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April 30, 2008



S'pore team wins Asian Pastry Cup

The three chefs will represent the Republic at the World Pastry Cup Contest in France next year

By Sariwati Latif

CLOCKING in 250 hours of practice the last three months paid off handsomely for three Singaporean pastry chefs when they won the Asian Pastry Cup award at the recent Food & Hotel Asia (FHA) trade show held from April 22 to 25.



WINNING RECIPE: PASTRY CHEFS (from left) Hoi Kuoi I, Pang Kok Keong and Ng Chee Leong practised for 250 hours to create their dessert creations. -- ST PHOTO: DESMOND FOO

The three chefs: Pang Kok Keong, 32, from Canele Patisserie Chocolaterie, Hoi Kuoi I, 23, from the Conrad Centennial, and Ng Chee Leong, 30, from the Shangri-La, will now go on to represent Singapore at the World Pastry Cup competition to be held in Lyon, France, next January.

Food & Hotel Asia, held once every two years, is a one-stop food and beverage marketplace for international trade buyers. It also has a cooking competitions component, and Singapore took the top prize in the main group competitions.

Aside from the Asian Pastry Cup, Singapore bagged the top prizes at the FHA Imperial Challenge, which focuses on Chinese cuisine, and the Culinary Challenge, which is divided into the Dream Team and Gourmet Team categories.

The Asian Pastry Cup trio have already planned their training schedules from now till next January.

Chef Pang told Life! yesterday: 'The team was exhilarated. We are very honoured with the win, especially since Taiwan and China put up such a strong showing. It was tough and gruelling working non-stop for eight hours with adrenaline pumping all the way, but the reward of being the champion was well worth it.'

Teams had to come up with 10 portions of a plated dessert, two chocolate cakes, a sugar showpiece and a chocolate showpiece.

Team Singapore's sugar showpiece depicted an underwater scene featuring squids and corals made with pulled and blown sugar. The chocolate showpiece showed two chameleons amid foliage and flowers.

Their chocolate cake was accented with caramelised banana, dark rum and a light passionfruit cream, among other things.

As for the dessert, called Red, the chefs created red chocolate spheres with layers of homemade hazelnut praline, hazelnut nougatine, milk chocolate foam and raspberry granita. Garnishing the plate are little spheres that look like

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caviar, made by injecting a gelatinous raspberry solution into chilled oil.

Chef Pang said: 'When the sphere is cut, the different layers of contrasting flavours and textures are a surprise.'

The Singapore team edged out the other teams because of their 'tasting points', said Mr Vincent Bourdin, Singapore representative of the organising committee of Asian Pastry Cup and World Pastry Cup.

He said: 'The ability to understand Western plated desserts and chocolate cakes was the reason they won over the other teams.'

The Cannery Singapore sent a nine-strong team to the Gourmet Team Challenge and won the top prize. They had spent half a year practising.

Executive chef Edward Voon, 33, said: 'We manage to beat 10 other five-star hotels and it's an awesome achievement for us. This will also open doors for small restaurants in the next FHA.'

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