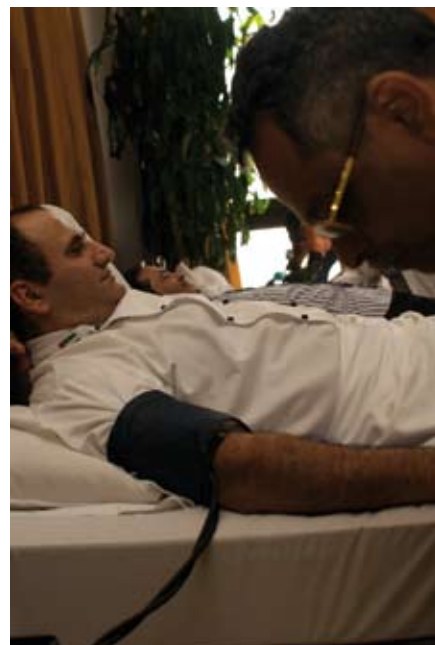
Chefs Mike Wunsch and Andy Kurfurst in front of the MLA stand



Chefs Andy Kurfurst and Gerhard Eichhorn of Convotherm in front of the Convotherm set up

What the men in white do - they do it in style

Chefs and other hotel personnel at a blood donation drive held at the Radisson SAS, Deira, to commemorate the International Chefs Day



A special thank you from the Emirates Culinary Guild



A wise man once said, “The only people with whom you must try to get even are those who have helped you.”

Although this does not quite make the cut, we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who took the time out of their busy schedules and went by to Al Wasl Hospital to donate blood for Alen. The sheer numbers that turned up gave the blood collection department a hard time that day, but stood testimony to the good will and popularity Alen enjoys.

A big thank you also goes out to those who were unable to be there in person, but who kept Alen in their prayers all the time.

It is with the help and support of his large family of friends that he has pulled through those crucial moments.

Once again, thank you.



THE EMIRATES CULINARY GUILD

Application for Membership

Date of Application: <input type="text"/>		
Family Name: (Mr./Ms./Mrs.)		
First Name/s:		
Nationality:	Civil Status:	Date of Birth: dd/mm/yy
Name of Employer:	Address in Home Country:	
Work Address:	Tel:	
Web Address:	Email:	
Telephone Office:	Professional Title:	
Fax Office:	Type of Membership Required: (Please tick one)	
Tel. Home:	Corporate <input type="checkbox"/> Senior <input type="checkbox"/> Junior <input type="checkbox"/>	
Fax Home:		
Email:		
Declaration to be Signed by all Applicants		
I wish to join the Emirates Culinary Guild. I have read the ECG Constitution and By-laws. I agree to be bound by the requirements of the constitution. If elected, I promise to support the Guild and its endeavors, to the best of my abilities.		
Signed:.....		
Proposed By:	Sig:.....	
Seconded By:	Sig:.....	
FOR OFICIAL USE ONLY		
Remarks:		
Payment received?		
Certificate Given.	Pin Given.	Medal & Collar Given
Approved President.....	Approved Chairman.....	
Fees:		
Senior Members: Above the rank of chef de partie (or senior chef de partie on executive chef's recommendation). Dhs: 350/= joining Includes certificate; member-pin, member medal and ECG ceremonial collar. Dhs: 150/= per year thereafter.		
Junior Members: Chef de partie or below Dhs: 50/= membership valid for duration of member's stay in UAE. Includes member-pin and certificate.		





Your Professional
FOOD & BEVERAGE Partner

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