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The **PRO** CHEF

MIDDLE EAST EDITION 50

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Welcome

Welcome to the 50th edition of *The Pro Chef Middle East*. This issue, we explore the future of the hospitality industry. If the last few months have taught us anything about the culinary world, it's that restaurateurs and chefs are capable of swiftly evolving and thinking out of the box to thrive. Don't you agree?



Now that restaurants are reopening, we're seeing creative concepts come into play. Sure, the current dining experience now includes more safety and hygiene measures, but for consumers to trust a brand, the necessary requirements have to take place. We've rounded up a selection for you to head to. This edition also features smart tech solutions, some of which include apps for digital menus, integration with POS systems, and an F&B targeted social media management platform, to reach your target audience.

Elsewhere in the issue, we take a look at women working in pastry and the challenges they had to overcome. We also speak to chefs about their latest menu additions, and whether or not certain concepts created during the lockdown are here to stay. As usual, we have delectable recipes from two newly opened restaurants in the country.

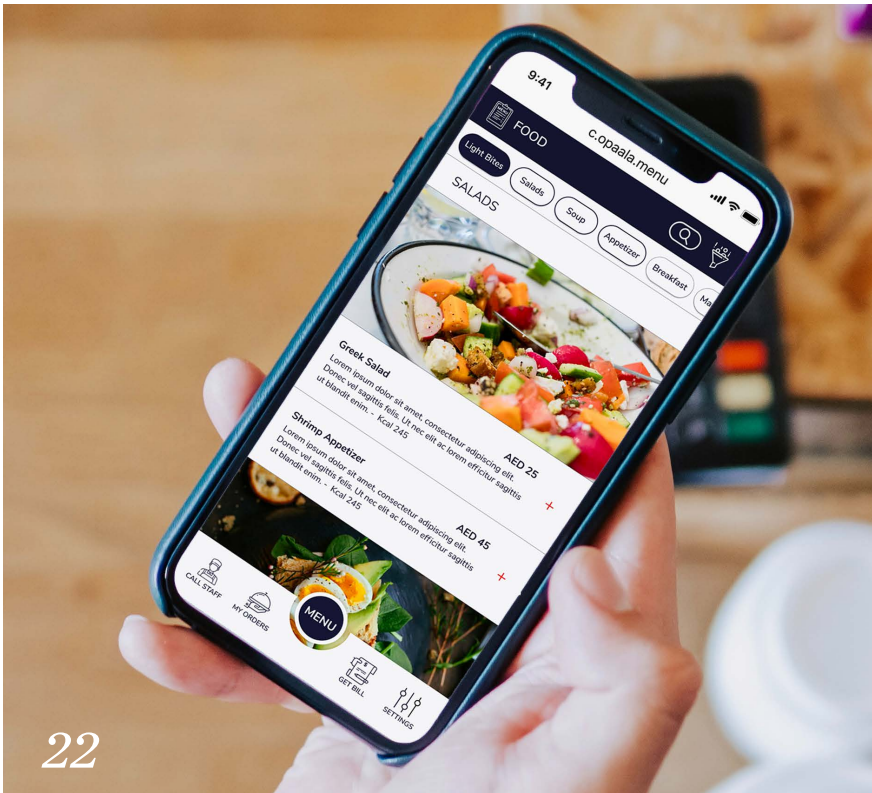
Stay safe and enjoy the season ahead.

Nicola Monteath
Editor





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The
**PRO
CHEF**
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**AWARDS
2020**

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#prochefmeawards

The Pro Chef Middle East Awards are back for the seventh year running to celebrate the achievements of those continuously raising the bar in the Middle East's F&B sector.

Voted for entirely by industry peers, these awards are a one-of-a-kind achievement and a prestigious stamp of approval.

Don't miss the chance to support your industry colleagues and cast your votes now:

theprochefme.com/awards

19
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Votes Cast in 2018

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News bites

Culinary news from the Middle East and beyond

Amsterdam's Taiko restaurant is coming to Dubai



The award-winning concept by Executive Chef and founder Schilo van Coevorden is set to launch its second outlet, and the first international outpost, at Sofitel Dubai Wafi. One of Amsterdam's most popular restaurants, Taiko based at the Conservatorium hotel, will be the first time a Dutch chef's restaurant concept has expanded to the Middle East.

Taiko Dubai will offer the same contemporary cuisine as the Amsterdam branch. Inspired by the flavours and textures of the Far East, varying from delicate to dramatic but always innovative. Diners can expect specialities such as wagyu biryani, his renowned watermelon sashimi and TFC (Taiko Fried Chicken). The restaurant's sleek décor and lively ambience will be recreated in Dubai with Schilo working closely with the Sofitel Dubai Wafi team. Dark reflective materials and dim lighting will sit perfectly within the hotel's design, inspired by Egyptian opulence and French sophistication. Weekends will liven up with Taiko's much-loved drum performances, while DJs play into the evening creating a club-like atmosphere.

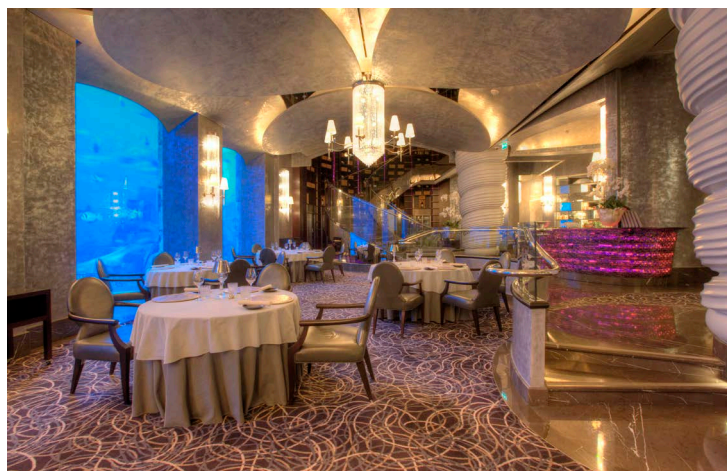
Smart Acres vertical farming company to launch in the UAE



Expected to launch in the third quarter of 2020, Smart Acres will be the latest addition to the hydroponic vertical farming industry, set to bring a green sustainable way of producing clean crops. Located at the Armed Forces Officer's Club in Abu Dhabi, the company's mission is to improve food security within the country, while developing the country's farming capabilities. Smart Acres will provide a

solution to potential socioeconomic threats, such as pandemics, and climate limitations the Middle East currently endures. The vertical farming company is set to be a one-of-a-kind agriculture system which will produce some of the highest yields of crops within the UAE's vertical farming industry, whilst introducing a new future for producing clean foods and allowing for both B2B and B2C sectors to locally source produce. In collaboration with n.thing, a South Korean vertical farming technology company, Smart Acres has been able to design farm modules using an award-winning IoT-based technology system to grow and monitor their produce.

Ossiano has been temporarily renamed



The renowned restaurant at Atlantis The Palm has reopened this summer with an exciting theme and change in name. Grégoire's Kitchen by Ossiano will feature a more relaxed dining experience and live entertainment. Diners will be treated to a modern tapas-inspired menu featuring 18

dishes, all designed by Grégoire Berger. Expect Cancale oysters with seafoam, mussels with chorizo, sardine and confit lemon truffle, and churros with chocolate and an innovative twist. The restaurant will offer two seatings, from 6pm and 8.30pm. Turn to page 8 for more restaurant reopenings.



Cook With A Celebrity Chef via Airbnb's Online Experiences

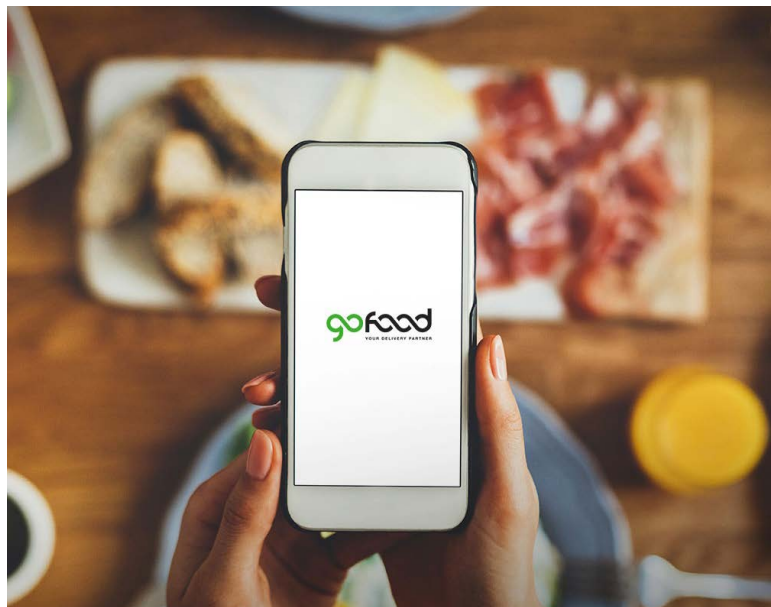
Want to pick up a few culinary tips, tricks and recipes from chefs whose restaurants hold Michelin-stars? Airbnb's latest online experience pairs guests with experts including David Chang, San Diego-based chef and James Beard semi-finalist Claudette Zepeda and acclaimed chef and Eleven Madison Park alum Rôze Traore. In addition to learning a new dish, all of the proceeds will go to benefiting programs that support the food industry and communities impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. The line-up includes David Chang's One-Pot Deliciousness experience, Edward Lee's Summer Grilling Lesson, Claudette Zepeda's Cauliflower Torta Tacos and Rôze Traore's Favorite Summer Recipes with a focus on seasonal ingredients.

The limited-edition experiences are available to book on a first-come, first-served basis. Visit airbnb.com/experiences.

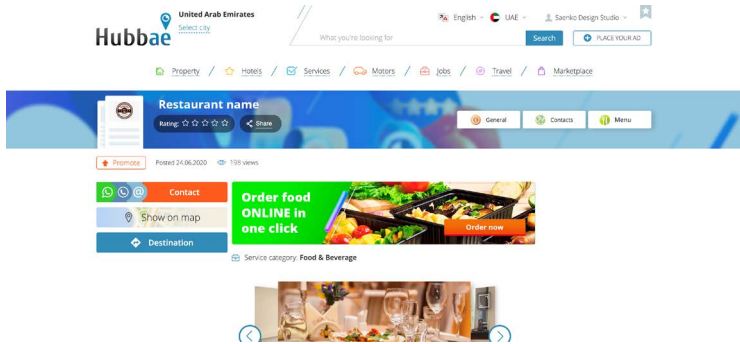
GoFood launches in the UAE

The homegrown food delivery app and website, run by restaurateurs, is now live. Customers can order their favourite meals from more than 2,000 restaurants currently on the platform. Find everything from hidden gems to high-end restaurants, neighbourhood cafés and take-out spots. Designed to help restaurants lower delivery costs and manage their expenses and data better, GoFood's ethical business model focuses on low commissions to allow the food and beverage industry to thrive in the current climate.

Available for download on iOS and Android



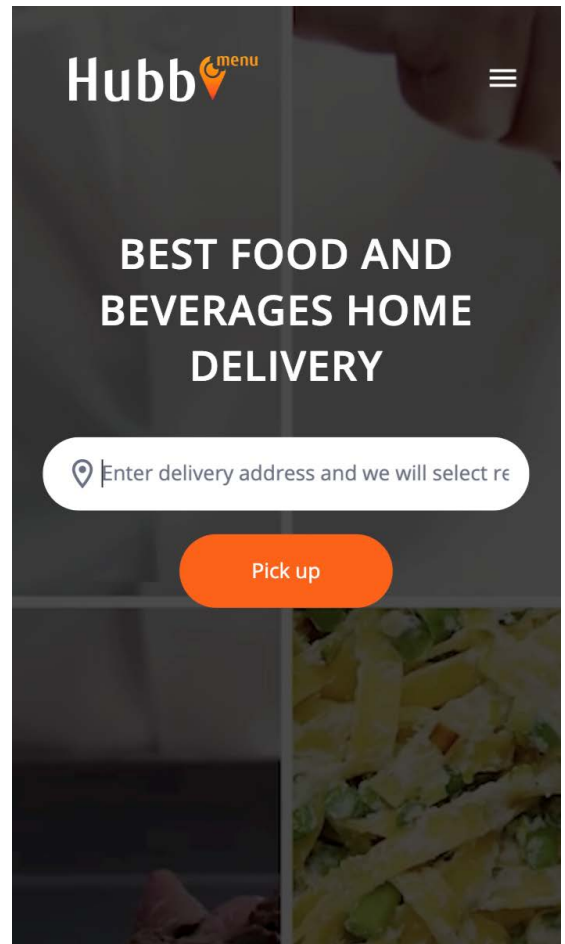
Hubbae.ae enters the UAE



The global e-commerce platform recently announced its entry into the food and beverage market to support restaurants and eateries across the UAE, by eliminating high costs involved in third-party transactions. With several food delivery aggregators charging a commission fee of 30-35% per transaction, the company believes there is a need for a new approach. To provide a solution for restaurants, Hubb offers a cost-effective option through a minimal monthly subscription fee of AED 50 (until December 31, 2020) with no added commission.

For a small monthly fee, restaurants can enjoy a platform that acts as a meeting place between themselves and customers, while also creating a space where restaurants can distribute menus, dishes, ingredients and more by simply subscribing to the platform. Restaurants that sign up to Hubb will have the option of using their own delivery drivers (to ensure all profits go to them). Restaurants can now sign up for free, until September 15.

To subscribe, log onto hubb.global/ or directly on hubb.menu/ and fill in the required details.



Virtual Cooking Competition in GCC

The Emirates Culinary Guild and the US Meat Export Federation have launched the first US Beef virtual cooking competition in GCC. A total of 40 winners in four different classes will win multiple prizes. Think you have what it takes? Registration is now open through the Emirates Culinary Guild.

Visit emiratesculinaryguild.net

Cream of Europe

Rise to the top
with French Cream

In pastry and other branches of the culinary arts, there is no denying that cream is an essential ingredient. As a cooking element, it adds an incredible depth of flavor.

European dairy cream, especially French cream, enhances the flavor of all preparations.

It has an unparalleled melt in the mouth, and its softness on the palate is uniquely smoothing and comforting.

No matter the level of the cooking skills, anyone can incorporate French cream to a range of dishes, from savoury to sweet.



Authentically Emirati By Chef Hind Al Mulla

Emirati Chef Hind Al Mulla incorporated French dairy cream by bringing new dimensions to typical UAE sweets. Her dessert is an entremet with cardamom and cinnamon whipped cream. The collection of elements came together with a surprising amount of texture.



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DINING IN THE CITY

Restaurants have reopened with special offers and creative concepts to entice customers. Here are eight to try the next time you fancy a meal outdoors.

Distillery Gastropub



Souk Al Manzil's popular hangout has launched a night dedicated to the UAE's hospitality industry. Every Sunday, hospitality employees can enjoy a flat 30% discount off their total bill. The menu features snack-style dishes such as spicy tomato bruschetta, beef brisket fries with peppercorn gravy, popcorn prawns with kimchi slaw and spicy

sriracha mayo, and a pound of hickory BBQ or spicy buffalo wings. For mains, the chips and battered cod with mushy peas are a must-try, or for something heartier, beef chilli topped with cheddar gratin. End with New York cheesecake and strawberry coulis, or the decadent apple crumble with vanilla ice cream.

To avail the Industry Night offer, hospitality employees must show a valid employment ID card. Contact +971 54 998 2003.

Bombay Borough



DIFC's latest Indian bar and eatery has special offers for those looking to try the city's culinary offerings. Diners can avail 10% discount on the total bill, using the code BB2020. A limited-time deal of buy three, get one free is also available on their Express Lunch Menu. Diners can share a portion of Chutney Papad Tokri, before tucking

into the Smalls menu. Mains include an extensive selection of grills, big plates and biryanis.

The lunch menu is priced at AED79 per person. Delivery is now available through Zomato, Deliveroo, Careem, and Talabat as well. Contact +971 4 327 1555.

Tresind Studio

Gather your friends and head to this hotspot for their latest chapter, the Food Truck. Diners can expect a 14-course menu (vegetarian option available) that features food truck specialities with a creative twist. Non-vegetarians can savour dishes such as Doritos dynamite, curry leaf Genovese pizza, chicken tikka karaage, lamb birria taco and Kerala curry ramen with chilli prawns, to name a few. The vegetarian menu features malai avocado roll ups, coconut curry ramen with chilli tofu and vada bao with tamarind and yuzu chutney. Both menus offer similar style dishes, with the finale being an indulgent mango cheesecake and chocolate and banana waffle.

From Dhs225 per person. Contact +971 56 420 9754 or +971 52 242 4262.





Mango Tree Thai Bistro, Hilton Dubai The Walk

Explore the four regions of Thailand with sharing-style dishes at 50% off. If you're on an intermittent diet or in JBR and feeling peckish, make use of the Early Bird Dinner special. We recommend the watermelon salad with dry shrimps floss, Som Tam corn with your choice of meat and Thai seafood sauce, and the traditional street papaya salad with prawns. For entrées, look no further than the crab-fried rice, northern homemade chicken curry, and shrimp Pad Thai noodles with yellow tofu and tamarind sauce.

Daily from 5-7pm. Contact +971 4 374 7555.



OPA

The highly acclaimed Friday brunch is back, promising a Greek experience for those with wanderlust. The four-course brunch highlights signature dishes, and diners can choose from a wide selection of sharing menu dishes, all brought to the table. For larger groups who wish to taste a bit of everything, OPA has a fixed sharing brunch menu (for eight guests and above), with a variety of Greek favourites on offer.

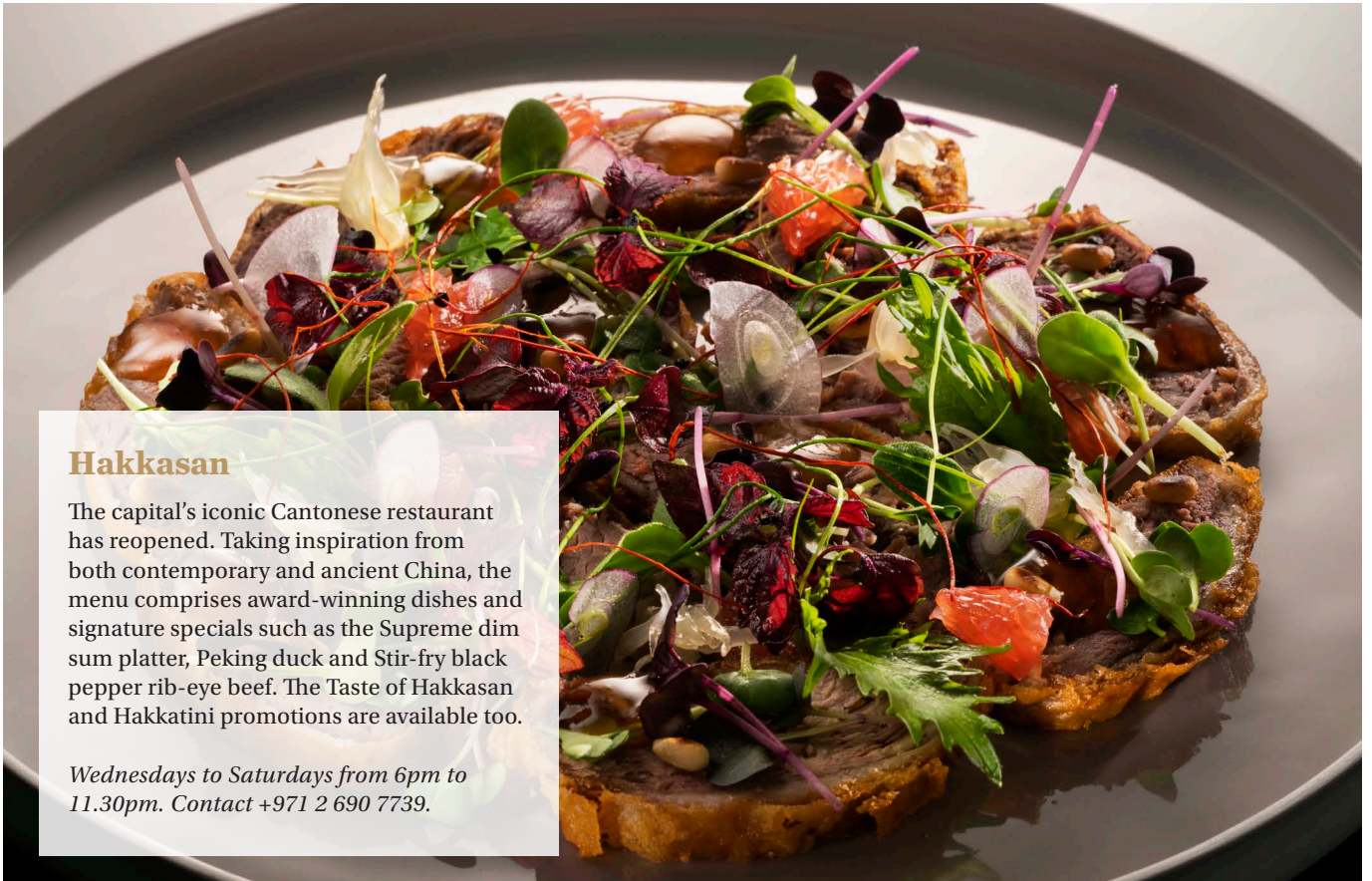
From 12-4pm, from Dhs245-395. Contact +971 4 357 0557.



Hell's Kitchen, Caesars Palace Bluewaters Dubai

Gordon Ramsay's fiery restaurant will now celebrate the famous Beef Wellington, a firm favourite on the menu, with the new #ShowMeYourWelly dining experience taking place every Wednesday. Diners can enjoy the classic Beef Wellington with a choice of one side including rocket salad with sundried tomatoes and parmesan, potato purée with chopped chives, sweet potato fries or truffle green beans with confit shallot, as well as a carafe. Non-meat eaters worry not, the Vegetarian Wellington is just as great, made up of salt-baked beetroot wrapped in puff pastry with a mushroom duxelle, served with an English pea purée, glazed baby artichokes and a vegetable demi-glace. The vegetarian option includes a choice of one side and a carafe of red, white or rose grape.

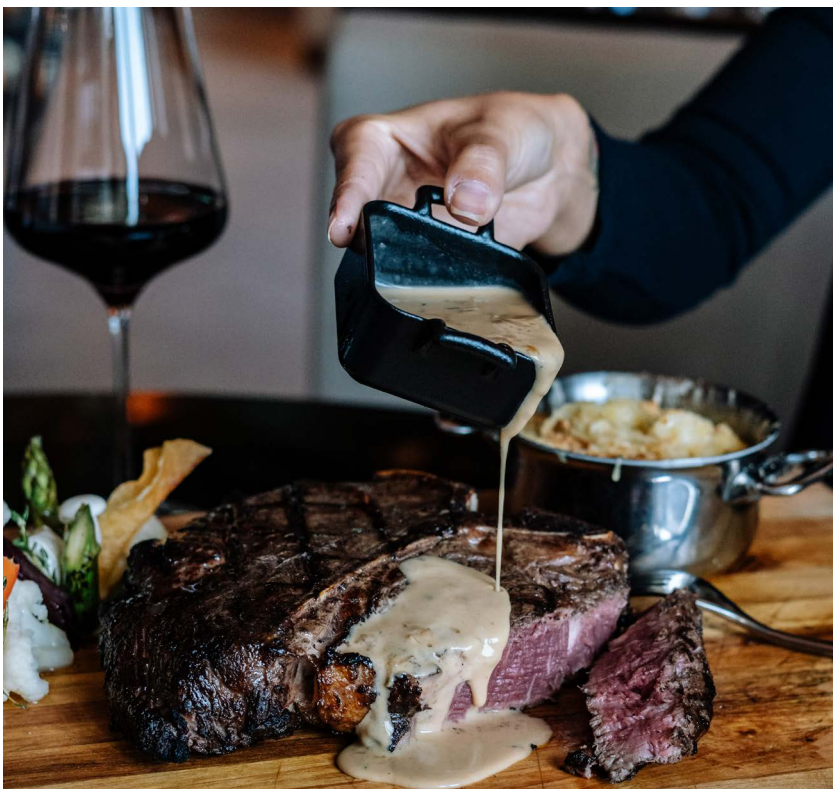
AED350 for the meat option and AED280 for the vegetarian wellington. The special is served every Wednesday, from 6-10:30pm.



Hakkasan

The capital's iconic Cantonese restaurant has reopened. Taking inspiration from both contemporary and ancient China, the menu comprises award-winning dishes and signature specials such as the Supreme dim sum platter, Peking duck and Stir-fry black pepper rib-eye beef. The Taste of Hakkasan and Hakkatini promotions are available too.

Wednesdays to Saturdays from 6pm to 11.30pm. Contact +971 2 690 7739.



Boa Steakhouse, Saadiyat Beach Club

Overlooking the Eastern Mangroves, this steakhouse offers an à la carte menu, back-to-back days of brunching, a Gentlemen's Saturday night special and a Business Lunch package. On Thursday night, guests can feast at the newly launched evening brunch that showcases some of the finest quality meat. On Friday afternoon, seafood lovers can tuck into BOA's five-stage brunch menu, starting with a seafood tower, followed by cold and hot starters, before the main course and, finally, a dessert platter. Men can gather their friends on Saturday night and catch up over succulent steak and aged drinks.

Contact +971 2 641 1500 for price packages.

Cream of Europe

Rise to the top
with French Cream



The (R)evolution of WOMEN IN PASTRY

Six chefs with varying experiences sat around a table to discuss what is it to be a woman in pastry

What brings people together? Is it possible to introduce a group with only one thing in common, and have the individuals speak for hours? We brought up the topic of pastry with a selection of successful women, and the conversation ranged from using the best ingredients to experiences of all kinds in the kitchen. While perhaps there is some antiquated notion that women do not deserve a place in today's modern kitchen, or are somehow not as capable, the collected group have proven they are more than confident in leading teams, winning awards, and starting thriving businesses. They are passionate, professional, creative, and dedicated to the craft of pastry.

During the discussion, the dialogue first centered on the chefs' respective journeys in the culinary arts. Overall, the group was split on when they wanted to become involved with pastry. Some of the women started in completely different fields (animation, fine arts, nutrition), and even if working in a kitchen, the beginning of their careers wasn't necessarily in pastry. The remainder gathered work experience in kitchens and restaurants around the world. Perhaps surprisingly, formal pastry training was something not necessary for all of the chefs.

IT'S WORTH THE STRUGGLE

The group had to work hard, perhaps harder than their male counterparts, to obtain the positions they are in today. In their experience, the women had to overcome adversity and sexism in the kitchen. Be it from detrimental, antagonistic, or misogynist situations, the group heard 'no' just as many times as they heard 'yes.' And yet, they persevered. As of today, these women are leaders in some capacity, and many of them work outside of their kitchens as culinary consultants to well-recognized institutions.

When it came to advising the next generation of chefs, each of the women had nearly identical recommendations. The suggestion to keep going, to understand the realities of what the industry will throw at any person starting out, was repeated again and again. The women recognized that the work would be difficult, and there would



Dark Pavlova

by Aaliya Randeree



be sacrifices, but the payoff could be amazing. The road to becoming a successful pastry chef is not an easy one, but by supporting others in the kitchen, the journey can be made easier.

A BRIGHT FUTURE

When discussing the pressure to be present on social media, each of the chefs admitted to having accounts on various platforms. As busy as most of them are, the commitment to consistently post can be a bit of a hassle, but a necessary one. One of the chefs mentioned that her business grew considerably by using social media to highlight her various products.

When asked how they wanted their careers to progress, the answers were not of writing cookbooks, appearing on television shows, or winning awards. The collected chefs were mainly interested in opening individual shops, continuing to consult, and providing training to home cooks or others starting their careers.



Creamy Meringue

by Nina Metayer



#TRENDINGNOW: DIY MEAL KITS

Two chefs discuss the success of at-home meal delivery kits and whether or not it's here to stay



FADI NAIM
EXECUTIVE CHEF, COUQLEY FRENCH BISTRO & BAR

The lockdown was a new situation from every aspect, whether it be personal or from the point of view of a business. At the time, our priority became survival and in order to do so, we decided to explore as many possibilities to make sure our customers remain engaged and Couqley remains top of mind even at home.

The DIY kits were just one of the many things we executed

(online website ordering, signature combos) and it truly left a mark on the brand. Before finalising any options, we charted our top priorities as packaging, hygiene and overall food safety, because above all else we wanted customers to be able to order our signature specials with the same trust and confidence that they had in the brand, before the lockdown.

Fortunately, our team was already in the process of creating a separate range of Couqley at-home kits to create new experiences for customers. With the lockdown, we had a chance to really focus on this and launch it within the first two weeks. We started off with our signature steaks and burgers which did exceptionally well. The response was due to a mix of the value for money that came with the DIY kits. Our very first kits were based on our bestsellers and this worked out incredibly well thanks to customers that were clearly missing Couqley.

Our kits definitely helped us absorb the crisis a bit and put us in a better position for when the recovery finally began. Additionally, it helped us think out of the box and even within the last three months, we managed to evolve our offerings with a Ramadan DIY kit and most recently a Summer DIY kit.

We do think that despite dine-in opening up, we want to keep giving customers a chance to enjoy our signature experience through cooking at home, so at least for us, the kits are here to stay. We're excited to come up with unique combinations in the future as well.



Photographs SUPPLIED



SANGWON KONLUK
 EXECUTIVE CHEF, FUCHSIA URBAN THAI

Our team at Fuchsia was actually already working on a cooking kit for our kids' menu 'Thai Tots' right before the crisis began. We spent a lot of time developing these with child-friendly instruction cards and easy to make noodle and falafel recipes. We were expecting some attention from our regular families, but the launch week actually coincided with schools shutting down and parents suddenly on the hunt for ideas to keep the little ones occupied. The response was amazing and it definitely helped cement our place in the city as a family-friendly restaurant.

Overall, there was a consumer preference to do minimal grocery runs during the lockdown and to come up with new experiences in their very own homes which is where kits came in. We also worked on multiple bundles for delivery whether it be a solo night in, a soulmate bundle or a complete feast for the family. We also added in elements like printed trivia quizzes to make sure dinner at home remains an engaging, interactive affair for little ones. The Bestie Bundle we offered during Ramadan allowed customers to place an order for themselves and have a duplicate order delivered to someone they are missing in the city. The kits and bundles definitely helped maintain the momentum for delivery and kept us in the spotlight.

The excellent thing about Dubai is that due to the multiple initiatives by the authorities, we are seeing a lot of consumer



confidence in the reopening stage. People are actually eager to get out and back to their favourite spots. It is a delight to see our regulars walk through our doors again and we think Dubai as a city is better known for its going out culture as well. Hence, kits don't necessarily have to become a permanent fixture in the F&B ecosystem just yet.

We will probably continue to dapple in kits every once in a while as an additional experience for special occasions like Valentine's Day, but in general, we are focusing on welcoming our guests back into our restaurants.

Chef's Special

THE BEST DISHES CURRENTLY ON MENUS
AT RESTAURANTS ACROSS DUBAI - AS
CHOSEN BY CHEFS THEMSELVES



SONU KOITHARA

EXECUTIVE CHEF AT SHAMIANA,
TAJ JUMEIRAH LAKES TOWERS

What is your favorite dish on the menu?

On every menu there is a dish that can only be described with a facial expression, and so this is Shamiana's Spiced Lamb Chops with Mint Yoghurt, which in my humble opinion is incredibly good. It holds a special place in my heart and is a definite crowd-pleaser and an absolute must-try on your next visit.

Can you describe the dish?

Our lamb chops are one of our signature dishes, and the most popular appetizer on the menu. My team and I take immense pride in preserving the authentic Indian flavours of it, using home-style cooking techniques. The trick to ensure the meat is succulent and flavourful, is in the marinade - an assortment of carefully selected spices blended with yoghurt. It is then cooked in a Tandoor, a traditional Indian clay oven. The chops are served with a side salad and mint chutney to freshen things up.

What makes it a standout dish?

With its origins in 1973, Shamiana is a heritage restaurant, hailing from the iconic Taj Mahal Palace in Mumbai. We are proud to use an heirloom recipe from the world of Taj and adapt it to local palates. The chops are marinated twice. The first marinade helps to tenderize the meat, while the second brings out the complexity of the flavours. The intense heat from the tandoor gives the meat a beautiful charred texture - crispy on the outside and beautifully tender on the inside.

Where do you source the ingredients from?

The meat is imported from Australia, a country famed for the highest quality lamb products. The spices are authentic and sourced from various regions of India.





BENJAMIN WAN
SUPERCHEF AT COYA DUBAI



What's your favorite dish on the menu?

Cangrejo al Coco/King crab, osietra caviar with avocado.

Describe the dish.

King crab is cooked sous vide with coconut milk and rocoto chilli. We then pick it down and bind it with the reduced cooking liquid. It's served with thinly sliced avocado, burnt cucumber, osietra caviar, curry oil and coriander. Also, it's gluten and dairy-free. Whenever we create a dish we always think about sustainability and how we can utilize as much of the ingredients as possible. For this dish, it's connected to so many other dishes on our menu in terms of the ingredients, primary or secondary, being used for other dishes.

What makes it a standout dish?

The intense flavours coming from everywhere that work with each other. The king crab seasoned with coconut and lime juice. The rocoto chilli adds heat to the dish, the avocado adds a freshness and creaminess to it along with the reduced coconut. We blowtorch compressed cucumber to add a bitter crisp element. Caviar adds a saltiness to it all and we finish it with curry oil, which goes so well with the coconut and coriander. There are a lot of flavours but it's very well balanced. Crab and avocado are a great combination in itself, we've just added more complementing ingredients to the mix.

Where do you source the ingredients from?

The King Crab is Alaskan. We use our dedicated Peruvian suppliers to bring in avocados, chillies and lime. The cucumbers are local and organic. We try and use local whenever we can, as long as the quality is not compromised. Lastly, the caviar is from France.



CRAIG BEST

HEAD CHEF OF GORDON RAMSAY HELL'S KITCHEN,
CAESARS BLUEWATERS DUBAI

What's your favourite dish on the Supper Club menu?

It might seem the obvious choice, however, the dish is classic, world-renowned and a winner in everyone's eyes. It's our famous Beef Wellington.

Tell us about the dish.

The Beef Wellington is a beef fillet wrapped in puff pastry, mushroom duxelles, and served with potato purée, glazed root vegetables and red wine demi-glace. We only cook with non-alcoholic wine, to ensure that everyone can try this Gordon Ramsay classic.

What makes it a standout dish?

Apart from being one of the most decorated dishes in the world, it all comes down to the flavour profile from the combination of the ingredients. The distinct meaty flavour from the fillet steak, with a slight hint of mustard, the earthiness from the duxelles balances perfectly with the glazed vegetables and demi-glacé. It all comes together with powerful and rich flavours, however, well balanced so that it's not overpowering.

Where do you source the ingredients from?

We do what we can to source the best possible local Ingredients; as celebrating home produce is something that we believe in. However, for specific things we need to source from overseas. Our beef fillet for the Wellington comes from Australia - it is grass-fed and wet-aged.





PHOTOGRAPHS SUPPLIED

The post-pandemic dining experience

Haider Madani, Founder of Cassette Restaurant and Café discusses the future of the restaurant industry

Six months ago, had someone told us that a killer virus would spread around the globe and bring the whole world to a standstill, how we would have laughed. Now, it feels like we make plans and COVID laughs.

Any predictions we make comes with great caution, and perhaps optimism, all while remaining ready to adapt should circumstances dictate. As with all aspects of life, with dining, there will be the BC and AC (Before COVID and After COVID) experience. We believe that the lessons we have learnt and the ways we have had to adjust our practices and adapt will mean that in six months from now, eating out will be a better dining experience than ever.

Most restaurants have increased their offerings to include exciting and innovative services. You dream of something food-related and a restaurant out there has it. Want a Michelin star rated seven-course meal delivered to your home? You can now have it. Want to collect your favourite Parisian dish curbside? You got it.

Creative culinary minds cease to amaze, as fine dining alongside casual eateries have shaken up their services to remain relevant and attractive. What this means for patrons is that they finally have variety and accessibility that was previously unknown. The virus may have been the catalyst, but the effects of it will last indefinitely.

Another positive to come out of this experience is the way the whole food and beverage industry has supported each other. This has created bonds and strengthening relationships between suppliers and restaurateurs. It means that the best ingredients are now in surplus supplies and chefs are keeping busy with the endless creative possibilities.

Unfortunately, many of the restaurants that closed their doors may never get the

“This pandemic may have been the stimulus, but it’s important to make the dining experience more relevant, safe and sustainable than ever ”

opportunity to reopen. What this dictates for those who have survived, is that their dining experience needs to be about so much more than just food. For example, we work tirelessly to bring art, music and the community together. Restaurants emerging from a lockdown have to focus on what makes them unique.

It seems clear that future dining experiences are likely to still involve social distancing, masking, perhaps even continued temperature checks, but we

feel as though that will not deter nor take away from the joy of eating out. In six months, when this virus is hopefully history, we believe that people will be more appreciative and eager than ever for meals they have not cooked themselves.

Hopefully, the way we have utilised technology to ensure the safe production and delivery of food will continue – it should. A prime example is the use of QR codes to replace paper menus. This pandemic may have been the stimulus, but it’s important to maintain and develop upon these changes to make the dining experience more relevant, safe and sustainable than ever.

The new-found respect for the community will also lead to increased support of independent businesses. As a family-founded enterprise, we have been overwhelmed by the championing spirits of our raving fans, and long may this continue.

So, the dining experience in six months’ time? Think of it as the BC experience with an adrenaline rush. We all need to be bigger, better and safer if we are going to survive.



Cream of Europe


Rise to the top
with French Cream



CREAM

The essential ingredient

When using dairy, no other products can match the versatile qualities of European cream. Used by chefs to enhance recipes and bring out the best flavours in their pastry, French cream is a staple product in kitchens



In pastry and other branches of the culinary arts, there is no denying that cream is an essential ingredient. As a cooking element, it adds an incredible depth of flavour. Cream is one of the most versatile dairy products, as it gives substance to all preparations. In the kitchen, chefs and home cooks can infuse it with herbs and spices to create an exquisitely flavoured ganache or add other delicious components to dishes. In its liquid form, cream provides silkiness and incomparable glossiness to pastry of all kinds. Furthermore, cream lends a unique smoothness to custard and ice cream, where it is sweetened and flavoured. Although cream can be sourced from many countries, French cream has an unparalleled melt in the mouth quality. Its softness on the palate is uniquely soothing and comforting.

NO SUBSTITUTE TO DAIRY CREAM

Perhaps most importantly for the ingredient, France has strict standards around the content of fat in its cream products. Educated chefs around the world understand that the consistent inclusion of 35% fat is essential to creating the ideal cooking

cream, whipping cream and other products. This cream includes both a low reduction rate and fast cooking time, which helps to retain all of the flavours and nutritional properties of the dishes. Furthermore, many European farmers are focused on sustainable dairy production. With chefs and diners, people are more interested than ever on how their food is made.

As part of the discussion of favored ingredients, our collected chefs were particular about many things, extending to the products they use in their kitchens. Unfortunately, for many chefs in the UAE, not all of the products are available that food professionals might want for their recipes. And yet, when it comes to pastry, there can be no substitutes.

Fortunately, European cream and many other recognisable high-quality French dairy products are available to both professionals and home chefs throughout the GCC.

No matter the level of cook or chef, anyone can incorporate French cream to a range of dishes in the kitchen, from savoury to sweet.



Join the community on Facebook and Instagram

#thecreamlab.me

SMART TECH SOLUTIONS

Explore these platforms that enable digital transformation for the hospitality industry



ELEPHANT SOCIAL

This pandemic has opened numerous brands' eyes on opportunities they previously missed out on, by lack of social media management. Now more so than ever, restaurants need to step up their social media game to reach their loyal customers and a new audience. Unfortunately, given the current climate,

most restaurateurs might have to do so with smaller teams and reduced budgets.

That's where Elephant Social comes into play. GCC tech company, Elephant Media, has worked with AWS (Amazon Web Services), to create an app that's hassle-free, user-friendly and affordable. The app literally replaces marketing agencies and dedicated social media managers, assisting businesses with content creation and scheduling of posts; all from one dedicated platform.

All you have to do is upload a photo on the app, get caption ideas that are

specific to your business (in English and Arabic), use the proprietary tech (Emotos) to get a feel of the post, and schedule it. It's that simple! The app also suggests growth hashtags for Instagram, to spread the word to your target audience. You can make multiple posts within minutes. A free 14-day trial is available so you can test the app with no obligation.

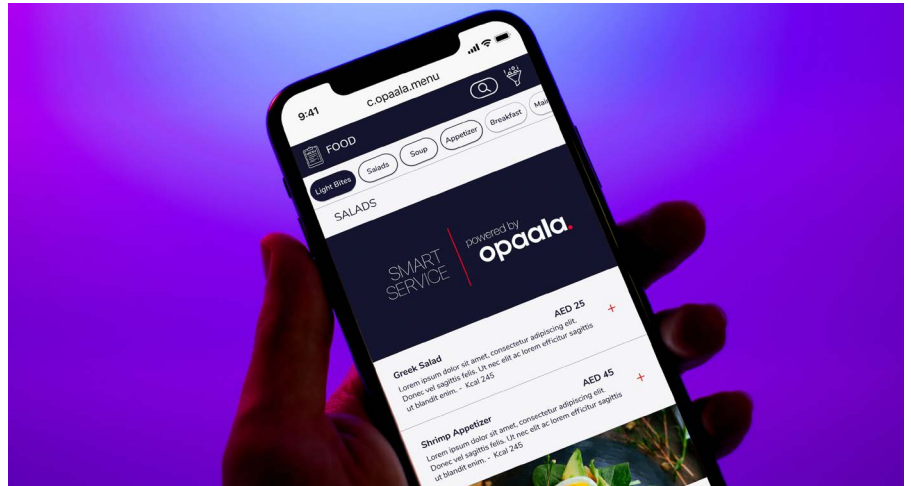
*Download the app
on elephant.social*

OPAALA

There is an immediate requirement for contactless solutions. Opaala was born pre COVID, as a food-tech platform designed to improve services, increase efficiency, reduce overhead and increase revenues. It also happens to have "contactless" as a nifty built-in feature.

Opaala is a seamless app-free platform which provides venues with a live dynamic menu to include scheduling, allowing for things such as automatic price change during happy hour, and daily special sections to automatically appear/disappear based on the day of the week. Images and menu items can be added, changed, or temporarily removed if unavailable, with a simple click on the CMS. Adding item modifiers and upselling are built-in features as well.

Diners can use their phones to scan the dedicated tag, so that the menu opens on their device browser. They're able to choose the language they want the menu in, call staff, send requests and special instructions, filter the menu based on dietary requirements, live search, place orders, track their bill and

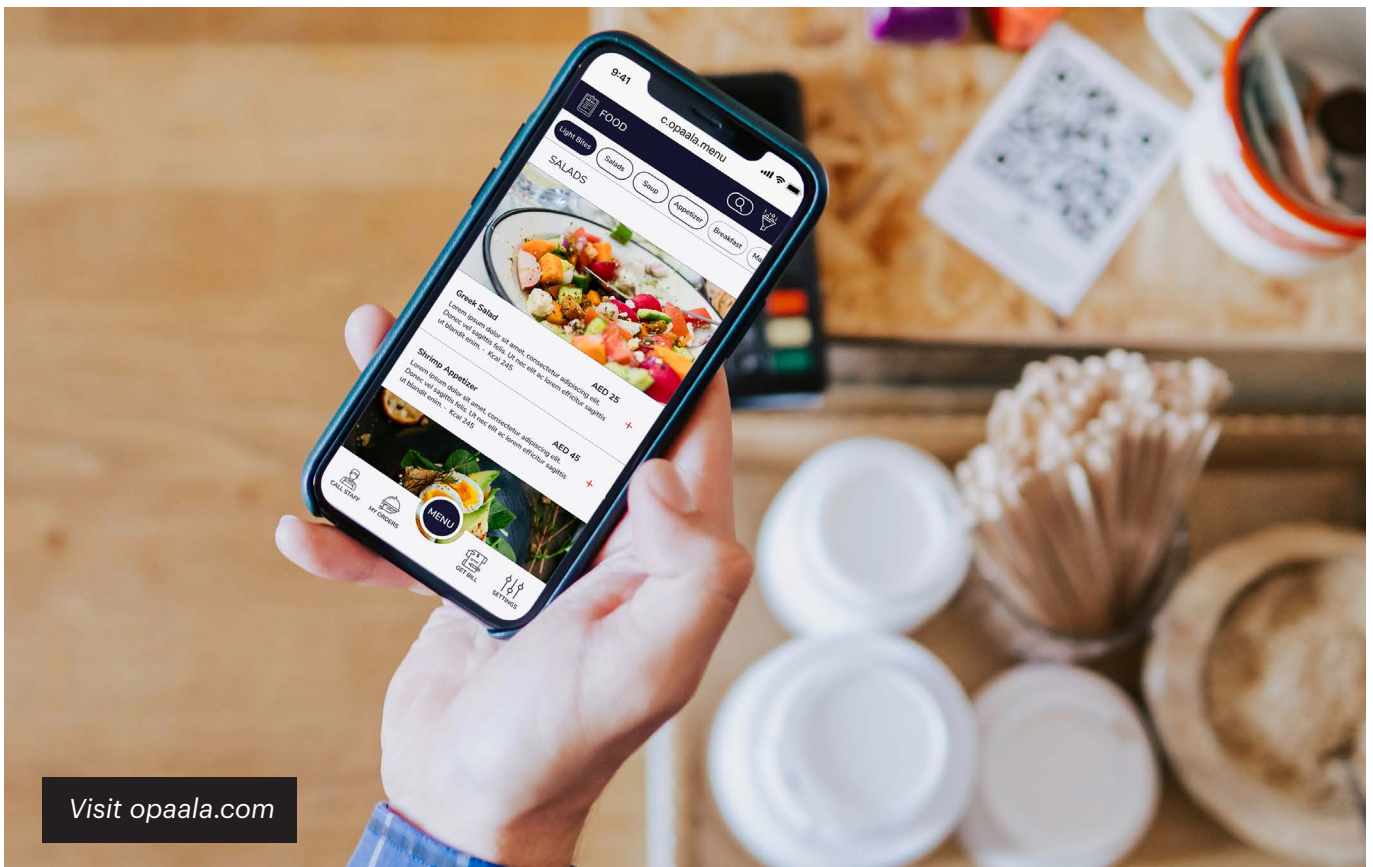


even pay through the platform, all without downloading the app. It also automatically identifies where the diner is seated, provides built-in bill splitting, and tracks the order across the venue.

Furthermore, it integrates directly into most POS systems, so venues can choose to accept orders and requests on a tablet or any other browser/device. The kitchen or bar receives a detailed order along with any modifiers, special requests and add-

ons. Once the diner is ready to leave, they can pick their payment option on their browser. This includes Apple pay, credit or debit card, charge to the room (for hotels) or directly with the venue through cash or card machine.

Opaala is currently in use at a number of restaurants that are seeing a 12-15% increase, with some venues recording over 30% in revenue/orders, while also helping reduce overhead by 25-35% on average.



Visit opaala.com

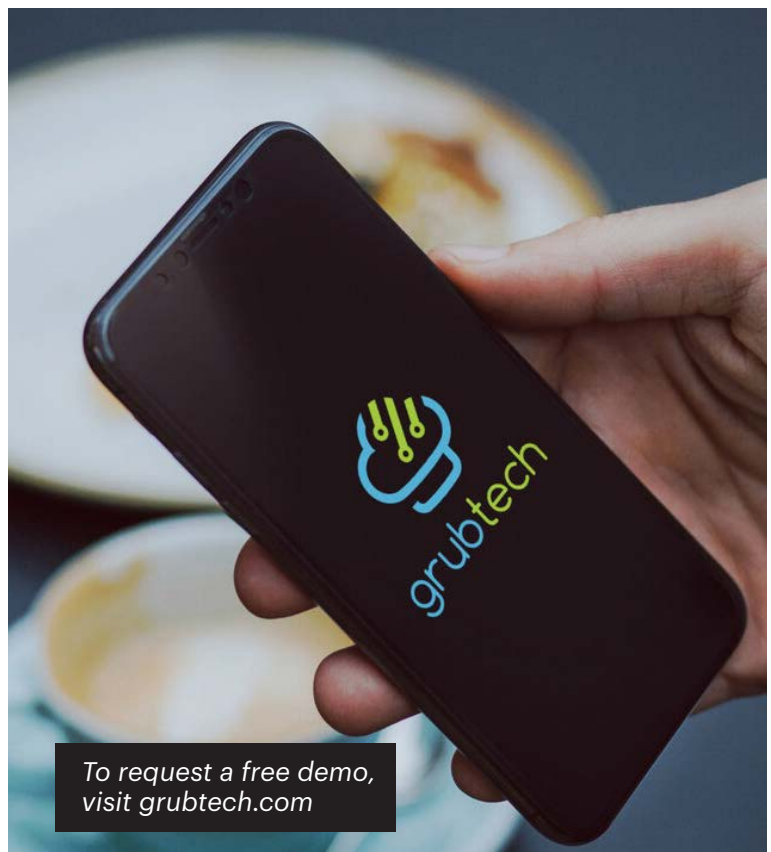


GRUBTECH

This SaaS platform's data-driven approach focuses on providing the food and beverage sector with streamlined operations for restaurants, cloud kitchens, and virtual brands. Grubtech offers assistance to restaurateurs for day-to-day operations, with tools such as an omnichannel Point of Sale, integration with food aggregators, an interactive kitchen display system, multi-brand menu and recipe management, commercial and operational reporting and analytics, advanced marketing capabilities, and a customer management portal.

The Dubai-based food tech startup's vision is to revolutionise the foodservice industry by offering the best technology possible, to let companies start, run and scale their businesses in the quickest way possible.

One of their highlighted features, GrubONE, uses bi-directional integrated APIs to automatically circulate menus across various channels and automate order capture from food aggregators into the dashboard. Furthermore, the company has also developed a machine-learning driven marketing solution that provides restaurateurs with abilities to manage digital and social media campaigns.



To request a free demo, visit grubtech.com

TASTE OF PROVENÇE

Executive Chef Yadav shares recipes from the exclusive chef's table at the newly opened La Salle, Saadiyat Beach Club - Abu Dhabi. The menu is a theatrical voyage of Southern France, offering diners a multi-sensory showcase in a unique setting that blends art, striking interiors and exquisite views of the beach



La Pissaladiere Nicoise

Serves 1

Pissaladiere Stuffing

50g white pearl onions
10ml olive oil
10g castor sugar
20ml veal jus
5g salt
2 fillets anchovy
10g Beldi olives (Seedless)
5g Datterino tomato
1 sprig basil

For the Puff Pastry

80g flour
60g margarine
1 egg
40ml water
1 tsp salt
1 tsp sugar

Method

- 1 For the pastry, prepare the dough with water, flour, sugar, salt and egg.
- 2 Spread the dough into a sheet and apply margarine. Follow the book fold method to incorporate the margarine into the dough.
- 3 Refrigerate before the final sheeting process.
- 4 Spread the chilled dough onto a sheet and cut the required shape for the Pissaladiere mould.
- 5 Peel the pearl onions and caramalise them whole in olive oil. Add in the veal jus and mix well.
- 6 Season and cook the onions until soft but holding the shape.
- 7 Butter a small round mould and arrange the cooked pearl onions.
- 8 In between the onions, add the Beldi olives.
- 9 Cover the arranged mould with a puff pastry sheet and bake at 180 degrees Celsius until the puff pastry gets cooked and turns light golden brown.
- 10 De-mould the Pissaladiere on a serving plate and garnish with anchovy fillets, Datterino tomato and fresh basil.





Risotto Acquerello

Serves 1

70g carnaroli rice
60ml olive oil
60g butter
20g shallots, chopped
150ml vegetable stock
20g girolles mushrooms
10g green peas
5g salt
3g crushed pepper corns
60g parmesan cheese
15g truffle paste

Pecorino foam

100ml milk
30g pecorino cheese
1 tsp soy lecithin

Method

- 1 Sweat chopped shallots in olive oil. Add the rice and sauté slightly.
- 2 Follow with the vegetable stock gradually, until the rice has released its starch and cooked. Season with salt and pepper.
- 4 Mix in butter, truffle paste and parmesan cheese and emulsify to form a creamy textured risotto.
- 5 Sauté girolles and green peas in butter and garnish the risotto with sautéed mushroom and peas.
- 6 Boil the milk and add cheese and soy lecithin.
- 7 Use a hand blender to create the foam. Garnish the plated risotto with the pecorino foam and shave white Alba truffle on top. Serve hot.



CREATIVE CLASSICS

Natasha Sideris, Founder and Managing Director of The Tashas Group has launched the latest chapter of the South African boutique lifestyle café in Al Barsha. Here she shares two recipes that are nourishing and indulgent



Last Minute Eggs

A savoury, flavourful bowl of eggs and veggies. Delicious for breakfast or whenever you are hungry.

Serves 2

Chilli Butter

50g butter
1g red chilli flakes
2g maldon salt

Roasted Peppers

2 red peppers

Roasted Cherry Tomatoes

100g cherry tomatoes
10ml olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

Creamed Feta

60g feta (soft variety)
15ml cream

Buttered Leeks

60g butter
120g baby leeks

Pinch of thyme
Pinch of oregano
Salt and pepper to taste

To plate

2 tbsps chilli butter
100g roasted peppers
60g roasted tomatoes
100g buttered leeks
60g baby spinach

4 poached eggs
4g lemon zest
20g spring onion
4g parsley
2g coriander, chopped
20ml olive oil
30g creamed feta
2g chives, chopped
1g coriander cress
Melba toast or crisp bread, to serve

Method

- 1 Melt the butter in a sauce pan and add the chilli flakes and salt. Allow to simmer until it separates. Strain the butter through a sieve and keep aside in a warm place.
- 2 Place the peppers in an oven set to 180C and roast until the skin blisters. Remove, place into a bowl, and cover with plastic wrap to sweat. Once cool enough to handle, peel and remove the skin and excess seeds. Cut into strips.
- 3 Drizzle tomatoes with olive oil, season and roast at 180C for 10-15 mins or until soft.
- 4 Mash the feta in a bowl and stir in the cream until smooth.
- 5 Place the leeks into an oven proof bowl and cover with the remaining ingredients. Bake at 180C until the leeks are tender and soft (15 mins).
- 6 Add chilli butter to a pan and bring to the heat. Add the roasted peppers, roasted tomatoes, buttered leeks and baby spinach. Stir through well until the spinach is wilted. Prepare the eggs. Finish the spinach with the lemon zest, parsley, coriander and chopped spring onions.
- 7 Spread the creamed feta onto the bowl or plate. Top the creamed feta with the spinach mix and then with the eggs. Garnish the dish with coriander cress and chives and drizzle with olive oil and season.
- 8 Serve the melba toast with the eggs.

Pineapple and Passion Fruit Eton Mess

Dessert with a combination of cooked meringue and cream, usually finished with a selection of berries. We made our version a bit fresher, by adding yoghurt.

Serves 2

Cream Yoghurt

100ml cream, whipped to stiff peak
7ml vanilla
150g Greek yoghurt

Poached Pineapple

200ml water
100g castor sugar
8 black peppercorns
4 cardamom pods
200g pineapple, wedges

Pineapple Powder or dust

10g dehydrated pineapple chunks or pieces
1 pinch of gold dust

To serve

2g pineapple powder (as above)
100g white meringue
250ml cream yoghurt (as above)
160g poached pineapple, cubed
160g fresh pineapple pieces
6 mint leaves
2 whole granadilla, remove pulp
2g edible gold leaf

Method

- 1 Place the cream in a bowl with the vanilla and whip to stiff peak. Fold the Greek yoghurt into the whipped cream until combined. Store in a sealed container in the fridge until ready to use.
- 2 Combine water, sugar, black peppercorns and cardamom in a pot and boil for 5 mins. Remove from the heat, add the pineapple and allow to stand for five minutes. Remove the pineapple and refrigerate until cool.
- 3 Blend pineapple in a spice grinder or with a pestle and mortar until smooth. Then fold in the gold dust.
- 4 To line the bowl with the gold dust, lightly grease with cooking spray or brush with olive oil, then dust with the pineapple powder. Place half the meringue on the base. Mix the yoghurt with half of the granadilla pulp and dollop over the meringue. Scatter the fresh and poached pineapple over the yoghurt mix. Crush the rest of the meringue and scatter over the yoghurt and pineapple.
- 5 Garnish with mint leaves and the remaining passionfruit pulp.





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