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THE MAGAZINE CHEFS LOVE TO READ

volume 16, issue 1

## SKY'S THE LIMIT

Chef **James Griffith** and his team have transformed EKFC into a world leader in airline catering



### SWEET EARTH

Nestle Professional launches plant-based 'Awesome' burger with the taste and texture of real meat



### PASTRY MASTERY

Oberoi's Pastry Chef **Rajeev Gopal Krishnan** believes in principles, purpose and perseverance



### THINK HEALTH

Exclusive interview with **Pottavatri Nrupen**, executive sous chef at The Retreat Plam Dubai MGallery by Sofitel



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# president'sstation

email [theguild@eim.ae](mailto:theguild@eim.ae)

Dear fellow chefs, ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to the first issue of our Gulf Gourmet for 2021.

On behalf of the Emirates Culinary Guild executive committee and the board of directors of Worldchefs, I wish everyone a great, healthy and successful New Year.

Our industry (like many others) is going through a very difficult time. Many of our colleagues have lost their work while others their business. But as I always say, challenges are opportunities, so let's all work together and make 2021 a better year for all of us.

Your Emirates Culinary Guild had a very busy 2020...quite tough but we kept pushing forward. We started last year with Salon Culinare, then relaunched our YouTube channel, followed it up with four very successful virtual competitions. In fact, the 5th virtual competition is now open for registration. 'The AI Baker Challenge' in between our senior members took part in many webinars.

We look forward to our first senior members' meeting in 2021. Date and location will be announced soon. Our first big event was the USA Pears Guinness World Record attempt on January 4. Read all about it in this issue.

The team is currently working on the Emirates International Salon Culinare for 2021. **The Salon will run from April 4-8, 2021 and the event will be held across three locations.** Radisson Blu Hotel Dubai Deira Creek will house all static display. The Gardens of Jumeirah Creekside Hotel will be the



venue for Live Cooking Classes. And the International Centre for Culinary Arts (ICCA) in Knowledge Park will host the UAE Chaine Des Rotisseurs Young Chef Finals.

All classes with Rules and Regulations will be in the February issue of this magazine. I look forward to seeing you all at the International Salon Culinare and Virtual Expo Culinare 2021 this coming April.

Please visit [gulfgourmet.net](http://gulfgourmet.net) to browse through previous issue of this magazines. Visit [emiratesculinaryguild.net](http://emiratesculinaryguild.net) to see latest happenings on the

events calendar. And visit [fb.com/wacyoungchefs](http://fb.com/wacyoungchefs) for young chefs to be in contact with over 4,000 chefs across the globe.

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

Culinary Regards,

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



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# editor'snote

email [editor@gulfgourmet.net](mailto:editor@gulfgourmet.net)

Every January brings with it a ray of hope. A desire that this year will be better than last year. It does not matter if the previous year was good or bad. The yearning is always for a better new year.

For many of us, including the ones who had a great 2020 despite the pandemic, this year's hope matters more than ever.

Will our jobs, our industry, our city, be ready to continue running just like in the pre-pandemic days? If the disruption forces our industry to function very differently, are we in a position to transition into a changed ecosystem without too much trouble or competition?

No one knows the answer. Which is why hope is such a beautiful thing. It is a positive ray of light that motivates us to better ourselves and be ready to make the most of what life gives us. Like they say, when life gives you lemons, make lemonade.

Last year saw small businesses embrace technology faster than ever before. And for the hospitality industry, this technology will go beyond just online ordering. It will impact the way chefs work too.

I always thought that robots that cook would be the biggest threat to our industry. Who would've thought that a



virus could be far more disruptive and that too in a matter of months?

The good news is that I have seen young chefs make money in the midst of this pandemic. Two chefs I follow on Instagram have taken out the middleman, found a dish (or dishes) that they make better than anybody else, and are selling it direct to consumer!

One chef sells sweets and the other sells meal packages. They cook at home or in a shared facility, use technology that's available for consumer ordering, and ship it directly to paying consumers.

If you are a great cook who's out of a job, think of something on these lines. Trust me, entrepreneurship may be tough, but if it clicks and you get a loyal

customer base, you will be earning 10-fold what you earn today.

And if you are comfortable where you are, that's fine too. Just don't lose the hope that January affords.

Talking of January, this month is known in foodie circles as Veganuary. It's a play on vegan and most people's new year's resolution to eat healthy. And a great product worth checking out is from Nestle Professional's newly launched brand called Sweet Earth.

They have just launched the 'Sweet Earth Awesome burger', which is a vegan burger patty made with Non-GMO soy, wheat, beetroot concentrate and coconut oil. I liked its taste and texture which mimics real meat. They say it is the only big brand vegan burger to receive Grade A for its quality and that it's nutritious.

If you are looking to add a vegan option to your menu, read more about Sweet Earth in this issue.

There are some great interviews, articles and images from around the culinary world in this issue. Hope you like them.

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

**Aquin George**  
Editor

## CREDITS



### EMIRATES CULINARY GUILD

Uwe Micheel  
President  
+971 4 340 3128, [theguild@eim.ae](mailto:theguild@eim.ae)

### EDITORIAL

Aquin George  
Managing Editor & Publisher  
Amaresh Bhaskaran  
Associate Publisher & Photo Editor  
Vahiju PC  
Art Director

### CONTRIBUTORS

Samaneh Naseri  
Kirti Pandey  
Miguel Máiquez

### REGISTERED OFFICE

Vattacan Inc  
243 Elgin Dr, Ontario L6Y2V2,  
Canada. [www.vattacan.com](http://www.vattacan.com)

### MIDDLE EAST OFFICE

Smartcast Group LLC  
PO Box 34891,  
Dubai, Shams,  
United Arab Emirates  
[www.groupsmartcast.com](http://www.groupsmartcast.com)

### SALES OFFICE

Middle East Alta Verba FZ-LLC, UAE  
International Vattacan Inc. Canada  
[advertise@gulfgourmet.net](mailto:advertise@gulfgourmet.net)

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# newsbites

## Butter stories from Middle East chefs

**M**aroun Chedid of Ritage by Maroun Chedid (Beirut, Riyadh) and Gilles Bosquet, Executive Chef at La Cantine Du Faubourg in Dubai have collaborated with their counterparts in Asia to reveal their secrets to creating the perfect butter sauce. Their recipes are published in a CNIEL media showcasing how to incorporate butter to produce outstanding taste, colour, and depth.

Chef Maroun created a beetroot hollandaise, a turmeric and citrus butter, a cauliflower puree, and an alcohol-free marchand de vin butter, resulting in bold purple, yellow, green and red sauces, all of which complemented a range of vegetable and fish dishes.

Chef Gilles created a baby vegetable and wasabi butter dish and grilled chicken breast and smoked paprika butter.



## Nikki Beach appoints Director of Culinary

**P**ortuguese celebrity Chef Cláudio Cardoso has joined Nikki Beach Resort & Spa as their Director of Culinary and Creation bringing yet another Michelin star experience to Dubai's dining scene.

Born and raised in South Africa, Cláudio pursued his formal culinary education in Portugal and has worked in Peru, Miami, London and Dubai. His knife skills have been used at Rhodes Twenty Four with Chef Gary Rhodes, Tom Aikens with Chef Tom Aikens, The Narrow with Chef Gordon Ramsay and Sushisamba where he was the Group Executive Chef.



## Net-zero supply chains is future of FMCG

**P**epsiCo is among the latest global organizations to commit to net-zero supply chains. The company said it plans to achieve net-zero emissions across its supply chain by 2040.

The interest in doing something like this within the industry is much larger. 84% of consumers globally showed interest in sustainable production, says GlobalData in a recent report.

Ramsey Baghdadi, Consumer Analyst at the data and analytics company, says, "Introducing an initiative to achieve net-zero emissions is an ambitious target for any player of this size in the FMCG industry."

To get your chef or company related news featured in this section, email [editor@gulfgourmet.net](mailto:editor@gulfgourmet.net)



## New Spanish restaurant in town

ola Taberna Española is Chef Daniel Perez's way of saying it is time to truly let Spanish cuisine shine in Dubai. Managed by Sunset Hospitality Group, the restaurant is aiming "to put Spain on the map in Dubai".

Both Chef Daniel and General Manager Lloy Rubio, are Spanish natives, who will be running the place housed in TRYP by Wyndham, Al Barsha.

If you are looking for a new place to try paella, tapas, Iberic 'sandwiches', sangria, and the largest selection of Spanish charcuterie in Dubai, you know where to go.

"Nobody will have the range of Jamón or paella with such flavour or turn the humble sandwich into a 'De Cigalas y Jamon Iberico', or Crayfish & Iberian cured meat for anglophones," they say.



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The new plant-based 'Sweet Earth Awesome Burger' from Nestlé Professional

# YES, IT'S VEGANUARY!!

January is for New Year's resolutions and healthy promises. The month is known in foodie circles as Veganuary. For restaurants looking for plant-based inspiration, the newly launched SWEET EARTH® range provides just that

**W**e at Gulf Gourmet, had the chance to taste Sweet Earth's plant-based burger last March and our initial reaction was that it tasted better than the competition. We asked a burger aficionado about his thoughts and his instant reaction was, "I can see myself ordering this instead of my usual beef burger."

If the Sweet Earth brand sounds new to you, it is because it is new to this market. The brand was acquired by Nestlé to join its other star brands including Maggi, Docello, Chef and Buitoni.

We spoke with Nestlé Professional

to find out more about the brand and their vision for its products for culinary professionals. Here are excerpts from the interview:

**We love the Sweet Earth burger and think it is an "awesome" alternative for beef burgers. You even got the taste right. Could you tell us more about it?**

At Nestlé we love natural ingredients like leafy greens, lush fruits and savory veggies and the Sweet Earth Awesome Burger is a testament to that.

The real burger experience both in terms of taste and texture comes from 100% plant-based protein. It consists of Non-

GMO soy, wheat, beetroot concentrate and coconut oil.

The protein is provided by soy and wheat, coconut oil gives the appearance of marbled fat, and beetroot concentrate creates the rich beefy color.

**How easy will it be to convince people in the UAE and the wider region to try plant-based foods?**

This is a fast-growing market. Around 65% of diners are now choosing plant-based meals for three reasons – health, environment, and animal welfare.

With 30% of the earth's entire land surface covered with livestock, raising

cattle generates more of the greenhouse gases responsible for global warming than transportation. Plant-based diets are proven to be less environmentally intensive than meat-based diets.

With Sweet Earth, our goal is to offer a range of plant-based meals without compromising on the taste and enjoyment associated with meat.

### Is the brand targeted at people who are vegans?

Plant-based diets are no longer just for vegetarians and vegans. People are becoming flexitarian in their eating habits – choosing to reduce their meat consumption at some or even all their meals.

We see meat consumption decreasing in 25% of countries across the world and each year there are 76 million new vegetarians. Plant-based food is for everyone.

### Why should chefs choose Sweet Earth?

The Awesome burger not only tastes great but is also awesome for the body. It has less fat, similar protein value and more fiber compared to a raw beef burger.

Chefs can now offer guilt-free indulgence to their customers.

They can get as creative as they want with it. It can be served as a 'classic burger' or with a Mexican twist because the patty is very versatile. It can handle any flavor that the chef throws at it.

It is convenient to prepare and fits in the operations of almost any kitchen. And yes, it can be fried, grilled or baked and still taste awesome.

### Can a small restaurant benefit from this range as much as say a large hotel chain?

Small restaurants too can benefit from our range as our products are made from high quality ingredients. This allows them to create premium and innovative



dishes that can command higher prices.

Globally, 60% of consumers are more concerned about quality than low prices, and are therefore willing to pay more for better quality prepared meals and meal ingredients.

### Which countries in the region offer Sweet Earth and will the range of products expand?

We just launched Sweet Earth in the UAE and Kuwait with our hero product, the Vegan AWESOME burger, Vegetarian Nuggets and Vegetarian Schnitzel.

Early next year we will be expanding into Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

We are planning to introduce more products such as Vegan Awesome Sausage, Vegetarian Chargrilled Pieces and Vegan Meatballs.

### With increase in demand comes increase in competition? Why should people choose Sweet Earth over other plant-based brands?

We stand out because our products do not compromise on taste, texture and nutrition. You've tasted it, right! You know, it is juicy, has a meaty taste and has the texture of ground beef, exactly as you would expect from a beef burger.

It transforms during cooking, gets caramelized and crispy on the outside, and stays juicy on the inside and has a superior nutritional profile.

Our patty has a scored a Grade A benchmark from Nutri-Score compared to a B or C of other plant-based patties. Our strength and expertise in R&D allows our products to continue

improving as we develop more relevant products for our portfolio.

Nestlé's strong network of Advisory Chefs will be able to partner with our customers every step of the way to ensure that the results are both healthy and delicious.

As an added support to our customers, Nestlé Professional is also offering continuous marketing support to work on joint business plans to help build awareness and generate more footfall for this new category.

### What kind of challenges does the GCC market have as far as plant-based offerings are concerned?

Awareness and availability. Most people are not aware of what plant-based products are, what they are made of and the health benefits of consuming these in comparison to meat.

Consumers who are looking for meat alternatives say it is difficult to find, as they are not widely available in the out-of-home industry. Those outlets that do cater to vegans and flexitarians still lack in providing a great alternative in terms of taste and texture.

### Is plant-based the future of food?

Our region is heavily affected with health-related concerns such as obesity, diabetes, high cholesterol etc. Reducing consumption of meat can be a great aid to these concerns, which is why Health is the #1 motivation to switch to plant-based meat alternatives in EMENA.

Add this to sustainability of our planet and an Awesome tasting range and the answer is yes, it is the future of food.





# Chefs Create Guinness World Record

Dubai chefs break Guinness world record to celebrate 15th anniversary of the Accession Day of His Highness **Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum**

Chefs from across Dubai joined hands with USA Pears to break the Guinness World Record for the longest line of pies. The previous record was 1,608 apple pies in Australia and the new record is 2,209 pear pies in the UAE. The record event took place the Arena in Madinat Jumeirah.

To make this delicious fea(s)t possible, USA Pears, Emirates Culinary Guild and 120 chefs joined in from Jumeirah Creekside, Radisson Blu Hotel DDC, Madinat Jumeirah, Le Meridien Airport, JW Marriott Marquis Hotel Dubai, Crown Plaza Shaikh Zayed Road, Waldorf Astoria DIFC, Double Tree by Hilton JBR, Bakemart, Emirates Flight Catering, Caesars Bluewaters Dubai, Sarood Hospitality and International Centre for Culinary Arts Dubai (ICCA).

Andy Cuthbert, Chairman of the

Emirates Culinary Guild and General Manager for Jumeirah Creekside Hotel; Madinat Jumeirah Conference & Events and Jumeirah Hospitality explained about the challenge to stick 100% to Covid-19 Rules. He said, "The team set up the tables a day before and in the morning of the event day, the full Arena was fogged and sanitized, it was great to see how disciplined all the Chefs were when working together to ensure the highest standards are maintained."

Uwe Micheel, President of the Emirates Culinary Guild and Culinary Adviser for Radisson Blu Hotel Dubai Deira Creek highlighted that the production process was overseen by a team of Dubai Municipality Food Safety Inspectors led by Sultan Ali Al Taher, head of inspection section food control department. The Auditor Team from Grant Thornton UAE was led by Khaleel Essa.

"It was a great feeling to see the Adjudicator and Auditors come up with the final count of 2209 USA Pear Pies," said Chef Uwe.

Representatives from all the supporting suppliers were also present at the event. Andy Cuthbert thanked the teams of Al Bayader, SAFCO, Lurpak, Farzana and NRTC for their support.

Chef Uwe confirmed that all the pies have been picked up by Sahem for Hope and distributed to three different labor camps in Dubai and Sharjah. "We wanted to stay with the vision of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum and not to forget the needy people who cannot walk into a Pastry Shop regularly and buy a cake."

Check out our next month's issue for all the images from the record-breaking event.







# MEET THE TOP 10 YOUNG CHEF DUOS

The top 10 young chef teams that go into the finals for the Nestle Professional Golden Chefs Hat Award UAE – Season 8 have been announced. The shortlisted teams were selected from over 40 of the finest young chefs by a jury of five culinary judges led by **Andy Cuthbert**, the Chairman of the Worldchefs Young Chef Development team and Chairman of the Emirates Culinary Guild.

Season 8 of the Golden Chefs Hat Award UAE has seen some of the best professional recipes by young chefs in its eight-year history. Organized by Gulf Gourmet, each month two of the best young chef teams are selected to be featured in the magazine. Their stories and their recipes published for all to see.

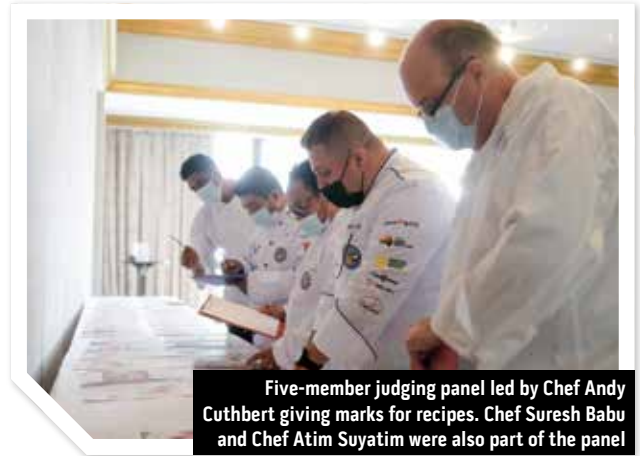
The creativity, innovation and plating of dishes were taken into account in a blind judging by the panel. The top 10 finalists in no particular order are:

- ◆ Chefs Adil Patel and Mitila Triwanny – **Caesars Palace Bluewaters**
- ◆ Chefs Sagar Thakur and Akhil Raj – **Caesars Palace Bluewaters**
- ◆ Chefs Patrick V. Ramos and Lekhnath Thapaliya – **Emirates Flight Catering**
- ◆ Chefs Ashoka Yapa Bandar and Kondala Rao Yadagiri – **Five Jumeirah Village Hotel**
- ◆ Chefs Oscar Cimmino and Ahmed Tarek El Gamal – **Larte Studio One Hotel**
- ◆ Chefs Hady Nabil Hussein and Nitish Kumar – **Madinat Jumeirah C&I**
- ◆ Chefs Sabita Darnal and Kanishka Kulasekara – **Radisson Blu Deira Creek**
- ◆ Chefs Ishkit Das and Mahmoud El Sayed – **Sheraton Jumeirah Beach Resort**
- ◆ Chefs Sani Savitri and Dinesh Herath – **Westin Abu Dhabi Resort and Spa**
- ◆ Chefs Sartaj Alam and Shaikh Meraj Uddin – **Zero Gravity**

If you are a young professional chef working in the UAE and would like a chance at making your mark, you can take part in the ongoing Season 9 of Golden Chefs Hat Award by emailing your interest to [amaresh@gulfgourmet.net](mailto:amaresh@gulfgourmet.net).







Five-member judging panel led by Chef Andy Cuthbert giving marks for recipes. Chef Suresh Babu and Chef Atim Suyatim were also part of the panel





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# A TASTE FOR HEALTH

Luxury gastronomy and nutritious food need not be mutually exclusive. **Pottavatri Nrupen**, the executive sous chef of The Retreat Palm Dubai M Gallery five-star wellness resort, tells Gulf Gourmet how the balance of taste and health on a plate is not just a trend but also a lifestyle that's here to stay...





January 2021 Gulf Gourmet

**H**ealth is wealth indeed. And if you want to feel wealthy, head to The Retreat Palm Dubai M Gallery. This luxury five-star wellness resort by Sofitel on the coastline of the Palm Jumeirah's East Crescent offers the perfect balance of holistic well-being and Dubai's vibrant energy.

From décor inspired by natural elements to organic products and wellness therapies, M Gallery offers guests an opportunity to recapture internal balance. What's more, it also offers four dining concepts that promote healthy gastronomy, focused on nutritious offerings made from locally-sourced products.

Balancing nutrition with taste in luxury high-end cuisine is far from an easy task. But this creative challenge is exactly what gives Executive Sous Chef Pottavatri Nrupen the motivation to come to work every day. With 15 years of experience and strong expertise in vegan and paleo diets across Italian, British,



**We innovate with ingredients and there are healthy substitutes for everything. For example, a cashew nut sauce instead of a heavy cream sauce for pasta. In the end, it's all about creativity and testing the possibilities**

South American, Asian, Middle Eastern and continental cuisines, Chef Nrupen brings not only the healthiest but also the best to the table at this unique resort.

"Whenever people think of wellness and detox, they tend to look at countries in Asia. This is the first of a kind luxury wellness resort in this corner of the world," says the chef.

He would know. Chef Nrupen comes from South India, which is known for its emphasis on age-old natural wellness concepts such as Ayurveda and yoga. Born in a small village near Hyderabad into a pharmacy owner family, health has been a part of his life from the very beginning.

"It was a family business and I worked in my father's pharmacy for four years before I decided that I wanted to be a chef," he says, retracing his journey so far. Chef Nrupen had started working at the pharmacy since the early age of 16, which gave him enough time to pick up a new vocation. "When one of my cousins just started with hotel management, I went to check it out and found a resonance. Then, I went to Hyderabad for a one and a half year hotel management course." Even as a child, Chef Nrupen looked for





opportunities to indulge in cooking. He would often assist the cooks when there were weddings in his village, abandoning the main parties to go backstage and observe their tricks and techniques.

After finishing his course and an internship at the Hotel Golconda in Hyderabad, things moved rather quickly for Chef Nrupen. Within months of wrapping up his formal culinary education, he got a chance to come to Dubai. "A cousin of mine was working at the Jumeirah group and he pointed me to an opportunity at the Madinat Jumeirah. I joined the Segreto Italian restaurant in November 2006."

The newbie couldn't have asked for a better training ground.

Chef Nrupen worked across the different sections, learning everything from meat and vegetable cuts to the art of making fresh pasta in the three odd years he spent there. "The Italian head chef really taught me a lot, not just about cooking but also about having the right attitude in life."

Having learnt all he could in that stint, the young chef moved on for the pre-opening of the Radisson Blu, Yas Island in Abu Dhabi as demi chef de partie. There, he worked at the Italian restaurant Filini. However, after getting a taste of the vibrant diversity of Dubai, it was hard for Chef Nrupen to get used to Abu Dhabi. Within nine months, he returned to the city with a job at the Movenpick Hotel Bur Dubai as chef de partie. "I was made in-charge of room service and it was a big job. But the executive chef gave me his full support and a lot of freedom, which helped develop my own skills." Over seven years, Chef Nrupen learned different kinds of cuisines and formats at Movenpick. "It was my most challenging role so far but it was also immensely satisfying."

The chef has been at the M Gallery since its pre-opening at the end of 2017. As executive sous chef, he works on



refining the concept as well as running the show on a daily basis. "Our afternoon teas are also unique, in that we have wheat-free, vegan and keto items instead of sandwiches and unhealthy snacks." He rejects scepticism that healthy food and taste cannot go together. "We innovate with ingredients and there are healthy substitutes for everything. For example, a cashew nut sauce instead of a heavy cream sauce for pasta. In the end, it's all about creativity and testing the possibilities."

The team has 25-30 people. Hiring for such a niche concept sometimes proves to be tough. Chef Nrupen looks for a strong foundation, so he can train the chefs in this novel kind of cooking. His pastry team also thrives on ideas and loves a good challenge. "I give them ideas and sometimes, they come up with something even better than what I had

imagined." Given the newness of the concept in the UAE, the team gets a lot of playing field for innovation. "We have a culture of learning from failures instead of punishing people for trying something new. That freedom stimulates creativity."

The resort has four dining outlets – Vibe, where breakfast, lunch and dinner are served; Ripples Juice Bar, which offers a large selection of fresh fruit and vegetable juices, signature mocktails and street food from around the world; Chapters, the resort's lobby café where guests can enjoy coffee, cookies, breads and chocolates; and the Bait Al Nakhla, an Arabic restaurant with authentic Middle Eastern cuisine.

Chef Nrupen believes that his job is not so different from that of a film director. "There is a lot of pressure and stress but you have to be patient and focus single-





mindedly on your creation. Your reward is in the reaction of your audience, which for us is the guest."

This focus is probably what made him an executive sous chef at a rather young age of just 35. "If you do things without having a goal and passion for what you do, you won't get too far. I also believe in setting small targets regularly. It's very encouraging when you reach these targets. This propels me forward."

That doesn't mean there won't be challenges. Chef Nrupen recalls a time when at Movenpick, he was faced with a stressful situation. "We had an event for 400 people. Two of my team members fell sick and it was left only to me and another chef to ready the whole show. It was a huge menu with some 10-12 dishes for 400 people. I don't know how we did it, but what matters is that we did it!"

In the future, he hopes to move into a more managerial and operations role from the food and beverage side. Long term, he dreams of securing the position of a general manager at



**Some of the ideas I have incorporated in my own dishes comes from my mother. She uses interesting ingredients which are very healthy – like sprouts, for example**

a big property. "It will be exciting to understand each and every aspect of running a hotel. Of course, I have to build to it. I think my training in the core business will come in handy."

That's as far as career goes. His other goal is to ensure his two sons – 7-year-old Charishman and 6-year-old Savanth Mayu – grow up to be responsible and successful individuals. His wife, Lavanya,

is a homemaker. "She's actually a better cook than I am. She cooks authentic Hyberabadi cuisine, which is really spicy." He also cannot get enough of his mother's cooking. "Some of the ideas I have incorporated in my own dishes comes from my mother. She uses interesting ingredients which are very healthy – like sprouts, for example. One time, I made gazpacho soup and used sprouts to garnish it. It was quite a hit and so healthy!" His parents live in Hyderabad, which means he gets to enjoy his mother's cooking only infrequently. Chef Nrupen also has a sister.

A rather social person, he counts family and friends time as his main hobby. When he's not enjoying other people's company, Chef Nrupen seeks pleasure in music.

His own tastes may be simple and traditional, but the chef's culinary ideas are beautifully modern and complex. When they translate into reality on a plate, they have the ability to restore emotional, physical and mental balance. Ask any of his guests at M Gallery!



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# THE GASTRONOMERS

This time around, Sri Lanka meets Kenya at the Golden Chef's Hat Awards competition as Chef **Chamila Krishantha** and Chef **Billy Clinton K'oremo** of Il Faro Trattoria and Lounge team up to take on rivals. Meet the 'gastronomers'..

## Chamila Krishantha

He's a people person. That's probably what makes Chamila Krishantha the right fit for the hospitality industry. After all, isn't good food all about spreading joy through palates?

This is the first time that the 27-year-old is participating in a culinary competition. However, he's determined to make a stellar debut with his 'beef cheeks with truffle polenta and vegetables' main course.

Chef Chamila, who is from Colombo in Sri Lanka, has been in Dubai for about four years. In the period, he's dedicated immense time and effort to learn the fine nuances of Italian cooking as a

commis chef at the Il Faro Trattoria and Lounge. "There's nothing that I find more satisfying than customers walking up to me and asking me to cook something that I had served them last week because they loved it," smiles the chef.

Interestingly, the love of interacting with people had initially turned Chef Chamila towards a career in marketing. "I began my professional life as an assistant manager but marketing was nothing like I had imagined. So I discussed it with my family and they suggested I try a career in hospitality because I like entertaining people."

A culinary course set Chef Chamila on the right path and he started off with a job

at the Bali's Casino in Sri Lanka, where he worked for a year. As a kitchen helper, the beginnings were modest. But the training did get Chef Chamila a job as a waiter in Arabian Courtyard Hotel and Spa in Bur Dubai. His dedication and affable personality won him an opportunity to work in the Indian and Chinese kitchens, beginning his culinary journey in earnest.

He began his tryst with Italian cuisine at the 800 Degrees Neapolitan Pizzeria in 2017. A year ago, he moved to the Il Faro.

It's a busy assignment, with weekends and Tuesday Ladies' Nights being especially hectic. Although Chef Chamila is in the pizza section, he takes care of ordering and costing too. "I work six days



Chamila Krishantha



Billy Clinton K'oremo





a week but when you enjoy your job, it doesn't feel like an effort." Chef Chamila takes any complaints from guests very seriously. "I put my heart and soul in what I do and when the guests don't enjoy it, it feels like a personal failure." But ever the learner, Chef Chamila uses any criticism to improve his work.

Someday in the future, he hopes to go back to his small family of grandmother, mother and a sister. Also on the wish list is his own Italian restaurant in Sri Lanka. "I've already made an Instagram account and a location on Google maps for it," he laughs.

Given his enthusiasm and work ethic, that should turn into a reality soon.

### **Billy Clinton K'oremo**

Africa is known for its chocolate, its coffee and its rich natural resources. A hidden treasure of the continent, however, is its cuisine. Flavourful and varied, African cuisine is slowly being recognized internationally by foodies.

This culture of good food is deeply embedded in Chef Billy Clinton K'oremo. The 28-year-old Kenyan chef will follow up Chef Chamila's main course with a delicious dessert – coconut panna cotta with meringue crumble, fresh berries and Nestle coconut pistachio ice cream.

Coming from Nairobi, Chef Billy made his way to Dubai two years ago to strengthen his inner culinnaire. While chefs are usually inspired by their mothers' cooking, his inspiration was his older sister. "She is very good with pastry and once she made delicious ginger bread and banana cake for me when I was 15. That's when I decided I wanted to be a professional chef," he recalls. While Chef Billy's sister went on to become a medical doctor, he embraced hospitality with formal education from the Amboseli Institute of Hospitality and Technology.

Starting at the Naivasha Sawela Lodge as a commis chef, Chef Billy learnt the basics of cooking for a couple of years. Later, he joined the Karen Country Club in Nairobi, moving into the luxury segment of hospitality. Two years later, in 2019, he ventured into Dubai to look for a job, finding an assignment at the Il Faro Trattoria and Lounge. "My sister had visited Dubai and she was impressed with the gastronomy scene here. So she recommended that I move here." Initially, it was difficult to adjust to the city, "because I felt alone and missed my siblings". That's understandable. Growing up with five siblings – a brother and four sisters - Chef Billy is used to being in a big family teeming

with activity. He also misses his wife, who lives in Nairobi. Now, however, Dubai has grown on him.

An easygoing personality, Chef Billy enjoys working with his team. The lounge is situated in Dubai's exclusive Azure Residences, with breathtaking view of the Burj Al Arab and the Burj Khalifa.

Someday, he hopes to be a head chef somewhere and maybe even open his own fine-dining restaurant. Until then, he's happy sharpening his skills by learning from others and enjoying the ride.

There's another big ambition he has. "Owning an Audi, a BMW or a Mercedes-Benz car. I love cars!" When he's not working, you will find the chef leafing through auto magazines and enthusing over hot wheels.

On trips home, he sometimes 'competes' with his older sister on who can cook better. "Every August, we have a big family gathering and we compete. I still think she's a better cook but she insists that I am," he grins. One of his other sisters is also doing hotel management in Kenya. So competition is about to intensify in the K'oremo household.

For now though, it's time to focus on the GCHA contest!



## Slow-braised Beef cheeks with truffle polenta and, parmesan crisps, sous-vide vegetable and crispy bacon

|                         |        |
|-------------------------|--------|
| Beef cheeks             | 2400g  |
| Beef jus base           | 720ml  |
| Carrot quartered        | 200g   |
| White onion quartered   | 200g   |
| Celery quartered        | 200g   |
| Leeks quartered         | 200g   |
| Rosemary                | 20g    |
| Thyme                   | 20g    |
| Garlic                  | 20g    |
| Tomato plum             | 120g   |
| Red wine non- alcoholic | 2000ml |

### Method

- ◆ Clean the beef cheek and remove the excess fat. Rub salt and leave it for 3 hours.

- ◆ Pan sear the beef cheek till golden brown.
- ◆ In the same pan put your mirepoix and add your herbs on it. De glaze with red wine non-alcoholic.
- ◆ Put the cheeks in the vacuum pack, add the stock and sous vide it. 80°C for 20hrs.

### BLACK TRUFFLE POLENTA

|                    |        |
|--------------------|--------|
| Milk               | 1000ml |
| Nestle Cream       | 3250ml |
| Parmesan cheese    | 270g   |
| Cream sour         | 2600ml |
| Garlic             | 24g    |
| Bay leaf fresh     | 8g     |
| Whole Black pepper | 6g     |
| Polenta flour      | 6900g  |
| White stock        | 1060ml |
| Black truffle oil  | 160g   |
| Butter             | 75g    |

|          |    |
|----------|----|
| Thyme    | 8g |
| Rosemary | 8g |

### Method

- ◆ Heat milk and stock together with salt, pepper, crushed garlic and herbs. Bring to boil and leave for 30 minutes to infuse. Strain into a clean pan and pass with the polenta into the thermo mix.
- ◆ Cook for 45min at 90°C on speed 3.
- ◆ At the end, add butter, sour cream, truffle and parmesan and blend for a second on high speed.
- ◆ Pass onto a tray and cover with a cling touching to the polenta to prevent the forming of the skin
- ◆ Peel and wash your carrot and vacuum with rosemary, olive oil and garlic.

### Sous-vide vegetable:

- ◆ Sous vide for 82°C for 8 minutes and get crispy vegetables pan roast to finish.





## Coconut panna cotta with meringue crumble, fresh berries and Nestle coconut Pistachio ice cream

### COCONUT PANNA COTTA

|                |       |
|----------------|-------|
| Double cream   | 1000g |
| Coconut powder | 1000g |
| Caster sugar   | 320g  |
| Gelatin leave  | 26g   |

#### Method

- ◆ Combine the cream, coconut milk and sugar in a saucepan bring the mixture slowly to boil. While stirring, add the soaked gelatin and leave. Allow it to cool down for 10 minutes. Pass the mixture through a fine sieve and put it in a round tube. Set it in the fridge.

### TULLIE MIX

|        |      |
|--------|------|
| Water  | 240g |
| Flour  | 40g  |
| Oil    | 80g  |
| Colour | 12g  |

#### Method

- ◆ Mix the water, oil, flour and colour together. On a hot pan with oil, add the mixture and pan fry until it sets down.

### MERINGUE CRUMBLE

|               |      |
|---------------|------|
| Egg white     | 400g |
| Sugar         | 120g |
| Baking powder | 12g  |

#### Method

- ◆ Whisk your egg white, sugar and baking powder until foamy and stiff consistency. Then bake it in the oven at 120°C for 45 minutes. Cool it down and break it into a crumble.

### COCONUT CRUMBLE

|                |       |
|----------------|-------|
| Flour          | 1200g |
| Butter         | 240g  |
| Sugar          | 4800g |
| Coconut powder | 800g  |

#### Method

- ◆ Mix the ingredients in a bowl. Mix them until its rough and chunky crumble. Bake in an oven for 3 minutes until its

golden brown.

### NESTLE PISTACHIO ICE CREAM

|                      |      |
|----------------------|------|
| Maggi coconut powder | 400g |
| Fresh milk           | 800g |
| Whipping cream       | 800g |
| Pistachio peeled     | 600g |
| Sugar                | 520g |
| Egg yolk             | 240g |
| Dragon fruit cubes   |      |
| Fresh coconut slice  |      |

#### Method

- ◆ Dilute coconut powder with fresh milk until combined.
- ◆ Add whipping cream and milk with coconut and sugar together in a pot. When its smoking (par boil) remove from heat and temper your egg yolks. Ensure a thick consistency.
- ◆ Roast your pistachio in the oven at 180°C 5 mins. Then blend it in a thermomix until it becomes a paste.
- ◆ Add your pistachio paste and temper cream mixture together.
- ◆ Place it in the blast freezer.





# THE SKY IS THE LIMIT

**James Griffith**, Vice President Culinary at Emirates Flight Kitchen (EKFC) reels us in with a heartfelt tête-à-tête that covers his early days as a chef, his family, his work at EKFC and has some sage advice for young culinarians



**B**orn and raised in Honolulu, Hawaii, Chef James Griffith moved overseas at an early age. He spent his early years in Africa, Jordan, New York, Indonesia, Hong Kong and Bahrain.

"My father was in the airline industry. Growing up in all these countries definitely had an influence on my palette," he says.

The African game, Jordanian 3rd circle shawarma, NYC lochs and bagels, satay at the stalls in Jakarta and pigeon lettuce wraps on the jumbo floating restaurant of Aberdeen, it all had immense effect on opening up Chef Griffith's senses to a variety of ingredients when growing up.

He has great respect for the culinary skills of the women in his house when growing up. His mother was great in the kitchen he says and his older sister has always been a foodie too, able to cook as well as knowing all the best restaurants to try out.

"Living in different countries – some of which did not exactly have the best of supermarkets – made for challenges in my mother's home kitchen. Yet, she always managed to create tasty food," he says.

And his dad? "My father, well he knows how to eat well, member of the Chaine de Rotisseurs, Bakers Dozen and always took us to places serving great food," he says with a smile.

Chef Griffith's journey into becoming a professional culinarian began with a hotel management training program at the InterContinental Hotel Bahrain.

His program started off with six months in the kitchens of this hotel where Chef Uwe Micheel was the Sous Chef. After completing his six months when he was to transfer to Housekeeping, the Chef offered him a permanent Commis position.



**Cooking soothes me when feeling stressed. I enjoy doing lunches for visitors out of our Concept Development kitchen which is the brainchild of our CEO Saeed Mohammed. It has everything one could want as a kitchen, as he says it is our play area to enjoy and innovate**

"I asked myself, get paid to work in the kitchen or do housekeeping for free? So, I guess one could say Uwe helped direct my path," he says.

After two years at the hotel working through all the restaurants and making it to Commis I, I headed off to The Hotel und Touristik Fachschule in Chur Switzerland to obtain my Hotel and Tourism Management Diploma. After graduation my culinary career began at the InterContinental Hotel Luxembourg.

Ask him if his early years were a struggle and he says, "Was it a struggle? Yes! Becoming a good cook is a struggle, but you either catch the buzz of the industry or you don't. It is long and hard work most of the time but the satisfaction one gets doing a successful service or banquet setup is immense.

"You look back at the simple steps learned; turning a potato, hand slicing and tasting your first parma ham, writing your first menu, all memorable moments in one's growth.

The one job he had where he learned the

most in usage of ingredients, cooking skills and technique was at a Gastatte in a small town in Germany. "Everything was done in house; slaughtering, sausages, vegetable and fruit farming. We would pick cherries in the summer and can them for use in winter. It was true 'farm to fork' before it became a popular saying."

Chef Griffith believes that people who you work with and for are what can make or break the job. "If you are with people that are positive and always challenging you to do better it helps in a lot of ways," he says, and adds, "It spurs you on to strive for more."

He laughs when we ask him about his journey to becoming an Executive Chef. "Hah, I have never actually had the title of Executive Chef, everything else except that." This is true. The positions he has held in his career are Trainee, Commis III, Commis II, Commis I, CDP, Junior Sous Chef, Sous Chef, Senior Sous Chef, Chef de Cuisine, Executive Sous Chef, Production Superintendent, Production Manager, Assistant Vice President and now Vice President Culinary.

Chef Griffith started working with Emirates Flight Catering as a Senior Sous Chef back in November 1995, one week before the Airshow. Looking back at those days he says, "Back then the company was the sole caterer for the event; chalets, restaurants, food outlets everything. Chef Heinz Zucchelli said, "welcome to our busiest two weeks of the year, now go to the Cold Kitchen and get to work". His organization of the event was so precise it was a great insight into catering on this large scale."

As Vice President Culinary, Chef Griffith says he is a small part of a great team of talented and enthusiastic professionals. His current role is to rebuild, redefine and re-establish the airline and non-airline catering standards, to establish the new norm and then surpass it once again.

Ten years ago when we interviewed Chef





Griffith for this magazine, he said that a workday could stretch to 14 hours and a basic target could be 90,000 daily meals. So what's changed in 10 years?

He says, "A lot has changed since then. Emirates Flight Catering has experienced some major highs, reaching as much as 225,000 meals per day, opening an additional facility to cope with the demand and winning the title of 'Best Airline Caterer, Middle East' for 6 consecutive years.

"We're currently facing challenging times due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; however, we will bounce back with the rest of the airline industry and we can't wait to be able to beat our former record of daily meals produced!

"This pandemic has shown what people and companies are truly made of and I am truly grateful to be part of such an enterprise as Emirates Flight Catering who through it all has done everything possible to take care of its people and rejuvenate business."

During the pandemic, EKFC has focused



## You look back at the simple steps learned; turning a potato, hand slicing and tasting your first parma ham, writing your first menu, all memorable moments in one's growth

on helping the community by assisting the healthcare industry and frontline workers by providing meals. The team also produced meals for cargo and repatriation flights.

At the height of global air travel, preparing over 80 million meals a year and managing thousands of people, complex processes and global customers has got to be both an exciting and nerve-racking. Given that, does he still find time to cook?

Chef Griffith says, "I try to cook and work in the kitchens as much as possible. It's difficult if you're in the middle of preparing something and you get a call to attend this meeting or have to go to that briefing.

"Cooking soothes me when feeling stressed. I enjoy doing lunches for visitors out of our Concept Development kitchen which is the brainchild of our CEO Saeed Mohammed. It has everything one could want as a kitchen, as he says it is our play area to enjoy and innovate."

Ask him what the secret ingredients are to running a successful inflight catering operation and he says, "I learned the inflight catering business from Chef Heinz Zucchelli. It was him that taught me to break the volumes down to manageable numbers by looking at it by

sections and areas and not to look at it as one large overwhelming number.

"Yes 225,000 meals a day is daunting but look at it as cold, hot and pastry and then further break it down into multiple layers in just the cold and so on, so it is manageable in batches."

Chef Griffith emphasizes that in their business it all comes down to sourcing and logistics. "It's easy to write a menu, but then our Sourcing Solutions and Fulfillment teams have to go and source the products and get it here and store it. Oh, and I need it by next week please!"

He adds, "When you run a restaurant you have a team that cook the same menu every day, day in and day out, for probably 3 months or longer in most places.

"Yes, you have daily specials or promotional items but more often than not you have people that have perfected their section's parts of the menu's dishes and that is what they prepare during each service. You see them daily and you work with them daily.

"In in-flight catering our business runs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, you have three shifts of people preparing 1,350 menus per day. These people are on rotating shifts, so they are preparing different dishes on different shifts and then all the menus change each month on top of that."

In order to, maintain consistency precise clear specifications must be laid down and training on the dishes is a constant."

"When Marco Pierre White visited EKFC, he said, "It's like cooking by numbers", which is true. Each dish has to look, taste and weigh the same to the other, you can't have two people on a flight sitting next to each other with one saying "you got more than me"."

While all this does sound overwhelming, Chef Griffith did find time for a personal life too. "My wife Eilette and I met while I was living in Germany. We were both





working at the InterContinental Cologne, and we moved out here to Dubai together.

"We both started at the Dubai Hilton Hotel where we first met Andy and Josephine who were also there along with Tarek Moureiss, David Thomsun, Omar Kaddouri, Ralph Hayes, Gerhard Hardick and Doris Grief. Any Dubai long timers will know these people."

Kiana his first-born daughter is now studying biomedical engineering in Holland and she is now looking at where to pursue her Master's degree. His second daughter Kalea, lives with them in Dubai and goes to secondary school. She is an avid swimmer, training up to five times a week and is eagerly awaiting for competitions to resume.

"As both our daughters have been born and raised in Dubai, they have had the opportunity to travel the world, as I did as a child. Being exposed to such a diverse population that is rich in different cultures, has expanded their palettes as well as their minds," he says.

One of the little-known facts about Chef Griffith is his love for biking. His great escape biking adventure he took with his father is the stuff of legends. In his previous interview to us he said, "We rode all the way to Greece from the UAE. After ten years of riding Hatta, Kalba, Fujairah and Jebel Hafeet, it got a little boring. The ride to Greece was amazing," he says.

"Come to think of it, if I wasn't a chef, I probably would have either become a custom-bike builder, an architect or a caviar taster!" he had said then.

James Griffith is also the Vice President Marketing for the Emirates Culinary Guild and has been associated with its rise over the past few years. He says, "As I was working for Chef Heinz, who was one of the founding members of the Guild, I was often involved in support of events and activities but had never joined. When Heinz left Dubai for Singapore I felt I should



## Emirates Flight Catering has experienced some major highs, reaching as much as 225,000 meals per day and winning the title of 'Best Airline Caterer, Middle East' for 6 consecutive years

apply to join in order to maintain the connection and support.

"The Guild's admirable work to promote the profession, develop young chefs and basically give back to the community are all things we all need to do more of."

For someone who has managed to be

successful at operating one of the world's largest and most successful inflight catering operations, what is his advice to young chefs looking to carve a name in the industry?

He says, "As Charlie Trotter once wrote, 'strive for perfection and you might hit excellence!'

"I believe each generation in the kitchen thinks the up-and-coming ones have it easier than they did. The ones that I have been lucky enough to learn from say we have it easy and we say the next ones have it easier.

"Kitchens are changing along with the generations of the world. Today's chefs seem to have more opportunities at fame and fortune but it still comes down to hard work and skill, maybe a little more luck involved with today's culinary shows and social media making instant stars.

"If you don't really enjoy working in the industry don't do it, there are less demanding jobs with a better work/life balance!"







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# LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Success lies in three Ps - principles, purpose and perseverance – believes Chef **Rajeev Gopal Krishnan**. As he retraces his professional journey, the head pastry chef of The Oberoi, Dubai shows that strong values and a good attitude can make all the difference when it comes to creating a winning career...

A small town near the east Indian city of Kolkata, Jamshedpur is known best for being the headquarters of one of the biggest conglomerates of India. The Tata group, which also owns the Taj group of hotels, has extensive steel operations in Jamshedpur, earning it the moniker Tatanagar.

The industrial town is also something of a melting pot of cultures, representative of the eclecticism of India as a country. This eclecticism shows up in the food scene of Jamshedpur – from Bengali desserts to Punjabi street foods to South Indian snacks, foodies are spoilt for choice in this tiny town.

So, culinary inspiration didn't fail Chef



**Spending a minimum of two years in a job gives you the right foundation and an opportunity to learn something from every assignment**

Rajeev Gopal Krishnan when he was growing up. Today, those childhood learnings have translated into an impressive career path. The Head Pastry Chef of The Oberoi, Dubai has

blazed quite a trail in the past couple of decades.

## THE VALUE OF VALUES

Chef Rajeev credits his strong values for his success. Jamshedpur was set up by the Tata group and the inclusive, ethics-based culture of the company permeated every aspect of life in this small town. "My family is originally from South India but my parents were medical workers who moved there before I was born," says the 40-year-old chef. "My mother was an excellent cook. I have yet to sample her brand of soft, delicious idli, which is a South Indian savoury rice cake, anywhere else."

The youngest child and a self-confessed 'mama's boy', he would



spend time with his mother in the kitchen. "Being in the medical industry, she was a very busy person with little free time. So for me, cooking was an opportunity to bond with her."

Cooking for family members is a way of expressing love. The principle applies also to the culinary industry. A chef who doesn't value and respect his guests has a short shelf life, believes Chef Rajeev. "As a child, I was a picky eater. So I was also interested in what ingredients my mother was using," he smiles.

Unfortunately, Chef Rajeev lost his parents in an accident when he was just 18. The responsibility of his education fell on his older brother's shoulders. Being a close-knit family, support and guidance came also from his cousins, some of whom were chefs. "I also watched some culinary shows and saw how chefs get opportunities abroad. When I checked out hotel management, it seemed to fit all my criteria for a lifelong occupation."

Signing up for the Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology in Trivandrum, he lived in the South Indian state that his family originally comes from for the first time.

Admittedly, the start was tough. "While training at a hotel, I cut my finger badly. I needed 22 stitches!" But what doesn't kill you, only makes you stronger. The people around him inspired Chef Rajeev to learn from his mistakes and become better and better at what he did. Finally in 2002, he passed out of IHM with flying colours.

**A GREAT START**

Starting his career as a commis chef in the pastry kitchen at The Trident in Gurgaon, Chef Rajeev was promoted to chef de partie within a couple of years. Then, he joined the Wildflower Hall Shimla, a picturesque resort by the Oberoi group at the foothills of the Himalayas.

The property used to be the residence



of a prominent commander-in-chief of the British army. "That was a difficult assignment for me. From being in city properties, I went to work in a hill station with extreme weather and low oxygen levels. I worked there for six months without visiting home. The temperature was freezing and it was difficult for me to get used to it."

However, that was the start of Chef Rajeev's long relationship with the Oberoi group. While there, he was selected to join a post-graduate executive programme from the Oberoi Centre of Learning and Development. During the three-year period, Chef Rajeev trained at some of the marquee properties of the hospitality group – The Oberoi Rajvilas, a luxury five-star hotel in Rajasthan, The Oberoi Grand in Kolkata and The Oberoi in New Delhi.

"The New Delhi property was from the

early 1700s. We were given holistic training at an amazing campus. I trained in everything from guest management to housekeeping to kitchen management. Then there was internship. They had some 34 properties in India and you could be placed anywhere for hands-on training."

The programme helped Chef Rajeev to not only develop his skills but also to develop his personality. Armed with new confidence, he applied and got a job at The Oberoi Udaivilas hotel, one of the most recognised luxury hotels in Asia. He worked there for a couple of years, before the lure of Dubai proved too hard to resist.

**DUBAI CALLING**

Chef Rajeev made his way to Dubai in 2010. However, entry into the culinary hub of the Middle East came with a temporary separation from the Oberoi group. "The construction of the Burj

Khalifa had just finished and Dubai Mall was being opened. I joined Brunetti, a patisserie by Emaar Properties, as pastry sous chef." As one of the first patisseries in the city, Brunetti had quite a spectacular opening. It was a busy two and half years there. Meanwhile, Chef Rajeev's dedication and entrepreneurial attitude won him a promotion to the executive sous chef position.

However, when The Oberoi opened a property in Dubai, the management called on Chef Rajeev to return to their fold. There was no hesitation whatsoever on his part. "I joined for the pre-opening and it was a great opportunity. I had very encouraging superiors. We did 15-16 hours of work daily but I never had a single moment of regret!" It's been seven years since and the relationship is stronger than ever.

In many ways, the Oberoi group gave Chef Rajeev's career the acceleration that few chefs enjoy. "They recruit people straight after high school and then give them a three-year training which covers every aspect. You finish with a valuable certificate that can take you places. In contrast, many culinary colleges usually lack hands-on, practical training that this is actually the main need in this industry." He lauds the fact that the Oberoi group gives deserving candidates a chance to get into managerial positions even if they are young.

Chef Rajeev extends the same attitude to those who work under him. "It doesn't matter how many years someone has spent in the kitchen. Some people have that spark from the beginning and I know that they are people who are up for any challenge." Even while recruiting, he watches for the right attitude in addition to the right skills. "I look for proactive people and those who are chasing the art rather than money. It takes a lot of energy to train someone. If the person you train is an opportunist who is around only until he gets a fatter paycheck, then it becomes a waste of time. Also, such people don't go too far in life."



**When I was a newbie, I was often made to do menial, boring tasks. Back then, I used to feel sorry for myself. Today, I understand the importance of the knowing things from the ground up**

One way to ensure good candidates make the cut is to ask them questions on how they deal with stressful situations. "I give them such scenarios – a head chef is screaming because something went wrong, a guest is about to miss his flight and is panicking, for example – how will you deal with this situation? In most cases, their reply will show you how well they deal with pressure." Given that pressure is a prominent feature of the hospitality industry, the ability to withstand it is the decider of career success.

As someone who has had a long-standing relationship with his employer, Chef Rajeev sees value in investing time and energy in a job. "Spending a minimum of two years in a job gives you the right foundation and an opportunity to learn something from every assignment. It's alright to seek good opportunities but not mindlessly."

Even in his senior position, Chef Rajeev learns something new everyday. "The Oberoi group has a very strong customer orientation and we are constantly looking to innovate to give our guests the best experiences possible. Nowadays, people have strong dietary needs and preferences. So many a times, it's challenging as a chef – more so as a pastry chef – to create items keeping in

mind health and calorie requirements. Without taking the time to build a strong foundation, it's impossible to successfully experiment with ideas and ingredients."

#### **PAYING IT FORWARD**

In the future, Chef Rajeev hopes to pass on to youngsters the knowledge he has gained over his career. Having trained so many young chefs, he has developed a knack for teaching. "I feel this industry deserves to have the right people with the right attitude. By teaching in a culinary college, I can contribute to ensuring that the industry gets that. Strong roots and strong mentors make all the difference in shaping your education." Sometimes, that also means tough love. "When I was a newbie, I was often made to do menial, boring tasks. Back then, I used to feel sorry for myself. Today, I understand the importance of knowing things from the ground up."

#### **FOOD AND FAMILY**

Chef Rajeev has the Oberoi group to thank not only for a lot of life's important lessons and his career, but also for his family. He met his wife at one of the properties where she was a trainee. "We became friends and kept in touch. It turned into a relationship with time and then into marriage. We have been together for 10 years now," he smiles. Chef Rajeev's wife still works in hospitality and so, she understands the pressures of his job. The couple has a five-year-old son, Raghav, who is cared for by Chef Rajeev's mother-in-law when the two are at work.

As a pastry chef, the Indian chef loves to experiment with his creations. One of his favourite desserts is Seradurra, a layered Portuguese pudding with crunchy pistachio and mango mousse. "The word Seradurra means 'sawdust' in Portuguese. It is topped with powdered digestive biscuits, which gives it a sawdust look."

A motivating manager, an inspiring mentor, a loving family man and a culinary extraordinaire, Chef Rajeev is truly a delightful bundle.





**Mango Serradura**  
(Serves 10)  
PREPARATION TIME (45 min)

**VANILLA MOUSSELINE**

|                     |         |
|---------------------|---------|
| Arla whipping cream | 300 gms |
| Arla cream cheese   | 500 gms |
| Icing sugar         | 150 gms |
| Vanilla extract     | 10 ml   |
| Halal gelatine      | 1 sheet |
| Lurpak Soft butter  | 100 gms |

**Method**

- ◆ Cream the mascarpone with icing sugar
- ◆ Add the vanilla extract and melted Halal gelatine
- ◆ Whip in the soft butter and fold the whipped cream

**VANILLA MOUSSELINE**

|                   |         |
|-------------------|---------|
| Pistachio powder  | 250 gms |
| Digestive biscuit | 250 gms |

**Method**

- ◆ Crush the digestive biscuit and mix it together with the pistachio powder

**VANILLA MOUSSELINE**

|                 |         |
|-----------------|---------|
| Mango puree     | 500 gms |
| Sugar           | 75 gms  |
| Gelatine leaves | 3 nos   |

**Arla whipping cream**

400 gms

**Method**

- ◆ Mix in the presoaked gelatine leaves in the cold water and melt it in to the warm mango puree
- ◆ After cooling it at room temperature fold in the whipped cream

**Assembling**

- ◆ Set the vanilla mousseline in the bottom of the serving dish
- ◆ Once it is set, cover the top with the pistachio sand
- ◆ Pipe the mango mousse and leave it to set in the chiller
- ◆ After 30 minutes glaze the dessert with fresh mango puree
- ◆ Garnish it with minute leaves.

***Chef's Tip:** Make the dessert one day in advance to enhance the mango flavor in the dessert. Halal gelatin needs to be presoaked in cold water for 5 minutes then it needs to be placed in warm mango puree to ensure it is completely dissolved.*

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# RISING KNIGHTS

They couldn't be more different. Chef Abhishek Sharma is as extroverted as they come, while Chef Dhanushka Fernando is your textbook shy guy. But when they join forces, the two chefs from Sheraton Jumeirah Beach Resort create culinary magic...

## Abhishek Sharma

As soon as you meet him, it's obvious that Chef Abhishek Sharma is an out-and-out extrovert. He laughs easily, speaks freely and gives off a friendly vibe that puts anyone at ease.

The commis chef from Sheraton Jumeirah Beach Resort is hoping to impress judges at the Golden Chef's Hat Award with his cooking skills as well as his charming personality. "I am making chicken breast stuffed with mushroom and spinach and serving it with potato croquettes, butternut puree, chicken

mini puff and glazed onion jus," gushes the 27-year-old excitedly when you ask him about the competition.

Indian-born Chef Abhishek made Dubai his home a couple of years ago. He works in the main kitchen at the Sheraton Jumeirah. "I do breakfast, lunch and dinner. I am the a-la carte chef here. The best part of my job is the opportunity to talk to guests."

Raised in Faridabad near the Indian capital of New Delhi, Chef Abhishek was inspired to join the culinary industry

when he visited a big hotel with his cousin, who is a pastry chef. "So I got a three-year formal education from the Indian Institute of Hotel Management and started with a job at the Radisson Blu in Delhi." Working there for a year, he subsequently moved to the Hilton group, where he was assigned to properties in Delhi and the nearby town of Gurgaon over a three-year period.

A colleague from an Italian restaurant where Chef Abhishek worked for a year at Hilton happened to shift to Dubai. "He called me and invited to join him in Dubai. I agreed right away."

There have been no regrets. Chef Abhishek loves the glamour of Dubai and cannot imagine living anywhere else. "It's such a stylish city. Of course, the standards here are higher. So, you have to work harder than in India and deliver international quality for a global clientele but I enjoy it."

Although the Indian chef is no stranger to competitions, this is the first time he is participating in a contest in Dubai. Rooting for him is his family. "My mother is a teacher, my father is an engineer and my brother is a chartered accountant. So they all expected me to go into an academic field but when I said I wanted to be a chef, they were supportive." He wants to make his family prouder by becoming an executive chef within a few years. "I want to work hard on my skills and move up the ladder soon, so I can become an executive chef by the age of 31 or 32. I know it's not easy but I am motivated to make it come true."





Abhishek Sharma



Chakravarthige Amith Dhanushka Fernando

We can't resist asking: Is there a woman behind this potential success? "I am single and ready to mingle," he laughs.

With that kind of positivity, who can resist Chef Abhishek's charms – in the kitchen or in life?

### Chakravarthige Amith Dhanushka Fernando

France is known for its pastry, but Sri Lanka is known for its pastry chefs. The tiny Asian island nation churns out talented pastry chefs in droves. One of them is Chef Chakravarthige Amith Dhanushka Fernando.

His full name is a mouthful of words. And his creations are a mouthful of happiness. The commis chef at Sheraton Jumeirah plans to deliver a fitting finish to Chef Abhishek's main course with his white mousse, sorbet and lemon terrine dessert.

This is Chef Dhanushka's second competition. But the 23-year-old chef is looking forward to giving rivals some stiff competition with his pastry skills.

Interestingly, he has had little formal training in hospitality. "I had never really

planned for a culinary career. It just happened," says the chef, who hails from Negombo in Sri Lanka. "I was looking for a job and my friends suggested pastry will be a good fit." Taking their advice, Chef Dhanushka enrolled for and completed a six-month pastry and bakery course from the London Hotel School in Colombo.

Thereafter, he plunged straight into real-life training with a kitchen steward job at the Suriya Luxury Resort Waikkal. "That was a great learning period for me. There were seven chefs in the team and each of my colleagues taught me something. I learnt not only how to make cakes and different kinds of desserts but also to manage my time and tasks efficiently."

After nearly three years, Chef Dhanushka left the resort as a commis chef, joining Ananthaya Resort Chilaw. However, that stint was short, lasting less than a year because he got an opportunity to join the Sheraton Jumeirah Beach Resort, Dubai. The ambitious chef did not have to think twice about his next move.

At the Sheraton Jumeirah, Chef Dhanushka makes desserts and also does room service, garden lunch and

mise en place. The team has four chefs, running the pastry operations of three restaurants, one of which is currently closed due to the pandemic.

"After coming here, I learnt about so many exotic ingredients – different kinds of garnish, international produce and so on. It's a more international set-up and the potential to explore ideas is higher than back home." The young chef has started experimenting with different textures and elements, a habit he wants to internalise.

As a relative newbie in the profession, his dreams for the future are rather modest. "I want to become a pastry chef," he says shyly.

Few people know that the Sri Lankan chefs' skill sets extend to the hot kitchen. In fact, whenever he cooks for his family of two brothers and parents, he's the one in charge of the main course. "When I am cooking for myself, my go-to comfort food is rice and chicken curry."

A man of few words, Chef Dhanushka prefers to let his work do the talking. And does it talk loudly!





**STUFFED CHICKEN BREAST WITH MUSHROOM AND SPINACH, MASH POTATO CROQUETTE, BUTTERNUT PUREE, CHICKEN MINI PUFF, EXOTIC VEGETABLES, DISH SERVED WITH GLAZED ONION JUS.**  
(4 servings)

**STUFFED CHICKEN BREAST**

|                  |      |
|------------------|------|
| Chicken breast   | 600g |
| Spinach          | 80g  |
| Mushrooms        | 40g  |
| Herbs (chopped)  | 10g  |
| Butter           | 15g  |
| Onion (chopped)  | 5g   |
| Garlic (chopped) | 5g   |
| Nestle cream     | 10ml |

**Method**

- ♦ Sauté all the vegetables with butter, add cream and bind the vegetables. Let the mixture cool and season the chicken breast. Stuff the mixture inside the

breast. Tighten with cling film. Steam roast in an oven at 160°C for 15 minutes and serve.

**BUTTERNUT PUREE**

|                   |          |
|-------------------|----------|
| Butternut pumpkin | 80g      |
| Nestle Cream      | 10ml     |
| Butter            | 10g      |
| Thyme             | 2g       |
| Seasoning         | To taste |

**Method**

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

**POTATO CROQUETTE**

|                     |      |
|---------------------|------|
| Maggi potato powder | 120g |
| Nestle cream        | 1cup |
| Nestle milk         | 1cup |

**Method**

- ♦ Boil cream and milk together. Add the potato powder and whisk. Let the mixture cool down. Then make the ball shape. Crumb and fry.

**DISH SAUCE**

|                   |
|-------------------|
| Nestle veal jus   |
| Caramelized onion |

**Method**

- ♦ Reduce the jus with onion. Season and serve.

**BUTTER VEGETABLES**

|                     |       |
|---------------------|-------|
| Baby carrots        | 8pcs  |
| Shimeji mushroom    | 40g   |
| Pok Choy            | 8pcs  |
| Maggi chicken stock | 200ml |
| Butter              | 15g   |

**Method**

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

**CHICKEN PUFF**

|               |      |
|---------------|------|
| Mince chicken | 150g |
| Puff pastry   | 60g  |
| Mushroom      | 20g  |
| Onion         | 5g   |
| Garlic        | 2g   |
| Thyme         | 1g   |
| Nestle cream  | 30ml |

**Method**

- ♦ Cook the chicken with all the vegetables. Once the chicken is well-cooked, add the cream and bind. Fill in the puff pastry and bake at 180°C for seven minutes.



## NESTLE ROMANTIC CAKE

### VANILLA SPONGE

|                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| Eggs           | 6   |
| Sugar          | 50g |
| Flour          | 30g |
| Almond         | 50g |
| Baking powder  | 2g  |
| Nestle cream   | 10g |
| Vanilla powder | 1g  |
| Butter         | 20g |

#### Method

- ◆ Mix the eggs and flour together. Then add almond powder. Finally, add baking powder, vanilla and butter, and bake.

### VANILLA MOUSSE

|                |      |
|----------------|------|
| Nestle Cream   | 100g |
| Nestle milk    | 150g |
| Egg yolk       | 2no  |
| Vanilla powder | 2g   |

|                 |      |
|-----------------|------|
| Gelatin         | 20g  |
| White chocolate | 150g |

#### Method

- ◆ Boil the cream. Add in the eggs, followed by white chocolate gelatin and finally the whipping cream.

### MANGO BRULEE

|             |      |
|-------------|------|
| Mango puree | 100g |
| Egg yolk    | 2    |
| Gelatin     | 5g   |
| Sugar       | 20g  |

#### Method

- ◆ Boil the puree with sugar. Blend it with the egg yolks before adding in the gelatin.

### MICRO SPONGE

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| Egg whites | 5   |
| Sugar      | 10g |
| Flour      | 5g  |

#### Method

- ◆ Mix all the ingredients together. Cook in a microwave.

### RASPBERRY GLAZE

|                 |          |
|-----------------|----------|
| Raspberry puree | 100g     |
| Sugar           | 20       |
| Gelatin         | 6 sheets |

#### Method

- ◆ Boil the puree with some water. Then add sugar and gelatin. Let it cool down.

### LEMON SORBET

|              |       |
|--------------|-------|
| Peeled lemon | 20g   |
| Sugar        | 100g  |
| Water        | 100ml |
| Lemon juice  | 10ml  |

#### Method

- ◆ Heat water and sugar with lemon peel in a pan. Let it cool down. Take out peeled lemon and add lemon juice. Put it in the freezer. Then whisk break by break for 4 hours. Let it get set, then serve

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## Winning Touch

Last month, winners of the American Egg virtual cooking competition were felicitated at a special ceremony in Dubai. The event was held at the Radisson Blu Hotel Dubai Deira Creek and saw Chef Uwe Micheel, president of the Emirates Culinary Guild and American Egg representative Bassam Boussaleh hand over the medals, certificates and prizes to the winners.

The virtual cooking competition was organized by the Emirates Culinary Guild, and saw 10 WorldChefs certified judges take two days to pick the winners from over 220 great recipes and videos that had come in.

Competitors included professional chefs in the Pastry and Savory competitions. Amateur cooks had competitions of

their own that included video as well as recipes with images. A total of 40 winners in 4 different classes won multiple prizes and three special prizes were awarded to the best traditional dessert recipe, best breakfast recipe and best use of egg in a recipe.

Here are images from the prize distribution ceremony.



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

## SAVORY – AMATEUR, COOKS & PROFESSIONAL

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





## VIDEO – SAVORY & PASTRY - AMATEUR

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

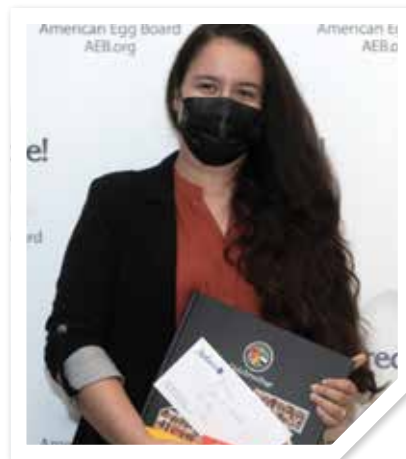
## VIDEO – PASTRY & SAVORY – PROFESSIONAL & COOK

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



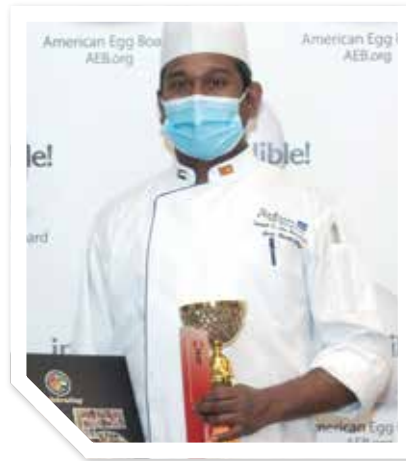








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## ECG Corporate Member directory

### Abu Dhabi Farmers' Services Centre

Martin Aguirre, Commercial & Operations Director  
P.O. Box 62532, Abu Dhabi, UAE  
Direct Line: +971 2 813 8400.  
Phone: +971 2 813 8888, Fax: +971 2 813 9999  
Mobile: +971 56 685 4836

### Advanced Baking Concept LLC (Probake)

Syed Masood, Mobile: +971.55.220.1475  
Email: masood@abc baking.com  
Anna Petrova, Mob 050 9121337,  
anna@abc baking.com  
Vivek Jham, Mob: 055 4498282,  
vivek@abc baking.com

### Agthia Consumer Business Division

Dinusha Gamage, Brand Manager - Food category  
Consumer Business Division  
Agthia Group PJSC, P.O Box 37725, Abu Dhabi.  
Mail: dinusha.gamage@agthia.com  
www.agthia.com

### Al Halal Meat Factory LLC

Sheikh Yasir, Operations Head  
Mob: +971 55 8893131, Off: +971 6 5584474  
Email: yasir@yesmeat.ae, www.yesmeat.ae

### Al Maya Hospitality

Mohamad Hajj Ali, Sales Manager  
Mob: +971 50 1550998, Off: +971 4 3473500  
Email: mohamadh@almaya.ae, www.almaya.ae

### Almarai Company

Ayman Arnous, General Sales Manager  
Mob: +971 50 159 2594, Tel: +971 4 4269600  
ayman.arnous@almarai.com, www.almarai.com

### Al Safi-Danone

Ashlea Daniel, Channel Development Manager,  
Tel: +971 4 340 6895, Mob: +971 50 568 6150  
Ashlea.Daniel@alsafidanone.com,  
www.alsafidanone.com

### American Garden

Manika Saxena, Food Service Manager  
Mob: +971 56 6441578, +971 55 6008704  
Email: manika@globalxport.com  
web: www.americangarden.us

### Anchor Food Professionals

Rami Doumani, Channel Development Manager  
Tel: +971 4 338 8549, Mob: +971 52 737 7266  
Email: rami.doumani@fonterra.com  
web: www.anchorfoodprofessionals.com/me

### Arab Marketing and Finance, Inc. (AMFI)

Simon Bakht  
Tel: +961-1-740378 / 741223 / 751262  
Email: SBakht@amfime.com

### Arabian American Technology (ARAMTEC)

Syed Iqbal Afaq, General Manager,  
Tel: +971 4 380 8444, Mobile: +971 50 624 9761,  
Email: syediqbal@aramtec.com  
Web: www.aramtec.com

### Arla Foods

Samer Abou Daher, Business Unit Manager,  
Tel: +971 6 534 6767, Mobile: +971 55 363 0555,  
Email: samer.abou.daher@arlafoods.com  
Web: www.ArlaPro.com, www.arlafoods.com

### Bakemart FZ LLC

Fasil Shalu, Project & Branding Manager  
Mob : +971 55 609 7525, shaluart@bakemartplus.ae,  
www.bakemartgourmet.com

### Barakat Quality Plus

Jeyaraman Subramanian, Tel: 009714 8802121,  
Email: jr@barakat.com, Mike Wunsch  
Tel: 009714 8802121, mikwuuae@emirates.net.ae

### Barilla Middle East FZE

Hadil Chaaya, FS Professional AME  
Tel: +971 4 882 0488, Mob: +971 50 906 6132  
hadil.chaaya@barilla.com, www.barillagroup.com

### BAYARA - Gyma Food Industries LLC

Haroon Moeen, Division Manager - Foodservice  
Mobile. +971 50 6586546, Tel: +971 4 8867478  
Email. haroonm@bayara.ae, www.bayara.ae

### Baqer Mohebi

Radwan Mouselli, Sales Manager  
Mobile No: 0558001551, office No: 043237272  
mazen.marakebji@baqermohebi.com  
www.baqermohebi.com

### Benchmark Foods Trading LLC

Nicholas Campos, Director Business Development  
Mobile No: 056 9955814, office No: 04 2573838  
nicholas@benchmarkfoods.ae  
www.benchmarkfoods.ae

### Blenders

Diarmaid Greene, Export Manager  
Mobile No: +971 52 956 9451  
diarmaid.greene@ucdconnect.ie, www.blenders.ie

### Casinetto Trading LLC

Giacomo Bernardelli, Managing Director  
Tel: +971 4 3419230, Mob: +971 50 4537712  
giacomo.bernardelli@casinetto.com

### Ceylon Tea Services Pvt. Ltd

Suren Atukorale, Food Service Manager  
Tel: 114822000, 114822342  
suren.atukorale@dilmahtea.com  
www.dilmahtea.com

### Chef Middle East LLC

Joanie Dall'anese, Marketing Manager  
Tel: +971 4 8159880, Mob: +971 55 9949297  
Email: joanie@chefmiddleeast.com  
Web: www.chefmiddleeast.com

### Corona

Ana Sorina Suliman, Export Manager  
Tel: 40373784343, sales@coronaitalia.it  
Web: www.coronaitalia.it

### Cuisine Solutions

Tim Whitehead, General Manager  
Tel: 04 208 6983, Mob: +971 50 269 2081  
Email: twhitehead@cuisinesolutions.ae  
Website: www.cuisinesolutions.ae

### Danube Hospitality Solutions

Joe Thomas, Business Head (OS&E)  
Twhitehead@cuisinesolutions.ae,  
www.cuisinesolutions.ae

### Del Monte Foods (U.A.E) FZE

Adel Shaban, Business Development Manager  
Tel: (+971) 4 3333801, Mob: +971 56 8286967  
mail: ashaban@FreshDelmonte.com  
web: www.delmontearabia.com

### Dilmah Tea

Vivette, Mob +971 508181164,  
viv@proactiveuae.com, Marketing@dilmahtea.com

### dmg events

Hassan  
Tel: +971 4 4380355, Mob: +971 56 8360993  
aysehassan@dmgeventsme.com,  
www.thehotelsshow.com

### East Fish Processing LLC

Sunil George, Head of Sales & Marketing,  
Tel:- 06 7455350, Mob: 055 151 2125,  
sunil@eastfish-uae.ae, Web: www.eastfish.com

### Ecolab

Sadi Amawi, Tel: 04 8014 444, www.ecolab.com

### Elfab Co LLC

Allwyn Rodrigues, Manager - Beef and Veal  
Tel: +971 4 8857575, Email: allwynr@elfabco.ae,  
web: www.elfabco.com

### Emirates Snack Foods

Marwan Hussein, HORECA Division Head  
Tel: +971 4 285 5645, Mob: +971 56 526 7181  
Radwan Mouselli, HORECA Sales Manager  
Tel: +971 4 285 5645, Mob: +971 56 413 2050  
www.esf-uae.com

### Faisal Al Nusif Trading Co. L.L.C

Thomas Das, Managing Director  
Tel: 04 3391149, Email: thomasdas@fantco.net,  
Web: www.fantco.net

### Fanar Al Khaleej Tr

Nazarii Zubovych, Sales Manager,  
Mob: +971 55 894 01 69, nzubovych@fanargroup.ae  
Martin Wathew, Sales manager,  
Mob: +971 50 263 83 15, mmathew@fanargroup.ae  
Brajju, Food Technologist, Mob: +971 55 467 87 42,  
Email: braju@fanargroup.ae, www.fanargroup.ae

### Farm Fresh

Feeroz Hasan, Business Development Manager  
Al Quoz, P.O Box 118351, Dubai, UAE  
Office No : +971 4 3397279 Ext: 253  
Fax: +971 4 3397262, Mob: +971 56 1750883

### Fonterra Brands (Middle East) LLC

Hany El Saigh, Food Service Manager - Lower Gulf  
Tel: +971 4 3388549 EXT. 225 (Direct)  
Mob: +971 50 650176  
hany.el-saigh@fonterra.com, www.fonterra.com

### Food Freshly AFC GmbH

Sukhdev Singh, CEO, Tel : +49520691525,  
+491608024720, info@food-freshly.de

### Food Source International

Angus Winterflood, General Manager  
Tel : +971 4 2998829, sales@foodsource.ae,  
www.foodsource.ae

### Golden Star International

Emie Dimmeler  
Mob: +971 50 3797164, Office: +971 04 3402492  
Email: emie@goldenstarinternational.com

### Greenhouse

Soula Baroudi, Regional Marketing Manager  
Mob: +971 55 5633397, Tel: +971 4 8170000  
soula.baroudi@greenhouseuae.com  
www.greenhouseuae.com

### Hamid and Kumar Enterprises LLC

Sunil Ahluwalia, General Manager,  
Tel: +971 4 3474712, +971 4 3474571  
Mail: dry@hkfoodgroup.com, www.hkfoodgroup.com



**Hi Foods General Trading L.L.C**

**Ismail Dalli**, Deputy General Manager,  
Tel: +971 4 8829660, Mob: +971 55 2445368  
Mail: ismail@hifoods-uae.com, www.hifoods-uae.com

**HUG AG**

**Riyadh Hessian**, 6102 Malters / Switzerland,  
food-service@hug-luzern.ch, www.hug-luzern.ch,  
www.facebook.com/hugfoodservice  
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Al Quoz Industrial Area No. 1, Near Khaleej Times  
Office, Mob +971 507648434, www.aramtec.com

**IFFCO**

**Stuart Murray**, General Manager,  
Food Service S&D, Tel. : + 971 6 5029000 (B),  
Mob: +97150 862 4097, Fax: +971 6 5546950,  
sjmurray@iffco.com, Web: www.iffco.com

**Intelligent Foods LLC**

**John White**, General Manager,  
Tel. : + 971 04 2633113, Mob: +971 50 862 4097,  
John@intelligentfoods.ae, www.intelligentfoods.ae

**Italian Food Masters**

**Corrado Chiarentin**, General Manager  
Tel: +971 4 882 9791, gm@italianfoodmasters.com  
www.italianfoodmasters.com

**JM FOODS LLC**

**Rajan J.S. / Maikel Cooke / Grace Renomeron**  
Management, Mob : +971 50 551 6564,  
Tel: +971 4 883823, Email: sales@jmfoodgulf.com,  
Web: www.jmfoodgulf.com

**Johnson Diversey Gulf**

**Marc Robitzkat**  
Mobile No: 050 459 4031, Office No: 04 8819470  
marc.robitzkat@johnsondiverseymc.com

**KRBL DMCC**

**Krishnakumar Sukumar**,  
Regional Food Service Manager  
Mob: +971 50 953 9344, Tel: +971 4 445 03681  
rsmfoodservice@krblmcc.com, www.krblrice.com

**Koppert Cress**

**Paul Da-Costa-Greaves**, GCC Counties, Middle East  
and United Kingdom  
Mobile No: 447956976413, Tel direct: 31174242819  
paul@koppertcress.com, www.koppertcress.com

**La Patissiere LLC**

**AKil YAssine**, BDM  
Tel: +971 4 3407021, Mob: +971 50 3034038  
akil@la-patissiere.com, www.la-patissiere.com

**Lowe Refrigeration LLC**

**Mark Wood**, General Manager  
Tel: +971 4 8829440, Mob: +971 52 8693695  
mark.wood@lowerrental.com, www.lowerrental.com

**MAM FOOD Factory LLC**

**Mohamed Aaly Maghrabi Wa Awladh Food Factory LLC**  
**Anthony Kerbage**, Head of Marketing  
Tel: +971 4 510 2230, Mob: +971 55 622 4918  
anthony@mamfoodco.com, www.mamfoodco.com

**Masterbaker**

**Sagar Surti**, General Manager – Operations  
Mob:- 00971 50 5548389, Phone:- 04 3477086  
Email :- sagars@uae.switzgroup.com

**Meat Livestock Australia (MLA)**

**Sam Gill**, Business Development Manager,  
Tel: +971 4 433 1355, sgill@mla.com.au,  
www.mla.com.au

**MEIKO Middle East FZE**

**Tim Walsh**, Managing Director  
Tel: +97143415172, Mob: +971509895047  
Email: wat@meiko.de, Website: www.meiko.ae

**MHP Food Trading LLC**

**Eugene Levterov**, Sales Director  
Tel: +971 4 5570622, Mob: +971 52 8754823  
Email: e.levterov@mhpmet.com, www.qualiko.ae

**MKN Maschinenfabrik Kurt Neubauer GmbH & Co.KG**

**Elias Rached**, Regional Vice President  
Middle East & Africa, Mob: +971505587477  
rac@mkn-middle-east.com, www.mkn.com

**Modern General Trading LLC**

**Khalidoun Alnouisser**, Senior Sales Manager  
Tel: +971 4 3059999, +971 50 4812067,  
email: khalidoun@mgtuae.com, www.mgtuae.com

**Muddle ME**

**Mr.Craig Burns**, Director, Tel: +971 4 517 8111,  
Mob: +971 50 2281207, info@muddle-me.com,  
www.muddle-me.com

**Nestlé Professional Middle East**

**Anuj Singh**, General Operations Manager  
Nestlé Professional UAE & Oman  
T +97 144 088 100, Direct +97 144 088 101  
Email: anuj.singh@ae.nestle.com

**NRTC Group**

**Soula Baroudi**, Marketing Manager  
Tel: +971 4 320 8889,  
marketingmanager@nrtcgrou.com  
www.nrtcgrou.com

**One Foods**

**Ayman Akram Arnous**, Food Service Manager  
Mob: +971 50 1592594, ayman.arnous@brf-me.com

**Palux AG**

**Stephan Köhn**, Sales Manager  
Tel: +971 4 979 31550, Mob: +971 50 9971026  
stephan.koehn@palux.de, www.palux.de

**Pascal Clair Sweets Café & Bakery LLC**

**Pascal Clair**, Chef & Partner  
Tel: +971 4 813 5898, Mob: +971 55 576 2441  
pascal@pascalclair.com, www.pascalclair.net

**Pear Bureau Northwest**

**Bassam Bousaleh**, (TEL) 961.1.740378, (FAX)  
961.1.740393, Mobile: 050.358.9197,  
AMFI, Beirut Lebanon, BassamB@amfime.com

**Potatoes USA**

**Victoria Hassani**, (TEL) +971 50 101 3541  
potatoesusa@gmadubai.com, www.usapotatoes.com

**Prokids Trading F.Z.C - Flavoil**

**Denys Baranevych**, Mob: 971 58 9703597  
Email: denys.b@flavoil.com, www.higholeic.ae

**RAK Porcelain**

**Raphael Saxod**, Managing Director,  
Tel: 97172434960, 97143285951  
Email: restofair@rakporcelain.com  
Web: www.rakrestofair.ae

**Rational Kitchen & Catering Equipment Trading FZCO**

**i.V. Thomas Hofer**, Managing Director,  
Office 2218 Building 2, Gold & Diamond Park,  
Sheikh Zayed Road, P.O.Box 126076  
Tel: +971 4 338 6615, Mob: +971 50 557 6553  
Fax: +971 4 338 6673,  
Mail: t.hofer@rational-online.com,  
Web: www.rational-online.com

**Restofair RAK**

**Raphael Saxod**, Managing Director  
Tel: +971 7 2434960, Email: rsaxod@ecf.fr  
Web: www.restofair.ae

**Robot Coupe**

**Aditya Kanumuri**, Area Manager-UAE  
Tel: +971 50 2044920, kanumuri@robot-coupe.com  
Web: www.robot-coupe.com

**Safco International Gen. Trdg Co. Llc**

**Ajit Singh Sawhney**, Chief Executive Officer,  
Tel: +971 4 8702000  
Email: ajit@safcointl.com, www.safcointl.com

**Shoppex Trading Est.**

**Charbel Khalil**, Marketing & Sales Manager  
Tel: +971 6 5340841, Mob: +971 56 6066967  
www.shoppex@eim.ae

**Skinny Genie**

**Elouise Byrne**, Sales Manager  
Mob: +971 50 8005208, elouise@skinny-genie.com,  
Web: www.skinny-genie.com

**SKYTOWER GENERAL TRADING LLC**

**Sai Ravikanth**, Manager - Sales  
Tel: +971 6 885 7000, Mob: +971 55 513 862,  
sm@skytowerme.com, www.thecandh.com

**TECHNICAL SUPPLIES & SERVICES CO. LLC (TSSC Dubai)**

**Eden Nebreja**, Marketing Manager  
Tel: +971 4 3431100, Mob: +971 56 2123282  
email: eden@tssc.ae, Web: www.tsscubai.com

**Transmed Overseas**

**Rana Malki**, Mob: +971 50 5592771,  
rana.almalki@transmed.com,  
www.transmed.com/foodservice

**Truebell Marketing & Trading**

**Bhushant J. Ghandi**  
Mobile: +971 50 6460532, Email: fsd@truebell.org

**United Foods Company**

**Mr Rudyard Torres Nano**, Marketing Manager  
Mob: +971 4 338 2688, rtorres@unitedfoods.ae  
Web: www.unitedfoods.ae

**Upfield Middle East Limited FZCO**

**Melanny Lopez**, Marketing Manager  
Tel: +971 4 2342071, Mob: +971 56 6812914  
melanny.lopez@upfield.com, www.upfield.com

**US Dairy**

**Nina Bakht El Halal**, Mobile: 050.358.9197,  
Beirut: 961-740378, email: halal@cyberia.net.lb

**US Meat Export Federation**

**Bassam Bousaleh**, Tel: +961-1-74038 / 741223  
Fax: +961-1-740393, Mobile: 050.358.9197  
AMFI, Beirut Lebanon, BassamB@amfime.com

**USAPEEC (USA Poultry & Egg Export Council)**

**Sana Makkani**,  
Tel: +1-770-413-0006, Mob: +1-770-413-0007  
mail: usapec@usapec.org, Web: www.usapec.org

**US Poultry**

**Berta Bedrossian**  
(TEL) 961.1.740378, (FAX) 961.1.740393  
Mobile: 050.358.9197, BettyB@amfime.com

**Vitamax Trading LLC**

**Vitaly Seyba**, General Manager  
Mobile: +971 50 7013054, +971 50 5004375  
email: info@vitamax.com, Web: www.vitamax.com

**Vito Kitchen and Restaurant Equipment Trading U.A.E.**

**Sascha Geib**, Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Street,  
P.O.Box 2257 Ajman, M:+971509664620  
Mail: uae@systemfiltration.com

**Welbilt**

**Rakesh Tiwari**,  
Mobile: +971.56.406.1628, rakesh.tiwari@welbilt.com

**Winterhalter Middle East BFC**

**Sean Moore**, Managing Director  
Mob: +971 56 6103900, +971526226877  
Email: sean.moore@winterhalter.ae  
Web:www.winterhalter.biz

**Winterhalter ME**

**Saju Abraham**, Sales Manager  
Mobile: +971 505215702  
Email: sabraham@winterhalter.ae





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| Name of Employer:           | Address in Home Country:                       |   |
| Work Address:               | Tel:   |   |
| Web Address:                | Email:   |   |
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| 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"/>         |
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Declaration to be Signed by all Applicants

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

Signed:.....

Proposed By:

Sig:.....

Seconded By:

Sig:.....

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Pin Given.

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Approved

Approved

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Young Member: Junior members will receive a certificate.

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

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# PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

A deadly virus kills millions of people every second. Many are not even aware of this virus. For all you know, that deadly virus is killing you right now while reading this.

I'm talking about the viral trend of self sabotaging feelings, thoughts and actions. It could be the obsession with materialistic wealth or showing the world you are a success.

Even in a busy culinary world, more and more chefs are slowly succumbing to this unhealthy way of life. More and more chefs come into this world with glamour in their eyes and end up doing the same monotonous role day in and day out for years and end up feeling let down.

So what do they do? Like a moth to a fire, they get attracted by the mumbo jumbo of self help gurus who claim to show purpose, passion, goal, better health, amazing relationships, or making loads of money.

Material and financial success is great to have. But you cannot measure happiness in those terms. Deep down you know money and success cannot bring you happiness. Yet you continue in a rat race and end up hurting your integrity, health and beautiful relationships.

We take these, fundamentals for granted. In fact, most of you forget to appreciate the essence of these in your life. Your life can easily be magical and exciting if you learn to say "thank you" to these core elements. As a child we had the ability to easily and effortlessly appreciate all of these.

And getting back to that blissful



innocence and thankfulness for all you have can be a simple road to reach.

Try these 15 things and let me know if it makes you less stressed and unhappy. It may sound weird at first, but no harm in trying, right?

- (1) Take in fresh air between work, travel and your room.
- (2) Drink good water
- (3) Enjoy the sunshine
- (4) Eat healthy and in moderation
- (5) Exercise regularly and keep the happy hormones on a high
- (6) Sleep well as it makes you much more alert and active
- (7) Smile and laugh to boost your immune system
- (8) Appreciate some alone time without your phone or laptop
- (9) Get into a healthy relationship platonic or otherwise
- (10) Be more compassionate to others no matter how difficult you find it
- (11) Find out what you believe in deep down and stick to it
- (12) Find

out the meaning of the Japanese word 'Shoshin' and imbibe that (13) Read the story of the Two Wolves as narrated by the Indian Cherokee Grandfather (14) Whatever you do, do it to ultimately row your boat and not someone else's (15) and finally, accept that some things have not gone right for you and move on. If you can't accept your failures, you will be stuck in that dark moment.

Let me know if these work for you and if they make your life a little less troublesome. There are some out there who believe in you – a family member or a friend – and it's time you do so too.

---

*Rohit Bassi is a corporate trainer and TedX speaker, who specializes in getting employees to perform better at work. You can reach him at [rohit@in-learning.com](mailto:rohit@in-learning.com)*





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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 pork, garnished with green herbs and lemon wedges. The background is dark, making the food and the pouring action stand out.

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can come  
at any anytime.**

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



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