

# ***Interview of the Month***

## ***Harmon Chellen***



*“If you don’t succeed the first time, try, try and try again.... Never lose heart...”*

### **1. Introducing Harmon...**

From very humble beginnings, Harmon Chellen rose to great heights of glittering achievements. All this was possible due to his enormous self-confidence, implicit belief in self, dauntless spirit and steely determination.

Mr Chellen started his career in 1989 as a Trainee Waiter at La Pirogue Hotel, and then moved to the Hotel School , situated at that time, at les Casernes Curepipe to do a CAP( Certificat D’aptitude Professionnel) in Restaurant and Bar. After completing his course, he worked for various hotels on the island. When the Gold Crest Hotel was opened back then, Harmon was working as barman there. Eventually, he decided to work on a cruise liner

called MS Astor, the famous cruise ship, for two years, travelling the world and visited almost hundred countries. After being away from home and his family, he took the hardest decision of his life but the best one to come back for good to Mauritius because he did not want his children to grow without him. His decision led him to become the Training Manager at l'Ecole Hôtelière Sir Gaëtan Duval, MITD up to date. From 2005 to 2007, Harmon also worked for the European Union as consultant for the "Ecole Hôtelière du Vanuatu" Project which was a project he had at heart.

On the social side, Harmon is a Rotarian, a member of Skal and is also a board member of the Tamil League. He is currently pursuing his MPhil/PhD at the University of Mauritius " An analysis of students' commitment towards employment in the Tourism and Hospitality sector. A case of Mauritius".

**2. At L'Ecole Hoteliere, are there many youngsters of our community following courses?**

Yes, indeed. There is a good number of youngsters of our community who are following courses at the school, be it at the Level of NC 3, NC 4 or Diploma Courses. Some of them have done extremely well. A few Examples would be Mr Daren Moodely, who is now the Sales and Marketing Manager of the Long Beach Hotel, Mr Rudy Periatamby who is presently the Food and Beverages Director at the InterContinental Hotel Mauritius, Miss Yaminee Govinden, who is presently working in France, just to mention a few. Many of them have gone for further studies and doing extremely well. Members of our community excel in the Tourism and Hospitality industry because of their open mindedness. We have always been open to other cultures and always willing to learn and understand the cultures of others. The Tourism and Hospitality industry is the perfect platform for the Tamilians to express themselves, as it is all about sharing.

**3. Having this exposure with youngsters, how do you feel our young community is doing on the education side?**

I believe our youngsters are doing well, but they constantly need to be monitored and guided. Education is not only about academic qualifications but also about attitude and personality. I believe that if we want our young community to succeed, monitoring and guiding them in the right way is essential. It is important to adopt a disciplined path right from the start. For instance, at Ecole Hoteliere, if I ever see someone whose uniform is not properly tucked in, I immediately reprimand the student. I believe strongly that the right attitude from the very beginning will help to forge a good personality.

**4. What advice would you have for youngsters?**

My advice to them is to always aim at the sky and if ever they fall, they will fall among the stars. I myself have two children, a son who is at the Royal College Curepipe and a daughter who is studying at Dr Maurice Curee. My wife and I are constantly monitoring their studies and allowing them to grow in a stress-free environment but also to advise them when necessary. I believe that parents have a big role to play in order for youngsters to choose the right path in the future.

**5. You yourself are completing your Phd – congratulations and all the best. Tell us more about this achievement.**

Well, I have always tried to find time for professional qualifications. I did my BSc (Hons) in Hospitality Management and Related Services from the Leeds Metropolitan University, UK. In 2010, I was awarded an MSc in International Tourism from the University of Mauritius and Universite de Toulouse. And I thought that I would go further and go for a PhD, which I am currently doing. Of course, my research is focused in my field of expertise, Hospitality and Tourism. I am looking forward to completing my PhD during the year.



*« J'ai toujours aimé le contact humain, faire des spectacles et dans cette passion, je me sentais dans mon élément. Le monde de l'hôtellerie est finalement comme une scène de théâtre. »*

**6. What is your opinion about Pathirikai, being an online paper?**

It is a very laudable initiative on the part of Pathirikai as it provides a platform for all our Tamil brothers and sisters to have up to date information for them to make an informed choice.

***By Kobashni***

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