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WACS CONGRESS Dubai 2008

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FROM THE

President's station

Dear Fellow Chefs, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the special WACS Congress issue of our Gulf Gourmet.

First of all I would like to say how proud the Emirates Culinary Guild is to host the WACS Congress 2008. We have come a long way since the congress was awarded to our city of Dubai in Dublin in 2004.

On behalf of the ECG, its committee and members, I would like to extend a hearty welcome to the WACS board led by President Ferdinand Metz, the culinary committee, the continental directors, the country presidents and all the delegates.

I am very happy to acknowledge and extend a very special thank you to Mr. Awadh Seghayer Al Ketbi, and the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing, who have supported us for many years now.

We all know that the ECG also enjoys the cooperation and support of its corporate members. It would be right to say that a lot of the activities we do would not be possible without the support of our sponsors. A big thank you goes to Unilever Food Solutions, Barakat, Fonterra, JohnsonDiversy, Custom Culinary, Jumeirah Emirates Towers, Electrolux, Churchill, Africa and Eastern, Horeca, Dick Knives, Convothorn, Kenwood, Paderno, Bragard and Pal, who at different levels have associated with us in making this Congress an event to talk about.

A big thank you goes to our own ECG team Josephine, Andy Cuthbert, Alen Thong, Andy Kurfurst, Heinz Zucchelli, Mike Wunsch, Martino D' Souza, Michel Miraton, Patrick Lannes and many more. I would also like to acknowledge the special efforts put in by Dr. Billy

Gallagher and Arnold Tanzer. We are very grateful to and also thank President Metz, the board members, the culinary committee and all friends and colleagues who have offered help in the past few years.

On behalf of the ECG I would also like to thank the out-going board of WACS and wish the new board all the strength and support they need in their term; as our honorary president Dr. Gallagher said in our April issue of the Gulf Gourmet with John and Gissur we have two excellent candidates – both committed to doing a great job and both very confident. We wish both good luck and the winner can be assured to get 100% support from the ECG and its members.

There are four countries bidding to host 2012, and again four very committed teams – good luck to all of them.

The entire WACS Congress program has been published in this issue to facilitate and ensure that you do not miss out on any of the wonderful activities planned. In this issue you will also find some of our executive chefs who make up for the force and strength that the ECG is today.

I wish us all a great, successful congress 2008 here in Dubai and already begin looking forward to the next congress in Chile in the year 2010.

Look forward to meeting you all.

Culinary regards,

Uwe Mischeel – President Emirates Culinary Guild

Director of Kitchens

Radisson SAS Hotel, Dubai Deira Creek

Alen Thong



Marhaba!

All of us here at the Emirates Culinary Guild are honoured and delighted to welcome you – and to thank you for visiting us – here in our home city, Dubai, for this the 33rd world congress of the World Association of Chefs' Societies (WACS).

We promise that you will experience, first hand, the true meaning of Arabian hospitality. Amid the sights and sounds of a 21st century Arabia, you will make contact with true Emirati's, all of whom, whilst still remaining true to their traditions, embrace a progressive, enlightened outlook and remain fully engaged in advancing the fastest-growing and most modern city on earth, one that we proudly call home, Dubai.

This year also marks the auspicious occasion of the 80th anniversary of the WACS' formation; so, not only do we bid you "Welcome" but we also wish you, Happy Birthday!

We hope and trust that you will enjoy the time you spend here. Dubai will offer you great shopping, great restaurants, good food, friendly people, great beaches, sunny weather, excellent service and a safe and clean environment.

The Emirates Culinary Guild has planned the event meticulously. Attention to detail, be it "business" or social, entertainment or socializing events, you will find that at WACS Congress 2008 there is something for everyone.

We look forward to meeting old friends, making new acquaintances and networking with our professional colleagues from around the world.

Ma 'as salaam!

Alen Thong

Director

WACS Congress 2008 Dubai



Ferdinand Metz

Dear colleagues and friends,

It is with great pleasure that I extend each one of you a warm welcome.

As we celebrate the 80th anniversary of the World Association of Chefs Societies (WACS) let us join together and yet again have another successful WACS Congress, this time in this lovely and vibrant city of Dubai.

As we promoted this Congress around the world we found that delegates were looking forward with great anticipation. I am sure that my expectations from WACS Congress 2008, that of being the best congress ever, will surely be met.

This being the first WACS Congress in the Middle East is a milestone of sorts for our organisation. Knowing that as chefs you all love to travel, visit other countries and sample their cuisines, you will come away with a better understanding of Emirati traditions, hospitality and cuisine. I am looking forward to meeting you all.

Warm regards,

Ferdinand E. Metz

President

World Association of Chefs Societies

Billy Gallagher



Dear friends and colleagues,

What a sincere pleasure it is for us to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the World Association of Chefs Societies in the vibrant city of Dubai. It is certainly going to be an exciting and unique event bringing together chefs from over 60 different countries together from around the globe.

As we continue to grow and expand our membership, conferences such as these are very important for us to plan the way forward. They are a platform to debate and discuss new ideas and consolidate what is being achieved so far.

I would like to congratulate our president and indeed the entire board for the tremendous work and enthusiasm they have shown these past four years. Many new initiatives that will bear fruits into the future have been launched, positioning the World Association of Chefs Societies as the respected voice for the professional chef.

To the organizers of this Congress I give my congratulations. Well done for all your endeavors.

I am sure the long hours and your dedicated commitment will be justly rewarded by all those who attend.

I would like to extend a very special welcome to all the participants attending the conference for the first time and to our junior members and I'm looking forward to sharing an exciting five days together.

Warmest regards.

Billy Gallagher

Honorary Life President,

World Association of Chefs Societies

Marhaban bikum fi Dubai... Welcome to Dubai...

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the WACS Congress 2008, the thirty third biannual WACS Congress, and to fascinating sunny Dubai. This year, the WACS Congress returns for the third time to Africa and the Middle East region with over 650 professionals from all corners of the globe meeting at this venue for what promises to be a very productive, educational and culturally insightful discourse.

WACS turns 80 this year, and I for one am looking forward to Dr Bill Gallagher's presentation on our history. Much has changed since that meeting in 1928 at Sorbonne, Paris, where August Escoffier was appointed Honorary president: Dubai was a small pearl fishing village, the Emirates under the protectorate of the United Kingdom, to the modern innovative city where we meet today.

The congress in 2008 runs the gamut- from insightful cuisine workshops, The Women in WACS forum, WACS certification, Master Chef presentations, the inaugural Global Chefs Challenge, the Dr Billy Gallagher Junior Forum, a hotly contested Presidium election, dinner in the desert and much more.



Local arrangements for the conference were handled with diligence and creativity by the Emirates Culinary Guild, under the chair of Mr Alen Thong, who together with his committee deserves thanks for taking care of the great many details involved in a conference of this size.

My thanks must also go to the board and the WACS congress committee for many hours of dedicated work to reach this point.

Finally, I would like to thank all the contributing leading edge companies for their sponsorship and organisation, and whose generous support contributed to the success of WACS Congress Dubai 2008. In these tight economic times, their involvement in WACS and their support of this congress is especially appreciated and demonstrates their commitment to the future of chefs globally.

The goal of this congress is to spark a dialogue between chefs globally, to give insight to the various workshops at offer, to network with your colleagues from across the globe and last but certainly not least to enjoy the cultural bounty that is Dubai.

Again, welcome to Dubai, I hope that you will find the congress informative and enjoyable, that you will take the opportunity to meet new friends and visit with old friends.

Hasta nos reunimos en Chile, 2010.

Arnold Tanzer

WACS Continental Director Africa and Middle East

WACS Congress Committee Chair

*Arnold
Tanzer*

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GOURMET
GULF
FROM US, FOR US

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Life and times OF THE ECG

Leading the UAE to World Culinary Excellence

The UAE is again set to make the world stand up and take notice. This time, the international stage will showcase the UAE as the newest centre of culinary prestige and excellence. The World Association of Chefs Societies (WACS) World Congress is here. And making this happen is the Emirates Culinary Guild



Chef Uwe Micheel



The ECG team, where executive chefs become marshals, that make every event a grand success

THE EMIRATES CULINARY GUILD (ECG) is the UAE's chefs association, a non-profit organisation established in 1988. Among its primary goals are to promote the interests of the culinary profession in the UAE, as well as to promote the country as well as its rich culture, through its cuisine, to the world. The ECG is behind the successful annual Middle East Junior Chef of the Year competition, the mission of which runs parallel to its

own – to encourage and develop junior chefs and to equip them with skills for senior positions. For the past several years, the ECG has also successfully held the Salon Culinaire, with this year seeing 70 hotels, over 1200 competitors and 7 countries compete, which has further proven the growing stature of the region, particularly of the UAE, in culinary excellence.

Chef Uwe Micheel, President, Emirates Culinary Guild & Director

Kitchens, Radisson SAS, Dubai, spoke with *Gulf Gourmet* on behalf of the executive committee and shared their activities, plans and aspirations.

United they stand

There are several categories of membership in the ECG. For professional chefs there are the Senior and Junior categories. Along with this the corporates dealing with food and beverage can become members as well. As of today the ECG mem



Alen Thong, Director, WACS Congress 2008, Dubai



Founder President Chef Michael Lee

Who would have thought in those early days of the Emirates Culinary Guild that it would have progressed to what it has become today: host to one of the biggest events in the culinary world - the WACS Congress.

A group of chefs in the Emirates, myself included, got together to organise the Salon Culinaire and other competitions for young chefs in order to motivate our junior cooks and to give them a chance to shine. From this the Guild grew and today is recognised as a formidable institution for all things culinary in the UAE.

I have always instilled in my juniors that the only way to achieve perfection and success is by hard work, dedication and professionalism. This principle applies throughout the working world, and in the case of Uwe Micheel, Alen Thong and their Guild Committee it has been proven.

I am honoured and proud to be a founder member of the Emirates Culinary Guild and I am even more so today when I see how it has developed.

Wish all of you the very best and have a very successful event.

Mike Lee

FOUNDER PRESIDENT



Andrew Cuthbert, Executive Assistant Manager, Food and Beverage & Jumeirah Hospitality, Jumeirah Emirates Towers, Dubai and Chairman, Emirates Culinary Guild

bership stands at approximately 1000 professional chefs and almost 40 food and beverage companies.

Although the ECG's leadership is vested on an executive committee, Chef Uwe is quick to point out that they work as a team. "I think that the important thing that makes us strong (as an organisation) is that we work together as a team." He continues, "In the evenings, for example, we are competitors. We are fighting each other to get the customers. But once we sit together, we put our hotel hats off and we put the Guild hats."

Chef Uwe is also proud to say that in the ECG pride is in what they do, and not in their heads, "In the Guild, it's not like, I'm the president and my word is final. We (the executive committee) work at a decision together. For example, when Chairman

"I think that the important thing that makes us strong (as an organisation) is that we work together as a team."

Andy Cuthbert, who is in charge of all competitions, makes a decision, I completely agree with him. We're not high-flying chefs. As the executive committee, we are a small team who lead, who organise things – but when competitions come, such as the Junior Chef and the Salon Culinaire, the others come in to help as well."

A culinary legacy

The ECG, in its 20 years of existence, has pursued its mission with determination and the fruits of its labours are now becoming evident. Asked what he thinks is the Guild's biggest contribution to uplifting the culinary profession in the UAE, Chef Uwe says it is bringing the country into the world stage of culinary prestige, particularly through the Salon Culinaire competition. "The biggest, I would say, would be the Salon Culinaire, which until 2005 was held every two years. Now it's every year. This is because of the boom in Dubai. There's the Gulfood, the biggest food exhibition in the area and now, the Salon Culinaire has become the biggest competition in the region. To top it all the ECG is now hosting the WACS Congress in Dubai. Can it get



Chef Heinz Zucchelli, Director, Production, Emirates Flight Catering, Dubai and Vice President, Emirates Culinary Guild



One of the founder members of the ECG is Chef Francois Porte, Executive Chef, The Emirates Golf Club, Dubai



Chef Andreas Kurfurst, Executive Chef, Renaissance Hotel, Dubai



Chef Arnel Paris, Executive Pastry Chef, Novotel & Ibis World Trade Centre, Dubai

better than this?"

The ECG has, in association with the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing, made Dubai a culinary destination of the world. Chef Uwe recalls that when, as Executive Chef of the then InterContinental Dubai, now known as the Radisson SAS, Dubai, he was putting up a restaurant at the hotel, he travelled extensively to New York, Hong Kong and Singapore to

look at their restaurants and see their concepts. "Now, the people in Hong Kong are coming here in Dubai to see what we are doing. I think this is the biggest success that we achieved – all the hotels and restaurants. The ECG is a big part of it."

A major agenda of the ECG is also to promote Emirati cuisine. "In the last few years, we have been trying to bring back Emirati cuisine, which was almost lost." Towards this end,

the ECG has held competitions solely focusing on Emirati cuisine as well as included this category in the various competitions it organises.

Over the past years, the ECG has likewise been in the forefront of several world-record breaking events in the UAE such as the biggest cake, the biggest spaghetti balls and the biggest number of rice dumplings. The annual Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) Blackbox competition is another event that the ECG spearheads. Chef Uwe adds that the ECG partners with the government, particularly the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM) in events such as the Food Surprises Week during the Dubai Summer Surprises.



**Left Chef Aruna Shantha, Executive Chef, Nad Al Sheba Pvt. Club, Dubai
Right: Chef Alan Pedge, Regional Executive Chef, Samaya Hotel**



Left: Chef Harald Oberender, Corporate Executive Chef, Dubai World Trade Centre and with him is Chef Vincent Gomes, Executive Chef, Le Royal Meridien, Dubai



Some of our judges this year

Under the ECG's auspices, culinary teams from the UAE have been sent to international competitions and these teams have brought pride to the country. "In the last two years, we sent a team to Singapore and both times, they came back with accolades, in terms of medals. Wherever we go out, so far, we have won major prizes."

As much as it being the biggest challenge for the ECG to host the WACS World Congress, it is also a dream come true. Chef Uwe shares that at the beginning of his tenure as the ECG's president, he and his colleagues dreamt of becoming a member of the WACS. "Then we became a member. When the guys came back – those who went to Norway to get the membership in the World Congress – when they came back, I asked them "When are we holding the World Congress?" At that time, we said to ourselves, by 2010, we want to have the congress in Dubai. Now we're having it in 2008.

Chef Uwe has steered the guild for ten years now, helping, along with

the executive committee, to bring it to where it is today. "I'm only the second president since the ECG started. I've asked four years ago to step down. Then I was asked to keep going. When your colleagues trust

"The Guild's biggest contribution to uplifting the culinary profession in the UAE is bringing the country into the world stage of culinary prestige, particularly through the Salon Culinaire competition."

you and put it into your hands to lead them, to lead the association, it makes you proud. I think that at the ECG, the chefs have become closer together. We help each other. We know each other well and we support each other. The team spirit between


the chefs is much more, I think, than in any other profession."

The future looks bright

Chef Uwe could have talked about the ECG and their plans all night. His enthusiasm for what they do is infectious and his pride for what they have achieved is evident.

For us, we eagerly await for things to come as the ECG leads the way to making Dubai the newest international stage for world-class cuisine.

Especially for this article, Chef Uwe wished to include the very first president of the ECG, Chef Mike Lee, whom he helped track down so that we could get his message. You will also see the ECG members, both the executive committee as well as other members, in all their glory in a pictorial journey through various competitions and events.

Get to know the ECG and join in as they celebrate yet another milestone – the WACS Congress 2008. 



grill of the month



A close-up portrait of a man with a beard and mustache, wearing a white thobe and a ghutra with a black agal. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a plain, light color.

son of the city

Awadh Seghayer Al Ketbi, Executive Director,
Dubai Convention Bureau, shares his life and insights
into the phenomenon that is Dubai

SPEAKING WITH AWADH SEGHAHER AL KETBI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DUBAI Convention Bureau, in his swanky office overlooking the extensive Dubai creek, you would be forgiven for thinking he has been doing this all his life. His disarming smile and easy demeanour belies the intensity and dedication with which he runs his office. But the facts and figures tell you what no one else can – staggering growth, rising numbers and innovation like never before.

It's difficult to believe then that the man who works hard behind the scenes spent the early years of his life without electricity and spent his days rearing camels. "That was Dubai then," he smiles. A quaint city that Al Ketbi visited with his family. "My mother gave birth to me in the desert with only my grandmother around," he says, taking a step in the past. "We had to travel to get sweet water, and that meant a half day trip over the dunes to get to the city.

Part of that journey was on camel and part in car," he says. But motor vehicles in those days were not the rough 4WDs of today. "They were

old Bedfords. At the time, it took us two days to reach Abu Dhabi in those cars. And we used to think wow, these are so fast," he laughs.

Al Ketbi lost his mother at a tender age, and he and his brother went to live with their grandmother for a while. His father remarried and moved to Dubai. "We had a small house of 2-3 rooms, 1 bathroom, and a sitting area, which was usually the huge yard," he explains. As a child, Al Ketbi spent his days attending school in the mornings and playing football in the evenings. "Our football field was what is now Hall number 3 at the Dubai World Trade Centre," he smiles.

Entertainment options were limited, and Hindi movies at Al Nasr

cinema, ice skating and bowling were the only activities available. "But that meant we created our own entertainment. We played games with our friends and neighbours. We used to know each other by name from Zabeel to what is now Mirdiff. It was a community of sorts, including locals and expats," he says.

So much so that some of his earliest memories are of times spent in the desert with his father and some expat friends. "We used to spend our spring break in the desert, and a lot of our neighbours used to join us for 10-12 days. We did things the local way. Like golf, for example, was an expat sport, but we played it in the desert," he smiles.

Some of his earliest
memories are of times spent
in the desert with his father.





Al Ketbi's earliest culinary memories are of an Indian man who used to go from house to house selling his wares. "We bought chips and sandwiches from him in the evening and they were a treat," he smiles. He and his brother were rewarded for good behaviour with one dirham, which, at the time, bought them two cokes, two chips and one Kit Kat chocolate. Since electricity was scarce, they used their ingenuity to keep their drinks cold. "We poured water in the sand, dug holes and kept the bottles in that," he smiles.

Although Al Ketbi misses the charm of the life he had back then, he is more than happy with the present. "We could never have dreamed of such a life, such homes, such cars and such infrastructure. Thanks to the foresightedness of the Government, we have a better life, better education, and a better future today," he states.

His gratitude to the Dubai Government and the royal family extends on a personal level as well. For, it was because of their kindness that he is what he is today. "At that age, I was having fun and had really not thought about my future and what I wanted to be. In the 80s, I wanted to finish high school and train camels. Tourism was the last thing on my mind. But I was very good in mathematics, and secured a very high rank in my school," he says.

As a reward, the royal family sent him to the UK to study English in 1988. "My grandmother went to the wife of our late ruler, Sheikh





Maktoum Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, and told her Saeed, (my brother) was complaining that Awadh always gets everything,” he laughs. But sure enough, she understood where the objections were coming from, and decided to send both brothers to the UK together.

It was a culture shock to be sure, but one that was softened due to his brother’s company. But three months later, it was time for Saeed to go back home to finish school. “I can’t begin to describe how I felt. I was truly alone and lonely that day,” he sighs.

Al Ketbi stayed on, finished his education, and realised he was interested in banking. “I thought to myself, what can I do that would not entail me sitting in a cubicle behind a desk all day. Marketing came to mind, so that’s what I chose to do,” he explains. Always the good stu-

dent, he did very well at school, and his professor felt it was a pleasure to teach him. So much so that he facilitated an internship with a bank for Al Ketbi. He trained for three months, and the manager paid him a stipend for the next three.



“It wasn’t a lot of money but it was a great experience. Living in the UK, I was really independent. That was when I realised how spoilt I was in Dubai. In my third year there, I

had to live on my own, wash my own clothes, clean my home and bathroom, and even cook for myself,” he smiles, quickly adding that he hates to cook but can survive if he has to.

“In fact,” he says as an afterthought, “People believe that if you can do kabsa, you can do anything. I can actually make that quite well, but I think biryani is a lot more difficult to make. I never quite progressed to the biryani level in my cooking skills.”

This independence stood him in good stead when he returned to Dubai. “I was confident enough to break away from the family home, have my own house and raise my own family. My cousins and uncles are all still in the family home, living together like an extended family,” he says.

After almost six years, in 1993, Al Ketbi decided it was time to come home. “The Government is really

helpful. When you think about the investment they make in you, it is your duty to share your knowledge with the country. The Government should benefit from its locals,” he states. After all, he feels, when the leadership is so visionary that you are not wanting for anything, what’s to stop you from realising your potential?

“If there are calls for democracy I would say a firm no. Our leaders practice the best form of democracy. They open their hearts, eyes and ears for us and relate to our life and our problems. I mean, the Crown Prince walks into a petrol station, buys and pays for an Orange juice himself, laughing and joking with his friends. Where in the world does that happen? Only in Dubai,” he smiles.

And only in Dubai does it happen that a chance encounter on the road leads to an article. “I was attending

an air show, and after the show, was fixing my car tyre. A car pulled up next to me and asked for directions. I opened my car, took out a small Dubai map, spread it on my hood and started looking for what he wanted. I turn, and saw he was taking pictures of me. I asked him what he was doing, and he said he was surprised I was carrying a tourist map. I said, well, I work for the tourism depart-

“Our leaders open their hearts, eyes and ears for us and relate to our life and our problems.”

ment, but he was still impressed. The following year, he came back and met me. He was a writer, and he had published this story in a magazine in the

USA,” smiles Al Ketbi.

Going back to his own story, Al Ketbi’s first job was at a company called DUGAS, Dubai Natural Gas Company. “I was an accountant there. Why I worked there, please don’t ask me. But 11 months down the line, I did realise that if I was working there, I had very possibly lost it. The working hours were long and whatever social life I had in Dubai, I destroyed during my term there,” he says.

By a stroke of luck, Al Ketbi got his hands on the number of the then CEO of Dubai Tourism. “I picked up the phone, called him and asked for a job. He was shocked that I was calling the CEO for a job. I said, well, I am, so do you have something for



he laughs. And he did. Taking an off from work the next day, Al Ketbi visited him, met with the finance and HR and other relevant departments, and was hired on the spot. So eager was he to get out of his old job, he even accepted a lower salary.

"I went back and submitted my resignation. But it was not accepted because it was my day off. So they called me and told me to come submit it the next day. I said why don't you put it in an envelope and open it tomorrow," he laughs.

But he did go back the next day, even if it was to say his goodbyes. "When I said goodbye to the CEO, he shook my hand and said I could come back if I wanted. He did not try to make it tough for me, and I took it as a sign of God's blessing for my future," he says.

That was March 1995. He joined DTCM on April 1, 1995, and till date considers himself the 'April Fool'. He was hired as Special Projects in Charge, SPI for short. "People called me the 'spy' (SPI) of the CEO, and

left the room when I walked in," he laughs.

But on a serious note, he got on well with his colleagues, and the team grew exponentially, from 60-something to close to 500. Today, Al Ketbi has risen to the rank of Executive Director of the Dubai Convention Bureau, and takes every day as it comes. "About 50 per cent of my job is unplanned. But the essence is to promote tourism in every way,

"I want my children to enjoy life, but I also want them to keep their culture and traditions."

and look at future business opportunities for Dubai. Whatever I do in marketing and sales is geared towards that," he explains.

And the results are there for all to see. Al Ketbi is expecting 89 cruise ships this year as Dubai goes from being a port of call to a hub season.

Passengers are expected to rise from 5,000 to 200,000, heritage and archaeological sites have increased, and budgets have gone up from AED 1 million to AED 11 million.

Al Ketbi is quick to acknowledge the efforts of his team as well. "We have some good people working with us. Mistakes do happen, but those are also part of the package. All in all, we have achieved a lot, and have some big plans for the future," he smiles.

While progressing professionally, Al Ketbi dedicates equal time to his family. "I love Oman, and we often drive down to Muscat for the weekend. I also take some short holidays throughout the year in addition to a long one so I can spend more quality time with my kids," he says.

Married in 2001, Al Ketbi is blessed with a son, Saeed and daughters, Mariam and Alia. As a family man, he's the first to admit he's not perfect. But he does try his best. "My wife and father will tell you lots of things. But they like to crib about me. They say I love my girls more but also that I spoil the boy. How does that make sense, I don't know," he smiles.

"The way I see it, girls were born to be spoilt. I can't imagine or stand either one of them crying. For my son though, it's ok to cry. He needs discipline, and although he is not at that age yet, he should expect it in the future," he states.

Al Ketbi's concerns about raising his children extend beyond just discipline though. "As parents, we have to learn how to draw the line. I want them to enjoy life, but I also want



them to keep to their culture and traditions. My son, for example, wears t-shirts and shorts all day, which was a strict no-no for us,” he explains.

To strike the balance, he reverts to what his father did all those years ago. “Once we were independent enough, my father would take us with him wherever he went. He always told us the best school in life is to spend time with your elders. He taught us all we know without teaching and without going after us with a stick and saying you have to do this, and you have to do that,” he says.

As a child, his fondest memory is of getting into the car with his father and going about the day, visiting friends, driving on sand dunes, conversing and watching his father converse with elders and prominent personalities. “He would reward us at the end of the day by taking us to the grocery store and buying some chocolates. That gave us an incentive to spend time with him as well, and in time, we had such respect and awe for him. It’s different when you do things with your father, and it’s unforgettable,” he says, the thought bringing a fond smile to his face.

That’s the culture he tries to imbibe in his own kids. “Every Friday is boy’s day out. My son and I spend the afternoon with my father or grandmother. Then we spend the evenings at a mall, shopping, or drinking coffee and talking. Its fun and a great chance for us to bond,” he says.

Al Ketbi also shares his passion for food with his family, as he enjoys eating out at new and different restaurants in town. “Food is an important part of any destination, as it is part of the tourist experience. When people visit a place, there’s always a


question of ‘Where do you want to eat today’,” he says.

When Dubai Summer Surprises started in 1998, each government department was given a week to handle. “We were in charge of food surprises. We were brainstorming about what



we should do, and thought the best thing would be to interact with the Emirates Culinary Guild. They did 80 per cent of our work, and were very supportive and took their own initiative to organise competitions and all. Luckily, both our objectives matched and we have been working together ever since,” he smiles.

With all the major hotel chains in the world here in Dubai, Al Ketbi feels this is where it’s at. “They bring in their expertise and knowledge to the destination, and the industry is all the better for it,” he smiles.

For the WACS Congress 2008, Al Ketbi has only a few expectations. “I hope it’s the biggest and best WACS Congress ever. I want the delegates to get a chance to experience some of the culture of Dubai. I wish that they take back fond memories of their visit to Dubai. That, to me, would be a job well done and success,” he concludes. 

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THE WACS CONGRESS 2008 SPONSORS



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a support system



The Emirates Culinary Guild enjoys the association and support not only from its chef members but from food companies and corporates as well. A large part of the resounding success of large events that the ECG hosts can be attributed to the sponsorship support from its corporate members. *Gulf Gourmet* spoke with the sponsors of WACS Congress 2008 to find out about their plans and interests in this huge event. *Here are some excerpts:*



دائرة السياحة والتسويق التجاري
Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing



Unilever Foodsolutions is the main sponsor of WACS Congress 2008. Chef Luigi Carola, Corporate Chef, Unilever Foodsolutions, said about their partnership with WACS, “Unilever Foodsolutions has its headquarters in Singapore, and is a global food solutions company. I am based in Bangkok, and have been with the company for over 10 years now. The strategy we apply to our business model is simple. We touch base with the local market and connect with our clients on that level. This enables us to have a better understanding of what chefs need, and helps us develop products to cater to those needs.”

“When you have people in more countries, it’s easier to gain insight into the issues of the market. And when these people come together, they can bring these issues to the table, such that what one misses out on, the other can deal with. Like halal, for example, in Bangkok, it would not be a consideration, but in the ME, I could not sell anything that was not halal,” he explained.

“Our strategy is based on two elements – chefmanship and vitality. We probably have the largest number of chefs

in a food company in the world. That’s because we feel a chef can relate to the needs and problems of another, and that gives us an insight into the kitchen. Vitality, on the other hand, is about feeling good, indulging yourself, and promoting good health,” he added. “We have been sup-

porting WACS from the last three years, as the sole sponsor in Dublin and now the main sponsor here.

“We want to be recognised and seen not as a food supplier but as a culinary partner. In short, we want to highlight the fact that we have started developing products that are truly authentic. For the first time in ten years, I can look in the eyes of the chef and say this is exactly what you make in the kitchen.” He proudly adds. Some of the products in this range include authentic

bouillon, which can be used in soups and starters, authentic dressing and liquid desserts, which currently include crème brulee, crème caramel and panacotta.

Chef Luigi concluded by saying, “All of us at Unilever Foodsolutions wish the Emirates Culinary Guild a successful and unforgettable WACS Congress 2008”.



Your Partner for Success

Rory Campbell, Managing Director at JohnsonDiversey Gulf said of his company, “Ours is a global company supplying and manufacturing specialist cleaning and hygiene solutions to the professional sectors of the food and beverage production, agriculture & poultry, hotels & restaurants, quick service restaurants, education and government services, building care services, health & fitness, and healthcare.

We also have the largest consulting and training division in the region, supported by our franchise partner, Mentus Hygiene.

We have been present in the Middle East and based in Dubai for the past 34 years delivering service and support to these sectors and our partners, which is second to none. As a Company we pride ourselves on the quality of our people and their training, ensuring a professional team delivering high quality service and support, everyday, everywhere.”

JohnsonDiversey
Clean is just the beginning



He added, “We believe that WACS is extremely important to the profession as it showcases the skills and dedication of the world’s top chefs, plus it encourages them to raise their standards and strive harder to come up with new dishes, methods and healthy options while competing with their peers. JohnsonDiversey as a Gold Sponsor will manage the cleaning and hygiene during the

competitions, and our consulting division will be doing audits and checks during the competitions with the team directly involved in the kitchens working with the chefs. At this

event, we want to show our commitment to the profession and our partners, while showcasing our local capabilities, and our support of the Emirates Culinary Guild. It will also give JohnsonDiversey major exposure to the world’s top chefs who have direct involvement in the choice of hygiene provider.”

Justin Vella, Business Development Manager, Foodservices at Fonterra Brands (Middle East) L.L.C said, “Ours is a New Zealand based company. With 95% of our products exported, we stand fifth in the dairy production industry. Having had over 15 years of experience in the Middle East, we have set a benchmark in providing innovative dairy solutions for the food service industry.”

“We are rather excited about our participation at WACS as this would be a great opportunity to get to know the chefs in the industry. The event itself helps make the industry global in its outreach and exposes the food trends and market needs. Being one among the sponsors, we will be setting up a display of our products at the venue and free give-aways will be distributed when people register for the event. Also, we hope to kindle an interest about our soon to be launched



product – Chef’s companion. Details of the product and samples will be made available so that we can get direct feedback from the chefs themselves,” he added.

“Bringing WACS to Dubai is a matter of honour for the Emirates Culinary Guild and its associates. Such prestigious events mark Dubai as a gem of international culinary acclaim. It will be the perfect opportunity to showcase the multinational cuisines and cultures that lie within Dubai. Moreover, it’s a platform for our local talent to come forward and share their capacities with the other masters from across the culinary world. Here, the chefs will not only share information and experiences but a rich scope for tourism will also be born through the means. And we are happy to be part of this growth,” he concluded.

Khaled Hamza, Director, Business Development, Custom Culinary & Griffith Laboratories Middle East started by saying that “for more than half a century, Custom Culinary® has been perfecting the art of flavorful foods. Custom Culinary® is one of the Griffith Laboratories family of companies. We are passionately dedicated to providing a full line of authentic tasting culinary foundations that consistently offer best-in-class performance and enable foodservice professionals to create their own signature menu items”.

“Events such as the WACS Congress play a critical role in bringing together the best in our industry as well as promoting education within the culinary field. The result is incredible enthusiasm from individuals new to the field, as well as those individuals who have been chefs for many



years”, he continues.

“Custom Culinary® is sponsoring the Hans Bueschkens junior chef’s challenge. This wonderful event seeks to involve junior chefs from around the globe through a world-class competition. I believe this early exposure for these young chefs is such a positive influence in their careers. “

Custom Culinary® has recently introduced a range of bases, sauce concentrates, seasonings and coating systems into numerous international markets. The WACS Congress will be a great opportunity for chefs to experience their line of products.

“We hope to foster enthusiasm and excellence in the culinary field through our sponsorship of both the Hans Bueschkens event as well as our ongoing support for the Train-the-Trainer program,” he concluded.

Electrolux is one of the Gold sponsors of the WACS Congress and Mauro Zanchetta, representing the company told the Gulf Gourmet that “Electrolux is pleased to be providing the Emirates Culinary Guild with the bulk of the equipment used in the seven competition kitchens. Our association with the Guild is long-standing and we have successfully partnered each other through various events”. “The WACS Congress, as we see it, presents exciting business opportunities for all those concerned with the hospitality industry. By interacting with new contacts and networking on a face-to-face basis one can gain an accurate insight into the present thinking amongst industry professionals. Possible future trends can sometimes be discerned just by being able to talk with so many experts, all in one place.

Electrolux is here at the WACS Congress to display a revolutionary new oven that will significantly reduce a chef’s workload. With cooking times much faster, less power will be consumed in the process. The Electrolux corporate chef will be demonstrating the advantages to be gained through using the oven.

“Electrolux is a major worldwide sponsor of this type of event. The advantages to us are: Brand recognition, the dependability of our products proven through real-time use in culinary competitions and the satisfaction gained

from the recognition and respect shown to us by professionals,” he continued.

A global leader in professional equipment, Electrolux focuses on innovations that are thoughtfully designed, based on extensive customer insight, to meet the real needs of professionals. Electrolux products include refrigerators, dishwashers, washing machines, vacuum cleaners and cookers sold under esteemed brands such as Electrolux, AEG-Electrolux, Eureka and Frigidaire.

This past year Electrolux sold more than 40 million products. Approximately 50% of them were sold under the global Electrolux brand. Professional products include amongst others, industrial kitchens, restaurants and laundries.

Consumer durable products include appliances for kitchens, fabric care, cleaning, etc.


The group’s products are sold in more than 150 markets; the largest two being Europe and North America. Operations are divided in five business areas. Consumer durables include four regional business areas, while professional products are a single global business area.

Mauro Zanchetta concluded by wishing the Emirates Culinary Guild a hugely successful WACS Congress, “one that will be talked about for many years and will be a benchmark in itself.”



Churchill China is the proud tableware sponsor for the WACS Congress. Richard Wedgewood, Director, Business Development said, "For many years, we have proudly partnered with the Emirates Culinary Guild and being given the opportunity to extend this sponsorship to include WACS 2008 is a true privilege. It gives us the opportunity to expose some of our latest products to world leading chefs. We have always set out to be 'The Chef's first choice' and acknowledge the key role that chefs' have in the success of our business. We consistently look forward to at any request to become involved in supporting competitive chefs events to help provide a means for the future development of global talent. We welcome the opportunity to 'give back' to an industry on which we so heavily rely."



He added, "Clearly WACS 2008 is a forum for the exchange of ideas and inspiration, it will be beneficial to all those privileged to be part of it. The opportunity to showcase and celebrate such talent, to share and learn must surely be the key to the promotion of international excellence in the kitchen. We will be providing the official keepsake of the event - gift boxed twin pack of Alchemy Unhandled Teacups decorated with the WACS Logos, along with those of the sponsors. Additionally, we will provide a new range of "Infinity" tableware for the Global Chefs Challenge. Infinity is a refreshing new white on white embossed tableware to provide the perfect canvass to showcase the talents of some of the world's most creative chefs." 

Andreas Ehegartner, Marketing Manager at Convotherm, the combi steamer manufacturer said, "We feel the obligation and responsibility to offer optimal practical benefits and absolute dependability to our customers. As a commitment to our customers, we have always provided the ideal practical use and absolute reliability through technical sophistications like the disappearing door, energy saving ACS System and operator convenience for more than 30 years now."



Commenting on the company's association with the WACS Congress 2008, he said, "WACS gives the chefs a window to talk about their experiences in the industry. Here, they will share their kitchen know-how and discuss everything from food to kitchen equipment. At Convotherm we understand that it is but


natural for them to come back to buy that equipment which has given them best results and with what they are happy. Thus, we provide our services and hope to build a good reputation in the industry."

"At the event, we will provide our combi steamers for all cooking shows. We will have one chef and two area sales managers to assist onlookers. We also are going to introduce our new Dubai based, Middle East representative office. Moreover, all chefs interested can participate in our Cook & Chill seminars. We, as manufacturers of combi steamers, understand ourselves to be the partner of the chefs. We don't want to tell the chef how to cook their food, we just want to make sure they have the best technology to achieve their own goals," he concluded.

Soula Baroudi, Marketing Manager at Horeca Trade spoke highly of the WACS Congress 2008 and her company's association with this prestigious event. "Bringing the Congress to Dubai is a result of a journey that started many years ago. It was a big challenge for the Emirates Culinary Guild to be able to bring chefs around the world to Dubai. This is a great achievement that puts Dubai on the map of the culinary world. Being a part of this event is an important milestone for our business as it will take us to a higher level, the level where we meet and network directly with international chefs and get exposed to their latest innovations, traditions, customs and philosophies of their societies." Horeca Trade is associated with the



WACS Congress through 2 principles at 2 levels. Unilever Foodsolutions - "Diamond Sponsor" and Nestlé Waters - "Official Supplier Sponsor".

Commenting on the expectations from the event, she said, "Since it's the first time such an international event takes place in Dubai, it's hard to measure the results or the benefits from sponsoring it. However, our objective is purely qualitative. It is mainly to position ourselves as partners and associates of the WACS and promote our services to some of the world's senior decision makers, professional chefs, restaurateurs, amongst others. Our focus is also to be a top of mind quality products and solution provider within the foodservice, catering and hospitality industries." 

Arvind Rao, Brand Manager, Kenwood said, "After 20 years in the UAE market, Kenwood stands tall not just in terms of the range of products and services it offers but also for the customer satisfaction at large. Our kitchen appliances are synonymous with quality and reliability. Whatever your need, we are sure you will find just the right solution for your everyday cooking and food preparation from our range of kitchen machines, food processors, blenders, smoothie makers, ice cream makers, juicers, water filters, bread makers, kettles, coffee machines, toasters, deep fryers, food steamers and kitchen scales. We keep on our toes to give the consumers

KENWOOD

the best in quality, keeping the growing need for handiness and longevity in mind."

"An event like WACS means a lot to the industry, it will draw in the cream of culinary society in Dubai. As sponsors, we look forward to supporting the Emirates Culinary Guild and creating a buzz about our brand. We plan to showcase some appliances from our preset line of blenders and mixers. We also hope to run competitions with interesting gifts for the guests who register at the stand. Moreover we hope to mingle with the masters of this industry and take our brand to them personally," he added.

Ranjan Salis, speaking on behalf of the Paderno group, elaborated about their association with the Emirates Culinary Guild by saying, “There are two companies that I manage for UAE, Oman and Qatar that have taken corporate memberships – Sambonet-Paderno Group (Italy) – one of the leading manufacturers of quality Flatware & Holloware made in Italy, as well as Schonwald Porcelain (Germany) – well known for its innovative designs & quality in the manufacture of porcelain for the hospitality industry”

“An event like the WACS Congress is extremely helpful in the hospitality industry as it facilitates sharing of




trends and ideas in the culinary field. Moreover it also aids in creating seamless borders for chefs from around the world. As far as Schonwald is concerned we are only a corporate member where the Guild helps us

to have a more wider client base, thereby creating more awareness of our products. And through Sambonet-Paderno, we will support the Guild by furnishing cookware to be used during the WACS

Congress. Through our presence we hope to get a lot of mileage and generate more awareness of our products, which hopefully will convert into more business,” he added.

Frank Arrestier spoke on behalf of Bragard who are also among the sponsors of the WACS Congress. “Over the last 75 years we have carved a niche for ourselves in the catering industry through our top-level professional clothing collections. The jackets and prestige uniforms designed by the Bragard brand name have become synonymous with quality recognized by every food industry throughout France. We always aim for work well done and that’s the goal we keep in mind while producing our garments, with the same professionalism and accuracy as you find important in running your daily business.”



“At the WACS Congress, where all the culinary stars descend on Dubai, we will provide them with our chef’s jackets and tunics. It would be a moment of pride for us to see the masters from across the globe showcasing our brand name and logo at the event. After a first hand experience with our product, the decision makers will be better able to choose the brand that they wish to select for the culinary staff use. We hope to expand our clientele as chefs and other decision makers recognise our capabilities as a company. After all, our designs are made for those who like to take their work at heart,” he added. 

chef's day



Long days at work means some major unwinding is needed on the day off. We caught up with some of our favourite chefs and asked them what they like to do outside the kitchen. The answers surprised us—some philosophic, others adventurous, but every one of them entertaining as ever



chefahmed



chefmartino



chefines



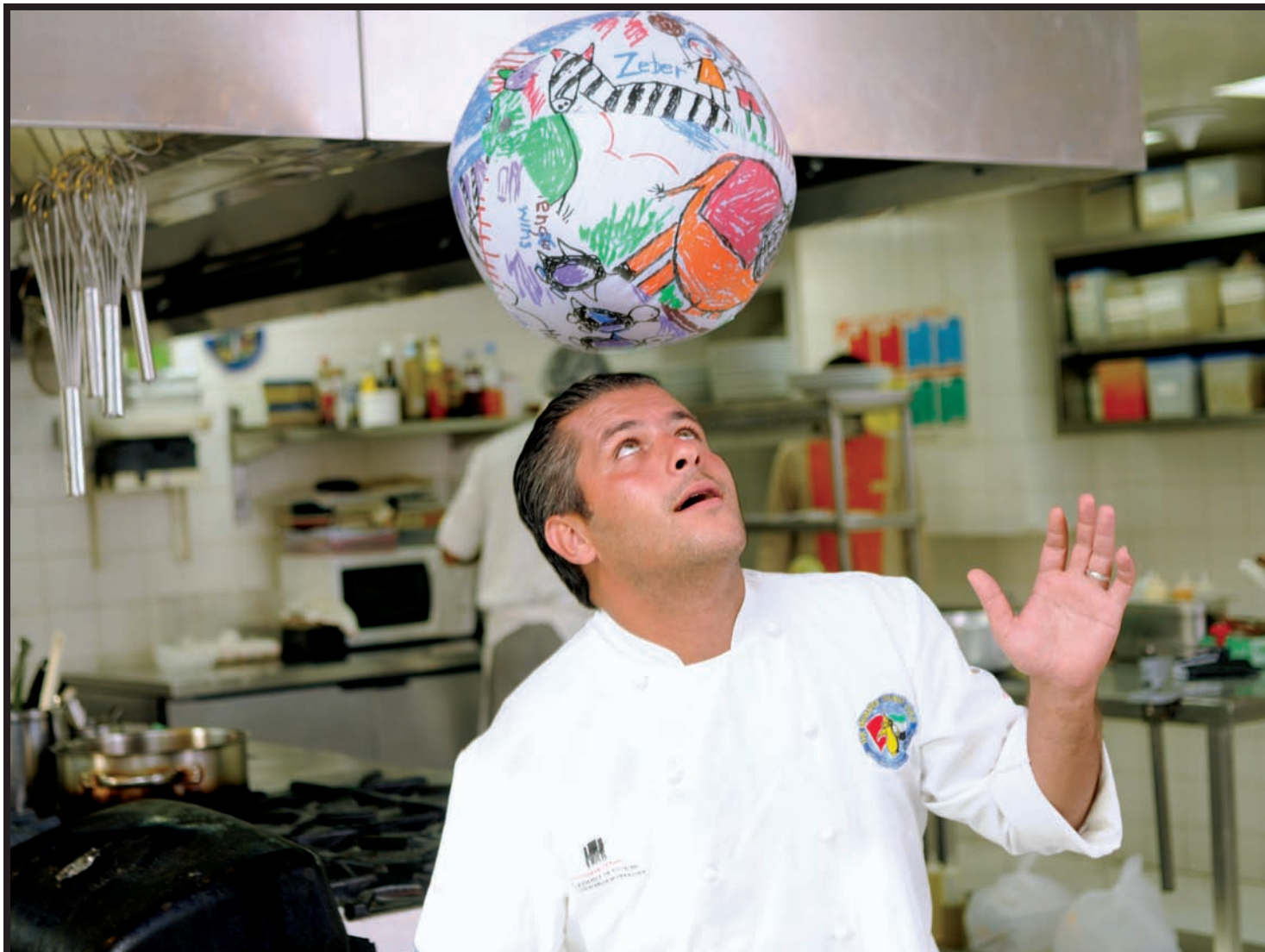
chefrobin



chefsudu



chefmilon



ahmed

chef ahmed al charif
 executive chef
 number one tower suites

“With so many balls in the air, playing around with one can be surprisingly therapeutic. Catch the right one and you’ve got it made. Sandy grounds are better, but this will have to do for now.”

martino



chef martino armando d'souza
executive chef
millennium airport hotel

"Enough of living life in the fast lane. It's time to switch off and relax. Close my mind and my senses and slip into my own, serene world. Life is peaceful indeed."





chef ines soares e lobo

executive chef
latifa school for girls

“It’s time to get going. The wheels are spinning, and so am I. Driving around is more a necessity than a hobby, but the lines between the two have thinned. Now, it’s all about the journey.”



robin

chef robin gomes

executive chef
sheraton deira hotel and towers

“The ebb and flow of water takes me back home. The happy memories of my childhood is reason enough to smile while I contemplate the past and look towards the future.”





chef
chandrasena “sudu” sudusinghe
executive chef
traders hotel

“Yes, the mind needs to be fed as well, and what better way than with some news from friends and colleagues. A healthy body needs to house a healthy mind, and a good book is the perfect pick.”

Sudu



milan

chef milon anthony rozaria
executive chef
marco polo hotel

“There’s nothing quite like a good shot. The sheer power of the bat as it swings into its target gives you such a rush. Leave behind all the tensions and frustrations of work and just take a swing.”







how green is my garden

Gulf Gourmet went for a walk
through the bio-garden at Jebel
Ali Golf Resort & Spa with
founder Chef Didier Gusching,
Executive Chef, and came away
a little more aware

It's a long, stony path that takes you from the hotel block to the stables. As you linger along the winding road, your senses detect the distinct aroma of fresh herbs, and your eyes are soothed by the sprouting greens.

JUST AS YOU BEGIN to think you are in some sort of nursery, tiny, cherry tomatoes peep from behind their bushy abode and teasing chilly peppers call out to be plucked from the shrubs.

And amidst all this stands a figure, tall and proud, his face gleaming with content and his eyes shining with achievement. That's Chef Didier Gusching, executive chef, Jebel Ali Golf Resort & Spa, and father of the bio-garden at the property. And proud he should be, considering what started as an improbable idea has made the hotel self-sufficient

suggesting we start our very own organic garden!" recalls Chef Didier, with a smile.

The first response can only be described as lukewarm. "My colleagues thought I was crazy. I am sure they said this Frenchman has finally gone senile. So for Mr Bettsworth and me, it became an even bigger challenge to make this work," he says, face still as determined.

"After a lot of convincing, I finally got management approval. But the real work had only begun. There were so many aspects that had to be looked at," he nods. To begin with, there were the rough bushes. What was a jungle-like expanse was soon levelled. Next came the soil. "We scooped out the dry, desert soil to a depth of one metre, and then replaced it with organic soil and compost," he explains.

Once the ground was ready, the seeds were planted.

"At first, we used to water the plants. But there was a lot of wastage and some other problems which led us to set up an irrigation system that was much more efficient. The task was difficult, but I think our hard work and dedication has paid off," he smiles, referring to the fresh, green produce in the garden.

It was Good Friday; and the best occasion to formally inaugurate the garden. The hotel was bustling with children, and they became the gardeners for the day. "We gathered all the little helping hands at the site. We had marked out our company logo of a peacock on a particular patch, and together, we planted rosemary seedlings on that. The children loved the new experience, the parents appreciated the educational and

entertaining aspect of the activity, and we felt the pride that came from making it all happen," he recalls.

With the first signs of green came more support and encouragement from the staff. The project garnered strong support and full commitment from the General Manager, David Thomson. Even my battalion of chefs realised the possibilities and potential of the project, and willingly gave time and effort to take it further.



Chef Gawdat Ali shows off the pluck of the day

for all their herb needs and two outlets self sufficient for their vegetable requirements.

"Like every journey, we began ours with a single step. Our late General Manager, Mark Bettsworth, suggested we beautify the grounds that lead to the stables. The idea was to give guests an additional activity, enabling them to walk amidst aromatic surroundings. The space was enormous though, and I took his idea a step further by



Chef Didier and Chef Gawdat get their hands dirty



“I want the younger generation to realise the importance of food and revel in the glory of nature as I do.”

One such chef is Gawdat Ali, who works as Commis 1 at the hotel. He puts in close to five hours of work at the garden daily, and that's before his shift in the kitchen begins! "I volunteered to help as I come from a family of farmers and have the basic know-how to raise plants. It excites me to pluck fresh herbs, fruits and vegetables from the farm each morning," he says.

The pleasure quotient rises, he says, when diners actually detect the distinct flavours of the food, and inquire about it. "I often bring them to the farm to showcase the many plants we have here," he smiles, adding, "It's like a global garden, wherein we have inputs from all the chefs – we share tips on farming, and also help each other with the produce picking, watering, weeding and seeding."

"The initial cost for setting up the garden was about AED 20,000 to 25,000. But since then, we have had to

make minimal investments as we are more or less self sufficient," claims Chef Didier.

"We cull about 60,000 litres of cooking oil annually. We sell this to a company that converts it into bio-diesel, and that money is re-injected into the garden to cover additional expenses like the salary of the gardener, tools, seeds, etc," he explains, adding with a wink, "I guess you could say my dirty oil produces some very fresh vegetables."

Taking the initiative a step further, Chef Didier hopes to set up their own compost by recycling the vegetables cuts and trimmings from all the kitchens. "Even that would help enrich the soil so we can have better produce," he says.

The bio garden, for Chef Didier, is about a lot more than just producing and serving fresh healthy food to his guests. "It's a legacy that I want to leave behind for my son.

What's in store?

Herbs: rosemary, thyme, basil, oregano, tarragon, rocca leaves, basil, mint, savoury, lavender, melissa, green pepper corn, vanilla, black cardamom, nutmeg, bay leaves, mimosa.

Vegetables: yellow pear tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, green cabbage, green and red chillies as well as soft green pepper, shallots, potimaron – small french pumpkin, lemon, beef tomatoes & roma tomatoes, cauliflower.

Fruits: figs, oranges, pomegranate, mango, papaya, pineapple and rock melon.



I want the younger generation to realise the importance of food and revel in the glory of nature as I do,” he says.

Chef Didier’s connection to nature started as a child, when he helped his father in his garden at home. “My father is truly passionate about it, and he has passed it on to me. I enjoyed planting the seeds and watering plants and making things grow. I even do it on a smaller scale in my home here,” he smiles.

His interest grew when he planted a tomato plant with his son. “One morning, he came running to me with a big, red tomato, and his eyes were shining with pride and joy like I had never seen before. It was the most beautiful thing for me and I was completely overwhelmed,” he says.

This is why Chef Didier focuses his efforts on involving children in the garden as much as possible. Like on the first anniversary of the garden, when he once again brought in

*“The pleasure
quotient rises when
diners actually
detect the distinct
flavours of the food.”*

the children from the hotel and, on a fresh, new patch of land, planted a diverse range of fruit trees. “Each tree has been named after the child who planted it, and when they come back, it’s amazing to see the excitement and eagerness with which they run to the garden. We’ve even put up a plaque listing the names of the children who participated that day,” he says.

As a responsible member of the food and hospitality industry, Jebel Ali Golf Resort and Spa has banned some eats from the menu, in keeping with animal rights and conservation norms. Foie Gras, for example, has been banned because of the cruel treatment of the geese. They have also stopped buying cod fish because it is nearing extinction – it has been replaced by another white fish. Also, red tuna from Indonesia has replaced Mediterranean red tuna, due to over fishing concerns.

“Being in the hospitality business, we cannot go completely vegetarian. We do have to consider options before



banning items on the menu. That for which there is no replacement, like Foie Gras, is simply an opportunity for us to explain to the guest why we have chosen to refrain from serving it. And we have realised they understand and appreciate our efforts,” he explains.

But Chef Didier is quick to state that he is not out to change the world. “It’s just a small effort on my part. If all of us were to do a little, within our limitations and possibilities, it would make a much larger difference, I think,” he says.

The bio garden has grown from strength to strength; more variety has been added since the first seeds were sown last year. On International Children’s Day, which falls on June 1st, the hotel plans to invite special needs children for some greens and fun. Age appropriate activities have been proposed.

There will be Aloe Vera planting (3-7year olds) and fence painting (7-12 year olds), for example. “We are looking forward to meeting our special guests on this day. The little ones will plant baby Aloe Vera at the far side of the Bio Garden, near the fruit tree orchard, while the older batch of participants will wear T-Shirts and paint away to glory. They will also sign their names for an everlasting mark on their work,” hopes Chef Didier.

“There is a lot that we can do as an organisation, as a team, as residents of this Earth. Small steps, meaningful ideas and great fruits of labour – that’s all that matters as the day closes!” he concludes. 🌱



adding the local flavour

Meet the warm and vibrant
persona that is Abdin Nasralla as
he shares some precious tidbits
on Emirati cuisine

◆ ◆

Interest and encouragement for Emirati cuisine is only now pouring in, with hotels offering some traditional dishes on their menu. *Gulf Gourmet* spoke with Abdin Nasralla, General Manager, Jumeirah Bab Al Shams Desert Resort & Spa, and came back with a better understanding of this local cuisine

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AS SOON AS THE LID IS LIFTED off the glistening pots on the table, our attention is drawn towards them, and we are suddenly gripped with pangs of hunger. “That’s the sign of good food,” smiles Abdin Nasralla, General Manager, Jumeirah Bab Al Shams Desert Resort & Spa. And it’s an even better sign, because it proves that Emirati food is as appetising outside the home as it is inside.

Nasralla, who has been in the UAE for over 30 years, is considered an expert in Emirati cuisine. Proof of that is in the fact that he personally oversees the arrangements for His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of UAE and the Ruler of Dubai, when he visits the hotel, regarded among his personal favourites.

“I truly believe that food is an important part of the culture and tradition of a country. And in a city like Dubai, which has so many influences, it is important to ensure the traditional cuisine does not die out,” he states.

Most people tend to bunch Arabic food together as one cuisine. But Emirati food is not about hot or spicy or mild. It’s about the cooking process and the experience it lends.

“Take Harees, for example. By looking at it, you can’t tell that it has a whole Ouzi in it. The meat, wheat, vegetables and spices are all mixed in together and cooked for six hours. Can you imagine how tender the mixture would be? It’s like eating butter,” he smiles.

Culinary-wise, a typical Emirati day begins on a sweet note. Bajeleh is a typical dish, and so is Batheetha. Without these, in fact, it would not be a traditional breakfast at all. Other important elements are goat cheese and dates, which must be on the table at all times. “What is interesting is that locals can tell if the dates are from Saudi or UAE. UAE dates are nice and soft, and quite versatile and are available in many varieties. “The tradition started with



It would be difficult for a first-timer to believe that the buttery Harees is made with a whole ouzi

Prophet Mohammad, who broke his fast during Ramadan with dates and water or milk,” informs Nasralla.

Dates are also used to derive honey, which is another regular at the table. Eggs are also a staple, albeit cooked



Emirati cuisine is best enjoyed eaten with your fingers rather than cutlery, says Abdin Nasralla

differently. “The Ajid, as it is called, is a type of omelette made with lots of vegetables and onions. There is also the mahalla, a thin pancake served folded. You have to break off a piece, dip it in sugar, then in butter and eat it,” explains Nasralla. “The point is, all the food is high fibre and high energy. It gives you a energetic start to the day, and keeps you healthy,” he says.

At lunchtime, unlike popular belief, the main course has to be fish. “There is a strong emphasis in fish in Emirati cuisine. But it is not preferred in the evening. The reasons are many—could be the smell left on your hands before bedtime, the health aspect, etc. But fish is a must during lunch time,” he explains.

Afternoon is also family time. With changing lifestyles, people prefer to go out in the evenings, so lunchtime is when the entire family gets together for a meal. “It may not be at 1 – it may be at 2 or even 3 in the afternoon, but its

imperative the family gets together for this meal,” he says.

Dinner will usually include meat and chicken. “When serving Ouzi, you have to be very careful to leave the head on. If the head is cut, it will mean that the Ouzi is not fresh, and that can be disrespectful. Same goes for fish,” says Nasralla.

Dessert during lunch is usually fruits, and lots of them. Watermelons, musk melons, pineapples, apples, pomegranates – the choices are endless. The climate dictates heavy consumption of citrus and water-based fruits, which are a must with lunch.

Sweets are normally preferred in the evening, informs Nasralla. A popular sweet is the Loqaimat, which literally means just a bite. These small, bite-sized balls are dipped in pure date honey and are quite a treat.

No meal can be complete without fresh salad though. A typical Emirati salad is full of fresh, green vegetables,

but none of it is chopped. “It’s all served whole, even the tomatoes. The cabbage is torn, not chopped. We like to bite into whole vegetables and lots of them,” he smiles.

Emirati food uses a lot of dry spices. From dried lemons, which are added to literally everything, to a special Arabic masala made with roasted ground spices. “The focus is also more on whole spices rather than powders. When women cook at home, they have a good idea of how much is needed like two sticks of cinnamon or one bay leaf to get just the right flavour,” he says.

On the liquid front, Emirati cuisine is partial towards milk. It’s generally consumed with dates, especially during Ramadan when breaking the fast. In addition, coffee is also very important, and tea and coffee are consumed throughout the day. “There is no necessity for tea or coffee to be served during breakfast or in the evening. It is a constant all day,” he says.

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“I truly believe that food is an important part of the culture and tradition of a country. And in a city like Dubai, which has so many influences, it is important to ensure the traditional cuisine does not die out.”

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Some traditional Emirati dishes

AL HAREES – One of the most savoured dishes in any Emirati kitchen, it involves a lengthy preparation. It is made by cooking ground wheat in a pot with a pinch of salt, to which the meat is then added. The mixture is then left for long hours until it is fully cooked and the meat is completely dissolved into the wheat. The mixture is then poured into a clay pot and placed in a clay oven or inside a specially prepared hole on the ground that is filled with burning coal. The pot is then completely covered with the coal and left for several hours, after which the thick mixture is removed and thoroughly stirred with a special piece of wood called

“midrib.” The final product is then topped with local ghee and placed onto flat plates.

AL MAJBOOS – The main ingredients of Al Majboos are meat and rice. The meat is placed in boiling water, and a local blend of spices and dried lime are added. Fried chopped onion is added to the cooked meat, followed by a vegetable medley usually consisting of potatoes, tomatoes and green peppers. The mixture is left to cook on low heat for a short period. Cooked rice as well as saffron is then added to the meat mixture in layers. Finally, Al Majboos is left to cook on low fire or in an oven for about 10 minutes.

AL SALOONAH – This dish is prepared by boiling meat with onions and then adding a variety of vegetables (zucchini, eggplant, onions, pepper, tomato and some okra). Spices and tomato paste are also added and the mixture is left to simmer for 10 minutes until ready.

AL KHABEESAH – This dessert is made from flour, heated on a stovetop, and as its colour turns brown, rose water, sugar, ghee and cardamom are added. The mixture is then left on medium heat until ready.





Chef Nassar Ibrahim, Sous Chef, is a staunch supporter and promoter of Emirati cuisine.



Al Saloonah is a hearty and healthy Emirati dish



Rice is more common than bread on the dinner table

Emirati cuisine also includes a lot more rice than breads. And the rice is washed thoroughly before cooking. “The fattening element in the rice is the starch, and if washed thoroughly and repeatedly, you can wash it away. Then no matter how much rice you consume, you will not put on weight,” advises Nasralla.

In fact, the focus on good health in food is an important part of Emirati culture. “The cuisine is low on oil. Most people think it’s heavy, but that’s because they mix the food up and don’t know how to strike that balance,” he says.

A typical Emirati meal at home would have generous amounts of salad, and just one main course. There is no lavish spread of fish, meat, chicken, etc, unless, of course, there is a guest. “When you have a guest at home, you want to respect them and offer them a variety of food, just in case they don’t like something,” explains Nasralla.

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**“The lady of the house
serves then the father
reads from the Quran to
bless the food and thank
God. Then he serves his
family, from his wife
to kids. It’s a beautiful
gesture on his part and
very emotional.”**

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Another important mealtime habit is eating by hand. For Nasralla, this is a very good habit as he does not trust the cleanliness of the cutlery placed in front of him. “We wash our hands thoroughly before and after eating,” he says simply.

One of Nasralla’s favourite mealtime ritual is the serving. “The lady of the house serves all the food together. Then the father reads a little of the Quran to bless the food and thank God. Then he gets up and serves his family,



from his wife to kids. This is symbolic of the fact that I am your father, you are my family, and I am providing this food for you. It’s a beautiful gesture on his part and very emotional,” he says.

So deep rooted is he in the traditions, that Nasralla insists all this can be recreated in a restaurant. “The idea that Emirati food cannot be prepared and served properly in a restaurant is not true. The block is in the mind, not in the food,” he states. Personally, he hopes to someday see a dedicated Emirati cuisine restaurant in Dubai. Till then, he is content doing his part by serving traditional delicacies at Al Hadeerah, and encourages his chefs to learn more about it.

Chef Nassar Ibrahim, Sous Chef, Arabic cuisine, at the hotel agrees and adds, “Emirati cuisine is very different, and well appreciated by the guests. They really savour it and actually ask questions, so interested they are in the cuisine.” Chef Nassar, who is originally from Egypt, is as much an expert on Emirati cuisine as any local. He assists Nasralla in promoting the cuisine in hotels, and is often asked to conduct demonstrations for other chefs.

Abdin Nasralla has so much to tell and we would have gone on and on without a care in the world. Except his meetings and commitments took over and our very fascinating conversation on Emirati cuisine had to be stopped. We promise to get lots more on Emirati cuisine as this is only the beginning.

As for Nasralla, he does not believe in retiring, but someday sees himself out with the people, sharing his knowledge about food and Emirati cuisine. We are here to learn! 🇦🇪

Life & times of Abdin Nasralla

Nasralla's first experience in the kitchen was with his mother. But it was not love of cooking that took him there. "She was a headmistress, and working all day, so I used to help her out in the kitchen just to give her some company," he smiles.

He was interested in engineering though, so that's what he took up in college. Then came the opportunity to go abroad. "That was 1969, and some of us youngsters went to London for our summer holidays. But I loved it so much there, I decided to stay," he says, matter-of-factly. And stay he did, for 12 long years, returning a "different person".

In London, having left his education half way, Nasralla had few choices. More so because he was really bad in English. "I was always asked what I was going to do. But I was determined, so I was willing to study, learn, do anything," he says. Enrolling in a three month course helped, but he still had a long way to go. "My brother-in-law suggested I read books, and watch television to pick up how the language was spoken. So I spent a lot of time doing that," he says.

His language problem disqualified or prevented him from getting most jobs. "The only job I got was as a cook. And all I had to do was peel and carve potatoes – 15 sacks a day," he smiles. Meanwhile, he got married to his sweetheart, and she helped him with his language as she was a little better at it.

Nasralla's simplicity and charm impressed the manager of the restaurant, and he took him under his wing. He picked up cooking in the hot kitchen, cold kitchen and salad tips. He even offered to send Nasralla to culinary school. "I told him I could not go because I did not know English. But he explained that people from all over the world came here and managed, so I went," he explains.

That was Ealing College, where he worked hard and learned some of the most important lessons of his life. "That's one advice I would like to give everyone. If you don't have the feel, the passion for what you do, you will never succeed. If you don't like what you do, it will be just a job," he says.

Now passionate about food, Nasralla worked at many restaurants and hotels. He was even chosen to work at the royal palace for special occasions once a month. "I was lucky in a way. I moved around in different sections of the

kitchen, trying my hand at everything from continental to pastry," he says.

In 1978, Nasralla went back to Ealing to study hotel management. Passing out with high grades, he came to Dubai to work for a few years with Jebel Ali International Hotels. Then he moved to The Oberoi in Cairo. "In May 2000, I had the opportunity to meet His Highness in Cairo. After I paid my respects His Highness inquired about me and asked what I was doing those days. I told him that my kids had grown up and I was working here (The Oberoi, Cairo) now. His Highness suggested that I should return to Dubai and sure enough, in July 2000, we were back in Dubai and I joined the Jumeirah Group," he smiles.

Starting at what was then Jumeirah Hospitality; a catering arm of the group, Nasralla was responsible for and has overseen many royal functions. He has planned and initiated many strategies and ideas that are still used. When he moved to Bab Al Shams, it was nothing but a piece of land. "I have been with the hotel right from the beginning, from choosing the place till today," he smiles.



Asparagus to Zucchini

rice

This month, in our A to Z (Asparagus to Zucchini) section, Gulf Gourmet features recipes with rice, from some of the region's talented chefs





Chef P. V. Pradeep

Executive Chef
METROPOLITAN HOTEL, DUBAI

INGREDIENTS

100 gm rice
2 gms lemon leaves
5 gms coriander
5 gms basil
2 gms salt
1 gm white Pepper
10 gms red chilli paste
20 gms sweet chilli sauce
60 ml cooking oil
3 gms ginger
1 egg
10 gms flour

DEEP FRIED RICE CAKE WITH SWEET RED CHILLI SAUCE

METHOD

Wash 75 gms of rice and cook. Keep 25 gms aside for frying later. Chop lemon leaves, coriander, basil and ginger. Mix all chopped herbs with cooked rice and check for seasoning. Mould into a desired shape, dust with flour, dip in egg and coat with raw rice. Deep fry till its golden brown in colour. Heat a bit of oil and add sweet chilli sauce and red chilli paste. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes and check for seasoning. Pour sauce on a serving plate, place rice cake on top with fried chilly & basil.







Chef Michel Miraton

Corporate Executive Chef
CORAL INTERNATIONAL, DUBAI

INGREDIENTS

Mushroom:

120 gms Arborio rice
1 cup mushrooms, cooked
8 tbsp olive oil
1 knob butter
1 stock cube
To garnish "Grana" cheese, grated

Shrimp:

120 gms Arborio rice
1 lb shrimp
1 tbsp salad oil
1 can leek soup (2.4 oz.)
4 tbsp butter
1 can chicken broth
1 head radicchio, torn in small pieces

Asparagus:

120 gms Arborio rice
1 lb asparagus (cut into pieces)
2 tbsp butter
1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1/3 cup onion, chopped
12 sun dried tomatoes (plumped & sliced)
5 Stock cubes
1/2 cup stock (additional)
1/3-1/2 cup pesto sauce
1/4 cup parmesan cheese
1/2 cup walnuts, toasted
To taste black pepper, freshly ground

RISOTTO TRILOGY

METHOD

Mushroom: Heat the butter and oil in a saucepan. Add the rice and stir well. Add the mushrooms, stir again and cover with hot water. Add the stock cube. Bring to the boil. Keep stirring in hot water until the rice is tender. Remove the risotto from the heat. Mix in a handful of "grana" cheese.

Shrimp: Cook shrimp in salad oil and 2 tablespoons soup mix until pink. Keep separately. Add chicken broth and remaining soup mix along with 1 and 1/4 cup of water and the rice. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and cover. Simmer for 20 minutes. Return shrimp to mixture and heat through. Stir in radicchio.

Asparagus: Place the sun dried tomatoes in a bowl and pour 1 cup of boiling water just so that all are covered. Allow to plump up for 15 minutes. Drain and slice them. Reserve the liquid. Place the stock in a small saucepan and bring to a boil. Cover to reduce and simmer, adding the drained liquids from the sun dried tomatoes. Steam the cut asparagus for 5 minutes. This may be done in a steamer or boiled in water. In a heavy saucepan over moderate heat, melt the butter and add the olive oil, and chopped onion and sauté until translucent. Add the rice and stir until coated. Then add the stock and stir until completely absorbed. Add the stock 1/2 cup at a time, stirring constantly and adding more stock only after all is absorbed.

Chef Nugi Wardhana

Executive Chef
RADISSON SAS HOTEL,
DUBAI MEDIA CITY



INGREDIENTS

For the Tandoori Prawns:

3 pcs prawns
10 gms red chili powder
5 gms salt
5 gms cumin powder
15 gms ginger/garlic paste
10 ml corn oil
A pinch yellow & red color
30 gms yoghurt
10 ml lemon juice

For the five spice Duck Breast:

150 gms duck breast, cleaned and trimmed
5 gms five spice powder
5 gms Schezwan peppercorn, roasted
5 gms salt
10 gms soya sauce
20 gms brown sugar
1 gms ginger, smashed
1 gms coriander root
1 gms garlic, smashed
50 ml water

For the Wagyu Beef Tenderloin:

100 gms Wagyu beef tenderloin
2 gms Schezwan pepper corn
To taste salt

For the fragrant Steamed Rice:

100 gms Thai rice
250 gms water
1 Pandan leaf
1 Lemon grass, smashed

For the grilled Sea Bream:

120 gms Sea bream fillet (or any white fish)
20 gms Sambal
20 gms sweet soya sauce
To taste salt
To taste pepper

RICE SURF 'N' TURF

For the Sambal:

200 gms red chilli paste
50 gms shallot
70 gms palm sugar
To taste salt
1 lemon grass, smashed
1 galangal
20 ml oil

METHOD

Tandoori Prawns: Marinate prawns in little salt, lemon juice, ginger/garlic paste and leave aside for 15 minutes. Mix yoghurt, red chili powder, cumin powder, salt, oil and food color and then put the marinated prawns in this mixture and leave it for 30 minutes. Cook the prawns in a tandoor for 7-8 minutes and keep aside to serve with the other ingredients.

Five Spice Duck Breast: Season the duck breast with salt, five spice powder and Schezwan peppercorn. Bring the rest of the ingredients to boil, cool down and set aside. Sear the duck breast in the hot pan, then immerse in the warm mixture for at least an hour. Take out from the marination and finish in the oven for 15 minutes.

Wagyu Beef Tenderloin: Season beef with salt and crushed Szechwan peppercorn. Grill to medium or rare as desired. Rest for 5 minutes before slicing.

Fragrant Steamed Rice: Put all ingredients in a rice cooker, and cook thoroughly.

Grilled Sea Bream: Season the sea bream with salt and pepper. Mix sambal and soya sauce then brush it on the fish. Grill in a very hot charcoal grill and keep aside to be served with the sambal, grated mango and other ingredients.

Sambal: Heat the oil in a sauce pan. Sweat the lemon grass, onion and galangal. Pour in the chilli paste, palm sugar, salt and pepper. Cook until oil and paste separate. Stir occasionally so the mixture does not burn.

To plate: Assemble all the components on a plate and serve hot.







Chef Timothy Kairu

Executive Chef
NOVOTEL & IBIS WORLD
TRADE CENTRE, DUBAI

VEGETABLE WILD RICE TIMBALE WITH HERBED BASMATI PARMESAN CRUSTED SALMON & SEAWEED SAUCE

INGREDIENTS

100 gms wild rice
50 gms basmati rice
100 gms fresh salmon
40 gms parmesan cheese
10 gms parsley
20 gms red pepper
20 gms yellow pepper
15 gms lolo rosso
15 gms frisse
10 gms leeks
30 gms seaweed
10 gms basil
50ml olive oil
To taste salt
To taste pepper

METHOD

Bring to boil the wild rice and white rice. Combine the two together. Sauté the red and yellow peppers with olive oil and season, mix the rice together and shape into a timbale.

Season the salmon and sear in a hot pan. Combine the parmesan cheese with the rice and cook in a non stick pan to a crisp golden color. Place on top of the salmon and gratin ate in the salamander. Prepare the sauce with basil, parsley and seaweed. Sauté all with olive oil add the fish stock and season. Mix in a food processor.

Serve as shown and garnish with a bouquet of leaves



Chef Christian Biesbrouck

Executive Chef
COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT, DUBAI

INGREDIENTS

4 shrimps
1 cup plain flour, sifted
1 cup rice flour
200 gms rice crispies
1 tbs baking powder
1 egg yolk
1 cup ice water
Oil for deep frying

For the dipping sauce:

1/2 cup rice vinegar
1/2 cup soya sauce
2 green chillies
3 garlic gloves
1 red onion, diced
2 tomatoes, skinned and freshly cut concasse.

CRUNCHY SHRIMPS

METHOD

Peel and de-vein the shrimps, leaving the tail on. Prepare and thoroughly dry with paper towel. To make the tempura batter lightly beat egg yolk and pour in ice water. Mix lightly. Then add the plain flour all at once, mix a few times with a fork till ingredients are loosely combined. The batter should be lumpy not smooth. If you over-mix until smooth the coating will become heavy and turn out oily. Place the rice flour on a plate, dip shrimps and shake off excess flour. Next, dip the shrimps in the tempura batter roll in a bowl of half crushed rice crispies. Heat oil in a thick pot or deep fryer to 350°. Deep fry the shrimps until golden brown and place on a plate with paper towels to allow excess oil to drain off. For the dipping sauce mix all the ingredients allow to rest for at least for 30 minutes before serving. Plate as in picture and serve hot.



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coffee&conversations



coffee & conversations



The Wise Wives Club clockwise from top right: Tracy, Josephine, Brijette, Renee, Maria, Annette and Rosantina

The Wise Wives

Over coffee and some delicious chocolate cake, we got seven lovely ladies to talk about what life is like being a chef's wife, and some interesting tidbits emerged. Some excerpts...



ON A SUNNY FRIDAY afternoon, seven women got together in the home of Annette Micheel, wife of Chef Uwe Micheel, President of the ECG. She hosted a coffee and cake soiree, bringing together seven well turned out women who complement their chef husbands every step of the way. The aroma of baking mingled with the heart warming smell of cinnamon, apple and chocolate wafting through Annette's elegant living room.

The chef's wives club, as we called them, found they had a lot in common, and it helped to share some laughs, some concerns, and some really funny stories about their chef husbands. We present some excerpts:

On Fridays...

Tracy: Heinz is never in the kitchen, which turns out well for me because when he cooks, it's like a bomb hit it. Every pot and pan, every spice bottle, every sauce is out.

Maria: That's quite unlike Andy. Though he usually spends his time playing Playstation with our son, he does cook at times, and always three to four dishes at once. And he cleans as he goes – when he finishes cooking, the kitchen is done.

Josephine: Friday is Andy's day to be the chef. He cooks breakfast for all of us, and the boys enjoy helping him out.

Renee: I cook for Patrick. I don't like him coming into the kitchen as that is my domain.

Brigitte: Michel has to go to the office every Friday morning. We like to have fish, so he goes to the market, places the order, goes to the office to check on things, and picks up the fish on the way back.

Rosantina: I don't know if I am lucky or not, but I have two chefs at home. Nyugi, and my son both spend the day in the kitchen and mommy is not allowed inside. She is there only to taste their creations.

Passionate about cooking...

Tracy: I experiment in the kitchen and he has to try it, so he likes it.

Renee: I like to buy the best products but my cooking methods are very simple. You won't find many fancy sauces and such with my food.

Maria: My new year's resolution was to learn a new dish every month. Some of them have turned out quite well, others not so. But he enjoys it.

Sharing recipes...

Maria: This one time I made a sandwich on ciabatta bread, with avocado, tuna, mayo, lettuce and sun dried tomatoes. They loved it, and when he had to make a new menu at the Ramada, he named it after me. Only, when I tasted it, I told him it was not like mine at all!

Criticism concerns...

A unanimous 'No!' erupted at first, and then the truth started seeping out...

Annette: Sometimes he does tell me that it would have been better this way or that, but I tell him you do your thing and I will do mine. After all, I like it and the kids like it. Besides, he tends to make the food richer, with more butter and stuff. I like it lighter.

Kids speak...

Rosantina: He definitely likes his father's cooking. I am not such a good cook—I am better at placing orders from restaurants.

Maria: Depends on the cuisine because I cook lot of Filipino food and he makes good European dishes.

Renee: When my daughter was with us, she liked my style because I keep



Annette Micheel

Annette was working as a restaurant cashier when Chef Uwe invited her to a party. When she landed up at his place, she found him in a crumpled shirt. “I spent the first few minutes of our very first date ironing his shirt,” she laughs.

That was in London, and they fell in love. They got married in Germany and moved together to Bahrain. Two sons followed, and Annette kept herself busy with the children and short stints at work. She has recently started her own business in oil diffusers, and is happy because she once again has the opportunity to work with hotels, her first love.

Rosantina Saraswati

Working as a PR Manager for a hotel back home in Indonesia, Rosantina had known Chef Nugi for some time before they fell in love. Soon they were married, and in a little over a year, she delivered their son, Akia. “That means ‘the first’. And no,” she pre-empted our next question, “I don’t know if there will be a second yet.”

On the professional front, she continued her job even after marriage. In Dubai for a little over a year, she has still not found a job to suit her requirements.

Maria Kurfust

After almost 24 years of marriage, Maria’s heart still skips a beat when Chef Andy walks out of the kitchen in his uniform. Their first meeting was just as romantic. Maria was a restaurant receptionist and he was a pastry chef in the same hotel and they met at a party. They started dating, and were married the same year and have been blissfully happy since then.

Maria went back to work once the kids were old enough and currently works with a company in Dubai Media City. “I was just getting a better salary. Hotels are not very good paymasters,” she sighs. And one in the family is enough!

Renee Lannes

Renee first met the love of her life when she was only 17. “We met again when we were about 24, and he was already a chef,” she says. In 1979, they were living it up in Brazil, when Renee got pregnant. “We got married, and had our daughter, Amelina, there,” she smiles fondly.

And she never went back to work. “I am a simple person. I am very hands-on in my home, doing everything from scratch. I prefer to stay at home, and look after my husband and daughter,” she says. Currently, Amelina lives in Paris, and is looking to make a career in the hospitality industry.





Tracy Zucchelli

Being fit really is good for the heart. An avid runner, Tracy met Chef Heinz at a running club. It took five long years for Chef to corner Tracy into marriage, and they have been together for 11 years now. A second marriage for both, she has two sons, who live in London, he has two daughters, one of whom lives here and the other in London. They spend most of their holidays in London, especially around Christmas, so they can be with the kids. Tracy has continued her job as a teacher, and yes, she still walks about ten kms everyday!

Josephine Cuthbert

Her first impression of her husband was that he was some sort of ex-convict. "Well," she explains, matter-of-factly, "He was bald and had a moustache." At the time, she was a waitress and he a sous chef at the Hilton in Dubai.

But as it often happens, friendship flowered, love blossomed and marriage happened soon after in 1993. About sixteen years later, Josephine spends her time taking care of their two boys, and working with the Emirates Culinary Guild. "I just cannot think of staying at home full time. I need to keep my mind occupied. With two boisterous boys running around, I need the break and time off for myself," she smiles.

Brigitte Miraton

26 years ago, Brigitte was waiting for a friend at a bar when Chef Michel walked in. "I said to myself, hmm, nice guy," she smiles. He asked me to dance, I said yes, and the rest is history," she sighs. After a whirlwind two week courtship, Chef Michel had to go back to work in Jeddah. He called her every Monday without fail, and six months later, he proposed. Brigitte worked on and off with many different companies, and currently works at the French Consulate.



things simple. Now she likes to experiment with food though.

Josephine: My boys are used to Filipino food because that's what I cook at home. But for breakfast, they like daddy making his special sausages and eggs. They even love to help him in the kitchen.

Festive fare...

Maria: You think after so many years, you would get used to the fact that you can't spend special occasions like Christmas together. But you don't. Even though you expect it, you still feel bad when it happens.

Brigitte: I get quite anxious as the festive season approaches. But I think I have accepted the demands of his job. When we were living in Beijing, I used to take my son and we used to travel to other destinations close by, like Thailand, for the festivals. I knew Michel could not come with us so I left it at that. But we have spent the last two Christmases together, and they have been a big deal.

Annette: I think in so many years of marriage, we have never celebrated Christmas or New Years together. Except when we were in Japan, because they had regular working hours, we got to see a lot of him.

Tracy: For the last ten years, I make him take his annual leave during these two weeks so we can go to London to be with the children.

Josephine: It's harder with younger children because they are always looking for and asking for daddy.

Dinnertime...

Josephine: I usually don't cook for him unless I know he is coming home at a proper time. Sometimes though, I am in bed and he calls and says I am on my way home, so what's for dinner? And I say, well, there is no dinner

for you. But luckily, he is not fussy – even a sandwich is ok for him.

Maria: That happens to me as well. But sometimes, don't you feel guilty? I do. I have a habit now of calling him everyday at 4 or 5, and before I even say hello, he says 'I will be home at 9'.

Annette: If he comes late, dinner is usually in the fridge so he can heat and eat.

On the phone...

Josephine: Sometimes, I don't talk to Andy all day. When he finally calls, I'm like, who is this. And he says I'm your husband, and it's like oh really.

Annette: Uwe calls at least two to three times a day.

Tracy: Mine does not even answer the phone!

At home or at work...

Annette: He is quite a neat freak and sometimes he will tell me, its dirty here or there and I feel a little bad.

Maria: He cleans the fridge himself, from top to bottom. He likes things to be spotlessly clean.

Rosantino: I think it's in his blood, and one can't take it out. Sometimes he will see something in the fridge and he will tell me, 'I think I saw this three days ago. You know you are not supposed to keep food for so long.' And I feel bad and then I just throw it away.

On the social front...

Annette: We don't really socialise that much. Sometimes when we throw a big party, we invite everyone. But if it's a small occasion, it's just close friends. Then we don't invite the entire guild.

Maria: We really do not get the opportunity to meet each other as such because our husbands are busy and they are the only connection we have.

Drawing the line...

Annette: Sometimes we go for lunch to his restaurant but I don't like it because more often than not, he walks away for some work and I am left sitting alone there.

Josephine: On my birthday this one time, we went to the Emirates Towers, and his assistant came and dropped off some flowers at our



table. They also gave me a card that said thank you for letting Andy spend so much time with us. I have saved that to remind myself of that day.

Pride in place...

Maria: When I see my husband walking around during events, I feel so proud. It's like a brotherhood the chefs have, and we are part of that because of them. I just love his uniform and my daughter always teased me about it.

Tracy: Heinz does not need to wear his uniform but he does. I guess there is just something about being a chef.

Annette: Definitely. If Uwe was asked to move out of the kitchen he would not. He is not a suit person, he says.

Josephine: Sometimes I wear the uniform as well, especially during events, just because you have such easy access to everything.

The conversation can go on forever, but we'll leave the rest for next time.





Gulf Gourmet PAID A VISIT TO INDEGO AT
GROSVENOR HOUSE AND CAUGHT UP WITH
CONSULTANT CHEF VINEET BHATIA AND
CHEF DIRECTOR PATRICK LANNES FOR A
CHAT ON ALL THINGS INDIAN

THERE'S INDIAN, AND THEN there's Indian. As a cuisine, Indian food is so diverse that you would be hard pressed to find a chef who would be so bold as to claim to be an expert in it. But, says Chef Patrick Lannes, Chef Director, Grosvenor House, if there is anyone who comes close, it would have to be Chef Vineet Bhatia.

"India is divided into so many regions, and every region has a different cuisine. But Chef Vineet has really managed to capture the flavours of the country and put it on a plate," he says. He is, of course, talking of the eclectic cuisine served at Indego, the Indian restaurant at Grosvenor House, where Chef Vineet is a Consultant Chef.

It is, at first sight, very Indian. So you have traditional masks adorning the walls of the slanted walkway that

leads you into the restaurant. The lighting is not bright and in your face, but rather soothing and calm. The decor is striking, as traditional artefacts spring up amidst the sedate cream, beige and brown interiors. From pots to the stunning Nataraj sculpture, from an embellished wooden door to the massive water bowls, the restaurant has a very earthy feel. The only splash of colour is on two walls, where a cabinet full of *mojris* (traditional Indian footwear) is set.

"It's not exactly the kind of thing one would see on the walls of a restaurant," smiles Chef Patrick, indicating how Indego is different. And all this falls into place when you look at the menu. "The food is very Indian. After all, I can't change the cuisine. Tandoori chicken, for example, will always be cooked in a tandoor. But I can give it a different flavour and presentation," says Chef Vineet.

But he is quick to prevent us from calling it fusion cuisine. "Just because I use truffle oil in lamb does not make the dish fusion. My food is a modern rendition of Indian food. I use European ingredients to enhance the cuisine," he explains. Behind this lies his inherent belief that no cuisine should stand still. Trends change, people change, ideas change, and food in turn has to move on.

"What's interesting is that Chef Vineet has managed to plate Indian food. Indian cuisine is always shared, but



Left: **Chocolate torte with coffee and jaggery ice cream** Centre Top: **Pot roasted ginger lamb chops** Centre Bottom: **Carom seed flavoured tandoori prawns served with curry leaf and mustard tempered chickpea chutney**



Chef Patrick Lannes, Chef Director, Grosvenor House, is pleased with the look and feel of this modern Indian restaurant

not in this case,” says Chef Patrick. Although some people may find it odd, the restaurant is very popular, and in fact, has a long list of loyal Indian guests. “We do offer sharing portions if someone insists on it. But that’s not what my food is about. It’s about presentation. It’s about going beyond the red and brown and adding more colour to the food,” explains Chef Vineet.

One eats through one’s senses. It’s the sight and smell of the food that start the culinary experience. When the food arrives at your table, it’s very western in presentation. But the fragrance and taste is typically Indian. “We have a South Indian Lentil soup, which is like *sambhar*, but we have added crab meat to it. We thought since the dish typically comes from a coastal region, the flavours would go well together,” he says.

Similarly, there is the traditional lamb *biryani* which is covered with flaky dough and cooked slowly on a low flame. The spices all get well absorbed and the dough becomes a flavoured nan which goes well with the yoghurt. There is also a smoked tandoori salmon – a fresh piece of salmon which is smoked with coal and spices, giving a very tandoori masala flavour but a smoky feel as well.

For dessert, a must try are the chocolate samosas. Traditional samosas are stuffed with potatoes or meat mince, but at Indego, they are a culinary extravaganza, stuffed with white and dark chocolate and nuts.

For Chef Vineet, it’s the food that’s important. He denies being a celebrity or a brand in any way, and assures us he is just a good cook. A view corroborated by Chef Patrick, who credits Chef Vineet with constantly raising the bar with new dishes on the menu constantly that keep the restaurant popular as ever.

Indego has been known to be consistent through the last three years in terms of quality of food, and Chef Patrick and Chef Vineet assure us they will not rest on their laurels but keep reinventing themselves. We are looking forward to it!





Traditional silver *thalis* find pride of place on the dining table amid contemporary interiors

Chef Vineet Bhatia



CHEF VINEET BHATIA ADMITS he's a hard core "Bombayite", although, after 15 years in the city, London is home for him now. "Everyone in my family were either doctors, lawyers or in the defence services," he smiles. He himself wanted to be a pilot. But he fell short in leg length and hence could not get through. "They offered me the army or navy, but I declined because I just wanted to fly," he sighs.

So the next step was to enrol for a textile designing course in New Delhi, India. "That was way back in 1985, and the colours and fumes really got into my hair and ears, and I realised this was not the job for me," he laughs. Then he got a call from the Dadar Catering College in Mumbai, and he figured, why not?

Subsequently it was a training stint at the Oberoi hotel that he says changed his life. "They did not have any openings at the front desk so they put me in the kitchen. I accepted, thinking I would wriggle out in a week or so," he explains. But when he walked into the kitchen, he was shocked. "It was absolutely clean and so organised and quite fantastic. I said to myself, this is it, I want to be a chef," he smiles.

So from being one of the last guys in the class as far as culinary arts goes, he started topping the course. And then Oberoi made him part of an elite group of students chosen from across the country to train at their academy in Delhi. "That was where I truly learned a lot. It was three additional years but the experience was invaluable."

Chef Vineet always knew he wanted to do Indian food. "I knew I wanted to work out of the country, and the best way to do that was to do Indian food. It was hard work, and we had to do a lot of banqueting. But I chose to do it because I wanted to learn as much as I could," he explains.

Chef Vineet then moved to the Far East and worked with some big hotel names before he realised the huge opportunity there was in the UK. So he moved to Chelsea with a restaurant called Star of India. "When I walked in, I was shocked to see the place. It was quite a mess and it took me six months to change things around. But within

two years, we had doubled our sales," he says.

After five years, Chef Vineet felt he had to move on, and he opened his own restaurant, Zaika. "But I had some partners in that, and I never saw any money," he frowns. At the time, Chef Vineet was married with a young child, and he had to make a decision. Also, he says, he had enough of a reputation by then, so he and wife Rashima decided to take a chance. So they took a loan on the house and opened Rasoi.

Chef Vineet credits his wife for his success, admiring her penchant for balancing work and home. "A lot of people thought I was a chef, not a businessman so Rasoi would not work. But I had Rashima by my side, and she gave me the support and confidence to do it," he smiles. With two kids at home, Rashima also handles the administrative side of the business, making sure all goes well.

In January this year, they opened a new concept restaurant called Urban Turban. "It's more a tapas bar, offering typical Mumbai street food. It's really popular with the younger crowd, who are the fine diners of tomorrow. I think Dubai also is ready for an Urban Turban, and I hope it will be my next venture here," he smiles.

Shuttling between his restaurants in the UK, Moscow, Mauritius, Geneva and Dubai may make it tough, but Chef Vineet makes time for it all. However, Rasoi remains closest to his heart. "It's a small boutique Indian restaurant, and is so non-descript, you can pass it by without knowing it's a restaurant," he smiles. But it's the food that draws people there.

In fact, on opening night, four diners came in as their first guests. "And those were the guys from Grosvenor House. They told me about the hotel but I just wasn't interested. They persuaded me though, and I asked them to come back the next day. I thought they wouldn't, but they were there the next morning with plans for the hotel," he says.

He was impressed enough to visit Dubai, and once he was here, he was convinced he wanted to do this. And the rest, as they say, is history. 🇦🇪

*"I think Dubai
also is ready for
an Urban Turban,
and I hope it will be my
next venture here."*



Jumeirah

& its association with the Congress

JUMEIRAH PROPERTIES ARE REGARDED as among the most luxurious and innovative in the world and have won numerous international travel and tourism awards. The company was founded in 1997 with the aim to become a hospitality industry leader through establishing a world class portfolio of luxury hotels and resorts. To date, the Jumeirah portfolio includes luxury hotels and resorts in Dubai, London and New York and the company's ambitious expansion plans to grow its portfolio of luxury hotels and resorts worldwide to 57 by 2011 are well underway, with projects currently under development in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Aqaba, Doha, Phuket, Shanghai, Bermuda, Mallorca and London

Jumeirah's core essence to STAY DIFFERENT™ promises guests experiences that are as unique and innovative as the brand itself. It recognises the distinctiveness of luxury travellers and the importance of personal experiences in their lives.


In line with this core essence, the individuality of the Jumeirah portfolio is unmistakable, encompassing the world renowned Burj Al Arab, the world's most luxurious hotel, the multi-award winning Jumeirah Beach Hotel, Jumeirah Emirates Towers, Madinat Jumeirah and Jumeirah Bab Al Shams Desert Resort & Spa in Dubai, the Jumeirah Carlton Tower and Jumeirah Lowndes Hotel in London and the Jumeirah Essex House on Central Park South in New York.

The Group's activities are however not only restricted to hotel and resort management, the portfolio also includes Wild Wadi Water Park, regarded as one of the premier water parks outside of North America, The Emirates Academy, the region's only tertiary level academic institution specialising in the hospitality and tourism sectors, Jumeirah

Branded Restaurants, the company's dedicated restaurant division, global spa brand Talise and Jumeirah Living, the Group's luxury brand of residences and serviced apartments offering effortless living in luxurious surroundings.

Jumeirah Emirates Towers also operates and manages Jumeirah Hospitality, the premier event management and outside catering company in the United Arab Emirates. Jumeirah Hospitality specialises in taking care of every aspect and each detail of any event at any location. As well as superb catering, the company also provides on-site service, supplying all the equipment, utensils, crockery, cutlery and linen needed, as well as decoration and lights to suit the theme of choice and provides a wide range of other extras including entertainers, video cameramen and guest transport.

When it comes to our colleagues, Jumeirah Emirates Towers has a dedicated Conference & Banqueting team, as well as a Jumeirah Hospitality team who manage the outside catering operations. In addition to our culinary food and beverage service teams, we have colleagues who are specialized in audio-visual, engineering, security, training, warehouse, stewarding, transport, accounts, safety and health hygiene, cost control, and sales and administration, as well as artists and florists.

For larger events we have a pool of 1,100 colleagues at Jumeirah Emirates Towers and if the requirement exceeds this, for example at large-scale outside catering events managed by Jumeirah Hospitality, we can collaborate with our sister hotels and business units within the Jumeirah Group; Burj Al Arab, Madinat Jumeirah, Jumeirah Beach Hotel, Bab Al Shams Desert Resort & Spa, Wild Wadi Water Park or Jumeirah Restaurants. In this way we have more than 12,000 colleagues that can work side by side to make the event a success. 



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STAY DIFFERENT™
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the brand itself. It recognises the
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experiences in their lives.*

Gulf Gourmet presents the two
prolific chefs who will vie for the
post of WACS President this year.
Our best wishes with both, and
may the best man win...

the contenders



Chef John Sloane

IF CHEF JOHN SLOANE is chosen to be WACS President this year, Asia will, for the first time in 80 years, host the Presidium for a four-year term. Chef Sloane has, in his professional and personal capacity, worked tirelessly to raise the culinary standards of global cuisines, and the professional development of chefs in Singapore, the Middle East, and Asia-Pacific region.

“The Presidium is an extension of our efforts to raise the standard of culinary excellence,” says Chef Sloane, “Our vision is to make WACS relevant to every chef, cook and consumer.”

Under Team Singapore’s leadership, the focus will be on three key areas aimed at institutionalizing the management of WACS to achieve sustainable goals and results; providing effective communication channels with chefs, cooks and the public; and increasing the education, training, and professional development of WACS members.

“We need to stay relevant to ensure a high quality of professionalism. By bringing the Presidium to Asia, Team Singapore aims to transform WACS into a world authority on food and world class chefs association,” he added.

Chef Sloane hails from New Zealand and has worked in his native country as well as in the UK, Guam, Papua New Guinea, Australia, Japan and Singapore. He is currently the Executive Chef of SATS In-flight Catering Centre 1. He is also the WACS Continental Director for Asia.

Chef Gissur Gudmundsson

AS A CANDIDATE FOR the WACS President, Chef Gissur believes that tomorrow's WACS should be built up for all of its members so that they feel they are getting the maximum value of belonging to WACS.

He says it must be forward-looking, inclusive, open and respectful and focused in its activities. He assures the members that a refreshed WACS that responds to the concerns in the hearts and minds of all of our member countries will be in place.

Chef Gissur lists the following salient points for his Presidency:

- Establish a permanent office in Europe
- Make communication between the Board and the members their #1 priority
- Allow juniors to be involved in WACS
- Make sure all Continental Areas are represented in the WACS Committees
- Create long-term and valuable relationships with sponsors

Chef Gissur firmly believes in supporting equal opportunity and diversity, uniting ideas and achieving goals. He has served as Continental Director for the Northern European member countries of WACS since 2004. In 2000, he became President of the Icelandic Chef Association, a position he held until 2006. A few years later, in 2003, he was appointed president of the Nordic Chef Association. He stepped down from this post in 2007.

A master chef since 1989, he has been involved at all levels of the culinary profession. Director for the only private culinary school in Iceland from 1995 to 1997, followed by being the promotion manager for the Bocuse D'Or Icelandic candidates since 1999, he has a strong connection to all the Nordic culinary teams, as well as the Icelandic team. He is also an internationally recognised competition judge.

Although he travels extensively, Chef Gissur has not kept away from his first love. He was the owner of a restaurant known as Geysir in Oslo, Norway from 1989 to 1993, and today he owns a restaurant called Tveir Fiskar in the old harbour of Reykjavik, Iceland. 🇮🇸





Chile: your host for 2010!

IN 2006, WHEN IN NEW ZEALAND, it was announced that according to the votes, Chile had won the bid to host the WACS Congress 2010, the President of the Chilean Gastronomic Association (ACHIGA) Fernando de la Fuente Espina and the General Manager, Jacqueline Rodríguez Echevarría jumped from their seats, the emotion was too big! For the first time in the history of WACS, a Latin American country would have the honor to receive fellow members from the 5 continents.

It had been years of silent work, professionalism and developing the association. Since 1996, ACHIGA was the representative of WACS in Chile. But it was not until 2004, that the General Manager attended the Congress in Ireland and announced the intention of bidding for 2010. Then we would be prepared to organize such a big event, it would be the moment to launch Chile's gastronomy to the rest of the world.

ACHIGA

THE CHILEAN GASTRONOMIC ASSOCIATION (ACHIGA) was founded on January 30, 1980 by a group of friends who, 25 years ago, enjoyed excellent cooking and liked to discuss about the fascinating gastronomic world.

During the following years, the economic climate favored the food industry and gastronomy growth reached our country. This was when ACHIGA's Board of Directors proposed new objectives for the association and increased the number of members and projects.

With this assertive change a new stage began for the association. In 1991, ACHIGA came in with the idea of raising funds and professionalizing its work. It was necessary to find sponsors for the new projects, which changed the profile of the association and provided the capital for its growth. ACHIGA began to organize gastronomic activities, such as: contests, fairs, and permanent training. It is important to mention that ACHIGA is the only gastronomic association recognized by the Chilean government, so it acts as a nexus between its associates and the authorities.

The growth of ACHIGA gave rise to internationalization. It crossed the borders in 1995 and became a member of the National Restaurant Association (N.R.A.), in the United States. A year later, in 1996, it was designated as the exclusive representative for WACS (World Association of Chefs Societies) for Chile, the most important worldwide association in this area.

Our mission as a trade association is to group the entire gastronomic sector of our country with the purpose of boosting its development in all areas. We are the voice of our association before the government and, for this reason, it is our mission to safeguard and protect our common interests.

Our objective is to constantly seek more services for the members, keep members informed and provide ongoing training, thereby actively promoting Chilean gastronomy.

Our challenge has been to make the sector more professional, so that, in the near future, it will reach worldwide standards through excellent training, contests, services, and covenants.

So now ACHIGA is working hard to give you members of WACS, an excellent Congress. Santiago is a new and unique destination, with first class infrastructure, political and economical stability, privileged environment, state of the arts technology, great service and experience, and multiple tourist attractions.

You will be surprised by our local products, such as fish and seafood, excellent wines and fruits, and many other delicatessens.

We are looking forward to see you all in Santiago, Chile in January 2010, where summer will be waiting for you, as well as the warmth and friendship of your Chilean culinary fellows. 🇨🇪



4 countries vying for WACS Congress 2012



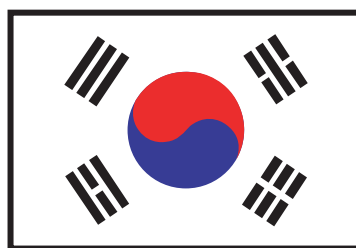
India



Portugal



Sri Lanka



South Korea

India

INDIA IS A LAND with a fascinating culinary culture. Beyond the immense variety of cuisines, beyond the myriad flavours, beyond the subtle regional variations in cooking methods and styles, lies a unique philosophy of food that is an integral part of the country's history.

Since ancient times, India has always treated food as a lot more than just a source of nourishment. The Upanishads, known to be religious texts of great antiquity, place food on a hallowed pedestal, equating it with God. In India, there is even a Goddess dedicated to food... she is known as Annapurna.

There's more. The world's oldest cookbooks are known to have originated in India. In particular, there are two revered treatises that offer incredible insights into India's gastronomic heritage: the Ksema Kutuhala dating back to the Second Century AD; and the Pak Shashtra by the legendary Indian king Nal, dating back to the Fifth Century AD.

Indian Gastronomy has a unique philosophy of its own. It embraces both food as well its maker, the chef. The philosophy propounds the belief that food has a natural affinity for absorbing vibrations from its surroundings. It is, therefore, important for the Indian chef to be a person who exudes positivism at all times... one who is calm, cheerful and kind. He radiates a sense of joy and well-being, and all these emotions are absorbed by the food that he cooks and serves. In this way, the cuisine served by a master chef has a profound spiritual and emotional effect on the guests for whom it is cooked.

For this vital role played by him, the Chef has always held a very special place in the kingdom, in the royal kitchens... and in the hearts of the people. Down the centuries, he has been a person with a rare blend of qualities — a man of knowledge, a creative personality and a kindly soul with a spiritual disposition. This endeared him to all he came in contact with. Moreover, his task as one providing both nourishment and epicurean pleasure for the royals made him a trusted, revered figure.

Also, as a repository of knowledge on India's cuisine, culture, customs and traditions, the Chef became a natural ambassador for the country — and continues to be so even today. He is a master of the fine art of winning hearts by inveigling the taste buds!



(From left) Chef M.S. Gupta, Treasurer, Chef Deepak Bhatia, Vice President, Chef Manjit Singh Gill, President and Chef Soundararajan.P, General Secretary

India is currently bidding to host the Congress of the World Association of Chefs Societies (WACS) in 2012. The backdrop and the timing of this bid is perfect. In addition to having a rich culinary culture of great antiquity, India is a rapidly emerging force in the global business arena. As a free and open economy, India is a large growing market fuelled by the dreams and aspirations of a billion people. Capital markets and the industrial sectors are booming, powered by world-class infrastructure.

The infrastructure includes comprehensive resources and capabilities for hosting global events and conferences — venues, accommodation, transportation, connectivity, logistics and event management support. In fact, New Delhi, the Indian Capital city, is hosting the Commonwealth Games in 2010. We look forward to hosting the next WACS Congress in New Delhi, India.



Portugal

HAVING A SUCCESSFUL WACS Congress is as much about planning the proceedings as it is about choosing the right settings. Lisbon, Portugal is a world of possibilities!

Sitting astride the river that brought the city the extravagant riches of its Golden age, the Portuguese capital offers a mix of grand architecture, sweeping waterfront and green spaces, buzzing nightlife, excellent restaurants and world-class event facilities and hotels. That's why Lisbon is such a great idea for WACS congress in 2012!

All Lisbon hotels are situated in the city itself. Very conveniently most five star hotels are located close to each other, within walking distance or served by Metro, public buses or tram transportation.

In the Lisbon region you will never be short of great things to do and see. Full of attractions, this region provides visitors with a unique setting for an unforgettable, once-in-a-lifetime experiences.

Lisbon is a city of light. The Tagus and the sun, nearly always present, make the Portuguese city a mirror of colour in which the architectural beauty and uniqueness of its buildings stand out.

Some favourite tourism spots include: Alfama/Castelo/Mouraria—what make Lisbon such a colourful city. Charming ancient Moorish quarters with narrow winding streets and picturesque white washed houses, crowned by St. George's Castle.

Bairro Alto – is traditionally Lisbon's nightlife hub, but during the day it's a sort of bazaar with designer shops you won't find anywhere else in the city.

Baixa/Chiado (downtown) – adds a special touch to Lisbon's ambiance.

Traditionally, it's the city's shopping hub and a unique place for leisurely walks. Also to be seen here are Praça do Comércio, the magnificent 'Black Horse' Square with its Triumphal Arch facing the River Tagus, the Cathedral, the Carmo ruins, Chiado magical atmosphere with unique cafes and bookshops, etc.

Belém – is filled with reminders of a past empire's grandeur – Portugal's discovery of new ocean routes and faraway lands, known by its monuments: the Tower of Belém and Jerónimos Monastery – both unique heritage classified by UNESCO; the Discovery's Monument, the Royal Coach Museum.

There is also the Belém Cultural Centre that hosts many cultural events. Belém is a place for walks through the gardens and along the riverside, culminating with a delicious Belém custard cupcake, one of Lisbon's most sought after sweets.

Parque das Nações – In eastern Lisbon, also along the river Tagus, you'll find Parque das Nações (former Expo 98), a large urban complex combining cultural, recreational, residential and business activities. This is also one of Lisbon's focal points and an example of integrated modernity. Besides the many riverside gardens, you'll also find unique infrastructures, such as the Atlantico Pavillion, the Lisbon Oceanarium, the Vasco da Gama tower and the Casino Lisboa.



Sri Lanka

THE CHEFS GUILD OF LANKA was initiated in 1988 and won an affiliation to WACS in Germany in 1992.

The Chefs Guild of Lanka has always striven for creativity and innovation not only in the hospitality industry but in every sphere of Sri-Lankan life. We pride ourselves on reaching out to those with few opportunities to live their dreams by ensuring that through cuisine, we cross language barriers and communicate world trends to those that desperately need empowerment.

Humbly we accepted a Humanitarian Award presented by WACS for the island-wide cooking camps within tsunami-affected areas where we brought together chefs from all over the country to feed the displaced tsunami victims. 25,000 people were fed daily for four weeks in two huge camps.

The guild's main objective is to focus on training and development for chefs; we achieve this through setting up our own training institutions in both developed and rural areas focusing on cookery, pastry and bakery training and thus, have created employment opportunities for retiring chefs from the industry.

The school offers a fully sponsored course by the Chefs Guild of Lanka and focuses on underprivileged youth, combined with an Eco-Tourism project where accommodation and food is provided to tourists and it is fully managed by the students and the board of the Chefs Guild of Lanka.

We have always dreamed big and achieved bigger, thus hosting ambitious projects to unite the industry on a large scale is nothing new to us. Culinary Art; the biggest culinary competition in Sri Lanka bi-annually since 1988 has grown to become a competition of high repute in the

Asia-Pacific region, now accommodates more than 1200 participants.

Sri Lanka is a land like no other. From the cool winds of little England to the sultry summers of the tropics, our versatile geography and amazingly diverse attractions have something to offer everyone; the cosmopolitan sophistication of the city, the soul inspiring simplicity of the South or the beautiful chill of the mountains. We are world renowned for our hospitality and our 'service with a smile' and our cultural,

historical and wildlife attractions are unsurpassable.

Our work and pioneering contribution to the industry in Sri Lanka and the Asian region speaks for itself. A school fully owned and operated by us, a focus on the underprivileged, creation of cross exposure and employment opportunities and other commendable works that serve for the betterment of the world we operate in have always been the root of our work. Our groundbreaking innovation of combining hospitality and philanthropy to further the industry and indeed, society as a whole serves as our beacon and philosophy.


Your vote to host the World Congress in Sri Lanka could mean the start of a new era for the hospitality industry in Sri Lanka, and will immensely benefit the worthy cause of training and development of the industry showing the rest of the world our commitment to the chefs to innovate, transform and take over the industry in the years to come.

The Chef's guild guarantees a full package during the congress where all attendees will be fully covered each day on food and beverage, inclusive of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages.

We invite you to be a part of the dream; The Chefs Guild of Lanka World Congress 2012 Sri Lankan Style!



South Korea

At the time of going to press, information on South Korea's bid was still not received. 



WACS CONGRESS PROGRAMME DUBAI 2008



SUNDAY 11TH MAY 2008

- 0900 - 1200** **Welcome City Familiarisation Tour of Dubai City**
- 1200 - 1930** *WACS Congress 2008 Registration desk operated by
The Emirates Culinary Guild
open at Dubai Convention Centre.*
- 1200 - 1700** *Emirates Culinary Guild will have a reception desk
to assist with dining requirements while
staying in Dubai.*
- 1400 - 1800** **Welcome City Familiarisation Tour of Dubai City.**
- 1500 - 1700** **All member countries to register with WACS Treasurer
to ensure eligibility to vote – voting paddles and
delegate document book**
**Booth located next to WACS Congress 2008
registration area.**
- 1930 - 2230** **Cocktail Party - Official Opening at Dubai Convention
Centre: Arabic Hallo Theme**
Cocktail food & beverages will be served.
**Wine Malt and Minerals included. Spirits available
cash bar**
- Welcome Address from Mr Uwe Micheel,
Emirates Culinary Guild President**
- Welcome Address from Mr Ferdinand Metz,
WACS President**

 **Food and Beverage**
 **Official WACS Business**

 **Junior Programme**
 **Speeches, Prize giving etc.**

 **Educational Programmes**
 **Official WACS Competitions**

MONDAY 12TH MAY 2008

0800-1800	<i>WACS Congress 2008 Registration desk operated by The Emirates Culinary Guild open at Dubai Convention Centre.</i>
0800-1800	<i>Emirates Culinary Guild will have a reception desk to assist with dining requirements while staying in Dubai.</i>
0730-0800	Morning Arrival coffee, tea and water
0800-0815	Opening Ceremony
	WACS Congress 2008 Director's Welcome.
0815-0835	Opening Address By DTCM of Dubai. His Excellency: Mr. Awadh Seghayer Al Ketbi
	Opening Address by The President of the Emirates Culinary Guild, Mr Uwe Micheel
0835-0845	WACS president Opening of Congress
	WACS Secretary General : Determination of Quorum. Proxies. Acceptance of Minutes
0845-0850	President appoints Audit and Election Committee
0850-0900	Vote on New membership
0900-0915	Vote on By Laws
0915- 0930	Parade of Nations
0930 - 1000	WACS president's report: Mr Ferdinand Metz
1000 -1015	Honorary Presidents report: Dr Billy Gallagher
1015- 1700	Dubai Showcase Exhibition areas open.
1015- 1045	Morning tea in Dubai Showcase Exhibition area.
1045-1100	Vice presidents report: Mr Ed Leonard

1100	Dr Billy Gallagher Junior Forum opening
1100- 1115	Secretary Generals report: Mr Ed Brown
1115- 1130	Report back Audit Committee
1130- 1145	WACS Treasurer's report: Mr Norbitt Schimdiger
1145-1230	Unilever Presentation : Chef William Wongso
1230-1300	<u>GROUP PHOTO- all delegates to wear chef's jackets</u>
1300 -1400	Lunch in Dubai Convention Exhibition area.
1400- 1415	WACS Ambassadors report: Dr H.C. Siegfried Schaber
1415-1525	Continental Directors reports: Africa and Middle East, America, Asia, Europe North, Europe Central, Europe South, Pacific Rim
1525-1540	WACS Master Chef Programme
1540-1600	Afternoon Tea in Dubai Showcase Exhibition area.
1600-1620	Candidates for Presidium: John Sloan Singapore & Gissur Gudmundsson Iceland
1620-1700	WORKSHOP MASTERCHEFS PROGRAMME
1700-1730	Open floor - Questions and Answers to board on days presentations: Ferdinand Metz
19h30 - 2300	Dubai - Modern Flavours and trends At Jumeirah Emirates Towers Godolphin ballroom, Sponsored by Barakat <u>Smart Casual - No tie required, Wine, Malt and Minerals</u>

 Food and Beverage	 Junior Programme	 Educational Programmes
 Official WACS Business	 Speeches, Prize giving etc.	 Official WACS Competitions

TUESDAY 13TH MAY 2008

0800-1800	<i>WACS Congress 2008 Registration desk operated by The Emirates Culinary Guild open at Dubai Convention Centre.</i>
0800-1800	<i>Emirates Culinary Guild will have a reception desk to assist with dining requirements while staying in Dubai.</i>
0600-0900	Junior excursions to Shindagha Fish Market
0730-0800	Morning Arrival coffee, tea and water
0815	Sergeant at Arms call to order. Housekeeping matters for the day.
0815-0825	Congress Committee Report: Mr Arnold Tanzer
0825- 0915	Presentations for 2012 Congress bids- strict 10 minutes per bid
0915-0930	Culinary Committee Report: Mr Reimund Pitz
0930-1300	Hans Beuschkens Junior Chef Competition, 1st 7 competitors
1000 - 1700	Dubai Showcase Exhibition areas open.
0930- 0945	Train the Trainer Presentation
0945-1015	Unilever Presentation : Unilever Health Institute
1015 - 1045	Morning Tea in Dubai Showcase Exhibition area.
1045- 1115	Women in WACS Forum.
1115-1215	Ship of the Desert: Professor Wernery
1215-1235	Report on Congress: Chile 2010
1235-1255	Vote on Congress 2012
1300-1400	Lunch in Dubai Convention Exhibition area.

1400-1700	Junior excursions to Hindu street and to the Spice Souk
1400-1500	Royal Thai Cuisine: Mr. Mumana Rangsan
1500-1545	WORKSHOP CULINARY GUIDELINES
1545- 1605	Afternoon tea in the Dubai Convention Exhibition area.
1400-1730	Hans Bueschken's Junior Chef Competition, 2nd 7 competitors
1605- 1700	PANEL DISCUSSION WOMEN IN WACS
1700	Close of day by Mr Metz
1800	Free Evening to Dine in Dubai.

 Food and Beverage
 Official WACS Business

 Junior Programme
 Speeches, Prize giving etc.







 Educational Programmes
 Official WACS Competitions

WEDNESDAY 14TH MAY 2008

0800-1800	<i>WACS Congress 2008 Registration desk operated by The Emirates Culinary Guild open at Dubai Convention Centre.</i>
0800-1800	<i>Emirates Culinary Guild will have a reception desk to assist with dining requirements while staying in Dubai.</i>
0800-0830	Morning Arrival coffee, tea and water
0830-	Sergeant at Arms call to order. Housekeeping matters for the day.
0835-0905	Vote for presidium 2008-2012. Acceptance Speech and Introduction of New Presidium.
0900-1200	Juniors at Congress
0905-0945	TV Chef Osama presents Mezzeh
0930-1300	Hans Bueschken's Junior Chef Competition, last 7 competitors
0945-1015	Morning tea in Dubai Showcase Exhibition area.
1015-1030	Celebrating 80 years of WACS: presentation by Dr Billy Gallagher and Norbert Schmidiger
1030-1110	Molecular Cuisine presentation: Chef Stephane Buchholzer.
1200- 13h00	Delegates free to view Junior Chefs Competitions
1110-1140	CERTIFICATION WORKSHOP
1140-1215	Unilever Presentation: Seminar on Gourmet Cooking
1215-1315	Lunch in Dubai Convention Exhibition Area
1315-1400	Middle East Banquets: Mr Andy Cuthbert.
1400-1445	INTERACTIVE JUDGING WORKSHOP.



1445- 1530	TRAIN THE TRAINER WORKSHOP
1530-1600	Afternoon tea in the Dubai Convention Exhibition area.
1600-1630	Close of day Mr Metz
1615-1715	WACS Global Chefs Challenge Briefing and mystery basket, 7 Continental Contestants in Arena.
	Free Evening to Dine in Dubai

 Food and Beverage	 Junior Programme	 Educational Programmes
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THURSDAY 15TH MAY 2008

0800-1800	<i>WACS Congress 2008 Registration desk operated by The Emirates Culinary Guild open at Dubai Convention Centre.</i>
0830-0900	Morning Arrival coffee, tea and water
0830-1530	WACS Global Chefs Challenge, 7 Continental contestants cook off in Arena.
0900-	Sergeant at Arms call to order. Housekeeping matters for the day.
0905-0915	Dr Billy Gallagher junior Feedback: Andy Cuthbert and Junior delegate
1000-1700	Dubai Showcase Exhibition areas open.
0915 - 0935	Honorary Members Inauguration and presentation to all members present
0935-1010	Unilever presentation: Culinology Seminar; Interface between science and cuisines:
1010- 1020	Vote for Continental Directors from post vacated
1020-1050	Presentation member countries Activities eg ACF / Culinary Olympics / Worlds cook tour for Hunger.
1050-1120	Morning tea in Dubai Showcase Exhibition area.
1120-1200	Presentation of official gifts from member Countries- 20 minutes Outgoing Presidents Speech and close of Congress
	Delegates to view last hours of Global Chefs Challenge in Arena
1330-1430	Lunch in Dubai Convention
	<i>Free Afternoon</i>

1900-2400 Gala Dinner in the Desert at the Lisali Fort
Buses depart 17h45
Dress is Smart Casual: Traditional Dish Dash and Abaya to be supplied on site
All competitors to be in official chef's uniform
Presentation of Awards
Presidents award- Global Partner
Educator Award
Lifetime Achiever Award
Honorary Presidents Humanitarian Award
Junior Chefs
Master Chefs
Global Chefs
PHOTO ALL WINNERS & SPONSORS separate room after ceremony completed.

 **Food and Beverage**
 **Official WACS Business**

 **Junior Programme**
 **Speeches, Prize giving etc.**

 **Educational Programmes**
 **Official WACS Competitions**



THE EMIRATES CULINARY GUILD



APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Date of Application:

Family Name: (Mr./Ms./Mrs.)

First Name/s:

Nationality:

Civil Status:

Date of Birth: dd/mm/yy

Name of Employer:

Address in Home Country:

Work Address:

Tel:

Web Address:

Email:

Telephone Office:

Professional Title:

Fax Office:

Type of Membership Required: (Please tick one)

Tel. Home:

Fax Home:

Email:

Corporate ☐ Senior ☐ Junior ☐

Declaration to be Signed by all Applicants

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

Signed:.....

Proposed By:

Sig:.....

Seconded By:

Sig:.....

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Remarks:

Payment received?

Certificate Given.

Pin Given.

Medal & Collar Given

Approved

Approved

President.....

Chairman.....

Fees:

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.