

PRESS RELEASE



THE ASIAN FOOD CHANNEL PREMIERES ORIGINAL PRODUCTION “E&O SEARCH FOR AFC’S NEXT CELEBRITY CHEF”

AFC and E&O Kickstart the First-ever Asia-wide Reality Television Contest in Search for AFC’s Next Celebrity Chef

21 July 2011, PHILIPPINES – Calling all food lovers and aspiring chefs! For the first time in Asia, the Asian Food Channel (AFC) is conducting a region-wide search for Asia’s next Celebrity Chef through AFC’s first-ever reality television series called the “E&O Search for AFC’s Next Celebrity Chef”.

Joining AFC in this search for Asia's best shining new chef talent is luxury lifestyle group Eastern & Oriental Berhad (E&O), with interests in property development, property investment, hospitality and lifestyle. Together, both organisations will leverage their resources to put contestants through a gamut of culinary challenges that will test even the most seasoned chef or passionate foodie.

With contestants from across Asia and auditions to be held in 5 countries – Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore – the programme promises to capture the best of Asia’s diverse talent. All aspiring chefs, individuals with culinary training, or those simply with the passion for and knowledge of cooking are invited to sign up for auditions and take up the challenge to be crowned “AFC’s Next Celebrity Chef”.

The winning chef will also be signed to an exclusive one-year contract as an AFC Celebrity Chef with AFC. In addition, the winner will be awarded the opportunity of a year-long employment contract with the E&O Group, taking on the mantle of Creative Director and Head of R&D for the E&O Gourmet Group.

Auditions will run from 3rd to 16th August 2011 in the five respective countries.

Contestants who are shortlisted from the auditions will be put through a series of intense cooking tests and trials, to identify who has the right ingredients to hold the title of E&O and AFC’s Next Celebrity Chef!

The exciting eight-part series will unveil the top 12 finalists in its premiere episode. Each week, one or more participants will be eliminated from the running based on the decisions made by the esteemed panel of judges.

AFC and E&O have appointed AFC Celebrity Chef and star of TV series *Tablescapes*, Chef Bruce Lim and Mr. Michael Saxon as the judges on this show. Mr. Saxon, Director of Group Hospitality & Lifestyle of E&O Group, is not only a well-known hotelier, but also author of his famous professional memoir, *Chef’s Tales*.

A host of international and distinguished celebrity chefs will also be invited to make surprise guest appearances in selected episode(s) throughout the series as guest celebrity chef judges.

Ms. Maria Brown, Co-founder and Managing Director of the Asian Food Channel, expressed her excitement at this AFC original production, "We are so proud and honoured to be able to create our own show to discover a celebrity chef in Asia.. It has been something we have been planning for a long time and as Asia's premier Food Channel we are delighted to be able to develop talent from across the region. Asia can now begin to have its own home-grown celebrity chefs that the region can take pride in.

"As this is AFC's first-ever fully produced and filmed **reality television contest**, we want the different backgrounds and personalities of the contestants and judges to add to the mix of culture and character dimensions to the series, which – as our loyal viewers will know – is what AFC has always been about!"

The entire series will be shot on location at E&O's numerous hospitality and lifestyle properties such as the Eastern & Oriental Hotel and Lone Pine Hotel in Penang, the Martinique seafront villa and Straits Quay Retail Marina at E&O's masterplanned township of Seri Tanjung Pinang, Penang, the St. Mary Residences in Kuala Lumpur as well as at some of the popular Delicious restaurants in Kuala Lumpur and Penang.

"AFC has always supported local Asian talent, through our many other original productions featuring legendary chefs such as Chef Wan and Chef Martin Yan. We feel this series is the perfect opportunity now to give our viewers not only high quality Asian content, but also for them to have the very real chance of a lifetime to be a Chef on our Channel," added Ms. Brown.

E&O Group's Deputy Managing Director Mr. Eric Chan commented, "E&O is all about luxury lifestyle experiences, and we are excited to bring this to life in a new and different way. This is Asia's first home-grown reality show centred around talented chefs and great food, and we are proud to be working with AFC to make it happen.

"With their production expertise, and the range of challenges we can offer across our different properties and businesses, we are confident we can inspire aspiring chefs across the region to become AFC's next celebrity chef and be a part of the E&O team."

This production follows the great success of *True Passion – Martin Yan*, which premiered on 13 July 2011, featuring Chef Martin Yan cooking his signature Asian dishes which he pairs in eight (8) episodes with his favourite wines. This show was shot on location at vineyards in Australia and at the AFC's studio in Singapore.

This programme comes after several other AFC original productions such as *Best Wan!* with Chef Wan, and several other documentary programmes covering topics from the use of palm oil in cooking, to the well chronicled visits made to Asia by notable chefs such as Chef Daniel Boulud, Chef Anna Olson, and Chef Robert Rainford.

The *E&O Search for AFC's Next Celebrity Chef* series will be complemented with online updates and information, as AFC will be launching a microsite dedicated to the production of the series. Please visit <http://www.asianfoodchannel.com/nextafcchef> for more information.

The site will provide up-to-date information about contestants and carry weekly updates of the latest happenings as contestants go through challenging rounds (with some of them failing!) until we are left with the last chef standing!

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ABOUT ASIAN FOOD CHANNEL

The Asian Food Channel (AFC) is the region's first 24-hour food channel dedicated to airing the best food and lifestyle programming from around the region and the world.

Based in Singapore, AFC's wide Asian distribution footprint covers eight territories and 45 million viewers, on basic tiers of all the major pay TV platforms across Southeast Asia.

The channel leads the ratings in its territories, regularly achieving the #1 lifestyle channel in terms of popularity and loyalty. It has achieved a broad following from young teenage food lovers and empty nesters to trendy urban females and aspiring male chefs.

AFC's online presence supports the channel with programme information, recipes, original content and an e-commerce store. As such AFC regularly executes 360 degree advertising and marketing campaigns and solutions for leading FMCG, Financial and Travel brands.

AFC broadcasts on:

- Astro Channel 703 (Malaysia and Brunei)
- StarHub Channel 435 (Singapore)
- First Media Digital 1 Channel 76 (Jakarta, Indonesia)
- Telkom Vision Channel 33 (Jakarta, Indonesia)
- Prime Indovision Channel 22 (Jakarta, Indonesia)
- Aora TV Channel 318 (Jakarta, Indonesia)
- now TV Channel 527 (Hong Kong)
- LIVE TV Channel 6 (Thailand)
- Skycable Channel 22 and Dream Satellite TV Channel 27 (Philippines)

Please visit www.asianfoodchannel.com for more information

ABOUT THE E&O GROUP

Eastern & Oriental Berhad (*collectively referred to as 'The E&O Group' or 'E&O'*) is listed on the Main-board of Bursa Malaysia. The Company is involved in three core business activities; namely hospitality and lifestyle, property development and property investment.

E&O undertook the meticulous refurbishment and upgrading of the heritage **Eastern & Oriental Hotel** (E&O Hotel) as well as **Lone Pine Hotel** in the late 1990s. Since it was established by the Sarkies Brothers in 1885, E&O Hotel has charmed travellers from near and far, creating a reputation to match its sister hotels – The Raffles, Singapore and The Strand, Rangoon – also founded by the Sarkies. Lone Pine Hotel, established in 1948, is the oldest beach hotel along Penang island's famed Batu Ferringhi tourist strip. A major refurbishment and expansion of the hotel was completed in 2010.

E&O Concierge was set up in 2010 to provide pay-on-demand bespoke hospitality services to E&O's serviced residences. Efforts are ongoing to further capitalise on the Group's hotel management expertise and extend this service towards the management of a portfolio of hotels and resorts in Malaysia and around the region.

In 2007, E&O embarked on a new lifestyle food and beverage (F&B) venture, via the acquisition of a substantial stake in **The Delicious Group**. Today, this thriving F&B brand is wholly-owned by E&O. Named after the original "Delicious" concept restaurant, the group now operates in some of the most vibrant spots of Kuala Lumpur and Penang. With F&B closely linked to lifestyle in the modern mindset, synergies arise from the strategic positioning of Delicious Group outlets in E&O's prime commercial / retail properties.

E&O's reputation as a premier property developer is built across a series of exclusive addresses in Kuala Lumpur and Penang Island. Its track record includes prestigious residential projects such as **Sri Se-Ekar** and **202 Desa Cahaya (202 DC)**, whilst at nearby Kampung Warisan, Malaysia's celebrated cartoonist Datuk Lat successfully conceptualised a traditional Malay village ambience within the heart of the capital.

E&O's more-recent landmark developments include the high-end condominium **Dua Residency**, located within the vicinity of the Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC) as well as **Idamansara**, located in Kuala Lumpur's upscale Damansara Heights. **Seventy Damansara** is another E&O signature development with 12 exclusive detached homes within a gated and guarded community. Located right in the heart of Kuala Lumpur's central business district is E&O's chic Manhattan-style **St Mary Residences**. On Penang island, E&O's masterplanned seafront development **Seri Tanjung Pinang** is one of the most sought-after residential addresses among locals and expatriates especially with its signature development, the **Quayside Seafront Resort Condominiums**, the first condominium in the region with a sprawling 4.5 acre private waterpark. The development also includes the popular Straits Quay retail marina, a popular F&B and shopping haven, and home to Penang's first Delicious restaurant.

The Group's **Property Investment** division forms a vital complement to the other core businesses and provides E&O with steady, recurring income flow and opportunities for capital appreciation in the longer term.

ABOUT CHEF BRUCE LIM

Chef Bruce Lim is a Filipino-Chinese, who was born and raised in America. Recently, he made the decision to go back to the Philippines to trace his roots and get culinary inspiration from native Filipino cuisine.

Bubbly and conversant in nature, Chef Bruce has distinguished himself from other Filipino chefs by immersing himself in various communities thus removing the elite image of chefs. With him, he brings along the message that food is universal and must be shared by everyone.

Although he has a host of specialties —from traditional French and Italian cuisines to Euro-Asian and international food— he is also a master of creative food presentation. Moreover, Chef Bruce also has thorough knowledge in sugar pulling and chocolate work.

Chef Bruce Lim took up Superior Level of Cuisine and Pastry at Le Cordon Bleu in London. At a relatively young age, he already has a decade of experience in food preparation. He worked in popular Philippine establishments Century Park Sheraton Hotel and Jollibee Food Corporation, which also has international branches. Chef Bruce has also partaken in food preparations in various hotels and establishments across the US: Hyatt Regency in Monterey CA, Fish Hopper Restaurant, MGM Grand Hotel Casino in Las Vegas, E & O Trading Company in San Jose, California.

His TV career began when he hosted segments for a health drink in the show "Magandang Umaga Pilipinas" (Good Morning Philippines), a daily magazine show in the Philippine's largest broadcasting network.

When not in the kitchen, Chef Bruce enjoys playing online games and kickboxing.

ABOUT MICHAEL SAXON

Michael Saxon was trained in the United Kingdom and draws on more than 30 years' experience working in the top hotels around the world in both operational and managerial positions.

These include postings at the The Four Seasons Yorkville Hotel (Canada), Resorts International Hotel & Casino (Paradise Island, Bahamas), the Regal Riverside Hotel (Shatin, Hong Kong) and the Taipei Hilton Hotel (Taiwan). He also oversaw hotel refurbishments and introduced new restaurant concepts during his stints with The Grand Plaza Parkroyal Kuala Lumpur and The Royal Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza (Singapore).

Mr Saxon was the General Manager of the luxury heritage Eastern & Oriental Hotel in George Town, Penang prior to taking on the position of CEO, The Delicious Group and Director, Group Hospitality & Lifestyle, Eastern & Oriental Berhad in January 2011.

Mr Saxon is also the author of *Chef's Tales*, a book on his life as an international chef, and a blog by the same name.

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