

STUDY ABROAD

A WHOLESOME EXPERIENCE

From renowned faculty to a prime location in the heart of Chicago, Kendall College School of Culinary Arts is a top choice. **By Mridu Rai**



Kendall offers a Masterchef Australia-esque experience

After working for some time in the hotel and patisserie industry in India, Danielle Crasto realised that although the work experience had provided her with a good learning opportunity, she needed to study and train further in order to take her skills to the next level. Crasto then started looking for a suitable culinary school in India. Her research led her to several schools across the country but the courses they offered weren't intensive enough. "I wanted a course wherein I would get personal attention and comprehensive experience in both the practical and theoretical aspects of baking and pastry," says Crasto. It was on the advice of one of her profes-

sors from a hotel management institute that Crasto decided to look up Kendall College School of Culinary Arts, Chicago, USA. "I visited Kendall's website and went through the faculty profile, the facilities being offered, the course structure and after taking in all the information, I knew that this was the right place for me," says Crasto. "Going through student testimonials was another factor which helped make my decision even easier. Each student spoke from the heart and what stood out most was how proud they were of their college. I knew then that I had to be a part of this. And I have not regretted my decision," she adds with a smile.

A part of Kendall College, Chicago,

Kendall College School of Culinary Arts has been ranked the best programme for preparing students for careers in the culinary arts by the Chicago Michelin Guide Restaurants in 2013, in a survey conducted by Taylor Nelson Sofres Global. In 2011, the Dining Room at Kendall College became the first and only culinary school restaurant to be included in the Michelin Guide Chicago. "At Kendall, we understand that along with the curriculum, it is very important for students to develop personally to be astute professionals. Throughout their time at Kendall, students are immersed in real-world experiences," explains Emily Knight Williams, president, Kendall College, Chicago. One such exam-

ple is the capstone, a senior-year student project. Kendall College offers bachelors and associate programmes in business, hospitality management, culinary arts, and education and for the capstone project, students from the departments of business, culinary arts and hospitality management work as a team to plan, fund and open a business. The project culminates with a presentation to a panel of industry professionals and Kendall faculty. This stimulates students to think out of the box while applying skills which go beyond cooking and baking. "This project along with the rigorous curriculum generates graduates who are professional, confident and prepared for leadership roles in a variety of service sectors," adds Williams. For Crasto, studying at Kendall has been an eye opening experience. She says, "You are taught to prepare for this (food) industry right from the word go so that when you enter a professional environment you don't feel like a fish out of water." After receiving such extensive training, Kendall's recent job placements have been quite notable. Hundred per cent of June 2012 graduates and 88 per cent of December 2012 graduates reported finding a job in their field within six months of graduating. The job profiles that Kendall graduates have bagged are as varied as bakery manager, banquet chef, head chef, kitchen manager and recipe tester. The courses in culinary arts offered at Kendall College are B.A in Culinary Arts and two associate degrees in baking and pastry and in culinary arts. The bachelor's programme is for a duration of four years and the tuition fees for it is US\$90,427. The associate programmes are for a duration of two years and the tuition fees are US\$45,690 (baking and pastry) and US\$53,772 (culinary arts). There are additional costs for books and other supplies for each programme.

As is the case with Crasto, the faculty is one of the main reasons why students choose Kendall and why it ranks high among Chicago's culinary schools. "Our hard working, award-winning faculty contribute to the professional culture that Kendall has perfected over the years," says Williams. The culinary arts faculty has also recently released Kendall's first cookbook titled *Sharing Our Global Passion*, which is a collection of recipes from around the world. The faculty mem-



Budding culinary masters pose with their favourite instructor at Kendall College

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bers who are respected professionals in the industry includes Chef Elaine Sikorski, who is a published author of *Cooking to the Image: A Plating Handbook*, chef-instructor Dina Altieri who was named the American Culinary Federation's (ACF) National Chef Educator of the Year in 2011. Chef Heidi Hedeker is one of the two chefs on the staff with a master-baker certification and Chef Michel Coatrieux has worked at Lucas-Carton and Taillevent in Paris, both winners of three Michelin stars and has also opened two of his own restaurants

in the Chicago suburbs. "The bakery and pastry faculty are passionate, dedicated and have a vast pool of knowledge to share," says Crasto. "All the students are treated the same regardless of prior industrial experience, age or educational background," she adds.

As part of the Laureate International Universities, Kendall has a large community of international students. Laureate International Universities is a leading international network of higher education institutions with more than 75 campus-based and online universities. Currently there are students from more than 80 countries at Kendall. "One in eight students is international, which contributes a global perspective to the classroom," believes Williams.

When international students enroll at Kendall, the Office of International Affairs provides them assistance on the basics of status maintenance, employment and internship regulations, and quick adjustment to academic life at Kendall College. Kendall also has an array of organisations and clubs that contribute to students' welfare and help them become fully immersed in the Kendall College culture. Kendall also provides scholarships that have been earmarked specifically for international students.