



food & entertainment

What is great food without great chefs? In this issue, we premiere the start of Chef's Table, a round-up of all the hot and spicy, good and earthy stuff that chefs around the region are getting up to. Read also about how traditional Chinese wellness cuisine goes mainstream at a Malaysian five-star hotel, and how socializing can be done in the lobby of a Sheraton. Join us as we congratulate the winners of the first HAPA-GAB Awards, and enjoy the timely feature on the founders of one of the most happening chain of nightspots in Malaysia.



Alessandro Graziosi

Chef de Cuisine, Villa Danieli
Sheraton Imperial Kuala Lumpur Hotel, Malaysia

Alessandro Graziosi began his career when he was just 17 years old. While he was still in school, he developed a profound passion for cooking. He landed his first job in Noy Restaurant in Milan as a kitchen helper, where he worked with Montefusco, a well known chef in Milan back then. During his tenure there, he had many opportunities to gain great skills and knowledge of the culinary world as chefs from 5-star hotels came to work at this 1 Michelin-starred restaurant.

From there, he moved to La Spiaggia, in Sydney, Australia and various restaurants and hotels, as well as family-owned businesses which brought in regulars and sold simple yet delicious modernized Southern Italian food. He went on to head the catering and banquet kitchens in Tirbu catering, in Milan as well as handling food costs, productivity and kitchen hygiene in Camperio restaurant, Milan.

Moving forward, Alessandro decided to expand his horizons by heading off to Thailand to share his culinary skills as well as promote traditional Italian cuisines. He worked with several free standing Italian restaurants as a consulting Chef de Cuisine in Thailand and later on, joined Le Meridien Khao Lak Beach and Spa Resort in December 2009. He was in charge of the resort's Italian restaurant, where he had a team of eight working under his supervision. This amicable chef successfully made a name for restaurant and was a key player in the transformation process of the restaurant, when it was changed to Favola, Le Meridien's concept Italian restaurant. **ha**

Richard Wilson

Executive Chef
The Nam Hai,
Vietnam

Richard Wilson, a 20-year veteran of the hospitality industry, is now the Executive Chef at The Nam Hai, Vietnam's premier seaside resort. Wilson joins The Nam Hai after spending three years in Oman overseeing the kitchen at The

Chedi Muscat, another GHM-managed property. The New Zealand native follows in the footsteps of celebrity chefs Anthony Bourdain and Gordon Ramsay, both of whom have been lured to the area in recent years by its gastronomic appeal.

The first seed for Wilson's return to Vietnam was planted in 1999, when he toured the country from north to south in exploration of its culture and cuisine. At that time, he was the head chef at an award-winning restaurant in Melbourne. After stints with Sofitel, Palazzo Versace and Shangri-La, Wilson joined GHM in 2007, setting the stage for the 2009 trip that would change his life. As with all chefs who have come before him, Wilson has designs on changing The Nam Hai's menu. But not overnight. His first priority is to get to know his new team. Then he wants to find out what products are available locally and through importers.

He'd also like to get to know the resort's three-acre garden, which has come a long way since Wilson witnessed the former sous chef plant the first beans and herbs there more than three years ago. **ha**



Ravi Obeyesekere

Executive Chef
The Westin Resort
Nusa Dua, Bali,
Indonesia

Ravi Obeyesekere, Executive Chef, has arrived in Bali direct from a highly successful 12 year stint as Executive Chef of the Sheraton Mirage Gold Coast in Queensland, Australia.

Originally from Sri Lanka, Obeyesekere is a true professional who brings a wealth of culinary experience to the Resort. His career has been an insightful journey that has taken him to fascinating destinations around the world including Middle East, China and New Zealand. Last year he celebrated the milestone of 25 years working for properties under the Starwood banner.

Obeyesekere is certainly no stranger to the Indonesian archipelago or its rich cultural traditions. In 1996 he was instrumental in setting up the Food and Beverage departments for several new Sheraton hotels that opened in succession across Java in Solo, Jakarta and Surabaya. He provided ongoing culinary support for a further two years to each property during his time as Executive Chef with Sheraton Mustika Yogyakarta.

As a consummate perfectionist, he is passionate about creating flavoursome food that guests can relate to. At The Westin Resort Nusa Dua, Bali he is keen to showcase dishes that honour the culinary heritage of Indonesia and Bali alongside modern fare to appeal to a diverse audience of travellers. **ha**



Palace Hotel Tokyo Shoots For The Stars

Four months after Palace Hotel Tokyo opened its doors as one of Japan's most exciting debuts in years, its collection of restaurants and bars is gathering notoriety as one of the city's most sought-after destinations for foodies.

Under the umbrella of the hotel's signature Japanese restaurant Wadakura, the sushi operation is managed by Shinji Kanesaka, who also owns the landmark, two-star Sushi Kanesaka. The Chinese restaurant Amber Palace is operated by the Chugoku Hanten Group, known for Tokyo's two-star Fureika.

At Amber Palace, the ambience is Old World China, from the antique wood panelling to the traditional musical instruments displayed and the rich, amber colour scheme throughout. With Chugoku Hanten Group's latest fine dining outpost, a team of chefs seasoned in Shanghaiese and Cantonese cuisines take the lead at the newest addition to Marunouchi's stellar array of eateries. **ha**

Left: The Amber Palace at Palace Hotel Tokyo



A selection of Setyo's sashimi

Modern Japanese Cuisine

The recent appointment of chef Setyo Widjonanto marks an exciting new era in culinary services at KO Japanese Restaurant, InterContinental Bali Resort.

Setyo has already put his signature on the menu at KO by introducing a number of modern Japanese dishes with a playful twist. He is passionate about the use of local ingredients and has sourced the island's best suppliers to ensure freshness and exceptional quality.

Menu highlights include an eight piece sushi dinner featuring delicate slices of fresh tuna, eel, snapper, salmon and other tasty specialties. Extensive selections of sashimi and tempura items are also available. **ha**



Wood-fired pizzas are a hot favourite at San Marco

Feasting at Dusit Thani Hua Hin

As you would expect of a resort like the Dusit Thani Hua Hin, a full complement of restaurants offer an excellent variety of dining and entertainment options, each with its own distinctive ambience.

Italian specialties are served at San Marco while Thai cuisine, in the traditional lakeside surroundings of Ban Benjarong, echoes the courtly spicy favourites of a bygone era.

At the beachside there's Rim Talay Bar & Grill which provides traditional fine dining and seafood. Another exciting addition to the resort is The Restaurant with all day dining featuring the Dusit Gourmet totally spoiling you for choice. The poolside bar Sala Tip is a great location to enjoy your preferred choice of drinks and light refreshments. **ha**

Say goodbye to
polishing.



Chef Setyo Widjonanto of KO, InterContinental Bali Resort

InterContinental Bali Resort Welcomes New Chef

InterContinental Bali Resort welcomes Chef Setyo Widjonanto who brings over 20 years of Japanese culinary experience to KO. Setyo is an Indonesian who has had the good fortune to train under the guidance of some of Japan's finest chefs. Since 2005 he has worked exclusively at various outlets of the internationally renowned Nobu restaurant chain that specializes in modern Japanese cuisine.

Well-versed in the art of preparing sushi, sashimi and omakase, Setyo is meticulous about the quality of food that is served from his kitchen. He understands that Japanese cuisine is truly a feast for the senses. Every dish must take the diner on a journey that pleases the palate and is visually appealing. [ha](#)

Singaporean Chef Handpicked For F&B Renewal

Newly arrived Singaporean chef Khairudin 'Dean' Nor is making sure guests at The Chedi Club Tanah Gajah not only tour Bali's fertile rice paddies, but also get a taste of its flourishing gardens.

The Chedi launched a timely refresh of its F&B offerings with a new destination-inspired a la carte menu, an expanded beverage list and bespoke dining invitation from the chef that is as personalized as the resort's butler service. The new menus have been in the works since Chef Dean's appointment earlier this spring.

The 39-year-old chef brings more than 17 years of culinary experience to the Chedi, a 20-villa estate set amid five hectares of landscaped gardens, ponds and pagodas sharing a border with a sweeping panorama of undulating rice fields and tropical jungle. Raised in multi-ethnic Singapore, Chef Dean was mentored for eight years by acclaimed chef Emmanuel Stroobant. He cooked his way up the ranks from Chef de Partie to Sous Chef at the prestigious Saint Pierre restaurant in Singapore, winner of 'Restaurant of the Year' at the World Gourmet Summit 2007.

A world away from the competitive kitchen of Saint Pierre, Chef Dean says going off into the garden is half the fun of his new position as executive chef of 70-seat semi-fine-dining restaurant at The Chedi Club in Ubud. [ha](#)

Young Chefs Awarded

On 5 September 2012, Republic Polytechnic (RP) awarded six budding young chefs at the finals of its second iChef competition, graced by Guest-of-Honour, Ellen Lee, Member of Parliament for Sembawang GRC.

The competition, organized by RP's School of Hospitality, attracted participation from 240 secondary school students. After several rounds of intense competition, ten teams of two members each were shortlisted to compete in the finals.

The finalists first participated in the Mystery Market Challenge, where they were given a budget of \$20 to select and purchase ingredients for their dishes, after which they assembled for the cook-off at Oliva, RP's in-house state-of-the-art training kitchen. [ha](#)

InterContinental Bali Resort Celebrates Authentic Italian

Bella Cucina at InterContinental Bali Resort is celebrating a return to the roots of traditional Italian cuisine with a distinctive new menu. It features dishes inspired by a collection of recipes that have been handed down through many generations in the family of Italian Chef Egidio Latorraca.

Since his recent arrival in Bali, Chef Latorraca has been busy acquainting himself with the availability of local produce, including fresh seafood caught daily in the coastal waters of Jimbaran Bay. He has also supervised the planting of various items in the Resort's vegetable garden to ensure a year round supply of herbs and other essential ingredients.

His signature dishes include handcrafted fettuccine with Italian aged ham, Kalamata olives and oven-dried tomatoes in a creamy basil sauce; and pan-seared duck breast accompanied with baby organic carrots, eggplant caviar, potato puree and shimeij mushrooms in a Moscato wine sauce. [ha](#)



Egidio Latorraca, Italian Chef at Bella Cucina, InterContinental Bali Resort.

Say hello to brilliant glasses!



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Soul Food

Healthy Food Choices That Meet Your Lifestyle And Dietary Needs



With more and more people spending extended amounts of time on business travel, healthy eating habits and better food choices are one of the most important new things that travellers are looking for. Being on the road no longer means one has license to throw diets and a strict healthy eating regiment out of the window.



In Malaysia there is now an option for both locals and travellers to enjoy something new, wholesome and altogether wellness promoting. Berjaya Times Square Hotel, Kuala Lumpur launched a new banquet healthy menu option in June 2012. This initiative, which is in line with the Berjaya Hotels & Resorts' Corporate Social Responsibility effort was mooted by the hotel in collaboration with Eu Yan Sang (EYS), a trusted leading, global integrative healthcare and wellness company with a strong foundation in Chinese Traditional Medicine.

Specially prepared by Kwan Siew Leun, the Chinese Chef of Berjaya Times Square Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, the dishes feature unique combinations of special Chinese herbs and healthy menu choices, offering beneficial properties for health and wellbeing such as improving blood circulation, flushing toxins from the body, nourishing vital body organs and benefiting mental concentration.

Among the highlights of the new banquet menu are the Chinese Health Cold Cut Combination with Chinese herbs, jasmine tea smoked duck, chilled "Dang Gui" chicken with jelly fish, tossed jade abalone with asparagus and wolfberry and chilled prawn with Szechuan pepper pickle. All these are tailored to nourish the body, while the double boiled bird's nest with cordyceps in superior stock helps to improve skin complexion and enhance youthfulness.

Dato' Anne Eu, Chairman of Eu Yan Sang Malaysia, is a walking advertisement for the healing properties of these foods. Gregarious, energetic, and possessing a diamond-sharp mind, she is the region's most well-known proponent of including traditional Chinese herbs into the everyday diet.

"Traditional Chinese herbal food can be infused into everyday life. Traditional Chinese medicine is not about curing health

conditions, rather, it complements Western medicine. It is also used as a prevention of conditions. Seven years ago French scientists 'discovered' a worm-like vegetable which they billed the strongest antioxidant in the world. It was cordyceps! The Chinese have been consuming it for thousands of years! It is good for the lungs and anti-aging. Taken now, when one is healthy, it prevents lung disease, and keeps the organs young," shares the wonder woman, who sips cordyceps tea daily.

The collaboration with Berjaya Times Square Hotel is one which ensures quality is always upheld. Eu Yan Sang's TCM physicians worked closely with the hotel's Executive Chef to come up with the dishes, making sure that each pairing was balanced. Recipes were meticulously formulated, to ensure that they were followed like a medical prescription.

"While we are targeting the Asian market and the Chinese diners, our menu offers Western dishes as well, such as the tofu and hawthorn berries salad with sancha sauce. What we are offering is a fusion of old and new, a mix of East meets West," enthuses Eu.

"The new banquet healthy menu options confirm that the Berjaya Times Square Hotel, Kuala Lumpur is committed to ensuring satisfaction by giving our guests choices and options that meet their lifestyle and dietary needs," said Abel Nelson Nang, Corporate Director of Marketing & Communications – Berjaya Hotels & Resorts.

"This initiative is also about promoting awareness on healthy living; and more about changing the culture of eating that will benefit our guests and/or community in the long run."

The new banquet healthy menu is available in various package selections starting from RM1,438++ per table onwards. **ha**



(Left to right): Dr. Patrick Loh, Professor of Singapore Management University, Mr. Eric Chiu, Managing Director of Eu Yan Sang Malaysia, Dato' Anne Eu, Chairman of Eu Yan Sang Malaysia, Tan Sri Dato' Seri Vincent Tan, Mr. Adrian Chung, General Manager of Berjaya Times Square Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Mr. Mondy Mecja, EAM Food & Beverage of Berjaya Times Square Hotel, Kuala Lumpur and Executive Chinese Chef Kwan Siew Leun of Berjaya Times Square Hotel, Kuala Lumpur



Excellence Honoured

It was a night of firsts for the F&B industry in Malaysia when iconic beer and stout player Guinness Anchor Berhad (GAB) stepped up to raise the bar with its inaugural hospitality awards programme. The inaugural HAPA-GAB Excellence Awards 2012 was organised by GAB and Hospitality Asia Platinum Awards (HAPA), both icons in the F&B industry. Nominees vied for awards in five areas: Best Product Quality, Service Excellence, Most Innovative Guest Experience, Best Entertainment Outlet and Outlet of the Year.

Above: Winners of the HAPA-GAB Excellence Awards 2012 posing with Thum Chee Yuen, Sales Director of GAB (fourth from the left) & Yap Swee Leng, Marketing Director (in red).

The HAPA-GAB Excellence Awards was designed to honour F&B establishments and the people behind them who have helped to raise quality and service standards in the hospitality industry, ultimately boosting Malaysia's tourism sector. Attendees of the awards ceremony dressed to the nines in elegant gowns and refined suits for an evening affair themed 'A Night of Stars.'

GAB Sales Director Thum Chee Yuen said the awards night was also a way to celebrate many years of cooperation and friendship with its valued trade partners. He also added that the awards programme is an extension of the training programme provided by GAB Academy. The academy was set up in 2008 to provide hospitality training to frontline staff of its partner outlets, and has already benefitted 5,000 staff from 900 outlets.

"Tonight, we go a step further with the HAPA-GAB Excellence Awards by recognising deserving F&B outlets who are also graduates of the Academy. Through this, we hope to add some healthy competition to the mix and provide opportunities for our trade partners to set new highs for themselves in terms of customer service," he said in his opening speech at Hilton Kuala Lumpur.

Jennifer Ong, founder and chairman of HAPA, said she strongly believed that business owners in the F&T industry must provide a standard of excellence for others to follow in order to have a competitive edge. "In that respect, the HAPA-GAB Excellence Award serves as a yardstick in acknowledging the top-tier F&T outlets that ensure quality and service excellence across multiple categories," said Ong. The judges for the Awards were independent experts selected by HAPA, which comprised of industry leaders and top chefs. The panel of judges made unannounced visits to participating outlets as mystery guests, ensuring that outlets did not 'put on a show' for the judges. From these visits, judges shortlisted eight nominees in each of the five awards categories.

During the glitzy night, guests not only enjoyed GAB's portfolio of award winning beers but also a delectable array of specially crafted dishes infused with the company's iconic beers. They were kept entertained throughout the night by Joanne Yeoh's smooth violin riffs as well as funny man Harith Iskandar's unreserved wit and humour.



*Clockwise (from the top left):
Thum Chee Yuen, Sales Director of GAB, delivering the welcome speech; (left to right) Shirley Low, Head of Trade Marketing, GAB, Jennifer Ong, Founder and Chairman of the Hospitality Asia Platinum Awards; Yap Swee Leng, Marketing Director of GAB;
The top 5 HEROs from the GAB Professional Solutions HERO Academy training program celebrating their win and cheering to their forth- coming Sydney leaning trip;
The HAPA-GAB Excellence Awards 2012, themed 'A Night of Stars', kicked-off with an electrifying performance by Joanne Yeoh; Funny man Harith Iskandar provided the evening's entertainment and had guests in stitches with his stand-up comedy.
It was a night of stars at the HAPA-GAB Excellence Awards 2012 – The 'Oscars' of the F&T Service industry;*



The top 10 HEROs from the GAB Professional Solutions HERO Academy training program celebrating their win with Yap Swee Leng, Marketing Director of GAB.

WIP Wins Big

Beating 68 participating outlets, *WIP* emerged as the big winner of the night, taking home the coveted 'Outlet of the Year' award. To qualify for the 'Outlet of the Year' award,

WIP has to compete against 40 finalists shortlisted for Best Product Quality, Service Excellence, Most Innovative Guest Experience and Best Entertainment Outlet award categories to win the sought-after award.

Chin's Stylish Chinese Cuisine won the 'Best Product Quality' and 'Most Innovative Guest Experience' awards while *SOULed OUT, Sri Hartamas* clinched the 'Service Excellence' award. *The Beer Factory, Setia Walk* came out tops for the 'Best Entertainment Outlet' award.

There were also two mystery awards given for Best F&B Concept and Best Branding which were won by *The Geographer Adventure Restaurant & Bar* and *Sid's Pubs* respectively.

GAB believes that service excellence begins at grassroots level and in that spirit, ten of the top performing HEROs to emerge from the GAB training programme were also recognised and awarded during the gala dinner. During the awards ceremony, the company also rewarded the top 5 HEROs (top 5 performers) of the GAB Academy training programme. The 5 received an all-expense paid study trip to Australia to increase their skills and experience through exposure to new and innovative F&B service concepts.

The HAPA-GAB Excellence award programme stems from the company's obsession with quality. This focus on quality excellence

has helped to lead GAB to its 11th consecutive year of growth. Realising that the quality of its brew can only be served to perfection when presented to consumers in the ideal manner and right atmosphere, hence the GAB Academy was set up to train its F&B partners on product knowledge as well as serving and selling skills.

GAB Professional Solutions (GABPS)

GAB expressed that it is their long-term mission to assist its trade partners to excel in their business. In order to bring GAB Academy to the next level, the arm was relaunched as GAB Professional Solutions (GABPS) at the Awards gala dinner through the unveiling of its new logo.

Thum said, "GAB Professional Solutions aims to take training and service quality to even greater heights through the introduction of groundbreaking training features. For example, instead of getting trade partners to come to us, we are going to our trade partners through Malaysia's first mobile training centre."

The mobile training centre will bring GAB's training programme to their doorstep and reach even more of its trade partners on a national scale. A series of expos and forums are also in the pipeline as part of GABPS's offerings to give F&B partners the opportunity to share ideas and best practices and tap into fresh new insights.

Next year, GABPS will be taking up the mantle as host of the HAPA-GAB Excellence Awards. [ha](#)



WINNERS LIST

OUTLET OF THE YEAR

GOLD WINNER

WIP
Kuala Lumpur

SERVICE EXCELLENCE

GOLD WINNER

SOULedOUT Sri Hartamas
Kuala Lumpur

SILVER WINNER

WIP
Kuala Lumpur

BRONZE WINNER

Chin's Stylish Chinese Cuisine
Penang

FINALIST

Baan 26 Thai Restaurant & Bar
Kuala Lumpur
Italiannies Pasta, Pizza & Vino @
Empire Shopping Gallery
Selangor
Mulligan's Pub & Bistro
(Bandar Baru Permas Jaya)
Johor
Soho Free House
Penang
The Beer Factory (Setia Walk)
Selangor

BEST ENTERTAINMENT OUTLET

GOLD WINNER

The Beer Factory (Setia Walk)
Selangor

SILVER WINNER

The Beer Factory (Sunway Giza)
Selangor

BRONZE WINNER

SOULedOUT Sri Hartamas
Kuala Lumpur

FINALIST

Bedroom
Kuala Lumpur
Monkey Bar
Penang
Soho Free House
Penang
Soho Gastro Pub
Penang
The Patio Bar And Lounge
First World Hotel
Genting Highlands

MOST INNOVATIVE GUEST EXPERIENCE

GOLD WINNER

Chin's Stylish Chinese Cuisine
Penang

SILVER WINNER

WIP
Kuala Lumpur

BRONZE WINNER

The Geographer Adventure
Restaurant & Bar
Selangor

FINALIST

boatHouse Restaurant & Bar
Kuala Lumpur
Hokkaido Bier Garten
Selangor
Soho Free House
Penang
Soho Gastro Pub
Penang
The Beer Factory (Setia Walk)
Selangor

BEST PRODUCT QUALITY

GOLD WINNER

Chin's Stylish Chinese Cuisine
Penang

SILVER WINNER

Hokkaido Bier Garten
Selangor

BRONZE WINNER

The Beer Factory (Sunway Giza)
Selangor

FINALIST

Baan 26 Thai Restaurant & Bar
Kuala Lumpur
Mulligan's Pub & Bistro
(Bandar Baru Permas Jaya)
Johor
SOULedOUT Sri Hartamas
Kuala Lumpur
The Beer Factory (Setia Walk)
Selangor
The Geographer Adventure
Restaurant & Bar
Selangor

MYSTERY AWARD

BEST F&B CONCEPT

WINNER

The Geographer Adventure
Restaurant & Bar
Selangor

BEST BRANDING CONCEPT

WINNER

Sid's Pubs



HAPA-GAB Excellence Awards 2012 Winners

WIP Kuala Lumpur

Winner of the following categories:

- **OUTLET OF THE YEAR – Gold Winner**
- **SERVICE EXCELLENCE – Silver Winner**
- **MOST INNOVATIVE GUEST EXPERIENCE – Silver Winner**

Once a "Work In Progress" and now "Whipped Into Place", WIP is an international lifestyle destination with a coastal resort ambience and the design feel of an urban-tropic garden. It is the perfect ecosystem for a mood transforming and relaxing social experience.



SOULed Out Sri Hartamas, Kuala Lumpur

Winner of the following categories:

- **SERVICE EXCELLENCE – Gold Winner**
- **BEST ENTERTAINMENT OUTLET – Bronze Winner**

SOULed OUT began in 1996 as a small neighbourhood café in Mont Kiara. More than a decade on and having served over three million patrons, with an eclectic mix of local, Western and Northern Indian food, an encounter with SOULed OUT continues to be 'as good as a hug'.



Chin's Stylish Chinese Cuisine, Penang

Winner of the following categories:

- **SERVICE EXCELLENCE – Bronze Winner**
- **MOST INNOVATIVE GUEST EXPERIENCE – Gold Winner**
- **BEST PRODUCT QUALITY – Gold Winner**

Award-winning Chin's first opened in London in 1987. This classy establishment took England's restaurant scene by storm and Chin's Penang is set to herald a new era of trendsetting, culinary chic in the Pearl of the Orient. The exquisite mix of style, taste and attention to detail at Chin's Penang makes it a forerunner in the South East Asian culinary art scene.



The Beer Factory (Setia Walk), Selangor

Winner of the following category:

- **BEST ENTERTAINMENT OUTLET – Gold Winner**

The Beer Factory™ is a new age bar that offers a drinking experience like no other. Each outlet has its own themes that are infused into its designs, putting new spins on industrial influences. Established in May 2010, The Beer Factory™ is fast growing its reputation as one of the best bars in Klang Valley.

HAPA-GAB Excellence Awards 2012 Winners

The Beer Factory (Sunway Giza), Selangor

Winner of the following categories:

- **BEST ENTERTAINMENT OUTLET – Silver Winner**
- **BEST PRODUCT QUALITY – Bronze Winner**

The Beer Factory™ prides itself on its huge selection of beers, proudly boasting a range of up to 60 different bottled beers from around the world. Its team of experienced bartenders is constantly mixing up new mind blowing cocktails to impress and tantalise your tastebuds.



The Geographer Adventure Restaurant & Bar, Selangor

Winner of the following categories:

- **MOST INNOVATIVE GUEST EXPERIENCE – Bronze Winner**
- **MYSTERY AWARD: BEST F&B CONCEPT – Winner**

Geographer Adventure Restaurant and Bar features signature food and beverages from around the world. It prides itself not only on its environment, and food, but also for its excellent services.



Hokkaido Bier Garten, Selangor

Winner of the following category:

- **BEST PRODUCT QUALITY – Bronze Winner**

Hokkaido Bier Garten is a Japanese restaurant & bar that serves fusion food which includes Western, Spanish and Japanese cuisine. It also features a boutique style wine shop with over 70 selections of specialty wines from around the world.



Sid's Pubs

Winner of the following category:

- **MYSTERY AWARD: BEST BRANDING CONCEPT – Winner**

Designed to be the neighbourhood pub, Sid's Pub soon became the favourite of those who wanted a pub and restaurant close to home where they could get decent food at a reasonable price as well as a good range of pub drinks. Sid's Pub prides itself for its attention to detail when dealing with its draught beers.





GAB Brand Ambassadors



(Left to right) David Lopez, Thum Chee Yuen, Helen Kam, Cassie Wong, Fanny Foo, Yap Swee Leng, Yuzairy Yatin, Hery Mashudi, Choong Khee Cheong, Aidil Fazli, Frankie Leson and Florian Nigen.



(Left to right) Geoff Siddle, Fuad, Yap Swee Leng, Dominic Siddle and Denis Rawlins.



Dave Chin with Yap Swee Leng.



(Left to right) Lee Teck Kuan & Samantha Ng, Jason Ng, Jeffrey Goh, Thum Chee Yuen, William Ho.



(Left to right) Gerald Chong, Danny Teo, Radiraju.



(Left to right) Eddy Jalaini Ram, Dato' & Datin Kevin Sim, Thum Chee Yuen and Devakumar Subramaniam



(Left to right) Dave Chin, Leslie Liang, Lim Sow Tat, Howie Tan, Florence Gan, Sunny Chow, Yvonne Ang, Eric Cheong.

The HAPA-GAB Excellence Awards 2012 Award Categories

★ Service Excellence

It will be awarded to outlets that practice true hospitality by consistently providing the highest level of service to its guests. The outlets will also be measured by their ambience and various aspects of customer service including how beverages are served and how food and drinks are paired.

★ Most Innovative Guest Experience

It will be presented to the outlet that presents the most unique dining experience for its guests through product and service innovation. Elements like décor, food and drinks menu will be considered.

★ Best Entertainment Outlet

The outlets have to be truly groundbreaking in terms of design and concept. It must also have a great beverage selection coupled with fantastic environment and excellent service making the entertainment experience a class of its own.

★ Best Product Quality

Outlets will be recognised for their excellence in the quality in their F&B offerings. This would encompass the quality of beers served, pouring techniques and even service temperature. The technical expertise of chefs and bar staff will also be taken into consideration.

★ Outlet of the Year

It will be awarded to the outlet that has achieved excellence in at least three of the four categories – service, product, quality to innovation and entertainment.



Soul Providers

They are the power couple of Malaysia's chill-out scene – so far above the stratosphere that they deserve a domain of their own. Yet Fred Choo and Michele Kwok, the founders, owners, creative minds and operators of SOULed OUT Sri Harts and Ampang, WIP and 7atenine are two of Malaysia's most down to earth entrepreneurs. Their customers love them, their staff idolize them, women socialites hiss when they stand next to Kwok and her slender, toned legs. Men rib Choo about his floral shirts, wishing secretly they had the derring-do to carry one off themselves. The media, fickle and faithless, will always give them space and time, because Kwok and Choo have built up an arsenal of goodwill based on good ethics, business integrity, phenomenal creative genius, and at the soul of it all, of being just good people.

Above: Michele Kwok and Fred Choo – the creative team of SOULed OUT Sri Harts & Ampang, WIP and 7atenine.

The SOULed OUT story is by now an epic. When the couple bought their first condo in Mont Kiara, they integrated right away with the largely expatriate community there, playing tennis and hanging out post match. The dearth of places to chill out sparked an idea in the couple. "I always wanted a little café-like place of my own. So when the neighbours challenged us to take over a Chinese coffee shop, we did! There was no vision, no big plan. We took baby steps and never thought we'd be planning five other outlets!" laughs Kwok.

When people talk about working their way to the top, no two people can embody persistence, diligence and work ethics the way the two mavens do. Night after night once the coffee shop closed at 7pm, the couple would sit in the adjacent parking lot and wonder if making RM500 a night was worth the daily slog and dirty hands (Kwok took orders, and even mopped the floors!). Choo then decided that a bar was the answer. They loved the social part of it, and alcohol brought in better revenue than traditional Chinese dessert porridge.

SOULed OUT Sri Hartamas began organically with 16 tables bought from Ikea. The outlet offered alfresco dining, and it took off so quickly the couple had to scramble back to the Swedish home store for more tables. By the time they moved out of the first shop lot, they were 80-tables strong every night.

Choo explains why SOULed OUT skyrocketed the way it did. "We asked ourselves what we were selling. Was it a neighbourhood

over for some Chinese New Year gambling. Fred pretended to lose at the game to give Kwok a fighting chance and she fell for a man "much older than myself, who was quiet, gentle, caring and calm," in Kwok's own words.

Choo was in housing development and mining at the time; Kwok, a student who was reading Law, which she gave up to fly with Malaysia Airlines until she decided she would rather be sitting in business class than serving coffee or tea.

Wanting to be engaged in business together, the two delved into women's apparel, boutiques, accessories and retail until they hit their first big one with the Noel Hampers & Gifts franchise. "At the time we never thought of making it big. We were in it for adventure," muses Choo. "I never had a specialization, I was just enterprising, and I had no idea of how to make things succeed. I just did it," shares Kwok, who is lauded for her savvy take on fashion, effortlessly pairing classic with surprising, for a look that is all her own.

Living, loving and working together is not always pleasurable though. Kwok confides that they fight more about work now. "Stress and pressure build up. Expectations are high on us and the brands and we need to be cohesive to ensure growth and expansion. Fifteen years in the business and we are not getting any younger. There is an underlying rush to get there, with people, systems in place," she runs her hand, tastefully be-ringed, through her trademark honey blonde streaked hair.



Above: Parties come alive at SOULed Out and WIP.

café? Michele and I are very good with people, so we began with good service, then good food and drink. Pricing also had to be competitive. And we had to inculcate these values to the staff."

When SOULed OUT moved from Mont Kiara, the couple made it a point to decide that business was not all about work. Unlike start-ups who get stuck in the rut of managing the business 24/7, they put systems into place so they could focus on new concepts. 7atenine at The Ascott followed, with the chic, flashy, uptown vibe that catapulted its owners to society folk. When they spent RM150,000 on a point-of-sale system, they knew they were in it for the big time, and yet they never sat down to dialogue about it. Things happened and they rode the wave.

It was a monster rip curl, with a treacherous undertow, greedily waiting to suck them in; but tenacity saw them through. That, and the deep love the couple have for each other. Though both hail from Seremban, they never met in their hometown. They were brought together by chance when Choo's brother invited Kwok

Choo looks at her with palpable affection, a softness in his already mild eyes. Business, he says, is becoming more complex. Sales are up six-seven fold and they are embarking on automization. "Those days we saw each other every day even though we were doing everything. Those days we had two or three managers. Now we have 26. The expectation of our business partners to remain number one is high. Getting to be number one is easy. Sustaining the top position is hard, and with new outlets opening, with young people who are the age we were when we started out 16 years ago, of course we are challenged, but we have business partners who have supported us for these 16 years and we can't let them down."

"And the staff," Kwok muses, her generous mouth tightening in resolve. "It's hard to just find good staff. What they are today, we helped to bring out, and they play a role in our growth. We have a low turnover. We have staff who have been with us five to ten years, and they want to see growth for themselves. That's why we need to open more outlets. It's been 16 years, and it is

time for the SOULed OUT brand to develop a franchising model concurrently with a fully fledged central kitchen not only for SOULed OUT outlets, but also as a franchise itself," Kwok states, as if she is running a to-do list in her head.

The SOULed OUT restaurant franchise opportunity is best suited for city centres with large populations. Ideal markets for expansion domestically are areas such as the Klang Valley, Penang, Sabah and Sarawak and international markets such as Singapore and Indonesia.

The SOULed OUT franchise programme is positioned as a premium franchise opportunity and is unique in that the target is to open only two outlets per year. This is done to ensure full support for each franchisee. The franchise programme also provides training which encompasses all areas of operations, which include floor operations, bar, kitchen, accounting purchasing and stock control.

"The time is right. We have built a very strong brand for the last 16 years and we are ready to further enhance and expand the brand. Our team is totally gung-ho and raring to go. The next step now is to identify the right franchisee and location. It's going to be another adventure, and I am just glad Fred will be with me on this again," says Kwok.

the places grew, so would they. It's become that anyone who has worked with us has no difficulty getting a job."

"You've got to share stuff about life, not just talk about the job. When managers do the briefings, it's all about 'You must do this!' That is the difference between the owner and the manager running the business. In the group it is not about the money. It is about the family unit, the doing something together and being five different outlets moving to a common objective," states the Commander.

It's been one heck of a ride, though it is still a ways to the finish line. One cannot help but wonder if they would do it all again if they were given a chance. "My honest take? The F&B industry has been a very enriching experience. It is very rewarding if you succeed, but there is a price to pay. There were fewer hours at home with my boys (the couple have two sons, 20 and 23). They've seen us work and we have encouraged them not to come into the business so fast. We told them to go out and work first. If I can help it, I don't want them to get into the business," Kwok says with candour.

"Our legacy is not the business." Choo says it like David Carradine in Kung Fu. "It is about the people. The legacy will pass to people who have been with us for 16-17 years. It's not fair to cash out now. It is not about how much we make, but about how



Choo is a little more emotive as he shifts the conversation to more personal issues. "After 25 years of marriage, I know Michele will always be there for me. It has helped defray the emotional stress. Michele brings fine things to rough edges," he compliments his spouse.

Returning the affection, Kwok says firmly that she would never do this business without Choo. "Though we say we argue a lot, I wouldn't be here without Fred. There are some things I don't like doing – the difficulty with foreign workers, for one, and with Fred in the equation I can do what I enjoy doing."

People management and deployment come naturally to Choo, earning him the nickname The Commander-in-Chief. The 5.30pm outlet briefings are legendary in the F&B circles, where Choo runs through the game plan for the evening and the rest of the night with his key staff and managers. "To be different, you have to train people to be different," Choo asserts. It also means rolling up sleeves and working the floor like his staff, which is what Choo did up until a recent few years ago. "He speaks to them and to their hearts," his wife says admiringly. "He showed the staff that when

I feel young, challenged, when I work with young people. We will let it all go as naturally as it came. The staff has taken ownership of this and has solved issues in the outlets and 25 percent of the holdings belong to them," says Choo, throwing a curveball.

Yes, the truth is that this visionary pair have started a new company which is owned by the staff and which in turn holds 25 percent share in the whole business. The duo have also invested a lot of their own cash into property for their staff. No small investment, seeing the premises are located near where the outlets are: Desa Sri Hartamas, Damansara Heights, all big ticket purchases.

Because they are so open, the writer hazards a question about having to appear ageless all the time. In her infectious, oh-so-easy-to-love way, Kwok chirps, "People say age is a number. Bullshit. I would look like a grandma if I didn't put effort in, and make time to ensure a face mask is done. I also surround myself with happy people, and I love a good laugh," she smiles, and those beautiful laugh lines appear, road maps in a face which is turned towards the future. **ha**



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International Food & Beverage Association Launched

The International Food & Beverage Association was launched in Malaysia on 7 September 2012 at the Royale Chulan Hotel Kuala Lumpur. Founded in 2012 to answer the need for a common platform for F&B practitioners to interact among the various countries and to share industry best practices with members of other countries. The association is officially registered in Singapore, with the four founding member countries being Cambodia, Germany, Malaysia and Singapore. The current board has 13 members, headed by President Cheong Hai Poh, who is also President of the F&B Managers' Association of Singapore. **ha**

Coming Up Roses

Last May the sparkling Bottega Rosé won the silver medal at the prestigious French contest Le Mondial du Rosé. The Union des Oenologues de France has since decided the world's rosé wines are to be given particular and very specific attention.

This competition is the only professional tasting meeting the standards required by the International Organisation of Vine and Wine, and it is reserved for rosé producers from all over the world.

This medal on the bottle guarantees the consumers that wine has been tasted, judged and appreciated by a professional, and the presence of a Mondial du Rosé seal is every bit as important. The awards are limited to 30 percent of the wines entered, in accordance with the regulations of the O.I.V. Vino dei Poeti Rosé

Bottega is an innovative cuvée obtained from Pinot Nero and Raboso grapes, harvested by hand in small baskets and vinified within two or three hours after harvesting, giving the wine its characteristic rosy hue. Characterized by aromas of golden apples and wild berries, it is an excellent aperitif, and combines very well with hors d'oeuvres, light main courses and fish. **ha**



Sharing Celebrations

Sheraton Hotels & Resorts around the world will be inviting guests to celebrate as the brand turns 75. This landmark event provides not just the opportunity to celebrate Sheraton's current position to advance its successes and relevance to guests around the world, but a platform for hotel teams to bring the celebration to local teams and markets.

In addition to the Sheraton's brand celebration offers, Sheraton Imperial Kuala Lumpur Hotel also rolls out a series of activities to commemorate the brand's major milestone. The exciting activities include dining deals, bridal deals and social event offers. For more on the celebrations visit www.sheraton75.com. For deals specific to Sheraton Imperial Kuala Lumpur, www.sheraton.com/imperialkualalumpur. **ha**

Above: The launching by Associates and Chuck Abbot, Regional Vice President South East Asia for Starwood Hotels Resorts and Managing Director for Sheraton Imperial Kuala Lumpur. Bottom left: Silver looks great on roses!

Malaysia On Your Desk

Avillion Hotel Group is collaborating with Gary Quah, renowned Malaysian photographer, to introduce the Avillion 2013 Calendar with Quah's stunning shots of Malaysia's sceneries, natural environment, culture and lifestyle. Avillion Hotel Group has a long standing history of its Corporate Social Responsibility community programmes. The Avillion 2013 Calendar is one of its highlight projects in 2012 to raise charity funds.

Gary Quah, a professional photographer who loves nature and the environment, collaborates with Avillion this year to care for the underprivileged community. He interprets Malaysian's multi racial culture and lifestyle through his photography and showcases the stunning natural sceneries found in various parts of the country, sharing them with everyone through the Avillion 2013 Calendar.

The calendar will be made available for purchase in all Avillion hotels. All proceeds from this project will be dedicated at helping the needy and underprivileged. **ha**



Margaret River Gourmet Escape

Western Australia will be in the international wine and food spotlight from November 22-25 when some of the world's best chefs, wine and food critics and culinary celebrities attend a new premium food and wine event in the Margaret River Wine Region in Australia's South West. Held for the first time, the four-day Margaret River Gourmet Escape will be an annual event with the potential to become a high profile food and wine festival in Australia and the Asia-Pacific Region.

Leeuwin Estate will be home to the event hub called the Gourmet Village. This will be open to the public and feature dozens of cooking master classes, 'pop-up' restaurants, cooking demonstrations, live music, wine pairing programmes and meet the Margaret River winemaker sessions. A cocktail and wine bar will also be located here and the expansive grounds will be home to a range of events from opening night festivities to live music performances. Contact www.gourmetescape.com.au for more details. **ha**

by David Bowden

Left: One of the venues of the Margaret River event, Leeuwin Estate.

As Pure As Water Should Be

Equipped with the company's NSF Certified 3M™ Water Filter Systems, the 3M Filtered Water Dispenser is able to reduce cysts, 99.99% bacteria, chlorine taste and odour and other chemicals including lead, benzene and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). The 3M Water Filter Systems boasts of 3M's revolutionary Integrated Membrane Pre-Activated Carbon Technology ("IMPACT"), which essentially packs the capabilities of a four-cartridge system into a single compact 3M filter cartridge, bringing about significant cost and space saving, while offering peace of mind for consumption of cleaner, clearer, better-tasting water.

Most offices use top-load dispensers that require frequent replacement of heavy 5-gallon water bottles. This can result in a need for large storage space to store these water bottles. Moreover, as employees need to carry and lift these water bottles regularly, there may be a possibility for injury or lost productivity. The piped-in design of the 3M Water Dispenser eliminates the need for these water bottles, helping save time, costs and space. With a capacity of 22,000 litres (6,000 gallons) of water, one filter cartridge is equivalent to 1,200 water bottles. Filter replacement is only once a year.

Furthermore, the 3M Filtered Water Dispenser is equipped with a light sensor that enables it to switch to power saving mode when the lights are out, reducing up to 12% of energy consumption.

The 3M Filtered Water Dispenser also comes with a touch-screen panel that features water temperature and level indicators for monitoring and adjusting purposes, an auto-dispense function for dispensing one litre of water with one convenient touch, and a safety lock to prevent accidental dispensing of hot water.

The 3M Filtered Water Dispenser can be purchased exclusively from 3M Authorized Distributor, Jestac Pte Ltd. For more information, visit www.3Mpurification.sg/dispenser or marketing@jestac.com.sg.

The 3M Filtered Water Dispenser incorporates 3M Purification's 40 years of leadership in filtration and separation technologies into a stylish and convenient water dispenser unit suitable for offices, hotels, apartments or practically any space.



The Social Hour

Sheraton Hotels & Resorts has rolled out an exciting new initiative – the Sheraton Social Hour.

The programme is designed to encourage social interaction and enhance guest experiences by offering premium wines at the hotel lobby lounges.

The Sheraton Social Hour, will facilitate interactions in a fun, comfortable, welcoming and accessible atmosphere where guests and customers can sample and learn more about premium wines from the hotel's Wines of the World selection. On hand to celebrate the occasion were Vincent Ong, Director, Brand Management for Sheraton Hotels & Resorts in Asia Pacific and Martin Jones, VP Food & Beverage for Starwood in Asia Pacific. **ha**

Top Of The Heap

The newly revamped and managed revolving restaurant at KL Tower, Malaysia, Atmosphere 360 is the highest peak of dining excellence in the Klang Valley, both literally and figuratively. Now owned and operated by Asian Kitchen, fronted by culinary powerhouse Dato' Ringo Kaw, the dazzling venue hosted the Chaine Des Rotisseurs Putrajaya chapter event to amazing acclaim. Kaw pulled out all stops to present a phenomenal menu which included braised bird's nest soup with pumpkin and chicken broth, grilled Wagyu tenderloin and a light-as-air durian pancake with chocolate brownie. **ha**

'Carbon Zero' Winemakers Dinner

Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa hosted a 'Carbon Zero' winemaker's dinner in partnership with Yealands Estate of New Zealand in July. Recognized as one of the most sustainable wines in the world, Yealands Estate winery from the Marlborough region of New Zealand is led by legendary entrepreneur Peter Yealands.

The winemaker's dinner took place at Sea Salt restaurant in Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa on July 17 2012. **ha**



Summit Lounge Rises To The Top

Three months after cutting the ribbon on a landmark makeover, the 20th floor Summit Lounge overlooking West Lake is taking wing as the newest haunt of Hanoi's upwardly mobile.

Following a dramatic redesign, the rooftop lounge at the Sofitel Plaza Hanoi is gaining ground as the most ambitious and photogenic nightspot to debut in the Vietnamese capital.

In 2011, the Sofitel Plaza Hanoi called on noted Singaporean architects DPD+ Design to execute a new concept throughout the venue. Celebrity chef Will Meyrick spent two weeks in Hanoi writing a menu of 40 culinary cocktails and upscale hawker fare, and music producers in Hong Kong composed the lounge's signature soundtrack.

In April 2012 the Sofitel Plaza Hanoi re-launched Summit Lounge as a five-star nightspot with a spacious wooden terrace, fibre-optic ceiling, dedicated DJ booth and long, sleek bar. The lounge is wasting no time putting its own spin on Hanoian nightlife, hosting a string of buzz-worthy events – from bubble shoot-outs to nostalgic 90s parties to toga nights – each month since its re-launch. **ha**

*Above: Sofitel Plaza Hanoi's Summit Lounge.
Below: Yealands Estate winery is one of the most eco-friendly vineyards in the world.*



The New Era B&B

There is a great new taste and chill out sensation happening in Resorts World Genting. With its purple interior and relaxed ambience, the new Bubbles & Bites located on level two of the Highlands Hotel offers up a cozy little hang out where the food is heart-warming, and the atmosphere is casually welcoming.



Bubbles & Bites is committed to serving fresh food, specializing in pizzas and pastas. Its extensive menus features made-to-order warm and cold salads, daily desserts, fresh daily soups and a fusion of interesting mains, making Bubbles & Bites the perfect place for families and friends to share hearty meals and jolly times together.

Looking for a casual hangout spot with friends? Head over to the lounge at the upper level, which serves light snacks and a wide variety of beverages. From various sparkling juices and wines to champagnes and beers, as well as unique drink offerings not found in the Klang Valley, with a price range to accommodate all levels, Bubbles & Bites more than lives up to its name.

The outlet also offers some appetizing food choices, all freshly prepared. Signature pizzas include the Carnivore and Carbonara, while the home-style macaroni & cheese is a big hit, as is the spaghetti or 'Simply Fresh' Burger.

Other favourites include the Philly Cheese Steak Sandwich, fish and chips, braised lamb shank, and whole roasted kampung chicken. Perfect desserts round out the menu, and include tiramisu, the trio of international dough fritters and Bubbles & Bites' signature hot chocolate. [ha](#)



Food 360°



He was a celebrity chef even before the term was coined, so Anton Mosimann knows what he is talking about when he says that food is the coming together of elements and senses. Known to his peers as a chef of great style, with a great understanding of food, he is a strong proponent of food with personality. This simply means cuisine served with as much art, as it is with heart.

Sia Huat is Asia's one-stop food service partner. Established for over 50 years, Sia Huat is one of the Southeast Asia region's premier names for front-of-house, back-of-house and catering foodservice products. Their product range spans over 30,000 SKUs to cater for different budgets and needs. Product lines include Asian small kitchen utensils, bakeware and pastry supplies, bar utensils, buffetware, chef apparel and crew ware, chinaware, chocolate tools and moulds all the way down to shelving and storage the



A great dining out experience is not just about the food. It is about the entire package of sensory appeal – from the sight of a perfectly plated meal on exquisite porcelain, to the way silverware fits in the hand, the comfort of the chairs one is seated on, right down to the service quotient, and how everything else comes together to frame the perfect meal out.

stewarding, housekeeping and cleaning departments of any establishment.

Sia Huat exports to more than 13 countries in Southeast Asia and around the world, and back up their efficient sales and service with a 40,000 sq foot ERP-enabled warehousing facility in Singapore to ensure stocks are properly stored and monitored for ease of future replenishments.

As a company committed to contributing to the success of its food-industry clients, Sia Huat believes that staying ahead of trends is of utmost importance. They do this by bringing in products that enhance the production, preparation and display of food; providing versatile buffet and table ware that help to enrich table settings and ambience for diners and offering products that improve the efficiency of stewarding and housekeeping, including carrying a 18/10 stainless steel chafer range that can easily be detached when needed and stacked back up after use.

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TAI ZO HEEN

This signature outlet at Prince Hotel & Residence Kuala Lumpur serves contemporary Cantonese cuisine within an elegant setting.

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As specialists in the field of tableware and food presentation, Sia Huat believes that plates, glasses and cutlery can enhance a diner's experience in a restaurant. F&B outlets will do well to heed their advice on pre-determining the theme that their restaurant will take on. This will help to decide on the design that is required on the tableware, as every detail can affect the ambience of the restaurant, since every kind of food has its matching plate and cutlery depending on the chef's creativity for plating. The emergence of fusion cuisine also now means a plate that is designed and intended for Chinese cuisine, can also fit just as well for a fusion cuisine dish.

Presentation Perfect

Malaysia's best known hospitality resource company, aptly called Hospitality Resources Sdn Bhd, is another go-to foodservices partner. Its Managing Director, Ajmal Khan, is an encyclopedia of the pertinent side of food presentation. He believes, "Dining is more than just good food. It includes good food, trendy decors, exciting table set-ups and impressionable service. It's the whole package encompassing a total concept dining experience. Not all fine dining is table cloths and frilly napkins. Many of the highest rated restaurants in the country have sleek, simple designs.

While all restaurants need to purchase the right commercial equipment before they open, fine dining restaurants need to consider the style of plates, flatware, linens and furniture that will help set the mood in the dining room. The equipment purchased for the dining room and kitchen should reflect the menu. The "in" products are contemporary, urban with a clear drive for functionality. They should possess the WOW factor without being too clumsy. Products on the table should make people, and spark conversation."

"An oval porcelain plate, neoclassic flatware a hexagon platter, glass dipping dishes, tasting plates, a brilliantly coloured vinyl table runner, a patterned stoneware serving bowl that doubles for dessert all of these disparate pieces could appear on the table during one dinner service," Ajmal continues.

"Tableware designs cater to food trends. The tabletop story reflects current lifestyles and an appetite for change in food, as



in cars and clothes. Fashion now is a mix and restaurant tabletop design closely follows this fashion picture. These diversions are part of an effort to create a social environment that make diners feel at home, a trend influencing the style, function and flexibility shaping tableware in the major categories: chinaware, flatware, glassware and accessories. Products from Hospitality Resources have been synonymous with contemporary tableware design, consistently showcasing cutting edge ranges that are built on innovation, quality and value for money," says Ajmal. For more information, visit www.hospitality.com.my



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Kian Contract Sdn Bhd is quickly earning international recognition for creating superior workplace furnishings - particularly tables and chairs for the hospitality industry. A brand name for quality and good value furniture, Kian began modestly as a manufacturer of rubberwood table tops, and then expanded into all other lines of the furniture industry. Today the Group's business activities cover the design, manufacture, contract and export of furniture, with their products being found in more than 100 countries across the globe.

Committed to quality product innovation, it is not difficult to find Kian's outstanding designs at leading F&B concepts or chains. As a proactive, trend-setting company, Kian is committed to working with their clients in order to best bring out the essence of a concept via workable, aesthetically-pleasing, unconventional furnishings. For more information, check out www.kian.com.



Although hotels have larger real estate in which to design concept eateries and restaurants, many properties focus on signature restaurants which become the talking point for many hotels. Prince Hotel & Residence Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia is a case in point. Its fabulous Chinese restaurant, Tai Zi Heen, is a signature outlet serving Cantonese cuisine.

Princely Fare

Elisa Saw, Director of Marketing Communications for the hotel believes that Cantonese cuisine is probably the world's most popular Chinese cuisine. "Most diners are fond of Cantonese cuisine as it has well-balance flavour in every dish. It is a style well accepted by both our local and foreign guests. At Tai Zi Heen we serve Cantonese cuisine using the freshest ingredients, and present it in the ambience that one would expect to experience in a 5-star hotel. Tai Zi Heen differs from many other Chinese restaurants in that it is an unpretentious mid-size signature outlet with minimal

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decoratives and Chinese classical touches. It is a relaxed dining environment. We strive to offer a wide variety of all cooking styles and top quality ingredients on the innovative Cantonese created by chef Michael Wong."

Tai Zi Heen is 100 percent pork free, making the outlet perfect for business luncheons and dinners. Weekend family brunch offers an All-You-Can-Eat dim sum at RM65++ per persons with over 60 new items on the menu.

Dim sums are red ticket items at Tai Zi Heen. The classic favourites are presented alongside some with a modern twist. "Our chef's specials which are also highly commended by patrons include the Crispy Kataifi Wrapped Prawn Rolls with Mango and Wasabi Mayonnaise, Deep Fried Salmon-Stuffed Yam Puffs with Buffalo Mozzarella and Unagi Spring Rolls Stick with Parmesan Cheese. Traditional dim sum is incorporated with cuisine from around the world to gives our menu a unique touch," enthuses Saw. Other signature items on the Ala Carte menu include the Yin Yang prawns and the classic Hong Kong roasted duck.

"A lot of people have the perception that hotel dining is expensive and stuffy, however, our outlet offers very good value and beautiful ambiance with exquisite service. We took the advantage of incorporating a lunch option at Tai Zi Heen into our meeting packages. This allows more guests to experience dining in Tai Zi Heen and allowing them to get to know the offerings available here. It has proven to be successful, with many guests highly complimenting the outlet," enthused Saw.



Iconic Dining

One property that has become iconic as a whole entity is Capella Singapore. The singular locale of Capella Singapore resort and spa in Singapore ensures that a vacation on Sentosa Island is like none other. Rightly so, because Capella is built on history-rich ground.

Tanah Merah I and Tanah Merah II, now home to Capella Singapore, were given conservation status on 7 Aug 2000 under the Conservation of Built Heritage. They were built in the 1880s to accommodate the British Officers of the Royal Artillery, Coastal Defense Command based on Sentosa Island. In 1956 the British Government authorized the disbandment of all their overseas coast artillery and by 1 Nov 1958 the 1st SRRA at Sentosa Island was disbanded.

Today Capella Singapore ingeniously weaves the best of old and new Singapore into an astonishing, breathtaking fusion. This blend of the old and the new, the natural and the designed, infuses every acre of Capella Singapore, with courtyards using native plants inviting moments of introspection as waves gently lap against the shore of Sentosa Island, their natural energy inspiring with every crest.





From casual cuisine to inspired four-course meals, Capella Singapore offers culinary opportunities without equal in Singapore restaurants. The Knolls offers a refreshing Mediterranean dining experience with authentic Mediterranean lunch and dinner menus as well as leisurely afternoon tea on the terrace overlooking the reflecting pools and the South China Sea.

The modern Chinese restaurant, Cassia, takes inspiration from the age-old spice routes in Southern and Western China and the seas around Singapore. Recipes are based upon traditional, regional cooking and blended with haute Cantonese techniques.

Reminiscent of the Cuban island bars of the 1950s and 60s, Bob's Bar joins Old World charm and classicism with New World sensuality and elegance. Relax indoors and enjoy full-bodied spirits and wines, or step outdoors to the Terrace, and recline in the tropical glow of the setting sun.



The affluent Ampang neighbourhood welcomes a fine addition to the dining scene with SOULed OUT flinging open her doors and charming residents with her unique and inimitable style. Modeled after the ever popular 16 year old SOULed OUT in Desa Sri Hartamas, her easy nature will surely win many a heart.

Enjoy an eclectic menu featuring Western, Asian and Northern Indian favourites with specialities such as Fried Beef Noodles, Chicken Cordon 'BLURR', Sheekh Kebab and Cheese Nachos, just to name a few. Complementing this will be a plethora of thirst quenching beverages with the highlight being cold, cold beers. Also featured are signature cocktails such as the Classic Mojito and Lychee Martini, wines, spirits and a neat selection of detox juices such as the famous Dragonfly juice.

Personalised service is one of the traits that set SOULed OUT apart from the rest. Efficient yet personable, SOULed OUT is a place engineered for friends and family to foster the spirit of friendship and camaraderie. After all, an encounter with SOULed OUT is "as good as a hug".



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The Singapore Slam

The TungLok Group is Singapore's leading restaurant chain. It owns and manages over 40 restaurants in Singapore, Indonesia, China, Japan and India. Each outlet bears the hallmark values of superior quality food, excellent service and unique interior design. This trinity has led the Group to win numerous accolades from the F&B industry, including the coveted Awards of Excellence presented during Asia's premier annual gastronomic event – the World Gourmet Summit and the Singapore Gourmet Hunt. TungLok restaurants in Singapore have also been regular hosts to internationally acclaimed chefs such as Jean George Vongerichten, Susur Lee, Roy Yamaguchi and Bryan Nagao.

The Group's tour of China's best gourmet capitals in Singapore began more than two decades ago, when quality Chinese fare was a rare sight. For example, fiery Hunan fare was almost unheard of when TungLok spiced up the scene with the opening of Charming Garden in 1980. The local dining scene had its first taste of robust flavours enhanced by the use of fresh and dried chillies, and they were hooked.

Cantonese-style cooking was given the haute touch with the opening of the flagship Tung Lok Restaurant in 1984. It offers diners an exclusive collection of refined creations and continually attracts a loyal following.

The Group has since enlivened the scene with a host of culinary styles like Northern Chinese and Sichuan, espousing tradition at its best. While firmly anchoring its forte in traditional Chinese fare, the Group also envisioned a trendy approach to Chinese cuisine – to re-look and rejuvenate.

LingZhi Vegetarian Restaurant revolutionized the dining scene a decade ago with its trendy interpretation of the usually prosaic Chinese vegetarian food. Guests are continually blown away by creations that involve combining uncommon ingredients like monkey head mushrooms and exalting the intrinsic benefits of the humble vegetable.

The Group is proud to have paved the way for Modern Chinese cuisine in Singapore through the talents of chefs like Ken Ling in renowned establishments like Club Chinois, Chinois by Susur Lee, the artistic venture of My Humble House and Space @ My Humble House.

Big Guns Blasting

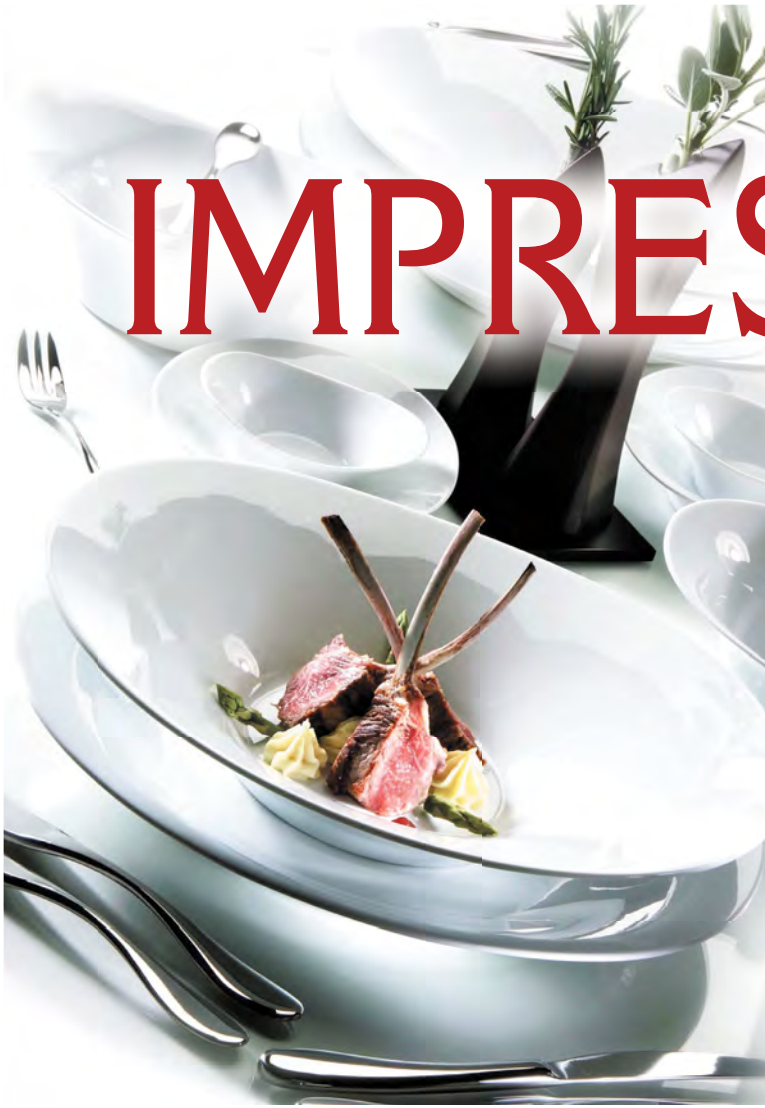
The dynamic SOULed OUT powerhouse is Malaysia's home-made, international standard dining and entertainment brand. After more than a decade of serving up lip smacking food and thirst quenching drinks amidst a buzzing ambience in Sri Hartamas, SOULed OUT Ampang flung open its doors to cater to those looking for a place to call home in the heart of Kuala Lumpur. Although more contemporary in outlook, it nevertheless dishes up the same comfort and warmth all have come to expect and love from the original SOULed OUT Sri Harts.

SOULed OUT is known for its comfort food, staples that all Malaysians and many expats are familiar with and crave on a daily basis. This kind of food epitomizes the brand's philosophy of "as good as a hug."

Quality epitomizes the food served at any SOULed OUT. Great ingredients is always the key to making things taste fresh and more flavourful. Secondly, every dish on the menu has been given the SOULed OUT treatment, which means there's always a secret ingredient that gives it the extra oomph!



IMPRESSIONS



At Hospitality Resources, creating lasting impressions is what we do best. From a perfectly set table to an extensively laid buffet, our range of products meets most requirements. For the past 12 years, Hospitality Resources has been in the forefront of innovation in tableware supplies. From classic fine dining to contemporary gastronomy, we offer ideas and concepts that will enhance the way you present and serve your culinary creations. View our exciting products on display at our showrooms, which span over 3 floors.



The food at SOULed OUT is so good that there is not just one signature dish. Stars on the menu include the Summertime Salad, Fried Beef Noodles, Sizzling Lamb Cutlet and Sake San Pizza amongst others. The wonderful thing about these dishes is that they were created by SOULed OUT's own staff. The Fried Beef Noodles created by the brand's Sifu (master), who is now retired, has been on the SOULed OUT menu for the last 16 years.

All the food is cooked ala minute and there are more than 100 dishes in the menu, consisting of different cuisine types, so the kitchen is constantly on their toes to ensure quality in every single dish that exits the kitchen. The SOULed OUT team strives on a daily basis to maintain consistency and quality in all that is served, by food tasting very, very regularly. Even items currently on the menu go through this scrutiny. New dishes are introduced via Weekly Specials to gain feedback from customers and if the response is positive, the item is added on to the menu. As Malaysia's best F&B concept brand, SOULed OUT is all about continuously keeping going, being proactive in R&D, gaining customers' feedback, troubleshooting, and making sure that every experience is as good, or better than their proverbial hug.

Eastern Grit

On the back of this array of giants, is the story of one humble man who would do "anything at all in order not to continue studying." Chef Yong Bing Ngen is owner and creative head (and many times, still chef) of Restaurant Majestic, Singapore. He sums up the drive that it takes to succeed in the food industry.

He tell his inspiring story in his own way, "When I was 16, and not wanting to return to formal education, having failed Malay in the Form 3 exams in Malaysia, my mother told me to learn a skill. I had no idea what a 'skill' was. My sister-in-law had a small eating shop in Genting Highlands and I asked her if I could help out there. I cleaned floors and tables until I saw the cooks at work one day. One cook looked up at me staring, but his hands continued to work, chopping chillies furiously while his eyes were on me. Then it hit me, this was 'skill'! I learnt also that Chinese chefs earned RM3,000 a month. I got RM120 cleaning up. From that moment I knew I wanted to be a chef. I told my brother I wanted to go into the kitchen to learn something, but he told me that a big restaurant was opening in Kuala Lumpur, and I should try out there. It was 20 September 1982. The restaurant was in Sungei Wang. I joined them as a kitchen helper. It was a difficult life. I learnt

dedication and perseverance through the long hours. I became Executive Chinese Chef in 1999 and when I joined the Pan Pacific I thought I had achieved what I wanted in life until the owner of a small boutique hotel in Singapore tasted my food and asked if I was interested in a job at New Majestic Hotel. It was 2005 and this 30-room hotel held no appeal for me. I was already in a 5-star! The owner offered me joint ownership of the business. I had never run a business before. It was then I decided to try something new, aged 40. I figured I still had enough energy, and I certainly had the kitchen experience. What finally persuaded me was when I went to the hotel on my own. It was about 4 or 5pm and I saw the light hit the building and I had a sudden revelation which told me I had to try this. Restaurant Majestic opened in 2006. I now run three restaurants! I still cook primarily at Majestic, so my regulars can remain in touch with me.

With my success I want to debunk the myth that all Chinese cooks are uneducated, greasy and low-paid. Chinese cuisine is an art, like any other culinary field. Take that messy cook out of his messy kitchen, give him a uniform, familiarize him with a kitchen and you will have a star." **ha**

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The State Of Austria

by David Bowden

For a small wine producing nation, Austria punches well above its weight. The Austrian Empire was once one of the most powerful in Europe and while its wine industry dates back many centuries, it has only just started to be noticed by most wine connoisseurs.



Above (from the top): The crops and vines of Burgenland 8091; Grüner Veltliner Höppler

With total annual production of a little over 2.2 million hectolitres, Austria produces just 1.12 per cent of the world's total production. It lags well behind the three main wine producing nations of France, Italy and Spain but also behind wine minnows such as Russia, Romania, China, Moldova, Greece, Hungary and Brazil. But this boutique star performer has successfully focussed on quality to capture the attention and imagination of the world's leading sommeliers and connoisseurs.

Bringing 'new' indigenous varieties to the world is never easy but the Austrian Wine Marketing Board (AWMB) is leading the charge. With varieties such as Grüner Veltliner, Welschriesling, Weissburgunder, Neuburger, Zweigelt, Blaufränkisch, St. Laurent and Blauburgunder you can appreciate the challenges confronting the AWMB. However, under the dynamic leadership of Willi Klinger, the AWMB is sensibly leading with the much acclaimed Grüner Veltliner (a very old variety with Traminer heritage) in the knowledge that the other varieties will eventually receive their due recognition.

With 72 per cent of the local production being consumed locally, many may wonder why the Austrians are keenly promoting the export of the remaining 28 per cent. Like many other wine-producing nations, wines are a fantastic national ambassador and a great way to promote the country and the many aspects of wine tourism. The numbers of boats cruising along the picturesque Danube River around the UNESCO-listed Wachau wine-producing region will attest to this.

Undoubtedly the most innovative winemaking developments in central European are happening in Austria. Austria's wine industry has transformed itself over the past 15 years and now exhibits a vibrant and creative force: dedicated young winemakers, private estates bottling their own wines, and premium dry wine styles suitable for those seeking quality wines.

Notable Styles

Over 50,000ha of vines are planted mostly in eastern and southeastern Austria. Approximately 70 per cent of the production is white varieties and 30 per cent reds and this includes more than 20 white and 13 red varieties. Red wines are slowly making their impact which is good news for those Asian consumers who have a preference for lighter reds.

Another important jewel of Austrian wines is their range of sweet dessert wines. These are mostly produced around the Neusiedlersee area; a large, shallow lake on the eastern border with Hungary. Eiswein, Beerenauslese and

in a lower harvest of between 2 to 2.2 million hectolitres. However, the quality in those areas that were not affected by the damage is exceptional. These wines harvested in early September will be characterized in the main by full ripeness, higher alcohol and lower acidity.

Many experts believe that Austrian wines are perfect for the various styles of Asian cuisines. As such, an increasing number of importers are adding Austrian wines to their portfolio. Höppler Wines are produced in Winden situated beside the large inland lake of Neusiedlersee in Burgenland just to the east of the Austrian capital Vienna.

luenheng.com) as well as elsewhere in Asia. Other Austrian labels are imported by Sip or Slurp (Shop B-0-7, Plaza Damas 3, 63 Jalan Seri Hartamas, Taman Seri Hartamas, T: +603 6211-4386). Michael Thurner operates Austria's Fine Brands (www.austriasfinebrands.com) from Singapore and represents several of the countries better producers (Huber, Jurtschitsch, Tement, Markowitsch, Johanneshof Rienisch, Juris, Weninger, T.F.X.T. and Tschida).

Austrian Labels such as Hillinger, Hartl, Netzl and Palser are imported into Malaysia by A & L Adventure & Leisure (www.a-and-l.com). **ha**



Trockenbeerenauslese are the sweet wines for which Austria is well known. Most of the Eisweins, for example, are sold at a fraction of the cost of the heavily marketed Canadian equivalents.

In Austria, a warm summer and a mild autumn combined with the moist air from the mists around the lakes and rivers offer ideal conditions for the development of Botrytis cinerea (noble rot) which is important for many wines to sweeten.

The production of Eiswein involves a lengthy and often risky procedure. After two or three frosty nights and a dawn temperature below minus 7°C, the grapes are sufficiently frozen to hand harvest and press into Eiswein.

Vintage 2012

Frosts and hailstorms at the beginning of the growing season have resulted



Jöst and son Christof Höppler produce their wines from Grüner Veltliner, Pinot Blanc, Chardonnay, Riesling and Sauvignon Blanc, Blaufränkisch, Zweigelt, Pinot Noir and St. Laurent grape varieties.

They also produce a range of excellent dessert wines. Höppler wines are distributed in Malaysia by Luen Heng F & B (www.luenheng.com) as well as elsewhere in Asia.

Above: The view of Burggarten from Kastner & Ohler Restaurant

Top row (from left to right): Pouring wines Vie Vinum Austria; Lenz Moser Trockenbeerenauslese; Erwin Sabathi of Sabathi Wines Styria Austria



Since its beginnings in 1964, Kettal has had an international calling to design and innovation. In the first years of the 21st century, Kettal acquired the brands, Hugonet and Triconfort, which came together to form Grupo Kettal. Today, Kettal works with the most important names in international design: Patricia Urquiola, Rodolfo Dordoni, Hella Jongerlius, Jasper Morrison and Emiliana Design studio.

Outdoor Designer Style

Kettal's raison d'être is the creation of timeless furniture, functional and expressive, which represents a contemporary culture and provides solutions to the emerging needs of modern life, based on a blend of creativity, customization, innovation and modern production. Kettal develops products specifically for each project.

The importance of research, both scientific and technological, has always been at the forefront of product development. The highly innovative nature of the brand means that today one can enjoy a

high quality product that in 2004 received ISO 9001 certification. Kettal, loyal to its philosophy of respect for the environment, uses eco-friendly paint. Almost all of Kettal's furniture paints are now 100 percent ecological and recyclable, and the wood used is protected under Perhutani certification.

To design spaces that fit in with their surroundings and outdoor experiences, Kettal combines materials, manufacturing techniques, colours and styles. For more information, please visit www.hospitality.com.my.

