

# gulf Gourmet

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From Us...For Us...



## Dream team

Meet the dedicated and talented men that make Nestlé Professional



GOVERNMENT OF DUBAI  
DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND COMMERCE MARKETING



WACS CONGRESS  
DUBAI 2008 12<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> May

# A unique offer



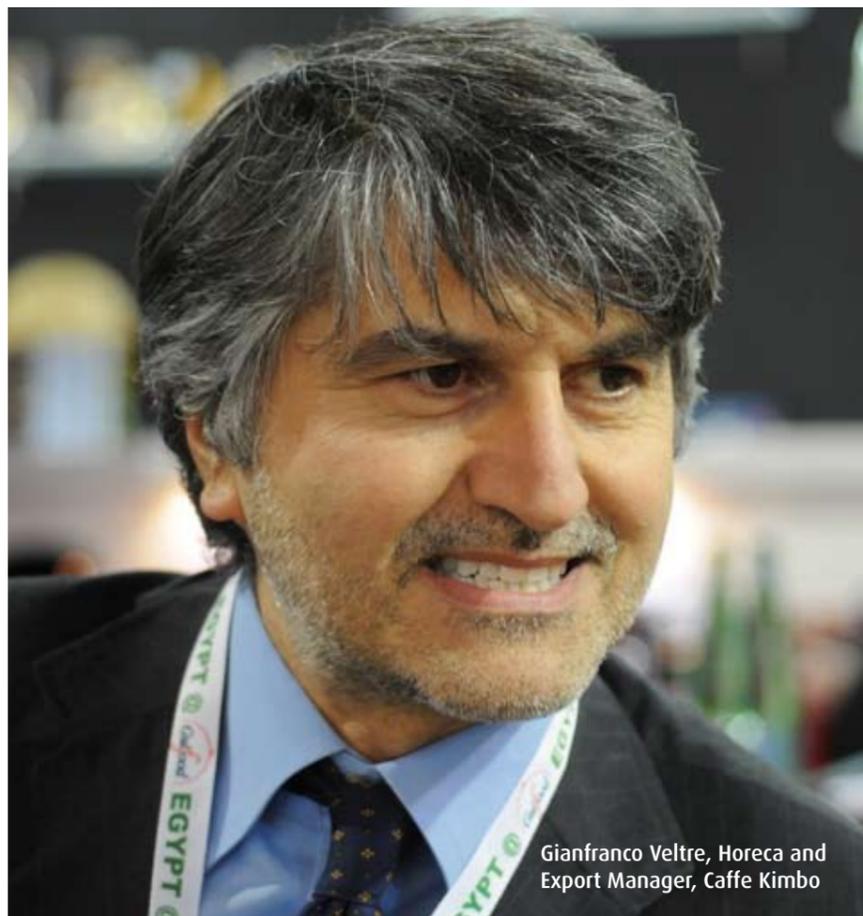
Ron Pilnik, managing director,  
Emirates Snack Foods

**A stand, a showcase, a restaurant or a concept. Cafe Culinaire, which made its debut at Gulf Food 2008, has certainly managed to arouse our curiosity**

The day started at 7.00 am, and chefs participating in the Salon Culinaire 2008 sleepily made their way to Cafe Culinaire for breakfast. They were served hot and fresh treats and steaming cups of Kimbo Espresso di Napoli that energised them for the day ahead.

No, this was not a restaurant at the World Trade Centre, but an initiative by Emirates Snack Foods called Cafe Culinaire. "We took a big risk," says Ron Daniel Pilnik, managing director, Emirates Snack Foods. The idea started taking shape about a year ago, when Ron realised he did not want to do what most other distributors were doing. "Which was basically becoming a landlord, whereby you get a plot of land from the DWTC, you ask your partners how much they want in terms of square feet, and everyone has their cubicles, some bigger some smaller, where they do their own thing," he nods.

Fed up with the same old routine, he realised it was time to do something different. It was time to add value to what they were offering to their principals. "We have more and more people joining us and there was just too much chaos," he says.



Gianfranco Veltre, Horeca and Export Manager, Caffè Kimbo

So Chef Soufiane Raji, corporate chef and area sales manager, Emirates Snack Foods, came up with the idea of showcasing all the products together as a whole by way of presenting them in dishes. A lot of brainstorming sessions later Cafe Culinaire emerged. "After all, we are solution providers. All our products do play together, like a restaurant. So that's what we did. We opened a restaurant," smiles Ron.

The menu was conceptualised and Chef Soufiane dug into his treasure trove of recipes for the perfect ones. "The food had to be fast and still make maximum use of our products. I use these recipes during my demonstrations anyway, so it was fast because it was just a matter of actually putting them down on paper," he smiles.

The menu and design was all done in-house, and Cafe Culinaire was up and running. "We are quite happy with the result because we can see our products in action. We don't just present three bottles and tell you what it is. We show you. It's all good to make nice bottles, but the question is, does it work? This is proof that it does," explains Ron.

For Ron, it's not just about showcasing the food. It's also about making contacts, maintaining ongoing business relationships and strengthening others. Which is important in today's increasingly competitive market.



## Cafe Culinaire lives on!

### What some of ESF's principals had to say about Cafe Culinaire

The exhibition may be over, but the same does not hold true for Cafe Culinaire. Emirates Snack Foods has created a dedicated website to keep Cafe Culinaire open in cyberspace (<http://www.cafeculinaire.com/index.htm>). That is, until a refurbished Cafe Culinaire opens its doors once more during Gulfood 2009.

In the meantime, the website will serve as a comprehensive "documentary" of everything in and around Cafe Culinaire, with several features like:

- Cafe Culinaire partners' profiles and links
- The Cafe Culinaire menu, which can be downloaded
- A series of press articles about the Gulfood in general
- An exclusive news section, which informs about product launches and other happenings.
- A complete section about the Barilla sponsored competitions at Salon Culinaire
- An extensive photo gallery, which shows Cafe Culinaire and many of its visitors.

All sections, including the menu, will be regularly updated, so don't forget to go back for more!



Xavier Haudebourg, Export Manager, Chocolaterie Michel Cluizel

"At Emirates Snack Foods, we believe in maintaining a unique, sustainable, competitive advantage. A competitive advantage is when you have something others don't, but that's not always long lasting. So it has to be sustainable, which means that what you have is long term and not dependant on price or some other short term gimmick. It has to be something that lasts over time as long as you work on it and invest in it," he says.

Ron moved to Dubai in 1997 with the company because he believed that they had an excellent distribution system, and if they added more products, the company would grow. And that's exactly what he has done since he has been with them. "Our focus is very simple. We don't make anything or have our own brands. We just take what others are making and we try to market it in this country," he shrugs.

The company, which started as a retail snack food company, today covers various products and has also forayed into the food service industry. For Ron, an idea like Cafe Culinaire



Pier Luigi Pavesi, Export Manager Middle East, Barilla

is all about keeping up with the industry. "Business has become more complex. With inflation and complicated infrastructure – even things like traffic affect us a lot because things have to be delivered on time – business gets tougher. But along with it comes an increase in professionalism, which is good," he says.

Add to that the attractive image that Dubai is creating for itself in the world, and everybody wants to come here. "A while ago, not many people knew what the UAE was. Few people knew Dubai. Today, when I go to a fair and tell them I am from Dubai, it's like I am a rock star!" he says. The very few barriers for entry, ease of import, and efficiency of the services means more competition and one has to be a sharp player to survive and grow.

And Cafe Culinaire hits the nail on the head. "It started out with the objective of having



Chef Soufiane Raji, corporate chef and area sales manager, ESF

# Principals

## What some of ESF's principals had to say about Cafe Culinaire

**Pier Luigi Pavesi, Export Manager Middle East, Barilla**

"It's an innovative idea and I think chefs and other clients would find it quite interesting. It's too early to say right now, but I think the response is quite good and I am quite happy with it. I am curious to see where this will go next."

**Riccardo Preve, CEO, Riso Gallo**

"It's a very good idea as it showcases all the products and services that ESF can offer to the chefs, restaurants and consumers. One sees very few examples of such innovation in other food expos. This is really the best way for chefs to try the product in an informal setting. It's about more than just selling the product – it's about hospitality."

**Xavier Haudebourg, Export Manager, Chocolaterie Michel Cluizel**

"We are fairly new in the market at only about a year old, and feel this is the best way to showcase our products. The concept is great because it allows people to try an entire range of products and see what they can do with it. It's unique really. Most other stands keep a large focus on display, but here, it's all about the taste, which is most important anyway."

**Gianfranco Veltre, Horeca and Export Manager, Caffe Kimbo**

"As a company that offers 12 different blends of coffee, the opportunity to taste becomes very important. We have our barista here with us and he can actually demonstrate his skills and serve people. That is a brilliant idea and we are very happy with the response."



Riccardo Preve, CEO, Riso Gallo

a restaurant to show the product in action. Now, it's starting to get a life of its own," smiles Ron, and goes on to divulge the reason behind his smile. "If you think about it, you have someone who is or wants to get into the restaurant business and is looking for a concept, well, here it is," he says.

In fact, Ron assures that if you have the right space and are an individual they trust to be successful with a restaurant, they can have it rolling in no time. "We have our own design team, we can make the menu for you, in the budget range you want, and provide all the ingredients as well. We don't deal in machines, but our talented chefs can certainly make recommendations. And you will have your restaurant ready," he says.

As if one needed more incentive, he adds that subtle showcasing of their brands in the restaurant would further sweeten the deal, as their principals would be happy to offer better pricing in return for this marketing activity. With support and assurance all in place, they only need takers. Anyone listening?