



# MEET THE MENTOR

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOHN MCFADDEN  
BY CHELSEA HU, KENVALE COLLEGE

**"Husband, father, chef; love every role I have in life." A few weeks ago, I was lucky enough to meet with John McFadden, Group Executive Head Chef and Culinary Director of Criniti's food chain - as we sat and spoke about his take on the importance of an empowering support system in order to foster a community of growth for developing leaders within the hospitality industry.**



Beyond his job title, and obvious expertise in the area - John stands amongst the top leaders in the cookery community as an advocate for nurturing young talent in hospitality. In getting to know him on a personal level, he speaks of his humble beginnings as a kitchen-hand from the age of 12, with a growing 35 years in the industry and how he quickly learnt to master the art of a work-life balance. Following our conversation, it becomes more and more evident that it was this passion that drew him to Kenvale College's Mentoring program where he is the ideal mentor to be able to motivate and nurture young people to show initiative and persist in working well within such a competitive and fast-moving industry.

After being linked with the college for just over a year now, he has proved himself to be the perfect match for the institution, as Kenvale mirror's his own values in educating students and working out motivations and priorities as well as discipline and time management. He further expands on this sentiment in his own words:



Mentors are matched to mentees in a support role, assisting particularly with their work/life balance and their personal and professional development. Mentors need to be role models of the highest standard of professionalism and integrity and foster the same in students.

Mentoring is important as it is time spent listening, rather than dictating - customising yourself to an individual's personality, culture and values.



As a mentor, he hopes to build trust and personal relationships with mentees where he is able to work with them one on one in making a difference in their careers and helping them get established. By bringing his family values to the table, he hopes that together, he is able to motivate change in identifying and understanding challenges and further, working on collectively implementing a solution that is both effective and sustainable for their futures.



To build on this, his volunteering within this program is not a singular example of the work he does actively encouraging education and training as his workplace has also recently partnered with the Hospitality Training Network in creating opportunities for growing talent. He regularly uses his large social network following to promote his work along with his team: an example being that he appeared on Studio 10 earlier last month to do a live cooking segment for a pasta masterclass. Furthermore, he was also hand selected to be Head Judge for Australian Professional Chef of the Year 2018, after having previously participated for seven years. They have described him as "an excellent mentor and leader for all the judges and finalists" due to his wealth of experience and therefore, it is safe to say that it is an absolute pleasure and honour for people of all rankings, to work with (and in my case, sit down with) such a professional and inspiring leader of today.



John McFadden



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