

World-class culinary school to open in PE

Eastern Cape will soon be able to produce its very own world-class chefs and confectioners with the opening of new culinary school early next year at the hands of the man whose dessert was a favourite of Oprah Winfrey's.

By [Lee-Anne Butler](#) 21 Jun 2012

Accomplished international chef Ralph Gottschalk, who owns and runs The Pastryworks in Port Elizabeth, said he would be realising a life-long dream by opening the school in January.

Gottschalk, who has cooked for Nelson Mandela, Winfrey, Bill Clinton and Tom Cruise during the course of his career, said the school would initially take 20 students - 10 in the culinary section and 10 in the confectionery section - grooming them into world-class chefs over 18 months.

Gottschalk has made a successful business out of his talents in the kitchen. He is a world-renowned pastry chef, having worked in top restaurants and hotel chains across the globe.

"We are currently applying to an international school for accreditation for our school now, as well as to Seta (Sector Education and Training Authority) in order to become assessors and moderators.

"We are also putting the curriculum together, along with experts in the industry such as dieticians and nutritionists."

The school, which may be named the Eastern Cape Centre of Culinary Arts, will offer an extensive curriculum, including food safety, food hygiene, fire safety and first aid.

Gottschalk said he had hired South African chef Nicole Thompson as a culinary lecturer.

Originally from East London, Thompson worked overseas as a chef before returning to South Africa in 2009.

She has since worked at Ginger restaurant along the Port Elizabeth beachfront, and has opened Five Elements restaurant in St Francis Bay, which was voted the best restaurant in the province, awarded by the Eastern Cape Tourism Board.

"Part of the training our students will undergo includes three to five months of on-the-job training at five-star hotels and restaurants in the country, and after they complete their training we will work towards giving them that jump-start into the industry by organising placement for their first three to six months of their career."

Once completed, students will have obtained a professional diploma in culinary arts or a professional diploma in confectionary arts.

Gottschalk said chefs already working in the industry could also benefit from short courses at the school which will be offered by visiting international chefs who specialise in plating items, a la carte desserts and more.

"Through connections in working in the Far East, the Middle East, the US and in Europe, I am able to bring world-renowned chefs over to offer short courses."

Gottschalk, who also runs a consultancy business and two bakeries which distribute cakes and baked goods to all the major Spar stores in Port Elizabeth, said students did not need to have cooking experience, as long as they had the passion.

"I am not going to send a student abroad to work if they are not ready. Students need to be professional from day one," he said.

Source: *The Herald*

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