Only 21 but bosses of their own bar

Students invest $20,000 to set up bar on SMU campus

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HEY may be barely out of their teens, but these girls are already running their own bar.

Meet Singapore Management University (SMU) undergraduates and entrepreneurs Ms Shemen Tan, Ms Shalini Arul, and Ms Nabilah Said, all 21.

The bar, Frujch, is the first bar at a local university. (See report on facing page.) It is located in SMU’s School of Information Systems at its Theatre Road campus.

It held its official opening on Tuesday — although it has been in operation since last September.

Earlier, the bar served only drinks, but it is now serving food as well.

The licence to serve alcohol was granted in September last year.

Getting it off the ground wasn’t easy.

First, the third-year students had to beat seven other groups and survive a stringent three-round selection process of an interview and two presentations. The four groups that scored highest were then allowed to submit business plans.

Next, the girls had to transform a bare recreational room with only pool tables and some sofas into a full-fledged bar.

Then they had to source for decor — from the girls’ savings.

But these budding entrepreneurs are prepared to slog it out for their “baby”.

Ms Arul said: “Honestly, we’ve never been sure if our bar will even make money, that might seem strange seeing that two of us are studying business. We just wanted it to be a place for students. As long as we can break even that would be good.”

Students seem to agree.

Louis Lin, 23, a third-year business student said: “It’s cosy and homely and it’s become a gathering place for all students.”

Ms Arul feels being good friends with the partners has worked in their favour.

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