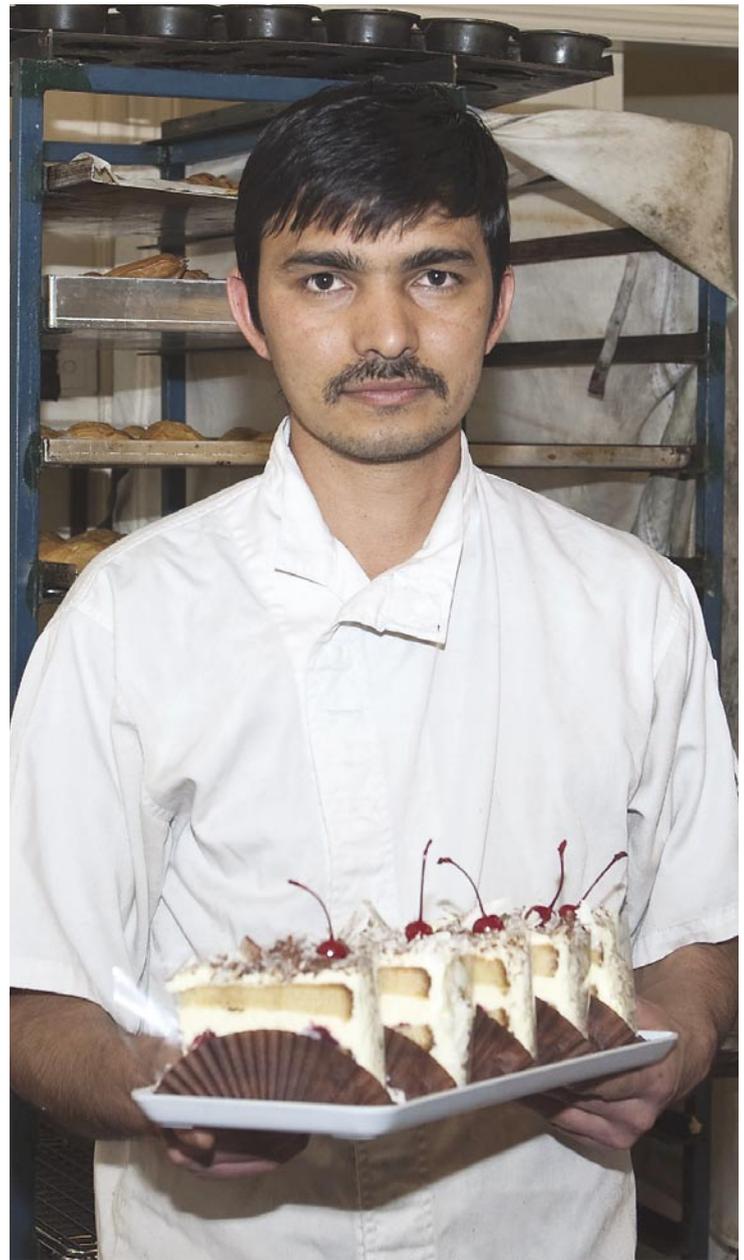


“It’s not just about the look, it’s the taste, the texture, all those little things that have to be perfect to make the product perfect”



Kamal Perwa

Kamal Purwa (pictured above) is a softly spoken pastry chef from India. He’s about as removed from the volatile, passionate image we normally have of chefs. He’s measured, chooses his words carefully and just gets the job done. He didn’t start out wanting to be a chef but when a career in information technology failed to find him consistent employment, his younger brother, who worked in hospitality suggested the change and he hasn’t looked back.

Hailing from the north of India, Kamal’s family moved to the south and as soon as his visa comes through he is set to return home for a visit. The 29 year old has been able to stay in Australia thanks to the sponsorship of his new boss Toni Vorenas – the job opportunity at Metro Cafe and bakery coming at the perfect time.

His Treat of France boss Ben Siddiki was closing his Melbourne bakery for a couple of months to go back to France so Kamal was at a loose end. Enter his former colleague from the Melbourne bakery, Chris Rule. The job offer in Mount Gambier was the perfect solution and it’s been his home since February.

Kamal, though, returns to Melbourne two days every week to continue his study, he’s looking to complete an Advanced Diploma in Hospitality, and while he misses his family, Australia is set to be home

for some time yet. “It’s quieter and more relaxed and I really love it here,” Kamal said. “I am enjoying living in a smaller city – it’s so different to the big city I lived in back in India.”

Kamal has always worked in a bakery since turning his hand to the kitchen, spending time in the Maldives as a pastry chef before returning to India for a few months ahead of the adventure to Australia. He’s been in Australia two years.

His Metro shift starts at midnight and then finishes up around 10 hours later. For someone who never considered a career in cooking, his quiet passion for everything he creates is astonishing. “I particularly love making wedding cakes and cakes for special occasions,” he said.

And speaking of special occasions, Kamal is set to experience one of Australia’s true special occasions this year - the Boxing Day Test. A self confessed cricket tragic, his favourite cricketers are India’s Virender Sehwag and Australia’s own fast bowling great Glenn McGrath, “I am going to the MCG - I am really looking forward to it,” Kamal said.