

OMANI CHEFS TAKE PART IN GCC ANCHOR MASTERCHEF CHALLENGE

Two Oman Air chefs, TB Chamara and Assim al Balushi, represented the sultanate in the challenge

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The third GCC Anchor MasterChef Challenge organised by Fonterra - a New Zealand-based multinational dairy co-operative - was held in Dubai earlier this month, in which two Oman Air chefs, TB Chamara and Assim al Balushi, represented the sultanate. Assim specialises in cold and hot preparations, while Chamara is a master pastry maker.

The duo was selected following a competition conducted by Oman Chefs' Guild in the kitchens of the National Hospitality Institute (NHI), where Assim and Chamara emerged winners and qualified for the finals in Dubai. Eighty chefs took part in the preliminary rounds held in six countries, out of which eight teams were selected for the finals.

Robert MacLean, principal of NHI, said, "Oman Chefs' Guild is a group of local chefs with an objective of raising awareness on the job of a chef." The Fonterra Food Group sponsored the event at NHI with a focus on its Anchor butter brand. This was the first time the Oman Chefs' Guild organised an external



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► Assim al Balushi and TB Chamara

competition and since Assim is an ex-student of NHI, we are delighted that he went up to the finals."

The Oman Air Catering team to the finals in Dubai was led by Fuaad al Hinai, food production manager of Oman Air Catering. "It is a proud moment for us that two young chefs qualified for a world class event and competed with the best chefs in the region."

The competition was conducted

on the Mystery Black Box concept, with contestants preparing a three-course meal entirely from the ingredients in the box. Assim said, "In the competition at NHI, we prepared cheese scalloped and peppercorn parfait for starters, beef steak for the main course and saffron poached pear served with yoghurt and cheese froth for dessert." The starter and main course were cooked by Assim, while the dessert

was prepared by Chamara.

"In Dubai, we competed with teams that participate in such competitions frequently and are used to this kind of an event. It was a new environment and a new kitchen for us which we had to get used to," Chamara said. During the final event at Fonterra's Calanarium, a professional state-of-the-art kitchen, the young chef were excited to meet the judges, including Chef Peter Hallin-

ans, advisory chef for Fonterra.

Assim prepared crusted chicken with citrus reduction for starters, and sea bass and jumbo prawns for main course, while Chamara made chocolate linguine which was served with mango cheese mousse for dessert.

The team from The Address Downtown Dubai was judged the winner of GCC Anchor MasterChef Challenge for the second consecutive year.