



NEW SPECIALISATION AT NUS

In view of increased interest in entrepreneurship among current MBA students, NUS will be launching the Innovation & Entrepreneurship (I&E) specialisation in the MBA course this month.

With the launch of the new specialisation, NUS hopes to instil in students with the entrepreneurial spirit and the necessary skills to become corporate entrepreneurs or founders of their own companies.

One of the units within this new specialisation involves spending a week in San Francisco/Silicon Valley in the United States, which is home to many unicorns (start-up companies valued at over US\$1 billion).

The module is designed to provide an in-depth view of the rewards and challenges of this unique ecosystem and also involves first-hand experiences working with entrepreneurs in this network.

Armed with his MBA, Mr López de Haro co-founded Cambodia's first rum distillery.

PHOTO: ANTONIO LÓPEZ DE HARO

In high spirits

The contacts Mr Antonio López de Haro made during his NUS MBA course have served him well on his entrepreneurial journey

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VENEZUELAN Antonio López de Haro started his entrepreneurial ways when he was a young boy.

The 33-year-old recalls: "When I was only seven years old, I was reselling my duplicate basketball collector cards at a premium, or selling home-made baked goods from

my kitchen without my parents' permission.

"I would also 'hire' my friends to work with me, washing my neighbour's cars."

After graduating from university in Switzerland, he lived and worked in Shanghai, China, for two-and-a-half years.

He then decided to pursue a Master of Business Administration (MBA) at the National University of Singapore (NUS) in 2008.

Business acumen

Taking up the NUS MBA proved more than just an educational journey for Mr López de Haro.

He says: "Studying in a multi-cultural city-state like Singapore provided me with a cultural experience that not only strengthened my character but also broadened my perspective and networks, which are important to the business world.

The module that had the most influence on Mr López de Haro was entrepreneurial finance, as the professor was himself an entrepreneur and investor in start-ups and SMEs.

He adds: "You could feel the passion and the knowledge from real-life experience, not just from theory and books.

"Till today, I am in con-

tact with, and have even partnered, some of my classmates from around the world to develop business ideas, including investing in Myanmar."

He also co-founded Raw Kitchen Bar, the predecessor of Kilo Kitchen, while he was studying full-time.

After graduating with his MBA in 2010, he ventured to Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and set up a restaurant and bar.

In 2014, together with his business partners, he created Cambodia's first rum distillery and brand, Samai Distillery, which produces a range of handcrafted rums using local ingredients.

Recently, the distillery won three internationally recognised awards for its rums.

Mr López de Haro says: "Our goal is to bring Samai Rums to Singapore, France and other countries in the region. Fast forward five years, and we should be exporting to over 10 countries around the world.

"A successful entrepreneur needs to be mindful of the smallest details but at the same time focus on the bigger picture.

"You need to be realistic and persistent but still live on the edge and be willing to push boundaries."