



LE CORDON BLEU®
NEW ZEALAND

Alumni Journeys





NATHANIEL EDRICO CHRISTOFORUS

Grand Diplôme | Diplôme Avancé Culinaire in Cuisine

Chef de Cuisine Rydges Wellington Airport Hotel

When I first came to New Zealand, **I had zero experience**, like nothing at all. I haven't even stepped into the kitchen. I didn't know what a kitchen looked like, **but six years later, at 23 years old, this is where I am now.**

There's a saying that, **if you climb up the ladder too fast, you'll slip.** So that's a saying that I've pulled dearly to my heart, that you have to start everything from the bottom. **There's a step and you will go up that step eventually.**

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS?

Don't let other people's opinions define who you are.

Instead, focus on becoming a better version of yourself every day. There is no cost to dreaming big, and with hard work, resilience, humility, and consistency, incredible things are possible. I hope my journey, from starting as a Dish Washer to becoming a Chef de Cuisine, shows that where you begin does not determine where you can finish.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR STUDIES WAS MOST MEMORABLE?

My Chef Instructors. Because they would always have an answer to whatever questions I had.

The amount of knowledge that they have, the amount of skill that they're able to teach us is really something different. Because I feel like it's not only about the skill that you have, it's the way that you transfer those skills to the students, the way that they're able to give that back out to the students is something different, it's amazing.



Biography

Nathaniel is driven by a lifelong passion for cooking. During his studies he started as a Dish Washer, a role that instilled in him resilience, humility, and a strong work ethic.

From there, Nathaniel steadily worked his way up through Wellington's hospitality scene. He progressed through Junior Chef roles at Mercure and InterContinental, and later advanced from Demi Chef de Partie to Junior Sous Chef within Accor hotels. In 2023, he joined Rydges Wellington Airport Hotel, where he climbed the ranks to his current role as Chef de Cuisine.

Today, Nathaniel oversees multiple outlets, manages operations, and mentors Junior Chefs. His journey taught him the value of perseverance and staying true to his goals. He hopes to inspire the next generation to dream big and never fear starting from the bottom.



KRITIKA MAHAJAN

Diplôme de Cuisine | Diplôme Avancé Culinaire in Cuisine

Head Chef Mr Morris Auckland

MICHELIN SELECTED



Biography

After graduating in 2021 with both the Diplôme de Cuisine and Diplôme Avancé Culinaire from Le Cordon Bleu New Zealand, Kritika Mahajan quickly emerged as a rising culinary talent. Her exceptional drive earned her Wellington Culinary awards prestigious Rising Star accolade during her initial internship at Shepherd Restaurant. Building a strong foundation in fine dining at Logan Brown, she later relocated to Auckland to expand her culinary horizons.

Her technical mastery, dedication, and natural kitchen leadership quickly propelled her career forward. Today, Kritika thrives as the Head Chef at the renowned restaurant Mr. Morris, leading the kitchen alongside acclaimed chef Michael Meredith to deliver seasonal, modern New Zealand cuisine.

Le Cordon Bleu truly gave me the boost I needed to reach my current position. The course is structured in a way that allows students to learn the fundamentals of cooking right after a demonstration class. **I believe that a live demonstration is invaluable for students without prior hospitality experience,** as it provides insight into how the industry operates and emphasises the importance of maintaining high standards to become an excellent chef.

Biography

In 2018, Bhanu left his IT career in Jaipur, India, to pursue the culinary arts at Le Cordon Bleu New Zealand. With no prior hospitality experience, he completed both the Diplôme de Cuisine and Diplôme Avancé Culinaire in Cuisine, graduating in December 2019. Bhanu built his fine-dining foundations in Wellington at Logan Brown and Liberty.

In 2023, he moved to Auckland to hone his open-fire cooking skills under Chef Michael Meredith. Today, Bhanu showcases his culinary artistry as a Sous Chef alongside acclaimed Chef Ben Bayly at the award-winning restaurant, Ahi.



BHANU PRATAP

Diplôme de Cuisine | Diplôme Avancé Culinaire in Cuisine

Sous Chef Ahi Auckland

1 MICHELIN STAR



Le Cordon Bleu was the best decision I made in terms of moving into hospitality. I started my career with all the fine notes and good kitchen habits. I got to cook with most types of meat and their cuts. Working in a kitchen and always keeping it tidy while maintaining the pace and quality. Keep these habits with you forever. Apply them at your job on every day and you'll see the results.



CHAYANUN PIPATTANACHAISIRI 
Bachelor of Culinary Arts and Business

 Personal & Head Chef  Embassy of Thailand in New Zealand



Biography

After moving from Thailand to New Zealand at a young age, Chayanun discovered his passion for cooking during the COVID-19 lockdown. He chose Le Cordon Bleu New Zealand for its unique Bachelor of Culinary Arts and Business programme, which perfectly blends kitchen practicals, wine analysis, and business theory. While studying, he went beyond the classroom and studied Thai cuisine to combine the classical French techniques learned on campus with his heritage, creating a refined modern Thai fusion cuisine. His talent and the prestigious Le Cordon Bleu name caught the attention of the Thai Ambassador. Chayanun proudly serves as the personal chef to the Ambassador and Head Chef at the Thai Embassy, representing Thai culture and cuisine on the global stage.

I got to introduce myself as a student studying at Le Cordon Bleu. The ambassador was immediately interested since he knew that Le Cordon Bleu is one of the best culinary schools in the world, so he wanted to know more about me. **That was what enabled me to form that personal connection, and now I am working as a Personal Chef for the Thai Ambassador and the Head Chef of the Thai Embassy.**



SHALVI MOHINDRA 
Diplôme de Pâtisserie

 Head Pastry Chef  Croissanteria Melbourne



Biography

Shalvi was already an established pastry chef and business owner in India when she decided to upskill and move to New Zealand. During her studies she ingrained the core values of precision and artistry into her work ethic. She began her New Zealand career rising through the ranks at Bohemian Fresh Chocolates in Wellington. During COVID, she bought and managed Bohemian's Auckland storefront for three years. Missing the hands-on creativity of a production role, Shalvi left to become Head Chocolatier for Cocoa Wilds, where she spent two years developing natural, award-winning flavour profiles. She has now taken another major career step by moving to Melbourne, Australia, where she serves as Head Pastry Chef for Croissanteria.

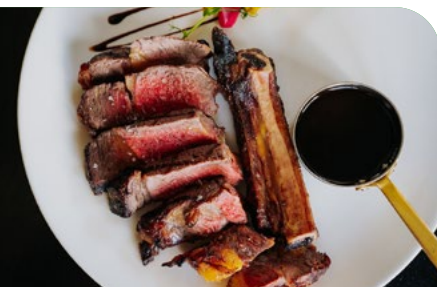
What we study is not only artistry, but also the logistics of how we can apply those recipes and ideas in a business point of view. We were always taught a dessert can look good on a plate, but it should also be commercially viable. It's a very nice, thin balance between being an artist and also being practical about costings and business.



YASHAN YU 
Diplôme de Cuisine | Diplôme Avancé Culinaire in Cuisine

 Head Chef  Botswana Butchery Queenstown

 **MICHELIN SELECTED**



After graduation, Yashan joined Amisfield, contributing to their historic three-hat achievement in 2019 while refining her skills in molecular cuisine. Seeking new challenges, she transitioned to Jervois Steakhouse, mastering multiple sections and rising to run the kitchen. In 2022, Yashan brought her talent to Botswana Butchery. Her exceptional standards and inclusive leadership earned her a promotion to Head Chef in 2024. Her talent and precision secured Botswana Butchery a coveted spot in the inaugural New Zealand MICHELIN Guide.

DONGJIN KWAK 
Diplôme de Cuisine

 Chef de Partie  Jag Singapore

 **1 MICHELIN STAR**



Dongjin is a precise and methodical chef whose exceptional work ethic earned him a role as Chef de Partie at Logan Brown immediately after graduation. During his tenure, Logan Brown was awarded Three Hats in the Cuisine Good Food Guide and has since become one of New Zealand's first Michelin-starred restaurants. Seeking his next international challenge, Dongjin moved to Singapore to join the Michelin-starred Restaurant JAG. Initially joining the Garde Manger section, he has since advanced to the Hot and Grill section as Chef de Partie.



CHERYL GUNAWAN 
Bachelor of Culinary Arts and Business

 Chef-Owner  Toko Roti Kerabat, Bali

 **MasterChef Indonesia Season 9 Winner**



Cheryl quickly established herself as a dynamic entrepreneur, balancing her hit local bakery, Toko Roti Kerabat, with a successful content creation career and collaborations with venues across Indonesia. Her sharp instincts and creative flair captured national attention when she competed in and won MasterChef Indonesia Season 9. Post-victory, Cheryl has excelled as a modern business owner, seamlessly leveraging digital storytelling and social media to build deep, authentic connections with her audience and customers.

HAWILA JIREH 
Bachelor of Culinary Arts and Business

 F&B Supervisor  Sofitel Wellington



Initially aspiring to become a baker, Hawila's path completely shifted during her degree as she discovered a deeper passion for service and customer engagement. While completing her studies, she began gaining hands-on experience at Sofitel Wellington, seamlessly connecting classroom theory with luxury hotel operations. Her dedication paid off when she was promoted to Food and Beverage Supervisor shortly after graduating.





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