



**Press Release**  
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## **Abu Dhabi Looks to Build Culinary Destination Status** **Gourmet Abu Dhabi Opens with 47- Strong Cast of Culinary Experts**

**Abu Dhabi, February 5, 2009** Gourmet Abu Dhabi, the Michelin star-studded extravaganza aimed at positioning the UAE capital as a world-class culinary destination, has opened in Abu Dhabi with a 47 strong cast of masterchefs, world-leading restaurateurs, celebrated visionary food and beverage consultants and special industry guests from 15 countries across the Middle East, Europe, Scandinavia, the Far East, Australia and the USA.

A packed programme of 45 headline events, including demonstrations and masterclasses by some of the most well-respected professionals in the global culinary arena, is taking place over the next 10 days at 13 of Abu Dhabi's leading hospitality outlets.

The culinary odyssey is the latest world-class offering to be presented by the Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority (ADTA) and significantly enhances the emirate's credentials as a major events destination.

Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority is looking to the event to inspire the local hospitality industry onto ever greater heights and to begin a cross-cultural culinary dialogue which will enhance the international standing of Middle Eastern cuisine.

"Abu Dhabi's hospitality proposition is expanding at a measured pace," said HE Sheikh Sultan Bin Tahnoon Al Nahyan, Chairman, ADTA. "Our existing hospitality portfolio already boasts excellent outlets and is regularly being enhanced by new restaurants. This hospitality inventory will expand further in the coming years as new hotels and resorts, which are currently either under construction or about to come off drawing boards, are opened. We want all who work in this sector to engage in a campaign to ensure that Abu Dhabi delivers the very highest standards of culinary expertise and service."

Gourmet Abu Dhabi comprises a masterchef 'cast' which, between them, represent 24 Michelin-stars, with most scheduled to deliver free-to-attend masterclasses to entrepreneurs and trade professionals.

"This line-up is extremely impressive and includes some of the industry's most admired personalities," added Sheikh Sultan. "We are fortunate to be able to absorb knowledge from them. At the same time, we hope to share some knowledge of our own, to ensure the legendary hospitality of the Arabian Gulf, and particularly of Abu Dhabi, takes its rightful place on the worldwide industry stage.

"In years to come, as Middle Eastern cuisine and Arabian hospitality achieve a more prominent place on the global gourmet landscape, I hope we look back and trace its emergence into the international culinary spotlight, in part, to this annual event.

“Food is very much a reflection of a destination’s culture, and, in bringing together culinary experts from around the world to share and absorb knowledge, Abu Dhabi is once again demonstrating its capability as an empowering force for greater cross-cultural understanding.”

Gourmet Abu Dhabi event highlights include culinary masterclasses, chefs’ lunches and dinners, gourmet safaris, a Royal dinner, a ‘first-of-its-kind’ gourmet golf experience, chocolate feasting, an Arabian feast, a food & beverage forum which will examine key issues impacting the industry and a ‘Night With The Stars’ Gala Dinner when the inaugural Gourmet Abu Dhabi Stars awards will be presenting to outstanding personalities within the UAE hospitality industry.

The event’s celebrity role call includes: Heinz Beck who is widely-regarded as the ‘Michaelangelo’ of the culinary world; Charlie Trotter of the USA who established the Charlie Trotter Culinary Education Foundation, aimed at helping people break into the culinary field; Alain Passard, the French chef renowned as the ‘vegetable magician’ after completely eliminating red meat from his menus; award-winning French chef Alain Solivères; Annie Féolde, the French woman whose name has become a byword for authentic cuisine within her adopted home of Italy; Atul Kochhar, the first Indian chef to be awarded a Michelin star; Jean-Christophe Ansanay-Alex who has blended international flavours and styles with traditional French cuisine; Laurent Pillard, one of the geniuses behind the success of the Las Vegas build-your-own Burger Bar; Lee Keung, the master of Chinese culinary art; Marco Sacco, co-founder of the Stars of Piedmonte group which promotes authentic Italian cuisine; Sam Leong, the guru of modern, Chinese cooking; Santi Santamaria, the Spanish master of Catalan cuisine, Yves Mattagne Belgium’s critically-acclaimed sea food masterchef; Eyvind Hellstrøm, the master of contemporary Norwegian cuisine; Philippe Massaoud, chef/owner of New York’s most ambitious Middle Eastern restaurant.

“I think I speak for all the masterchefs when I say how enthusiastic we all are about Gourmet Abu Dhabi and having the opportunity not only to spread our own knowledge but to experience, first hand, the Arabian hospitality we hear so much about and to meet and interact with professionals within the Middle East,” said Annie Féolde.

The masterchefs will be joined by master pâtissiers: Frédéric Bau, the Frenchman whose signature style is the marrying of chocolate in various dishes; Gilles Marchal, the sculptor of stunning chocolate masterpieces; Hugues Pouget a past French Champion of Desserts; Oriol Balaguer, the Spaniard whose work previously earned him the title of ‘Best Dessert In The World and Yann Duytsche, the Spanish author of Diversions Sucrées which redefines the art of pastry making.

These acclaimed professionals will team up with executive chefs from hosting establishments in Abu Dhabi including Le Royal Méridien Abu Dhabi, Emirates Palace Abu Dhabi, Shangri-la Hotel Qaryat Al Beri Abu Dhabi, InterContinental Abu Dhabi, Hilton Abu Dhabi and Beach Rotana Abu Dhabi.

Celebrity participants include Ian Wright the adventurer and traveller who will host ‘An Evening with Ian Wright’ and Curtis Stone, the Australian culinary young gun who will be in the UAE capital for a one-night only ‘Evening with Curtis Stone’ event.

The Food & Beverage Forum sees the foremost names from the world’s culinary scene come together with industry leaders to share perspectives on issues affecting

the trade, including 'What Makes A Successful Restaurant?' , 'Understanding Arabian Hospitality' and 'The Importance of Culinary Education.' The forum also includes beverage masterclasses with Italian master barista Andrea Lattuada, Germany's master mixologist Ernesto Lechtahler and Italy's Flair Barista last year's 'World Champion of Coffee Flair.'

Gourmet Abu Dhabi's grand finale will be at the Armed Forces Officers Club with a gastronomic discovery of the splendour of Middle Eastern cuisine with nine sessions given over to 'The Origin of the Mezze', Moroccan and Egyptian cuisines, how the Iranian kebab became the jewel of the spice route, Middle Eastern fusion food, the Arabian dining secret, a taste of Saudi Arabia and the sweet tale of Syrian pastry.

The event will conclude with a themed 'Arabian Feast' dinner at Abu Dhabi's Armed Forces Officers Club on February 14.

Please bookmark [www.gourmetabudhabi.ae](http://www.gourmetabudhabi.ae) for updates.

**About Gourmet Abu Dhabi:** Gourmet Abu Dhabi is a culinary lifestyle extravaganza initiated and presented by the Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority (ADTA). This world-class festival is crafted for discerning individuals who seek gourmet enjoyment in perfect grandeur and want to experience true Arabian hospitality. This gourmet event features only the finest cuisines and most unique dining experiences in Abu Dhabi.

**About ADTA:** Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority (ADTA) was established in September 2004. It has wide ranging responsibilities for building and developing the emirate's tourism industry. These include; destination marketing; infrastructure and product development and regulation and classification. A key role is to create synergy in the international promotion of Abu Dhabi through close co-ordination with the emirate's hotels, destination management companies, airlines and other public and private sector travel-related organisations.

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