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AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2021

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THE MAGAZINE CHEFS LOVE TO READ

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gourmet

volume 16, issue 7

BUILT TOUGH

Chef **Alan Pedge** is a living, breathing example of rock-solid reputation and resilience in an ever-changing culinary landscape

*Alan Pedge
ECG Vice President*

THE WUNDERKIND

Executive Chef **Rene Juefri Johari** talks about why he is following in his father's footsteps



PASTRY MASTERY

If her name doesn't catch your attention, Chef **Arwa Federal's** signature cakes definitely will



CACAO CRAZE

Exclusive interview with Chef **Dilip Kumara**, winner of the World Chocolate Masters Middle East





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“

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**WORLD CHEFS
CONGRESS & EXPO
ABU DHABI
UAE
30 MAY-2 JUN 2022**

Dear fellow Chefs, ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to the August-September issue of our Gulf Gourmet. I hope you all had a good summer, and most of you had some quality time with friends and family. We all hoped for the Covid19 situation all over the world to have improved by now. We see in countries and areas where the vaccination level is high, life returns to a different level. People have learned to live with the new normal.

The United Arab Emirates is getting ready for Expo 2020. We are getting closer to the opening. We look forward to businesses coming back stronger with lots of big events on their calendar. Starting this month with the Big 5, Yumex, Air show, Motor Show and Formula 1 just to name a few events on the books for 2021.

Your Emirates Culinary Guild Team is busy in preparation for Abu Dhabi 2022

We will have 7 events under 1 roof

1. Worldchefs Congress
2. Global Chefs Competition
3. Billy Gallagher Young Chef Forum
4. Young Chef African Cup
5. Expo Culinare
6. Salon Culinare
7. Education Corner

We look forward to an amazing event and welcoming chefs from around the world. I am really looking forward to showcasing our Emirati culture and food, and at the same time to learn from colleagues.

I hope most of you have registered on the ChefID app. If you have not, go to ChefID.com and help us grow the "Chefs only" app. And invite your friends (as many as you like).

I look forward to seeing many of you at our monthly meeting on September 13 at the Crowne Plaza® Dubai, Sheikh Zayed Road. The meeting will be hosted by Chef Christophe Prud'homme

The Congress registration is open now at



worldchefscongress.org. Do not miss out on the Early Bird Discount.

Please visit gulfgourmet.net to browse through previous issues of this magazine. Visit emiratesculinaryguild.net to see latest happenings on our events calendar. And visit fb.com/wacsyoungchefs for young chefs to be in contact with over 4,000 chefs across the globe.

Please do not miss the company profile of our corporate members. We really do

appreciate your support. Also do look at the Friends of the Guild pages to check out all our supporters.

Thank you to Chef Bijendra Singh Ramola and Jumeirah Creekside Hotel Team for hosting the last meeting.

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

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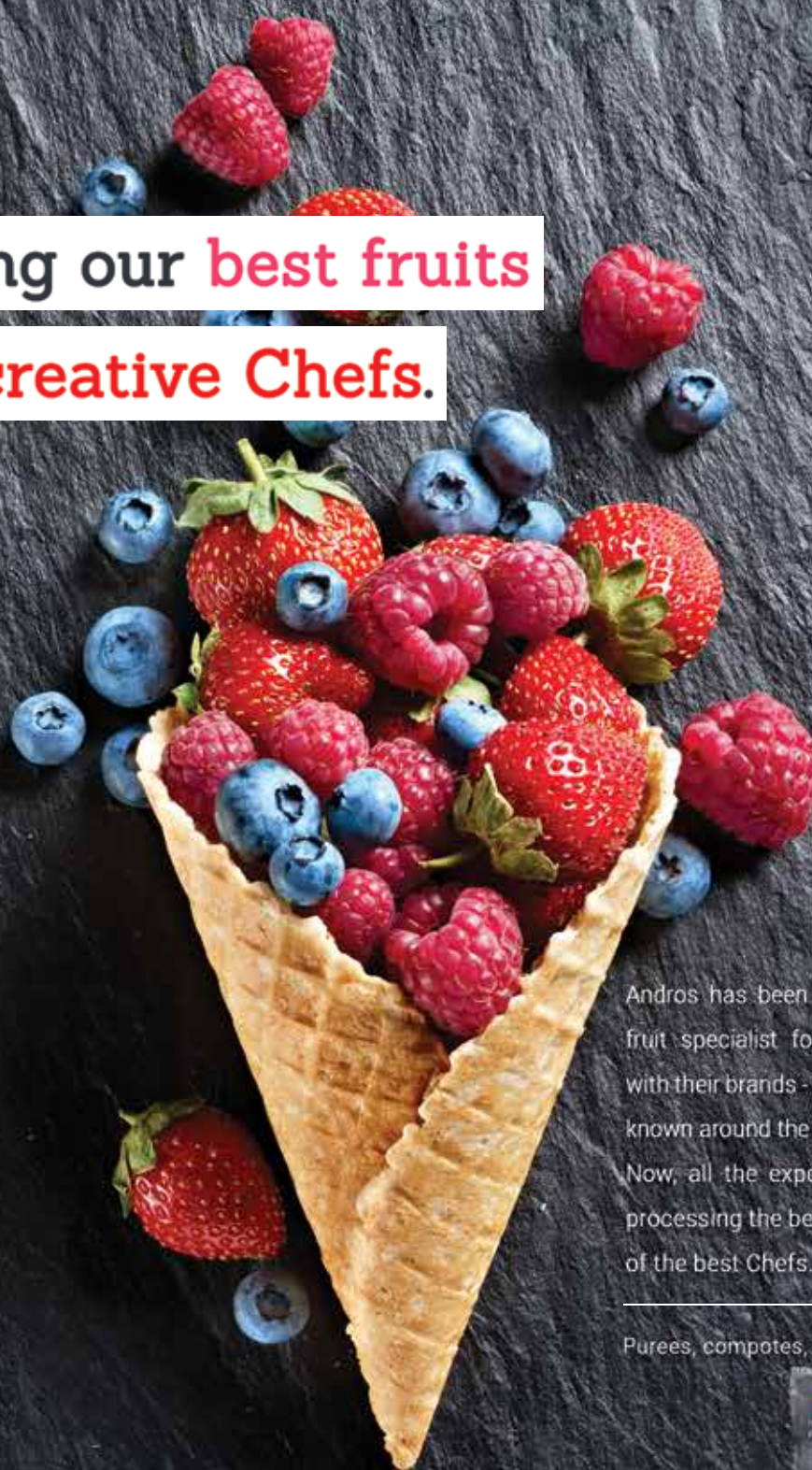
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ANDROS
Chef

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editor'snote

email editor@gulfgourmet.net

We're back after our usual summer break. What is not usual though is how we spent these two months. For a change, we put our time to good use building **chefID**, a community platform for professional chefs.

So far, it's been a fantastic, unnerving and exciting journey all rolled into one. We have over 1,000 powerful chefs on the professional social media designed for culinary professionals. Senior chefs have been posting job opportunities directly on the app, and young chefs are showcasing their creative talent for those who care about food rather than photography skills.

We have chefs from Canada to New Zealand testing the platform. In this short period, we have already live-streamed the Emirates Culinary Guild Annual General Body meeting privately to Guild members and the Cacao Barry World Chocolate Masters competition to all those who are registered on the app.

If you are a chef who wants to build his professional profile, you should try out **chefID**. For a limited time, you will get automatic followers. A feature that will not be offered in the future.

For those asking why **chefID**, the answer is we want to offer chefs a digital



alternative that has the best of LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, Learning, Industry News, and Ecommerce in one app.

For advertisers too this is an unmatched opportunity. For the first time in our

15-year history we have started offering print (**Gulf Gourmet**) and online (**chefID**) combo packages that are second to none.

While you already know that **Gulf Gourmet** is one of the world's leading magazines read by chefs, our **chefID** channels and app are doing well too. At the time of writing this, our last social media post reached 58,955 people and received 2,319 likes, comments and shares, with 8,002 post clicks.

If you are looking to reach chefs and make your brand standout with our multiple channels, email us. We have aggressive outreach plans in the UAE for World Expo this year and Worldchefs Congress early next year.

Coming to the issue at hand, we have some terrific pieces highlighting the careers of experienced chefs like Alan Pedge, upcoming superstars like Rene Juefri Johari and Dilip Kumara, and young chefs like Ramy Eldesouky, Dinesh Kumar, Mohammed Fayis and Dasun Tharaka. These are inspirational stories worth delving into. We have also got images from the events livestreamed on the app.

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

Aquin George
Editor

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August-September 2021 **Gulf Gourmet**

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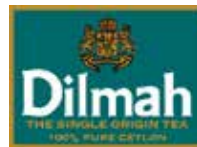
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newsbites

Rosewood Jeddah appoints Kardino as Executive Chef

Chef Kardino Zulhadi, a prominent name in the culinary world, has been appointed as the Executive Chef at Rosewood Jeddah.

Zulhadi's appointment as Executive Chef marks his commencement in the commercial hub of Saudi Arabia, following his previous work with other luxury hotels in Makkah, Riyadh, Indonesia, Maldives, China, Philippines, Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Istanbul, Spain, Jordan and UAE.

Having completed his education from BPLP Nusa Dua, Bali-Indonesia – Hotel Academy Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia in 1991, Chef Kardino Zulhadi is proficiently trained in the elegant world of culinary.

With over 27 years of work experience in the hospitality industry – from developing food concepts, managing staff to designing new menus, Chef

Zulhadi brings with him extensive experience in gourmet cuisine. He joined Rosewood Jeddah in May 2021 and has worked in various hotels around the world with longstanding stints at Hyatt Regency Riyadh, Conrad Nusa Dua, Bali, Shangri La, Manila, Shangri La Golden Flower Hotel Xi An, China and Fairmont Dubai.

At his new position at Rosewood Jeddah, Chef Kardino Zulhadi will be responsible for leading the (Habsburg-All Day Dining, Soleil-Café Lounge, Sky Lounge and In Room Dining sections of the hotel, enhancing menus, managing restaurant staff and organizing financial budgets.

He has also successfully completed the Professional Development Modul Advanced Kitchen Management by The Emirate Academy of Hospitality Management in academic association with Ecole hotelier de Lausanne.



The first World Chocolate Masters Middle East winner Aravinda Leelarathna with this year's World Chocolate Masters winner Dilip Kumara, after a spectacular show at the Cacao Barry Chocolate Academy in Dubai. [Full coverage on page 40.](#)

SINCE 1894 **HERSHEY'S** arabia **Kitchens**

هرشيز arabia مطبخ



Peter is Worldchefs Continental Director for Pacific Rim

The Australian Culinary Federation has appointed Peter Wright to the board of Worldchefs as the Pacific Rim Continental Director. Peter will take over from Neil Abrahams, who recently resigned.

Peter now represents the Pacific Rim members of Worldchefs – Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Guam, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea-Affiliate, Tonga - Affiliate & Vanuatu – on the international board of directors.

Peter says, "I'll work diligently to uplift the progress in our region. Creating a manageable agenda with the countries of the Pacific Rim that allows all chefs and cooks to access the assets of World Chefs. Including education, culinary innovation, sustainability improvements, and the opportunity to access a global

network of likeminded people, food, and cultural diversity."

Peter's career commenced in the 80s graduating from Melbourne's William Angliss culinary school. HE began his career with the Sydney Olympics and over the next two decades gained recognition as one of Australia's leading foodservice experts and global event specialist.

Peter is an Honorary Life Member and former President of the Australian Culinary Federation, a position which he held for nine years. Peter has represented Australia twice at the Culinary Olympics bringing home Gold medals on both occasions. He has completed an Advanced Diploma in Hospitality at NMIT, is a qualified Sports Nutritionist and holds the title as a World Chefs Certified Master Chef.





Chef Akira is Back

Renowned Michelin star chef Akira Back is collaborating with Vox Cinemas to curate a special menu for "THEATRE", their new luxury cinema concept. The menu is being launched in the UAE in September before being rolled-out across Vox cinemas in Bahrain, Qatar and Kuwait later this year.

Guests can expect a modern Japanese menu which features a dynamic combination of Akira Back's signature dishes as well as exclusive culinary creations. Famed for his sense of adventure and creativity, Akira Back has enjoyed an illustrious career bringing his culinary expertise and artistry across the globe, with a portfolio of critically acclaimed restaurants and lounges in destinations like Beverly Hills, San Diego, Seychelles North

Island, Toronto, Singapore, Seoul, Dubai and more.

The new concept combines film with fine food and provides guests with the option of dining in an exclusive private lounge area or having their food delivered straight to their seat through the in-theatre waiter service.

The reclining leather seats, plush blankets and pillows will further add to the cutting-edge audiovisual technology in a stylish and intimate setting.

Chef Akira Back says, "F&B is a complementary component of going to the movies and we have designed a menu that is sure to appeal to the most discerning guests and movie lovers."

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

Billy joins Meliá Chiang Mai as Executive Chef

Thai national Suksant Chutinthratip (Billy) will be heading the pre-opening team of Meliá Chiang Mai as Executive Chef. He previously worked as executive chef at Hotel Nikko Bangkok, Rayong Marriott Resort & Spa, and Courtyard by Marriott Bangkok.

He was also an executive sous chef for SkyCity Auckland Entertainment, managing VIP and gaming restaurants, as well as Renaissance Ratchaprasong Bangkok Hotel.

Beginning his hospitality career in 1994 as a cook helper at The Ambassador Hotel and Convention Centre Bangkok's Le Bistro, award-winning Chutinthratip climbed the career ladder at various properties including Sheraton Grande Sukhumvit, a Luxury Collection Hotel Bangkok, The Peninsula Bangkok, Lotus One in Dubai, Raffles Singapore, The Athenee Hotel, a Luxury Collection Hotel Bangkok, and Le Meridien Bangkok.

John joins Hampton by Hilton Marjan Island as GM

Hampton by Hilton Marjan Island has welcomed John Riad as General Manager. No stranger to Hilton, John brings 19 years of industry experience. In this role he takes over the world's largest Hampton by Hilton property.

John began his journey with Hilton in 2002 at the Hilton Pyramids Golf Resort in Egypt as the Revenue Manager. He has also worked at Hilton Kuwait Resort, Conrad Dubai, and more recently DoubleTree by Hilton Ras Al Khaimah as Hotel Manager for almost four years. He was also in charge of opening the new DoubleTree Ras Al Khaimah Corniche Hotel & Residences during this period.



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Nestlé
Golden
Chef's Hat
Award



SILENT KNIGHTS

Individually, they're both shy and reticent. But when they team up for the Golden Chef's Hat Award, the personalities of Chefs **Ramy Mohammad Abdelsalam Eldesouky** and **Dinesh Kumar** come alive, bursting with colours and stories. What vibrant dishes does our team from Jumeirah Creekside have for us this time around?

RAMY MOHAMMAD ABDELSALAM ELDESOUKY

Cooking is love on a plate. This is how Chef Ramy Mohammad Abdelsalam Eldesouky feels about gastronomy. When he cooks something special for his guests, he feels fulfilled in ways that only passionate chefs can understand.

The 30-year-old Egyptian chef has been cooking since he was barely 12. Since then, small, basic kitchen tasks have given way to elaborate culinary experiments. His latest experiment – the main course for the GCHA – is an Asian

salmon dish served with Thai green sauce, sunchoke puree and grilled vegetables.

Like he does with all his dishes, Chef Ramy has poured his heart and soul into the creation. "The salmon and vegetables are grilled with butter, thyme and lemon," he says, explaining his dish for the judges.

The demi chef de partie from Jumeirah Creekside Hotel has been in the industry since 2008, when he started out at the Millennium Hotel Resort in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. "But I have been used to professional kitchens since I was a child. My father is also a chef and

I helped in the restaurant while still in school." Helping around the Arabic restaurant, he developed a liking for the vocation. So by the time he finished up his education at the age of 19, the way forward was clear.

Chef Ramy worked at several hotels in Sharm El Sheikh before he got an opportunity to become a chef de partie for a restaurant catering company in Saudi Arabia. "We had to cater to six restaurants and I learnt a lot. It was a pretty big operation with some 35 odd chefs." A couple of years later, he



RAMY MOHAMMAD ABDELSALAM ELDESOUKY



DINESH KUMAR



headed out to Dubai, joining the Criollo Cafe at Sunset Mall in Jumeirah.

Earlier this year, he made his way to Jumeirah Creekside.

Chef Ramy's dream is to become an executive chef someday. But before he gets there, he would like to explore a bit and hone his skills. Going back to Egypt is also on the radar.

On his immediate wishlist, however, is a holiday in Egypt to spend time with his wife and their three-year-old daughter. Chef Ramy loves to cook for his family too when he goes home. Does he wish his daughter follow in his footsteps in the future? "I'll let her choose her own path. The world will look very different by the time she reaches adulthood," says the indulgent father.

Does he have any interesting anecdotes to share from his past experiences? "Once I made some mushroom soup for the guests, who were Italian. My team leader called me outside and I thought I had made a mistake with my dish. But when I went outside, the guests hugged me and told me the soup was very good. They also gave me a generous tip."

Such moments reinforce Chef Ramy's decision to get into this noble profession. And make life delicious!

DINESH KUMAR

'Desserts are the fairy tales of the kitchen – the happily-ever-after to supper', goes a quote doing the rounds online. If that is true, Chef Dinesh Kumar is nothing less than a fairy godfather. Serving the perfect finish to Chef Ramy's salmon main course is Chef Dinesh. Keeping the flavours of the team's meal intact, his dessert is an Asian symphony of Earl Grey tea-infused chocolate cream, white chocolate lemongrass and tropical fruits. "There is also vanilla creme brulee with it," he says, pleased with his creation.

The 27-year-old is demi chef de partie in the cold kitchen at the Jumeirah Creekside. He's been with the property for two years, supporting operations while learning the nuances of fine-dining pastry. "There are so many opportunities to innovate here and I like that very much," he says.

Born and raised in southern Sri Lanka, Chef Dinesh started his career in 2011. After working for a couple of years in his home country, he got a break in Dubai with the Hilton Fujairah Resort. A year later, he moved to Hotel Palace Downtown, where he worked for three years before joining Jumeirah Creekside in 2019. "What I love about my job here is that the focus on food

is very strong. Our chefs come up with new ideas regularly and we change things quite often. Every five-six months, you will find new offerings. And that helps me learn a lot."

While most chefs dream of big positions and fancy designations, Chef Dinesh's wish is to reach perfection in his chosen profession. "The rest comes on its own," he smiles.

Being away from his family in a foreign land, Chef Dinesh has had some interesting experiences, not just in the kitchen but even outside.

"When I was working at the Hotel Palace Downtown, there was a big fire in another hotel on New Year's Eve. It was very tragic and the fire kept burning through the first of January, which is my birthday. I was very sad on my birthday and the mood was really sombre."

When such tragedies and life's challenges get him down, Chef Dinesh finds solace in the guitar. "I can play guitar and I also do some spicy seafood cooking to switch off." Even after spending the whole day in the kitchen, he is never bored of cooking.

This passion reflects in his creations. Ask any lucky taster of his desserts!



Grilled salmon, crispy seafood croquette, Jerusalem artichoke puree, roasted grilled vegetables, spiced lettuce emulsion, artichoke chips

SALMON CONFIT

Salmon	640g
Thyme	Few sprigs
Salt	10g
Pepper	5g
Extra virgin olive oil	20ml

Method

- ◆ Clean and fillet the salmon
- ◆ Cut into even size 160g portions
- ◆ Baste with olive oil, season with salt and pepper

- ◆ Grill the salmon skin side down, finish it in the oven 200°C for 7-8 minutes. Cook to medium well and serve with accompaniments.

FOR SEAFOOD CROQUETTE

Lobster tail	100g
Shrimps	100g
Garlic	5g
Mashed potato	50g
Nestle cooking cream	40ml
Salt	10g
Pepper	5g
Parsley	Few sprigs
Thyme	Few sprigs
Lemon juice	15ml
Flour	100g
Eggs	2
Panko breadcrumbs	180g

Frying oil 250ml

Method

- ◆ Clean and dice the seafood. Heat oil in a pan and sauté garlic, thyme and seafood till all the moisture dries up. Mix it in mashed potato and cream, and season with salt, pepper, parsley and lime juice.
- ◆ In a separate bowls take flour, beaten eggs and breadcrumbs.
- ◆ Make seafood balls, dip each one in flour followed by eggs and then breadcrumbs, and shape it.
- ◆ Fry till golden brown in colour.

FOR ROASTED GRILLED VEGETABLES

Oyster king mushroom	50g
Carrot	50g
Asparagus green	50g
Beet root	50g

Sweet potatoes	50g
Maggi vegetable stock	15g
Butter	15g

Method

- ◆ Wash and peel the vegetables and dice it.
- ◆ Blanch all vegetables in salted boiling water
- ◆ Grill and then roast in an oven till cooked.
- ◆ Take vegetable stock, mix it in water, and combine required amount of butter. Glaze the prepared vegetables in vegetable stock glaze.

SPICED LETTUCE EMULSION

Thai curry paste	20g
Ginger	5g
Lemongrass	1no
Chilli padi	2no
Kafir lime leaf	5g
Romaine lettuce	30g
Nestle chicken powder	10g
Maggi coconut powder	15g
Butter	15g

Method

- ◆ In a pot heat up the butter
- ◆ Add ginger, lemongrass and chili padi
- ◆ Sweat until fragrant
- ◆ Add the curry paste and sweat
- ◆ Add the chicken stock, reduce to half
- ◆ Add the Thai basil, kafir lime leaf and cream
- ◆ Infuse on heat for 10 min
- ◆ Strain and add romaine lettuce and blend while hot.

JERUSALEM ARTICHOKE PUREE

Topinambour	100g
Butter	25g
Nestle cooking cream	45ml
Salt	2g
Lemon	2ml

Method

- ◆ Prepare a container of cold water with lemon juice to put the peeled topinambour inside
- ◆ Wash and peel the topinambour and keep straight in the lemon water

- ◆ Once all are peeled, slice thinly
- ◆ Take out of the water and season with salt, And vacuum pack fully Cook in a steamer at 100°C until soft (about 1 hour)
- ◆ Once soft, take out of the bag and blend in a thermomixer and strain
- ◆ Ideally leave to drip excess water over night, warm up again and add the butter and the cream fraiche and season
- ◆ Serve HOT

JERUSALEM ARTICHOKE CHIPS

Jerusalem artichoke	100g
Frying Oil	1ltr
Salt	4g

Method

- ◆ Peel and slice the Jerusalem artichoke into 0.2mm thick slices
- ◆ Fry in a deep fryer at 150°C until golden brown
- ◆ Leave to drip the oil on a paper towel Season with fine salt
- ◆ Keep in the dehydrator until use

Chocolate Mouse with Chocolate Lemon Grass Creamux

KitKat Dulce de Leche Biscuit Combine Vanilla Cream Brule and Tropical Fruit Chunk with Apricot Cardamon Coulis and Coconut Whipped Ganache

CHOCOLATE MOUSE

Earl grey tea powder	10g
Nestle Chocolate Mix powder	62g
Milk	125g

Method

- ◆ First infuse the tea powder with milk overnight
- ◆ Put the appropriate amount of cold milk into a high bowl
- ◆ Mix chocolate powder into the tea infused milk using a whip until homogenous mixture has been obtained.

WHITE CHOCOLATE LEMON GRASS CREAMUX

Milk	38g
Nestle Cooking Cream	38g
Brown Sugar	8g

Egg Yolk	20g
Milk Chocolate	100g
Dark Chocolate	40g
Gelatin	1

Method

- ◆ Boil the cream, milk and lemon grass together.
- ◆ Meanwhile in a bowl whisk egg yolk smooth then rapidly whisk in the brown sugar.
- ◆ Pour the boiling cream mixture and whisk quickly, pour the tempered egg mixture into the heat cream and low heat stirring using a spatula.
- ◆ Lastly add bloom gelatin and white chocolate mix with hand whisk until smooth.

KITKAT DULCE DE LECHE BISCUITS

Milk Chocolate	40g
Nestle Sweetened Condensed milk	60g
Florentine	30g
KitKat Chunky	30g

Method

- ◆ Melt milk chocolate
- ◆ Add the Dulce de leche

- ◆ Add the Florentine and KitKat chunky mix
- ◆ Sheet on the butter paper

HAZELNUT FINANCIER

Icing Sugar	38g
Hazelnut Powder	21g
Flour	21g
Egg White	42m
Butter	42g
Honey	25g

Method

- ◆ Combine icing sugar, hazelnut powder, flour, egg white, and honey in once bowl.
- ◆ Add clarified butter mixture over ingredient and mix by hand whisk.
- ◆ Bake it in prepared flat tray at 175°C for 18 minutes.

SHINING GLAZE

Silver Gelatin Sheets	4.5g
Water	33g
Sugar	56g
Glucose	56g
Milk Chocolate	56g
Nestle sweetened condensed milk	40g



Natural Glaze 23g

Nestle Cooking Cream 40g

Method

- ◆ Bloom the gelatin
- ◆ Then boil the water, sugar and glucose
- ◆ Pour boiling hot mixture over chocolate
- ◆ Add condensed milk and blend with a hand blender
- ◆ Add bloomed gelatin and natural glaze then blend by hand with blender.

VANILLA CREAM BRULEE

Docello Creme Brulee mix 50g

Nestle Cooking Cream 100ml

Milk 75 ml

Method

- ◆ Mix milk and cream together in a pot and bring it to a boil.
- ◆ After boiling remove from heat and add powder milk with hand whip. Then bring back to boil.

- ◆ Keep it ready in chiller overnight.

TROPICAL FRUIT COMPOTE

Mango (fresh) 25g

Passion Fruit 25g

Mango Puree 25g

Passion Fruit Puree 25g

Dragon Fruit 25g

Sugar 25g

Vanilla Stick 2g

Method

- ◆ Cook all fruits together in low fire

COCONUT WHIPPED GANACHE

Cream 200g

Liquid Glucose 499g

Gelatin 3.69g

Ivory Chocolate 246g

Cream 400g

Coconut Puree 250g

Desiccated Coconut 15g

Method

- ◆ Boil cream and liquid glucose in a pot
- ◆ Transfer the boiled mixture over the ivory chocolate and make it smooth
- ◆ Add the cream and coconut puree
- ◆ Use it after overnight from chiller
- ◆ Whip by using electric mixture until it is whipped properly.

APRICOT CARDAMON COULI

Apricot Puree 200g

Sugar 27g

Agar-Agar 2g

Cardamon Powder 5g

Method

- ◆ Bring to boil the apricot puree and half of the sugar.
- ◆ Add half of the sugar after boiling with the agar-agar mix it properly and keep it in chiller to set.
- ◆ Mix it by blender.



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THE WUNDERKIND

Most dream about success. Chef Rene Juefri Johari worked for it. The executive chef of DoubleTree By Hilton Dubai started by following in his father's footsteps and then went many kilometres ahead. What is the young chef's secret sauce?



A 37-year-old executive chef is rare. What is rarer still, is a 37-year-old executive chef with the enthusiasm of a child and the wisdom of a grandfather.

Chef Rene Juefri Johari is one of these rare gems.

The wisdom of the executive chef at DoubleTree By Hilton Dubai defies his age. Running big kitchen operations with a firm but gentle hand, he coaxes his team to bring their best to the plate ever single day. Not that the team needs much motivating – it's easy to allow Chef Rene's childlike enthusiasm to infect you.

His own story is no less inspiring. Despite being born to a professional chef father, he had made his mark in the culinary world on his own, sans his father's influence and network. The fact that he has achieved quite a lot in a relatively short time stands testimony to the young chef's talent.

But talent is just part of the story. Read on to find out what other ingredients make Chef Rene the success he is.

BORN TO COOK

The son of a rather successful chef, Chef Rene did not need any epiphany to show him the way to the professional kitchen. Hospitality was an integral part of his upbringing and the seeds of a love for culinary arts were sown early on.

Born in Kuala Terengganu in the east coast of Malaysia, Chef Rene travelled all over the country as his father changed jobs. These travels exposed him to many cooking styles, good food and ingredients. When his father moved to Shanghai, Chef Rene decided to stay back in Malaysia and formally study cooking.

Leaving high school with the intention of getting a culinary degree, he declined to opt for business studies when he could not secure a seat in the first batch. "I had to wait for the second batch to start. I used the waiting time to familiarise



I had to wait for the second batch to start. I used the waiting time to familiarise myself with the local industry and do an unpaid internship

myself with the local industry and do an unpaid internship," he recalls. The idea was to get a feel of the profession before going in. "The experience helped me relate to the theoretical lessons better."

In 2008, Chef Rene finished his three-year bachelor studies in Restaurant, Culinary, and Catering Management from the Universiti Teknologi MARA. Along the way, he also dabbled in teaching.

His first job was at the Senses restaurant at the Hilton Kuala Lumpur. When Chef Rene first asked to be assigned to the kitchen, the request was declined because he was a trainee. "It was an Australian lady who was the head chef. I told her to allow me to come for a couple of days and show her what I can do." A week later, when he finished his training, he was offered a full-time job.

Later, he worked for the tourism department of Malaysia, doing promotions for the local food. A while later, Chef Rene went professionally into teaching. First, he did some part-time teaching at the Malaysia Science University and then taught full time at Neela University.

Eventually, however, the kitchen won over the classroom.

The corporate chef of Nestle in Malaysia sent Chef Rene's CV to a recruiting agency. The agency offered the young

chef a chance to join the pre-opening team for the Abu Dhabi Formula One event in 2009. After several rounds of interviews, Chef Rene was offered a chance to go to Abu Dhabi. At the same time, he also got a call to take up a position at a different university.

Post a little introspection, Chef Rene opted for the Abu Dhabi position, spending nearly two years there. "I realised that it could be a stepping stone to Europe. I've always wanted to travel and work abroad. My dream destinations are France and Switzerland. My father had worked in Switzerland and he got me all curious."

The opportunity did open new doors. Chef Rene moved to Dubai to work with the Ivy restaurant by the Jumeirah Group as chef de cuisine in mid-2011. Although he was offered a chance to go to Hilton Seychelles, he declined that in favour of Dubai. "It was a well-known restaurant format by a London-based Michelin-star chef. I joined as the chef de partie and worked there for a year and a half."

The same building housed a high-end restaurant called Vu's. It was a fine-dining, French Mediterranean restaurant. The head chef knew Chef Rene from the opening of the Ivy and offered him a junior sous chef position at Vu's. "I was very excited at the opportunity to join a restaurant of that standard. It was a short stint though. After seven-eight months, they asked me if I would like to move to Rib Room, which is a steakhouse. I was promoted to sous chef."

In the beginning of 2017, Chef Rene moved to Galvin Dubai by Meraas, a French restaurant from restaurateur brothers Chris and Jeff Galvin. Galvin Dubai, which was located in The Square area, gave the Malaysian chef a taste of celebrity dining. He also went to London for training before the restaurant open. "That was my first job as head chef, running the kitchen operations. I did two more restaurant openings at Meraas. I was moved to Toro & Ko, a



Spanish restaurant." Chef Rene worked on changing the menu at the Toro & Ko. "That was yet another experience with celebrity chefs and top-level dining."

Towards the end of 2019, he joined DoubleTree by Hilton Dubai.

The move won Chef Rene his first executive chef title. Having worked in both hotels and restaurants, he appreciates both the benefits and challenges of the two formats. "I like the environment in a hotel because you have different departments and there are more opportunities to meet more people. Restaurants attract very specific clientele." However, working in hotels is more intense. "In a restaurant, if you open for lunch and dinner, you are done at specific times. In a hotel, you start very early and different restaurants have different needs. Starting with breakfast, you have to cater to the cafe, then lunch and dinner services and so on."

Chef Rene oversees the F&B operations of the entire property. There are three main outlets – the main restaurant My Square, Food Lounge for artisan bakes and sandwiches, and the pool bar Bay Club – along with conference and banqueting services.

The executive chef sees himself as the head of a culinary family. "Your colleagues are people you see day in and day out. So it's like being in a big family. Sometimes you have fun together, sometimes you have quarrels. But at the end of the day, professionalism and a good understanding of our collective purpose takes precedence over individual issues." Even when he has to sometimes play the boss, he likes to take an informational rather than a hierarchical approach. "Our employees are not machines. They are people with emotions. You want to make sure they understand why you are telling them to do something differently."

While Chef Rene, the manager, believes in collectivism, Chef Rene, the cook, is



You can be the highlight and even be the face of a company. Social media allows you to interact directly with your customers as well as inspire others and get inspired by them

strongly individualistic. Specialising in Asian, Mediterranean, French, Spanish and Middle Eastern cuisine, he likes to keep updating his taste buds with new ingredients. "Respect ingredients, always," is his simple advice to budding chefs. "People are too much into modernization of cooking skills. They tend to forget the basics. One of these basics is building up your palate. You develop your brain cells by reading. The same way, you build up your palate by being open and exploring ingredients." Curiosity is a tool that sharpens a chef's skills. "When you get curious, you get more information. Don't hesitate to ask

questions." Despite his main work now being operations, Chef Rene pops into the kitchen regularly to cook for guests. "I do breakfast sometimes, maybe make an omelette for a guest. I am a pretty hands-on executive chef."

Chef Rene celebrates the fact that culinaires these days have many opportunities to present their talent directly to the customers, for example, through social media. "You can be the highlight and even be the face of a company. Social media allows you to interact directly with your customers as well as inspire others and get inspired by them."

Understandably, Chef Rene's culinary family takes up a lot of his time. Whatever time is left over, he likes to spend with his wife and his one-year-old baby. "My wife also studied culinary arts and she used to work in event management before. So she understands my time constraints and challenges."

These constraints won't ease even in the future. For, Chef Rene dreams of launching his own restaurant and maybe even return to teaching in the distant future.

The future, however, will have to wait. The present can't get enough of him!



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FEDERAL MINISTRY OF DELICIOUSNESS

If her unusual name doesn't quite catch your attention, Chef Arwa Federal's signature cakes definitely will. Her studio is the headquarters of deliciousness, where the politics of flavours, colours and senses play out daily...

When your surname is 'Federal', expectations from you cannot help but be high. Luckily, Arwa Federal not just meets but surpasses even the highest expectations.

No, she doesn't run a government agency. Quite the opposite actually. Chef Arwa focuses on the politics of colours, flavours and tastes, bringing them together to give her customers memorable gastronomic moments.

Her Arwa Federal Signature Cakes studio specialises in custom-designed cakes and desserts for special occasions such as birthday, weddings and parties. "We are not a cake shop, we are a cake studio," the 36-year-old owner of the concept emphasises. If you want to sample her goodies, you have to take an appointment and state your requirements, preferences and location, so her cabinet of dessertarians can bring your personality into the delicacies. "For example, when we are making a wedding cake, we get to know the couple and their styles, and then design the cake accordingly. If it's a birthday, we understand the theme and create a design that's unique to the theme and to the person whose birthday it is. All our recipes are made from scratch," she elaborates.

While the studio is relatively new – it opened its doors in the beginning of 2020 – Chef Arwa has been running the business informally for 15 years as a home business. "I started off with family and friends. Even though we



I started off with family and friends. Even though we started just before the pandemic hit, people were still celebrating and they had bigger budgets for cake

started just before the pandemic hit, people were still celebrating and they had bigger budgets for cake." People were especially generous when it came to kids' birthdays. With not much else to do in terms of entertainment, having a memorable birthday cake became all the more important.

Born and brought up in Mumbai, India, Chef Arwa had a fascination for baking from early childhood. Her mother is an avid baker and the scent of freshly baked cookies and cakes almost always wafted through their house. Helping her mother with baking, the little girl knew she wanted to be a baker when she grew up. "My teachers felt I could excel in academia but I stubbornly joined hotel management. My parents were supportive throughout, though." Completing her last semester of college

in Switzerland, Chef Arwa got a job at a five-star hotel in Dubai as a junior pastry chef but the stint was shortlived. "I realised this setup was not for me. The work hours and the kitchen politics got to me and I decided to become an independent chef."

Her friends and family came to the rescue.

Chef Arwa got her first order at the end of 2005. "I baked a black forest cake," she smiles. Through workshops with noted pastry chefs, she honed her skills, eventually gaining enough confidence to launch her own studio last year.

"I had my eye on this particular space for almost two years, we've been in the building for years. There was this whole period of contemplation on whether I should formalise my business or just stick to home business. But now that I have experienced the formal process, I wish I had done this much earlier."

The location of the studio is rather attractive, easily accessible to clients from both Dubai and Abu Dhabi. In the initial meetings, Chef Arwa tries to understand the size and theme of the party and how well the designs associated with the event fit in with the idea of the cake. "Everything matters – the stationery used in the invites, the decor, the stage design. Sometimes, we have a story that the cake has to tell, maybe on how a couple met." Once they have the details, the cake is conceptualized and two sketches are provided to the client. "After feedback



and approval, we start working on it. The entire process takes 7-10 days."

Although the design is the attraction of the cake at first glance, Chef Arwa ensures that the taste is not compromised in any way. "The client will come back to us only if the guests enjoyed the cake. If it looks good, but it doesn't taste good, there's no point in doing it."

One of the cakes she had a lot of fun making was in the shape of a plate of rice. "We made the rice with small sugar pieces and each grain was handmade. The doll was made using butter cream, and then textures were added to it." A cake made by her was also featured in a top Bollywood film.

Ask her about her future plans and Chef Arwa sticks to a horizon of five years. "I definitely want to teach. That was also the point of starting the studio. I've done that casually but now I want to



Everything matters – the stationery used in the invites, the decor, the stage design. Sometimes, we have a story that the cake has to tell, maybe on how a couple met

make it structured. It's something I really enjoy doing. We may also launch some merchandise."

A regret is not having gone to a pastry school during her educational years. "I would like some more technical

knowledge and do a formal training."

And who are the lucky tasters of her delicious creations? "My husband and my sister are my biggest critics. And now my niece too," she laughs.

On her own role models, Chef Arwa says she follows several celebrity chefs known for their creativity and innovativeness. "Pierre Hermé and Heston Blumenthal are two of my favourites. I also follow several social media handles that excel in cakes."

Last but not the least, where does her unusual surname come from? "Our old family business. We were into book manufacturing and then notebooks. Once I was in the elevator of the building and someone asked me if I was running a government agency because my studio was by appointment only!"

Well, if there was a ministry of desserts, we are sure Chef Arwa would be heading it.

Chocolate Cake with Hazelnut Praline & Salted Caramel Filling

CHOCOLATE CAKE

Lurpak Soft Unsalted	425g
Caster Sugar	350g
Large eggs	2
Plain flour	250g
Cocoa powder	125g
Baking powder	12.5g
Teaspoons Bicarbonate of soda	6g
Fine Salt	5g
Vanilla Extract	5ml
Freshly brewed coffee	250 ml
Milk	225 ml

Method

- ◆ Preheat your oven to 350°F/180°C. Grease 2 x 6" diameter cake tins.
- ◆ In a bowl, mix together the flour, cocoa, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda and fine salt and whisk it all together. Keep to one side.
- ◆ Place the butter into the bowl of a

free-standing mixer with a paddle attachment. Beat until creamy.

- ◆ Add the sugar and beat for a few more minutes until pale. Beat in the eggs, one at a time, then add the vanilla; scraping the mixture off the sides and bottom.
- ◆ Add the dry ingredients to the mixing bowl, along with the freshly brewed coffee and milk, and mix slowly until it all comes together.
- ◆ Beat vigorously for a further minute, then divide the batter between the two cake tins. Place them in the middle of the oven and bake for 35 to 40 minutes. When they are ready, leave the cakes to cool in their tins for 10 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

HAZELNUT PRALINE

Still Mineral Water	45ml
Superfine Granulated Sugar	125 g
Toasted Hazelnuts	200 g
Dried Vanilla Pods	2

Method

- ◆ Place the still mineral water and sugar in a saucepan and cook to 250° F/121°C.
- ◆ Place the chopped toasted hazelnuts (which should still be warm) and the vanilla pods in a bowl and pour the syrup over them. Mix well and transfer to a saucepan. Allow to caramelize over medium heat.
- ◆ Transfer the mixture to a greased baking sheet and allow to cool, then grind the praline in a food processor.

SALTED CARAMEL

Arla Pro High Stability

Whipping Cream	135 g
Glucose syrup	50 g
Superfine granulated sugar	85 g
Lurpak Soft Unsalted	15 g
Salt	5 g

Method

- ◆ In a saucepan bring the cream to boil, remove it from the heat.
- ◆ Combine the glucose syrup and sugar in a saucepan and heat until it turns an amber color.

- ◆ Remove from the heat, add the butter, and mix well.
- ◆ Pour in the boiled cream, then return the mixture to the heat and cook to 217° F/103°C.
- ◆ Add the salt. Set aside to cool.

CHOCOLATE SWISS MERINGUE BUTTERCREAM

Pasteurized eggs whites	60 g
Caster sugar	85 g

Arla Pro Butter Unsalted, diced at room temperature	180 g
Vanilla bean paste	2.5 g
54 % Dark Chocolate callets	40 g

Method

- ◆ Combine egg whites and sugar in a heatproof bowl of a stand mixer set over a simmering water. Whisk constantly until the mixture reaches 160° F/ 71° C.
- ◆ Attach the bowl to the mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. Starting on a low speed and gradually increasing to a medium-high speed, which until stiff (but not dry) peaks form. Continue mixing until the mixture is fluffy and glossy, and completely cool.
- ◆ With the mixer on a medium-low speed, add the butter a few tablespoons at a time, mixing well after each addition. Once all the butter has been added, whisk in vanilla.
- ◆ Switch to the paddle attachment and continue beating on low speed until no air bubbles remain, about 2 minutes. Continue beating until the frosting is completing smooth.
- ◆ Melt the chocolate callets over a double boiler. Once cooled, add the melted chocolate into the prepared buttercream.

CHOCOLATE GANACHE

Arla Pro High Stability Whipping Cream	100 ml
54% Dark Chocolate Callets	150 g

Method

- ◆ Heat the cream in a small saucepan over medium heat until it begins to gently simmer.
- ◆ Pour over chocolate, then let it sit for 2-3 minutes to gently soften the chocolate.

- ◆ With a metal spoon, very slowly stir until completely combined and chocolate has melted.
- ◆ Allow ganache to chill for 2 hours.

To Assemble the Cake

- ◆ Torte the cakes into 2 layers each.
- ◆ Place the cake layer on the prepared cake board. Pipe a dam of ganache around the edge of the cake. Add the prepared chocolate buttercream and the

hazelnut praline.

- ◆ Place a second layer of the cake over. Pipe the dam with the ganache and fill with salted caramel.
- ◆ Place the third cake layer. Pipe a dam of ganache around the edge of the cake. Add the prepared chocolate buttercream and sprinkle the hazelnut praline over.
- ◆ Ice the cake with the chocolate ganache and decorate with fondant.



August-September 2021 **Gulf Gourmet**

THE ADVENTURES OF ALAN

Chef Alan Pedge is flexibility, curiosity and resilience rolled into one. The vice president of the Emirates Culinary Guild has witnessed the evolution of the Gulf region and its hospitality industry. And had quite an adventure along the way...



" If you get caught in yesterday, you won't be able to march forward with confidence into tomorrow."

These words sum up not just Chef Alan Pedge's winning attitude but also his life.

An industry veteran, he has spent five decades exploring what life has to offer. Understandably, not every exploration was easy. But each one was fulfilling and a step towards tomorrow. The vice president of the Emirates Culinary Guild and the food and beverage manager of YOSH Hospitality has many stories to tell, some of which will blow your mind.

Chef Alan's love affair with the UAE is as old as the city's modern history – it began at a time when today's most vibrant Middle Eastern city was a plain Jane. "I first came here in 1979," he gets nostalgic. "It was a different world back then. Dubai was not the financial centre it is today and the infrastructure was still being built."

Few European chefs back then would have considered the city to be destination for their professional explorations.

Chef Alan did, and he hasn't looked back since.

AN EARLY START

Most chefs have childhood stories of how they were inspired to become gastronomes by their family members or friends.

Chef Alan has no such romantic tales to tell about his beginnings into the profession. This story is one of hard work and faith in fate. "I grew up in the city of Lincoln in Northeast England. It is a very old city close to Nottingham." Chef Alan was still in school when he had his first tryst with the hospitality industry. "I started a part-time job at a hotel when I was in school. Nothing fancy – just cleaning vegetables and washing dishes." The young boy's interest and commitment caught the eye of the supervising chef at the hotel called Eastgate. After he finished school, Chef



I started a part-time job at a hotel when I was in school. Nothing fancy – just cleaning vegetables and washing dishes

Alan was offered a chance to do a full apprenticeship at the hotel. "I accepted it and I have never had a moment of regret. In my past 50 years in the industry, I have never felt I should have done something else."

Why would he? Chef Alan not only excels at the job he loves, the profession has also taken him halfway around the world and given him a lifestyle most can only dream of.

But the early start had its teething troubles. "I worked five and a half days at the hotel and went to college one day a week. So I basically had just one evening off a week." However, Chef Alan embraced the learnings and enjoyed every minute of what he did, which made the going somewhat easier.

In 1976, he passed out of Norwich City College, moving on to work in some country house hotels in England as a chef. "The country house system in England is like the châteaux in France. They are smaller but the quality of food is very high. This was before Michelin stars became well-known in the UK. I worked in a couple of hotels where you had to book four-five days in advance to get a seat at the restaurant." These experiences stood Chef Alan in good stead, eventually winning him an opportunity to come to Dubai.

NEW SHORES

When he came here for the first time,

Dubai had none of the internationalism that it so proudly flaunts today. For a chef, the real big difference was in the supply chain. "You had a flight coming in with supplies once a week. So you didn't get fresh vegetables and produce every day. Most of your produce came from Jordan and Syria via truck or from India by boat." It was rare to see 'exotic' ingredients like avocado.

Joining a cosy British restaurant in Bur Dubai, Chef Alan catered to a class of customers that is very different from what it is today. "Today's customer in Dubai is a white-collar official. At the time, it was a blue-collar city with British, South African and Australian engineers working here to build the infrastructure that you see now." Projects like Jebel Ali were under way and road infrastructure was being built. "Believe it or not, when I came to Dubai for the first time, I lived in one of the first apartment blocks in Bur Dubai. Those days, you had packs of wild dogs running around. Sometimes when you returned home late at night, you had to wait inside your car until the wild dogs left. Dubai has changed so much over the years."

After working at the restaurant for a year, Chef Alan went back to the UK, this time to join what would be his first big hotel experience.

"It was a large hotel near the airport with 600 rooms. It was a totally different environment to the one I was used to. I joined as the chef de partie and moved up to sous chef over the years."

Chef Alan returned to Dubai to the Chicago Beach Hotel but the stint did not work out too well. Due to political problems at the hotel, he left in just eight months, returning to the UK to work in some four-star hotels. "I also worked at the five-star Palm Beach Casino in London. In 1985, I had my first executive chef position at the Marlborough Crest Hotel."

The lure of an international lifestyle,



however, was too strong to resist. "The culture of working abroad eventually pulled me back to the Middle East."

EASTERN ENCOUNTERS

When Chef Alan returned to the Gulf region in 1988, he headed for Saudi Arabia, to Holiday Inn in Al Jubail. A few months later, he was transferred to Bahrain, which at the time was the financial hub of the region. "Bahrain was much ahead of Dubai back then. This was around the first Gulf War. The war had a very big impact on the region. Because of the political instability, many financial centres moved down to Dubai." Three and a half years later, he went deeper into Asia, with a job in Sri Lanka. For the next three years, he was the executive chef at the Ramada Renaissance Hotel



I worked five and a half days at the hotel and went to college one day a week. So I basically had just one evening off a week

in Colombo. Subsequently, he also spent a year in Malta, before going to Jazira Beach Resort and Hotel, Abu Dhabi "at the border with Dubai". The idea was

to have a golf course resort there but the plan did not materialize. Chef Alan spent some time there before heading for Lebanon to join the Regency Palace Hotel. "That was a unique experience. The civil war had ended but there was still a lot of tension. We did catering for weddings and events." A couple of years later, he went to a severely cold Kazakhstan from the hot Lebanon. The change in environment was stark. Temperatures there went sub-zero in winters. Chef Alan joined the Intercontinental Hotel, the only five-star in the country's capital Astana. "Astana had been the capital only for four years. The capital was moved from Almaty. At the time, everyone was chasing oil. Our guest list was magnificent. At least once a month, we had a presidential visit."





Much was happening around the time. The 9/11 attacks had a deep impact on oil and things were in disarray. Kazakhstan had oil reserves, which were the item of many international deals.

In mid-2004, Chef Alan decided to move back to Dubai, compelled by a personal decision. "My daughter was 10 or 11 years old at the time and we wanted to get her into the European mainstream school system. That's not to say that the education in Kazakhstan was not top grade. It was just that it was not accredited by the UK education system. So we made a decision to come to the UAE." Staying with the Millennium Hotel for a couple of years, Chef Alan moved to Ramada Hotel in Bur Dubai and Samaya Hotels and Resorts in Deira Dubai before he joined YOSH Hospitality in 2013. The holding company owns a number of private VIP properties.

PRESENT PERFECT

As is obvious, it has been a wild ride. There were highs and there were lows, but there was never a dull moment.

A big low for Chef Alan came last year, when in the middle of the pandemic, he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. "It came out of the blue. I had no pain or any symptoms. The tumour had grown quite a bit and spread to my liver. Luckily, it was caught in time. I had an operation and now it's gone." Nursing himself back to health, Chef Alan refuses to let past travails affect his present or future. "If you are going to worry about what happened yesterday, you give up on life. I have a family, I have a daughter. I have to see them for a number of years. You don't fight an illness with your body. You fight it with your mind."

While his mind tells him to take it easy, his heart insists on exactly the opposite. As the third-in-command at the guild, Chef Alan runs the day-to-day show when culinary events like Salon Culinaire take place. He's been with the Guild since 1994, being the chief marshal from 2009 to 2016 and heading the Abu Dhabi



My main advice to any chef is 'learn the kitchen, not the section'. Because one day you might be in the hot kitchen, then in the cold kitchen. Also, be more flexible than the generation before you

chapter between 2011 and 2014. "Vice president is always a tricky role. You have no actual 'job'. Chef Uwe Micheel takes care of the people and public aspects of the Guild. Chef Andy Cuthbert takes care of the admin. But when the doors to the events open, I am the one in front of all the chefs, making sure all the day-to-day nuances are taken care of."

Ever the adventurer, Chef Alan doesn't see himself retiring ever.

"In the unlikely event that I do, I would like to spend some time with my

daughter in the Philippines, where she works at the university."

CHANGING LANDSCAPE

The culinary landscape today looks very different from what it used to be half a century ago. While AI and automation threaten jobs in the industry, changing tastes and needs of customers are putting bigger pressure on chefs to innovate.

"Flexibility is the key to remaining relevant. One of the reasons I came to this part of the world was that I saw this happening in Europe, where a lot of the skills were being outsourced. Unfortunately, it does lead to a loss of skills. When you get a situation where most of your meat is cut in a factory and you buy your breads, croissants and Danish, these skills are lost in the kitchen."

Nevertheless, young chefs should ensure they improve their all-round skills and have a good handle on the basics. "A lot of chefs, especially from Asia, come into the trade and put themselves in a slot. They work in cold kitchen or pastry and close their eyes to the rest of the kitchen. My main advice to any chef is 'learn the kitchen, not the section'. Because one day you might be in the hot kitchen, then in the cold kitchen. Also, be more flexible than the generation before you."

He expects the trend of the restaurant atmosphere taking over hotels to make flexible skills even more desired. "One thing that is happening not just in the UAE but in the Middle East and Asia is that we are now seeing far more hotels franchising out their restaurants to different companies. Due to this blossoming of independent restaurants, the skills of a chef have to be even more flexible."

Taking into account his long and successful innings in the culinary industry, it's tough to fault his career philosophy. Flexibility, resilience and curiosity, the ingredients that make Chef Alan the person we all want to be.



BORN TO WIN

Meet Chef **Dilip Kumara**, the winner of the World Chocolate Masters Middle East 21\22

Some chefs like competitions. Chef Dilip Kumara lives for them. The Sous Chef at FIVE Palm Jumeirah Hotel would move countries for a chance to learn and teach via competitions.

Chef Dilip returned to Dubai just to pursue his self-improvement project through culinary competitions and at last count had nearly 20 medals. He was also the winner of the Best Pastry Chef Award at the extremely competitive Salon Culinaire 2019.

EARLY DAYS

Cut to the year 2000. An impressionable teen growing up in Panadura, Sri Lanka, was fascinated by his brother-in-law's white uniform. Stories from the



I decided I wanted to be a chef when I was in my late teens

professional kitchen were heard and absorbed fully. Slowly, a gastronomic ambition took seed.

"I decided I wanted to be a chef when I was in my late teens," says the now 36-year-old chef. Determined to earn his own white uniform, Chef Dilip joined a three-year programme at the National

Apprentice Board in Sri Lanka, which has churned out many a talented chef.

"I studied for six months and worked for six months in turns. I got exposure across sections of the professional kitchen – butchery, pastry, hot kitchen, cold kitchen." Chef Dilip did not have to pay any fees for his education, instead he had to work for free at a hotel.

"I worked for those three years at the Tangerine Beach Hotel in Kalutara. It was a regular job with one day weekly off."

THE RETHINK

Initially, Chef Dilip veered more towards the hot kitchen. "I changed my mind later when I realised that in pastry, if you follow the recipe properly then



Celebrating the winner (LtoR - Pierre Feghali, Andreas Krampl, Nicolas Lambert, Gregoire Berger, Chef Dilip Kumara, Emmanuel Ryon, Romain Renard, Fabien Firetto, Charles Azar, Amine Mebrouki and Anuj Pachauri)

there is consistency in quality and taste. Plus, there is more room for creativity and innovation."

In 2006, a tragic event made him rethink his job. "A very close friend of mine died in a bike accident. I was distraught and I wanted to take a few days off work. But the head chef refused and I didn't go to work for a week. Eventually, I chose to resign from there."

For two months that followed, Chef Dilip stayed home, coping with the loss of a dear friend. When the offers started pouring in later, he chose a position at the Blue Water Hotel in Wadduwa, Sri Lanka. Joining as Commis III, Chef Dilip worked there for a year, becoming a Commis II by the time he left.

Although he was happy working at the Blue Water, an offer from Dubai proved too hard to resist.

DUBAI AND MALDIVES

Chef Dilip made his way to the UAE to join the Arabian Ranches Golf Club in mid-2008. "It was a small golf club and I joined the pastry kitchen as Commis I. A year later, I left for the Intercontinental Hotel at Festival City in Dubai." It was the first five-star hotel that he had worked in. The standards were quite high and so were the expectations. There were challenges.

"I lived in fear of doing something wrong but my executive pastry chef was very understanding and encouraging. That helped a lot." When 2010 came, many of his friends moved to Maldives as the tourism industry there had picked up. Chef Dilip went along, working at the Zitahli Resort and Spa, but he got bored within months as he missed the action that the Dubai hospitality industry offers.

RETURNING FOR COMPETITIONS

"I really enjoy competitions and I missed witnessing them. So I spoke to a friend in Dubai and said I wanted to come back." A vacancy at the Dubai International Hotel in the airport had



World Chocolate Masters Middle East Selection winner 21-22 - Chef Dilip Kumara



Chef Arvinda Leelarathna focusing on his showpiece for the #Design assignment



Chef Ashwani Pathania focusing on his showpiece for the #Design assignment

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Chef Dilip's name written on it. In March 2011, he returned to Dubai, the hub of gastronomic activity.

"Around 2012, I participated in my first major competition – the Salon Culinaire. I won a gold for petit fours,

a silver for cake dressing and a bronze for plated desserts." Chef Dilip also participated in the Junior Chef of the Year competition, winning a gold and a bronze. Along the way, he was promoted to chef de partie from demi chef de partie.

It was a productive year. The end of 2012 heralded another change. Chef Dilip moved to the Kempinski Hotel in Ajman as sous chef. After working there for nearly two years, he felt the pull of home. "I got married around that time and planned to return to Sri Lanka. But then I got an offer from Le Meridien as sous chef and decided to stay."

Four and a half years later, Chef Dilip became senior sous chef at the Le Meridien before moving to Five Jumeirah The Palm in his current role.

COMPETITIONS

Coming back to his competitions life, Chef Dilip had one of his major achievements when he won a gold at the IKA Culinary Olympics in 2016. In 2019, he also participated in the ExpoCulinaire.

"My colleagues and my bosses all supported me, helping me prepare and train for it. I hardly slept in the run-up to the event. "I won three golds and a bronze and was the Best Pastry Chef. All the sleepless nights were worth the result." Of course, it was hardly easy. In fact, there was a situation when the pastry chef ran out of sugar during the live cake competition. He asked a friend to bring some from the hotel and that meant a good one hour was wasted.

"For an hour, I could not do anything and every minute counts in such competitions." Staying calm and finishing up with whatever was available saved Chef Dilip the day. And all was well in the end.



I won three golds and a bronze and was the Best Pastry Chef. All the sleepless nights were worth the result



CHEF VIVIAN CREADO Wins prizes under 3 assignments - 3rd Position, Best #You presentation and Best #Taste (LtoR - David Bendotti, Andreas Krampfl, Vivian Creado and Charles Azar)



Chef Vivian Creado focusing on his showpiece for the #Design assignment



Jury members having a light moment before the competition begins (LtoR - Nicolas Lambert, Andreas Krampfl and Charles Azar)

FAMILY

His family couldn't be more proud. Besides his parents and an older sister, Chef Dilip has a staunch supporter in his wife Shamiqa. A five-and-a-half-year-old daughter completes their world.

"My brother-in-law is an executive chef in a hotel in Maldives. He's been a big influence on me." Like his brother-in-law, Chef Dilip dreams of being an executive chef someday. Retiring from the profession is not on the cards at all.

"For me, cooking is a passion, not a job. When I am done with a full-time career, then I would like to open my own pastry shop, maybe in Sri Lanka." As a young chef, Chef Dilip understood that the path to success means taking decisive small steps.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG CHEFS

For novice chefs, he has the same advice. "Don't try to run straight to the top. Climb the ladder one at a time and you will be on a more stable footing." Even for competitions, it may not be very wise to take on the biggest categories in the first attempts. It's better to go into single categories first, learn the ropes and then fight for the



CHEF ARAVINDA LEELARATHNA won 2nd position this WCM (LtoR - Aniruddh Vatsa, Arvinda Leelarathna, Nicolas Lambert and Gregoire Berger)



Chef Bertrand Le Gallic working on his creation for the World Chocolate Masters competition

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bigger titles once you have gained confidence and expertise.

"Sometimes, the chefs participate in too many categories at once and their attention is divided. I firmly believe in perfecting one thing before moving on to the other. It takes time, energy and single-minded focus to become really good at something." It might have been this set of values that are behind Chef Dilip's wins.

Or maybe it's just his inborn talent. Whatever it is, one thing is certain – Chef Dilip can't stop competing and we are yearning to see what he does at the WCM Global Finals next year.







Nestlé
Golden
Chef's Hat
Award



NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

They're young and raring to go. Chefs **Mohammed Fayis** and **Dasun Tharaka** make up for their low experience with their talent. What have they been cooking up for the GCHA in the Radisson Blu Hotel, Dubai Deira Creek kitchen?

MOHAMMED FAYIS

All good things come to those who wait. Some, like Chef Mohammed Fayis, don't have to wait too long for good things to come to them.

The Indian chef landed in Dubai for a six-month internship at the Radisson Blu. But his skills and commitment impressed the management so much that even before he finished the internship, he had a job. Three years on, he's only growing as a chef each day.

All of 25 years old, Chef Fayis does not hesitate to put in 10-15 hours a day into his work. "The chefs here are very supportive and I am learning something new every day," he says.

Born in the southern state of Kerala in India, Chef Fayis had wanted to become a professional chef for as long as he can remember. "Although my family members were doubtful about my decision, my father supported me and I joined a four-year hotel management degree course."

Starting his training in 2016 at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Bangalore, he came to Dubai as part of his education. Little did he know then that the short assignment would lead to an international career path. Chef Fayis has embraced the experience with open arms. "The kitchens here are better equipped than those in India. The equipment and facilities are world-class and it's great to learn in an international environment."

It helps that his father and brother also



**MOHAMMED FAYIS**

work in Dubai. Family support is around whenever it is needed.

Although Chef Fayis works in the cold kitchen at the Radisson Blu, he wants to eventually experience the hot kitchen. "I am trying to learn the hot kitchen too alongside my job. Someday, I would like to be an executive chef and for that, all-round knowledge is very important."

Leveraging his hot kitchen learnings, Chef Fayis has whipped up a beef roulade with balsamic glaze as main course for the GCHA. "I used beef cheeks, served with mashed potato, sautéed veggies, pumpkin puree and sago crackers."

Despite his short career, Chef Fayis has learnt quite a bit, not just about food but also about the rigors of the job. "When the pandemic broke out, we had seven chefs in the kitchen. Four of them tested positive for Covid and the three of us had to run the show for several weeks. I am very proud of the fact that we pulled it off without any disruption to our operations," he says, the pride in his team unmistakable in his voice.

This team spirit should stand him in good stead when Chef Fayis and Chef Dasun Tharaka join hands to win the Golden Chefs Hat Award.

DASUN THARAKA

If life hands you lemons, make lemon pie.

That's what Chef Dasun Tharaka did.

**DASUN THARAKA**

Unlike most chefs who follow their culinary dreams due to a passion for the art, Chef Dasun started on this journey to support his family financially. Seven years later, he has no regrets. In fact, the rocky path opened into a promising new world, a world he now cannot imagine not being a part of.

Just 23 years old, the demi chef de partie runs the show at the Boulevard Gourmet Cake Shop by Radisson Blu Hotel Deira Creek. Don't be fooled by his young age — Chef Dasun has been working since he was 16, which means he has nearly seven years of experience.

The Sri Lankan-born had to assume familial responsibilities when he was barely into his teens. "I did a course to start off and started working in the kitchen. Before that, I had no idea what a professional kitchen looks like," he recalls. The three-month course not only got a young Chef Dasun a job but also sparked his interest in the culinary arts. He proceeded to train at the Vivanta by Taj in Colombo for a year and then enroll for a hotel management course. "I did not complete it. I decided to focus on learning everything on the job." Joining the Kingsbury Hotel in Colombo in 2016, he moved to Pegasus Reef Hotel and learnt the ropes.

The year 2019 brought a new exciting opportunity — a chance to go abroad. "I joined the Millennium Airport Hotel in Dubai as a commis chef. The head chef left in a few months and I got a chance to manage the whole kitchen along with

the staff. That was a big learning curve." A couple of years later, he was hired at the Radisson Blu for the cake shop.

His near-term dream is to climb to the pastry chef position soon.

But given his age, there is much still to learn, especially in international pastry. What Chef Dasun appreciates about his current job is the enthusiasm for innovation at the Radisson Blu. "Our management pushes us to do something new, something special every week. We have chefs specials and weekly specials. The environment is very conducive to innovation."

Chef Dasun has had some previous experience with culinary competitions. He won a bronze medal at the Salon Culinaire. For the latest competition, he has made a chocolate mousse dessert with black glaze, passionfruit crème brulee and raspberry panna cotta. "The base is chocolate crumble and the garnish is coconut puree," he elaborates.

In the seven years that he has been in the industry, Chef Dasun has experienced some memorable moments. One of these was when a five-tier cake was being taken to the event hall. "The top three tiers of the cake fell off and there was complete chaos. Our team came together beautifully and within 15-20 minutes, the cake was ready. That was a close call!" he laughs.

That's hospitality for you. Never a dull moment!

Beef Roulade with Balsamic Glaze and Braised Beef Cheek with Roast Potato, Pumpkin puree, Maggi potato croquettes and Beefroot flavoured Sago crackers

BEEF ROULADE WITH BALSAMIC GLAZE

Beef Rump	450gm
Beef Flank	200gm
Maggi Beef stock powder	50g
Salt and Pepper	As needed
Rosemary	5gm
Fresh Oregano	5gm
Nori Sheet	2 sheets
Balsamic Reduction	5ml

Method

- ♦ Baste the beef flank and roll it. Oven roast till medium rare (120°C - 12min)
- ♦ Mince beef rump and season with herbs, salt and pepper
- ♦ Cut the beef flank roll into strips and roll it with nori sheet
- ♦ Roll the cut strips with the minced beef rump layer by layer
- ♦ Oven roast at 150°C for 20 minutes
- ♦ Glaze the cooked beef roll in the pan with balsamic reduction

BEEF CHEEK BRAISED

Beef Chick	300gm
Carrot	8gm
Onion	8gm
Celery	8gm
Garlic	5 cloves
Thyme	2 sprigs
Nestle Buitoni Tomato Coulis	35gm
Nestle Chef Demi glace sauce	10gm
Cranberry juice	35ml

Method

- ♦ Seal the beef and vegetable with thyme, salt and pepper. Add it into tomato paste, cranberry juice and finish it with Chef demi-glace sauce and pressure cook for 45 minutes
- ♦ Get the sauce from the braising and keep it aside

ROAST POTATO

Potato	40gm
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Duck fat	5gm
Butter	5gm
Salt and pepper	As needed
Thyme	2 sprigs
Oregano	2 sprigs
Nestle chicken stock powder	15gm

Method

- ♦ Cut the potatoes into dices and melt the butter and duck fat with herbs
- ♦ Fry the potato until golden in colour
- ♦ Add chicken stock and oven roast at 100°C for 20 minutes

PUMPKIN PUREE

Pumpkin	30gm
Salt and pepper	As needed

Cream	5gm
Milk	100ml
Maggi chicken stock powder	2gm
Thyme	2gm

Method

- ♦ Cut pumpkin into small cubes. Cook it in milk
- ♦ Add cream, chicken stock, thyme and seasonings and blend it into a puree

MAGGI POTATO CROQUETTES

Maggi mash potato powder	30gm
Salt and pepper	As needed
Braised beef	5gm
Onion	2gm
Flour	5gm



Egg	1 no
Panko bread crumbs	5gm
Oil	50ml

Method

- ◆ Prepare potato in a thick consistency and add chopped onion, chopped braised beef and salt and pepper.
- ◆ Make it into small balls
- ◆ Dust it with flour, dip in egg and coat with breadcrumbs. Repeat this step and deep fry in oil.

SAUTEED VEGETABLES

Baby carrot	2pieces
Romescos broccoli	5gm
Asparagus	2pieces

Baby beetroot	5gm
Butter	3gm
Salt and pepper	As needed
Maggi chicken stock powder	10gm

Method

- ◆ Peel and clean the vegetables
- ◆ Make the chicken stock, add vegetables, boil it and strain the stock
- ◆ Sauté vegetables with butter and season with salt and pepper

BEETROOT FLAVOURED SAGO CRACKERS

Nestle Buitoni Tomato Coulis	40gm
Sago	10gm
Salt	As needed

Oil	30ml
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Method

- ◆ Boil the tomato coulis and sago. Add salt
- ◆ Spread the sago on a butter paper and dry it
- ◆ Fry the dried sago in oil

FOAM

Yoghurt	40gm
Cream	10gm
Salt & Paper	As needed

Method

- ◆ Blend all ingredients together with a hand blender



Docello Trio Chocolate Mousse with Nestle Lemon Crème Brûlée and Raspberry Docello Panacota, Coco Crumble and Berry Compote

CHOCOLATE MOUSSE

Docello Chocolate Mousse Powder	50g
Milk	100ml

Method

- ◆ As per instructions written on the packaging

MILK CHOCOLATE MOUSSE

Docello Chocolate Mousse Powder	50g
Milk	100ml
White Chocolate	30g
Nestle Condensed Milk	1 can

Method

- ◆ Prepare 2 first ingredients as per packaging instructions and fold while chocolate and Nestle condensed milk

WHITE CHOCOLATE MOUSSE

Nestle Crème	1 can
--------------	-------

White Chocolate	40g
Egg	3 pcs
Sugar	20g
Gelatin	5g

Method

- ◆ Beat egg and sugar until it gets fluffy. Then add nestle cream and white chocolate. Lastly add gelatin and fold

NESTLE LEMON CREME BRULEE

Cooking Cream	100ml
Milk	100ml
Docello Creme Brulee	50g
Lemon Juice	10ml
Lemon Zest	3pcs

Method

- ◆ Prepare as per package instruction. Add lemon juice and lemon zest into it.

RASPBERRY DOCELLO PANNA COTTA

Cooking Cream	100ml
Milk	100ml
Docello Panna cotta Powder	50g
Raspberry Puree	30ml

Method

- ◆ Prepare as per packaging instruction

and add raspberry puree

COCO CRUMBLE

Nestle Condensed Milk	1 can
Almond Powder	30g
Butter	30g
Sugar	30g
Coco Powder	10g

Method

- ◆ Boil Nestle Condensed Milk, butter and sugar together until it becomes a paste and add almond powder, coco powder, and let it cool down. Then break it into pieces.

BERRY COMPOTE

Raspberry Puree	20ml
Strawberry Puree	20ml
Blackberry Puree	20ml
Blueberry Puree	20ml
Sugar	10g

Fresh Berries (blackberry/blueberry raspberry) 8pcs each

Method

- ◆ Boil all the purees together with sugar and add fresh berries.



taste the

NEW GOODNESS

طبيعي أطيب



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THE GUILD AGM

The Emirates Culinary Guild AGM and voting for executive committee was held over the summer at the Jumeirah Creekside Hotel following the monthly guild meet. The leadership team was voted in again for a new term with a slight change effected in the Young Chefs Club. Here are moments captured by Cody Cuthbert.









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A partner you can rely on.



At Alto-Shaam we're relentlessly driven to design and manufacture products that perform flawlessly in the most demanding conditions to give operators confidence and consistency in every meal. And our team is just as committed to providing industry-leading service and support. From installation consultation to equipment training to around the clock, every day technical assistance to culinary support you can trust that we are here for you.

ALTO-SHAAM
COMMERCIAL FOODSERVICE EQUIPMENT

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newmembers



Marwan Hussein, Horeca Division Head receiving Emirates Culinary Guild Membership certificate from ECG President Chef Uwe Micheel

Established in 1996, **Emirates Snack Foods (ESF)** quickly developed into a prominent player in the marketing and distribution of premium food products and ingredients in the Food Service and Retail markets in the UAE. ESF is the sole representative in the UAE of a multitude of top international food brands: managing the importing, storage, marketing, sales and distribution, with dedicated in-house resources.

The ESF team is continually inspired by



the quality of their brands, and driven by their passion for food. Throughout the year ESF carries out varied brand building programs, including product demonstrations and participates in prominent exhibitions and events to creatively showcase its portfolio and client services in the UAE.

In addition to product demonstrations in client kitchens, ESF also organizes full scale brand building events where a comprehensive program involving a multiple of its brands takes place in leading F&B locations, as well as dedicated facilities such as the Emirates Academy of Hospitality, Emirates Culinary Guild meetings and culinary art schools.

Partaking in food and beverage exhibitions and culinary events represents a large part of ESF's calendar.



Chef Marwan Abi Daoud, Upfield's Lead Chef for North Africa and Middle East receiving Emirates Culinary Guild Membership certificate from ECG President Chef Uwe Micheel

Our History

Our company has been a leader in the plant-based spreads industry from the very beginning, when the patent for making plant-based spreads was acquired from its inventor, Hippolyte Mège-Mouriès in 1871. The company became known as Unilever in 1930 following a merger between Margarine Unie and Lever Brothers. The business continued to grow significantly through the years, when in December 2017, the business was sold and relaunched as **Upfield**.

Upfield today stands at the forefront of a new era, as the world is moving toward plant-based nutrition.

Iconic Brands Loved by Generations Around the World

FLORA

Flora Plant is one of Upfield's latest



product innovations and is the only 100% plant-based cream and butter without any allergens available in the Gulf. Flora Plant Butter and Flora Plant Cream are vegan, dairy free and gluten free with a rich and creamy taste and which consumers can use 1:1 in baking and cooking. It is made with plant-based oils and has no artificial flavors or preservatives.

RAMA

Rama believes that keeping things simple and practical is good. Just like preparing tasty food in a simple and practical way every day. It's the reliable and trusted support in the kitchen and at the table. Rama offers a wide

range of products from plant-based spreads to spreadable butter to cream alternatives, combining the best of both worlds – Rama plant oils with selected dairy ingredients for best taste and performance in the kitchen.

VIOLIFE

Violife comes from the Greek word Vios, which means Life. So it's actually, life squared, live life to the full.

With more than 30 years of vegan products development and production experience, Violife is the world leader with a global footprint. Our products are free from everything.

No allergens, no nuts, no GMO, no preservatives.

Plus they are enriched with Vitamin B12.

AND above all they are delicious!



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Application Membership

Date of Application:

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

Declaration to be Signed by all Applicants

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

Signed:.....

Proposed By:	Sig:.....
Seconded By:	Sig:.....

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Remarks:

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

Fees:

- Young Member: Junior members will receive a certificate.
- Senior Members: Above the rank of chef de partie (or senior chef de partie on executive chef's recommendation).
Dhs.350/=joining. Includes certificate; member-pin, member medal and ECG ceremonial collar. Dhs. 150/=per year thereafter.
- Affiliate Member: Dhs.350.00 for the first year. Dhs.300 per year thereafter.
- Corporate Member Dhs. 20,000 per year



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