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# gourmet

THE MAGAZINE CHEFS LOVE TO READ

volume 15, issue 8



## COACH CULINAIRE

Chef **Helen Morris**, executive chef and senior culinary lecturer, brings out the best in students and ingredients alike

### GLOBAL HONOUR

Chef **Uwe's** Emirati cookbook wins 'Best of the Best in 25 Years' at Gourmand World Awards 2020



### LOOKING SKYWARDS

**Doxis Bekris**, AVP at EKFC, on what it takes to create a happy and collaborative work culture



### DESSERT DESIGN

Hilton's award-winning pastry chef **Eranda Liyanage** proves that art knows no boundaries



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# president's station

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Dear fellow Chefs, ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to the December issue of our Gulf Gourmet.

This is the last issue of a year that was very challenging for all of us around the world.

Some of us are back in business, but many of our colleagues are still struggling. Despite all the challenges we face I wish you and your family a blessed and healthy festive season.

To all of us who are celebrating Christmas, Merry Christmas and I hope all our colleagues and friends find the time to spend with their family before the year ends. I wish everyone a healthy and happy new start into 2021. We all pray for a better year to come.

Your Emirates Culinary Guild is finishing the year with our biggest ever virtual competition, the USA Egg Virtual Competition. This competition was brought to us by the American Egg Board.

We received in excess of 220 entries with some great videos and recipes. Do not miss the videos on our Emirates Culinary Guild YouTube Channel.

**Subscribe, watch and like our videos, share with your family and friends. Help us to grow your Emirates Culinary Guild YouTube Channel.**

The ECG WorldChefs-certified judges also just finished selecting the finalists of the Nestle Golden Chefs Hat Award. Some really amazing recipes from our young chefs. We really have great talent on the starting block. I wish them all a great future and would like to tell young chefs please keep working



hard and do not lose your passion for our great profession.

The next big project – challenge – the team is working on is a Guinness World Record Attempt in honor of H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Ruler of Dubai and Vice President and Prime Minister of UAE. We have chosen the January 4, 2021 to break the record for the 'longest line of pies'.

We are working now on Salon Culinaire 2021 and Virtual Expo Culinaire, to be held in March 2021. More details are in this issue.

We are speaking now to our existing partners and new partners for this great show. If any of our corporate partners are interested to join us physically or virtually, please to contact us at

[emiratesculinaryguild@gmail.com](mailto:emiratesculinaryguild@gmail.com)

Please visit [gulfgourmet.net](http://gulfgourmet.net) to browse through previous issues of this magazine. Visit [emiratesculinaryguild.net](http://emiratesculinaryguild.net) to see our upcoming events calendar. And visit [facebook.com/wacsyoungchefs](https://www.facebook.com/wacsyoungchefs) for young chefs to be in contact with over 4,000 chefs worldwide.

Please do not miss the company profile of our corporate members. We really do appreciate your support. Also do look at the Friends of the Guild pages to check all our supporters.

Culinary Regards,

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



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# editor'snote

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**W**ow! What a year it has been! This sentence makes perfect sense both in a good year and in a crazy year. 2020 has clearly been the latter.

For the first time in 10 years, since I have taken over the reins of this magazine (yes, it's been that long), we missed an issue. This year we published nine issues instead of 10 due to the temporary closure of our printing press and supply chain partners in April.

Thankfully, both the chef community and the foodservice companies that advertise in our magazine went above and beyond to ensure that this magazine came out uninterrupted from May onwards.

This was anything but easy given the restrictions in place.

We had physical copies of our magazines delivered as far as China and Europe during the early summers using special couriers.

We had hotels give us extraordinary permissions and open their doors to our photographer and reporter so that their chefs could be featured in this magazine.

Our editions continued to be packed with interesting stories of culinarians from the Middle East and around the world even though access was restricted.



I must thank my team of journalists and designers, based in three different continents, for the exceptional work they do behind the scenes.

As we move into 2021, I am happy to inform you that we have received 100 per cent backing from all our advertisers. Be it global players like Nestle Professional and Arla Pro, regional heavy weights such as Emirates Snack Foods, or even international exhibitions like Tuttofood, we are thankful for your support of chefs through this medium.

We are currently beta testing something great for our digital push and will officially announce its launch in Q1 of next year. We are excited about it and hope it helps chefs improve their careers and give them an identity in a crowded industry.

For young chefs, I am happy to announce that Season 9 of Golden Chefs Hat Award UAE begins next month. The year long competition that runs in this magazine is a great platform for budding culinarians to make their talent seen by all those who matter. We are looking for 20 teams to participate. Details are inside this issue.

This issue is also packed with tons of exclusive content that you will not find elsewhere. We have secured interviews with some of the leading chefs in the region as well as young chefs who have the potential to become tomorrow's executive chefs.

This issue also has a special column from regional foodservice industry expert Samer Abou Daher on the lessons learnt by the foodservice industry in 2020 and how we should move forward.

All this and more news stories - such as an Emirati cuisine cookbook by our favourite chef being featured at the Alfred Nobel Museum in Sweden and details of a Guinness record attempt early next month – are packed into this edition.

Hope you enjoy the read and until next time keep cooking with passion.

**Aquin George**  
Editor

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December 2020 **Gulf Gourmet**

# friends of the guild



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# newsbites

## Meet the winners of Risotto Quest

Chef Francesco Dimonte of Emirates First Class Lounge and Chef Davide Gardini of BiCE Ristorante won the Best Classic Risotto and the Best Innovative Risotto competitions respectively at the recent Risotto Quest contest.

The quest involved 16 chefs from 13 restaurants showcasing the greatness of the Northern Italian dish that is gaining global recognition along with pizza and pasta.

Chef Dimonte received an all-expenses-paid trip to Tuttofood 2021 (an innovative international platform for the agri-food trade sector) and Chef Gardini receive a similar invitation to

HostMilano 2021 (a global event for HoReCa and Foodservice industries).

"When it comes to a successful traditional risotto, you can't single out a specific ingredient," said Chef Dimonte. "The ingredients of a risotto represent an entire territory and this is what makes it so special for me to prepare 'traditional' dishes."

"Traditional or innovative, I agree there are no tricks or shortcuts in the kitchen. What matters is the quality of raw materials and to remain faithful to our Italian roots," added Chef Gardini.

Check out the dishes on the Emirates Culinary Guild's YouTube channel.



## Golden Chef's Hat Award UAE – Season 9 is on!

Nestle Professional and Gulf Gourmet are inviting young chefs to participate in Season 9 of the country's most popular young chefs team competition in 2021.

Winners from previous seasons of the competition have been awarded prizes ranging from Macbooks to international trips. And many have fast-tracked their careers to senior culinary positions around the globe.

Season 9 will continue to see 20 teams (two chefs in each team) from UAE-based hotels, restaurants and catering companies compete in a unique format. Each team's recipes and chef stories will be published in Gulf Gourmet magazine in 2021.

To participate in the competition



and see your interview and recipe in this magazine, email [amaresh@gulfgourmet.net](mailto:amaresh@gulfgourmet.net). This is your opportunity to stand out from the crowd and to make your mark as a young chef

## Waitrose adds e-commerce channel for UAE customers

Waitrose & Partners launched its UAE e-commerce platform last month. This is the first online store outside of the UK for the British grocery brand with 15,000 SKUs available for purchase.

The platform comes at a time when Covid-19 has accelerated consumer adoption of online shopping. According to a report by Ken Research, the pandemic has prompted 79% of consumers in the UAE to change their shopping habits from offline to online.

Orders can be booked up to two hours before the delivery time, minimum order spend is AED 100, and a delivery fee of AED 15 is waived for orders over AED 350.



## Guinness World Record attempt on January 4

In honor of H. H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Ruler of Dubai and Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates, the Emirates Culinary Guild in partnership with USA Pears has decided to attempt a Guinness World Record feat on January 4, 2021. This is the day His Highness was crowned the Ruler of Dubai.

The attempt is to break the 2016 Australian record for the 'Longest Line of Pies'. "We plan to prepare

2,000 pieces of Pear Pie, each pie will be prepared with 3 pieces of USA Pears.

The record is expected to be broken in the gardens of Jumeirah Creekside Hotel following which the pies will be distributed free to the public.

Bassam Bousaleh, the regional representative for USA Pears, confirmed that fresh pears will also be distributed to visitors and professional chefs witnessing the live attempt.



### International Food Fair



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## Chef Uwe's Emirati cookbook enters hall of fame

'Flavours of Dubai' by Chef Uwe Micheel has received yet another award! This time it is the Gourmand World Cookbook Awards' Best of the Best in 25 Years. Very few cookbooks have received this honor, which is the equivalent of the Hall of Fame award in cookbook writing. The book features recipes of traditional and modern Emirati cuisine and has previously won the World Best Chef Cookbook award in 2016.

Due to the pandemic, the awards ceremony which was to take place across three countries – China, France and Sweden – had to be postponed to next year and the results were announced online.

Chef Uwe's book was exhibited at

the Alfred Nobel House Björkborn in Karlskoga, Sweden, along with other best of the best award winners. The exhibition ran for two months in September and October 2020.

Governor Maria Larsson opened the cookbooks exhibition as chair of the Alfred Nobel Björkborn Foundation. She said, "This international exhibition shows the importance of sharing and transmitting food cultures through cookbooks. The quality and depth of these books is stunning."

The Gourmand World Cookbook Awards started 25 years ago at the Frankfurt Book Fair, with the objective to get more respect for cookbooks and food culture. The awards



ceremony has since become one of the world's most prestigious cookbook awards with exhibitions held in UNESCO in 2019 and Nobel House in 2020.

## Guild wins best professional association award

Emirates Culinary Guild has been awarded 'Best Professional Cooking Association - Middle East' at the MEA Business Awards 2020.

Following the nomination acceptance, MEA Markets' rigorous internal vetting procedure found the Guild to be a regional leader that promotes excellence in its field. The organizers said, "Our extensive research and judging process is driven by merit and centred around an in-depth evaluation of skills and services on offer.

"Awardees must demonstrate expertise within their field, dedication to customer service and a commitment to promoting excellence. This approach has brought us much success and commendation throughout its use and enforces MEA Markets' stance that victors are not determined by popularity of votes, but by their contributions to their industry."

## Richard joins Hyatt as Executive Chef

Hyatt Regency Phnom Penh has appointed British national Richard Bias as their executive chef.

He brings over two decades of culinary experience to Hyatt's first property in the Cambodian capital. The 247-room hotel is expected to open its doors in Q1 2021.

Prior to this, he was executive chef at Amankora in Bhutan, before which he was Director of Culinary at W Bali. He has previously worked at The Chedi in Muscat, Atlantis The Palm in Dubai as

well as Belmond La Résidence d'Angkor in Siem Reap.

Bias oversees five F&B outlets, including the hotel's two main dining venues FiveFive Rooftop Restaurant & Bar and Market Café Restaurant & Lounge. "Phnom Penh's F&B scene is quickly maturing and through the hotel my goal is to put the city's culinary offerings on the map," said the chef who has trained under Michelin-starred chefs such as Anton Mosimann and the late Gary Rhodes.





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# DESIGNING DESSERTS

Art knows no boundaries. Definitely not on Chef **Eranda Liyanage's** plate. The executive pastry chef of Hilton Dubai Jumeirah and Hilton Dubai the Walk is quite an artist when it comes to desserts. But that barely scratches the surface of his achievements...

About 40 kilometres east of Colombo, lies a city famous for its sandy beaches and its centuries-old tradition of fishing. Situated at the mouth of a lagoon, Negombo offers a lot to tourists – from manmade structures such as ornate Roman Catholic churches to breathtaking natural sights.

This is probably why hospitality is hardwired into the people of this bustling Sri Lankan city.

Chef Eranda Liyanage carries this long legacy within him. There's nothing that pleases him more than a satisfied smile of a guest. That simple smile, though, is no easy achievement. A lot of effort goes behind it. The executive pastry chef runs the pastry operations of nine outlets of the Hilton Dubai Jumeirah and Hilton Dubai the Walk, including banquets and room service.

Little wonder then that a 13-hour day is 'normal' for Chef Eranda. Running a team of seven people, he handles his responsibilities without a single sign of a frown. "I come in at 7 AM daily and leave at 8:30 PM. It's a lot of work but it's never tiring when you really enjoy what you do," smiles the 38-year-old chef.

Fortunately, Chef Eranda is well-trained



**In my home city, there are numerous hotels and many of my relatives also work in hospitality. So I had exposure to the industry from childhood**

to handle all kinds of operations. He started his career in the hot and cold kitchens, then moved to pastry because it afforded him the opportunity to be creative and experiment with new ingredients and ideas.

Thinking back, he cannot remember a time when he didn't enjoy cooking. "In my home city, there are numerous hotels and many of my relatives also work in hospitality. So I had exposure to the industry from childhood," he recalls.

When he decided to be a career gastronome, Chef Eranda took courses at the National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority and the Colombo

International Hotel School in Sri Lanka, starting thereafter as a kitchen helper.

In his first 'real' job, he was a commis III at the Blue Oceanic Hotel in Sri Lanka. The hotel, with 96 rooms and two outlets, served as the launching pad for the chef at the beginning of 2000. A couple of years later, he moved to the Mermaid Hotel & Club where he spent another year before joining the Palm Beach Hotel, Mount Lavinia. Another three years passed before Chef Eranda made his way to Dubai. Somewhere along the way, he also tried a hand at building some experience in another island paradise, Maldives, but the tsunami in 2004 put paid to these plans.

2006 was a special year. It marked Chef Eranda's entry into the Middle Eastern hub of gastronomic activity – Dubai. It was also his debut in the big league. The Dubai Marine Beach Resort & Spa had as many as 14 outlets offering an entire range of learnings that Chef Eranda hadn't even dreamed of.

Working under some seasoned chefs, the Sri Lankan absorbed all the lessons like a sponge. Later, towards the end of 2008, he joined the Renaissance Hotel Dubai as demi chef de partie.

It was in Renaissance that Chef

Eranda made his first mark at culinary competitions. Rather spectacularly at that. At the prestigious Gulfood 2009, he was crowned the Middle East Junior Chef of the Year, winning a gold, a silver and a bronze in dessert plating, cake decoration and pastry showpiece categories, respectively.

His career took off splendidly from there on. Chef Eranda joined the Madinat Jumeirah Hotel towards the end of 2009, where he worked until mid-2012. The hotel had 44 outlets, a new scale for the young chef. In his time there, he picked up more medals at the Gulfood events.

With time, came a new opportunity. The Sri Lankan chef joined the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Sohar, Oman but found the job atmosphere different. "Felt out of place. Still, I braved it for a year and a half."

When a position opened up in Hilton Al Hamra Beach & Golf Resort in Ras Al Khaimah, Chef Eranda returned to the UAE in mid-2013 as pastry chef. Over the next seven years, he also worked at the H Hotel Dubai and the Fairmont Ajman before taking over as the executive pastry chef for Hilton Dubai Jumeirah and Hilton Dubai the Walk earlier this year.



**Chef Eranda with his wife Tushari, son Enush and daughter Chanumi.**

As is obvious, it's been a rather hectic career. But it's also been an eventful one. Other than impressing his guests and supervisors, Chef Eranda has continued to wow audiences and judges at competitions. In 2018, he won a gold and a silver at the Culinary World Cup while in 2014, he secured two medals at the Dubai World Hospitality Championship. "At the Culinary World Cup, I was one among 10 chefs from the UAE who participated. I won the medals for pastry art."

As a pastry chef, he believes in simplicity. "I try not to have more than three main ingredients in my dishes. The guests don't just eat desserts. They order them with starters and main course. If there are too many things on the plate, the flavours have to fight for attention and that dulls the experience."

On the personal front, life couldn't be better. Chef Eranda has two children – a five-year-old son Enush and a three-year-old daughter Chanumi – with his wife Tushari. "Enush is already showing signs of following in my footsteps. He loves cooking," smiles the indulgent father. He can imagine a future when son and father work side-by-side at their family-owned pastry shop. Chef Eranda hopes to set up his own pastry shop in Sri Lanka, returning to be close to his parents and his two sisters.

For now though, it's Christmas and New Year that he's looking forward to. Chef Eranda hasn't allowed the coronavirus pandemic to dull his enthusiasm. "I am making plans. We will make a gingerbread house," he says excitedly.

Glass always half-full. That's Chef Eranda's winning recipe.

## **Milk Chocolate cremeux with vanilla cheese choux. Gluten free pecan nut cake, ice cherry cheese sorbet with cheery compote**

### **GLUTEN FREE PECAN NUT CAKE**

Whole egg	730 gm
Pecan nuts	490 gm
Sugar	400 gm
<b>Lurpak unsalted butter</b>	200 gm
Dark chocolate 53%	200 gm
Egg white	160 gm
Sugar	100 gm
<b>Method</b>	

- ◆ Pre heat oven to 180°C
- ◆ Use a food processor to chop the pecan nuts with the sugar.
- ◆ Then add the eggs and beat together.
- ◆ Add the melted butter and the melted chocolate at the end of the mixing process.
- ◆ whip the egg whites with the sugar.
- ◆ Gently combine the two mixtures and spread on a baking tray
- ◆ Bake at 180°C for 20-25 minutes

### **CHOUX PASTE**

<b>Arla milk</b>	250 gm
Water	250 gm
Ugar	10 gm s
Salt	05 gm

<b>Lurpak unsalted butter</b>	225 gm
Flour	275 gm
Egg	400 gm

### **Method**

- ◆ Bring water, milk, butter, sugar and salt to the boil in a large pan.
- ◆ Add flour, mix to form a thick. Cook over medium heat 4-5 minutes.
- ◆ Place mixed bowl into the mixer with the paddle attachment, mix until semi cooled.
- ◆ Slowly add the eggs, little by little, scraping well between each addition. Test the consistency, adding more or less eggs as necessary.
- ◆ Mix until smooth and shiny.
- ◆ Pipe choux using round nozzle.



- ◆ Bake in the deck oven, bottom and top heat 190deg, Vent Open, 25-30minutes until lightly colored.

**ICE CHERRY CHEESE SORBET**

Water	244 gm
Sugar	280 gm
Trimoline	20 gm
Glucose powder	70 gm
Sorbet stabilizer	3 gm
Cherry puree	1000 gm
Arla cream cheese	400 gm

**Method**

- ◆ Bring water to a boil in a medium sized pot, add sugar, Trimoline, glucose and stabilizer
- ◆ Cook to 85°C. pour over puree and removed the heat add the Arla cream Cheese and refrigerate until cold. process in an ice cream machine

**MILK CHOCOLATE CREMEUX**

Arla whipped cream	250 gm
Arla full fat milk	250 gm
Egg yolks	100 gm
Ugar	50 gm
Milk chocolate 35%	245 gm

**Method**

- ◆ Boil the cream and milk add the sugar, egg yolk Make a cream anglaise

and cook 82°C, in a bowl, add milk chocolate, strain cream anglaise through a fine sieve over partially melted chocolate to obtain a smooth, shiny texture mix with a rubber spatula. process emulsion with a hand blender to perfect cremeux, pour mixture into molds. freeze until ready for use

**CHOCOLATE GLAZE**

Water	110 gm
Arla cream	110 gm
Non fat milk powder	25 gm
Glucose syrup	50 gm
Sugar	350 gm
Coco powder	140 gm
Gelatin sheet	32 gm
Neutral glaze	240 gm

**Method**

- ◆ Soak gelatin In a ice water until softened. squeeze out excess water and aside. place the water, glucose and into a medium size pot and cook to a temperature of 40°C.
- ◆ Add the cream, milk powder, sugar and coco powder and bring to a boil. stir in gelatin to dissolve, strain over the neutral glaze and blend with an hand blender.
- ◆ Set aside to cool. Glaze at 35°C

**VANILLA CHEESE MOUSSE**

Arla cream cheese	400 gm
Icing sugar	100 gm
Vanilla bean	1 pce
Arla whipped cream	600 gm
Gelatin	8 gm

**Method**

- ◆ Soak gelatin In a ice water until softened. stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat cream cheese with icing sugar, vanilla until smooth. in a separate bowl, beat the whipped cream, melted the gelatin, fold the whipped cream over the cream cheese mixer add the gelatin

**CHERRY COMPOTE**

Fresh cherry	500 gm
Cherry puree	200am
Sugar	100gm
Pectin nh	5 gm

**Method**

- ◆ Cut into the cherry half remove the seed boil the cherries, sugar and cherry purre in a medium sauce pan and cook over medium heat for 10 minutes until cherries are wilted and soft cook more minutes until reduced in half and thickened. Add pectin into the pot and stir to combined remove the heat



# LOOKING SKYWARDS

What is the one ingredient that every kitchen must have? According to **Doxis Bekris**, it is laughter. Mixing humour with food creates a happy and collaborative workplace culture, which inspires creativity and innovation. It is with this positivity that the Assistant Vice President of Emirates Flight Catering (EKFC) is going about recharging the business in this tough environment. Excerpts from an interview..



“If you can laugh at your troubles, they will never make you cry.” This attitude has served Doxis Bekris, the Assistant Vice

President of Emirates Flight Catering (EKFC), well in life. The Greek chef has used humour to not only deal with challenges but also to bond with teams and people throughout the world.

In a tête-à-tête, he takes us through his past, his present and his future...

#### Could you tell us about your childhood and your family?

I was born in Rhodes, an island in southern Greece. I have four siblings; two brothers and two sisters. I am the middle child. My parents are retired now but they used to work for the government.

My father was a police officer for the Drug Enforcement Unit and my mother worked at the local district Prefecture. Later in her career she transferred to different divisions such as the Port Authority and Forestry Division.

I have great memories from my childhood, lots of fun times with my family but of course, like any family, we had our ups and downs.

Raising 5 children on basic salaries was of course a financial strain for



**I study Food and Beverage trends of every year and every different sector Emirates flies to, to gather data on customer demographics, their likes and dislikes and based on feedback received and extensive research, my team and I conduct trials internally to help us develop the annual Food and Beverage offering on board the aircraft**

my parents but we overcame such challenges by supporting one another. We remain close knit even today.

#### Why did you choose to become a chef?

It might sound like a bit of a cliché but my mother was the inspiration behind my decision to become a chef. Our dinner table was always filled with a variety of dishes and food.

Cooking was a 'labour of love' for my mother and as I got older, I began to help her out in the kitchen. I started by making cakes and desserts, obviously because I wanted to eat the leftover

batter at the end like any other kid, but from there, I started making other dishes such as salads before finally getting the confidence to make full meals.

Mealtimes gradually became my favourite time of the day and I just wanted to keep learning and trying new things. My hobby became my passion and eventually became my career.

At first, I wasn't planning to go to Culinary School to become a professional chef, but rather to learn more about cooking and how to mix ingredients and learn the different techniques of cooking them.

However, once I got there, I found that everything just came naturally to me. I started my training at the National Tourism School in Rhodes and when I graduated from there, I went on to the University of Wolverhampton in the UK to study for a BA in Hospitality and Licensed Retail Management.

During the summer holidays I went back to Greece and did a number of internships in different hotels and restaurants. During term time in the UK I worked in several hotels and restaurants as well and although I had the option to do managerial placements for my internships, I had consciously chosen to work as a chef instead.





I have had the great honour of working in some of the best kitchens in the industry; Criterion by Chef Marco Pierre White, Gordon Ramsay's restaurant at Royal Hospital Road in London and the Institute of Directors, a Members Only institute in Trafalgar Square. From there, my career as a chef took off.

### **How were the early years as a chef? Was it a struggle?**

My internships in Greece and my early years as a young chef in the UK, were far from easy. I faced many disappointments and challenges but looking back, each one was worth it!

All those struggles helped to shape not only my future, but in many cases helped me shape my culinary vision and culture and to a certain extent, they helped shape me as a person as well.

Non-stop working, long hours and no days off can really take its toll especially during the holidays when everyone is celebrating with their family and I had to be at work, working late and often doing overtime, I sometimes wondered whether it was worth it. Then there were work situations - dealing with harsh and tough chefs and challenges such as products not being delivered by suppliers while I had a fully booked restaurant with loyal and new customers to feed. It could be extremely stressful.

Such struggles were and will always be part of a chef's life. What matters the most is your ability to learn from such situations and be able to overcome them with as little impact and stress as possible.

When you begin to take such circumstances in your stride, you know that you have grown as a chef and manager.

### **Tell us about your career journey.**

My career started in Rhodes, Greece, where I did my first internship after graduating from Culinary School. I then moved to UK for additional studies where I started working in parallel in different Michelin star restaurants and well-known



hotel chains and institutions.

My love of travelling took me to places like Germany, Cyprus, Kenya, Switzerland, Singapore, as well as Hong Kong for work. Osaka in Japan, Italy, mainland China (Guangzhou and Shenzhen) as well as the U.S. (New York in particular) and of course Dubai, where I am now.

### **Tell us about your current role.**

Currently I am leading the Concept and Development team for Emirates Flight Catering as Assistant Vice President. My role is to research and develop world-class menus and culinary concepts for Emirates Airline. I study Food and Beverage trends of every year and every different sector Emirates flies to, to gather data on customer demographics, their likes and dislikes and based on feedback received and extensive research, my team and I conduct trials internally to help us develop the annual Food and Beverage offering on board the aircraft.

I am also responsible for the quality of the raw ingredients used as well as the consistency of produce and meals delivered day-to-day. I am very mindful of incorporating the training of young chefs

and innovative techniques into the daily routine of my team. I think it's vital in our line of work that we never stop learning.

### **What are the challenges in your present job?**

One of the biggest challenges we face as chefs and especially in an operation to the massive scale and size like the Emirates Flight Catering, is the consistency and quality of raw materials together with the challenging factor of constant supply.

We use hundreds of tonnes of each product every year so when we try to source fruits, vegetables and proteins such as chicken, beef or seafood, we go to the largest farms around the world, farms whose number one priority is to produce the quality products that we insist on having and number two, who also have the capacity and capability to supply us the volumes required for our operation throughout the year. For smaller quantities of produce, we always try to source locally to support the local economy and of course, reduce our carbon footprint.

### **Have you competed in culinary competitions?**

As a young chef I took part in several competitions around the world, from Hotelympia in London UK, Global Culinary Challenge in Malaysia, Gastronomía in Cyprus, Istanbul Gastronomy Festival, IKA Culinary Olympics in Erfurt, Germany and of course at the National Culinary Competition in Greece.

The experience of competing, no matter where, is always the same – stressful and tiring but rewarding and educational. What young chefs need to understand and focus on is not to win the Gold Medal but rather the opportunity to actually participate in such high-profile competitions because it's the journey and the learning experience that matters the most, not the winning.

#### **What is your advice to young chefs?**

Start with the basics, listen carefully, never be late, keep yourself busy, ask questions, keep pushing yourself, learn to do your Mise En Place, wear tough but comfortable shoes, take care of yourself and most importantly, teach and give back!

#### **Tell us about your family.**

As mentioned earlier, my parents Anna and Antonios, are retired and enjoying themselves after a life of hard work and raising myself and my brothers and sisters. We're a very close family and we always put each other first. Whenever anyone of us needs anything, we band together, communicate and support until things are sorted out. I am the only one living abroad so every time I go home, my priority is to spend as much time as possible with them.

My fiancée, Nina, is an Elementary School Teacher, she adores kids, and hopefully at some point, we will also have kids of our own. Maybe not five though!

My younger brother Tasos too works in the hospitality sector. Tasos has his own Vanilla Café & Lounge in Greece. My older sister Maria is an Elementary School Teacher, my older brother George is a Bank Manager and runs his own



Vanilla Web Radio. My younger sister Ioanna was a hairdresser. Unfortunately we lost her in 2010 in a car accident. This is something that our family will never recover from, but we cherish the time we had with her.

#### **Any interesting anecdotes from your work past or present?**

No anecdotes come to mind, but one thing that always comes up when talking with colleagues, fellow chefs and my managers, past and present is my ability to always see the glass as half full.

Being positive and having a sensible sense of humour in everything I do is a key element to the success of my team. Humour can keep us going through times and sometimes if you don't laugh, you will cry. Laughter is always better! Mixing laughter with food I find creates a happy, enjoyable, creative and spontaneous environment. This, I hope, will lead to many anecdotes that my colleagues can share in the future.

#### **What are your future plans?**

Currently, at Emirates Flight Catering, we're working tirelessly to build the future of aviation catering. The pandemic has pushed us to challenge everything we do and re-invent ourselves for the better.

We research and study new technologically advanced cooking equipment and IT systems, we're in full swing on designing and developing menus for 2021 that include our new Brunch menus and signature dishes.

We're developing new and exciting menus that include meals and fusion ideas derived from 20+ years of offerings alongside factors like seasonality, authenticity, as well as creativity and innovation. We're always following the Food & Beverage trends from around the globe to ensure that our appetite for perfection is incorporated into every dish.

I love doing what I do and given the opportunity, I wouldn't change it for the world.



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# A DUET OF DELICIOUSNESS

Chefs **Ishkit Das** and **Mahmoud El Sayed** of the Sheraton Jumeirah Beach Resort are our first team of challengers at the Golden Chef's Hat Awards this month. While Indian-born Chef Ishkit will display his sharp skills in the hot kitchen, the Egyptian-born Chef Mahmoud will don his creative cap for a smooth pastry finish...

## ISHKIT DAS

An unkind cut that would have turned most other people off cooking had opposite effect on Chef Ishkit Das. If anything, the cut of a professional knife made the teenager more determined to master the fine art of culinary.

Today, it all seems so far away when he expertly chops the toughest of meats with a finesse that comes only with practice and an inborn talent. "I am making veal with oyster sauce for the competition," smiles the 25-year-old when we ask him about his plans for the Golden Chef's Hat Award competition.

"It's the shoulder cut and the sauce brings out the softness of the veal."

The commis chef from Sheraton Jumeirah Beach Resort is an import from Chandigarh in India to Dubai. He's been in the Emirate for about two and a half years, learning all he can about international cuisines. "I am lucky to have a good boss. He's always there to support me and to push me to give my best."

Maybe it's his affable personality or maybe it's just luck, Chef Ishkit has always managed to get support from the people around him. Seeing his passion from

cooking from an early age, his mother bought him a professional knife and chopping board as a present. "The first time I cooked chicken curry for my family using that set, I cut my finger badly. I was just 14 years old." But the beginner's bad luck was not enough to deter Chef Ishkit.

Later, after finishing high school, he applied for admission to the Institute of Hotel Management (IHM), one of the most prestigious institutes for hospitality training in India. Through a centralised admission system, he secured a seat at the IHM Kurukshetra in north India. "It was like opening a door to a whole



ISHKIT DAS



MAHMOUD EL SAYED



new world. When you see a hotel from the customer-facing side, it's glamorous and beautiful. But when you enter as a hospitality professional, you see the grind that goes on in the background to give guests an amazing experience." Over his three years of study, Chef Ishkit trained in all departments, even doing a small training at the JW Marriott in Chandigarh. When the time came for internship, he had six-seven options to choose from. "I chose Le Meridien in Delhi, where I worked for a year and a half."

Not too many chefs are lucky enough to start their careers in the gastronomy nerve centre of Dubai.

Chef Ishkit was.

In mid-2018, he got his first job at the Sheraton Jumeirah Beach Resort. "Le Meridien also promoted me to trainee chef but I chose to come to Dubai because I wanted to work abroad. Right now, I am in charge of the kitchen at the Black Goose Buns & Brews."

Someday in the future, he would like to work in France for a couple of reasons. One, he likes the culinary culture of France. Two, his girlfriend is French. "I

am trying to learn the language but it's hard!" he laughs.

Of course, Chef Ishkit is up to any challenge. Be it amazing his girlfriend with his French-language skills or impressing the GCHA judges with his culinary talent.

### MAHMOUD EL SAYED

Other than their employer, Chef Ishkit and Chef Mahmoud El Sayed have something else in common. Both started off on their culinary journey when they were just 14 years old.

"Both my father and brother are pastry chefs. So I started working with them in a pastry shop just fresh into my teens," says Chef Mahmoud. The early start gave the Egyptian-born chef a career advantage. Just 28 years old now, he's already a pastry chef.

Chef Mahmoud was barely 17 when he became demi chef de partie at the Le Meridien Hotel in Cairo. Graduating from the Horus Institute for Tourism and Hotels in 2011, he joined the Four Seasons in Alexandria as chef de partie before moving on within a couple of years to Intercontinental Cairo as sous chef.

"At the Four Seasons, there were five-six pastry chefs and an executive pastry chef from France. I learnt a lot there, especially European-style cooking." In mid-2017, Chef Mahmoud came to Dubai with a pastry chef role at the Sheraton Jumeirah Beach Resort. "I am in charge of the bakery here. We are a team of five people."

Chef Mahmoud has had some experience with culinary competitions. In competitions this year and last year in Sharjah, he has won silver medals for plated desserts and Egyptian pastry. "This is my third competition. I am making panna cotta with lemon cream, vanilla sorbet and raspberry puree, garnished with rose petals," he says.

In the future, Chef Mahmoud hopes to work in Europe, maybe the UK. "I think the quality of life is really good there, especially for family." He is father to two kids – a four-year-old and a five-month-old – who live in Egypt with his wife at the moment.

Chef Mahmoud is rather close to his family. One of his brothers is a pastry chef and another brother is into finance, both being in Saudi Arabia. He also has a sister.

They're all rooting for his win. As are we!





**Veal loin code with veal sweetbreads mousse. Braised veal shoulder. Butter nut puree. Crusted grilled polenta. Served with braised jus and exotic vegetables**  
(4 SAVINGS)

**VEAL ROULADE**

Veal loin	400g
Veal sweetbread	80g
Nestle Cream	40ml
Butter	20g
Egg white	3no
Rosemary and thyme	5g
Seasoning	Taste
Olive crust black	10g

**Method**

- ◆ Make the sweetbread mousse with egg cream and butter. Code with the loin. Tie it with a cling film and cook in an oven at 160° Celsius roasting 15min.

**BUTTER NUT PUREE**

Butter nut pumpkin	80g
Nestle Cream	10ml

Butter	10g
Thyme	2g
Seasoning	Taste

**Method**

- ◆ Roast the pumpkin with olive oil. Add cream and blend it finely. Finish with butter and stock. Strain and season it.

**BRAISED VEAL SHORT RIBS**

Short ribs	200g
Mirapoix	30g
Tomato paste	10g
Beef stock	200ml
Bay leaves	2pcs

Chef demi glaze	100ml
Nestle veal jus	100ml

Maggi chicken powder	5g
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**Method**

- ◆ Sear the ribs. Roast mirapoix and add all in one container. Cook it in an oven at 120° Celsius and steam roast with the Nestle product based liquid. Once done check if the meat is soft.

**CRUSTED POLENTA**

Polenta	1cup
Nestle milk	4cup
Nestle cream	half cup

Butter	20g
Seasoning	Taste

**Method**

- ◆ Boil the milk with seasoning. Then add gently the polenta. Cook well. Arrange in a mold and let it set. Take out. Cut, grill and serve.
- ◆ Crust with crispy veal bacon and seasoned panko.

**DISH SAUCE**

Braised jus	200ml
-------------	-------

**Method**

- ◆ Reduce the jus with herbs. Strain and serve.

**BUTTER VEGETABLES**

Baby carrots	6pcs
Romanesco cauliflower	80g
White asparagus	80g

Nestle chicken stock	150ml
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Butter	20g
Seasoning	Taste

**Method**

- ◆ Blanch the veg in chicken stock. Butter the vegetables with parsley.
- ◆ Season it well.

## Deconstruction of panna cotta & lime crème brulee with raspberry parfait coved with raspberry crumble

(4 SAVINGS)

### NESTLE PANNA COTTA

Nestle fresh milk	400g
Fresh cream	600g
Docello Panna Cotta	150g

#### Method

- ◆ Boil cream and milk together and add panna cotta powder and mix properly. Pour it into a mould and let it cool.
- ◆ Cut in to shape and serve.

### LIME CRÈME BRULEE

Nestle fresh cream	500g
Sugar	60g
Egg yolk	5no
Vanilla	3g
White chocolate	300g
Gelatin	10g
Lime zest	2g

#### Method

- ◆ Boil cream and sugar together. let it cool down. Then slowly add the egg yolks and whisk properly.
- ◆ Add white chocolate and finish with gelatin.
- ◆ Panna cotta covered with dehydrated rose petals.

### RASPBERRY PARFAIT

Water	30ml
Sugar	85g

Eggs whole	30g
Egg yolk	80g
Nestle cream	85g
Raspberry puree	70g

#### Method

- ◆ Whisk the egg and yolk, heat the sugar with the water at 118 Celsius.
- ◆ Pour it slowly into the whisked egg and egg yolk mixture,
- ◆ Whisk until it completely cools down,
- ◆ Add raspberry puree into the 1st mixer. Then add rest of the whipped cream

#### Garnished with

Sugar garnish	6pcs curls
Diced mango	25g
Nestle vanilla cream	70g







# A WOMAN OF TASTE

Chef **Helen Morris** is a good chef. She's an even better chefmaker. With her positive attitude and her sharp skills, the executive chef and senior lecturer at The Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management can bring out the best in students and ingredients alike...

The greatest gift a generation can hand down to another generation, is wisdom. Once you get to know her, it's easy to see that Chef Helen Morris has received this gift in abundance.

Two supremely talented grandmothers taught the lady how to be an amazing cook. Today, Chef Helen is paying the favour forward by teaching aspiring culinarians what hospitality is all about.

The executive chef and senior lecturer at The Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management cannot wait for the coronavirus restrictions to lift. She's missing the enthusiasm of her students and the lively atmosphere of her classrooms, features of offline interactions that not the best of online learning software can compensate for.

Yet, despite the limitations, Chef Helen's motivation remains high. Before going into lockdown, she was basking in the high of attending the Sharjah Expo Culinaire, a prestigious event where she had an opportunity to show her students the best of the industry.

This was just one of the exciting experiences that her 12 years in Dubai have brought her way. Looking back, it's been quite a ride for the British chef, with the range of experiences reinforcing her love of all things food. "I had never thought I will live here for so long. Before coming here, I always thought Dubai was too glamorous for me. My initial plan was to stay for five to six years. Truth is that it still doesn't feel like I've been here for more than a decade. It feels like just five-six years," she smiles.

Time does fly indeed. It was in September 2008 when the British chef landed in the celebrated city, leaving behind her home country and her job as the curriculum manager for food and beverage department at the College of North West London in Wembley. She admits that her life outside Dubai now feels like another lifetime.



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#### CHANGING COURSE

Five years ago, when Gulf Gourmet last interviewed her, Chef Helen was warming up for changes at the Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management. "Yes, a lot has changed since we last spoke. We have upgraded our F&B courses tremendously to bring them in line with current trends in the industry." In the meantime, the academy, which is a part of the Jumeirah group, has also launched its own food festival. "This is an achievement I am especially proud of. It's a unique event. The whole community comes together, our suppliers support us and our students get to learn hands-on how big events are planned and executed."

Gone are the days when culinary courses focused purely on the food and the guest experience. Today, thanks to social media, many of us also eat with our eyes. "Our new programmes teach students the nuances of photography and creative writing as well to show them how to present and market their creations in an attention-deficient world." Further, projects have been added to give students the task of setting up and

running a restaurant from scratch. "One goal is for them to learn all the basics of business but also to foster the attitude of teamwork and collaboration."

Chef Helen has not just been teaching. She has been learning in the period too - be it while presenting a student's social media paper at a hospitality seminar in Vienna or while attending a conference of regional food and beverage leaders in Beirut.

Additionally, she's been involved in social causes such as women empowerment.

As one of the few women in the hospitality industry, Chef Helen understands the need for gender balance in the kitchen. "The academy does charity and we espoused the cause of breast cancer support recently. We were also involved in a UAE government initiative to empower women in Africa by training them. I visited Rwanda and South Africa. The plan was to train around 1,000 women between the ages of 18 and 50 years but it was postponed because of the pandemic." The expectation is that the programme will go forward in 2021 or 2022, depending on how the situation evolves.

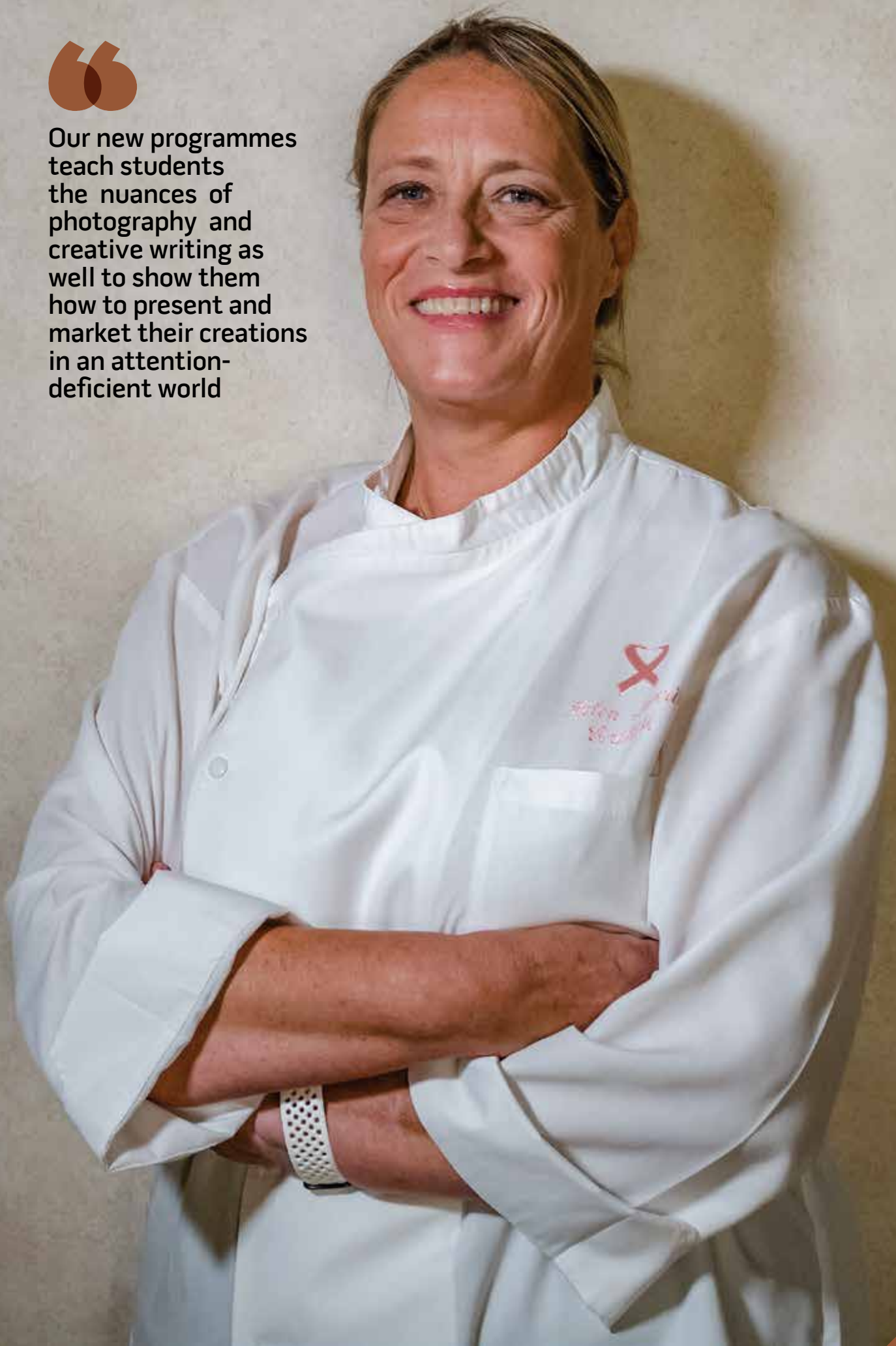
Understanding individual capabilities and honing them to harness everyone's potential optimally sets a good teacher apart from a regular one. "I know that everyone can't be good academically. But many people can work quite efficiently on the operational side. True education is the one that doesn't leave anyone behind." Maybe that's why her students keep in touch with her even after they pass out, whether for advice on a career change or guidance on the next move or even helpful suggestions on dealing with workplace problems. "Watching my students come into their own and realize their potential is truly rewarding."

#### SIMPLE BEGINNINGS

It's been a long journey from being an untapped talent herself to becoming the diamond that shapes other diamonds.



Our new programmes teach students the nuances of photography and creative writing as well to show them how to present and market their creations in an attention-deficient world





Chef Helen recalls the days when there were early experiments with food, most of them qualifying as 'accidents'. "When I was 14, I messed up a lot of stuff in the microwave, while experimenting with my new piece of equipment," she laughs at the memory.

Although she grew up in the tiny village of Ash in Shropshire in England in a farmer family, a career in hospitality didn't quite grow on Chef Helen until she was 15.

That too, by chance.

"I was looking for a part-time job and I started waitressing at this busy roadside cafe called Little Chef. Eventually, I was moved to the kitchen, where I was trained by a very organised woman." Being one of the two people taking care of the kitchen, Chef Helen learnt the ability of being quick without compromising on efficiency.

Meanwhile, some other career options were considered and rejected. "I thought of joining the Royal Air Force and realised that's a bit too regimented for my taste.



**Since I was 16, I wanted to get out of my small village life and see the bright lights of cities. Growing up, I had met some Australians and the way they spoke fondly about their country made me want to go there. So I did**

Computer programming was another idea but the subject was too boring for me to want to make it my life's calling."

Inspired by the white hats in celebrity cooking shows, she joined a catering college in Shrewsbury. Thereafter, she

indulged in professional cooking at a couple of hotels. At the Caversham Hotel in Reading, she learnt how to be forward-looking and at the Tylney Hall Hotel in Hartley Whitney, Hampshire, she gained valuable insights into the art of managing people.

Giving in later to the urge of testing foreign shores, Chef Helen headed out of the UK to fulfil a long-cherished dream of working in Australia. "Since I was 16, I wanted to get out of my small village life and see the bright lights of cities. Growing up, I had met some Australians and the way they spoke fondly about their country made me want to go there. So I did."

During her 13 months in Australia, the British chef discovered a range of 'amazing' ingredients as well as the finer nuances of Asian culinary influence. She had a wide basket of experiences there, going from a grill restaurant to a hotel resort to a cafeteria. Chef Helen worked in Brisbane and Cairns, learning to enjoy the more relaxed and less formal environment in the workplace. "I was initially mortified at the idea that we had to call the head chef in Brisbane by his first name. It took quite a bit of adjustment to the new culture."

But adjust she did. And how! Even today, Chef Helen nurses the desire to return to Australia in the distant future.

Family issues cut short her stay in Australia and Chef Helen returned to the UK to work in a couple of hotels and a restaurant, before she made the switch to teaching. "The Butlers Wharf Chef School in London needed someone to train students. It was not a classroom but hands-on training in a restaurant and kitchen operations combined with theoretical studies."

The experience reformed her – teaching was her calling.

#### **PANDEMIC PAUSE**

Currently, Chef Helen has her hands full with plans that had to be put on





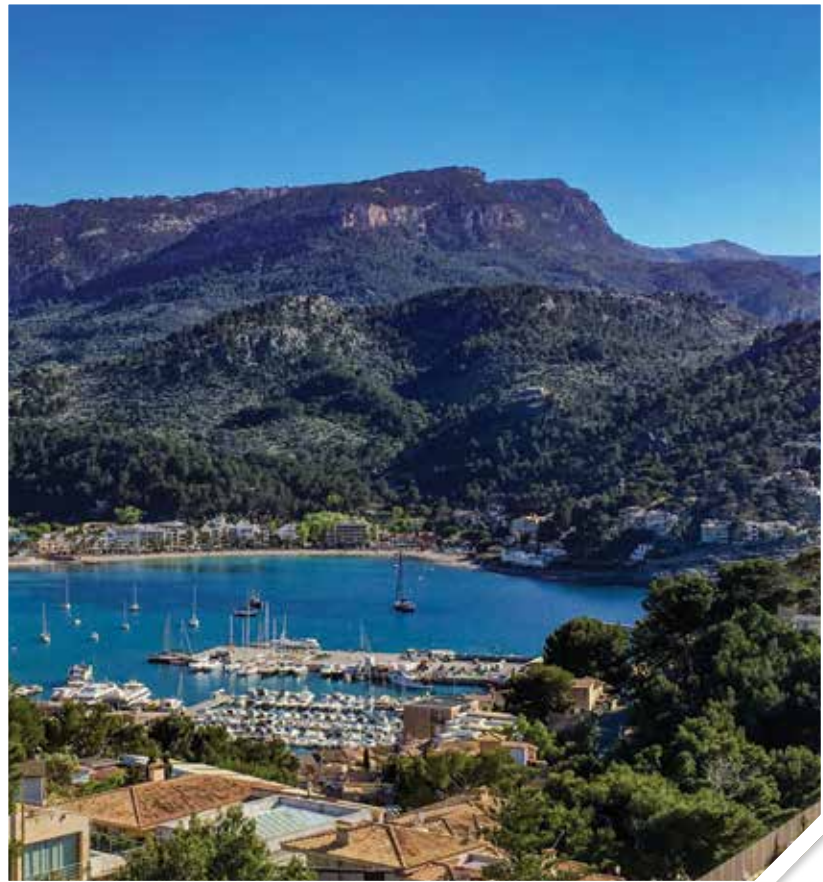
hold because of the pandemic. "Covid has forced a temporary pause. We had a lot going on before the pandemic. I want to see these plans through." The Sharjah Expo Culinaire was meant to be a precursor to other exciting things to come. "It gave us a chance to walk around and look at what was available in the F&B industry and to witness the competitions. Some of our students demonstrated their skills and some others spoke on relevant topics such as sustainability. In fact, one of our graduates is a youth ambassador in the UAE government for sustainability," she elaborates with obvious pride.

Having been a tutor for a while, the experienced chef is inspired by the confidence the new generation of aspiring chefs display. "When I was 17-18, I didn't have the confidence to perform or speak before an audience of 50-60 people. These students do it so effortlessly, even when there are high-ranking professionals in the audience."

Both the academy and the students are waiting for things to normalise, so they can return to the enriching events and sessions. "It's quite a challenge to keep students engaged during online classes. Also, our practical sessions are closed right now. We had hoped to get back this year but it seems unlikely before January. Fingers crossed that we return to in-person learning soon." In the interim, the academy has added more subjects to its online repertoire. Beverage knowledge and restaurant operations, restaurant concept design and street food truck design are some new subjects meant to widen the scope of learning for students.

#### PERSONAL NOTE

As an educator, Chef Helen has to impart to students a thorough understanding of how different formats work, including high-end and fine-dining concepts. But on a personal level, she veers towards local, rustic restaurants and street food-style eateries. "That is not to say I don't admire Michelin-starred restaurants but given my



rural upbringing, I prefer street food."

On her days off, you might find her enjoying a meal at the 3 Fils or bonding with friends over Indian breakfasts at Saravanaa Bhavan. "Al Fanar is also great. They have fresh fish everyday and they grill it beautifully."

Among her other hobbies is travel, be it for work or for leisure. Unfortunately, coronavirus has upended travel this year but she hopes to bounce back once the health threat is over. Not one to waste time, Chef Helen is using this time to enhance her skills with various courses and qualifications. "I like to challenge myself. So I did some courses recently. One of the main ones is this female leadership course from Cornell University." She also embarked on a masters programme in international hospitality management. As someone who did not get a bachelor's degree early on, there were other basics to learn, like academic writing and even researching material. "Passing my dissertation with a distinction felt very satisfying. I am as much an enthusiastic student as I am an enthusiastic teacher."

Off and on, Chef Helen likes to visit her home village. "My parents still live there. One of my sisters lives close-by and another lives just outside Manchester. It's funny how I couldn't wait to get out of there when I was a teenager but today, I love to walk down the same fields because they give me a sense of calm that cities cannot."

She is the only professional chef in the family, her sisters being hairstylist and retail manager. "My nephew was massively into baking earlier and I had thought he would also go down the same path as I did. But he changed his mind along the way and he is now studying business management," she shrugs.

Just as well, because for Chef Helen, no one compares to her grandma when it comes to pastry skills. "She was so good at it and we had all kinds of fruits growing in our gardens. There was nothing she couldn't turn into a delicious treat," the chef smiles indulgently.

Just like there's no one that Chef Helen cannot turn into a culinarian.





The academy does charity and we espoused the cause of breast cancer support recently. We were also involved in a UAE government initiative to empower women in Africa by training them. I visited Rwanda and South Africa. The plan was to train around 1,000 women between the ages of 18 and 50 years but it was postponed because of the pandemic





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## TWO FOR ONE

Italian Chef **Oscar Cimmino** is teaming up with Egyptian-born Chef **Ahmed Tarek Abd El-Hamed El Gamal** to win the Golden Chef's Hat Award this month. The two chefs, from Larte Studio One hotel, are determined to give some serious competition to rivals for the honour...

### AHMED TAREK ABD EL-HAMED EL GAMAL

When life gives you lemons, make lemon pie.

Chef Ahmed Tarek Abd El-Hamed El Gamal takes this advice very seriously.

Here's a small example of this attitude: When the Covid19 pandemic shut down his hotel for four months, he used the time to start a new business and launch his Instagram and YouTube accounts!

To us, his CV makes an interesting read.

His medals count is endless, his culinary creations are a sight for sore eyes and a treat for the palate. To think, it almost did not happen.

Chef Ahmed studied to be a lawyer, even worked in the legal industry for a bit and was set to continue down that career. Then, he changed tack to gastronomy, much to the chagrin of his family but to the delight of food connoisseurs.

Today, the Egyptian-born chef has no regrets. Why should he? In his eight years in hospitality, he has won more

recognition than many seasoned chefs and worked for prestigious employers such as Radisson Blu Hotel Dubai Deira Creek and Anantara The Palm Dubai Resort. In 2018, he was adjudged the 'Young Chef of the Year' at the Emirates Salon Culinaire Dubai.

His latest obsession is winning the GCHA trophy. "I am making a colourful and healthy beef dish for the contest," says the 28-year-old. "I marinated the beef shoulder for 24 hours with seasoning. It uses Nestle demi-glace and it will be served with tortellini pasta,



**AHMED TAREK ABD EL-HAMED EL GAMAL**

potato croquettes, green pea puree and honey-glazed beetroot.”

Working at the Larte Studio One hotel kitchen as chef de partie, Chef Ahmed is in charge of the breakfast experience and plays assistant to the head chef. “The main cuisine is Italian. I have a range of experience in different kinds of cuisine, from Middle Eastern to western-style grills to Mediterranean food.”

Needless to say, he enjoys pushing boundaries. “What better way to do that than to enter competitions? Many times I have not won anything, but I get to see so many ideas and techniques and also challenge myself,” he smiles. Rarely does he repeat his recipes at competitions. “Every competition brings a new opportunity to try a new recipe. I like to experiment with mixed flavours from different continents in my dishes.”

Do we see foodies from all continents giving a hearty thumbs-up to that?

## **OSCAR CIMMINO**

Never trust a skinny Italian chef. Especially if he comes from Naples. Except if his name is Oscar Cimmino!

The head chef of Larte Studio One hotel will offer his pastry creation at the GCHA competition this time around. Unsurprisingly, he’s offering one of the most celebrated Italian

desserts - “Panna cotta that is softer and creamier than the Italian version, with chocolate mousse, pistachio crumble and mango sorbet. I am decorating it with a gold sheet to reinforce the fine-dining experience,” says the 30-year-old chef.

Chef Oscar has been in Dubai for three years now. This is hardly his first time outside Italy. Earlier, he has worked in Austria, Portugal, the UK and Romania – which explains why he absorbs cultures and cuisines so easily.

“Since January, we have been working on the restaurant. There are many changes and we opened a pizza terrace,” he elaborates. The menus are being revised regularly and there has been a steady increase in the number of customers, especially for breakfast and lunch. Chef Oscar is responsible for the kitchen operations and the development of a new menu. He also handles the budgeting and trainings.

Interestingly, even though food is a very big part of the culture of south Italy, no one in his family is a professional chef. His was a modest upbringing but it was full of love and support. “I got into cooking because both my parents worked and I had to cook for my little sister. My mother would make the base sauce and I had to do the pasta after coming back from school.”

**OSCAR CIMMINO**

Once the love of cooking was entrenched into him, Chef Oscar would often talk to his friends about opening his own restaurant. To train, he started working in a restaurant on weekends. “I studied hospitality for five years and started my career. I worked in several places including London, Vienna and Lisbon.”

Towards the end of 2017, he got an offer to work in Dubai.

“It was an Italian restaurant called Bianca Mozzarella & Co. I said: why not! Unfortunately, the restaurant shut down recently because of Covid and I joined Larte Studio One five months ago.”

Chef Oscar has not participated in culinary competitions but he did get some exposure to contests and big events at a food festival.

He’s looking forward to an enriching experience, which hopefully will open the doors to other exciting competitions.

As for future plans, he doesn’t believe in making any. “I learn whatever I can, whenever I can. Right now, I am trying to sharpen my management skills. The only dream I have is to open my own Italian restaurant in maybe six-seven years.”

Why not? You can never have too many Italian restaurants after all!



## Nestle Precious Stones

### DOCELLO VANILLA PANACOTTA

Docello Panacotta	50 g
Milk	100 g
Cream	170 g
Vanilla syrup	110 g
Gelatine (soaked in cold water)	8 g
Dark chocolate	25 g
Cocoa butter	25 g

#### Method

- ◆ **For panna cotta:** Boil the milk and cream, remove from heat and add the panna cotta powder and mix until the powder dissolve. Add the raspberry puree and bring back to boil. Fill in the round line molder. Freeze it till set.
- ◆ **For covering:** Melt chocolate and cocoa powder. Drop it in top of the ball let it to set and turn it

### MANGO SAUCE

Mango puree	50 g
Sugar	20 g

#### Method

- ◆ Boil together until thickened.

### PISTACHIO CRUMBLE

Pistachio Grainy	100 g
Maltosec	17 g
Salt	1 g
Water	13 g

#### Method

- ◆ Combine all ingredients. Mix until get sticky texture. Roll up the mixture in between two baking papers. Remove the paper sheet on the top and bake 35 minutes at 130°C.

### CREAM BRULEE COATED RASPBERRY

Raspberry puree	100 ml
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Raspberry	2 pcs
Gelatine (soaked in cold water)	8 g
Sugar	50 g
Docello Crème Brulee	100 g
Milk	400 ml
Cream	200 ml

#### Method

- ◆ Bring to boil the mix of milk and cream.
- ◆ Remove from heat, add powder and mix with hand whip, then bring back to the boil.
- ◆ Mash the raspberry, add to the mixer and fill the mold.
- ◆ Before serving, sprinkle with brown sugar and caramelize under heat.

### LIME CHOCOLATE MOUSSE

Docello chocolate mousse	50 g
Milk	100 ml
Lime zest	touch
Lime juice	3ml

#### Method

- ◆ Put the appropriate amount of cold milk (between 20°C/ 50°C) into a high bowl.
- ◆ Mix powder with milk using a whip until a

homogenous mixture has been obtained.

- ◆ Add the lemon juice and the lemon zest to the mixer then whip with a mixer for 2 minutes at low speed and 5 minutes at high speed when the mixer ready fill it in the tube mold put the chiller for 2 hours until it get hard.

### MANGO AND PASSION FRUIT SORBET

Mango Puree	150 g
Passion fruit puree	100 g
Water	110 g
Sugar	55 g
Atomized Glucose	80 g
Stabilizer for Sherbets	1 g

#### Method

- ◆ Make a syrup with the sugar, atomized glucose, water, and stabilizer. Pour over the puree and churn in an ice cream machine.

- ◆ Garnish by golden leaves, mint leaves and chocolate flex

## The Lost Island

### ROASTED ANGUS LOIN

Beef angus hanging tender	360g
Rosemary	10g
Olive oil	10g
Maggi seasoning	20g

#### Method

- ◆ Cut the beef tenderloin into long strips

and season with rosemary and Maggi seasoning.

- ◆ Cover it tight enough to shape it like a sphere and rest it in a chiller for 30 minutes.
- ◆ Remove the wrap, sear the beef roll, and cook it in the oven for 10 mins at 150°C
- ◆ Take out the beef, allow it to rest and serve.

### BRAISED BEEF

Short rib	70g
Oil	20g
Onion sliced and lightly fried	20g
Carrots sliced and lightly fried	10g
Nestle Beef stock powder	20g
Salt pepper	A.R
Bouquet garni	5g
Nestle tomato coulis	10g

**Method**

- ◆ Trim and tie the beef. Season and colour swiftly on all sides in hot fat to seal the joint.
- ◆ Place the joint on to the vegetables.
- ◆ Add the Maggi beef stock with water, which should come a third of the way up the meat, and season lightly.
- ◆ Add the bouquet garni and Nestle tomato coulis. Bring to a boil, skim and cover with a lid.
- ◆ Cook it in a brassier cooker for 45 minutes. Remove the meat, add the jus, skim and strain.
- ◆ Replace the meat and don't cover the braised beef. It should be well cooked. Allow 35 minutes.
- ◆ To test if cooked, there should be no sign of blood. Remove the joint and correct the colour and consistency of the sauce.

**RICOTTA TORTELLINI AL OLIO**

Flour	100gm
Eggs	2 no
Ricotta cheese	50gm
Spinach	30gm
Garlic	10gm
Olive oil	20ml
Salt	AR
Parsley	touch

**Method**

- ◆ Place the flour onto a clean worktop and make a well in the middle. Fill the hole with egg yolks, egg and olive oil.
- ◆ Sprinkle with salt, start beating the eggs with a fork while slowly incorporating flour into the eggs, a little at a time.
- ◆ Once the eggs and flour are combined together into a messy mixture, start kneading. The dough will be flaky at the beginning but will come together.
- ◆ If you feel, it's way too hard to work with, add water at this stage. Knead for 10 minutes.
- ◆ A well-kneaded dough should be smooth. Flatten it slightly with your hand and tightly wrap in a plastic wrap.
- ◆ Refrigerate for 30 minutes before rolling out. The rested dough can be then rolled out with a rolling pin.
- ◆ Cut it in to tortellini shapes. Stuff it with a mixture of ricotta cheese and cooked spinach.



- ◆ Boil it in water for 2 mins. Heat the garlic in olive oil, add the pasta and season by salt and touch of parsley.
- ◆ Keep mixing until it gets a nice color and serve.

**BEEF HERBS JUS**

Chef demi-glace	30gm
Water	20ml
Rosemary	touch
Onion	5gm
Garlic	3gm
Butter	touch

**Method**

- ◆ Sauté the onion and garlic with butter. Add the rosemary and mix the demi-glace with water.
- ◆ Add the pan mix well once the sauce is ready. Strain it and serve.

**GREEN PEAS PUREE**

Green peas	50gm
Onion	5gm
Garlic	3gm
Nestle cream	30gm
Butter	touch
Salt	A.R
Water	50ml

**Method**

- ◆ Sauté onion, garlic, and green peas with butter. Then add cream, water and cook slowly until it gets tender. Then blend it fine; season and serve

**MASH POTATO WITH BEEF CROQUETTES**

Maggi potato powder	100gm
Water	200ml
Nutmeg	touch
Beef trimmings	50gm
Butter	touch
Salt	A.R
Bread crump	20gm
Egg	1 no
Flour	20gm
Oil	for frying
Nestle cream	30ml

**Method**

- ◆ Boil the water, take out of fire, add the potato powder and mix well.
- ◆ Sauté the beef trimmings and add it to the mash potato with a touch of nutmeg.
- ◆ Add the butter and cream, and season with salt. Shape it into a sphere. Dust it with flour, then egg, then bread crumbs.
- ◆ Deep fry till it turns golden brown in colour.

**VEGETABLE CONFIT WITH OLIVE OIL**

Beetroot cubes	6cubes per plate
Salt	A.R
Honey	30gm
Water for blanching	500ml

**Method**

- ◆ Blanch the vegetables, season it with salt and honey.
- ◆ Arrange it on the oven tray and cook for 10 mins at 150°C.
- ◆ Take it out and serve with garnish of seasoned micro herbs.



## THE NEW MEATING ROOM

When medieval butchers hung slaughtered cattle in their cellars, little did they know that they would someday serve as an inspiration to the 'Dry Ager Guy' - **Mirco Beutler**, the founder and CEO of dry-aging solutions provider MGK. Today, dry-aged beef is a luxury, a celebrated culinary art. And what better way to honour the tradition than with a swanky flagship 'Dry Age Boutique' in Dubai? The Dry Ager Guy elaborates on his plans...

It's an acquired taste, something like wine, blue cheese and caviar. But then, most of the fine things in life are.

This one is tied to a time-honoured technique that has been used for thousands of years to enhance the flavour and tenderness of meat and game.

Before refrigerators were born in the 1940, dry-aging was the usual process to keep meats edible for a long time. Despite being a common practice, the process did not fail to fascinate artists. Rembrandt even captured the dry-aging

process in his painting 'The Slaughtered Ox'. Today, gourmands and celebrity chefs swear by the flavour of dry-aged meat, with Michelin-starred and high-end restaurants are offering the delicacy as a luxury experience.

The ultimate 'Dry Ager Guy', however, is Mirco Beutler. The founder and CEO of MGK, a leading provider of HACCP monitoring systems and dry-aging solutions, is passionate about the meat cured through this technique. Before setting up his own company, Mirco had spent more than 12 years in

the luxury food and beverage industry across Germany, the UK, Austria and the UAE, learning the nuances of fine-dining experiences.

Reflecting his passion, MGK boasts of an impressive portfolio of products. Mirco's favourite line is the dry-aging refrigerators for personal and commercial use. "The Dry Ager Guy provides the technology to dry-age different types of meat in the perfect temperature and humidity environment," says Mirco, referring to himself by his chosen nickname. The brand counts top



restaurants as customers not only in the Middle East but also in New York City. "I extensively studied the dry-aging process in the U.S. Our technology even powers Delmonicos in New York, a 183-year-old establishment known for its steaks," Mirco says with unmistakable pride.

His obsession with understanding the age-old process took him across the world, culminating in the launch of a spectacular show that Dubai will see soon. Next year will begin with a new spot for the exclusive dry-aged meat concept in the city. The 'Dry Age Boutique' will offer unique cuts of dry-aged meat from different regions of the world. Besides beef, on offer will be dry-aged lamb, fish and duck, with special recipes exclusive to the brand. "I promise you that it will be the most luxurious and the world's largest dry-ager boutique," Mirco enthuses.

The boutique will also offer spices and a 'time travel' through the process. "Dry-aging usually takes from 45 to 100 days and you will be able see how it evolves." There's also a private tasting room. In addition, the boutique will provide products for high-end weddings and events. "The idea is not just to offer products and accessories but also educate people about the process. We have planned seminars as well as cooking and tasting events to encourage people to even dry-age meats at home."

The boutique will open in January 2021 at the Wafi Mall. "We have planned a spectacular feast for the eyes as well as the palate," Mirco smiles.



The entrepreneur chose Dubai to launch his first-of-a-kind flagship boutique due to his emotional connection with the city. "I came here in 2003 to work at the Emirates Towers Hotel. For me, Dubai is a land of opportunities and if it's one city that deserves to have our flagship store, it is Dubai."

Starting his career at the Kempinski Hotel Airport in Munich, Mirco spent his initial years at the Sheraton Skyline Hotel London Heathrow, London Hilton on Park Lane and Intercontinental Wien before making his debut in the Middle East. MGK was founded in 2004 after he noticed a need for products that could help companies meet food safety regulations. The company has a team of 18 employees servicing the Gulf region and Southeast Asia. MGK today enjoys a clientele of over 3,000, including some of the biggest global brands in hospitality. Mirco's 'baby' sure has come a long way in the past 15 years!

For him, the fascination with meats is as personal as it is professional. "In my free time, I love grilling and cooking. I also

enjoy experimenting with ingredients and techniques." However, being a foodie doesn't mean he compromises on health. Mirco is sporty as much as he is sporting. Skydiving, playing tennis and even bootcamp training are just some of his other hobbies.

Don't forget to meet the maverick at his favourite meat room!







# JUST ARRIVED!

## Bakemart's sleigh of goodies!

Christmas celebration is always a wonderful time. What better way to celebrate than to enjoy the goodies of this season. We have a bag full of treats with a wide selection of products including Buche Noel, rich fruit plum cake, despacito cake, pudding, panettone, stolen, minced pie, pain d epices, kletzen, gingerbread house, cookies & much more!

We can also customize for corporate gifting. Send us your inquiry!







## Winners of First Virtual American Egg Competition Revealed

It took 10 WorldChefs certified judges from the Emirates Culinary Guild two days to evaluate over 220 great recipes and videos that came in for the American Egg Virtual Competition. Chef Peter De Kauwe from The Club in Abu Dhabi highlighted the quality of videos by amateur chefs and Chef K.A.C. Prasad from Miramar Al Aqah Beach Resort – Fujairah judged the quality of the pictures and recipes done with American Eggs.

In the recipe and image categories Chef Hillary Joseph won Best American Egg Pastry and Chef Sampath De Silva won Best American Egg Savory. Both chefs

are from Radisson Blu DDC. In the video by a professional chef category, the winner was Chef Shrinath Manohar Nair from Emirates Flight Catering and Chef Firdaus Noorian from Oman won the video by an amateur chef.

Chef Uwe Micheel, President of the Emirates Culinary Guild said, "What an Incredible result from our latest virtual competition. We doubled the entries since our last virtual competition. Every culinary competition is a learning process for the competitor and for the winners, of course there are the great prizes offered by our partner the American Egg Board."

A total of 40 winners in 4 different classes won multiple prizes and an additional 3 special recognition prizes made this competition an exciting one for the competitors.

Andy Cuthbert, Chairman of Emirates Culinary Guild said, "We are excited to see this competition do so well and the interest from professionals and amateurs alike was fantastic. We thank them all for being part of the competition. This competition once again was a great platform for young chefs and senior chefs and budding amateurs to show their skills online."

In this competition the Incredible US Egg was the star of every recipe, and it revealed some amazing recipes from very traditional to modern creations from all levels of competitors. Check out the Emirates Culinary Guilds YouTube channel and Facebook page, to see the fantastic recipes and videos online.

### SPECIAL PRIZES

There will be Special Prizes – Book by Chef Uwe for the BEST These are awarded for both PICTURE/RECIPE AND VIDEOS

**Best traditional dessert recipe: RAEESHA ALIZA AL AZIZI**

**Best breakfast recipe: UVIDU VIHAN DE SILVA**

**Best use of egg in the recipe: DASHRATH PAKHRIN**

## PASTRY – AMATEUR, COOKS & PROFESSIONAL

<b>Winner</b> (Branded Trophy, 2000 Dhs Cash, Branded Incredible Egg Knife, Book By ECG)	<b>2nd Place</b> (Branded Trophy, 1000 Dhs Cash, Branded Incredible Egg Knife, Book By ECG)	<b>3rd Place</b> (Branded Trophy, 500 Dhs Cash, Branded Incredible Egg Knife, Book By ECG)	<b>4th Place</b> (300 Dhs Cash, Branded Incredible Egg Knife, Book By ECG)	<b>5th Place</b> (200 Dhs Cash, Branded Incredible Egg Knife, Book By ECG)
<b>HILLARY JOSEPH</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> US Egg Strawberry Parfait	<b>B.K. SUDATH RODRIGO</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> US Egg Lime Crème Mousse	<b>ADNAN ALI</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> US Egg in 5 textures	<b>AYANDRA SOUZA DE SALES</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> US Egg Quindim Tart	<b>ANNETTE MICHEEL</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> Banana US Egg Roll
<b>6th Place – 10th Place</b> (Branded Incredible Egg Knife, Book By ECG)	<b>PUNCHI K. NURANGI</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> Tropical Combination	<b>JONA T. RODRIGUEZ</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> Tropical Pavlova	<b>HAMISA SOONAM SIDDEEQ</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> US Threaded Egg Yolk	<b>HAMISA SOONAM SIDDEEQ</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> US Threaded Egg Yolk
				<b>FIRDAUS NOORAIN</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> Swiss Meringgue Macarons

## SAVORY – AMATEUR, COOKS & PROFESSIONAL

<b>Winner</b> (Branded Trophy, 2000 Dhs Cash, Branded Incredible Egg Knife, Book By ECG)	<b>2nd Place</b> (Branded Trophy, 1000 Dhs Cash, Branded Incredible Egg Knife, Book By ECG)	<b>3rd Place</b> (Branded Trophy, 500 Dhs Cash, Branded Incredible Egg Knife, Book By ECG)	<b>4th Place</b> (300 Dhs Cash, Branded Incredible Egg Knife, Book By ECG)	<b>5th Place</b> (200 Dhs Cash, Branded Incredible Egg Knife, Book By ECG)
<b>SAMPATH DE SILVA</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> US Egg & Mushroom Mousse	<b>LUPITA BELLA ANTALO</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> US Egg Telur Dadar Padang	<b>JOHN JAVED MAISH</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> Egg Wrap Little Spicy	<b>EVGENY BELOUSOV</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> Egg White Omelet	<b>JONA T. RODRIGUEZ</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> King Crab Cakes
<b>6th Place – 10th Place</b> (Branded Incredible Egg Knife, Book By ECG)	<b>SAI PRASANNA BABJI</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> US Egg Variations	<b>SAGAR THAKUR</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> Egg Spinach & Mushroom Tortellini	<b>ISLAM EZZAT MASOUD</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> US Soft Boil Egg in Chicken Patty	<b>HOUSIEN ALAA &amp; SAIF ALAA AI</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> US Scotch Eggs
				<b>SIDRA HANIF</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> Egg Florentine Traditional Style





## VIDEO – SAVORY &amp; PASTRY - AMATEUR

<b>Winner</b> (Branded Trophy, 2000 Dhs Cash, Branded Incredible Egg Knife, Book By ECG)	<b>2nd Place</b> (Branded Trophy, 1000 Dhs Cash, Branded Incredible Egg Knife, Book By ECG)	<b>3rd Place</b> (Branded Trophy, 500 Dhs Cash, Branded Incredible Egg Knife, Book By ECG)	<b>4th Place</b> (300 Dhs Cash, Branded Incredible Egg Knife, Book By ECG)	<b>5th Place</b> (200 Dhs Cash, Branded Incredible Egg Knife, Book By ECG)
<b>FIRDAUS NOORAIN</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> Swiss Meringue Macaroons	<b>AYANDRA SOUZA DE SALES</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> Quintin Tart	<b>MARIYAM AHMED ALZAROONI</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> Cream Puff	<b>ALISA BELOUSOVA</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> Thai Egg Custard	<b>ALLEGRA HRIB</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> Japanese Cheesecake
<b>6th Place – 10th Place</b> (Branded Incredible Egg Knife, Book By ECG)	<b>EVGENY BELOUSOV</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> Champion Egg Omelet	<b>BADYA KHAIREDDIN</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> Beef loaf stuffed with US eggs	<b>ALLEGRA HRIB</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> Quiche	<b>HAM (AHMED) HRIB</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> Egg Yolk Ravioli
				<b>JULIANA DE PINHO TORRES DIAS</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> Egg Sponge Cake

## VIDEO – PASTRY &amp; SAVORY – PROFESSIONAL &amp; COOK

<b>Winner</b> (Branded Trophy, 2000 Dhs Cash, Branded Incredible Egg Knife, Book By ECG)	<b>2nd Place</b> (Branded Trophy, 1000 Dhs Cash, Branded Incredible Egg Knife, Book By ECG)	<b>3rd Place</b> (Branded Trophy, 500 Dhs Cash, Branded Incredible Egg Knife, Book By ECG)	<b>4th Place</b> (300 Dhs Cash, Branded Incredible Egg Knife, Book By ECG)	<b>5th Place</b> (200 Dhs Cash, Branded Incredible Egg Knife, Book By ECG)
<b>SHRINATH MANOHAR NAIR</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> Confit Egg Yolk with Savory Pavlova	<b>MICHAEL KITTS</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> Granola Omelette Souffle	<b>ARIVU RAVI</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> US Egg Citrus Meringue Pie	<b>ARIVU RAVI</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> Chocolate Souffle	<b>ROY KENFACK D. NGUEDONG</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> Crispy US Egg
<b>6th Place – 10th Place</b> (Branded Incredible Egg Knife, Book By ECG)	<b>HAMISA SOONAM SIDDEEQ</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> US Threaded Egg Yolk	<b>AMMAR YASIR KHAMIS</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> Beetroot Puree Colbert	<b>OLGA MOLOKOYEDOVA</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> Autumn Eggs	<b>KARIMA SAIDOUNE</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> Egg & Lamb brain tapas
				<b>ISURU DAHINGA</b> <b>Name of Dish:</b> Wasabi Crème Brulee

















# PASTA & PIE

UAE's biggest live cook-off for amateur cooks was held last month at the ICCA Dubai and was organized jointly by Dubai Knowledge Park (DKP) and ICCA.

Twelve contestants were selected out of 100 entries to cook their best pasta or dessert pie within three hours using ingredients from a mystery box. The box for pasta included red and yellow bell peppers, Portobello mushrooms and

asparagus while the pie box contained bananas, kiwis and Cape gooseberry.

The panel of judges comprised of Mohammed Abdullah of Dubai Knowledge Park; Chef Uwe Micheel, Chef Alessandro Miceli, Shanaaz Raja of ICCA Dubai and Hesa Khalifa Al Khalifa.

Andre' Cordina and Ruchi were the pasta and pie competition winners respectively and took home AED 16,000

each. Runners-up Ahmed Sadik and Naima Albastaki won personalized classes in Culinary Arts worth AED 1500.

Mohammad Abdullah, Managing Director of Dubai Knowledge Park, said, "We launched this competition in collaboration with ICCA Dubai to sharpen the skills of promising cooks, provide a unique platform to come together in a safe and competitive environment and separate the patisserie pros from the gnocchi novices."

























# Salon Culinaire gets a makeover for 2021

The Emirates Culinary Guild has announced the dates for the 24th Emirates Salon Culinaire (ESC) 2021. The event will run from March 14-18, 2021.

Unlike in 2020, where the Salon was held in Sharjah, the Guild intends for the 2021 event to be held as the world's first Worldchefs' endorsed competition across multiple venues in different cities in the UAE.

The event will be live streamed and shall run alongside a virtual edition of ExpoCulinaire 2021.

Cooks are creative, cooks need to adapt and cooks are the leaders of change. The cooks of the Emirates Culinary Guild are positive this competition will show the industry that cooks are ready to adapt to any change, not just this new normal but any change thrown at them.

The Emirates Culinary Guild is focused on kick starting the industry along with business leaders and supporters to ensure that the United Arab Emirates continues to rebound from this pandemic in line with the President's and Rulers' visions for the country.



The hospitality industry is one of the most important sectors of business and commerce in the Country and the Emirates Culinary Guild is committed to do its part in this success.

The Salon next year will be the third time that the salon will run alongside ExpoCulinaire exhibition.

To help with the proceedings, the ECG will invite an international team of judges that have been with the Guild for more than 27 years.

Together with the president of the Guild & Director of Kitchens Radisson Blu Hotel Dubai Deira Creek, Uwe Micheel

and the committee the 5 days will be a memorable experience for all.

The competition will have chefs from the United Arab Emirates, and if chefs from the region or globally wish to participate they will be welcomed. The chefs will compete in 20 classes across all disciplines of the Culinary arts.

Chef Uwe Micheel said, "We are proud to once again been able to host the Emirates Salon Culinaire even though in a very different format. In a way we can deliver a fantastic competition once again."

Chairman Andy Cuthbert, General Manager of Jumeirah Creekside Hotel, and Madinat Jumeirah Conference & Incentives and Jumeirah Hospitality, added "This year's competition will challenge us as organizers but we must as cooks be ready to be agile and adapt to every change that is thrown at us."

Joanne Cook owner and managing director of Purple kitchen events the organizer of the ExpoCulinaire stated, "Purple Kitchen Events shall continue to support the Emirates Culinary Guild and look forward to hosting a full event in 2022."







December 2020 **Gulf Gourmet**

# newmembers



**Bassam Bousaleh receiving Emirates Culinary Guild Membership certificate from ECG President Chef Uwe Micheel**

The U.S. Meat Export Federation, (USMEF), is a non-profit trade association working to create new opportunities and develop existing international markets for U.S. red meat. Headquartered in Denver, USMEF has a worldwide network of offices and is represented in the GCC region by Arab Marketing and Finance, Inc. (AMFI) S.A.L.

USMEF shares its local market intelligence and more than four decades of experience with U.S.



exporters, traders and buyers in addition to end users and processors in each market. Its mission is to "to increase the value and profitability of U.S. beef and lamb industries by enhancing demand for their products in export markets through a dynamic

partnership of all stakeholders." Simply put, USMEF is "Putting U.S. Meat on the World's Table."

Strategic priorities of USMEF include total carcass utilization, trade support, buyer education and loyalty, market presence, market access assistance, and enhancing product image.

To learn more about USMEF, please visit our website [www.usmef.org](http://www.usmef.org). For your inquiries, kindly contact [amfi@amfi-me.com](mailto:amfi@amfi-me.com).





**Bassam Bousaleh, from USAPEEC Middle East receiving Emirates Culinary Guild Membership certificate from ECG President Chef Uwe Micheel**

The USA Poultry and Egg Export Council, USAPEEC, is a non-profit organization of the U.S. poultry and egg industry that is dedicated to increasing exports of U.S. poultry and eggs worldwide. USAPEEC is an FAS cooperation organization headquartered in Stone Mountain, Georgia. It also has global presence through its international network of offices and consultants, and is represented in the Middle East



by Arab Marketing & Finance Inc. (AMFI). Today, USAPEEC members account for more than 90 percent of all poultry and egg exports. Members

include nearly all major U.S. poultry and egg producing and processing companies, as well as many international trading firms.

USAPEEC is a regular exhibitor in many major international trade shows, working to support its members by promoting product high quality and safety, enhancing market development prospects, and driving volume and value sales of U.S. poultry and eggs.



## ECG Corporate Member directory

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### Agthia Consumer Business Division

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## Application Membership

Date of Application:      

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

### Declaration to be Signed by all Applicants

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

Signed:.....

Proposed By:

Sig:.....

Seconded By:

Sig:.....

### FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Remarks:

Payment received?

Certificate Given.

Pin Given.

Medal &amp; 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



# FOODSERVICE REBOUND

While the Foodservice industry is no stranger to unexpected events, challenges and disruptive technologies, this year came with unprecedented uncertainties. Many in the industry were hoping that the challenges we faced during the last years from political instabilities in the region, grounding of flights, introduction of VAT, oversaturation of the market, etc... will turn around in 2020 due to the influx of 20 million visitors attending the EXPO.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 took our entire industry by storm and kept many people and organizations unclear on what should be done and how to respond in preparation for 2021.

Looking at some learnings from 2020, Agility was the name of the game. Organizations that embraced flexibility with their people and customers were among the companies who navigated through the year with the least damage.

Companies who acknowledged stress, took immediate precautionary actions on keeping their people safe, learned how to manage their people and customers remotely, kept a growth mindset, devised short term plans and priorities while staying focused on their long-term vision, recognized their people and supported their customers lead themselves and their businesses



**The business will rebound, flights are going to resume, hotels and FSRs (Full-Service Restaurants) will pick up very soon therefore if we are not ready, we might miss the train and it's going to be very difficult to catch it again!**

## FOODSERVICE COLUMN

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to build resilience. They are in a better position to grow through the difficulties of 2021.

Great organizations, teams and people do not give up, they live up to the challenges. Remember, challenges beget success.

Here are few points Foodservice companies should look into before the start of 2021. The business will rebound, flights are going to resume, hotels and FSRs (Full-Service Restaurants) will pick up very soon therefore if we are not ready, we might miss the train and it's going to be very difficult to catch it again!

#### Healthier Habits

A survey by IPSOS showed that 54% of consumers are eating healthier as an impact of COVID. The pandemic has transformed this growing behavior into a permanent habit. The rise of plant-based meals, flexitarian diets, Keto, Veganism, Low Carb meals, Immunity foods, Super Foods are among many trending habits that is here to stay in 2021.

Foodservice companies that do not cater to the new needs stand to lose. Business Development Managers and Marketing Managers should look into their product assortments and adjust accordingly.

#### Digital Adoption

E-commerce has been growing in the region for many years but it remained at a B2C (business to consumer) level. The pandemic has accelerated this growth globally and consumers today are more comfortable buying online.

To address the business collapse in April, May and June 2020, some Foodservice companies ventured into a B2C platform and diverted their teams' efforts into a cash- home delivery business – during the lockdown. This move kept those companies running and opened new doors of



opportunities. Example: Chef Middle East, Bidfood and Benchmark Foods.

Heading into 2021, new B2B (business to business) platforms are starting to appear. Check out Tradeling, Mybidfood.me, Tawreed, etc... These are new digital platforms for businesses. Now restaurants, cafes and even hotels can source their products from these digital platforms. Majed Al Futtaim (Carrefour Business) are also stepping into Foodservice through digital and the traditional model.

### **Cash Flow**

2020 was a very challenging year for Foodservice companies to collect their dues from many customers. Cash flow was a big challenge especially for distributors and wholesalers as they had to pay their suppliers (principal companies) on time, even before collecting their outstanding from their customers.

A smart, supportive and strict payment terms should be agreed and confirmed with their customers if they wish to stay in business. I remember my MBA professor saying "a company P&L can show high profitability however what kills an organization is a negative Cash Flow statement".

CFOs, sales people, accounts people, everyone is responsible to ensure a healthy business with customers and payments secured on time – as agreed!

### **People, People, People**

I cannot stress more on the fact that people are the most important factor in the success formula.

Foodservice professionals who invested time understanding the new normal of the industry, who read reports, articles and attended the hundreds of webinars during lock down, who stayed in touch with their customers and genuinely supported them, who learned new skills of conducting virtual meetings and managing remote businesses, are the leaders of this industry and they are the future managers, directors and CEOs of the best Foodservice organization in the region.

My humble advice to my colleagues in the industry is to never stop learning, invest in yourselves, and let your passion drive you. And my humble advice to organizations is to stick to their super stars, invest in them, embrace freedom through responsibility.

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*Samer Abou Daher is a foodservice industry leader and has worked at Horeca Trade, Fonterra, Kraft Heinz and Arla.*





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A hand is shown from the top left, holding a silver spoon and pouring a thick, dark brown sauce onto a plate of food. The plate contains several pieces of seared meat, possibly beef or lamb, garnished with green herbs and lemon wedges. The background is dark, making the food and the pouring action stand out.

**Inspiration  
can come  
at any anytime.**

**The trick  
is to be near  
a kitchen  
when it does.**



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