

Cooking their way to the top

PLAN B is often taken as a last resort but doing so helped Afqah Bastrisyia and Rabiatal Adawiyah Radzuan to win the UCSI University's Next Big Chef 2018 grand finale.

The two students from SMK Bandar Baru Sri Petaling had planned to prepare a beef-based dish but changed their minds when they concluded that they would struggle with the preparation time.

Their plan instead was to prepare seafood aglio olio pasta and strawberry trifle.

The judges decided that the delicious trifle was of the highest quality and an indulgence one would normally find in five-star hotels.

Their main dish also received praise.

"We are in total disbelief," said Afqah after winning the grand prize that comprised bursaries worth RM20,000 from UCSI and RM1,000 cash.

She said they did not expect to win after changing the game plan.

"We did not expect to reach the finals as the other contestants are really good.

"Changing our original plan was a tough call but we decided that it would take too much time to prepare the main dish well. This competition is a race against the clock too," she said.

This year's competition finals carried a western-centric theme that required contestants to prepare the main course and dessert in two hours or less.

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D Mansion Sdn Bhd, all teams were also required to include Maggi's mash potato instant mix as part of their final dish.

Sunway Putra Mall executive chef Rossham Rusli and O'Coffee Club Kuala Lumpur executive chef Mohammad Sabri Abdul Ghafar were the judges at the grand final. They were joined by Loke Hoi Weng, Hanafi Hamzah, Chan Kok Fai and Muhammad Haziq Muizzuddin Jamalullail, chefs from UCSI's Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management.

Also present at the grand final was Bangsar and Pudu education office head of the academic unit Aziah Amir.

Praising the competition, she encouraged the contestants to pursue their passion and hone their culinary craft.

"If you have a passion for cooking, take it seriously and make it your career path," she said.

Fifty two-person teams from schools across the Klang Valley took part in the competition.

The competition was broken into two legs, with the top 20 teams advancing to the grand finale.

The first and second runners-up were Sri Kuala Lumpur International School comprising Marcus Koay Kah Yan and Ian Wen Her Foong and SMK Bukit Jalil with Tey ru Yuen and Emi Oni respectively.

The SMJK(C) Confucian team with Lee Wen Long and Tibble Wong Jing Er won the best dish award.



One for the album as the winners pose for a group photo.