



Food & Entertainment





New Japanese Restaurant at Pullman Bangsar

Gohan Japanese Restaurant has just opened in a secluded location on the first floor of the Pullman Kuala Lumpur Bangsar to offer what Chef Hoi claims is traditional Japanese cuisine which, according to him, means serving kaiseki (dégustation) or seasonal dishes. The dynamic young chef trained in Singapore under Chef Hirohashi at Kumo Kaiseki Restaurant and then his passion for authentic Japanese food took him to Japan for two years on-the-job training. The pork-free food served in the contemporary-styled restaurant is authentic and back to basics with features of the food being the premium Japanese rice served and the dish presentation. Two dishes that typify the presentation are grilled yellowtail and the seared beef with black garlic sauce. Gohan comfortably seats 80 diners with sit-up sushi and teppanyaki counters. It is decorated in oak timber and black rock table tops with two tatami rooms to accommodate ten hungry diners in each. Panoramic windows offer floor-to-ceiling views. The restaurant is open daily for lunch from 12 noon to 2.30pm and dinner from 6pm until 10.30pm. www.pullmankualalumpur.com

Fuego Lights up KL Skyline

Level 23A, The Troika is a hotbed of flavours and fun with Troika Fine Dining presenting Cantaloupe, Claret, Strato and now Fuego. Fuego brings scintillating South American flavours to Kuala Lumpur with flamed, grilled and smoked styles dominating a tantalising menu orchestrated by owners Eddie Chew and Christian Bauer. Elevated views of the floodlit Twin Towers provide a spectacular backdrop to this open-fronted outlet. South America is a continent of many national and regional cuisines and Fuego has selected popular styles and dishes from across the land plus some from neighbouring Mexico and Central America. Diners are encouraged to sample various dishes with sharing plates facilitating the process. Ceviche is available in four ways with barramundi, prawn, snapper and salmon prepared in lime. Grilled watermelon with fried halloumi, pickled tomato and raspberry vinegar is one of the more unique entrées. Enjoy desserts such as banana and salted caramel mini magnum ice cream plus a crunchy cookie and banana cream. Wines and spirits such as rums, tequilas and piscos feature on the beverages list. Like all outlets at Troika, bookings are essential with two seatings at 6pm and 8.30pm.

www.troikaskydining.com





Bamboo by the Beach

Guests at the deluxe beachside property of Hotel Pullman Khao Lak Katiliya Resort and Spa on Thailand's west coast facing the Andaman Sea are in for a food and beverage adventure with seven outlets from which to choose. Kick your shoes off and choose the Bamboo Bar and Seafood Grill where diners can expect delicious meals that could include silky tofu and feta, ginger and onion marmalade with red cabbage pesto, pan-roasted duck breast with tamarind and green peppercorn sauce, sweet potato and pineapple and, amarena and espresso mascarpone trifle.

www.pullmankhaolak.com



The Dark Side of Dining

For many diners, eating out is a sensory journey but take away one of those senses and is the experience the same? Dining in the Dark in Kuala Lumpur's bustling dining and drinking precinct of Changkat Bukit Bintang takes guests on a gastronomic journey in the dark as they dine in absolute blackened surroundings having surrendered their mobile phone to the safety of a locked closet before being led into the restaurant by a darkness expert who is either visually impaired or blind. The absence of light lets the individual brilliance of each diner shine brightly as they try to guess the dishes they devour in the dark. A surprise menu is offered and can be paired with wines and all is served by a darkness guide who offers assistance in negotiating the dishes and beverages without any visual cues. There are dozens of similar restaurants around the globe with Blindkuh in Zurich, Switzerland being the original opening in 1999.

www.dininginthedarkkl.com



Astrid and Gastón Gastronomy

Peru's leading gastronomic ambassador, author, television presenter, chef and culinary franchiser, Acurio Gastón continues to go from strength to strength in opening new outlets in Europe to complement his existing properties throughout Peru and South America. The chef's flagship property of Casa Moreyra in Lima's prestigious San Isidro District just released its latest five-course and ten-course dégustation menu matched with wines from its extensive international wine list. Orchestrated by Head Chef Diego Muñoz, the menu features many ingredients sourced from the restaurant's on-site experimental herb garden. Astrid and Gastón is ranked in the top 50 restaurants of the world and is a must dine-in restaurant in Lima but only with a reservation made weeks in advance. www.astridgastron.com

Hooked on Hubba Hubba

With a heritage of the successful SOULed Out Group, diners just know that Hubba Hubba is destined for greatness. Hubba Hubba in Mont Kiara is a hip and happening gastrobar for young urbanites to get hooked on hanging out. Staff greet diners like friends coming into their home so it's very relaxed, informal but with good dining and drinking options. The reasonably priced menu showcases global dining favourites with an emphasis on some classic Malaysian dishes such as satay, Hainanese chicken chop and kampung fried rice. It gets ramped up a bit with dishes such as soft-shell crab spaghetti and lamb shank creatively served like a pie. Wines are accessible to ensure it's a place to grab a bottle and go or dine in at a modest mark up. Some 170 fancy top drops are available at near trade prices starting from just RM80/bottle. The restaurant is colourful, with free wi-fi and complimentary covered off-street parking and just 150m from the popular Solaris dining and entertainment area in suburban Kuala Lumpur. www.hubba.asia



Fine French Cuisine and Wines at The Olive



Chef Cyrille Gallard from Bordeaux recently presented a fine selection of dishes at The Olive to complement tasting flights of premium wines from the same region in France. It really was vive la France as the young chef who comes from a nation of grandeur and heraldry, broke down the beauty of the ingredients to appreciate their simplicity. Chef Gallard has refined his cuisine to a level of sophisticated simplicity which places his restaurant, L'Atelier de Candale located in St. Emilion as one of the finest in the whole of Bordeaux.

The owner and chef at L'Atelier de Candale, sited within the elegant Château de Candale presented some of his personal favourites accompanied by a selection of fine wines paired by Resorts World Genting's sommelier, Kevin Yee. The prix fixe meal was as much visual as culinary as the chef likes to transport diners to the days of simple and happy food that delights the eye as well as the palate.

In his 17 years as a chef, the Cognac-born Gallard has cooked for luminaries such as King Juan Carlos of Spain and Hao Ping, the President of UNESCO. Many of the chef's dishes benefit from ingredients that he gathers and discoveries on his global travels and fusion is part of his daily cooking regime.

Dishes served to the discerning diners at the three-day event included Madras curried oyster, lobster ravioli in tom yam-inspired miso, French duck in Burgundy wine with truffle and wild mushroom jus, Brie with truffles and fresh herbs and a dessert named 'floating island' accompanied by chocolate truffles.

A carefully selected wine programme included Château Haut Brisson la Grave 2010, the very rare Riveyrac 1965 (fortified from Muscat and Grenache grapes), Château Tour Saint Christophe 2013 and Enclos Tourmaline 2013 from Pomerol. The dining event was part of the Chef Series held in conjunction with Genting's 50th Anniversary Celebration.



Hospitality Opportunities in an Ever-changing Landscape



Chef Gilles Marx



Kenny Lee



Loh Lik Peng

With every New Year chefs, entrepreneurs and restaurateurs do some navel gazing in predicting their business forecast for the New Year. F This year is possibly no different to many other years or is it? Hospitality Asia spoke to several hospitality entrepreneurs to get their take on what 2016 holds for them.

Chef Founder Gilles Marx was raised in the countryside of Alsace France and has always been attracted to the culinary world. He grew up with fresh and natural farm products and this inspired him to explore the world of gastronomy. He worked in several restaurants as a teenager and then realised he wanted to be a professional chef driven by the quality of the food and service provided to his customers. He has worked in Michelin-starred restaurants in Alsace, Lyon, Burgundy and Paris, as well as restaurants in Australia and South East Asia. He showcases his 30-year passion for French cuisine and

lifestyle in Jakarta's AMUZ Gourmet Restaurant using ingredients sourced from global and Indonesian markets.

As a successful entrepreneur Chef Marx operates the company's flagship AMUZ, but also APREZ Catering for small to medium-sized functions, Artoz Bar and Lounge (with Jakarta's largest collection of whisky, cognac and cigars) and Aprez Café situated in a luxury residential complex.

Chef Marx said: "There's a lot of activity planned for 2016 with renovations to AMUZ which is now in its fifth operating year. Our catering is rapidly growing and we're now looking for a new location

to further expand this part of the business. We're also searching for a good location for our French café/ bistro concept and of course, our Aprez Café has potential to multiply if we find the right locations and partners."

According to the chef many new restaurants and concepts are opening in Jakarta while there are others that are closing. "Last year was difficult for many and I think 2016 will be much the same," he reflected. Marx diversified his businesses at an early stage to balance out the peaks and troughs. The main challenge for him will be developing and finding good staff



AMUZ Restaurant, Jakarta



Chef's table, AMUZ Restaurant, Jakarta

and keeping up the training to support their new projects which are normally limited to one new project per year.

"There are always good opportunities, especially in difficult times. I think people recognise companies like ours, with a professional and ethical reputation, that can steadily deliver high quality standards even in difficult times. With our experience we have the capacity to analyse and measure the potential of upcoming opportunities to take minimal risks," he remarked.

According to the chef, Indonesia has opened up to other Asian countries and is facilitating

investments which are generating lots of interest due to Indonesia's large population. Chef Marx thinks this will continue throughout 2016 as more investors understand and feel more confident with Indonesia.

"2016 will see more traditional food concepts but with a new look or served in a relaxed trendy setting. During difficult times, consumers go back to what they know best and to what they feel comfortable with. We see this all over the world where young and experienced chefs open small restaurants to interpret classic and traditional dishes with a modern presentation," he claimed.

The chef added: "I'm positive going into 2016; our company is in great shape, we managed to expand and to grow significantly every year since 2010, all our current brands are performing and we have more expansions planned but all of these are reasonable and well within our reach and expertise. We think the Indonesian economy will start to slowly recover in 2016."

The chef has been in Indonesia for many years, has experienced the ups and downs of business and believes he is successful through diversifying his offerings,

being present in different market segments, being flexible and, listening to his customers.

Chef Marx claims that companies that focus on customer satisfaction plus staff training and development will always do well. "We will strive to constantly improve our offerings and service and expand only if it's a strong concept with proper backing and which can be managed to deliver the promise," he explained.

Chef Marx sums up how many may view 2016 in saying that every year has its challenges and, "the current economic climate is part of it, but there isn't much we can do about it other than adapt and focus on our business, to consolidate what we have, make it better and try to further expand if suitable." He concludes that: "the right concept in the right place, consistency in service and food quality are key to the success in this industry and this only can happen if you have a strong and professional management team."

Blissful Business

Kenny Lee is the co-owner of Bliss Gastrobar which recently opened in Desa Sri Hartamas in suburban Kuala Lumpur (his partners are John

Lee, his brother and chef and a new partner, James David). For someone without any training in hospitality, Lee has come a long way from once being an advertising art director to bar owner, restaurant operator and also consultant for the development of two Malaysian resorts.

Bliss Gastrobar is a new venture that has emerged where Riblee's Restaurant once stood. The owners are basically the same but they felt that the restaurant needed to be revamped and made more contemporary in line with the changing entertainment/dining scene of the area.

"Desa Seri Hartamas has changed and we needed to change with the times. This part of Kuala Lumpur has been through a reformation as there's more nightlife and food and beverage activity and our previous restaurant needed to be rebranded and refreshed with a more balanced emphasis on food, wine and beverages rather than just food as it was before. Our new partner really saw the potential for the outside balcony area to be a lively venue for guests to get together, mingle, drink and watch the world go by. While the changes may appear cosmetic, there is now a greater emphasis upon the bar and walk-in wine cellar to place renewed interest in the joys of drinking," claims Lee.

Bliss's clientele seeks more sophistication than what a pub offers so now there is an emphasis on the food as well as the beverages. The menu has been simplified with the former best sellers being retained and the menu will be refreshed every few months as well as offering daily specials to keep patrons interested. Lee claimed that they have to accommodate the needs of former Riblee customers while offering something different

to new diners. "One of the things I've noticed is that we now need to react more quickly to what the market wants and slow-selling items will have to be replaced," suggested Lee.

Dynamic Singaporean

Dynamic hotelier and restaurateur, Loh Lik Peng was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1974 to Singapore parents who were practicing medicine there at the time. He attended law school in England before returning to Singapore in 1997. Loh became a corporate litigator upon his return before leaving the profession to start his hospitality career. Since then, Loh has started ventures across Singapore, Shanghai, Sydney and London.

Loh claims that nothing major is planned for 2016 for now and he hopes to have a more restful year. According to the entrepreneur, 2016 is going to very much depend on the recovery of the world economy so he not expecting any fireworks but suggests that it is really hard to

predict in the present circumstances.

"For sure there are opportunities as every cloud has a silver lining and I think slow periods are a good time to look at projects realistically," he claimed. He continued: "For the travel trade every year brings fresh ideas onto the scene. It's very dynamic so I think there will be some exciting surprises for sure. I wish I knew what those might be!"

2016 will be a year where resilience and perseverance will always be important business qualities according to Loh. He added: "It's important to focus on the big picture when you need to get past a difficult period. For now though; I'm tempering my expectations and hopefully waiting for a fantastic 2017."

Loh has ventured Down Under and he thinks the new property in Sydney is looking very strong so far and the London hotels continue to look strong. Singapore is facing strong headwinds and will continue to do so for some time but overall Loh is quite optimistic.





Chef Edwin Phua is the young and dynamic force behind Singapore-based Chef at Work Pte. Ltd. (CAW), a leading food and beverage consultancy that creates exciting and sustainable A to Z support for those interested in establishing food concepts in hotels and restaurants. This means concept development, kitchen design, food styling, technology infrastructure, training chefs and integrated one-stop restaurant and café solutions.

A CHEF AT WORK

With 15 years experience, the company has achieved this in 24 countries where its team of in-house architects and contractors have assisted in the design and construction of food and beverage outlets.

CAW can project manage the entire creation of a food concept with the only outsourced staff being a barista and sommelier. They have a staff of eight but also use consultants when required. Additional expertise includes front and back of house assistance plus chefs to develop dishes and menus.

The company caters to three types of clients – existing restaurants, entrepreneurial restaurants and franchises. CAW has a strong working foundation and product delivery with their strengths being training, operational procedures and skills enhancement. It operates a studio to teach chefs and for owners to do tastings while their restaurant is being designed.

One of its successes has been its work with 11 hotels in the Ikos Hotels and Resorts group in Greece. Five years ago, Chef Phua was invited by the Ikos CEO to inject fresh

Asian ideas and concepts to the group's existing outlets. The company also successfully tendered for a Singapore initiative called SGenable and now provides expertise to assist Down Syndrome kids in establishing kitchens plus front and back of house programmes.

Chef Phua draws inspiration from Scandinavia as they lead the trend and understand that outlets need to upgrade. CAW is looking at opening in Kuala Lumpur and Japan.

His professional career began after graduating from L'Ecole Le Cordon Bleu in Paris and completing his apprenticeship at France's three-starred Michelin Restaurant Lameloise. He has worked in some leading restaurants and institutions such as Salt (Australia), Les Amis Group (Singapore) and the Institute of Technical Education (Singapore).

Chef Phua's passion for culinary arts brought the beauty of his dishes to greater heights and besides being a professional chef, he is also the first Singaporean to become a certified food stylist from Johnson and Wales University in the USA.

Woman @ Wok



Without going into detail; women and men are different in many ways and so it is with women cooking and being professional chefs. It's accepted that there are anatomical and biological differences between men and women especially as women are the ones who bear children. However, each sex makes up approximately fifty percent of the population, but few women pursue their culinary career and there are less female executive chefs than male. It's not that women don't enjoy cooking; of course they like cooking but males dominate professional cooking.

United States statistics suggest that by the late 1990's, a third of students enrolled in culinary schools were women with numbers rising. Baking and pastry remain popular with women, but as noted English-based chef and author Margot Henderson laments: "Women love to cook, but women aren't running kitchens, they aren't around, they're not in charge, they're still outsiders."

Henderson added: "Like it or not, women tend to cook in a different way to men, and the way they response to food is often different too. But the ultimate aim, the ultimate purpose, is the same: nourishment, eating; the pleasures of being together."

For Henderson, the loving, nurturing and instinctive side (feminine side) of running kitchens is being forgotten. Of course, bearing children comes into the picture and can disrupt a female chef's career as it can any career, but Henderson has three children but still runs a successful business.

It has been suggested that female show traits of social intuition, consensus and empathy and that many successful and progressive kitchens adopt these principles in their daily operations. Furthermore, women are more interested in detail and finesse and they bring a different sense of focus to kitchens. Hospitality Asia spoke to several leading women chefs for their thoughts.

The Chemistry of Cooking

Isadora Chai began cooking via an unconventional background as she graduated from the University of NSW with a double degree and triple majors in biotechnology, biochemistry and marketing. Her honours thesis wasn't Cordon Bleu cooking but rather stem cell research. However, during her studies and after graduating, she worked part-time in restaurants as she was addicted to it and decided to leave corporate life to become a chef.

Now with her own successful restaurant, Bistro à Table in suburban Section 17, Petaling Jaya, Kuala Lumpur, she worked through the ranks of several restaurants in Australia and Europe, including Sydney's L'etoile. Her last European posting was in Les Fontaine Aux Perles (Rennes) before returning home to establish Bistro à Table by herself and becoming its head chef. She commented: "Sometimes, I feel like I switch roles between glorified dishwasher and barking waitress."



Having worked in Michelin restaurants, she takes pride in sourcing the finest global produce and staying true to cooking without taking shortcuts. Chef Chai is old school where one must be equipped to produce something from the most basic ingredient and kitchen utensils. "I make sure my team is equipped with this because one day, when they move on to greater kitchens, their skill-set is a reflection of my kitchen philosophy," she reflected.

She believes that culinary knowledge shouldn't become stagnant, which is why she travels to work alongside great chefs with her last posting being with the legendary Juan Mari Arzac, the originator of nueva cocina vasca. Here in Spain's Basque country, Chef Arzac and daughter Elena operate one of the world's leading restaurants. For Chef Chai, it's important to exchange knowledge between chefs and to be exposed to different cultures and food.

In reference to women working in kitchens she remarked: "Let's face the reality; in a kitchen mainly dominated by males, you're dealing in a gorilla's backyard. If you're not at the top of the kitchen hierarchy, you're pretty much fresh meat or jail bait and there's no such thing as a Human Resources Department to protect you from sexual harassment. You can also forget about the presence of gender equality, because being regarded as the 'weaker' sex, women tend to get relegated to the 'less stressful' tasks; the pastry section. There's nothing wrong with pastry, but no one becomes executive chef, if they're heading pastry."

“ You're only as good as your team, so it's also imperative to gain everyone's trust and loyalty. ”

Chef Chai has experienced victimisation and prejudice many times. She remarked that as a sous chef, insubordinate juniors sabotaged her while under her watch. In such cases it becomes an arduous task of managing everyone's egos and when necessary, getting rid of the team's bad apples. A common remark heard from women chefs and reinforced by Chef Chai is that she had to work harder than most males to prove to others that she wasn't just good, but great at her job and worthy of her position. "You're only as good as your team, so it's also imperative to gain everyone's trust and loyalty," she added.

For the young chef, cooking isn't some cushy job where you just clock from nine to five and saunter back home after work. "You must question yourself whether your love for the commercial kitchen overrides your fondness for a social and family life. It's not a job that is usually financially rewarding," she laments. Furthermore: "If you want to progress, you must work harder than anyone else and constantly improve yourself, so no one can question your promotion or position. If you need to do the extra hours; do it, because it shows that you have the mental and physical stamina. If you can, find yourself a female chef mentor as she should understand what you're going through and at least you'll be able to see light at the end of the tunnel, especially during rough days."

Chef Chai offered more great advice for young chefs, especially women. "There's no such thing as leap-frogging in the kitchen in order to be at the top of the pyramid. Work hard, help others in your team and gain loyalty from the bottom up, as you climb the hierarchy. It's a long and painful process, but by the time you've reached the top, you'll be better equipped to handle most people and situations. Even though you may be very talented, you still need time to learn to interact and manage people. I think this is my main message to the Y-generation and Millennials who think that they can become head chefs the moment they graduate from culinary school."

Nooks, Lofts and Stoves

Leading the Aloft Kuala Lumpur Sentral culinary team is Executive Chef Phoebe Donko-Hanson who accepts the challenge to develop new styles and bold flavours. She has introduced a new menu of local favourites and international fusion cuisine at Nook, the hotel's main restaurant.

Originally from Ghana, Chef Phoebe developed a taste for cooking when young as family and friends gathered, sharing dishes and holiday feasts. Her friends came from varied ethnic backgrounds and they would eat at one another's homes and this is where she drew inspiration from ethnic influences including those from Haiti, Jamaica, South America, Vietnam and Korea.

With commercial kitchens being predominantly male domains women require tenacity and diplomacy to break into the realm. She claims that most women understate theirs and this makes an interesting dichotomy.

Remembering that everyone, at some point in their lives has experienced prejudice and victimisation makes it a bit easier to push through difficult times. However, there's nothing worse than a victim-mentality in the

kitchen. The chef claims: "If there's a problem, then fix it to the best of your ability."

There are usually circumstances and situations that are the cause and effect of a person getting victimised or experiencing prejudicial treatment. She added: "For me, the way that I've made it through these instances of unpleasant inconvenience (yes, I consider it mere inconvenience) is to remind myself that the person on the giving end of the 'inconvenience' is usually going through something of their own. All I can do is to let my work speak for itself." While this may take time, with tenacity, the chef says things usually fall into place.

Chef Donko-Hanson suggests that if young people are passionate about food, they should pursue it. However, women have to be mentally, physically and emotionally prepared for the long hours and missing special occasions which could affect their personal life.

“ If there's a problem, then fix it to the best of your ability. All I can do is to let my work speak for itself. ”





French Flair

Chef Anne-Cecile Degenne started young and prepared food at home before accepting an internship in France, her country of birth when she was 17 years old before moving to south of France to work in a Michelin-star restaurant. Making the decision to travel, she relocated to the French West Indies for eight years ending up as Executive Chef.

The double degree holder (Culinary Arts and English) moved to New York to continue her education. Eventually she relocated to Asia and joined AccorHotels at the Sofitel Manila and ended up as Executive Chef at Sofitel SO Singapore. As it was a new hotel she started from scratch before moving to Hôtel des Arts Saigon in Ho Chi Minh City with its four outlets.

The cooking scene has changed according to the chef although it was once really tough and difficult for women to be chefs in a predominantly male-dominated industry. "Today, cultures have changed and people are more receptive to changing gender roles. Sometimes it's still hard for some people to understand that women can be the equal of men. So, our role as female chefs is to show that we're just as passionate and do our best otherwise they will think we're incapable of doing things," she comments. She has also had surprised guests who expect a male executive chef but they too need to appreciate that cooking is no different to the rest of society.

The chef is fortunate in not having experienced prejudice or victimisation in the kitchen. "I believe the role requires you to develop passion in your job and not just doing it on a day-to-day basis," suggested the chef.

“ *Today, cultures have changed and people are more receptive to changing gender roles. Sometimes it's still hard for some people to understand that women can be the equal of men. So, our role as female chefs is to show that we're just as passionate and do our best otherwise they will think we're incapable of doing things!* ”

Being a woman in a male-dominated industry requires one to be strong, passionate and to never give up, she added.

The Soul of the Kitchen

Hailing from a small tight knit, food-loving family in Jakarta, Chef Lyris from SOULed OUT in Desa Sri Hartamas commenced her culinary journey as an intern in various prestigious hotels in Jakarta and Singapore. She then embarked on a hospitality course in the Netherlands, returned to work in hotels in Jakarta before starting at SOULed OUT and now heads it and the central kitchens at the SOUL Society Group.

Inspired by the Naked Chef, Chef Lyris finds that Jamie Oliver's style appeals to her as he's earthy, down to earth, not pretentious and inspires and motivates her



“ *If you’re passionate about what you want to do, just go for it!* ”

to hone her cuisine direction towards simple, tasty and good food. She admits that Malaysia’s food and beverage industry is dominated by men and has been for a long time and it’s for females to penetrate. She added: “In Asian cultures, it’s also not the norm for men to take instructions from women.” As such she has experienced problems, many times. “But, if you’re passionate about what you want to do, just go for it and you’ll find ways and means to overcome obstacles,” she added. She is a great believer in professionalism and as long as you’ve done your best and your conscience is clear, things will be fine.

She believes in being tough but fair and this rule not only applies to women, but to all. “But because we are women, we can use our womanly ways to our advantage to make things happen. Follow your heart, if you love it, just do it! You certainly won’t regret it” she confesses.

Passionate about Culinary Arts

Executive Chef at the Mandarin Oriental Singapore Toni Robertson was born in Myanmar and migrated to the United States in her late teens. She served eight years in the United States Air Force and while stationed in

Europe, had the opportunity to fuel her passion for food and cooking. She decided to pursue this passion and attended culinary school in Chicago before landing her first job at the Ritz-Carlton Chicago. Since then she has worked around the world, almost exclusively in luxury hotels rising to her first executive chef position in 1992 and heading the kitchens of Sun City’s Palace Hotel. In doing so she became South Africa’s first female executive chef. After a stint in New York she became Executive Chef at the Mandarin Oriental Singapore.

Returning to Asia has allowed her to rediscover her professional and personal roots. She always wanted to be a chef while growing up in Myanmar as the culture revolves around food and eating as part of the family dynamics. “I was inspired and supported by my first chef, Fernand Gutierrez, a man ahead of his time who understood that women can excel in the kitchen and he provided the opportunity to prove myself,” reflected the chef. Continuing: “However, my greatest influence is my sister Peggy, a doctor who loves to cook and study





culinary arts. She encouraged me and inspired me to pursue my dream, gave me the opportunity to travel to the United States and supported me throughout my career. I think she would have made as good a chef as a doctor.”

While much of the stigma of female chefs has gone, the chef believes there are still areas and countries that are male-oriented and where it’s still challenging for female chef. She continued: “The work is physically and mentally demanding; at 5’2” I’ve had to adjust to the physical requirements. But what I’ve found is that the most formidable challenges, stereotypes and negative attitudes about women can be overcome by being passionate about the culinary arts.” This means being professional and taking advantage of every opportunity to perfect one’s craft. Furthermore, while being a female chef isn’t easy, hard work and professionalism are always noticed.

“ *The work is physically and mentally demanding; at 5’2” I’ve had to adjust to the physical requirements. But the most formidable stereotypes about women can be overcome by being passionate!* ”

The chef considers herself fortunate as she has never felt any prejudice as a woman or even an Asian. However: “When I first arrived in Singapore 15 years ago, I was the only female executive chef so most of the suppliers wouldn’t talk to me thinking I was the chef’s secretary. However, I’ve never thought of myself as a female chef, just a chef and my approach to my work has always been professional.” She accepts that her job isn’t to be a great chef, but rather a great leader who can inspire and train people from different backgrounds, with different skills and abilities, into a team of professional chefs who together can create exceptional culinary experiences. “When you treat people with respect and understanding, offer them opportunities to excel, mentor them so they can develop professionally and personally, then you’re well on the way to laying a solid foundation of teamwork, professionalism and excellence,” she suggests.

She maintains her best advice for young women, who are passionate about cooking, is to follow that dream and pursue it as hard as possible. But, she adds: “Expect to do the hard work if you want to excel. Talk to female chefs and find a mentor who can assist in making the correct decisions and provide guidance. Go to a good school and learn the basics, then work in the best kitchen, under the best chef possible.” She concludes: “In the kitchen, always be professional and seek opportunities to broaden or develop new skills. You will be noticed. Let your chef know you are ambitious and passionate and move around the kitchen to learn new skills and acquire knowledge. When opportunities present themselves, embrace them.”

Dynamic De Dietrich Ovens



The range of De Dietrich home and kitchen appliances builds on the brand's creativity, innovations and avant-garde designs. Its technological know-how continues to transcend its range of home and kitchen appliances in creating the first Self-Cleaning Pyrolysis Oven in the 1980's, Steam Oven and revolutionising domestic induction cooking and offering unique culinary solutions such as the patented Intelligent Cooking System (ICS) and Low Temperature Cooking Programmes.

Among its highly-acclaimed jewels in the De Dietrich range of ovens is the DOP1597W which incorporates an Intelligent Control System that offers settings for the most commonly selected recipes. Once selected, the oven's electronic sensors automatically determine the ideal cooking mode. The oven's Low Temperature feature helps deliver the finest gastronomic meals for those who enjoy slow cooking. A special programme enables food to cook through to the centre even for low temperature cooking from 65oC to 80oC.

The De Dietrich range of new pyrolytic ovens is noted for its Pyro-Turbo, a highly efficient cleaning system. Thanks to the addition of a turbine operating during the pyrolysis cycle, the air is perfectly circulated throughout the oven to ensure optimal cleaning in all parts of the oven.

A Soft Close feature involves specific hinges which allow for a slow, soft closing of the oven door that is automatically engaged over the last centimetre of the door movement. This involves a catch located on the left-hand side of the oven door cavity where two chambers containing lubricants slow down the closing of the door. When the door is slammed, lubricant in the first chamber is pushed into the second chamber thus slowing down the closing process.

De Dietrich is constantly developing solutions to enhance modern food connoisseur's lifestyle. For De Dietrich, the kitchen of the third millennium embodies a contemporary and harmonious space where cutting edge technology meets innovations in design, performance and features.

Contact De Dietrich Bangsar Showroom, www.dietrich-asia.com

The new Ambassador of Peru in Malaysia, Mr. Guido Loayza enjoys using a story to explain the Peruvian agricultural, fishing and commercial tradition. He suggests that consumers should reflect upon the role Peru has taken in everyone's daily diets.

International Trade Peru to Asia



From the left: Peruvian potatoes, Chillies and Pepino

The story starts with Achic rising early for the market as he has to meet suppliers arriving from the highlands. Despite being early, the town is already lively with people, artisans and merchants opening their stalls and workers heading off to repair canals and roads. Bureaucrats, servants and priests as well as foreign visitors were also active.

In the market, people obtained products from all over the then known world: the coast, the mountains and the rainforest. There was seafood, potatoes, corn, beans, pumpkins, nuts and peppers and fruit like avocado, pacaes, guava and even tutumo and huarumo from the jungle. There was also a special section for medicinal plants. This occurred 5,000 years ago and Achic was a merchant from a town called

Caral, located in a valley between the Pacific Ocean and the Andes Mountains, 180km north of the current capital, Lima. Caral was the first settlement in the Americas so called a 'city' and its main feature, distinguishing it from later Peruvian civilisations, was that its power was based on trade and not war. This trade allowed ancient Peruvians to use productively its land and sea wealth.



Mr. Guido Loayza, Ambassador of Peru

Contemporary Trade

Thanks to the economic, juridical and political stability that the country has enjoyed since the 1990s, Peru has been able to recover such traditions. This makes it possible for premium Peruvian products to consolidate their presence in traditional markets like the USA and the European Union while entering new markets like Asia, Persian Gulf and Africa.

While well known for its minerals, Peru has emerged as a major exporter of vegetables, legumes, fruits and other agricultural products. Its main exports are specialty coffees, quinoas and other Andean cereals like kiwicha and kañiwa (with high protein content), asparagus, grapes, paprika, capsicums, artichokes, avocados, berries, nuts, bananas, mangoes, citrus fruits and onions. An important feature is that many exports are organic, targeting niche consumer markets and strategically exported in off-season periods to the Northern Hemisphere.

In addition to agricultural products, Peru is a major exporter of seafood and among the world's largest fishing nations accounting for 10% of the global fish catch. The cold, nutrient-rich waters of the Humboldt Current create perfect fishing grounds for large pelagic species with the Peruvian anchovy being the world's largest single species in volume landed.

Other commercially important marine species include tuna, mackerel, South American Pilchard, Peruvian Rock Seabass, crabs, lobsters, shrimps, abalone, mussels, scallops, clams, squid and octopus.

Meet the Ambassador

Since arriving in Malaysia, last November, Ambassador Loayza has been meeting Malaysian business

people especially interested importers. "I'm also interested in Malaysian products for Peruvian markets like tropical fruits such as rambutan, mangosteen, jackfruit, starfruit and durian," explains Ambassador Loayza. He adds, "Interestingly, 10% of the Peruvian population are ethnic Chinese and 5% are descendants of Japanese immigrants. Their cultural contribution means that Peruvians are familiar with Asian cultures, which is advantageous for business."

Improved trade can be attained thanks to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in which Peru and Malaysia are parties. To achieve this, the Peruvian Embassy is focussing on promoting trade, investment and tourism.



Clockwise from the top left: Peruvian corn, Gooseberries, Gelato sticks and Andean cheese

Global Cuisine

Peruvian cuisine is being rapidly established globally – in Latin America, the USA, Western Europe and Japan it's well known and the boom will envelop South East Asia.

"Our idea is to promote the fusion of Peruvian products and ingredients with Malaysian produce. For example, the famous Peruvian quinoa, considered a 'super food' for its nutritional value and health benefits, can be used in Malaysian dishes," claims the ambassador. Famous restaurants such as Nobu have connections with Peru. Peruvian restaurants as Central, Astrid and Gastón and Maido are in the List of the 50 best in the world. Central in Lima is rated the best restaurant in Latin America and the fourth worldwide, and Astrid and Gastón has expanded globally from its Lima base.

Peruvian Produce and Trade

Peru-Malaysia trade in 2014 was US\$191 million (Peru exports, US\$22 million and Malaysia exports, US\$169 million). This means a trade balance of US\$147 million in Malaysia's favour.

However, Peru is excited in that Malaysia is a net importer of food products and is developing economically with excellent growth potential as a market for high-value consumer products. The Malaysian food and beverage market is also developed and sophisticated.

This presents an opportunity for Peru, which has products of high quality and in the broadest diversity for grapes, asparagus, artichokes, seafood, olives and oil, specialty coffees, nuts, Andean cereals, potatoes and corn.

The main Peruvian exports to Malaysia are fresh grapes, asparagus, squid, cuttlefish, quinoa and cocoa. Over the past two decades, Peru has emerged as a significant fruits and vegetables exporter. Andean cereals, as quinoa, kiwicha, kañiwa aren't well known in Malaysia yet, but are popular in the USA, Western Europe and Japan where they are known as healthy foods.

Peru has become the main producer and exporter of organic coffee in the Americas. Most beans (Arabica variety) are grown in Cloud Forests on small local farms making

them perfect as fair trade products. Some connoisseurs consider it the world's best coffee with Café Tunki, having won the Best Specialty Coffee in world awards. Three Peruvian coffees are in the list of the world's ten best coffees Café Tunki, Café Quechua and Sol & Café.

Pisco Power

A product that's beginning to be appreciated in Malaysia is Pisco, a fine grape distillate produced in Peru since the 16th Century, after the Spaniards introduced grapes. Pisco is the base for cocktails like Pisco Sour, Pisco Passion and Chilcano.

Pisco and wines (like those from Tacama) are two products that the embassy is promoting via tastings with consumers and trade and both have been received favourably with imports expected soon.

There's also the possibility of using Malaysian fruits like rambutan and mangosteen to create new Pisco cocktails. In order to do this, the embassy has conducted activities with universities, culinary schools, bartenders and baristas. Some of these are masterclasses and



Maras salt pans



Clockwise from the top left: Chicharron de cerdo, Pachamanca, Cerviche and Meringue sour sop



Peruvian barbecue



Clockwise from the top left: Tacama reds, Pisco sour, Tacama whites, Pisco passionfruit, Pisco variants and Demonio Pisco

teleconference classes with leading Peruvian experts.

Peru was also South America's first wine producer with vinification starting around 1540. For historical reasons its production decreased and exports ceased for a long time. But Peru's wine production is active with more reaching international markets including Asia.

Challenges and Successes

The main challenges are mutual lack of knowledge and contacts between the Peruvian and

Malaysian businesses and transport connectivity. Promotion through organised events and participation in trade fairs are some of the activities implemented by the embassy.

The ambassador says, "We must keep a positive attitude and work hard to inform the Malaysian public and businesses about Peru and our products, and to put in contact the business communities of the two countries."

In Peru the private sector is the main economic agent with

the government supporting the private sector in seeking business opportunities for Peruvian companies.

The embassy is organising a Commercial Section to offer detailed business information and coordination.

"On April 24 this year, Peru and Malaysia celebrate 30 years of bilateral relations and this will serve as the basis for closer relationships," concluded Ambassador Loayza.

Contact: +60 3 2163-3035 / perumalasia@gmail.com

Barista Meets Artista at Le Méridien



Le Méridien Hotels and Resorts has been in a global partnership with Illy since 2008 as part of its commitment to the coffee culture and to create coffee experiences in venues such as Kuala Lumpur's The Hub on level one of its hotel in the Malaysian capital.

The hotel is taking its passion for coffee to the next level by celebrating coffee and art, together with the people who make it. Its 'Inspiration Brewed Here' campaign is designed to enrich and strengthen coffee cultures in hotels around the world and all Le Méridien hotels have appointed their own Master Baristas who boast a technical mindset beyond basic coffee making and who undergo intensive training

designed by Le Méridien and its global coffee partner Illy.

Recent visitors to the Kuala Lumpur property included Le Méridien Global Master Barista, Franz Zauner who oversees the development and training of the Master Barista programme and, Esther Maasdam as Le Méridien's first ever Global Latte Artist. Zauner works closely with the Hotels and Global Brand team to enhance the coffee service and quality experience for customers.

Maasdam was named Dutch Latte Art Champion four years in a row from 2011 to 2014 and is working on creating 12 works of destination-inspired latte art from around the world using Le Méridien hotels as her inspiration. She is also working with Le Méridien Master Baristas globally to develop local recipes and designs to help guests

unlock the destination through coffee. Two hands-on workshops were conducted during their visit to Kuala Lumpur – a DIY latte art etching workshop with Maasdam and a coffee cocktail masterclass with Zauner. As part of the coffee celebration, local artist Haris Rashid also painted a beautiful Malaysian icon using coffee as the medium for his masterpiece.

Le Méridien Kuala Lumpur has fully embraced its commitment to coffee and celebrates by curating locally-inspired coffee flavours such as Nonya Delights (gula Melaka and coconut café latte), Malaysia's Favourite (iced cendol latte), The Secret (cincau café latte) and Indian Indulgent (cinnamon café latte).

PINOT NOIR VS BLAUBURGUNDER

In most parts of the globe, the Pinot Noir grape produces some of the world's most delicate red wines. In many Germanic-speaking parts of the wine world (Germany, Switzerland and Austria), the variety is known as Blauburgunder (or blue Burgundy) and in the far north of Switzerland, centred on Hallau, the area is known as Blauburgunder Land. Wineries such as Weinkellerei Rahm produce a range of excellent Blauburgunder wines including the Schaffhuuser Art series. www.weinkellereirahm.ch



SÄNTIS SWISS WHISKY

Scotland doesn't have complete ownership on whisky with many countries now producing the fine spirit from grain mash. Sântis Swiss Alpine Whisky uses spring water and barley to produce the finest spirit that is then stored in very old oak barrels in Appenzell in northeast Switzerland. The charming apple wood smoke aroma of the barrels gives the whisky a pure, delicate freshness.

Appenzeller beer is displayed as well at the Visitor Centre (www.brauquöll.ch) or

join in a nine-stop or 27-stop whisky tour of the Alpstein Mountains

www.whiskytrek.ch



CHEESE AND WINE EXPERIENCE

Combine the joys of cheese and wines at a wine and cheese pairing experience at Two Fat Blokes Kitchen in the Hunter Valley, N.S.W., Australia. Nine local, Australian and international cheeses are paired with wines from the De Luliis Wines range. The experience lasts one hour with four sessions daily for two to 15 participants and bookings are recommended.

www.twofatblokes.com.au

PIG & D'POOCH MOSCATO

Holm Oak Vineyards is a hidden treasure on the Tamar Valley wine trail in the far north of Tasmania. This delicate pink sweet wine is produced from Muscat a Petit Grains grapes sourced from Victoria. The vineyard team of Rebecca and Tim Duffy are ably assisted by Pinot d'vineyard pig and Bella d'winery dog in crafting this delicate wine to complement a sweet dessert of fresh berries. www.holmoakvineyards.com.au



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「ASIA'S LARGEST SUPERCLUB」

#26 **DJ**
IN THE WORLD TOP 100 CLUBS



The award-winning nightspot Zouk Club KL, the capital of the city's electronic dance music scene is lavishly outfitted with state of the art lighting and sound equipment. Zouk Club KL is the only standalone nightspot in Malaysia endorsed by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture as a venue under the National Key Economic Areas (NKEA).

The superclub is ranked No.26 in the world on DJ Mag's Top 100 Clubs, and its most exclusive venue Imperial was the first in Malaysia to be inducted into The World's Finest Clubs, adding another trophy to its glittering shelf of awards, and auguring superbly for the bigger, bolder Zouk Club KL that would yet again usher a game-changing era.

WELCOME TO THE CLUBLAND - ZOUK CLUB KL



Lounge About at Chaze

Chaze or 'the lounge' is inspired by Chaze (the persona) who is a suave and enigmatic man, enjoys hosting parties, appreciates music, has fashion sense and most importantly, has an taste especially for distilled beverages. Hidden behind the entry is the Bar where beverages are showcased in a low-lit bar. For casual drinking, the Living Hall is where mixologists show patrons. The heart of the action is the DJ Space while the Fun Nook is home to table tennis and the Snug Corner for getting close. For privacy, a subterranean playground, the Play Room has a secret entry code and is ideal for private events or parties. Chaze's hidden loft is a modern speakeasy where events come to life. Located in MARQUEE @ Menara Lien Hoe, located at Tropicana Golf and Country Club in suburban Kuala Lumpur, is operated by M Group with six distinctive food and beverage concepts all targeted for 2016.

www.facebook.com/chazeatmarquee



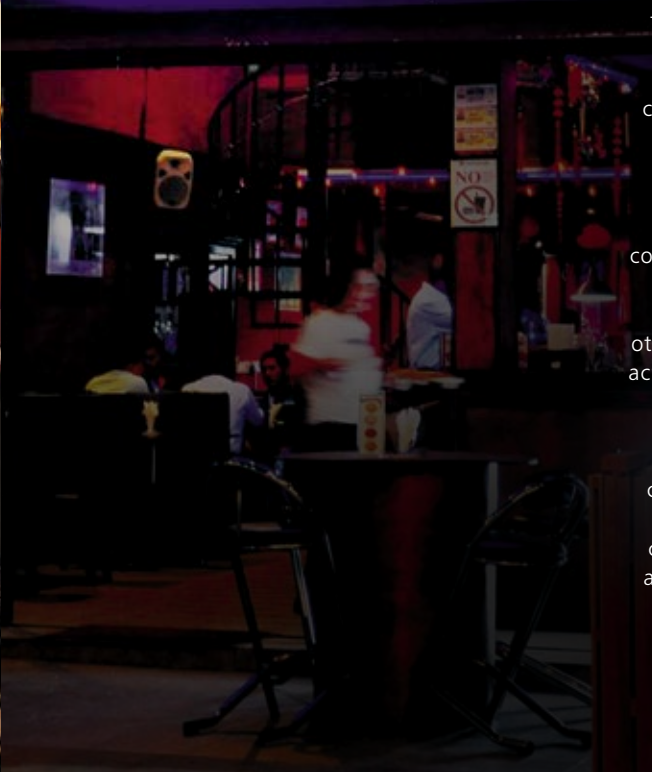
NAVIGATORS

Restaurant. Bar. Bistro

Navigated by Live Music

Live music six nights of the week is the key to the success of Navigators Restaurant, Bar and Bistro in Jaya One. Bands play from 9pm, Monday to Saturday and continue until the early hours. Beverages served are mainly beers, spirits, single malt whiskies, Japanese whiskies and a compact wine selection with Carlsberg, Connors and Asahi on tap plus a comprehensive selection of bottled beers.

For many the pool table is the focus of the attention while a big screen and other screens beam in the latest live sport action. There is a decent selection of 'ship snacks' such as chicken wings, sausage with onions as well as more substantive meals such as pastas, burgers, fish n' chips and grilled lamb rack. The upstairs has a relaxed environment and lounge chairs make it popular for private events and parties. www.navigators.com.my



Marble 8 Means Beef



Marble 8 brings a depth and elegance to the industry with their premium steakhouse, ultra-chic and modern bar and posh whisky and cigar lounge which has allowed Marble 8 to reimagine the concept of dining and drinking in Malaysia – infusing the experience with exquisite flavours, authentic creations, accented with luxurious charm.

What greets and awaits patrons at the restaurant is a dedication to serving only the finest Wagyu and Angus beef cuts. Offering the best cuts bar none, marvel at their bespoke dry-aging cellar designed to optimise the dry-ageing process that stars at a minimum of 21 days and maximum of 60. Grilled on specially crafted grills, the steak that you will experience at Marble 8 is second to none. One of their most famous cuts, the signature Tomahawk is dry-aged with bone intact for 45 days before being grilled to perfection for up to six guests.

All steaks are meticulously cooked on specially crafted grills to maximise the taste of both the dry-aged and wet-aged cuts. The chefs here, all handpicked by Modesto Marini, believe in minimalist intervention when cooking, to allow the natural flavours of the meat to come to the fore. Classic sauces including Béarnaise, red wine jus and creamed horseradish are served to satisfy

personal preferences, and are always accompanied by their classic three salt options (Pink Himalayan, Australian Murray River Maldon Salt and Monte Verde infused with Rosemary) for steak purists.

Meanwhile, M8 Bar at Marble 8 has been designed to be Malaysia's signature international and contemporary nightspot with a design that embodies elegance and style with amazing views of the Petronas Twin Towers. On offer is an extensive selection of beverages accompanied by atmospheric background music. Guests can select the finest vintage wines and aged ports from a Wine Spectator award-winning list.

The Privé introduces a new style of lounge to Malaysia in combining the finest collection of whiskies and cigars. It is known to provide a private and discrete venue for business deals and networking or just enjoying the finer moments of life with close family and friends. Preferred by VIPs, visiting international royalty and celebrities, the Privé's President Room with butler service and its own bar is perfect for intimate gatherings and special celebrations.

Marble 8, Kuala Lumpur's most prestigious steakhouse, luxurious lounge, and elegant bar embodies being able to enjoy the finer things in life under one roof.

For reservations please call or email reservations@marinigroup.com T: +603 2386-6030 www.marble-8.com

Cool Drinks, Live Music

Mandolin Restaurant and Pub in suburban Kuala Lumpur delivers exactly what the locals seek – good Indian and Western pub food, extensive selection of beers and other beverages and live musicians performing retro hits every night of the week. Mandolin is located in Plaza Glomac in Kelana Jaya with the happy hours starting at 5pm and the bar closing at 2am every night, and at 3am on Fridays and Saturdays. Patrons enjoy a setting that extends from the indoors to the popular outdoor section and there's a pool table and large screen for enjoying televised sports action.

T: +60 3 7886-8434.



Mandolin

French Flair, Thai Touch

L'Apport on top of the 32-storey high Sofitel Bangkok Sukhumvit combines avant garde Thai contemporary design with the finest French flair in offering a sophisticated venue to drink, dine and meet while admiring the panoramic views. L'Apport has been described as a rooftop Parisian apartment that's part lounge room, part library and part dining space with an adjoining open terrace. L'Apport opens from 5pm to midnight so patrons can start the evening as the sun sets over the bustling city below and watch it evolve into one that glitters in the dark. www.sofitel.com



Three Storeys of Happiness in Shanghai

HU Bar and Lounge has just opened in Le Royal Méridien as Shanghai's newest nightlife destination. Located on the 64th, 65th and 66th floors of the hotel, the bar is named for and built to reflect the past, present and future glories of its home city. Split into three parts, HU Bar consists of an exclusive penthouse-inspired event space, a classically-styled bar and a modern nightclub.

www.leroyalmeridienshanghai.com



UNIQUE SYSTEM FOR TIERED CAKES

This unrivalled system consists of superimposed inserts and stainless steel frames allowing a spectacular architecture to be put up in record-breaking time. The assembly includes wedges to allow the assembled cake to be transported safely. It also enables the possibility of light textures (mousse and bavaroise), different flavours for each tier and simplified portion cutting before guests. www.eurochefworldwide.com



STRAHL BEVERAGEWARE FOR ALL OCCASIONS

Strahl beverageware has the clarity and feel of glass and is virtually unbreakable due to the unique strength of polycarbonate. Strahl's new range of Shot Glasses was inspired by the demand for a multipurpose shot glass. Available in three convenient sizes 35.5ml, 50ml and 74ml, they are ideal not only for liquor, but also for smaller tasting platter items. Designed specifically to stack the CapellaStack tumbler range, it offers a popular space saving solution. Due to demand, Strahl have just introduced the new 355ml Tall and 414ml short tumblers, ideal for serving cocktails, liquor on the rocks, spirits, soda and beer. www.strahlbeverage.com

www.strahlbeverage.com



GLASS-BEAD BLASTED CUTLERY

Those in the hospitality industry live and breathe gastronomy, day after day and therefore need a partner who understands industry needs. This means that they can focus on what they do best. Gastronomes are artists who work hard, innovate and are experts at what they do. WMF Hotel has introduced the latest glass-bead blasted technology to give tables a distinctive look by adding some exciting surface variations. Its homogenous surface offers a beautiful velvety matt sheen that is less susceptible to dirt and is applicable for all WMF Cromargan cutlery models. www.advancehotelsupplies.com.my

MINIMALIST CHAIR

The IOTA Chair, designed by John Kelly of the USA is so named for the minimal and efficient use of materials, labour and manufacturing time. This practical chair fits in perfectly in industrial-style designed spaces. Complementing the unfinished, utilitarian ambience, IOTA features a seat and back in bass veneer, studded with rivets for added character. The cold-galvanised treatment with epoxy finish highlights distinctive stoppers on the chair's feet. Get the bench and side chair too, all with comfortable waterfall seats. A dining table in the same style is also available. www.kian.com



ARTISANAL CRYSTAL GLASSWARE NOW AVAILABLE

Sia Huat Pte. Ltd. recently welcomed established crystal glassware manufacturers Spiegelau and Nachtmann into its portfolio. Spiegelau is a time-honoured brand that dates back to the 16th century, with a dedicated commitment to uphold Bavarian artisan craftsmanship. It is a well-known brand among European restaurateurs and hoteliers for its impeccable quality, Spiegelau continuously develops new and contemporary designs to meet the needs of modern dining concepts. Together with Spiegelau, Sia Huat also represents Nachtmann, a brand synonymous with brilliantly designed fine cut crystal ware for retail channels in Singapore. www.siahuat.com



ORIGINS OF CHOCOLATE

With the Origin Collection, Callebaut supports consumers in their daily quest for extraordinary flavour pairings. The Single Origin couvertures are each made with cocoa beans from one particular country or region. Each chocolate brings an exciting taste sensation and aromatic character that reflects the soil, the climate and the environment where the cocoa beans were grown. Just like wine, the taste of these couvertures can slightly alter with each harvest but that is one of the great joys of single origin chocolate. www.callebaut.com

SERIOUS SERVICE IN SAFFIRE'S SERENE SETTING

Head Chef Simon Pockran has cooked in one of the most serene natural settings imaginable for the past five years. The chef was part of the start up team for Saffire Lodge on Tasmania's East Coast and rated one of the world's most luxurious lodges. Prior to Saffire Lodge he cooked at Darley's Restaurant in Lilianfels Blue Mountains to the west of Sydney. The chef from Blaxland trained in a café before moving to the deluxe Lilianfels. He loves working in niche boutique hotels and considers himself fortunate to have worked in two of Australia's best. His cooking style is to be honest with the ingredients and not to change them too much. While Saffire

Lodge is located in a remote area he enjoys the healthy balance between work and lifestyle which he enjoys with his wife, six-month old baby and pets.

Professionally, it can be challenging to source specialty ingredients but the lodge has a good supply network with many being local. He sources oysters, mussels, fish, squid, lamb and pork locally especially as this is what most

lodge guests crave. His menu changes with the seasons but a favourite for Chef Pockran is savarin of ocean trout and avocado; a dish that embraces summer. The lightly cured local ocean trout, thin slices of avocado and chilled cucumber essence are combined. Served in a cold bowl it makes a refreshing starter. Sometimes native finger limes are added, to offer another dimension. www.saffire-freycinet.com.au



TRADITIONAL JOHOR DELIGHTS FOR THISTLE JOHOR BAHRU CHEF

With over 15 years of international culinary experience, Executive Chef Mahathir Huzaidy Samson helms the kitchens at Thistle Johor Bahru. In 2007, he was nominated at the Hospitality Asia Platinum Award for Best Western Chef. During his stint at Meliá Kuala Lumpur, he led the culinary team that won three gold medals and two silver medals at Salon Culinaire Malaysia. Chef Huzaidy has been cooking since he was a boy growing up in Sabah where he helped his mother in the kitchen preparing her favourite dishes especially beef rendang, chicken kurma and kuih makmur. An apprentice in Sunway Resort Hotel's pastry kitchen at the age of 19 set the stage for his career advancement. Since then he has worked with the Sol Meliá Group in China, Korea and Indonesia as well as the Novotel Kuala Lumpur, Conrad Centennial Singapore and most recently, for the Damac Group in Dubai where he was the Group Executive Chef. He enjoys preparing traditional Malay dishes such as lontong goreng (fried rice cakes) and apam balik (griddle pancakes).

LAKE COMO TO NAITHON BEACH

Chef Favio Manzoni, chef at Vero the Italian Trattoria and Wine Bar at the Pullman Phuket Arcadia Naithon Beach grew up on the shores of Italy's Lake Como where the northern Italian cuisine combines flavours from artisanal farmers and mountain producers. His culinary journey started at home picking porcini mushrooms, fishing for trout from the rivers and learning how to cook for family and friends. It was only natural that this led him to work in the prestigious Hotel Villa d'Este beside Lake Como where he learnt the art of balancing flavour with fresh ingredients. After experiencing the world including being private chef to the magnate Leona Helmsley and Oscar de la Rente in the USA, he relocated to Thailand. His passion is to teach a new generation of chefs and he does this with his team at Vero, one of Phuket's leading Italian restaurants. Vero offers specialty dishes that provide a unique culinary journey through various Italian provinces. These range from wood oven-baked pizzas to secret family pasta recipes. His favourite is slow-cooked rabbit which isn't offered so frequently in Asia as in Europe.



Chef Savours Seafood by the Seashore

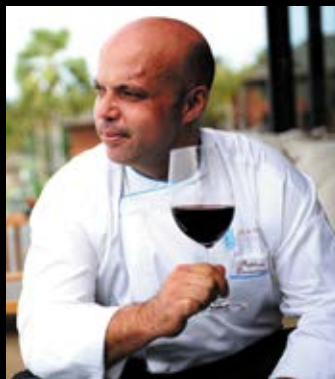
Chef Thorsten Killian from Jala Restaurant in The Andaman Langkawi believes that cooking is all about passion and the ability to be inspired by the simple ingredients around him. Born in Thailand, the chef of Thai-German origin has over 12 years experience in the kitchen. His career, coupled with his East-meets-West ethnicity has exposed him to various ingredients and cooking methods. He has worked in Austria, Switzerland, Ireland, Germany, Portugal and the Middle East. Chef Killian started his career in the Hanner Restaurant in Austria, moved to Hotel Castell in St. Moritz in Switzerland to work in various five-star hotels there and in other parts of the country. Now Chef de Cuisine at Jala he is surrounded by an abundance of seafood and enjoys using this to create appetisers of cured red snapper and mains such as red mullet fillets.

French Mediterranean Cuisine at Hansar Samui

Overseeing the culinary team at Hansar Samui is Executive Chef, Stephen Jean Dion. Born and raised in Montreal, Canada, the chef began his career as an 18-year old apprentice, at Les Halles in Quebec which achieved the reputation of being one Canada's best restaurants.

After two years there, he travelled to Asia passing through Singapore and Malaysia before becoming Chef de Cuisine in Bangkok's Ma Maison Restaurant at the Hilton Nai Lert Park. A unique opportunity to be the private chef to His Majesty the King of Jordan became a career turning point and he spent two years catering for the Royal Family. He has also cooked for the Sultan of Brunei and Prince Charles. The chef's love for Thailand saw him return to Bangkok where he spent five years at the Lebua at State Tower Bangkok,

starting as Chef de Cuisine of Sirocco Restaurant before being Executive Chef. Now at Hansar Samui, diners appreciate his French Mediterranean cuisine as well as a Thai menu at the beachfront H Bistro Restaurant. Menu highlights include crab ravioli with Italian basil and brandy-flavoured sauce.





fe sizzlers

AUSTRIAN CHEF HEADS EAST TO WESTIN

Austrian-born Executive Chef Angerer at the Westin Langkawi Resort & Spa has a keen appreciation of Pan-Asian cuisine after more than 20 years delighting regional food connoisseurs. His career began as an apprentice in the early 1980s working his way into key positions in acclaimed restaurants in Austria and Switzerland. He leads the resort's food and beverage operations including Seasonal Tastes and Tide Restaurants plus banqueting. He brings a deep understanding of the diversity of Asian cuisine from working in prestigious regional hotels since 1992. Chef Angerer was Executive Chef in other Starwood properties in Saigon and Surabaya. Other key positions have included several Executive Chef roles at distinguished Malaysian and Cambodian hotels and as a culinary concept technical advisor in Japan. One of his favourite dishes is crispy cod crusted with dry coconut and shaved macadamia nuts, cherry tomato confit, potato mash and age balsamic vinegar.

SICILIAN SONATA AT PREGO

Sicilian born Vincenzo Sirna brings more than nine years experience to his new position at Prego in the Westin Kuala Lumpur. Chef Sirna was inspired to take up a cooking career by his mother and grandmother and as a child he watched them prepare home-cooked meals made from fresh ingredients grown in the family garden. He trained at a Sicilian hospitality school and his first restaurant was located near Garda Lake in Veneto. Fueled by the love for food and travel, he started cooking around Italy and eventually the world. Since relocating to Prego he has introduced a new and enhanced menu of exquisite Italian fare. His favourite ingredient is eggplant because it is rich in vitamins, plus calcium, phosphorus and potassium to make it a super food. His favourite dishes are fresh prawn salad with Italian basil, potato dumplings with salsa pomodoro baked with buffalo mozzarella and seared tuna served with sweet and sour eggplant. The chef unwinds listening to jazz while making plans for his next trip. He also loves discovering local cuisines and his favourite so far is bak kut teh (stewed pork ribs with herbal soup).



HOKKAIDO SCALLOPS IN THE MALDIVES

Imported Hokkaido scallops are one of the favourite ingredients for Chef Endar Pratanda, Chef de Cuisine in the Nala Rah Teppan Grill at the Outrigger Konotta Maldives Resort. While the surrounding waters of the Indian Ocean contain an abundance of seafood the chef especially likes the flavour and consistency of Hokkaido scallops which he can procure even in the resort's remote location some 350km south of the capital, Malé. The chef specialises in teppanyaki grilling and combines various mushrooms and caviar with his signature dish. Chef Endar was born on Indonesia's Bintan Island and started his career there working at BintanLagoon Resort before cooking in Japanese restaurants within Malaysia's Equatorial Group as well as other locations in Indonesia and Tunisia.



New Sizzlers at Resorts World Genting

Resorts World Genting recently welcomed Chefs Steven Chou and Mandy Goh to its culinary fold.

Prior to joining Resorts World Genting as Chef de Cuisine, Chef Chou was Head Chef at the Bungalow, a prestigious French-Asian supper club which morphs into a nightclub on weekends.

A graduate of New York University, Chef Chou holds a degree in Hospitality Administration/Management. A Taiwanese American who grew up in New York, he immediately fell in love with cooking after being initially drawn to the hospitality side of the service industry. He began his culinary career as a line cook and worked in various Michelin-star restaurants in New York. He was invited to helm Bungalow where working with Asian ingredients was a new experience. "As a chef, my goal is to bring out the best in a dish; this means not overcooking it and keeping it simple," he said.

Describing his cuisine as 'true, grounded, simple and elegant,' Chef Chou wants to understand another chef's culture and to know and be surrounded by people who share common fundamentals. In his current position he will develop new menus and signature dishes.

After completing her national service, 28-year old Chef Mandy Goh realised she wanted to enroll in a course to become a chef. As a student at KDU University College Penang's School of Hospitality, Tourism and Culinary Arts, she discovered what she calls tactile awareness and enjoyed working with her hands.

During her work placement at the Mandarin Oriental Kuala Lumpur her true interest in the cooking blossomed. After graduating, she became an employee of the same hotel just as it was preparing for Bocuse d'Or which required an assistant younger than 21 years of age to participate in the final round in Lyon, France. While tough work, her team won and made history for being the first winning female team in Bocuse D'or Asia.

The chef's mandate as Chef de Cuisine at Litude Restaurant, Bar and Lounge in the Genting Club is to create affordable food with a dominant selection of local flavours as Malaysians are deeply rooted in the tastes and textures of their homeland.

She added, "I want to make the restaurants here to places visitors seek out for food; I want Malaysians to drive here just for the chef."

