

ISSUE 05
WINTER 2021
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Vietnam

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Celebrate



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Feeling Festive, Again



Here we are once more, at the end of yet another extraordinary and difficult year. A year of chaos and turbulence, of lock downs, roller-coaster daily uncertainty, of heartbreak and hope. Yet, despite our apprehension of what is yet to come, the festive season shall not stop us from creating memorable moments for our family and our friends and beloved ones. The charming magic and excitement of all the customary festivities ahead, the cool winter climate and the colors of the lights decorating our streets, feed us with hope and expectation.

And it is that special kind of hope we all need when looking forward to 2022.

Vietnam, especially its tourism and hospitality industry, has experienced a year of constant pain, of loss and separation. Its protagonists, and supporters like us, simply can't wait any longer for our country to wake up from its long paralysis. We are encouraged by the fact that many hotels and resorts have finally reopened their doors to welcome guests with attractive packages, hoping to attract more domestic tourists.

Join us when we discover festive Christmas and New Year offers by restaurants, hotels, and resorts across our country. Hôtel des Arts Saigon, Park Hyatt Saigon, Mia Boutique Resort, and InterContinental Saigon are all offering magical moments and enchanting invitations to explore life at its best.

Don't also miss out on some of the newcomers in our Epicure Vietnam's Winter Edition - such as the rebooted Nomu Izakaya, or the new destination for brunch lovers, Square One at Park Hyatt. Or how about learning how to make the perfect roast, or creating your very own cocktail at home with the help some of our talented mixologist contributors.

Whether you are tourist or a local resident, please allow Epicure Vietnam to be your personal culinary guide to the latest trendy bars, new restaurants, or simply some of the delicious recipes from our supportive Chefs.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays.

Jade Huynh

Publisher



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WORTHY HEIR OF BARON PHILIPPE DE ROTHSCHILD IN CHILE



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LEONIE BRUT**



"Leonie Cuvee is a remarkable champagne, the result of the most precise selection of grapes with the best ripeness and the perfect time of storage, all so carefully calculated". Laurent Férou, Cellar Manager.

Cuvee Leonie Brut Champagne has a pale yellow color and a stimulating smooth lather. The aroma of this champagne is of a complex medley of tropical fruits, dried flowers and toasted bread. The champagne has a fresh expression with special notes of pineapple with a lovely long and fruity after taste.

Canard-Duchene Cuvee Leonie Brut Champagne pairs perfectly with dishes such as foie gras, smoked meat, ginger-roasted sea bass or chicken cooked with truffles. Chill this champagne precisely to 6 degrees for the perfect drinking experience.

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Hedonism Wine Hub – 35 Xuan Thuy, District 2, HCMC.

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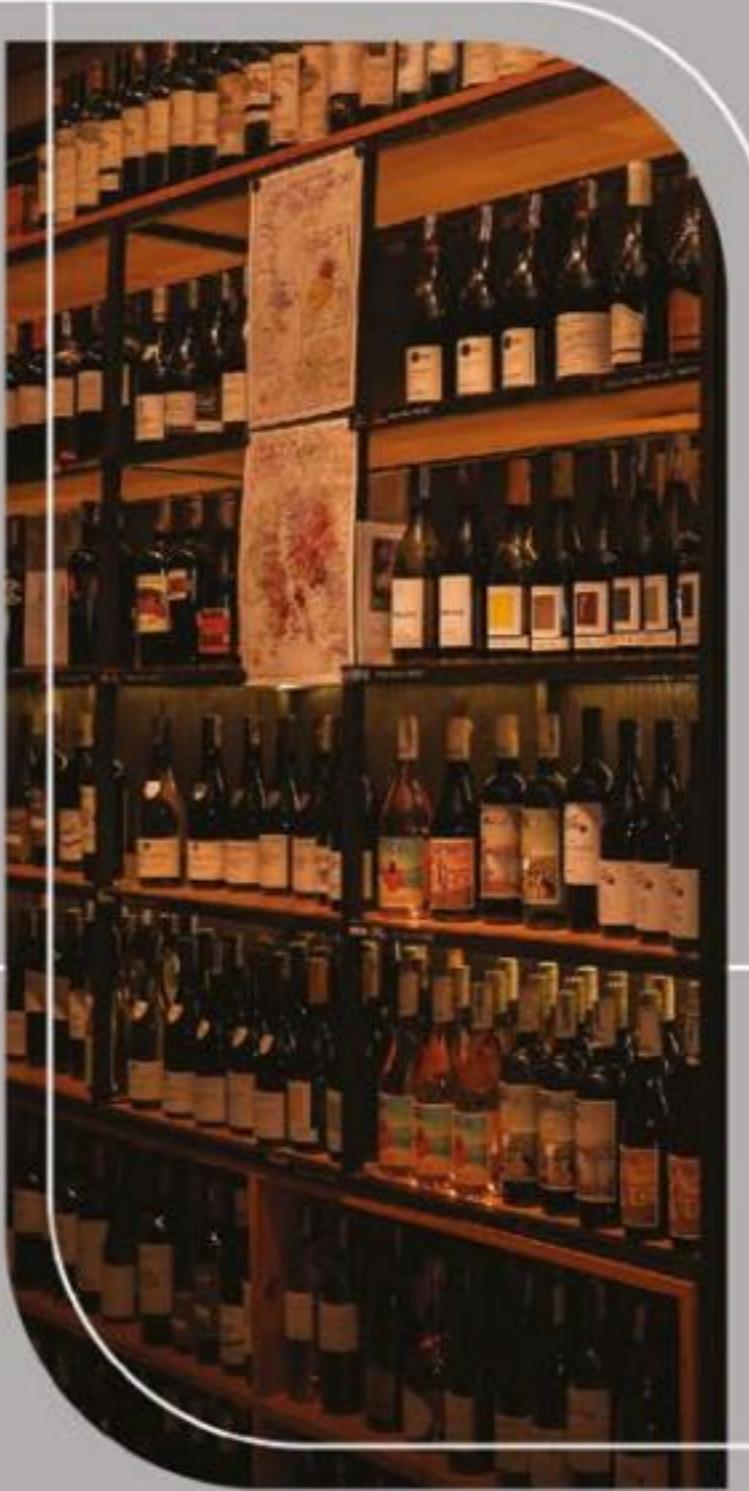
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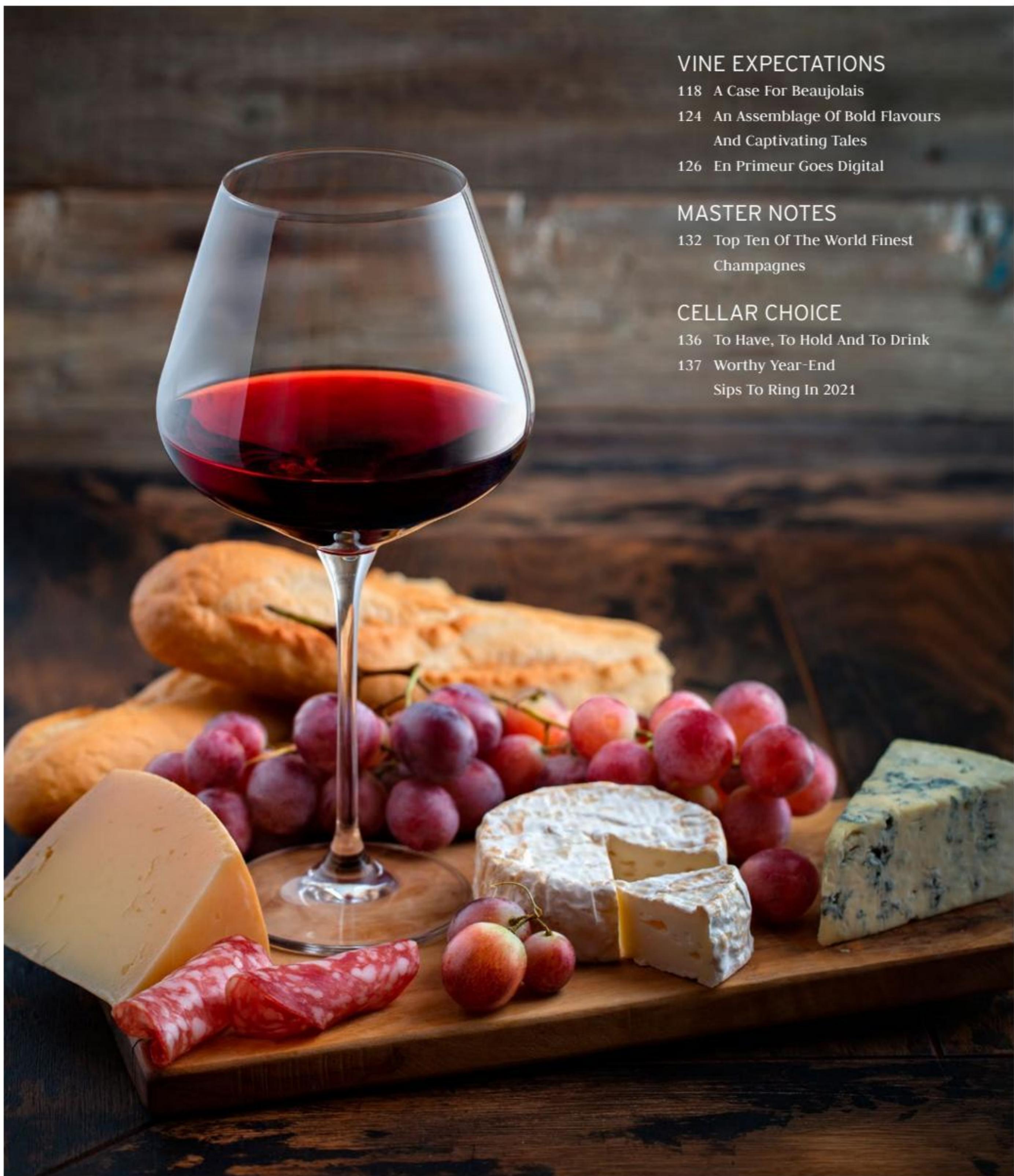
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▲ REBOOT YOURSELF AT NOMU IZAKAYA

Located in the heart of Saigon's District 1, Nomu Izakaya is a modern Japanese Izakaya recently taken over by Chef Adrian Chong. The Chef & Founder of Sol Kitchen and Bar in Districts 1 and 7. Drawing some inspiration from Spanish cuisine, Nomu Izakaya debuts inventive culinary dishes that infuse the playfulness of tapas with the belief in the sanctity of freshness anchored in the core of Japanese cuisine. Dishes to be expected include bestsellers like truffle & ponzu angel hair pasta with hand-picked crab, scallop with wasabi aguachile, as well as steak tartare with smoked salmon roe. On the liquid front, Nomu does a bespoke selection of hand-selected wines, sake, and classic cocktails such as Mezcal Sour, Saketini, or Vietnamese coffee martini. In keeping with its ethos of being a casual and laid-back destination, Nomu presents a sleek and minimalist design, accompanied by an ambient low light and cool concrete tabletops, giving rise to a sultry evening vibe. *152 Nguyen Cong Tru, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. www.facebook.com/nomu.vn*

CIDER CREATIONS FROM THE CITY OF LOVE

Thanks to the ongoing popularity of craft beer pubs and eateries in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam is on the way to becoming one of Asia's better known destinations for locally-made craft brews. Recently a new player is making a splash in the local scene by presenting a range of ciders made with ingredients from Vietnam's most fertile region - the rolling hills and mountains of Da Lat. Thi Nguyen, formerly with Saigon's East West Brewing, has taken the knowledge gained from her employment, and added the connections from her hometown to create delicious flavors. The range features some of Da Lat's more standout ingredients, such as classic apple, berries, and even pineapple. Not only are these fruity, tart, and crisp ciders the perfect cooling refreshment in Saigon's sweltering heat, they promote local farmers and help Vietnamese families. *Tel: +84 913 060 728 www.dalatcider.vn*





LET YOUR DREAM VACATION SET SAIL

Sailing Club Signature Resort in Phu Quoc calls itself 'your dream villa on an island'. With its tropical vibes and located along the famous Long Beach, this gem is ideal for families and friends searching for an escape from the urban bustle and hustle. All together 100 spacious two- and three-bedroom villas, each fully-equipped with a kitchen, family-size dining area, luscious garden and private pool, invite for a rewind and reboot. For dinner, try the catch-of-the-day at Sandals, the resort's gourmet marketplace, and savour it either within the restaurant itself, or in the comforts of your own villa. The attentive personal touch of the resort's professional staff also extends to its kids club, the boutique shop, and the spa and gym. Our favourite thing to do is to sip wine while lazing in one of the resort's private cabana while watching the sun set over the ocean. *Groupe 6, Duong Bao Hamlet, Duong To Commune, Phu Quoc City, Kien Giang Province, Vietnam. Tel: +84 942 131 0555*

▼ A HYBRID CAFE & WINE BAR IN SAIGON

Developed and driven by a trio of hospitality experts - Kel Norman (operations), Dan Van Sousanis (wine) and Will Frith (coffee), BEL is an innovative retail concept serving the beautifully balanced Building Coffee and much more. An unpretentious, laid-back addition to the Pham Viet Chanh area, BEL serves a day-to-night menu of Building Coffee, Panini, Charcuterie, Banan desserts, and a thoughtfully curated wine list with over twenty offerings by the glass. The layout is comfortable and cozy, with outdoor seating, friendly service and a convenient location in a quiet alley. BEL is a superb choice to kick-start your morning and relax over lunch, and is becoming known as a perfect staging post to gather friends for a glass of wine or two before a great night out. The must try coffee option has to be the Oatly Pandan Latte, and top tipple is something sparkling that you can't miss: Chevalier Brut Blanc de Blancs. *40/8 Pham Viet Chanh, Ward 19, Binh Thanh District, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Tel: +84 77 780 10 81*



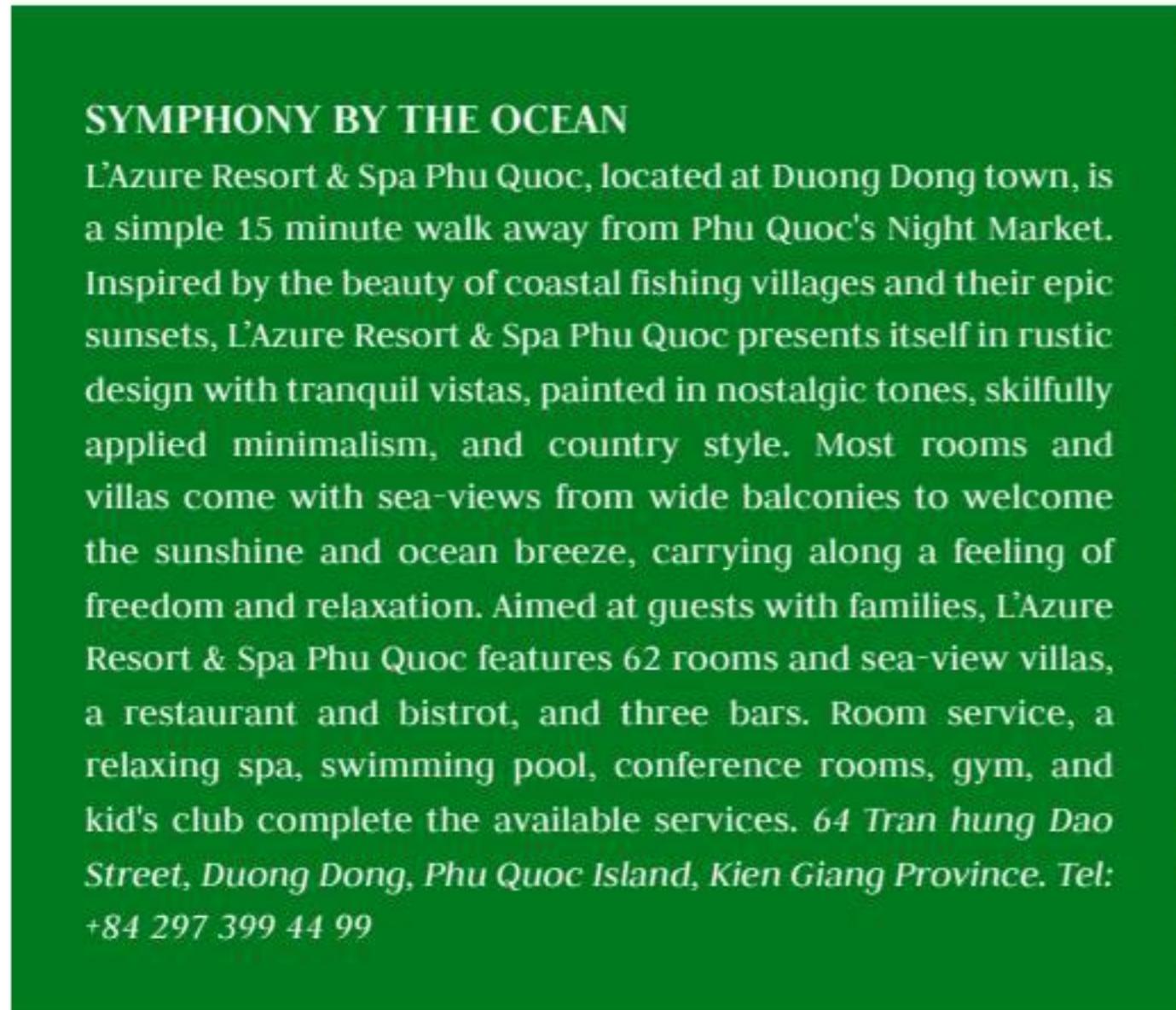
▼ WHEN INDIAN TRADITION MEET CHINESE FUSION

Whether you're in the mood for the spicy tang of Chicken Tikka Masala, the creamy indulgence of cheesy Palak Paneer, or a fluffy and fresh Naan bread with delicious garlic or chili flavours, Biryani House in Saigon's Thao Dien ward is ready to satisfy your cravings. One of Saigon's recent newcomers, Biryani House opened in 2020 and quickly became a neighbourhood favourite. Their menu is a standout among Saigon's Indian eateries, featuring a broad variety of Northern and Southern Indian dishes. In addition, their Indian-Chinese fusion rice and noodle dishes are tempting, such as Chicken Manchurian, made by deep-frying chicken, seafood, lamb, vegetables, and Paneer, then sauteeing them in a soy-based sauce. Other unique dishes are Hakka Noodles and Momo Dumplings, and they are sure to make your culinary adventure at Biryani unique and memorable. *08 Nguyen Cu Street, Thao Dien, Thu Duc Province, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Tel: +84 388 485 855*



▲ RELISH IN PICKLE PARADISE

Sweet, tangy, tart, spicy, savoury, for many of us, few things beat the fresh, satisfying crunch of your favourite pickle straight from the jar. This comfort food found in our refrigerators is what inspired the founders of Pickles Eatery to create a concept dining experience dedicated to this beloved treat. And it's not just gherkins! Here you'll find a wide variety of pickled vegetables, brine types, maturation times, and zesty spices. Located in Binh Thanh's lively Nguyen Cong Tru area adjacent to Pham Viet Chanh, Pickles Eatery invites you to sit back and enjoy a charming, vintage shop house with a cozy atmosphere. Menu options include an array of wine and tapas, plus a full brunch (or as they affectionately call it, "Munch"), a dinner, and a cafe menu. Ingredients are hand-picked and locally sourced, and the menu is crafted around seasonal availability. *83 Nguyen Cong Tru Street, Ward 19, Binh Thanh District, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Tel: +84 90 455 18 12*



SYMPHONY BY THE OCEAN

L'Azure Resort & Spa Phu Quoc, located at Duong Dong town, is a simple 15 minute walk away from Phu Quoc's Night Market. Inspired by the beauty of coastal fishing villages and their epic sunsets, L'Azure Resort & Spa Phu Quoc presents itself in rustic design with tranquil vistas, painted in nostalgic tones, skilfully applied minimalism, and country style. Most rooms and villas come with sea-views from wide balconies to welcome the sunshine and ocean breeze, carrying along a feeling of freedom and relaxation. Aimed at guests with families, L'Azure Resort & Spa Phu Quoc features 62 rooms and sea-view villas, a restaurant and bistro, and three bars. Room service, a relaxing spa, swimming pool, conference rooms, gym, and kid's club complete the available services. *64 Tran hung Dao Street, Duong Dong, Phu Quoc Island, Kien Giang Province. Tel: +84 297 399 44 99*



▼ A WINE LOVER'S LATEST PARADISE

Founded by the great minds behind Heart of Darkness Brewery, Cellar Wine Bistro is aiming high at becoming one of Saigon's premier wine and food destinations. With its intimate atmosphere and friendly service, wining and dining here quickly feels like visiting a close friend, rather than a public bar. Featuring a selection of over 150 fine wines, Cellar Wine Bistro takes you on a journey to Napa Valley, Bordeaux, Tuscany and beyond, all this right in Saigon's central District 1. Their wines are only half the story though - an extensive wine pairing menu features mouthwatering in-house creations like Israeli stuffed dates, cod ceviche, and even a marinated Wagyu flank steak. Whether you're a wine expert or a novice drinker, Cellar's attentive sommelier is at your service to suggest just the right pairing to suit your particular taste or craving. *31D Ly Tu Trong Street, Ben Nghe Ward, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Tel: +84 90 301 75 96*



▲ THE NEXT LEVEL OF VENDING MACHINES

Vending Machines Vietnam (VMV) providing clients with modern Japanese and European equipment from brands like Azkoyen and Zummo. Offering a range of capable of dispensing snacks, freshly ground, brewed coffee, and freshly squeezed orange juice. Over the years, the Company has established and provided the equipments to Vietnam's leading companies, such as VinGroup, Aeon, Deloitte, FV Hospital, Savills, RMIT. The vending machines offer cash payments, cashless & touchless options for more seamless and hygienic experience. Features LED lighting, transparent presentation for easy viewing, expiry control system preventing the sale of expired products add to the appeal and make these machines user-friendly and ergonomic. The motto "Peace of Mind" is the Company philosophy, which offers free installation and maintenance services for all machines across Vietnam. *For more information, visit www.vendingmachinesvietnam.com or email: info@vendingmachinesvietnam.com*

DINING IN "THE LOG"

One step into The Log, and you'll understand why this restaurant is unlike other dining experiences in Ho Chi Minh City. A feast for the senses, marked by the distinctive glow of wood paneling, embellished with gorgeous retro-modern lighting and furniture, its lush greenery is punctuated by wall-mounted moose heads. Imagine walking onto the set of a classic Bond film, or a 1960's noir-esque drama, and you get the idea. The natural vibe is inspired by the surrounding heritage trees and greenery found in Saigon's central. Nestled atop the GEM Exhibition Center, this is a special fine dining experience suitable, while remaining accessible for any party, family gathering, or intimate evening with your loved ones. The Log curates experiences with in-style fusion cuisines, from aperitif to meals à la carte, or a luxurious buffet. Customers can enjoy dining indoors or an "al fresco" experience in the garden. *Rooftop, Gem Center, 8 Nguyen binh Khiem, Da Kao, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Tel: +84 97 500 22 88*



▼ IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE MAGICAL ATMOSPHERE

Sheraton Saigon Hotel & Towers invites you and your dearest ones to immerse in the magical atmosphere of the holiday season over a selection of enticing festivities. Create lasting memories with top-notch gastronomy offered throughout all the restaurants, Saigon Café, designed for both Christmas and New Year's buffet with a diverse choice of premium seafood and traditional festive highlights. Price 1,688,000 VND++ per pax for dinner buffet and 1,280,000 VND++ per pax for a brunch buffet. For a cozy and intimate Christmas gathering, the exclusive 7-course dinner menu is available at Li Bai restaurant on 24 & 25 December at VND 1,280,000++ per person while Level 23 Signature introduces Christmas & premium set menu on 24th and 25th December from 2,200,000 VND++ per pax to 5,500,000 VND++ per pax and New Year's Eve set menu 2,500,000 VND++ per pax. *88 Dong Khoi, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Tel: +84 28 3827 2828*



▲ CREATING MEMORABLE MOMENTS

At Hôtel des Arts Saigon, creating memorable moments for family, and friend and beloved ones is the Hotel's specialty. For a magical experience and enjoy the Festive moments, indulge yourself in sensational gastronomic delights and premium spirits at the hotel's award-wining culinary experiences restaurants and get ready to kick-off the party to welcome 2022 at one of the best rooftops in Saigon. The Festive's Package offers The Holly Jolly Journey Staycation Package where you can stay and celebrate your Christmas & New Year at Saigon Kitchen, Social Club or pamper yourself with Saigon famous Epic Brunch. *78 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai Street, District 3, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Tel: +84 28 3989 8888. Email: h9231-sl2@accor.com*

CHRISTMAS GLOWS WITH LOVE

It's undeniable that the Festive Season is the most anticipated celebration of the year, with people bonding over food and building relationships through gatherings. Herald the merriment season in style with a tantalising spread of holiday delights and book a festive feast at InterContinental Saigon with joyful array of delectable dining offerings. Embrace the Yuletide joy at Market 39 with an international buffet including a premium collection of seafood spread along with all the traditional items and savour all the best of Christmas and New Year specialties with Nha Trang Lobster, New Zealand Black Mussel, Roasted Turkey with Truffle oil, foie gras and cranberry sauce with a Festive Packages at Market 39 from 1,590,000 VND++ per person for Buffet Dinner to 2,590,000 VND++ for Christmas & New Year's Eve and 2,790,000 VND++ for Christmas Brunch Buffet. For Italian Food Lovers, Basilico Restaurant offers Christmas & New Year Eve a lavish selection of Antipasto feast and delicately crafted menu with an opulent choice from Ravioli filled with black trumpet mushroom, ricotta, nutmeg butter sauce and Parmesan, or Grilled Tasmanian salmon served with asparagus, cauliflower cream, caramelized cherry tomatoes and classic lemon butter sauce for only 1,490,000++/person including Prosecco, house wines, beers, cocktails, and soft drinks. *Corner Hai Ba Trung St. & Le Duan Blvd., District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Tel: +84 28 3520 9433*



▼ A FEAST FOR THE SENSES

Mia Saigon's is the ideal venue for any festive holiday gathering this season, and there's no shortage of occasions to celebrate. Enjoy a festive afternoon tea on Saturday and Sunday from 2-5pm with assortment of Christmas-themed treats and live piano music and celebrate your festivities in style by the river with a Christmas Eve Dinner Buffet, a Christmas Day Brunch Buffet, and a Chill & Grill Sunday BBQ on December 26th. For New Year, the resort offers the New Year Eve's Dinner Buffet and New Year Day's Brunch Buffet, and a Sunday BBQ on January 2nd. Not only are these events worth checking out, your sweet and savoury cravings will be satisfied by the holiday hamper, including homemade goodies, like wild berries, rhubarb jam, traditional fruit cake, a bottle of red wine and much more. *For booking: 2-4 Street No. 10, An Phu Ward, Thu Duc City, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Tel: +84 28 628 74 222*



▲ ONCE UPON A TIME IN WONDERLAND

This Christmas season, Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi celebrates "Once Upon a Time", as it transforms into a winter wonderland complete with classic-style nutcrackers. Bringing the holidays to life with renowned French sophistication and joie de vivre, the Metropole will host exclusive dining events throughout the season. Festivities kick off on Christmas Eve with two signature buffet dinner seatings at Le Club, along with set menus of French gourmet cuisine at the Festive Wonderland by Le Beaulieu. European and New World cuisine is available at Angelina. Christmas Day brings an extravagant buffet lunch or a multi-course set dinner, again at the Festive Wonderland by Le Beaulieu and Angelina, plus a buffet dinner at Le Club. *15 Ngo Quyen Street, Hoan Kiem District, Ha Noi, Vietnam. Tel: +84 24 3826 6919 ext. 8215*



FEEL AT HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Christmas at The Reverie Saigon is always an epic festive celebration. Join in on the merry-making with a festive gourmet menu, available all throughout December at Café Cardinal. Enjoy traditional holiday dishes, expertly curated from France and throughout Europe. Located high above the city skyline, Café Cardinal is an ideal setting for a more casual gathering while enjoying scenic views over down town Saigon. Indulge in High Tea from 2-5 pm every day, featuring festive holiday treats to enjoy with friends and family. And once you are ready, head over to the Royal Pavilion for a unique twist on authentic Cantonese cuisine, prepared especially and uniquely for Christmas and the New Year's Eve and New Year's Day holidays. Or gather with your loved ones as you raise a glass of Champagne at The Long while counting down to 2022. To add glamour to your own holiday parties and for last-minute gifts, be sure to check out The Reverie Boutique. Chances are they'll have the perfect sweet treats and decorative cakes for any festive occasion. *22-36 Nguyen Hue Boulevard & 57-69F, Dong Khoi Street, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Tel: +84 28 3823 6688*

CHRISTMAS IN CANDYLAND

Now that you've dined on the perfect roast, it's time for dessert. While you can't go wrong with a traditional log cake, these new flavours deliver unique twists to the festive staple and will thrill anyone with a sweet tooth.

BY NIDA SEAH



▲ ONE FARRER HOTEL

Try a festive dessert with a local twist – the Ondeh Ondeh Yule Log Cake (\$58). Be nice as you dig into a slice made with pandan coconut dacquoise and gula melaka buttercream, or be naughty with other treats such as the Lemon & Blueberry Stollen drenched in red wine (\$22), and Golden Longan & Pecan Nut Fruit Cake with Grand Marnier (\$28). orders.onefarrer.com/en_sg

▼ FAIRMONT SINGAPORE

Fairmont's sweet offerings are given a whimsical touch this year, and they taste as good as they look. The Mushroom Toadstool with Hazelnut Financiers (\$120) are decked with sugar Santa figurines and will transform your festive celebration into a fairytale fantasy. A pair of adorable Santa's Booties (\$42) houses bite-sized French macarons that are infused with local flavours like lychee and rose water. fairmontathome.com/collections/christmas-at-home





◀ HOTEL FORT CANNING

Sure, there's the Classic Chocolate Log, Gingerbread House and Rich Fruit Cake, but with three new tantalising flavours, you will be in for a sweet surprise. Opalys Dream (\$68) is a citrusy creamy treat; Gianduia Yuzu Cocoa (\$68) has Gianduia mousse and yuzu cremeux wrapped in cocoa sponge; and White Forest (\$68) is a delightful combination of vanilla mousse, Kalingo dark chocolate cremeux and sour cherry gelee. linktr.ee/HFCFestives



▲ PAN PACIFIC SINGAPORE

The hotel's pastry team presents not one or two but four new log cake flavours. Strawberry Lemon Log Cake (\$83.46) wows with its stunning hue of red and a refreshing flavour combination of Valrhona strawberry chocolate mousse, strawberry compote, lemon curd and a hint of white wine. The Hazelnut Praline and Yuzu Gateaux (\$87.74) may look simple but is a decadent treat with yuzu crèmeux, yuzu peel and hazelnut jivara milk chocolate mousse on a crunchy feuilletine base. Other two flavours include Sea Salt Caramel Chocolate Tart and the tropical Vanilla Mango Passion Log Cake. ppsinshop.com

▼ GOODWOOD PARK HOTEL

It's a fruity Christmas at Goodwood Park Hotel. The White Enchantment Log Cake (\$88) is a tangy dessert on a Sablé breton base, with pistachio sponge, pear mousse, yuzu cream and white chocolate baubles, while the Assorted Berries Baked Cheese Loaf is generously topped with blueberries, raspberries, and strawberries. But the most striking is the Festive Fruity Mousse Cake (\$78), a vibrant pink cake shaped like a Christmas wreath. Homemade raspberry jam is layered between Viennese sponge cake, lychee-whipped white chocolate ganache, and apple mousse. goodwoodparkfestive.oddle.me



SQUARE ONE

Destination for Brunch Lovers

Square One's Sunday Brunch is a unique dining experience in Saigon, bringing together the diverse and rich cultural traditions of France and Vietnam into one culinary journey of discovery.

Located in a prime location in Ho Chi Minh City's Lam Son Square, overlooking the newly reopened Saigon Opera House and promenade, Park Hyatt Saigon reflects the nostalgia of Saigon's French colonial history with its tranquil elegance and sophisticated, refined design. Known for its distinguished dining experiences, Park Hyatt Saigon allures guests with enticing flavours from different award-winning F&B outlets, curating thrilling culinary adventures expertly designed by renowned masters in the industry.

Positioned on the mezzanine floor of Park Hyatt Saigon mansion, Square One is where guests enjoy fine culinary indulgences, while creating blissful memories with friends and family. Combining both Vietnamese and French spirits, Square One stands out like no other thanks to its impressive art collection amidst the luxurious yet welcoming ambiance.

The à la carte menu rotates quarterly to highlight different aspects of these two diverse, rich culinary traditions. With each changing season, Square One artfully crafts "a bridge between





both worlds", while still highlighting each country's best flavours for a unique and unforgettable experience.

Keeping sustainability in mind, all ingredients are carefully sourced from local farms, preserving the "farm to table" approach. Designed by both French and Vietnamese Chefs de Cuisine, the Sunday Brunch menu features 31 distinctive dishes, including seven starters, seven sides and condiments, six main courses, seven sweet treats and four Chef-signature dishes.

Each dish undergoes a meticulous, unbiased, strict taste-test and is constantly improved throughout a months-long journey of culinary refinement before becoming a featured item in this esteemed collection.

"Since it's not fusion but more of a parallel journey of two world-renowned cuisines, we and the team aim for a smooth combination," the chefs say. "So you can try the all-time French classic, pâté en croûte...then decide to immerse yourself in the street spirit of Com Tam right after that – it's still so relevant."

Not only will your taste buds be delighted, dining at Square One is a multi-sensory experience with amusing and unrivaled tableside service to ensure a memorable experience for each discerning guest.

Sunday Brunch is available every Sunday, from 12 noon to 3pm at Square One Restaurant. Your choices of three packages of absolute indulgence are:

• **LE GOURMAND**

Free flow of food, including soft drinks
VND 1,000,000

• **LE DIMANCHE PARISIEN**

Including free flow of Bisol Belstar Prosecco
DOC Brut, house wines, cocktails, soft drinks
VND 1,590,000 + Champagne free flow
Veuve Clicquot Yellow Label Brut 990

Prices are subject to 5% service charge
and then 7% VAT.

2 Lam Son Square, District 1,

Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Vietnam

T: +84 28 3520 2359

E: squareone.saiph@hyatt.com





CHANH BISTRO

Feel Your Rooftop Fantasy

Immerse yourself in a verdant, vibrant world of culinary delights and handcrafted cocktails. Chanh Bistro's rooftop dining space is perfect for group celebrations, or an intimate date with that special someone.

Perched on a rooftop along a peaceful stretch of Ly Tu Trong Street, just blocks away from Ben Thanh Market, Chanh Bistro's colourful garden vibes and urban scenery are part of what makes this boutique bistro a standout among Saigon's casual yet sophisticated dining establishments. Chanh's rooftop is relaxed and open while still feeling intimate and private, with lots of trees and plants giving it a mellow and airy aesthetic—perfect for dates or group gatherings. With Western and international inspired cuisine and cocktails, Chanh's menu includes crowd pleasing options like a tender and juicy lamb shank, a pan-fried foie gras, linguine scampi and a chocolate fondant. Plus, for the festive

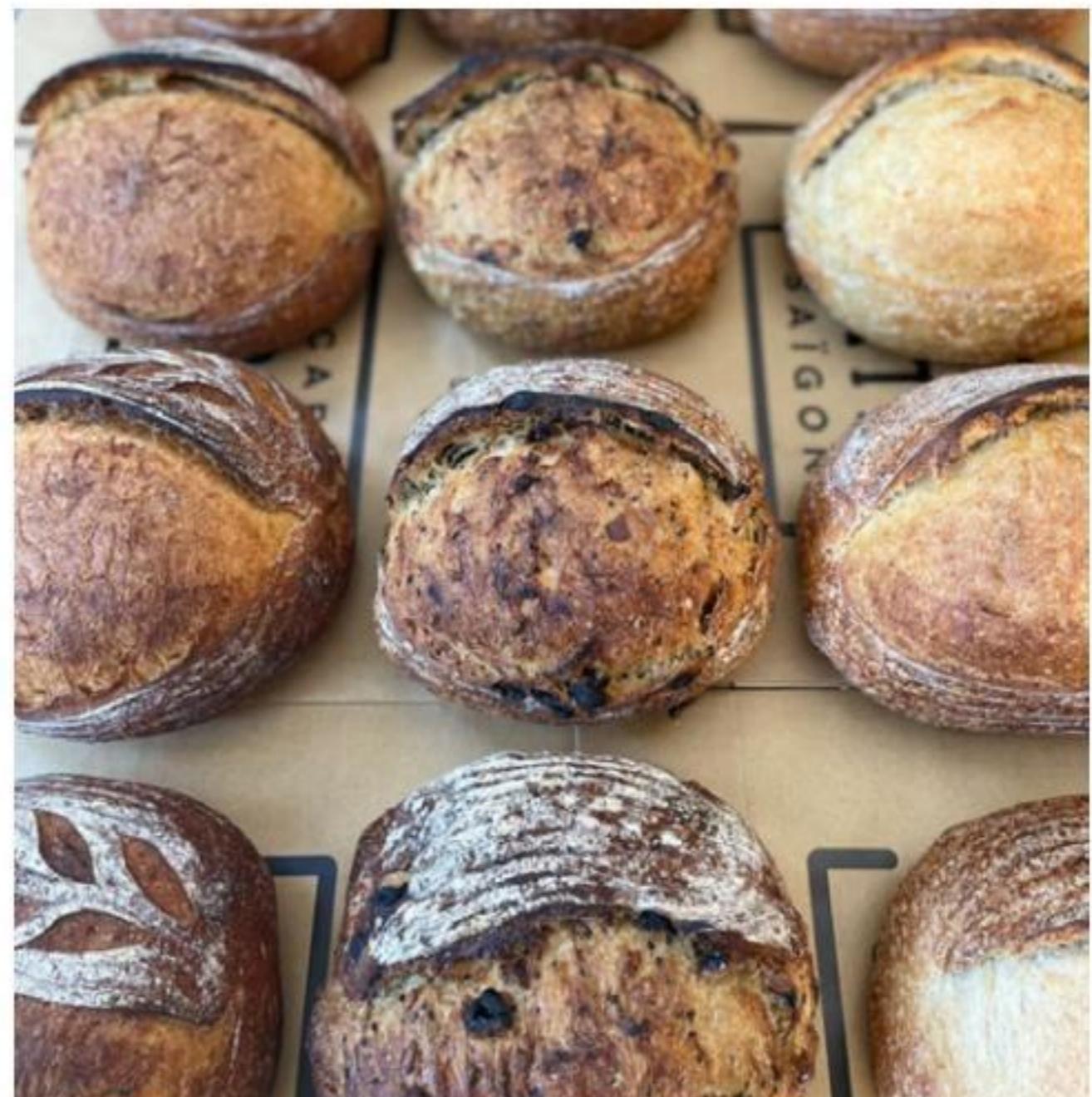
season, guests can choose from meat-stuffed roasted turkey and honey-glazed ham. You can pop in for a boozy brunch every day from 10:30 am until 3 pm, with an a-la-carte or set menu plus the option of free-flow drinks. Or enjoy an afternoon treat with happy hour specials on wine by the glass, spirits, and cocktails available from 2 pm until 6:30 pm. Our advice: book in advance, as Chanh tends to fill up quickly.

215 Ly Tu Trong, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City
(near the Ben Thanh market)
Tel: +84 903 838 60

TARTINE BAKERY

Go Way Beyond Bread

Tartine goes above and beyond, pushing the limits of what a bakery-cafe in Saigon can offer with a broad array of home-made goods and artisan sourdough bread made fresh daily.



A thick, perfectly crispy crust opens up to a soft center, and the unmistakable aromatic tang of artisan sourdough bread fills the air. It's Tartine Bakery's signature, and it's what keeps Saigon's bread lovers coming back for more. Founders Phuong and Jerome founded Tartine as a passion project, and now bake several fresh batches of artisan goods every day, using high quality, house-milled whole wheat flour and natural yeast cultures. Beyond bread, Tartine's fare includes a variety of home-made spreads, dips, raw kombucha, vegan substitutes, and more. They can be found throughout Saigon in various retail shops in most districts. Their bakery-cafes in D1, D2 and Binh Thanh include a broad menu of sweet and savoury dishes, with highlights including their must-try Truffle Eggs Benedict (perfect for brunch). Plus, catch their daily happy hour from 3-7 pm for specials on wine by the glass, spirits, and cocktails. All locations have an easygoing, chill vibe with access to their entire array of fresh-baked breads and pastries.

Tartine Saigon: • District 1 • Binh Thanh • Thao Dien (near Tropic Garden)
• An Phu (near Masteri An Phu) • Vista Verde



THE FINEST CUT

Meat lovers will find perfectly broiled steaks and more at Wolfgang's Steakhouse Singapore, a restaurant that thrives on exceptional food and service.

BY NIDA SEAH



100% USDA Prime Petite Filet Mignon, Honey Baked Ham, Herb-infused Potatoes and Seasonal Vegetables

Mention steakhouse, and most diners will think of comfort food – smoky cuts of meat and seafood, pasta, baked potatoes and salads – served in indulgent portions in a warm inviting atmosphere. There's a certain nostalgia to such establishments, complete with white tablecloths, gleaming cutlery, attentive staff and a menu that does not stray too far from the familiar.

Wolfgang's Steakhouse (not to be confused with a similarly named restaurant at Marina Bay Sands) is all that and more; it is a haven for the hungry who just want to kick back with fellow well-heeled patrons and dine quietly on good food and wine.

Executive chef See Tok Hoong Yew certainly agrees. "There are numerous steakhouses in Singapore but I feel that every place has their own special touch that leaves an impression on their guests. For us, besides the service, food and ambience, I feel that our place has always brought memorable moments for our guests, especially when they choose to celebrate their special occasions with us," he says.

The steakhouse at Intercontinental Singapore Robertson Quay is decked in dark caramel and walnut hues where elegant chandeliers bathe the dining hall in a soft glow. Behind its wood-panelled walls are two private dining rooms lined with an impressive display of new and old age wines where each bottle has been selected for its unique flavour profile. There are more in its wine cellar should you want to indulge in wine-pairing or toast to a special occasion.



Wolfgang's Steakhouse



A PERFECTED CRAFT

The restaurant is the namesake of Wolfgang Zwiener who opened the first Wolfgang's Steakhouse on Park Avenue in 2004. Drawing on more than four decades of experience, Zwiener created a menu that offers top quality USDA-certified Prime cuts of beef, including the famed Porterhouse Steak. It was so successful that the restaurant expanded to multiple locations in the United States and around the world – Singapore being one of them.

Food quality remains a top priority for the restaurant, no matter where it is in the world. It only orders beef from trusted suppliers, and to maintain quality, all restaurants have their own in-house cellar for ageing where chilled beef (never frozen) is dry-aged for a 28-day period.

Chef See Tok, who has 20 years of culinary experience and has been with the Singapore restaurant since its opening in 2017, is proud of the menu. "One of things that I enjoy most about being here is to be able to share the joy of tasting 100% USDA Prime, Dry-aged Beef with others. The flavour profile, marbling and experience are completely unlike any other," he explains.



CELEBRATED CLASSICS

There is a hefty selection of seafood-focussed appetisers including Jumbo Shrimp Cocktail, Wolfgang's Crab Cake and the must-try Lobster Bisque. There is also a wide range of sides such as German Potatoes and Creamed Spinach to accompany the mains. But there is no doubt that the star dishes are the meat, and rightly so. Besides the Porterhouse Steak, diners can choose the New York Sirloin or Rib Eye where the flavours are enhanced by dry-ageing which concentrates all of the meaty goodness. If you prefer a less intense flavour, try the wet-aged Prime Filet Mignon.

Chef See Tok does not rest on his laurels though. He gets inspired when dining out at other eateries, and comes up with new dishes and specials regularly to keep the menu exciting. "When I dine out at other places, I start to think about how those dishes could have been prepared differently and improved. Being in a country where the food options available are so unique and robust, I definitely don't miss a chance to learn and experience all kinds of different cuisine and food styles and explore from there," he says.

For Christmas this year, he has decided to bring in a seasonal item for the joyous occasion – Wolfgang's Alaska. "It's our rendition of the classic dessert, Bombe Alaska, and we hope that our guests will enjoy this version as much as we do!" he says. The festive menu also features Grilled King Salmon, 100% USDA Prime Petite Filet Mignon and Honey Baked Ham alongside Herb-infused Potatoes and Seasonal Vegetables – all familiar favourites to indulge during the festive season.

Wolfgang's Steakhouse is at 1 Nanson Road #02-01, Intercontinental Singapore Robertson Quay.
wolfgangssteakhouse.sg

Photography (food and chef) Jasper Yu,
assisted by Tang Jun Wei
Art direction and styling Nikki Ho
Props TANGS
Restaurant photos courtesy of Wolfgang's Steakhouse

GOUREMET KNOWLEDGE



Beef Wellington



HOW TO MAKE PERFECT ROAST THIS FESTIVE SEASON

There's nothing like a home-cooked Christmas feast. But getting those roasts just right can be a little daunting for even the most seasoned home cook. Read on for expert advice and foolproof tips for a perfect festive dinner.

BY PRIYANKA ELHENCE

This is the season to enjoy a tender and juicy Christmas roast. Step aside turkey. This year we're focusing on other sumptuous roasts such as roast beef, rack of lamb and beef Wellington. Three chefs give us their expert tips on how to choose the roast that's best for you and cook it stress-free to impress your guests.

THE RIGHT CUT

So how does one choose the ideal cut of beef and lamb? "Before deciding on your choice of cut, always consider the preparation method and cooking duration. For instance, if you're serving your dish medium-rare, opt for cuts with marbling

since the fat within the muscle will not melt away. But if you are looking to braise or roast your meat over a long duration, choose cuts with more connective tissues such as the leg or shoulder," says Carlos Montobbio, head chef of Spanish restaurant Esquina.

Chef-owner Drew Nocente of Salted & Hung, a contemporary Australian restaurant, shares his go-to cuts. "For beef, a nice ribeye will always make an excellent roast. Lamb bone-in leg is always good, as cooking on the bone will give it a nicer flavour. Be careful not to trim off too much fat as fat is flavour and it will help to make sure that the meat doesn't dry out".



Chef-owner Drew Nocente

“ Be creative and have fun with the flavours you love. ”

CHEF-OWNER DREW NOCENTE, SALTED & HUNG

Desmond Tan, grill master and chef of Fyregill (an online butchery specialising in Australian grain-fed and grass-fed meats) and Fyregill Store and Academy (which retails BBQ grills and conducts cooking classes) agrees. “Choose the cut of meat based on the cooking method you intend to use, for example, grilling, pan fry, roasting, slow cooking and smoking. Muscles on the animal such as shanks, chuck, cheeks and briskets that do a lot of work are very tough and require a longer cooking time. Muscles that do not get a lot of movement tend to be more tender such as tenderloin, ribeye, striploin, rump and flank. They can be served pink so they require relatively less cooking time. For beef, use ribeye or striploin for more tender roasts, while the rump or rump cap has a heavier beefy flavour. Likewise for lamb, use a boneless leg or shoulder.”

BOOSTING THE FLAVOUR

All the three chefs recommend leaving on some of the fat. Montobbio says, “If we are going to roast the meat, we should only trim off any massive chunks of fat. Remove the silver skin when cleaning a ribeye or tenderloin, but ideally, leave a layer of fat to protect the meat from drying out in the oven. It can also be used to produce a delicious sauce after you’re done cooking your meat. If you’re grilling a tenderloin or ribeye, trim off most of the outer layer of fat but leave just a bit so that it melts and drips onto the embers, producing a nice smoke for the meat.”

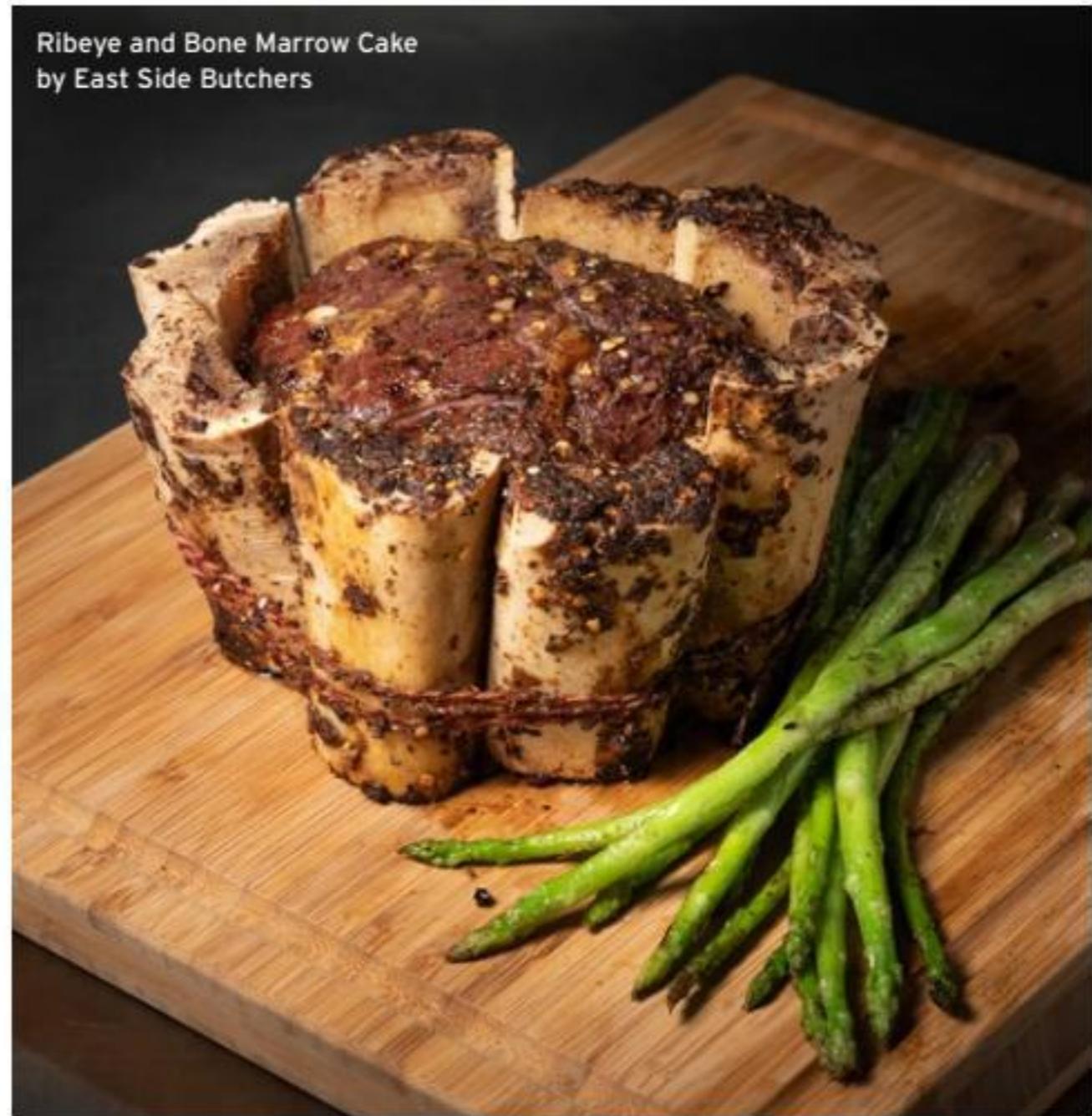
Likewise, Tan says, “It’s not recommended to remove all visible fat as fat gives flavour and protects the meat keeping it moist while roasting. The fat will render during the cooking process creating a basting effect and helps the meat achieve a nice caramelisation. Keep a thin layer of fat on your roasting joint and put the fat side on top when roasting. However, if there’s too much fat on a piece of meat, trim some of it using a sharp kitchen knife without cutting into the muscle.”



WHEN AND HOW TO SEASON A ROAST

"Seasoning is subjective," says Nocente. "This is where you can be creative and do some great tasting marinades, brines and rubs. I like to brine the lamb with 2 percent salt, juniper and rosemary for 12 hours before roasting it."

Montobbio concurs but offers a slightly different point of view at the same time. "There is a lot of debate on this! I was taught at culinary school to always season your meat once it's done cooking and left to rest, so that it doesn't lose its juices when it's cooking. I agree with this for quick cooking methods such as grilling, but when you're cooking your meat for long periods of time, I prefer to season the meat throughout – before, during, and after you're done cooking. One of my





Head chef Carlos Montobbio

“ One of my favourite ways to season meat is by brining it. I would definitely recommend brining your roast to make it more tender and evenly seasoned. ”

HEAD CHEF CARLOS MONTOBbio, ESQUINA

favourite ways to season meat is by brining it. I would definitely recommend brining your roast to make it more tender and evenly seasoned. Just a simple 10 percent salt brine will do. It takes about an hour for chicken or pork ribs and two hours for pork belly, lamb legs and beef short ribs. Do also make sure to add a bit of water in the oven so that the meat doesn't dry up and keep basting your roast often so that the fat and juices are absorbed back into the cut of meat."

And according to Tan, the general rule of thumb is to have a thin layer of salt covering the entire surface area of the meat. "When it comes to seasoning, less is more. You can always add more later but you'll not be able to remove excess. So if you over salt the meat in the beginning, it'll be best to try and remove it before cooking. The best time to season the meat depends on its thickness. The thicker the meat, the longer the time required. The thinner the meat, the shorter the time required. Generally the best time to season would be one to two hours before cooking, to allow the salt to penetrate the protein," he says.

RECOMMENDED ROASTING TIMING

Montobbio says, "The timing really depends on your cut and the oven you're using. However, sous vide cooking is a much more consistent method so I would sous vide lamb leg roast for 18 hours at 63°C and roasted beef short ribs for 48 hours at 58°C."

Tan adds that cooking times are also dependent on the thickness of the meat more so than the weight of it. "The thicker the meat, the lower the temperature, the longer the cooking time. The thinner the meat, the higher the temperature, the shorter the cooking time," he says.



Ribeye and Bone Marrow Cake
by East Side Butchers



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ESQUINA,
SALTED & HUNG, AND FYREGRILL.
FOOD PHOTOS (UNLESS INDICATED): ISTOCK

Finally, Nocente suggests going with a medium rare roast beef at about 20 to 25 minutes per kg; a medium leg of lamb at about 25 minutes per kg; and setting aside 35 to 40 minutes for a Wellington. "For roast beef, it is best to cook the meat to a medium rare doneness at a temperature of 55°C. A Wellington is the same process as roast beef. Remove the meat from the oven when it reaches 50°C and let it rest to 55 to 57°C before carving. For lamb at medium doneness, remove from the oven at 54°C and let it rest to 60°C."

“ Cook using a meat thermometer - it helps take the guesswork out of cooking. ”

GRILL MASTER AND CHEF DESMOND TAN, FYREGRILL



WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR STEAK PRINTED MEDIUM-RARE?

Food technology companies reinvent the food supply chain with plant-based proteins, cultured meats and 3D-printed meats. We take a look at how these industry disruptors give much food for thought beyond the whims of the palate.

BY ESTHER FAITH LEW



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE GOOD FOOD INSTITUTE ASIA PACIFIC;
EAT JUST AND REDEFINE MEAT.



R&D on cultured meat gets a boost from investments by government agencies

Food technology companies are seeing the light of day and growing faster than the magic beans in Jack and the Beanstalk, with a significant number that have already either entered or made an impact on the market, with more to come that are still going through their Seed Rounds or Series As. Both international and local start-ups and companies are stirring up the pot with a staggering mix of offerings for consumers.

Whether it's beef, pork, chicken, shrimp, lobster, milk or eggs, companies are offering alternative proteins for advocates of a plant-based diet and cultured meats grown in a lab. In our last issue, we covered many – though not exhaustive – brands that are now available. Since then, the developments have kept their momentum. The big boys are jumping in to either partner or fund the creative boys with their innovations. Singapore's Float Foods has just received a grant from Temasek Foundation to commercialise OnlyEg, a plant-based whole egg substitute. Another local player, Shiok Meats, has reportedly raised US\$12.6 million in Series A funding for its lab-grown shrimp, and one of its major shareholders is Seeds Capital, the investment arm of Enterprise Singapore. These examples show that this industry is a blue-eyed boy right now with the government paying close attention to nurturing these start-ups to unicorns and more. But more importantly, it begs the question "How will consumers react to these new product offerings and what is the potential demand that will arise from it?"

DRIVEN BY PALATE OR PURPOSE?

Food technology companies are visionary, yet they are also disruptors because of their aim to displace – and eventually replace – the traditional food supply chain. But the reason for their rapid growth and strong government support show that there is no smoke without a fire. The demand is there, and Asia is a market with much upward potential to be tapped into. A vast number of consumers on vegetarian diets are hungry for more options, and the generations of millennials and 20-somethings are also a voice to be heard as they are the ones who have thrown conventional brand loyalty out the window in favour of consumer behaviour that questions and distrusts. They resonate with brands that align with their beliefs and have a socio-environmental agenda for the better good of the planet.

So, plant-based proteins are on the highway to acceptance, especially those that are sustainably sourced. It may not win over all meat lovers, but new brands are gaining traction. What about meats that are grown in a science lab or printed by a 3D printer? Will they be well received? Before you let your connoisseur side decide and dismiss them with disapproval, perhaps it is time to think long and hard about how we enjoy our food and the price we have to pay for that enjoyment. These innovations, whether we like it or not, serve a purpose by aiming to solve urgent social and environmental problems being faced today. What are they? Shall we begin with



Alt-Steak



Good Meat chicken at 1880

“Now that high-quality plant-based meats are increasingly available through mainstream restaurant chains, and cultivated meat is beginning to appear on the menu in Singapore, the race is on to scale-up operations and invest in equipment to make larger volumes of product, which will deliver further cost savings to consumers.”

MIRTE GOSKER,
ACTING MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE
GOOD FOOD INSTITUTE ASIA PACIFIC

global deforestation caused by agriculture; greenhouse gas emissions caused by animal agriculture; or inhumane slaughtering of animals in commercial food manufacturing facilities?

However, it doesn't mean that appreciation of a juicy A4 Miyazaki Wagyu ribeye, an umami blufin tuna sushi or a flavourful Poulet de Bresse is wrong. And there is no need to find plant-based substitutes for these cravings if you don't want to. There is always the option of having real meat that has been sustainably sourced, cultivated and grown in a lab. The call to action for us is not as extreme as we think. Meat lovers can begin with mindful eating that moderates cravings with a flexitarian diet. Just by decreasing our intake of conventional meats, we can make a collective difference. This shift in mindset will trigger the behavioural changes that will pave the way to acceptance, and all while the industry continues to refine their products and improve their taste and texture to please palates.

If current reviews are anything to go by, it would seem that Redefine Meat's 3D-printed Alt-Steak and Eat Just's Good Meat cultured chicken are gaining the acceptance of chefs. Even enjoying

endangered bluefin tuna may no longer be an issue as California-based start-up Finless Foods is growing them in the lab. Of course, we would have to wait for the economies of scale to kick in before these companies cast a wider net of global distribution. Singapore is getting a head-start with the presence of Eat Just which is setting up a manufacturing facility here for its Just Egg, with plans to scale up for its Good Meat range of cultured meats. Its chicken range is already available at private club 1880 (find out what the chef has to say in our side story on p39), whose members represent the thinkers and innovators of our progressive society. Seafood lovers who are only all too aware of the ocean's depleting resources will be happy to know that local start-up Shiok Meats has already moved on to cultured lobster after the success of its cultured shrimps.

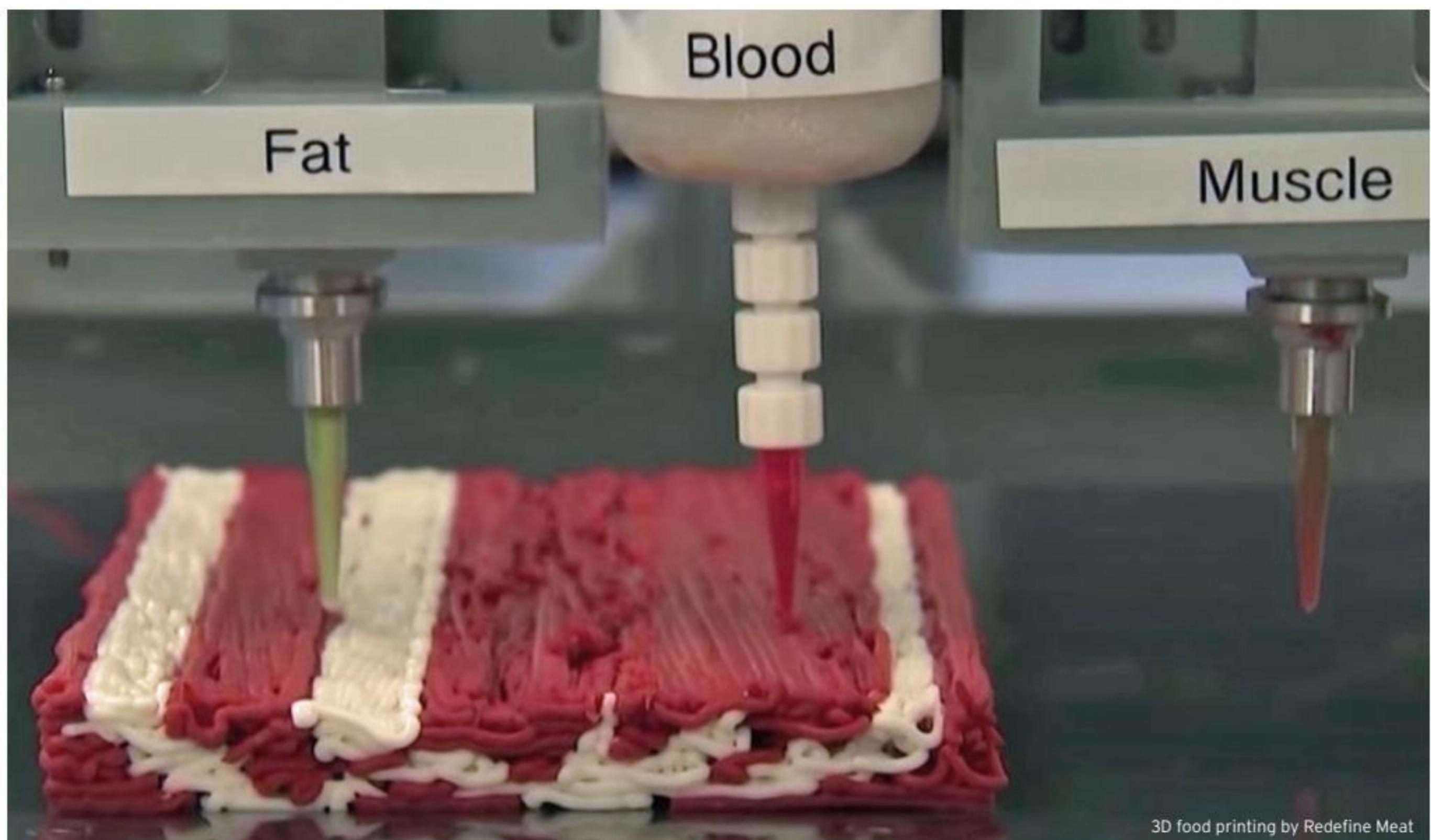
WHAT'S STIRRING THE POT?

"The Singapore story is just beginning. Now that Eat Just Inc. has been approved to sell their cultivated chicken bites, other companies are lining up to access the world's first cultivated meat market. The Singapore Food Agency has already said that Shiok Meats' cultivated shrimp is in the pipeline, and so is cultivated meat from another local start-up Ants Innovate. Hong Kong-based Avant Meats is also in talks with Singapore's food regulator about obtaining approval to

sell their cultivated fish maw—a high-value seafood ingredient used in traditional Chinese cuisine," says Mirte Gosker, Acting Managing Director of The Good Food Institute Asia Pacific.

Gosker added that Singapore's welcoming ecosystem for innovation is a boon for investments in cultured meats and alternative proteins. "Now that consumers are able to walk into a restaurant in Singapore and actually eat real chicken meat that doesn't harm a single bird, the industry is real in a way that, for many observers, it hasn't been until now. Even though the volume of cultivated meat being sold is still the tiniest of drops in the bucket, we believe that it serves as a useful proof of concept that will accelerate growth of the space globally."

The outlook for food technology innovation looks bright in Asia, but there are top three decisive factors that will impact its development. It's taste, convenience and cost, said Gosker. "Now that high-quality plant-based meats are increasingly available through mainstream restaurant chains, and cultivated meat is beginning to appear on the menu in Singapore, the race is on to scale-up operations and invest in equipment to make larger volumes of product, which will deliver further cost savings to consumers. It will also be crucial for brands rolling out new plant-based products to take into account the local culinary culture and mindset.



3D food printing by Redefine Meat



Animal stem cells are ethically harvested without animal killing

“Meat analogues have been widely distributed across Asia for many decades, mainly serving the large Buddhist community. In China, for example, these products fall into the well-established industry category of soy products. Forty-one percent of Chinese consumers surveyed by IPSOS in 2020 said that they think plant-based meat can be used to replace what they've known as soy products. The use of new and innovative ingredients may play a key role in differentiating a plant-based meat product from that association with traditional ‘mock meats’, which is expected to be sold at a low price point, comes with historical image baggage, and has not succeeded in attracting a broader audience over the years,” shares Gosker.

To add to Gosker's point, the international market appeal of new products that are backed by strong lifestyle branding and packaging will appeal to a new generation of consumers who are drawn to their secular and holistic associations. Whether it's organic, allergen-free, free-range, plant-based or cultured, these products will take pride of place on the shelves of organic supermarkets that champion holistic living and mindful eating.

BIOTECHNOLOGY SCORES WINS

San Francisco-based Eat Just made the headlines late last year for securing the world's first regulatory approval from Singapore Food Agency (SFA) to sell its cultured chicken commercially under

its Good Meat brand. CEO & Co-founder Josh Tetrick shared that it took about two years to develop the infrastructure and safety protocol of its cultured chicken. Currently, it has achieved a 14-day production time as compared to the time line of about 45 days for conventional chicken to go from birth to slaughter. The process of growing cultured meats begins with stem cells, the building blocks of muscle and other organs, which are placed in petri dishes with amino acids and carbohydrates to activate the rapid multiplication of cells.

Eat Just's cultured chicken has not just passed the test for the quality and consistency of its manufacturing process; it has also proven to have a high protein content, a diversified amino acid composition, high relative content in healthy monounsaturated fats and is a rich source of minerals. Also, no antibiotics are used in its proprietary process, while safety validations prove that it has an extremely low and significantly cleaner microbiological content as compared to conventional chicken.

These factors make a compelling statement for Good Meat amidst Covid-19 pandemic fears as well as that of zoonotic diseases in general. In this scenario, Tetrick's vision of having conventional meats off the menus in restaurants makes a lot of sense, with the caveat that its replacement is priced competitively and meets culinary expectations (read more about Tetrick's vision for Eat Just on pg 56).

Tetrick shared that the roll-out of Good Meat products would be to restaurants for now, while plans for retail distribution would likely be implemented before the end of 2022. "Eventually, we do want Good Meat to be available in butcheries and grocery stores and at a good price point. Right now, it is priced like that of premium chicken, but within the next five to 10 years, a gradual process of cost reduction will kick in. We are also expanding our product line, with chicken breast meat following up on our launch of chicken bites. Cultured beef and pork are also in the pipeline," adds Tetrick.

Cultured meat will either have its ardent fans or die-hard traditionalists who reject it, but ultimately, it's real meat derived from stem cells ethically harvested from its source, and this meat is hormone- and chemical-free. That makes a lot of difference, and Tetrick has this to say to epicureans, "You can still choose your favourite meats from the menu, whether it's an umami-rich wagyu cow from Japan or the fattiest bluefin tuna. And you can enjoy it without sacrificing anything, and in a way that aligns with your values."

"We are also expanding our product line, with chicken breast meat following up on our launch of chicken bites. Cultured beef and pork are also in the pipeline."

EAT JUST CEO & CO-FOUNDER JOSH TETRICK



1880'S EXECUTIVE CHEF COLIN BUCHAN SHARES HIS PERSPECTIVE ON CULTURED CHICKEN

Why are you open to cultured chicken and how would it benefit your diners?

"At 1880, I have noticed that while diners still love their meat, there is an openness to plant-based alternatives, and curiosity about cultured meat. Lately, we have had more vegan and vegetarian menu requests - trends such as flexitarianism, and reducetarianism are definitely on the rise. Being able to make history with our diners by offering a new and more sustainable alternative is hugely exciting.

We collaborated with Good Meat on a dining experience comprising a 4-course menu starting with three unique vegan dishes that reflect the evolution of the chicken and its environmental impact as it became a key food source for humans. Following that, we served two Good Meat dishes: the Chinese bao and an American fried chicken and waffle, as these are the two nations that are the largest consumers of chicken. We want to inspire important conversations around our food sources while having a delicious and thought-provoking dinner."

Did you have to change the way you cut, season and cook the cultured chicken?

"The cultured chicken by Good Meat comes in a bite-sized, breaded form which influences how the dish is prepared and presented. The texture and taste of cultured chicken is just like traditional chicken - because it is chicken. We work with it as we would with conventional chicken, just in the form of a nugget."

How do you plan to develop your menu offerings of cultured chicken?

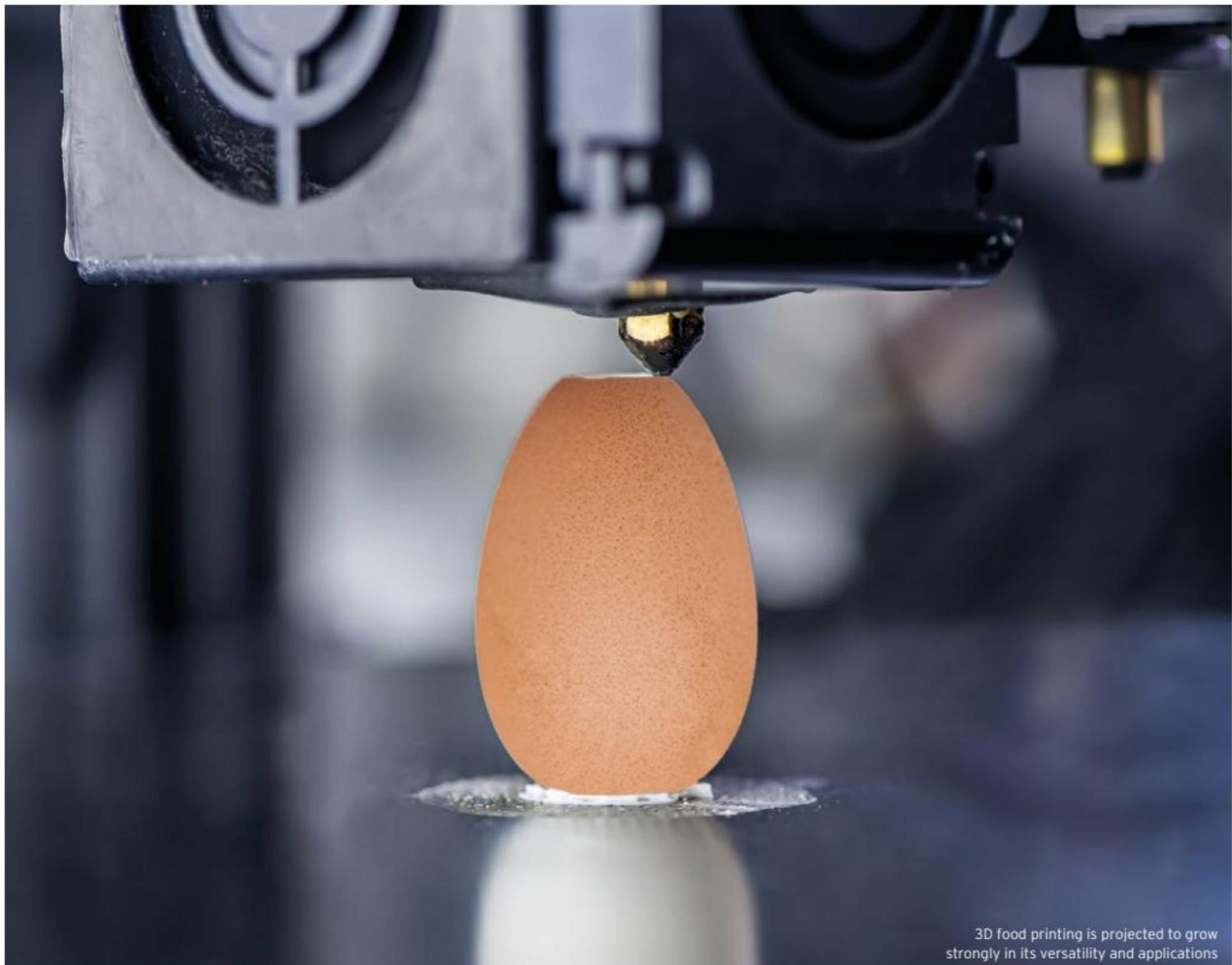
"The opportunity to work with an entirely new category of food and conceptualise an interactive meal to introduce the cultured chicken has been an incredible experience. Once Good Meat cultured chicken production ramps up, it will open many possibilities to create unique and traditional dishes for diners. We are looking at hosting tasting sessions in the coming months with new dishes to show the versatility of cultured chicken."

THE FUTURE OF 3D FOOD PRINTING

The other technology that pushes the boundary of acceptance is 3D food printing. One company that is creating a tidal wave with its Alt-Steak product is Israeli start-up Redefine Meat, which recently organised a blind tasting in partnership with Best Meister, a meat distributor, in Tel-Aviv. The event was carried out in a meat-branded food truck concept that attracted over 600 visitors and served almost 1,000 orders. According to reports, Alt-Steak secured an acceptance rate of over 90% based on metrics such as taste, texture and mouthfeel.

“We can iterate a steak to be softer, harder, juicier with less fat, and much more – all with a simple click of a button,” says Eshchar Ben-Shitrit, CEO & Co-Founder of Redefine Meat. He explained further on why his 3D printing process customises meats with a high level of

flexibility. “We use a special kind of 3D printing process where three ingredients are printed simultaneously to form the product – our Alt-Muscle (plant-Protein), Alt-Fat (plant-fat) and Alt-Blood (natural colours and flavours). Our machine performs a specific technological process for each and combines them in the 3D model in the print software. Our materials are food items and eventually consumed, so they inherently have a high viscosity. In addition, we print a ‘full’ product – unlike plastic 3D printing that prints just the shell – so we don’t need any additional materials to support the product while it’s printed. Importantly, using a digital 3D printing process that changes in the product comes at zero cost or complexity. We can use a 3D model of an entirely different meat product with the same machine, process and ingredients, whereas traditional food production technologies have to change entire formulations.”



3D food printing is projected to grow strongly in its versatility and applications



Founders Eshchar Ben-Shitrit
and Adam Lahav

Whilst some aspects of 3D printing leave much to be desired with its rigid configurations, Redefine Meat has invested in technology that balances hundreds of different parameters to produce 3D-printed meat that excels in all parameters at once to meet the right requirements for texture, flavour and colour. Ben-Shitrit explains: "Many people believe that mimicking the texture of meat is the biggest challenge, but texture can be defined quite easily and measured in precise ways. We discovered that even when you have the perfect texture from an analytical perspective, if you don't get the colour right or have a slight variation in flavour, consumers will not give the product's texture a high score.

"This is where the rapid prototyping and digital production benefits of our 3D printing technology come into play. During the development phase, we can make new design iterations to the meat's structure digitally via software within minutes and 3D print several new meat prototypes with different structural parameters for sampling within an hour. Digital meat production has also opened the door to advanced AI & machine learning technologies that help us to further optimise the alternative meat experience for consumers. With the ability to learn consumer habits, likes, dislikes and more, we are able to feed these learnings through into the development and refinement of our meat. For example, if consumer feedback data suggests the meat is too fatty, digital files can be optimised using computational methods to re-structure the distribution of fat to address the issue."

"Many people believe that mimicking the texture of meat is the biggest challenge, but texture can be defined quite easily and measured in precise ways."

ESHCHAR BEN-SHITRIT, CEO AND CO-FOUNDER OF REDEFINE MEAT

Redefine Meat has worked with butchers, chefs and food technologists to map out parameters that account for preferences in taste and texture, which means that Alt-Steak may be ordered according to your favourite cut. "The main components of Alt-Steak are pea proteins and soy, but with the ability to switch files and print different cuts on-demand, local meat distributors can also provide restaurants and stores much more versatility with their product offering and according to demand – such as the specific marbling of Wagyu beef from Japan or the texture of grass-fed Australian Angus prime beef – at the click of a button," says Ben-Shitrit. With pilot tests underway in Israel, Alt-Steak products will gradually expand into Europe and Asia via partners.

THE ART OF DRY AGEING BEEF

They say the finer things in life improve with age. Here's a glimpse into the world of dry-aged beef and what it really means.

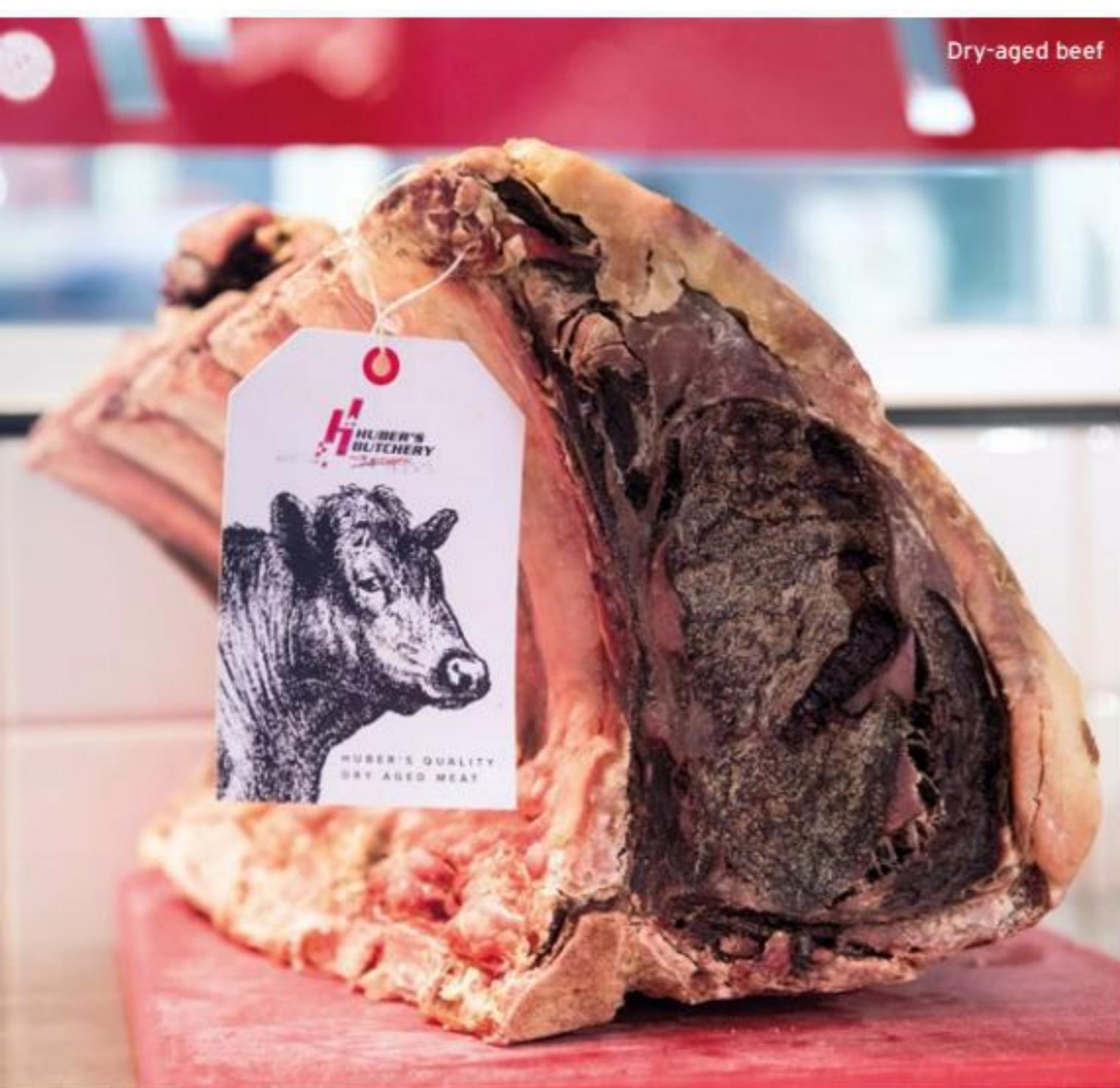
BY PRIYANKA ELHENCE

Dry ageing concentrates the flavours of beef, leaving it typically described as tasting nuttier, muskier, like mushrooms and blue cheese. Natural enzymes and bacteria within the meat start to break down its molecular bonds when exposed to oxygen, altering the flavour and texture of the protein. Before a cut of dry-aged beef can be used for cooking, the rotten crust that forms around the meat's surface has to be carved out.

Interesting then, that a lesser yield comes with a higher price tag. "Dry ageing is essentially a controlled decomposition," says Andre Huber, executive director of Huber's Butchery. In Singapore, dry-aged beef is expensive because land space and rental is expensive, as the meat is sitting in a dedicated ageing chamber (or room) for 30 to 60 days with closely monitored temperature, humidity, and air flow. Dry-aged beef is best done using Himalayan salt blocks in a room that is food safe, has good air circulation and promotes the growth of good bacteria while preventing bad bacteria and mould from growing.

At Huber's Butchery, dry ageing is done in a slow, controlled process. "We take about 60 days to age what others would usually do in 28 days because we believe the slower process is safer and yields beef with better flavour and texture," explains Huber. The company has a customised dry-ageing programme that allows customers to order various cuts of meat and dictate how long they would like it to be dry-aged for. "Some customers request for beef to be aged for an extended period of time like 100 days or even 200 days. People believe it will get better with age, like how it usually is with wine. However for me, there is a point where the beef flavour just gets too funky and very few people will enjoy that flavour." Most restaurants sell beef aged up to 45 days only because any longer, the flavour becomes too funky for diners to appreciate.

Huber goes on to say that aged meat comes in two forms – wet-aged and dry-aged. "Both versions involve enzymes breaking down the meat which



results in beef that is more flavourful and softer.” As carbohydrates turn into sugars, they weaken the connective tissue around the protein strands so that the meat becomes more tender and sweet. Meanwhile, as the water inside the meat works its way out, the meat begins to shrink and flavours begin to concentrate.

In comparison, wet-aged describes meat that has been aged in a vacuum-sealed plastic bag for months that prevents evaporation from taking place. This method results in less concentrated flavours, without the nutty flavour or same mouthfeel as a dry-aged steak. Dry-aged meat has the addition of moisture loss as well as possible good bacteria growing on the meat that adds an additional flavour profile to the beef.

“You have to start with a good quality product,” said Huber. “You need meat that has a higher fat content in terms of marbling so that it will keep sufficiently moist even after the dry-ageing process. It is important to choose premium quality large cuts with fat caps and bone-in to protect the sides of the meat during dry ageing. By having a thick cap on its exterior, will ensure that only fat is lost during trimming at the end of the ageing process.”

Huber says that a good Angus 200+ day grain fed beef is best. “The long grain feeding gives the beef a good amount of marbling and the fat has a sweetness that helps to balance the dry-aged flavours. An alternative beef we have is a Galician style grass fed cow that is typically older than six years of age, compared to most commercial beef that is slaughtered



Bedrock Bar & Grill
Double Cut Dry Aged Porterhouse

at two to three years of age. By allowing the cow to graze of prime grasslands, the cattle develop a good amount of marbling, and because the animal is older, the flavour of the meat is also more intense.”

Naturally, the longer the beef is dry-aged, the more intense and pronounced its flavours. The aged flavour varies according to length of ageing as well as the aging conditions. “For beef that is typically aged from 14 to 30 days, there is a concentration of beef flavour; from 30 to 60 days, there is a concentrated beef flavour with a development of slight blue cheese, nutty flavours from the good bacteria; and after 60 days, the funky taste starts developing and gets more intense as time passes. These are the results in our dry-ageing room. For other company or people ageing beef, the temperature, humidity or air flow may be different hence the ageing process could be very different,” shares Huber. “There are many others way such as wrapping the beef in fat, butter or with whisky but I prefer to have it naturally dry aged. Also there is the trend to age the beef with all kinds of alcohol, whisky, sake or using butter or tallow.”



YOUR GO-TO SOURCE FOR JAPANESE PREMIUM MEATS

Anzu Meat Factory is set to be a key player in bringing affordable premium Japanese meats to meat lovers in Singapore.

BY ESTHER FAITH LEW



Fans of Japanese food know the premium they have to pay to enjoy their favourite air-flown produce. Dining at restaurants too means paying for the quality that they have come to expect, whichever cuisine it may be. While there is no lack of choices in Singapore when it comes to Japanese cuisines and at varying price points, those who wish to enjoy their favourite dishes at home still have to pay premium prices at Japanese speciality supermarkets and grocers.

Anzu Meat Factory was launched in Singapore with the aim of making Japanese premium meats accessible to all meat lovers, especially when Covid-19 led to a spurt in home cooking and an overwhelming demand for produce. In a pandemic, consumers place even more importance on quality produce that is highly nutritional and safe. Anzu is part of Atom Group, which also owns a ranch in Oregon, U.S. that raises unique US Wagyu called Washugyu. It also sources meats from artisanal meat producers who



are passionate about producing premium quality meats with high food safety standards and protocols.

“The strong and close business partnerships which we have established with great meat producers all over the world, such as Miyachiku, the Miyazakigyu sole producer in Japan; Greater Omaha Packing, one of the most renowned U.S. Black Angus meat packers in the U.S.; and Lucyporc, the premium three-cross breeding pork producer in Canada, are also our great assets and it allows us to provide consumers with quality meat consistently,” says Atsushi Watanabe, managing director of Atom Food International.

QUALITY MEATS AT AFFORDABLE PRICES

Atom Group, the team behind Anzu Meat Factory is renowned in Japan, Singapore, China, Taiwan, Thailand and the U.S. for its quality meats, which it has sold for several decades. Toshiki Hanada, the founder of Atom Group, is the descendant of three generations of bakuro, who are professionals skilled in discerning the quality of livestock. Leveraging generations of expertise, Hanada sourced only the tastiest meats from various regions. From Hokkaido in the north to Kyushu and Okinawa in the south in Japan, to even the U.S. and Europe, he has sought the best meats for his unique butcher shop concept.

In addition to its dedication to sourcing only the highest quality premium meats from trusted farmers, Anzu Meat Factory also enjoys purchasing leverage that it passes down to consumers by offering extremely

affordable prices for its meats. “Every month, our group purchases huge volumes of Miyazakigyu, which is equivalent to JPY100,000,000 (S\$1,250,000) for its global operations. This group purchasing power allows us to make our prices for premium wagyu extremely unbeatable,” shares Watanabe.

To date, Anzu Meat Factory has already run highly popular promotional fairs for its Miyazakigyu and Mugifushi Canadian pork products.



WHY TABLE MANNERS MATTER

Catherine Baron, founder of etiquette school Le Savoir-Vivre tells us why fine dining etiquette is much more than just good table manners.

BY NIDA SEAH



It was fine dining etiquette 101. As we took our seats during a French table setting workshop, Catherine Baron rebuked us. The founder and CEO of Hong Kong-based etiquette school Le Savoir-Vivre: Academy of Etiquette and Modern Manners reminded us that we should only sit when the host sits. Otherwise, we should remain standing.

A little harsh perhaps, but necessary to remind us of proper manners and behaviors at the table. “There is no better or possibly worse place to make an impression which lasts forever. Mastering table manners reveals an important part of one’s competence,” says Baron.

The workshop was conducted during *À Table!*, an event organised by Alliance Française de Singapour to spotlight the

French art of fine dining. Baron’s workshop was more than a crash course on how a French table should be set – it was an insight into French culture. “My aim is to share my passion and knowledge about the French art de vivre, embracing gastronomy, wine, ancestral know-hows, terroir, heritage, and *je ne sais quoi* that makes France so unique,” she says.

Her passion was rewarded in 2014 when she won the Prize for Talented French Nationals Abroad, presented by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs for her contribution to the promotion of French culture.

She shares why fine dining etiquette and French art of table setting are still important in this day and age, as well as her top tips on good manners.

Why is it important for people to learn dining etiquette?

In a dining situation, etiquette refers to proper manners and behaviors at a table. It is important to be a gracious dining guest or host and make others feel comfortable as well. In a business dining situation, it is an essential tool to professional success. Dining etiquette is also a window into a country's culture. In a global world, it helps to better comprehend and respect foreign habits and cultures in order to avoid faux pas and offend people's sensitivities.

What are some major faux pas people make that irritate you the most?

The use of a cell phone at a table is never appropriate at any kind of lunch or dinner, even at a business dinner. It is highly disrespectful to guests and the people around them. And hearing bon appétit! Even if it is acceptable in a restaurant, it is not considered elegant because it is making a reference to digestion. The rule is rooted in the 19th century's beliefs that anything suggesting the body function is improprietary conversation.

Are there any particular Asian mannerisms that have been adapted for fine dining here?

The use of a round table, the toasting and sometimes, the sitting placement and the right technique to use chopsticks.

With regards to French table setting, what are the key characteristics?

Symmetry and harmony are the key characteristics. It is the appreciation of the beauty of the table according to a rational order reflecting elegance and splendour to enchant the eyes.

How different is the French style of table setting compared to other countries such as England?

We have many distinctive differences, such as placement of host and hostess, setting of cutlery and glassware, and number of dinner plates allowed. In French style, it is appropriate to place your piece of bread directly on the tablecloth. In



English style, a small plate for the bread with a butter knife is placed at the upper left side of the dinner plate.

How have dining etiquette and table setting changed over the years? Is there any behavior that was previously unacceptable but is now considered acceptable?

With gender diversity, many table rules must be reviewed such as the sitting placement at a table or the service of the wines (in the past only men could serve wines to women). In business situations, more women – because of their position – are inviting clients or partners. So nowadays a restaurant bill for a business lunch or dinner that's paid by a woman in charge is perfectly appropriate. In the past, only men were entitled to pay a bill. However the standard techniques of eating – the manner of using knife, fork, spoon, napkin – remain unchanged.

CATHERINE BARON'S TOP DOS AND DON'TS OF DINING ETIQUETTE

Do

- Chew with your mouth shut. Take one small bite at a time.
- Only eat foie gras with a fork.
- Know that the napkin is never refolded once the meal is over.

Don't

- Set your utensil back on the table once you have used it. Place it on your plate instead.
- Cut the bread with your knife. You should break it up with your hands.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ALLERGIES

Allergies are nothing to sneeze about. We speak to general practitioner Dr Benjamin Loh about the common causes, treatments, and in particular, how to deal with food allergies.

BY PRIYANKA ELHENCE



Nobody likes having allergies. It's an uncomfortable inconvenience for most of us, and a potentially fatal occurrence for a few. Instead of just sneezing the problem away, there are ways to detect the triggers and deal with the symptoms. Dr. Benjamin Loh, a general practitioner with a special interest in allergy, ear, nose and throat, and dermatology, shares how one can manage both food and inhalant allergies by taking a multidisciplinary, holistic approach to one's health.

Are flu symptoms and dust mite allergy symptoms the same?

Contrary to popular belief, they are not identical despite sharing some similarities. Dust mite allergy – one of the most common allergies – can cause uncomfortable symptoms such as sneezing, teary eyes and a runny nose. If you are having a flu, you might have fever, chills and a loss of taste and smell. Some patients with Covid-19 might also experience nausea, body aches, diarrhea and vomiting.

How is dust mite allergy treated?

Symptom management is vital for treating dust mite allergy. Decongestants, antihistamines and corticosteroids help provide temporary relief. Currently, immunotherapy where we repeatedly introduce allergens into the body so that it becomes desensitised, and sublingual immunotherapy where allergens are introduced under the tongue, are viewed as potential treatments for grass, pollen and dust mite allergies.

What about food allergies?

A food allergy occurs when the immune system goes into overdrive after coming into contact with a particular food, compound or protein that it perceives as a threat. Current statistics reveal that six to eight percent of children and up to five percent¹ of adults are affected by a food allergy. While all foods are potential allergens, some foods are more notorious for triggering allergic reactions, including shellfish, peanuts, eggs, soybeans, certain fruits and tree nuts.

Food allergies and food intolerance are often mistakenly used interchangeably. Food intolerance tends to affect the digestive system whereas food allergy is usually an overreaction of the immune system. A food allergy can be fatal, potentially causing anaphylaxis if not treated immediately.

How can we determine if we have food allergies?

Food allergies can be diagnosed by doing a food allergy test to determine what foods one is allergic to, specifically a skin prick test or a blood test. Currently, the only practical treatment option for food allergies is to undergo allergy testing to avoid symptom-triggering foods. For the skin prick test, a possible allergen is placed on the pierced forearm skin and observed for a reaction.

A positive response manifests as itchiness, swelling or redness in the test area. However, the Immunoglobulin E (IgE) blood test is recommended for persons who have had life-threatening allergic responses in the past or who suffer from severe eczema and psoriasis.

Is it possible to outgrow a food allergy?

Yes, it is possible. Children can outgrow allergies to soy, milk, wheat and eggs. However, fewer children outgrow tree nut and peanut allergies, and adults are unlikely to outgrow an allergy that they developed as an adult.

TIPS FOR MANAGING FOOD ALLERGIES EFFECTIVELY

- Always check ingredient labels carefully before buying the food item
- Find out what your food allergens are and avoid them
- Stay away from a restrictive diet during pregnancy or while breastfeeding
- Always carry an emergency epi-pen if you have a serious food allergy





The Morning Machine

A CONVENIENT TRUTH

The Morning Machine is for all coffee nerds and home baristas out there. With a choice of recipes, customisable settings and a mobile app, this coffee capsule machine will make the daily grind more exciting.

BY NIDA SEAH



There are many ways to make a cup of coffee. You can reach for the instant freeze dried variety, pop in a kopi-o bag or simply pour hot water over coffee grounds in a paper filter. For those who have a little more time to spare, there's the French press (where ground coffee is soaked, steeped and strained in hot water), siphon, moka pot, percolator and a host of other methods and equipment dedicated to making the perfect cup of joe. There's also the espresso machine that allows you to create barista-quality coffee at home.

Coffee capsule machines are the newer kids on the block. These little pods of coffee have made it even easier to load up on caffeine – just drop one into the machine, press a button and let it do its thing.

But that's the problem for coffee connoisseurs – it's just too easy. For this group, it's all about getting the best brew from the best beans, be it one that's assertive and full-bodied, or a drink that's more mellow and smooth. That means getting the water temperature right and adjusting the brew ratio and grind size, among other things. The one-size-fits-all approach won't do.

The Morning Machine fills this gap. Specialty coffee pioneers Leon Foo of PPP Coffee and Andre Chanco of Yardstick Coffee believe that "convenience can be delicious" and want your morning coffee to be the best version of what it can be. So they created a machine where you have full control on how you want your coffee to taste by creating your own recipes.

Coffee capsules from independent roasters



IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS

At first glance, it's a sleek minimalist contraption that will easily find a place in any (cluttered) kitchen. Going by its looks, it's already a winner, having clinched the Red Dot Award: Product Design 2021. If you are familiar with capsule machines, you'll find that the basic parts of the Morning Machine are not too different, with the capsule slot on top, water tank at the back, and used capsule container, drip base and tray at the front.

Morning coffee capsules



What's different is the OLED screen and the dial control. Turn the dial either way to choose your recipe. There are 10 default settings, ranging from the Morning Machine's flagship recipe Bloom & Brew, to Short, Long and even Kyoto-style Drip. You'll also see recipe details such as temperature, coffee output and pressure profiles.

Temperature affects the different compounds in coffee – higher temperatures tend to produce a cup with higher body, bitterness and sweetness. The Morning Machine uses the temperature setting to alter the taste balance and aroma of the coffee.

Each recipe also comes with different pressure profiles (a first for coffee capsule brewing) which, like temperature, can affect the flavour. The machine features traditional espresso pressure profiles, but you can adjust it through the accompanying Morning mobile app. Plus, you can control the output for each coffee thanks to the built-in scale. Choose a shorter cup for a more intense taste or a longer cup (with higher weight output) for a milder flavour.

TASTE THE DIFFERENCE

Setup was easy; it was literally plug-and-play. All I needed to do was to fill the water tank, “wake” it up and start brewing by pressing the button on the screen. The most difficult part was actually choosing the capsules and recipe (it works with Nespresso OriginalLine capsules and third-party compatible capsules).

I decided to stick to Morning’s Tried & True capsules to test how different recipes affect the flavour. This medium-roast coffee from Peru is described to have a “smooth body” that is “perfectly designed for the espresso drinker”. Here’s the verdict for selected recipes.

- Bloom & Brew, 25g – This includes a stage where the machine pre-infuses or “bloom” the coffee inside the capsule. Coffee was stronger with more distinctive toffee and cereal notes.
- Classic, 40g – This is said to be the most versatile recipe, especially if you can’t make up your mind. Coffee was smooth with balanced acidity and sweetness.
- Short (Dark Roast), 25g – This produced a traditional Italian espresso shot with a syrupy mouthfeel.
- Kyoto-style Drip, 100g – Temperature was lower at 75°C which made the brew more refined and smoother. The slow brew recipe required a longer wait but it was worth it. Best enjoyed over ice.

THE RIGHT CONNECTION

If the default selection doesn’t satisfy your taste buds, the Morning mobile app offers a database of partner roasters. Get personally developed recipes that replicate cafe-quality coffees, which means you get a brew exactly as the roaster intended. Alternatively, create your own to suit your preferences and save it to the My Recipes page or on the machine itself.

It was fun experimenting with various settings and roasters’ signature recipes. The feature-packed Morning Machine has allowed coffee lovers like me to get the best out of specialty roasters and unleash my inner barista for the perfect brew. Now that’s worth waking up for in the morning.

The Morning mobile app



Leon Foo



Andre Chanco



COMPLETING THE ECOSYSTEM

“Andre and I really wanted to think differently and sell coffee differently,” says Leon Foo, co-founder of Morning and chairman of PPP coffee. This vision has resulted in the creation of the award-winning Morning Machine. Launched on Kickstarter last year, it immediately made waves for its minimalist design and customisable and connected features. It was fully funded in two days and within two weeks, it was 2.5 times oversubscribed.

“What we recognised three years ago was that the industry has always been kind of offline and fragmented,” explains Andre Chanco, co-founder of Morning and Yardstick Coffee. “We had an opportunity to build something where it connects the roaster to the end customer and vice versa. That’s where the Morning Machine ecosystem comes into play.”

According to Foo, they are able to complete the ecosystem, not just by linking a coffee brewing equipment to roasters worldwide but allowing customers to buy their coffee readily and making them according to how roasters intended them to be.

The Morning Marketplace website allows anyone from around the world to access and buy coffee from independent and champion roasters. “We discovered that people would want this kind of choice when it comes to their coffee discovery. And I think COVID-19 just accelerated that,” says Chanco. It is this accessibility, boosted by technology and innovative solutions, that’s key to helping people make the perfect cup of coffee at the touch of a button.

MODERN ERA OF COOKING

Epicure Vietnam takes a closer look at the science behind healthier, modern day cooking methods that claim to maximise the nutritional content of food.

BY PRIYANKA ELHENCE





Unless you're on a raw diet, there's no denying the fact that heat and water combined alter the way nutrients behave in food. A reduction of nutrients is unavoidable upon cooking, with some foods losing up to 40 percent or more of their healthy assets when cooked. Nutrient depletion or alteration typically occurs when foods are cooked at high temperatures for an extended period of time, especially in a moist environment like a pot of boiling water or a deep fryer. Comparatively, cooking methods that expose foods to heat and water for shorter amounts of time are believed to offer maximum nutrient retention, as minerals and antioxidants are less at risk of being degraded.

Air frying, slow cooking, dehydrating and pressure cooking are becoming increasingly popular alternatives in addition to the usual steaming, sautéing, grilling, roasting and baking cooking methods, as they offer less nutrient loss with minimal amount of fat. Hence it's not surprising to see an increasing number of revolutionary, all-in-one cooking appliances that offer home cooks the option of preparing healthier meals. For instance, new to the Singapore market are three innovative Ninja air fryers

DID YOU KNOW

Nutrient retention with alternative cooking methods is possible as long as the food is protected from direct heat contact. Because the modern air fryer keeps the surface of the food dry and cooks it with circulating hot air, this process ensures food retains more of its key nutrients as it cooks food in a faster, healthier way all while using a tablespoon of oil at most.

developed by SharkNinja USA, a pioneer in nutrient-extracting and food processing solutions for busy lifestyles. Ninja's unique selling point is to provide revolutionary kitchen appliances with multiple functions in one machine, saving kitchen space, time and money for home cooks. Multi-functionality in one machine certainly has its advantages, as consumers don't have to invest in multiple gadgets for different cooking methods.

We take a closer look at these different alternative cooking methods and the science propelling their benefits and nutritional advantages.





DID YOU KNOW

Contrary to popular belief, using an air fryer isn't carte blanche to eating larger quantities of foods typically deep fried. While an air fryer has its benefits and certainly uses less fats for cooking, it cannot replace everything such as baking and broiling, which are still healthier options. Healthy eating starts with good quality fruits, vegetables and lean meats and choosing a sensible cooking method.

AIR FRYING

The eternal question – are air fryers really the answer to healthy, fried food without adverse health side effects? Potentially, yes. There have often been similarities drawn between regular baking and air frying, but they are two distinctly different cooking methods. Conventional ovens work by producing heat from an element (either gas or electric), where the heat is slowly dispersed through the oven over time. In the case of convection ovens, that time is sped up by the use of a fan, similar to the one in a compact air fryer. Air fryers use rapid air technology instead of an element to create heat, achieving much higher temperatures in a shorter period of time.

The small size of air fryers also helps them circulate heat more evenly. Food becomes crispy without burning or releasing toxic carcinogens, giving the same taste and look as deep frying but with a minimal amount of additional fat. The heated air picks up and circulates tiny oil droplets that coat and “fries” the food. Air frying also reduces exposure to the formation of acrylamide, a compound that forms during high-heat cooking and is believed to be linked to the development of certain cancers.

AIR GRILLING

An air grill is much more functional than an electric grill, typically housing a powerful heating element that heats a special grill where the food is cooked. Again, advantages include the fact that minimal fat is required for air grilling, and the indoor grilling happens smoke free too. The design of the air grill allows for adjusting the temperature, choosing the frying mode and the speed of heat treatment. Cooking in the air grill is based on the circulation of hot air again, reaching very high temperatures that enable it to mimic the cooking results from a traditional grill. A top-down heat source produces temperatures up to 500 degrees, and a powerful fan circulates the hot air to cook food quickly and evenly, with comparable browning and crisping.

**NINJA'S AIR FRYERS DO MORE THAN JUST AIR FRYING -
THEY HAVE MULTIPLE COOKING FUNCTIONS IN JUST ONE MACHINE.**



**NINJA FOODI AIRGRILL
(Air Fryer + Indoor Grill)**

For those who love to barbecue without the mess of an outdoor grill. Grilling on the indoor Ninja Foodi Airgrill is virtually smoke-free thanks to the unique Cyclonic Grilling Technology that delivers chargrilled exterior and juicy interiors over 260°C circulating air and a 200°C high-density grill grate. The 5-in-1 indoor grill is also a 3.7 litre air fryer, perfect for grilling, air frying, roasting, baking and even dehydrating.

**NINJA FOODI MULTI COOKER
(Air Fryer + Pressure Cooker)**

A multi-functional cooking system that includes Pressure Cooking, Slow Cooking, Rice Cooking, Steam, Sauté, Brown, Air Fry, Bake, Roast, and Grill. TenderCrisp technology combines the best of pressure cooking and air frying all in one pot for juicy insides and crisp outsides, cooking up to 70 percent faster than traditional cooking methods in its 6 litre capacity.

**NINJA AIR FRYER MAX
(Air Fryer + Dehydrator)**

Max Crisp, Air Fry, Air Roast, Bake, Reheat, and Dehydrate - all in one appliance in the family-sized XL 5.2 litre basket. The unique MaxCrisp Technology delivers 240°C of superheated air to cook foods up to 50 percent faster than fan ovens, for crispier results with little to no oil.

Pressure Cooking



Air Frying





“Food dehydration involves removing water and moisture from food, preventing microorganisms like yeast, mould, and bacteria from growing, thus preserving food for future use while keeping nutrients intact.”

DEHYDRATING

Dehydration is one of the oldest methods of preserving food known to mankind, as dehydrated foods keep their nutritional value for much longer, making for lightweight, nutrient-dense snack options.

Food dehydration involves removing water and moisture from food, preventing microorganisms like yeast, mould, and bacteria from growing, thus preserving food for future use while keeping nutrients intact. Warm air is used to dry out thinly sliced foods, rather than cook it, and crisp it up evenly. Reducing the moisture content also hampers and slows down natural enzymes present in fruits and vegetables, thus retarding the spoilage.

Dried foods, especially fruits, have a greater concentration of fibre and antioxidants than fresh fruits; nutrients such as vitamin C, beta carotene and iron are kept intact; and even minerals and other nutrients are maintained for much longer according to scientific research.

PRESSURE COOKING

Pressure cooking is touted to be a very efficient cooking method, utilising much less energy than most other appliances as it leverages the pressure powers of steam rather than cooking in water. Because a pressure cooker basically uses “steam under pressure”, foods are bathed in steam as they cook, thus staying moist and juicy. The softer the food, the easier it is for the body to digest, and especially in the case of hard-to-break-down proteins in legumes, pressure cooking can increase digestibility by as much as 84 percent.

And now electric pressure cookers as part of multi-cookers have exploded in popularity because of their time saving benefits (cutting down cooking time by as much as 70 percent compared to other traditional methods), and

much higher retention of vitamins, minerals and flavour. Another advantage of such modern pressure cookers is that pressure can be quickly reduced during cooking to add delicate foods such as herbs and dairy that require less cooking time than meat later during the process, thus better retaining their texture and nutrients.

Pressure cooking also helps eliminate two cancer-causing compounds (acrylamide and heterocyclic amines), which are often produced by other high-heat cooking methods. Studies have shown that pressure cooking is also the best cooking method when it comes to lectins and phytic acid, the two anti-nutrients in grains, legumes and pseudo grains like quinoa, which can bind to minerals and make them indigestible. When soaked overnight and cooked under pressure, the amount of phytic acid can reduce by as much as 50 percent.

SLOW COOKING

Hail the slow food movement. Economical to use and great for making the most of budget ingredients, slow cookers offer a healthier, low-fat method of cooking and require the minimum amount of effort. The extended cooking times allow better distribution of flavours, as the lower temperatures lessen the chance of scorching foods that tend to stick to the bottom of a pan or burn in an oven. Less expensive or tough meats, such as chuck steaks, roast, and less-lean stewing beef, are tenderised through the long cooking process, slow cookers use less energy than a standard electric oven and can usually be left unattended all day for many recipes, providing a perfect alternative for busy lifestyles. Trimming fat from meat before slow cooking is required as the fat won't drain off as with other cooking methods, nor does oil need to be added at the start of the cooking, so the health benefits are definitely attractive.

DID YOU KNOW

Nutrient retention with alternative cooking methods is possible as long as the food is protected from direct heat contact. Because the modern air fryer keeps the surface of the food dry and cooks it with circulating hot air, this process ensures food retains more of its key nutrients as it cooks food in a faster, healthier way all while using a tablespoon of oil at most.



A Grand Overwater Villa perched on stilts and surrounded by 50 shades of blue



INTO THE BLUE

A stay at the newly opened Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi will plunge you into the depths of experiential luxury. Adeline Wong visits the sumptuous haven in the South Malé Atoll and feels irrevocably inspired.



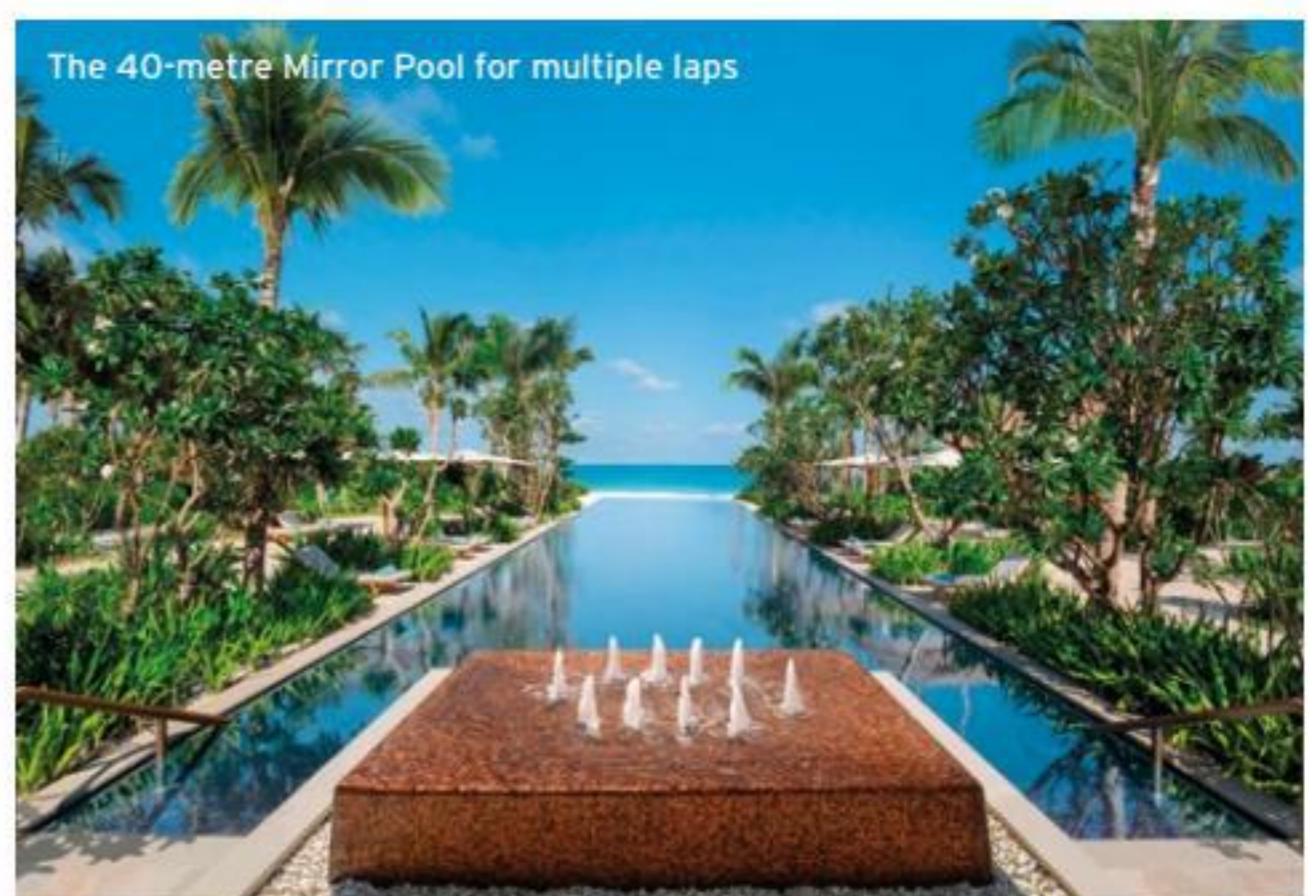
At almost 600 sqm, the two-bedroom Beach Villa comes with an infinity pool, outdoor dining area and a floating daybed.

With 1,200 islands, year-round dry, sunny weather and more than 130 resorts to choose from, it's hard to think of a more tropical idyll than the Maldives. Cerulean waters, powder white sand dunes and ombre sunsets make the island nation an aspirational spot for honeymooners yearning for romantic seclusion and a dreamy escapade for leisure seekers looking to disconnect from the world.

Even the most Instagram-worthy photo of Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi can scarcely prepare you for the staggering expansiveness of the newly opened resort. A two-year project in the making, the 122 all-villa paradise – each with its own pool – spans three interconnected islands in the South Malé Atoll. To explore the entire length of the resort – all three and a half kilometres of it – will require a languorous 40-minute bicycle ride.

EASE AND LUXURY

Part of the charm – and sometimes the frustration – of reaching your resort in the Maldives is the seaplane transfer from Malé. If you are the sort who loves travel but hate the travelling, unpredictable weather conditions or late-night flight arrivals can put a dampener on the getaway experience. (Seaplanes in the Maldives do not fly at night.) Here is where Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi blows the competition out of the water with its strategic location and



hassle-free arrival experience. You can land at Velana International Airport, clear customs, board the resort's own 70-footer yacht, and be sipping on a lemongrass cooler at the lobby in just under an hour.

First-time visitors who choose Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi as the starting point to explore the Maldives do so at their own risk: the luxury resort sets a pretty high bar for subsequent trips to the island paradise. The villas are categorised into three main room types: Beach Villa, Reef Villa and Overwater Villa. The smallest, a King Beach Villa, measures 234 sq m, while a cavernous three-bedroom Overwater Villa spans 1,113 sq m. It is the only resort in the Maldives where all the bungalows offer a 180-degree vista of the Indian Ocean, which is not a coincidental feature. "It was designed in such a way that no single accommodation is compromised," explains Dino Michael, global head of Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts, over lunch at Glow restaurant with a small group of editors from Singapore and China. "People tend to have a very romantic notion of the Maldives. When you arrive here you will find that it is everything you have ever wanted from the island, and then we give you so much more, from the sense of space on the island to the room size," he adds.

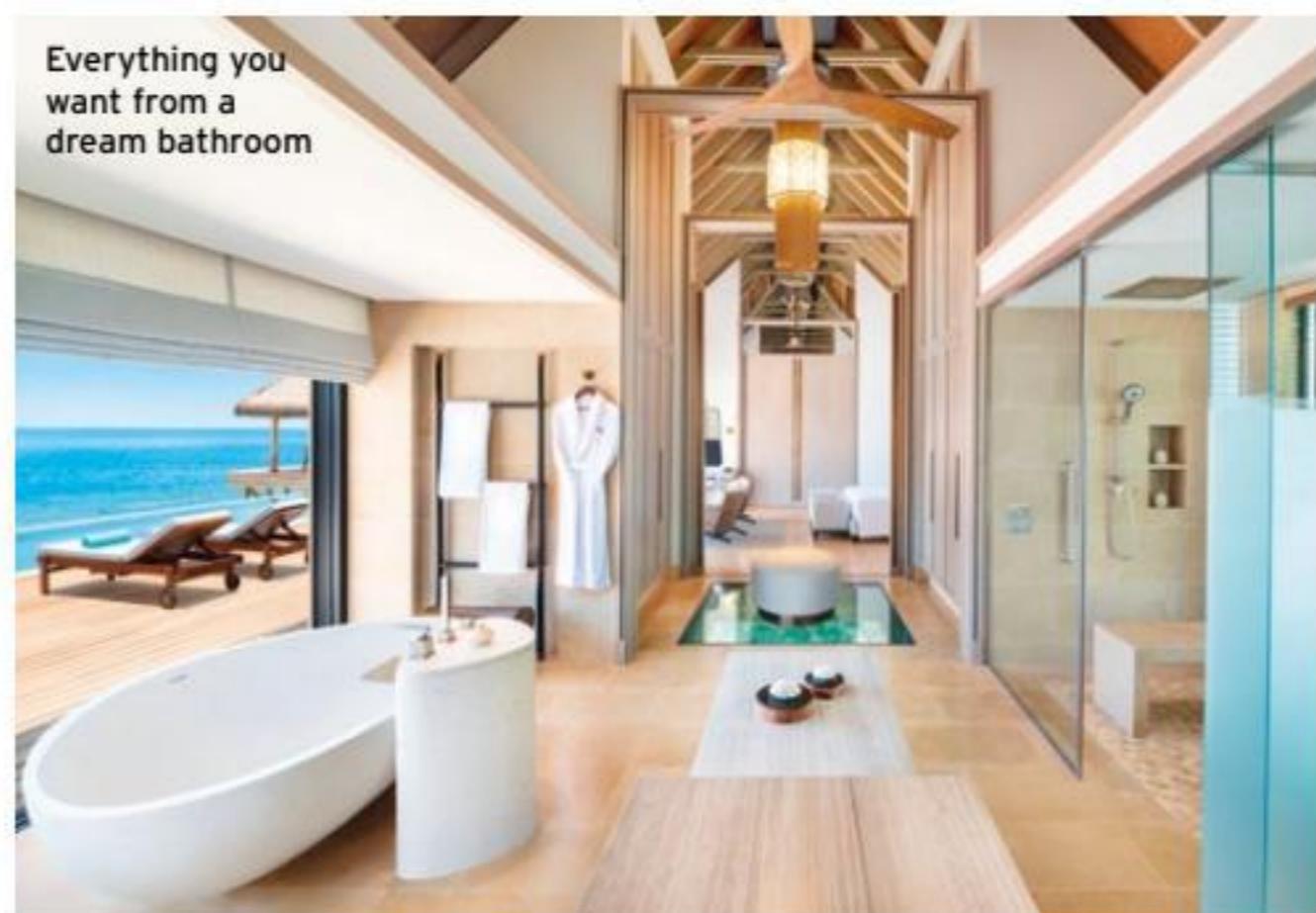
The skeptic in me is inclined to take Michael's statement as brand speak until my personal butler, Thibault Sanna, transports me to my villa in a buggy, one of over 40 available on the resort. My home for the next three days is a thatched-roof beauty made in heaven, a one-bedroom, 276 sq m Grand Overwater Villa built on stilts, overlooking the impossibly blue ocean. The six-metre high-ceilinged hideaway houses a generous living room, an oversized king bed and an elegant dresser. This is before I find myself standing on the glass floor of the wardrobe area (if you are lucky enough, you might see reef fish swimming below your feet). A separate shower, toilet and bathtub complete the bathroom wish list. Smart technology ensures all the light settings can be controlled using the iPad located at the bedside table.



A floating daybed offers one of the best seats in the house to view the Indian Ocean.



The elegantly appointed two-bedroom Overwater Villa



Everything you want from a dream bathroom

Step outside and you'll find another shower, a floating daybed, a dining gazebo, a 10-metre infinity pool, and a hammock hanging over the Tiffany-blue ocean. Why have breakfast at The Tasting Table when it's really more glorious to enjoy it in the privacy of your own deck? Tip: order the floating breakfast to make a splash on your Instagram feed.

As indulgent as my experience is, this villa (US\$1,760 to US\$2,800 a night) isn't the last word in exclusivity and luxury. The resort is currently putting the finishing touches on two standalone Stella Maris Ocean Villas and a private independent island. Set to launch on 1 October, both can only be accessible by yacht. The private island - yours for between US\$45,000 and US\$75,000 a night - can house about 18 people in a two-bedroom overwater villa and three-bedroom beach villa. Guests will not only have a dedicated chef and concierge team but will enjoy exclusive access to a spa, gym, entertainment centre and five pools.

ACTIVITIES GALORE

In a resort as expansive as this, you can bask in the privacy of your own villa and never feel the need to step out of your peaceful cocoon, but the call of the sun and ocean beckons. Kids will be entertained by the supervised Young Discovery Park, which boasts outdoor

water slides with splashing buckets, and an indoor area for cooking activities. Adult distractions come in the form of a sprawling spa where therapists recommend apothecary-style massages based on the four elements in your body, using essential oils from Elemental Herbology. Mornings can be spent toning your core muscles over a contemplative Pilates mat workout at the Ocean Pavilion with the sounds of lapping waves as your company.

A 15-minute speed boat ride away, you can be snorkelling in some of the bluest waters in the world and spotting an amazing school of butterfly fish, sea turtles and clownfish, after which a lie down on the sandbank is a mandatory pleasure. If that is not enough, a marine biologist will take you on a private diving session and help you capture breathtaking moments in the ocean. Few guest requests are considered off-limits, says Etienne Dalançon, the resort's general manager, who cites one odd challenge by a guest to have a haircut on a remote sandbank before his dinner. "The aim is not to say no to our guests but to say yes and try our best to realise it in the best possible way," he says.



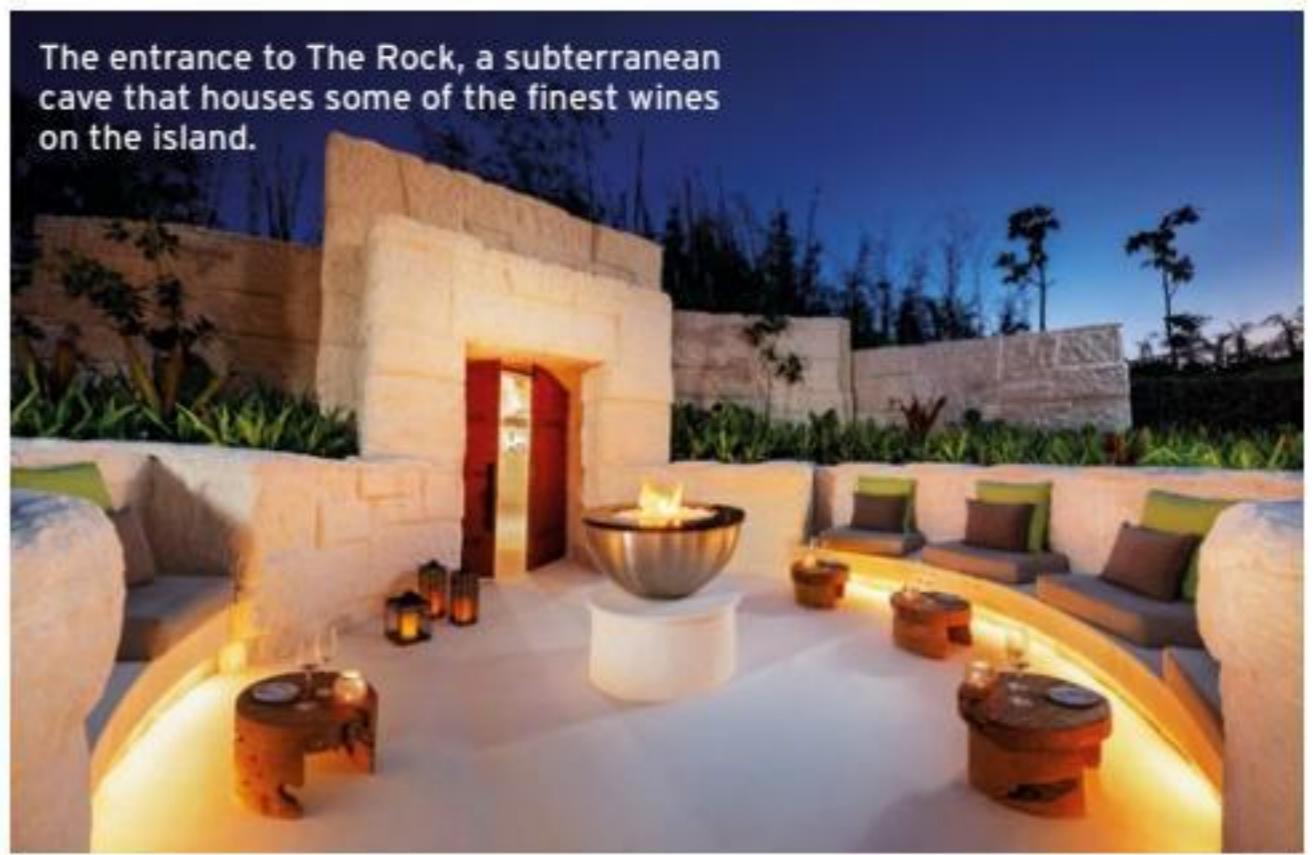
Elevated tree-top dining at Terra



Yasmeen is built to look like a heritage house in Syria, complete with household artefacts



Li Long is the only full-fledged Chinese restaurant in the Maldives with a wood-fired oven



The entrance to The Rock, a subterranean cave that houses some of the finest wines on the island.

A WORLD OF GASTRONOMY

When it comes to dining, serial resort-goers have probably experienced it before. Your villa is great but the cuisine options are underwhelming. And when the island you are on is as remote and self-contained as the Maldives, there isn't much you can do about it. With Waldorf Astoria the expectation goes up – after all, this is the same luxury brand that invented the Waldorf salad and eggs benedict. Here, the resort has upped the dining game with the most number of restaurants and bars in the Maldives – 11 to be exact.

Much of the credit goes to director of culinary, Vijayakant Shanmugam, a Singaporean who runs a tight ship with a team of 70 chefs to provide stellar dining experiences. There is Terra which offers seven treetop dining pods. Li Long is the first full-fledged Chinese restaurant in the Maldives featuring a custom built wood-fired oven for Peking duck. The Rock, a subterranean cave-cum-wine cellar, houses 7,000 bottles. The best time to visit Yasmeen, an al fresco Middle Eastern restaurant decked out to look like a traditional house in Syria, is in the evening when the temperature drops, and where you will be feted with some of the most delectable flatbreads and mezze on the island.

The dining destination that generates the most buzz is The Ledge by Dave Pynt, the eagerly anticipated sister restaurant of Pynt's one Michelin-starred Burnt Ends in Singapore. Located by the resort's main pool, The Ledge exudes sleek casualness and serves several familiar favourites of Burnt Ends, such as Jamaican Chicken with Lime Crema, and Grissini and Ikura. Singaporean head chef Deborah Yeo and her team work the four-ton dual cavity oven and elevation grills fired by sustainable jarrah wood at over 700 degrees. It may be early days but as a staff arrives to present a hulking 1.8kg, 45-day aged Blackmore OP ribs to the table, you realise The Ledge has it down pat.

Unexpectedly, it's at Glow restaurant where I had my best meal. The lemongrass chicken curry, a Malay-inspired dish, is served with fragrant coconut milk infused brown rice, while the gluten-free dessert – hibiscus with guava sorbet – takes some heat off the tropical weather. A wonderful story of farm-to-table herbs unfolds as guests are taken on a tour of the restaurant garden where about 25 herbs like lemongrass, curry leaf and rosemary grow verdantly.

If you do manage to visit all 11 F&B establishments (which will require a tempting five-night stay) and are wanting more, request for a special experience. Perhaps the idea of getting whisked away on a yacht to the nearest sandbank for an intimate dinner, where chefs can fire up the freshest seafood on an outdoor grill, will appeal to you. Because in The Maldives, even the wildest wishlist is just a phone call away.



FESTIVE STAYCATION AT PARK HYATT SAIGON

A festive season is like no other, it is a season of merriment, of gift sharing and of unforgettable celebration. Fairy lights, delightful gingerbreads and sparkling pine trees, all are ready to set the scene for a magnifique experience at Park Hyatt Saigon.

It is no exaggeration to say that there is no shortage of festive celebrations at this award-winning hotel. Whether you are looking for an idyllic romantic escape for two or a magical family experience, a little Park Hyatt sparkle makes it perfect with a wonderfully warm hospitality and a glamourous seasonal atmosphere.

This December, enjoy the most wonderful time of the year by celebrating in style and curating your own noteworthy experiences with a cherished staycation at The Park. With the enhanced offerings available, one's stay promises to be filled with wonder and joy.



**VALID FROM 1 DECEMBER TO 31 DECEMBER 2021
(EXCEPT THE FEAST DAYS)**

- One room night for two guests in Park City View
- Daily breakfast at Opera Restaurant for two persons
- VND 1,000,000 nett hotel credit per each person
- 30% off Spa Experience at Xuan Spa
(subject to government's directives)
- A complimentary premium bottle of Prosecco upon arrival
- Early check-in at 11:00 AM and late check-out at 5:00 PM
(subject to availability)

At VND 7,000,000 / Night / Two Guests (Monday - Thursday)

At VND 6,000,000 / Night / Two Guests (Friday - Sunday)

APPLICABLE TO THE NIGHTS OF 24, 25, 31 DECEMBER 2021 AND 1 JANUARY 2022 ONLY

- One room night for two guests in Park City View
- Daily breakfast at Opera Restaurant for two persons
- VND 3,000,000 nett hotel credit per each person
- 30% off Spa Experience at Xuan Spa
(subject to government's directives)
- A complimentary premium bottle of Prosecco upon arrival
- One-way complimentary luxury transfer to locations within 6km of the hotel and an additional cost of VND 500,000 for the return (including District 7)
- Early check-in at 11:00 AM and late check-out at 5:00 PM
(subject to availability)

At VND 12,000,000 / Night / Two Guests

Early bird offer (non-refundable):

Book 14 days in advance to get 15% off

* Prices are subject service charge and then VAT.



Besides, to adore the festive season to the fullest, there are several December highlights listed by the hotel that should not be missed. From a flavourful selection of artisanal Christmas cakes, sweets and pastries created by the talented Pastry team, a collection of exquisite foie gras terrine, imported caviar and traditional roasted turkey available at Santa Shop, a photogenic Festive Afternoon Tea experience at Park Lounge to unlimited Sunday Brunch at Square One and Opera, there is a bundle of luxurious lifestyle indulgence ready to allure each discerning guest.

2 Lam Son Square, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Vietnam

Email: reservations.saiph@hyatt.com

Tel: +84 28 3824 1234



Alchemy crystal singing bowls are part of the colour therapy healing at The Healing Village Spa

TENDER LOVING CARE

In a first for Four Seasons Resorts in the Asia-Pacific region, a dedicated Cancer Care Massage and bespoke wellness programme are now available in Bali.

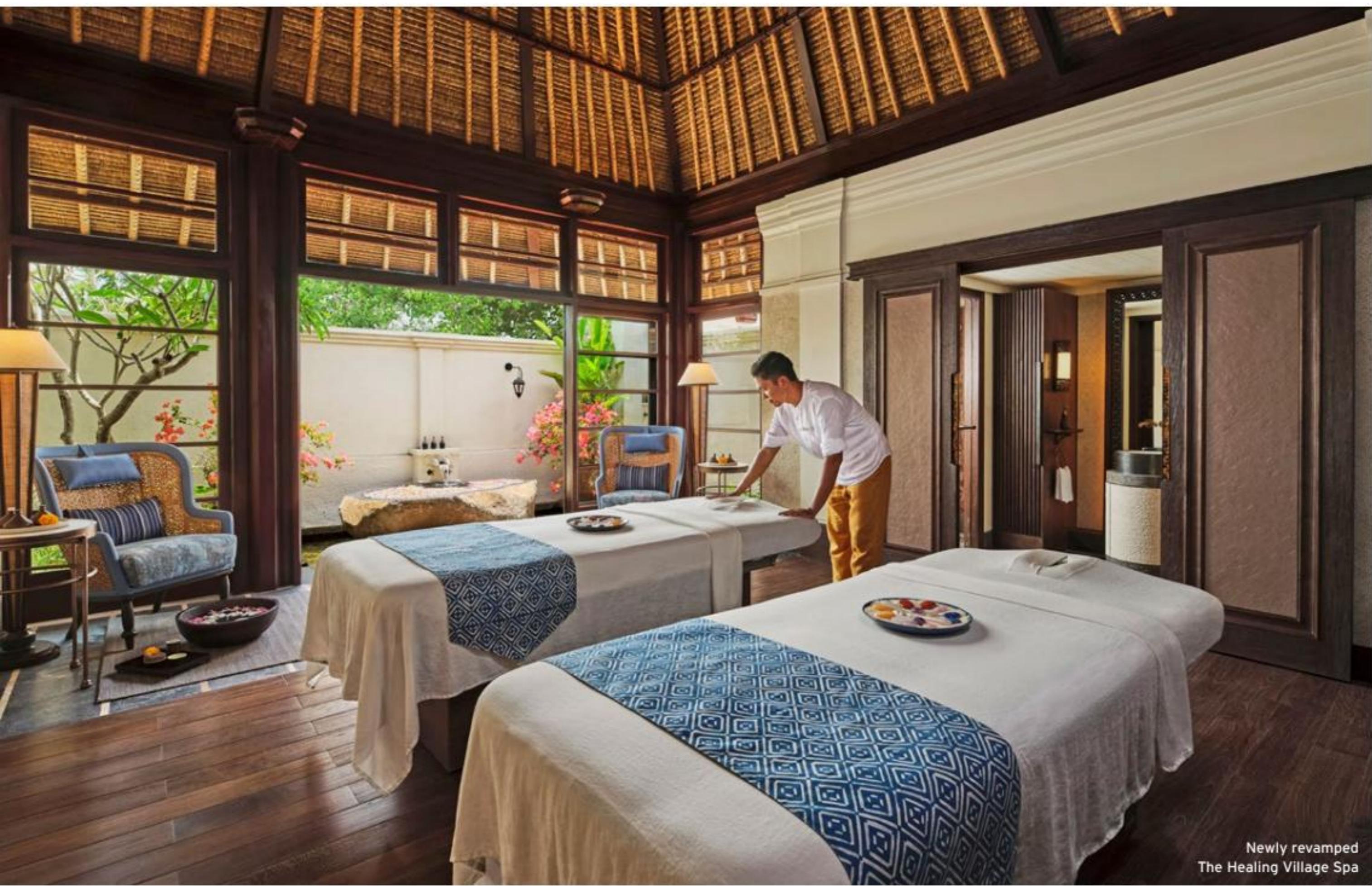
BY EVE TEDJA

Aung Rai was 41 years old when she found a lump on her left breast. She was diagnosed with a hormone receptor-positive breast cancer, a type of cancer when cells grow in response to the hormone estrogen. For more than one year, she had to bear chemotherapy, mastectomy, radiations, and a lifetime hormone therapy to prevent the return of the disease. The battle was too lonely to be waged alone. Fortunately, she found support in Pink Fighters Bali, a community of women living with breast cancer and part of a support group of the Bali Pink Ribbon Foundation.

The side effects of the treatment were severe. Hair loss, joint pain, nausea, hot flashes, fatigue and numbness were just some of what Rai experienced after the ordeal. "The treatment was a long and tiring process. My body ached and sometimes I had it carefully massaged but only on the back or feet. I did not dare to allow the therapist to touch me anywhere on the chest," says Rai even now, four years after she was diagnosed. She is not alone in being afraid to have massages during or after cancer treatment.



Most of spa and retreat centres are also reluctant to treat guests with history of cancer – all with a strong reason: the therapists are not equipped with the knowledge on how to care for a cancer-ridden body. After all, it was only in the late 2000s that studies about the benefit of massage on cancer patient started to emerge. With an estimated 19.3 million new cancer cases occurred in 2020 alone, it ranks as a leading cause of death and an important barrier to increasing life expectancy in every country in the world (Global Cancer Statistics 2020).



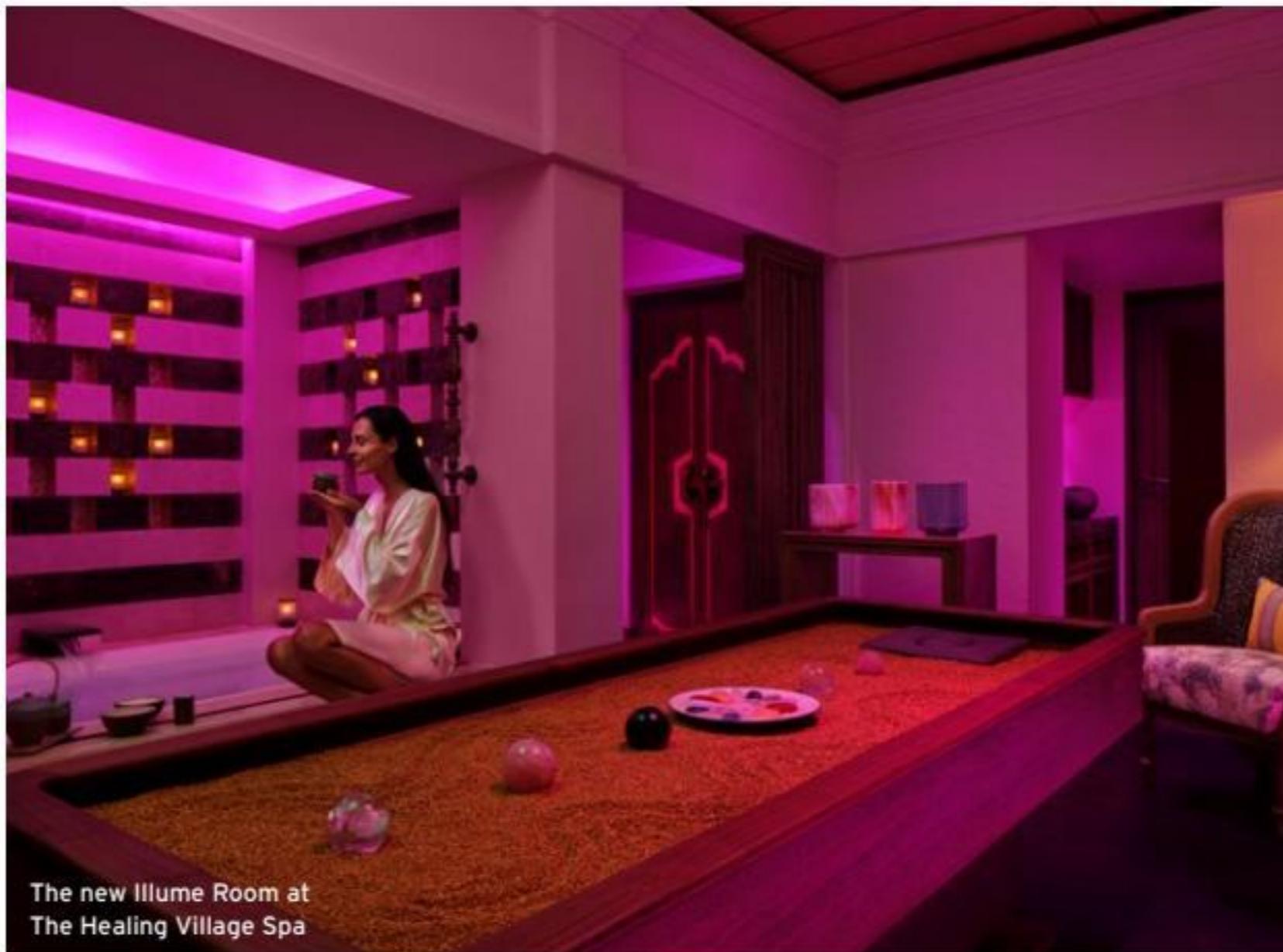
Newly revamped
The Healing Village Spa



As a former nurse specialising in children's cancer care, Four Seasons regional director of spa Luisa Anderson is fully aware of this lack of supportive therapy. "When I first joined the spa industry, there was no treatment of any kind for cancer patients because the belief back then was that we could harm them. It is only recently that supportive therapy becomes part of the cancer journey," says Anderson. Massage is not a luxury but a necessity for a person diagnosed with cancer.

Last year, 12 therapists from Four Seasons Resort Bali at Jimbaran Bay and Four Seasons Resort Bali at Sayan followed an intensive training with Christine Clinton. As a certified specialist and founding member of SATCC (Standards Authority for Touch in Cancer Care), Clinton taught the all-women therapists to understand the needs of a cancer patient at any stage during the cancer journey – pre-treatment, during treatment or rehabilitation. "Cancer medical treatment is very aggressive and it massively affects the body. Cases such as swelling, scarring, collapsed vein, skin sensitivity, and many more are common on cancer patient. But, most of all, they need love and care. We try to create an environment of complete support and acceptance so they feel safe to be vulnerable," says Anderson.

In a first for Four Seasons Resorts in the Asia-Pacific region, a dedicated Cancer Care Massage is now being offered at both Four Seasons Resorts' spas in Bali. Women from Bali Pink Fighters were invited for trials, including Agung Rai and Sari Ardani. "The massage



was very gentle and relaxing. I have no lymphatic nodes under my left arm, so the massage really helped with blood circulation on the left side. I could feel the tension released in just a few minutes. The therapist also applied some techniques to boost my metabolism," says Ardani, a breast cancer survivor and a mother of three children.

ELEVATED BY ENERGY

Putu Santi Martadi is the perfect embodiment of a gentle and soft-spoken spa therapist. With 17 years of experience at Four Seasons Resort Bali at Jimbaran Bay's Healing Village Spa, Santi supervises the operational aspect of the recently revamped wellness destination and was one of the Cancer Care Massage-trained therapists. "Being able to comfort the breast cancer survivors has been educational and moving for us here. I know that I can't heal them but at least my touch can help to ease their pain," says Santi. Now, she and her colleagues are confident to treat cancer patients with a gentle 60- or 90-minute massage.

The spa's new facilities also allows guests to embark on the resort's bespoke wellness journey, Elevated by Energy. Housed in a two-storey building, it offers 10 all-suite spa rooms with state-of-art heated-quartz sand bed for inversion therapy and massage, coloured light therapy, gemstones and crystal singing bowls, as well as healing rituals. Expertly combining ancient wisdom with modern science, the cancer patient can be sure to receive a holistically healing experience when they stay at the beachfront resort. Supported by a fully certified yoga master, healer and the soothing soundtrack of the ocean, the experience is not only good for the body but also emotionally healing.

The resort serves a highly nutritive menu created by a certified clinical nutritionist, Miles Price. A founder of Life Clinic Hong Kong and a member of British Association of Applied Nutrition & Lifestyle Medicine (BANT), Price recognises food's powerful healing properties when it is carefully chosen and cooked right. On the menu, one will find locally-sourced produce as well as a balance of protein, good fats and vegetables. Catering for all preferences whether vegan, gluten-free, carnivore or pescatarian, the dishes are not just tasty but loaded with vitamins and nutrients to boost the immune system.

GUIDED BY GRATITUDE

The same intention of complementing cancer treatment plans with a personalised wellness programme centred around mindfulness, healthy lifestyle and nutrition is also evident at Four Seasons Resort Bali at Sayan. The verdant riverside resort is home to the Sacred River Spa, with two resident experts and trained therapists. Nature's healing property is strongly felt when one stays at the resort. Curated by resident wellness mentor and former Buddhist nun Heni Ferawati, the Guided by Gratitude retreat offers a holistic programme that includes meditation, blessing rituals, massage, yoga, and the deeply relaxing Sacred Nap under a bamboo bale by the river.

Catering to people at various stages of the cancer journey, the treatment will soothe the nervous system and increase the sense of calm. An in-depth consultation will be conducted prior to the retreat to determine the type of cancer, treatment and side effects. "The therapist will adjust the treatment accordingly, using oils to soothe dry or radiation-irritated skin, release scar tissue and provide lymph support," explains Santi.

The resort also offers a Sattvic-inspired menu. Rooted in the ancient Ayurveda philosophy, the menu features organically-grown fruits and vegetables, herbs, cheese, calming spices, grains, nuts, and seeds. Created by executive sous chef Wayan Sutariawan with insights from spa and wellness manager Faraaz Tanveer, the vegetarian dishes promote longevity and immunity without sacrificing flavour. Start the day with a breakfast of Masala Dosa or Sattvic Taco, on to lunch with Mushroom and Pearl Barley Risotto, and end with a dinner made of hearty Semolina Spinach Fettucine with Vegetarian Meatballs.

Through nourishing food, restorative treatment and supportive environment, cancer patients are invited to restore their energy. The goal is to make them feel stronger to better able to handle whatever is happening in their lives.



Sacred Nap with resident wellness mentor, Heni Ferawati

CULINARY EXPLORER

Gordon Ramsay hits the road again in the third season of *Gordon Ramsay: Uncharted* where he explores global cuisines amid frigid temperatures, muddy back roads and stormy waters.

BY NIDA SEAH





If you've enjoyed the two earlier seasons of Gordon Ramsay: Uncharted, then be prepared for more culinary adventures with the multi-Michelin-starred celebrity chef.

Like previous episodes, season three sees Gordon Ramsay travelling through different countries exploring global cuisines and their unique culinary customs. This time, he travels to places such as Portugal, Croatia, Mexico, Texas, Maine, Puerto Rico, Iceland and America's Smoky Mountains. He learns about the delicacies and flavours unique to each region, before creating recipes inspired by the harvested ingredients, local dishes and the people he meets. Each episode ends with Ramsay in a final cookout challenge with a food expert and preparing a meal together for the locals.

But let's face it, the highlight of the show is watching Ramsay swear his way through each "mission" as he attempts to fish, harvest, forage, hunt, kayak and dive to collect the ingredients – and messing up along the way. Season three promises to be bigger and bolder with more adventures and challenges. In Texas, he herds cattle with the help of a helicopter and hunts for venomous rattlesnakes under the stern eyes of tough, gritty characters. In Portugal, he joins local fishermen in the open seas to fish for sardines – a task that turned out to be a lot harder than it looked. Luckily the show pulls back just enough to let each region's cuisine be the star, whether it's the Maine lobster, wild Atlantic salmon or Icelandic scallops. It's a wild ten-part adventure ready to be savoured.





Gordon Ramsay's Maine Oysters Rockefeller, a classic dish with rich green-coloured sauce that's named after the richest man of the day John D. Rockefeller.

OYSTERS ROCKEFELLER WITH CREAMED SPINACH AND BREAD CRUMBS

INGREDIENTS

MAKES
12

- 12 fresh oysters on the half shell
- 1 lemon

CREAMED SPINACH

- 3 cups spinach
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 shallot, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1/2 tsp freshly ground nutmeg
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 57g cream cheese, softened
- 1 lemon, zested
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- Pinch of chili flakes

BREAD CRUMBS

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, finely minced
- 1/2 cup panko bread crumbs
- Pinch of kosher salt

OPTIONAL

Rock salt or seaweed

To make creamed spinach, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil, then blanch spinach for about 30 seconds. Remove from water. Once cool enough to handle, drain as much water as possible from the spinach and set aside.

Heat a large high-walled skillet over medium heat. Add butter, then shallots and cook until soft and translucent, about 2 minutes. Add garlic, nutmeg and chili flakes, and stir to combine. Add heavy cream and cream cheese, stirring until melted and incorporated.

Let this mixture simmer for a moment to thicken the heavy cream, then add drained spinach back to the pan. Stir to incorporate, then add lemon zest and Parmesan cheese. Add lemon juice or salt as needed, then set aside.

To make bread crumbs, combine the ingredients in a small bowl and mix with your fingers to incorporate everything evenly. Set aside.

Preheat a grill to medium-high or preheat the oven to 232°C. Place oysters on a small baking tray lined with seaweed or rock salt, or crumple aluminum foil lightly on top of a sheet tray and place the oysters on top so they don't fall over.

Top each oyster with a heaped tablespoon of creamed spinach, followed by a generous spoonful of breadcrumbs.

Add to the hot grill or oven and cook until spinach is bubbly and breadcrumbs are golden brown and crispy, about 5 to 8 minutes. Serve with lemon wedges.



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DRIVING CHANGE

Seven chefs share their experiences and tell *epicure* what's in store for the year ahead.

BY EVE TEDJA & PRIYANKA ELHENCE



LOUIS PACQUELIN
Clos Pasoh

The French head chef and co-owner of the recently opened Clos Pasoh is no stranger to Singapore's fine dining scene. The former chef de cuisine of BBR by Alain Ducasse at Raffles Hotel Singapore was in charge of the restaurant before the pandemic hit last year.

POWER OF CHANGE

"Change is inevitable. You just have to roll with the punches, and believe that your hard work will pay off. Before COVID-19, I thought that I was in the prime of my career. I was in my 30s, working for Alain Ducasse in one of the most beautiful hotels in the world and then the pandemic happened. It was the first time in my life that I stopped working for two consecutive weeks ever since I started this career at 15 years of age."

KEY TO SUCCESS

"I believe in putting in the work, day in and day out. But at the same time, you also need to work smart. Self-awareness is important. That is the only way you continue to evolve and reinvent yourself. When I opened Clos Pasoh earlier this year as co-owner, it was the first time that I had the full autonomy to define my own cuisine. I am returning to the roots of my training in French brasserie classics from my time at Ducasse's Aux Lyonnais. New school French cuisine is a shift from fine dining. The flavours remain true to the brasserie dishes that inspired me, but I have reinterpreted them to appeal to another generation of diners. The flavours, while familiar, are light and clean. I like to add acidity or a little kick of heat."

NAVIGATING THE FUTURE

"Sometimes, you have to accept that things aren't going to go as planned. I am learning new things from my business partner, JC Cadoret, and from my team. I am excited to welcome this new chapter of my career."



MANJUNATH MURAL

Adda

Mural is the powerhouse best known as the first Indian executive chef to score a Michelin star for (the now shuttered) Song of India in 2016, a first for an Indian restaurant in Southeast Asia (Singapore). In November 2020, Mural opened his casual, 70-seater Indian restaurant Adda, serving soulful Neo-Indian traditional street food with contemporary twists and infusion of local flavours.

POWER OF CHANGE

"Chefs have to embody new innovative ideas according to the changing times. The only thing chefs have in their control is their menu, their passion and how they motivate their team. The menu can be regularly updated to accommodate new trends and expectations without compromising on the chef's quality and reputation."

KEY TO SUCCESS

"There is no limit to innovation and reinvention when a passionate chef decides to do something different. Having the courage to think out-of-the-box with confidence is the key to new creations. My

cooking style has changed so much. I used to be a traditional Indian cuisine chef, but now, I am equally confident in fine dining too. Winning a Michelin star has given me the confidence to venture into different projects such as Gunpowder Kitchen and Bar in Jakarta; and Hirtij in Brisbane, along with what used to be many travelling opportunities to promote Indian cuisine with a touch of local flavours. I'm not afraid to try new things now."

NAVIGATING THE FUTURE

"The future of Indian cuisine is very bright. I will continue to do new things, but at the same time I will create a very fine dining Indian restaurant experience too."

JOEL SI JIN LIM

Si Jin

It doesn't take long for this one-and-a-half-year-old modern steakhouse with Korean flair to take off. Apart from the exceptional premium cuts, dry-aged steaks and curated wine cellar, loyal patrons are flocking in to have chef owner Joel Si Jin Lim taking care of their meat-y requests. The South-Korean chef is no stranger to bovine refinery. Having trained under Wolfgang Puck's Cut and in charge of the openings of Akira Back restaurants in Singapore, Jakarta and Dubai, Lim's obsession with meat and deep reverence for Korean cuisine finds its place at SI JIN, his first venture.

POWER OF CHANGE

"I've realised that as part of the F&B community, we are all in this together. Since day one of the pandemic, SI JIN has decided to fight back, remain positive and creative. We had to adapt while taking care of our families, guests and supporting our local suppliers, producers and farmers. We went the extra miles - upgrading to HEPA air filters, using a thermal scanner, installed a touch-free and motion detection door, provided sealed cutlery and napkin pouch, daily sanitation, and even regular PCR tests. Despite the limitation and restriction, we are fortunate to have full support from our guests. I am grateful because their support enables us to keep moving forward."

KEY TO SUCCESS

"Guests come for our curated selection of meats from across the continents. From conventional to the rarest cuts, we grill and serve it to the guests' liking on their tables. Our latest gem is A5 Kuroge Washu Wagyu Beef from Hokkaido. At the moment, we have Sumatran Wagyu on the menu, highlighting the quality

of local produce. We also work closely with local farmers to get the freshest produce, be it vegetable or sea salt."

NAVIGATING THE FUTURE

"This pandemic undeniably changes the way food is prepared and consumed. I've learned that people are rooting for their local businesses. Our guests are willing to go out of their way to support such as ordering beef from us. Eventually, we will find a solution to end this pandemic. Until then, we must keep our heads up high, provide top-quality food and dining experience for our guests and support each other in the F&B community."





IVAN BREHM

Nouri and Appetite

This hugely talented chef and visionary behind one-Michelin-starred Nouri, Brehm opened Appetite one year ago on a mission to create a unique culinary experience in Asia. This multi-concept space located directly above Nouri focuses on transcending its restaurant roots by bringing together scientists, artists, musicians, and designers, and Brehm's out-of-the-box vision with Appetite is to show how food, arts, music, and education are all interconnected. Appetite is home to a development kitchen for both restaurants, taking a creativity-as-science approach to food in tandem with Nouri's research and development arm, resulting in new dishes that contextualise their collective research.

POWER OF CHANGE

"I guess embodying change literally means incarnating the dynamic spirit of seeking the new, despite the risks driving change. What things do chefs have in their control, and what elements do they have to adapt to? This interesting moment we live in has shown me nothing is in our control apart from the ownership of our own actions."

KEY TO SUCCESS

"The star was a nice pat on the back, but also conditional to a certain set of things that could easily get in the way of progress. There is surety in a concept of sound techniques, pristine product, and heavy investments in décor. Smoke and mirror presentation, pomp and circumstance, but at some point in time, an individual needs to ask 'what is it all for?' Because if it is just money and fame, I'm sure there are easier ways to get there that don't involve 16-hour days and crazy levels of stress. What we cook ends up inside people's bellies and minds. To treat this as an afterthought, and not a main driver of one's intent is borderline irresponsible."

NAVIGATING THE FUTURE

"People forget, but the root word for innovation means to breathe new life into something that already exists, hence it is a reinvent. In the context of cooking, that is translated to cooking that is grounded by tradition, but that looks upwards to the new. Sitting on the shoulder of giants, we can choose to do the same, and be the same, but we can also choose to stand up and see new horizons."

EELKE PLASMEIJER & RAY ADRIANSYAH

Locavore

Ranked 37 in Asia's 50 Best Restaurants 2020 and Indonesia's only entry to the prestigious list, Locavore was founded in 2013 by chef Eelke Plasmeijer and Ray Adriansyah in Ubud, Bali. Changing the game and pushing the boundary with sustainably sourced local ingredients has always been the soul of Locavore. Over the years, the enterprise has expanded to include the butchery Local Parts, casual bistro Locavore To Go, Indonesian restaurant Nusantara, cocktail bar Night Rooster, and the backbone of its progressive cuisine, LocaLAB.



POWER OF CHANGE

"When international borders were being closed, we received cancellation after cancellation until we had no choice but to close Locavore. From the beginning, we've done everything we could to stay afloat. We created ready-to-eat hampers, vegetable basket, Indonesian food tiffin delivery, many things. We simply refuse to give up. We managed to keep our entire team until today. Having different business models also helped us to create various dining offers. As soon as the situation allowed us to travel, we went to Jakarta, Surabaya and Semarang with our team, doing pop-ups and restaurant takeovers. Bali is home but we also actively seek opportunities beyond the island".

KEY TO SUCCESS

"Sustainability and showcasing local ingredients remain our priority. Our colleague at LocaLAB, Felix Schoener continues to experiment, producing marvels that we use on our menus. The bright side of this pandemic gave us the opportunity to go to different cities in Indonesia, sharing our explorations of local ingredients to many Indonesians who have never been to Locavore. We also managed to launch two tasting menus, Pancaroba and Rintik Rintik."

NAVIGATING THE FUTURE

"We are done looking back and now we have set our gaze to the future. Locavore 2.0 is set to open next year in a new location in Lodontunduh, Ubud. We will move the lab, build a dedicated fermentation facility, koji room and garden there."



KEVIN CHERKAS

Cuca

Founded in 2013, Cuca's playful tapas, inventive dishes and cocktails have made the restaurant a must-visit culinary destination in Bali. Led by Kevin Cherkas, an El Bulli and Arzak alumni, Cuca's appeal lies in its eclectic global flavours, dedication towards using local produce and a casual approach to the dining experience. Those who have tried dishes such as Bali Breakfast, Cotton Betutu or BBQ Octopus would recognise Cherkas's flair in evoking memorable moments through flavour.

POWER OF CHANGE

"Being on a tourist island without tourists has not been easy. We were closed for eight months and have only reopened lately on weekends. We have been very lucky that we've had so many good years to weather this crisis and take care of our team. So, the plan for now is to take the time to look at everything we do and simply become better."

KEY TO SUCCESS

"We found that doing the same thing as we've done before simply doesn't work. So, we reevaluated the landscape and tried to understand why people came to Cuca. We went through the painstaking process to make something new, something that you can't find anywhere else. Since we

can't travel at the moment, the new menu is inspired by trips and memories of flavours from places like Japan, Greece, France, and Mexico. One of our new dishes, Beef Bone & Marrow is inspired by Taipei's famous night market snack."

NAVIGATING THE FUTURE

"We must get better every day, so when things slowly go back to normal, guests will find Cuca at its best. We have a new signature Hot Sauce. Cuca will also travel to other cities in Indonesia. There are exciting brunches to be had at our restaurant. This whole situation is like the monsoon season. When it starts to rain, at first you wait it out. But, the rain goes on and you must get on with it. We've accepted the rain, and are ready to work and get a little wet!"

CHEF MASTERCLASS



MAN ON A MISSION

Nothing is stopping chef Mathew Leong as he heads to the Bocuse d'Or finals in Lyon, France this September.

BY NIDA SEAH

The Bocuse d'Or is one of the most prestigious – and rigorous – culinary competitions in the world. Founded by the father of French gastronomy Paul Bocuse, the competition brings together 24 talented chefs from around the world where they each have to prepare two recipes in five hours and 35 minutes precisely.

Mathew Leong is one of them. At age 26, he will be the youngest Singaporean chef based in another country to make it all the way to the finals in Lyon, France.

It has been a long journey, one that began when he was just 13 where he took part in his first culinary competition – and won. Although he did not win again the next year, his talent caught the attention of the competition judge and local veteran chef Jimmy Chok.

"I remember I was in awe the moment I stepped into his kitchen because it was my first time being in a professionally run kitchen. Chef Jimmy Chok taught me a lot about the culinary industry during my one-day tour at his restaurant. This experience ignited my passion to be a chef," says Leong. "If it weren't for this opportunity, I would not be where I am today"

After graduating from secondary school, he worked for chef Chok who became his mentor. Leong went on to earn a diploma in Culinary Arts at SHATEC and had various stints in Singapore kitchens such as Tippling Club and Open Farm Community.

BROADENING HIS HORIZONS

Moving to Norway was a way to step out of his comfort zone and excel further in his culinary career, he says. With only a few hundred dollars in his pocket, he left the familiar comforts of home for the Scandinavian country and went to work for two-starred Michelin restaurant Re-naa. He returned to Singapore briefly before going back to Oslo, Norway again, this time as Chef De Partie at Michelin Plate restaurant À L'aise.

"I ended up choosing À L'aise because the restaurant specialises in French cuisine. This was something new to me as I have never cooked this type of cuisine before during my career and I wanted to challenge myself by doing something new and different," says Leong.

He is now gearing up for one of the toughest challenges of his career, the Bocuse d'Or, that will take place on 26 and 27 September. Here, he shares his rigorous training schedule, his culinary style and the ambitious goals he has set for himself.



In the kitchen
with commis chef
Sebastian Skauen (left)

How do you feel now that the grand final is approaching?

I feel nervous yet excited – nervous because Bocuse d'Or is such a prestigious culinary competition and everyone in the industry will have their eyes on this biennial world chef championship.

We are basically racing against time to get everything ready, including the food and design work for both the takeaway boxes and platter. Even though it can be really nerve-wracking at times, I am looking forward to competing against 23 other culinary giants from around the world.

This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be standing on the same competition ground with renowned chefs at such a young age.



A L'aise

Why did you want to join the competition in the first place?

Throughout my career, I have heard a lot about great chefs from Scandinavia, including Geir Skeie, a Norwegian chef and restaurateur who won the 2008 Bocuse d'Or Europe and 2009 Bocuse d'Or.

Since then, chef Skeie has always been my inspiration. He was only 29 years old when he was crowned champion at the 2009 Bocuse d'Or world final. I remember I was only 15 when I read about this and I told myself that I want to make history and be the youngest Asian contestant to clinch gold at the Bocuse d'Or competition and put Singapore on the global culinary stage.

How are you preparing for the competition?

I work full-time as head chef at A L'aise, from Tuesdays to Saturdays. During my days off, I will train for the competition with my team at my own kitchen and training ground.

Each training session would usually take an average 10 hours. During the training, we would do a time trial and prepare the dishes needed to be presented at the competition. We need to ensure that we finish everything within the five-and-a-half hours given.

It's definitely tough having to juggle between work and training for the competition but I am very thankful to have the support from my team – coach Ulrik Jepsen who's also the co-owner of A L'aise; commis chef Sebastian Skauen Johnsen, and president of Bocuse d'Or Academy Singapore Eric Teo.

How has the pandemic and restrictions impacted your preparations, dishes and the competition itself?

After winning Bocuse d'Or Singapore in 2019, I was supposed to compete in Bocuse d'Or Asia-Pacific which was scheduled to be held in China in July 2020, but the event was cancelled because of the pandemic. The Bocuse d'Or 2021 finals have also been postponed twice, from January to June to September.

While a six-month delay may seem short, it actually caused a huge disruption to my training schedule and team. It meant that I had to look for extra budget to prepare additional six months' worth of ingredients for my training sessions.

Can you share your dishes and the concept/idea behind them?

This year, candidates will take on tasks inspired by the changes in the industry brought about by the pandemic. The platter challenge will centre on a hot dish showcasing a whole braised beef paleron for the first time ever.

For the plate challenge, we are given a "takeaway" task designed to echo the new modes of catering that have emerged during the pandemic. We have to design a takeout menu around three dishes – starter, main course and dessert, and the same seasonal product, tomato. All dishes must be present in a reusable box designed and developed by the candidates from materials of plant origin.

With these new rules in place, it has been a challenge. Besides having to create dishes with tomatoes as the theme, I'd also need to work with the design team to create a takeout box that's sustainable. Since the design of the takeout box is one of the marking criteria, a lot of work needs to go into it.

You've achieved a lot in just a few years. What are your goals after the competition?

After Bocuse d'Or 2021, the next aim in my career is to own a fine dining restaurant that is listed in the Michelin guide. My goal is to earn my first Michelin star within one year of opening and be the youngest chef to own a three-starred Michelin restaurant before the age of 31.

Besides owning a fine dining restaurant, I would also like to have my own chain of bistros around the world, which specialises in Asian with Nordic influence. Though I am based here in Norway, as a Singaporean, it would be great to open my own restaurant in my homeland, before expanding my footprint across the region.

Do you miss Singapore food? What are you craving now?

Definitely, it's been almost one and a half years since I came back to Singapore due to the ongoing pandemic and food is one of the things I miss the most. I miss eating all the local food and drinks that cannot be found in Norway.

Besides my mum's signature dishes – Cantonese steamed fish and stir-fried beef with scallions, I really miss eating local food like fried oyster omelette, Hokkien mee, chilli crab, satay, and drinking my favourite teh-peng (iced milk tea). Although I do make some of these dishes whenever I crave them, they just don't taste like home.



Mathew Leong's meat course at the national qualifier - Strip Loin Terrine with Smoke Mousseline and Wild Puff Rice

How has working in Norway changed your cooking style and has it changed you as a person?

Living and working in Norway for the past five years have definitely changed my style of cooking. During my time here, I have tasted many different types of Nordic cuisines. With the skills I have learnt here in Norway, together with my Asian background, I always try to infuse both Nordic and Asian flavours into my food.

The past five years in Norway also played a part moulding me into the person I am today – I have learnt to be independent.

What advice would you give to aspiring chefs?

I always believe that tough times don't last – tough people do. The road during the start of your career may be difficult, full of hurdles and challenges to overcome, but your preservation and hard work will eventually pay off.

Being in this industry is never easy, you have to undergo a lot of pressure and it takes up a lot of your energy due to the long working hours. But if you are really passionate and desire to thrive in this industry, it is important that you create opportunities for yourself and not just wait for them to come knocking on your door. Be courageous enough to step out of your comfort zone because that's how you will learn and grow.



THE PERFECT JOURNEY

Not one to be afraid of change, culinary prodigy turned perfectionist chef André Chiang's definition of success lies not in the number of stars and accolades he earns. Rather, for him, the measure of success lies in how his legacy of Sichuan cuisine is carried forward

BY PRIYANKA ELHENCE

André Chiang. A name that needs no introduction anywhere in the world. Born in Taiwan, 44-year-old Chiang first fell in love with cooking as a result of his mother's influence and started his career when he moved to the south of France at the young age of 15. 15 years later, he returned to Asia as a mighty culinary force and visionary to be reckoned with, a man who refused to be defined even by his own success.

Chiang honed his culinary skills with work experience amassed under the greatest masters of French Nouvelle cuisine such as Alain Ducasse, Pierre Gagnaire, the late Joël Robuchon, Michel Troisgros, Pascal Barbot, and Jacques & Laurent Pourcel. Despite starting at the lowest rung, Chiang quickly rose up the kitchen ranks, proof of his skill and tenacity. Case in point, Chiang was invited to apprentice as a commis at Pourcel's three-Michelin-starred restaurant Le Jardin des Sens in Montpellier, France just three years later when he turned 18 years old. It was there that he created 'Memory' - a whipped foie custard topped with a coulis of wild mushrooms and Perigord black truffles - which eventually became a mainstay on all his degustation menus at Restaurant André, while other elements of his menus changed on a seasonal basis.

Chiang's restaurants constantly graced Asia's 50 Best Restaurants list, with his eponymous two-Michelin-starred Restaurant André at #2, Burnt Ends Singapore at #10, and RAW Taipei at #24 and Best Restaurant in Taiwan, in 2017. And with good reason too. For instance, when he opened Raw in

Taipei in 2014, Chiang sparked a new wave of modern contemporary dining in Taiwan as he designed seasonal degustation menus that heroed local ingredients inspired by Taiwanese classics but presented through modern creations. Who else could recreate street food snacks such as tea-braised eggs into molten-centered quail eggs cooked in an earl grey-bay leaf concoction. Mad? Perhaps. Successful? Without a doubt. Unsurprisingly, Chiang's determined approach to RAW also saw the restaurant earn two Michelin stars.

But in a shocking move, Chiang shuttered his 30-seater Restaurant André for good in 2018 shortly after he announced to Singapore (and the world) that he was returning his Michelin stars and was returning home to Taiwan after 30 years.

Singaporean filmmaker Josiah Ng's recently released documentary titled André and His Olive Tree shed light on aspects of Chiang's rarely seen personality and attempt to answer "Who is André?" as he "designs his own personal framework, almost DNA-like, based on true self-knowledge and to encourage his own creativity". Even now as he trains other Chinese chefs to keep the Chinese culture flag flying high on the international stage, Ng discovered that Chiang wasn't concerned about the legacy he's leaving behind. Instead, he says, "What I do care about is 'how to carry on the legacy of Chinese cuisine?' If there's one thing I would love to leave behind, is to set a world-class standard of Chinese cuisine (Sichuan cuisine) for everyone to really appreciate the beauty of our culture."

We caught up with Chiang to find out more about his quest for perfection and what his next conquest would be, as he is one to never rest on his laurels. For this natural born leader, leading the charge is second nature to him, as is creating waves of change.

How would you describe your evolution as a chef and as a creator?

A chef manages the kitchen, cuisine and produce, creating a memorable dining experience; however a creator manages the entire experience, from branding, strategy, CRM, to dining and design, including leading a trend or a topic which will eventually influence people's behaviour and thoughts.

Tell us more about octaphilosophy

Octaphilosophy is my principle of cooking; it stays and follows me wherever I go. In a nutshell, it's my culinary principle, the backbone of my creative process at Restaurant ANDRÉ and a dining experience centered on an eight-pronged philosophy that describes my culinary ethos and the elements that shaped my past and dreams. Each dish on my degustation menus showcase a different interpretation of my philosophy's eight elements: memory, artisan, pure, salt, south, terroir, texture and unique. Josiah Ng's André and His Olive Tree documentary addressed Chiang's obsession with results and perfection in a country like Singapore, and exploring the Asian culture's definition of success.

How do you define success and what is the significance of the olive tree to you?

Success means that you have the ability to make many more people succeed or to help many more people around you pursue their dreams. To me, the olive tree represents my "original intention" of one part of me in France, one in Singapore, and one in Taiwan. It's about "what I want to be", "who I am", and "where I belong".

What were your reasons for returning the coveted stars and would you do it all again?

Will you try to be in a beauty pageant competition just to prove you are beautiful? There are things in life that we chase, and could live without. I will definitely do it again, anytime.



Why are creativity and reinvention important to a chef?

The importance is the same reason as why we need different artistic eras such as the Victorian age; Art Deco style; the 80s; the 90s; and the Contemporary period to define different styles. I define mine as Modernism, which represents living in the present and appreciating the precious moments of where we are right now, giving a definition of the present to each generation and history. To reinvent is to continually create; it is like re-writing the history of food to reveal new truths.

How do you want to be best remembered?

I would like to be remembered as "The Chef that created a new era of Chinese cuisine and French cuisine in Asia". It is our mission to create a new era of things; we should all have that mentality and take pride in it. I want to be remembered as the chef that sets a world-class standard and example for all Asian chefs; the first person making Asia proud by using European interpretation and technique to redefine Chinese cuisine.

**There are perfectionists... and then there is you.
How would you describe perfection?**

I like to describe perfection as a painting. Before you start painting, you already have a vision of what you want to paint; how you want to paint it; or sometimes, why you want to paint. So, who sets the standards of perfection? Who should define what “perfect” is? For me, perfection is the original purpose and intention of why I’m doing what I do, and eventually I achieve my own expectation of purpose.

**Looking back at your ‘simple man’ beginnings,
how has your personal story evolved and what
would you change?**

We all got lost somewhere, somehow along our journey, chasing some unnecessary goals that we thought were the real purpose of our life. Some return to their original intention, but some don’t.

I’m still that “simple man”, and I’m glad Restaurant André reminded me to stay true to myself. I wouldn’t want to change anything.

**How important is sustainability and how do you
apply it?**

Sustainability is a necessary and basic practice to our generation – sustainable practices in local produce, local team, local clientele and local inspiration. I apply the same principle to all my nine restaurants around the globe.

**You are an incredible visionary. What’s next on
your horizon?**

Being the “Ambassador” of Asia’s cuisine. I want to analyse, redefine and globalise Asian cuisine in front of the world, and help each culture and cuisine find its own uniqueness and language.



ON CLOUD WINE

Discover the exclusive vino collection from the cellars of one Michelin-starred wine bar, Ma Cuisine, plus classic French dishes to get you in a spirited mood.



Concept
Adeline Wong

Art direction and styling
Dyutima Jha

Photos
Ching

Video
Tu Jie Rui

Text
Victoria Lim

Recipes
Mathieu Escoffier
of Ma Cuisine

Wine pairing
Anthony Charmetant
of Ma Cuisine

Shot at
Ma Cuisine

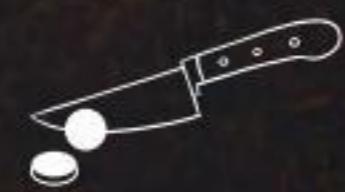


La Pouarde de Bresse

A classic French dish which was created in 1957, the La Pouarde de Bresse follows strict rules. The fowl has to be 1.8kg to 2kg: five months old and is fed with milk products for the first three weeks. The result a juicy and firm-fleshed chicken.



Serves 4



Prep Time 30 minutes
+ 3 hours refrigeration



Cook Time 35 minutes
+ 30 minutes rest

- 200g salted butter, softened
- a sprig of thyme
- 2 tbsp black pepper
- a sprig of rosemary
- 4 lemons, zested
- 1 Bresse chicken
- salt and pepper, for seasoning

» In a bowl, combine the salted butter, thyme, black pepper, rosemary, and lemon zest. Mix the ingredients well.

- » Spread the marinade all over the Bresse chicken.
- » Season the inside of the chicken with salt and pepper.
- » Tie the legs of the chicken with a butcher string and refrigerate it for 3 hours.
- » Place the refrigerated chicken on a cast iron plate, and cook it in an oven at 220°C for 35 minutes.
- » Once done, place the chicken vertically and let it rest for 30 minutes before serving it.



**GEVREY-CHAMBERTIN 1er
CRU La Perriere Domaine
Philippe Pacalet 2014**

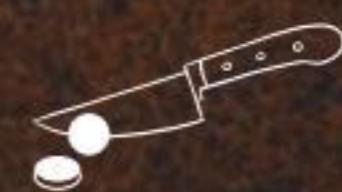
Owner Philippe Pacalet is quite a character in the wine industry. He doesn't own a single hectare of vines but vinifies wines of more than 25 appellations in Burgundy. Breaking all the rules, Pacalet eschews sulphur dioxide during vinification and maturing, which is unheard of and he only uses indigenous yeasts to achieve the most accurate terroir character.

Les Saint-Jacques

Hokkaido scallops are preferred as they are sweeter than the ones from the Atlantic, which goes exceedingly well with the Grenobloise sauce - made with capers, lemon dice, brown butter, shallots, parsley and brioche croutons. The garlic baby spinach adds another dimension to the dish.



Serves 4



Prep Time 15 minutes



Cook Time 30 minutes

grenobloise sauce

- 200g butter
- 1 tbsp baby capers
- 1 tbsp shallots, diced
- 1 tbsp lemon flesh, diced
- 1 tbsp minced parsley
- 2 tbsp brioche croutons

» In a pot, melt the butter over medium heat until you smell a nutty aroma or the colour has turned to a toasty-brown hue.
» Strain the beurre noisette (brown butter). Add all the other ingredients into the beurre noisette.

baby spinach

- 25g salted butter
- 1 clove of garlic
- 150g baby spinach
- a dash of black pepper
- chives, chopped
- chervil, chopped

- dill, chopped
- tarragon, chopped

» In a pot, melt the butter before adding in the garlic.
» Remove the pot from the stove and stir in the baby spinach for 1 minute, then season with black pepper and toss in the herbs.

scallops

- 8 Hokkaido scallops
- a drizzle of garlic oil
- a pinch of Maldon Salt

» Remove the scallops from the shells and wash them well.
» In a pan, heat the garlic oil and Maldon salt, when smoking place the scallops in and remove the pan from the heat. Cook each side of the scallops for 1 minute.
» Plate the cooked scallops on the the spinach, then pour the grenobloise sauce on them.

CHAMPAGNE Ullens Domaine de Marzilly

Established in 2012, Domaine de Marzilly is an independent family estate located in the picturesque commune of Hermonville in Champagne-Ardenne, France. This Champagne house is one of the last few that still performs riddling by hand, a traditional method for prestige cuvée which follows a rigorous process that lasts several weeks.

Tidbit: Anthony Charmetant met Maxime Ullens (the vigneron for Domaine de Marzilly) in Belgium before the latter became a winemaker. Both struck a friendship and kept in contact. That was how Ma Cuisine got their hands on this bottle of Champagne, exclusive in Asia.



St Steel Bolt Hammer Ice
Bucket W Leather Handle,
Bungalow 55.

Imperial Silver Stainless
Steel SS30 Cutlery, Lovera
Collections.

White round marble board,
Comme Home. Artesano
Original Salad Bowl Cover,
Villeroy & Boch.



Plates, stylist's own. Hiba
Wood Candle Type 02, **Atomii**.

Cake Slicer, stylist's own.

Jewel Round Chrome Cake
Stand by **Lovera Collections**.

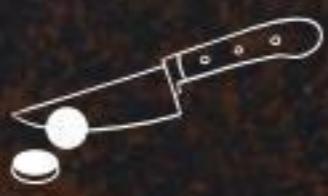


Le Paris Brest

A heritage, Le Paris Brest was originally made to celebrate the Paris-Brest-Paris bicycle race. Its circular shape represents the bicycle wheel. Add Fleur de sel de Maldon to amp up the praline flavour and reduce the sweetness.



Serves 10



Prep Time 1 hour



Cook Time 25 minutes

chou dough

- 250g milk
- 130g butter
- a pinch of salt
- a pinch of sugar
- 130g flour
- 5 eggs, whipped
- almonds, sliced
- Maldon salt

» In a pot, bring milk, butter, salt and sugar to a boil.
» Remove pot from the stove and stir in the flour. Then place the pot back on the stove for 4 minutes or until it forms a dough.
» Place the dough in a cold bowl and fold in the eggs.
» On a baking tray, shape the dough into a wheel and sprinkle almonds and Maldon salt on it.
» Bake the dough at 175°C for 25 minutes. Once it is baked, leave it inside the oven to cool.
» Before assembling it, cut the pastry in two, horizontally.

crème pâtissière

- 125g sugar
- 4 egg yolks
- 1 whole egg
- 65g corn flour

- 500g milk
- 50g cream
- 1 stick vanilla

» In a bowl, mix sugar, yolks and egg together until fluffy.
» Fold corn flour in to the egg mixture.
» In a pot, bring milk, cream and vanilla stick to a boil before straining the milk mixture.
» In a different pot, bring the milk mixture and egg mixture to a boil. Set aside. Keep it refrigerated.

praline butter

- 300g praline powder
- 500g butter

» In a bowl, mix everything together until smooth. Set aside.

crème anglaise

- 3 yolks
- 100g sugar
- 100g milk

» In a bowl, mix the sugar and yolks until fluffy.
» In a pot, bring the milk to a boil.
» Mix the boiled milk to the egg mixture. Stir the mixture constantly to prevent the eggs from cooking.

» Over low fire, cook the egg mixture until 85°C, then remove it and whisk until it cools down, for 10 minutes.
» Set aside. Keep it refrigerated.

assembly

- 100g icing sugar

» In a mixer, whip crème anglaise, praline butter and crème pâtissière until smooth.
» Place the praline butter cream in a piping bag and pipe the cream on one side of the chou pastry.
» Sprinkle icing sugar on the top.



PORT VINTAGE Niepoort 1952

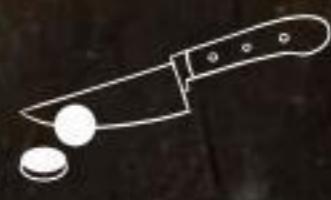
An independent family business since 1842, the Niepoort family combines centuries-old tradition with innovation to produce distinctive Ports and Douro wines. In Vila Nova de Gaia, the Port doesn't just mature in the cellar, it is nurtured as well. Celebrated winemaker, Dirk van der Niepoort, makes sure to top off his Colheita and Garrafeira Port with the wines from the exact same vintage (to make up whatever that is lost to evaporation, a.k.a. "the angel's share.").

Le Homard Bleu

Fished from the Channel Islands, the blue lobster (marked by its unique blue hue when raw) is best cooked with salted butter to showcase its sweet flavour. The mushroom and bacon give the dish an umami taste.



Serves 4



Prep Time 1 hour



Cook Time 50 minutes

lobster

- 10 litres water
- 400g salt
- 4 lobsters

» In a pot, bring the water and salt to a boil. Place the lobsters in the pot for 4 minutes. Then chill them in an ice bath before removing the shell, head and claws.

» In the same pot, reboil the claws for 3 minutes, then chill them in an ice bath.

red wine sauce

- 2 litres red wine
- 1 litre veal stock
- 25g smoked bacon, diced
- 1 carrot, diced
- 1 pearl onion, diced
- 1 stick of celery, diced
- 1 shallot, diced
- 5 cloves of garlic, diced
- 1 tbsp tomato paste

olive oil

- 4 lobster heads and shells
- 8 cl Cognac
- 1 sprig of thyme
- 50g laurel
- 50g parsley
- 100g cold butter, diced

» In a pot, bring the red wine to a boil and flame it. Then, add in the veal stock and stir until the mixture has been reduced to half. Set aside to cool.

» In a pan, sweat the bacon, carrot, pearl onion, celery stick, shallot and garlic until they become soft. Add in the tomato paste and cook it for 5 minutes to remove any acidity.

» In a smoking warm pot with olive oil, colour the lobster head and shell until they turn red.

» Strain the oil, pour it back to the pot and deglaze it with Cognac.

» In the same pot, add the shells, heads and tomato paste mixture and then cover with the red wine mixture. Add thyme, laurel, parsley and simmer for 40 minutes.

» Stir in the cold butter, dice by dice, until everything is well-mixed.

Burgundian garnish

- 12 button mushrooms
- 12 pearl onions
- 12 carrots, diamond-shaped
- 20g butter
- 12 slices of bacon

» In a pan, sauté the button mushrooms, pearl onions, carrots and in butter for 5 minutes.

» Sear the bacon and cut small *bâtonnet* (sticks) out of it. Set aside.

assembly

» Assemble according to picture on page 71.



SAINT JOSEPH Le Petit Père Domaine La Vigne des Pères 2015

Winegrower, Aymeric Paillard started working in Rhone Valley since 2011. Hailing from Champagne, Paillard chose to work with the sharp and steep slopes of St-Joseph - it's where nothing can be achieved with machines, and only through human effort. Paillard produces the most natural wines possible, with the occasional rustic flavour. There are less than 2,500 bottles produced per vintage and 10% of this production is available at Ma Cuisine, exclusive to Asia.



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



SOCIÉTÉ CIVILE DU DOMAINE
DE LA
ROMANÉE - CONTI
VOSNE-ROMANÉE, CÔTE D'OR



Parisienne Shiny Bronze Ion
Plated Stainless Steel SS304
Cutlery, Lovera Collections.

Marble Round Plate, Luzerne.
Milk/Honey Pitcher, Atomi.

Guinea Feather Placemat,
Bungalow 55.



WORTHY HEIR OF BARON PHILIPPE DE ROTHSCHILD IN CHILE

Chile is a true winegrowing paradise. The richness of its soil and the variety of climates there give rise to an extraordinary diversity of terroirs. Baron Philippe de Rothschild takes advantage of this patchwork of terroirs to create highly distinctive wines that are a byword for quality and excellence.



HISTORY OF BARON PHILIPPE DE ROTHSCHILD IN CHILE

In the late 1990s Baron Philippe de Rothschild SA, true to the pioneering spirit of its founder, Baron Philippe, decided to start making wine in Chile. Boasting soils suitable for vine-growing and varied topography and climate, conditions in Chile are ideal for making high-quality and distinctive wines, Cabernet Sauvignon in particular. Escudo Rojo is the result of the marriage between Chilean terroirs and the know-how of Baron Philippe de Rothschild. Since its creation in 1999, it has stood as the worthy heir of Baron Philippe de Rothschild in Chile. This is exemplified in its name since Escudo Rojo is the Spanish translation of the German “Rote Schild”, which means red shield. By bearing the Rothschild name, Baroness Philippine de Rothschild showed that the Rothschild family had come to Chile to stay.

A MARRIAGE BETWEEN CHILEAN TERROIRS AND BORDEAUX WINEMAKING TRADITION

The Andes Mountains to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the west, Chile's central region enjoys exceptional climatic conditions. Escudo Rojo is born in the Maipo Valley, the historical heart of the Chilean vineyard. At Buin-Maipo, 45 kilometres south of Santiago, Viña Baron Philippe de Rothschild Chile stands proud in the middle of its own 60-hectare vineyard. It has been headed by Emmanuel Riffaud since 2015. An agricultural engineer and oenologist, he joined Baron Philippe de Rothschild in 1999 as a member of the Mouton Cadet technical team before moving to Chile in 2008. He took over as managing director of the company's Chilean subsidiary in 2015.



“Baron Philippe de Rothschild Chile has been growing and innovating constantly since it was established in Chile at the end of the last century. Its roots in Chile are now confirmed by its ownership of more than 1,000 hectares of vines in the Maipo and Maule Valleys, cultivated in the purest Bordeaux tradition. The spirit of Baron Philippe de Rothschild is reflected in the ceaseless quest for perfection, using our Bordeaux know-how to express the quintessence of the Chilean terroir.”

EMMANUEL RIFFAUD - WINEMAKER
BARON PHILIPPE DE ROTHSCHILD CHILE

THE MAIPO VALLEY - FLAGSHIP OF CHILEAN WINEGROWING AND BIRTHPLACE OF ESCUDO ROJO

The Maipo Valley is a winegrowing area bounded to the north by the Chacabuco range, to the south by the Angostura de Paine (a narrowing of the central plain), to the east by the Andes Mountains and to the west by the coastal range. 80 kilometres long and 35 kilometres wide, it spans nearly 12,200 hectares and is crossed by two rivers, the Maipo and the Mapocho. The soil is mostly silt over a subsoil of gravel, sand and some clay.

The Maipo river tempers the climate, forestalling frost in winter and extreme heat in spring. Winter is cold and rather dry while spring is dry, warm and very bright, with a day/ night temperature difference of 18 to 20°C that favours high-quality grapes. Two other features are low humidity and a lot of sunshine, both ideal conditions for growing vines and bringing grapes to perfect ripeness, an essential condition for making fine wines.

Vinegrowing in the Maipo Valley started in the first half of the 19th century with the introduction of varieties like Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot and Carmenere, imported from Bordeaux. Over time, Cabernet Sauvignon became the preferred variety because of the perfect match between the grape and the Maipo Valley terroir, producing high-quality wines.

The Maipo Valley is famous for Cabernet Sauvignon, just like the Medoc, where Baron Philippe de Rothschild has its winegrowing roots. Cabernet Sauvignon plays a leading role in Escudo Rojo Gran Reserva blend and reveals the quintessence of its Chilean expression in Escudo Rojo Origine.

ESCUDO ROJO GRAN RESERVA 2019 - A SIGNATURE BARON PHILIPPE DE ROTHSCHILD WINE WITH A FLAMBOYANT PERSONALITY

Escudo Rojo Gran Reserva holds out the promise of the refined and elegant expression of French and native grape varieties rooted in the Chilean terroirs: Cabernet Sauvignon, Carmenere, Syrah, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot are blended in exactly the right way, as though there could be no other. This high-quality wine is a perfect example of the art of blending, the real hallmark of Baron Philippe de Rothschild. The combination of different grape varieties gives the wine its distinctive character, setting it apart from many other Chilean wines traditionally made from a single grape variety.

The flamboyant red of the label reflects the wine's warmth and assertive personality. The 2019 vintage immediately reveals powerful ripe red fruit aromas. The nose gains in complexity with airing. Spicy black pepper notes combine perfectly with the subtle vanilla, caramel and mocha aromas that come from time spent in oak. A powerful and complex attack leads into a rich and smooth mid-palate, given structure and heft by very mature tannins, creating a harmonious and balanced wine of great refinement. The powerful and stylish finish reveals all the character of the Chilean terroir, combining the elegance of Cabernet with the roundness and powerful flavours of Syrah and Carmenere.



Escudo Rojo in Vietnam:

Imported and exclusively distributed by The Warehouse with over 30 years of experience.

Main branches:

- 100 Trung Hoa, Cau Giay District, Hanoi
- 12 Le Dinh Duong, Hai Chau, Danang
- 15/5 Le Thanh Ton, District 1, Hochiminh City

Hotline: 1900 277 267

Website: www.warehouse-asia.com

Fanpage: theWarehouseVN



A TRIBUTE TO THE LEGACY OF GENERATIONS OF WINE MAKERS

Led by third-generation winemaker and renowned viticulturist Gina Gallo, the Gallo Signature Series features an exquisite flavour unique to the Gallo family estate's collection of some of the best vineyards in Sonoma, Napa, and Monterey Counties.

Led by third-generation winemaker and renowned viticulturist Gina Gallo, the history of the Gallo family is synonymous with the history of winemaking in California. What began as a simple idea in 1993 - to make quality wine accessible to American households - has evolved over decades to comprise premier vineyards and wineries in some of California's most renowned wine regions. Today, the Gallo family is considered one of the most powerful wine families in the world with more than four generations part of this endeavour to date.

With humble beginnings in Sonoma, Napa, and Monterey Counties, over time, the Gallo family estate vineyards grew deep roots in Sonoma County and later expanded its presence into Napa Valley and the Central Coast.

Boasting a truly unique collection of vineyards, Gallo is one of the only wine producers that can tap into a diverse range of growing regions and handpick specific blocks within that wide array of properties. Thus, the Gallo Signature series was born to celebrate the distinctive make-up of the Gallo family estate vineyards and this unique access.

It's not secret that great wine begins in the vineyard. The Gallo estate wines come from extraordinary vineyards in some of California's most renowned regions including Napa Valley, Sonoma and Monterey counties. Made by hand, Gallo's wines reflect the terroir of these ideal climatic vineyards as well as generations of winemaking philosophy.





Situated along the Central Coast in Monterey County, the Gallo Olson Ranch Vineyard is amongst the amongst south-after cool-climate vineyards in the Santa Lucia Highlands. The cool breezes from Monterey Bay create a perfect lengthy growing season that allows grapes here to develop rich flavours and depth.

Flanked by soaring mountains on all sides, Napa Valley is a world-renowned wine region boasting perfect climate conditions for growing high quality grapes. From its deep nutrient-rich soils and windswept estuarine flats to the terraced vineyards of the rocky hillsides and the mountaintop vineyards, Napa Valley is home to dozens of major grape varieties and is renowned for Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay.

The grapes for Gallo Signature Series wines are hand-picked from the Gallo family's vineyards located in some of California's best sites, including Chardonnay from the Russian River Valley, Cabernet Sauvignon from Napa Valley, Pinot Noir from Santa Lucia Highlands and Zinfandel from Dry Creek Valley.

With some of California's best grapes at her fingertips, Gina Gallo crafts artisanal wines from the Gallo family's unique combination of vineyards. Created in small batches with limited production, every process and detail is given utmost attention. From hand-harvesting grapes selected by Gina to keeping lots separate through fermentation, the result is an exceptional and exquisite blend that reflects the distinct terroir of the Gallo estate vineyards but also Gina's lifelong passion for the art of winemaking.

For Gina, the Gallo Signature Series is a reflection of generations of family wine legacy married with an uncompromised commitment towards great quality wine and vineyards. As a symbol of bespoke craftsmanship, each bottle is sealed with Gina's signature.



The Gallo Signature Series tells the story of Gina's younger days walking in the vineyards with her grandfather, Julio. In her words, "They tell the story of California's most revered appellations. They represent the pinnacle of varietal expression from the finest blocks in our family's most sought-after vineyards."

Gallo was the first winery in the U.S. to receive the ISO 14001 certification that was created to assist companies globally to reduce their impacts on the environment. The Gallo family also adopts a future-forward approach to winemaking and makes decisions with the next generation in mind, like the 50/50 Give Back program. This initiative was created by founders Ernest & Julio and sets aside one acre of natural land for every acre of land planted to vines.





WHY YOU SHOULD DRINK PROVENCE ROSÉ ALL YEAR ROUND

Provence rosés are versatile and refreshing, and pair well with all kinds of cuisines. Make this pink wine your drink of choice the next time you have a menu in hand.

BY RICHARD HEMMING

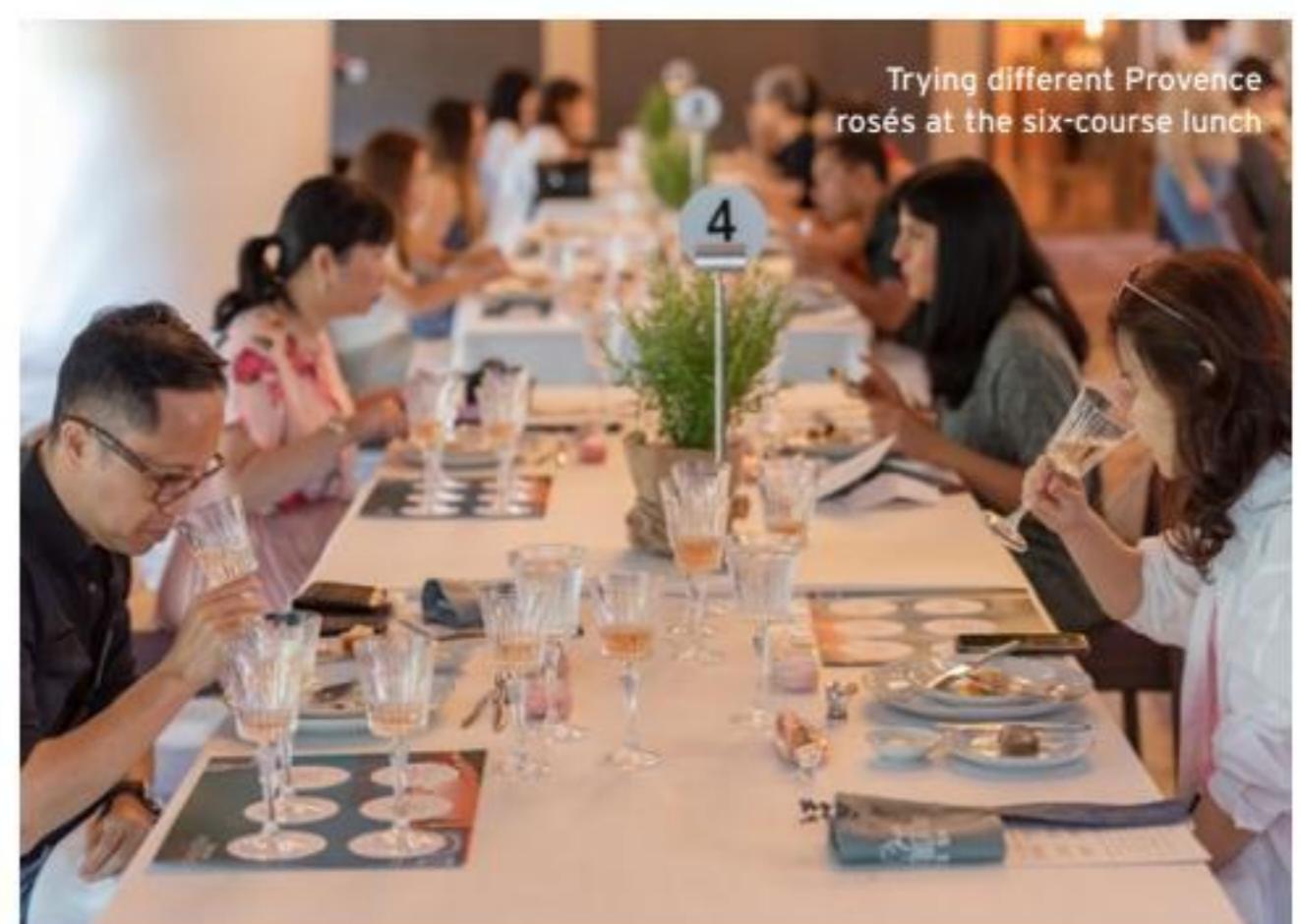
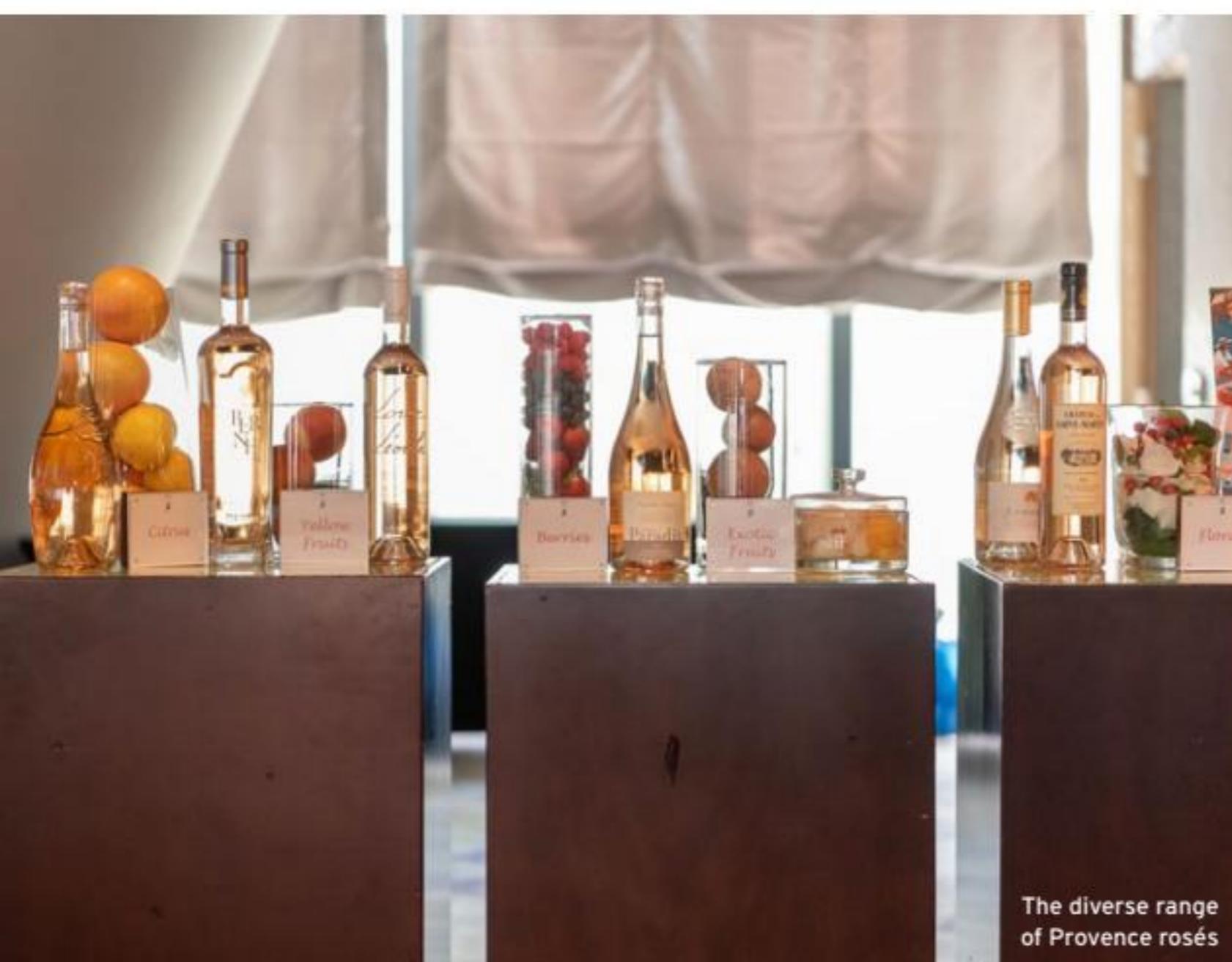
On an enlightening afternoon, more than 40 epicure readers attended an exclusive food and wine pairing workshop organised by Vins de Provence. The event on 24 September at The Glasshouse, Andaz Singapore, showcased Provence rosés along with a six-course lunch.

French-trained sommelier Stephanie Rigourd shared with readers how rosés are produced as opposed to reds and whites, the types of rosés, the region, and its terroir expressions. “In one glass, you have the style and history of a specific area – the weather, soil,

topography and savoir-faire of the producer,” she said.

As readers enjoyed their meal which included Asian-inspired courses, she highlighted how each of the six Provence rosés could enhance the dishes, ranging from Hokkaido scallop carpaccio to the crisp fried chilli prawn wonton served with spiced aioli.

Readers enjoyed their meal comparing the six Provence rosés from various appellations. They came away learning firsthand just how versatile the wines are and their ability to pair with varied cuisines.



Here are the five most compelling reasons to order yourself a glass of pink at your next lunch and dinner.

1. Provence rosés are the benchmark against which all rosés are made

With a 2600-year-old history of making blush wines, Provence is the home base for all rosés, and even the colour other regions aspire to – Provençal pink. Grapes are grown almost exclusively for rosé production, not as an afterthought to consume excess harvest. The region is committed to making fresh, crisp, and delightful rosé wines.

2. Rosés go with everything

For appetisers, choose a light-bodied rosé for their crisp, dry, mineral notes, which work well with hors d'oeuvres and starters. With meatier courses, a bold medium-bodied rosé with a touch of tannins and texture matches well. Rigourd believes Provence rosés, with their fruity notes and freshness, would be an ideal accompaniment to hawker centre delights like char siew, satay or sambal chili lala. As the French say, rosé, toute l'année (rosé all year round) – this is a wine for all courses, cuisines, and seasons.

3. It is perfect when chilled

While rosés do not need a decanter or cellar, they like a good chill. Give them some fridge time and bring it to 10 to 12 degrees Celsius. Too cold and the aromas lose their definition; too warm, and the wine may taste flat.

4. Shades of pink

From salmon pink to deep lurid pink, rosés come in all shades of pink and peach, and the diversity goes deeper than the colour. Provence wines rosé production is spread over 27,000 hectares of distinct terroir and 18 different grapes. In Provence, the combination of climate, grape varieties and expertise has made the region a unique location for producing dry, very light and aromatic rosés.

5. Effortlessly organic, Provence rosés are sustainably produced

Sustainability comes naturally to the region. The hot and dry climate and the bold Mistral winds ward off rot and disease. The vineyards are committed to organic viticulture, with 31% AB (organic) or HVE (High Environmental Value) certified, and the rest well on their way.

Find out more about Provence wines at www.vinsdeprovence.com/en

UNVEILING THE LUXURY OF WINE

Unlike top-end whisky or cognac, wine tends to be largely modest in presentation. Some producers, however, have started to trumpet its luxury status.

BY RICHARD HEMMING

One says Bonnes Mares, the other says Beaune. In every other respect the labels look the same – there's no gold-embossed lettering, no crystal-studded glass, not even a gift box. Both come from Burgundy. Both are made from the same variety, Pinot Noir.

Yet one is 20 times more expensive than the other. Wine is notoriously obtuse. Look closer at those labels and you'll see grand cru written on the label of the Bonnes Mares. For wine lovers, those are the magic words indicating the highest-ranking Burgundies, coming from specific vineyards that imbue their grapes with heavenly levels of complexity – hence the sky-high price.

ALL BOTTLED UP

Perhaps it's only what's inside the bottle that matters, but as a luxury experience, wine often falls short. Wine bottles look essentially identical – there are only slight variations in shape, and labels generally follow the same standard conventions. When you browse endless shelves of wine in a shop, there are precious few clues as to which are the most prestigious bottles.

Compare that to top-end whisky or cognac. Glenrothes 1968 single malt arrives in its own hand-stitched leather suitcase with an oak display plinth like a Smithsonian artefact. Remy Martin's Louis XIII comes in a bespoke bottle with a fleur de lys stopper, swaddled within a silk-lined red box fit for the Warrior King himself.

Even apparently humble goods such as scented candles are now nestled within crepe paper like bone china antiques. So why is premium wine so spartan by comparison?



WEIGHING UP LUXURY

One of the reasons is scale. Wine production is highly fragmented, and even some of the most prestigious wineries don't even have a marketing department. In many parts of the world, winemaking remains an old-fashioned, artisanal craft, far removed from the three-star restaurants and boutique merchants that end up selling it.

However, luxury conglomerates have been creeping into the wine sector. The LVMH empire, whose portfolio includes Givenchy and Bulgari, also owns Château Cheval Blanc in St-Émilion and Château d'Yquem in Sauternes. In Burgundy, Clos de Tart and Domaine d'Eugénie belong to Groupe Artémis, who also own Château Latour in Pauillac, and whose founder owns Gucci and Balenciaga among others.

Even so, these wines remain largely unluxurious in presentation. The bottles give little indication of the rare elixirs lying beneath the corks. It's as if wine adheres to an ancient code of modesty.

Not all wines, however, because some producers have started to trumpet their luxury status. Chief among them is Penfolds, whose 'Grange' Shiraz is Australia's best-known fine wine. Top-end Penfolds reds have been packaged in all manner of elaborate gift boxes and limited-edition gift sets – but that's just the beginning.

Their more eye-catching projects include the ampoule, a bespoke glass creation containing a bottle of rare Block 42 Cabernet Sauvignon whose six-figure price includes the attendance of



MAXIMISING THE WINE EXPERIENCE AT HOME

If you want to make the most out of a special bottle at home, it's all about service. Invest in the best glassware – Zalto and Riedel are two top names to look out for – and have several different shapes to best complement different wine styles. Decanters can add dramatic flair, especially the more complicated designs, and most wines will benefit from the aeration. Playing some videos that give your wine some context can help – 67pallmall.tv is a great free resource for top-quality film – or go the extra mile and hire a sommelier to serve your guests to give the best bottles the full five-star treatment.

a winemaker to open the vessel. More recently, Penfolds released a record player console that offers a hand-crafted, hi-spec analogue audio experience – and a hidden drawer containing two vintages of Grange, of course.

For many in the wine world, such overt luxury might seem vulgar. But for one particular wine category, this sort of opulence is commonplace.

THE BLING OF BUBBLES

Champagne has always been a luxury drink, and part of that perception is the brand experience. Best-selling names such as Veuve Clicquot, Moët et Chandon and Ruinart are dab hands at inventive gift packaging that emphasise the luxury feel of the product. It's no coincidence that all three of those brands are also part of the LVMH empire.

The higher up you go, the greater the luxuriance. With Champagnes such as Louis Roederer's Cristal or Cattier's Ace of Spades, heavyweight boxes and gold-plated bottles all build up the prestige of the brand. Furthermore, there is carefully curated celebrity endorsement, product placement and advertising to position the brand alongside other luxury goods.

Bling-bling Champagne remains the outlier, however. Most wine looks decidedly demure, and perhaps that does indeed focus our attention on the most important thing – because a glass of wine is one of life's great everyday luxuries, at any price.

CHANGING WINE THROUGH TECH

When Michael Baum, CEO and Founder of Vivant, became the first American owner of a Burgundy vineyard, Château de Pommard, the technology entrepreneur began applying his innovative ideas to the age-old domain of wines, leading to the creation of online platform Vivant.

BY JUNE LEE



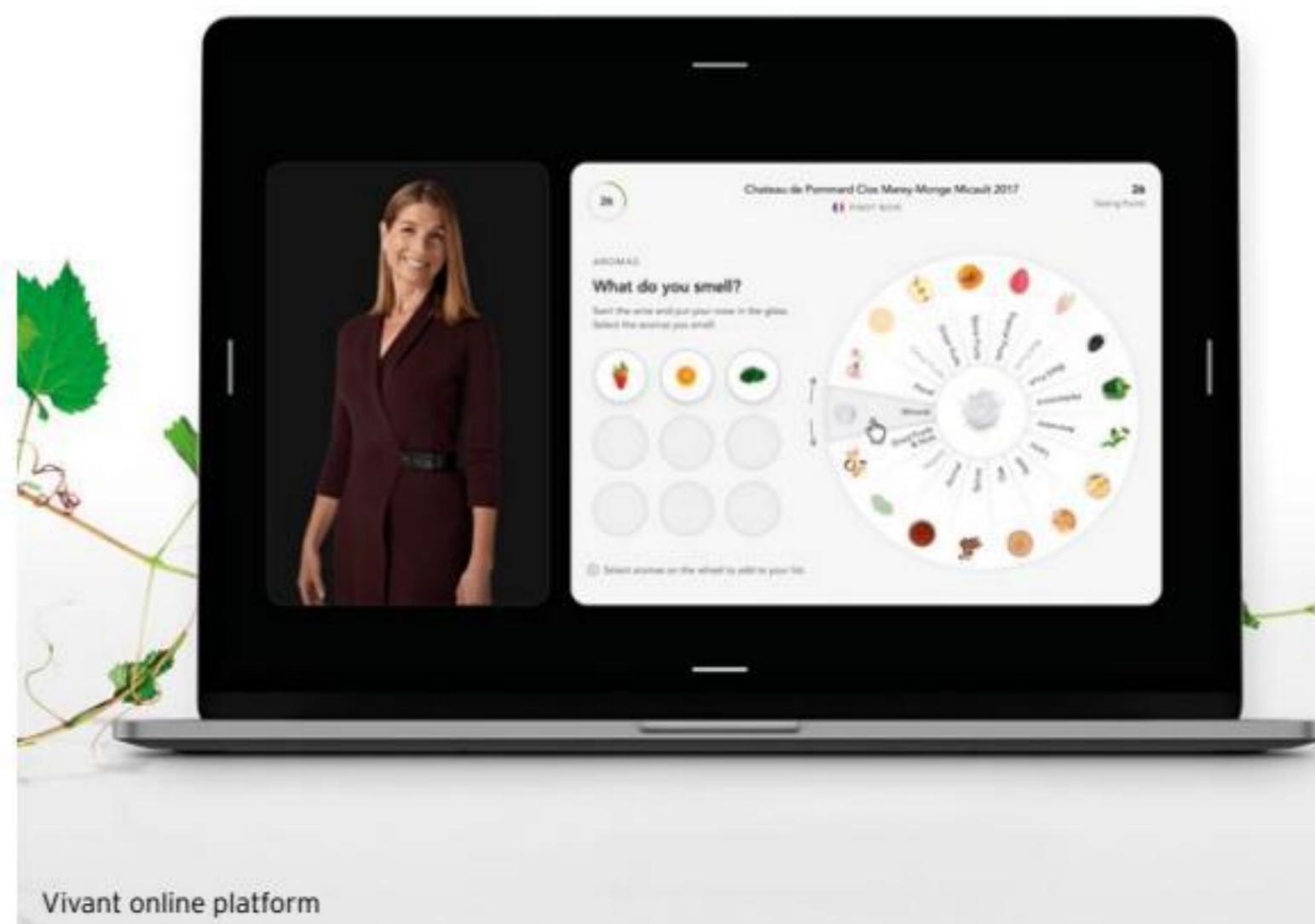
Michael Baum

Michael Baum is curious by nature, and a creator of successful start-ups. Having founded six different technology companies over the years, he's more recently been focused on starting and running Founder.org, including supporting the 128 companies started with university students around the world, Rootstock Music, and Vivant. That's on top of his investment in Château de Pommard in Burgundy in 2014, which he has since converted to biodynamic viticulture, a topic in which he is now a passionate advocate.

"The results (of biodynamic conversion) went beyond our expectations, and our wines are now more aromatic, flavourful, and energetic than ever. We have clients all over the world in 92 different countries. To share our story with them meant we had to physically travel, creating a carbon footprint and going against our very belief in caring for our planet. So to scale, we challenged ourselves to create the magic of greeting people at the chateau, but online," Baum explains.

"Soon, we realised this was an opportunity to help other responsible winemakers tell their story too and connect with potential clients around the world. This is something most of these smaller producers would never have the chance to do otherwise. We brought together an international team of wine educators, product designers, software engineers, and media producers to create a new platform where people can meet responsible winemakers and taste their wines alongside expert wine advisors, no matter where they are."

The Vivant platform is a slick showcase that incorporates video, live classrooms, wine tastings and more, but there's a more serious issue that underpins it – that currently, less than 3% of global wine is responsibly made. "Today, the wine industry isn't sustainable at all. We're putting all these chemicals in the ground and in our bodies. Not good at all," laments Baum. "The problem is winemakers who produce responsible wines are in the minority, and their voices aren't heard. Through digital wine experiences, we let them reach a global audience in a really fun way. For the consumer, we have created a way to distribute smaller tasting tubes of wine so it can now be cost-effective to taste a producer's wine, no matter where you are in the world, during a digital experience."



Vivant online platform

WHY SUSTAINABILITY MATTERS

"Vivant combines two of my biggest passions, technology and wine, so it is a joy each day to think about how we can make the platform and content even more inspiring and engaging. We have invested heavily to create a sophisticated platform for Live Experiences where participants interact and engage with the environment, not just watch a masterclass," shares Michael Baum.

"Our overarching mission at Vivant is to accelerate the wine world's transition to a sustainable future by amplifying responsible winemakers' voices. We show our members that naturally produced wines taste better (as has been proven in blind tastings), and we are building a global wine community committed to a better way," he continues.

Their goals are not for Vivant, per se, but the industry and the planet as a whole. One percent of all membership fees and wine purchases help fund innovative new ideas and research positively impacting

a sustainable future for wine through Vivant's initiative 1% For Wine. "By 2030, we hope that at least 10% of the world's wine is being produced responsibly. We will continue to reach out to winemakers worldwide to share more about what they do and ask them to take the Vivant pledge. We also hope to continue to grow our community of responsible wine drinkers, who can use the platform to further their knowledge and make more informed choices when selecting wines."

"We are looking at a variety of projects that will help winemakers farm more naturally. For example, utilising plant-based products to control mildew (a major problem in grape growing) versus systemic chemicals or heavy metals like copper and sulfur. Genetic analysis is another fascinating field. Understanding the genetic makeup of the microbial life in your soil can really help you understand everything from the best rootstocks to plant to the best amendments to use."



Behind the scene with
winemakers at Vivant

Baum points out that it's not just a producer's problem; it also traces back to consumer demand. "We're making wine education more accessible and fun than ever, and a considerable part of this education piece focuses on responsibility: The responsibility we have to care for people, care for our planet, and care by supporting the producers who are the future of the industry. A lot of this is about consumer behaviour. We hope to not only connect responsible producers with consumers but also modify consumer preferences and behaviours, leading them to make better choices."

"More globally, I hope that my work, in general, is helping make the world a better place than I found it. There are so many ways technology can contribute to improving people's lives. We just need to focus on the opportunities."

One of the most interesting aspects of technology is when humans are able to take an innovative idea in one domain and apply it to another. Baum explains that this idea fascinates him. "At my previous company, Splunk, I had the idea, while working at Yahoo!, to apply search technology to troubleshooting complex computers and software. But the inspiration came from watching the success of search being used to find information on the web."

Baum recalls that as a child, he loved to disassemble and reassemble appliances, audio hi-fi systems, and eventually computers to understand how things worked. But it wasn't until he got to university that he fell in love with math and algorithm. "Fortunately, the world of software was in its infancy at the time, and I was able to get involved at a very early stage of the industry," says the 57-year-old. "I'm very interested to see advancements in AI and human-computer interfaces. I want to be able to control access to information with my brain, just by thinking, not by typing or speaking, which is too slow. On the other hand, I own several Teslas, but autonomous driving scares me."

On the kind of revolution he wants to see in his lifetime, Baum replies, "I want to see dramatic changes in the way humans grow, package, and distribute our food. We are eating things with no flavour because they were grown with synthetic chemicals and kept alive for weeks during transit. Alternative methods of agriculture and plant-based substitutes for chemical fungicides can enable us to farm more rationally and build back the resources we have destroyed. Plastic packaging has to evolve; we're killing the planet with so much waste. Just because we can ship edibles from one part of the world to another doesn't mean we should. Advancements in farming techniques can enable people to go back to growing their own food, locally."

For someone who is so wired and connected to technology as his work medium, play medium, and social medium, how much technology is too much? Baum leaves us with his advice, “For many kids growing up now, it is the main way they communicate with each other, share experiences and passions. For adults, we’re all so used to meeting people online. I’ve heard people use the saying ‘zoomed out’. And Covid has certainly accelerated all of this. So while it is easy to say, turn it off, walk away, leave the phone at home. It’s not so easy as technology is now the medium that many people live and work in. With that said, our planet provides an incredible respite from technology. Nature has a way of counterbalancing the ill effects of too much screen time. So I’d advise people to spend at least as much time with nature as they do with technology.”

“I want to be able to control access to information with my brain, just by thinking, not by typing or speaking, which is too slow.”

DRINKING BETTER WINE

Michael Baum lays the issue out clearly: “Our collective future strongly depends on giving back to the living systems that are sustaining us. Companies are in the best position to effect a change in mindset, to set an example. I love wine and I want to continue to drink great wine. But, I also want future generations to be able to drink great wine, breath fresh air, drink clean water and live healthy productive lives. If we don’t take on this challenge, who will?”

Statistics show that Old World winemakers have a better appreciation for responsible winemaking. In example, France leads the world with three times more organic wine produced than any other country. And France leads the world in organic wine consumption with more than twice that of any other country.

“We have a number of studies that prove over hundreds of thousands of blind taste tests and ratings that organic and biodynamic wines score significantly higher. Six points out of a hundred higher on average. For me personally, or for any wine professional, who is often tasting a lot of different wines; it is obvious that responsibly made wines are more energetic and the aromas and flavours more powerful. Conventionally farmed grapes just never reach their full potential versus organic or biodynamic grapes. My belief is that synthetic chemicals block the grapes’ natural abilities. You can see this when you taste two wines of the same vintage, from the same area and grape varietal. The responsibly grown grapes will give the wine a sense of life, of purity in aromas and flavours. On the other hand, the conventionally made wine will feel muted,” Baum asserts.



A CASE FOR BEAUJOLAIS

With Burgundy and Rhone wine prices soaring, it's time to revisit the allure of Beaujolais and its elevated crus.

BY NIMMI MALHOTRA





MEE GODARD COTE DU PY 2019

Grapes: Gamay

Taste: Cote du Puy is a climat in Morgon composed of schist. Low yields, partially destemmed; maceration for three weeks and aged 12-18 months in old oak barrels or vats. Expressive and elegant nose of red fruit- strawberry, cherry, raspberries alike; silky fine tannins and deftly handled oak. \$58, WEA wines



FAMILLE DUTRAIVE, FLEURIE LIEU DIT LES DEDUITS

Grapes: Gamay

Taste: Famille Dutraive comprises the legendary Jean-Louis Dutraive and his three children. The fruits sourced from old vines are grown organically. Vinification in cement with carbonic maceration. Aged in oak for six months. Floral, summer strawberry bubble gum on the nose and crunchy berries on the palate. A smashable summer wine. \$70, Artisan Cellars



CHATEAU DU MOULIN-À-VENT LES VERILLATS 2018

Grapes: Gamay

Taste: This Cru Beaujolais comes from a lieu-dit: les Verillats, that sits at the top of the appellation on sandy, granitic soils. Vinified in the Burgundian method and aged in 30% French oak and 70% steel. Red and blueberries mingled with oak spices, minerals with some signs of maturity. It's earthy and savoury with developing meaty flavours. \$58, Grand Vin



Old bush vines

“Beaujolais has a complicated story despite its extraordinary terroir,” says Pascaline Lepeltier, the Laureate of Un des Meilleur Sommelier de France, and an advocate for the region. For the last decade, Beaujolais has been going through a renaissance. It is an evolving process of winemakers shedding the image of the candy-tinged Beaujolais Nouveau; rescuing Gamay from its reputation as the poor cousin of Pinot Noir; and redefining the oft forgotten region with terroir-driven wines.

A PIONEERING NATURAL WINE REGION

Much of Beaujolais’ revival is credited to the celebrated Gang of Four – Marcel Lapierre, Jean Foillard, Jean-Paul Thévenet, and Guy Breton – who turned to natural winemaking methods in the 1980s. Lapierre was inspired by the work of Jules Chauvet, widely considered the father of natural winemaking, and went on spread the gospel to his peers.

Their work, Lepeltier says, was instrumental in opening new markets (especially in natural wine), reaching edgy restaurants, and inspiring a new generation of winemakers. “New blood, next generation in historical estates, and outsiders are all part of this evolution,” she says.

Leading winemakers in the region follow the same principles – no chemicals in the vineyard or cellar, late harvest, slow fermentation, selection of optimal grapes and minimal intervention. While not all are making “natural” wines, Stéphanie Rigourd, sommelier and partner at The Vintage Club Singapore and a natural wine commentator says, “They produce wine giving a true expression of the terroir, wines made in the vineyards and not in the cellar. And they started this new trend for natural wines well before it was a trend.”

KNOW YOUR BEAUJOLAIS

Beaujolais sits sandwiched between the regions of Burgundy and Rhone. Compared to its illustrious neighbours in the north of Burgundy, Beaujolais AOC is relatively simple to comprehend.

About 98 percent of the wine produced comes from one red grape, Gamay; the rest, Chardonnay. Gamay once grew in Burgundy but was unceremoniously ousted in 1395 by Philip II the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, who considered it inferior to Pinot Noir. It was serendipity that Gamay found a home in Beaujolais, rich in granite and schist – two soils in which the grape naturally flourishes.

The 10 elevated cru appellations, each with their own personality, sit in the north while the south is home to easy-drinking wines and the infamous Beaujolais Nouveau, once the only celebrated export of the region.

The wines can be produced with carbonic maceration – a winemaking technique adept at preserving fruity esters and softer tannins – or with the Burgundian method, widely practiced by the crus. Gamay complies with both and produces a spectrum of styles: the ageable, structured expressions of Saint-Amour and Moulin-à-Vent; the soft fruity expression of Brouilly and Régnié; the floral expression of Fleurie; and the juicy, quaffable thirst slakers of Beaujolais village. To highlight their terroir, many producers label their wines under the cru name, eschewing a mention of Beaujolais altogether.

Lepeltier says the industry body, Interpro Beaujolais, has invested extensively in terroir analysis. Of late, climats and lieux-dits, or plots, are being shown on the labels to highlight the sourcing of the grapes. Additionally, she says, “More and more of the great producers are multiplying bottlings to show the terroir variations.” For example, producers write Morgon Côte du Py instead of simply Morgon. “This is the sign of things moving forward.”



Mee Godard – the rising star of Beaujolais

MORGON, A LEGEND IN THE MAKING

Morgon has been described by Lepeltier as “the beating heart of postmodern Beaujolais.” The wines possess the same ageability as Moulin-à-Vent, if not the same power.

One of Morgon’s rising stars is Mee Godard, who runs a 7.8-hectare eponymous domaine. Educated in Oregon and Montpellier with vintage experience garnered in Champagne and Burgundy, Godard had no connections to Beaujolais until 2013, when she bought five hectares off a retiring winemaker.



Working the soils



Pascaline Lepeltier

Winemakers Bryce Laffond (left) and Edouard Parinet



"I created the estate in Beaujolais because I was convinced about the quality wine we could make here," says Godard, adding that she was also attracted to the "conviviality" of the people.

She had previously sampled Beaujolais on a tasting trip with some friends and the wines were a revelation. "A lot of people have the image of Beaujolais Nouveau, which is the contrary of the capabilities of Gamay," she says. While Nouveau is all about immediacy – quick ferment, candy and banana flavours, and short shelf life – Godard's distinctive style of making vins de garde (wines that keep and age) is diametrically different. Gamay, with age, expresses aromas of saucisson, forest floor and mushrooms, and smoke, bearing similarities to Pinot Noir.

Her boutique parcels of land are spread across the choicest of climats with a potpourri of soils, not just the granite for which Morgon is known. Les Corcollettes comprises degraded pink granite soils; Grand Cras, clay-rich alluvial soils; and in the renowned Côte du Py you will find the treasured roche pourrie, or rotted rock – a decomposed schist. Godard vinifies and bottles each climat separately. "We adapt our work to each plot," she says.

Domaine Mee Godard's winemaking process is Burgundian – destemmed grapes and whole bunches are macerated for two to three weeks and aged for 10 to 13 months in barrels and foudres (large wooden vats) of varying sizes. While Godard is conscientiously organic, the next step for her is biodynamic. "This is one goal I would like to reach in the next couple of years," she says.

THE STRUCTURAL WINES OF MOULIN-À-VENT

In contrast to Godard, the relative newcomer, Edouard Parinet belongs to the second generation of the historic Château Moulin-à-Vent. The most renowned of the ten crus, Moulin-à-Vent also bears the most similarity to Burgundy. Records from the early 19th century show the wines were listed at the same price as those of Pommard.

The Parinet family took over the chateau in 2009 and transformed the estate, investing in winemaking facilities, Burgundy-style winemaking, and climats-specific styles.

"Moulin-à-Vent wines can please very different palates," Parinet says over Zoom. "The structure of our wines varies from one vintage to another. For instance, 2017 will mostly please those who prefer a light, evanescent, elegant style of wine, while 2015 vintage will please more amateurs looking for structured, round and deep wines."

The structure and ageability are partially credited to its soils, rich in manganese and iron, and the powerful winds that dry the vines. "The winds, iron oxides, silica and sands create a stressing environment for the Gamay vines, leading to smaller, more concentrated berries," Parinet explains. "Thanks to that, the juice has more concentration, and the wine can then age better."



The famous windmill of Moulin-à-Vent sits at the heart of this 620 hectare cru in Beaujolais



The chateau turned fully organic this year and aims to be certified organic by 2024. “We are working the soils all the time,” Parinet adds, explaining that they move the earth continuously to make it breathe.

THE VINTAGE VARIABLES

Parinet says that one in two vintages in Beaujolais is a hot vintage – but also, that hot vintages are the best vintages. The region also suffers from frost as well as hail, which decimated the 2016 and 2017 vintage. 2018 is celebrated as one of the best recent vintages. This year, frost struck again in early April and reduced the crop by 30 percent.

“From the beginning, we knew 2021 would be a complicated vintage,” Parinet says. Their yield fell to a paltry 19 hectolitres per hectare, 35 percent below their average. As for the quality, he remains buoyant: “We have a small vintage, but we are very happy with the quality of the fruit.” In Morgon, Godard’s experiences

mirror Parinet’s. She believes this vintage will be more delicate and accessible, even if there isn’t enough of it.

“Beaujolais’s reputation has changed a lot in the last ten years,” Parinet reaffirms. He believes it is because of the increased interest in delicate red wines, as well as the soaring, if not unaffordable prices of Burgundy and Rhone. At the same time, the cru-level wines have earned the sommelier community’s seal of approval, with Gamay becoming a mainstay of the light-red category. “Beaujolais appeals to the sommeliers because of its fruit profile, freshness and excellent value for money prices. Besides, it works well in Singapore’s hot weather,” Rigourd says. As a bonus, cru wines can age well.

In his 1988 book *Adventures on the Wine Route*, the renowned wine buyer Kermit Lynch described Beaujolais as, “a light, grapy, fizzy, tart, quaffable red wine.” The Beaujolais of today is far from disposable. The new generation of winemakers and elevated quality of the ten crus have helped the wines evolve far beyond this light, tarty assessment of the past.

AN ASSEMBLAGE OF BOLD FLAVOURS AND CAPTIVATING TALES

Led by Winemaker of the Year (2019) David Phinney, Orin Swift offers compelling storytelling through its creative expression of art on every bottle and combines bold flavours with balance and focused sleekness evoked from an assortment of rich grape varietals from Napa Valley.

The history of Orin Swift dates back to 1995 when on a lark, Dave Phinney took a friend up on an offer and went to Florence, Italy to spend a semester “studying.” During that time, he was introduced to wine, how it was made, and got hooked.

A few more years of university led to graduation and eventually a job at Robert Mondavi Winery in 1997 as a temporary harvest worker. Deciding that if he was going to work this hard, it would eventually have to be for himself. In 1998, Dave founded Orin Swift Cellars: Orin is his father’s middle name and Swift is his mother’s maiden name.

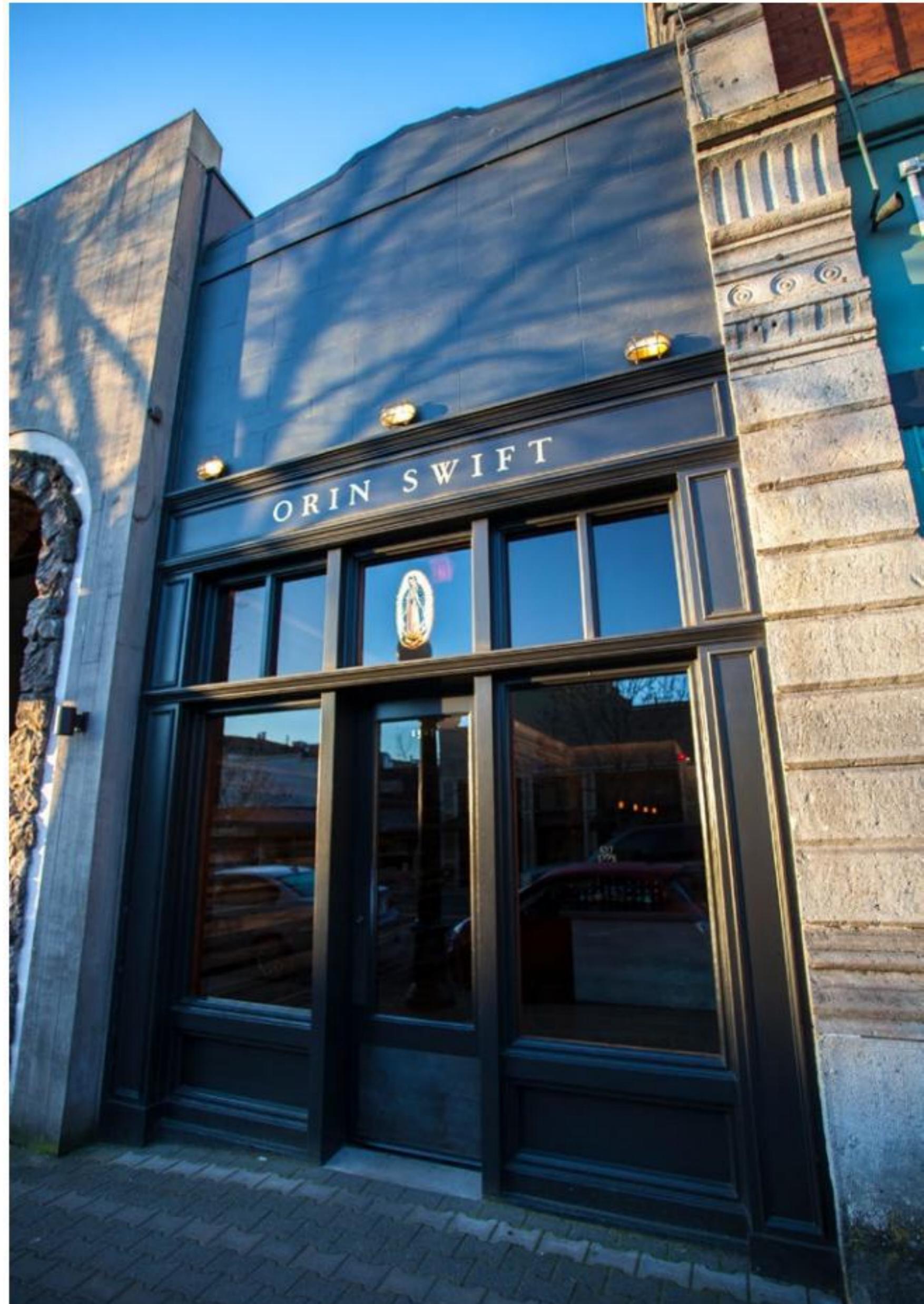
Dave recalls his first vintage in 1998, which was less than spectacular. “It was a tough harvest, and I bought fruit for the wrong part of a great vineyard. I learned first-hand that experience is what you get when you don’t get what you want. The truth is, when it comes to winemaking there are no silver bullets, no secrets. We as winemakers are only as good as our fruit source”.

Today, Orin Swift’s winemaking philosophy remains the same: find the best fruit from the best vineyards. Farm it right, harvest it right, bring it into the winery and don’t screw it up.

It all begins in the vineyard. Based out of Saint Helena, within the prized Napa Valley, Orin Swift features a portfolio of wines that appeal to a variety of senses. It Sourcing for the Orin Swift family takes Dave across the state of California, with a special interest in the Napa Valley, Sonoma County and Santa Barbara. He sets his sights on small lots within the most coveted growing regions while ensuring that only fruit of the highest quality makes it into the final blend.

Each label tells a story created by Dave Phinney brought to life with distinctive artwork and packaging. The wine inside reflects Dave’s affinity for showcasing geographic diversity and his exploration of vineyards around the world and at home in California.

To Dave, “There’s a soul to this business. That soul isn’t just from the people who make wine, it’s everyone who loves wines that make them feel something”.





Impressed by the wines and how the way the brand powerfully connects with consumers, E&J Gallo Winery added Orin Swift to their family of brands in June 2016. Having long admired Phinney and Orin Swift's innovative blends, expressive wines and imaginative thought-provoking labels, Orin Swift's addition was much-welcomed.

The harmonious relationship allows Dave to focus on his work in the vineyard, the cellar and the creative packaging. "I'm like a kid in a candy store," he says. "I'm freed up to do all the things I love. That's what I'm supposed to be doing."



Dave also says he knows Orin Swift wines are in very good hands. "It's important to me there's good stewardship of the brand," he says. "The philosophy of Orin Swift is to be humble and to over deliver, and that describes Gallo's philosophy too. There's not a lot of flash, just a really smart way of doing business. I know that selling wine is the hardest part of this business and we're putting Orin Swift wines in the hands of people who know what they're doing."

"We're always challenging ourselves. We don't have competitors - we compete with ourselves. We've never made a wine we're completely satisfied with," he says. "I'll be shocked if over the next 2-5 years, we're making not just a better wine, but appreciably better wine. 2016 is an important vintage and I'm excited about what the future holds."

EN PRIMEUR GOES DIGITAL

As En Primeur 2020 drew to a close, epicure looks back over the past two tumultuous years and their impact on Bordeaux's centuries-old selling system.

BY NIMMI MALHOTRA

Cult Wines en primeur 2020 tasting in Hong Kong



In spring every year, over 6000 wine critics, journalists, sommeliers, wine merchants and distributors flock to Bordeaux, the French wine capital, to taste the new wines of the year past. A string of hedonistic days follows – multiple tastings at multiple chateaux, harried lunches and leisurely dinners and a buzz unrivalled by any other experience in the wine world.

The Bordeaux En Primeur (EP) week is the biggest event on the wine calendar. Its purpose, much like Paris fashion week, is to introduce the new Bordeaux wines to the world, take a temperature check on the new vintage and generate millions of dollars in sales before summer kicks in.

During the last two pandemic-influenced years, En Primeur faced cancellation and was forced to reinvent. It morphed into a new hybrid format with digital technologies, WIT (wine in tube) packaging and sharp logistics.

EN PRIMEUR EXPLAINED

It is worth remembering that one cannot buy Bordeaux wines directly from the chateaux. A multi-tiered system was put in place in the 18th century to facilitate sales. The chateaux sell the wines to wholesalers known as negociants. The negociants sell to merchants like Berry Bros and Corney & Barrow, who have direct access to the

consumer. Much like the financial world, the wines are sold in futures (en primeur) while still in barrel. The consumers buy into the covenant that the wines will be delivered in 18 to 24 months when matured and in the bottle.

The seductiveness of en primeur is simple: you are buying these fine wines at their lowest prices, much like buying a house off-plan. When the wines hit the shelves, the cost will be much higher, making en primeur an astute investment.

But the en primeur of late wasn't living up to its promise. "The en primeur of 10 to 15 years ago versus en primeur now just does not capture the imagination," says Adam Bilbey, head of wines and spirits for Sotheby. Bilbey, who has over 15 years in the wine trade, says the practice was close to ruins, with chateaux releasing the wines at such astronomically high prices that it stopped making any financial sense. As a result, many buyers walked away from the En Primeur sales campaign, disenchanted.

Sam Mudie, director of Southeast Asia at Cult Wines, a wine investment firm, attests to the disenchantment in hard numbers. He says, "People have been really burned with the higher prices of 2009 and 2010 releases." He adds that most of the wines from 2009 and 2010, with a few exceptions, have decreased in value over time – by 10 to 15 percent on average and some as much as 40 percent.



CHATEAU D'ISSAN 2020

Margaux

Grapes: 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 39% Merlot, 2% Petit Verdot, 3% Cabernet Franc, 1% Malbec

Taste: Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot and Malbec – all feature for the first time in this vintage. "These add layers of spice, and the overall architecture is clear. Peony and violet notes add a kick upwards on the finish; this has a delicacy even though it is intense," says Jane Anson. Look for earthy notes, generous black fruit, perfume, and concentration. EP Price \$90

DOMAINE DE CHEVALIER 2020

Pessac-Leognan

Grapes: 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 27% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot, 3% Cabernet Franc

Taste: Olivier Bernard helms one of the finest estates of Pessac Leognan. Black and red berries come to the fore, coupled with floral notes of rose and violets. Jane Anson says, "Classical, powerful, not exuberant, an impressive Chevalier that has tannins and fruit and freshness, nothing shouting too loud." The finish lingers. \$101

CHATEAU LÉOVILLE POYFERRÉ 2020

Saint-Julien

Grapes: 64% Cabernet Sauvignon, 31% Merlot, 2% Petit Verdot, 3% Cabernet Franc

Taste: This second growth estate is one of Saint-Julien's finest estates. Purple coloured, the medium-bodied wine expresses intense fruit – black cherries, blackberries with stony minerality and spicy undertones. "The quality and precision of the tannins are impressive, giving the wine form, energy and equilibrium," James Suckling says.

Price on allocation

Available from
www.wineclique.com

epicurevietnam 127
<https://tieulun.hopto.org>

Ronan Laborde, president of UGC and co-owner of Chateau Clinet



Taking notes

EN PRIMEUR 2019

In 2020, France went into a nationwide lockdown and En Primeur week was cancelled. “I think we were all shocked by this experience,” Ronan Laborde, president of Union des Grands Cru de Bordeaux (UGCB), says. UGCB is the primary organiser of En Primeur week. After much back and forth, they managed to piece together a new campaign – a shortened online version.

For the first time in its history, barrel samples of Bordeaux wines were shipped outside Bordeaux to key critics. Tastings were conducted remotely, via Zoom or other media.

The 2019 vintage received positive reviews – 3.5 to 4 out of 5 by Bordeaux Institute of Wine and Vine Science (ISVV). In a regular year, a price rise could have been justified. However, on account of Covid and the grim state of world affairs directly affecting fine wine – namely Brexit, US tariffs on French wine, and the disenchanted Hong Kong and China market – chateaux instead dropped prices by 20 to 30 percent.

Thanks to the exceptional quality and reasonable prices, En Primeur 2019 was a success. “According to our figures, more wine companies than ever bought En Primeur 2019. The issue was that there were not enough quantities available to fulfil the request,” Laborde says in an email.

Jane Anson, Decanter magazine's Bordeaux correspondent and the leading Bordeaux critic, shares, "I think the lower prices of 2019 showed once again that En Primeur works when the chateaux get the price right. The best solution is to price genuinely below market (and if chateaux want to take more of a profit, then simply release a small amount during En Primeur and more at a later date when in bottle) so that there is a reason for purchase."

While the campaign was declared successful, only a select few chateaux truly benefited from it. Global wine marketplace Liv-ex explains it best in their 2019 closing report 'The magic is back': "A typical En Primeur campaign lasts from April through June. This year it happened in the space of four short weeks. This brevity had its downside: with circa 25 releases a day, only the top few names were afforded airtime. Naturally, these were often the success stories of the vintage."



Much to the frustration of merchants, most chateaux only released a small tranche of wines. "The prices are becoming fairer again now (2019), but there's less of it. They've only released 20 percent at what the market will perceive a fair price, but then they've got the rest of the 80 percent to release over time," Bilbey says.



Jane Anson



Chateau Clinet



Pouring wine in Bruxelles

EN PRIMEUR 2020

This year, travel restrictions meant that En Primeur 2020 was a muted affair – with a small percentage of the 6,000 yearly guests present on the ground. Once again, a digital campaign was launched – with events happening both online and in-person – but this time, it was carefully planned.

“Last year’s experience with Covid increased our humility,” Laborde says. “We prepared several plans in advance and were fully ready to adapt to any situation this year.”

The UGCB set up 210 tasting sessions in 10 cities worldwide (nine different countries) and shipped close to 100 tasting sets to select wine critics and merchants. “As a result, more than 2,500 wine professionals enjoyed En Primeur 2020 thanks to the UGCB,” Laborde adds. In addition, chateaux sent their samples separately.

The wines were sent, far and wide, to critics and key merchants but with great trepidation on the part of producers. “As tasting is key for buyers, we had to adapt,” says Stéphane Laborde, export director for Jean-Pierre Moueix group. The group owns several prestigious crus, including Château La Fleur-Pétrus and Château Trotanoy. “En primeur wines are ‘fragile’ as these young wines are coming straight from the barrel. There is always a small risk of alteration for a sample which travels more than 10,000 km,” he adds.

It is important to note that the quality of barrel samples have always been up for debate. First, the samples presented to critics may or may not be the final blend of the wine. Mainly, winemakers produce a blend exclusively for the en primeur tasting.

Second, as Laborde notes, the samples are so young that they can change in taste. “This is certainly why Gruaud Larose, Palmer and a few others didn’t send out any en primeur samples,” Anson says. “Pichon Baron sent out two sets at the time (in WIT tubes) in case there were any problems with one of them. Others such as Latour only sent them to very few critics and ensured they had someone from their team on the ground to check them.”

Unlike the first pandemic year, local critics could visit Bordeaux this year. “The estates were extremely happy to see people after a year of almost no visitors, but it was quiet – around 20 percent of the normal number of visitors. A few estates, such as Haut-Brion, remain entirely closed to visitors,” says Anson.



In yet another first, merchants invited their top clients to sample the barrel wines along with the merchants and critics.

“To taste en primeur, you do need experience and understanding,” Bilbey says. To train the uninitiated, merchants and Hong Kong-based critics like James Suckling held “Taste like a pro” sessions to help wine collectors understand the nuances of barrel wines. For untrained palates, sampling barrel wines could be a risky endeavour, but Bilbey sees the upside. “The more private clients get the opportunity, the better they’re going to get at tasting barrel samples.” In the future, he believes the merchants will continue to push for samples to share with clients to generate demand and engagement.

As for the quality of vintage 2020, reports indicate it is another stellar year making it a rare trifecta of strong back-to-back Bordeaux vintages. Right on cue, en primeur prices are back on the rise.

The price increase was cautious in the early weeks, then rather flamboyantly high as the campaign ended late June this year. “What tends to happen is chateaux might get the price right

one year, but they are loathed to give this profit away two years in a row,” observes Anson.

Despite the global pandemic, Sam Mudie conservatively predicts a growth of 20 percent over the next two years. He says, “Confidence in Bordeaux is right now the strongest it’s been for about three-plus years. I think we should still be targeting or expecting double digits from a good EP campaign now.”

While it’s too early to declare En Primeur 2020 a resounding success, the market and Laborde are both hopeful. “For the second year in a row, the En Primeur presentations were unfolded outside Bordeaux. This is the confirmation that last year was not an exceptional success, under exceptional conditions.”

Stephen Laborde is hopeful the coming years will bring some semblance of normal and adds that “we will probably also continue to send a few samples to dedicated clients.”

On the other side, Bilbey echoes the sentiment of many invitees when he talks about digital campaigns. He says, “It will never replace being able to go to Bordeaux and taste during En Primeur week.”

TOP TEN OF THE WORLD FINEST CHAMPAGNES

Celebrate with our hand-curated Top Ten of the world's finest champagnes, savour their unique history and distinct growing locations, and enjoy the delicate variety of grape blends and enduring ethos surrounding each of these iconic Champagne Houses.



ACE OF SPADES BY ARMAND DE BRIGNAC

A touch of celebrity never hurts, as seen with this one - Ace of Spades. Owned by Jay-Z and produced by the Cattier family, now in their 12th and 13th generation of the champagne business, success swiftly followed. Ace of Spades does not produce vintage champagne editions, but instead blends grapes from different years, with the exact combination varying from year to year.

The grape blend is an even three-way blend between Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and Pinot Meunier, with the aim to achieve a consistent and well-balanced product. Each release ages in oak casks for at least one year before bottling, which creates the slight toasty, vanilla, and pastry hints the label is known for.





▲ BOLLINGER

Founded in 1829, Bollinger distinguishes itself with some of the best vineyards and the production of some of the highest quality Champagne in the world. Most of their terroirs rate either as Grand Cru or Premier Cru. They grow mostly Pinot Noir, which then forms the backbone of all of Bollinger Champagnes.

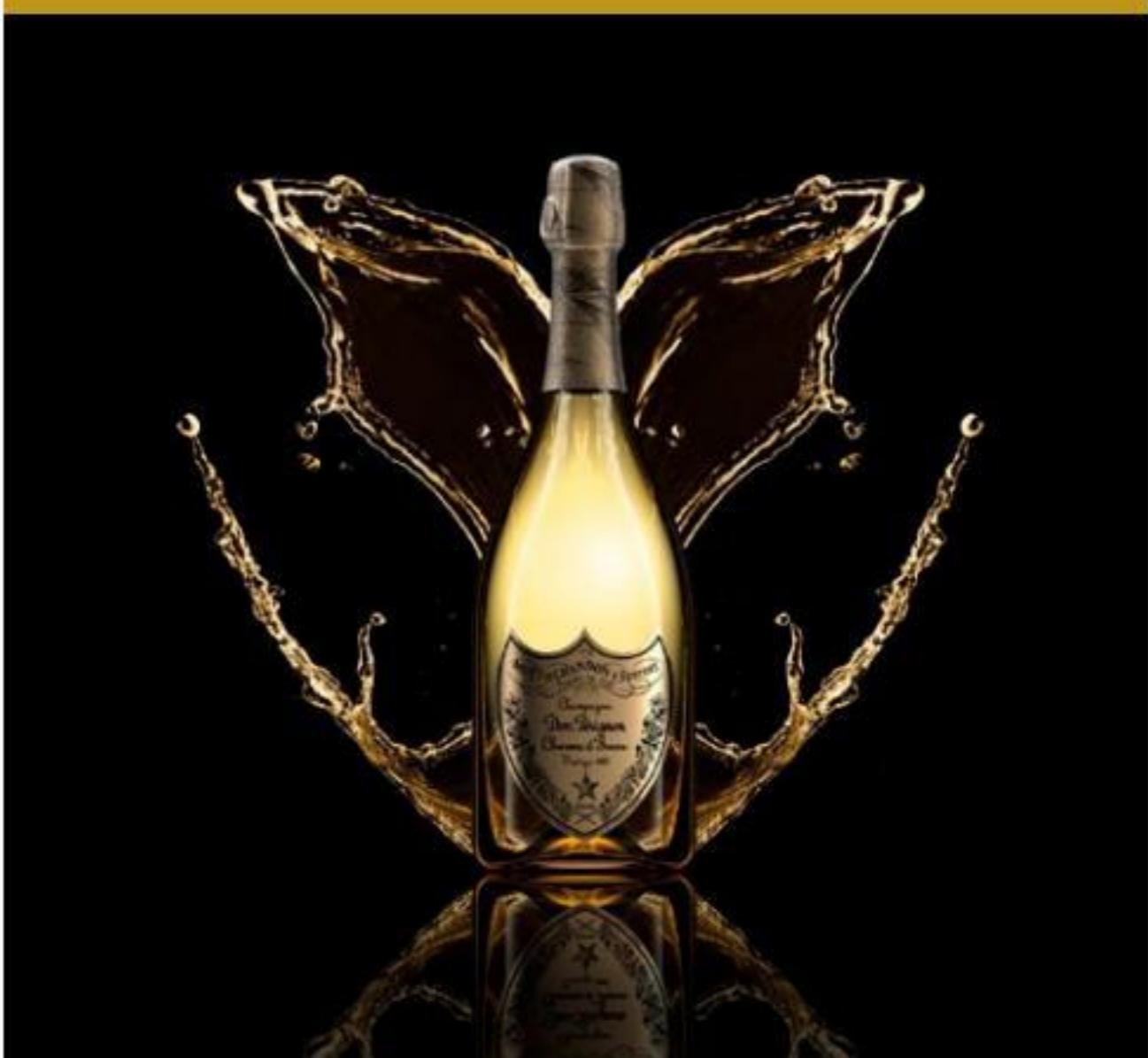
The combination of Pinot Noir grapes and the specific ageing process produces champagnes known for their depth and complexity. Each bottle combines delicate fruit flavours with notes of rich spices and mineral complexity, and a slightly saline finish. The recognised great years for Bollinger are 1996, 2002, and 2008.



DOM PERIGNON

Dom Perignon is produced by Moët & Chandon, a member of the LVMH powerhouse group of luxury companies. It is recognised as delightfully complex, worthy of its status as one of the world's first Prestige Champagnes. Dom Perignon's vineyards are rated Grand Cru or better, because of their distinctive chalky mineral content that adds texture and depth to the grapes.

More specifically, its grape blend is a combination of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, with the final composition changing with each vintage. Sometimes, the blend is perfectly equal in its proportions, while other times the percentages round out to 60% Chardonnay and 40% Pinot Noir, or 40% Chardonnay 60% Pinot Noir. As with many French Champagnes, Dom Perignon did very well in 2002 and 2008. For a slightly older vintage still in its prime, Dom Perignon 1996 is one of the best.



▲ KRUG

Krug maintains meticulous standards at every level of the process. Each cask comes from a fine-grain, old wood oak - typically at least 200 years old - and Krug requires an additional three years of dry seasoning before it is considered suitable.

The 2002 Krug's first vintage wine of the new millennium benefited from the ideal weather conditions that defined the year. It offers a good representative bouquet, with orange notes balanced with licorice and hints of chocolate.



▲ MOËT & CHANDON

Founded in 1743, Moët & Chandon has offered exclusive winemaking savoir-faire and an innovative and pioneering spirit. The 1,190 hectares of rich limestone soil, 50% of which is classed as Grand Cru and 25% Premier Cru, make up the largest vineyard area in Champagne. The Moët & Chandon cellars extend for more than 28 kilometres underground, forming a subterranean labyrinth with optimum conditions of humidity and temperature.

As the House's signature cuvée, Moët Impérial is its most universal expression. This Champagne is a perfectly executed blend of over 200 crus, fusing the full body of Pinot Noir with the suppleness of Pinot Meunier and the finesse of Chardonnay.

The House recently also pioneered once more by developing a revolutionary Champagne - Moët Ice Impérial, the first Champagne to be enjoyed over ice, in large glasses that have been specially designed to reveal all of its subtlety.



PERRIER JOUET

Perrier Jouet is known as one of the most consistent Champagne brands over time, in part because the head of their Champagne House has only changed hands seven times in 200 years of operation. Known for focusing on small-batch production and high-quality standards, Perrier Jouet vintage champagnes remain a special treat today.

Perrier Jouet is produced from a grape blend of 20% Chardonnay, 40% Pinot Noir and 40% Pinot Meunier. The result is a precise, fresh, and somewhat floral Champagne, such as the Perrier Jouet Grand Brut, with its fragrances of white flowers, blended with fresh lemon and peach.



◀ POMMERY

Madame Pommery made history in 1868, when first braking ground on what would become known as the Pommery Vineyard and Champagne House. Now under the direction of Clement Pierlot, the 10th cellar-master of Pommery House, they continue to work with nature to provide the best in their famous Champagnes.

Pommery is actually a blend of 40 vineyards, from throughout the Champagne region of France. The three grape blend is made up of Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier, and about one-third Chardonnay. This subtle blend is then aged in the cellars for about three years to develop a full aroma. It makes this Champagne a brand that is consistent by focusing on maintaining certain qualities, rather than enhancing vintages in their blends.



▲ VEUVE CLICQUOT

FOUNDED IN 1775, Veuve Clicquot Champagne House is old enough to have seen and survived the French Revolution. Known to be delicately nuanced and bursting with complex flavour, Veuve Clicquot Yellow Brut is a distinctive treat, with grapes used coming from as many as 50 to 60 different vineyards.

Traditionally, the proportion of each grape variety used is 50 to 55% Pinot Noir, 15 to 20% Pinot Meunier, and 28 to 33% Chardonnay. And while many prefer Veuve Clicquot La Grande Dame – especially the 2004, 2006, and 2008 vintages - Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin Cave Privée Brut from 1990 is the shining star.



TAITTINGER

Established nearly a century ago, Taittinger comes from a family-owned operation and Champagne House, passionate about taking the ego out of making Champagne, and focusing instead on the quality of the vines, grapes, and wines.

The grapes for Taittinger come from over 35 different villages in the Champagne region, and are typically blended in a combination of 40% Chardonnay, 35% Pinot Noir, and 25% Pinot Meunier. Such a relatively higher proportion of Chardonnay is unique among fine non-vintage Champagnes.

The presses for each wine are in the vineyard, which allows for the immediate pressing of the fruit after the manual harvest. This technique makes for an extra flavourful product, often with hints of fresh fruit and honey with white flowers and vanilla creating a nuanced, layered blend.



◀ RUINART

Ruinart stands as the oldest Champagne House in the world, now owned by the LVMH group, and is a thriving part of the French luxury brand powerhouse. They offer four cuvées, all of them aimed at small market speciality stores and consumers with a trained palate that can appreciate the intense subtlety and layering in their wine.

TO HAVE, TO HOLD AND TO DRINK

A selection of wines from sought-after regions of Bordeaux,
Bolgheri and Central Otago, New Zealand.



**TENUTA ARGENTIERA
BOLGHERI
SUPERIORE 2017**
Region - Bolgheri, Tuscany, Italy

The tiny appellation of Bolgheri DOC is home to Tenuta Argentiera. Situated along the Tuscan coast, the property's best vineyards are positioned on picturesque slopes overlooking the Tyrrhenian Sea. The estate is only 20 years old, unlike its illustrious neighbours- Ornellaia and Sassicaia, making it a relatively new player in the Super Tuscan category. A blend of 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc, the wine was aged 14 months in barrique (new and old) and a year in the bottle before release. Argentiera's Bolgheri Superiore 2017 is a wine of concentration and balance, with juicy ripe fruit, touches of rosemary, spice and silky tannins. This affordable Super Tuscan is ready to drink now or cellar for 10 years.

\$170, Angra Wines, www.angra.com.sg

**FELTON ROAD BANNOCKBURN
CHARDONNAY 2018**
Region - Central Otago, New Zealand

This Central Otago staple enjoys something of a cult status and hardly needs an introduction. Known for Pinot Noir, Felton Road also produces an impressive Chardonnay. Winemaker Blair Walter manages to extract a veritable regional expression with his farm to bottle style winemaking. Certified organic and biodynamic fruit is whole bunch pressed and fermented with indigenous yeast, with long natural malolactic fermentation. The wines rest on lees for nine months in French oak barrels, mostly seasoned, developing body and texture and bottled without fining or filtration. The nose is a bouquet of ripe peaches, hazelnuts, and spice; the palate carries the same fruit, with a whisper of citrus while the acid balances the ripened fruit. Drink chilled to enjoy the mouth-watering freshness.

\$82, Monopole, www.monopole.com.sg



CHATEAU ANGELUS 2018 THE PHOENIX
Region - St Emilion, Bordeaux, France

Stéphanie de Boüard- Rivoal took over the reins of Chateau Angelus from her father, becoming the third woman to helm the 96 acres of St Emilion first-growth estate. She is the 8th generation of the Boüard de Laforest family who has owned the property for 235 years. The 2018 vintage is a blend of 65% Merlot and 35% Cabernet Franc and aged in new oak barriques and two new foudres (large barrels)

to lower the impact of wood. Satin-textured, the wine shows complex aromas of cassis fruit, sandalwood, tobacco leaf, sweet coffee notes and bay leaf. The tannins are refined and impart remarkable structure to the wine. Medium to full body, this vintage is defined by its elegance and structure in every sip. One for the cellars, to try in five years. **\$664, Wine Clique, www.wine-clique.com.com.sg**

WORTHY YEAR-END SIPS TO RING IN 2021



KRUG CLOS DU MESNIL 2006

From a small walled plot in the village of Le Mesnil-sur-Oger comes the ponderous, yet lithe 2006 vintage. As with all Clos du Mesnil, the highest expression of Chardonnay from the house, the initial impression is tightly wound, though it soon unfurls delicate white fruits on the nose, and incredibly concentrated layers of brioche and lemon pith, with a hint of sweetness and spice. It is a “virtuoso soloist” in Krug’s description, exuding needlepoint fine bubbles, needing time and attention as it languidly reveals its potential. Drink with a suitable classical music pairing as suggested by the Krug app, with fish or shellfish. Price on application from shop.themoomba.com and Ambassade outlets: JAAN by Kirk Westaway, Zén, Hashida Sushi

2006 VINTAGE HIGHLIGHTS:

- Considered a warm year, though there was extreme rainfall as well.
- Grapes can be compared to 2002 and 1989, both generous years.
- Chardonnay displayed ample aromas and classic structure.



FIRST DROP WINES

COLD SWEAT SYRAH 2014

Syrah is typically known as Shiraz in Australia – unless it is made in a Rhone-like style, such as this. 100% Syrah from the Craneford vineyard in Eden Valley spent 12 days on skins and thereafter 16 months in new French oak. A cool vintage sees finer flavours, from the tomato leaf aromas to dark cherry, fine graphite and slight pepperiness in the finish. The eye-catching copper structure label will tarnish in unique ways, making every bottle a canvas for art. Drink now or cellar another 8 years. \$126 from maltwineasia.com



BODEGA GARZÓN

BALASTO 2017

Tannat originated from southwest France, but has famously found a new home as the ‘national grape’ of Uruguay. At Garzon, one of the newer and most ambitious wineries, their Balasto icon wine takes its name from the ideal granitic soils that imbue energy and complexity to its 50% Tannat, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Merlot and 5% Marselan blend. Juicy red and black fruit, silky tannins and hints of wild flowers make this easy to drink now, with a Christmas roast beef. \$119 from 1855thebottleshop.com



Singapore's Best Sommelier in French Wines

2020 is Celine Jung from Park90. The 11th edition of the competition took place on 16 Nov at Origin Bar, where Jung beat out fellow finalists Lucas Liu (also Park90), Alvin Neo (Mott 32), and last year’s champion Daisuke Shibuya (Sun In Moon Japanese Dining). She proceeds in an online match to the Asia finals on 15 Dec alongside champions from Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Vietnam, Thailand, South Korea and China for the regional title. Catch it at www.facebook.com/bestsommelierinfrancwines.



With subtle Vietnamese flavours of coriander and fresh lemongrass, the cocktail is a mix of fresh herbs and gentle spices. Roku Gin matches perfectly with an array of distinctive Balinese spices: Sancho pepper, citrus and green tea.

SAIGON CALLING

INGREDIENTS

- 45ml lemongrass-infused Roku Gin
- 30ml fresh lemon juice
- 20ml white honey
- Coriander bitter
- Pandan leaves and begonia flower for garnish

METHOD

- Pour all ingredients into mixing glass.
- Dry shake (with no ice) first.
- Then add some ice into mixing glass, and shake it again.
- Pour it into a stemmed cocktail glass.
- Garnish with three dashes of coriander bitter, along with pandan leaves and begonia flower.

WHITE HONEY

INGREDIENTS

- 2/3 cup water
- 2/3 cup honey
- 1/3 cup white sugar

INSTRUCTIONS

- Place honey and water into a small saucepan.
- Bring to a boil while stirring occasionally. Then turn the heat down to low and let simmer for an additional 10 minutes, stirring consistently.
- When the syrup thickens a little bit, remove from heat and cool.

LEMONGRASS- INFUSED ROKU GIN

INGREDIENTS

- 2-3 lemongrass stalks
- 1 cup Roku Gin
- Peel of 1 lime

METHOD

- Wash 2-3 stalks of lemongrass and trim them, leaving 3-4 inches from the bottom.
- Smash bottom of lemongrass with a kitchen mallet to open the ends.
- Pour 1 cup of Roku Gin into a large glass jar.
- Put the lemongrass and the lime peel into the jar and seal it tight with a lid for 24 hours.

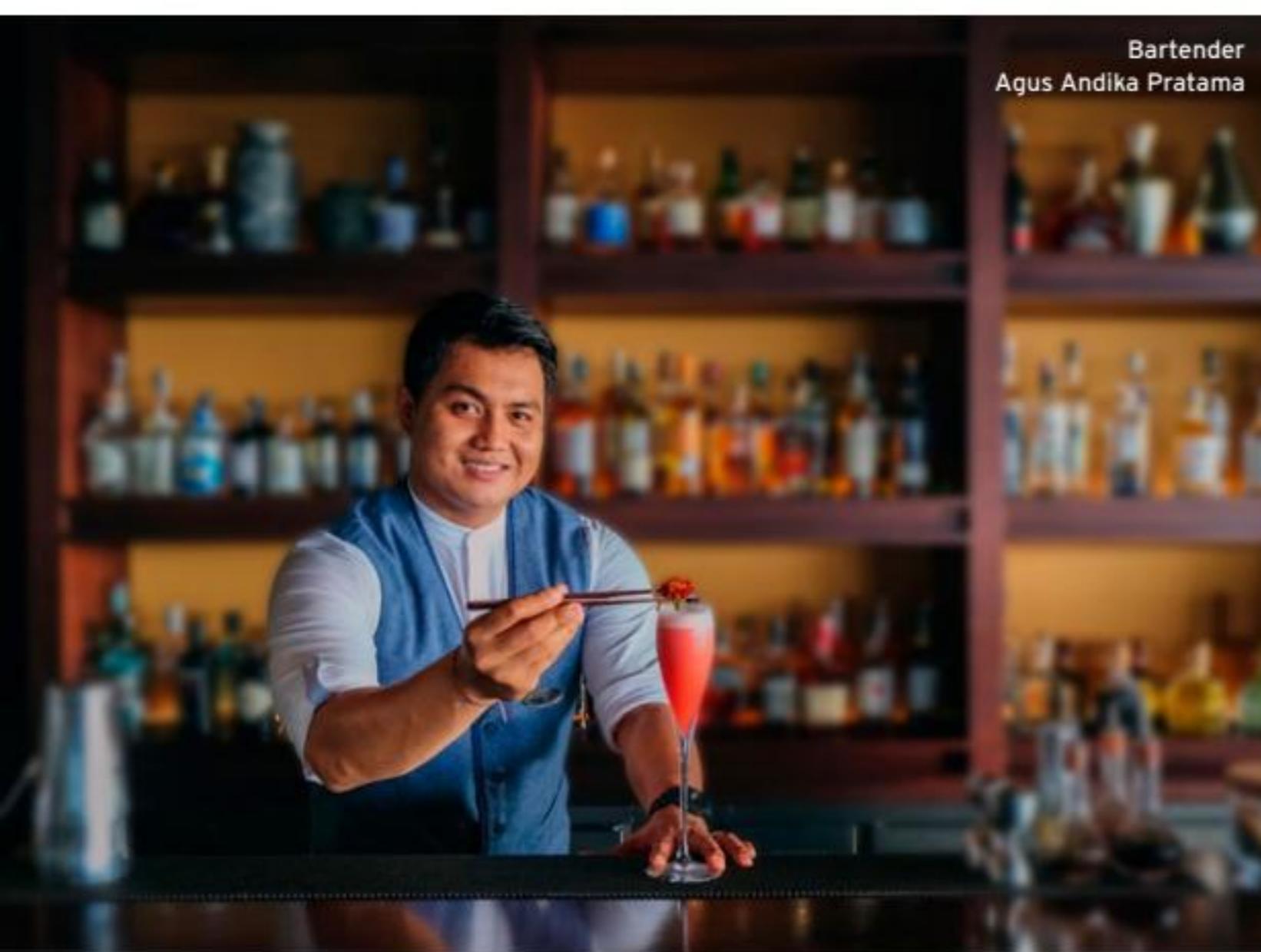
CORIANDER BITTER

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tsp coriander seeds
- 1 tsp cardamom
- 1 cup 151 proof grain alcohol/vodka
- 1 pc orange peel

METHOD

- In a glass jar, infuse vodka with cardamom and orange peel for at least 24 hours. Strain.



WHO: Executive chef Gaetan Christopher Beisuz, and bartender Agus Andika Pratama

AT: The Writers Bar, Raffles Bali

WHERE: Jl. Karang Mas Sejahtera No.1A, Jimbaran, Kec. Kuta Sel., Kabupaten Badung, Bali 80361, Indonesia

Opened in Jul 2019, The Writers Bar at Raffles Bali seeks inspiration from rich local Balinese ingredients as it navigates its way to creating its unique identity. The bar team comprises seasoned Balinese professionals, including executive chef Gaetan Beisuz (locally known as Chef G) and bartender Agus Andika. Agus gained his stripes at top establishments like Ku De Ta and Sundara bar at Four Seasons Bali Jimbaran, while Chef G, originally from Lyon, France, honed his craft all over Asia.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF RAFFLES BALI

THE ARAK ENTHUSIAST

The Balinese arak is a clear alcoholic drink distilled from rice or coconut juice at 20% to 50% ABV. Agus, an avid arak enthusiast and distiller shares, “Every village of Bali makes arrack, and has a different taste.” Arak appears in a few cocktails alongside Balinese produce such as dragon fruit, galangal, snake fruit, Balinese long pepper and native Bedugul strawberry, which are used as ingredients and garnishes.

LE TROU NORMAND

Chef G interpreted the gastronomical French tradition of Le Trou Normand in Bali. “In Normandy, France, there is a custom to have a trou (hole) when having a long meal to help clean the palate before the next course, as well as aid digestion to be able to continue the meal,” he explains. Spirits like Calvados, Armagnac or even Chartreuse are offered and matched with a sorbet or ice cream.

In Bali, he has monikered it Le Trou Balinais, where arak infusions are offered as little interludes during long brunches. “Instead of the single spirit with sorbet, we create a new arak infusion every week with herbs, spices and fruit, and this is served in a rock glass with crystal clear ice.”

Agus champions the infusions and creates yin and yang combinations like snake fruit and lemongrass, tamarillo and celery.

INSPIRATIONAL GARDENS

The terrace garden is a source of creativity. In addition to the herbs and spices, the indigo-hued telang flowers (butterfly pea) are brought in to lend their vibrant blue to neutral spirits. Soon, the team will harvest their first batch of stingless honey. “It is a lot of fun to work with stingless honey for cocktails and beverages because it brings in both acidity and sweetness,” Chef G shares.

JOURNEY OF NGIAM THOON BOOM

Legendary bartender Ngiam Tong Boon and his travels in the 19th century form the basis of The Writers Bar menu. A map plots his journey from his native Vietnam to Singapore, where he is said to have created Singapore Sling in 1915. The Bali Sling pays homage to Singapore Sling, but as Chef G explains, “Bali Sling is not a part of Ngiam Thoon Boom. We created a bit of a gimmick here with the name of our previous bartender, Nando Boon.”

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

Come November, Agus and Chef G are looking to launch a new menu just in time for the festive season. “The idea is not to divert from the first concept because I think it’s very important for us to remain true to who we are”, says Chef G. They will continue to retrace his journey with a broader selection of spirits.

COCONENAS PALOMA

INGREDIENTS

- 30ml Tequila blanco
- 20ml pineapple shrub
- 60ml grapefruit and coconut soda
- grapefruit peel, for garnish

METHOD

- Build tequila blanco and pineapple shrub into a highball glass with ice
- Top up with grapefruit and coconut soda
- Stir gently to mix
- Garnish with fresh grapefruit peel

FOR
GRAPEFRUIT
AND COCONUT
SODA

METHOD

- In a 1L soda siphon, combine 600ml grapefruit juice (pulp strained) and 300ml coconut water.
- Charge with one soda charger. Store in fridge.

FOR
PINEAPPLE
SHRUB

METHOD

- Combine 100g pineapple juice with 100g sugar and 100g vinegar. Stir until sugar is dissolved. Store in fridge for up to 2 weeks.



Shelley Tai at Nutmeg & Clove puts a tropical spin on the Paloma, for an ideal hot weather thirst-quencher

The Paloma is a Mexican tequila based cocktail using lime juice and grapefruit-flavoured soda. Tai levels up the drink with not just fresh grapefruit juice (as the usual canned grapefruit sodas tend to be too sweet) but coconut water for a tropical touch, as well as gently carbonated water which makes you drink more, according to her. Bartender tip: Fruity shrubs are also an ideal way to introduce acidity outside of using citrus.

MAIN PHOTO BY CHINO SARDEA.
PHOTO COURTESY OF NUTMEG & CLOVE



WHO: Bar manager, Shelley Tai

JOINED: Nutmeg & Clove, 8 Purvis Street

FROM: Hong Kong

INSTAGRAM: @kankantai

BACKGROUND

Hong Konger Shelley Tai, 31, studied fashion merchandising but never got a chance to parlay her studies into a career. Instead, it was her part-time job on the bar floor that got her hooked on hospitality. Her interest and determination led her from barback to apprentice bartender, and finally to bartender at Quinary, Hong Kong and now bar manager at Nutmeg & Clove, Singapore.

WINNING TOUCH

Along the way, she participated in the Diageo World Class Bartender of the Year Hong Kong in 2018 and 2019, eventually winning the title on her second try. "I was very shy and didn't talk much at my first competition," she recalls. Don't mistake her reticence for lack of skill though; she became much more serious at her craft during

her five-year stint at modernist bar Quinary (currently number 16 on World 50 Best Bars). Although she favours spirit-forward drinks, she won't commit herself to a style, explaining that she enjoys finding culinary flavours and infusing those into her drinks.

SPREADING HER WINGS

Landing in Singapore happened, in a way, because of World Class. "It made me feel small," she fumbles, finding the right word in English. "Meeting so many people and seeing what they do, made me want to learn more myself. At 30, I realise I wasn't growing enough, so I decided to leave Hong Kong." Tai accepted a job in New York in 2020, and was geared to move until Covid-19 scuttled that opportunity.

Colin Chia, co-founder of Nutmeg & Clove, was not having a great year either, as he had to close the bar's physical operations for 257 days following Singapore's Circuit Breaker. Ever enterprising, the former Diageo commercial manager, who also has bars in Bangkok, relocated Nutmeg & Clove to Seah Street in November and recruited Tai to be its high-profile bar manager.

MENU TO WATCH

Since moving herself and her cats over, Tai has been learning the ropes of being a bar manager, meaning she focuses more than on drinks – she's responsible also for planning menus, events and bar operations. The bar's new menu, launching in April, is based on the 12 Chinese zodiac animals, weaving in Nutmeg & Clove's strong Asian leaning with a creative twist around colour, food and spirits. Tai and Chia ensured that the whole team pitched in, with forerunner Rabbit (or Rabbit) offering a sophisticated combination of pinenut washed vodka, purple carrot wine and fig leaf kombucha.

Foodwise, the bar couldn't be luckier – Chia's longtime friend and celebrity chef Willin Low consulted on the Asian-fusion menu, serving up winners like the curry kueh pie tee (\$12) with potato foam, tom yum bishop's nose (\$12) – heavenly for fans of crispy chicken butt, and a heritage recipe based on Chia's father's own Teochew lor bak (\$18) – braised pork belly with chee cheong fun and braised egg in a perfectly balanced gravy.

THE LAST WORD

"A good bartender must have traits of discipline, creativity and friendliness," says Tai. In particular, discipline is important to her because there are also negative influences in the industry, such as over-drinking and not taking care of one's health. To that end, she prefers to keep a morning routine and to exercise regularly – weight training and boxing being her favoured sports. "Diet-wise, I eat everything," she claims, except too much carbohydrates at night. Her favourite Singapore dish: kaya toast and eggs.

Toss to Good Fortune

Get into your parents-in-law's good books when you turn your annual Chinese New Year lo hei into a luxe affair with these three expert yu sheng recipes and auspicious creations from award-winning chefs of Li Bai Cantonese Restaurant, one Michelin-starred Summer Pavilion and Wan Hao Chinese Restaurant.



Premium Lobster, Alaskan Crab, Salmon, Scallop & Caviar Yu Sheng with White Peach Sauce

Chef Brian Wong's white peach sauce brings a delicate and floral take to the refreshing raw fish salad.

Recipe by

Brian Wong, executive Chinese chef
of Wan Hao Chinese Restaurant,
Singapore Marriott Tang Plaza Hotel

serves
12 persons

prep time
1 hour + 1 hour of simmering

white peach sauce

- 1 lemon, sliced
- 150ml water
- 500g plum paste
- 50g lemon paste
- 180g white peach purée
(available from Lazada)

- » In a pot, add lemon slices and water, and then simmer for 1 hour.
- » Remove the pot from heat, and take out the lemon slices.
- » Add the remaining ingredients and stir thoroughly. Set aside.

assembly

- 25g pickled red ginger, julienned
- 25g pickled ginger, julienned
- 50g pickled papaya, julienned
- 50g pickled green peach, julienned
- 50g pickled leeks, julienned
- 30g preserved lime strips

- 100g carrots, julienned
- 100g radishes, julienned
- 100g green radishes, julienned
- 80g crackers
- 30g white sesame
- 30g crushed peanut
- 120g fresh salmon
- 120g fresh Hokkaido Scallop
- 300g lobster meat, cooked
- 250g Alaskan crab meat, cooked
- 30g caviar
- white peach sauce
- a few pieces of edible gold sheets

- » Assemble according to picture on page 76.



Black Caviar and Hokkaido King Scallop Yu Sheng

Prefer something more extravagant than salmon slices and golden crackers? Chef Cheung Siu Kong opts for black caviar and Hokkaido king scallops, and crushed sweetened walnuts to add a luxe touch to the ubiquitous dish.

Recipe by

Cheung Siu Kong, Chinese executive chef of Summer Pavilion, The Ritz-Carlton, Millenia Singapore

serves

10 to 12 persons

prep time

1 hour

yu sheng sauce

- 300g plum sauce
- 50g white vinegar
- 80g fine sugar
- 80g lemon sauce
- 50ml water
- a pinch of salt

» In a pot, bring all the ingredients to a boil. Set aside.

assembly

- 10g black caviar
- 4 fresh Hokkaido King Scallops
- 50g preserved cucumber, julienned
- 50g preserved mixed melon, julienned
- 30g white ginger, julienned
- 50g preserved leeks, julienned
- 60g sweetened walnuts, crushed
- 25g fried red sweet potatoes, julienned
- 25g fried yams, julienned
- 25g fried purple sweet potatoes, julienned
- 50g radishes, julienned
- 150g carrot, julienned
- 2 limes
- 40g pomelo sacs
- a pinch of gold flakes
- a pinch of orange peel
- a pinch of red chillies
- a pinch of lemon leaves
- a dash of cinnamon powder
- a dash of pepper powder
- 40ml peanut oil
- 80g yu sheng sauce

» Assemble according to picture on page 80.



Double-boiled Sea Whelk Soup with Fish Maw, Soaked Nostoc Algae and Persimmon

In a separate pot, add ginger to boiling water before boiling the fish maw to remove any fishiness.

Recipe by

Cheung Siu Kong

serves

4 persons

prep time

10 mins

cook time

4 hours 30 minutes

- 200g sea whelk
- 800g chicken meat
- 500ml water
- 4 pieces of fish maw
- 60g soaked nostoc algae
- 1 persimmon, quartered
- a pinch of salt

» Blanch sea whelk and chicken meat in boiling water.

» In a ceramic pot, add blanched sea whelk, chicken meat and water, and double boil for 4 hours.

» Add fish maw, soaked nostoc algae and persimmon, then double boil for another 30 minutes.

» Add salt to taste before serving.



Black Caviar and Hokkaido King
Scallop Yu Sheng



Double-boiled Sea Whelk Soup
with Fish Maw, Soaked Nostoc
Algae and Persimmon



Yu Sheng with Salmon, Sea Whelk, Coral Clam and Salmon Roe

Toss to greater heights with the Coral Clam Yu Sheng Platter which features coral clam atop an appetising mix of ingredients such as yam, sweet potato, white radish, carrot, pickled ginger and pomelo.

Recipe by

Chung Yiu Ming

serves

4 persons

prep time

1 hour

yu sheng accompaniments

- a pinch of pepper
- five-spice powder
- 60ml plum sauce
- 50ml peanut oil

assembly

- sea whelk
- coral clams
- salmon roe
- salmon slices
- 30g cucumber, julienned
- 20g white pickled ginger
- 80g white radish, julienned
- 80g carrot, julienned
- 30g pomelo sacs
- 30g crackers
- 20g crushed walnut
- 10g sesame seed, toasted

- » Set aside pepper, five-spice powder, plum sauce and peanut oil on individual saucers.
- » Assemble according to picture on page 84.



Crispy Pork Trotter with Pineapple Sauce

A Chinese New Year classic, the crispy and succulent pork trotter is accompanied with a sweet and tangy pineapple sauce.

This recipe has been simplified so you can enjoy the juicy pork with lesser effort.

Recipe by

Brian Wong

serves

12 persons

prep time

30 minutes

cook time

1 hour 30 minutes

pineapple sauce

- 1kg pineapple, peeled and core removed
- 30g lemongrass
- 5g bird's eye chilli
- 10g ginger flower
- 200g orange juice
- 60g garlic, minced
- 5g turmeric powder
- 12g chicken flavour seasoning
- 30g fish sauce
- 60g fine sugar

» Cut pineapple into chunks and place in food processor to blend. Set aside.

» In another food processor, blend the lemongrass, bird's eye chilli and ginger flower.

» In a heated wok, stir fry the blended lemongrass mixture until it reaches an aromatic fragrance.

» Add orange juice, blended pineapple and garlic, cook until a paste-like texture is achieved.

» Add turmeric powder, chicken flavour seasoning, fish sauce and fine sugar, stir until everything is well-mixed. Set aside.

crispy pork trotter

- 2kg pork trotter
- 2 knobs of ginger, sliced
- 3 bay leaves
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 4 pieces of liquorice
- 3g Sichuan pepper
- 2g star anise
- 1 Chinese cardamom
- 2g fennel seeds

• 3g dried chillies

• 30g Chinese wine

• 30g dark soy sauce

• 10g sugar

• 5g salt

» In a pot, place the pork trotter and fill the pot with water — until it covers the pork trotter.

» Add ginger slices into the pot and allow it to soak for three minutes. This is to get rid of the gamey flavour from the pork.

» Remove the pork trotter and wash it thoroughly.

» In a different pot, place the cleaned pork trotter and fill it with water — until it covers the pork trotter. Add the remaining ingredients and bring it to a boil.

» Once the water is boiling, turn the fire down and slow cook it for 45 minutes.

» Remove the cooked pork trotter, drain then leave it out for the skin to dry.

» In a wok, heat the oil to 160°C and deep-fry the pork trotter until a crisp skin is achieved.



NOMA, LED BY RENÉ REDZEPPI, PLACES TOP SPOT ON THE WORLD'S 50 BEST RESTAURANTS 2021 LIST

After a Covid challenged year, the 5th of October 2021 marked a momentous occasion for stars of the restaurant world as they convened together for the World's 50 Best Restaurants

Awards 2021, sponsored by S.Pellegrino & Acqua Panna, in Antwerp, Flanders.



Unlike previous years, the 2021 list invited eager anticipation following the launch of a new category named *The Best of the Best*, which saw a hall of fame catalogue of previous 'number 1' restaurants that were listed on the World's 50 Best. This meant reigning 'number 1' restaurant Mirazur was no longer be eligible to take the spot this year, following a new rule that restaurants that have won in previous years can no longer appear on the list.

This year's event saw restaurants from 26 countries across five continents place on the list, culminating in the announcement of a new No.1, as René Redzepi took to the stage to collect the double honours for his restaurant, Noma in Copenhagen, Denmark, as The World's Best Restaurant 2021 and The Best Restaurant in Europe 2021. Noma had placed in the 50 Best lists on four occasions - in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2014.



Noma's accolade is a testament to Chef Redzepi and his team's uncompromising commitment to unusual seasonal ingredients. The menu is strictly seasonal, divided into three phases: seafood in the winter, vegetable in the summer, and game and forest in the autumn – foraged locally and brought to life in inventive and ingenious ways on the plate.

This new iteration of Noma (sometimes referred to as Noma 2.0) is eligible for The World's 50 Best Restaurants list due to three key changes from the original restaurant: its location, concept and ownership. As such, it is considered a new restaurant.

Noma is joined in the top three by Geranium (No.2) also in Copenhagen, Denmark and Asador Etxebarri (No.3) in Atxondo, Spain.

The highest new entry goes to Italy's Lido 84, which debuts at 15th place. The Chairman in Hong Kong climbed 31 spots and clenched 10th place this year, earning itself the Highest Climber award. South Africa made a debut on the year's list with new entry Wolfgat, the best Restaurant in Africa, at 50th place. Odette in Singapore moved up 10 spots to no.8 and is named the Best Restaurant in Asia.



**HERE ARE THE WORLD'S 50
BEST RESTAURANTS OF 2021**
(New entries are marked with a *)

1. Noma (Copenhagen, Denmark) (The Best Restaurant in Europe)
2. Geranium (Copenhagen, Denmark)
3. Asador (Atxondo, Spain)
4. Central (Lima, Peru) (The Best Restaurant in South America)
5. Disfrutar (Barcelona, Spain)
6. Frantzen (Stockholm, Sweden)
7. Maido (Lima, Peru)
8. Odette (Singapore, Singapore) (The Best Restaurant in Asia)
9. Pujol (Mexico City, Mexico) (The Best Restaurant in North America)
10. The Chairman (Hong Kong, China) (Highest Climber)
11. Den (Tokyo, Japan)
12. Steirereck (Vienna, Austria) (Art of Hospitality Award)
13. Don Julio (Buenos Aires, Argentina)
14. Mugaritz (San Sebastian, Spain)
15. Lido 84 (Gardone Riviera, Italy)* (Highest New Entry)
16. Elkano (Getaria, Spain)
17. A Casa do Porco (Sao Palo, Brazil)
18. Piazza Duomo (Alba, Italy)
19. Narisawa (Tokyo, Japan)
20. Diverxo (Madrid, Spain)*
21. Hiša Franko (Kobarid, Slovenia)
22. Cosme (New York, USA)
23. Arpège (Paris, France)*
24. Septime (Paris, France)
25. White Rabbit (Moscow, Russia)
26. Le Calandre (Rubano, Italy)
27. Quintonil (Mexico City, Mexico)
28. Benu (San Francisco, USA)
29. Reale (Castel di Sangro, Italy)*
30. Twins Garden (Moscow, Russia)
31. Restaurant Tim Raue (Berlin, Germany)
32. The Clove Club (London, United Kingdom)
33. Lyle's (London, United Kingdom)
34. Burnt Ends (Singapore, Singapore)*
35. Ultraviolet (Shanghai, China)
36. Hof van Cleve (Kruishoutem, Belgium)
37. Singlethread (Healdsburg, USA)*
38. Borago (Santiago, Chile) (Sustainable Restaurant Award)
39. Florilège (Tokyo, Japan)*
40. Sühring (Bangkok, Thailand)*
41. Alléno Paris Au Pavillon Ledoyen (Paris, France)
42. Belcanto (Lisbon, Portugal)
43. Atomix (New York, USA)*
44. Le Bernardin (New York, USA)
45. Nobelhart & Schmutziger (Berlin, Germany)*
46. Leo (Bogota, Colombia)
47. Maaemo (Oslo, Norway)*
48. Atelier Crenn (San Francisco, USA)
49. Azurmendi (Larrabetzu, Spain)
50. Wolfgat (Paternoster, South Africa)*



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www.twgtea.com

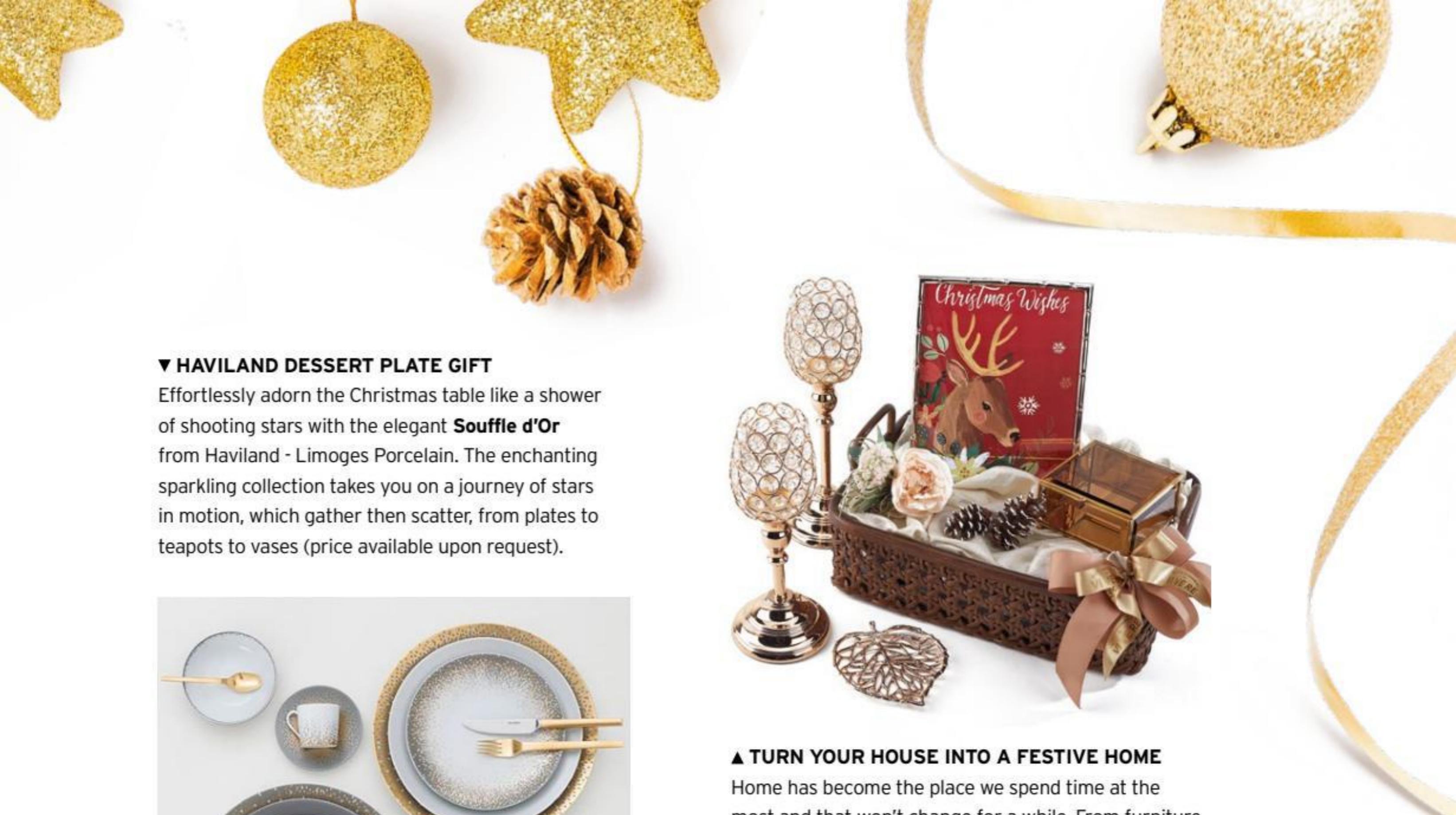


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Inject bright splashes of colour throughout your home with the latest collection of elegant, handcrafted and handblown vases, glasses and bowls from Lasvit, traditional Bohemian artisan glassmakers. The **Candy tableware collection** complements existing lighting sculptures created by Campana Brothers in collaboration with Lasvit's master glassmakers, expressing a colourful universe through glass. The latest collection offers Candy tableware comprising a glass, a vase, a carafe and a cheese lid with each housing a colourful universe inspired by the psychedelic hues of candy. For something equally colourful, the **Crystal Rock** vases by Arik Levy come in a variety of colours and sizes to suit each home interior.

www.watelier.com





▼ HAVILAND DESSERT PLATE GIFT

Effortlessly adorn the Christmas table like a shower of shooting stars with the elegant **Souffle d'Or** from Haviland - Limoges Porcelain. The enchanting sparkling collection takes you on a journey of stars in motion, which gather then scatter, from plates to teapots to vases (price available upon request).



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www.cochine.com



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www.lyres.com.au



HOTEL

Ho Chi Minh

- An Lam Saigon River
- Caravelle
- Chloe Gallery
- Eastin Grand Hotel Saigon
- Hotel Des Arts
- Hotel Nikko Saigon
- Intercontinental Asiana Saigon
- Lotte Legend
- Le Meridien Saigon
- Mai House Saigon
- Mia Saigon
- New World Hotel
- Norfolk Mansion
- Novotel Saigon Centre
- Oakwood Residence Saigon
- Park Hyatt Saigon
- Pullman Hotel
- Renaissance Riverside Hotel Saigon
- Rex Hotel
- Saigon Prince Hotel
- Sedona Suites
- Sofitel Saigon Plaza
- Sheraton Saigon Hotel
- Sherwood Residence
- Somerset Vista Hochiminh City
- The Reverie Saigon
- The Myst Dong Khoi
- Villa Song Saigon
- Windsor Plaza Hotel

Con Dao

- Poulo Condo
- Sixsence Con Dao

Nha Trang

- An Lam Retreats Ninh Van Bay
- Intercontinental Nha Trang
- Sheraton Nha Trang Hotel & Spa
- Sixsence Ninh Van Bay
- The Anam

Da Nang

- Fusion Maia Danang
- Furama Resort & Spa
- Hyatt Regency Danang Resort And Spa
- Intercontinental Da Nang

Hoi An

- Four Seasons Resort The Nam Hai

Hue

- Alba Wellness Resort
- Banyan Tree Lang Co

Ha Noi

- Intercontinental Hanoi Westlake
- Intercontinental Hanoi Landmark72
- JW Marriott Hotel Hanoi
- Sheraton Hanoi Hotel
- Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi

Phu Quoc

- Fusion Resort Phuquoc
- Hyatt Regency Nam Nghi Phu Quoc Island
- Intercontinental Phu Quoc Long Beach Resort
- JW Marriott Phu Quoc Emerald Bay Resort & Spa

RESTAURANT

Ho Chi Minh

- An Vien Restaurant
- Anh Tukk Modern Thai Cuisine
- Argentinian Steakhouse El Gaucho
- Au Lac Do Brazil Restaurant
- Boomerang Bistro Saigon
- L'usine Cafe & Restaurant
- La Villa French Restaurant
- Hoa Tuc Restaurant
- Moo Beefsteak
- Opus Sai Gon
- Pendolasco Restaurant
- Uraetei Yakiniku Restaurant
- Refinery Bar & Restaurant
- San Fu Lou
- Tandoor Vietnam
- The Log Restaurant
- Thai Cong Restaurant
- Villa Royale Downtown Antiques & Tea Room
- 3G Trois Gourmands

Da Nang

- Bushido Restaurant
- Bistecca Restaurant Danang
- Don Cipriani's
- El Gaucho Argentinian Steakhouse
- Hai Cang Da Nang Restaurant

- Mr. Anh Restaurant
- Nen Restaurant
- Olivia's Prime Steakhouse
- Pizza 4p's Hoang Van Thu
- Retro Kitchen and Bar
- The Rachel Restaurant
- The Temptation Restaurant
- Tra House & Bistro

Ha Noi

- Bow Thai
- Cloud Nine Restaurant
- EMM's French Bistro
- Essence Restaurant
- French Grill
- Hanoi Garden Restaurant
- Hanoi Ocean House
- Hanoi Serene Cuisine Restaurant
- La Fiorentina - Italian Restaurant
- La Badiane
- La Verticale
- Madame Hien
- Maison Vie Restaurant - Fine French Cuisine
- Kimono Japanese Restaurant
- Opera Garden Restaurant
- T.U.N.G Dining
- Red Bean Restaurant
- Teddy's American Grill House
- Tunglok Heen

AIRPORT

Ho Chi Minh

Tan Son Nhat International Airport

International Terminal

- Lotus Lounge
- Rose Lounge
- Lotus Lounge 2
- Orchid Lounge
- Le Saigonnais Lounge

Domestic Terminal

- Lotus Lounge
- Le Saigonnais Lounge

Da Lat

Lien Khuong International Airport

- Lien Khuong Airport

Nha Trang

Cam Ranh International Airport

International Terminal

- Lotus Lounge
- Sun Coast Lounge

Domestic Terminal

- The Champ Lounge

Ha Noi

Noi Bai International Airport

International Terminal

- Song Hong Business Lounge

Domestic Terminal

- Song Hong Premium Lounge



WHERE TO BUY

Ho Chi Minh

- Phuong Nam Vincom Dong Khoi
- Phuong Nam Saigon Centre
- Phuong Nam An Phu Supermarket
- Phuong Nam Estella Place
- Phuong Nam Parkson Hung Vuong
- Phuong Nam Vivo City
- Phuong Nam Crescent Mall
- Phuong Nam Vincom Le Van Viet
- Phuong Nam Book City Garden Mall
- Phuong Nam Book City Van Hanh Mall
- Ca Chep Bookstore
211-213 Vo Van Tan, District 3

Ha Noi

- Phuong Nam Garden Mall
- Phuong Nam Lotte Center
- Phuong Nam Mega Mall Royal City
- Phuong Nam Vincom Ba Trieu
- Phuong Nam Vincom Nguyen Chi Thanh

Binh Duong

- Phuong Nam Aeon Mall Binh Duong

Dong Nai

- Phuong Nam Vincom Bien Hoa
- Phuong Nam 113-115 Dong Khoi Street, Tam Hiep Ward

Da Lat

- Phuong Nam Vincom Bao Loc
- Phuong Nam Lien Khuong Airport
- Phuong Nam 279 Phan Dinh Phung Street

Nha Trang

- Phuong Nam 17 Thai Nguyen Street, Phuoc Tan Ward

Da Nang

- Phuong Nam 153 Phan Chu Trinh Street, Phuoc Ninh Ward, Hai Chau District
- Phuong Nam Vincom Da Nang
- Phuong Nam Danang Airport

Can Tho

- Phuong Nam 06 Hoa Binh Street, An Cu Ward, Ninh Kieu District



Square One

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PERRIER X MURAKAMI

Japanese mega-artist Takashi Murakami is no stranger to new collaborations with high-profile global brands. Back in 2003, the artist, whose whimsical, childlike abstract flowers and animals are instantly identifiable, partnered with Louis Vuitton to create leather goods festooned with his eye-catching handiwork and impressive labels ranging from Uniqlo to Vans. Murakami's newest collaborator is Perrier, the French purveyor of carbonated water in iconic green-hued bottles. With limited number of bottles screen-printed with tell-tale Murakami emblems such as flowers with emoji faces, as well as Kaikai and Kiki, his five-eyed pair of anime characters, now is the worldwide hit as fashionista's drink. Available at Annam Gourmet Stores: www.annam-gourmet.com. Hotline: 1900 636 431. Email: customerservice@annam-gourmet.com

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