

**EVENT  
INFO**

**WHAT**

Beyond 'O' Level Seminar 2016

**FOR WHOM**

Exclusively for parents and students awaiting the O-level results

**WHEN**

Jan 9, 10am

**WHERE**

Temasek Convention Centre, Temasek Polytechnic

**HOW TO REGISTER**

Register online at [www.tp.edu.sg/beyondolevel](http://www.tp.edu.sg/beyondolevel)

**FOR INQUIRIES**

Contact 6780-6027 or 6780-6556  
E-mail: [outreach@tp.edu.sg](mailto:outreach@tp.edu.sg)

# Gut feeling about food

Despite initial parental objections, they pressed on to start their own cafe and eatery

Report by **FOO JIE YING**  
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**Spending long hours slogging behind the stove did not seem like a glamorous job to their parents.**

But Mr Sean Lim, 25, and Miss Jerraldine Chen, 24, stuck to their convictions and pursued a culinary and catering management diploma at Temasek Polytechnic (TP).

They have made a name for themselves with Sin Lee Foods, which was recently crowned 'Best Cafe' by home-grown restaurant-booking platform Chope.

They also run Ah Bui Curry House, a local delights eatery at the National University Hospital Medical Centre.

When asked how they found the confidence to be their own bosses at a young age, Mr Lim said: "TP gave me opportunities to go for competitions... Things like that really got us growing quite a bit."

"We were quite lucky to have met good mentors in TP, then business mentors outside. From there, you take on the role of being an owner (of a business) and take charge."

They will be speaking at the TP Beyond 'O' Level Seminar on Jan 9. (See report above.)

Miss Chen started developing an interest in baking when she was eight years old. Thanks to her moth-

er, an avid baker, her home was often filled with the aroma of freshly baked goods.

Mr Lim's decision to go into F&B stemmed from a gut feeling.

"It's a bit cliched, but maybe it's a calling? I guess cooking was something I could really do well in. I had a gut feeling and following my gut is important for me," Mr Lim said.

## OBJECTIONS

But his parents were not so convinced when they realised their son was serious about his culinary pursuit.

He said: "I think most parents will object to it. Cooking isn't a very glamorous thing."

"The whole plan was for my sister to study medicine and I would read law. My sister did her part, she's a specialist now."

"But for me, at 15 or 16, I decided cooking was what I wanted to do and luckily, I did okay," Mr Lim said.

While studying at TP, he did his internship at Italian restaurant Dolce Vita at Mandarin Oriental Singapore, when it was helmed by Michelin-starred chef Marco Pedrelli.

After graduation, he worked at the now-defunct Guy Savoy at Marina Bay Sands.

Miss Chen, who also faced objections from her parents initially, furthered her studies and graduated



**BOSSSES:** Mr Sean Lim and Miss Jerraldine Chen run Sin Lee Foods and Ah Bui Curry House.

TNP PHOTO: PHYLLICIA WANG



**I had a gut feeling, and following my gut is important for me.**

— Mr Sean Lim on pursuing a culinary career

with a Bachelor of Professional Studies in Culinary Arts Management, a course offered in a collaboration between the Culinary Institute of America and the Singapore Institute of Technology.

Along the way, she gained experience as a trainee sommelier at restaurant Les Amis and completed a kitchen internship at Eleven Madison Park in New York.

The pair are already running their own company, The Batter People Co., under which Sin Lee Foods and Ah Bui Curry House fall.

It was something Mr Lim and Miss Chen wanted to try their hand at for a change.

Mr Lim said: "We thought, let's start something of our own. We've been cooking for other people for a long time now. Why not do something of our own?"

It was a steep learning curve for the duo, who conceded that they started out "green and idealistic".

Ah Bui Curry House was a creperie that they started without considering factors like location and rental.

"What we thought was that as long as we made good food, people will come," said Miss Chen.

"But we didn't factor in things like the target group. Because we're located near the National University of Singapore, we thought students would come. But we forgot that they had long holidays."

They hope to expand The Batter People Co. in other ways, such as with events, to make it an all-round company.

Mr Lim said: "I think we've grown a lot through running our own business and are looking for new opportunities."