

FROM US. FOR US.

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THE MAGAZINE CHEFS LOVE TO READ

gourmet

volume 19, issue 7



IN IT TO WIN IT

For **Nuwan Kumara**, Emirates Salon Culinaire is more than a big stage. It is a pivotal moment to redeem himself after striking out several times

A FREEZING PICTURE STORY

Chef **Sebastien JM Kuhn** takes us on an ice-cold journey for his book 'Chef on Ice'



MANIFESTING PASTRY POWER

Chef **Man Kofalida** is this month's challenger at the Arla Pro Pastry Mastery Competition



QUOTE MARSHAL

Chef **Manjula K Rathnayaka** on obstacles faced by new marshals, and power of passion





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Macarons*

*Rich Ribbon
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Dear Members and Partners,

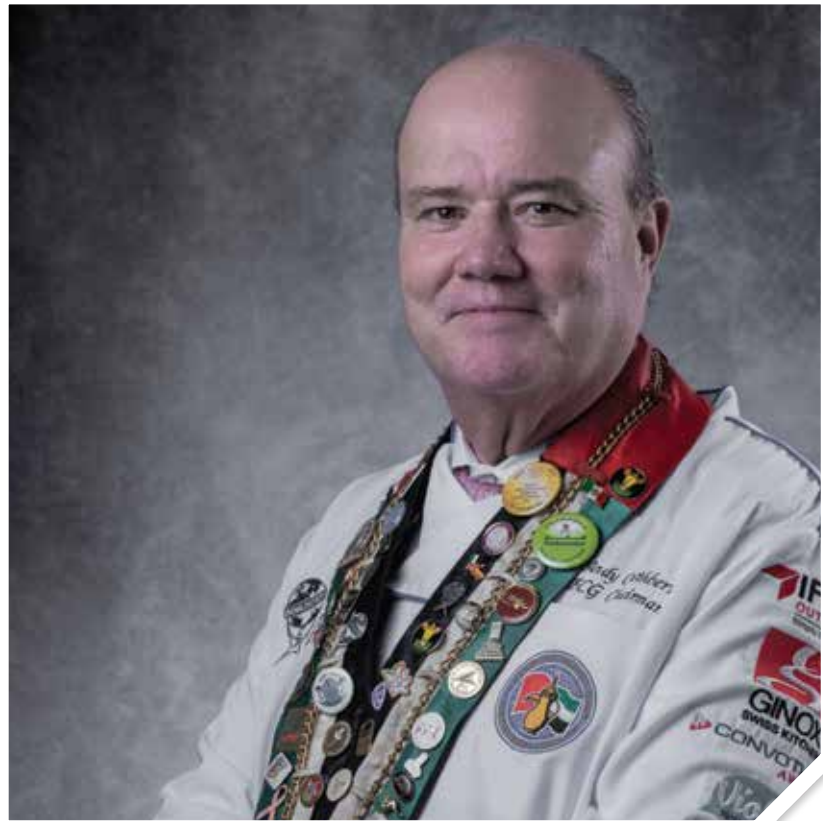
As we start our season of events, we kick off with our welcome back meeting on September 10th and look out for the final venue information. The next four months will see some exciting times ahead for our culinary team. We start by sending a team led by Chef Peter and Chef Sanjeewa to the Maldives to compete on our behalf, and we thank our partner, Sounbula Mills, for their generous support of the team. In November, we head to Egypt for the Africa Cup during the HACE exhibition, and we thank the Egyptian chefs for taking the lead on this. The team led by Chef Majed and Rabeh has been training hard. Stay tuned for our social media accounts and the upcoming magazine editions for a comprehensive report.

October, of course, is a big month with a big delegation heading to Singapore for the Worldchefs Congress. We are bringing four contestants from the Middle East and Africa to the Global Chefs competition, where the teams compete against the Worldchefs team.

Chef John Buenaventura from EKFC is our Senior Global Chef competitor; Chef Kasdi Dahari from Hilton is our Vegan competitor; Chef Ruwan Kumara from the Palace Downtown is our Global Pastry Chef; and Chef Prajak Chandrakant Chindarka from the EARTH Hotel Abu Dhabi is our young gun competing in the Global Young Chef competition.

We are proud of each and every chef for representing the UAE in the competition; they have all been practicing hard. We wish them all the best of luck.

In September, we will also co-host Salon Du Chocolat with Hospitality Services. Salon Du Chocolat is an



event endorsed by Worldchefs that focuses on pastry and bakery chefs and, of course, chocolate. It will take place in Madinat, Jumeirah, from September 18 to September 20.

Another team event is the return of the Black Box competition, where seven teams will compete in the Taste of H.K. Black Box challenge 2024 using ingredients from HK enterprises, including special surprise last minute additions.

We thank our long-term partner, HK, for this initiative and for giving teams the opportunity to compete. The dinner takes place on the 11th of October, and more information will come on the socials.

Finally, a sustainable cookoff will be held during the Future Hotel Summit in conjunction with our strategic partner, the UAERG. This competition promotes sustainability by featuring produce from all around the Emirates. Additionally, a live cooking competition will take place every day at the summit.

Check out the exclusive writeups penned by our industry experts, and stay tuned for the launch of our redesigned website, which has been undergoing a complete revamp throughout the summer. Our Woman's Culinary Chapter is going from strength to strength, and please do reach out to Chef Tarryn Leigh-Green for more information: tarrynleigh.green@nyummeals.com

Wishing you all a great end of year for 2024.

With Regards,
Andy Cuthbert
President and Editor



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newsbites

IFFCO OOH Transforms into IFFCO Professional

A New Era of Culinary Mastery

IFFCO Out of Home, the flagship division of the international IFFCO Group, has announced its transformation to IFFCO

Professional. This rebranding exercise reflects the division's commitment to revolutionising the food service industry by offering comprehensive culinary solutions and continuously upgrading services, fostering open and transparent partnerships with customers, and enabling further trust in the organisation. Committed to delivering the highest standards of quality and innovation across an extensive portfolio of products covering every aspect of cooking, frying, baking, beverage, indulgence, and plant-based options, IFFCO Group says the thoughtful rebranding of its OOH business division to IFFCO Professional takes this into account, demonstrating a core principle of taking a more holistic approach to ensure meeting the diverse needs and indulgent tastes of its customers.

Speaking on the new identity, Justin Emmanuel Steinbach, CEO – IFFCO Professional, said, "Since the beginning, our dedication to excellence has been unwavering, and as we continue to work on exceeding expectations and maximising customer satisfaction. We believe that by placing the customer at the core of everything we do, we can continuously raise the bar for best-in-class solutions, which is why we have adopted a policy of openness, transparency and integrity, welcoming feedback and insights as being invaluable in keeping our ambitions for continuous enhancements on track to ensure that we



Justin Emmanuel Steinbach, CEO – IFFCO Professional

remain at the vanguard of innovation and growth across every sector."

Justin added: "Our organisation's passionate professionals are dedicated to researching and developing innovative products and solutions that will shape the future of the culinary world. From pop-up cafes to multinational chains and five-star hotels, we understand that culinary excellence is not just about taste and flavour; it encompasses sustainability, health, wellbeing and social responsibility. We are also committed to positively impacting the environment and society, from sourcing sustainable ingredients and

packaging to promoting responsible practices across the value chain; we are conscious of our potential to help create a better future for future generations."

IFFCO Professional's stated mission is perfectly clear: to deliver excellence and maximise customer satisfaction. To achieve this, the division is building more robust and enduring relationships with customers, partners, and stakeholders, earning their trust in IFFCO Group's growing portfolio of brands and services, and continuously improving and innovating to maintain the division's status as a food industry stalwart that combines diversity, creativity, and culinary mastery with taste, character, and flavor.



THE CHEFS TABLE 2024

In an interview with **Gulf Gourmet** magazine, **Nick Clowes**, the Commercial Manager for The Hotel Show Dubai, discusses the intense competition at the Chefs Table competition, which had the closest scores ever recorded. He also draws attention to the role of the Emirates Culinary Guild and dmG events in setting high standards for the event with their leadership and expertise

Can you describe the concept of the competition?

THE CHEFS TABLE at The Hotel Show Dubai is brought to you by The Emirates Culinary Guild (ECG) and dmG events. The tournament takes place over the three days of the exhibition, during which nine teams from the region's leading hotels/restaurants compete and highlight their culinary skills. It is a head-to-head competition utilizing three fully-appointed kitchens that are purpose-built at the venue. Judges score for mise-en-place, culinary skills, presentation, and, of course, taste.



Points are deducted for anything less than a pristine kitchen after service.

2024 was the 6th edition of the Chefs Table competition. How has this competition evolved over the

years while complementing The Hotel Show?

The Chefs Table competition complements The Hotel Show by adding a dynamic and engaging element to the event. The Hotel Show is a prominent trade exhibition

for the hospitality industry, featuring products, services, and innovations related to hotels, restaurants, and catering. The Chefs Table competition:

- ♦ **Attracts Attendees:** The event draws in a crowd of food enthusiasts, industry professionals, and media, increasing overall attendance and interest in The Hotel Show.
- ♦ **Showcases Talent:** The competition provides a platform for chefs to showcase their abilities, which aligns with The Hotel Show's goal of highlighting excellence in hospitality.
- ♦ **Networking:** Facilitates networking among chefs, hospitality professionals, and suppliers, fostering connections that benefit the industry as a whole.

Can you describe the atmosphere and ambience at this year's Chefs Table?

The combination of enhanced team collaboration, fierce competition, refined ambience, and a focus on guest experience made this year's Chefs Table atmosphere the best it's been. This improves year on year as the teams have honed their skills and refined their approaches to create an exceptional dining experience. This year's event was particularly notable for its highly competitive nature, with the closest scores ever seen.

What is the planning process involved in running the Chefs Table? What were the most challenging aspects of organizing this culinary event?

Running the Chefs Table involves intricate planning and organization, requiring the collaboration and dedication of several key individuals and teams. The event begins with defining the overall vision and theme, which includes crafting a unique menu that showcases the chef's expertise while considering seasonal ingredients and dietary restrictions.

The logistics involve ensuring all necessary supplies and equipment are available and meet the high standards of the event. This includes everything from



cooking equipment to tableware and decor. Coordinating the staff, including chefs and waitstaff, is essential to manage the event smoothly.

Guest experience is a top priority, starting with sending out invitations, managing RSVPs, and planning seating arrangements to enhance interaction and comfort. Culinary preparation is another significant aspect, involving the sourcing of high-quality ingredients from our sponsors and extensive pre-event preparation, including ingredient prep, cooking, and plating rehearsals to ensure flawless execution.

On the day of the event, precise timing and coordination are crucial to ensure smooth service and perfect presentation of each dish. Engaging with guests to provide insights into the dishes enhances their dining experience. The most demanding aspects include maintaining attention to detail in every

element, managing a large team, and being adaptable to handle unexpected issues such as ingredient shortages or last-minute guest requests. Consistently delivering a high-quality experience despite the pressure and complexity of the event is a significant challenge.

The success of the Chefs Table is not possible without the hard work and dedication of Mr Andy Cuthbert and the Emirates Culinary Guild, whose leadership and expertise set the high standards for the event. Additionally, the dmg events operations team, led by Sree Nambery and Benita Virginia Dsouza, plays a crucial role in organizing the logistics, coordinating with suppliers and staff, and ensuring every detail is meticulously planned and executed. Additionally, the event is supported by key sponsors RAK Porcelain, Topia, Barakat, and Chef Middle East, whose contributions are vital to the event's success. Their combined efforts make



this complex and high-stakes event exceptionally successful.

How competitive was it, and which team won the competition this year?

It's impressive to see the Chefs Table competition intensify each year, culminating in a tightly contested event where Madinat Jumeirah emerged as the overall winner. This competitiveness underscores the high level of skill and creativity brought by each participating team, pushing boundaries and raising standards in culinary excellence. Such close competition not only enhances the event's excitement but also highlights the dedication and innovation of chefs and their teams, ensuring that guests enjoy a truly memorable gastronomic experience.

Tell us about your collaboration with the Emirates Culinary Guild.



Our collaboration with the Emirates Culinary Guild is a cornerstone of the Chefs Table event. Led by Mr. Andy Cuthbert, the Guild provides unparalleled expertise, industry knowledge, and resources that elevate the event to a world-class standard. Their deep understanding of culinary trends and extensive network of top chefs and

culinary professionals are invaluable. This partnership ensures we maintain the highest quality standards in every aspect of the event, from ingredient sourcing to final presentation, creating an unforgettable dining experience.

Without the Guild, the Chefs Table would not be possible to execute.

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

From IKA with Love

A snapshot of the UAE team creations at the **IKA Culinary Olympics 2024**



Nishan Nayana Mudiyansele



Pathma Madushanka Kuma Hennedige





Pathum Priyankara Liyanage



Ruwan Kumara Gerdara



A PINCH OF SNOW

Life of Chef **Sebastien JM Kuhn** on the White Continent

Beginning his apprenticeship in 1987 at a Michelin-starred restaurant in France, Sebastien JM Kuhn has worked as a chef in various hotels and resorts all around the world, eventually leading to Australia in September 2005. As a jet-setting chef, now he has added one of the most remote places on the planet to his list of conquests: Antarctica. And that's only the tip of the iceberg!

In the frigid wilderness of Antarctica, life as a chef is just as jumping over crevasses. Tackling temperatures, managing all consumables in a location with rare resupply missions, more than the responsibility of feeding a team of

researchers and working with passion - it evolves into a unique state of mind. Chef Sebastien encapsulates this experience in his intriguing new book, *A Chef on Ice*.

"I am pleased with the outcome as the book has received positive feedback. However, what makes me even happier is that this book tells a true story filled with both joyful moments and times of sorrow, including the loss of two lives. It is not just a story about being a chef or living in Antarctica, but rather a complete journey that takes readers from Australia to Antarctica, France, and South Africa," Chef Sebastien expresses with a warmth of gratitude.



In 2018, he stumbled upon a luxurious tour operator that offered exclusive trips to Antarctica for only 14 guests. For Chef Sebastien, having the opportunity to work in one of the most pristine, untouched places remaining on Earth while doing what he loves is a dream come true. He emphasises, "I hope that by sharing my experience, others will develop an appreciation for this magnificent continent and understand why we must protect it."





It all happened during the break in 2014 when he came across an ad in the newspaper from the Australian Antarctic Division seeking chefs to work in Antarctica. Following an arduous hiring procedure, Chef Sebastien secured a once-in-a-lifetime culinary adventure as one of only a few chefs worldwide to live in Antarctica and prepare meals for a close-knit group of researchers and staff. It marked his first season working in Antarctica, which, unbeknownst to him, would lead to another five seasons spanning over a decade, totalling 660 days on the ice.



It's not easy to cook gourmet meals as the private chef for high-end customers who typically stay for 5-6 days in one of the harshest environments on Earth, let alone live in a nylon tent. "Our off-grid setting meant we had to melt ice for water and were provided with basic camping accommodations - foam mat and polar-grade sleeping bag," says Chef Sebastien.



"Even with temperatures as low as -20 degrees Celsius, our biggest challenge was properly storing food since we had no electricity. Thankfully, I recalled reading about the "cold porch" technique used by early explorers to preserve heat and utilised a similar space hovering around zero degrees to store our food," he recounts.



However, difficulties are just things to overcome after all: Ernest Shackleton, 15th December 1900. The landscapes and a tight-knit community made the hardships worthwhile.





Meeting different groups of guests and discussing their dietary preferences before preparing their meals with high-quality ingredients flown in weekly meant he created connections with people who shared the same passion for food and adventure. While living and working in a challenging and basic setup, he came across an idea to write a book titled "A Chef on Ice" that dishes out all the details on what it takes to work in Antarctica, from mastering essential safety skills to preparing ingredients with limited resources in this unforgiving, secluded environment. Through a series of first-hand interviews, the book gives you a peek into Chef Sebastian's travels to the bottom of the world, complete with some breathtaking visuals of Antarctica's landscapes, a place few will ever travel.



Basking in this awe-inspiring place, Chef Sebastian reveals in his book *A Chef on Ice* how he has found a sense of purpose in the most unexpected moments.



Food is like the glue that brings everyone together at the station. Chef Sebastian uses his craft to boost morale and make their time a little more enjoyable in a fragile environment. "Though everything usually went smoothly, there was one instance where a guest requested a Mexican dish requiring guacamole, but we had no avocados. Luckily, I remembered an article about using frozen peas as a substitute for avocado in guacamole and gave it a try - much to everyone's satisfaction," he remarks lightheartedly



TO IN IT WIN IT

Emirates Salon Culinaire is a platform for ambition, strategy, and empowering chefs. For **Nuwan Kumara**, it was more than a big stage, but rather a landmark juncture to redeem himself after striking out several times. **Amaresh Bhaskaran** speaks to Chef Nuwan Kumara, who, in his victory vault, holds three golds, one silver, and the coveted title of Best Cuisinier of the Year



Rippling applause rings around the Expo Centre as Chef Nuwan Kumara cradled the Best Cuisinier trophy in his arms.

It is a striking expression of pure joy. The dopamine rush from the jubilation masks Chef Nuwan's joie de vivre in liberating himself from the burden of self-imposed expectations.

Behind the win lie multiple attempts, enough for the muscle memory to take over and lead him to this touching moment.

"Many chefs in the competition get discouraged by one loss and never try again. On the other hand, look at me. I have been on a long competition spree, winning merits in the 2018 Salon Culinaire and two competitions in Fujairah. This is my 12th time competing, aiming to win as many medals as possible. Surprisingly, this was my first attempt at Best Cuisinier, and I managed to secure the title," he elucidates.

There was no rigid mindset, no procrastination, no tricks from AI—just pure hard work and putting in extra effort by competing in four different categories. Now, every time he steps into the arena, he comes out with medals.

At the heart of his brave strategy is making every second count. Chef Nuwan began gearing up five months in advance for this competition. This was also the first time he tried his hand at the aspic, which he was unfamiliar with. Yet, with the help of colleagues, taking notes from videos, and practising it over six times, a gold medal was within reach.

"This time, I competed in chicken live cooking, beef live cooking, and making aspics. I received gold medals in all these categories except for fish live cooking, where I got a silver medal. Although I didn't quite hit the mark with the fish dish, I was thrilled at my goal of clinching the title of Best Cuisinier," he says,



Many chefs in the competition get discouraged by one loss and never try again. On the other hand, look at me. I have been on a long competition spree...

Performance jitters kept him tossing and turning all night long during the three-day competition. Chef Nuwan admits to having endured countless months of tasting sessions and seeking feedback within the confines of his kitchen before stepping onto the grand stage. "Apart from the rigorous practice regimen during those three days of the competition, the surge of adrenaline and a burning desire to win the gold medal made it impossible for my body to sleep," he confessed.

Every previous attempt conveys his winning tale, as do all the tenacious efforts to recuperate his mind after every competition. Not that it needs a reminder; there is no one-person affair in winning. Behind every winner stands a supportive mentor, or in Chef Nuwan's case, mentors, colleagues, and the support of the Emirates Flight Catering team.

"Whether it's the incredible support from Emirates Flight Kitchen with ingredients, the guidance from my executive sous chef, Chef Anand Coonor, or the support and faith from Chef Nilantha Kumara and Chef Kapila Bandara, they all helped me with the practice for this competition. And, of course, I especially thank Chef James and Chef Rudolf."

As he expresses his gratitude, he also

gives his brother, Chef Pradeep Wasana, a big shout-out. "My brother currently works as a sous chef at DoubleTree by Hilton. In fact, he was the reason behind my foray into competitions and developing a winning mindset."

An up-close and very personal look at the script of his success gives us a glimpse of the early 2000s in Sri Lanka. Growing up in Galle, surrounded by the flourishing hospitality scene, his daily walk to school was filled with the aroma of rosemary and freshly baked bread that piqued his curiosity. He couldn't help but be magnetised to the hotels. He knew little about what it takes to be a chef, but it somehow clicked.

"Once I graduated, I enrolled for a culinary diploma at the Swiss Lanka Hotel School. A dream that happened because of the support of my grandfather, mother, and uncle." His voice clenches with overwhelming emotions midway through, remembering losing his father at the age of five. As someone who wears his heart on his sleeve, the tears in his eyes have an unspoken depth for his grandfather, who put all his faith and love in him so that he never felt his father's absence.

His first bite in the industry was as a kitchen hand at a local restaurant. Juggling school by day and mastering global cuisine recipes by night, he swiftly familiarised himself with the aromas that once intrigued him.

Over the next couple of years, the young chef went from being a trainee to first commis. He worked at the Bay Beach Hotel and the Austrian Beach Boutique Hotel before moving to the UAE in 2011, with an opportunity at Abela & Co. in Dubai.

Stepping onto foreign soil for the first time was more than just his dream. It fulfilled his grandfather's unfulfilled wish to see him settle outside Sri Lanka, something he never had the chance to accomplish due to his limited education.



Apart from the rigorous practice regimen during those three days of the competition, the surge of adrenaline and a burning desire to win the gold medal made it impossible for my body to sleep



"There was no turning back once I had grown accustomed to the foreign setting. Within a few years, I secured another role at More Cafe, an open restaurant concept that brought me closer to European cuisine," he says.

There, along with picking up new knowledge, he found his "right hand for life" in Chef Nilantha. "Chef Nilantha is salt to my pepper. He has been a great coach, reminding me to practice and guiding me for the competition. Whenever I would make something, I would ask him for advice. And together, we research different ideas before I create my dishes," he says, highlighting



Quality food leads the way in any operation. When it comes to in-flight catering, there's no room for error

that more than a good cook, Chef Nilantha is a good friend.

Life took a turn for the better when he

joined Emirates Flight Catering Company in 2017. In this very big operation lie both charisma and challenge. "I started in the hot kitchen making sauces and doing bulk preparation before progressing to preparing meals for first-class passengers of other special airlines, and then years later, catering to the VIP passengers of Emirates Airlines. After that, I transferred to Emirates Flight Catering Company Outlets. Each transition brought a new experience," he explains. His commitment and curiosity then got him promoted to chef de partie in 2023.

For the past year and a half, Chef Nuwan has been part of the team at a restaurant



This is my 12th time competing... Surprisingly, this was my first attempt at Best Cuisinier, and I managed to secure the title




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inside Emirates Aviation College—Crew Training—cooking for pilots and cabin crew. It's a slight change from cooking for flights, but his restaurant experience has come in handy.

"There is no major difference in the working process," he points out.

"Quality food leads the way in any operation. When it comes to in-flight catering, there's no room for error. Say, if it is specifically mentioned angle-cut carrots, then no other types of cuts can be used. At the restaurant, too, we continue to uphold our exacting standards for serving high-quality food."

Even though the restaurants where he has worked reflect his love of cooking and creating art, he has a list of his favourites. "I like cooking Italian food; one of my specialities is making fresh pasta. I also excel at Sri Lankan cuisine, especially preparing Sri Lankan fish curry, known as Malu Ambuthiyal. Oh, and Indian, European, and some Arabic cuisine are also something I enjoy," he explains, showcasing his versatile culinary skills.

A shy talker, pausing with simplicity marks, he has a small piece of advice for the budding chefs dreaming of walking in his footsteps: the more you practice, the more confident you will be. "Practice time management, keep cool in unexpected situations, such as when equipment malfunctions, and maintain high hygiene standards throughout the competition," he says.

When time permits, leisure comes in the form of family moments. His 7-year-old son and wife are always there at the end of the day to cheer him up. "Regardless of how late I was during the competition practice, be it midnight or later, my son and wife were always wide awake, eagerly awaiting my return. My son is my biggest cheerleader. He wished I would win Best Cuisiner, even creating adorable encouraging cards, and I won it," he says with a heartfelt smile.



Helping my colleagues train for competitions is one of my future goals. I want to share what I've learned

Excited as he is about the opportunities and challenges at Emirates Flight Catering Company, the 38-year-old chef hopes to eventually adorn his trophy shelf with medals from the Culinary Olympics. "Helping my colleagues train

for competitions is one of my future goals. I want to share what I've learned."

But what does this win mean for him?

'A new learning opportunity', he says with enthusiasm. Aside from claiming his trophy, he is also excited about the bigger prize of a one-week educational trip to Germany.

Talking with Chef Nuwan, you would anticipate him bragging about the unbridled power he has shown despite his tribulations, but he remains excited and humble all at once. Only one thing comes to my mind: he is a placeholder of sportsmanship. Guess I came for the winner and stayed for a humble warrior.

WORLDCHIEFS PRESIDIUM 2024-2028

MEET TEAM ANDY

ANDY CUTHBERT

A champion of empowering the future generation of Worldchefs through culinary unity.

RICK STEPHEN

A luminary committed to empowering the Worldchefs community through competition and skill enhancement.

ALAIN HOSTERT

A visionary dedicated to empowering the next generation of chefs through education.

KRISTINE HARTVIKSEN

An advocate of the Green Chefs inclusion and culinary sustainability

UWE MICHEEL

A global culinary champion passionate about taking the industry to the next level through scholarship programs.



THE CULINARY UNITY

A Culinary Journey: From Passionate Beginnings and Beyond

(Part VI) Learning to make terrines, perfectly poaching salmon, and mastering endless coats of aspic jelly, Chef Helen Morris tells about her experience working in a massive kitchen and proving herself as a strong female chef

So here I was. It finally happened. I was in that big kitchen with the mystical white vision of the chef. There he was, standing tall and proud in that towering hat, looking like a culinary wizard. And I was in total awe. There is something magical about a kitchen. It always has that smell, ranging from the fresh aroma of breakfast to the mouth-watering scent of dinner. I started in the pastry section, and let me tell you, that was a different kind of olfactory overload. The pastry chef was superb, but I realized early on that my love affair with pastry was destined to be a brief fling.

So, I moved to the cold larder section, where I discovered my true passion. I became a master of decorated buffet pieces, using chafrois and poaching whole salmon, finishing them with a glaze so perfectly you could see your reflection (which, by the way, is a great way to check for spinach in your teeth). I created all sorts of culinary masterpieces, from delicate flower displays to endless coats of aspic jelly. Timing was everything—waiting for the perfect moment to use the jelly, then glazing the creations. When finished, it was a piece of art worthy of a museum (or at least a very fancy Instagram post).

I learned how to make terrines and plate delicate portions that looked like magazine shoots. I mingled with seasoned chefs who had years of experience, absorbing their wisdom like



There is something magical about a kitchen; it's where passion and precision blend to create culinary masterpieces

a sponge. Most of my time was spent in the cold larder, with the occasional stint in the hot section, where I learned the true meaning of "if you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen."

Now, let us talk about those big pots and pans. Coming from a small hotel with a kitchen to match, I was familiar with pots and pans that were, well, more manageable. But in this kitchen, they were massive. I had to prove I was an independent, strong female chef. So, what did I do? I hit the gym and started weightlifting! I had to show I could carry those massive pots and pans on my own. Of course, I was not completely reckless—when necessary, I'd ask for help, especially when those pots were filled with bubbling sauces and a two-man (person) job was required. However, I did not just learn new kitchen techniques or terminology. I learned about teamwork and surviving long hours. Teamwork was crucial, not just in

the kitchen but throughout the entire hotel. We needed that camaraderie to keep things running smoothly.

As a team, we partied with hotel staff, friends of friends, and anyone who worked in the hotel industry. We exchanged stories about our restaurants, the latest mistakes by the commis, and the arguments over the pass between service and kitchen teams. The hospitality world is small, and those connections were invaluable. Even without social media, we stayed connected through letters and phone calls. Yes, actual landlines! Remember those?

But we had fun days off, dining in the latest London restaurants, enjoying boat rides, and picnicking by the river Thames. We explored new places in Berkshire, Hampshire, and hit the coast when the sun was out. Our nights out were legendary; we would often party until three, four, or even five in the morning. We would sleep for a couple of hours, shower, and head back to work, somehow functioning the entire day. These days, I cannot even fathom staying out past 10 PM! Just the thought of it makes me need a nap.

Now, let us talk about the staff accommodation situation. The hotel had a house in a beautiful village near the hotel, and we all shared the living room and kitchen space. That, my fellow hospitality friends, was a



Savor your culinary dreams and relish every moment, both in and out of the kitchen

nightmare. Not everyone knew how to clean up, especially in the kitchen. Plates piled high with dirty dishes until HR stepped in. We had to label everything to identify the culprits of the filth. It was like a real-life episode of "CSI: Kitchen Nightmare."

One significant member of the kitchen team, the sous chef, moved to the Caribbean, and my next holiday was all expenses paid in a luxurious beach hotel—connections! I formed a strong bond with his replacement, who had great managerial experience and endless stories. He got me my next job, and I will always be grateful for that.

But before that, our awe-inspiring executive chef moved on, leaving us with a grand farewell banquet. As part of the *Chaine des Rotisseurs*, we executed an amazing medieval banquet. My decorated buffet work was out for the test! The event was phenomenal and left a lasting impression. We were like culinary knights, wielding our spatulas and tongs with precision and flair.

Where did I end up next? Thanks to those connections, I ended up in the beautiful grounds of another country house hotel in Hampshire. I got on well with the executive chef, and the kitchen was even bigger. About six weeks later, I started my new job and lived in leafy Hampshire. As you can guess, there were more culinary escapades to follow.

Savor your culinary dreams and relish every moment, both in and out of the kitchen.

Chef Helen



PINK GOLD ON YOUR PLATE

From learning the art of cheese-making to spearheading the production of animal-free lactoferrin, the story behind food tech company TurtleTree becoming a trailblazer in sustainable dairy innovation

By **Shreya Asopa**

It all seems like a reprisal of Ray Kurzweil's theory of technological singularity. His manifestation of technology merging with biology has materialized through precision fermentation.

Precision fermentation, a common biotechnology that has been producing biosimilar ingredients for the pharmaceutical or enzyme industries since the 1990s, remained obscure in the layman's lexicon until recently, as the demand for sustainable food solutions increased. The Dairy News Today report indicates that the precision fermentation industry will reach \$3.62 billion globally by 2024.

Much of the discourse on precision fermentation is overshadowed by trite remarks about serving food products sans animals, mitigating carbon emissions versus equal access, and replicating traditional taste.

There is no denying that forward-thinking food tech companies have given a strong rebuttal, whether in recreating dairy's creamy goodness through precision fermentation-derived casein or addressing cost through panning economies of scale. While everyone else is nagging over flavor and mouthfeel, one food tech company is using precision fermentation in a different kettle of fish— to create milk proteins without involving a single moo.

The Singaporean food tech TurtleTree has made a significant leap forward by creating Lactoferrin (LF+), a dairy protein popularly known as 'pink gold,' through precision fermentation. "We produce bioactive ingredients that provide functionality inside the body without affecting the taste and flavor of the finished formulation. Pasteurization can reduce the bioactive components of milk by over 50%. Some dairy companies extract high-value proteins like lactoferrin and re-introduce them into processed dairy to preserve the nutritional profile. TurtleTree has taken the same approach," says Fengru Lin, Co-Founder & CEO at TurtleTree.

The road to inventing pink gold, sought after by many plant-based and lab-based options, was brewing long before, back when Fengru was buried in piles of reports and metrics at a global corporation. You nudge her about the leap, and she describes the cheese-pull moment. "I'll always remember the time I spent in Vermont learning how to make cheese. When I returned to Singapore, I struggled to find fresh raw milk to replicate the whole process. There were various challenges within the dairy system, from issues such as intensive farming and the use of antibiotics to boost milk production, all hampering the milk quality," she explains.

The protein recipe was cooked up only after she met the company's current co-founder, Max Rye, who was delivering a presentation on startups cultivating meat in a lab. "We spoke on challenges

around milk and realized no one else is doing it. And in 2019, we made significant headway around the concept of cell-based milk, which is getting mammary cells to express different ingredients in milk," shares Lin.

Having full-functional milk leapfrog other dairy options brought its fair share of unabated problems. Once they secured initial patents for cell-based milk and approached influential entities, they got hit with sour feedback pertaining to reaching a competitive price in the near future.

"The industry experts were rather focused on the high-value ingredients and proteins found in milk. Top of the protein list was lactoferrin due to its scarcity and cost of \$1,000 a kilogram. So, we shifted our focus. Today, we have also established our self-assessed Generally Recognized As Safe (GRAS) status for our precision fermentation-derived LF+," stated Vanessa Castagna, the Director of Scientific Affairs at TurtleTree.

The whole process of preparing LF+ is divided into three major steps. To kick things off, the production host is modified to produce a specific recombinant protein. The production host is then immersed in a nutrient-rich broth in a bioreactor for growth and then a protein is extracted for purification and transformation into solid powder form.

Taking a look at last year, Castagna recalled manufacturers rearing their



The team behind TurtleTree's latest advancements in sustainable dairy proteins

heads left and right due to limited capacity. Flipping the script on consumer perception by outlining how they modify the finished formulation without compromising on the vegan status has opened doors to partnerships with B2B2C partners. "However, it doesn't change the uphill battle of changing consumer perception. We still work with industry partners and follow the work of groups like the Precision Fermentation Alliance, PFA, to make this a successful journey, says Castagna.

What is currently swirling around the dairy-free or plant-based milk industry stems from scattered facts on nutrition levels mixed with apprehension about the taste of the end product. The answers have found their way to TurtleTree's LF+. This protein does not alter the flavor or consistency of food, making it easy to include in various products such as sports drinks, ice cream, protein powder, and yogurts.

According to Lin, including better-for-you nutrition in the menu gives chefs an edge by allowing them to focus on flavor without worrying about the bioactive components since they don't add any

extra taste. "One of our chef advisors, Dominique Crenn, has wholeheartedly embraced precision fermentation-based ingredients to fortify her current menu, providing patrons with a plethora of choices. We have also worked on better-for-you desserts. Last year, we had an event in San Francisco, and one of our food scientists came up with a delicious lactoferrin sorbet. Desserts don't have to be bad for you. That's a new way to see it."

Zooming in on the technology shows it may take a while before dairy without animals becomes a household name. Despite this, the life cycle assessment is already teasing us with a positive picture of lower greenhouse gas emissions compared to traditional dairy products. Castagna points out that Perfect Day's LCA highlighted that transitioning from milk protein to animal-free whey protein could reduce CO2 emissions by 246 million tonnes. "We are currently conducting our LCA to show how removing animals from the dairy process can reduce greenhouse gas emissions," she adds.

With nutrition as its compass, the company is not holding back from exploring new possibilities. "Lactoferrin

is our flagship product, but we have a pipeline of other proteins and blends in development. These proteins are better for the environment, better for you, and cruelty-free," says Castagna.

Considering a major task ahead of them, these two know how to fuel their days with productive beverage preferences. Fengru, a fitness enthusiast and protein paladin, enjoys her dense and rich protein shakes. Meanwhile, Vanessa, a glutton for mochas, often enjoys them with TurtleTree's LF+. With all the fusion of science and mocha, their dairy dream team is revolutionizing the industry—one protein shake at a time!

Five years into the journey of success and errors, Fengru is still making every day count. We ask if you could add a pinch of hindsight, would you change anything?

She ponders, "If I had made different choices, would I still have learned from my valuable lessons, from my mistakes, and achieved the successes we've experienced? I can't say. It's not just about reaching the finish line; every setback, cut, and success; I took them all and enjoyed every minute of it."



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Meat With Sulemana

Abubakari Sadik Sulemana, a seasoned protein and livestock agriculture specialist, elaborates on the power of understanding the right meat cuts for preparing the perfect dish

When it comes to cooking meat, understanding which meat cut to use is crucial. Building on our previous discussion of hindquarter and forequarter cuts, we will now explore midsection cuts.

Midsection Cuts, as implied, are also derived from the middle portion of the animal and include cuts like ribeye, sirloin, and fillet.

Moving on to the most popular and common beef cuts, we have the following:

1. **Ribeye:** This is known for its rich marbling and incredible taste.
2. **Sirloin:** An all-round and tender cut commonly used for steaks.
3. **Fillet:** A highly prized and tender cut known as tenderloin.
4. **Rump:** A boneless, flavorful, lean cut perfect for grilling or roasting.
5. **T-Bone:** A T-bone cut combines fillet and sirloin, offering the best of both worlds.
6. **Porterhouse:** This cut is a larger portion of the tenderloin.

It is important to note that while these cuts are popular, there are also lesser-known beef cuts that offer unique flavours and textures (that is, the secondary cuts of beef)

1. **Featherblade:** This is a marbled and flavorful cut.
2. **Flat Iron:** Tender and juicy cut, ideal for grilling.
3. **Picanha:** The cut is known for its tenderness and rich flavour.
4. **Tri-Tip:** A triangular-shaped cut excellent for grills and marinade.
5. **Bavette:** This is also known as the flap steak; it is an affordable cut that's suitable for grilling.

6. **Onglet:** This is a robust and beefy cut often used in French cuisine.

Each beef cut requires specific cooking techniques and recommendations if you are to derive the best qualities out of it. Therefore, understanding these cooking techniques is crucial to ensure you get the most flavour and tenderness from your chosen cut. Furthermore, when selecting a beef cut for your dish, consider factors such as cooking method, desired texture, and personal preferences.

By familiarising yourself with the various beef cuts available and their unique characteristics, you can make informed decisions before choosing the perfect cut for your next meal.

Key Takeaways

- ◆ **Understanding Beef Cuts:** Learn about the different beef cuts, such as forequarter, hindquarter, and midsection cuts, to make informed cooking choices.
- ◆ **Popular Beef Cuts:** The most commonly loved beef cuts include ribeye, sirloin, fillet, rump, T-bone, and porterhouse. Explore these for delicious meals.
- ◆ **Exploring Lesser-Known Cuts:** Discover unique beef cuts like flat iron, onglet, featherblade, picanha, tri-tip, and bavette to add variety and flavour to your recipes.

Preparing the Meat

Trim any excess fat, season with salt and pepper, and allow it to rest at room temperature.

- ◆ **Grilling:** Preheat the grill, sear the meat on high heat, and then cook it until it reaches your desired level of doneness.



- ◆ **Roasting:** Preheat the oven, sear the meat in a hot pan, and then transfer it to the oven to roast at the recommended temperature.
- ◆ **Pan-frying:** Heat oil in a skillet, sear the meat on both sides until it is browned, and finish cooking it in the oven or on the stovetop.
- ◆ **Slicing and serving:** Allow the meat to rest before slicing it against the grain, and serve it with your choice of accompaniments.

True story:

One summer, my family had a barbecue featuring ribeye steak. The perfectly seasoned and grilled midsection cut was a hit, pleasing everyone's taste buds with its juicy and tender texture. It was a memorable meal that brought us together and made me appreciate the deliciousness of midsection cuts even more.

The Most Popular and Common Beef Cuts

I recommend that you discover the wide array of mouth-watering beef cuts commonly found across the world. From succulent ribeye to tender Sirloin, Filet to juicy rump, classic T-bone to indulgent porterhouse, you uncover, with each sub-section, the distinct attributes and culinary delights that make these beef cuts popular all over the world.

Bridging the Gap: Seasoned Chefs as Mentors in the Culinary World (Part II)

Chef **Tarek Mouriess** focuses on how experienced chefs can assist young chefs in developing a solid foundation while staying relevant in an ever-changing culinary landscape

Seasoned chefs have a unique ability to ignite and nurture the passion of young chefs. By sharing their deep love for the culinary arts and the joy of creating exceptional dishes, seasoned chefs can instill a sense of purpose and dedication in the new generation. Here are some ways seasoned chefs can support young chefs in navigating evolving culinary trends:

Sharing Industry Insights: Seasoned chefs have a wealth of experience and knowledge about the culinary industry. They can share their observations and insights about shifts in consumer preferences, as well as new culinary techniques. By discussing these insights, seasoned chefs can help young chefs stay informed and anticipate changes in the culinary landscape.

Offering Mentorship and Guidance: Seasoned chefs can act as mentors to young chefs, guiding how to adapt to changing culinary trends. They can provide:

- ♦ Advice on incorporating new ingredients.
- ♦ Experimenting with different flavor profiles.
- ♦ Applying innovative cooking techniques..

Mentorship allows young chefs to learn from the seasoned chefs' experiences, benefiting from their wisdom and expertise.

Collaborative Learning and Experimentation: Seasoned chefs can create opportunities for young chefs



to engage in collaborative learning and experimentation. This can involve organizing workshops, tastings, or even teaming up with other chefs to develop new recipes and concepts. By encouraging young chefs to explore and experiment with culinary trends in a supportive environment, seasoned chefs can help them gain confidence and develop their creative approach.

Emphasizing the Importance of Versatility: Culinary trends often require chefs to be versatile and adaptable. Seasoned chefs can underscore the importance of continuously expanding one's culinary repertoire and being open to learning new skills.

Encouraging Continuous Education: Culinary education is a lifelong journey, and seasoned chefs understand the importance of staying updated with

industry advancements. They can motivate young chefs to pursue continuous education by attending culinary workshops and seminars or enrolling in specialized courses. By supporting their pursuit of knowledge, seasoned chefs empower young chefs to adapt to changing trends and excel in their careers.

Balancing Tradition and Innovation: Seasoned chefs can guide young chefs in finding the right balance between honoring culinary traditions and embracing innovation. They can assist young chefs in adapting to changing culinary trends by sharing industry insights, offering mentorship, promoting collaborative learning, emphasizing versatility, facilitating networking opportunities, encouraging continuous education, and guiding the balance between tradition and innovation. Through their guidance and support, seasoned chefs help shape the next generation of adaptable, innovative, and well-equipped chefs to thrive in a dynamic culinary landscape.

Encouraging Research and Exploration & Nurturing Creativity: Seasoned chefs can encourage young chefs to conduct research and explore various sources of inspiration. This includes studying cookbooks, food magazines, culinary blogs, and social media to discover culinary trends. Ask them to dive into real-life experiences through attending pop-up events, collaborating with other chefs or restaurants, or participating in food festivals and competitions. By



encouraging them to experiment with new ingredients, flavor combinations, and presentation techniques, seasoned chefs can help young chefs develop their unique culinary style.

Supporting Continuous Menu

Development: Menus in restaurants and culinary establishments must evolve to keep up with changing trends and customer preferences. Seasoned chefs can guide young chefs in regularly reviewing and updating menus to incorporate new culinary trends. They can provide insights on menu planning, balancing flavors and textures, and creating cohesive dining experiences that align with current culinary demands.

Emphasizing Local Ingredients &

Sustainability: Culinary trends often highlight using seasonal and locally sourced ingredients, promoting sustainability and freshness. Seasoned chefs can educate young chefs on the importance of utilizing local produce and help them develop relationships

with local farmers and suppliers. By incorporating seasonal ingredients into their menus, young chefs can stay aligned with current culinary trends and advocate for a more sustainable approach to cooking. It is also essential to educate young chefs about sustainable sourcing, reducing food waste, and environmentally conscious cooking techniques.

Mentorship in Technology Integration:

Seasoned chefs can mentor young chefs in effectively integrating technology into their culinary practices. This can involve teaching them how to use cooking apps and recipe management software or even incorporating innovative cooking techniques made possible by technological advancements.

Cultivating Adaptability and Flexibility:

Culinary trends can change rapidly, and chefs must adapt quickly to stay relevant. Seasoned chefs can instill a mindset of adaptability and flexibility in young chefs, teaching them to embrace change and be open to learning new skills.

Navigating Dietary Restrictions and

Preferences: Culinary trends often reflect shifts in dietary preferences, such as veganism, gluten-free options, or plant-based diets. Seasoned chefs can guide young chefs in understanding and accommodating these dietary restrictions and preferences. They can share their knowledge of alternative ingredients, cooking methods, and flavor profiles, ensuring that young chefs can cater to various customer needs.

Very important! Developing Business

Acumen: Adapting to culinary trends requires not only culinary skills but also business acumen. Seasoned chefs can mentor young chefs to understand market dynamics, analyze consumer behaviour, and make informed decisions for their culinary ventures. By imparting their knowledge of the business side of the industry, seasoned chefs equip young chefs with the tools to navigate the competitive culinary landscape effectively.



RESTOFAIR
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Winning PR Strategies in the GCC's F&B and Hospitality Industry

Ritika Bhanushali writes how brands can blend cultural sensitivity with innovation for lasting impact

In the GCC's vibrant F&B and hospitality sectors, crafting successful PR strategies requires a delicate balance between cultural sensitivity and innovative engagement. Jumeirah Hotels and Resorts' 2022 campaign exemplifies this balance. Designed to attract tourists to their Middle Eastern properties, the campaign emphasized the emotional experiences guests could expect, such as warmth, bliss, and family bonding. By reflecting the Middle Eastern essence of hospitality—valuing relationships and communal experiences—Jumeirah successfully blended global appeal with regional cultural nuances. This approach showcased their luxurious offerings and resonated deeply with the local culture's emphasis on togetherness.

On the other hand, SALT's campaign stands out for its innovative approach that sparked curiosity and engagement. Transitioning from a food truck to an iconic UAE brand, SALT's 'Find SALT' campaign cleverly utilized influencer marketing and a citywide scavenger hunt, where keys were hidden in parks and clues shared via social media. This tactic generated significant excitement, driving people to participate and experience the brand firsthand. By creating an air of exclusivity and adventure, SALT successfully captured the audience's imagination and positioned itself as a unique and sought-after brand in the market.

To excel in the GCC, brands must offer immersive experiences that resonate with the region's emphasis on hospitality and community. Organizing events like cooking workshops during Ramadan that showcase traditional recipes and foster communal Iftar experiences can create meaningful connections with the local community. Additionally, including the general public



alongside influencers and media during activations ensures that the audience receives an unbiased and relatable perspective, which can enhance the campaign's credibility and appeal.

Influencer marketing is crucial in the GCC's PR landscape. Influencers act as cultural ambassadors, bridging global brand messaging with local customs. Their endorsement can significantly enhance a campaign's relatability and effectiveness. For instance, influencers who understand and respect Ramadan traditions can communicate a brand's message in a way that resonates with the target audience, building long-term loyalty.

Integrating social media with traditional media is key to a successful PR strategy in the GCC. Social media platforms provide real-time engagement and broad reach, ideal for interactive campaigns and direct audience connections. However, traditional media remains valuable, especially in regions where print and broadcast media are respected for their credibility and broad reach.

Differentiating from competitors is also

vital in a crowded market. Highlighting unique aspects of a brand can generate excitement and a strong desire to experience its offerings. SALT's 'Find SALT' campaign is a prime example of how innovation and creativity can differentiate a brand, capturing the public's curiosity and drawing them into an engaging and memorable experience.

Additionally, sharing behind-the-scenes insights into a brand's operations can enhance its appeal. For F&B and hospitality brands, transparency builds trust and fosters a personal connection with customers. Incorporating interviews with head chefs or hospitality professionals, presented in a visually engaging format, allows the audience to gain a deeper understanding of the brand's commitment to quality and service. Visual storytelling, such as video interviews or behind-the-scenes footage, helps convey the passion and expertise that go into creating memorable experiences, further strengthening the emotional and relational connections that are central to the region's cultural identity.

In the GCC's F&B and hospitality sectors, PR strategies that honor cultural values while distinguishing a brand from competitors are crucial. By offering immersive experiences, choosing culturally aligned influencers, integrating social and traditional media, and showcasing internal dedication, brands can craft campaigns that deeply resonate with their audience. Jumeirah's and SALT's successes both illustrate that combining cultural sensitivity with innovative engagement leads to significant growth and impact. For brands navigating the GCC, a thoughtful, culturally sensitive, and distinctive approach is key to forging meaningful connections and achieving lasting success.

Tackling Food Waste: A MULTIFACETED APPROACH

(Part IV) The Limitations of Current Food Waste Management Practices

Dear Chefs,

While the hospitality industry has made significant strides in addressing the pressing issue of food waste, numerous limitations persist in the current food waste management practices. These limitations span various aspects, including operational challenges, regulatory barriers, and societal factors, hindering the industry's ability to achieve comprehensive and sustainable solutions. In this article, we delve into the key limitations and explore the essential factors that impede progress in this crucial endeavour.

OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES:

Limited Infrastructure and Resources: Many hospitality establishments, particularly smaller operations, lack the necessary infrastructure and resources to implement effective food waste management strategies. Inadequate storage facilities, composting equipment, and dedicated personnel can pose significant obstacles to proper waste segregation, recycling, and repurposing efforts (Papargyropoulou et al., 2019).

Lack of Training and Awareness: Despite the growing emphasis on sustainability, staff members often lack comprehensive training and awareness programs regarding food waste management practices. This knowledge gap can lead to inefficient implementation of waste reduction strategies and hinder the adoption of best practices (Pirani & Arafat, 2016).

Inconsistent Data Collection and Monitoring: Accurate data collection and monitoring of food waste generation are crucial for identifying



Chit-Chat with Chef Carl

areas of improvement and measuring the effectiveness of implemented strategies. However, many hospitality establishments struggle with inconsistent or inadequate data collection methods, hindering their ability to make informed decisions and track progress (Filimonau & Sulyok, 2021).

REGULATORY AND POLICY BARRIERS

Ambiguous Regulations and Liability Concerns: The complex web of regulations surrounding food safety, liability, and waste management can create ambiguity and uncertainty for hospitality operators. Concerns over potential legal liabilities often discourage establishments from engaging in food donation or repurposing initiatives, leading to increased waste (Filimonau & Tochukwu, 2020).

Lack of Incentives and Support: In many regions, governing bodies lack robust incentives and support mechanisms to encourage and facilitate sustainable food waste management practices within the hospitality sector. This absence of external motivation can hinder the adoption of innovative solutions and impede progress (Mak et al., 2021).

SOCIETAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS

Consumer Expectations and Behavior: Consumer expectations for abundant variety, large portion sizes, and aesthetic perfection in food presentation can contribute significantly to food waste generation. Additionally, societal norms and cultural attitudes towards food waste can influence consumer behaviour, making it challenging to shift mindsets and encourage more sustainable practices (Wang et al., 2021).

Lack of Public Awareness and Education: Despite increasing efforts, there remains a general lack of public awareness and education regarding the environmental, social, and economic impacts of food waste. This knowledge gap can perpetuate unsustainable behaviours and hinder the adoption of responsible practices by consumers and industry stakeholders alike (Juvan et al., 2017).

Cost and Profitability Considerations: In a highly competitive market, hospitality establishments often prioritize cost-cutting measures and profitability over sustainability initiatives. The perceived high costs associated with implementing comprehensive food waste management strategies can deter businesses from taking action, particularly in the absence of clear financial incentives (Mak et al., 2018).

Overcoming these limitations requires a multifaceted approach involving collaboration among various stakeholders, including policymakers, industry leaders, and consumers. Addressing operational challenges through investment in infrastructure, training, and data collection systems



is crucial. Regulatory reforms, incentives, and support mechanisms can encourage sustainable practices within the industry. Furthermore, raising public awareness and fostering a culture of responsible consumption is essential to driving lasting change.

LACK OF MOTIVATION AND RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

Personal Experience from Carl: As an industry insider, I have witnessed firsthand the lack of motivation among many hospitality establishments to actively participate in food waste management practices and related research initiatives. Despite the growing awareness of the issue, there seems to be a disconnect between

acknowledging the problem and taking concrete actions to address it.

During my interactions with various establishments, I have encountered a reluctance to allocate resources and prioritize food waste management efforts. Many operators view it as an additional burden rather than an opportunity to contribute to sustainability and potentially reduce operational costs in the long run. Furthermore, I have observed a general hesitancy to collaborate with researchers and academic institutions studying food waste management strategies. This reluctance often stems from concerns about potential disruptions to daily operations, confidentiality issues, or a

perceived lack of tangible benefits from participating in research studies.

Overcoming this limitation requires a shift in mindset within the industry, fostering a deeper understanding of the long-term benefits of embracing sustainable practices and contributing to the collective knowledge base. Increased education and awareness campaigns, coupled with incentives and recognition for establishments that actively participate in research and implement effective food waste management strategies, could help address this limitation.

Chef Carl
from Sydney

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Manifesting Pastry Power

From watching the Masterchef series to manifesting Pastry Mastery, meet young pastry chef **Man Kofalida** from Madinat Jumeirah C&I

Holding the piping bag for precise designs, 23-year-old commis Man Kofalida, from the pastry kitchen of Madinat Jumeirah C&I, has all the ingredients to vie for the pastry crown in the Arla Pro

Pastry Mastery Competition. Meet the Cambodian Commis...

In spite of the dynamism of daily banquet events, catering to huge numbers, and the competitive world of pastries, she

loves every bit of the experience. In her own words, "I love working here, creating various desserts that look good and are also fresh and of high quality. The happiness on the faces of the guests eagerly anticipating dessert is what makes this job fulfilling for me."



Given the large-scale operation, she often puts in a nine-hour shift that occasionally extends to 13 hours during the events while planning the production and mise-en-place in advance with the team. According to her, time seems to fly by when you're engaged in something you're passionate about. "If you have a passion, you'll find joy in your tasks, whether baking a cake, adding creative garnishes, and ultimately feeling satisfied by completing something with your own hands."

Backtracking to the past, Chef Kofalida noticed her destiny lay in the culinary when she was growing up in Phnom Penh. "I was 16 when I saw the Masterchef series on TV. I knew I, too, had to be like them, join competitions, and see the world of chefs."



The happiness on the faces of the guests eagerly anticipating dessert is what makes this job fulfilling for me



If you have a passion, you'll find joy in your tasks, whether baking a cake, adding creative garnishes, and ultimately feeling satisfied by completing something with your own hands



With no chefs in her family, the path ahead was rocky. "When I first told my parents I wanted to be a chef, they pictured me struggling to lift heavy equipment and drowning in kitchen heat, just like the street food stalls at Phnom Penh!" She laughs at this now.

"But I explained to them day by day about how the industry works," she says. As the youngest in a family of three older brothers, it didn't take long for her family to recognize her passion for pastry, giving her the wings of encouragement to soar towards her goals.

Following her high school, she completed a two-year hotel schooling diploma programme and decided to work in the kitchen. She interned at two different hotels in Cambodia before getting

placed at the Courtyard by Marriott Phnom Penh for a few months.

Due to the pandemic, her plans to pursue an internship abroad were put on hold. However, her happiness knew no bounds when she bagged an internship offer at Madinat Jumeirah in 2022.

"After my six-month internship, my performance was assessed, and I was hired as a commis pastry chef," she states, expressing her contentment that her efforts to learn and improve were acknowledged.

Since her initial day on the job, Chef Kofalida has met chefs from diverse nationalities and cultures. She has gradually mastered Arabic and Egyptian desserts along with Western pastry and

even acquired proficiency in English through daily practice. Chef Kofalida proffers that it doesn't matter where you are from; just put your heart to work, and everything else follows.

Learning to her can take many forms, such as reading books, watching videos, or direct guidance from senior chefs. "There are so many facilities to learn from. Understand different recipes, brainstorm ideas, and follow the original recipes because, in pastry-making, even a small deviation in ingredients can lead to undesirable results."

Arla Pro Pastry Mastery is Chef Kofalida's third competition. She won a gold medal in the Sweet Tartelette Creations category at the recent Salon Culinare and also represented the UAE team for the 2023 Young Chefs competition. "I thank Chef Rodrigo for guiding me for competitions, and a huge thank you to my pastry team for always having my back," she says with gratitude.

Various Arla Pro products were used to create this delicate dish, including mango, passion fruit, and apricot, with a touch of cardamom. She says, "The dish has an Arabic touch and burst of summer flavours all contained on the plate."

Over the next few years, she wants to keep doing what she likes and seize every opportunity to grow as a good chef. "If the chance arises, I plan to travel and stay true to my culinary aspirations," she affirms.



I thank Chef Rodrigo for guiding me for competitions, and a huge thank you to my pastry team for always having my back



Apricot Passion Cheesecake, Cardamom Ganache with Vanilla Chantilly Cream, Agar-Agar Mango and Passion Mango Crumble

Apricot Passion Cheesecake

Arla Pro Cream Cheese 34%	180 g
Arla Pro Whipped Cream 35%	40 g
Granulated Sugar	30 g
Apricot Puree	30 g
Passion Puree	20 g
Vanilla Pod	1 Pod
Gelatine	8 g

Method

- ◆ Take the cream cheese and make it soft. Whip cream with sugar and vanilla pod till soft peak; fold with cream cheese mixture.
- ◆ Add apricot and passion puree and combine together, then add gelatin. Pour into the mould and freeze overnight after glazing with apricot chocolate.

Cardamom Ganache

Milk Chocolate	100g
Cardamom Powder	5g
Arla Pro Whipped Cream 35%	100g
Arla Pro Butter	10g

Method

- ◆ Boil whipping cream and pour it on top of milk. Mix it and add butter. Combine it all together.

Vanilla Chantilly Cream

Arla Pro Whipped cream 35%	100g
Icing Sugar	15g
Vanilla Bean	1 pod

Method

- ◆ Whip the fresh cream with icing sugar
- ◆ Add the vanilla bean, and continue whipping until hard.

Agar-Agar Mango

Mango Puree	125g
Orange Juice	62g
Water	120g
Agar-Agar Powder	4g
Sugar	40g

Lime Juice to taste

Method

- ◆ Blend the mango puree and orange juice until it's smooth. In a small pot, add water and agar-agar powder and stir. Bring it to a full boil and keep stirring to make sure that all the agar agar powder is dissolved.
- ◆ Add sugar and mango cubes and whisk till it's smooth. Remove from heat and add more sugar and lime juice if needed. Pour the mixture into a mould. Add 1 cm of mango cubes.

Passion Mango Crumble

Arla Pro Butter	100g
Sugar	100g
Almond Powder	100g
Flour	100g
Passion Puree	50g
Mango Puree	50g

Method

- ◆ Melt Arla Pro butter, combine all the ingredients, sugar, almond powder, and add the melted butter, using a fork to lightly combine. Bake 180°C for 15 minutes.

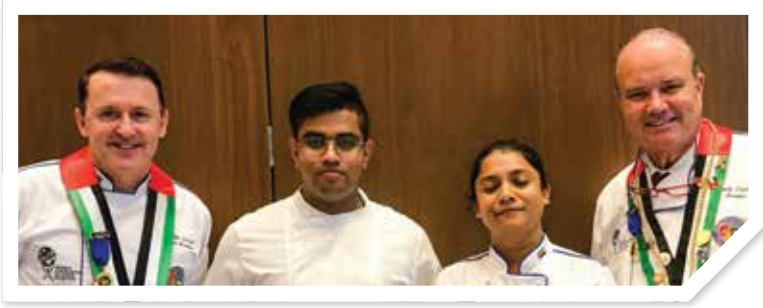
August-September 2024 **Gulf Gourmet**



The Guild Meet

The June Guild meeting was held at the Millennium Place Barsha Heights Hotel, Dubai, on June 21, 2024. We thank GM Glenn Nobbs, Executive Chef **Alvin Karkada** and their team for hosting the meeting





August-September 2024 Gulf Gourmet





Quote Marshal

Memories of 2021 Expo Culinaire, obstacles faced by new marshals, and power of passion. Chef **Manjula Rathnayaka** shares some of these details with Gulf Gourmet

What does it take to be a Marshal?

"Commitment," stated Chef Manjula.

"Running a competition seamlessly requires marshals. A lot is at stake. Every new Marshal should commit to performing as a cohesive unit, tackling any problems that may arise. It is not just a support; it is a commitment," he added.

Chef Manjula recently flew from Australia to judge at the Salon Culinaire, putting his culinary expertise to use and fulfilling his lifelong ambition to preside over the very competitions that had once built up his self-belief.

Carrying the judge's label comes after days of handling pre-competition responsibilities as a Marshal. From verifying participant prerequisites and ensuring that the culinary area is free from any disruptions that might compromise the judging process, he has done it all. "I held the position of Marshal in 2021 at Expo Culinaire, in 2023 at Sharjah Expo Culinaire and once again last year at the World Chefs Congress in Abu Dhabi, overseeing all the behind-the-scenes details involved in organising the competitions. This experience gave me the much-needed perspective into assessing situations and making impartial judgments."

The Marshals, he explains, are a big team who breathe life into competitions. This



Running a competition seamlessly requires marshals. A lot is at stake. Every new Marshal should commit to performing as a cohesive unit, tackling any problems that may arise. It is not just a support; it is a commitment,

is why Chef Manjula urges young chefs to contribute to the event's success. As Chef Manjula wisely remarks, "No one is to remain a marshal forever. It is important for fresh faces to step up and carry on the legacy."

Besides being a senior member of the Guild, Chef Manjula is also the regional vice president of the Dubai chapter of the Sri Lankan Hospitality Professionals Association (SLHPA). For him, both of these are equally important. As he aptly puts it, "I was once a hidden gem, but it was through my association with the ECG and the Sri Lankan Association that





No one is to remain a marshal forever. It is important for fresh faces to step up and carry on the legacy

I developed invaluable connections and came to the forefront in this industry."

ART & HEART

In the tiny town of Kurunegala in Sri Lanka, Chef Manjula would wander through the acres-long rice fields, the emerald stalks breathing in the fragrance of soil, ready to be harvested and enjoyed straight from his family farm.

Yet, it wasn't the juicy fresh produce

or the glitz of a career in hospitality that attracted Chef Manjula. "I was constantly drawn to the creativity and carving present in the world of pastry as a kid. So I just jumped on the bandwagon, signed up for vocational courses offered by Sri Lanka's Youth Corps and even did a Pastry & Bakery certificate course offered by the Ministry of Education." Donning the white jacket and holding the offset spatula was just the beginning of his sweet adventure.

Before arriving in Dubai, Chef Manjula did way more than simply finishing the programme. He trained for six months at multiple bakeries, including the Perera & Sons Bakery in Kandy, which gave him a taste of authentic French bread, homemade cakes, and pastries packed with seasonal fruits.

Initially, he was stunned by the magnitude of the large-scale operations in the bakeries. However, as he thrived in the demanding bakery environment, he felt prepared to accept the opportunity to join Epicure Catering Services in Dubai.

Being part of a distinct, close-knit kitchen culture before did not prevent him from blending well with the new multinational team. The constructive influence of Executive Chef Sathie, Sous Chef Chef Hassan, and Chef Newton, paired with their mentorship, helped Chef Manjula grasp the ins and outs of the operation. This led to his well-deserved promotion as the first commis within three months.

In 2011, he got his foot in the door at WAFI Hospitality, where he was put in charge of pastry bakery operations in the central kitchen. This was no small feat. Over the next two years, he had his hands full managing the colossal operations of the group, which consisted of over 13 outlets, leading a team of 20 staff members, and rubbing shoulders with seasoned chefs such as Chef Russell, Chef Angelo, Chef Kalum, and Chef Mario.



I was constantly drawn to the creativity and carving present in the world of pastry as a kid

"I was promoted to the Acting Demi, overseeing all the central kitchen pastry production, set menus, and a la carte orders. I remember, back in 2012, we executed a massive catering operation at the Wafi Hospitality rooftop, hosting a massive gathering of around 1,500 guests over two days. The event was spread across two days with pastry chefs and seven distinct buffets. It was an incredible bulk operation experience," shares Chef Manjula.

Around then, he also became a member of the Emirates Culinary Guild. Though hearty for participating in the Guild's activities and competitions, his busy work schedule and the rigours of steering bakery production for a supermarket retail brand didn't leave him much time to get involved.

"But that changed with time," he quickly counters with a smile. "Today, I make every effort to be there for the Guild in any way possible. I thank Chef Uwe, Chef Andy, Chef Prasad, and all the senior chefs and colleagues who contributed to my success."

In the following five years, Novotel Suits Hotel and Ibis Hotel Mall of the Emirates, both of which were under the Accor Group, as well as Leopold's of London The Beach, were key additions to his career arc.

"I was appointed as a senior chef de partie for the pre-opening of Leopold of London Restaurant in JBR," he says. Joining the team of nine, like yeast to dough, he rose with the brand as it expanded from one outlet to seven outlets across the UAE. "In those three fruitful years, I trained young chefs for different outlets and set up 400 covers of pastry operations for breakfast, lunch, and dinner," he adds.

A while into setting up the first outlet, a banquet of breaks awaited him, one promising one at Bazar. "We were making a variety of bread and croissants, healthy versions of pastry,



I came to Australia to showcase my art, but my heart is still in Dubai. I balance both

and desserts for Pret-To-Go and pastry delicacies that complemented the concept of fine dining. Unfortunately, that restaurant went under, but I soon found a new home at Coffeol," he says, noting the unpredictability of life.

At the age of 27, the role of Pastry Chef was a culinary Everest. The hospital, under the Chain of Al Garhoud Private Hospital and Hospitality Group, was in the process of setting up Coffeol, a niche cafe with a bakery and pastry space, when they welcomed Chef Manjula onboard to recruit and lead a team of six pastry chefs.

"I was overseeing the purchasing and operations for both the cafe and hospital menus. The experience was filled with exciting challenges of crafting our menus with the guidance of dieticians, adhering to patients' dietary restrictions while also catering to the cafe's clientele," he explains.

The past five years spent managing the cafe were a true test of his character, particularly when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. When the hospitality business crashed across the industry, the cafe was also not behind in bracing for the impact. The pastry operations downsized from 11 outlets to six, with Chef Manjula baking the menu with a limited workforce and an increased workload.

However, An adorable silver lining emerged when his son was born, bringing zest to his never-ending work cycle. Caught between running the operations smoothly and supporting his wife in caring for their newborn, he

mulled over hitting the pause button on his career when a long-lost aspiration of becoming a consultant and teacher boiled to the surface.

"It was 2021, and I decided to work as a Private Chef through platforms like Take A Chef and MiumMium while simultaneously teaching people at Cozy Meal Worldwide, an online cooking classes platform. As a freelance chef, I had all the freedom to set my own hours and schedules, cook for clients, and refine my culinary talent," he explained. Gaining autonomy in his projects and new skills opened a gateway to yet another prospect at Ka'ak Al Manara. Joining as a Head Pastry Chef and Group Pastry Consultant at this Lebanese bakery, he set out to create pastries that presented a fusion of Arabic and French influences.

Before long, his talents were recognised all the way to the Land Down Under. As a pastry chef, Chef Manjula led the operations of a casual dining restaurant, The Grounds of Alexandria, in Sydney. These days, he works at a Star Class Australian property close to the heart of Sydney (Darling Harbor).

"It's been only some months for me as a Pastry Chef. While here, I will also frequent Dubai for the Guild's activities whenever they need me. I came to Australia to showcase my art, but my heart is still in Dubai. I balance both."

Chef Manjula started his career working at a bakery, and that's how he envisions concluding it. Someday, he hopes to have a pastry bakery store. Another recurring thought is opening a training school. "My wife is a lecturer; she has taught in universities like Peradeniya in Kandy and Wollongong, so the training aspect is in the picture. But now I want to be a good pastry chef and an entrepreneur in the industry."

His plans, at present, appear to be the best way to add more sweetness to our lives as we deal with the industry's razzmatazz.



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THE EMIRATES CULINARY GUILD APPLICATION FORM

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Employee/ Business Owner:	Name of Business:	Designation:
Work Address:	Email Address:	Contact Number:

Type of Membership: (please tick)	
SENIOR: (Above the rank of chef de partie/ senior chef de partie on executive chef's recommendation).	AED350 joining fee/ AED150 renewal fee Includes certificate; member-pin, member medal and ECG ceremonial collar
MEMBER: (Below the rank of chef de partie 29 years old and over).	AED150 joining fee/AED75 renewal fee Includes certificate; member-pin, member medal and ECG ceremonial collar
YOUNG MEMBER: (under 28 years)	Free Includes certificate; member-pin

Declaration to be Signed by Applicant:

I wish to join The Emirates Culinary Guild in collaboration with The Women's Culinary Chapter.

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' endeavours to the best of my abilities.

Signature:

Proposed By:	Signature:
Seconded By:	Signature:

For Official Use Only				
Remarks:				
Payment Received?				
Certificate Given		Pin Given		Medal & Collar Given
Approved by President:			Signature:	
Approved by Chairman:			Signature:	

Note: The membership is only applicable to those who are working in the UAE as professional chef or with a background related as Chef in the hotel and restaurant industry.

The WCC is in collaboration with the Emirates Culinary Guild, which is a member of the World Association of Chef's Societies



*Dinner Bell
Cheese*



*Gustodoro
Tomatoes*

ELEGANCE IN EVERY BITE



SAVOR THE CREAMY MELT OF DINNER BELL CHEESE BETWEEN GOLDEN, TOASTED SOURDOUGH, PERFECTLY COMPLEMENTED BY A SIDE OF RICH GUSTODORO TOMATO SAUCE FOR DIPPING. A SIMPLE, LUXURIOUS BITE AWAITS.



  /EmiratesSnackFoods
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August-September 2024 **Gulf Gourmet**

newmembers



Dilmeet Sahni - Chief Managing Director (centre), and Pankaj Chanta - Corporate Head, Foodservice Division (left), receiving the Membership Certificate from the ECG President Andy Cuthbert.

Safco International General Trading Co. L.L.C, is one of the leading food service distributor, importer and exporter of superior quality food and non-food products in the UAE, Middle East region & international markets. We offer an exceptional blend of premium quality ingredients and value-added service to our clients.

Safco journey started in 1994, as a family-owned business with the vision and determination to diversify its wings to all major food segments.

Since inception, SAFCO has established



Leaders in Foodservice and Distribution

& built its business model by maintaining long term relationships with their clients, suppliers & business partners. Highly trusted and well recognized for our commitment to quality, SAFCO prides itself at being a preferred supplier to the Foodservice and HORECA industry in UAE and internationally.

10th October 2023, a pivotal and landmark day in Safco's history as we join Sila's family. This strategic investment will allow both parties to join forces and enhance footprint and market presence in the UAE food distribution and beyond.



Mario Nehmeh - Sales manager NinaPita receiving the Membership Certificate from the ECG President Andy Cuthbert.

The Nina Pita story began in 1936 when Nasri Nehmeh founded the bakery in Haifa, Palestine. Since then, our dedication has been unwavering—to create the finest artisanal pita globally. Crafted from a treasured family recipe using only all-natural ingredients, our bread continues to captivate plates worldwide with its authentic flavors and superior quality.

Our extensive product range caters to every preference, offering small cocktail pitas to XL pitas, and round, oval, and oblong shapes. Available in both wheat and whole wheat options, our offerings



also include innovative wheat za'atar breadsticks, blending tradition with modern tastes.

For those seeking to provide their customers with an artisanal Pita, our slow-baked stone oven process ensures the highest quality. Nina Pitas boast a remarkable 18-month

shelf life without the use of additives, preservatives, or added sugar, emphasizing health and freshness.

Whether enjoyed on their own or paired with various fillings, Nina Pitas promise a wholesome and delicious experience that respects our over 80-year-old family legacy. Join us in savoring the simplicity of pure ingredients and the satisfaction of tradition at Nina Pita.



“
Chef
Simon
says...

Culinary Trends Express

Simon Martin, Executive Chef at Kerry Taste & Nutrition (Food Service), has been sharing trends for our region since 2016

Welcome back to Trends Express. Without further ado, let's jump on board the "Trends Express" and see what's hot and appearing in our region. Remember, **"LIKE IT, BUY IT, SNAP IT, SHARE IT."**

They're not complicated, but just a few simple ingredients will rock your culinary planet

AJVAR is the new kid on the block. With origins from the Balkans, the grilled notes of the fire-roasted peppers and aubergines give a pleasant smokiness, sweet tangy notes, and a hint of garlic to this thick paste-like sauce. Not only is it available in our restaurants and cafes, but it's also making its way onto retail shelves, positioning itself to become a major player in our region by 2024. Traditionally served with grilled meats (that's a winner), it's now being seen in pasta dishes, sandwiches, on grilled fish, as a dip with cheese and vegetables, or even stirred into mocktails like a "pepper virgin Mary" and savoury ice creams. Normally, from red peppers, we see the trend to include chilli hints or even make them with yellow or orange peppers. **I'm craving this in a Philly beef sandwich and salivating as I write this.**

Sometimes food trends are driven not by taste or texture but by colour, and as we all return from our summer breaks, we are seeing the rise of all things **PURPLE**.... from red cabbage soup to Ube drinks, this "Royal" colour brings food alive with a



passionate colour that is loved across the region and desired in food and beverage alike. Foods like carrots, asparagus, cauliflower, aubergines, potatoes, kale and even forbidden rice all can be found in shades of purple, and we are seeing the rise of purple brownies, pasta, and jams. As the weather cools it looks that deep colours in our foods are becoming more prolific. Food and fashion are interconnected, and the coming season will see this as fashion and food merge colours to drive, inspire and delight our customers. **Have you thought about colours in your products...Why not?**

We now have "New Orleans Remoulade," which is remoulade sauce with the addition of Cajun spices. We see "spice Café du Paris" and this week I even saw a "Zaatar Gribiche", those eggs, capers and herbs in creamy mayonnaise were screaming out for the aromatic addition of zaatar to liven up the menu. This is a trend that's gaining momentum and it is here to stay as it allows local twists on classic sauces. The sky's the limit: 'Soubise' onion sauce with a hint of dates molasses or hollandaise sauce infused with curry leaf and whole grain mustard.... However other sauces like sumac crème anglaise or tahini cream chantilly are also becoming popular. My favourite so far is black sesame ranch sauce....so good. **HAVE YOU SEEN THIS TREND YET? WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE?**

AUGUSTE ESCOFFIER & FERNAND POINT, both Masters of Modern and Classical Cuisine, would have marvelled at how the modern take on classic sauces has evolved. This month I've tried new combinations, and not all are good, but some have legs. How many of you tried the KitKat dipped in ketchup?? It was not that bad; you need to try these really or try the Gulab Pizza. The Oreos and lime hot sauce were a challenge. However, I must say Nutella on dill pickles was a winner for me, alongside marshmallows on my chilli con carne... **AMAZING** is all I can say.

Finally, our corporate partners at the Emirates Culinary Guild are also helping define the landscape of trends with their visions. Their foresight to avail their latest products to us at our monthly meetings, reflects both innovation and current market trends. Stay ahead of the curve, talk to them, and try their products. Join them and us in driving the trends in our region.

Kerry Foodservice provides custom-made solutions (coatings, sauces, beverages, etc.) and branded solutions such as Chef's Palette and DaVinci Gourmet to global and regional chains, QSRs, and casual diners across the region.

3rd EDITION

SALON DU CHOCOLAT

ET DE LA
PÂTISSERIE
DUBAI

18 - 20 SEPTEMBER 2024 | 3 - 9 pm

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