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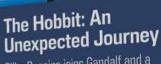
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FEBRUARY 2018



FOOD
40 TOP TOQUE
Bertrand Grébaut of Septime

48 SUSTAINABLE CUISINE TAKES
TO THE SKIES
SIA's farm-to-plane initiative

Wine & Drinks
50 VINE EXPECTATIONS
Alvaro Comenge of Bodegas Comenge

52 RAISING THE BARFestive labels for the collection

54 CELLAR CHOICE Fine reds for a prosperous New Year

55 TIPPLE TIPS Breakfast in Bed

Entertaining 58 ADIEU, RESTAURANT ANDRÉ A walk down memory lane with André Chiang

68 HOMETOWN HEIRLOOMSJean-Charles Dubois of Sofitel Singapore City Centre

72 MASTERCLASS Eggs in Purgatory and Italian doughnuts

76 AT HOME WITHNikki Hunt of Design Intervention

82 COOKBOOK CRITICThe Mediterranean Table

Travel
88 CHEF'S TRAVELOGUE
Cross-cultural cuisine in Lima

92 ROMANTIC REPASTS IN
KUALA LUMPUR
A one-hour flight getaway from home

96 SWISH STAYCATIONNovotel Singapore on Stevens

98 FREQUENT FLYER Matthew Shang and Paul Semple of HASSELL



Regulars 4 EDITOR'S NOTE

13 EPICURE LOVES Blue Box Café

14 EPICURE NEWS Prosperity in a pot and sky-high dining hotspots

22 GLOBETROTTING EPICURENew eats in San Francisco, London and more

32 EPICURE LOOKBOOKThe Bulgari Resort and Residences Dubai

36 STYLE BUZZTop jewellery picks for Valentine's Day

44 EPICURE REVIEWS Casa Poncho

100 FOOD TALKYou're my butter half

102 STOCKISTS

104 EPICURE'S CHOICEThe things we crave this month



Dior Rose des vent's Nouvel an chinois 2018 necklace

fter the fleeting joy from a five-day 21°C cold spell, we are once again entering into familiar tropical climate territory in February.

Temperatures are rising in our office too, but for a different reason, as our team celebrates Valentine's Day and looks closer to home to put together this Passion & Perfection issue. Digital editor Natasha Venner-Pack reviews a new hotel in Kuala Lumpur and recommends three of her favourite fine dining restaurants for a quick couple's getaway (page 92). Staff writer Jessica Chan checks into Novotel Singapore on Stevens and shares the reasons why foodies will take to this new lifestyle hub cum hotel (page 96). Of course, we can't forget our readers in Indonesia who have been faithfully following our magazine. Jakarta-based writer Divya Pridhnani recommends five of her favourite breakfast destinations in the Indonesian capital (page 28).

This Valentine's Day is one that *epicure* will remember for another significant reason. It's when Restaurant André bids its fans adieu after eight magnificent years, having created milestone after milestone for Singapore's dining landscape. Our country's 'loss' will be Taiwan's gain as the Taipei-born chef André Chiang returns to his homeland to concentrate on his other immensely popular restaurant, RAW, and other pending projects. But Chang promises that he will still be shuttling to and from Singapore. Watch this space for more details on his next F&B opening in the same Restaurant André space.

Here we are, a month later, presenting five of André's favourite recipes (page 58). For his fans, it will be a special way to remember those dining experiences.

To the team at Restaurant André, thanks for the memories.



Adeline Wong Group Managing Editor

e We love to hear your feedback.



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epicure life's refinements

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ANDRÉ CHIANG staged in several Michelin-starred establishments, including L'Atelier de Joël Robuchon in Paris and Le Jardin des Sens in Montpellier, before settling down in Singapore to helm JAAN. He struck out on his own and opened Restaurant André in 2010 – it's currently 2nd on the Asia's 50 Best Restaurants 2017 list and 14th on the World's 50 Best Restaurants 2017 list, and has maintained two

Michelin stars since the guide's launch in Singapore two years ago. Restaurant André will shutter on 14 February this year as Chiang moves back to Taiwan to focus on his other restaurant, RAW.

What is your fondest memory of your time in Singapore? "Serving all my lovely diners and my first restaurant guest, the late Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew, who told me that the Restaurant André building used to be his office under Laycock & Ong, Singapore's first law firm."



Adieu, Restaurant André, page 58



ALEJANDRO SARAVIA started his chef journey at 16, enrolling in a culinary school in Peru, before honing his skills during an internship in New York and gaining experience in countries around the world. In addition to running his own critically acclaimed restaurant, Pastuso, in Melbourne, he also doubles up as a consultant chef, media spokesperson, and advocate for Latin American cuisine and culture.

Perú is known for corn. What's your favourite way to eat it? "It would have to be whole white corn boiled in water and infused with cloves, cinnamon and a bit of raw sugar, then served warm with fresh chilli paste and coriander leaves. My second favourite is tamales, in which corn dough is stuffed with meats and cheese, then wrapped in banana leaves. They are steamed or boiled in salty water, and served with salsa criolla – comprising diced red onions, Roma tomatoes, fresh coriander and ají chillies."



Shining the light on Perú, page 88

WHAT WENT ON DURING THIS MONTH'S COVER SHOOT







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14 February 2018

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EPICURE LOVES



Blue Box Café

Even without the swept-up hair, black dress and cascading pearls, diners can still emulate the soignée Audrey Hepburn in *Breakfast at Tiffany*'s within Tiffany & Co.'s first retail dining concept, Blue Box Café. Sitting on the fourth floor of the flagship boutique along 5th Avenue, a striking robin's egg blue décor – the brand's trademark colour – is splashed across the walls, plates and sofas. Complemented with cool herringbone marble and amazonite stone, the sophisticated and dreamy interior pays homage to the luxury jeweller's evolving craftsmanship and heritage. There's a prix fixe menu for breakfast (US\$29/S\$38) and lunch (US\$39), but we have our eye on the picture-perfect afternoon tea (US\$49). The three-tiered set offers finger sandwiches alongside intricate desserts, such as the Tiffany Bird's Nest and Chocolate Ingot. Take it up a notch with The Blue Box Celebration Cake (US\$12). Decorated with a little blue bow made of icing, it is a treat for the eyes and palate. *Tiffany & Co., 727 5th Avenue, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10022, United States. Tel: +1 212 605 4270*

EPICURE NEWS





A pot of treasures

Shave off precious meal prep time with the help of a Chinese New Year fave, pen cai.

Hai Tien Lo offers two opulent pen cai options. The Classic Auspicious Treasure Pot (\$328 for six persons, \$478 for 10 persons) is packed with whole abalone, dried fish maw, dried scallop, dace fishball, pork tendon, pig tripe, Matsutake mushroom, bamboo pith, Chinese mushroom, Chinese cabbage, lotus root and white radish. Or opt for the Premium Wealth Treasure Pot (\$398 for six persons, \$598 for 10 persons), which includes all the aforementioned ingredients, plus pork knuckle, roast duck, and dried oyster. Available till 2 March. Three days advance order. Level 3, Pan Pacific Singapore, 7 Raffles Boulevard. Tel: 6826 8240

Si Chuan Dou Hua Restaurant's Prosperity Pen Cai with Fugu Udon Noodles (\$438 for four to six persons, \$688 for eight to 10 persons) brims with auspicious delicacies like abalone, fish maw and sea cucumber, and a thick superior broth. What makes it special is that you can complete your meal with fugu noodles, prepared with fresh fugu (directly imported from the capital of

pufferfish, Shimonoseki) fish paste. Add the noodles to the broth to soak up all the goodness, and enjoy it steamboat style. Available till 2 March. Three

days advance

order. sichuandouhua.com

THE EARLY ORIGINS OF PEN **CAI CONSISTED** OF ONLY EIGHT INGREDIENTS, **COOKED IN EIGHT** DIFFERENT **SAUCES BEFORE** THEY WERE BEING LAYERED.

Swissôtel Merchant Court's prosperity pot, Braised Buddha's Temptation Claypot (\$388 for 10 persons), is filled with premium ingredients such as baby abalone, sea cucumber, XO Chinese sausage, dried oyster, roasted pork belly, fatt choy (black moss), dried scallop, dried Chinese flower mushroom, tiger prawn and Chinese long

cabbage, all bathed in a flavourful broth. Available till 2 March. Three days advance order. 20 Merchant Road. Tel: 6239 1848

Wah Lok Cantonese Restaurant's signature three-layer Longevity Poon Choi (\$408 for six persons, \$688 for 10 persons) will get the thumbs up even from your granny. It is first layered with Tianjin cabbage, radish and yam, followed by another layer of pork shank, roasted duck. Topped with black moss, pan-fried live prawn, whole abalone, dried oyster, juicy fishballs and sea cucumber, this is a great 'basin' dish to savour. Available till 2 March. Three days advance order. Level 2, Carlton Hotel Singapore, 76 Bras Basah Road. Tel: 6349 1292

To welcome the Year of the Dog, Jade's executive chef Leong Chee Yeng has added extra ingredients to the classic Eight Treasures Pen Cai (\$78/person, minimum of six persons) - handmade Fuzhou-style fishballs. The fishballs are made with mackerel that has been beated, mashed and moulded, then stuffed with a savoury minced pork filling. These are packed together with 16 other ingredients such as roasted duck, poached prawns, tenhead abalone and dried scallop, as well as pork belly braised with five-spice powder and bean paste. Available till 2 March. One day advance order. Lobby Level, The Fullerton Hotel Singapore, 1 Fullerton Square. Tel: 6877 8943

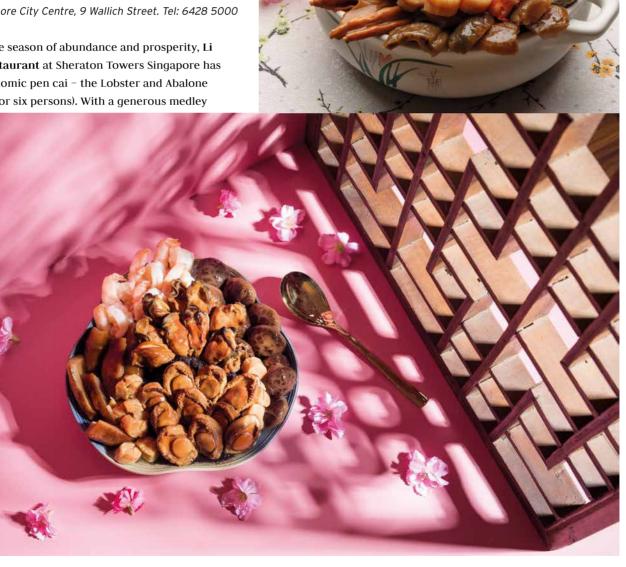
Order a pen cai (\$488) from Yan Ting and receive a complimentary

medium Prosperity Yu Sheng with Norwegian Salmon, Fried Glutinous Rice with Preserved Meat, and an Osmanthus and Water Chestnut Cake. What we like about the pen cai: the lip-smacking sauce made from oysters and Chinese ham, plus exquisite ingredients such as premium abalone, dace fish, dried oyster, sea cucumber, pork belly, roasted duck and soy sauce chicken. Available till 2 March. Three days advance order. Upper Level 1, The St. Regis Singapore, 29 Tanglin Road. Tel: 6506 6887

Created by Racines' master chef Andrew Chong, the sumptuous casserole (\$198 for six to eight persons) is filled with delightful ingredients such as abalone, sea cucumber, king prawn, Hokkaido scallop, dried oyster, flower mushroom, fish maw, roasted Kurobuta pork, roasted French duck breast, truffles, Chinese gluten and black moss to impress the most discerning family member. Available till 2 March. Three days advance order. Lobby Level, Sofitel Singapore City Centre, 9 Wallich Street. Tel: 6428 5000

Complementing the season of abundance and prosperity, Li Bai Cantonese Restaurant at Sheraton Towers Singapore has prepared a gastronomic pen cai - the Lobster and Abalone Fortune Pot (\$398 for six persons). With a generous medley

of Boston lobster, abalone, sea cucumber, and goose web to symbolise wealth and abundance. Available till 2 March. Three days advance order. Lower Lobby Level, Sheraton Towers Singapore, 39 Scotts Road. Tel: 6839 5623



Li Bai Cantonese Restaurant

Yan Ting



It's everyone's birthday

The seventh day of Lunar New Year, which falls on 22 February, is also known as *ren ri* (the day humans were created). Here's where to celebrate the occasion.

Golden Peony's executive chef Ku Keung has whipped up several Cantonese set menus and à la carte menu to celebrate the Year of the Dog. Highlights include the Fortune 3-D Meringue 'Yu Sheng' (\$888 for 30 persons and more) with New Bedford Scallop, Salmon, Crispy White Bait and Fish Skin, which is artfully arranged in the shape of a dog, and the Roast Whole Suckling Pig with Shanghainese Sticky Rice, Fritters and Chicken Floss (\$338). Level 3, Conrad Centennial Singapore, 2 Temasek Boulevard. Tel: 6432 7482

Savour fine Cantonese cuisine in an elegant setting at Cassia. The Deluxe Fortune Set (\$199/ person) is an ultra-decadent six-course dining experience. Start the feast with an auspicious combination of Crispy Suckling Pig with Minced Shrimp, Panfried Goose Liver with Roasted Duck, and Steamed Crystal Dumpling with Black Truffle and Fresh Mushrooms. Then tuck into the Thick Chicken Broth with Fish Maw and Flower Mushroom which is double boiled for six hours. End the meal with their Cassia Trilogy Dessert - Salted Egg Yolk Bun, Cream of Avocado and Crispy Water Chestnut Strips. Capella Singapore, 1 The Knolls, Sentosa Island, Tel: 6591 5045

Lime Restaurant's Feast of Pawsperity buffet (\$60/person for lunch, \$80/person for dinner) has

something for everyone. After a complimentary welcome drink, head straight to the live cooking stations. You wouldn't want to miss their Peking Duck with Hoisin Sauce, Half Shell Scallop with Garlic Butter, and Roasted Pork Knuckle. The spread also includes old-school fare like the Slow-cooked Soy Braised Pork Belly with Fatt Choy. PARKROYAL on Pickering, 3 Upper Pickering Street. Tel: 6809 8899

The culinary team at Le Méridien Singapore, Sentosa's all-day dining restaurant, Latest Recipe, will create a five-course Joy set menu (\$58/person) on this special day. Besides sampling the restaurant's smoked salmon yu sheng, expect scrumptious creations such as the Double-boiled Free Range Herbal Chicken, as well as the lip-smacking Steamed Eight Treasure Rice in Lotus Leaf. 23 Beach View. Tel: 6818 3305

The feasting continues with **The Clifford Pier**'s Lunar New Year Weekday Set Lunch (\$35 for two courses, \$38 for three courses). Tuck into Tempura Shrimp Fritters, fresh prawns coated with Orange-Sambal Glaze, to usher luck and prosperity. Highlights include Golden Mandarin Orange Crisps with Yuzu Mini Salmon Yu Sheng, and a house-baked Orange and Ginger Rum Baba are







complemented with Red Date and Longan Compote for a sweet ending. The Fullerton Bay Hotel, 80 Collyer Quay. Tel: 6597 5266

Two Michelin-starred Shisen Hanten by Chen Kentaro is set to impress diners with their lavish eight-course Majestic menu (\$2,988 for 10 persons). Think extravagant dishes like Foie Gras Chawanmushi and Crab Roe Soup served with superior bird's nest, Braised 3-head Australian Abalone with Sea Cucumber, and Stirfried Ibérico Pork with Red Pepper and Cashew Nut. The star of the menu, however, is their indulgent Family Reunion Yu Sheng, which includes fresh julienned vegetables, premium abalone, lobster from a local fishery, salmon, fish roe and sweet Botan prawns. Level 35, Orchard Wing, Mandarin Orchard Singapore, 333 Orchard Road. Tel: 6831 6288

If eating more sustainable ingredients is part of your Chinese New Year's resolutions, then opt for mezza9's Claypot Braised MSC-certified Wild Abalone, Mushrooms, Broccoli and Superior Stock (\$38), and the Double Happiness and Good Luck Yu Sheng (\$48), which includes Norwegian Atlantic salmon and Mediterranean sea bass. Mezzanine Level, Grand Hyatt Singapore, 10 Scotts Road. Tel: 6732 1234

Enjoy a Peranakan feast at **Baba** Chews **Bar and Eatery**. Its festive set menus (\$48/person for seven-course menu, \$58/person for eight-course menu) feature an auspicious Baba Salmon Yusheng with sliced pineapples and cornflakes, and Pork Knuckle Pongteh (pork braised in fermented soy bean sauce) and mixed vegetable stew. For a more decadent spread, go for its premium sets (\$68/person for eight-course menu, \$88/person for nine-course menu), which include the Udang BBC Tiga Rasa, a Nyonyainspired stir-fried sea prawn dish, that delights the taste buds with the combination of the Indonesian sweet sauce, chopped truffle and Baba Chews' homemade rempah. #01-01 Katong Square, 86 East Coast Road. Tel: 6723 2025

Singapore's authority on Eurasian-Peranakan cuisine, Folklore's Damian D' Silva will celebrate the Lunar New Year with Tok Panjang (long table). Signifying reunion, the Tok Panjang (\$68/person) features 17 treasured recipes from his maternal Peranakan grandmother, including the oh-so crispy *ngoh hiang*, Peranakan Prawn Salad, and the must-have Chap Chye. What is also good is the Itek Teem, salted vegetable duck soup that is hearty, savoury and soul-comforting. *Level 2, Destination Singapore Beach Road, 700 Beach Road. Tel: 6679 2900*



Meatilicious

MeatLovers, Singapore's first meat concierge by ADiRECT, specialises in Wagyu, Kobe beef and other premium meat cuts from Japan and other parts of the world. For Chinese New Year, it has launched a special beef bundle (\$132) comprising Hokkaido Snow Beef Kiriotoshi, Hokkaido Snow Beef Shabu Slice and Kagoshima Yakiniku Cut (250g each). Only 300 bundles are available. The novelty item is Olive Beef, a product of olive-fed cattle in the Kagawa Prefecture. Choose from four different cuts: Olive Beef Steak (\$78 for 200g) for a hearty pan-seared steak paired with wine; Olive Beef Yakiniku (\$75 for 250g) for grilling or barbecuing over a charcoal fire; Olive Beef Shabu Shabu (\$75 for 250g) for Japanese hotpot; and the thicker Olive Beef Sukiyaki (\$75 for 250g) to produce a flavourful broth. meatlovers.com.sq Tel: 6684 9917

Mr Farmer is a new online wet market

dedicated to delivering fresh, ethically farmed and sustainably sourced meat directly to your door. Their Gooralie pork (from \$23.80 for 400g) comes from free-range farms that grow their own grains for feed. The GG French Poulet chicken (from \$10) is the breed favoured by several top chefs in Singapore. All products are chemical-, hormone- and antibiotic-free; chickens are allowed to grow naturally for a minimum of 60 days on a 100 percent natural and vegetarian diet; eggs come from free roaming chickens in New Zealand; and the beef is grass-fed and free range (from \$18 for 200g). mrfarmer.sg

GASTRO GEMS OF HOKKAIDO

Explore the wonders of seafood haven Hokkaido with executive chef Shinichi Nakatake's seasonal menus, the Sapporo (\$200/ person) and Hakodate (\$180/person) at



Keyaki. Renowned for its fresh seafood, the six- and seven-course menus are a showcase of Hokkaido-sourced ingredients, such as the coveted Grilled King Crab; Simmered Kinki Fish, a premium signature of Hokkaido with a tender texture and a subtle sweetness; and the must-have fresh and creamy Uni. The two menus are available till 28 February. Level 4, Pan Pacific Singapore, 7 Raffles Boulevard. Tel: 6826 8240



10 minutes with...

JEAN-MICHEL GATHY,

principal designer, Denniston Architects



What inspires
you to create
dramatic water
features in
your signature
designs?
Water is one of
my strengths
because it
makes resorts

look beautiful and it's the most powerful natural element possible. Water embodies everything that we seek - emotion, strength, calm, drama and charisma. When you are in the water, you feel at ease. The ambience creates empowerment in a resort setting, and a water feature can also be used to muffle noises.

The pools are the best way to portray lighting and softness as they reflect the surroundings perfectly. For example, at Marina Bay Sands, we designed the pool of the roof as an oasis, dominating the skyline of the city. The infinity pool is built on a special platform and is the largest outdoor pool in the world at this height. Making a beautiful swimming pool is akin to orchestrating a dance, and it is incredible how the slightest water movement breaks the noise.

What has been your most memorable design to date?

I don't have a specific hotel in mind as we are proud of all the hotels and restaurants which we have designed. Some of my more coveted restaurants include Tapasake Restaurant at One&Only Reethi Rah, Maldives; The Wine & Cigar Library at The Chedi Andermatt, Switzerland; Le 1947 at The Cheval Blanc Randheli.

Maldives; Piano Nobile at Aman
Venice and The Dining Room and Tea
House at Park Hyatt Sanya Sunny
Bay. The success of the hotel is the
result of a good mix of the design and
architecture (hardware) as well as the
management (software), where at the
end of the day; the comfort and needs
of the customers are met. That is
what satisfies us the most.

Tell us more about Malaysia, your favourite country.

For authentic Malay food, I highly recommend Bijan - the restaurant has a nice ethnic feel and the classic kerabu pucuk paku is my favourite. South Sea Seafood in Kampung Baru Subang and Hakka Restaurant in Jalan Kia Peng (Kuala Lumpur) offer good versions of spring rolls and stir-fried crab. The best place for prawn masala and all kinds of roti is Passage Thru India - my go-to Indian restaurant with a magical and exotic atmosphere. I also enjoy Marini's on 57, Kuala Lumpur's highest Italian restaurant, near the Petronas Twin Tower. The cocktail bar is the place to be with great music and stylish patrons.

What's an underrated eatery that you love in Singapore?

Jing Restaurant on Fullerton Road.

How do you achieve work-life balance?

I always keep my personal life separate from work and create a clear barrier. I eat organic food and enjoy the pleasure of life-enriching sports.

READING LIST



★ Instagram sensation Tara Jensen pens A Baker's Year, a cookbook-autobiography peppered with selfillustrations and personal photographs. Her trove of recipes for monthly bakes

is perfect for the occasion. Published by St.

Martin's Griffin US. Distributed by Pansing Books
Distribution Pte Ltd. Available from all Kinokuniya
and selected POPULAR bookstores. \$46.95



* In Finding Fire: Cooking at its most elemental,

Lennox Hastie, chef-owner of Sydney's Firedoor, presents over 80 recipes and reveals what goes into creating a

good fire, and the different types of woods to enhance the flavours of your ingredients to create outstanding dishes. Weaved with Hastie's personal history and knowledge on different cultures, *Finding Fire* is a rediscovery of the art of cooking. *Published by Hardie Grant Publishing. Available from bookdepository.com.* \$52.98



★ Chef Rodolfo Guzmán of Santagio restaurant, Boragó, presents an eponymous tome, Boragó: Coming from the South. Between the pages lies an exciting world of Chilean

culture and cuisine, with stories on local ingredients padded with Chilean history and geography, culminating in a recipe selection of 100 famed dishes from Guzmán's restaurant. Personal notebook sketches give readers a peek into the creative process behind gourmet Chilean cuisine. *Published by Phaidon. Available from bookdepository.com.* \$79.40



Curried flavour

Famed restaurateur and cookbook author Hari Nayak helms Masti – Cocktails and Cuisine, a two-storied beachfront complex heating up the south of La Mer leisure centre. The lush yet vibrant interior of contrasting colours and patterns goes hand in hand with his playful take on Indian cuisine. Expect a mix of African and Indian flavours in the Bhatti Merguez (AED60/S\$22), a succulent lamb served with a chilli garlic masala, and a splash of South American influence in the Steak Kali Mirch Soft Tacos (AED75), where fermented rice pancakes sandwich slow-cooked black pepper short ribs.

Post-dinner, head upstairs to the Masti Lounge for a panoramic view of the Arabian Gulf as well as unique cocktails. We have our eye on the Jaggery Old Fashioned (AED65), where the traditional cane sugar adds a spiced, buttery caramel note to the invigorating mix of Pikesville rye whiskey, pistachio and chai bitters. They also carry the biggest gin collection in the city and offers curated tasting sessions within a dedicated Gin Room. *La Mer South, Street 2A, Jumeirah Road, Jumeirah 1, Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Tel: +971 800 62784*

Hot new eats



Shining light on Pacific Northwestern fare in bustling San Francisco is **Birdsong**. The cuisine hails from North America – Oregon to Alaska – and focuses on the abundance from both land and sea. Everything from berries and Dungeness crab to an elk is cooked simply, sometimes with a touch of Asian or native American influences. Chefowner Chris Bleidorn marries these ingredients with open-fire cooking and dry ageing to deliver fine, inimitable plates. Pasture raised buffalos are presented, ribeye and heart, alongside seasonal morsels and bone broth in his 12-course tasting menu (US\$175/S\$232), while larger family-style servings of Aged Duck (US\$110) and Whole Roasted

Trout (US\$91) take centre stage in his à la carte selections. Craft beers, brewed in Oregon, Washington and British Columbia, are the drink of choice. The best seats at this dinner-only restaurant are reserved, of course, at the 10-seat chef's counter overlooking the open kitchen. 1085 Mission St, San Francisco, CA 94103, U.S.A.



Over in London, chef Simon Rogan brings back his cult pop-up, **Roganic**, at a permanent location along Blandford Street. A pun on his name and the word 'organic', Rogan works with his original team, including head chef Oliver Marlow, to dole out the same avant-garde dishes (from £80/S\$146) using natural and foraged



produce. Fans of his two Michelin-starred L'Enclume are no strangers to his elaborate courses, and Rogan plans to do the same for Roganic. Rafeal Cagali, head chef at Aulis, Rogan's experimental eight-seater chef's table in Soho, will be working closely with Marlow to deliver equally fascinating dishes. 5-7 Blandford Street, Marylebone, London WIU 3DB. U.K. Tel: +44 20 3370 6260



MEHUL AGARWAL,

coal trader and senior manager for asset development, Noble Group

- » 6AM: Start at Victoria Memorial, a pristine white marble monument; it houses art that tells the story of colonial India. Amid its lush garden, have a warm cup of lebu cha (lemon tea) from the many hawkers just outside. 1, Queens Way Kolkata, West Bengal 700071, India. Tel: +91 33 2223 1890
- » 8AM: For the quintessential Kolkata breakfast, the steps of the iconic Calcutta Stock Exchange are teeming with peddlers selling everything from masala chai to thick toasts slathered in sugar and malai (milk cream). The location is primed for viewing pre-independence British architecture, including the red-hued Writer's Building and General Post Office. 7, Lyons Range, Kolkata, West Bengal 700001, India.
- » 11AM: Check out Peter Cat for their legendary *chelo* kebabs. This Indo-Persian dish feature heaping portions of buttered rice, fried egg and grilled tomatoes, topped with succulent chicken or mutton kebabs. No. 18A, Park Street, Kolkata, West Bengal 700016, India. Tel: +91 33 2229 8841
- » 1PM: Along Elgin Road is Netaji Bhawan, the ancestral home of Bengali nationalist, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. Tour through the memorial hall's library and museum before heading over to Kewpie for a traditional Bengali pre-plated meal of home-style curries served with ghee rice, fried bread, chutneys, pickles and dessert. 38/2, Lala Lajpat Rai (Elgin) Sarani, Kolkata, West Bengal 700020, India. Tel: +91 33 2486 8139
- » 4PM: Take in the serenity of Hooghly River with a walk. Begin at Prinsep Ghat, a riverside monument built in the memory of Anglo-Indian scholar, James Prinsep, to get a vista view of the Howrah Bridge and Vidyasagar Setu. Fort William, Hastings, Kolkata, West Bengal 700021, India.
- » 7PM: Tangra, Kolkata's Chinatown, is my pick for dinner. Once home to tanneries owned by Hakka Chinese, the food combines the best of both worlds; fried snacks, fiery noodles and umami-laden meats soaked in gravy. Tangra, Kolkata, West Bengal, India.
- » 10PM: Complete the trip with a nightcap at Someplace Else, The Park Hotel, where local rock bands sing in both Hindi and Bengali. 17 Park Street, Kolkata, West Bengal 700016, India. Tel: +91 33 4004 9000

GLOBETROTTING EPICURE Indonesia



Sundara at Four Seasons Resort Bali at Jimbaran Bay celebrates Chinese New Year with aplomb. Throughout February, loungers and party-goers can enjoy vodka-based Gou Nian crafted in jugs (Rp488,000). Special dishes will be added to the menu including the fivespice chicken salad with orange mint dressing (Rp195,000), steamed spotted grouper fillet (Rp295,000), and chargrilled 200 days grain fed Stockyard ribeye (Rp350,000). Desserts include black sesame infused chocolate with cardamom ice cream (Rp95,000), and lemon yuzu semifreddo (Rp95,000). The feasting continues on Valentine's Day itself; complete your romantic meal with a decadent Valrhona chocolate fountain with sparkling Rosé for two (Rp988,000/ set). Jimbaran, Kuta Selatan, Bali 80361. Tel: +62 361 701 010





welcomes its new director of culinary, Richard Bias.
With over 20 years of F&B experience, including high profile stints at Anton
Mosimann's private club in Belgravia, Nobu, Bread
Street Kitchen in Dubai, and The Chedi Muscat in
Oman, Bias looks set to

enhance W Bali's F&B offerings in a significant way. Starting this month, guests can order from several new à la carte menus, such as the Batik Lobster Wonton with oxtail, mushroom and red wine shallots (Rp100,000) and Caramelised Pork Belly with sunflower seed risotto crème fraiche and charred onions (Rp95,000). The resort will continue to champion local farmers and producers, including the makers of POD chocolate and Tokusen beef. Bias is also looking to collaborate with raw chocolate producers to launch a series of raw chocolate items as part of the resort's revamp of the Mad T Party afternoon tea. *Jl. Petitenget, Kerobokan Kelod, Seminyak, Bali 80361.*

Tel: +62 361 300 0106

Nestled within the tranquil setting of West Bali National Park is a stunning sanctuary called **Plataran Menjangan Resort & Spa.** Guests can take their pick of traditional Joglo villas at this unique eco retreat, whether it's a nature facing accommodation or one that's right by the ocean. For couples, families, nature and adventure lovers alike, the resort offers an enchanting experience with Bali's untamed wilderness. Room packages include a 3D/2N Couple Retreat (Rp14,525,000), a 4D/3N Wellness Escape for two (Rp15,700,000), and a 4D/3N experience at the two-bedroom Forest Villa for two adults and two children (Rp26,600,000). The latter includes a



bird-watching and safari picnic lunch, a guided trip of Menjangan Island with snorkelling activities and a beach picnic lunch. West Bali National Park, JI. Raya Seririt, Gilimanuk, Singaraja, Bali 81155. Tel: +62 361 844 6012



Fresh from a mini interior upgrade which saw the restaurant sporting a repainted black ceiling and additional lighting for a brighter dining environment, Golden Lotus Chinese Restaurant in Bali Dynasty Resort is ready to welcome its guests for the Chinese New

Year season. Be sure to order the classic Yee Sang (yu sheng) and toss the salad for good luck. The salad's sweet and sour flavour combination comes courtesy of ingredients like thinly sliced carrots, shredded yam, pickles, white sesame, chopped peanuts, mandarin orange leaves, spring onions, sweet potatoes, salmon fish fillet, all drizzled with Golden Lotus special sauce. It's available as part of the Chinese New Year set menu called Hong Wan Salmon Yee Sang (Rp278,000), which serves Yee Sang salad, chicken, duck and prawn dishes, friend rice, soups and delicious mango pudding. On 16 and 17 February, the restaurant will feature a Barongsai and Chinese martial arts show to entertain diners. *Jl. Kartika Plaza, Kuta, Bali 80361. Tel: +62 361 752 403*





The latest culinary offering from The Ritz-Carlton Jakarta, Pacific Place is named after a Sanskrit word that means passion, perseverance, wealth, beginning and victory. Formerly known as Pacific Restaurant and Lounge, PASOLA is now the hotel's all-day buffet dining venue offering a progressive combination of Indonesian and international cuisines on. Look out for dishes such as Rendang Arancini, Barramundi Dabu-dabu, and Oxtail Soup. The buffet is available at Rp361,000 for lunch and dinner. Sudirman Central Business District (SCBD), Jl. Jendral Sudirman Kav. 52-53, RT.5/RW.3, Senayan, Kebayoran Baru, South Jakarta City, Jakarta 12190, Indonesia. Tel: +62 21 2550 1888





In collaboration with Altitude Grill,
The Macallan concluded the final
part of their Masters Series Dinner
last December on an impressive note,
with a superb five-course degustation
menu paired with selected blends.
Highlights of the dinner included a
Smoked Duck Salad appetiser served

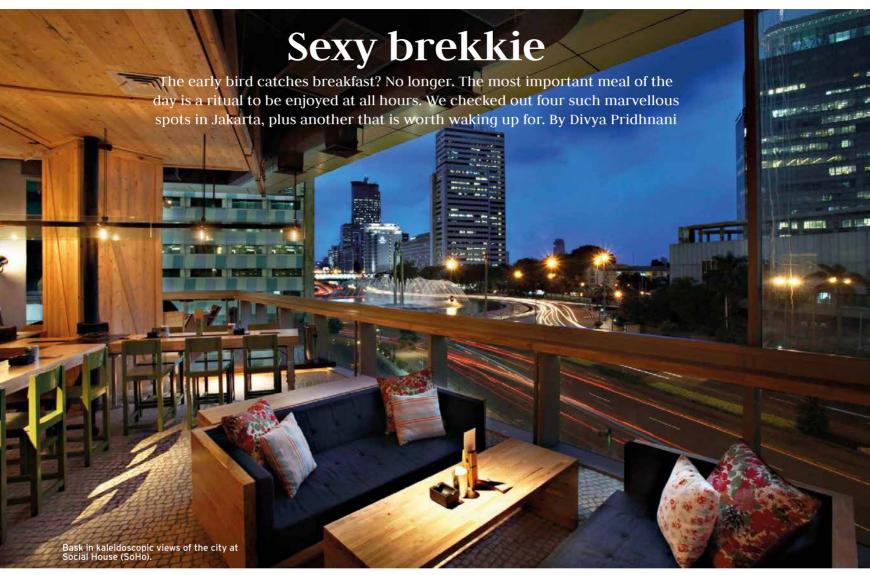
with prunes, cranberries, orange balsamic dressing, which was paired with The Macallan Edition No.1, and the star of the evening: Sher F1 Wagyu MBS 7+, aged in The Macallan 12 Year Old for 21 days, served with chipotle onions and grana whipped spuds, and paired with The Macallan Reflexion. Whisky fans can look out for more highlights of The Macallan Masters Series Dinners this year. *More info at edrington.com.*



If you want to soak up the festive atmosphere, head to ShangriLa Hotel, Jakarta – it will welcome lion and dragon dancers to its

If you want to soak up the festive atmosphere, head to Shangri-La Hotel, Jakarta – it will welcome lion and dragon dancers to its hotel on Chinese New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. The hotel will also be launching red and gold hampers in various sizes and other goodies. From 1 to 15 February, Jia restaurant, which celebrated its first birthday in January, will roll out a selection of traditional Chinese New Year menus (prices unavailable) crafted by Chinese executive chef Christopher Chai. This year's offerings include Salmon Yee Sang, Eight-Treasure Pot, Suckling Pig and Deep-Fried King Prawn with Golden Pumpkin Sauce. For those celebrating Chinese New Year at home, Jia offers an assortment of delicacies for takeaway. *Kota BNI, Jl. Jenderal Sudirman Kav.1, Jakarta 10220.*

Tel: +62 21 2922 9999



all it the rise of 'breakfastarians', but the trend for a dining tribe that craves breakfast-style meals any time of the day is thriving in Jakarta. With such fast and constant growing demand, the metropolitan city is now rich with eateries serving morning meals till late in the night.

While the idea of a conventional 'brekkie' usually involves a combination of bread, eggs, bacon and sausages – accompanied with an all-too essential cup of tea or coffee – breakfast in Jakarta ranges from American classics to Asian delights and each restaurant's own delectable signatures. Adding to the experience is the atmosphere that some of these places have to offer, whether it's a view of the metropolitan city or a picnic-like setting.

The one with all the classics

Where: Social House (SoHo)

Why: Located at one of South-East Asia's largest and most

prominent malls – Grand Indonesia – SoHo is divided into three main zones – the dining area, lounge area, and an open-air terrace bar offering alluring views. The interior design exudes an industrial-chic feel with its extensive use of blonde timbers, glass, steel and raw concrete material. An open shelving display of the WinePost features a fine selection of over 300 wine labels from around the world.

What to eat: SoHo offers an international breakfast menu till late afternoon during weekdays and all day during weekends. Enjoy classics such as eggs benedict, Spanish omelette, truffle scrambled eggs, NY bagel with smoked salmon and cream cheese, pulled pork on English muffin as well as signatures like Wagyu beef brisket hash, *shakshuka* beef or pork sausages, and crispy pork belly Chinese fried rice. For the sweet-toothed, opt for blueberry chia pancakes and red velvet waffles.

Breakfast time: Mondays to Fridays: 8am to 3pm; Saturday,



welcomes guests with blooming



colours and a trendy, artistic interior. Like the hotel, the cosy restaurant is inspired by fine arts, sculpture and photography, and features original works of local Indonesian contemporary artists. For one, RoCA's ceiling is an artistic reflection of Indonesian-born Eddie Hara's personality - playful, colourful, chic and funky - with its kaleidoscopic, graffiti-like and intricate designs.

The jazzy and creative space is bright and buzzing through out the day, but turns serene and cosy as the city goes to sleep. Great for those looking to grab a delicious, hearty meal.

What to eat: Start the day with the classic scrambled eggs with an added touch of truffle essence, or egg florentine. Choose their signature smoked salmon avocado salad with quail egg as well as chicken tostada salad, a crispy tortilla stuffed with grilled chicken, shredded Jack cheese, quacamole, sour cream and coriander dressing. Health-conscious individuals can pick from a range of vegetable and fruit juices - namely Hospital Hater, Art Doctor and Muscle Up - to accompany their meal.

Breakfast time: Open 24 hours, daily

\$\$\$: Rp150,000 average cost/person (excluding alcoholic beverages)

RoCA ARTOTEL Thamrin Jakarta, Jalan Sunda No. 3, Jakarta Pusat 10350. Tel: +62 21 3192 5888

100% Asian brunch

Why: This 'farm-to-table' restaurant harvests its ingredients from its own hydroponic farm, located in a small town an hour away from the capital, Ciawi.

GIOI is nestled in one of Jakarta's prime dining hubs, Senopati. Its wooden façade resembles a cosy home. Rows of Indonesian tampah bambu or round bamboo trays adorn the walls as an eye-catching backdrop, while springy rattan cushion chairs are spaced across the restaurant. The use of wooden panelling

Where: GIOI Cookery & Plantery



adds a rustic touch, together with hanging winnows on the wall, hydroponic greens, and natural light from a partial skylight. It's an invigorating spot to enjoy your first meal of the day.

What to eat: You won't find conventional brunch dishes, as GIOI focuses on spice-rich Asian fare. Some of their brunch-worthy creations are Gioi's Crispy Duck; a Balinese inspired dish with duck marinated overnight, on a bed of jasmine rice tossed in herbs and topped with stir-fried snake bean, chicken and three kinds of homemade sambals; *matah*, *uleg* and *panestanan*; Salmon Lodeh, an elevated traditional dish of thick vegetable stew, rich in herbs and spices that uses crispy skin salmon instead of mackerel; and crispy pork belly topped with *rujak* or traditional sweet, spicy and sour fruit salad.

Breakfast time: 10am to 10pm, daily \$\$\$: Rp250,000 average cost/person Jalan Senopati No. 88, Kebayoran Baru, Jakarta Selatan. Tel: +62 21 721 1468/721 1480

For coffee and picnic enthusiasts

Where: Gordi HQ

Why: Gordi HQ – the first coffee subscription in Indonesia, established in 2015 – has recently extended its service to a café in the quiet side of South Jakarta, Cilandak.

It is easy to find the humble two-story building with its glass house veneer and wall panelling in calming colours of blue, grey and white. Walk into the café and you'll find a homey, living room-esque lounge space, completed with hanging plants and comfortable couches. Here, customers can feel a great sense of openness and



escapism from the capital's busy street, especially at its green backyard. The backyard is decked with short wooden tables, where guests can enjoy their very own intimate brunch picnic and while the day away.

What to eat: You won't go wrong with a combo of good ol' melted grilled cheese (multigrain loaf toasted with two types of cheese smeared with homemade bechamel sauce); salted egg chicken fingers (hand-battered chicken fingers with salted egg aioli dip); hand-cut fries, assorted croissants; and Gordi's cookies, which can all be found in their Sweet and Savory Picnic Set (Rp120,000) or Scrumptious Picnic Set (Rp170,000). Other signature options include Home Gyudon (warm rice with thin slices of beef with sous vide egg and completed with a beef broth); a muesli bowl; and Mexican baked rice (warm rice with chilli con carne, pan-seared herb-marinated chicken thigh, melted cheese and salsa).

Naturally, Gordi HQ is also a haven for coffee enthusiasts. There are two options (that are rotated bi-weekly): manual brew (when the extraction of coffee is slowed through a filtered drip and the water, temperature, grind and coffee ratio are decided by the brewer), or milk-based coffee (manually-brewed or espresso coffee that are made with milk as a main ingredient such as cappucino, latte, flat white and more). Gordi HQ chooses its coffee blends from different coffee roasters in Indonesia and beyond.

Breakfast time: 7.30am to 9pm, daily \$\$\$: Rp100,000 average cost/person

Jl. Jeruk Purut Dalam No. 25, Jakarta Selatan. Tel: +62 21 2278 5171



FOR THE EARLY BIRDS



Where to go: Hours

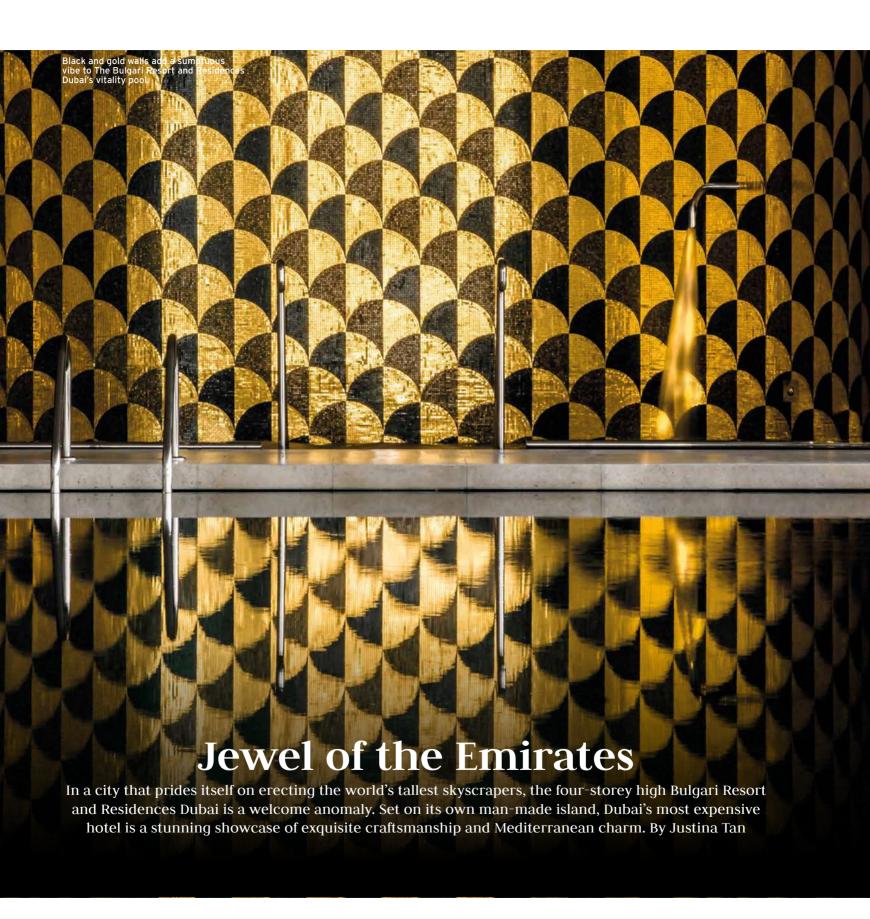
Why here: Nestled in the lobby of an office building, surrounded by the bustling streets of Kelapa Gading in North Jakarta is Hours, an F&B newcomer that opened late last year. The restaurant is always buzzing with energetic chatter from the ever-flowing crowd of working professionals and couples.

Art fills the space. A vintage car is placed at the entrance of the establishment, while the La Marzocio coffee machine design is inspired by Jo Malone, a British perfumer and one of the owner's favourite icons.

What to eat: You can sit and while the day away, but Hours only serves breakfast at the traditional timing. Early birds should drop by before noon to enjoy a range of sweet and savoury breakfast dishes such as egg on cloud with sausages and mushrooms or frittata (Spanish potato omelette) as well as the popular brioche French toast served with either banana and salted caramel sauce or jackfruit and kaya sauce. Hours is also known for its chia seeds pudding and açaí bowl, though their to-die-for salted caramel latte can ruin diet plans.

Breakfast time: 8am to 10pm \$\$\$: Rp100,000 average cost/person Hours, Jalan Boulevard Bukit Gading Raya No.1, Kelapa Gading, Jakarta Utara.

Tel: +62 21 4585 8134



ith its hot desert climate, ultra-modern mega malls and space-age architecture, Dubai may come across as intimidating and a tad soulless. However, the emergence of The Bulgari Resort and Residences Dubai just two months ago has transformed the emirate's futuristic landscape with its upscale Mediterranean village aesthetic.

Since 2004, the Italian jewellery and luxury goods brand has been flexing its architectural and interior design muscle with sumptuous five-star hotels bearing the Bulgari name in major cities like Milan, London, Bali, Beijing – and now Dubai. All five projects were conceptualised and brought to fruition by renowned Milan-based architectural firm Antonio Citterio Patricia Viel and Partners, which counts Valentino, Ermenegildo Zegna and Alain Ducasse among its clients.

Mediterranean in the Middle East

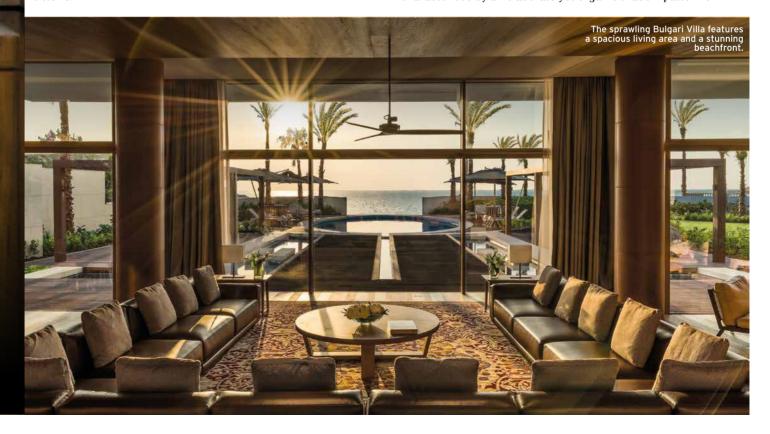
Staying true to the DNA of Bulgari's properties, The Bulgari Resort and Residences Dubai features the bold, contemporary Italian style that's synonymous with the brand, but the design of the interiors is rooted in the traditions and culture of the locale. "The overall design merges inspiration from southern Italy and Roman architecture with the colour palette and elements of a Middle Eastern desert landscape," shares architect-designer Antonio Citterio.

Located on Jumeirah Bay – a seahorse-shaped man-made island – and connected to central Dubai via a 300m bridge, Bulgari's latest property sits on 13 hectares of land and includes a resort with 101 guestrooms and 20 villas, six residential buildings housing 173 ocean-facing apartments, 15 private mansions, a beach club, a 18,300 sq ft spa and Bulgari's first-ever yacht marina, which is inspired by Italy's marinas. It's the first-of-its-kind development in scale and magnitude for the brand.

Showcasing the same level of expertise and fine craftsmanship as a Bulgari *bijou*, Citterio and Viel are generous with the use of rare or precious materials, which they picked according to their colour, texture and feel: green onyx from Iran for the spa's reception desk, Mongolian black granite for the floors of public areas, real gold in the swimming pool, and the finest marble from Italy, Turkey and Brazil throughout the property.

"The sheer amount of detail that goes into each resort is exemplified in the exquisitely unique cuts of marble used as structures and decoration throughout the resort. During its construction we travelled extensively with artisans and suppliers to research and hand-select singular marble slabs at quarries, coming both from Italy and every part of the world," says architect-designer Patricia Viel.

The facades of the hotel's two main buildings are characterised by an elaborate yet organic shadow pattern of



coral-like sunscreens. "Created on the overlay of horizontal lines, the building facade is defined by coral-like *brise soleils* (sunscreens) or matte white lacquered steel parapets. In addition to serving their function in providing shade from the hot sun, the sunscreens also reference shading techniques in the Middle East," explains Viel.

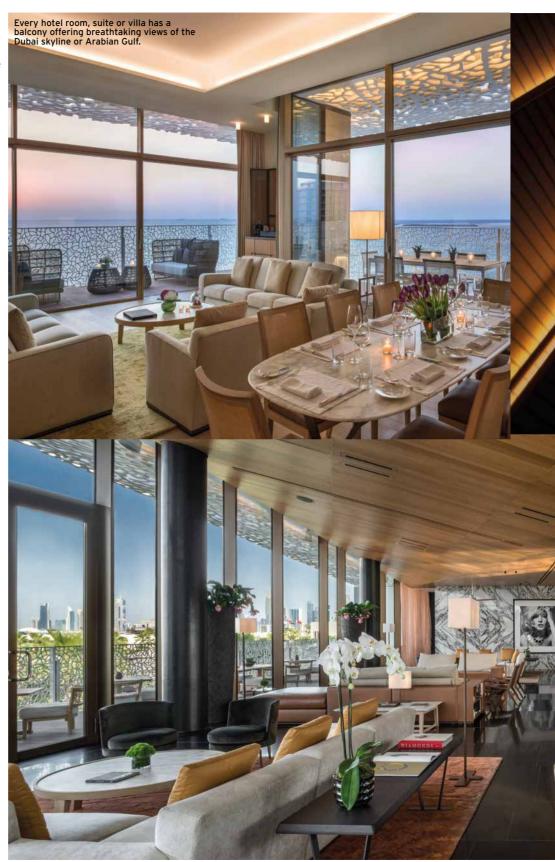
Outdoors, native and imported plants, such as palms, olive, lemon and Australian baobab trees, rosemary bushes and flowers wind throughout the property to evoke a Mediterranean garden in the middle of the sea. Home to a resident array of birds and wildlife, La Limonaia (the lemon tree garden) brings to mind a quaint Roman garden, framed by the marble of the resort and offering impressive views of Dubai's skyline.

Impeccably detailed

Although all the rooms and suites in The Bulgari Resort and Residences Dubai boast magnificent vistas of the city's skyline or the Arabian Gulf, the Bulgari villas, which are situated on the shoreline, are in a league of their own. The 5,813 sq ft Bulgari Villa features a spacious living area, a sunken bathtub, a stunning beachfront, and a private lush garden with a large outdoor swimming pool.

As can be expected of any Bulgari property – particularly one that has been crowned Dubai's most expensive hotel – the interiors are decked with premium furnishings such as fine Italian furniture from brands like Maxalto, Flos, Flexform and B&B Italia, a vintage trunk-style minibar, and cashmere blankets. Warm polished woods, rare marble and exquisite textiles provide the finishing touches.

Throughout the property, the custom-design 'Maglia Pantheon' mesh pattern is repeatedly used, as it is a part of the architectural tradition of Baroque Rome – a source of inspiration for Bulgari. The pattern features intricate bronze lattice-work, as well as Bulgari's eight-pointed star motif which first appeared as an inlay in the vestibule of Bulgari's flagship Via dei Condotti boutique. The eight-pointed star, inspired by the Campidoglio floor in Rome, takes prides of place





Dazzling beauties

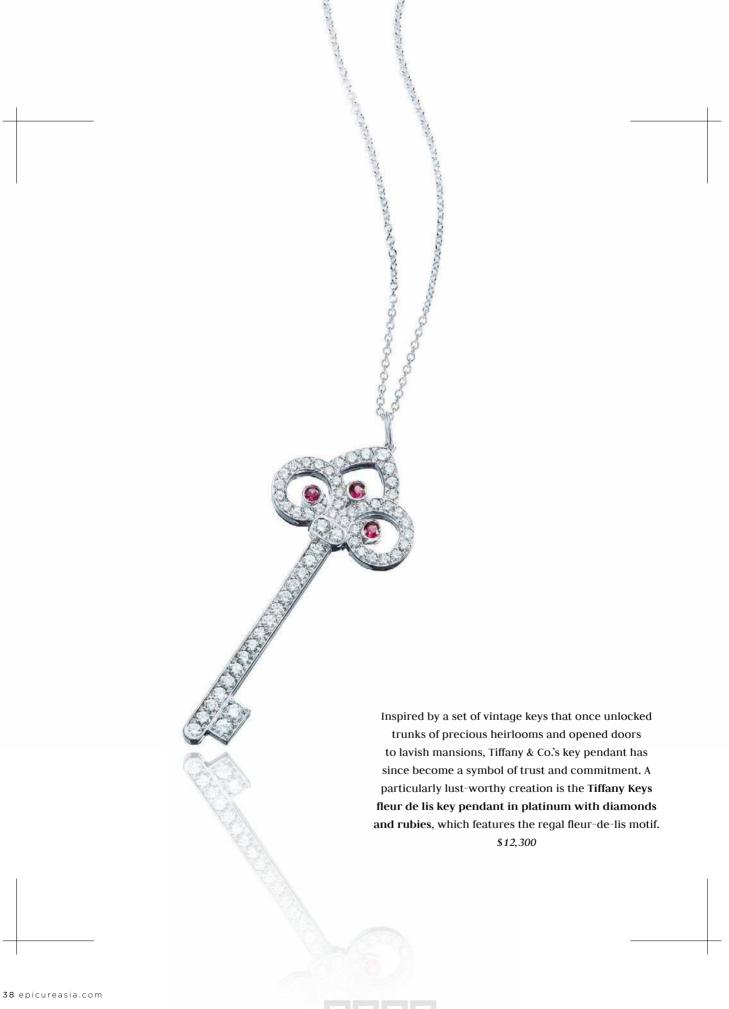
Whether as a sentimental love token or a pretty adornment for a Valentine's Day date, these exquisite jewellery pieces make timeless keepsakes that are as versatile as they are romantic. By Justina Tan



Although forged with vibrant red lacquered ceramic to commemorate the Lunar New Year, Dior's Rose des vent's Nouvel an chinois 2018 earrings are delicate yet striking enough to accentuate a dainty ensemble. A twist of grains frames the medallion, which incorporates a diamond at the heart of an 18K pink gold wind rose. *Price upon request*.

One of Bulgari's most iconic and well-loved jewellery designs, the somewhat masculine B.Zero1 – crafted to resemble Rome's majestic Colosseum – was groundbreaking when it made its debut in 1999. Fast-forward almost two decades and the unconventional ring has been reinvented to embody individualism and self-expression. The B.Zero1 Labyrinth four-band ring in white and pink gold with pavé diamonds daringly infuses a new layer while rose and white gold meld together to form a mesmerising labyrinth. \$9,680





Nothing is as unabashedly romantic as hearts – a key emblem for the aptly named Happy Hearts collection, one of Chopard's main Valentine's Day launches. Display your affection for a significant other with the adorable **Happy Hearts Ring**, which features an enviable bouquet of powder pink stone rose hearts surrounding just one that frames the brand's signature moving diamond. \$9,540





sk any Parisian about Bertrand Grébaut, and you'd hear high praises of the former graphicdesigner-turned-culinary-trendsetter challenging the status quo of the restaurant industry. His neo-bistro, the one Michelin-starred Septime located in the 11th arrondissement of Paris, has not only garnered international acclaim for straightforward, produce-centric haute cuisine, but also earned bragging rights as the most sustainable restaurant of The World's 50 Best Restaurants list in 2017. He is leading a revolution from his humble kitchen by reinventing what it means to dine and wine in style in Paris while

disregarding age-old kitchen hierarchies. Best of all, he proves Michelin-grade fare doesn't have to come with a hefty price tag.

These accolades are remarkable, considering that he started his culinary path at a later age. He tossed his graphics design degree aside to enroll at Europe's leading culinary institute, École Grégoire-Ferrandi. After taking a few slaps at Marius et Jeannette and La Table de Joël Robuchon, he found himself at Alain Passard's L'Arpège. There, everything fell into place. Passard's poetic, intuitive style of cooking struck a chord with the budding chef. Slowly

Defining a new era

Sustainable haute cuisine without cutthroat prices? Bertrand Grébaut is reinventing what it means to dine in Paris. Jessica Chan finds out how.



but surely, he constructed his own culinary vision behind the distinguished kitchen as head chef of Passard's L'Agapé, earning his first Michelin star at 26.

Carrying on Passard's teaching, Septime debuted in 2011 with his business partner Théo Pourriat. Rather than the hushed, polished calm of a fine dining establishment, he introduces artfully distressed paintwork and large industrial mirrors while surrounding diners with rock music. Instead of an exaggerated presentation of numerous elements on one single plate, he and his talented team stick to a simple menu, listing three ingredients per course. The restaurant filters their own water to be served in old wine bottles, adding a décor element that is both pragmatic and pleasing on the eyes. It's unpretentious, and allows the building blocks of a dish to shine – 99 percent of which are grown in France. All these are within reach even to a curious student dipping into his savings. Of course, it hasn't stopped music legends, Jay-Z and Beyoncé, from dining there.

The same principles carry over to the nearby Septime La Cave, a wine bar focusing on organic wines, and the oyster bar, Clamato. For the former, he doesn't just buy the wines from producers. He owns a 2.5 acre biodynamic vineyard in Saint-Emillion and supports those hit by the wills of nature (frost and droughts) through the Vendanges Solidaires scheme. His trifecta of transcendent dining in the more relaxed neighbourhood follows the aim to allow everyone from all walks of life to enjoy his culinary creations all while giving

back to the environment. What's not to love?

You have a background in literature and graphics design. What led you into the kitchens of L'Arpège and, now, Septime?

I was very much into graffiti as a kid which is why I pursued a degree in graphics design. It was done without any real enthusiasm and my job became more of an accessory. It forced me to examine what I wanted, what my passion was. All I thought about constantly was "what will I eat" or "what will I cook". However, I didn't choose this path brashly. I had a clear vision of what I wanted to be as a chef, guided by my (obvious) love for food. My background did help sharpen my attention to the aesthetic of a dish, from its colour to texture.

You said your internship at L'Arpège led to your own culinary vision. How has your mentor, Alain Passard, influenced your take on food?

My mentor was the first who spoke to me about balance, sensibility and introduced me to a more instinctive style of cooking. His clear focus on vegetables is inspiring and

has shown me how it presents an open playground for the kitchen's boundless creativity – more so than meats. What sweetens the deal is how cooking with vegetables has allowed me to fully express the personality of my cuisine.

Did Passard's shocking move to remove red meat and focus on organically grown produce have an impact on you?

While I do occasionally indulge in red meat, I am aware of the overwhelming carbon footprint involved. We followed suit at Septime and subsequently reduced our red meat consumption as well. When we do serve meat in the restaurant, we buy the entire animal. The flesh will be used seasonally, while unconventional cuts are served as terrines, or in broths or staff meals.

What inspired the informal style of Septime?

The idea came from addressing an ever-growing demand for novel and creative fine plates, served at affordable prices. Theo and I wanted to break the codes of classic, expensive west Parisian restaurants and attract an open-minded clientele from all different walks of life. Hence, Septime, a place that reflects us and our generation, was born.

How did it feel to win the Sustainable Restaurant Award in 2017? Ever since my time at L'Arpège, sustainability has been part of my vision. Over the years and leading up to Septime, it became even more apparent. It became our focal point. Winning the award was gratifying as it highlighted all the tremendous work we were doing behind the scenes. It was a proud moment for me and my team.

You also work with local producers to ensure the survival of ancient varieties. Tell us more.

When available, we do use ancient varieties to ensure they are not lost. Right now, we are working with two

bakers who use ancient wheats and 100 percent natural yeast. There is also our seasonal tomatoes sprouted from ancient varieties of seeds, which have adapted to their terroir. We don't grow them for vanity's sake; these produce carry the exact taste we are looking for. This encourages curiosity in our diners, allowing them to take their time to learn about them by enjoying our dishes. Of course, we are not the only ones using them, but we hope more chefs and restaurants will follow in our footsteps.

Your thoughts on urban farming?

While I believe terroir has an important role in how the produce will turn out, urban farming should still be encouraged. In an ideal world, every city would have agricultural farms and innercities would be green. At the end of the day, however, the lack of terroir in a populated city makes it difficult for producers to provide for a restaurant.

Your menu changes depending on the markets. What goes into its planning?

It changes when an unexpected ingredient becomes available, but we do switch it up weekly or every 10 days. We try to anticipate seasons and quantities weeks before with our suppliers to ensure a coherent menu, much helped by our great, ongoing working relationships. There would always be one seafood element, one meat and six vegetables. You won't see a chef's signature here. The menu is constantly evolving, depending on what turns up in the kitchen. I try to do something unique for a cuisine that's telling of my generation.



What's next for Septime?

For now, we want to put our focus on the regularity of our menus and comfort of our staff. We have just moved into a brand-new office space, which includes a test kitchen.

A favourite natural wine?

At this moment, it would be white wines from Jura, a region sandwiched between Burgundy and Switzerland. It carries a freshness and minerality that I am fond of. Natural wines have existed for at least the last 30 years, and have been popular in Paris for the last decade. Our diners, including those at Septime La Cave, have been responding well to them.

Chefs focusing on sustainability are on the rise. Who would you want to work with?

Jorge Vallejo, who focuses on modern Mexican cooking with an emphasis on greens over at Quintonil, Mexico. I have trouble finding time to, but I would also like to collaborate with my friend, Nicolai Nørregaard. He helms Kadeau, which serves new Nordic cuisine using foraged ingredients that are then pickled, cured, fermented or smoked. I find his style of cooking memorable and precise.

Where can we find you winding down after work?

Le Servan, a Parisian bistrot where my companion Tatiana Levha (formerly from L'Arpège and L'Astrance) works. It serves French cuisine with an Asian touch, in a comforting and welcoming space. You'd want to eat here every day. **e**



Double goodness

Aged in two types of casks, The Macallan Double Cask is the latest aged statement from the Scotch whisky specialist.

When it comes to expressing the brand's signature style, The Macallan Double Cask 12 Years Old is a well-rounded choice. The respected Scotch distillery takes new, non-bourbon American oak and fills it with sherry for an undisclosed period of time. The whisky is then aged in the cask for at least 12 years. Thereafter, it's married with the whisky aged in European oak sherry casks before it's bottled at 43% ABV, making this sherry-

aged whisky a truly distinctive product.

Having been matured in traditional American wood and sherry cask, the whisky boasts a nose of sharp orange peel and understated caramel notes. Once this golden liquid reaches the palate, it exudes a complex array of flavours from fruit jam and orange blossom honey to caramelised banana.

The Macallan Double Cask 12 Years Old offers a medium to lengthy finish that's soothing and gentle, with more of woody vanilla notes that eventually fades into nut butter and marshmallow. There are also hints of leather and black pepper to add an extra dimension to an otherwise lithe and supple body. A great balance from start to finish, enjoy it with a few drops of clear water for a mellower experience. The aroma is toned down while bringing out a pleasant vanilla buttercream note.

For more information: themacallan.com facebook.com/themacallan.id

FPICURE REVIEWS

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CASA PONCHO

TONO Cevicheria, Super Loco and boCHINche aside, there's a dearth of good Latin American restaurants in Singapore. Our curiosity was piqued when Casa Poncho quietly launched on Bukit Pasoh Road last December. Opened by the trio behind 13% Gastro Wine - Geoffrey Weckx, Gregory Marchand and Bruno Vaillant - the cheerfully decked out joint is a breath of fresh air when compared to the minimalist and modern interiors of most new restaurants.

The concept centres around a Latin American man named Poncho and his love for food, drinks, music, fun and friends. Fittingly, the space is decorated with vibrant Mexican masks, a motorcycle, and Catrina skulls associated with the Day of the Dead. Each of the restaurant's four spaces has a different mood - the buzzy bar, cosy dining room, leafy courtyard, and our

favourite - the outdoor garden with a mural of cacti and pineapples.

The three owners produce and distribute their own brand of mezcal, Mezcal Machetazo, which features in a few tipples from the drinks menu. We found a few cocktails (all \$18) were on the sweet side - the El Verde Geo of Mezcal Machetazo Blanco with homemade spiced basil syrup showcased the minty sweetness of the herb but overdosed on agave syrup, while the Poncho's Favorito of Tequila Reposado, Dry Curaçao and Aperol reminded us of fruit punch served at a party. The Mezcal Sour with Mezcal Bruxo Blanco's tartness drowned out the other nuances. With Tequila Blanco, dark rum, spiced basil syrup, ginger ale, cranberry and bitters, the Licor de Oro had too much going on, making it difficult to taste the layers of flavours.

The compact menu is split into three sections:



the hot and cold selections, and desserts. The first benchmark of a Latin American ioint is its ceviche. but we were disappointed by the versions available at Casa Poncho. The chilled grilled octopus of the Ceviche El Manotas (\$18) was overcooked, and thus chewy, while the marinade

lacked the punch and balance of a good Tiger's Milk. The El Atún (\$18) fared a little better with its tasty and textural mix of Nikkeistyle marinated tuna, crispy Peruvian corn, avocado, onions and lime, but still fell short of the real deal.

The Guacam...Ole! (\$12), mixed with pomegranate seeds and fried shallots, was a more satisfying starter, though we wished it came with more baked tortilla chips. Skip the Huevos de Poncho (\$10), a baked egg omelette similar to Japan's *tamagoyaki*. The omelette had mozzarella cheese and charbroiled capsicum, but they were barely discernible.

From the hot selection, the Pulpo Ranchero's (\$18) grilled octopus was again overcooked and stringy, with a toowatery salsa ranchera. The Chilorio de Cerdo con Espárragos (\$18) of pulled pork, asparagus and refried bean purée was similarly lacklustre with its dry, flat-flavoured meat. One of the heavier dishes on the menu, the Lomito al Carbón (\$30) of charbroiled Argentinian beef tenderloin, was lean but succulent. Surprisingly, the best dish of our meal was the Burrito Love Affair (\$15), which oozed with the juices of roasted chicken and beef, wonderfully contrasted with onions, chipotle chilli salsa and sour cream.

Wobbly but still firm, the Poncho's Flan (\$14) dessert was enjoyably light and tangy, with a crumble and cubes of mango, strawberries and blueberries on the side. The Churros (\$8), however, were deceiving – perfectly crisp on the outside but overly doughy and undercooked on the inside.

The owners have certainly invested a lot of effort into creating

an authentically designed restaurant. It's a pity that the food and cocktails barely pass muster. EUNICE LEW

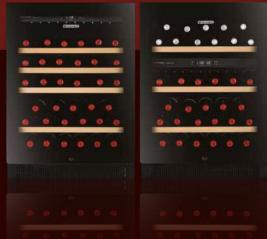


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Desire

Glass with class

Can your choice of glassware actually make you a better wine drinker? Luxury Asian stemware maker Lucaris is on a mission to prove so. June Lee reports from Hong Kong.



arely three months after 29-year-old Sarah Heller became the world's youngest Master of Wine in 2017, Lucaris swooped in to collaborate with the Hong Kong-based wine consultant to design a range of glasses. The news was shared to a group of journalists who were flown to Hong Kong for a glass masterclass with Heller last December. The collection is expected to be out in 2019.

Empowering a new generation of drinkers of Heller's age range is entirely consistent with the brand's promise to be the crystal of modern Asia and beyond. As Heller notes, there is much untapped wine lover potential in China and India alone. "If 2.5 billion people bought just one wine glass each, imagine how fast the centre would shift to Asia," she remarks. Executive director of Ocean Glass (Lucaris' parent company), Uday Verma, chimes in, "Without a proper glass, wine is just another beverage." Launched in 2009, Lucaris has had a meteoric rise, and is on track to achieve its goal of 10 million pieces sold by 2019.

MASTERING THE CURVES

We would soon find out for ourselves whether we agreed on what wine tastes like when poured into different vessels. Heller aptly dubbed our event a "food and wine and wine glass pairing" session, as four wines, three hor d'oeuvres and three glassware collections were prepared for our light-hearted experiment. Under Heller's expert encouragement, the tasting became quite animated as preferences were voiced.

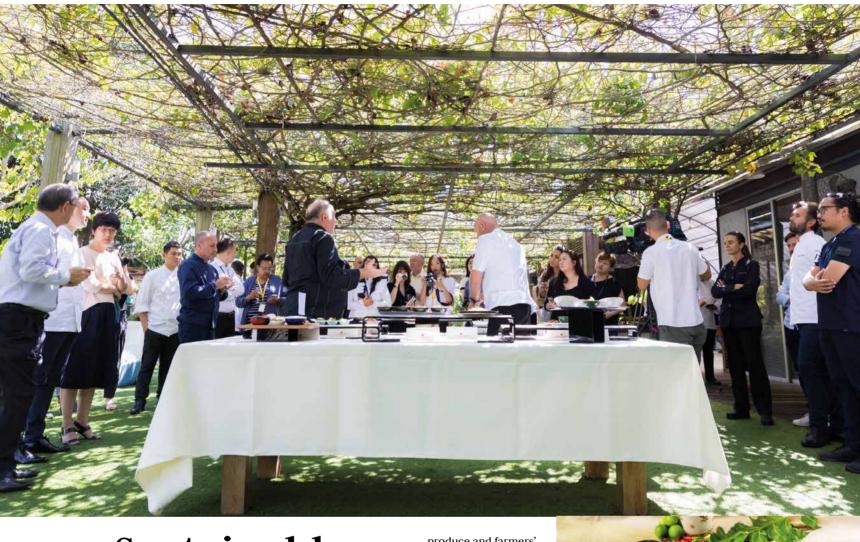
A Sonoma Coast Chardonnay was up first, served in the Chardonnay/rich white glass from the Desire, Hong Kong Hip, and Shanghai Soul collections. In summary, the Desire with its

Aerlumer curl lines brought out the wine's tropical aromas, making it a generous pairing with the accompanying spring roll. Shanghai Soul's slimmer bowl and extended height brought out heavier flavours, and Hong Kong Hip's angular lines demonstrated the best "contrast pairing", with more acidity, texture and grip coming across that went well with a salty, fried dish.

The second wine, a Nero d'Avola paired with a crispy slice of barbecued suckling pig, prompted the question: can acidity really be 'brought out' by the glass? It seemed possible, as again, Hong Kong Hip's Burgundy glass drew cleaner, brighter flavours from the wine. Heller explained that acidity is felt on the sides of the tongue, so a wider rim assists in this respect. The Shanghai Soul's Burgundy glass, however, surprised by seemingly showing the wine's soft, rounded characteristics, which both Heller and I preferred over the other two in this instance. As a bonus, it was also the best pairing with the sweetness of the sauce on the dish.

For those keen to experience the difference themselves, Heller will be hosting a series of classes throughout select Asian cities in 2018. "Glassware really is the final part of wine-making that started with the grape and ends in your glass in front of you. More than ever, stemware is a tool to express wine's different characteristics," she concludes.

Casting its net even further, Lucaris also partnered with The Hotelier Awards 2017 in Macau as its official glassware brand, joining top marques such as BMW and Pernod Ricard in celebrating Asia's finest hotels and resorts. Notes co-founder of the awards, Benoit Thebaut: glassware enhances hospitality through premium presentation and superior experiences. A range like Hong Kong Hip, for instance, with its long stem, oversized bowls and modern shape, delivers an elevated dining experience. With a rave reception at the event, you may just find Lucaris coming onboard again for the awards when it splits into two editions, with the Southeast Asian segment happening in Singapore on 23 May. **e**



Sustainable cuisine takes to the skies

Singapore Airlines has gone the extra mile in their commitment to employing sustainable practices and using countries' local produce to create their in-flight dishes. Here's how. By Refa Koetin

hese days, every major airline worth its salt has a culinary panel of celebrity chefs to create mile-high menus for in-flight dining. Singapore Airlines (SIA), ever-zealous on delivering the best experience to their passengers, has gone one step further, pledging to promote sustainability and support local

produce and farmers' communities with their new initiative, From Farm to Plane.

To demonstrate how this culinary philosophy is achieved, SIA hosted the World Gourmet Forum (WGF) last October, in collaboration with the



Kranji Countryside Association (KCA), and also brought together its International Culinary Panel (ICP) of eight top toques to present their creations. *epicure* got a first-hand impression of SIA's efforts at this event, as the exclusive F&B magazine from Indonesia.

Held at Gardenasia in the Kranji farming district, one of the highlights of the WGF was the Farmers' Market, where SIA's partnering farms showcased their best produce such as edible



mushrooms from Kin Yan Agrotech and organic vegetables from Bollywood Veggies. Members of the ICP – including chef Carlo Cracco, and chef, vineyard owner cum winemaker Georges Blanc – mingled and shared with guests their dishes that are served on-board SIA, which were on display in the verdant grounds of Gardenasia.

The pursuit of sustainability starts with SIA, through consultations with the ICP, partnering catering companies such as SATS, and exploring what local farmers have to offer. Betty Wong, SIA's divisional vice president for customer experience, said: "We work very closely with local farms, first asking if they cultivate produce that meets the needs of specific creations. Our culinary team then designs meals and recipes, making ingredient adjustments where necessary." The airline's efforts are not limited to Singapore; in-flight meals also feature catch from fisheries certified for their sustainable practices by the Marine Stewardship Council, as well as local farm produce from countries that SIA flies to.

Echoing Wong's sentiment, KCA president Kenny Eng

emphasised that the partnership with SIA is a "big milestone" for both organisations. "It is about time that our local farms are celebrated internationally. And what better way than to offer their produce on one of the world's best airlines? These farmers are the country's pride and joy, just like our national carrier is," he said.

From creation to execution

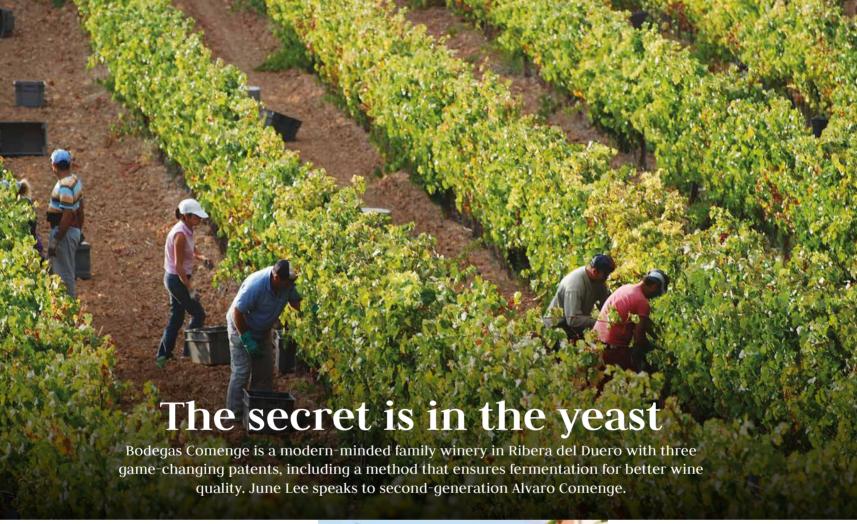
The responsibility of recreating dishes masterfully crafted by the ICP toques, using locally sourced ingredients, rests on the chefs at the SATS Inflight Catering Centre. During a visit to its two massive facilities – housing a workforce of more than 2,000, including a director of kitchens, executive chef and 19 sous chefs – we witnessed how the team, which runs like a well-oiled machine, produces almost 90,000 high-quality and impeccably presented meals a day.

The facilities are immaculate; visitors have to undergo screenings and health inspections, put on lab coats and shower caps, and go through a hallway of sterilising blowers. Inside, huge kitchens with cutting-edge heavy equipment are run by highly trained staff. There are dedicated kitchens for different cuisines, such as cold dishes, pastry, oriental, dim sum, Indian, Japanese, Muslim, premium, Thai/Korean and Western, as well as a MasterChef-style training quarters to prepare flight crew and in-flight chefs on how to serve premium meals to passengers. And it doesn't stop there – there's also room for food labs, an R&D kitchen, and the only Simulated Aircraft Cabin in the world. The latter is a revolutionary facility that is used to test the quality of meals and wines in the same conditions – whether cabin pressure, altitude noise or turbulence – as an aircraft flying at 30,000 ft.

Meals that go above and beyond

SIA's new farm-to-plane menus have been introduced to Suites customers on selected routes since last December and progressively made available to passengers travelling in other classes. Whether travelling in Singapore Airlines Suites, First, Business, Premium Economy or Economy class, they can expect refined fare, courtesy of the World Gourmet Cuisine programme, which started in 1998 when the airline formed a culinary panel of international award-winning chefs.

Complementing this programme is SIA's Book the Cook service, which launched in 2012, and is available to passengers travelling on Premium Economy and upwards. It allows you to enjoy fine dining at 30,000 feet with a wide selection of meals, including classic Western favourites, healthy low-fat and popular Asian dishes, a comprehensive spread of time-honoured fare from Singapore, as well as exclusive creations by the ICP. Dishes can be chosen up to 24 hours before the flight.



lvaro Comenge comes from an illustrious family tree, one that the family has traced back at least five centuries. His grandfather Don Miguel wrote the definitive textbook on Spanish wines in 1942, *La Vid y los Vinos Espanoles* (The Vines and Wines of Spain). His father Jaime, after a distinguished career as a public servant, established Bodegas Comenge in 1999.

In contrast, Alvaro calls himself a laidback guy, and quips, "I told my father that he got the worst salesman." Given the chance, sporty Alvaro would have spent his career with horses,

having competed in his youth and then bred them, owning over 40 horses at one point. He joined the winery full-time in 2003 in a commercial capacity, and today runs it with his father, who's now 78. He's down to four horses as a hobby, but the winery has grown to 30-plus hectares under vine in the past 18 years.



Starting fresh

Bodegas Comenge is located in Valle de Cuco, Valladolid, between Curiel de Duero and Pesquera de Duero. Jaime, who had been scouting for a suitable site for a while, came across the area by serendipity, when one of his nephews held an art exhibition in a nearby town. "Dad went to have lunch in the town and to support

my cousin by buying a painting, and then as he was on his way, he struck up conversations with the locals and found out about the sites for sale," recounts Alvaro. The farmers in the area were traditionally attached to their land, which was mainly used for farming, such as cereals, potato and sugar beets, but saw the



opportunity in selling.

Alvaro believes that they had an advantage by building the winery from scratch. "It can be burdening to inherit or buy an old

winery that needs a lot of investment and effort to update. We did not have that burden, and could plan and plant intelligently using new technology, which is good for the plants and the people while saving money too," he elaborates. Their forward-minded practices include increased planting density and tall trellising systems, which allows airflow and helped protect better against diseases. It was so uncommon at the time that they had to import materials from Germany, but it soon caught on. They also allow native vegetation such as poppies all year round, except in very dry years, which helps to improve soil fertility and prevent erosion.

The winemaker and co-founder is Rafael Cuerda, whom Jaime met in university when he went back, in his 50s, to study for a masters degree in viticulture. "His fellow students were half his age!" says Alvaro, but his ever-enterprising father thrived and even took a step further to establish three patents with the university post graduation. Alvaro would have liked to take up the same studies his father did, but joining the winery at a crucial period meant that he never found the time, and instead learnt from practice rather than theory.

From intangible to tangible

Their patents have centred around one of the most crucial ingredients in wine-making: yeast. They embarked on studies of the indigenous yeast around their vineyards, and hit upon a method that guarantees fermentation, even when using riskier wild yeast. Another recent potential breakthrough has been a yeast strain that naturally increases acidity, a major factor in the Ribera del Duero where the soils have low acidity. With luck and further trials, Alvaro hopes this newest patent will be lucrative for them after disastrous weather in 2017 saw them lose 63 percent of their usual production.

Despite the uncertainties of agriculture, Alvaro – a city boy

DON MIGUEL 2005 Grape variety: Tempranillo, Cabernet

Sauvignon

Taste: From a single
2.7 hectare vineyard
of Pago de las
Hontanillas comes the
flagship wine. Long
ageing of up to 22
months, new French
oak barrels and the
aromatic character of
grapes from this plot
result in an intense
and structured body.
Drink now with roast
meats or cheese. \$80



COMENGE 2006 Grape variety: Tempranillo Taste: Elegant and silky tannins contribute to the drinkability of this wellaged vintage. A tinge of soy sauce brings intrigue to the fine, warm fruity notes of the grape. The juice is elaborated from 17 micro-parcels, located on clay and limestone slopes. (Note: certified organic starting from the 2015 vintage.) \$55



COMENGE VERDEJO 2016
Grape variety: Verdejo Taste: Made with some 80-year-old vines from Rueda, this is an intense Verdejo with a serious dry, expressive and persistent character. The terroir's calcerous soils bring ideal acidity and ripening, giving a length that's not common for this style of wine. \$30

Available from Iconic Wines.



who was born and still lives in Madrid, and studied business – has found satisfaction in the wine trade. "When I worked in consulting, there was no tangible product before," he muses. Today, he gets to raise a glass of his own wine while walking in his father's footsteps in promoting Spanish wines to the world. **e**



Year of the Dog This special Zodiac Dog magnum of Castiglion del Bosco

This special Zodiac Dog magnum of Castiglion del Bosco Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 2013 will be a hot item for collectors. Chinese artist Li Fu Yuan has created a dynamic label to match the contents, where Sangiovese expresses itself with aplomb – structured, jammy fruit with savoury thyme and laurel aromatics. 488 bottles worldwide, \$1,455 (1.5 litres) from Castiglion del Bosco



SCOTCH SHARE

It's not too late to be a partowner of GlenWyvis Distillery, a groundbreaking community-owned whisky distillery in historic Dingwall, Scotland. With first master distiller Duncan Tait (formerly Mortlach) on board, the ambitious brand will begin its initial production of single malt, while already selling craft gin in the meantime. The second Open Share Offer starts from £250 (\$\$455), and you'll be joining some 2,200 investors who raised £2.6 million in 2016. glenwyvis.com

A VINE VALENTINE'S

OSO Ristorante's co-founder and veteran sommelier Stephane Colleoni shares his tips on how to get the best wine experience while dining out.



For Valentine's
Day, we will be
recommending
well-known
Marchesi
Antinori's Rosso
di Montalcino,
Pian Delle Vigne
2014, available
only by the
bottle.

Different types of wines – sparkling, reds, whites and Rosés – are seductive in their own way. Most importantly, pick a wine that your special someone and you love. Each sip, paired with good food and conversation, should lead to the right mood for a romantic evening.

To ensure a good dining experience, please trust the sommelier (laughs). I strongly suggest to have a pairing of house wines by the glass for each dish. Most good restaurants' house wines are carefully selected by the sommelier.

An increasing number of guests have been requesting wines from Napa Valley. After their holiday in the vineyards, guests tend to ask for a particular label that they enjoyed during their tour.

We have a dedicated page of wines from Piedmont, which is also co-founder and chef Diego Chiarini's hometown. As an Italian restaurant, we pay homage to the great family-owned Italian wines. We have an upcoming dinner with La Spinetta, a family owned business since 1977. Check out our Facebook page (fb. com/osoristorante) for this and more wine dinners on a regular basis.

New from the vaults



The Scotch Malt Whisky Society (smws.sg) has finally opened its Singapore chapter, along with Thailand and Malaysia editions too. Founded in 1983, SMWS is famed for buying and bottling its own single casks, which are made available only to members. Basic membership (\$140 annually) includes member rates for events and at all partner bars (ncluding the U.K.) plus access to purchase their bottles, while pioneer status (\$320) includes a welcome pack with a lapel badge and three 10cl limited release bottles. The partner bar is The Single Cask. #01-25 Caldwell House, CHJIMES, 30 Victoria Street. Tel: 6837 0953



The
Macallan
Quest
Collection
is the hotly
anticipated
global
travel retail
range from

the leading single malt brand. The quartet comprises Quest, Terra, Lumina and Enigma, each with a distinctive cask and flavour profile. Quest, as the most approachable one, has a dessert-like palate of apples and vanilla, while citrus and warm ginger inform the Terra. For The Macallan classic fans, the Enigma is the finest of its expressions with the richest, rounded flavours. US\$64 to \$250 from DFS Changi Airport



The Glenlivet Founder's Reserve is a new permanent entry-level single malt in the group's portfolio. In honour of founder George Smith, the no-age statement whisky is produced from his original design lantern-shaped copper stills, and given a twist by master distiller Alan Winchester using aged oak cask as well as American first-fill casks. Try it in a refreshing highball to discover its distinctive creamy sweetness and fruity orange and pear notes. \$80 from fb.com/TheGlenlivetSG



Dial up a lucky Lunar New Year with these (wine) numbers.

50&50 Toscana IGT 2005

First produced in 1988, the 50&50 was born from friendship – the owners of Avignonesi and Capannelle met at a dinner by chance and began mixing and matching their wines. The 50-50 blend of Sangiovese and Merlot was thus born. Both grapes are separately aged in oak for 24 months, then blended for a wildly complex and long-lived Super Tuscan that has become a cult collectible. The 2005 is ideal for drinking now, with fantastic structure and opulent length in glass.

\$268 from Le Rouge

HIGHLIGHTS

Sangiovese comes from the Capannelle estate in Gaiole, Chianti, where the galestro-rich soil gives it a structured character.

Merlot comes from Avignonesi's clay-rich estate in Montepulciano, ideal growing conditions for elegance and character.

2005 was a generally tough year for Tuscany but Montepulciano excelled. 50&50 was not produced in 1989, 1994, 1996 and 2002. Its latest vintage and 25th release is the 2013.

CHAMPAGNE DRAPPIER QUATTUOR BLANC DE QUATRE BLANCS

Named after the Latin word for four - Quattuor this is a rare assemblage of white Champagne grapes, comprising Arbane (25%), Petit Meslier (25%), Blanc Vrai (25%) and classic Chardonnay. Arbane, with barely a few hectares left in Champagne, lends its herbal freshness to the blend, which is made in as natural ways as possible - from minimal sulphur to natural malolactic ferment and no filtering. White flowers and citrus fruits dominate the nose, while mineral persistence carries through on the palate. Try it with light seafood or on its own as apéritif. \$144 from straitswine.com



3

POGGIO VERRANO 3 2009

The trinity of Alicante, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot gives this entry-level Super Tuscan its lucky prime name. Ageing of one part is done in barriques for 12 months, while the other stays in stainless steel for freshness, before being assembled and bottle aged for four months. At 14%, it's rich and full-bodied as expected from a Super Tuscan. Look for a soft palate with intense black fruit and chewy tannins that linger delightfully. Drink now with grilled or roast meats. \$65 from KAL Wine Source Asia





VINTEC, now acquired and distributed by Electrolux, has the ideal solution for your open house this Chinese New Year. Present your wines, chilled and ready to serve, in a sleek V30SGMEBK wine cabinet (\$958) – its new minimalist borderless glass door and no visible handle appearance blend seamlessly into your living room. Internally, everything is taken care of with regulated humidity, vibration reduction system and triple glazed and UV treated door to ensure optimal storage conditions. Pro tip: set the temperature at 12°C if cellaring reds and whites, 16 to 18°C for serving red wine or even 6 to 8°C if serving Champagne. *Electrolux Customer Care*, #07-10 *Galaxis (West Lobby)*, 1 Fusionopolis Place. Tel: 6727 3699

GM of 40 Thieves in Bali, Jack Page, dreams up a romantic morning-after cocktail.

BREAKFAST IN BED

30ml lemon juice 30ml condensed milk 3 cardamom pods 30ml Cointreau 30ml orange spiced Vietnamese coffee 1 barspoon orange marmalade orange peel, for garnish

- · Combine lemon juice and condensed milk to get a runnier consistency.
- Muddle cardamom pods in shaker tin. Place all ingredients into the shaker except garnish, and shake well with ice. You want the contents to be chilled through.
- · Strain into a brandystyle balloon glass, over crushed ice. Garnish with orange peel rolled into a rose bud shape.

orange spiced

Vietnamese coffee

2 tbsp ground Vietnamese coffee 1 cardamom pod 6 cloves orange twist

 Mix coffee grounds with other ingredients, then place into a Vietnamese coffee filter. Use normally by pouring hot water into the filter and letting it drip. Cool before using.



Formerly based in Singapore, he's newly settled in Bali











SEAFOOD DELIGHTS

If you haven't tasted seafood at Long Beach, you haven't tasted REAL seafood!

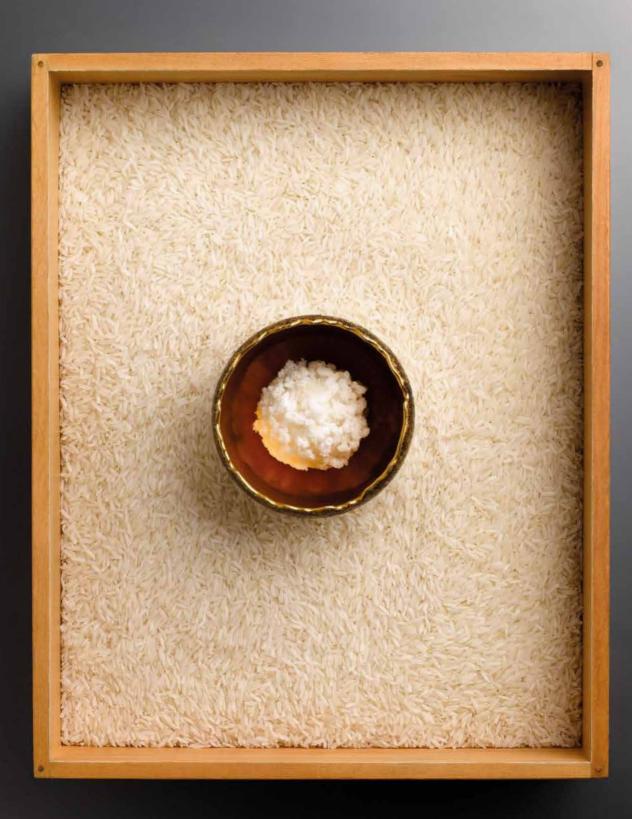


Long Beach @ DEMPSEY - Left turn to Dempsey via Holland Rd (before Peirce Rd), 25 Dempsey Road
Long Beach IMM - Level 3, Next to Rooftop Garden, #03-07 IMM Building, Jurong East St 21
Long Beach UDMC - #01-04 East Coast Seafood Centre
Long Beach KING - Next to Kallang Park Mcdonald's / KFC, Opp Mountbatten MRT (via Exit B)
Long Beach @ STEVENS - #01-10 Mercure Singapore on Stevens, 30 Stevens Road

Tel: 6323 2222
Tel: 6448 3636
Tel: 6448 3636
Tel: 6455 8833

ENTERTAINING





ADIEU, RESTAURANT ANDRÉ

PHOTOS <u>EDMOND HO</u> RECIPES BY <u>ANDRÉ CHIANG</u> SHOT AT <u>RESTAURANT ANDRÉ</u>

Two Michelin stars, 2ND ON THE ASIA'S 50 BEST **RESTAURANTS 2017** list and 14TH ON THE WORLD'S 50 BEST **RESTAURANTS 2017** list later, André Chiang's 10 years in Singapore has culminated in this moment - his swan song at Restaurant André, which shutters on 14 February. In celebration of the famously meticulous chef's achievements and contributions to Singapore's culinary scene, we got Chiang to share five recipes from his extended menu that most fittingly epitomise one of his Octaphilosophy's eight elements of gastronomy - Memory.

SEITEN NO HIGIRI R-ICE CREAM

Using Aomori rice that's as precious as Japan's best Wagyu, Chiang developed this dish using the grains as the star ingredient for Aomori Prefecture, showcasing its quality and sweetness through various forms such as rice ice cream – 'r-ice cream' – and puffed rice. As the specific Aomori rice is not available in Singapore, you can create your own version with other rice varieties, each with their unique flavour profile.

Serves 20 Prep time 3 hours Cook time 3 hours

r-ice cream

200g high-quality rice (variety of rice depends on what flavour you desire)
2 litres full cream milk or water
6 litres rice milk
1.2kg rice cream
48g ice cream stabilising agent Stab 2000

(available from Classic Fine Foods)
78g yolks
78g yugar or home-fermented amazake

78g sugar or home-fermented amazake 12g sea salt

rice milk

- » Toast the rice at 180°C until brown, about 18 minutes.
- » Vacuum bag the rice with milk and steam at 60°C for 15 minutes.
- » Strain off water (the rice milk) into a bowl and reserve rice pulp to make r-ice cream.
- » Blend rice milk, egg yolks, sugar and salt with stabilising agent Stab 2000, bring to a boil and cook to 80°C.
- » Cool down and blend with rice pulp, then set aside 1.2kg to be used as r-ice cream.

puffed rice

3 litres water 80g salt

300g sushi rice

» Cook rice until slightly overcooked, about 10-15 minutes. Dry at room temperature, then puff by deep-frying with oil at 210-215°C.

amazake espuma

1200 amazake (available from Japanese supermarkets) 600ml milk 150g sugar 3g sea salt 166g cold Pro Espuma

» Blend all ingredients together in a Vitamix blender, then transfer 650g to each siphon. Charge each siphon 3 times with a cream charger.

assembly

fleur de sel

» Scoop the r-ice cream, roll it over the amazake espuma, then coat with puffed rice. Place in the centre of a bowl, then garnish with a pinch of fleur de sel and serve.

TEXT <u>EUNICE LEW</u> VIDEOGRAPHY BY <u>NAZURAH RAHIM</u>



AIR BAGUETTE, LENTILS HUMMUS, JAMÓN IBÉRICO

After Albert Adrià whipped up a Camembert dessert in tribute to Chiang's rendition during their collaboration in Barcelona last year, the Taiwanese toque returned the favour when they were in Singapore, reinterpreting Adrià's Air Baguette with lentils hummus and jamón ibérico.

Serves 15 **Prep time** 1 hour + overnight proofing **Cook time** 15 minutes

500g high gluten flour
5g yeast
195ml full fat milk
8g salt
flour, to dust
200g Cevenne onions, sliced
extra virgin olive oil
200g lentils
1 litre chicken stock
100g jamón ibérico, finely chopped

- » Mix flour with yeast, milk and salt, then knead to make a dough.
- » Proof overnight in the chiller.
- » Take the dough out from the chiller and separate into small 200g pieces and sprinkle with flour.
- » With a dough roller, roll pieces to 2mm thickness and cut into the desired shape.
- » Preheat oven at 250°C, bake setting.
- » Bake dough pieces until they puff up and brown, about 3 minutes.
- » Cook sliced onions with a little extra virgin olive oil in a pot until soft.
- » Add in lentils and chicken stock. Bring mixture to boil and simmer until the lentils are completely soft.
- » Blend onions-lentils mixture into a purée and mix in jamón ibérico.
- » Poke a hole in the baguette and pipe in the onions-lentils-jamón ibérico purée until the baguette is filled.
- » Place the stuffed baguettes in a box of hay and serve immediately.



Preparing for the final shot of the air baguettes



MOUNTAIN GRAPE, RAMUNE, QUANDONG

On the streets of Taiwan, you'll find traditional treats of round pickled *jiao lai arh* (literally translated: bird pear) fruit that are dipped in caramel. A nostalgic Chiang recreated his childhood snack with a similar fruit from Indonesia, called cucumber grapes or mountain grapes – its cross-section looks exactly like a cucumber, but it tastes like a thick-skinned grape.

Serves 15 Prep time 5 minutes + 6 hours freezing Cook time 10 minutes

15 Borneo wild mountain grapes
(alternatively, use normal grapes or
cherries)
350ml Ramune (available from Japanese
supermarkets)
3g quandong powder (a bush fruit,
available in Australia)
3g Davidson plum powder (available in
Australia)
2 soda chargers

- » Rinse and dry grapes.
- » Mix grapes and Ramune into an espuma bottle and charge with 2 soda chargers. Freeze for 6 hours, so that the grapes become infused with Ramune.
- » Release the gas from the espuma bottle and strain the juices.
- » Mix quandong and Davidson plum powders well. Alternatively, you can use sour plum powder, but the flavour will not be identical. Wipe-dry grapes and sprinkle with powder mix.
- » Serve immediately.



Restaurant André's third floor, where the photo shoot was held



ABALONE, KOMBU AND LIVER

Chiang was with fellow chef Ben Shewry of Attica in Perth when he observed abalones living near kombu and consuming the tall kelp. It inspired him to create this oceanic dish that reflects the mollusc's natural environment, allowing guests to 'see' what he did.

Serves 10 Prep time 1 hour + overnight freezing Cook time 1 hour

4 pieces of Australian blue lips abalone 150ml white dashi (available from Japanese supermarkets)

30g shallots, chopped

3 litres chicken stock

50ml extra virgin olive oil

80g seaweed paste (available from

Japanese supermarkets) salt and pepper, to taste

2 litres water

3 pieces of kombu (available from Japanese supermarkets)

30g seaweed (available from Japanese supermarkets)

30g katsuobushi flakes (available from Japanese supermarkets)

- » Shuck abalone from its shell, then clean and reserve the liver to make liver paste.
- » Marinate abalone with white dashi and freeze it overnight.
- » Heat up a pot to medium heat and add chopped shallots. Sauté with extra virgin olive oil until caramelised.

- » Add abalone liver and chicken stock, then simmer until the liver is cooked, about 7-8 minutes.
- » Cool liver to room temperature and blend with seaweed paste until smooth, then season with salt and pepper.
- » Heat water to high heat, then add kombu and seaweed. Once boiling, add katsuobushi and simmer for 15 minutes.
- » Cool and strain carefully, then set aside kombu.
- » Soak kombu in water until it is soft, then deep-fry at 185°C until crispy, about 2 minutes.
- » Slice frozen abalone thinly.

assembly

red coral (available in Japan; alternatively, use dehydrated seaweed, available in Japanese supermarkets) herb salt

» Pipe abalone liver paste onto kombu chips. Roll slices of abalone and place on chips, then finish with red coral and herb salt.



ONION PETAL, CRAB MISO, MUSHROOM GARUM

On a trip to Manila with his Filipino sous chef, Chiang was fascinated by crab fat, an intensely umami paste, and fermented crab garum, which he likens to fish sauce. Here, he shapes onion petals and rice to look like *ika* sushi, with crab miso hidden within.

Serves 12 Prep time 1 hour Cook time 1 hour

mushroom garum

200g dried shiitake mushrooms 30ml dashi 200g dried porcini 50g dried morel 200g king oyster mushrooms 2.5 litres water

salt and pepper, to taste

- » Marinate shiitake mushrooms with dashi for 10 minutes, then roast the shiitake at 160°C for 15 minutes.
- » Mix shiitake mushrooms with remaining ingredients, except salt and pepper, then boil and simmer until reduced to 1 litre.
- » Season with salt and pepper.

onion petal with crab miso

3 Cevenne onions, halved
200ml dashi broth
50g sushi rice
10g sushi vinegar
3 mud crabs
5 pieces of sea lettuce (alternatively, use wakame)
coriander flowers

- » Remove the skin of the onions, then pull out the individual petals carefully.
- » Cook onions in dashi broth until soft but still whole, about 5 minutes. Allow petals to cool.
- » Steam sushi rice and mix in sushi vinegar while rice is still warm.
- » Steam mud crabs at 100°C for 6 minutes. Open the shells and save the roe and crab fat around the shells you should get about 100g in total. Reserve the rest of crabs for other uses.
- » Mix the roe and crab fat well. On slow heat in a pan, reduce until it becomes a paste.
- » Lay out onion petals and carefully place sea lettuce inside.
- » Add in a small spoon of rice, followed by the crab paste.
- » Wrap each petal carefully to prevent breaking the shell, then shape like a sushi.
- » Garnish each piece with coriander flowers, then serve with mushroom garum on the side. ${\bf e}$



Check out *epicure* on YouTube for a behind-the-scenes look at what went on during this month's cover shoot.



City Centre, is someone who is filled with positive energy. Perhaps it has something to do with where he hails from. "I come from the vibrant, historic city of Angers in the Loire Valley, reputed to be the garden of France because of the region's amazing produce and the fact that the land is watered by Le Loire, France's longest and mightiest river," says the 42-year-old Frenchman proudly. The third largest city in the country was once a bustling waterway and frequented by French royalty. The Pays de la Loire region was crowned a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2000, as a tribute to the Loire Valley's outstanding cultural and architectural contributions to the country. Angers is home

to a population of 300,000 and host to some of France's biggest and most important annual festivals, such as the Anjou Festival and Angers Summer Festival.

As a child, Dubois ate very well. A staple family dinner in his household was the



hearty Meringue Soufflé Omelette with Sautéed Morels, because his family would pick their own mushrooms in the woods near their home. Eels are a delicacy from Le Loire, and his family's Foie Gras Terrine with Wild Mushrooms and Smoked Eel was a favourite treat of his. The eels made perfect accompaniments to his father's homemade terrines from his hunting escapades in the woods. "We grew up in a friendly neighbourhood where everyone knew each other. My parents owned a small hotel in town, L'auberge de la Roche Baraton; my father was the chef of a 60-seater restaurant and my mother ran the service. I would help them with the kitchen mise en place and table setting before going to school. A few of my uncles were also chefs, and it just seemed normal to me to be in the kitchen. As a young child, I wanted to be a chef and cook hearty and delicious dishes like my father. Till today, he is very happy that there is always someone cooking beside him in the kitchen for so many years," shares Dubois.

Dubois was only four years old when he cooked his first dish – a simple sponge cake called *le goûter* (a popular late afternoon teatime snack). The *pain perdu* was another popular after-school classic. It was the perfect way to use up stale, leftover bread – soaking it in milk and then pan-frying it. Though his parents have long retired, his father's sauces still set the benchmark for Dubois. "My favourites are *lotte* à *l'Américaine* (monkfish in *sauce Américaine*), *sandre au beurre blanc* (Sander fish from Loire Valley with a beurre blanc sauce), and *bécasses* à *la bordelaise* (woodcock bird in a rich Bordelaise sauce)," he adds.

MERINGUE SOUFFLÉ OMELETTE WITH SAUTÉED MORELS

Serves 2

Prep time 10 minutes **Cook time** 10 minutes

4 free-range eggs, whites and yolks separated fleur de sel, to taste freshly ground black pepper, to taste 1 tsp French butter, softened 40g morels, roughly chopped

garnish

porcini powder (available from Culina) truffle mayonnaise micro herbs





- Whisk egg whites until light and frothy. Fold in egg yolks gently so that the soufflé mixture doesn't lose too much air. Mix until fully incorporated to form a smooth batter. Season with fleur de sel and black pepper.
- Heat butter in a non-stick pan and add morels. Season and gently sauté.
- Add egg mixture to morels and stir to scramble quickly. Smoothen top and let it set without browning.
- Sprinkle egg and morels mixture with porcini powder. Place under a hot grill to cook the omelette through completely or until the eggs are set.
- Transfer omelette to a plate and dot with truffle mayonnaise and micro herbs. Sprinkle with porcini powder.

FOIE GRAS TERRINE WITH WILD MUSHROOMS AND SMOKED EEL

Serves 8

Prep time 25 minutes + 2 days resting time **Cook time** 10 minutes

200g wild mushrooms

2 tbsp salted French butter

1kg duck fat

1kg foie gras, lobes separated

 $1\,tbsp\,Armangnac$

1 tbsp Porto

7g sugar

12g salt

7g freshly ground pepper

200g smoked eel, warmed (available from

Classic

Fine Foods)

toast (optional)

- Preheat oven to 120°C.
- Sauté mushrooms in butter until evenly browned.
- Heat duck fat in a separate pan.
- Place foie gras into a baking dish and cover it with the melted duck fat. Bake in the oven for 15 minutes and then leave to cool to room



temperature.

- Remove the vein from the foie gras and keep remaining duck fat.
- Marinate foie gras with Armagnac, porto, sugar, salt and pepper.
- Place foie gras in a plastic wrap-lined terrine mould, and alternate layers of foie gras with the sautéed mushrooms. Seal terrine tightly and refrigerate for 12 hours.
- Remove plastic wrap from foie gras and place foie gras back in the terrine mould. Reheat duck fat and cover terrine with 2cm of fat. Refrigerate for 48 hours.
- Once ready, slice foie gras terrine and serve alongside warmed smoked eel and toast.

BLUBERRY ESPUMA

Serves 2 Prep time 10 minutes + overnight soaking Cook time 10 minutes

1 tsp French mountain honey 200ml milk 1 vanilla pod, beans scraped 1 tbsp Cointreau 1 tbsp sugar + 1 tsp extra 3 slices thick bread, cubed 50g blueberries 100ml whipping cream 2 tbsp French butter mixed berries

2 eggs, beaten

edible flowers

- Cointreau and 1 tbsp of sugar. Soak bread in the mixture and refrigerate overnight in a sealed container.
- Blend blueberries with 1 tsp of sugar until smooth. Strain.
- Mix strained berry juice with whipping cream and spoon into an espuma bottle. Refrigerate until ready to serve.
- Melt French butter in a pan. Wipe excess egg mixture off the bread cubes, then pan-fry each piece until well-caramelised. Set aside.
- Quickly sauté mixed berries in the remaining butter. On a plate, top fried bread with the sautéed mixed berries.
- · Siphon blueberry foam into the centre of the plate and garnish with edible flowers. ${f e}$

Mastering... Eggs in Purgatory and Italian doughnuts

Executive chef Angelo Ciccone of Regent Singapore executes these two classic Italian breakfast with aplomb. By Priyanka Elhence

kin to *huevos rancheros*, the evocatively rustic Uova Al Purgatorio literally translates into Eggs in Purgatory, the Italian version of soft eggs in a red sauce circle. "This Neapolitan recipe from Campania was inspired by Italian monks and the Christian religion generations ago. It got its name because the white egg in the red tomato sauce resembles white souls escaping the red flames of hell," explains executive chef Angelo Ciccone of Regent Singapore, A Four Seasons Hotel.

Most Italian incarnations call for a fiery, piquant tomato sauce, accentuated with good quality olive oil, garlic and fresh herbs. Similar to the heady North African *shakshuka*, in which the

Eggs in Purgatory

eggs are scented with turmeric, cumin and coriander, the Italian rendition comes with crunchy toast. "It's the perfect hangover breakfast too, because the heat from the chillies is good for clearing the residual fog from your brain after a heavy, boozy night," adds Ciccone with a smile. Adding a few anchovies to the tomato sauce, he says, brings out an umami flavour that complements the acidity of the tomatoes. Spicy pork sausages can be substituted for chorizo or any other sausages, while Portobello mushrooms serve as a vegetarian option.

For a sweet, rich Italian breakfast from the southeast of the country, nothing beats Ciccone's favourite doughnut dish of Bombolone Pugliese e Caffé Shakerato from Locorotondo, a region officially known for its wine production and also reckoned as one of the most beautiful towns in Puglia.

Popularly eaten in parts of southern Italy, from Puglia to Sicily, during the hot summer months, *bombolone* is typically consumed in the morning for a burst of energy, but the versatile doughnut is also equally enjoyed as dessert or a daytime snack. Ciccone reveals: "The name is derived from *bomba* (Italian for bomb), due to the doughnut's resemblance to an old-fashioned bomb or grenade. However, most people today call it a bomb because of its very high calorie count." The *bombolone* tradition is believed to have originated from the Austrian *krapfen*; the difference being that the Italian version is filled from the top, and the filling can be visibly seen. "Giving the dough adequate time to rest is critical to

ensure a light texture. Otherwise, the pastry will be too dense and filled with oil." A shaken iced coffee completes the dish; Sambuca can be used instead of the hazelnut liqueur for a fancier touch to the *caffé shakerato*. "For a healthier option, bake the *bombolone* instead of frying it. You can make mini *bombolinos* stuffed with ricotta cheese, then serve them as savoury canapés with aperitivo," says Ciccone.



PHOTOS EDDIE TEO VIDEOGRAPHY ELLIOTT CHAN













UOVA AL PURGATORIO

Serves 4
Prep time 15 minutes
Cook time 1 hour

15ml extra virgin olive oil
5g fresh garlic
5g fresh red chillies, roughly chopped
100g cherry tomatoes, halved
500ml passata or fresh tomato sauce
8 fresh organic eggs
200g spicy pork sausages, skinless and cut
into 1cm pieces
10g fresh basil, roughly torn
30g Parmesan cheese, finely grated
4 slices of sourdough, toasted

1.1 Preheat oven to 185°C.

5g fresh parsley, chopped

- **1.2** In a pan, sauté garlic with olive oil and chilli for two minutes.
- **1.3** Add sliced cherry tomatoes and tomato sauce. Cook on slow fire for 30 minutes.
- **1.4** Add sausages and cook for an additional 20 minutes.
- 1.5 Add fresh basil and Parmesan cheese.
- **1.6** Crack open the eggs directly into the bubbling sauce, ensuring they are evenly spaced out over the pan.
- **1.7** Put the pan in the oven for 5 minutes or until the eggs are fully cooked.
- **1.8** Remove the pan from the oven and serve with toasted sourdough bread. Garnish with a sprinkle of chopped parsley.









BOMBOLONE PUGLIESE E CAFFÉ SHAKERATO

Serves 4

Prep time 20 minutes + 1 hour resting time **Cook time** 10 minutes

bombolone (makes about 20 pieces)

9g yeast

172ml iced water

150ml milk, cold

900g white flour

180g sugar

9g salt

135g eggs

164g butter, softened

vegetable oil, for deep-frying

1.1 In a stand mixer, mix yeast with iced water.

1.2 Add milk and let the yeast fully activate for 20 minutes at room temperature.

1.3 Add flour, sugar and salt, and mix well for 5 minutes. Add softened butter and mix for a few more minutes until mixture is fully incorporated.

1.4 Add eggs a little at a time, and mix gently until a uniformly smooth dough comes together.

1.5 On a floured surface, create small ball-shaped pieces of 85g each and place on a



tray. Cover tray with cling film and let the dough rest for 1 hour in the fridge or until it almost doubles in size.

1.6 Deep-fry bombolone in vegetable oil at 155°C for 2-3 minutes on each side or until golden brown. Strain and let cool down.

iced coffee

4 cups espresso 2g hazelnut essence 100g whipped cream 2g ground cinnamon

2.1 Mix espresso with hazelnut essence over ice in a shaker, then shake.

2.2 Strain coffee into a martini glass and top with fresh whipped cream and a dash of cinnamon.

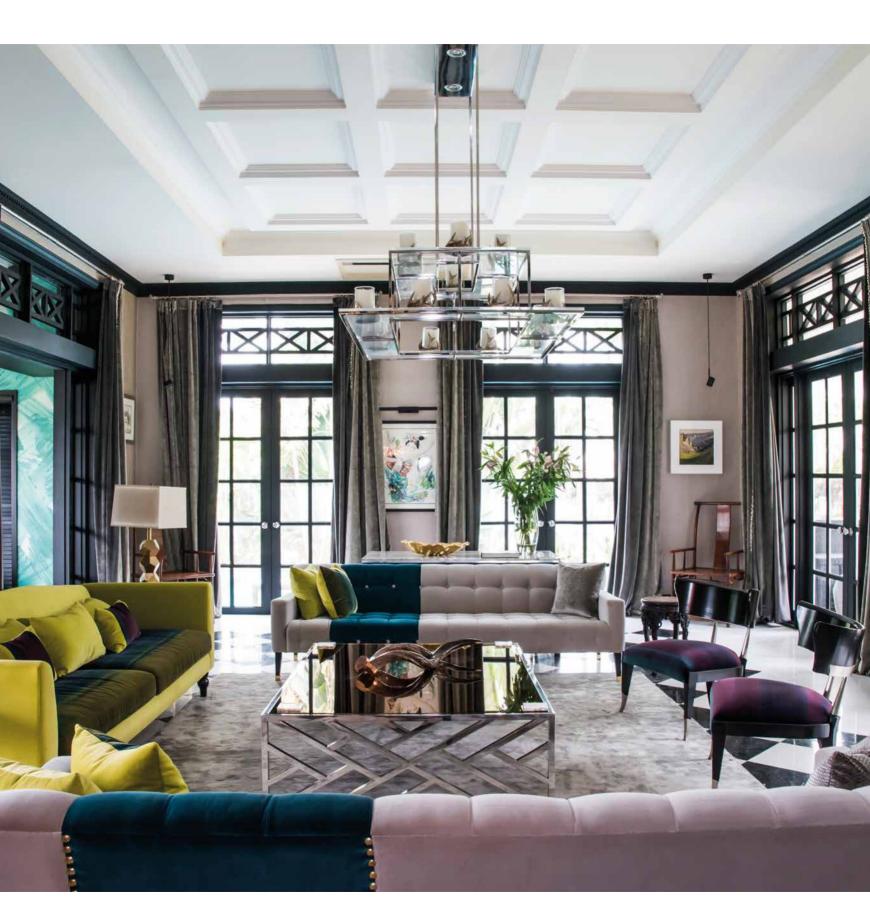
assembly

400g pistachio gelato pistachio nuts, roughly chopped icing sugar

3.1 Slice the cooled bombolone in half and stuff with pistachio gelato. Garnish with chopped pistachio nuts and dust liberally with icing sugar.

3.2 Serve with iced coffee. ${f e}$







poised, polished and inscrutable – three words that can be used to describe both Nikki Hunt, 50, the founder of interior design firm Design Intervention, and the 7,500 sq ft District 10 Good Class bungalow that she shares with her husband Stephen. Their two young adult children, Jaime and Sasha, are currently studying in the U.K. (where Hunt is originally from).

Hunt left the finance industry in 1998 to become a stay-at-home mum, but after helping several friends with their renovations, she discovered her flair for beautifying homes, and Design Intervention was birthed in 2004.

As we step into her sprawling abode, it's as if the pages of an interior design magazine

have materialised before our eyes. Hunt and her family have lived here for 12 years, but the furnishings still appear new – thanks to a recent facelift that involved changing the wallpaper to more



verdant hues and switching out key pieces of furniture, such as sofas, chaise longues and dining chairs. She refreshes her living spaces almost every year. "I am inspired by virtually everything I see: a leaf in the garden, the set of a TV show or the trim on a friend's dress," Hunt enthuses.

The mother of reinvention

The current iteration of Hunt's home features a subdued palette of grey and green in the living room, but bursts into colour along the indoor terrace flanking it. Exuding a garden vibe, the sunlit space incorporates a modest bar, two chaise longues upholstered in a vibrant floral green motif, a round table

and a long table. Both tables are draped with table runners in the exact same print. Overhead hangs a row of gilded birdcageesque pendant lamps. Adjacent to the living room is the dining area, a cosy space that houses a spacious octagonal dining table and plush Breton striped chairs. In contrast to the rest of her bright, cavernous home, this room is dimmer and more intimate – perfect for the classic English afternoon tea she has rustled up for a few work friends.

Midas touch

"I'm not happy with this," remarks Hunt as she fusses over the table setting that her helpers have just carefully laid out. To us, the gorgeous floral centrepiece, green, gold and white tableware, mint-hued napkins, brass-accented Champagne flutes and Christofle cutlery are picture-perfect – but she probably sees something we don't. In fact, Hunt is such a perfectionist that our photographer, who arrived early, was asked to wait outside while she prepped herself and her home for the shoot.

Besides Design Intervention, Hunt and her business partner of five years, Andrea Savage, 37, also have a TV show to their name. The second season of *Come On In* (which began airing last November on HGTV Asia) sees the duo and their team at Design Intervention helping families across Singapore bring life to their home spaces. These are pretty big achievements for any designer, but even more so for someone with no formal training in interior design.

To thank their team for their efforts during the three months that they were busy filming *Come On In*, Hunt and Savage have put together a lovely afternoon tea for two of their key staff members – interior designer Issa Salvacion and assistant designer Jaclyn Hsu. "Afternoon tea is my favourite meal because it is decadent. We all need breakfast, lunch and dinner, but afternoon tea is a luxury and that's what makes it so special. We wanted to spoil our team and this is the best way to do so," shares Hunt.





RASPBERRY AND WHITE CHOCOLATE TART

Serves 8-10

Prep time 30 minutes + chill overnight

250g Amaretti biscuits 100g butter, melted 375g good quality white chocolate 425ml Bulla cream 2 tbsp sugar 2 tbsp amaretto

3 tsp corn flour 2 tbsp water

400g raspberries

- Blitz Amaretti biscuits in a food processor and pour in butter until you have well-coated fine crumbs. Press crumbs into the base of a lined springform cake tin. Chill.
- Break 325g of white chocolate (reserve the rest for decoration) into a bowl and add $\frac{1}{2}$ the cream to the chocolate.
- Place the mixture in a bain-marie and once melted, remove from heat and stir until smooth. Leave to cool.
- In a small saucepan, boil corn flour with 2 tbsp of water and leave to thicken.
- In a separate bowl, whisk the remaining cream, sugar, amaretto and cornstarch-water mixture until soft peaks form. Fold into the chocolate-and-cream mixture.

- Pour the mixture over the biscuit base and chill overnight.
- Decorate with raspberries and white chocolate shavings.

STICKY LIME AND COCONUT DRIZZLE LOAF

Serves 10

Prep time 15 minutes **Cook time** 40 minutes

175g self-raising flour 1 tsp baking powder 175g golden caster sugar 2 eggs

100g butter, softened

icing and decoration

200g coconut milk

200g coconut milk 200g golden caster sugar 3 limes, zest of 1 lime and juice of 3

- Preheat oven to 180°C. Butter and line a 900g loaf tin with baking parchment. Tip all the cake ingredients into a large mixing bowl, then beat until completely combined and the mixture drops off a spoon.
- Tip mixture into the loaf tin, and then smooth the top with the back of a spoon. Bake for

40 minutes until golden and firm to the touch. While the loaf is baking, make the icing and decoration.

- To make the icing, tip coconut milk and 150g of sugar into a saucepan. Boil for 5 minutes until syrupy and the bottom of the pan can be seen when you stir.
- Stir in lime juice and set aside.
- Crush remaining sugar with lime zest until you get a damp green paste and set inside.
- When the loaf is cooked, remove from oven and pour the icing over a little at a time, waiting for the cake to absorb it before adding more. By the time all the icing is used, it should be coming up the sides of the tin. Leave everything to cool.
- To serve, carefully remove loaf from the tin, sprinkle with the lime sugar and slice.

SULTANA SCONES

Serves 12

Prep time 20 minutes **Cook time** 30 minutes

225g self-raising flour 55g butter 25g sultanas a pinch of salt 25g caster sugar 150ml milk

- Heat oven to 220°C. Lightly grease a baking sheet.
- \bullet Mix flour with salt, then rub in the butter.
- Stir in sultanas, salt, sugar, and then the milk to form a soft dough.
- Turn dough out on to a floured work surface and knead very lightly. Pat out to form round mounds of about 2cm-thick.
- Use a 5cm cutter to stamp out scones and place on a baking sheet. Lightly knead together the rest of the dough and stamp out as many scones as necessary to use up the dough.
- Brush the tops of the scones with a little milk. Bake for 12-15 minutes until well-risen and



golden.

• Cool on a wire rack and serve with butter or clotted cream, and good jam.

CRAB AND CHEDDAR TARTLET (ANDREA'S RECIPE)

Serves 6

Prep time 1 hour

Cook time 30 minutes

250g flour

125g butter

1 tsp salt

1 tbsp water, cold

1 tbsp flour, for dusting

5 free-range eggs (one reserved for the egg wash)

400ml cooking cream

½ tsp sea salt

1/4 tsp black pepper, freshly ground

250g tasty or mature cheddar

2 tbsp tarragon, finely chopped

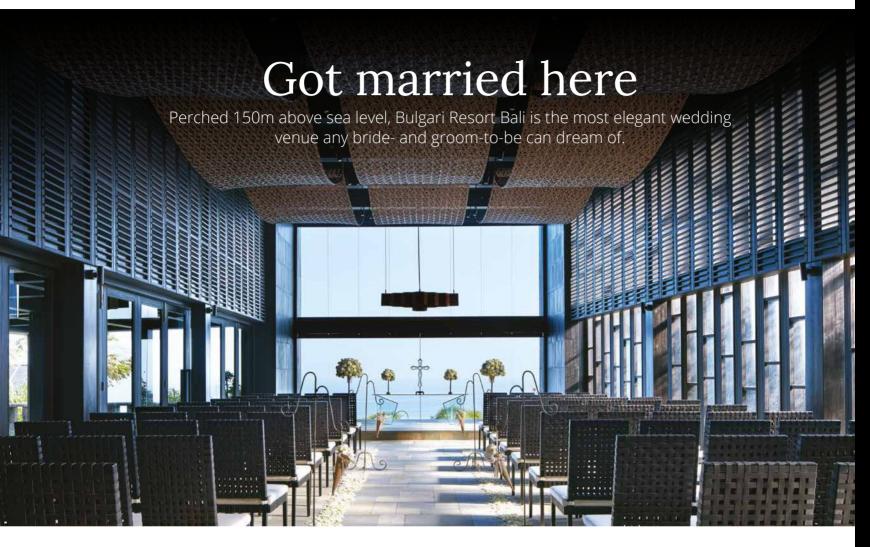
2 bunches spring onions, sliced

200g crab meat

- Sift flour and salt into a dish or food processor. Cut butter into cubes and add to the bowl or food processor.
- If using a food processor, pulse flour, butter and salt together until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. If using your hands, use a knife to lightly cut through the butter into the pastry, then use your fingertips to 'rub in' the butter.
- Add 1 tbsp of ice cold water to the food processor and lightly pulse. Repeat this until the dough just starts to come together. If using your hands, add 1 tbsp of cold water to the mix and slowly bring the dough together with your fingers. Once the dough has started to form into a ball, turn out onto a work surface and knead lightly to create a dough. Do not add too much water during this process extra liquid will make the pastry easier to work with, but will result in hard pastry.
- Use your hands to squeeze the pastry together and roughly shape into a long rectangular shape. Don't over-knead the

pastry, as this encourages the development of gluten, giving the pastry a hard texture.

- Wrap in cling film and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes. Lightly flour your surface before rolling out the pastry.
- Roll out the pastry on a floured surface to a thickness of about 3mm. Place in a 4cm-deep, rectangular, loose bottom tart pan. Line the pastry with a circle of greaseproof paper and baking beans. Chill for 10 minutes.
- Preheat oven to 220°C.
- Bake for 15 minutes, then remove the paper and baking beans. Crack 1 egg and whisk it lightly with a fork. Brush the inside of the pastry with egg wash and turn the oven down to 180°C.
- In a mixing bowl, combine the remaining 4 eggs and cream and season with sea salt and pepper. Set aside.
- Sprinkle cheese, tarragon, spring onion and crab over the tart case. Pour the egg mixture over the cheese, crab and herbs.
- Bake for 25 minutes until the custard is set and the pastry is golden brown. When the tart is cool, slice and serve. **e**



Designed by architects Antonio Citterio Patricia Viel and Partners, Bulgari Resort Bali marries Italian sophistication with Balinese tradition. The resort's signature hand-cut volcanic cornerstones, natural lava and palimanan stone blend in with Uluwatu's rugged landscape, while a collection of unique Balinese antiques and art pieces add a touch of elegance and heritage to the property.

The stunning resort offers one- and two-bedroom villas and up to Five-Bedroom Mansions, which come with the same opulence found in other Bulgari properties in Milan and London. In particular, the Five-Bedroom Mansion pampers the wedding couple and their families with a spacious living room, open-concept dining room and bar, five separate bedrooms, sun decks, a gazebo with open living areas, and a private pool and garden overlooking the sea.

Cool cocktails, fine wines and light bites are the highlight at II Bar; the fine fare is only rivalled by the venue's spacious terrace on a cliff overlooking the ocean and gorgeous Balinese sunsets. Step into II Ristorante - Luca Fantin and savour head chef Fabrizio Crocetta's creative interpretations of Italian cuisine with the help of the finest local ingredients and imported produce. For all-day international specialities with

a stunning view, Sangkar Restaurant is the place to go, while the cliffside La Spiaggia is a cosy restaurant and bar where you can enjoy the freshly grilled bounty of the sea accompanied by a cool sea breeze and a magnificent view.

Couples who want to seal their union here can choose from four different themes: a water wedding set floating on the surface of the Water Pond, a classically formal ceremony at the gorgeous Bulgari Chapel, a glamorous party at The Bulgari Villa, or a laidback and intimate Beach Wedding.

The Bulgari Chapel Wedding, in particular, allows you invite up to 90 guests at the 315 sq m chapel that echoes the resort's graceful style. Aside from two nights' accommodation in the Ocean View Villa and a 60-minute Romantic Balinese treatment at Bulgari Spa, the package also includes signature welcome drinks, classic background music, two flower girls, and more.

Bulgari Resort Bali JI Goa Lempeh, Banjar Dinas Kangin, Uluwatu, Bali 80364 Tel: +62 361 8471000 www.bulgarihotels.com/en US/bali

Sunny flavours from the Med

Privanka Elhence puts The Mediterranean Table to the test for hearty recipes steeped in tradition that are not only delicious but also naturally good for you.

At a glance

What's not to like about a salubrious cuisine brimming with antioxidant-rich garlic, fresh herbs and lemony nuances, all tied together by the fruitiness of good quality olive oil? Given that Mediterranean cuisine is known to be great for the body, I was excited to get my hands on The Mediterranean Table after a particularly indulgent Christmas. Complemented with beautifully rustic illustrations, the cookbook vaunts 150 easy, packed-with-flavour recipes that pay homage to the region's abundant homegrown ingredients, from Santorini's sparkling shores to Italy's sundappled lemon groves, and everything in between.

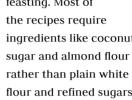
The Mediterranean Table is a stimulating compilation of hearty recipes from various chefs, restaurateurs, food writers and food stylists. One of my favourite finds has to be the colourful Prosciutto,

Artichoke, Fig and Roquefort salad with Balsamic Dressing, a light but delicious salad. From cured meat and fresh seafood to salty cheeses, olives, anchovies and roasted vegetables, almost all the ingredients the recipes call for are locally available, so no dish is really off limits in this book.

Among the chapters are Small Bites and Plates to Share, Sunshine Lunches and Salads & Summer Soups for quick weekday meals. For more relaxed, indulgent repasts, Al Fresco Feasts and From the Grill will have you covered with its substantial chargrilled fare. You just can't go wrong with the skewered Middle Eastern grilled fish or eggplant-wrapped lemon chicken kebabs. My advice is to set the tone for pre-barbecue drinks first, with the classic Spanish Tapas Board and a robust, Sicilian-style Bruschetta with Caponata and Marinated Mozzarella.

The final chapter of the book is dedicated to Sweet Treats and Drinks, with healthier desserts to balance the sumptuous

> feasting. Most of ingredients like coconut rather than plain white flour and refined sugars.

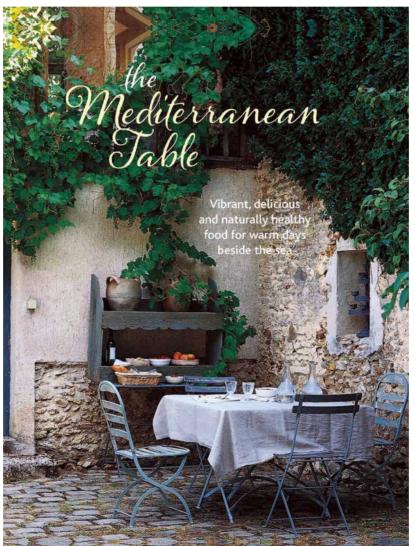


The road test

The provincial plate of grilled fish alongside the brightly-hued tomato salad will pique your interest in the barbecued Harissa Sardines with Tomato Salad recipe. The slightly spicy harissa calls for spices to be freshly ground to a paste, but the effort is worth it since the resulting paste adds a piquant kick to the otherwise fishy sardines. The accompanying tomatoes are only lightly drizzled with lemon juice and olive oil, and garnished with a sprinkling of fresh parsley.

I'm a big fan of mushrooms, so the

homey Mushroom Stew with Walnut Gremolata on Soft Polenta is an obvious choice. Inspired by the classic Italian ossobuco, this rich vegetarian dish is packed with four mushroom varieties atop a bed of creamy, cheesy polenta, with the nutty gremolata adding crunch and texture to every bite. This meatless gem can certainly



qualify as comfort food any day.

I'm usually apprehensive about making baklava, given its usually high calorie count, but the version here uses coconut oil and maple syrup instead of refined sugar and butter. I especially enjoyed the sweetness of the syrup being cut through by hints of citrus brought on by the freshly squeezed orange and lemon juices.

Verdict

Most people vow to start the new year with clean, healthy eating, but fast-forward to a few months down the line, that resolve usually wears thin, with 'healthy' taking a backseat to fast. With *The Mediterranean Table*, you can really have it all – an attractive selection of delicious, easy-to-prepare recipes for a healthier lifestyle the whole year round.

The Mediterranean Table retails for \$\$29.90 at bookdepository.com

HARISSA SARDINES WITH TOMATO SALAD

Serves 4

200g tomatoes

1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped

- 1 garlic clove, chopped
- 1 tsp caraway seeds
- 1 tbsp red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 8 plump fresh sardines, gutted
- a pinch of sea salt

tomato salad

300g ripe tomatoes, ideally in assorted colours

extra virgin olive oil, to drizzle freshly chopped flat-leaf parsley, to serve freshly ground black pepper, to taste



- a large baking sheet, greased
- Begin by scalding the tomatoes. Pour boiling water over the ripe tomatoes in a small pan or pot set over a medium heat. Heat for 1 minute, then remove from the water and carefully peel off the skin using a sharp knife. Roughly chop, reserving the juices.
- Blend together the chopped tomatoes with their juices, the chilli, garlic, caraway seeds, vinegar and ground coriander to a paste.
- Heat the olive oil in a small frying pan set over a medium heat. Add the paste and fry,

- stirring often, for 8-10 minutes, until it thickens and reduces. Season with salt and set aside to cool you will use this harissa paste to coat the sardines later.
- Prepare the tomato salad. Finely slice the tomatoes and the lemon. Arrange the slices in a serving dish, pour over a little extra virgin olive oil. Sprinkle with parsley and season with pepper.
- Preheat the grill to a medium heat.
- Cut slashes in the sides of each sardine. Place them on the prepared baking sheet and spread

RECIPE SHELAGH RYAN PHOTOGRAPHY KATE WHITAKER

each with the cooled harissa paste on both sides, making sure it gets inside the slashes.

• Grill the sardines for 6-10 minutes, until cooked through. Serve at once with the tomato salad on the side.

MUSHROOM STEW WITH WALNUT GREMOLATA ON SOFT POLENTA

Serves 6

150g / 5 cups dried porcini mushrooms
5 fresh tomatoes
2 tbsp olive oil, plus extra for frying
1 large onion, diced
1 tbsp plain/all-purpose flour
150ml / ²/₃ cup white wine
700g / 1 lb. 9 oz. (about 6 caps)
Portobello mushrooms, thickly sliced
350g / 5 cups button mushrooms, whole if very small or halved
200g / 3 cups oyster mushrooms, cut in half lengthways
2 tsp fresh thyme leaves
1 tsp dried chilli / hot red pepper flakes
1 tbsp tomato purée / paste

walnut gremolata

to season

50g / ½ cup walnuts 25g / ½ cup freshly chopped flat-leaf parsley 1 garlic clove, crushed grated zest of 1 lemon

sea salt and freshly ground black pepper,

soft polenta

200g instant polenta/cornmeal 80g / 5 tablespoons butter 100g / ½ cup finely grated Parmesan cheese 1 teaspoon sea salt

• First make the gremolata. Put the walnuts on a baking sheet and roast in the oven at 170°C (325°F) Gas 3 for 5 minutes. When cool, chop finely, put in a small bowl and combine with the remaining ingredients. Season to taste and set aside until needed.

- Put the porcini in a heatproof bowl and add 500ml boiling water. Set aside to soak.
 Score the base of the tomatoes, put them in a heatproof bowl and add enough boiling water to cover. After 10 minutes remove them from the water, let cool then peel, deseed and chop the flesh. Set aside.
- Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a frying pan/skillet set over a medium heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring, for about 10 minutes, until the onion has softened but not coloured. Increase the heat and add the flour. Stir to incorporate and cook for 1 minute. Add the wine and let it bubble for 1 minute, deglazing the pan with a wooden spoon.

Remove from the heat and set aside.

- Heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a large frying pan/skillet set over a medium-high heat. Add the Portobello and button mushrooms in batches and fry until lightly brown, adding more oil between batches as necessary. Remove the pan from the heat while you drain the porcini and squeeze out excess liquid (reserving the soaking water for later).
- Chop the porcini and add them to the other mushrooms in the pan, along with the oyster mushrooms. Add the reserved onion mixture, thyme, chilli/hot pepper flakes, tomato purée/paste, chopped fresh tomatoes and 375ml of the reserved porcini soaking liquid.



RECIPE JORDAN BOURKE PHOTOGRAPHY TARA FISHER

- Return the pan to the heat and simmer gently for 20 minutes, until the sauce has thickened. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
- To make the polenta, bring 1 litre water to the boil in a medium saucepan and add the salt.
- Pour in the polenta and stir constantly over a very gentle heat for about 10 minutes, until the polenta is coming away from the sides and is smooth in texture - watch out as it will splatter.
- Add the butter and Parmesan, beat well to combine, taste and adjust the seasoning as required.
- Pour the polenta into a serving dish, ladle on the mushroom stew and sprinkle with the Walnut Gremolata. Serve immediately.

BAKLAVA

Serves 12

200g shelled unsalted pistachios, plus 1
tablespoon extra to serve
100g / ½ cup each of whole almonds and pecan
nuts
150g / ¼ cup coconut palm sugar
a good pinch of sea salt
½ tsp ground cinnamon
¼ tsp ground cardamom
5 tbsp coconut butter or oil, melted
20 filo /phyllo sheets, cut into 15 x 25-cm/6 x
12-in. rectangles

syrup

180ml / ¾ cup pure maple syrup
120ml / ½ cup water
1 cinnamon stick
freshly squeezed juice of ½ orange
freshly squeezed juice and zest of ½ lemon
2 cardamom pods, bashed open

a 15 x 25 cm / 6 x 10 in. cake pan, lined with parchment paper

• For the syrup, place all the ingredients in a saucepan and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for 5 minutes until slightly reduced. Remove from the heat and leave to cool.

- Strain through a sieve/strainer and refrigerate.
- Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F) Gas 4. Place half the nuts and the coconut palm sugar, salt, ground cinnamon and cardamom in a food processor. Blitz until very finely chopped.
- Add in the remaining nuts and blitz until finely chopped, but not quite as finely as the first half, so they have a bit of a bite.
- Using a pastry brush, brush the parchment paper with a little of the melted coconut butter or oil. Place one filo/phyllo sheet into the tray and generously brush with oil, but do not let it pool, repeat 5 times so you have 6 oiled sheets.
- Place half the nut mixture on top and gently spread out. Layer another 6 filo/phyllo sheets on top, oiling each sheet generously.

 Spread the rest of the nut mixture on top and finish with the last 8 sheets of filo/phyllo, brushing with oil as before. Press firmly down

on the baklava so it is well compacted.

- Using a very sharp knife, cut the baklava into bite-sized rectangle or diamond shapes, take your time so as not to tear the pastry. Bake for 45-50 minutes until the pastry is golden brown on top. If it is beginning to burn cover with foil. The filo/phyllo pastry will curl up once baked. However, some people sprinkle water onto their baklava prior to baking to prevent the filo/phyllo from curling up, so you can do it this way if you prefer.
- Immediately, while still hot, pour the cold syrup over the baklava, ensuring it seeps into every crevice. Leave to cool completely before serving. Do not cover or refrigerate as the filo/phyllo will become soggy.
- \bullet When ready to serve, chop the remaining 1 tablespoon of pistachio nuts and sprinkle over the top. ${\bf e}$







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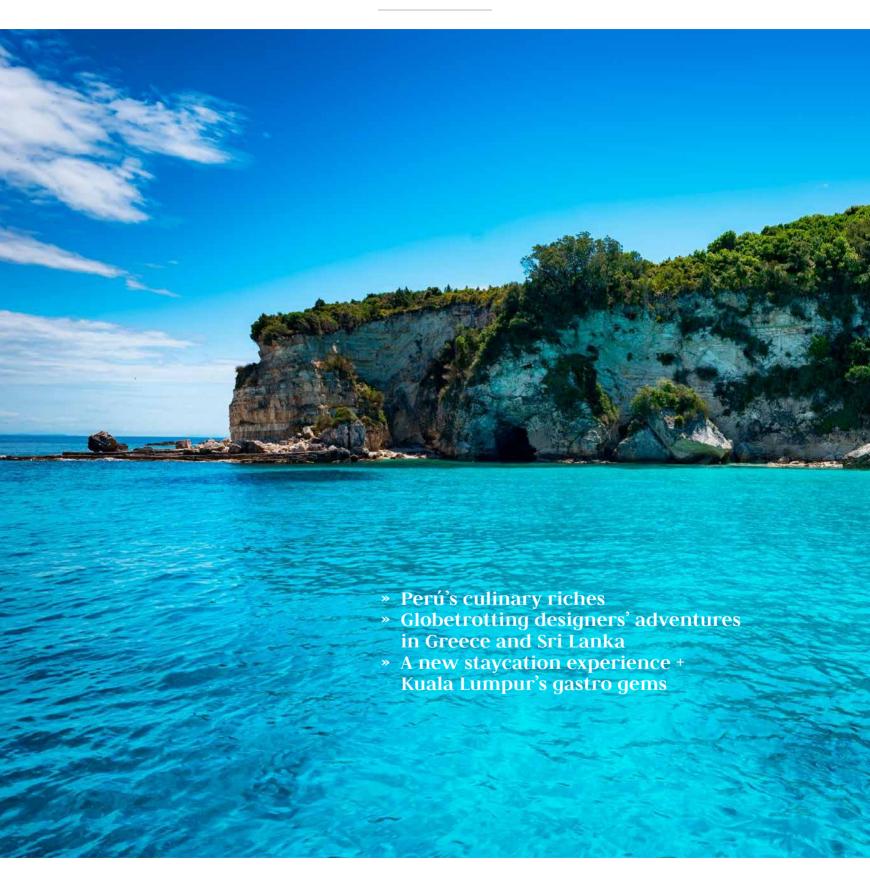
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TRAVEL





ince 1535, Lima, the City of Kings, has been lauded by ancient civilisations for its wealth and strategic location by the sea. Today, she is an ethnic metropolis, shaped by pre-Hispanic, colonial and modern influences. Countless *huacas* or temples dot the valley, particularly the Pachacamac shrine – a major pilgrimage centre during the Incan empire and surrounded by every aspect of nature: ocean, islands, mountains, desert and vegetation. Perúvian gastronomy highlights the best of Latin America – Perú was awarded the title of Cultural Patrimony of the Americas since 2011, awarded by the Organization of American States (OAS). Perúvian culture pays a lot of homage to nature, and it is reflected in the way we let ingredients shine, without camouflaging them with too many flavours or spices. Our food is known not only for its exquisite taste, but also for its variety.

A cultural melting pot

Perúvians have always welcomed foreigners and embraced their cultures and cuisines. The numerous regions, diversity of ingredients and various cultural influences all make Lima a special hotpot of flavours. There is an ample variety of fresh fish and seafood, and abundant local produce such as *ajíes* (Peruvian chillies), citrus, *papa* (potato), *choclo* (white corn) and other vegetables.

In the 19th century, Chinese migrant labourers in Perú set up their own grocery stores and restaurants, and would use the Chinese expression *chi fan* (eating rice) when dining at these restaurants. Perúvians began to associate that phrase with Chinese restaurants, now known as *chifas*. Similarly, fusion Japanese food with a Perúvian twist is termed *nikkei*, and Lima





flaunts a growing number of restaurants where sushi chefs experiment with local ingredients. For instance, *pulpo al olivo* (octopus in olive cream sauce), is a traditional Perúvian-Japanese comfort food creation of thinly sliced, sashimi-style octopus covered in a rich cream sauce flavoured with black Botija olives.

A produce haven

"In another 10 years, Lima will be like Paris – people will come here to eat," says Gaston Acurio, the country's most illustrated chef. Make sure you start your gourmet journey at Gran Hotel Bolivar, widely regarded as one of the places where the famous pisco sour recipe originated.

There are two reasons for Perú's gastronomic boom: first, her ecological and climatic diversity creates a bountiful supply of fresh produce – fish, rice, fowl and goat are the key ingredients





of Perú's north coastal cooking. In the Andes mountain range, the different varieties of potatoes and sweet corn, along with cuy (guinea pig) and ajíes form the basis of highland cooking in dishes such as ají de gallina – diced chicken in a thick cream sauce with ají chilli

pepper and walnuts, served over white rice. The jungle adds its own touch with wild game and *patacones* (fried banana) and *yucca* (cassava or manioc root). Finally, local exotic fruit such as *chirimoya* (custard apple) and the superfruit *lucuma* are used to produce extraordinary desserts. Another much-loved dessert is *mazamorra morada*, in which sweet purple maize jelly is stewed with fresh and dried fruits and spices to form a corn pudding.

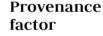
The second reason is the rich mix of Western and Eastern cultural traditions and how Perú seamlessly incorporates new influences to create what has been dubbed the new Peruvian cuisine. Over time, Perú has felt the influence of Spain in its stews and soups, Arabian sweets and desserts, African contributions



through Creole cooking, Italian pastas, and Perú's most popular gastronomic traditions of *chifa*.

Currently, the most common misconception about Perúvian cuisine is that it is identical to Mexican cuisine. They are completely different. The other misconception is that our food is based solely on potatoes because Perú grows more than 5,000 varietals in the Andean mountains. Having said that, you have to try causa limeña rellena, a hugely popular cold appetiser of thickly mashed

yellow potatoes seasoned with *ají* chilli pepper and lemon, and stuffed with tuna, chicken or vegetables. It's amazing. Certainly, the most recognised local dish that represents the coast of Perú is Perúvian ceviche, and while you can find many different interpretations of this dish in other Latin American countries, our ceviches are unique because of three key ingredients: local limes with just the right amount of sweetness; fresh fish and seafood; and *ajíes* – mild yet flavoursome chillies which perfectly complement the citrus notes with hints of heat and spice.



While Perú's culinary landscape is making giant leaps, there is a huge local push for a better understanding of where food comes from and how it is being produced.

This is extremely important given the increased awareness of food wastage. I find that even teenagers

have no idea how seasons affect availability or how meat gets processed. Thankfully, Perú has stepped up as one of South America's leading countries to educate people on the importance of seasonality and how food is grown, so that there is better appreciation of the efforts put in by farmers. I have also seen a big increase in the number of restaurants and chefs who offer seasonal menus to highlight a particular product or ingredient the region is known for. This creates a proud sense of identity in the local community.

Peruvian yellow chillies



of onions). While there, check out Dédalo, which offers a fine selection of art and products fr

Lima's must-dos

Lima's markets are filled with beautiful local produce from all over the country. I highly recommend two hidden gems: Mercado de Magdalena, the open-air local fruits and vegetable market located on Plaza Túpac Amaru in the district of Magdalena del Mar. Another recommendation is the colourful Muelle de Pescadores (Fishermen's Pier) on Agua Dulce beach in the Chorrillos district. This is one of Lima's oldest fish markets, and everything from the food stalls to the vending stalls is still largely managed by fishermen and their families - it's a must-do for all seafood and fish lovers. Restaurant Sonia is a famous family-run local cevicheria there, and it probably has the best parihuela (concentrated broth of fish and shellfish) and ceviche de lenguado (sole ceviche). For another equally popular cevicheria, the beachside La Canta Rana in Barranco has been serving ceviche for more than 26 years and you can't go wrong with anything on its menu.

Today Lima boasts one of the most complete culinary experiences in South America, be it street food, casual or fine dining, especially with three restaurants in The World's 50 Best Restaurants 2017 list, including Maido, Central Restaurante

selection of art and products from independent Perúvian artists and designers.

Lima is also filled with great watering holes such as Ayahuasca Resto Bar, Picas Resto Bar or Cala Restaurant for their delicious tipples and versions of the pisco sour. Alternatively, enjoy a sublime dinner at Restaurant Huaca Pucllana in Miraflores, affectionately known as the house of Novo-Andean cuisine with dishes like goat cheese and fig salad with fresh hearts of palm and gooseberry crust, lamb shanks with *loche* pumpkin risotto, and roasted baby goat with Lima bean *tacu-tacu*. **e**

Alejandro

Peruvian-born, Melbourne-based Alejandro Saravia, 35. is widely credited for introducing Peruvian cuisine to Australia's food culture after his success with A Taste of Peru and Morena in Sydney. In addition to running Pastuso – a hip

and Astrid y Gastón. Barranco,
Lima's hipster-artsy suburb near
Miraflores, is famous for small
and quaint bars and boutiques
steeped in history, but also
for the best local breakfasts.
Pop into Tanta for a breakfast
of croissants and empanadas.
Central Restaurante by Virgilio
Martínez Véliz is one of my
favourite restaurants in that area,
and I recommend the dégustation
menus to experience incredible
ingredients found throughout
Perú at different altitudes.

Head to old Lima for lunch at Taberna Queirolo, a famous old-style casual eatery. I highly recommend the *butifarra* (pork ham sandwich) and the *escabeche de pescado* (a cold dish of fried fish marinated in vinegar, then steamed with generous amounts

cevicheria, pisco bar and Peruvian grill, Saravia is a consultant chef and advocate for Latin American cuisine and culture. In 2017, he became the official F&B ambassador for Gippsland Victoria. He brings his South American heritage to all aspects of his cooking. Saravia has worked in New York, Barcelona, Paris, London and Sydney, and under some of the best chefs, including Heston Blumenthal.





s Valentine's Day draws near, the rush to book a spot in one of Singapore's many fine dining establishments can put a damper on our mood. Rather than compete with the crowds, consider another alternative, a mere one hour's flight away – Kuala Lumpur. Having grown up in the local food paradise that is KL, a recent trip back reminded me of some hidden gems that are perfect for a gastronomic rendezvous, from a well-acclaimed restaurant that champions uniquely Malaysian ingredients, a modern Mediterranean seafood haven in the heart of town, to a mind-blowing tapas hotspot, complete with one of the best views of the city.

BABE: JAPAS FUN DINING

With a sweeping view of Kuala Lumpur's skyline, and its location in an office block in the leafy suburb of Damansara Heights, it's no wonder that it was mostly couples who filled the seats at Babe: Japas Fun Dining. Its name was coined by Japanese-American co-owner and chef Jeff Ramsey; 'Japas', which means Japanese-accented tapas, are as delightful-looking as they are tasty. Having trained under culinary legend José Andrés and earned his first Michelin star during his time as executive chef at Tapas Molecular Bar at the six-star Mandarin Oriental, Tokyo, Babe is reflective of Ramsey's multicultural approach to cooking.

Like Alice in Wonderland, you're encouraged to fall down the rabbit hole with their twelve-course Fun Dining Menu (RM450), where nothing is quite like it seems. I loved the crunchy Lomi Lomi Salmon – Hawaiian salted salmon with tomato and allium in two bite-sized nori cones that resembled *temaki*. The tart flavour of the tomato melded with the slight saltiness of the salmon and nori. A visual surprise came in the form of the Prawn Siu Mai, zesty prawns on a bed of couscous held in a translucent

purple potato cup, displayed on a bed of rainbow coloured pebbles.

The most playful dishes of the night came in the form of Duck & Coke and the 'Steak Sandwich'. A hollowed out Coke can hid a delicious chicken-skin wafer (with the word Babe branded on top) filled with duck confit, foie gras and a sliver of Coke jelly. Another visually arresting – and deceptive – dish was the sandwich. The 'bread' was actually meringue made of tomato water and the 'lettuce', cheese, tied together with slices of juicy beef tongue.

To get the best view, make sure you book one of their poolside tables in advance. With the right balance of fun, ambience, a seasonal menu and a great view, Babe will appeal to those who like their romance to come with a little adventure on the side. 11th Floor, Work@Clearwater, Jalan Changkat Semantan, Damansara Heights, Kuala Lumpur. Tel: +60 3 2095 8599

DEWAKAN

epicure last visited Dewakan in 2016, and this trip confirmed our view that the restaurant is still one of the best fine dining experiences in the Malaysian capital. This is surely due to the love and respect chef Darren Teoh shows when using little-known indigenous Malaysian ingredients. The restaurant name, a portmanteau of the Malay words 'Dewa' and 'Makan' which means 'God' and 'to eat' respectively, was reflected throughout my meal, honouring the hard work of the farmers and fishermen. Amid an elegant and minimalist interior, diners can watch the chefs in action as they work on the fantastic 18-course Kayangan menu (RM370).

The first course was the crowd-pleasing Choy Sum Nori, a celebration of the land and sea. Choy Sum was artfully shaped and seasoned to look and taste like kelp, even down to the tiny



bumps that you normally see on actual kelp. The Mango Curry was smooth and bursting with spices. An ode to one of his grandmother's Keralan dishes, this was one of my favourites – understated and heartwarming. The Bario Rice Porridge consisted of a rare rice variety, which is grown in the rich, fertile soil in the Sarawakian highlands by the Kelabit ethnic group. The soft, pillowy texture of the medium-grain rice, which after being soaked in clam stock to reach the consistency of porridge, was moreish. The acidity from the accompanying *sengkuang* and the juiciness of the beef tongue paired well with the porridge.

Not for the faint of heart was sheep's brain – named What Do Sheep Think With? – on the menu. Sitting on top of Teoh's homemade jackfruit vinegar emulsion, the gelatinous grey matter was as fatty as expected. It was fried, dusted with *kulim* powder, and came topped with dried lamb and *air jambu*. The palatecleansing dish of Tapai and Pickled Rose brought to light the lesser-known *tapai* – fermented rice – which went well with the delicate, pickled rose petals. *Lower Ground Floor, KDU University College, Utropolis Glenmarie, Jalan Kontraktor U1/14*, Seksyen U1, Shah Alam, Selangor. Tel: +60 3 5565 0767

BAIT

This popular Mediterranean seafood restaurant recently opened a second branch in the Intermark, the same glassy building that houses DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Kuala Lumpur. Group executive chef Logan Terence Lopez is a familiar face within the Malaysian F&B circle, and is the driving force behind the buzzing atmosphere and packed tables at BAIT. At the original Bangsar location, one must normally book a table in a day or two in advance.

Couples can expect to savour well-known aphrodisiacs, such as Oyster Selection. The combo of French Fin de Claire and Irish Gallagher oysters was creamy, briny and extremely fresh. The plates are best shared, such as the Cuttlefish slow-cooked in Squid Ink Gravy and the Braised Baby Squid. The former came laid on rectangles of pan-fried polenta, the midnight-coloured cuttlefish a stark contrast against the yellow polenta and the chopped crimson peppers. The latter was a hearty dish, plump baby squid stuffed with saffron flavoured paella and flambéed with rum for a hint of sweetness.

More earthy flavours followed, like the Stuffed Lamb – three fat Peruvian Piquillo peppers bursting with slices of hand-cut lamb, pan-fried with nutmeg-infused oil. While the combination of pan-fried meat and oil could be overly greasy, Lopez balanced the dish with the striking Champagne Blue Cheese Sauce, that will have even naysayers of this pungent cheese nodding their heads in approval. Lot G-19, Ground Floor, The Intermark Mall, 348 Jalan Tun Razak, Kuala Lumpur. Tel: +60 3 2181 1268

SOFITEL KUALA LUMPUR DAMANSARA

Situated opposite DC Mall, which houses a number of eateries, this new hotel is perfect for rolling out of bed for a lazy Sunday brunch, before catching the next flight back. After a busy day bustling around KL, new five-star Sofitel Kuala Lumpur Damansara (opened in August 2017) was a welcoming refuge.

Greeted by name by the friendly bellboys, I was escorted through the sleek marble lobby that reminded me of the new Novotel on Stevens in Singapore - also by the Accor Group. Designed by Wilson Associates (their international portfolio includes The St. Regis Singapore), the 312-room hotel has a quiet air of elegance, and I spotted plenty of couples either strolling through the lobby or making their way to Kwee Zeen, the hotel's all-day dining venue. My Luxury Room was tastefully decorated, French contemporary style, and came with a plush king-sized bed, and a bathtub, rain shower and Lanvin amenities.

Following a long, hot shower, I ended the day by watching a movie, esconced on a dangerously comfortable bed with a warm duvet, I was out like a light.

From now till 28 February, the promotional rate starts at RM438/night for a Luxury Room. No. 6, Jalan Damanlela, Bukit Damansara, Kuala Lumpur.

Tel: +60 3 2720 6688 **e**



Guests can expect bathroom amenities

Lumpur Damansara.

from Hermès and Lanvin at Sofitel Kuala



ncreasingly, staycations are seen as mini breaks and a must-do on many urbanites' time-starved schedules, an opportunity to unwind in-between the next ticket out of town. While there has been no lack of new hotel openings on our island for a quick relaxing fix, the modish Novotel Singapore on Stevens has the makings of an unforgettable city retreat. The perks: an infinity pool, commodious rooms and 14 F&B establishments. Best of all, it is located just outside the Orchard Road belt.

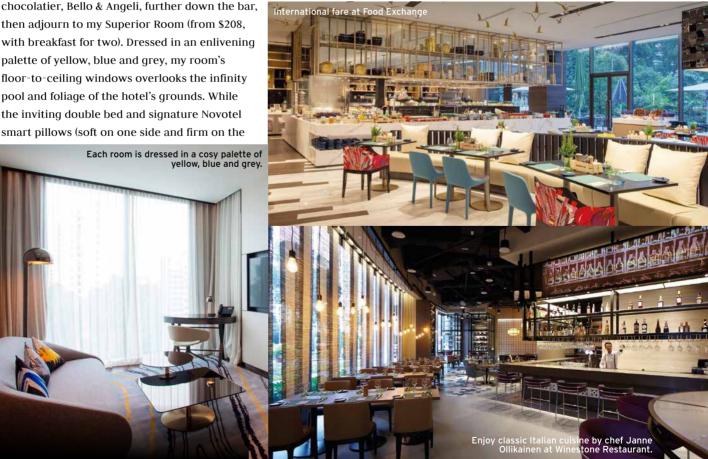
More often than not, I shuffle out of a hotel's lobby without a second thought. Novotel Singapore on Stevens' glass-fronted building, however, sets an atmospheric tone, leading me into the open lobby space and a midday tipple at L'Apéritif Tapas Bar. Families and young couples lounge with their cups of coffee or fresh bakes from Mercure Singapore on Steven's (its sister property) FudeBar right next door.

Post-cocktail, I savour the last of my French Fashion (\$19), a Daron Fine Calvados-based cocktail paired expertly with truffles from award-winning chocolatier, Bello & Angeli, further down the bar, then adjourn to my Superior Room (from \$208, with breakfast for two). Dressed in an enlivening palette of yellow, blue and grey, my room's floor-to-ceiling windows overlooks the infinity pool and foliage of the hotel's grounds. While the inviting double bed and signature Novotel

other) beckon, the delightful Italian fare at Winestone is just as appealing. On top of freshly baked pizzas and cheese platters, the restaurant is also home to an extensive selection of wines, from the famed Rupert & Rothschild to an organic Margaux from Chateau Le Coteau. I make a note to return for future wine tasting events for oenophiles.

With the sheer variety of F&B options at my doorstep, I choose FISK Seafood Bar & Market for some takeaway treats. Some guests are still tucking into their plates of Raw Hand Dived Scallops (\$29) and Atlantic Halibut (\$32), as I make a beeline for the retail front, grabbing the last of their sweet Greenland Prawns and a bottle of Prosecco for a night in.

Come sunrise, the INBALANCE health and fitness centre, situated next to the massive tennis court, helps me work up an appetite for the international spread at Food Exchange, the hotel's buffet restaurant. I sit at one of the few poolside tables, where I choose pancakes, scrambled eggs, Hokkien noodles, and tandoori chicken, served with a fine view of Stevens Road. It was the ultimate staycation, with all the dining options and amenities you'll need in one location. #01-01, 28 Stevens Road. Tel: 6491 6100 e





hat does the opulent Atlas Grand Lobby & Bar in Singapore have in common with The Ribbon, an avant-garde marvel sitting along Sydney's Darling Harbour? Both are the brainchilds of Matthew Shang and Paul Semple, principals of international design studio, HASSELL. The trailblazing duo has been accentuating skylines worldwide with defining venues, which are partly inspired by their travel experiences. From cruising across the Ionian Sea to partying in a 230-year-old warrior fort in Jaipur, their appetite for adventure is ceaseless.

What does it mean to be principals at HASSELL?

Semple: Along with fellow principals, we are an integral part of a multi-talented team spanning Asia, Australia, Europe and the United States. Presently based in Singapore, we will be working on projects locally and regionally. Right now, we are looking at a beach club in Bali, rooftop bar based on Chinese trading junk ships in Sri Lanka, and various restaurants and bars in Malaysia and Indonesia.

As avid travellers, how has it helped you in your line of work? Shang: It's essential. In fact, we have a growing list of architectural masterpieces to visit.

Semple: While the
Ronchamp chapel by Le
Corbusier (decorated
with stained glass
painted by the master
himself) or the aweinspiring textiles houses
by Frank Lloyd Wright are
teeming with inspiration,
our new concepts could
come at any moment.
Once, when in Rome for a



christening, we became intrigued by how fragments of Roman ruins were embedded into its buildings. We incorporated said design into an upcoming restaurant.

How has being avid travellers helped you in your line of work? Semple: We love to visit The Royal Botanic Garden in Sydney. The route from Lady Macquarie's chair offers a spectacular view down the barrel of the harbour to the famed opera house. In Perth, there's Bread in Common and Little Creatures Brewery, but we make time for a road trip to Margaret River for the magnificent coastline along Eagle Bay and Yallingup. A highlight is always ending the trip with lunch at Vasse Felix Tasting Bar, Wine Lounge and Restaurant, followed by a viewing of Janet Holmes a Court's masterworks in the adjoining gallery.

You were recently in Rajasthan. What impressed you there? Semple: Our friend's destination wedding at the Alila Fort Bishangarh, a 230-year old warrior fortress turned luxurious five-star hotel. Perched upon a granite hill, the 360° view of the

Alila Fort Bishangarh



impressive Rajasthani landscape and Mughal detailing (painted arches and carving details) made for a dramatic backdrop for any joyous occasion. Top it off with a prime view of the supermoon flying over the fort, it was a celebration like no other. Shang: We extended the trip with an invigorating stay at Samode Haveli, a 175-year-old residence of Samode's rulers. Their descendants still live within the compound. Semple: What took our breath away was a simple walk through the markets in the wee hours

of the morning.
Vendors could be seen peddling an array of vegetables and flowers held in colourful sacks made of saris and miscellaneous clothes.

You sailed through the Ionian Sea last June. Tell us more. Shang: We went all out for our first sailing experience, and spent a week going from Preveza

to the Ionian islands. We will always remember taking a dip in the emerald waters of Antipaxos' pristine Emerald Bay, and scootering across Paxos to Lakka for a shopping spree. We adjourned to Corfu, a magnificent respite rich in Venetian and Grecian history. While enjoying a pampering night of cocktails and gyros in Old Town, we spotted English actors Jim Carter and Imelda Staunton. Semple: The rest of the weekend was spent catching up with friends at Kolonaki and a birthday celebration on Paros Island in the Aegean Sea. For those heading there soon, we recommend the AthensWas Hotel for its chic. natural interiors and convenient location to the ancient citadel, Acropolis of Athens.

Your destination of choice for a guilty indulgence?

Shang: Sri Lanka, always. We have a small bungalow inland from Induruwa. It's a 10-minute drive away from Geoffrey Bawa's eclectic Lunagunga Estate, where we wandered through its lush gardens and enjoying a wonderful curry lunch. Past the padi fields is Bevis Bawa's exceptional Brief Garden, featuring a mural by Australian artist, Donald Friend. For celebrations, The Villa Bentota is on the top of our list. Paul celebrated his 40th birthday there

alongside a fantastic Sri Lankan feast. They also do a mean arak sour that's great with some hot spiced cashews.

What's your travel plans for the rest of 2018?

Semple: There's Umbria, but we are looking forward to a whole new adventure in the U.S. Not only can we visit friends on both sides of the coast, we can also check out HASSELL's newly established San Francisco office. **e**

DESTINATION HITS

★ Alila Fort Bishangarh

Off NH-8 at Manoharpur, Bishangarh Village, Jaipur, Bishangarh, Rajasthan 303103, India Tel: +91 1422 276 500

★ AthensWas Hotel

Dionysiou Areopagitou 5, Athina 117 42, Greece Tel: +30 21 0924 9954

X Bread in Common

43 Pakenham St, Fremantle WA 6160, Australia Tel: +61 8 9336 1032

★ Brief Garden

Brief Garden Kalawila Village, Beruwala 12070, Sri Lanka Tel: +94 77 350 9290

★ Little Creatures Brewery

40 Mews Road, Fremantle, Western Australia 6160, Australia Tel: +61 8 6215 1000

Lunaganga

Dedduwa, Bentota 32350, Sri Lanka Tel: +94 344 287 051

★ Samode Haveli

Near Jorawar Singh Gate, Gangapole, Jaipur, Rajasthan 302002, India Tel: +91 141 263 2407

★ The Villa Bentota

138/18 - 138/22 Galle Road, Bentota, Sri Lanka Tel: +94 342 275 311

★ Vasse Felix

Caves Road (Cnr Tom Cullity Drive), Cowaramup, WA 6284, Australia Tel: +61 8 9756 500



ILLUSTRATION ELLIOTT CHAN

You're my butter half

What's more nerve-wracking than buying a gift for your beloved on the most romantic holiday of the year? Add on the challenge of him or her being an avid foodie, for whom no fancy bag or shoe will do the trick. Jessica Chan comes up with a (her) list that's sure to pave the way for a successful Valentine's Day, and more to come.

■ he latest Rockstud cross-body bag from Valentino? Or the signature red soles of Christian Louboutin? These beautiful designer gifts have little room in my heart. Rather than the sparkle of a Cartier diamond ring sitting awkwardly on my short stubby finger, my wildest dreams are filled with the gleaming spheres of Royal Reserve Ossetera caviar, hidden within the off-menu Secret Soufflé (US\$2,500/S\$3,352) from Petrossian, New York City. Fragrant wisps of Applewood smoke feathers the smattering of gold leaves, all before chef Richard Farnabe drowns the dish in a lavish flambé of Richard Hennessy (a prized 200-year-old Cognac), adding a slight char to the pristine cloud of egg whites. As exhilarating as it sounds to me, all it garners from my less-than-impressed other half is a loud groan. While in the two years we have been together he has never (or yet) failed to come up with thoughtful gifts – such as an inscribed ring from the limited-edition Monkey 47 Distiller's Cut - his foodobsessed VIP has other ideas on her mind for 2018.

Thankfully, to save him the trouble (and in the name of research), I've come up with the quintessential list that will do no wrong in my book.

The search is for the incomparable, the unsurpassed – perhaps, the San Joaqin Dos (¥2,462/S\$30) from Theobroma, Tokyo? This intricately layered chocolate cake is made of individually baked sheets and ganache. It strikes a stunning balance between the sugars and the bitter yet acidic notes of the chocolate. Chefowner Tsuchiya Koji recommends a Champagne pairing, but I can't help but look for a dram of the coveted White House whisky blend. I can just imagine it. The honey, oranges, cinnamon and smoky notes blending seamlessly with the bittersweet treat. Along the same vein, there's also the 22-year-old barrel aged ice coffee (¥100,000) from The Münch, Osaka. BuzzFeed's Steven and Andrew, in their ever-popular *Worth It!* series, claims the meticulously brewed coffee (taking up to 30 minutes just for the first drop to fall) draws a fine line between a dessert wine and a rich cup of Joe. I

would add a personal bike tour through Modena, Italy, with the gregarious Italian chef, Massimo Bottura (US\$25,000).

As ostentatious as I sound when it comes to savouring the best in life, I have wants that will not drain his bank account. With the rainy season making way for the long summers our island is known for, a picnic comes to mind. Nothing too fancy please. There's no need to pay an arm and a leg for the experience. His phone would have Billie Holiday crooning *Summertime*, as we enjoy glasses of Prosecco along with supermarket cheese, and my all-time favourite Donq Boulangerie's Healthy France loaf (\$4.90, featured in this month's Top 10). While we watch the sun go down on the lush greenery of Labrador Park or Marina Barrage, we would clink our glasses and enjoy the soft evening rays and each other's company.

Regardless of what hides within the specially wrapped boxes, I know very well that shopping for me is no easy feat. He knows my fondness for French butter, but the printed packages from Petite Normand and Le Vieux-Bourg are lost on him, just as much I'm clueless over the supposedly striking difference between a pair of Shure and BOSE earphones.

Gifting is a daunting task and even more so for the people who matter the most. With his clear adoration for whiskies, it's not possible to just grab a bottle off the shelves. Just how do I pick one that will impress his already experienced palate? As much as I consult his fellow colleagues and friends, he will always be one step ahead of me. Online articles do little to help. Top 25 Gifts For Your Man? Who are these men they speak of? Generic leather wallets or engraved coffee mugs are as predictable as they come. Both of us want to pick out something that shows how much we care. If a picture says a thousand words, a gift says much more. It encapsulates the thoughts, considerations and adoration we have for each other. Like me, he is trying his hardest to set up the perfect Valentine's Day. If that doesn't move me, I don't know what will. **e**



STOCKISTS



Bulgari B2-200/207/208 The Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands Tel: 6634 8313

Blancpain B2M-237 The Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands Tel: 6634 8771

Castiglion del Bosco Email: jessicaho.cdb@ gmail.com

CHIJMES

#01-25 Caldwell House 30 Victoria Street Tel: 6837 0953

Chopard #01-03 Ngee Ann City Tel: 6733 8111

Dior #01-22/#02-13 ION Orchard Tel: 6509 8828

Iconic Wines

100D Pasir Panjang Rd Tel: 6262 1975

KAL Wine Source Asia Ground level 45 Niven Road Tel: 6298 9672

Le Rouge @ Raffles Place #01-25 Chevron House 30 Raffles Place Tel: 6532 7992

The Straits Wine Company straitswine.com

Tiffany & Co. #02-11 ION Orchard Tel: 6884 4880



Designed for bon vivants who share the belief that food is the ultimate universal language, *epicure Indonesia* is on an enthusiastic quest to seek out the latest dining trends, sniff out remarkable wine vintages and uncover the dynamics and intricacies of the local and international culinary scene.

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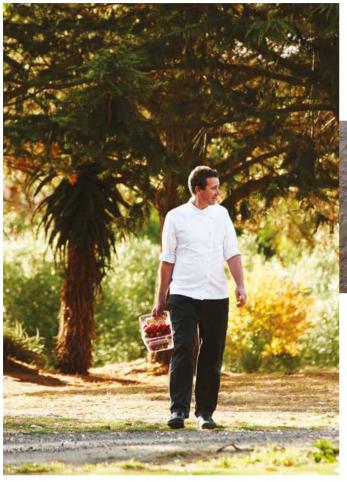
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EPICURE'S CHOICE



Rethink what's on your dinner plates at {Re}Food Forum. Held at Grand Hyatt Erawan Bangkok on 19 and 20 March, the symposium will shine light on issues surrounding waste, farming and the sustainability of Asia's food industry. Chef Dan Hunter of Brae, ranked 44 on The World's 50 Best Restaurants, will join SILO's (the first zero waste restaurant in U.K.) chef-owner Douglas McMaster to talk about land-



care philosophies, farm-to-table dining and more, alongside other influential F&B minds. The chefs will join hands to serve a series of dishes featuring 'ugly' vegetables usually discarded by supermarkets. Tickets are THB1,700 (\$\$70) and THB3,000 for one- and two-day passes respectively. Proceeds will be donated to various charities

involved in sustainable agriculture in Southeast Asia. re-take.asia

Round off your Valentine's Day celebration with To'ak chocolate. Rare Nacional cacao beans, sourced from 100-year-old trees, are fermented in various vessels to bring out unique and remarkable flavours. The Scotch drinker will gravitate towards the Single Malt Islay Cask (US\$355/S\$472), a vintage Ecuadorian dark chocolate, which is made from beans left to age for two years in a cask (that was once home to Islay's peaty single malts, the Laphroaig Scotch whisky). The Andean Adler (US\$355), on the other hand, is aged for three years in said

vessel, giving the sumptuous treat a smoky and herbal flavour, topped by a cranberry-like sweetness. Each bar is presented in a handcrafted Spanish elm box. toakchocolate.com





Embellished with 88 diamonds and four brilliant-cut rubies, Blancpain's limited edition **Villeret Valentine's Day 2018** (\$23,500) is the accessory a lady needs. We like the subtle detailing adding mystique to the coveted timepiece. The mother of pearl dial is embedded with precious gems and a sapphire moon, painting a pretty picture of a star-studded sky, while a silver Cupid's arrow takes the form of a seconds hand. All 99 watches, individually engraved and numbered, come fitted with a striking red alligator leather strap. *B2M-237 The Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands*, *2 Bayfront Avenue. Tel:* 6634 8771



ENSURE YOUR VALENTINE'S DAY IS TRULY MAGICAL

Offering a majestic view of Kuta Beach, The ANVAYA Beach Resort Bali is offering some surprises for enchanting couples during their romantic getaway. Embrace the romance on 14th February 2018 with an exquisite 3 or 4 course dinner with wine pairing under the Balinese moonlight, or enjoy an elegant Megibung dinner with your loved one within the Bali Aga-style ambience and Balinese contemporary architecture of Kunyit Restaurant.



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