

Dubai Chefs Bag Top Honors At International Culinary Events

The Emirates Culinary Guild (ECG), the voluntary association of the region's professional chefs, bagged the gold medal and Trophy of Honor at the recently concluded "African and Middle East Culinary Challenge" at Johannesburg as part of the "Food and Hotel Africa" show, held each year at the Sandton Convention Centre and Uwe Michael, Regional Executive Chef of the InterContinental Dubai, was elected as the best chef in a hotel operated under a corporate hotel brand by a majority of votes from the Hermes Awards of the World jury in France.

Announcing the details of the prestigious awards at a press conference in Dubai, Uwe Michael, who is also President of the Emirates Culinary Guild said, "The awards are a great credit to the culinary prestige of the UAE, to the participants and to the professional chefs that supported them."

"I take this opportunity to thank the Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM) who have supported us and helped us achieve record breaking culinary feats in the past and these international awards are another feather in the emirate's cap," Chef Michael added.

"During the awards ceremony in Paris lots of people were talking about and praising the development and the high standards of Dubai's catering industry and I am extremely proud to get this award as it recognizes the work I do and apparently this is also the first time that this trophy..... has..... come..... to..... the..... Middle..... East,"..... said..... an..... elated..... Chef..... Michael.

DTCM Deputy Manager Events, Maiwan Juma Bin Beyal remarked, "Dubai has a series of excellent restaurants and fine food outlets featuring some of the best cuisine from around the world and we are delighted to state that the emirate also has the chefs to compete against the best in the world and come out tops, this is indeed a great recognition for the emirate's culinary professionals."

Mr. Bin Beyal noted that the DTCM would continue to support Dubai's hotels and the Emirates Culinary Guild in reaching new heights of culinary brilliance and thereby enhance fine dining in Dubai.

In Johannesburg, the ECG culinary team comprising Christian Gradnitzer and Vicky Jeffries - both of whom work at Burj Al Arab, Dubai - had to fight off some tough competition from the other eight national teams that were competing.

They had half-an-hour in which to write-out a two-course menu for eight people. The ingredients that had to be used, were given to them only seconds before they had to start creating their menus. After submitting their menu, they had only two hours in which to prepare their gourmet meal.

In the end, it was Christian and Vicky's superior cooperation and culinary skills won the day for the ECG.

John D. Wood, Executive Chef of Burj Al Arab was notably pleased with the result of Vicky and Christian and thanked the Emirates Culinary Guild for giving them an opportunity to participate in this prestigious competition.

"We practiced several times for this competition and it proves that through commitment and dedication you can win. Vicky and Christian did a superb job against some tough competition and they are obviously extremely pleased with the result," Mr. Wood said.

"This triumph only continues to prove that U.A.E. is becoming greater contender on the world culinary circuit. There is a great future ahead for the Chefs in Dubai and the UAE," he observed.

This is the second time that the ECG has competed in this event, and the second time that it has carried off the top honors. The competition was judged according to the rules and regulations of The World Association of Cooks Societies (WACS), the 72-nation confederation of professional chefs.

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