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volume 19, issue 9



TEAM ANDY WINS!

Worldchefs' new president, **Andy Cuthbert**, and his team are ready to drive a wave of change

PASTRY PRASAD

Chef **Prasad Bandaranayaka** brings his steampunk recipe to the competition table



DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH

Chef **Sachitra Danendra** on proving that anything is possible with courage



EGG-CITING POULTRY SUCCESS

Picture perfect moments at the US Egg Promotions and the US Poultry GCC Roadshow





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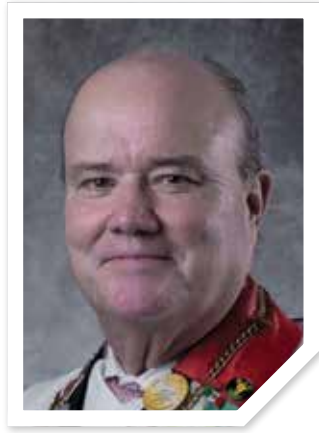
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Dear Members and Partners,

I would like to begin by thanking my family, my wife Jo, and two sons, Kyle and Cody, for their steadfast support. They have always given me strength in my endeavors for the chefs of the UAE and globally. This support has been especially meaningful now that our team has taken on the Presidency of Worldchefs for the next four years.

I also thank the incredible team here in the UAE, the executive committee of the Guild, our supporters, sponsors, and the Presidents and countries that have placed their faith in me and our team to lead Worldchefs until 2028.

In accordance with our Guild's constitution, I will now be stepping down as President of the Guild to assume the role of Guild Coordinator, a position previously held by our founding father, Alen Thong. I will continue to support the Guild, just as I have for the past 32 years, as it is something I am passionate about.

I am proud to hand over the reins to our Vice President, Alan Orreal, who will lead the Guild until our general election in May 2025, when we will vote for the next Presidium and board in line with our bylaws.

To all our team members, I kindly ask you to support Alan in this role over the coming seven months. Your support has been invaluable to me since I took on the role of President in 2023, and thank you, Alan, for stepping up to lead us.

With Regards,
Andy Cuthbert



Congratulations to Team Andy on winning the Presidium of Worldchefs, where like-minded global professionals from all corners of the world surrounded them. Andy, as President of Worldchefs, will lead our global fraternity up to its centenary year in 2028.

As I step into the role of President of the Emirates Culinary Guild, I am humbled by the immense success of the leaders of the Guild that have come before me and thankful that I have had the pleasure of their coaching and mentoring during my many visits to Dubai over the past 22 years. Their legacy and pillars of strength will continue to be our guiding light as we carry our mission forward to support the chefs of the UAE.

I am grateful for the trust placed upon me by our committee and members, and I will return it through my effort and support as we continue to grow and strengthen our Guild heading into 2025.

Reflecting upon the success of the Worldchefs Congress, and on behalf of the whole committee, I want to congratulate and commend the remarkable efforts of all the competitors in both the Global Chef and Gelato Cup. We flew the flag, represented the United Arab Emirates with pride, and showcased our skills on a world stage, a courageous effort that has yielded valuable lessons for us moving forward.

As we embark into the events and festive season, I look forward to seeing you out and about at our many events and wish all of our members, corporate sponsors, and supporters a bumper session. May you all be busy throughout as we serve our customers and guests across the Emirates.

With Regards,
Alan Orreal



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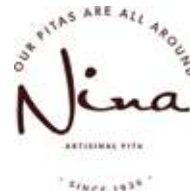
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newsbites



A Culinary Sweep

Emirates Culinary Guild Team returns as champions from FHAM 2024

The chefs from the Emirates Culinary Guild were victorious at the 2024 FHAM Global Culinary Challenge that took place in Malé, Maldives. The team of young chefs and senior chefs impressed the judges with their innovative dishes, bringing home top honors in this international competition.

On the international culinary stage during the four-day competition, both young and senior chefs from Abu Dhabi, led by Guild Asst Vice President Chef Peter De Kauwe from the Club Abu Dhabi, Chef Sanjeeva Chamil, our Chairman of Abu Dhabi & District, took home an impressive array of awards. The team won the following accolades: A total of 7 Gold, 3 Silver, and 4 Bronze medals, four best-in-class trophies, and the best national team trophy.

Chef Dinesh Hashan won three gold medals, one silver medal, and a bronze medal, along with two Best in Class trophies. While Chef Ishara Mayanga De Silva also shined, winning two gold medals, two bronze medals, and two Best in Class trophies. Chef Tharishma Madushanka Mendis took home two silver medals and one bronze medal, and Chef Nishan Nayana Kantha added to the team's success with two gold medals.



Guild President Andy Cuthbert was overjoyed to witness the success of a team and could not have been more proud of these young chefs and their hard work and dedication, which has paid off once again with trophies and gold medals. "We were lucky to have our great competition partner, Sounbula Mills, support the chefs again through sponsorship," he says.

President Cuthbert thanked Mr. Karim Al Azhari from Sounbula Mills for the continued support to the Guild and the Chefs, as without the support, the Guild would not be able to send chefs to compete on a global scale. Managing director of Sounbula Mills, Mr. Karim Al



Azhari, said, "It is such an important part of our company's DNA to support the industry, and we are once again delighted to see the success of these young chefs showcasing their skills and representing the country, as a UAE based company." ■

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

Egg-citing Poultry Success

Take a look at the worthwhile moments cracked with the US Egg Promotions and the US Poultry GCC Roadshow

US EGG PROMOTIONS

From breakfast creations to delightful desserts, a spotlight on eggs as it can elevate any meal

The Emirates Culinary Guild and the USA Poultry and Egg Export Council (USAPEEC) teamed up to showcase the versatility and premium quality of US eggs in breakfast dishes and select desserts featured in all-day dining buffets.

A series of US Egg promotions recently took place at seven hotels across Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Fujairah in the UAE.

The event highlighted various US products, including frozen liquid sugared egg yolk, frozen liquid high whipped egg whites, and frozen liquid whole eggs.

Approximately 18,000 hotel guests had the chance to experience the benefits of US eggs, enhancing their dining experience. These promotions strengthened ties with key players in the food service industry.

It is with such events that it becomes clear eggs are more than just a breakfast food; they're the star of every meal! Are you ready to add some eggstra magic to your dishes?



US POULTRY GCC ROADSHOW

The event highlighted the attributes and applications of US poultry to culinary and industry experts

The US Poultry GCC Roadshow clucked up success in the Middle East. The targeted foodservice event concluded on a high note on September 12th, leaving a trail of culinary excitement across Qatar, Oman, and the UAE.

This lively event brought together culinary professionals, industry experts, and importers, all eager to discover the quality and versatility of US poultry.

Organized by the USA Poultry and Egg Export Council (USAPEEC) and backed by the United Soybean Board (USB), the roadshow featured the culinary flair of keynote speaker Chef David Bonom. Attendees were treated to a series of engaging theoretical sessions and sizzling live cooking demonstrations.

Moreover the guests indulged in a delightful buffet at the events held in Qatar and Dubai, showcasing an impressive array of the poultry dishes.

Jena Gress, Global Marketing Manager at USAPEEC headquarters, attended the event and connected with the attendees. The initiative put a spotlight on US poultry products in the GCC region along with fostered stronger connections within the culinary community.





Diamond in the Rough

Chef **Sachitra Danendra**'s story is a fitting analogy of the belief that with courage, anything is possible

Decades ago, it seemed a stretch for many to imagine that Chef Sachithra Danendra, then in his late twenties and recently awarded a merit certificate in his debut competition at SIAL, would eventually achieve the title of Best Pastry Chef.

Regardless, Chef Danendra was not disheartened, facing it stoically, having dealt with skeptics early in his career. He bottled up all his emotions only to win the Best Pastry Chef title not once but twice, first at La Cuisine du SIAL in 2012 and then again the following year at the Emirates Salon Culinaire. It was a victory that subverted the conventional idea of a young chef's winning potential, proving the naysayers wrong.

"When I share my profile with others today, they are surprised, thinking if I have truly achieved all these at such a young age. But it happened because of my commitment to the competitions, passion for the industry, and faith in my skills during the pressure," he ponders the past.

Back in 2013, when we asked him about his future plan, he envisioned owning a brand in Sri Lanka. Today, in the vivacious city of Colombo, he is fulfilling that dream by managing a restaurant, Okra Kitchen, by Ravi and Sepali, alongside a dessert bar, 3 Bags Full.

Even though some hiccups like COVID tried to disrupt his business journey, he persistently reinvested in the business, kept it running with a team, and steadily strengthened the brand over the past five years. "My dream is to make this brand global, and I'm confident I will achieve it. It is a commitment that you need for the industry, and you can achieve anything in your life," he asserts.

Handling hospitality ventures with determination has been easy for him. An ethereal talent that runs in his genes. If he were to have a sibling photo frame, one can see him beaming in the center alongside his brothers, both chefs by profession. A closer look



Achievements are more than milestones; they define the path and pave the way forward

at the photo gives you a recap of his first try with culinary entrepreneurship following his Three-Year Diploma in Hospitality Management.

"I applied my education to launch a cake-baking business for my parents' customers. I did pretty well for three years and even have a mini fan club on Facebook. Realizing the need for broader knowledge, I decided to travel and learn more."

A career-defining moment came into his life when his talent aligned with the needs of the Nestlé Professional team. "It all began just a year after I arrived in Dubai. In 2012, I was honored as Best Pastry Chef at La Cuisine du SIAL, followed by another Best Pastry Chef accolade at Emirates' Salon Culinaire in 2013. That same year, I won the Nestlé Golden Chef Hat competition."

Even though these achievements might appear as mere milestones, they held weight and eventually led to Chef Danendra's position as a Nestlé consultant. "I was just 25 at that time and the youngest recipient of all three awards," he recalls. "Shortly after winning the Golden Hat, Nestlé approached me with a collaborative opportunity to create a recipe book featuring their new products."

And then after years of perfecting his techniques in the bustling kitchens of the Middle East, he returned to his roots in Sri Lanka. His impressive track record facilitated an invitation from Nestlé Group to serve as a culinary advisor for their operations in Sri Lanka and the Maldives. "It was a fruitful role. I traveled around the world for Nestlé workshops working with different cuisines and ingredients," he said.

Now a former culinary advisor for Nestlé Professional Sri Lanka & Maldives, he recently led a workshop for 12 different countries. Last year, he received a prestigious invitation to collaborate with the Asia Oceania Africa (AOA) Nestlé Professional Regional Team as a pastry chef, where he had the chance to mentor young chefs, helping them rise to the occasion and fulfill their culinary dreams.

He has also been appointed as the culinary consultant at the CBL Food Solution. The company, one of the biggest FMCG businesses in Sri Lanka, runs with the vision of growing the business in the culinary industry and expanding to other countries with his expertise in handling multinational, multicultural food solution businesses.

As he views his life from a new height, his rise, he conveys, 'it has been phenomenal'. The reflection from above throws the most subtle advice of the day that just with a speck of courage, you can fade the fears. All you need to do is to take a step. ■



The Ultimate Culinary Showdown at Taste of HK

A complete report on the recent black box competition

The black box culinary competition, hosted by HK Food Group and chaired by the Emirates Culinary Guild, received an enthusiastic response from Chefs, hotels, and top brands in the F&B industry. The participating team consisted of the top seven hotels in the UAE, each with rich expertise in banqueting and catering: Atlantis the Palm, Le Meridien, St Regis Abu Dhabi, Madinat Jumeirah, Zero Gravity, and Emirates flight catering.

The team consisted of a Team Chef/Manager and three chefs, including a young pastry chef (25 years old) and other chefs who could be at any level. All teams were presented with a black box containing identical ingredients, from which they developed a four-course menu.

The menu included a cold starter utilizing NAT Chicken Grillers or Cancao Chicken Thighs, featuring two different preparations. For the hot appetizer, they used Germania Duck, again presenting two different preparations.

The main course showcased Fletcher's Lamb Rack, while the dessert allowed for the use of any item of their choice.



Devon Clotted Cream was provided as the sponsored item.

Additional ingredients, such as everyday grocery items and garnishes, were included to complete the meal. The participants were to bear the cost of these additional ingredients.

All proteins were sponsored and supplied by HK Enterprises in association with their partner brands.

The cold starter chicken was sponsored by NAT, a Brazilian brand that is part of the Vibra group. From farm to fork, all their cuts were inspected and



Judging Points Criteria for Table Service

- ◆ Only the two service staff of each team were judged.
- ◆ Professional Preparation of the table, including the centerpiece: 20 points
- ◆ Service and Welcoming: 40 points
- ◆ Food Knowledge: 40 points

hand-selected by trained and qualified professionals, all done with dedication to bring only the best to the consumers.

Cancao, another Brazilian brand by GT Foods, became synonymous with chicken thighs and set the benchmark for quality and flavor at tables in Brazil and around the world.

The most relished item on the menu was the duck, sponsored by Villa Germania from Brazil. As the largest producer and exporter of specialty birds in Latin America, they are leaders in the Gourmet Proteins category. They offer certified quality and a range of over 200 products, with duck and quail as their specialties.

Fletcher Lamb, Australia's most integrated processor and exporter of lamb and sheep meat products, sponsored the main course.

Everyone was a winner

- ◆ The judges faced an extremely challenging task in selecting a winner. Ultimately, the champions and the runners-up were separated by just one point. However, one team did manage to gain a slight edge over the others. Emirates Flight Catering Company LLC won the title of Best Kitchen Team and the Champions Trophy.
- ◆ Atlantis the Palm was the runner-up. Nour Alhuda Amro from Waldorf Astoria DIFC received the Young Chef award. St Regis Abu Dhabi's Best Service team won the award.

The most critical item on the menu was the black box ingredient, oyster sauce, revealed only two days before the main event. Lee Kum Kee sponsored this. Established in 1888, Lee Kum Kee became an international household name that symbolized quality and trust.

Wagstaff, another leading brand for lamb and mutton, sponsored the award for the Best Service Team.

Tramontina, the Brazilian manufacturer of cookware, cutlery, home appliances,

Judging Criteria

- ◆ The teams were judged on food and service categories.
- ◆ **Brought Material/Ingredients:** 5 points
- ◆ **Timing:** 5 points - Evaluated whether the food was served on time and in the correct order.
- ◆ **Professional Preparation:** 20 points - Assessed the proper working techniques, correct utilization of working time, and punctual completion.
- ◆ **Hygiene:** 10 points - Focused on the standard of hygiene maintained during food preparation.
- ◆ **Presentation/Innovation:** 10 points - Ingredients and side dishes must be in harmony. Points were granted for excellent combination, simplicity, and original composition. A pleasing table decoration theme to best set off the food displayed.
- ◆ **Taste & Texture:** 50 points - Each dish must have appropriate taste and seasoning. The dishes were expected to meet today's nutritional standards in terms of quality, flavor, and color.

and knives, sponsored the gifting. Ronai supported the participating chef teams by providing personalized aprons. ■

November 2024 Gulf Gourmet





The Making of a Worldchefs President

In an exclusive interview with Gulf Gourmet, the new President of the Worldchefs, **Andy Cuthbert**, talks about victory and the pillars he is committed to and shares his vision for the Worldchefs



He has a natural trait of lighting up any room and radiating his optimism to the crowd. He can rise above himself, staying humble with a Zen-like presence even as he faces a powerful adrenaline rush. What transpires when he stands in front of everyone is an inspiring scene of excitement, enthusiasm and positivity that is contagious to all those around him.

At one point, the crowd cheers recede like gentle raindrops. The members of Team Andy stand proudly while Andy Cuthbert gathers his thoughts on the dais. Stage lights illuminate the ceiling. Pausing to soak in the atmosphere for two seconds, he declares, "Thank you for your trust in our team. We will serve you; you rule us, not the other way around."

His journey to the presidency was nothing short of a tour de force that surprised many but felt it wasn't news for those in the know. His trademark to uplift others shone through as he stepped into this new role. Presumably, it stems from his experience as the



It's not just Andy or Andy plus four; it's about the five of us united as a team

Worldchefs Continental Director for Africa & the Middle East and Chairman of the Worldchefs Congress Committee. He's been there and done all that.

Despite his win, he insists that it was only achievable because of the trust the members placed in his team to make a real difference. With leadership on the cusp of change and high expectations, the team carries the weight of these demands. "The only way we can truly succeed," he asserts, "...is through open and honest discussions about what we need to alter, how we can enhance our efforts, and then move forward as a united global community of chefs."

His solemn response euphemistically pointed out the more minor issues, giving a clearer view of the larger picture.

Throughout his extensive tenure with the association since 1994, he has worn many hats, such as orchestrating events, serving as the enforcer at the Worldchefs Congress in Dubai in 2008, and taking the helm as both Chairman and Organizer of the Congress in Abu Dhabi in 2022.

Remembering his connection with Worldchefs, his archives take us back to the days when Worldchefs' Lifelong Honorary President, Dr. Billy Gallagher, encouraged him to carry on his legacy. "It was Billy who, in a way, motivated me to join Worldchefs more formally. The 2008 Congress in Dubai, which he attended, solidified my commitment beyond the Emirates Guild, where I have been a founding member since 1992."

A master at the game of words and work, he observes, from his vantage point, the enduring strength of the association. This strength must be wielded responsibly with the guidance of senior chefs.





We will serve you; you rule us, not the other way around

"We have the honorary life member committee, where many former board members contribute to Worldchefs."

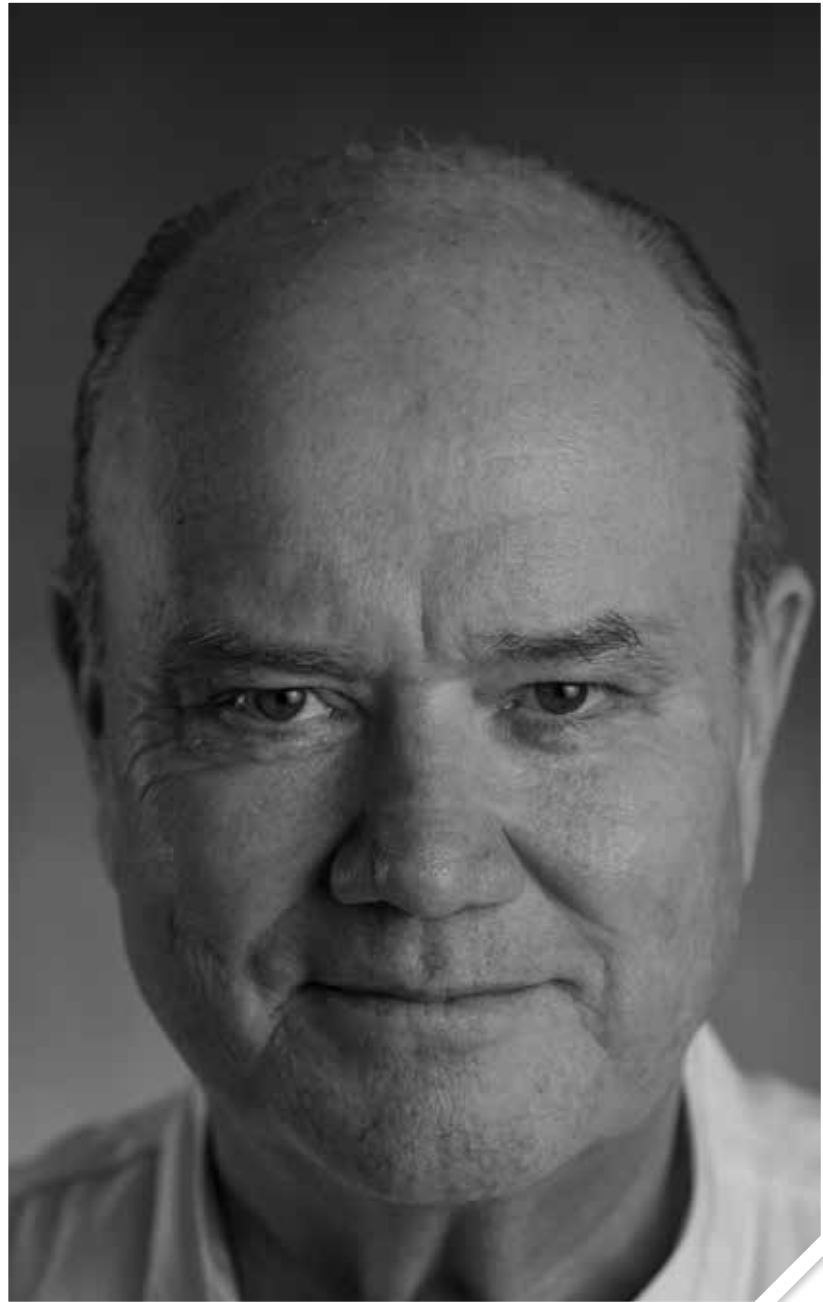
Are they public relations champions? The marketing edge? Or advisory support for young chefs' development? As we pepper him with questions, he reiterates their knack for connecting with people.

"It is important that once you have led a committee, you fold back into an advisory role or some area that utilizes your expertise. Many of our committee members are young, and we want to engage young chefs on every committee. Therefore, it is essential that a representative from this group sits on each committee to help young people understand the inner workings," he explains.

Case in point: The association has members who have been with them for 50-60 years, many of whom attend every Congress. So, they should be recognized for their past contributions and how they can work on their current and future roles.

"On the educational side, initiatives like 'Feed the Planet' and the Young Chef Development Committee are already building success with their teams. We need more of these chefs on different committees. Bearing this belief, he adds, "Even my personal succession plan is that the President will serve for four years, and then I will have a successor ready. Of course, people will nominate themselves to be President for 2028," he says with a smile.

If there's one quality he associates with this role, it's commitment.



"Worldchefs has been committed for the last 96 years and founded in 1929 at Sorbonne University in Paris, the World Association of Cooks' Societies, now Worldchefs, aimed to unite chefs and cooks under one umbrella. From there, the association has grown to 105 national members. It has always been around competitions, training, collaboration, and a sense of community, ensuring that being a cook or chef is aspirational. This support and guidance can only thrive through commitment."

We Are Running For You, Run With Us
A solid quartet of experienced chefs has

been assembled in his team. Creating a dynamic atmosphere that shines their daily momentum like the sun is Chef Alain Hostert. His extensive involvement with Worldchefs as the continental director of Europe, his selfless public service and support for the Culinary World Cup make him an ideal choice as Secretary General.

Chef Rick Stephen from Australia adds a breeze of wisdom to the mix. He comes with a long-standing involvement in Worldchefs, serving as the continental director of Asia and leading the culinary team of Australia. With his focus on

training and education, he will bring daily inspiration as the Vice President.

One standout member is Chef Kristine Hartviksen from Norway, who served as President of the Norwegian Chefs and led the Congress in 2014. She also presided over the Nordic Association. For the squad, she is the Assistant Vice President or, rather, a guiding star for all trends in the culinary world. Though she may seem like an outlier at first glance, Chef Kristine advocates

for inclusivity and the green chef movement and has played her part in marking a Nordic food movement.

The final, clear choice was Chef Uwe Micheel. He has served as vice president for four years on the current presidium, overseeing finance. His extensive knowledge and global connections make him the anchor they need. As Assistant Vice President, he will control unnecessary spending of funds and enhance the business through sponsorships.

"It's not just Andy or Andy plus four; it's about the five of us united as a team. This isn't about any single person's agenda; rather, it is about the will of the members who have entrusted us with leadership," his voice loudly stresses the word us. He continues, "We've made promises about what we stand for and aim to achieve. We're looking to build on our strong foundation over the last 96 years to set this association up for another hundred."

Among his many responsibilities, three priorities stand out: enhancing communication, establishing a structured meeting plan for the next three years, and focusing on education. To dismantle any drop of misconceptions that portray the office as operating like a secluded secret society, he emphasizes the importance of integrating it as the expansive global network of its members, a challenge, he believes, is one that his team is well-prepared to face through enhancing communication. "Again, it's not just Andy; it involves the entire World Chefs board, including five members, seven continental directors, both the past and immediate past presidents, and Ragnar Fridriksson, the managing director. This strong structure requires effective communication and transparency to ensure that board activities are clearly relayed to over 105 country presidents."

He gives weight to safeguarding fair play to keep transparency and fairness within the committee. "It should not be a matter of personal favoritism, but



We're looking to build on our strong foundation over the last 96 years to set this association up for another hundred

rather a decision rooted in merit and qualifications. Ultimately, we aim to place the right individuals in the right roles, steering clear of assigning positions to any Bob, Mary, or Jane just because they're well-liked. We need to have the right people in the right position."

The ensuing conversation takes a new direction toward governance and its evolution for modern times. This doesn't mean flipping the script or chopping the constitution and guiding principles. Instead, the focus is on taking a closer look at the statutes and standing rules, a task already tackled by the bylaws committee and finding ways to align them with today's standards.

"If that's the case, it must go through the entire process: presented to the members, voted on in our meetings, ensuring everyone is on the same page. Clear communication is key, and we owe it to our members to keep them in the loop," he stated. These are not just words but actions in place to change the outlook. In January next year, along with his team, he will be in Paris, rolling out the welcome mat at the Paris office for anyone interested in visiting the presidium.

"We'll be open from after lunch until, say, five in the afternoon, and we'll just connect with our membership



We all share goals of sustainability, growth, and feeding the planet, but how do we do that? That's the kind of collaboration we seek

base, especially our senior members. If the French associations, German associations, or really any associations want to swing by and see what we're up to, they're more than welcome," he adds with a slight shrug. "...and if they want to take the commitment to come, we'll make sure there's hot coffee and some good croissants," he smiles.

In his view, many hurdles remain to be overcome before implementing the pillars. Basic education remains at the top of the list as a fundamental need echoed by many in the culinary community. With the Worldchefs Academy, aspiring cooks and budding chefs can learn entry-level skills. Education is not just important; it has become a universal truth chefs acknowledge at every stage of their careers. President Andy backs this sentiment to drive the initiatives by Worldchefs forward.

"The aspiration is to become the global voice of chefs, 'like the UN or WHO,' but..." Toward the end of his remarks, he raises a pressing question, "...how can one continue to cultivate relationships with existing sponsors while simultaneously standing strong in their commitments and achieving their aspirations?"

Taking a brief pause for thought, he articulates, "Sponsorship goes beyond financial support. We all share goals of sustainability, growth, and feeding the planet, but how do we do that? That's the kind of collaboration we seek. For this, we are also planning seven collaborative meetings with partners and open forums each year; this includes five board meetings annually and an ongoing schedule of meetings. The goal is to create a structure where not just 'President Andy' leads every meeting; it's going to be us doing the meeting," he outlines.

Technology, he says, is another pillar in demand, something their campaign could not have succeeded without. "Youth and technology go hand in hand.



I've noticed a strong push from the UAE government to embrace AI, enabling us to give back to the community by teaching basic food hygiene, new trends, cost management, staff care, and training. Interestingly, the last two letters of Dubai spell AI, and we were the first country to have a Minister of AI."

As most youth now consume content on their phones, he gradually opens up about Team Andy's collaboration with Sunjeh Raja, Director and CEO of the International Center for Culinary Arts in Dubai, creating the Foodverse, an AI-enabled app to harness the potential of the people and the industry in food. With the catchphrase 'Every Kitchen a School,' this platform will provide validated culinary education for free in places lacking access to structure, systems and processes while leveraging insights from Worldchefs members worldwide. "The Foodverse will become the living, breathing platform for Chefs. Apart from hosting never-before-seen industry and chef profiles supported with a myriad of well-thought real-world problem-solving features, a world-class competition module will also be available, following the judging guidelines of the World Chefs, helping large and fledgling associations alike to kickstart their talent-nurturing contests."

He continues, "You can get as creative and collaborative as you want and reach a global audience as the app is available worldwide and will also integrate the World Chefs while remaining inclusive."

A part of the vision for this app is to support those aspiring to enter the industry and young chefs to start on a better platform. "We want to give them a foot in the door and connect them with many people through the mentorship programs on this app. You name it, we can do it."

Of course, technology was the ace up his sleeve, to cast a wide net and reel in momentous support as he geared up for the election, not just in a nondescript



This isn't about any single person's agenda; rather, it is about the will of the members who have entrusted us with leadership

manner but by communicating his nomination in multiple languages to help strike a chord in each country and region.

"Someone told me they've been with Worldchefs for 40 years and have never seen a campaign like this. The campaign was a mixture of things, though. It was about what I could do for the chefs and how to persuade people that paying for a membership in a Worldchefs body would truly make a difference. The goal was to uphold the pillars of Worldchefs without reinventing the wheel but rather ensuring that the wheel was inflated and strong. And using technology as an aid for digital communication and education."

It was in early 2024, during a visit to Stuttgart, the team shot multiple videos. Then, with the help of the team at ICCA and Mr. Sunjeh Raja, they utilized AI to translate these videos into various languages, including Russian,

Vietnamese, Chinese, Italian, Spanish, Malayalam, Hindi, and Tamil and more.

"Past President Ferdinand Metz said, 'Try to speak to the people in their language.' his eyes flashed like a soft candlelight. "We filmed our manifesto and translated it into Spanish and Portuguese, and we also reached audiences in Canada and the USA. We produced materials in Italian and sent them to the continental director there, and he responded: I understand it. Thank you so much...And that set us up for success. The result is that we sat here today for another four years."

Being at the forefront of the culinary world certainly comes at a price. It can mean sacrificing the simple, everyday joys of family life. But, decades of being a culinary godfather have taught him better how to keep up with the new pace of the industry without running out of steam.

"I still remember the discussion at home before filling out the nomination forms. I finally sat down for a heart-to-heart with Madam Joe. I asked her what she thought, and she was as supportive as ever, just like she is now in the Emirates Culinary Guild. With her approval, we decided to take the decision," he recalls.

The euphoria from the win still lingers. Applause is still ringing in his ears. To him, the real work begins now. His victory was merely the first chapter; what comes next will truly shape his legacy. ■

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A Culinary Journey: From Passionate Beginnings and Beyond

(Part VIII) From one Ozzie kitchen to another, Chef **Helen Morris** writes about her days in Australia



I had a dream, and I'd been waiting for this day like a kid waiting for Christmas morning. And then, boom—I touched down—down under, OZ, Australia!

The excitement, the thrill! I had a dream, and I'd been waiting for this day like a kid waiting for Christmas morning. And then, boom—I touched down—down under, OZ, Australia! Watch out because I was ready. My main goal? Travel, explore, and eat my way through this great country. And boy, did I ever! If my visa hadn't kicked me out after 13 months, I'd probably still be sunburnt and sipping flat whites.

Now, I have a suitcase full of travel stories, but let's focus on the culinary adventure. Australia's produce? A whole new world. It was like someone gave me a blindfold and dropped me into a grocery store filled with ingredients I'd never seen, let alone cooked with! The Southeast Asian influence, especially Vietnamese cuisine, was a punch of color and flavor I wasn't expecting after my love affair with French classics. And the aromas? They hit you like a surprise left hook, but in a good way. The best part? The kitchen brigade was so chilled—no fiery kitchen meltdowns, just creativity and good vibes.

The local produce was everywhere—veggies, fruits, fish, shellfish, and meat. It was like Christmas every time I walked into a market. Cooking Roo (kangaroo)? Oh yeah, I did that. Eating kangaroo? Well, once or twice. Tasty? Yes. But those Asian-inspired dishes? That's my go-to, my holy grail of food. Fresh flavors and mouth-watering aromas—I was in culinary heaven.

Now, I wasn't just wandering around like a foodie tourist. I needed to finance my travels, so I jumped from one Ozzie kitchen to another like a culinary nomad. Hotels, restaurants, riverboats, wilderness lodges—you name it, I worked there. I became the queen of agency work, earning a reputation for surviving kitchens where they'd show me the menu and the fridges, then leave me entirely on my own. It's a miracle I didn't burn the place down. The highlight? Cooking on a riverboat, cruising the Brisbane River while frantically trying not to drop anything overboard. And yes, I took a boat to work. Brisbane, I loved you.

Then, there was the exclusive Bloomfield Wilderness Lodge. I got flown to North Queensland like a rock star, landing in a field of cattle (move over, Hollywood). The guest room? Mine. The excursions? Free. The guests? Fancy. But the food? That was where the real fun started. I was young, and I'll admit it—I took ingredients for granted. In the UK, I could grab whatever I needed, but out there? I had to get creative. The nearest supermarket was... non-existent. So, I planned menus like a general preparing for battle, making sure I didn't run out of, well, everything. Food had to be flown in. The kitchen team? Me and one kitchen hand. Talk about pressure. Honestly, I don't even remember what I cooked—if only Instagram existed then. But the compliments kept rolling in, and I lapped it up like a thirsty dog.

The chef returned from his vacation



and let me hang out for a few more days. He was way more experienced than I was, and I soaked up his knowledge like a sponge. Cooking chicken with tea? Who knew? That was my first lesson in "There's more than one way to cook a bird."

One of the best parts of the Ozzie culinary scene? The people. The chefs were friendly, laid-back, and intrigued by me—the Pom who kept calling them "Chef." Now, let me tell you, this threw them. One chef, Steven, tried to break

me of the habit. "Call me Steven," he'd say. And I'd reply, "Yes, Chef. I mean, Steven. Wait, no, Chef!" It was a vicious cycle, but in the end, I think we reached an understanding. He was still Chef, but I might've slipped a "Steven" in there once or twice. Learning from these chefs was not only inspiring but also a great experience that I treasure to this day—a special place in my heart that one.

Alas, my time in Oz came to an end. My freedom, my new culinary adventures—gone in a flash as I landed back at a cold

Heathrow. My hair? Long enough to rival Rapunzel (seriously, a year without a hairdresser!). Clothes? A time capsule from a year ago. Accent? Full Aussie twang, mate!

Back to reality, back to the kitchen grind. But hey, I'm a chef, so finding work wasn't an issue. Onward to the next chapter of my culinary journey.

Until the next issue, flavorsome regards,

Chef Helen

NuKoKo

Choco Without Cocoa

Where many companies are already using beans to create dairy alternatives, egg replacers, and fermented bean-based meat substitutes, British food tech NuKoKo has chosen to transform the humble fava bean into chocolate

By **Shreya Asopa**

If there's one thing on a dessert menu that consistently tugs at your gaze, it has to be chocolate. Whether in the fudgy layers of a brownie or the molten core of a lava cake, this comforting ingredient shines through with its decadent flavor.

While a pot of heavy cream simmers nearby, think of a pastry chef preparing bite-sized chocolate truffles. With a steady pivot of the hand, the chef moves on to prepare chocolate ganache; except today, this ganache is made from chocolate that contains no cocoa.

Will our sweet tooth for the velvety texture of rich, brown chocolate still prevail, or will technology deflect our love for classics? Ultimately, the answer lies in the taste. For chocolate connoisseurs and chefs alike, the mere thought of a cocoa-free alternative might raise some skepticism. "If it doesn't taste like chocolate, what's the point?" asks Ross Newton, CEO and co-founder of Guildford-based foodtech venture NuKoKo.

Though still in the final stages of development, NuKoKo has gone beyond surface-level flavor replication. They are studying the science of taste, breaking down cocoa to its flavor compounds, and building a product that mirrors chocolate, all using fava beans.



If cocoa were to disappear tomorrow, there would be enough fava beans produced each year to fill that gap

"Chefs want chocolate that melts in your mouth, blends smoothly into a dessert, or when they put it in the ice cream and behaves just like the classic ingredient they are used to. And that is exactly what our product does. It melts, mixes, and tastes just like cocoa-based chocolate," says Newton with a knowing smile. "There is no need to alter recipes, processes, or techniques. They can maintain their tried-and-true recipes and simultaneously reduce production costs."

Anyone familiar with the business of chocolate is aware that a wave of new startups making strides in chocolate without cocoa is no longer a fledgling movement but a rapidly growing industry. A new take on the sustainable initiative was brought on by Ross Newton alongside his partner Kit Tomlinson, who is co-CEO and co-founder of NuKoKo. Together, they've made a chocolate alternative using locally sourced beans as a substitute for cocoa.

"After working in the chocolate industry for about 10 to 15 years and the successful sale of our previous chocolate venture, we were inspired to create a cocoa-free alternative," Newton tells Gulf Gourmet, shedding light on the importance of such a venture after noticing the cracks in the supply chain and the rising cocoa prices all tied to climate change.

Earlier this year, a global cocoa shortage emerged, driven by unpredictable weather patterns in West Africa. According to the UNCTAD commodities price monitoring report, the price of cocoa soared by an astonishing 136% between July 2022 and February 2024.

"The last few years have seen a supply deficit of between 100,000 and 300,000 tonnes of cocoa," he explains. "This scarcity has sent cocoa prices skyrocketing. Plus, chocolate is among the top carbon-emitting food products. Our approach reduces the risk of deforestation that plagues cocoa farming, offering more affordable supply as cocoa becomes increasingly challenging to source." While their formal life cycle assessment is still in the works, plans are in place to conduct one post-scale-up. Preliminary estimates from the LCA indicate they can reduce CO emissions by 80 to 90%.

Recognizing the sweetness in sticking to local produce, given that cocoa primarily grows along the tropical belt in West

Africa and South America, the NuKoKo team came up with the idea of creating classic bean-to-bar chocolate using fava beans from local farms. They achieved promising results by deconstructing the cocoa fermentation process and applying it to fava beans.

"During cocoa fermentation, around 500 different microbes contribute to flavor development. However, we take a more directed approach, selectively applying specific microbes to the beans that bring out cocoa flavor precursors. You'd be hard-pressed to notice the difference once it's in your ice cream or dessert," he says.

For chefs aiming to create healthier menus, Newton posits that fava beans are a great option as they offer high protein and fiber, standing out against traditional chocolate. "While it doesn't share the same nutrition in terms of polyphenols as cocoa, it brings its suite of antioxidants, vitamins, and folate to the table. Also, these fava beans have a naturally milder flavor, meaning less sugar is needed in the final formulation, about 40% less than traditional chocolate."

Currently, the market is influenced by two driving factors: sustainability and challenges within the supply chain. Consumers want planet-friendly products, and companies are racing against the clock to reduce their CO2 emissions and reach those ambitious net-zero goals.

Considering contemporary times, the company plans to adapt different types of locally sourced beans to target various markets. "Right now, we are focused on fava beans. About 3 million tons are harvested annually in the UK and Europe, which is plenty to get us started. To put it another way, if cocoa were to disappear tomorrow, there would be enough fava beans produced each year to fill that gap. And if we venture into Asia, we would likely shift our focus to a different local bean that suits that market. The same goes for other regions. So it is always about sourcing local beans and keeping our carbon footprint down," says Newton.



As NuKoKo looks to the future, its mission is as sweet and sustainable as it gets. They plan to bring a range of milk chocolate, vegan milk chocolate, and dark chocolate. But they're not stopping there. The vision includes bringing functional benefits by adding extra proteins, probiotics, and gut health boosters. They are also eyeing other ingredients, like coffee, which face similar supply chain challenges. But for now, it seems a good moment for them to focus firmly on introducing their chocolate to the world next year and getting people to try it.

We ask him about the dream scenario for chocolate, and he smiles, thinking of his two kids. To him, the future is not about creating a new definition of chocolate for the coming generations. As he puts it,

"I want them to enjoy chocolate just as I did but make it more sustainable and healthier for them."

Earlier this year, the company had a funding success, raising €1.3 million in seed capital, which it aims to use in scaling the production and preparing for its early 2025 launch. The joy around chocolate and making it guilt-free has always been on his mind, but he knows there's still much more to tackle. "If I could turn back the clock, I might have started this venture earlier," he admits.

No matter the timing, in a world where cocoa prices are volatile, the necessity for innovation is ever greater so that chefs and food manufacturers don't have to worry about running out of cocoa. ■



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Meat With Sulemana

Abubakari Sadik Sulemana, a seasoned protein and livestock agriculture specialist, discusses Grain-Fed Angus and Wagyu Beef

The journey from farm to table for premium beef, whether it's Grain-Fed Angus, Black Angus, or Wagyu (including F1 and F2 varieties), is a meticulous process. From breeding and rearing to the final product on your plate, each step links to the quality, flavor, and texture. Below, we take a closer look at this fascinating process for each type of beef.

BREEDING AND REARING

Grain-Fed Angus & Black Angus

Known for their tenderness, marbling, and rich flavor, Angus cattle are typically raised on grass before transitioning to a grain-based diet. This feeding regimen, lasting 100 to 150 days, enhances the marbling, creating the texture and taste that have made Angus a global favorite.

Wagyu (F1 & F2)

Renowned for their superior marbling and buttery texture, Wagyu cattle follow an even more specialized process. F1 Wagyu represents the first crossbreed between purebred Wagyu and another breed (often Angus), while F2 is the offspring of Wagyu and F1. These cattle are raised for up to 600 days, with a high-energy grain diet introduced after grazing to develop the signature intramuscular fat.

FEEDING PROGRAM

Grain-Fed Angus

Angus cattle are transitioned to a grain-based diet, typically including corn, barley, and other grains. This diet is closely monitored to enhance flavor, with protein content pivotal in optimizing meat quality.

Wagyu (F1 & F2)

The Wagyu feeding process is a precise art. In Japan, Wagyu cattle are sometimes hand-fed and kept in



low-stress environments to encourage the development of their exquisite marbling. While F1 Wagyu usually boasts higher marbling than Angus, F2 Wagyu approaches the quality of purebred Wagyu.

ANIMAL WELFARE AND HANDLING

Animal welfare is integral to meat quality, particularly stress reduction, which affects tenderness and marbling. Angus and Wagyu cattle are closely monitored to ensure minimal stress. Wagyu, in particular, is often treated with extraordinary care to maintain the integrity of its prized meat.

PROCESSING AND BUTCHERY

Angus & Black Angus

Once Angus cattle reach their optimal weight, they are humanely processed. The beef is then aged, often through wet-aging, to enhance its tenderness and flavor before being butchered into popular cuts like ribeye, sirloin, and filet mignon.

Wagyu (F1 & F2)

Wagyu butchery requires a high level of precision to preserve its intricate marbling. After humane slaughter, the

meat is carefully divided into primal cuts, and the delicate fat distribution is handled with exceptional care. F1 Wagyu offers superior marbling to Angus, while F2 approaches the premium qualities of purebred Wagyu.

DISTRIBUTION AND SELECTION

Angus & Black Angus

These cuts are distributed to retailers, restaurants, and consumers around the world. Popular selections include ribeye and filet mignon, which are appreciated for their rich flavor and tender texture.

Wagyu (F1 & F2)

F1 Wagyu cuts like sirloin, striploin, and tenderloin offer higher marbling and richness than Angus. F2 Wagyu, closer to the purebred variety, has a higher marbling score, reaching the luxurious A4 and A5 grades.

THE FINAL STAGE

Angus & Black Angus

Angus beef is typically grilled or roasted in the kitchen with minimal seasoning to emphasize the meat's natural flavor. The result is a tender and flavorful dish enjoyed by steak lovers worldwide.

Wagyu (F1 & F2)

Wagyu beef is prepared with careful precision. Whether seared or grilled, its unique marbling is preserved during cooking, and due to its intense richness, it is often served in smaller portions.

Angus and Wagyu beef undergo a meticulous process from field to fork. Whether you're indulging in the classic richness of Angus or the luxurious melt-in-your-mouth experience of Wagyu, each bite tells a story of care, tradition, and excellence. ■

1989 ft. The Lentil Soup

Chef **Tarek Mourieess** on prioritizing reflection and feedback

In the kitchen, leadership isn't just calling "hot," "behind," or ordering in above the sizzling of a hot pan. It is about the people. It is about understanding the individuals behind the uniforms and knowing when to step in and when to pull back (technology may reduce some needs, but the human touch in leadership is irreplaceable).

Most importantly, it is about dishing feedback that does not pierce through someone's self-esteem but helps the team grow. Now, if you're imagining me holding a megaphone in one hand and a chef's hat in the other, just stop it there. Leading a kitchen is far more delicate than that. As a chef with years of experience, I have tried to master the art of delivering feedback that helps the team become their best versions.

Feedback is just like the salt of the kitchen. When used right, it enhances everything. But it's not just about tossing in some salt, trying to sugarcoat the suggestion, or directly pointing out what's wrong. One needs to whip in a little guidance, sprinkle on some encouragement, and serve it all up with a side of empathy, as a good chef would.

I owe my leadership style to my first mentor, Chef Chang Cey Wen. One day, he handed me a book called *The Leadership Top 7 Habits*. Honestly, I thought he was setting me up for a lecture. But it turned out to be a great book on the recipe for becoming a good leader. Handing it over, he simply said, "Tarek, leadership isn't about being in charge; it's about taking care of the team and building relationships while keeping your point."



He listened, he cared, and he put all his efforts into creating a conducive environment to encourage open dialogue. Part of his leadership focused on giving feedback to help us grow as a team. This made me realize that feedback is about building trust and making the kitchen a place where everyone feels like they belong.

However, providing constructive criticism is an art that requires finesse. One of my biggest lessons in handling feedback happened in 1989 when I worked as an executive sous chef at a hotel in the UAE. It started innocently enough. When I joined, I evaluated our lentil soup; I learned it lacked the vibrant Mediterranean flavor.

As any other chef, I approached my executive chef, Chef Chang Ce Wyn, suggesting the change. Chef Chang tasted it and praised the improved flavor of my version.

But what I didn't know was that I had unintentionally stirred up more than

just the soup. Getting the nod of approval on the change was a decision that did not sit well with some of the chefs. One of the senior sous chefs who'd been making this same dish for the last 10 years was frustrated. He had never seen the head chef taste his soup, let alone give feedback.

The senior chef was defensive, insisting he had no reason to try my soup. The atmosphere was tense. What I learned that day was huge: feedback isn't just about what you say. Sometimes, it's about what you don't say.

When Chef Chang sensed friction, he called us into his office. The silence in Chang's office felt like an eternity for the three of us. He sat there, deep in thought, reminiscent of a Buddha, for what felt like a good eight seconds. At that moment, we all took a step back and really started to reconsider the situation.

No matter your situation, it's like cooking a stew. You need to let the ingredients simmer for a while. So, take a moment to stay calm, embrace the silence, and really let your thoughts stew for a bit.

Then, Chef Chang began with his inspirational remark. First, he acknowledged the senior chef's years of experience and made sure to talk about fear of change and vulnerability in the face of new ideas. Second, he explained, instead pointing fingers and saying, "That's wrong." It's more like saying, "Here's what could make this better, and let's figure out how together." Third, he recognized my soup's merit and highlighted the potential for growth through collaboration. In any



Leadership isn't about being in charge; it's about taking care of the team and building relationships while keeping your point

kitchen, you've got this constant dance between the old guard, the people who've been perfecting the same recipes for years, and the new kids eager to try something different. Both matter. But the magic happens when you get the experienced chefs to stay open to new ideas and the new chefs to respect the wisdom of those who've been around. Chef Chang's willingness to taste my soup itself demonstrated the value of keeping an open mind and taking suggestions and feedback.

Feedback is not a personal attack. It can happen at any ranking of your career and should happen at every level. It is about learning through it and learning never stops. No matter how many years you've spent in the kitchen, there's always something new to discover. When we give feedback, we reveal not only our expectations but also our leadership style.

A chef who delivers feedback with empathy and encouragement tends to cultivate a more motivated team. In contrast, a chef focusing solely on criticism can inadvertently create a culture of fear, stifling creativity and growth.

I have learned that feedback needs to be communicated clearly and straightforwardly but also politely. If your feedback is vague and based on personal preferences, it can really confuse the other person. For example, instead of just saying, "Your dish was off," it's way more helpful to point out



what exactly didn't hit the mark. Was it the taste, the presentation, or maybe the cooking technique?

What really matters after you get feedback is how you handle it. That's where the real growth happens. Tweaking your style in handling the team occurs along the way. Just like cooking, taking a moment to reflect on feedback helps you turn those insights into meaningful changes.

After I get feedback, I like to hit pause and ask myself a few simple questions. "What turned out great, and what made it work?" Then, I ask, "Was there anything I could have done differently?"

Leading in the kitchen is hard. No more; it is just about whipping up perfect dishes. It's about creating a culture and an environment in the kitchen to encourage dialogue and have healthy discussions that ultimately benefit the entire team and where feedback is seen as a tool for growth, not something to be feared. When it comes to giving or getting feedback, think of it like baking a cake.

You need measured ingredients, the correct temperature, and a lot of patience while it all comes together. In cooking, every bit of feedback helps create something better. ■



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What's Hot and What's not

Deep Dive into Beverages with industry expert **Jan Marc**

Evolution of Beverages in the UAE Market.

Let's fragment beverages into coffee and non-coffee. About five years ago or so, there was no fancy bar or coffee equipment, no bespoke coffee beans, and the bean origins and grading were not a significant part of the USP when selling coffee. Moving forward, the customer gets more educated as the years pass by, particularly in the UAE, where only a few specialty coffee shops were known back then. Now, every corner of the UAE offers specialty coffee. This only shows that the demand for the third wave of coffee had increased. When it comes to non-coffee beverages, customers prefer mojitos, lemonades, and iced teas. In recent years, however, consumer habits have evolved. New elements and techniques came into the development. Culinary ingredients and dishes were often taken as an inspiration or sometimes based on the seasonality of fruits or calendar events. Customers are constantly craving something new, be it coffee or non-coffee. Occasionally, they are the origin of the trends, and often, drinks are tailored according to their preferences.

Beverages vs. Food and how they complement each other.

It is vital in a restaurant business that beverages and food complement each other. Beverages are as important as food to a restaurant business. Often, we notice promotions only happening in food, but few do the same for beverages. Many would know that beverages are more profitable than food. Hence, putting a plan in place for beverage offerings will bring additional value to the establishment.



Health and wellness trends in beverages.

One of the fastest-growing trends in beverages, driven mainly by millennials, is health and wellness. A growing number of people in society are becoming increasingly conscious of what they eat and drink. Even in supermarkets, we can see a variety of milk alternatives, sugar-free sodas, low-calorie, natural, organic, and so on. Restaurants and cafes should embrace this trend to gain the health-conscious part of society.

But one question remains: will you be one of them?

Upcoming trends in beverage creativity

COLD is the new HOT. Iced beverages are still the most preferred drink by consumers, from mojitos to lemonades and iced coffees to indulgent frappes. There are beverage preparation techniques used in bars that are now adopted by non-licensed casual dining restaurants. Moreover, a wide range of new milk alternatives are gaining popularity, such as pistachio, cashew, sesame, and many other options.

Gen Z consumers increased their expenditure on seltzers or any sparkling beverages mainly because they are refreshing, trendy, and naturally flavored with fresh ingredients. In the age of social media, Instagram-able (IG-worthy) drinks with fancy garnishes are in the spotlight.

Nevertheless, the new trend has been augmented by the growing popularity of probiotic drinks like kombucha, beverages that connect to sustainability, and trendy global cultures that are influenced by local flavors.

How to select the right mix of beverages for a restaurant/coffee shop?

Selecting the suitable composition of beverages can vary as it depends on the concept or theme of an establishment. If a restaurant concept is about healthy foods, offer smoothies, use functional ingredients, and source the freshest fruits you can incorporate. If you are a coffee shop, then you might want to highlight your coffee, its origin, and the variety of coffee-based beverages. It is vital for operators that a proper selection of items should be considered.

The perfect bartender - How?

A bartender can't be perfect all the time. One should be a critical thinker, experimental or innovative, and have a good sense of ownership. Being a bartender is not an easy job, as others may perceive. The menu creation and ideation process involves research, gathering relevant data, identifying generation habits, and comparative involvement in the digital age. Always aim for excellence, not perfection. ■



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Not All Vanilla Is Created Equally

Sherif El Ghamrawy, CEO of Vanilla & Spice reveals the secret to differentiating Grade A vanilla from the others

Our food is a dynamic blend of ingredients and imagination, brought together by chefs around the world striving to create and recreate that perfect recipe. The magic that results is largely in the chef's selection of the finest ingredients that come together to create culinary bliss. In the world of confectionery, vanilla is the most prized ingredient after chocolate, and almost every producer of ice cream, chocolates, patisserie, and bakes uses real vanilla in many of their recipes. As a main ingredient for all things sweet, sourcing high-quality vanilla is crucial to the overall taste and aroma. Besides, there is also an economic benefit that is sometimes overlooked. What makes high-quality vanilla different from the rest? It starts with nature, which plays a vital role in the growth of vanilla since moisture, the right exposure to sunlight, and the quality of the soil greatly affect quality. The climate and soil of the island of Madagascar, particularly the north where vanilla grows under a tropical rainforest canopy, offers the most conducive environment for the vanilla *planifolia* orchid to flourish.



Maturity of the green pod is another factor. It is essentially one of the rare fruits that grows on this orchid. As with any fruit or vegetable, the more time given for the fruit to mature, the better the size, taste, and quality, and this is eventually shown in the length and weight of each pod. Longer, plumper pods were given ample time to mature and tend to have a stronger flavor profile. They also contain higher levels of vanillin as well as seeds, also referred to as caviar. The third factor is the delicate curing process. For vanilla to exist in the culinary world, it must go through an extensive period of drying and curing, which results in the finished sleek, oily, dark pod that graces kitchens around the world. The process of curing and drying is an intricate balance of sunlight and turning over the pods several times a day to maintain the right exposure and temperature to reach the optimum condition. While this usually takes three months, the process can take longer if rain or inclement weather strikes, requiring vanilla to be moved indoors until the sun returns. From pollinating and harvesting to curing, each step in the vanilla journey from tree to table has an impact on the quality of each pod. How does one differentiate grade A vanilla from the rest?

In general, high-quality vanilla is identified using the following indicators:

Unsplit: When vanilla undergoes curing, overexposure to the sun and heat will cause the pod to split open, greatly reducing the quality and moisture of the vanilla, in addition to the loss of the highly prized seeds in the center. Split pods should be avoided.

Length: The size of the pod is an important factor since small pods didn't fully mature while on the vine. A minimum of 16 centimeters of pods



should be considered, with 17 to 22 centimeters being the king of pods.

Weight: A mature vanilla pod can weigh between 5 and 8 grams, meaning it will likely have the highest concentration of flavor and offer more seeds. Avoid vanilla pods that are 1.5 to 3 grams as these are considered low grade and are better fit for mass production of extracts and pastes.

Moisture: With the exception of crushed vanilla powder, the ideal moisture level is 35 to 38 percent to extract the exceptional flavor components of the pod.

Vanillin: Vanillin is the measuring stick of all vanilla, and an ideal vanillin content of between 2 and 2.7 percent ensures that you can get the maximum value from each pod while requiring less vanilla overall.

Color: Grade A vanilla has a dark brown, almost black color, which differentiates it from the lower grade types.

Oiliness: Vanilla pods are moist, oily, and sticky. Properly cared for pods will leave an oily film when handled. Avoid pods that are dry or firm, like wood, when squeezed; good vanilla is soft and malleable when the pod is squeezed between the fingers. When planning to make your next vanilla purchase, use these indicators to ensure that you are actually getting what you paid for. Always check the label for vanillin content, moisture, and pod weight, and where possible, buy vanilla with larger, heavier pods that will not only transform your culinary creations but will also save money since you will use less vanilla to create your sensational recipes. ■

Understanding Umami

Chef **Bobby Kapoor**, Chef-Partner at Cartalyst Food Solutions and Classic Catering, explains about the fifth taste and its culinary potential

Our culinary journey is all about celebrating the senses. From an early age, we are taught about the four basic tastes—sweet, sour, salty, and bitter. But as chefs, an often-overlooked fifth taste can take your dishes to the next level: umami.

In this session, we will explore the science behind umami, its role in cooking, and how you can harness it to create dishes that captivate the palate.

What is Umami?

Umami, a Japanese term meaning "pleasant savory taste," was first identified in 1908 by Japanese scientist Kikunae Ikeda. He discovered that glutamate, an amino acid found in foods like tomatoes and mushrooms, was responsible for this unique flavor. Umami enhances the overall taste experience, making food more satisfying and memorable.

The Science Behind Umami

Umami is primarily associated with three compounds:

- ♦ **Glutamate:** Found in foods like tomatoes, mushrooms, and aged cheeses.
- ♦ **Inosinate:** Present in meat and fish, especially when cooked.
- ♦ **Guanylate:** Found in dried mushrooms and some seaweeds.

When these compounds interact with taste receptors on the tongue, they create a complex flavor profile that enriches and deepens a dish.

Sources of Umami

Here are some common ingredients rich in umami:

- ♦ **Tomatoes:** Sun-dried and tomato paste versions have a concentrated umami flavor.



- ♦ **Mushrooms:** Shiitake, porcini, and morel mushrooms are potent sources.
- ♦ **Aged Cheeses:** Parmesan and Gouda pack a strong umami punch.
- ♦ **Soy Sauce:** A staple in many Asian cuisines, adding richness and depth.
- ♦ **Fish Sauce:** It is integral to Southeast Asian cooking, contributing to intense umami.
- ♦ **Fermented Chili:** A powerful flavor enhancer with umami and heat.
- ♦ **Cured Meats:** Bacon, ham, and salami are high in umami.
- ♦ **Cooked Chicken:** Chicken naturally develops umami when roasted.
- ♦ **Pickled Ginger:** Its multiple forms—raw, pickled, or dried—offer versatility.
- ♦ **Curry:** Onions, ginger, and tomatoes in a curry are a dynamic umami trio.
- ♦ **Japanese Ingredients:** Dashi, koji, and mirin introduce complex umami flavors.
- ♦ **Mustard:** Varieties from different countries offer diverse umami notes.
- ♦ **Anchovies:** Either fried or powdered, anchovies add depth to many dishes.
- ♦ **Baby Prawn Powder:** Used in Portuguese and Indian pickled dishes for umami intensity.

- ♦ **Fermented Rice:** Found in sushi and other global dishes, adding subtle umami layers.

Harnessing Umami in Your Cooking

Here are some techniques and tips to help you maximize umami in your culinary creations:

- ♦ **Layering Flavors:** Incorporate umami-rich ingredients at different stages of cooking. For example, in a pasta sauce, start with sautéed onions and garlic, add tomatoes, and finish with Parmesan.
- ♦ **Balancing Tastes:** Umami can mellow overly sweet or sour dishes. A splash of soy sauce or mushroom powder can bring balance.
- ♦ **Enhancing with Techniques:** Roasting, grilling, and fermenting can enhance umami in meats and vegetables.
- ♦ **Creating Umami Bombs:** Combine umami-rich ingredients to form powerful flavor bases. For example, a blend of sun-dried tomatoes, Parmesan, and garlic can be used in dressings or sauces.
- ♦ **Exploring Cuisines:** Different cultures approach umami differently. Italian cuisine uses tomatoes and cheese, while Japanese dishes lean on soy sauce and dashi. Understanding these culinary traditions can inspire new approaches.
- ♦ **Curry and Stews:** Explore how different spice blends and ingredients create umami layers in dishes like curry, stews, or even Creole cuisine. Balance fresh flavors with umami-rich ingredients like ginger, lemongrass, or galangal.
- ♦ **Food Pairing and Plating:** Traditional pairings—like sauerkraut with pork or kimchi with udon—can elevate the



umami experience. Experiment with these combinations in your cooking.

I remember visiting The Fat Duck in 2007, where a dish came with headphones to enhance the sensory experience. This highlighted how food is about more than just taste; it's tied to

memories, culture, and where we come from. Understanding umami can help you build a "flavor pyramid" that reflects your culinary background and experiences.

By mastering umami, you'll create more satisfying dishes and gain a deeper appreciation for how flavors work

together. So, explore, experiment, and take notes as you discover the potential of umami in your cooking. Whether you're perfecting a curry or creating a signature dish, understanding this fifth taste will make your food shine.

Happy cooking!

Pastry Prasad

With a big slice of ambition in his heart, Chef **Prasad Bandaranayaka** is ready to give his best at the Arla Pro Pastry Mastery Competition

A chef's hat seeps deep into his skin, a passion engraved in black on his forearm. It is a motif that he earned to celebrate his first day in the kitchen. A bold line extends from the hat to a spatula, inked in the center, a connection that conveys that just as the spatula smoothly flips and spreads in different cooking situations, he too can navigate life's ups and downs. Encircling his wrist, a whimsical mixing bowl and whisk swirls together, a reminder of the ongoing process of churning through life's challenges that come with perseverance.

Don't let his tattooed arm deceive you; the authenticity with which Chef Prasad Bandaranayaka crafts each pastry tells a different story, where pastry is not just a skill but his life.

Around the lush and imposing mountain beauty of Kurunegala, once the ancient royal capital of Sri Lanka, teen Chef Prasad spent his days assisting his elder sister, preparing food, tackling home chores, and hitting the books. "My mother worked in Dubai when I was small, and I was in the capable hands of my elder sister. She is like a second mother to me, always pushing me to be the best in studying and cooking," he reminisces fondly.

After some introspection after high school, he realized his heart started to flutter whenever he daydreamed about the world of caramelizing, folding, and baking.

Two years of grasping the art of pastry at



A chef's hat seeps deep into his skin, a passion engraved in black on his forearm... pastry is not just a skill but my life

Mount Lavinia School, and he emerged as one of only two graduates from the competitive cohort of 25 students. "After my graduation, I got an opportunity in the UAE," he shares. "I trained for a year under the mentorship of Chef Wladimiro Gadioli at the Saadiyat Beach Club.

When he moved to the Al Ain Rotana Hotel, I was lucky enough to be taken under his wing," he recalls.

His next career leap took him to the JW Marriott Marquis Hotel in Dubai. Two and a half years of multitasking, absorbing lessons from his mentors, understanding the presentation of desserts, and honing management skills built up his muscle memory. Adapting from erstwhile fast-paced kitchen experiences, he joined the Marriott Downtown Abu Dhabi as a demi chef de partie.

"Limited staff in the team led me to take on more responsibilities, eventually which led to a promotion. After a lot of experience, I decided to step into a new role at Ritz Carlton DIFC. For the last nine months here, I have been gaining



When it comes to desserts, I keep a simple approach to easily prepare them to meet that demand without compromising quality



tremendous lessons from Executive Chef Nemer Hasanain, Executive Pastry Chef Thilina Kasun, and Junior Sous Chef Shamil Hassan. They are always available to help me furnish ideas and train me on new techniques."

He believes the support from the entire Ritz Carlton pastry team has pushed him to do his best. "Take, for example, this competition; the entire staff supported me. Just yesterday, three of them were assisting me in handling my responsibilities while I practiced. Otherwise, I would have had to wait hours after finishing my work to practice the dish."

Sharing about the steampunk elements his dish carries, he explains that it is traditionally rich with golden butter. "This butter cuts any bitter taste. We achieve this by overboiling the butter to around 100 degrees, and you get a burnt butter flavor. I then combine it with Arla Pro products to create a smooth texture and make an almond dacquoise sponge. The goal is to ensure the dessert is light; otherwise, a heavier sponge can overwhelm the palate and stick to the mouth, which I wanted to avoid. And the raspberry cheesecake mousse gives a perfect palate rinse."

The artistic technique used in his creation emerges through the layers, which have achieved consistency after ten different iterations. "I remember in one version, I put chocolate ganache in the middle. At that point, the color of the elements didn't match, so I removed it," he reflects.

Circling back to his current role, Chef Prasad views this position as a windfall opportunity for leadership. He adeptly guides a team of seven to eight talented chefs and takes care of all the event production and finishing work. "On most days, we cater to a volume of 1000 to 500 guests daily," he says.

On the ground, working with numbers may seem straightforward, but it



It's important to communicate and listen. Be patient... and always try to discuss your ideas with the team to improve the overall outcome

conceals a whole world of maintaining focus and not forsaking creativity.

"When it comes to desserts, I keep a simple approach to easily prepare them to meet that demand without compromising quality. If there are many components on the plate, the diners will not appreciate the real flavors when it comes time to taste. When working with numbers, particularly thousands, we should avoid excessive details that may make it difficult for the guest to identify the dessert."

In an everyday challenge where culinary taste meets creative artistry, one might wonder how he blends the two to create desserts. "Actually, it all starts with teamwork and the guidance of my seniors," he shares. "We are always thinking about combinations for the desserts. Some desserts may not pair well with others, so as a team, we

engage in discussions and taste tests to refine the dish," says the 30-year-old.

Several mind-mapping meetups gradually developed his liking for coming up with new ideas for events. "These discussions are always enlightening. I keep an open mind when we talk. I once mentioned how people use vegetables creatively, like using tomatoes, which are fruits, in desserts or using caviar but made from fruits. So it is always about coming up with fantastic ideas."

Planning, he says, starts a few days in advance, and while the banquet menu remains mostly the same, special requests for events like weddings can lead to changes. Despite sometimes clocking in 13-hour shifts, he enjoys the energy and excitement of running operations.

His immediate plans include effectively managing a team, creating delicious desserts, brainstorming, and successfully implementing new techniques. In the far future, he aspires to become a top pastry chef like his mentor, Chef Thilina.

Ask him how young chefs can quickly advance in the pastry field, and in no time, he'll serve up wisdom about patience and a positive attitude while working in a team. "It's important to communicate and listen. Be patient, especially with junior team members who may not understand everything. And always try to discuss your ideas with the team to improve the overall outcome."



Golden Butter Steampunk

(Burnt Butter Honey Cake on Vanilla Mille-Feuille, Vanilla Frosting, Raspberry Cheesecake Ice Cream, Apricot Compote and Pistachio Streusel)

Almond Dacquoise Sponge

Egg	200g
Sugar	120g
Almond powder	150g
Flour	40g
Egg white	132g
Sugar	20g
Arla Pro Unsalted Butter	30g

Method

- ◆ Whisk the egg and sugar together and make sabayon.
- ◆ Whisk the egg white and sugar together to make meringue.
- ◆ Melt the butter.
- ◆ Using a spatula, fold dry ingredients and butter.
- ◆ Sheet the mixture into a very thin layer and bake it at 160°C for 17 minutes.

Florentine

Arla Pro Unsalted Butter	375g
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Sugar	400g
Honey	150g
Arla Pro high stability Cream 35%	450g
Almond Slice	675g

Method

- ◆ Boil butter, sugar, honey and cream.
- ◆ After boiling, add an almond slice and mix well.
- ◆ Pour the mixture on a silicon mat and sheet it into a very thin layer.
- ◆ Bake at 150°C for 13 to 15 minutes.

Apricot Compote

Apricot Puree	200g
Fresh Apricot	120g
Sugar	30g
Salt	3g
Pectin	08g
Vanilla Bean	1pcs

Method

- ◆ Boil the apricot puree and vanilla bean, and add fresh apricots.
- ◆ After boiling, add sugar and pectin and let it boil again.
- ◆ Add a pinch of salt.
- ◆ Let it rest in the chiller until it sets.

Chocolate Ganache

Arla Pro high stability Cream 35%	492g
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Jivara Chocolate	820g
Trimoline	20g
Arla Pro Butter	98g

Method

- ◆ Boil cream and trimoline.
- ◆ Pour it in chocolate and mix it well.
- ◆ Add butter and blend.

Golden Butter Cream Cheese Frosting

Arla Pro Cream Cheese 34%	680g
Arla Pro Unsalted Butter	226g
Icing sugar	170g

Method

- ◆ Mix icing sugar and butter using a paddle until creamy.
- ◆ Add cream cheese.

Pistachio Streusel

Arla Pro Unsalted Butter	200g
Caster Sugar	150g
Crushed Pistachio	120g
Flour	200g

Method

- ◆ Mix all ingredients using a paddle.
- ◆ Bake it at 150°C for 17 to 20 minutes until golden brown.

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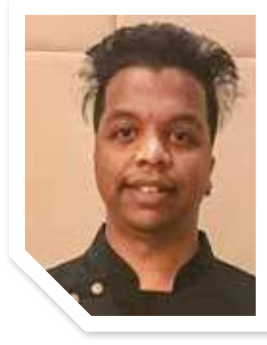
The Guild Meet

The October guild meeting was held at the Jumeirah Creekside Hotel on Tuesday 8th October 2024. We thank Chef Ramola Bijendra and General Manager Andy Cuthbert for hosting the event





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THE EMIRATES CULINARY GUILD APPLICATION FORM

Date of Application:

Family Name:	First Name/s:	Ms/ Mrs/ Mr/ Other:
Nationality:	Civil Status:	Date of Birth: dd/mm/yyyy
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

newmembers



Sasha Kannan, Category Development Manager, Food Service; Sudhir Nambiar, Food Service Director; Maneet Kaur, Regional Sales Manager, Food Service; and Lalit Sharma, Key Account Manager, received the membership certificate from Chef Harald Oberender, VP of Corporate ECG and Guild Coordinator of the ECG Andy Cuthbert.

Agthia: Your One-Stop Shop for F&B Solutions

Agthia is your culinary partner dedicated to providing complete solutions that cater to a diverse range of cuisines and venues. With decades of experience and a commitment to innovation, Agthia has become the go-to choice for chefs, culinary experts, and food service professionals who value quality, convenience, and reliability.

A Commitment to Excellence

Agthia's F&B Solutions are designed to meet the demanding needs of hotels, restaurants, caterers, and food connoisseurs. From sourcing ingredients to ensuring timely delivery, Agthia offers a comprehensive range of services that simplify the culinary process. Our expansive distribution network covers the entire UAE, reaching over 125,000 locations with a fleet of over 436 vehicles.



A Diverse Portfolio of Products

Agthia's portfolio encompasses a wide variety of products, catering to different tastes and preferences:

- Beverage Solutions: From the iconic Al Ain water, the UAE's number one brand, to international favorites like Alpin and Voss, Agthia offers a refreshing selection of beverages.
- Cooking Essentials: Agthia's trusted Al Ain brand provides high-quality cooking essentials, including tomato paste, gourmet sauces, frozen vegetables, and wholesome proteins.
- Snacking Delights: Indulge in the sweetness of Date Crown, the UAE's

leading date brand, and explore versatile ingredients like date syrup, date paste, and date powder.

- Versatile Staples: Agthia's Grand Mills flour, Sunwhite rice, and Al Ain pasta are essential staples for any kitchen.

Operational Excellence:

Agthia is committed to operational excellence and strives to provide exceptional service to its customers. By investing in advanced technology and logistics expertise, we ensure fast delivery, reliability, and efficient supply chain management.

Partner with Agthia

Whether you're a seasoned chef or a budding culinary enthusiast, Agthia is your ideal partner. Our comprehensive F&B solutions, coupled with our unwavering commitment to quality and service, make us the preferred choice for food service professionals across the UAE.



Shibu Abdul Jabbar, Director - Sales & Operations, Deep Seafood Company, received the membership certificate from Chef Harald Oberender, VP of Corporate ECG.

The Deep Seafood Company: A Legacy of Ocean's Bounty

The Deep Seafood Company began its journey in 1986, and has since grown into a legacy in the heart of the UAE. Starting as a humble supplier to the echelons of royalty and government in Abu Dhabi, the company has blossomed into a seafood powerhouse known for excellence. Today, it stands not just as a supplier, but also as a symbol of quality and sustainability in the seafood industry.

Over three decades of unwavering dedication and excellence, The Deep Seafood Company has refined its expertise with precision. Beyond seafood, they always focus on choosing only the finest from the sea. Each product is a testament to the company's unwavering dedication to quality. Holding prestigious certifications like Chain of Custody ASC & MSC, HACCP, FSSC 22000, ISO 9001, and ISO 14001, and a registration with the USFDA, the company sets the benchmark for industry standards.



Their vision centers on becoming the top choice for seafood worldwide, blending efficiency with unwavering trust. Their mission is to provide the best quality products and set a new standard for seafood consumption worldwide. It's a mission fueled by a commitment to not just meeting but surpassing customer expectations.

With over 1000 efficient employees, The Deep Seafood Company manages an impressive portfolio of over 2500 SKUs, reflecting their vast range of products. They operate a fleet of over 250 customized freezer and chiller vehicles and boast a staggering 8000 MT of frozen storage capacity. Their international presence, with offices in

the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, India, UK, and Maldives, speaks their global reach and reputation.

In addition, their in-house brands, including Oceano (premium packaged seafood) Gulf Choice & Sea Power. They also operate Gournex (Meat and Poultry Division), and Royal Future (KSA).

The company embraces ecologically viable fishing methods and offers sustainable, fresh products. Their product range is as diverse as the ocean itself, from fresh catches to frozen delights and value-added creations, ensuring a delectable experience for all.

In a world, where the demand for quality and sustainability is ever-increasing, The Deep Seafood Company stands as a beacon of hope and excellence. It's a steward of the seas, dedicated to bringing the best of the ocean to your table.



Sagar Surti, CEO of Masterbaker, received the membership certificate from Chef Harald Oberender, VP of Corporate ECG, and Guild Coordinator of the ECG Andy Cuthbert.

Masterbaker Marketing FZCO: Premium Bakery & Pastry Solutions.

Since its inception in 1992, Masterbaker Marketing FZCO has been a key player in the Middle East's baking industry, providing first-class ingredients and exceptional technical services. With a fully dedicated team of experts, Masterbaker represents leading global bakery and pastry brands, ensuring that customers receive only the best products and solutions. The company's focus extends beyond ingredient supply—it offers world-class training led by Master Bakers from Europe, ensuring that its clients remain at the forefront of industry trends and innovation.

Masterbaker stands out as an innovator and trendsetter in new product development, introducing unique



MASTER BAKER

offerings such as sheet butter and premium fruit fillings in tins, which have revolutionized pastry and bakery applications. With in-house technical consultation and extensive training programs, customers benefit from hands-on demonstrations, seminars, and tailored solutions provided both locally and at leading baking centers in Europe.

Operating out of the National Industries Park in Dubai, U.A.E., Masterbaker's home base features a state-of-the-art facility with a pallet capacity of 13,000, spread across three temperature zones.

The facility occupies a 20,000 sqm land area with a 12,000 sqm build-up area, 35% of its power consumption derived from clean, solar energy. This strategic location provides flexibility in managing temperature zones and ensures proximity to the entire U.A.E. and Middle East, enhancing delivery efficiency.

Masterbaker's presence spans across the U.A.E., Oman, Qatar, and Bahrain, catering to the bread, pastry, and egg product segments.

November 2024 **Gulf Gourmet**

Dipu Nair, Managing Director, Quadrant International LLC (Right), and Max Van Hoek, Regional Export Sales Manager of Top Taste BV, Holland (left), received the membership certificate from Chef Harald Oberender, VP of Corporate ECG, and Guild Coordinator of the ECG Andy Cuthbert.

Quadrant International LLC, is a company incorporated in 2010 for the express purpose of distributing well known brands of Food and Beverages throughout various channels of distribution in the United Arab Emirates.

In addition to the retail segment Quadrant International LLC also focuses on non-retail channels of distribution like the HORECA segment, Foodservices and Ship chandlers plus exploring bulk 're-export' opportunities from the U.A.E. The company's office and warehousing are strategically located in the Dubai Investment Park within close proximity to key logistics hubs like the Jebel Ali Seaport and the

Dubai Logistics City, with distribution all over the UAE. The current product portfolio consists of Snackfoods, Intermediate ingredients and Fruit Purees with many other categories in the pipeline. The Company is focused on distributing quality products and is HACCP certified since 2012.



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 International LLC



Sergio Sousa, Chief Commercial Officer, and Khalid Majid Albedwawi, Director – Strategic, Silal Fresh, received the membership certificate from Chef Harald Oberender, VP of Corporate ECG.

Dedicated to pioneering the fresh-produce industry, **Silal Fresh**, part of Silal a leading Agri-Food company, is emerging as a leader in fruits & vegetables distribution industry in the UAE and beyond. Silal Fresh leverages the advanced farming methods and innovative capabilities of Silal to deliver highest quality fresh produce from over 900 local farms. With the largest network of local and global sourcing capacity, we bring to you the finest and the freshest produce from across the world.

By choosing Silal Fresh, you support sustainable farming and contribute to a healthier, eco-friendly food

system. Our swift farm-to-table delivery ensures unmatched freshness, preserving the full flavor and nutritional value of every bite.





“
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

All Things Smokeysounds like a song, but smoke is not only on trend but also an integral part of the cuisine of our region, whether through BBQ, in marinades, sauces, cheeses, butter, or even ice cream. Smoke profiles can not only complement dishes but also enhance them. We are, of course, talking about clean-label smoke. The providence of the smoke plays a massive role in trends this time of year, applewood, beach, oak, etc..... all providing a unique profile that is driving excitement and the rebirth of our own regional pitmasters. What could be more tempting than a 12-hour smoke brisket served on smoke mash or lightly applewood smoked soft serve topped with sour cherries and a smoke-infused dark chocolate sauce.... **WOW, I HEAR YOU SAY**.... Let us not forget mocktails with smoking foam caps or infused dried fruits. So this up-and-coming trend is not **"SMOKE AND MIRRORS"**. It is a profile that is growing here, and it looks like it is going to stay for the foreseeable future.

TEMPO and **PITCH**, as well as other genres of **MUSIC**, have been shown to influence response to foods and leverage trends. A slower pitch will slow down dinner eating and encourage them to order more. Classical encourages a bigger ticket spend. Oddly, Jazz has a significant increase in the desire for chocolate compared to Rap music. Music and sounds can evoke powerful memories that can be used to enhance our perceptions of the quality and flavor of a meal. Chefs like **Heston Blumenthal** use the "sounds of the sea" to deliver associated images and a heightened sense of smell during the fish course. Pitch is also known to affect taste, so a low pitch on a brass instrument will result in fudge/toffee tasting bitter, as opposed to a high Pitch on a keyboard, which will leave the fudge/toffee tasting sweeter. Science and research are still ongoing and are open to interpretation. **So next time you pick your playlist, think hard... IS YOUR SELECTION WORKING FOR YOU???** *Personally, I like to have my breakfast to the dulcet sounds of Eartha Kitt whilst dinner is more rocky with AC/DC...what is yours???*

Chips have a reputation as a junk food staple. However, they are now on trend as a welcome addition to most foods, adding



texture and a burst of flavor to Pizzas, sandwiches, crushed on the soft serve, or salads. With so many varieties to choose from, almost anything can be enhanced, and it is going viral. TikTok and Insta are awash with these hacks. I love to take a packet of flaming hot Cheetos to crush over my food on flights to give it texture. **HAVE YOU SEEN THIS TREND YET? IF SO, WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE?**

This month, I've been traveling across the region and for a few days in France, where it is more noticeable that food is becoming less complicated and less fussy but packs flavor and cooking skills. I have tried a few new mixes like hot biscuits with soft-serve chili chips and hot sauce on chocolate ice cream. The combination was super delicious.

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 Chefs Palette and DaVinci Gourmet to global and regional chains, QSRs, and casual diners across the region.



*Riso Gallo
Risotto*

*Cà Foresto
Porcini Mushrooms*

*Appennino
Truffle Oil*

AN EARTHY ELEGANCE ON YOUR PLATE



SAVOR THE LUXURIOUS CREAMINESS OF RISO GALLO RISOTTO, PAIRED WITH THE RICH, FLAVOR OF CÀ FORESTO PORCINI MUSHROOMS AND FINISHED WITH A DRIZZLE OF APPENNINO WHITE TRUFFLE OIL.

A TRUE GOURMET INDULGENCE.



**ARLA
PRO.**

**CHEF
OF THE
YEAR
2024**

Enter to *Win*

A Culinary Immersion trip to Denmark

* Craft an exquisite plated dessert featuring Arla Pro High Stability Whipping Cream, Butter, and Cream Cheese. Submit a photo of your culinary creation to emiratesculinaryguild@gmail.com & stand a chance to WIN a culinary immersion trip to Denmark!

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