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## gourmet

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE FOR CHEFS  
volume 9, issue 3**GULFOOD  
REPORT**

Highlights from  
the 2014 edition  
of the world's  
biggest annual food  
exhibition

**SALON  
INSIGHTS**

In-depth coverage  
of the recently  
concluded Emirates  
Salon Culinaire

**MALAYSIAN  
MAVERICK**

Exclusive interview with Chef Sivabalan  
Krishnan, winner of the much coveted  
Best Cuisiner title at Salon Culinaire

**PASTRY  
POWER**

Chef Derek Anderson  
showcases step-by-step  
procedures with images  
to create his award-  
winning pastry dish

**EMIRATI  
CUISINE**

UAE National and  
Chef extraordinaire  
Musabbeh Tarish Al  
Badwawi reveals his  
Machboos recipe

**GOING  
GREEN**

Chef Raghu Pillai on  
what it takes to make  
a sustainable kitchen  
flourish through a  
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Inspiration every day

# president'sstation

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Dear fellow chefs, ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to the March issue of our Gulf Gourmet. This issue is special for many readers as it contains images of winners at the Emirates Salon Culinaire 2014; the biggest Salon Culinaire in history. I had the honor of welcoming His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Vice President and Prime Minister of UAE and the Ruler of Dubai. His Highness was very pleased with the success of the show.

Congratulations and thank you to every single competitor for their efforts and hard work. I saw a lot of happy chefs as well as some who were less satisfied. But do remember; like I have always said, winning a gold medal is very nice but not the most important thing in life. To learn, to train, to develop ourselves and at the same time enjoy, have fun, meet new colleagues and make new friends are more important.

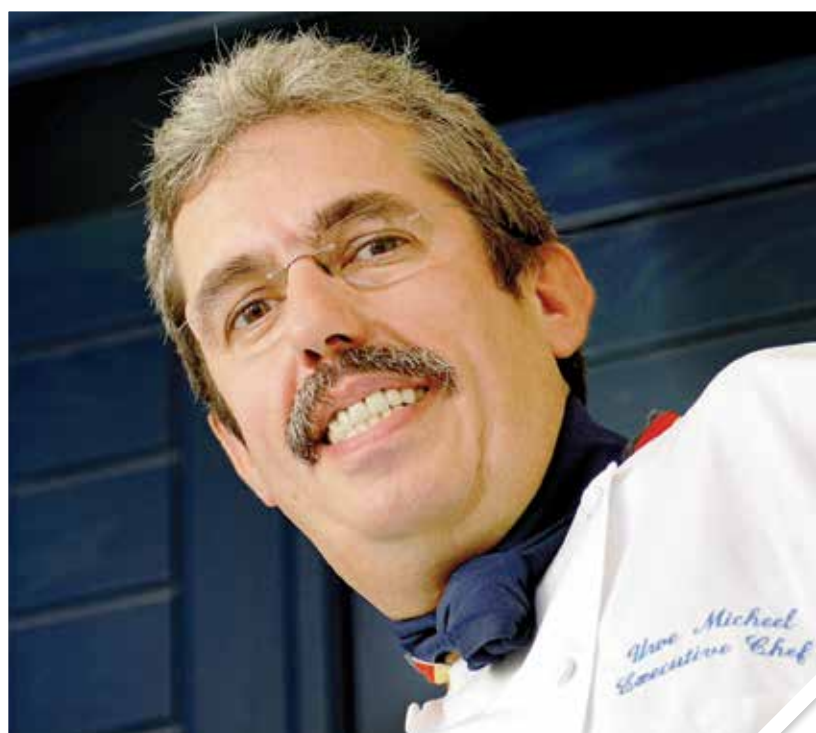
So even if you did not win your desired medal, I'm 100% sure you have learned something. Make the most of the feedback you have received and try again. There are many great opportunities to come.

Thank you to Chef Otto and all the judges and marshals. Without you, the Emirates Salon Culinaire would not be possible and I genuinely appreciate the precious time you've offered.

A big thank you to all our supporters, the Dubai World Trade Centre, Manitowic-Convotherm, Ginox, Nestle Professional, Sadia, Meat Livestock Australia, Masterbaker, the US Dairy Export Council, Barakat, Mitras, Iffco-Rahma and many more.

I do apologise if I have forgotten someone here from the long list of our supporters including our Room and Food Sponsors; see the special page in this issue.

Looking ahead, we have a busy schedule in the coming months. I am off to



Horeca in Beirut followed by a big team heading to Singapore. More details in our next issue.

In May we plan a mini plated competition with our partner, the US Beef Export Federation. June 9 is the date set for the East Coast Salon and there are some opportunities left for partners to join. Please contact Chef Prasad at [kacprasad@iberotel.ae](mailto:kacprasad@iberotel.ae) or myself at [uwe.micheel@radissonblu.com](mailto:uwe.micheel@radissonblu.com). Last event before the summer will of course be the WACS Congress in Stavanger, Norway.

I urge all members to visit the Guild website ([www.emiratesculinaryguild.net](http://www.emiratesculinaryguild.net)) to see the calendar and also check the WACS Young Chefs Facebook page on [facebook.com/#!/wacsyoungchefs](https://facebook.com/#!/wacsyoungchefs) and encourage your young chefs to join that

page so they can be in contact with over 4,000 chefs across the globe.

Please do not miss the company profiles of our corporate members, the long-time supporters who have renewed their membership, as well the new ones. We really do appreciate your support. Also, do look at the Friends of the Guild pages to check all our supporters.

And finally, a big thank you to Chef Michel, Chef Hossam and the Team from Coral Deira Hotel for hosting the February meeting.

Culinary Regards,

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



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# editor'snote

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Last month, I had siblings visiting me in Dubai and I took them out for lunch to one of the fancy restaurants in town where the cooking takes place in front of you. The young lad assigned to our table was a smart young Commis. We started talking and I realised that he's never been to Salon Culinaire because his hotel was short staffed. He asked me about my profession and I told him I edited a magazine for Chefs.

He smiled and did not reply. I asked him if he had heard of Gulf Gourmet and he shook his head in a manner that I assumed meant no. So I asked him if he read any magazine that was meant for chefs and he replied in the affirmative saying there was one magazine he did read.

By now I was embarrassed in front of my family thinking perhaps he reads our competition. I couldn't contain my curiosity and asked him which magazine? He said the Chef Uwe magazine. I heaved a sigh of relief and said that is Gulf Gourmet. He quickly replied asking whether I was the guy in the small photo that appeared immediately after Chef Uwe's column. On confirming I was indeed the guy in the small photo, he told me how he and his colleagues would go through the magazine every month.

I know for a fact that the hotel with 8-10 outlets receives just 3 copies of every issue. The reality that scores of chefs take turns to read each copy is heartening. And



truth be told, there is no rocket science behind the popularity.

When Amaresh, our associate publisher, and I started working with the Guild, our goals for the magazine were clear. Chief among those goals were to empower young chefs to become tomorrow's Executive Chefs. To this end we have left no stone unturned.

We do not publish this magazine for the elite few but for every professional at every level that contributes to making the UAE a world-class F&B destination. Gulf Gourmet is the most widely read magazine by professional chefs in the region and this is the reason why some of the biggest names in food service industry have partnered with us.

But we are constantly innovating and looking for fresh thoughts. If you do have any ideas on how to further develop this community of kitchen talent through our magazine, please do email me.

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

**Aquin George**  
Editor

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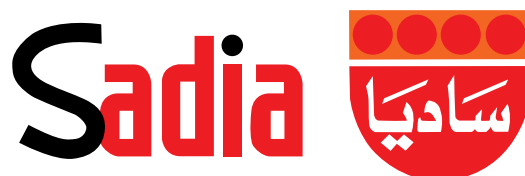


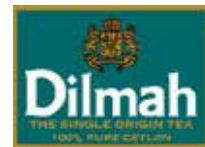
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FoodService

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## newsbites

### New “beach picnic” concept

**A**mwaj Rotana has just made beach outings even more pleasant with their new picnic basket offer. Guests at the Jumeirah Beach Residence property are invited to a unique picnic experience at the beach thanks to Executive Chef Alan Synman.

The basket is said to be perfectly filled with a large variety of delicacies to keep guests from daydreaming about the next meal and save them a trip to the store while enjoying the glorious sunshine of the white sand beach.

Chef Alan Synman says, “The picnic basket is yet another endeavour from us this year to enhance guest experience at the hotel. It will ensure greater convenience since they have something ready to take with them to the beach. We went for a classic French option of a picnic basket, which will include a fresh baguette, cold cuts, quiche, dessert and more.”



### Chef Theo Randall in the UAE

**A**ward winning celebrity Chef Theo Randall, best known for being a mentor and guest chef on British television, is visiting UAE this month. He will be hosting cooking master classes, assisting with a special menu and also signing copies of his latest book, ‘Pasta’. The event will take place at Jones the Grocer’s Al Manara store in Dubai on March 25 and in Abu Dhabi at their Khalidiyah store on March 26.

Theo Randall says, “My menu is made up of the same simple rustic dishes I enjoy when I go to Italy – unfussy yet utterly delicious and uncomplicated.”

Master class participants will have an opportunity to interact with Theo and receive a complimentary signed copy of Theo’s book for AED 995 all-inclusive. Theo will also be performing a cooking demonstration imparting tips and techniques prior to these master classes for AED 295 per person.

### Café D’Alsace showcases Alsatian specialties at Gourmet Abu Dhabi



**C**afé D’Alsace, the fusion restaurant featuring the best of French, German and Swiss cuisines at YAS Marina, was one of the proud partners at Gourmet Abu Dhabi. As part of the opening festivities, Café D’Alsace offered guests a wide selection of unique cheeses from France presented by world-renowned cheese maker Patrice Marchand. In addition, master baking classes were held with master baker Chef Rainer Scharold, who presented traditional country bread-making techniques that have been passed down through generations to the attendees.



# HMH Strengthens Management Team

**H**MH - Hospitality Management Holdings has announced the appointment of three new executives namely Abdullah Melhem as Director of Operations, Cristina Polo as Director of Business Development and Akber Bana as Manager - Revenue & Distribution.

Laurent A. Voivenel, CEO of HMH, said, "We have five new properties opening this year that will boost our existing portfolio of hotels by 25 per cent. It is therefore imperative to strengthen the management team while executing our strategic vision."

**Abdullah Melhem**, the new Director of Operations is a veteran in the industry with 14 years of experience at Starwood Hotels & Resorts and 15 years with Hyatt Hotels & Resorts. Abdullah has spent much of his career in the region with his last posting as the Area Manager for Makkah and Madina as well as the General Manager of Sheraton Dammam Hotel & Towers. Abdullah has excellent qualifications being an Associate in Arts - Civil Engineering, BS in Management and Master of Business Administration. In his new role Abdullah will be responsible for all operational issues of HMH portfolio and will



Abdullah Melhem

also be in charge of all pre-openings.

**Cristina Polo** the new Director of Business Development has previously worked with Hilton Hotels & Resorts, Le Meridien Hotels, Forte Grand, The Rezidor Hotel Group, Radisson Hotels and Country Inn & Suites. She has over 15 years of strong experience in the field with her last role being Director of Revenue Optimization Middle East for The Rezidor Hotel Group where she was in charge of maximizing revenue growth of 30 multi-brand hotels in the region. Cristina has a Post Graduate Degree from Dess International Trade, Master's Degree in International Economics, Bi Deug in Economic Science & Spanish, and a Bachelor's Degree in Economics. In her new role Cristina will be responsible for all sales and revenue generation.



Cristina Polo

She will also oversee marketing.

**Akber Bana** the new Manager – Revenue & Distribution brings expertise in managing revenue, e-commerce and loyalty programs and has over 10 years of experience working with Arabian Courtyard Hotel & Spa in Dubai, Sheraton Karachi and Marriott Karachi. Prior to joining HMH, he served as Manager Revenue, Marketing and Loyalty Programs with Arabian Courtyard. Bana has a Master's Degree in Computer Sciences, B.SC Hon in Software Development, Specialization in Relational Database Management System and Diploma in Computer Science. In his new role Bana will be responsible for all revenue and distribution including e-commerce, social media and loyalty programs.



Akber Bana

## Sweet Victory

**J**ocelyne Fallait of Beach Rotana hotel receiving the award for Pastry Chef of the Year at the 2014 ceremony of the Gourmet Abu Dhabi Stars Awards. It is always good to see a lady do exceedingly well in our industry.





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## Turning over a new LEAF

The UAE Green Festival is scheduled to take place from March 16 to April 16, 2014 and Holiday Inn Dubai - Al Barsha is participating by providing guests with valuable tips on environment protection and giving a personal feel of the hotel's energy saving practices.

Guests will benefit from a tour of the hotel showcasing energy and resource saving practices in different areas: like laundry, air quality, recycling and gardening. Presentations, tips and advice on how to preserve the environment, as well as a recycling arts and crafts exhibition will be a learning exercise for all.

The main highlight of the hotel's participation in the festival is converting a meeting room terrace into an herb garden.



## Wah! Taj

We received this image of Executive Chef Youssef

Darwish and his culinary team from the Taj Palace Hotel Dubai proudly showcasing their medals. They outdid their last medal tally and it sure is reason to celebrate. Great show chefs!

To be featured in this section, email your Chef-related news or information relevant to those working in a professional kitchen to [editor@gulfgourmet.net](mailto:editor@gulfgourmet.net)

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# THE FLAVOUR OF THE EMIRATES

When **Musabbah Tarish Al Badwawi** left the army to become a chef, little did he know that he would be making history. The first UAE national to become a professional chef, he is now busy trying to put Emirati cuisine on the world menu. The Executive Oriental Chef of Jumeirah Zabeel Saray Hotel at Palm Jumeirah tells **Amaresh Bhaskaran** about his interesting entry into the culinary world...

Every food lover knows that Dubai is the culinary capital of the world. From French pastries to Italian pastas to Thai curries to Mediterranean kebabs, there's little you can't find in the vibrant city. And yet, the local flavour is somehow missing from its menus.

That is why chef Musabbah Tarish Al Badwawi has taken it upon himself to bring the Emirati cuisine to the plates of Dubai's guests. The first UAE national to become a professional chef, he has promoted the message of Emirati cuisine through his TV shows and hotel menus.

What's more, chef Musabbah has made his way into the culinary field from a completely different world of the army, where he spent a good seven years. Replacing a military uniform with an apron couldn't have been easy, especially as cooking in Emirati culture is considered a woman's job.

Fourteen years ago, Chef Musabbah broke from tradition and took the plunge. "When I was in the army, I would have these get-togethers with my friends. I would collect money from them, do the grocery shopping and then delegate kitchen work to them - 'You cut the onions', 'you wash the rice' and 'you chop the tomatoes'. Then I would cook our meal. I loved cooking from the very



When I was in the army, I would have these get-togethers with my friends. I would collect money from them, do the grocery shopping and then delegate kitchen work to them

beginning but the thought of becoming a chef didn't cross my mind then. Later, when I got a chance to join the hotel industry, I jumped at it," he recalls.

His first hotel stint was at the Jebel Ali Golf Resort & Spa and Oasis Beach Hotel. "I was assigned to the butchery division. I worked there for a year and three months, then joined the hot kitchen." Jumeirah Beach Hotel turned out to be chef Musabbah's next stop for two years, after which he headed for Dubai World Trade Centre as chef de cuisine.

A couple of other jobs later, chef Musabbah was hired in 2010 by Al Rai TV to host the Sufra Cooking Show. A couple of months later, he also hosted a daily Ramadan cooking show on Sharjah

TV. Among his other accolades are a finalist spot in the Top Chef competition on LBC TV in Lebanon and participation in a derby in Kentucky in the United States, where he represented the UAE. "I was lucky enough to be one among 18 celebrity chefs from all over the world in Kentucky," the 38-year-old chef says.

Coming from Hatta in the UAE, chef Musabbah grew up in a home with 12 siblings. Today, he's the father of a four-year-old son, Ahmed.

After roughing it out in the army, the kitchen was a whole new world for chef Musabbah, he admits. "There was so much to learn. Even if you spend 50 years in the culinary world, there is still always so much to learn. Even though I know Emirati cuisine well, I am learning something new every day."

On his wish list is proficiency in Italian, French and Indian kitchens. "I love Indian food because every state in India has a different cuisine. The cuisine varies from East to West and from North to South. Italian cuisine also has so much to offer."

Learning newer cuisines comes easy to chef Musabbah, because he believes his peers have given him valuable training. "They taught me the basics, the techniques, the sauces, the presentation." Today, even the best



## ABOUT MACHBOOS

**Machboos**, also called Kabsa, is a popular rice, meat and vegetables dish in Arabian Gulf countries. The dish gets its taste from the mix of spices used. Modern Machboos is made with readymade mix of spices but the traditional style of cooking this dish is to use every ingredient separately to get the perfect balance. The meats used in Machboos vary from chicken to lamb or beef to even fish and shrimp. The meat is cooked either through grilling or traditional barbecuing.

Sometimes, dry fruits and nuts such as cashew and almond are used to garnish the dish. In some regions, Machboos is served with home-style tomato sauce.





of hospitality graduates lack deep knowledge of basics, which form the foundation of prowess in the kitchen.

Traditional beliefs made chef Musabbih's entry into the culinary world somewhat difficult. He admits he had to prove himself worthy of an opportunity. "In my first interview, they were not quite sure if they wanted to hire me because in our culture, a man being in the kitchen is considered a shame. Women handle the kitchen. So I had to undergo nine interviews. I told them I am really interested in working as a chef. I started on a salary of 2,000 dirhams."

There on, his career moved rather fast and today, chef Musabbih is known for his expertise in Emirati cuisine. He has even won several medals for his mouth-watering local dishes. "There is a campaign under way to bring back Emirati cuisine. People are beginning to understand what the local cuisine is like. We have to be proud of our cuisine."

After he entered the profession, several other UAE nationals followed him into the kitchen. "Now, there are quite a few local chefs trying to bring our cuisine into the light from the dark. We want to promote it not only in the UAE but also around the world."

Emirati cuisine is slowly finding its way into the menus of restaurants and hotels and there is also a plan to build a five-star Emirati restaurant. The Emirates Palace also houses an exclusive restaurant that serves local cuisine.

"I want more Emirati chefs in the hotel industry. We have to break those barriers. We have to educate them because at home, they know only a few techniques. Here, we can teach them a lot of other techniques."

Chef Musabbih's own favourite Emirati dish is Chicken Machboos, an eclectic spicy mix of rice, vegetables and chicken. This traditional dish has historical significance for the Emiratis. "In olden

times, there were no supermarkets and women had limited ingredients at home. They also didn't have too many utensils. Machboos means 'mix of everything'. So they would cook everything together in one bowl but layer it in such a way that the flavour of all ingredients came together on the plate."

In most UAE homes, chicken machboos is made two to three times a week, says the chef. The dish is also called Kabsa in some parts.

Talking about the Nonions sautéed onion paste, which he has used in the recipe, he says, "I have used Nonions before and I find it extremely useful as it consumes less time and there is no compromise on quality or flavour."

What is chef Musabbih's advice to Emiratis who want to follow in his footsteps and become chefs? "If you love food, take the plunge. Don't worry about family pressures. Be humble, learn and just do it!" he finishes.





## CHICKEN MACHBOOS

### INGREDIENTS

Chicken thigh	1 kilo
Basmati rice	1 kilo
Chopped tomato	50 gm
Nonions Sautéed Onion paste	30 gm
Miraya Garlic Paste	10 gm
Chopped coriander	5 gm
Ghee	15 gm
Spices	3 gm
Dry lemon	2
Cinnamon sticks	2 gm

Bay leaves	1 gm
Cloves	0.5 gm
Miraya Ginger paste	10 gm
Water	1,500 ml
Salt	2 gm
Black pepper	1 gm

### METHOD

- ◆ Heat ghee in a round pot and saute the Miraya garlic paste, tomato and Miraya ginger paste.
- ◆ Add the all the spices, cinnamon sticks, bay leaves, black pepper, and cloves.

- ◆ Then add the Nonions sautéed onion paste
- ◆ Once the flavours are released, add hot water and boil.
- ◆ Then add the chicken once the water starts boiling.
- ◆ Cook for 45 minutes and add dry lemon, chopped coriander, Basmati rice, salt and cook for 20 minutes more until the rice is cooked.
- ◆ Place it on a plate and garnish with fresh mint leaves and serve with yoghurt cucumber sauce.



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# SWEET AND SOUR

There are pastry chefs and there are hot kitchen chefs. Rarely do the two meet, except inside **Derek Anderson**. The Executive Pastry Chef at ADNHC Compass is a rare master of both trades. In a quick chat, he tells us his secret recipe for success...

## How did you decide to become a chef?

When I was a kid, I used to learn to bake cakes and other desserts from my mother. So when I graduated from a training school in 1991, I realised I wanted to be a pastry chef.

## Please tell us about your career path...

I started in Colombo, where I grew up. My first job was at the Holiday Inn Hotel. From there, I went to Taj Samudra Hotel. In 1995, I got a chance to go to Muscat in Oman to join the Gulf Hotel. Later, I moved to the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Muscat. I came to Dubai in 1998, for the opening of the Radisson SAS. I worked there for two and a half years. Now that hotel has become a Sheraton hotel.

In 1999, I joined Abu Dhabi National Hotels, where I got a chance to work across different locations. I learnt a lot and I also grew in my career. I worked with some really good chefs and I proved that I had something more to offer than other chefs from other hotels. Luckily, I had good colleagues and an experienced staff. I want my team to be more successful so that even when I am not there, they can handle situation and excel in everything they do.

## Could you tell us a bit about your current role?

I am the Executive Pastry Chef and I

additionally handle the operations of the hot kitchen where I am helping the staff improve their presentation skills and teach them how to bring different dishes together.

## How big are the operations of Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre?

In our retail business, we have 20 outlets. We also have two conference rooms and a huge wedding hall where we can do 600-700 covers daily. Every month, we do 17-18 weddings. It's a large exhibition centre and we are equipped to do 5,000-6,000 covers.

## What, according to you, are the skills that someone requires to be a good pastry chef?

The first thing you have to learn is technique. Some chefs know how to make the dishes but they don't know how to present them well. Some other chefs know everything but they don't have the patience to do these things. You need to be patient, you need to respect what you are doing and then, you will become a good chef.

## Within pastry, do you have a preference?

Yes, I love to work with sugar and chocolate carvings. I also like to work with bread. I enjoy creating things from scratch and am not too fond of bringing

something from outside and then building on it.

## What has been your inspiration?

So far, I have worked with around 12 pastry chefs from around the world. I learnt something different from each one of them. The approach to cooking is different in different countries. I learnt how the French cook, how the Americans do it, the Italians, Mexicans, Asians, Indonesians. Chefs of different countries have different mentalities. I observed them and imbibed their positive points in my cooking but retained my own style.

## You have a lot of young chefs working for you. How is this generation of chefs different from yours?

Young chefs these days are very talented and they have good computer skills. So they can do research to improve their knowledge of ingredients and techniques. They come from hotel schools and they have a good background. Their attitude is also right. They want to learn. They already know some things and they have to build on it. I like working with young chefs because they have fresh ideas and a thought process that is different from experienced chefs.

## What is your advice to young chefs?



Don't be a clock watcher! In this business, you can't come in at 9am and leave at 5pm. You have to learn to efficiently manage your time without compromising on the quality of your work. Some good chefs know how to do that and they manage to finish their work well ahead of time.

#### What have you prepared for us today?

It's brioche bread and butter pudding. Brioche is soft bread. The British make bread and butter pudding with leftovers but I am making it with peanut sauce and freshly baked bread. Also, my dish is steam cooked and baked. In the old style, you bake the bread. In this style, you first steam it so there is moisture inside the bread.

#### You have used Anchor products. How has the experience been?

They are fantastic. At the moment, I am using Anchor butter and cream. The volume is very good compared with other creams. When you beat the cream, you can tell its good cream. Anchor cream also doesn't spoil very fast and has a long shelf life. This applies as well for Anchor butter. This brand of butter is quite popular and is used across the world because of its good quality. We use about 100 kilograms of this per week or two.

#### You are also handling the hot kitchen.

How do you strike a balance between the two because the two are very different styles of cooking?

I enjoy hot cooking as well. I use my pastry techniques in the hot kitchen - how to combine the flavours and bring the dishes together, how to arrange the flavours. The arrangement of the flavours makes a big difference to the taste of any dish. Food has to look nice as well as taste good.

French chefs know this. I try to combine different kinds of flavours - Asian with European, for example. So you can have an Italian pasta made in Sri Lankan style or an Indian tandoori chicken in European style.

As much as I enjoy the hot kitchen, I prefer being a pastry chef. I have been one for 19 years!

#### Have you participated in competitions?

Oh yes! I have around 10 gold medals. So far I have won 35 medals at the Emirates Salon Culinaire. I am pretty good with wedding cakes and other cakes. I always aim for the gold medal, nothing less than that. I started competing since 1998 in Abu Dhabi.

I now help train young chefs for competitions. First, I ask them to show me what they can do. Then, I show them how they can improve whatever they are doing - cooking or plating or arrangement. We work on colour combinations, portion sizes, suitable plates for serving different dishes, among other things.



### BRIOCHE STEAMED PUDDING SERVED IN CRUSTED LAYER AND VANILLA MOUSSE

#### INGREDIENTS

Eggs	5
Milk	100ml
Sugar	80gms
Anchor Cream	300gms
Anchor Butter	60gms
Brioche pudding crumble	200 gms
Vanilla essence	5 ml

#### PEANUT BUTTERGEL

Water	100 ml
Sugar	25 gms
Pectin	10 gms
Peanut butter	80 ml
Gelatin	3 gms

#### METHOD

- ♦ Boil the cream and milk together until foamy. Remove it and chill it for 15 minutes.
- ♦ Beat the egg yolk and egg white separate; gently mix with the liquid cream.

- ♦ Melt the butter mix with vanilla essence.
- ♦ Take the brioche bread and powder it roughly and mix it with the pudding mixture.
- ♦ Take the mixture and give it a cylinder form, steam it for 20 minutes.
- ♦ After the pudding is cooked cool it and apply the peanut butter gel.
- ♦ For the peanut butter gels mix all the ingredients and boil it then cool it.
- ♦ While presenting, place some wild berries as garnish.





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# MALAYSIAN MAVERICK

Winning the most coveted culinary title of the year is enough to send most chefs blowing their own trumpets loud and clear. But chef **Sivabalan Krishnan**, winner of the Best Cuisiner at the Salon Culinaire this year, would rather let his dishes do the talking. In a rare chatty mood, the shy Malaysian opens up to **Gulf Gourmet** on what gets his adrenalin pumping...





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If you see chef Sivabalan Krishnan in a crowd, you are likely to miss him. Understated doesn't even begin to cover his shy persona. But put the 34-year-old in the kitchen and the transformation is nothing less than magical. He's in command, cooking up a storm, layering his flavours perfectly and trying to teach the clock a lesson in time management.

Over a period of a few days, chef Sivabalan consistently delivered at three contests at the Salon Culinare this year. He racked up points after points with his exotic dishes, eventually winning the Best Cuisiner title at the prestigious competition.

And yet, you won't find him shouting from the rooftops of his hotel about the coveted title. A day later, he's back in his



Both my maternal and paternal families were into the wedding catering business. I studied information technology but realised early on that it was not my cup of tea...

kitchen at Atlantis the Palm in Dubai, doing what he likes to do best – tease his guests' taste buds.

A Malaysian import to Dubai, chef Sivabalan has cooking in his veins. "Both my maternal and paternal families were

into the wedding catering business. I studied information technology but realised early on that it was not my cup of tea," he recalls. A chance offer by a neighbour to work at his pastry shop opened the door to a whole new world for chef Sivabalan.

After two years at the pastry shop, his impressed boss recommended him to a friend, who helped chef Sivabalan get apprenticeship in restaurants in Malaysia. He worked at a resort property in his home country before being given a chance to go to Kuwait.

"I worked for the Al Ghunaim Trading in Kuwait as a cook on yachts. There were six of us. There, I learnt classic techniques of cooking without the use of modern equipment and about the cold kitchen and the hot kitchen."





Chef Sivabalan, a big fan of classic techniques of cooking, believes this is something you can't learn in hotel schools or through books. "That knowledge has to be handed down to you from experienced chefs," he says.

After working in Kuwait for a year and a half, familial duties took him back to Malaysia in 2007. "My brother had an accident and my father was not keeping well. So I had to return."

Back in the family fold, he took up a job at The Garden Terrace restaurant at Swiss-Garden Golf Resort and Spa. "Sometime later, my father passed away. Then I told my family of one brother and one sister that I had to work on my career abroad. They were very understanding."

The year 2009 marked new beginnings for the chef. He joined Atlantis the Palm and worked in a junior position for a year, before he caught the eye of the seniors. "From that time onwards, I got promotions every year. Today, though I am the sous chef, I have a special assignment of handling VIP events and cooking for VIP guests."

Chef Sivabalan has also helped add new dishes to the menus of Atlantis the Palm restaurants – Le Brasserie and Seafire Steak House. Special weekly menus are launched for guests and the feedback taken. Dishes that are liked by guests the most then make it to the menus as a permanent item.

Starting out with Indian and Malay cuisine, chef Sivabalan is now comfortable also with Chinese, French and other styles of cooking. Never mind the long hours and the working holidays. He loves his job because it gives him a chance to build on his core skill. "When I joined the culinary field, I felt I could go far in it. Although there is some teamwork involved, how your career progresses depends mainly on you in this profession. It's a one-man show. If you have the skill, you will succeed."

## 2009

The year 2009 marked new beginnings for the chef. He joined Atlantis the Palm and worked in a junior position for a year, before he caught the eye of his seniors.

Chef Sivabalan with his wife Fiorella.





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Accommodating he usually is, but don't tell chef Sivabalan to make do with cheap, substandard products. "I need only the best ingredients for my cooking," he smiles.

At the Salon Culinaire, he whipped up some interesting flavours and tastes. In the practical cookery beef round, he used three parts of the meat to create three different textures. The effort did not go unnoticed. "The judges liked my cooking method and said the dish was well-balanced." The five-course gourmet menu round also belonged to chef Sivabalan. "I played around with tomato. I made tomato soup with smoked goat cheese. I also made tomato bread, salsa and dehydrated tomato."

He credits chef Roshan Fernando, the executive sous chef of Atlantis the Palm, for the two gold medals and one silver medal he won at the Salon Culinaire. For the past five years, chef Roshan has been encouraging chef Sivabalan to participate in contests, sharing information and teaching him how to arrange the flavours right.

Chef Sivabalan's first competition too was chef Roshan's idea. Unfortunately, things went wrong from the word go. "I participated first in 2009 but I was disqualified because I did not read the rules properly. Peeling of vegetables was not allowed and I peeled the pumpkin. I was heartbroken because I had trained hard for it."

The lesson learnt stayed with chef Sivabalan, who now makes it a point to ask for help, get feedback and read the rules carefully. After a break of two years, he got back on the competitions scene in 2011.

"The thing about competitions is that you have to just cook something tasty rather than something exotic. People think if it is a competition, you have to cook something extraordinary. It's more about presentation and taste than about exoticism."



I usually make a plan so that I finish the job in 40 minutes if the given time is one hour. That leaves me with 20 minutes to fix anything that goes wrong. I don't panic

Chef Sivabalan prepared for the contest for six months, staying back after gruelling nine-ten hour shifts to do some research and read up on food.

Every day, he would spend three-four hours on lapping up classic techniques from books and trying modern variations of home cooked meals. "Home cooked food is healthy food. And if you study the ingredients properly, you can add special flavours to home cooked meals and create exotic dishes." According to him, seasoning is the key to creating a delectable dish. The trick is to avoid going overboard and not trying to season each ingredient, so the final dish is well-balanced in flavours.

Chef Sivabalan sees his ability to season well as his biggest strength. He also believes he can think on his feet and that helps him in the kitchen when he's under pressure.

A million things can go wrong while competing in cooking contests. To avoid such situations, chef Sivabalan does his homework well. "I usually make a plan so that I finish the job in 40 minutes if the given time is one hour. That leaves me with 20 minutes to fix anything that goes wrong. I don't panic." He also makes notes and refers to them to work systematically.

For those looking to don his winner's apron, he has a simple advice – don't train only for competitions, train for your

daily job. "You have to be consistently good, whether you are cooking for buffet or a-la carte menu. That's how you will improve and become good enough for competitions."

Chef Sivabalan admits to being a bit of a workaholic. Luckily, his wife doesn't mind much because she understands his need for excellence. Prod him a bit about his family life and he tells you shyly that he met his wife in Kuwait, where she worked for Kuwait Airlines.

A Philippines national, his wife would visit the cafe where he worked there. "We have been married for eight years. We kept in touch once I returned to Malaysia and then we met again in Dubai and got married."

A simple man, chef Sivabalan loves to relax over coffee and conversations with his wife at a cafe in a mall. His own favourite restaurant? Kentucky Fried Chicken! "I know this may sound strange to you but I love KFC. I really like chicken and the fried chicken is absolutely delicious."

Despite being surrounded by food and flavours, chef Sivabalan is lean unlike most of his counterparts in the industry. "When you do so much cooking, you lose your appetite," he laughs.

Light meals and cardio exercises keep him from packing on the pounds, he says.

Life's been good, he admits. Someday, he hopes to share everything he has learnt with youngsters looking to enter the culinary world. "I want to be a teacher in a hotel school, maybe back home in Malaysia. If I can't become a teacher, I will do it as a voluntary job at a school for underprivileged children."

Until then, chef Sivabalan is happy to spice up food lovers' plates and leave the rest to fate.

Belying the popular saying, easy lies this head that wears the crown.



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# DOWNTOWN DAREDEVILS

The boys from The Address Downtown Hotel in Dubai are this month's participants at the ongoing Nestle Professional Golden Chef's Hat Competition

This month's contestants are no newbies to the world of culinary competitions. At this year's Salon Culinaire, one won the Middle East Young Chef of the Year title while the other missed being named Pastry Chef of the Year by a narrow margin. Their credentials on paper make them the favourites to win this contest. But will they? Check out the recipes and the images and decide for yourself.

## ISHARA ATHAPATHTHU

This 25-year-old has already graced the cover of this magazine two years ago and that pretty much sums up how capable a chef he is. A quick glance at his resume and you see a page dedicated only to the awards he's collected in a relatively short period of time.

Following a one-year diploma in Swiss Lanka hotel and a year-long training at the Neptune Bay, Chef Ishara spent two years working at resorts in Sri Lanka before joining Radisson Blu in 2011. In his first competition he won the bronze at the five course dinner at the SIAL in 2011. This was a confidence booster and he hasn't stopped since. In 2012 he won 3 bronze medals at Salon followed by the Young Chef of the Year award at BurJuman Young Chef of the Year 2012. He won gold in all three categories including a high category gold for Emirati Cuisine to get that award.

He told us then that his goal was to win the 2013 award for the Cuisiner of the Year. Thanks to the high bar he set for



ISHARA ATHAPATHTHU

himself then, he has just won the Middle East Young Chef of the Year at the biggest contest in the region last month.

He says, "This Nestle Professional competition was no cakewalk. I have tried to use all of the Nestle Professional products given to me in a unique manner to ensure that it is nothing short of a world-class dish." Turn the page to see his recipe for horse radish crusted beef strip loin & braised short ribs and the foie gras lobster.

## AYESH KONARA

This young lad also has his share of medals to prove that he can be a fine partner to Ishara. Chef Ayesh, a fellow Sri Lankan says that he took to hotel management by choice without any



AYESH KONARA

influence either from his family or friends.

He realised he had a knack of creating the perfect pastry dishes and decided to master the art. Born and raised in picturesque locales of Kandy, the youngster spent four years working around his hometown and then the Maldives before coming to Dubai in 2011 to join Atlantis the Palm.

Fortune was on his side as Chef Ayesh landed directly in the hands of exceptional mentors such as Chef Roshan and Chef Achala. He did not let them down and soon began learning the finer nuances of pastry making. He soon moved to The Address Downtown where Chef Achala had previously moved and now even had Chef Tushan as mentor. Imagine spending



3 years learning directly from 50% of the UAE's national culinary team!

At this year's Salon Culinaire, he says he missed becoming the Pastry Chef of the Year by a really narrow margin and he's set his eyes on the title for next year.

Talking about the Nestle Professional competition he says, "The Docello products provided are extremely easy to use and take away most of the hard work. It was therefore fun trying to make the dish unique and to make it stand out from the competition." To achieve that

Chef Ayesha created a recipe that merged unique flavours into the dessert.

"I used praline for the chocolate mousse, passion puree for the crème brûlée with gave the panna cotta a distinct vanilla flavor," he says.



## HORSE RADISH CRUSTED BEEF STRIP LOIN & BRAISED SHORT RIBS

Foiegras lobster with asparagus foam, Mediterranean croquet, coconut carrot puree, confit potato, thyme flavored demi glaze.

### INGREDIENTS

Wagyu Strip Loin	100 gms
Maldon Salt	To taste
Crushed Pepper	To taste
Olive Oil	15 ml
Panko (Japanese bread crumb)	10 gms
Grated Horseradish	4 gms
Chopped Parsley	5 gms
Wagyu Beef Short Ribs	100 gms
MAGGI® Chicken Stock	20 gms
Onion White	half
Carrot	2 pieces
Celery Stick	1 piece
Bay leaf	

Peppercorn	3 gms
Potato local	30 gms
Garlic	5 mg
Sage	3 gms
Thyme	5 gms
MAGGI® Coconut Powder	5 gms
Butter	5 gms
Spinach fresh	4 gms
MAGGI® Mashed Potato	10 gms
Boiled chickpeas	3 gms
Parmesan cheese	2 gms
Foie gras	20 gms
Lobster Canadian	20 gms
Asparagus Peru head	5 pcs
Chef® Demi Glace	15 gms
Micro cress for garnish	

### METHOD

♦ Clean and season the beef. Vacuum pack then cook in the sous vide at 62 degrees centigrade for 21 minutes. Then put the pan seared crust on the top and finish in the oven at 160 degrees centigrade for 4

minutes.

- ♦ Slow braise the short ribs with chicken stock and vegetables for three hours in an oven.
- ♦ Cut the potato into rings then confit in oil with garlic and herbs. Cook well, then pan sear it to gold brown and crispy.
- ♦ Sauté onion garlic and carrot in the pot, add stock and coconut powder, cook till the carrot is soft, blend pass through the sieve.
- ♦ Cook crushed chick peas, add sautéed spinach to it, add mash potato, parmesan cheese and then let it cool down. Make 30 gm balls crumbed and deep fried.
- ♦ Blanch asparagus head and blend the bottom part of asparagus to puree. Add the puree to warm milk for foam.
- ♦ Cut carrot into small dice and cook till tender glaze in the butter to serve.
- ♦ Pan sear the foiegras cubes and lobster tail cubes, then mix some asparagus puree and season.





## PRALINE CHOCOLATE MOUSSE, PASSION CRÈME BRÛLÉE WITH VANILLA PANNA COTTA

### INGREDIENTS

#### WPRALINE CHOCOLATE MOUSSE

Docello® Chocolate Mousse	500g
Milk	1L

#### FELUNTINE CRUSH

Milk Chocolate	100g
Praline Paste	135g
Feulautine	150g

#### PASSION CRÈME BRÛLÉE

Docello® Crème Brûlée	500g
Milk	2L
Cream	1L
Passion puree	

#### VANILLA PANNA COTTA

Docello® Panna Cotta	600g
Milk	2L
Cream	2L

Vanilla stick	4pc
<b>RASPBERRY SOBERT</b>	
Raspberry puree	425g
Water	100g
Sugar	65g
Milk powder	10g
Stabilisateur	6g
Lemon juice	10g

#### VANILLA MERINGUE

Sugar	500g
Egg white	500g
Vanilla stick	1 pc

### METHOD

- ♦ Put in to the cold milk bowl. Then add mousse powder mix and whip until homogenous mixture has been obtained. Then mix in a mixing bowl for 2 minutes on slow speed and 3 minutes high speed.
- ♦ Then add Feluntine Crush
- ♦ Melt the Chocolate and Praline Paste, mix with Feulitine Crunchy using small mixing machine with paddle

- ♦ Bring to boil the mix of milk and cream. Remove it from the heat, add the powder and stir well for 3 minutes and add passion puree for taste
- ♦ Portion and chill (minimum 1 hour)
- ♦ Before serving sprinkle with sugar and caramelize under heat
- ♦ Boil milk and cream
- ♦ Remove from heat add powder and mix hand whip then add vanilla stick
- ♦ Put in to the small round mold
- ♦ Bring raspberry, water and sugar to a boil then add milk powder and stabilisateur and add lemon juice. Then put the mixture in a freezer until it gets set and thereafter put it in an ice-cream machine for 10 minutes.
- ♦ Mix the vanilla stick, Sugar 250g and egg white 250g in a machine until it foams. Put the remaining sugar and egg white into a bowl and the foam mixture put in another bowl, fold well. You can then pipe small rounds and put in to the hot box at 35C until set.

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# GREEN STORM IN THE GARDEN

The organic garden at Yas Island Rotana is neighbour's envy and owner's pride. Flush with clean and fresh produce, the garden has won the hotel the 'Middle East Best Sustainability Practice' award at Gourmet Abu Dhabi. Executive Chef **Raghu Pillai**, the leader of the green pack at the hotel, tells **Gulf Gourmet** how the idea took root and how it's morphing into a movement...

If you happen to be at the Yas Island Rotana in Abu Dhabi, don't forget to take a walk in its garden. Chances are that something exotic from that garden will land on your plate with all its freshness and chemical-free goodness.

The garden is Executive Chef Raghu Pillai's pride and joy. With good reason – it not only symbolises team spirit but has also put the hotel on the sustainability map.

Growing vegetables such as eggplant, water spinach, okra, beans, capsicum, tapioca, radish and cherry tomatoes as well as herbs like dill, fenugreek, lemongrass, coriander and curry leaves, the garden is a mini farmer's market.

"We have more than 25 kinds of plants in our garden, all brought by enthusiastic staff who got deeply involved in the project," smiles chef Raghu, when you broach the topic of the garden.

It all began as a whim. A sous chef at Yas Island Rotana would plant some greens in the nooks and crannies of the hotel. His passion impressed chef Raghu - a self-confessed farmer at heart - who decided that a garden would be a good addition to the hotel.

"I also thought it would be a good team-building exercise. The stress of long hours, staff crunches and routine job could be mitigated somewhat by a









hobby." A barren ground was cleared of debris and the baby steps to a fertile garden were taken.

"We started in July last year. People brought seeds, they brought plants. We had water spinach and Thai basil that we started using in our kitchen. That's when we realised the potential of the garden," says the chef.

The hotel paid for the organic manure and the garden flourished. "If you see the organic produce at the garden, you will see the difference between the quality of what you get here and what you get in the market. Also, you pay a small fortune for organic vegetables in the market."

As yield from the garden rose, Yas Island Rotana added some of the vegetables grown to its buffet menu. "First, it was twice a week, then three, then four. We then realised what we had was a sustainable model."

Chef Raghu is pleased with the enthusiasm his team has for the garden. "I see people finish their work hours and then devote time to the garden, watering the plants and taking care of them. Even our gardener is now very involved."

The next step, according to chef Raghu, is a compost pit. "We saw a machine at the Gulfood that can do composting under sealed conditions. We plan to use it to convert our waste food into manure."

The focus, he says, would be growing more herbs and other items that are used in small quantities in dishes but greatly influence the taste. "Herbs are expensive and you need lesser quantity of fresh herbs to get the same flavour. We have also started using edible flowers, something that you rarely find in the market."

Chef Raghu recalls the time his team picked radish pods from the garden and used it in salads. The guests who



We have more than 25 kinds of plants in our garden, all brought by enthusiastic staff who got deeply involved in the project

ate the salads were so impressed that they visited the garden to see what it was. "You don't find such things in the market."

Kafir lime is one plant that the team is keenly watching. "The plant wilted but it revived and now is doing well. Lemongrass is another thing we want to grow more. We are now looking at covering the delicate herbs to protect them from excess light and heat. In three months, that initiative will start."

The hotel uses water from drip irrigation to feed the plants. Summer months are rather harsh on the plants. Chef Raghu admits that the yield falls somewhat in summer and the plants have to be watered twice instead of once during those months.

What sets the organic garden at Yas Island Rotana apart from other sustainability initiatives is that it's a collaborative effort rather than one person's passion. The garden won the 'Middle East Best Sustainability Practice by a Hotel' award from Gourmet Abu Dhabi, an award that has previously gone to the team that got the endangered Hammour fish out of the menus of Gulf hotels and restaurants.

Has chef Raghu seen any other such sustainability initiatives that have caught his eye? "I believe the Jebel Ali Hotel has an organic garden. It's been done very professionally. I also saw on the news that the new chef at the Monte Carlo Beach Resort hotel wants to start



an organic garden and have a restaurant based on that garden. It's a great idea."

However, chef Raghu admits that organic foods may not be the solution to the world's food crisis. "Organic may not be a mass market solution.

The world cannot survive purely on organic and sustainable produce. The number of mouths to feed is far more than what you can generate organically but if you can create something in your backyard from waste and a little effort, you should!"





While chef Raghu is passionate about the garden – it's a precursor to his plan to do farming once he retires – he doesn't want to make it too big.

"Although I see it being a part of our menu, we won't expand it a lot. Our main focus is cooking and if we make the garden too big, it will require manpower we can't afford to spare."

He also fears that the 'fun' element may be lost if tending to the garden becomes a chore for his team members. "We will try to increase yield as much as

possible. Come summer and we will see which herb plants can withstand the heat." Apart from the organic garden, Yas Island Rotana is at the forefront of a Green Earth initiative that's on at the Rotana hotels. "We will have a month where we highlight all organic produce through a standard menu across hotels."

The menu that was put together by Yas Island Rotana has been approved by the corporate office and would now be extended to all other Rotana hotels. Perhaps the hotel can also tie up with a big food company like Unilever to add to

its sustainability effort. The food giant has a massive sustainability campaign going, sourcing its raw materials from sustainable farms, reducing wastage and making its supply chain more efficient, among many other initiatives.

"I have heard about it and I think it's a good thing a big company like Unilever Food Solutions is taking pains to save the planet. More companies need to look at this and the hotel industry – their big customer - can support them in their efforts," says chef Raghu. This step in time will probably save nine later.

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# A FOODY AFFAIR

**Ruqya Khan** visits Gulfood, the world's biggest annual food and hospitality exhibition, to bring us this first-person report

If there was learning to derive from attending an event I would say that Gulfood 2014 clearly was a lesson on how food brings people together.

As I walked through the aisles piled high with new products, cooking equipment, cutlery and even décor I saw a common thread of interest that weaved through the five days of food frolic.

Visitors took back a lot more than bags full of goodies and brochures with information – they had a true taste of food from across the world. Exhibitors took pride in their brand and chefs stood tall in the limelight of their talent. Surely Gulfood this year was different from its previous episodes – the event spread into a bigger area, there was more excitement on the stands, a larger number of people visited the event, finding parking took longer but all in all it stayed true to its essence. The essence of devotion to the food industry and everything that goes into making each bite a moment to relish.

Gulfood 2014 was a 5-day food extravaganza. The event closed on 27 February hosting a record 4,500 exhibitors from 120 countries and 10 new country pavilions including Bahrain, the Basque region, Colombia, Czech Republic, Japan, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Romania, Serbia and Vietnam showcasing this year.

More than 80,000 international trade visitors from over 150 countries

## Gulfood Award Winners 2014 include

- > **Best Trade Stand up to 40m²:** Al Rifai
- > **Best Trade Stand over 100m²:** Agthia Group
- > **Best New Functional Food or Drink:** Genius Foods – for Genius White Sandwich Loaf
- > **Best New Health Food or Beverage:** IFFCO – for Al Baker Multigrain Atta
- > **Best Sustainable Catering Equipment Innovation:** IMC – for WasteStation
- > **Best new Halal food:** Al Watania Poultry – for Skin Packs
- > **Best New Health and Wellbeing initiative:** Unilever – UFS Food Safety
- > **Best environmentally sustainable initiative:** Lupin Foods Australia
- > **Best consumer marketing campaign:** IFFCO – Noor "I want the Best"...Big Idea

attended the trade show. Gulfood cemented Dubai's growing reputation as a global events destination and a key pillar of Dubai's 2020 tourism vision, which is set to double its annual visitors numbers from 10 million in 2012 to 20 million in 2020.

Latest trends, investment opportunities, growth drivers and challenges

impacting various sectors of the global food industry took centre stage as key stakeholders engaged in panel discussions, presentations, interactive workshops and case studies. Many topics of concern and interest were brought to the fore for the first time ever.

As part of its extended five-day format, Gulfood hosted the inaugural World Food Security Summit - A Gulfood Leaders event, bringing together high-ranking ministers, industry thought leaders, government representatives and sector-specific visionaries to address the importance of securing a stable, cost-effective and safe supply of food for the world's growing population.

More than 300 key stakeholders from across the international food industry value chain discussed prevailing food security concerns, debate mechanisms to bridge the gap between supply and demand and explore strategies that encourage alliances and initiatives to tackle future challenges of the global food industry.

With the rise in regional income levels and the growth of tourism in the region, increased halal food consumption is a key driver of global food industry growth. Halal World Food, a specialist show-within-a-show platform debuted at this year's Gulfood, it brought in more than 450 of the world's leading halal manufacturers, processors and distributors from over 50 countries.





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It is expected to generate significant investment opportunities for major international businesses eyeing regional buyers, suppliers, logistics providers and storage and transport solutions.

Among the other new additions at Gulfood this time was the Barista Bonanza and Coffee Council held in partnership with the Speciality Coffee Association of Europe (SCAE). Designed to promote coffee excellence it gave coffee enthusiasts and professionals an opportunity to share the love of the brew. Authorised SCAE trainers conducted seminars on the organisation's three-tiered Coffee Diploma System while world-class baristas demonstrated their expertise with a variety of brewing techniques and offered visitors a taste of speciality coffees from around the world.

Apart from the new and innovative sectors, visitors were pleased to the warm and inspiring energy at Emirates International Salon Culinaire. Held in the Zabeel Pavilion of DWTC, this competition is the heart of Gulfood time and again. This year more than

# 4,500

The event closed on 27 February hosting a record 4,500 exhibitors from 120 countries

1,500 professional chefs participated in 25 categories testing creative culinary prowess, efficiency and collaboration.

The region's largest event of its kind was judged by a panel of international experts mandated by the World Association of Chefs Societies (WACS). Gold, Silver and Bronze medals and certificates were awarded to competitors showcasing the best gastronomic skills and five trophy awards were given to Best Patisserie, Best Cuisinier, Best Artist, Young Chef

of the Year and Best Arab National, a new award designed to encourage the development of Arabic cuisine.

Curtains came down on the event with the announcement of the Gulfood Awards. Organised by Dubai World Trade Centre, the awards were judged by an international panel of independent industry experts and attracted more than 250 entries from 19 countries. Twenty different accolades were presented including: best newcomer brand or business, best new halal food, best environmentally sustainable initiative and best trade stand. Innovation was a key highlight this year and was recognised in products, foodservice and catering equipment.

The Gulfood Industry Outstanding Achievement Award, in recognition of a company or personality demonstrating outstanding commitment and achievement within the Middle East's food and beverage industry, was presented to Alen Thong, Co-ordinator of the Emirates Culinary Guild and Managing Director of John Holt Foods, a longstanding Gulfood supporter and participant.





## Full list of Gulfood Award 2014 Winners

> **Best new non-alcoholic beverage** – The Original Drinks and Food Co. – Rochester Ginger

> **Best new functional food or drink** – Genius Foods – Genius White Sandwich Loaf

> **Best newcomer brand or business** – Genius Foods – Genius White Sandwich Loaf

> **Best new Halal food** – Al Watania Poultry – Skin Packs

> **Best new fast food product or innovation** – Compagnia Alimenare Italiana – Extra Virgin Olive Oil Spray

> **Best new baked or confectionery product** – Y3K Foods – 3K Water Baked Cheesecakes

> **Best new frozen or chilled food** – Globex International – FISH BOOM Smoked Swordfish

> **Best new health food or beverage** – IFFCO – Al Baker Multigrain Atta

> **Best health and wellbeing initiative** – Unilever – UFS Food Safety

> **Best new foodservice innovation** – Groix & Nature – Lobster Oil

> **Best environmentally sustainable initiative** – Lupin Foods Australia

> **Best consumer marketing campaign** – IFFCO – Noor "I want the Best" ... Big Idea

> **Best new catering equipment innovation** – TSSC – Baby Jaws Under the Counter Bottle Breaker

> **Best sustainable catering equipment innovation** – IMS – Waste Station

> **Best light equipment innovation** – Muddle Me – PacoJet 2

> **Best heavy equipment innovation** – MKN – FlexiCombi

> **Best trade stand up to 40m<sup>2</sup>** – Al Rifai

> **Best trade stand between 40 - 99 m<sup>2</sup>** – Go Fast Sports

> **Best trade stand over 100m<sup>2</sup>** – Agthia Group

> **Outstanding achievement award** – Alen Thong, Co-ordinator Emirates Culinary Guild and Managing Director of John Holt Foods



March 2014 Gulf Gourmet



## The Guild Meet

Last month's meeting for the members of the Emirates Culinary Guild was hosted by Chef Michel Miraton, Chef Hossam and the team at Coral Deira Hotel. Here are moments captured at the networking event



# Salon Insights

This year's Emirates Salon Culinaire was the biggest in its history with over 1,500 chefs competing for glory. Our lensmen were on the ground to capture some of the exciting moments during the five-day event.

Chocolate  
Botanical  
Garden



March 2014 Gulf Gourmet



Best Effort by a Corporation - Jumeirah Group



Best Effort by an Individual Establishment - Atlantis the Palm



1st Runner - up - Best Cuisinier - Mahesh Peters from The Address Downtown



2nd Runner - up - Best Cuisine - Praveen Leelavathy from The Address Downtown



Best Arabian Cuisinier - Ibrahim Ayoub from Atlantis the Palm



Best in Hygiene - Diversey Gulf FZE - Ibtissame El Fen from Sharjah Ladies Club











**Best Pastry Chef - Dammika Herath from Radisson Blu Creek**



**The Middle East Young Chef of the Year (second from right) - Ishara Athapathu from The Address Downtown**



**Winner - Best Cuisinier - Sivabalan Krishnan from Atlantis the Palm**





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Baklava with the  
sauce and  
Pistachio  
Custard  
Torta Lorraine

Chocolate Liqueur with Gelée  
Meringue, Coconut, Agar Agar  
and Marinated Fruit

Gold









March 2014 Gulf Gourmet





*One Endog*

24/02



March 2014 Gulf Gourmet



thank  
YOU!



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MARQUIS  
DUBAI

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Jumeirah

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**Jumeirah Group**

Jumeirah

EMIRATES TOWERS

STAY DIFFERENT™

**Jumeirah Emirates Tower**

CORAL DEIRA  
DUBAI

**Coral Deira Hotel**

GROSVENOR HOUSE  
DUBAI

**Grovesnor House**

روتانا  
Rotana

**Arjaan Rotana DMC**



March 2014 Gulf Gourmet

# newmembers



Dalia Fakh (Sales Executive) and Marwan Fares (CEO) receiving Emirates Culinary Guild Membership certificate from ECG President Chef Uwe Micheel

Hi Foods is part of SADITA, a group established over 40 years ago and with a deep-rooted history in the Gulf.

At Hi Foods we are dedicated to providing our customers with a wide range of top quality chilled, frozen and dry foods, because quality branded products mean greater reliability. It is our aim to make your life easier by providing you with variety that is sure to meet your requirements.

Hi Foods is part of SADITA, a group



established over 40 years ago that carries a deep-rooted history in the Gulf. Our Mission and vision are Increasing value for our brands and customers by continuously innovating and combining efforts with staff experience. , Be positioned among the top players in the

UAE market and our values are Delight products with superior deliverables at competitive prices, Ensure value returns by seizing emerging opportunities in a dynamic market.

About our future Develop a distribution system through modern prime depots locations, Increasing brand awareness and developing customer loyalty, Increasing multinational brands in all categories and Ensuring operating margins through economies of scale and efficiency.



Neil Saxon - VP & Managing Director MENAT and Danielle Perry Sales Manager Branded Food Service MENAT receiving the membership certificate from Chef Uwe Micheel, President, Emirates Culinary Guild

Kerry has enjoyed phenomenal success since originating operations in 1972 in Listowel, Ireland. The history of the group traces the evolution and growth of Kerry – from its modest beginnings in the south west of Ireland into a leading player in the global food industry. Beginning from a green field site in Listowel, County Kerry Ireland over 40 years ago, Kerry has enjoyed profitable growth with current annualized sales of approximately €5.8 Billion.

Now headquartered in Tralee, County Kerry, Ireland; the group employs approximately 36,000 people and has established operations in 24 countries across 5 continents. Included in this are manufacturing facilities in 23 different countries and a network of sales offices worldwide. Within these operations, the EMEA markets account for 38% of sales, America markets 44% of and sales to Asia Pacific markets represent



18% of total Group sales. The group is structured into four divisions:

**Kerry Ingredients and Flavors:** The largest division, supplying over 15,000 ingredients and flavors and integrated solutions for some of the biggest names in the food industry.

**Kerry Foods:** A leading manufacturer and marketer of added-value branded and customer branded chilled foods to the UK and Irish consumer food markets. Some of the brands include LowLow, Cheesestings, Charlevilly Dairygold, Denny and Richmond.

**Kerry Agribusiness:** Kerry's Agribusiness

is headquartered in Charleville, County Cork and works with the groups 4,000 milk suppliers in Ireland to produce milk and related dairy products.

**Kerry Foodservice:** Showcasing a portfolio of Kerry Branded products which have been developed in mind with Food Service Operations. Brands include Big Train Powdered Beverage Mixes out of the US, Davinci Beverage Syrups and Sauces out of the UK, Kerrymaid Creams, Spreads and Cheeses out of the UK and Orley Inclusions and Toppings out of South Africa.

In 2009 the first Global Technology & Innovation Center was established in Beloit, Wisconsin USA and in 2015 our second center will be opened in the Millennium Business Park, Naas, County Kildare, Ireland. This opening of this new center will be a focal point for all scientific research, innovation, and technology/product development.



# 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 Culinaire 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.

Take advantage of our platform.

Positively impact your market share!

Contact us now

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REACH

ENGAGE

INFLUENCE

## 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

## WHO READS IT?

▶ Executive Chefs	23%
▶ Senior & Mid-Level Chefs	36%
▶ Hotel GMs	10%
▶ Restaurant Owners	15%
▶ C-Level Executives	2%
▶ Purchase Managers	7%
▶ Food Industry Leaders	4%
▶ Marketing / PR Managers	1%
▶ Others	2%

## REACH BY COUNTRY

▶ United Arab Emirates	71%
▶ Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	18%
▶ Oman	2%
▶ Qatar	4%
▶ Kuwait	1%
▶ Bahrain	2%
▶ United Kingdom	1%
▶ Others	1%

## 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%



**gulf**  
**gourmet**





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# THE EMIRATES CULINARY GUILD



## APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Date of Application:

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

First Name/s:

Nationality:

Civil Status:

Date of Birth: dd/mm/yy

Name of Employer:

Address in Home Country:

Work Address:

Tel:

Web Address:

Email:

Telephone Office:

Professional Title:

Fax Office:

Type of Membership Required: (Please tick one)

Tel. Home:

Corporate ☐ Senior Renewal ☐

Fax Home:

Senior ☐ Young Chef ☐  
(under 25 yrs below)

Email:

Declaration to be Signed by all Applicants

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

Signed:.....

Proposed By:

Sig:.....

Seconded By:

Sig:.....

### FOR 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

## Experimental Ali

- > **Name:** SK Rajjack Ali
- > **Age:** 29
- > **Position:** Chef de Partie
- > **Works at:** Time Oak Hotel and Suites
- > **In Dubai since:** 7 Years
- > **Home is:** Kolkata, India
- > **Love:** Experimenting and creating new dishes
- > **Inspiration:** My mum for choosing me to help her in the kitchen
- > **Dream:** To become an executive chef. Also start a restaurant that serves international food in India.

*Every month we choose one Social Media Superstar from our many fans who like the Gulf Gourmet page on Facebook. You could be next!*





## A ROUND TRIP ON ADAIR PLEASE

**T**he one airline that I have never flown is Ad Airways. It is out there somewhere but I never get that flight. I am very disappointed that this highly publicised airline is so difficult to find. It certainly does not fly out of airports I frequent.

This is the airline created by advertising agencies and they use it in all their campaigns. On Ad Airlines air hostesses waft on silken cushions and have ethereal smiles as they wander about this soft focus cabin, gently covering supine passengers with blankets and laying cool hands on fevered brows, kneeling with liquid grace as they serve food and drink like it was their life's mission and had to be done with electrified zeal. Even when they speak to you it is like those sylphlike sirens luring Ulysses.

Two days ago I asked an airhostess on a standard airline to tuck me in with a blanket with an option on the celestial music generally heard on AdAir and she threatened to call the Captain. As for the fevered brow stuff she said, look, you want cool hands go to Flo Nightingale, you want water, wait till the flight takes off, now fix your seatbelt, sorry, we don't allow bags under the seat, put it away, up there in the overhead locker and put your seat upright.

On AdAir people blend into their wonderful sculpted seats, cupped and cuddled by the huge stretch of space given to each pax even in Economy and that enables the traveller to relax with beatific smile on beatific face as he slumbers in beatific repose.

On other airlines you twist and turn and stick foot into footrest for balance

and scrunch up and clutch at pillow and toss and twist a little more and only five minutes have passed as you slide down the seat for the fourth time and wish you had been born eighteen inches shorter as you remove fellow passenger's knee from your air space.

AdAirways is big on fine dining. Everybody on this airline eats with grace and dignity and the food makes a Roman feast look like a Salvation Army soup kitchen. Pictures of passengers eating are always misty and romantic and have that special ambience about them. You can hear the violins and the cherubs frolicking as you imbibe (as compared to eat.)

In other airlines they fling the food across 17 C and 17 D at you in 17 F wrapped in cellophane covers that need Hercules on a good day to rip apart. You sit all squeezed up enclosed by the tray table and your arms are locked in at the elbow and tearing cellophane or lifting flaps where it says 'lift here' now becomes a superhuman task.

After several shots at it and a final poke with the fork when next door partner isn't looking, you find dinner is brown goo, some green goo, some light pink goo and a semi solid reddish crimson goo onto which you are supposed to pour ketchup and mustard from plastic packets that are human-resistant and you surrender by splashing various coloured goos around the vicinity.

Not just that but the main splash will always be nor' nor' west of your napkin right onto your white shirt and since you are confined to a space of 18 inches by 16 inches any effort to clean it will result in either glass of water spilling or green goo dropping or your elbow striking fellow

passenger's cashew nuts (salted) and sending them spinning.

Also, unlike on AdAir, bread made for normal airlines is baked by sticking together crumbs with insta-destruct glue. The moment you break the bread it disintegrates into its original crumb form, like a grenade and you have crumbs everywhere, especially on your coat.

On AdAirways all passengers are good looking and built to walk the ramp. The women are svelte (so, go look up the meaning, this is not an English lesson) and the men debonair and dashing and their clothes never wrinkle. They step off the plane after 11 hours of flying like they had stepped out of the shower. Their suits are pristine and pressed and they are shaven and spotlessly fresh. No ladies with lumpy handbags, no grumpy men with bad attitudes, none of the great unwashed fly Ad Air.

In normal airlines you look mangled after five hours and positively destroyed after eleven. You stagger off the plane in a suit that looks like it was shot, your eyes are red, your beard dis-gus-ting and yawns come in series like waves on a beach.

And it isn't Cindy Crawford sitting next to you it is a lady with a three month old baby who likes crying once every two minutes. Some of my best friends are in advertising. One day, I am going to ask one of them if they'll get me a ticket on this airline I can never find.

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*Bikram Vohra has been the Editor of 11 newspapers including Gulf News, Khaleej Times, Bahrain Tribune, Emirates Evening Post and helped in setting up Gulf Today*



# Is your message loud and clear?

**Content-Farm.com** is an international network of business and lifestyle journalists, copywriters, graphic designers, web developers and communication specialists that have come together to create an ecosystem for content marketing.

Our role is to understand your target audience, get the message right and to deliver your message in a format that is cost-effective, has maximum impact and increases the return on your marketing dollars. We have:

- **Wordsmiths** to fine-tune your message to suit your audience profile.
- **Designers** to package your message for web, print or social media.
- **Editorial** teams to publish newsletters, brochures, magazines and books.
- **Digital** experts to build websites or to manage your email and social media communication.

To know more contact [info@content-farm.com](mailto:info@content-farm.com) or call [+971-55-7174842](tel:+971-55-7174842).



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