

2 course focus



The student team of Sunway University's Athanor restaurant.

Hands-on culinary training

THE Centre for Tourism, Hospitality and Culinary Management (CTHCM) at Sunway University prides itself in providing top-notch diploma and degree programmes accredited by the world-renowned Le Cordon Bleu.

All programmes under CTHCM are carefully designed to enhance students' strategic thinking, critical analysis, industrial exposure and practical work experience.

This year, the centre set up its restaurant Athanor to provide better hands-on learning experience.

Located at level 6 of Sunway University at the heart of a vibrant and exciting student environment, the restaurant offers a menu centred on modern western cuisine.

Athanor is a real-work training ground for senior students, supervised and managed by a team of CTHCM award-winning chefs. It recently opened its doors to the public.

The name Athanor is derived from the age-old Arabic word "at-tannur", which means the baker's oven – a furnace used by alchemists to maintain uniform and constant heat.

The restaurant aims to transform simple ingredients into pleasurable food, an empty space into a fine dining environment and, most importantly, young cooks into skilful chefs.

Chef Patrick Siau Chi Yin, teaching fellow-cum-head chef of CTHCM who has been with Sunway for more than seven years, is the mastermind behind Athanor.

"With the growing number of talented students at Sunway, I believe there is a need to create a proper avenue to showcase our senior students' skills and, at the same time, provide an alternative choice of internship opportunities for them," says Siau.

"At Athanor, students are provided more freedom to learn, experiment and explore culinary specialties as well as understand the business operation of a restaurant. They are the ones determining the operation of the restaurant and ensuring its business sustainability."

Siau adds that students can explore and apply what they have learnt from textbooks and classrooms.

He believes students are able to unleash their greatest potential when given more freedom and a little guidance.

Queeny Cheong Peg Gie, currently in her final semester of the BSc (Hons) in Culinary Management (BCM), is leading the student team at Athanor.

"The restaurant is run by about nine students. We are mainly BCM students in our final semester. We also have two students from Diploma in Culinary Arts who are doing their internships here.

"One of the greatest perks of working at Athanor is gaining work experience without worrying about class schedules. We plan our rosters accordingly to balance our studies and ensure smooth operation of the business. We also do rotations to make sure all of us get fair exposure in the kitchen and on the service floor," says Cheong.

Kelvin Lau King Chai and Quek Jia Wei of the kitchen team had both completed their internships in other restaurants before joining Athanor.

Quek says, "I did my internship in a restaurant at a seasonal hotel resort in Penang. The work there was quite fixed as we had to cook systematically and in bulk. Here, we can do things differently and we get to polish our culinary skills by paying more attention to the details."

"I am grateful to be part of the team as we have Chef Siau to guide us. This allows us to gain additional exposure different from classrooms and internships in other restaurants," Lau concurs.

At the end of July, British High Commissioner to Malaysia Vicki Treadell officiated the opening of Athanor.

Joining her for lunch at the restaurant were Sunway Group's Education and Healthcare Division's chief executive officer Dr Lee Weng Keng, Sunway Education Group and Sunway University's senior executive director Dr Elizabeth Lee, Sunway University's vice-chancellor Prof Graeme Wilkinson, and Sunway University Student Council and Sunway College Student Council members.

The CTHCM is a well-established centre under Sunway University's Business School, the largest faculty on campus, and was awarded Tier 5 D-Setara '12 for excellent curriculum, quality graduates and graduate satisfaction in the hospitality and tourism discipline by Malaysia Qualifications Agency.

The centre offers diploma programmes in culinary arts, events management and hotel management as well as degree programmes in culinary management, international hospitality management, and conventions and events management.

■ For more information, call 03-7491 8622, e-mail info@sunway.edu.my or visit university.sunway.edu.my.



(From left) CTHCM's teaching fellow-cum-head chef Chef Patrick Siau Chi Yin, Vicki Treadell and teaching fellow Chef Chong Wei Tzeh.

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