

Mek Phungsamphan

Country: Thailand

Course: Certificate 3 in Hospitality (Commercial Cookery)

Institute: TAFE NSW – Sydney Institute, Ultimo College



Mek Phungsamphan won an Institute award for work during his Commercial Cookery course.

What is TAFE NSW?

I feel so good and proud. It is something that I will never forget. It is such a great prize. I knew I worked hard and did my best – to be rewarded for that is wonderful.

Why did you choose to study your course at Ultimo?

Ultimo has a great reputation. I came to Australia in 2003 and joined my brother who was living in Sydney. My brother had done the course previously and he strongly recommended that I do it. I was inspired by the improvement that I saw in him.

What was the overall experience of studying like?

It was fantastic! The teachers were wonderful and have been behind the success that I have achieved. I will always look back and think of my time at TAFE NSW as very good days.

I had previously studied Accounting because one day I knew I wanted to open up my own restaurant, but learning at TAFE NSW was a much more enjoyable experience! Although at times it was hard, I got so much out of it.

What was the highlight of your time at Ultimo?

One of my highlights would have been cooking at the Apprentice (the on-campus training restaurant), and having the whole restaurant experience with other students. I had to use my skills and knowledge to do a good job, and to find solutions to solve the problems as they arose.

What did you like best about the teachers?

I can only say good things about my teachers. I was so lucky to have them. They really looked after me and I considered them my friends as well. They were skilful and passionate in their teaching. When I first started I knew I had to learn a lot and I wasn't confident, but I knew I had to be a qualified chef. My teachers helped me gain my confidence.

How has studying cookery helped you to progress your chosen career?

I am now the Sous Chef and manager at the Yok Yor Thai restaurant in Darlinghurst. My brother is the Head Chef, and with my brother and another business associate, I am actually a part owner of the restaurant. Without studying my TAFE NSW course I would not have had the confidence or the skills to be doing this.

Where do you see yourself in five years time?

I would like to be sharing my experiences and encouraging people to go to TAFE NSW to study Commercial Cookery. I think if people want to get into hospitality or the restaurant business they should have the quality training that I received.

In two years time I would like to have my own restaurant, and in five years time I would like my restaurant to be known. I will try my best to make it the best restaurant around.