

ALVIN QUAH

Excitable, affable and unfailingly enthusiastic, Alvin is poles apart from the stereotype of a science expert. After numerous years studying, and with a pharmaceutical career behind him, Alvin says that MasterChef Australia had finally given him the opportunity to do something for himself.

"I did well at school because I was scared of being nobody," Alvin says. "I did a science degree but underpinning it all was my passion for cooking. I've been busy chasing what people want me to chase and putting what I want into the background. It's bizarre but growing up I had it instilled in me that you're either a doctor, a lawyer, an engineer or nobody!"

With a Malaysian background, Alvin moved to Australia in his late teens to study at Melbourne University, and says that his cooking is influenced by his heritage.

"My mum is my inspiration," says Alvin, who grew up in a Buddhist household. "I used to hang around the kitchen watching her as a child. She would never use measurements, her cooking was instinctive".

Having won a place in the Top 24, Alvin is certain that he can't go back to his old desk job. "I'd be really worried about going back to my old job, sitting in front of the computer feeling suffocated and stifled after so many opportunities to be myself and express my creativity."