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Brighter Prospects for F&B Students

Les Amis Group launches new career initiative to groom local talent

In March this year, the Les Amis group raised \$540,000 for educational institutes in line with their 20th anniversary mission to expand their reach to young minds. Now, they are spearheading the 'LAwards' inter-institution culinary competition in August at SHATEC Institutes through a new career-grooming initiative, LEAPFROG.

"LEAPFROG is inspired by the idea of progressing by leaps and bounds, overcoming obstacles and constantly jumping ahead. This is exactly the experience that the Les Amis Group offers to promising talents who are ready to step up," says group Chairman Desmond Lim, a steadfast believer in investing in staff.

The group has been the vanguard of the local F&B scene ever since its flagship Les Amis, Singapore's first independent fine-dining restaurant, opened in 1994. For the past decade, they have been offering scholarships to fuel F&B passionates, spawning a succession of alumni who went along to become successful restaurateurs.

"Les Amis has been such a close partner in education and this initiative is yet another way to nurture and challenge the next generation of culinary professionals in the spirit of friendly competition." Tan Hsien Wei, Assistant Director, Temasek Culinary Academy & Course Manager, Temasek Polytechnic.

Supported by the Singapore's Chef Association and Singapore Tourism Board, the inaugural LAwards will be split between a qualifying and final round on the 23rd and 30th August respectively. 5 finalists will be chosen to represent their educational institute, utilizing a mystery ingredient to dish up a spread within the \$300 budget – mimicking a real-life situation where chefs are often tasked with special requests.

"For the past 20 years, Les Amis has consistently been the epitome of French fine dining in Singapore. Our ties with Les Amis go way back to the beginning where two of its founders Ignatius Chan and Justin Quek graduated from SHATEC. Since then, many SHATEC graduates have passed through the baptism of fire at Les Amis that it has almost become a rite of passage in their culinary journeys. SHATEC is therefore proud to be given the privilege to be the host venue for the inaugural LAwards Culinary Competition and to have our students compete in it as well. The competition will serve as an excellent opportunity to expose and grow budding young talents for the industry. We appreciate and congratulate Les Amis for their commitment to

culinary excellence and talent development.” Margaret Heng, Chief Executive, SHATEC Institutes.

The winner will walk away with \$3000 cash and an all-expenses paid ‘10 Michelin Stars’ trip to Japan or Europe to dine in the most sought-after restaurants – not forgetting the chance to take selfies with the famous chef-owners behind these revered kitchens. The LAwards will be an invaluable avenue for students to network with industry chef-judges as the group hopes to curate an inimitable opportunity for students to broaden their knowledge of the F&B arena.

“Our students are excited in taking part in the competition, in hopes that they can showcase their culinary skills, learn from other competitors, and gain the exposure and knowledge from the network with industry chefs. Hopefully too, these industry chefs would also realise the potential of these young student apprentice, and help to further groom and mentor them into future successful chefs.” Alvin Goh, Deputy Director, Culinary Arts, ITE College West.

“The competition will be a great opportunity for our students to not only expand their culinary creativity, but also to develop key skills in teamwork, communication and confidence.” Lawrence McFadden, Chief Executive, At-Sunrice GlobalChef Academy.

The judging panel for the LAwards will include Les Amis Group Chairman Desmond Lim, quasi-professional Chef Melina Yong, Singapore Chef’s Association Vice President Eric Neo, Tetsuya and Waku Ghin Chef-Owner Tetsuya Wakuda and Singapore Tourism Board Executive Director John Gregory Conceicao.

“This is one of countless ways that Les Amis contributes to shaping youngsters to be part of the vibrant culinary scene in Singapore, today and for the future. Always cutting edge and always offering a hand to the new generation, leaving a legacy, Les Amis leads the way.” Eve Felder, Managing Director, The Culinary Institute of America.

With Singapore being a prime food hub, the group hopes to lever this competition to an international scale in the future, anchoring its mark as the leading F&B player in its league.

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