



Media release

Minister for Employment and Small Business and
Minister for Training and Skills Development

The Hon. Shannon Fentiman MP

Top apprentice chef ready to master Thai cookery

TAFE Queensland's 2018 Apprentice Chef of the Year Emma Arkinstall is preparing to embark on a 10-day culinary tour of Thailand as part of winning the highly contested competition for aspiring chefs.

Minister for Training and Skills Development Shannon Fentiman congratulated Emma, a third-year apprentice with The Star Entertainment Group, who took out the top spot last year for her seafood canape creation featuring scallops, finger limes, and vodka.

"TAFE Queensland are providing world-class training and Emma is a shining example of the success that can come from the best in culinary training," Ms Fentiman said

"Suan Dusit University in Bangkok is hosting the Thai cookery exchange, which is part of Emma's prize for being at the top of her trade."

"I was lucky enough to sample some of the delicious food Emma prepared in the MasterChef style competition last year, where finalists were asked to prepare one of their five menu item canapes, as well as an entrée, and a main meal using only a mystery box of ingredients.

"During her exchange, Emma will undertake Thai cooking classes, fruit and vegetable carving, and visits to Bangkok's floating market and seafood market.

"It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to train with a leading cooking school in Thailand, where she will learn new techniques but will also get the chance to present western-style cooking classes in front of the university's staff and students."

Miami-based Emma, who was formerly from Beaudesert, is currently completing a Certificate III in Commercial Cookery at The Star Gold Coast and said winning the award was a reflection of her strong passion for food and cooking.

"After I finished school, I began a degree in nursing but after two years I realised that my heart just wasn't in it and I wanted to start a new career as a professional chef," Emma said.

"It's been a great learning experience undertaking my apprenticeship at The Star Gold Coast where I've been able to work across multi restaurants and kitchens, and try my hand at everything from making butter and ice-cream to learning how to plate up modern Australian cuisine.

"This will be my first time to Thailand and I'm really looking forward to working with authentic Thai ingredients and learning their techniques, while also showcasing some of the western techniques and dishes that I've learnt through my apprenticeship."

The Star Entertainment Group Managing Director Queensland Geoff Hogg said he was thrilled for Emma and her upcoming Thailand tour, which comes as the company and its partners invest almost \$5 billion in building world-class integrated resorts in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast.

"There's never been a more exciting time to work in tourism and hospitality with our Queen's Wharf Brisbane development and our ongoing expansion at The Star Gold Coast presenting extraordinary career opportunities for aspiring Queensland chefs," Mr Hogg said.

“Today, we proudly employ more than 80 full-time culinary apprentices nationally.

“Nearly half of them are working at Treasury Brisbane and The Star Gold Coast through our strong partnership with TAFE Queensland, which started in 2012.

“Together, we established The Star Culinary Institute to offer three-year culinary apprenticeships, before expanding our partnership to offer two more hospitality programs through the launch of the Queensland Hotel & Hospitality School in 2015.

“We are delighted that Emma will soon embark on this international culinary journey and we look forward to hearing her stories and experiences on her return.”

Ms Fentiman said the exchange would help Emma sharpen her skills and cement her future in the tourism and hospitality sector.

“We know that by 2020 it’s predicted that we will need an additional 20,000 employees in our growing tourism and hospitality industry,” Ms Fentiman said.

“We are investing in initiatives like free tafe for Year 12 graduates because all young Queenslanders should have the opportunity to gain a qualification to get a job and build a successful career in our future industries.

“TAFE Queensland is providing world-class training and the Apprentice Chef of the Year award is a fantastic opportunity to acknowledge the incredible talents they are producing.

TAFE Queensland and Suan Dusit University have an established partnership in culinary exchange and Thai Airways support the partnership by providing the return journey.

In addition to the Thai cookery exchange, Emma also won a German-forged steel knife set and Stico clogs or chef shoes.

Emma leaves at 2pm on Monday 14 January from Brisbane’s for Bangkok and returns on Wednesday 23 January.

For more information on free tafe visit: www.training.qld.gov.au/freetafe.

Photos available:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/1phsbw3rdh7qmib/AAAM6kBhQ5tOUmfsjhHHbc5aa?dl=0>

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