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AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2017

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THE MAGAZINE CHEFS LOVE TO READ
volume 12, issue 7



NO TURNING BACK

MEET CHEF FERAS AL-HAMADI,
THE 'BEST ARABIC CHEF', AND
CHEF THUSITHA PERERA, THE
'BEST KITCHEN ARTIST', AT EAST
COAST SALON CULINAIRE 2017

SKY HIGH

Dwarika Bhatt,
executive chef at Zero
Gravity Skydive Dubai,
shares a special recipe
for the pros



TRADE TALK

Interview with
Gianpaolo Bruno,
the Italian Trade
Commissioner for UAE,
Oman and Pakistan



GOLDEN CHEF

Artistic Food Lab
Jeddah competes for
the Nestle Professional
Golden Chefs Hat
Award – Season 2





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Dear fellow chefs, ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to the August-September issue of our Gulf Gourmet.

Hope you had a great summer and were able to take a vacation with family and friends.

Myself and the Emirates Culinary Guild team had a busy summer. I travelled with the WorldChefs President Thomas Gugler to Mongolia and had the honour of meeting the country's Vice President.

In July a big delegation from the UAE went to Colombo; some of us judged, others competed or just visited to support our longtime friends. I must say a big thank you and congratulations to Chefs Gerard and Dimuthu for a great show.

In August, Chairman Andy Cuthbert and I travelled to Kuala Lumpur for the WorldChefs Board Meeting. Thank you K. K. Yau and team for being a great host.

If you have not registered yet for the World Chef Congress on July 2018 in Kuala Lumpur, make sure that you register as soon as possible, we are looking forward to a great Congress. Andy Cuthbert and the Organizing Committee are working very hard to put together an amazing show for us. Do not miss it.

In the meantime our Culinary Team for Singapore and Luxembourg got together and started their training.

Our Pastry Team is in full swing for the Championship in Milan in October.

A big mabrouk goes out to Chef Majed al Sabagh and the entire Syrian Guild for the first Syrian Salon Culinaire. Due to the challenges in Syria, the Salon was held in Ras Al Khaimah.

In August, I also travelled to Luxembourg to book the Team Hotel for our Culinary Team for the World Cup next year. We will be hosted by Lycee Technique



Hotelier Alexis Heck. Chef Alan and Team thank you for your support.

Our Young Chefs Team is in full preparation for the African Cup to be held in Mauritius this month-end.

The registration for the La Cuisine Du Sial in December is open. I know that some of you are already in full training. Look forward to seeing you all in Abu Dhabi.

A big thank you also goes out to US Poultry and Egg Export Council and Mr. Bassam Bousaleh and the AMFI Team for hosting the US Egg Workshop and US Poultry Workshop – two great events.

If you have missed previous issues of Gulf Gourmet magazine please visit www.gulfgourmet.net for back issues.

I urge all members to check out the Guild website to know what's happening on the calendar at emiratesculinaryguild.net. Do visit facebook.com/wacsyoungchefs and encourage your young chefs to join and stay in contact with over 4,000 chefs across the globe.

Please do not miss the company profiles of our corporate members. We really do appreciate your support. Also, do look at the Friends of the Guild pages to know who our supporters are.

Culinary Regards,

Uwe Micheel

*President of Emirates Culinary Guild
Director of Kitchens
Radisson Blu Hotel Deira Creek*

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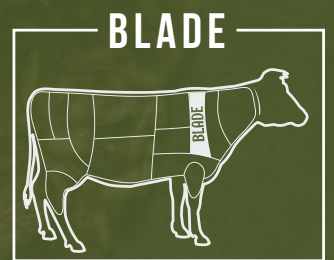
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DO YOU KNOW YOUR BLADE **FROM YOUR** KNIFE?

Secondary cuts like the oyster blade are increasingly becoming popular menu items at many top restaurants and steak houses. Quality Australian oyster blade performs just as well as loin cuts but costs less. Its flavour and tenderness also make Australian oyster blade ideal for a gourmet roast and when prepared as a steak, provide exceptional eating quality.



Oyster Blade Roast

The oyster blade is connected to the shoulder blade of the beef. Roasting this whole cut allows the connective tissue to melt into the meat resulting in a flavourful and tender roast. Oyster blade can be further cut into steaks, thinly sliced for stir fries or diced for slow cooking.



Oyster Blade Steak

This is a muscle that sits just below the shoulder blade and is bisected by a lone line of connective tissue. When separated from the shoulder, it is cut into steaks. When cooking oyster blade steak, it's important to score or remove the centre gristle to prevent curling when cooking. Sliced into thin strips, this cut is also suited to stir fries.



Flat Iron Steak

The oyster blade can also be denuded and trimmed of connective tissue and cut into flat iron steaks. These steaks are extremely popular because they are lean, tender, juicy and full of flavour.



Australian Oyster Blade Mushroom Risotto
Recipe by Master Chef Tarek Ibrahim

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editor'snote

email editor@gulfgourmet.net

A long vacation is always welcome and we at Gulf Gourmet have done so every year for over a decade. This is why we publish 10 issues a year (instead of 12) and use the two-month gap every summer to explore, unwind, refresh and return with a bang.

Last year our team was spread across Vietnam, Canada, and Poland. This year we travelled separately to the UK, India and Germany. It helps us to view different perspectives before returning to what some might believe to be monotonous work.

However, monotonous would not be the right word for us. Truth be told, we are blessed to be in our field of work as we get to meet chefs from across the globe. It's always a new flavour, a new trend and a new possibility we are being exposed to.

And talking of new possibilities, we are starting a new section in our magazine called #GourmetWatch. This is nothing but a melange of insta-worthy snaps of food and food-related events that are vying for consumer attention in the culinary world.

This includes plated dishes from you – our chef readers – that your marketing team is vociferously pushing out to the press. It is to help you get a glimpse of how important it is to tantalise not just through taste and smell but also through the way you present your dish. Hope this inspires new designs in your day to day work.

This issue also includes a special interview with Gianpaolo Bruno, the Italian Trade Commissioner for UAE, Oman and Pakistan. With almost every hotel and every mall in town pushing Italian cuisine, we find out from him about the UAE's impact on food trade and he reveals some interesting numbers and trends about Italian produce in this market. Do read it.



Then we have images from the first ever Syrian Salon Culinaire held in Ras Al Khaimah. Organised by the Syrian Culinary Guild with support from the Emirates Culinary Guild, the inaugural event saw more than 80 percent of the participation from first time competitors. This is great news as not only is Syrian cuisine being promoted, but more chefs are taking a chance at giving their best and learning from the masters.

And finally, we are working with American Garden to create a recipe book called 'Women in Culinary'. This will feature women chefs from all levels, showcasing starters, mains and desserts. This is a pet project for us as we want to see more women chefs shine bright in the culinary space. If you or your colleague is interested in being shortlisted for this book, please email editor@gulfgourmet.net with your contact details.

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

Aquin George
Editor

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friends of the guild



دائرة السياحة والتسويق التجاري
Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing







newsbites

Sharjah hospitality sector grows 7.8% in H1 2017

Sharjah's hospitality sector revenues witnessed a remarkable 7.8% increase during the first half of 2017 compared with the previous year, with its value reaching AED 372 million, the Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority (SCTDA) announced. The announcement came as the emirate steadily positions itself as a destination of choice for local, regional, and international tourists.

SCTDA reported a massive 70 per cent occupancy rate from January to June this year. The total number of guests for the first half of the year reached 885,000, representing a 3.5 per cent increase versus the same period in 2016.

Saudi nationals occupied many of the local hotels' lists of top guests. During the first two quarters of the year alone, hotels welcomed at least 72,000 Saudi travelers.

HE Khalid Jasim Al Midfa, Chairman of SCTDA, said, "The remarkable expansion in the occupancy rate is the result of the Sharjah Government's intensive efforts to attract local, regional, and global tourists as part of its comprehensive and ambitious socio-economic development plan. Our ultimate goal is to draw 10 million visitors a year by 2021, a grand accomplishment that will help accelerate the emirate's unprecedented growth in the 21st century."



New Chef De Cuisine at Yansoon Restaurant

Hakaya Collection has appointed Chef Leba Joseph Makhoul as the new Chef de Cuisine at Yansoon. The restaurant is their waterside dining destination, in Ras Al Khaimah, offering authentic Levantine cuisine.

Chef Leba brings with him over 20 years' experience in delivering Lebanese and Armenian cuisine. His vision for Yansoon is to continue to offer classic favourites whilst adding his signature touches to each dish, using only the very best and freshest produce.

"A lot of my clients say my dishes take them back to a special moment in their childhood," said Chef Leba. "I take great pride in this and look forward to bringing the same spirit and passion to the Yansoon kitchen."

"With my new seasoned culinary team by my side, I look forward to delivering Yansoon's Ramadan menu this year and creating new and inspired Levantine dishes. I'm excited to showcase my signature style and of course my own dessert range that I've passionately perfected over the years," concluded Chef Leba.

Most recently, the Lebanese Chef worked at Mayrig restaurant.



Siddhesh Sukhathankar appointed Executive Sous Chef



Siddhesh Sukhathankar

Siddhesh Sukhathankar, previously Executive Pastry Chef at Amwaj Rotana Jumeirah Beach - Dubai has been promoted to the position of Executive Sous Chef.

Siddhesh first joined Amwaj Rotana in December 2014, having previously worked with renowned chefs such as Marike van Beurden of Caprice, Four Seasons Hong Kong, Vikas Bagul of The Oberoi and Trident in Mumbai, and Claire Clarke from French Laundry.

Prior to his working career, Siddhesh obtained his degree from the Institute of Hotel Management in Mumbai as well as a Post-Graduation Diploma in Kitchen Management from The Oberoi Centre of Learning and Development.

With this promotion, Siddhesh has joined a team of talented individuals who have progressed within the hotel.

The hotel also appointed two more key members to the kitchen team

Andy Zyla has been appointed as new Specialty Outlet Chef at JB's, the only gastropub in Jumeirah Beach Residence (JBR). Andy comes to Amwaj Rotana with 16 years of experience both in hotels and independent restaurants spanning international destinations such as the UK and Maldives.

With over 6 years' experience in the UAE additionally at big name hotels such as the Westin and Le Meridien Mina Seyahi, Fairmont the Palm and the Address Montgomerie Dubai, Andy is a highly skilled chef who has run operations with over 800 covers per day and teams of about 100 staff members.

At Benihana, the internationally renowned American-Japanese eatery, **W.A.P. Sanjeewa** will helm the kitchen as its Specialty Outlet Chef. No stranger to Rotana Hotels, Sanjeewa was the Specialty Outlet Chef in Teatro Downtown Rotana, Bahrain, for three years prior to moving to Dubai.

Prior to his new stint, he has also worked in a number of exotic destinations such as the Hideaway of Nungwi Resort & Spa in Zanzibar,



Andy Zyla



W.A.P. Sanjeewa

Conrad Maldives Rangali Island, Hilton Colombo and Hilton Seychelles Resort and Spa in a variety of destinations and is the recipient of numerous awards like Gold and Silver Medals at the Hotel Asia Food Competition.

World Pizza Champion Returns

Chef Danilo Sangrigoli is back at Anantara The Palm Dubai Resort. Danilo, the recognized three-times World Pizza Champion and the only competitor to ever win both the acrobatic and baking sections of the Italian Pizza Championship will be at The Beach House until September 16.

He will be serving up a special pizza menu for lunch and dinner, where the jovial Italian will wow guests with his acrobatic displays of dough twirling and high velocity pizza creation.

Danilo is also the Guinness World Record holder for speed pizza making, having made a whopping 540 pizzas in 103 minutes.



Bice Ristorante Announces New Head Chef

Iconic Italian Restaurant BiCE, located at Hilton Dubai Jumeirah, Jumeirah Beach Residence, has appointed Davide Gardini as the new Head Chef.

Before joining BiCE, Chef Davide Gardini was the Head Chef at Eatery in Dubai Mall. His culinary experience as Head Chef includes restaurants in Italy such as Osteria Petito, Tinto and Il Trebbio.

He has over 15 years of culinary experience and says, "...I am thrilled to incorporate my traditional cooking and modern expertise to create eye-catching and mouth-watering dishes at BiCE."



Richard Sandoval's Toro Toro comes to Abu Dhabi

Award-winning chef Richard Sandoval in partnership with Perfetti Hospitality has announced the opening of his world-renowned Latin restaurant concept Toro Toro in Abu Dhabi this month.

Housed inside The Jumeirah at Etihad Towers, the outlet will offer pan Latin flavours through hot and cold sharing plates including aperas and ceviches. Also, traditional churrasco is served a la carte alongside a wide selection of savoury side dishes to complement these grills. Other Toro Toro outlets are located in Dubai, Miami, and Washington DC.



US\$1.5 billion Dubai Food Park to take shape at Dubai Wholesale City

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, has unveiled the blueprint for Dubai Food Park (DFP), the latest addition to Dubai Wholesale City (DWSC).

To be developed at a cost of US\$1.5 billion, first destination in the Middle East dedicated to serving the food sector. DFP seeks to enhance Dubai's position as a leading regional hub for food trade, import, export and re-export of foodstuffs. Conceptualized at a time when food trade makes up 11 percent of the UAE's GDP and the food industry is estimated to grow by 70 percent to US\$6.3 billion by 2030, the Park will offer all categories of food wholesale services to meet the high demand of the food sector in the UAE and the wider region.

DFP will span over 48 million square feet within DWSC, the largest wholesale hub in the world occupying 550 million square feet that will



Central Wholesale Market within Dubai Food Park (Photo: AETOS Wire)

take shape over a 10-year period at an estimated cost of US\$8.2 billion. The Park's strategic location at the crossroads of East and West and easy accessibility to Dubai's advanced logistics facilities distinguish it from other wholesale destinations worldwide.

DFP will fall under the supervision and responsibility of Abdulla Belhouli, CEO of Dubai Wholesale City.

The Park will feature a central wholesale market serving the retail, hospitality and food service sector, a logistics area, complementary services area, handling packaged goods area, a facility for recycling organic waste, and a comprehensive range of governmental services including customs clearance, licensing, food safety and inspection – all under one roof.



Ministry of Health and Prevention organises 'Junior Chef Program'

The Ministry of Health and Prevention, represented by the Department of Health Education and Promotion, held its first edition of 'Junior Chef Program' in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development and the Sharjah Girl Guides.

The program, which throughout August, is part of the Ministry's efforts to reduce obesity in children to 12 per cent by 2021 in line with the objectives of the UAE Vision 2021 National Agenda. This includes awareness on the importance of eating healthy foods, providing them with

healthy shopping skills and choosing healthy food alternatives.

Targeting children aged 10 to 15 years, educational workshops on healthy food and cooking have been carried out under the supervision of an experienced nutritionist.

30 restaurants. 90 days.



Celebrating the growth of the UAE as a foodie destination and its cosmopolitan dining scene, Radisson Blu's Taste My UAE food festival is back after a highly successful launch last year.

The three-month celebration of food and culture starts at the beginning of September and features over 30 top notch restaurants from Radisson Blu hotels across the UAE, all offering a 25% discount throughout the festival.

The list includes resident favourites such as Belgian Cafe Yas Island, Certo, newly renovated The Fish Market and the award-winning Emirati restaurant, Aseelah. This year will see exciting additions as well as new restaurant openings such as Fire Lake Grill House & Cocktail Bar at the Radisson Blu Dubai Waterfront, and Filini Italian Bar & Restaurant in Ajman, a dining concept by the late Roy Ackerman.



Brazilian coffee exports remain steadfast despite nearly 30% increase in costs

Coffee exports from Brazil to the Arab region led to sales of USD 122 million during the first half of 2017. According to the Brazilian Coffee Exporter Council (Cecafé), revenue gained from coffee exports from Brazil to the Arab region witnessed a 29.7 per cent increase compared to the same period in 2016.

This is even though 653,200 bags of coffee were exported to Arab countries between January and July 2017, while 645,100 were exported during the same period last year, indicating only a 1.2 per cent increase in volume.

Lebanon remained the top buyer of Brazilian coffee in the Arab world with a recorded USD 29.9 million spent on coffee imports during the same period. It was

followed by Jordan at USD 14.6 million, Saudi Arabia at USD 12.9 million, and the United Arab Emirates at USD 10.2 million. Other major importers of Brazilian coffee in the region include Bahrain, Oman, Egypt, Kuwait and Morocco.

As coffee exports from Brazil to the Arab region continue to rise, the overall revenue recorded from international coffee exports saw an increase of 7.2 per cent, at USD 2.9 billion, with the United States as the top importer accounting for a 20 per cent share in total coffee exports from Brazil. Germany followed with a 17.5 per cent share, Italy with 9 per cent, Japan with 7.1 per cent and Belgium with 6 per cent. In July alone, Brazil exported 1.7 million bags of coffee, grossing USD 283.4 million.

World Cheese Awards 2017 open for entries

The World Cheese Awards is now open for entry, with producers from across the globe invited to submit their cheese to be judged during the competition's 30th anniversary celebrations. Dedicated only to cheese, with no other dairy products able to enter, the awards will return to London on Friday 17 November, to form part of Taste of London Festive Edition at Tobacco Dock.

Following a record-breaking edition of the World Cheese Awards in San Sebastián last year, organisers, the Guild of Fine Food, are expecting this to be the largest cheese-only

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gourmetwatch



Spook-tacular

Promotional images from Desert Palm Dubai for their Halloween-themed weekend starting October 26.

Bring it on!

Chef Tarek Ibrahim, the popular Arab celebrity chef, hosts a fun-filled cooking masterclass at Spinneys using Australia's finest vegetables and beef in partnership with Meat & Livestock Australia.





Batucada Brazil

Friday September 8 will see a pop-up at Grand Hyatt called "Batucada by Andiamo". This is to celebrate the Brazilian Independence Day while recreating the vibes of Rio. Food is just one part of the extravaganza as you might expect.



Hello Italy

Experience Italy at the Steigenberger Hotel Business Bay every Monday night featuring live pasta stations, antipasti and their metre long "Pizzametro"



Maharaja Appetite

India Palace has introduced a king-size dining experience, Khansama, aimed at transporting you the royal kitchens of India and to dine like the Maharajas did in their times



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Eid with a Difference

The Seafood Brunch at Na3Na3, Address Dubai Mall created a whole new Eid dining experience using an array of the ocean's finest treasures.



Poke-what?!

Cali-Poke, the California Seafood House with a Peruvian flair, sent us this image to tell us that the build-your-own style poke and ceviche bowl restaurant has opened its fifth location in Dubai (and its first outside the US).





THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

Zero Gravity Executive Chef **Dwarika Bhatt** reveals his life journey from the calm foothills of the Himalayas to the adrenaline-filled shores of Dubai

Dwarika Bhatt was born and raised on the scenic foothills of the Himalayas in India. He grew up surrounded by the calm serenity and the beauty of the Dehradun valley. Today, he's carving a name for himself at Zero Gravity, which is the drop zone for the world-famous adrenalin-filled Skydive Dubai and the party spot for those who couldn't care less about tomorrow.

So how did Chef Bhatt find his way from the cool climes of the Himalayas to the sunny shores of Dubai?

He says his journey has been a long and fun-filled one thus far. "I grew up in the valley where we lived on natural and



I grew up in the valley where we lived on natural and seasonal products. We only ever ate produce that arrived directly from the farms

seasonal products. We only ever ate produce that arrived directly from the farms," he reminisces.

As the youngest of three kids in his

household he was pampered quite a bit. Unlike his elder brother and sister, he always found himself in the kitchen around his mom. "It is here where you start your first lesson of culinary," he says, adding, "as a child you learn faster than adults."

He remembers how he would try out cooking the same food with his mother's permission and the words of praise from her mouth would motivate him. "You feel that you are the best chef. I was encouraged to try and play with different flavours," he says.

As he moved into his adolescent years, Chef Bhatt harnessed a desire to learn more about cooking and to pursue a

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career in the culinary arts. However, his dad, who worked as a government employee, was not too happy with this dream. "He never wanted me to be a chef. He was concerned for my long-term stability and desired for me to become a government employee as well. He said to try and seek a 9 to 5 job that would make for a great family life."

Not one to look away from his goals, Chef Bhatt managed to convince his parents and pursued his degree in hotel management from I.H.M Pusa New Delhi.

As luck would have it, he was recruited on campus by Madinat Jumeirah and flown down to Dubai.

He started his career as a commis with Madinat Jumeirah's Khaymat al Bahar before moving to the fine-dining restaurant Napa.

His next stop was the fine-dining restaurant Sultana in Shangri-la Barr Al Jissah Resort, Oman. "After sharpening my skills with Shangri-la I came back to Dubai and joined Le Meridien Mina Seyahi, where I learnt the intricacies of main kitchen operations." In 2008, he made his way back to Oman, this time with the Grand Hyatt as a Sous Chef for its Mokha Café.

"Throughout my career I have been very passionate to learn and grow. I have been fortunate to come across some pretty talented chefs, who taught me a lot. Two names in particular that stand out are Chef Sameer Miglani, who inspired me to be dedicated to my craft, and Chef Martin Grabner, who opened my eyes to a whole new way of cooking with flavours."

In 2010, he was back with his first employer Madinat Jumeirah working at the award-winning fine dining Pier Chic restaurant. He was promoted to chef de



Planning new menus and concepts to retain and bring new guests. Working for staff motivation and retention by providing them an atmosphere where they are passionate to go to work in the morning

cuisine and moved to Pisces. It won the Timeout best seafood restaurant that year. A year later he was handling a lot more outlets including Barzaar, Jambase, Al Rukn Courtyard and Souk Amphitheatre.

"In 2013 I was given the opportunity by Chef Sebastian Noshe to open Zero Gravity Dubai." And since then he has been running the culinary operations as his own baby. In a market filled with thousands of high-end restaurants and lounges, Zero Gravity has managed to uphold its place.

Now as Executive Chef at Zero Gravity what are his biggest challenges? "My challenges are the same as every Executive Chef in town. Talent is one. The next generation of chefs are too enthusiastic to learn everything in one day. Most youngsters find it difficult to retain their commitment or even simply stay engaged in their chosen profession. Consistency of raw material from suppliers is second. And third has to be the increased competition that stresses the bottom line."



Fortunately, this is part and parcel of every leadership role and Chef Bhatt says he enjoys the momentum at his current workplace. "Planning new menus and concepts to retain and bring new guests. Working for staff motivation and retention by providing them an atmosphere where they are passionate to go to work in the morning. Recruiting new talent and preparing them for the next level. Sourcing of new products in the market. These are things that keep me going," he says.

On the personal front, he's completed by his wife Rajni, who's a Hygiene Manager with the Fairmont Hotel Dubai, and his two sons Dhairya (studying in grade 2) and the younger one Aarya, "who is always pretending to cook".

At the end of our conversation we could not help but ask for his advice to young chefs that want to rise to the top of the game. He says, "Always try new things without any fear of failure as it all counts as learning. Try to be better than yesterday."

FIVE SPICED BARBARAY DUCK BREAST WITH CARAMELIZED FIGS, CONFIT POTATO, PLUM PUREE, TOASTED HAZELNUT PESTO, FOIE GRAS JUS AND GREEN JUMBO ASPARAGUS

FIVE SPICED BARBARAY DUCK BREAST

Barbaray Duck Breast (female)	170 gm
Five Spice Powder	3 gm
Salt	4 gm
Pepper powder Black	1 gm
Organic olive Oil	8 ml

METHOD

- ◆ Score the duck fat and marinate it with the above ingredients for 24 hours.
- ◆ Take a thick bottom pan over a medium heat.
- ◆ Add the fat side down and let the fat become crispy while cooking the duck breast.
- ◆ Turn the duck breast once the fat is crispy and finish it in the oven as desired.

CARAMELIZED FIGS

BBlack Figs (Brazil)	50 gm
Brown Sugar	8 gm

METHOD

- ◆ Cut the figs into two.
- ◆ Apply the brown sugar on the inside part of the fig.
- ◆ Take a heavy bottom skillet and let the fig caramelized on a slow heat till it caramelizes nicely.

CONFIT POTATO

BPotato Idaho	80 gm
Duck Fat	200ml
Bay Leaf	2 Leaves
Thyme	1 Sprig
Garlic clove	1 Clove
Whole peppercorn Black	2 gm
Maldon Salt	3 gm

METHOD

- ◆ Cut the potato into scallop shape.
- ◆ Take the duck fat in a thick bottom pan.
- ◆ Add bay leaf, thyme, garlic, salt & pepper.
- ◆ Add potato and let it cook in the duck fat on a slow temp till done

PLUM PUREE

Organic Black Plum	40 gm
Fresh Orange	1 Piece
Maldon Salt	3 gm
Star Anise	1 Gram
Butter	15 gm

METHOD

- ◆ Cut the plum into small pieces. Zest the orange and squeeze the juice.
- ◆ Take a vacuum bag, add all the ingredients and cook in the water bath.
- ◆ Once the plum gets tender blend in a food processor and strain through a fine sieve.

TOASTED HAZELNUT PESTO

Hazelnut	10 gm
Garlic	1 Clove
Organic olive oil	10 MI
Basil	3 Gram
Salt	1 Gram
Pepper	1 Pinch

Parmesan	2 gm
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METHOD

- ◆ Toast the Hazelnut and peel off the skin.
- ◆ Blend basil, parmesan, garlic and olive oil in the food processor.
- ◆ Remove from the food processor, add the crushed hazelnuts and seasoning.

FOIE GRAS JUS

Veal Jus	50 MI
Foie Gras	15 gm
Butter	10 gm

METHOD

- ◆ Cut the foie gras into small cubes.
- ◆ Heat up the sauce pan and add the foie grass let it caramelized and deglaze with veal jus.
- ◆ Finish it with fresh butter.

GREEN JUMBO ASPARAGUS

Asparagus (Peru)	60 gm
Butter	10 gm
Salt	2 gm
Pepper	1 Gram

METHOD

- ◆ Peel and cut the asparagus into two & blanch them.
- ◆ Take a pan add little stock and fresh butter.
- ◆ Add the asparagus and season it.



STEP 1



Scoring the duck breast fat to get it more crispy

STEP 2



Crispy skin cooked barbery duck breast

STEP 3



Basting the duckbreast

STEP 4



Putting the duck breast in the pan to make the skin side crispy

STEP 5



Cutting the black figs for caramelization

STEP 6



Asparagus in butter emulsion

STEP 7



Deglazing foie gras with jus

STEP 8



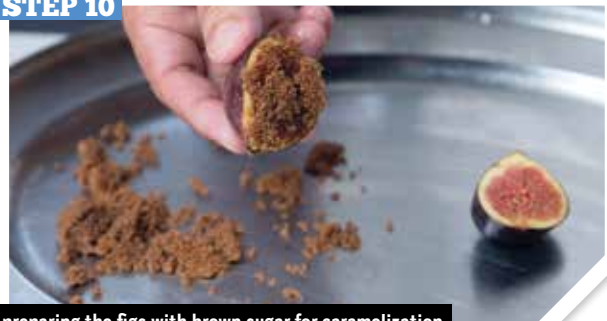
Searing the foie gras cubes in a hot sauce pan.

STEP 9



Caramelizing figs

STEP 10



preparing the figs with brown sugar for caramelization

MADE IN ITALY

Even when not in Rome, eat like the Italians do.
Gianpaolo Bruno, the trade commissioner of the Italian Trade Agency, is working hard to ensure you can...

When it comes to style, who can resist the charm of the Italians? The inherent classiness of the Italian lifestyle reflects in its cuisine too, making it one of the most popular in the world.

Every time you bite into that perfectly loaded pizza or savour the taste of ricotta in that ravioli, silently send Gianpaolo Bruno a mental 'thank you' note. He's the man striving to bring you the best of the best from Italy. The trade commissioner at the Italian Trade Agency, based in Dubai, acts as the bridge between Italian goods and services companies and buyers in the UAE, Oman and Pakistan.

Excerpts from an interview...



Can you please tell us more about the Italian Trade Agency?

We are an Italian government agency in charge of promoting the businesses of Italy all over the world. Our main job is to help Italian companies, especially small and medium enterprises (SMEs), enter new markets by developing marketing

and promotion strategies for their products and services. We support them by offering consultancy services and organising promotional activity, trade fairs, business-to-business meetings, seminars, technology symposiums, media management and so on. We help them find business partners. The Italian Trade Agency has 80 offices all over the world. So it's a big network. The Dubai office, where I am located, is responsible for the UAE, Oman and Pakistan.



When did trade between the UAE and Italy begin?

It was a progressive penetration of Italian goods and services into the local market. The earliest cooperation started when the Emirates was founded but it wasn't much at the time because the country was not as developed as it is now. Trade interactions between the two countries took a quantum leap in the first year of the new millennium, starting around 2001-2002. In terms of Italian exports to the UAE, trade hit a record high in 2015 at 6.4 billion euros.

Now we are experiencing a bit of a

decrease but Italy is still the third most important European country for the UAE in terms of supply after Germany and the United Kingdom. On a global scale, we are the ninth biggest exporter to the UAE.



What, according to you, makes Italian goods and services special?

First and foremost, it's the quality. There's also a certain level of specialisation. But all this comes from the fact that the Italian style is liked by consumers all over the world. The excellence in quality and style reflects the Italian lifestyle, which is unique.



What are the highest selling segments for Italy in terms of exports?

Jewellery, including watches. It's the biggest Italian export sector. We export 1 billion euros worth of jewellery items per year. We have started facing stiff competition from new manufacturers such as Turkey and India. They are getting stronger and have the lower labour cost advantage. But even then, the 'made in Italy' tag and the styles are preferred by local and international consumers.



Within food, it's confectionery – chocolates, candy and associated products – that is our highest selling segment. It represents 50 percent of the total food exports to the UAE. Baked goods is the second with 18 percent. Fruits and vegetables - fresh and canned – are yet another big segment. Milk and dairy products and fats and oils, especially olive oil, are other important export categories.

? Are there any food segments where you see demand increasing?

Bio food products – organic, non-genetically modified foods. People here are becoming very health-conscious these days; it's the influence of the western consumer. So they want such products. Italy is one of the biggest producers of bio products and has

products and processes that are protected by the European Union. There are foods that have to be certified every step of the way, from the farm to the table. There are very strict production codes for them to retain their pure and natural qualities. We would like to focus more on these products because demand is rising.

? What are the various platforms you use to promote Italian items?

We usually participate in the Dubai Speciality Food Festival. This year it is between September 18 and 21. The fair is organised by the World Trade Centre along with Hotels Middle East.

GulfHost is another big exhibition for the hospitality industry. We participate with Italian pavilions with about 25 companies. There are also stalls dedicated to bio

foods and now we are trying to promote breakfast items. Usually Italian products are well known for lunch and dinner but Italian breakfast items - croissants, cakes, marmalades, cappuccino, dairy products – are lesser known and we are trying to build them up.

? How long have you been living in Dubai?

It will soon be two years. Before this, I was the trade commissioner for sub-Saharan Africa, based in Johannesburg in South Africa for more than seven years. And before that, I was in the United States.

? How is this market different from the others?

It's a highly sophisticated market, where consumers want top-class products. They want high quality and don't mind paying a high price. It is a great market for us for luxury and niche products. In the Middle East, I would say the UAE is our most important market, with a high potential. For Italy, the biggest market is Germany. United States and France are our other big markets. The UAE is the 17th biggest market for us by importance but more important than Japan, for instance. For particular



Italy is one of the biggest producers of bio products and has products and processes that are protected by the European Union. There are foods that have to be certified every step of the way, from the farm to the table

products, it is one of the most important markets, luxury products, furniture, apparel being some examples. This is a major consumer market. It has high strategic importance for us.



Dubai chefs are spoilt for choice, given that there are so many ingredients from all over the world available here. In that context, what's the selling point for Italian ingredients?

Italian food mirrors the Italian lifestyle, which is natural, healthy and classy. That philosophy is incorporated into our ingredients too. And the consumer understands that.



After some slowdown after 2015, do you see growth this year?

Absolutely, particularly from the second half of the year. Macroeconomic growth is expected to accelerate further. We see many opportunities. So our promotional activity will strengthen to help companies with good Italian products and services come here and sell their items.



Do you have a specific focus for the coming 6-12 months?

Yes, 'Export 2020' exhibition is our big focus right now. We will organise many events for promoting Italian businesses, including food. Export 2020 will have 25 million visitors. These visitors would like to eat and eat well. So we have to be ready to supply the best Italian foods to them.



What are the typical challenges that Italian

companies face when they come into this market?

The major challenge is the internationalisation and globalisation process. The backbone of the Italian economy is SMEs, which are sometimes really small. By default, these companies do not have the organisational or financial capability to go international. So they need a government agency like ours to help them out in devising their competitive strategy. They face stiff competition from large companies from all over the world. So even though they have excellent products, their size proves to be a hurdle. One of our policy objectives is to promote aggregation in SMEs for them to be able to reap the benefits of international markets.

in Milano



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August-September 2017 **Gulf Gourmet**

The Pick of the BUNCH

This month's challengers for the Nestle Professional Golden Chef's Hat Award – UAE are the boys from Mövenpick Hotel Jumeirah Beach

The Mövenpick Hotel Jumeirah Beach are a steady fixture in this competition with their boys easily making it to the top 3 every year. They have even won the Award in the past. Will this year's team regain that glory?

The duo this time are 26-year-old Savio D'souza and 24-year-old G.D. Iran Madushanka Perera. Here are their stories and their competition recipes.

Chef Savio D'souza

Chef Savio hails from the land of sunny beaches that is Goa, India. Sure

enough, Dubai feels at home for him given how the sun shines equally bright here and tourists from around the world love this place for its warmth and sands, just like in Goa.

It's been two years for him at this JBR property and the youngster works the production shift. He says, "For me pastry is the ability to put on a plate the sweetest dreams you can imagine." And boy can he do that. For this competition he created a lavender Docello honey panna cotta, on brown sugar coconut lime chiffon, with stripped rose coulis, pistachio brulee, mango caviar,

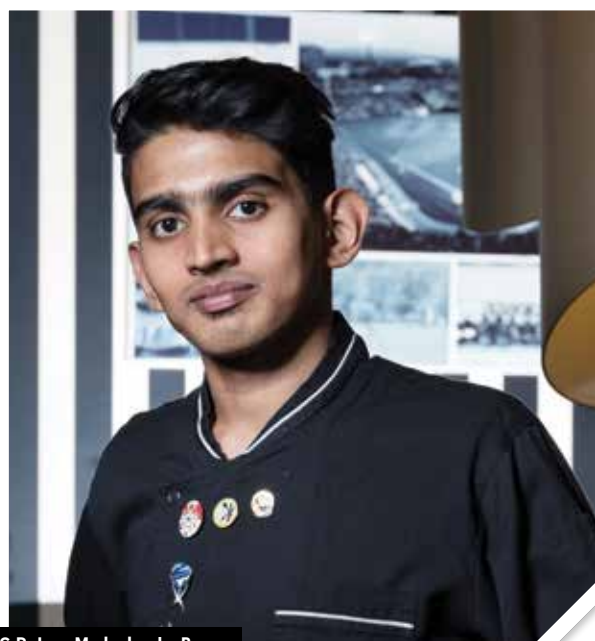
dehydrated chocolate mousse, Kit Kat crisp, and passion sorbet.

Sounds like a mouthful? Wait till it melts on the tongue as this is easily one of the most innovative desserts we have seen this year in the competition.

Savio started his tryst with desserts at the Taj Dubai followed by Taj Vivanta Goa, then the Movenpick JLT before finally impressing guests at the Movenpick JBR.

The profession was a no brainer for Chef Savio given that most of his family are professional chefs. "My mom is master



**Chef Savio D'souza****G.D. Iran Madushanka Perera**

in bakery so she was my inspiration to become a pastry chef," he says.

Armed with a 3-year Bachelor's degree in Hotel Management and Catering Technology from Rizvi College in Mumbai, Chef Savio's next stop is to open a bakeshop in Goa and his ultimate desire is to become the Executive Pastry Chef at a Ritz Carlton property.

Chef G.D. Iran Madushanka Perera

Chef Perera hails from Sri Lanka and moved to Dubai just a year and a half ago to join the Movenpick in Jumeirah Beach.

Prior to this he spent three years in Colombo at the Cinnamon Grand Hotel and then the Global Tower Hotel Apts. His sole aim during this period was to save up enough money to buy a one-way ticket to Dubai and work here.

"I began my career by completing my diploma in Hotel & Catering Management at the Win-stone School of Culinary Art and doing internships as well."

"In my family, no one has worked in this industry. My father and mother are government employees and my brother is into graphic designing. I literally

joined the hotel school just because I was fascinated seeing other students who are senior to me going to hotel schools. I thought to myself, 'Hey, this looks like a good start for a career'."

Chef Perera says that his current focus is to learn and improve his knowledge and to someday own his own restaurant. For this competition he created olive and coconut oyster blade crust, butter braised red radish Nestle jus, dehydrated sweet potato mash biscuit, green pea mint puree, white truffle foam, and balsamic tomato coulis.

OLIVE AND COCONUT OYSTER BLADE CRUST, BUTTER BRAISED RED RADISH NESTLE JUS, DEHYDRATED SWEET POTATO MASH BISCUIT, GREEN PEA MINT PUREE, WHITE TRUFFLE FOAM, AND BALSAMIC TOMATO COULIS

BAKED OYSTER BLADE

Oyster blade	450 gm (cylinder shape)
Olive oil	20 ml
Crushed rock salt	pinch
Pepper	pinch

Method

- ◆ Season the meat and sear in olive oil on medium heat for a while.
- ◆ Cook it in a 190° pre-heated oven for 10 mins until done inside.
- ◆ Remove from oven and coat in the seasoned crust.

OLIVE AND COCONUT CRUST

Olive	50 gm
Maggi Coconut Powder	20 gm
Desiccated Coconut	50 gm
Black pepper	5 gm

Method

- ◆ Finely chop the olive and dehydrate, mix with coconut and coconut powder.
- ◆ Check seasoning as required.

BRAISED RED RADISH

Radish (2 bunch) top removed	1-3 pieces
Unsalted butter	100 gm
Kosher Salt	3 gm
Apple cider vinegar	30 ml
Chef Veal Jus	100 ml
Sugar	to taste
Pepper	to taste
Tarragon	15 gm

Method

- ◆ Melt the butter in a saucepan and add the radish, vinegar and a little sugar.
- ◆ Add kosher salt and simmer.



- ◆ Remove from flame to add jus and tarragon.
- ◆ Reduce on low flame until required texture.

NESTLE MASH BISCUIT

Maggi Mashed Potato	200 gm
Butter	30 gm
Milk	250 ml
Salt & pepper	10 gm
Potato	2 pieces

Method

- ◆ Boil the milk on medium flame.
- ◆ As soon as it starts boiling, add the mashed potato powder and stir well.
- ◆ Add in the butter and mix carefully until thick and smooth. Season accordingly.

For the biscuit

- ◆ Slice the potato evenly shaped. Season and put in a dehydrator until crisp.
- ◆ Once done, sandwich with the mash carefully.

GREEN PEA PUREE

Green peas	200 gm
Butter	20 gm
Seasoning	10 gm
Nestle Cream	20 gm
Onions	20 gm

Method

- ◆ Boil the peas and blanch for 3 mins.

- ◆ In a pan, sauté the onions, add in the peas, and stir well.
- ◆ Add in the cream and thicken well.
- ◆ Once cooled down, blend to the desired paste.

STEAMED VEGETABLES

Baby carrot	20 gm
Beetroot	10 gm
Yellow Carrot	15 gm
Green asparagus	15 gm
Salt & pepper	pinch

Method

- ◆ Wash and cut the vegetables into desired shapes.
- ◆ Steam well until cooked.
- ◆ Season and serve.

SQUID INK COCONUT TUILE

Tempura Flour	100 gm
Maggi Coconut Powder	20 gm
Oil	100 ml
Squid ink	3 gm
Water	150 ml
Ice	100 gm

Method

- ◆ Mix all the ingredients together in a bowl.
- ◆ In a non-stick pan, cook the mixture on a desired flame until crisp.
- ◆ Remove with a spatula and set aside to cool. Break and use as required.

TOMATO BALSAMIC COULIS

Water	50 ml
Buitoni Tomato Coulis	75 gm
Balsamic Reduction	20 ml
Glucose	10 gm
Sugar	25 gm
Agar Agar	4 gm

Method

- ◆ Mix all ingredients (except agar agar) in a pot and heat on a low flame.
- ◆ Once well mixed, begin to boil. Add in agar agar.
- ◆ Cook well and keep aside to cool.
- ◆ Blend the mixture for a smooth gel.

WHITE TRUFFLE FOAM

Nestle Cream	250 ml
Agar Agar	6 gm
White Truffle Oil	15 ml

Method

- ◆ In a saucepan heat the cream. Add agar agar and let it dissolve on a medium heat.
- ◆ Add in the truffle oil and then remove from the heat.
- ◆ Use a blender to blitz the mixture.
- ◆ Blend on slow speed, and cover the blender and pan with a towel to prevent splashing.
- ◆ After 60 seconds, there should be a nice thick foam on top. Spoon as needed and use quickly as desired.

LAVENDER DOCELLO HONEY PANNACOTTA, ON BROWN SUGAR COCONUT LIME CHIFFON, WITH STRIPPED ROSE COULIS, PISTACHIO BRULEE, MANGO CAVIAR, DEHYDRATED CHOCOLATE MOUSSE, KIT KAT CRISP, AND PASSION SORBET

LAVENDER HONEY PANNACOTTA

Docello Panna Cotta	150 gm
Milk	500 ml
Nestle Cream	500 ml
Gelatin mass	15 gm

Method

- ◆ In a pot, boil the milk and cream. Remove from flame and add in the Panna Cotta powder and mix well.
- ◆ Put the pot back on the flame and boil again while stirring well.
- ◆ Lastly, add in the soft melted gelatin mass.
- ◆ Pour into desired mould.

BROWN SUGAR COCONUT LIME CHIFFON

Cake flour	186 gm
Almond Flour	80 gm
Maggi Coconut Powder	20 gm
Baking Powder	14 gm
Eggs	200 gm
Brown Sugar	175 gm
Milk	143 gm
Corn oil	170 ml
Lime zest	2 nos

Method

- ◆ Pre-heat the oven to 175 degrees.
- ◆ Beat the eggs and sugar until fluffy.
- ◆ Fold in the dry ingredients, add milk slowly.
- ◆ Finally, finish adding the oil.
- ◆ Bake for 20 minutes.

ROSE COULIS STRIP

Sugar	35 gm
Rose water	350 ml
Rose syrup	5 ml
Agar Agar	6 gm

Vanilla	1 pod
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Method

- ◆ In a pot, heat the rose water, sugar and vanilla.
- ◆ When about to boil, add in agar agar and cook further for 2 minutes. Remove from flame and add in the rose syrup before setting aside.
- ◆ Once warm, pour it into a shallow flat tray and leave it to set in the chiller.
- ◆ Once fully set, cut into small strips or desired shape.

PISTACHIO BRULEE

Docello Crème Brulee Powder	125 gm
Milk	500 ml
Nestle Cream	125 ml
Pistachio paste	60 gm
Gelatin mass	15 gm

Method

- ◆ First soak the gelatin in cold water.
- ◆ Boil the milk and cream in a pot. Remove from flame and mix in the crème brulee and pistachio paste well.
- ◆ Boil again for a little bit. Remove from flame and fold in the melted gelatin mass.
- ◆ Set in small moulds or as required.

MANGO CAVIAR

Mango puree	35 gm
Water	8 gm
Sugar	6 gm
Agar Agar	4 gm
Sunflower oil	500 ml (chilled)

Method

- ◆ Mix puree, water, and sugar on low heat until sugar dissolves.
- ◆ Add in agar agar and stir nicely.

- ◆ Put the mix in a syringe or caviar maker and drop slowly in cold oil.
- ◆ Strain wash and keep chilled in cold water.

DEHYDRATED CHOCOLATE MOUSSE

Docello Chocolate Mousse	250 gm
Milk	200 ml
Egg Yolks	80 gm
Sugar	25 gm

Method

- ◆ Mix the milk and mousse powder until thick. Make sabayon and fold in the mousse mix.
- ◆ Spread it on a silpat and put it in a dehydrator for 24 hours.
- ◆ Break it in pieces and serve as required.

KIT KAT CRISP

Kit Kat Mix In	100 gm
Milk chocolate (tempered)	80 gm

Method

- ◆ Mix the chocolate and Kit Kat crumble well and spread on to a transfer sheet.
- ◆ Cut or curl as required.

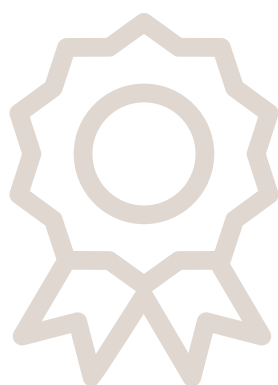
PASSION SORBET

Passion fruit puree	100 gm
Water	45 ml
Sugar	40 gm
Glucose	10 gm
Stabilizer	1.2gm

Method

- ◆ Boil all the ingredients together and keep it aside to cool in the chiller.
- ◆ Pulse about two times and put it in a ice cream machine or paco jet until firm.
- ◆ Remove to blend again and freeze.
- ◆ Repeat 2 more times until the mixture becomes silky in texture.





BEST OF THE EAST

The East Coast Salon Culinaire this year buzzed with talent. But two names stood out. Say hello to **Chef Feras Al-Hamadi**, the 'Best Arabic Chef', and **Chef Thusitha Perera**, the 'Best Kitchen Artist', whose talent was everyone's envy and their employers' pride...

FERAS AL-HAMADI - BEST ARABIC CHEF

Chef Feras Al-Hamadi has the Midas touch. Everything he touches, turns culinary gold. So his 'Best Arabic Chef' win at the East Coast Salon Culinaire came as no surprise to those who know him. In the three years that he has participated in the East Coast Salon Culinaire, Chef Feras has won the honour twice. And if his 'live-and-learn' attitude is any indication, he's just warming up!

The love for learning is ingrained in Chef

Feras. Perhaps it's a family trait, handed down by his parents. Three of his siblings are teachers, proof that the emphasis on learning has been a big part of his childhood. Growing up in Dara in Syria in a large family, Chef Feras's earliest memory of his kitchen career revolves around his mother. "My mother is a homemaker and my father was a businessman. We are a big family – I have three brothers and five sisters. So there was always something my mother needed help with when cooking for us," he reminisces.

For the 38-year-old chef, there is no cook better than his mother. "She's the best chef in the world," he laughs. "I was always happy when I was helping my mother in the kitchen. She is my inspiration."

Chef Feras is the only professional chef in the family. Born in Kuwait, where his father owned a business, Chef Feras moved to Syria when he was 10 years old. "But I didn't like it much there. So I dropped out of school and returned to Kuwait." Working there for a while



as a teenager, he realised early on that finishing his education was important. Tourism and hospitality management held a certain attraction and so, Chef Feras got his certificate in the vocation from an institute in Aleppo, before returning to Kuwait.

There, he started his career in Oasis Hotel in 1996 but returned to Syria in

1997, joining the Bosra Cham Palace Hotel in Busra as the chef de partie. A year later, Orient Gate Hotel, a 400-room hotel with 14 outlets in Damascus, became his next employer.

Chef Feras first set foot in Dubai in 2003, when Automatic Restaurants group offered him a job. There were 15 outlets and the catering division of the

company took care of the supplies to all these outlets. Until 2007, there were numerous 2,000-3,000 cover events that he did catering for.

The year 2008 brought new opportunities. Chef Feras joined the Social Club Hotel but did not work there too long, moving on to Emirates Grand Hotel within months. He worked there for three years, handling the main kitchen and the Arabic kitchen and supervising a team of six. When an opportunity to work at the Auris Group came knocking, the Syrian chef did not shy away from opening the door. It was in 2014 that he moved to his current position at the Iberotel Miramar Beach Resort.

Winning at culinary competitions comes naturally to Chef Feras. In the first contest he participated, he won a gold, two silvers and a bronze. This year in May, he won silver medals in the Arabic mezze and the three-course family dinner in the East Coast Salon Culinaire. His skills and technique impressed the judges enough to hand him the 'Best Arabic Chef' title. "Competition was stiff. Last year too. Young chefs these days have such great ideas. But whether I win or not, I like to participate in competitions because I learn so much seeing other chefs' technique." It is Chef Feras's belief that "competitions are not just for winning but also for learning" that makes him a high-potential chef. "There are so many chefs here from all over the UAE and even abroad. Even if you don't win a medal, you still win because you learn something new."

And yet, Chef Feras doesn't see himself staying in the industry forever. "Someday, I want to be a businessman like my father. I will never stop cooking though. Maybe I will just start doing it at home, for my family."

When he called his mother after winning the competition, she cried. We know those were tears not just of joy but also of pride.





“

Someday, I want to be a businessman like my father. I will never stop cooking though. Maybe I will just start doing it at home, for my family

THUSITHA PERERA - BEST KITCHEN ARTIST

He's an artist, minus the quirks. He's a maverick, without the moods. Talent and tenacity have written his success story. Meet Chef Thusitha Perera, winner of 'Best Kitchen Artist' at the East Coast Salon Culinaire.

At the competition at Miramar Al Aqah Beach Resort, his open showpiece based on Napoleon Bonaparte and the medieval culture won him a high gold. High silvers for vegetable and ice carvings clinched

him the greatest honour at the contest for any kitchen artist.

Ironically, Chef Thusitha's talent has roots in a less-than-ideal childhood. "My father was a farmer and he died when I was just three years old. My mother struggled to make ends meet and could not afford to buy us toys. So I started with making my own toys with wood," says the Sri Lankan-born chef, his tone wistful. Growing up with an older brother and a sister, Chef Thusitha turned all kinds of discarded

items into material for creative experiments. "I even made toys with cigarette boxes and cartons."

He was his school's resident artist. "From drawing to painting and sculpting with clay, there was little I didn't do. I made small statues, painted my school walls. Among the boys, I can safely say I was the best artist."

But a career in arts was far from Chef Thusitha's young mind. He dreamed of being in the armed forces. Resisting







family pressure to go into an accounting or a banking job, he saw a way out when a cousin suggested hospitality could be an option. "He told me that I had the opportunity to move to the UK if I went into hospitality. So I joined a private institute and my paternal aunt helped me with the fees." Chef Thusitha was lucky to have the support of his extended family. An uncle secured him an apprenticeship at the Taj Samudra hotel and he later trained at the Ceylon Hotel School for three years.

The first year was spent in the hot kitchen and then came the butchery. A happy coincidence took Chef Thusitha down the path to kitchen artistry. "The cold

kitchen was very close to the butchery. A chef there would carve sculptures from fruits and I used to go watch him. One day, he asked me if I wanted to try my hand at it. I failed at the first attempt but I kept trying to get it right. After two-three months, I got better at it." A senior chef walking by the cold kitchen happened to notice a carving made by Chef Thusitha. On realising who the creator of the artwork was, the senior chef gave him a chance to work as an artist for carving fruits and vegetables. "That senior chef taught me to work with a lot more materials - styrofoam, sugar, etc. There were others who taught me ice carving. I was lucky to have such good

teachers. In those three years, I became a professional, not just a trainee."

Word of Chef Thusitha's talent spread and he was suggested for a job to a chef at the Water's Edge hotel in Colombo. "I joined there as commis III and I was helping the kitchen artist. In the three years I worked there, I went from being commis III to commis I."

It was also the place where Chef Thusitha entered the competitions arena. In his debut in 2010, he walked away with a gold medal for vegetable carving and three bronze medals for cake decoration and ice and butter carvings.



"It was the turning point of my career. I moved to pastry."

Towards the end of 2011, Chef Thusitha moved on the Cinnamon Lakeside hotel in Colombo and then to Golden Berries and Hotel Kingsbury before an opportunity took him to Doha in Qatar in 2014. A year and three months later, he accepted a position at the Le Meridien Al Aqah Beach Resort in Fujairah. Along the way, Chef Thusitha has picked all the basics of pastry. "I have a good working knowledge of the cold kitchen. Pastry remains my favourite. There's so much you can do."

For the Napoleon Bonaparte open showpiece, he used parchment and marzipan. A pumpkin and a watermelon turned into a mask, faces, a dragon and a falcon in the vegetable showpiece round, and an eagle sprang forth from the ice block he carved. "This was my first competition in the UAE. I did make some small mistakes but I learnt from them."

The dream of working in the UK is still alive in Chef Thusitha. But for a reason bigger than himself. "I want to make Sri Lanka proud," finishes the 31-year-old.

How then can you not wish him all the luck in the world?



From drawing to painting and sculpting with clay, there was little I didn't do. I made small statues, painted my school walls. Among the boys, I can safely say I was the best artist

August-September 2017 **Gulf Gourmet**

Straight from the ART

Saudi Arabian chefs **Darina Sidda** and **Badr Khalid** are all for the art of cooking. They want this art to feed not only your sense of taste but also your vision. The two chefs are training at Nestle's Artistic Food Lab to create poetry on the plate...

When mankind came about, food was fuel for the body. Its look and feel did not matter as long as it gave you energy and kept you warm. As life and lifestyles developed, it became fuel for the gustatory senses – food had to taste good too in

addition to powering the body. Today, it's fuel for the soul. We eat with our eyes as much as with our mouths.

Which is why Chefs Darina Sidda and Badr Khalid are on their way to becoming experts in a kitchen trend that is now a

'good to have' but will become a 'need to have' going forward. The chefs from Saudi Arabia are training in food artistry at the Artistic Food Lab in Jeddah. Be it stacking fruits on a pastry cup or arranging pasta on a plate, the focus of food artistry is to create a visual delight.



**DARINA SIDDA**

Let us know our two food artists better:

DARINA SIDDA

Chef Darina was just 10 years old when she realised she wanted to become a professional chef. There was no epiphany that drove that decision. "I love cooking and it was a natural choice," she says.

Given her early beginnings, Chef Darina is already something of an expert in teasing the taste buds. "I always saw cooking as an art. Even the most complicated of dishes can be modified and adapted to enhance the flavours without losing their core essence."

Experiments with tastes led Chef Darina to experimenting with the presentation of the dishes. "In making different kinds of dishes, I find a lot of inspiration and I explore my creativity."

Chef Darina has a soft spot for pastry. After all, it is perhaps the section of the kitchen that offers the maximum opportunities for designs. From those creamy, colourful roses dotting a wedding cake to the drizzle of honey on ice-cream filled wafers, desserts have the obligation of completing a meal by delighting all senses.

Her signature dish is a pastry cup with custard and fruits, served on a flat wooden board. A white net adds a design element to the dish, bringing out contrast between the red of the strawberry and the darkness of the black raspberry.

In a couple of decades, Chef Darina hopes to own a restaurant that serves pastries. She doesn't discriminate between one kind of desserts and another. "From traditional to modern deconstructs to local and international pastries, I like to try my hand at the entire range. That way, I can also try fusion recipes to bring together flavours from all over the world."

Given Chef Darina's talented hands, that's something to look forward to.

BADR KHALID

At the tender age of nine, Badr Khalid chose unusual toys – the gas stove, pots, pans and food ingredients. Now 21, the chef from Saudi Arabia does not feel he missed out on anything. For, those toys have now secured him a career in the kitchen.

Inspired by his sister Tehani's prowess in the kitchen, Chef Badr wanted to learn

everything about food. In choosing his vocation, he went a road less travelled in Saudi Arabia. "Earlier, it was not considered good for Saudi men to become chefs. In fact, it was impossible. People looked down on men who chose to be chefs. Now things are changing and people have become more open-minded. There are also a lot more opportunities now," he says.

Chef Badr enjoys all kinds of cooking – be it whipping up the main course in the hot kitchen or designing desserts in the pastry kitchen. "In pastry, I especially like making American dishes."

For Chef Badr, inspiration lies in everything you see. "Everyday life contains so many creative cues. The real skill lies in identifying them."

One of the dishes Chef Badr really enjoys making is creamy chicken, which can be served with pasta. With his training at the Artistic Food Lab, he hopes to sharpen his cooking and presentation skills that will help him develop a strong career in the hospitality industry.

As a pathbreaker, he has all our best wishes.

**BADR KHALID**

BUTTONI CHICKEN FETTUCCINE

INGREDIENTS

Chicken breast fillet	3 pieces
Onion chopped	1
Garlic chopped	4 cloves
Cooking cream	300 ml
Lemon juice	2 cl
Water	200 ml
Maggi chicken powder	20 gm
Buitoni tomato coulis	100 gm
Maggi coconut powder	50 gm
Olive oil	50 ml
Salt /pepper	to taste
Fettuccine pasta	120 gm
Coriander leaves	to garnish

METHOD FOR PASTA

- ♦ Boil water and pasta in a thick bottom pan, bring to a boil, add 5 gm of chicken stock powder and boil it further.
- ♦ Drain and cool the pasta.

FOR THE PASTA SAUCE

- ♦ Heat a pan and add a little olive oil, onion, and garlic; allow it to sweat.
- ♦ Add the tomato coulis, a little chicken powder and 100 ml of cooking cream.
- ♦ Season with salt and pepper just before bringing the sauce to boiling point.
- ♦ Add pasta and toss.

FOR THE CHICKEN BREAST

- ♦ Mix the flour, salt, pepper and coconut

milk powder together. Coat the chicken breast with this flour mix.

- ♦ Heat oil in a pan over medium heat and pan fry the chicken breast until golden brown.

SAUCE FOR THE CHICKEN BREAST

- ♦ Heat a pan, add a little oil in the pan, then brown the onion and garlic.
- ♦ Add water and chicken stock powder.
- ♦ Allow to boil on medium heat; then add cream and lemon juice. Whisk until all binds together.
- ♦ Add chicken pieces in to the sauce and toss well.
- ♦ First place the pasta on the plate, the chicken breast on top of it, and garnish with coriander leaves





DOCELLO COCONUT PANNA COTTA AND PHYLLO DOUGH WITH MIX BERRIES

COCONUT PANNA COTTA

Docello panna cotta	80 gm
Nestle cream	250 gm
Milk	250 gm
Maggi coconut powder	40 gm

METHOD

- ♦ Mix the coconut powder and milk.
- ♦ Mix with the Nestle Cream
- ♦ Bring to a boil
- ♦ Pour the mix in to the Docello panna cotta mix
- ♦ Whisk till you obtain a smooth texture
- ♦ Pour in the mold and set in the chiller

PHYLLO DOUGH

Phyllo dough pocket	1
Butter (melted)	½ cup
Fresh berries	to garnish
Mint leaves	to garnish

Strawberry to garnish

METHOD

- ♦ Cut the phyllo dough sheet into small circles
- ♦ Brush them with butter in a cupcake pan
- ♦ Arrange 3 layers of phyllo dough circles in every muffin mould and push the centre inside the phyllo dough
- ♦ Bake the phyllo dough, cool completely, and then fill the small cups of phyllo dough with panna cotta.
- ♦ Decorate with fruits and mint leaves.



The Engineer Who Turned Chef

Meet **Beide Worku**, the Managing Partner and Executive Chef at 'Gursha', Dubai's newest Ethiopian restaurant. Gulf Gourmet caught up with the man at his fine dining outlet in Palm Jumeirah, to find out why he switched from a successful career to launch his own restaurant

The oldest of three boys, Beide Worku is an unassuming young man. He has travelled from Ethiopia to the US before finding his way to Dubai. It is here that he finally garnered the courage to take a leap of faith and launch a restaurant concept that has been taking shape in his mind since childhood.

Here are excerpts from a conversation we had with him about Ethiopian cuisine, the Dubai restaurant scene, and his personal journey to accomplishing his culinary dreams.



Tell us about yourself and your younger days?

Born and raised in Ethiopia, I moved to the US as a teenager and have been calling Dubai home since 2014. Initially, I followed the conventional path of going to school and getting a job that my mother would be proud of,



My background is in engineering and I took on different responsibilities up to a regional director for the Middle East. Ironically, it was my job that brought me to Dubai

but eventually it became clear that my passion lies elsewhere.

There was a traditional belief that men aren't meant to cook, and so I'd often find myself chastised for

frequenting the kitchen, but that never stopped me from pursuing this field. I remember begging a chef friend of mine to show me the inside of a professional kitchen when I was merely a patron of the restaurant, and that's how I discovered that food was what I truly enjoyed.

So finally, I decided to make the switch from corporate to restaurant. It's been a fun ride since.



Any connection to the hospitality sector within the family? Where did this desire to promote Ethiopian cuisine come from?

I have no connection to the hospitality sector whatsoever.

My affair with Ethiopian food began as early as my childhood memories go. This was the food I grew up eating, and my love for it has not changed even the



slightest since. But true appreciation came much later after I went to culinary school and saw the true undiscovered potential of Ethiopian flavours and ingredients.

? You did have another career prior to attending culinary school, right?

The first real job I had was the military. In hindsight, it was the best springboard forward for the rest of my life.

I joined the aviation security industry after my stint at the Army and I pretty

much stayed a part of it until I opened the restaurant.

My background is in engineering and I took on different responsibilities up to a regional director for the Middle East. Ironically, it was my job that brought me to Dubai.

? How old were you when joined culinary school? Why the change of heart from pursuing a clearly successful career?

I was 32 when I joined culinary school. The whole process around food – from growing it to cooking it – is something

I've always enjoyed. Doing what you love for a living? That took a bit of growing into, both personally and professionally. My becoming my own man is more about the convergence of many small personal journeys than an instant change of heart.

? Ethiopian cuisine is huge in the West. How is it doing in this region? How many Ethiopian restaurants in the UAE?

The success of Ethiopian food in the west can mainly be attributed to the discovery of its healthy and nutritious value by the western consumer. Ethiopian cuisine is almost entirely gluten free, thanks to Teff – the gluten free grain used to make the staple sourdough bread Injera, and has a huge selection of vegan dishes.

Those qualities are not yet well known in this region, and that is precisely why we made it our mission to make Ethiopian food more accessible to UAE, and the region at large.

I estimate that you may chance upon about a dozen Ethiopian restaurants throughout the UAE, mainly in Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

? Why did you choose UAE for your restaurant?

Since I call UAE home now, I figured I might as well start from home. Also, Dubai is a vibrant, multicultural city that is known for its wide selection of food, so why not introduce Ethiopian Cuisine in a city where people embrace diversity and already enjoy many global cuisines.

? What helps you stand out from other Ethiopian restaurants in the city?

Focusing on the traditional way of eating, the restaurant offers a communal ambience of dining together and sharing a meal with a group. The authenticity, service, and the new story we tell through our culture is what makes us different. We want to provide our customers an authentic experience which will introduce them



to the Ethiopian food, traditions and culture. I believe there's a thirst for new discoveries by customers who are already saturated with choices.

? Why did you make yourself the head chef? Why not hire the finest chef from Ethiopia and focus on the business?

We do have a head chef, and I am the executive chef. I decided to stay involved with the food to make sure we tell the story properly.

In all honesty, I am also a bit of a perfectionist so it might take some time before I can build the confidence needed to completely remove myself.

Having said that, at the core of all this is my love for cooking so I can't see myself doing only the business side of things.

I'm sure I'll be somewhere still cooking regardless of the business side.

? What are your future plans? How do you intend to improve your culinary skills going forward?

On a personal level, I want to continue to learn Ethiopian food as it is very diverse and I don't feel we have exhausted it yet.

Mastering a craft means continuous experimentation and keeping your skills sharp so I will continue to do those things. I will also continue to tweak and grow the concept of Gursha to make it even more accessible to more people. Perhaps by adding lighter QSR version to the portfolio and increasing outlets.



Inaugural Syrian Salon in RAK

The 1st Syrian Salon Competition took place on August 26, 2017 at the Cove Rotana Resort RAK, UAE. The event organised by the Syrian Culinary Guild saw 104 participants. The inaugural event was brought to life thanks to the support of the Emirates Culinary Guild to the Syrian Culinary Guild. The ECG supported the Syrian chefs and educated them to aim for the high standards that have now

come to be expected under WorldChefs (WACS) rules in the UAE.

The vision of the competition is to introduce professional Syrian cuisine to the world and to help Syrian chefs be prepared for international league culinary competitions. The 104 chefs that participated are from different companies, restaurants and hotels in the region.

Chef Majed Al Sabagh, President of Syrian Culinary Guild, said, "Eighty percent of the participants are first timers in the world of culinary competitions. This makes the competition all the more exciting. We awarded 70 medals to our winners as well as trophies to the Best Syrian Cuisiner, Best Pastry Chef and Best Hygienic Chef. We are so proud of each and every one."

Here are some of the moments captured at the Salon.





US\$ 3 billion

what's your GCC market share?

The UAE alone has over 750 hotels.
Each hotel has an Executive Chef.
Each Executive Chef has an annual budget.
It ranges from AED 1 million - US\$ 3 million.

There are over 7,000 independent restaurants in the UAE.

Each restaurant has a Head Chef.
Each Head Chef has an annual budget.
It ranges from AED 100,000 - US\$ 1 million.

Now you do the maths.

The largest body that speaks for this group of Chefs is The Emirates Culinary Guild (ECG).

ECG organises Salon Culinare at Gulfood Dubai, La Cuisine by SIAL in Abu Dhabi and world-record breaking food events in the city.

Gulf Gourmet is the only magazine endorsed by the ECG.

It also influences non-ECG Chefs across the GCC and is distributed at World Association of Chefs Societies events around the globe.

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ABOUT GULF GOURMET

- ▶ Most widely read magazine by Chefs & Decision Makers in the GCC
- ▶ Officially supported by the Emirates Culinary Guild
- ▶ Highest circulation in its category at 6,150 copies per month
- ▶ Readership estimates of nearly 11,276 per month
- ▶ Positively influencing the UAE food industry since 2006
- ▶ Recognised by the World Association of Chefs Societies
- ▶ Circulated at top regional and international culinary events

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REACH BY COUNTRY

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MARKET SEGMENTATION

▶ 5-star Hotels	46%
▶ 3/4-star Hotels	19%
▶ Independent Restaurants (Elite)	18%
▶ Independent Restaurants (Standard)	12%
▶ Food Industry Suppliers	3%
▶ Large & Medium Food Retailers	2%



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August-September 2017 **Gulf Gourmet**

Guild AGM

The Emirates Culinary Guild Annual General Body Meeting was held last May during the East Coast Salon at the Miramar Al Aqah Beach Resort near Fujairah. The leadership team was re-elected for another year to continue doing the great work that has put the UAE on the world culinary map. Here are images from the meet.



newmembers



Adel Shaban, Business Development Manager, Del Monte Foods (UAE) FZE receiving Emirates Culinary Guild Membership certificate from ECG President Chef Uwe Micheel.

Since **Del Monte's** successful establishment of its regional headquarters for the Middle East and North Africa in the U.A.E. on 2007, it has pro-actively spread throughout the region starting with the Saudi Arabia market on 2010 in Riyadh and Jeddah. Iraq, Turkey and Ukraine were opened on 2013, while Russia and Qatar are recently added on its persistent growth - capitalizing on the massive fresh produce and prepared food business opportunities available across the region. Del Monte® is also developing its farming operation in Ras al Khaimah, UAE - growing iceberg and romaine lettuce melons, broccoli, watermelon and strawberry.

As a company involved in the produce, produce based foods and beverage



industry and as a responsible corporate citizen, we recognize our responsibility to ensure that our business activities are guided by the careful balance of the interests of all our stakeholders. For this reason, the company has established environmental and social policies and procedures as well as numerous programs that protect and sustain the environment, and promote the wellbeing of our employees and the communities where we operate.

Our strategy ahead remains firm on diversifying our product offering but also expanding geographically.

Del Monte is continuously launching new product categories and line extensions; such as the Disney and Marvel branded kids nectars, ultra-fresh smoothies and green juice, French fries & frozen vegetables among others.

Del Monte® is dedicated to meeting the current and future needs of consumers worldwide. In fact, our long-range vision is to become the leading global supplier of healthful, wholesome and nutritious fresh and prepared foods and beverages to consumers of all ages.



Hany El Saigh, Food Service Manager-Lower Gulf at Fonterra receiving Emirates Culinary Guild Membership certificate from ECG President Chef Uwe Micheel.

Our Foodservice business provides customers with dairy products and chef-led solutions designed specifically to support their culinary needs. We work behind the scenes to deliver exciting new tastes and products for Chefs, Bakers, Caterers, Commercial Kitchens, Hotels, Restaurants, Quick Service Restaurants and Cafes in 50 countries around the world. Our expertise in dairy enables us to meet the evolving needs of the Foodservice industry across a range of products including Cheese, Butter, Cream Cheese, Yogurt, Cream and Beverages. Together with our customers, we work to find chef-led solutions that will improve productivity in the kitchen, increase yield, reduce wastage, improve nutritional outcomes, enhance taste and texture, and deliver new menu options.

Fonterra is committed to the growth of the Foodservice industry and to



providing customers with tailored products and solutions that support their business needs. In 2005, Fonterra Foodservice was established as a dedicated sales division to meet the specialised demands of customers in Quick Service Restaurants, Fast Food outlets, Cafés, Restaurants, Hotels, Bakeries, Commercial and Institutional Catering, and Manufacturing.

Fonterra provides Foodservice operators with a range of branded dairy products, as well as core dairy ingredients, including ready-to-serve creams, beverages, butter, yoghurt, cultured dairy, and cheese. We bring together

both consumer and ingredient products to provide a comprehensive suite of products for the modern commercial kitchen. Today's foodservice professionals face ever increasing consumer demands for high quality and tasty food. They need to present good value for money, with a high degree of choice and customisation, and products need to be delivered rapidly, in a variety of forms. They are challenged to provide fresh, quality, nutritious food, as fast and efficiently as possible while keeping costs down and continuing to surprise and delight consumers. Fonterra Foodservice have a team committed to working behind the scenes where people eat out, working with chefs and caterers to create solutions, tailored products and innovations in taste and experience. With its expertise in dairy, Fonterra is able to meet the vast range of needs for today's foodservice professional



Kevin Schubert, Business Development Executive, Food Source International and Mohammed Anwar, Sales Manager, Food Source International receiving Emirates Culinary Guild Membership certificate from ECG President Chef Uwe Micheel.

Food Source International is a Dubai based food import, export, marketing and distribution company dedicated to sourcing and selling premium quality food products for the hospitality industry in the UAE and throughout the region.

Food Source International was founded in January 2005 and has since established itself as a reliable distributor of premium Meat products, Seafood, Cheeses and Chocolate.

Our philosophy is to ensure we supply



world class products with first class service to a wide range of customers and maintain consistent standards. We are strongly committed to food safety standards, we have been a fully HACCP certified operation since 2011, maintaining a modern temperature controlled warehouse and a fleet of temperature controlled vehicles.

Food Source International services major hotels, fine dining restaurants and catering companies throughout the UAE. In addition to servicing the UAE, Food Source International has established an operation in the Sultanate of Oman, while also re-exports to markets such as Maldives, Africa and countries in the region.

We aim to increase our customer base and maintain customer loyalty through confidence in our products and continued quality service.



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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:

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Payment received?		
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Young Member: Junior members will receive a certificate.

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Dhs.350/=joining. Includes certificate; member-pin, member medal and ECG ceremonial collar. Dhs.

150/=per year thereafter.

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Corporate Member Dhs. 20,000 per year



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It's Not Rejection, it is Redirection

*"Rejection is the sand in the oyster, the irritation that ultimately produces the pearl." — **Burke Wilkinson***



MORE THAN A CHEF

**ROHIT
BASSI**



Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes. Never resist them; that only creates sorrow. Let reality be reality. Let things flow naturally forward in whatever way they like
— **Lao Tzu**

A cook or a chef's life is a tough one. It goes through many ups and downs. It is not all glitz and glamour as portrayed by the media. It takes a certain type of toughness to pursue this profession.

In the pursuit of appreciation for your culinary skills you will find that your dish will be rejected at least once in your lifetime. Yes, you put all your heart and soul on creating a great dish. But then someone out there, be it a food critic, paying customer or some award giving institute may demean your dish. Forget about your dish, they may actually insult you.

My parents were right in saying that rejection takes place in every phase of one's life. In fact, life may come across as full of sacrifices and uphill battles. Some of the most amazing people are those who overcome rejection. It is phenomenal how they take a rejection or a "NO" as the "Next Opportunity".

Every rejection is a learning opportunity and simply leads to development. One of the greatest challenges that you will face in in your career or business is rejection.

Rejection may cause you to doubt in your abilities. Some of you may view a rejection as your worst nightmare. The evolved person says, "Rejection is divine redirection towards something beautiful beyond your imagination."

For most of us, rejection after rejection lands great blows to our confidence. We feel the devastation deep within ourselves. The feeling of something lacking in us drowns us and we are unable to comprehend the so-called divine plan that is unfolding for us. In the moment of rejection, and beyond that moment, nothing makes sense.

Our destructive emotions override so-called common sense. A thick layer of misery and self-pity engulfs us. No matter how painful the experience, there is that someone who tells us "we are where we are meant to be." We are told to have that trust in the universe and know that everything will be just fine. Apply this principle. Take a leap of faith in your life.

Being persistent in life is great. Remember, some could easily view this as desperation. In the caring and encouraging words of the great philosopher Lao Tzu: "Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes. Never resist them; that only creates sorrow. Let reality be reality. Let things flow naturally forward in whatever way they like."

Rohit Bassi is the founder of In Learning and works across industries to help employees outperform themselves. You can contact him on rohit@in-learning.com



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