

gulf

THE MAGAZINE CHEFS LOVE TO READ

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gourmet

volume 16, issue 6

Mrs.
FIX-IT

For 16 years, **Josephine Cuthbert** has been the enduring support system of the Emirates Culinary Guild

MOUTHFUL
OF SKY

Dinesh Indika Atapattu, executive pastry chef, Etihad Airways traces his culinary journey

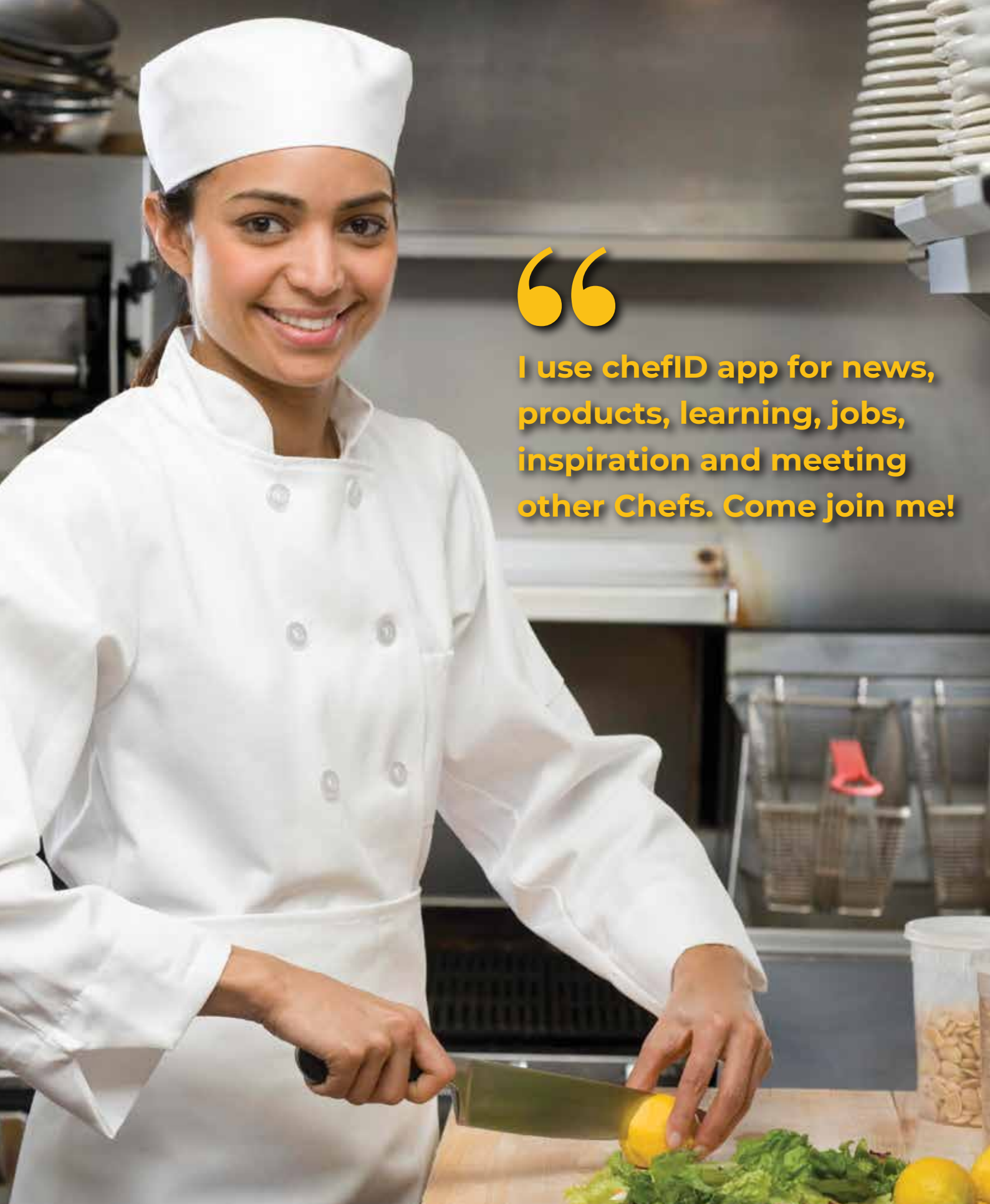
DRIVING
COMPETITION

Crowne Plaza Dubai and InterContinental Fujairah compete for the Golden Chefs Hat Award

CHOCOLATE
FACTORY

Chef Charles Bernard, Director – R&D, Bateel International has a recipe for young chefs





“

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CONVENTION
& EXHIBITION
BUREAU

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

Dear fellow Chefs, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the June-July issue of our Gulf Gourmet. We are all looking forward to the summer, some of us for good summer business and some of us for a break with the family.

In many areas the Covid 19 numbers are dropping and the rules are relaxing. Please look after yourself keep sanitizing and wearing the mask when appropriate. "Stay safe everyone".

After the very successful Salon Culinaire and Virtual Expo Culinaire in April, we had a very successful Chefs Table Competition in May/June. Thank you to DMG, the Hotel Show organizer, and their sponsors for their support.

The teams had lots of great quality food ingredients from the European Union (products from all the member countries) and a super fresh seafood selection from Dubai's Waterfront Market. If you have not visited the Waterfront Market in Deira, I recommend it highly. It's a great place to buy your seafood, meats, fruits and vegetables.

All the participating teams performed very well and we saw some amazing menus. See more about his competition in this issue.

We have our monthly June meeting followed by our AGM in Jumeirah Creekside Hotel. In the meantime, the team is working full steam on Abu Dhabi 2022.

We are really looking forward to welcoming Worldchefs in our Capital. See monthly updates about all the events happening 30 May to 2 June 2022 under 1 roof.

The Congress registration is open now at worldchefscongress.org, do not miss out on the Early Bird Discount.

I hope all Chefs reading this have already registered in the **ChefID app**. If not, do it now to get involved.



Please visit gulfgourmet.net to browse through previous issues of this magazine. Visit emiratesculinaryguild.net to see latest happenings on the 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 all our supporters.

Thank you to Chef Diyan Manjula De Silva and Radisson Blu Dubai Deira 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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NEW!

LOOKING FOR
FRIES
THAT STAY
CRISPY
FROM YOUR DOOR
TO THEIRS?



Extended
Holding Time



Extended
Warmth



Naturally
Salted



Gluten
Free



Crispy on
Delivery!



MADE IN BELGIUM



editor'snote

email editor@gulfgourmet.net

It was this time 10 years ago, when Amaresh and I were offered to run this magazine by the Emirates Culinary Guild. Never imagined I would complete 10 years and 100 issues as Editor and Publisher of this prestigious publication for chefs.

We hope that the trust placed in us by the Guild leadership has been validated through our work.

I want to thank all the advertisers over the last 10 years – from organizations like Nestle Professional, Arla Pro and Emirates Snack Foods to people like Samer, Monica and Ayca – for ensuring that we keep our focus on chefs rather than just products.

There are one too many companies and people to list on this page. You know who you are. Thank you!

To commemorate this significant milestone, we have built, what I believe is the world's first social media app exclusively for the chef community. The ChefID app is free for all chefs and can be downloaded on iOS and Android.

WHY chefID?

Our focus with this platform is quality over quantity. In just the first few weeks, we onboarded over 600 chefs of which nearly 200 are culinary decision-makers in the region.



Simply put, we want to give more power to chefs and give them the identity they deserve. Something we have learned how to do over the past 10 years.

Given the unmatched power of our content, capital raised, and industry goodwill, we believe ChefID will be a gamechanger by the time Worldchefs Congress 2022 takes place in Abu Dhabi next May.

Looking forward to the next 10 years with your support.

On the cover this month is the first non-chef we have featured in over a decade. And there could not be a more deserving person in my mind to have this honour.

Josephine Cuthbert has given 16 years of her life working for the upliftment of chefs in the UAE. The cogs of the wheels that is the Emirates Culinary Guild has kept running smoothly all these years thanks to her hardwork and dedication behind the scenes.

Do read our amazing interview with Madam Josephine.

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

Aquin George
Editor

Chefs can connect with other chefs, create their multimedia CV, and find and share news, jobs, products, trainings, and more for free.

Our thinking behind building this platform is threefold:

1. We don't want chefs to navigate multiple platforms for jobs, learning, portfolio-building, showcasing creativity, peer networking and relevant news.
2. We want the space exclusively for chefs and their creativity, and not for professionals from outside the kitchen.
3. We want the platform to allow chefs to share their thoughts and not just be told what is right and wrong.

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EUROPE



June-July 2021 Gulf Gourmet

newsbites

New and Renewed Members of the Guild



MOHAMMAD CHABCHOUL



SUSENO HADISUTARNO



DIYAN MANJULA



ACHALA WIRASINGHE



IMTIYAZ MALIK



ILKER YOKUS



SURENDER NATH CHAUHAN



TIAAN WESSEL



KHALIL AL HASMI



UJJAL ROZARIO

Why I Am Leaving For The UK: Interview with Chef Scott Price

'Folly by Nick and Scott' isn't going to be the same without Scott in it

If you've heard the news, Chef Scott Price is no longer an active part of the duo that brought us brands like Table9 and Folly by Nick and Scott.

Aquin George had a chat with Chef Scott to find out more. Here are excerpts from that interview:

Ten years ago you told me that Table 9 was your and Nick's way of creating a locally grown Chef brand. How far has that dream been realized as compared to the influx of restaurants by celebrity chefs who don't live in the UAE?

I think my beliefs haven't really changed on this. We continued on by starting our own business and partnering with GATES hospitality to create Folly By Nick & Scott. Also, more recently, Folly Workshop in Time Out Market.

There has also been a maturity in the market and more people are looking for home grown experiences. Tom & Serge, Reif Kushiyaki, 3 fils, RUYA and BB social are all good friends of ours. They share that same vision, and I am sure that the demand and conception of local brands will only continue to thrive in the UAE.

Why have you decided to leave UAE?

After almost 12 years, my wife and I have decided to head back to the UK with our two children (one & three). We have bought a property and smallholding very close to the village Gretna Green in Scotland where I grew up.

We will be running a guest house cottage, where I will cook for guests and will focus on promoting the local area and all that is has to offer - from the local distilleries to the fresh seafood (moorsidefarmhouse.



com). In the longer term, we plan to develop the property to build a community venue to host culinary events and get together for the local area.

How did the pandemic impact you and the Dubai business? Did it play a role in your decision?

I think the pandemic has affected everyone in the country. It's been a challenging year that's for sure. We have been fortunate to have a supportive business partner in Naim Maadad (GATES Hospitality), who have helped us navigate through. Folly is doing very well and has been since we reopened in August last year.

My decision to leave is purely based on my wife and I wishing to relocate back to the UK to be closer to home and the family. And also to start a new exciting chapter in our lives.

Dubai, I am sure will continue to grow and open up in the coming months and will benefit from the way it has handled the pandemic from the beginning.

What happens to the hospitality company that Nick and you started together?

Nick and I have been working together for nearly twelve years and are great friends as well as business partners. I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved together in our time together in Dubai and always will be.

Nick will be continuing on in the Partnership with GATES hospitality. We have a fantastic team and I have no doubt that the venues will continue to grow and thrive under Nick's supervision and guidance.

What is your advice to chefs based in the UAE, who want to build a brand name similar to the way chefs do in the US or in Spain?

I would say that if you have the ideas, commitment and desire inside you, then take the chance and go for it. Make sure you take as much advice in the process to give yourself the best chance of success.

It's a very tough lifestyle in the hospitality business, so be prepared to sacrifice a lot, but can also be incredibly rewarding. The sense of achievement you get from building an idea from a piece of paper into a busy and bustling restaurant full of people enjoying themselves is incredible.

I am so incredibly proud of our team at folly and what we have achieved together and will miss it dearly.



Italy at the Table

The thousand facets of food are all at TUTTOFOOD 2021. And it gets better this year with HostMilano running simultaneously and new collaborations including APCI

An unmissable event for all Food & Beverage professionals. Whether they are masters - chefs, pastry chefs, ice cream makers - or wish to offer the best to those who love to cook at home, TUTTOFOOD is increasingly becoming the point of reference for food innovation inside and outside the home.

And thanks to the cooperation with HostMilano, which this year will be held at the same time as TUTTOFOOD and MEAT-TECH at fieramilanocity from 22 to 26 October. This will allow the out-of-home sector to collect interesting ideas and business opportunities from TUTTOFOOD.

In the foreground is the collaboration with APCI, which will bring its decades of

expertise to the event, also in innovative "phygital" formats. TUTTOFOOD will be the occasion to relaunch the Italian catering sector, and more, through the participation and show-cooking of the Association's chefs, its conferences, but also the novelties of the exhibition area.

Among the various sectors, TUTTOFRUIT stands out for its novelties. This area is dedicated to fresh fruit and vegetables and the innovations of the IV and V product range.

The 2021 edition is also aiming for organic growth in the latest sectors launched - TUTTOWINE, TUTTODIGITAL and TUTTOHEALTH - and consolidation of the traditional sectors.

Further initiatives for industry

professionals will originate from additional major partnerships. Product innovation will be the focus of a competition in collaboration with GDO Week, whose winning products will be the protagonists of the Innovation Area, a space where it is possible to find out about the latest trends and get ideas for new ingredients to include in menus.

Thanks to the collaboration with Netcomm, the sector will enjoy a look at e-commerce, which is becoming increasingly important also in the catering industry with the delivery and dark kitchens phenomena, while - new this year - DNV, an important international certification body with extensive experience in the certification of food supply chains, will bring up-to-date data and insights to the event.

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

Carmine Pecoraro is Conrad Executive Chef



Carmine Pecoraro is the new Executive Chef at Conrad Abu Dhabi Etihad Towers. The South African chef has previously worked at Burj Al Arab, Madinat Jumeriah, JW Marriott Marquis and Emirates Palace. He pre-opened The Royal Atlantis Resort & Residences prior to joining Conrad Abu Dhabi Etihad Towers.

New Exec Pastry Chef at Four Seasons

Chef Nicolas Lambert has joined Four Seasons Resort Dubai at Jumeirah Beach and Four Seasons Hotel Dubai International Financial Centre as Executive Pastry Chef. Lambert worked in France before moving to Four Seasons Hong Kong. While he was there, he was recognised as the youngest ever "Asia's Best Pastry Chef" by The World's 50 Best Restaurants. In his last role, he was at Four Seasons Hotel Lion Palace St. Petersburg.



Vito Mollica is Executive Chef of Chic Nonna

Italian group Mine & Yours Group has appointed Vito Mollica as Executive Chef of Chic Nonna, a new concept restaurant opening in DIFC Dubai in September. He is also Corporate Director of Culinary for the Group. Born in the south of Italy, Vito Mollica worked in

Prague, Netherlands, UK and Italy. In 2011, Firenze received the first Michelin star while he was Executive Chef and two years later he received the Dish of the Year award from Guida dell'Espresso. In 2014 he was named Chef of the Year by an Italian newspaper.

International Food Fair



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FIERA MILANO



Nestlé
Golden
Chef's Hat
Award



DOUBLE DARE

Curiosity may kill the cat but it only serves to motivate our challengers this month. While Chef **Indrashis Saha** is on a crusade to unravel the mysteries of taste, Chef **Reynaldi Agus Supriadi** is on a mission to understand the culinary universe. Meet the daring duo...

INDRASHIS SAHA

A little boy in East India would sometimes ignore his grandmother's strict instructions to let the java plums marinate in mustard and salt for at least two hours before eating the snack. The infraction didn't go unpunished. Eaten before the required two hours of marination, the snack had none of the beautifully wrapped flavours of sweetness, sourness, bitterness and saltiness that it usually did.

The lesson? One: disobeying your seniors is bad. Two: food holds myriad mysteries that need should be carefully uncovered for the best gastronomic experience.

Both lessons are deeply embedded in Chef **Indrashis Saha**. Now 29, the recently-anointed pastry chef at Intercontinental Fujairah Resort in Al Fujairah City marvels at the many complexities of good food and works hard to unravel them, much to the delight of guests. "Do you know our taste buds change every five-six years? And it's not just your tongue but your entire mouth that decides how much you like a certain dish," he says with childlike enthusiasm.

These mysteries motivated Chef **Indrashis** to go down the culinary road, even when his family members were keener on him opting for a more

traditional career. "My parents wanted me to either become a doctor, an engineer, a chartered accountant or a computer scientist. So there was some resistance in the beginning when I said I wanted to do hotel management. But eventually they gave in when they realised that's what makes me happy."

Today, there are no regrets. In his eight years in the field, Chef **Indrashis** has gathered an impressive set of skills. "I had a good start with the Intercontinental Hotel in Chennai, India. A couple of years later, I moved to the U.S. to work at the Lafayette New York for a year. It was a classic



INDRASHIS SAHA



REYNALDI AGUS SUPRIADI



REYNALDI AGUS SUPRIADI

French restaurant in Manhattan." When he returned to India, he joined the Intercontinental again. "I was part of the opening team of the Intercontinental Mahabalipuram Resort in South India. In less than two years, I got a call for the Intercontinental Fujairah and I have been here since 2019."

Chef Indrashis started at the Intercontinental Fujairah as the chef de partie. He then moved up to pastry sous chef and was then promoted to pastry chef.

His creation for the Golden Chef's Hat Award competition is a rose-infused dessert. "It's raspberry jelly, rose parfait and coconut crunch served with yuzu chocolate and raspberry sorbet." What strikes you immediately about the dish is its simplicity. "I believe that a dish should not need 20 items to beautify it. I like to keep it simple and yet flavourful. The sweet flavours wrap around each other perfectly and the coconut crunch brings an unexpected twist to the mix."

His gastronomic explorations are far from over. "I would love to work in Lyon in France someday. I believe the food there is exceptional and it's a place of pastry. Sicily is another place I would like to explore." And why not? Onward and upward!

The skies hold a special fascination for Chef Reynaldi Agus Supriadi. As a child, he wanted to go beyond just touching the sky by being an astronaut. Today that dream is a memory but the ambition of rising above the rest still lives and breathes inside him.

For the chef de partie of Intercontinental Fujairah Resort, participating in culinary competitions is a way not just to build on his skills but also to show the industry his potential. "I have done several competitions, even big ones like Salon Culinaire and SIAL. I was also a part of the junior national team that competed in Germany," says the 25-year-old chef.

Chef Reynaldi, who hails from Indonesia, is the second-in-command at the Drift Seafood Kitchen and Bar and runs the show when the sous chef is not around. Ask him where his love of food began and he can't remember. "I just stumbled on to it, to be honest," he recalls. "In 2013, I joined an internship program at the Hilton Hotel and Resorts in Bandung, Indonesia and then got a chance to come to Dubai a year later to work at the Redstarwok Pan-Asian Restaurant."

Starting out as a kitchen helper, he made his way into a commis chef job

by joining the pre-opening team of the Hilton Garden Inn at the Mall of the Emirates. Subsequently, Chef Reynaldi moved to the Jumeirah Zero Gravity Beach Club and Restaurants and worked there until July last year. "The pandemic caused some disruptions and I was just wondering if I should return home to Indonesia when I got this job." From mid-2019 to mid-2020, he was a part of the Emirates Culinary Guild's junior national team. "I turn 26 this year. So I will be too old to qualify for the junior team."

That doesn't mean Chef Reynaldi will have to abandon his competitive streak. At the GCHA, he is putting up some stiff competition for the rival team with his crispy codfish recipe, served with red cabbage and carrot, pumpkin and orange puree.

That's as far as the now goes. In the distant future, Chef Reynaldi hopes to join his father's online catering business in Indonesia. An idea that he is also playing around with is a space-themed merchandise company. "It would be great to have a space-themed hangout with good music, so I can also indulge my love of music," he smiles.

Ideas and enthusiasm, that's Chef Reynaldi for you.



Nuance de rose

ROSE CREMEAUX

Docello Crème Brulee	200 gm
Heavy cream	900 ml
Rose water	100 ml
Pink color	2 drops

Method

- ◆ Bring milk and rose water to a boil.
- ◆ Add Crème Brulee powder to the mixture gradually and stir well.
- ◆ Cook in slow flame until it comes to a boil.
- ◆ Add 2 drops of pink color (flow paste) and mix well.
- ◆ Pour on lined trays in a thickness of 1 cm.
- ◆ Cut the mouse into rectangular shapes 10cm x 4cm and line on a tray.

PINK SPRAY

Cocoa butter	300 gm
White chocolate	300 gm
Pink color (fat soluble)	2 drops

Method

- ◆ Melt cocoa butter and pour over chocolate.
- ◆ Add pink color to it and buzz for a homogenous mixture.
- ◆ Temper the mixture to 30°C and spray the prepared cremeaux lined on the tray.

RASPBERRY JELLY

Raspberry puree	500 gm
Sugar	100 gm
Gelatin sheet	3 ea

Method

- ◆ Bring raspberry puree, sugar to a boil.

- ◆ Remove from flame and add gelatin to it.
- ◆ Pour on lined tray to a thickness of 0.5 cm.
- ◆ Allow it to freeze.
- ◆ Cut the jelly into rectangular shape 10cm x 4 cm.

COCONUT CRUNCH

Feuillettine	300 gm
Nestle coconut powder	150 gm
Cocoa butter	200 gm
White chocolate	500 gm

Method

- ◆ Melt cocoa butter and chocolate.
- ◆ Add Feuillettine and coconut powder to it and mix well.
- ◆ Pour on lined sheets and spread well homogenously to a thickness of 0.5cm.
- ◆ Keep in room temperature in cool and dry condition.
- ◆ Cut into rectangular shape of 10cm x 4 cm.

PINK DIP

Cocoa butter	300 gm
White chocolate	300 gm
Pink color (fat soluble)	1 drop

Method

- ◆ Melt cocoa butter and pour over chocolate.
- ◆ Add pink color to it and buzz for a homogenous mixture.
- ◆ Temper the mixture to 30°C.
- ◆ Individually dip every rectangular shaped coconut crunch.

LUCHEE RASPBERRY SORBET

Sugar	219 gm
-------	--------

Glucose syrup	108 gm
Lychee puree	800 gm
Raspberry puree	200 gm
Water	200 gm
Stabilizer	7 gm

Method

- ◆ Cook sugar, water, glucose together until it comes to a boil.
- ◆ Add stabilizer and cook again.
- ◆ All the mixture to chill overnight.
- ◆ Add the prepared mixture to lychee and raspberry puree.
- ◆ Buzz well and churn.
- ◆ Store in freezer between -12°C to -15°C.

ASSEMBLY

Raspberry jelly
Rose cremeaux
Coconut crunch
Yuzu chocolate
Lychee raspberry sorbet

Method

- ◆ Temper yuzu chocolate and spread into thin sheets.
- ◆ Cut into right angle triangles of 10 cm x 2 cm.
- ◆ Place raspberry jelly on the plate.
- ◆ Place the sprayed rose cremeaux on the top of raspberry jelly in an angular fashion.
- ◆ Place the cocoa dipped coconut crunch on the cremeaux in an angular fashion.
- ◆ Place the yuzu chocolate on the coconut crunch in an angular fashion.
- ◆ Place a quenelle of the lychee & raspberry sorbet on the side.

Bonté de l'océan Pacifique

Pan Seared Halibut with Macadamia Nuts, Yuzu Grilled Compress Watermelon, Sous-vide Yolk toast Caviar, Jellied Red Cabbage Consomme, Purple Potato Mousseline, Buttered Vegetables, Cauliflower, Pine nut & Spinach Puree, Butternut Orange Puree and Saffron Sago Crisp.

PAN SEARED AND BASTED HALIBUT

Halibut fillet	600gm
Garlic	4gm
Lemon	1pcs
Thyme	2gm
Butter	50gm

Salt & Pepper As required

Method

- ♦ Fillet Halibut Fish, Marinate with chop Garlic, Chop Thyme, Lemon Juice, Salt and Pepper.
- ♦ Keep in chiller to set.



- ◆ Heat the non-stick pan, put olive oil and seared Fish for both side until it get crispy
- ◆ Add Butter, thyme and garlic and baste the fish.

CITRUS MACADAMIA CRUST

Macadamia Nut	60gm
Parsley	2gm
Orange	1pcs
Salt & Pepper	As required

Method

- ◆ Chop Macadamia and Parsley and keep aside.
- ◆ Zest the orange and mix all ingredients.
- ◆ Put in the top of the fish after it's pan seared.

YUZU GRILED COMPRESS**WATERMELON**

Watermelon	50gm
Tarragon	1gm
Yuzu	1pcs
Salt & Pepper	As required

Method

- ◆ Cut watermelon into thick slices, put in a vacuum bag.
- ◆ Chop Tarragon and squeeze yuzu into the bag.
- ◆ Add Salt & Pepper and Vacuum the watermelon.
- ◆ Keep it for a while after opening, slice into long shapes and sear it on both sides until it gets color.

SOUS-VIDE EGG YOLK TOAST**CAVIAR**

Salmon Roe	2gm
Egg	4pcs
Brioche Bread	50gm
Chives	2gm
Butter	30gm
Thyme	2gm

Method

- ◆ Put Egg in Sous-vide machine at 64 for 1 hour
- ◆ Chop thyme add into soft butter
- ◆ Cut long and thin Brioche bread, spread both side with butter.
- ◆ After the Egg done crack it and kept in chiller for awhile
- ◆ Separate the egg white with yolk, scoop it put into brioche bread cover for both sides.
- ◆ Seared the bread in heat pan until gets

color Put salmon roe on top of it and add chop chive.

JELLIED RED CABBAGE CONSOMMÉ

Maggi Vegetable Stock	200gm
Red Cabbage	15gm
Gelatine	10sheet
Celery	15gm
Carrot	15gm
Onion	1gm
Thyme	
Salt & Pepper	As required

Method

- ◆ Cut mirepoix into small dices, slice the cabbage and keep aside
- ◆ Soak the gelatine in ice water
- ◆ Heat the water, add Maggi Vegetables stock put
- ◆ mirepoix and cabbage
- ◆ Simmer it for about 15 minutes, check the seasoning and strain.
- ◆ Add gelatine into consommé put thin layer in gastronorm trays
- ◆ Set it in chiller and cut into thin dices

PURPLE POTATO MOUSSELINE

Purple Potato	100gm
Nestle Cream	100ml
Butter	30gm
Salt & Pepper	As required

Method

- ◆ Steam potato until cook
- ◆ Peeled it and mash it with potato mouli
- ◆ Heat the cream add potato, seasoning and butter
- ◆ Whisk it until it get mousseline consistency

BUTTERED VEGETABLES

Asparagus	7gm
Baby Carrot	7gm
Broccolini	7gm
Butter	5gm

Method

- ◆ Peel all vegetables
- ◆ Blanch it and keep aside
- ◆ Toast with butter before serving

CAULIFLOWER, PINE NUT AND SPINACH PUREE

Cauliflower	100gm
Pine Nut	5gm
Baby Spinach	10gm
Milk	100ml

Nestle Cream	50ml
Butter	50gm
Salt & pepper	As required

Method

- ◆ Sweat the cauliflower. Add milk and cream.
- ◆ Simmer it until cauliflower gets cooked and add pine nut and seasoning
- ◆ Blanch the Spinach and keep aside
- ◆ Blend smooth paste the Cauliflower add Spinach,
- ◆ Butter and Salt & Pepper
- ◆ Check the seasoning

BUTTERNUT ORANGE PUREE

Butternut Pumpkin	100gm
Orange	1pcs
Butter	50gm
Thyme	1gm
Salt & Pepper	As required

Method

- ◆ Sweat the Pumpkin add Milk and Orange Juice
- ◆ Simmer it until Pumpkin gets cook and add Orange
- ◆ Zest Thyme and seasoning
- ◆ Blend smooth paste the Pumpkin add Butter and Salt & Pepper
- ◆ Check the seasoning

SAFFRON SAGO CRISP

Sagoo Pearls	10gm
Saffron	Pinch
Salt	As required

Method

- ◆ Heat the water and add sago until it cook
- ◆ Wash and strain keep aside
- ◆ Mix with saffron and salt
- ◆ Put the mixture in baking pan and make it thin layer
- ◆ Put it to dehydrator for 3 hours.
- ◆ Fry the sago until crisp.

GARNISH

Sakura Mix	
Afilla Cress	
Black Lemon Powder	
Beetroot Powder	

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June-July 2021 **Gulf Gourmet**



A MOUTHFUL OF SKY

He's a high-flier today. But Chef **Dinesh Indika Atapattu** rose up the ranks over time with patience and determination. The executive pastry chef of Etihad Airways traces his journey from being a dealer in a casino to the main man behind the sweetest and the best the airline's catering service has to offer...

Most of the times, when you ask an experienced chef about the younger crop of chefs, the complaint is the same – they come, they learn, they leave. Chef Dinesh Indika Atapattu has another dimension to add: they come, they learn, they leave...to learn some more, somewhere else and that's a good thing for the entire industry.

Chef Dinesh, the executive pastry chef at Etihad Airways in Abu Dhabi, doesn't see explorations in the initial phase of a culinary career as something to fear. In fact, he welcomes it. After all, he has eight jobs in over two decades to credit for the rich experiences and skills he brings to the proverbial table. "Moving around a bit in your early days is not a crime, moving around for the wrong reasons is," says the 43-year-old chef.

Chef Dinesh has moved around for the right reasons.

More than 20 years ago, he gave up a stable life in his country, close to his family and his culture, to venture out into the unknown. Leaving Sri Lanka, the land that seems to have an endless supply of talented pastry chefs to offer to the world, in search of new experiences wasn't easy. But as is clear, the reward was worth the gamble. "Actually, I started my career in 1998 as a dealer at the Bellagio Colombo Casino. What I learnt there was that success was all about taking calculated risks," he says.

The job proved to be a stepping stone to bigger things.



For my mother, it was a dream come true. She always wanted me to be a professional chef in Dubai

Once he completed his international cookery course, an offer to join Beach Rotana Hotel as a kitchen steward came by and Chef Dinesh ventured into the culinary capital of the UAE – Dubai. A year later, he was transferred to the kitchen to fulfil his ambition of being a *culinaire*. "For my mother, it was a dream come true. She always wanted me to be a professional chef in Dubai," he smiles at the memory.

Admittedly, Chef Dinesh spent a long four years at the Beach Rotana learning the ropes of international hospitality, an initial training period that stood him in good stead going forward. In 2004, after deciding that he had learnt all he could in that role, he moved on to Al Ain Intercontinental as *demi chef de partie*. A couple of years flew by before he changed jobs, this time making his way to the Grosvenor House. However, when his wife arrived in the UAE to join him, the stint had to be cut short. "My wife managed to get a job in Abu Dhabi, so I had to move out of Dubai to join her. I returned to the Intercontinental Group, this time in Abu Dhabi."

Before joining Etihad Airways, Chef Dinesh had a few more career stops. He worked at the Emirates Palace as assistant pastry chef, at the One and Only Royal Mirage Hotel Dubai as pastry chef de cuisine, and then at the Rocco Forte Hotel in Abu Dhabi, which is today called the Hilton Capital Grand Hotel.

Seven years ago, he finally landed at Etihad Airways. Since then, he has taken over the bakery and pastry operations at the catering service. "Before the pandemic, I had a team of 84 chefs. We run the operations not just for the flights but also for our third-party business. We also supply to hotels and other clients, especially items like chocolates, macarons and frozen cakes."

His cheffing days are mostly behind him. These days, most of Chef Dinesh's time is spent on business development - presenting the company's products to customers; interacting with clients and understanding their needs; working on the costing with other departments; and travelling abroad in search of new and innovative products and ingredients. "I often have to travel to Europe and collaborate with chefs there to see what new ingredients are in the market. I mostly go to France, the Netherlands and Germany and build networks there."

The Covid-19 pandemic may have slowed the hospitality industry down but not much has changed for Chef Dinesh and his team. "We are working with fewer people at the moment but things are beginning to return to normal levels. So my team still has a lot of work to do daily."

June-July 2021 Gulf Gourmet

However, his hectic schedules don't stop Chef Dinesh from getting involved in activities that contribute to the development of the hospitality industry. "I started participating in competitions in 2003. I won a few medals and then decided to become a marshall. Around 2013, I became a senior member of the Salon Culinaire team." In his company too, Chef Dinesh organizes the teams that participate in culinary competitions, grooming them and teaching the finer points of presentation. According to the Sri Lankan chef, such engagements not only help the industry benefit from shared knowledge but they also contribute to personal development.

As an experienced hand, Chef Dinesh knows that knowledge-sharing is the only way to build a strong industry. When he is training chefs, he does not focus on how long they will stick around in his company. "We should not be selfish and train only those that we think will remain with us. We also benefit from whatever the chefs have learnt from their previous jobs. The thing about knowledge is that the more of it you pass around, the more of it comes back to you." He celebrates the fact that many of his former chefs got better opportunities thanks to the skills they acquired while working in his team. "That's immensely satisfying, the opportunity to help people become their best possible versions."

Although Chef Dinesh does not spend as much time in the kitchen as he would like to, he uses every chance he can get to work alongside his team. "When we are creating new recipes, then I do work with my team closely. After discussions with the costing and menu design teams, I have to execute the final decisions. This is where it is important that my team understands who the end clients are and what their exact requirements are. Cascading every detail correctly can be quite a challenge." Even something as simple as packing needs to be perfect because in hospitality, the presentation counts as much as the taste. From storage to transportation, there are myriad aspects to such a



Tough times usually provide great opportunities for learning. These are times when we all might have to be a bit more patient than usual

business, all of which have to be kept in mind while creating new products.

Understandably, such a demanding role leaves Chef Dinesh with little time for his family. Fortunately, the closeness of the family brings a lot of support and comfort. "My daughter is 10 years and my son is three. My wife used to work as a nurse earlier but she gave that up to take care of our children. So she understands the nature and challenges of a demanding profession."

But more family time is definitely on his wishlist for the future.

Using his extensive experiences in both cooking and business development, Chef Dinesh hopes to set up his own enterprise someday. "I would love to have a business where I supply European chocolate-based products to hotels, like pralines for example. I have learnt quite a bit about Swiss and French offerings and that is an exciting avenue to explore somewhere in the distant future."

Good things come to those who wait.

Chef Dinesh believes that the current challenges facing the hospitality industry should not discourage anyone from truly following their dreams. "Tough times usually provide great opportunities for learning. These are times when we all might have to be a bit more patient than usual. But we shouldn't forget that good times and bad times, both don't last. Only resilient people do," he signs off.

Success does tend to favour the most resilient, doesn't it?



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Mrs. FIX-IT

When a young **Josephine Cuthbert** married Chef **Andy Cuthbert**, little did she know that she was starting a love affair with the culinary arts. For the past 16 years, Josephine has been the support system of the Emirates Culinary Guild (ECG), running the coordination and admin of the Guild as it grows by leaps and bounds...

Anyone who knows how to play chess, knows that it's the queen who protects the king. In the game of life, the queen of a community often protects her entire army.

If you doubt that, ask the Emirates Culinary Guild (ECG) family.

Its members can't stop thanking Josephine Cuthbert enough. One of the silent pillars of strength for the guild,

Josephine is celebrated for her ability to bring structure to the most chaotic of operations and find solutions to the toughest of problems.

When you meet her, her vivaciousness and unbridled energy shines through. With an infectious smile on her lips, she can put anyone at ease immediately. You could say that balances out the rather intimidating presence of her husband Andy Cuthbert, chairman and founding member of the ECG.

Like an indulgent mother, Josephine has seen the guild grow over the years. She started helping out at the guild at the end of 2004. And never stopped. "My first experience with the guild was in 2001, when they asked me to help them with the registration. However, at the time, I was working full-time for an engineering company," she recalls. The registration work took just two days, but the seed of her involvement was planted.

A couple of years later, when she left



LADIES OF THE GUILD: (left-right) Shanaaz Raja, Badya Salam, Josephine Cuthbert, Sana Quidwai and Annette Micheel.



the demanding job at the engineering company to raise her two sons and realised that being a full-time mom wasn't really her thing, Chef Andy suggested she work part-time helping the guild scale up. "Outside of raising kids, meeting friends for coffee wasn't satisfying enough for me. I had been working since I was 18 years old. So this was a good balance, where I could contribute but without compromising on my parental duties."

It started out slowly.

Chef Alen Thong, one of the founding members of the guild, would take Josephine for meetings to get her used to the role of assistant coordinator. "I had experience managing multiple tasks in projects from my earlier job. Slowly, we started doing competitions. In 2004, we started with just 300 chefs participating, then 500, then 700 and in 2008, we had 1,500!"



Outside of raising kids, meeting friends for coffee wasn't satisfying enough for me. I had been working since I was 18 years old

Understandably, the rising scale meant a lot of coordination and work. Replying to chefs' queries, working out the details of potential sponsorships, compiling and scheduling tasks, Josephine had her hands full. "I was lucky to have Chef Alen to teach me the nitty-gritty. Eventually, I started doing the entire admin for the various competitions."

Sixteen years later, the fruits of that labour are sweet. Today, the ECG proudly bears the flag for the Emirates culinary industry, even internationally. The guild is endorsed by the World Association of Chefs Societies (Worldchefs), a 105-nation fellowship of the world's various professional chefs' organisations.

"For me personally, the most exciting thing about being a part of the guild is the diversity of the people I meet and the ability to interact with different nationalities, different personalities and cultures. There is always something new to look forward to."

Cultural diversity is something Josephine is very comfortable with. But it wasn't always so. "My husband is Australian and I am Filipino. So initially, we had our cultural differences. It was not a big deal for him but it was for me." Josephine came to Dubai in her late teens, joining the Dubai Hilton as serving staff around



Josephine with her family in the Philippines.

1991. Even though she had previous experience working an office job, it was not something she enjoyed. Within a year, she was promoted to a fine dining restaurant as a hostess. In 1992, the couple met and the rest is history. "My first impression of him was funny. I heard a strong, loud voice coming out of the kitchen and then this sous chef came into the coffee shop where I was. He looked like he was going to war. At the time, he had a handlebar moustache, which added to his angry looks."

However, Chef Andy proved to be a rather patient teacher and someone who knew how to deal with people. The two became friends and love blossomed. On Josephine's birthday in October 1992, Chef Andy popped the question and they were married in May 1993. At the time, she was 22 years old and he was 28. Eventually, the couple had two sons - Kyle and Cody.

Along the way, Josephine's love bloomed not only for a chef but also the cheffing industry. "Chefs are a very nice community. They are passionate about what they do, they care about others and dedicate their lives to pleasing other people. I get numerous messages of gratitude from chefs after competitions. It's very touching."



This is why, Josephine is grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the guild. "Unfortunately, Chef Alen is no more with us but I want to sincerely thank him for mentoring me and giving me the

chance to run the administration of the guild. Thank you also to ECG President Chef Uwe Michel for recognising my contributions over the years."

Not that it's anywhere close to over. As it scales new heights and expands its wings, how can the guild manage without its Mrs. Fix-It?



Josephine with her husband Andy and sons Kyle and Cody.



My husband is Australian and I am Filipino. So initially, we had our cultural differences. It was not a big deal for him but it was for me

June-July 2021 **Golf Gourmet**



THE FIRST LADY

Annette Micheel, the wife of ECG President Chef **Uwe Micheel**, prefers to let her actions speak rather than her words. Her quiet strength and unassuming nature endears her to anyone who meets her, not least the members of the guild...

Home is where the heart is. And success is where the support is.

If there's anyone who knows the value of support at home, it's veteran chef Uwe Micheel, the president of the Emirates Culinary Guild (ECG). The secret sauce in his recipe for success is his quiet pillar of strength, his wife Annette.

The unassuming Annette is a woman of few words. Especially when it comes to talking about herself. "Most of the times, she doesn't even realise how big her contributions to my life and the guild are," Chef Uwe says affectionately.

Lately, Annette has been getting more involved with the operations of the guild, mainly when there are events that need many hands on deck. As someone who started her career in hospitality, she is able to offer more than just the odd support. "In the early years of my career, I did apprenticeship in a hotel in Germany and then I moved to England. I met my husband at the London Intercontinental Hotel," she offers when prompted to tell us about herself.

Annette has accompanied Chef Uwe in his professional journey across the world. After they got married, the Micheels moved to Bahrain, then to South Korea and then to Japan. "We worked in the Intercontinental Hotel in Korea. I worked for Movenpick Café." In Japan, Annette could not work as the family had expanded and her sons needed her full-time care. Even when the Micheels moved to Dubai, she did not return to the demanding hospitality



Every day is different in this industry and you meet so many interesting people

industry, instead choosing to work in the office at a kindergarten. "I also worked as freelance tour guide and at exhibitions. So I was in constant contact with the hospitality industry."

Annette has seen the guild grow from a small group of chefs to a formidable force in the Emirati culinary industry. "I have seen my husband and other founding members really put in a lot of efforts into it. It's delightful to see how well recognized it is today."

The first time Annette got a taste of the guild's events was back in 2008, when she helped out at the Chef Congress in Dubai. "We had to give out uniforms, direct visitors and help with odd tasks. It was nice to understand how the business works and how much pressure the chefs face."

However, having two children to take care of meant little time for other engagements. Now that her sons are all grown up, Annette devotes more time to the guild. "She plays host to the wives of the visiting chefs when we have these huge events. That is not easy. There are so many different kinds of people. She keeps them

entertained the whole day, freeing up the chefs to focus on the events without having to worry about their spouses," Chef Uwe says.

Annette is well-respected among the chefs of the guild. Sometimes, when Chef Uwe organises meetings, she takes care of the logistical aspects, allowing him to concentrate on the agenda. "She comes from the hotel industry, so she knows what it means to be a host," he says. Partly it's her hotels training, and partly her learnings as a supermom. Today, the couple's sons are both in Germany – one has followed his father into the hotels industry and the other is into finance. During their growing-up years, Annette had to make up to them for Chef Uwe's hectic schedules. "I always took them to Germany for Christmas holidays because that is the busiest period for Chef Uwe. We have a nice fireplace in our home there and it was lovely to experience the traditional German Christmas."

And yet, despite the personal sacrifices, she would choose hospitality and being married to a chef all over again if she could turn back time. "Every day is different in this industry and you meet so many interesting people."

As for the guild, she describes it as "one big, happy family". "We have experienced members and young members, we keep welcoming new members. Even the wives of the members are part of this extended family. We always have a lot of fun when we meet."

Three cheers for the first lady of the guild!

THE SILENT SUPPORTER

Emma Pedge, the wife of ECG President for Abu Dhabi **Alan Pedge**, is the silent wind beneath his wings. She did not let his constantly-changing lifestyle come in the way of pursuing a noble profession. Even as her husband moulds young chefs, Emma, who started her career in hospitality, moulds young minds at a nursery...

Behind every successful man, is a supportive woman.

For three decades, Emma Pedge has been a rock for Alan Pedge, the Emirates Culinary Guild President for Abu Dhabi. An industry veteran, Chef Alan needs no introduction.

When he is not opening new hotels in Dubai and London, you will find him leading teams at national and international competitions. He's also a certified judge of the World Association of Chefs Societies (WorldChefs) and has been in the judging panel of several prestigious events, including the Salon Culinare.

For Emma, accompanying her husband on his journey has been long but satisfying.

Starting her career in hospitality in 1994, she moved on to become a nursery teacher as Chef Alan's assignments took the Pedges from place to place. "I am originally from the Philippines. I started my career in F&B in Iraq," she says, recalling some painful experiences of the Iraq War back then. "We would run to the basement when we heard those terrible sounds. I was there for less than two years and then I joined Meridien Kuwait." When Emma moved to the Gulf Hotel in Bahrain after a couple of years, little did she know that she would find her soulmate there. "He was the executive sous chef there. We became friends and that's how it developed."

The two met in 1989 and got married in 1991. Since then, Emma has supported Chef Alan in all his endeavours, even changing her own career path along the



For us, the guild is like family. The members have known each other for a long time

way. "We came to the UAE in 2004. First, we were in Abu Dhabi and then we also spent some time in Sharjah."

For a while, the Pedges had to live in hotels. Although it was not a traditional arrangement, Emma's background in hospitality made it doable. "I used to work in hotels, so it was no big change. At the time, we didn't get separate accommodation from company and you would just live in the hotel where you work. The good thing is you don't have to clean or maintain your home. But of course, you can't decorate it the way you like or cook your own kind of food. It was alright for some time but eventually we needed our own cosy corner."

When Chef Alan got a job in Sharjah, Emma started on her second career — she took up a job as an assistant teacher in a nursery there. "We Filipinos love children and we usually live in big families with a lot of children. So it felt right. Later, I did formal training in teaching, so I could teach older children too." That was 15 years ago. Today, Emma is a proud nursery teacher at the Chubby Cheeks nursery.

Such a nomadic life can get to many people. But not Emma. "You go to different places, you enjoy different experiences, meet different people. I have always loved that aspect of hospitality."

She is happy that she got to witness the rapid rise of the ECG. "It has a lot of young chefs now, it has gone international. When I began working, being a chef wasn't recognized as a high-profile career. Today, many people aspire to be chefs, celebrity chefs have even made it fashionable to be a chef. It's heartening to see the profession getting the recognition it deserves."

Being in Abu Dhabi, Emma has few opportunities to actively participate in the day-to-day functioning of the ECG. However, when events take place in Abu Dhabi, she makes it a point to support with whatever she can. "For us, the guild is like family. The members have known each other for a long time. They are close friends and they take care of each other."

Having seen the industry closely herself, Emma doesn't quite mind the compromises that Chef Alan sometimes has to make on the personal front. Christmas and New Year are especially busy periods and personal celebrations always have to wait for the next day. "On New Year's Eve, we usually stay at the hotel. Alan is around but he can't be at my table because he has to take care of a lot of other things. So we do a brunch the next day."

With such unwavering support, does Chef Alan's success come as a surprise to anyone? Not to us, for sure!



BADYA SALAM GETS UAE GOLDEN VISA

Chef Majed Al Sabagh's wife has a culinary reputation that has earned her the elusive 10 year residency

Badya Salam Kher El Deen is popular in culinary circles as Chef Majed Al Sabagh's better half. But what many don't realize is that she is a culinary star in her own right. She is the author of two Arabic cookbooks for children and she is a major draw at the Sharjah Book Fair and even appears on national TV. Her work has even been acknowledged by UAE's authorities. She was recently awarded the 10-year UAE Golden visa reserved for people who add tremendous value to the country.

Just like Chef Majed, Badya too encompasses the age defying gene that makes your jaw drop when you realize they are parents to three children with the eldest Fares being a 20 year-old studying hotel management. Her other two children are Fajer, 16, and Rashed 11.

You will see Badya at Guild events in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, or Sharjah. "We the Ladies of the Guild are everywhere supporting the Guild's activities. We organize many events with them and do our best to be involved in any way that we can," she says.

She too has been extremely active, especially during the pandemic months. She drummed up support of friends and family to bring additional traction to the various online events that the Guild has organized since. Or even wielded the camera to record videos for activities on the Guild's YouTube channel.

Badya is also actively involved in her husband's venture, the Chef International Centre (CIC) where they have activities for children and women. If there is a Guild



It fills my heart with joy when some of the children I have taught are now training other children

project that needs promoting beyond professional chefs, she clearly has the network to make a difference.

Her first tryst with the Guild was 20 years ago when she came to the Salon Culinaire to cheer Majed who was then a Commis competing in the cooking competition. It was a truly memorable day because Majed won a medal and it was also the day their first child was born.

She reminisces and says, "I supported him, I took photos and on the same day I went to the hospital and delivered our first son. It was February 2001. At that time I was supporting a young chef, while now I am supporting a board member and someone who is taking decisions that can help other chefs."

Being the wife to a husband, who is an executive chef, owner of a company, and board member of the Guild must be tough, especially given there are three kids to raise.

Badya agrees and says, "True, it was not that easy because I had to hold together

everything from children to the house and also prepare an atmosphere of comfort for Majed to continue his work properly without any problems from our side. I even trained our kids to be able to take care of themselves and cook simple things."

Badya was raised in the same village in Syria as Chef Majed. They met, fell in love, got married and they came to the UAE soon after. To support the family, she began working in sales and training and kept at it for 10 years.

Her major involvement in the industry started when Chef Majed began his consultancy and teaching and being involved in workshops for kids and families. Slowly but surely as their company grew she took charge of certain aspects of the business. She even went to Ajman University to study culinary, where Chef Majed teaches. If that wasn't enough, Badya has even completed a course from Worldchefs Academy and passed the certification online.

She says that Majed has always been supportive of her endeavours be it in the form of advice or even with publishing her first book in 2018 called 'From Badya's Kitchen' for children. The book has simple recipes for children without ingredients like sugar or cream.

Badya says she has lots of other activities with women associations and government departments. Majed describes her as "very active, very social and very supportive to people around her even beyond her family."





BRINGING IDEAS TO LIFE

Joanne Cook has been instrumental in either setting-up or growing every big culinary event in the UAE over the past two decades

Think Gulfood and Salon Culinaire or SIAL Middle East and La Cuisine du SIAL or Expo Culinaire and now Worldchefs Congress 2022, Joanne Cook is the person making ideas come to life on the ground.

Talking about her early days, the British national says, "I fell into the industry. I took a summer job, whilst at university in London. And it just so happened that I was placed at an event organizer."

What began as one day a week internship turned into a full-time role in 1995, immediately after her last day of final exams at university. Her employer, Montgomery Exhibitions, was the largest privately owned organizer in the world with events in the UK, and in the Middle and Far East.

Her primary focus was operations and delivery including events such as IFE in London. And her ability to get things done, saw her work on the international side of the business. She moved to Hong Kong in 1997, where HOFEX was their largest event. "Here I discovered that food and drink exhibitions are very strong elements in the hospitality sector," she says.

The F&B industry sees heavy government support the world over because it impacts exports, imports and even food security. "It is more than just trade," she emphasises.

"It was wonderful organizing such major events where culinary association are involved. Asian associations were very strong even back in the 90s. I noticed that hospitality trade events around the world would always have chefs as a part



A chef's life is kind of like the life in the military. There are ranks, you earn stripes, and you have to give it your all with a passion. The brotherhood and sisterhood is phenomenal

of it. This is why I have been associated with chefs throughout my career."

After working in Singapore FHA and Thailand, Joanne was back in London when she was approached by Dubai World Trade Center to take over a fledgling event called Gulfood. "At the time it ran every two years and was 12,000 square meters," she says.

She adds, "Dubai was actively recruiting people like me across all of their sectors, as they wanted to find internationally experienced organizers to raise their events to the next level and make it global. I was part of that first tranche of people who were brought over."

She decided the adventure to run and grow Gulfood would be worth it. And grow she did.

By the very next edition, she had sold out the show and grew it by 73%. A waiting list was created in year one of the first show that she delivered in

February 2005. The event was soon turned into an annual affair, and yet the show grew by 40%.

Her association with the Emirates Culinary Guild began here. "I'd understood that a chef's life is kind of like the life in the military. There are ranks, you earn stripes, and you have to give it your all with a passion. The brotherhood and sisterhood is phenomenal. And those jackets are worn with such pride," she says.

In 2009 she left and started a partnership with SIAL to launch SIAL Middle East in Abu Dhabi. She knew she had the support of the Guild and her first event in 2010 saw 400 chefs compete at the La Cuisine du SIAL.

A few years ago she launched her company Purple Kitchens and started ExpoCulinaire in Sharjah because she knew that Salon Culinaire would need a new home. Joanne believed that the foodservice exhibition space could use a more innovative approach whereby you can introduce sectors such as education into the fold.

Rather than spend 35% of budgets on marketing for visitor promotion, investing a portion of that to give chefs a platform is the better thing to do believes Joanne.

Now, with Worldchefs Congress 2022 being organized by her company, she says, it is reminiscent of the time she came to grow Gulfood. "Who would have known that Worldchefs Congress in Russia wouldn't have happened? This will be the first reunion in four years of the global chef community."

Exciting times lay ahead for Joanne Cook and we are super excited for her success.

'No Words To Describe The Sense Of Overwhelming Joy'

Shanaaz Raja, the Director of Courses at ICCA Dubai, is no stranger to the hundreds of young chefs who began their true culinary journey at the institute she spearheads with her husband **Sunjeh**

Shanaaz Raja's association with the Emirates Culinary Guild through ICCA Dubai, has allowed over 125 underprivileged young chefs to receive a certified culinary scholarship worth over \$10,000 each. Something she rarely talks about.

Her passion for teaching makes her a great mentor to tomorrow's chefs. Here are excerpts from an interview with her.

Could you tell us about how your association with the culinary world came to be?

Being born into a food loving family, my love for food and cooking is something that has always been a part of my being. Having a large family living in almost every part of the world has gone a long way in providing exposure and opening my perspective to different cuisines.

Moving to Dubai in 2005, made us realize that in spite of having such a large tourism-based economy, there were no culinary schools in the UAE and that is what urged us in this direction.

However, the early years were indeed difficult, as we worked hard at developing ICCA and even today it is a constantly evolving canvas with continuous innovation and improvement from our side.

What is your role at the ICCA Dubai and how long have you been working here?

I have been a part and parcel of ICCA since its very inception. My own education of having a Master's degree



We are proud of our association with the ECG, a great relationship, based on making lives happen

in Food Science and Nutrition, together with my background of coming from a family, where almost all the women of the previous generation were educators, made it but natural for me to step into my current role as the Director of Courses, overseeing the curriculum and its implementation on a day to day basis.

In this role, together with Sunjeh, we have focused on delivering an outcome driven training which over time has become our USP; making ICCA a leading culinary school in the Middle East region.

How does it feel to see chefs who learnt their culinary basics at your institution now be at high positions in hotels and restaurants around the world?

There are no words to describe the sense of satisfaction and overwhelming joy we feel to see our alumni who joined us with little or no knowledge in food production, today working all over the world, most in well known brands and others in their own businesses, flourishing and heading operations.

Whenever we come in contact with or

get to know of alumni who are doing well, it reiterates our faith in what we are doing and makes us strive to develop the program further to make this transition for our learners easier, not only helping them integrate, but also deliver seamlessly at the standards required of them.

Tell us about your earliest memories of the Emirates Culinary Guild. How you came to be associated with them and about the support you have offered over the years

My early association with the Emirates Culinary Guild began with escorting students to seminars hosted by Chef Uwe Micheel at the Radisson Blu, Dubai Deira Creek, then the Intercontinental Hotel. His warmth and mentoring attitude towards the students, during the workshops, made it worthwhile for batch after batch to attend his workshops!

And then there was the incredible Salon Culinaire, which was an amazing platform for young chefs to shine and get acknowledged by the world. Realizing the amount of hard work and passion the core team of the Emirates Culinary Guild put into hosting these competitions was indeed an eye opener and thus started our journey in being there for them when they needed us.

In 2014 when it was finally decided to initiate the long envisioned Culinary Scholarship program for underprivileged young chefs from the industry in the UAE, it was but natural to work together. We are proud of our association with the ECG, a great relationship, based on making chefs lives better.



June-July 2021 **Gulf Gourmet**



THE FACE OF YOUNG CHEFS

Meet the Chairman of the Emirates Culinary Guild Young Chefs Club and Worldchefs Culinary Ambassador for young chefs in the Middle East and North Africa

We last spoke to Chef Sana Quidwai three years ago. We ask her what's been happening ever since and pat comes her reply, "Motherhood!"

Chef Sana took a break from her culinary career in 2019 when her two-year-old daughter Amyreh was born and extended it because of the pandemic. "So, I'm still on a break," she says.

A break would hardly be the right way to describe her days since. While being a mother to a newborn is in itself a fulltime job, she never left her position as President of the Emirates Culinary Guild Young Chefs Club (ECGYCC). On the contrary she took up the additional responsibility of Worldchefs Culinary Ambassador for young chefs in the UAE.

Things changed further recently when she and Chef Ashish Thapliyal swapped roles making him President and she taking on fewer responsibilities as Chairman of the ECGYCC.

This was in direct response to the new role she took up as Worldchefs Ambassador for all countries in the Middle East and North Africa region.

She says, "I have grown tremendously as a culinary professional because of the Emirates Culinary Guild. I believe that for ladies, especially once you are on maternity leave, you completely lose touch with the industry. However, the Guild has allowed me to be a part of the industry."

Chef Sana began working with the ECGYCC by contributing on the sidelines five years



I have grown tremendously as a culinary professional because of the Emirates Culinary Guild

ago. "Chef Uwe asked me to join," she says. She helped organize events by learning from the then ECGYCC young leadership like Chef Danushka and Chef Ashish, who she says continues to be a big help.

"Everybody's helping each other and teaching each other. This is what has made me what I am right now with the Emirates Culinary Guild," she says of her five years with the Guild.

Within a year of becoming a part of the ECGYCC, Chef Danushka (the young chef club's previous president) left for Sri Lanka and Chef Sana's dedication elevated her to the position of President.

"When Danushka left, our activities dropped to 4-5 events a year but has since grown to 2-3 events a month!"

Even during the pandemic, the ECGYCC has been doing online workshops for young chefs. The club has grown despite the challenges they face.

"Ashish, Islam, Fay and I, who are part of the core committee, are training new people

to come up and take our position once we are out. I believe we are among the most active young chef clubs in the world."

We ask what it is like have Chef Raghuprasad Pillai as a mentor to the ECGYCC and her reply is, "Oh, he's a blessing! You always need a person who can tell you what is right and yet be a boss when needed. He'll tell you what we can and what we can't do."

"Chef Raghu is clear in his thought process and there is no beating around the bush," she says and adds, "This is a voluntary role and people are offering their time when possible. He is respectful of this and gives us the independence to organize things the way we deem best. And when we face a challenge, we know we can go back to him and ask for any help."

The Emirates Culinary Guild Young Chefs Club has grown over the past few years and even chefs who have moved out of the UAE continue to remain engaged.

Chef Sana as part of the role has travelled to countries like Singapore, Malaysia and Luxembourg.

She says more young chefs should join and step up to the plate. "I was never asked to leave my job and come for any particular event. Everybody in the group has been very clear that job comes first because you are getting paid there, and that this is a voluntary contribution of your time and effort for your industry."

If you are a young chef reading this, you know what you should do.

June-July 2021 **Gulf Gourmet**

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CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY

Offering sweet delights with a sweet smile comes naturally to Chef **Charles Bernard**. The research and development director of Bateel International LLC is a dessertarian par excellence. And a rare Mauritian pastry chef in a bastion usually dominated by Sri Lankan chefs...

When you think of long, sandy beaches and crystal blue waters, Mauritius can't be far behind in your mind.

The country has a rich history, influences of which can be seen in its everyday life, not least in its cuisine that mixes the best of Indian, Creole, French and Chinese food.

It's this legacy that pastry chef Charles Bernard, the research and development director of Bateel International LLC, carries proudly in his DNA. He infuses the multiculturalism of his upbringing into every dessert that he touches. Needless to say, his delicacies find resonance with all kinds of palates, across cultures and countries.

To think, it almost didn't happen that the chef took up a career in pastry. "At my first interview after passing out of hotel school, I was told there is no vacancy in the hot kitchen and I could work for six months in pastry and move later. It's been 25 years and I'm still waiting to move to the main kitchen," the Mauritian-born chef laughs.

If his father had his way, Chef Charles would have been working for the government now. When he was growing up, the hospitality industry was not so well-developed in Mauritius. "You



It's been 25 years and I'm still waiting to move to the main kitchen

aspired to be a doctor, lawyer, pilot or policeman. If you were not so good in academics, only then you became a chef. My father worked in the public sector and he wanted me to become a government employee."

The idea, however, failed to inspire any enthusiasm in a young Chef Charles. After school, he decided to try his hand at the culinary arts, inspired by the fine moments at home spent helping his mother in the kitchen. An uncle who worked in hospitality arranged an interview at the PLM Hotel Azur Mont Choisy. It was there he found a 'temporary' assignment to pastry, which eventually turned out to be his calling.

As a strong believer in spending time learning the basics, Chef Charles stayed with the hotel for four years, until the end of 1993, when he was invited to join the

Hotel Berjaya Beach Resort and Casino. "It's a Malaysian group of companies. It was there that I got my first pastry chef designation. I stayed there for three years and then left to join the Beachcomber group." Over the next six years, Chef Charles worked at the Paradis Hotel owned by the Beachcomber group, slowly climbing the ranks to becoming a manager of a team. A chef he worked with there turned out to be the passport for his overseas sojourn.

"It was 2003 and this chef asked me if I wanted to move to Dubai. I took up the offer and joined the One & Only Royal Mirage as assistant pastry chef." Although an enriching experience, the stint lasted just a year and a half because Chef Charles was offered a promising adventure in Barbados. "I didn't know anything about the country. I had heard about the Caribbean but I accepted the challenge anyway."

Joining the Sandy Lane Hotel, Golf and Spa was a good decision. Chef Charles was promoted to executive pastry chef position within a year and a half at the exclusive luxury hotel. The culture of Barbados was nothing like he had imagined. "The cuisine, the attitudes were highly Americanized." Along the way, the family welcomed two new members – son Lucas in 2005 and daughter Tessa in 2006.



In 2007, an opportunity in Dubai knocked on his door. It ended up offering Chef Charles his 'home' of 14 years. "I joined Bateel in 2007. Back then, it was known for dates and the company wanted to venture into the cafe business. This is where I came in, to head the pastry, bakery, cookies and chocolate operations." The first Cafe Bateel opened in August 2007 at the Al Manzil and second in Dubai Mall. "We now have around 20 cafes, 13 of which are in the UAE" says Chef Charles. One of his responsibilities is the menu planning. Bateel changes its menu thrice a year and does special menus for events such as Christmas, New Year, Ramadan, Easter, and Valentine's Day, among others. "So it gives me a lot of creative opportunities."

Admittedly, it's been a wild ride. "I've seen a lot of things, I've done a lot of things. But the great thing about



Every year, I tell myself this is the last time I am participating in a competition but that never happens. I guess that's just my personality

working at Bateel is that gives you the joys of working in hospitality without the extreme compromises on personal life that mainstream hotels require."

Nevertheless, Chef Charles believes in constantly challenging himself,

sometimes through culinary competitions. "Every year, I tell myself this is the last time I am participating in a competition but that never happens. I guess that's just my personality." Since 2009, he has participated in various competitions. "Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose. But every time, you learn something new."

One of his own favourites is chocolate cheesecake. Having done trainings in France, Chef Charles enjoys combining the traditional European desserts with local flavours. "I add a Middle Eastern twist sometimes, like dates or pistachio."

As for the future, he dreams of spending lazy days on the beautiful beaches of Mauritius. "I love my country and I am building a nest there. When I retire, I would like to go back." For the next decade, however, Dubai is where his heart is. As are his delish delights!



Chef Charles with his wife and children



CHOCOLATE CHEESECAKE WITH TONKA BEANS

Almond streusel	1500g
Baked chocolate cream cheese	3000g
Praline Feuilletine	700g
Mascarpone chocolate cream	1800g

ALMOND STREUSEL

Lurpak Soft butter	331g
Brown sugar	138g
Icing sugar	138g
Semolina	276g
Flour	258g
Almond powder	83g
Sea Salt	6g
White chocolate	57g
Corn oil	172g
Brown sugar	43g
Almond powder	72g
Total	1500g

Method

- ♦ Mix with the soft butter, brown sugar, icing sugar, semolina, flour, almond powder, and sea salt. Bake at 160°C for 20 min. Cool down and make a powder in the robot coupe or mixer with the paddle attachment. Add the melted white chocolate, oil, brown sugar, and almond powder.
- ♦ Spread 1,300g in a 60x40 frame. Bake at 160°C for 15 minutes.

CHOCOLATE BAKED CHEESECAKE

Lurpak cream cheese	1432g
Sugar	539g
Flour	33g
Eggs whole	337g
Egg yolks	50g
Lurpak cream	421g
Cocoa mass/100% dark chocolate	337g
total	3000g

Method

- ♦ Make a ganache with the cream and cocoa mass.
- ♦ Mix the Lurpak cream cheese with, the sugar and flour. Add little by little, the egg and egg yolk. Then add the ganache
- ♦ Pour 3kg of chocolate baked cheesecake per frame 60x40 on the streusel. Bake for 3 hours at 90°C.
- ♦ Cool down and freeze. After frozen spread the praline Feuilletine on the bake cheesecake

PRALINE FEUILLETINE

Hazelnut praline	195g
Hazelnut paste	195g
Dark chocolate	100g
Pailleté Feuilletine or crispy pancake	185g
Lurpak soft butter	46g
Total	700g

Method

- ♦ Melt the butter and chocolate. Mix with the praline and hazelnut paste, finally add the Pailleté Feuilletine.
- ♦ Spread on the frozen bake chocolate Cheesecake.

CREAM CHEESE CHOCOLATE CREAM

Milk	300g
Cream	300g
Egg yolks	145g
Sugar	110g
Dark Chocolate	360g
Cocoa mass/100% Chocolate	45g
Mascarpone cheese	590g
Total	1800g

Method

- ♦ A day before prepare the custard with the milk, cream, egg yolk, sugar. Boil the milk, cream and chopped Tonka beans, in a bowl whisk the egg and sugar. When the liquid start boiling pour on the egg mixture and mix well. Pour back in the saucepan and cook to 82°C. Strain and pour on the chocolate and chopped cocoa mass to make a ganache. Wrap and store in the fridge overnight.
- ♦ Mix the mascarpone cheese with a paddle, add in the ganache, and mix well.
- ♦ Spread 1.8 kg on the praline Feuilletine and spread evenly
- ♦ Store in the fridge or freezer for couple of hours before cutting the cheesecake. Cut and decorate as per the picture or as per your inspiration.
- ♦ This cake is good for 48 portion and can be divided as per the quantity needed and the mold you want to bake your cheesecake in.



Nestlé
Golden
Chef's Hat
Award



Aim for the CROWNE

Giving it their all for the Golden Chef's Hat Award this month are a duo made up of a seasoned competitor and a newbie with a passion from the Crowne Plaza Hotel Dubai

Chef John Javed Masih

This 30-year-old Junior Sous Chef hails from Karachi in Pakistan and has called Dubai home for nearly a decade. He began his career in the UAE working as a Commis II at the Radisson Blu Hotel Dubai Deira Creek.

"Back in the day, there were lots of culinary competitions and I enjoyed observing and learning. My chefs trained me for my first competition at the BurJuman 2013 Young Chefs Challenge where I won the Silver medal," he says.

He adds, "I had two opportunities when I came to the UAE, but I chose Radisson Blu because I had heard of Chef Uwe Micheel. That was a great decision

because he helped me get the ICCA Culinary Scholarship."

Five years later, he moved to Serafina restaurant (which coincidentally happened to be housed within the same BurJuman centre where he won his first competition medal). "I worked there for two years. I was Demi Chef de Partie. My chef would say, 'why don't you go home?' but I would work 20 hours a day at times. I was appreciated for my hard work."

He then opened a restaurant for a Sheikh where he had the opportunity to do "the menu, the planning, everything. I even had the opportunity to be the head chef there. But I wanted to learn more

so I sought out the opportunity to work at Marriott Hotel Al Jaddaf." Here he got the opportunity to learn from his chefs and open the 24 Karat Italian restaurant.

He approached Chef Christophe Louis Prud'homme recently and ended up in his current role just six months ago working at their Italian restaurant.

Chef John and his wife Helen are proud parents to a toddler named Jasmin. "My parents are no longer working and I support them," he says about his immediate family.

Over the years, he has won multiple awards in various culinary competitions and wants to give back to the industry.



Chef John Javed Masih



Chef Kritika Abrol



His long-term goal is to teach upcoming chefs. "I have had some great and some not-so-great experiences as a young chef starting out. I want to be able to help young chefs who don't have the means to learn," he says.

Chef Kritika Abrol

Chef Kritika is a 21-year-old from India and works as Commis III at the Crowne Plaza Dubai. "This is my first job and I have been working for less than 2 months," she says.

After three years of studies in hospitality management and leadership from

IGNOU, Delhi she found the opportunity to intern at the Crowne Plaza in Dubai and was offered a job soon after.

"My first impressions here were amazing. My internship was in Pastry and I loved looking at chefs creating beautiful cakes.

"All my Chefs here are very good to me and they teach me things like a kid. There are so many things to learn and even our Executive Chef Christophe has taught me and given me books to improve my skills. When I enter the kitchen, I feel so happy! This is my happy place," she says.

Her decision to become a chef stemmed from watching celebrity chefs on TV. "My family has always been very supportive from the beginning. They said, do whatever you want and they helped me to go to college."

For this competition she wanted to create something colorful and eye-catching and that's what you will see in her recipe.

Her big dream is to be a Chef Owner with multiple restaurants. "Getting my name selected for this competition was very heartwarming for me because there are great chefs here and I was selected."

Beef roulade with braised beef chuck

BEEF ROULADE CRUST WITH HERBS

Beef	320gm
Dates paste	10gm
Black olive paste	4tsp
Salt and Pepper	As needed
Olive oil	4 tbsp
Mustard	2 tbsp
Thyme	4 leaves
Nori paper	2ps

Method

- ♦ Cut the beef for beef roulade. Press with meat hammer. Apply date paste and

black olive paste. Cook at 180°C for eight minutes then remove from oven. Apply mustard and then apply the herbs crust. Put it back in the oven for three minutes.

BASIL AND PARSLEY CRUST

Basil	10 leaves
Parsley	10gm
Thyme	2 leaves
Salt	As needed
Paper	As needed

Method

- ♦ Blend the parsley, mix herb and basil leaves. Add some salt and pepper. Slowly add bread crumbs inside the

blender. Mix it well. Take out from blender and sieve it.

BEEF CHICK BRAISE

Beef chuck	320gm
Carrot	5gm
Celery	5gm
Onion	5gm
Garlic	4 cloves
Thyme	2 leaves
Buitoni Tomato Coulis	30gm
Chef demi glace	10gm
Salt and Pepper	As needed

Method

- ♦ Sear the vegetables and beef with salt



and pepper. Add tomato paste, then put demi glace and cook in the oven for 55 minutes at 200°C.

- ♦ You also get sauce from braising.

NESTLE MASH POTATO

Maggi mashed potato	300gm
Milk	10gm
Cream	10gm
Butter	1tsp
Salt and Pepper	As needed
Parmesan cheese	3 table
Chive	2 leaves

Method

- ♦ Heat milk in a pot and add mash potato. Stir well. Mix in the butter, salt, pepper and cream just before taking it off the heat.

PUMPKIN PUREE

Pumpkin	25gm
Butter	2 tbsp
Thyme	2gm
Garlic	1tsp
Salt and Pepper	As needed

Maggi chicken stock 2 cup

Method

- ♦ Cut small cubes of pumpkin. Sauté it well in butter.
- ♦ Add chicken stock then put thyme, garlic, salt and pepper.
- ♦ Reduce the stock. Blend it well and strain it out.

BURRATA RAVIOLI

Burrata cheese	20gm
Basil	5 leave
Parmesan	2 tbsp

Salt and Pepper As needed

Method

- ♦ Mix burrata, basil, salt and pepper for ravioli stuffing.

PASTA DOUGH

1 whole egg	2ps
1 egg yolk	2yolk
Salt olive oil	As needed
Pasta flour	400gm

Method

- ♦ Mix whole egg and egg yolk. Add oil followed by pasta flour and mix well. Shape it up and add the burrata stuffing.

RAVIOLI SAUCE

Butter	3tbsp
Parmesan	2 tbsp
Maggi chicken stock	1/2 cup
Saj herb	1 leaf
Salt and Pepper	As needed

Method

- ♦ Heat chicken stock in a pot. Add butter, salt and pepper. Add cooked ravioli towards the end and finish with parmesan.

MIX SALAD LEMON AND GINGER COMBINATION

Fresh mix leave	20gm
Cucumber	4gm
Carrot	4gm
Confit cherry tomato	4gm
Fennel	4gm
Grey fruit	4gm
Lemon juice	2tbsp
Olive oil	4tbsp

Sugar 1 tsp

Salt pepper As needed

Method

- ♦ Wash mixed leaves. Add lemon, ginger juice, salt and pepper to the salad mix. Add cucumber, carrot, confit tomato, and fennel grey fruit to the salad and mix.

MUSHROOM CROQUET

Chopped sauté mushroom	10gm
Chopped onion	1tbsp
Dust flour	Dust
Panko bread crumb	1 cup
Whole egg	1ps
Salt and pepper	As needed
Butter	1 tsp
Whole egg	1

Method

- ♦ Sauté the mushroom with onion butter. Salt and Pepper reduce the water make ball shape for croquet dust the flour and cod with egg and panko bread crumb and fry

SAUTÉED VEGETABLE

Baby carrot	8gm
Broccoli	12gm
Green beans	12gm
Salt and Pepper	As needed

Method

- ♦ Peel and clean the vegetables.
- ♦ Add chicken stock boiler to blanch. After that strain the water.
- ♦ Heat butter in a saucepan and add vegetables. Sprinkle salt and pepper on it.



Hazelnut chocolate mousse with nestle crème brulee and raspberry jelly

DOCELLO CHOCOLATE MOUSSE

Docello chocolate mousse powder	125g
Milk	250 ml

Method

- ◆ Put the cold milk in a high bowl.
- ◆ Mix the chocolate mousse powder with a whip until it becomes a homogenous mixture.
- ◆ Now whip the mixture in a mixer for 2 minutes at low speed and then for 5 minutes at high speed.

DOCELLO CRÈME BRULEE

Docello crème brulee powder	125g
Milk	250ml
Cream	125ml

Method

- ◆ Bring to boil the mix of milk and cream.
- ◆ Remove from heat and add crème brulee powder and mix with hand. Whip then bring back to a boil.

HAZELNUT DACQUOISE

Egg white	80g
Sugar	80g
Hazelnut powder	64g
Flour	13.2g
Nestle cream	13.2g
Melted butter	6.4g

Method

- ◆ Beat egg white and sugar in a mixer on a high speed.
- ◆ Fold the hazelnut powder into meringue and then slowly add the flour by cut and fold method.
- ◆ After this, add the fresh cream and finally add melted butter.
- ◆ Put the mixture in a baking tray and level it.
- ◆ Cook the mixture in 200°C for 9 minutes.

RASPBERRY JELLY

Frozen raspberry	80g
Sugar	30g
Agar-agar	1.6 g
Lemon zest	1g
Raspberry puree	20g

Method

- ◆ Cook frozen berry, raspberry puree and sugar together on a medium flame.
- ◆ Add the agar-agar into the mixture and towards the end add lemon zest.

SALTY HAZELNUT AND BROWN SUGAR CRUMBLE

Hazelnut powder	80g
Flour	40g
Butter	80 g
Brown sugar	60 g
Salt	6.4g

Method

- ◆ Beat the brown sugar and butter until it becomes fluffy.
- ◆ Mix the dry ingredients together.

- ◆ And the mix it with sugar and butter.
- ◆ Bake it at 180 degree for 20 minutes.

PISTACHIO BRIGADERIO

Nestle condensed milk	60g
Butter	15g
Maggi coconut powder	30g
Pistachio paste	4g

Method

- ◆ Put condensed milk in a pan and warm it a little bit.
- ◆ Then add butter into it.
- ◆ After two minutes add coconut powder and pistachio paste and cook for 7-8 minutes. Let it cool down.
- ◆ Then, make small balls and cover it with pistachio powder.

MIRROR CHOCOLATE GLAZE

Nestle heavy cream	120g
Sugar	180g
Water	150g
Cocoa powder	60g
Gelatin	20g

Method

- ◆ Boil cream, sugar and water together and then add cocoa powder to it. Add gelatin into the mixture.
- ◆ Strain the mixture and cool it before use.

GARNISH

Sugar ring	
Fresh raspberry	
Hazelnut crumble	

Reimagining Foodservice Culture

Samer Abou Daher, has joined Bidfood as Director of People and Culture. We caught up with the effervescent personality on why he chose to move from a thriving sales career into building the people culture for a fast-growing organization

Congratulations Samer on your new role. How did this position come about?

I was lucky enough to join Bidfood in 2003 – (previously HORECA Trade) – as a Sales Executive in my early 20s. I learned and grew alongside the company as both a person and a professional, and with that grew my attachment to it. This new role comes as BME turns the dial up on its People Development vision – an integral part of our mission to nurture a people-focused and future-driven organization.

I'm proud and grateful to rejoin my Bidfood family as a mentor to my 300 colleagues to drive a leadership-enriched culture and ignite the potential of our people. It's like I never left – my heart has always been here.

Your move from Director of Sales to Director of People and Culture is honestly not surprising, given your people skills. Will this role take you away from the food service industry and your established network of professional chefs?

Not at all. Foodservice is not a job; it is a lifestyle. My passion towards the Foodservice industry and my network of friends / Chefs is what made me who I am today. I will be joining my colleagues in the sales team on joint market visits. The day I feel that I am not connected with the industry is the day I will realize that I have not been doing what I am supposed to be doing.



My advice to young chefs and Foodservice executives is to invest in themselves every single day. Read one page of a magazine or a book, meet new people, set your own goals, and write them down, never stop learning!

Could you please tell us what the role entails?

We will be driving BME's People and Culture journey, setting and delivering strategic direction across all BME's offices in the GCC. This entails providing our know-how with regards to leadership, coaching, employee relations, productivity, engagement, and accountability, talent acquisition, corporate culture, life-work balance (life comes before work), performance management, and learning and development. I am not a manager, I am not a boss, I am a friend, a mentor, a cheerleader, a coach. Coaches do not play; they motivate and empower.

Why is it that people and culture is not a priority focus in the foodservice industry?

It's because of money & time! Unfortunately, many players in the industry see this as a cost. We see this as an investment. Corporate cultures are built by daily small actions taken by leaders not by a nice speech from the CEO once a year or an employee of the quarter celebration.

This is not a one-time project; this is a journey. Many players in the industry look at People & Culture as a race, we see this as a relay. Passing the baton from one leader to another, creating new leaders, growing to new markets, adding new team members to our family. It is our way of working!

Building a people's culture is done by constant, never-ending focus. It is full time not part time. We don't just do it when the days are sunny and pull of the plug when the business is going south! We didn't let anyone off during the pandemic, we maintained everyone's salaries despite facing lot of cash flow issues when customer stopped paying us. This tells you something! This is Bidfood, it is our priority!

You will be creating a major shift in the way people-centric processes work inside of Bidfood. Won't it be difficult to change the cultural mindset across all levels of the business?



June-July 2021 Gulf Gourmet



The Bidfood Middle East leadership

Horeca Trade (Bidfood) has always been a people's company. Our CEO has always kept our people in the heart of every decision we take. This is not new to us and our leadership team across our five markets in the GCC are fully aligned. We are aware that any change must start with us, from the top. We are committed to drive this change; we must always be role models to our teams, and we are embracing this mindset.

Some people say that it is difficult to change. People resist change! At Bidfood, we believe differently. What if I give you a million dirhams, will you change? What if change makes our people's lives easier and make them happier at work? Will they still resist change? Would it still be difficult? People resist stupid change, people resist wasting their time, their efforts if they don't see the benefit. At Bidfood, we see the benefit, we believe that our people are the most important asset. Therefore, this won't be difficult!

Across the world we see businesses talk about talent being the most critical resource for business success. And yet, you see a lot of companies not investing enough in talent. Why is that?

This is exactly like going to a Gym, if you ask hundred people "Do you think going to a gym is good for you?" I bet you that more than 90% will say yes, yet less than 10% actually go. For organizations to thrive and survive in a fast-changing world, they need to invest in their talents. Products come and go, menus change, trends shift, but you do not want your best people to

leave you. Building talents takes time and investment. Unfortunately, many managers do not have the patience and they want quick wins. They do not think in a sustainable way. I read one time about a nice conversation when a manager asked her CEO: "What if we train our people, spend all this money on them and they leave?". The CEO replied: "What if we don't and they stay!"

You recently started your own side hustle and turned it into a profitable business that has won awards. Could you tell our readers more about it?

Back in November and before re-joining Bidfood, I took over a small take-away / delivery Pizza and Burger restaurant in Mirdif that has been operating with loss for more than a year and literally changed everything from the smallest grain of flour, up to the menu and the logo. The only thing that remained the same was our 7 team members. I was challenged to fire them and get new staff however I decided to fire them up! Through setting the right vision, motivation, training, empowerment, and trust, we managed to grow the business by 4 times in less than 5 months. We won the third best Pizza with Virgin Radio competition few months ago and the team are super happy with their achievement.

And finally, what is your advice to a young chef or foodservice executive who wishes to bring about a positive change in their company's people and culture?

When the student is ready, the teacher will appear! My advice to young chefs

and Foodservice executives is to invest in themselves every single day. Read one page of a magazine or a book, meet new people, set your own goals, and write them down, never stop learning!

Bringing a positive change in organizations' people and culture is not an easy task and is not a one man show. Leaders should embrace this, but actions should come from each one of us. Successful companies need more daring leaders, need more ambitious teams. The only constant in life is change. As they say, if we don't change, we will end up in chains. Life and skills are changing rapidly and what we learned 10 or even 5 years ago is becoming obsolete very quickly. Sales and marketing strategies that used to work in the past are no longer useful. Cooking techniques and food trends are evolving. Therefore, we need to embrace change and ask ourselves how can I learn and develop? How can I change into a better person?

Through my long journey in the Foodservice business in the GCC, I met a lot of people who think they have 10 and 20 years of experience where in fact they have only one year repeated 10 or 20 times. Foodservice professionals and young chefs should understand that doing the same thing for 10 years is not good for them. They need to learn and adapt new skills. By this, people and their organizations will gain competitive advantage and will win over their competitors. This is how we build companies, restaurants, and businesses that are built to last.



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Soya, almond and coconut: source of calcium. Calcium is needed for the maintenance of normal bones. Oat: source of Vitamin B12. Vitamin B12 contributes to the reduction of tiredness and fatigue. A varied and balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle is recommended for good health.



June-July 2021 **Gulf Gourmet**

THE CHEF'S TABLE

Emirates Culinary Guild supported The Chef's Table Challenge once again this year at The Hotel Show 2021 held in Dubai. Radisson Blu Hotel Dubai Deira Creek won the trophies for Overall Winners, Best Kitchen and Best Service. The Best Barman was from Jumeirah Creekside Hotel.

The Show had both live and in-person event at the Dubai World Trade Centre. Here are images from the event.





June-July 2021 **Gulf Gourmet**





June-July 2021 Gulf Gourmet



CHEF EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Middle East Chef Excellence Awards Winners 2021 and the Young Chef of the Year Winners organized by Hozpitality were announced last month at the Dusit Thani hotel in Dubai. Here are images from the event



June-July 2021 Gulf Gourmet



June-July 2021 **Gulf Gourmet**

ICCA Dubai's Culinary Scholarship CELEBRATES CLASS OF 2021

This Annual One Million Dirham Continuing Education Award for UAE Young Industry Chefs has trained 125 deserving young chefs since 2015

On May 18, ICCA Dubai celebrated the latest batch of graduates from its Culinary Scholarship Program, the Annual One Million Continuing Education Award for UAE Young Industry Chefs.

This innovative, first-of-its-kind initiative was established in 2014 in partnership with the Emirates Culinary Guild, City & Guilds, London, UK and the Worldchefs.

Each year, the Dubai-headquartered culinary institute pledges AED 1 million

to educate and train 30 talented, deserving but financially underprivileged young chefs from the UAE industry.

As of 2021, 125 scholars have graduated from this program. With the help of sponsors such as US Cheese, US Poultry and Nestlé Professional, additional students have been added to each batch, and the curriculum has also been expanded – initially, only the Cooking Diploma was offered, now the Baking and Patisserie Diploma has been added as well.

The Continuing Education Award and its associated Scholarship Program have garnered several acknowledgments and recognitions, including the Dubai Knowledge Park and Dubai International Academic City Recognition for the "Year of Giving 2017".

"We are celebrating an important milestone in our joint Scholarship program between Emirates Culinary Guild and ICCA Dubai, and our partners, without whom we would never have been able to see these young people



flourish. 125 young lives changed from 2015 since the Scholarship's inception equates to 125 families across the globe being in a better place, because we see our young chefs in all corners of the globe, from France to Australia.

The industry is on its knees, but our role as leaders is to lift up the spirit of the young and give them a direction for a brighter future that is surely coming for all of us, in this industry" notes Andy Cuthbert, the Chairman of Emirates Culinary Guild, a Member of the ICCA Dubai Culinary Scholarship Committee, the General Manager of Jumeirah Creekside Hotel and the Continental Director (Africa & Middle East) for Worldchefs.

WHY THE SCHOLARSHIP WAS ESTABLISHED

Many industry chefs hail from non-culinary backgrounds and do not have any formal training or qualifications

- ◆ This unique Scholarship Program identifies 30 talented, deserving but financially underprivileged young chefs from the industry each year
- ◆ The students then receive one year's professional training for an International Diploma in Culinary Arts for free at ICCA Dubai's world-class campus in Dubai Knowledge Park
- ◆ The institute has strategically partnered with the Emirates Culinary Guild, Worldchefs and City & Guilds, UK, to execute this program
- ◆ Graduates receive a Diploma from City & Guilds, London, UK and Global Chef Certification from the Worldchefs
- ◆ This initiative is a tangible step towards bridging the skills gap within the hospitality industry and ties into the Government of Dubai's wider vision of developing a knowledge-based economy
- ◆ The Scholarship Program has been tremendously successful, not only helps young chefs to enhance their career but also helps to uplift their dependents & families as well in the long run

despite having relevant experience. This is often due to financial limitations.

In order to give back to the community and ensure that today's workforce is aligned to future opportunities and

economic needs, ICCA Dubai launched the Continuing Education Award Program in 2014, with the first batch of students inducted in 2015.

"Technical Vocational Education &



Trainings (TVET) are paramount, as the industry today is increasingly focusing on the standard of knowledge and skills required for high-quality work, especially in the culinary industry and the world of hospitality.

"This trend can be seen all over the world, with various governments implementing serious training initiatives to develop knowledge and skills, because building a skills-based economy is considered the need of the hour. At ICCA Dubai, we take pride in what we do. With the Class of 2021 graduates, we have trained and certified 125 young industry chefs to date, staying true to our commitment and resolve to truly make an impact," says Sunjeh Raja, the Director and CEO of ICCA Dubai and a Member of ICCA

Dubai Culinary Scholarship Committee.

He adds, "The ICCA Dubai Scholarship program delivers a Diploma that is approved by City & Guilds, London, UK, and a Global Chef Certification recognised by Worldchefs. This is a world-renowned standard, offering international acceptance and portability, opening up a world of opportunity for professional growth to the scholars we have trained."

WHAT THE SCHOLARSHIP ENTAILS

The Continuing Education Award Scholars are given the opportunity to learn at ICCA's state-of-the-art culinary training facility in Dubai, where they are taught by some of the most eminent industry chefs and culinary professionals. They are also given access to best-in-class equipment,

high-quality ingredients, and extensive learning materials produced in-house. The costs for all of this – amounting to nearly \$10,500 per student chef– are borne by ICCA Dubai.

"To do what you love and are passionate about...and with 125 successful graduates trained in the five years since the inception of the Scholarship is a dream come true! The Scholarship program is a tangible step in bridging the skills gap. It is designed to share knowledge, experience and expertise along with providing a formal education, with the goal of developing a sustainable workforce and socially inclusive work environment.

"We remain committed to supporting and uplifting the aspiring young chefs of



the industry, for we believe that better than a vision held are dreams shared and brought to reality," says Chef Uwe Micheel, the President of Emirates Culinary Guild, a Member of the ICCA Dubai Culinary Scholarship Committee, the Director of Kitchens at Radisson Blu – Dubai Deira Creek and the Asst. Vice President for Worldchefs.

Chefs working in the industry without a formal qualification receive salaries of approximately \$6,000 per annum. Without acquiring recognised certifications or degrees, they would find it difficult to evolve in their career. The Continuing Education Award enables such chefs to obtain a widely recognised and respected Diploma and Certificate, which opens up a world of opportunity. It

has been noted that past Scholars have commanded salaries as high as \$65,000 or \$70,000 per annum or more after graduating, thanks to now having both the relevant experience as well as the required qualifications.

"The difference between a Cook and a Chef lies in the knowledge and understanding of the how and why of cooking. With so many young chefs coming from a non-culinary background and having entered the industry without formal training, this program has helped articulate their fundamentals while strengthening their knowledge and skills to make them more confident and proficient in the kitchen. It is heartening to see them evolve over the year from the time they start their first lesson at

ICCA Dubai to this day as they graduate. We are confident that the program will not only change their way of working but also their perspective towards their profession as well as themselves. Needless to say, immense opportunities await these graduated scholars, who are now well equipped for professional growth and excellence," says Shanaaz Raja, the Director of Courses at ICCA Dubai and a Member of the ICCA Dubai Culinary Scholarship Committee.

This initiative is a tangible step towards bridging the skills gap within the hospitality industry while inculcating social inclusiveness and sustainability. It also ties into the Government of Dubai's wider vision of developing a knowledge-based economy.



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Work Address:	Tel:	
Web Address:	Email:	
Telephone Office:	Professional Title:	
Fax Office:	Type of Membership Required: (Please tick one)	
Tel. Home:	Corporate <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Renewal <input type="checkbox"/>	
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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:

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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BUREAU

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

EXPO *Culinaire*
FOOD & EQUIPMENT FOR CHEFS | PASTRY CHEFS | BAKERS | HORECA PROFESSIONALS
FEATURING THE 25TH EMIRATES INTERNATIONAL SALON CULINAIRE
ALONGSIDE WORLDCHEFS CONGRESS & EXPO 2022
30 MAY-2 JUN 2022 | ADNEC, ABU DHABI, UAE

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



Next year, the global chef community will have reunited for the first time in four years and only the second time ever on this continent. Don't get left behind, make your plans now!



What opportunities will you have over four amazing days?

- Meet up with thousands of topchefs from more than 100 countries
- Taste and test some of the best HoReCa products the world has to offer at ExpoCulinaire 2022
- Explore dozens of certified training and education sessions and forums
- Enjoy the talent and creativity from hundreds of competitors at the Global Chefs Challenge Finals, Emirates International Salon Culinaire and the Young Chefs National Team African Cup
- Socialize at three fantastic evening events
- Expand business development and career opportunities like never before

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