

EARNING A DREAM

Mohammed al Busaidi's achievements give every Omani youth something to look up to



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Someday Mohammed al Busaidi will be known as Chef Mo. It's a name that came out of the blue when he was asked on air how he'd be known once he was a celebrity. For now, he's putting himself through the daily grind of college and a job. But there is little that can ruffle Mohammed. He's on his toes all day as he switches roles between student and professional in the same environment, that of a kitchen.

At 25, he is working his dream job, his aspirations sure to make any Omani proud. But Mohammed earned this. And so, he does it with pride. After high school, he took a year off to work a few jobs. The next year, passing by National Hospitality Institute (NHI), he decided to enroll for the cooking course there. He also took up a part time job waiting tables in the banquet and events

section of Al Bustan Palace, A Ritz-Carlton Hotel.

Robert MacLean, principal of NHI, said, "It is people like Mohammed who will fulfil the industry's need for more people as role models, especially at a time when the emphasis is on employment for Omanis in the service industry. He supported himself through the first job and managed to get a sponsor for the second."

The Two Cups of Coffee programme by NHI, in association with Costa, helped Mohammed pursue a diploma in hotel management, sponsored by Sweets of Oman. The programme encourages people to sponsor a local student's education for the price they spend on two cups of coffee every day.

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"When we interviewed Mohammed, he came across as a man who was very keen and serious about making a career in the hospitality industry. Sweets of Oman is delighted to have sponsored him for this programme at NHI," said S Balakrishna, general manager of the company. In the meanwhile, Mohamed applied formally at Al Bustan Palace for a job and was accepted.

As he sits poised, a slight smile on his face, there's nothing to show the rigour of his daily life. "It's okay. It's fun," he says. As a student of hotel management with NHI, Mohammed is in class from 8.30am to 1pm. His shift with Al

Sodemann, executive chef, Al Bustan Palace, sees hope for the future. "I was impressed when I saw him the first time - full of passion, always smiling and helpful, enjoying a lot of cooking and very hard working. These are the future talents we need to develop to make sure Oman's hospitality business is growing. We are looking forward to getting more hospitality students onboard to maximise the development of young Omani talents."

Mohammed's internship is due soon where he will be required to work with every department - from front office to kitchen. But he is happiest in the kitchen. His job now entails learning the works in the butchery section. "The chefs

What he can't seem to get enough of though is the burger, a universal favourite. "I don't know why I am so into them. But I really like the idea of a handy whole meal. Some fries, a milk shake and you're done. Paninis, wraps, sandwiches... I love them all." Mohammed follows Food Network. "I love the craziness and creativity." He's not a fan of *Hell's Kitchen* because it's 'more about the drama and less about the food'. Does he see himself as a Gordon Ramsay someday? Vigorous shaking of the head follows. "I'm all about having fun. Being cranky is just not my thing."

Mohammed hopes to be a top chef someday, but he finds his role models in chefs like Bobby Flay



LURE OF THE BURGER

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