

food & entertainment



So much to eat, so little space to put the eats into. Such is the dilemma of a traveller in Asia. From Japanese desserts with a Malaysian twist, to some of Australia's best boutique wines, there is just so much to savour. F&E professionals will also get an idea of who's doing what at which restaurant or hotel, with our up-to-date appointments section.

Alan Wichert ▶

Executive Chef

Eastin Grand Hotel Sathorn Bangkok, Thailand

Alan Wichert has been named Executive Chef of Eastin Grand Hotel Sathorn Bangkok. He brings more than 24 years of culinary experience to the team. Starting as an apprentice, it took him seven years to rise up the ranks and assume the position of Executive Chef at La Bouffe Restaurant in London. Over two decades, he has obtained professional cooking and kitchen management experience that has been rewarded with many accolades, notably The Swag & Tails restaurant in London being introduced into the Michelin Guide in 1998. Some of his upcoming plans include creating culinary delights for The Glass House, an all-day dining outlet and Azure, a fine Mediterranean restaurant and surpassing culinary norms and pushing the restaurants in the hotel to be "must-try" dining destinations.



Martin Braecker ▶

Executive Chef

Mandarin Orchard Singapore

German national Executive Chef Martin Braecker will be overseeing culinary innovations and standards for Mandarin Orchard's renowned restaurants and bars. He will also be tasked with the development of creative menus for themed events, meetings and banquets to drive the profile of the iconic hotel as a preferred venue for functions on prominent Orchard Road. No stranger to the arena of fine food and impeccable restaurant quality, he once honed his skills in Michelin-starred Gault & Millau.

A 22-year veteran in his field, he specializes in Cuisine du Marché, he believes such foundation allows him the flair and creativity to bring out the best flavours from using only the freshest of ingredients and the best produce available. His penchant for contemporary cuisine is evident in his cooking style, taking meticulous pride in presenting delicious, beautifully plated dishes.



◀ **Vincent Aw**

Executive Chef

Holiday Inn Singapore Orchard City Centre

With extraordinary experiences ranging from working with celebrity Chef Emmanuel Stroobant of Saint Pierre (Singapore), to being trained in Madrid, Spain at Michelin starred restaurant Sula, all under his belt all by the age of 27, Vincent Aw looks set to wow the culinary scene. Most recently, he has also been selected as part of the national team representing Singapore in the culinary challenge that will take place at Food & Hotel Asia 2012. His prior experience spans celebrated hospitality establishments, namely Pan Pacific Singapore and Amara Sanctuary Resort Sentosa, as well as dining gems such as Saint Pierre and Rogues Bar & Bistro. With the savoir-faire that he possesses, Aw will definitely bring a refreshing edge to the hotel.



Nik Ahmad Norman Shah, Assistant Japanese Chef at the Japanese Restaurant (formerly Gen), of Sunway Putra Hotel Kuala Lumpur (formerly Legend Hotel Kuala Lumpur) is one of the new breed of local Malaysian chefs. Although introverted, his love for food compels him to talk and reach out to share his food experiences with people. Schooled in the art of fine dining, and trained at Starhill Gallery's Shook!, Nik found Japanese cuisine to be the perfect outlet for his artistic soul.

Zen-tastic Desserts

Decadence comes to Japanese desserts at Sunway Putra Hotel



"My foundation comes from a Japanese lady chef whom I studied under in Japan. Japanese cuisine is all about art. To me, food is a way to express things artistically, and this is why I find Japanese cuisine suits what I try to do," says the chef with the twinkling smile.

Nik's desserts are one of the draws of the Japanese Restaurant because he goes beyond matcha ice cream. His quartet of desserts took ten years to refine and perfect, one technique at a time.

The pumpkin cheesecake combines cream cheese, sour cream and red bean paste into a dense, though fluffy mixture which is then topped with adzuki bean paste and placed on a sesame crust. Nik pays homage to traditional Malaysian desserts with his red bean banana mango fritters with black sesame ice cream. The combination is immensely satisfying.

Another best seller is the warm green tea chocolate cake which literally bursts with decadence. Velvety green tea sponge houses a centre of molten chocolate which come together in a paean of fragrance, texture and flavour. [ha](#)



Top row: Panel of Judges with the Organizing Committee at the Champagne Breakfast Session; Above (from left to right): Judges having a serious discussion; A judge providing comments and suggestions to one of the participating teams; Winners with their hard-won cheques and awards

Five And Counting

It was a case of success in numbers at the 5th Penang Chefs Challenge 2012 held recently. With over 520 participants, 23 Professional teams and 14 Apprentice teams, the competition was red hot for one of the most challenging culinary competitions in the region, which attracted participations from Thailand, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Australia, Switzerland, Italy, Austria and Malaysia over a heated three days.

The 5th Penang Chefs Challenge 2012 also saw the introduction of the first ever

Greenhorn Chefs Challenge, which will now become an annual inclusion in the years ahead. Over 270 participants competed in 350 entries for this challenge, with participants as young as 16 trying their skill.

The event was supported by the Ministry of Tourism Penang Office (Venue Sponsor), MAH Penang Chapter (Judges' Rooms Sponsor), Penang State Youth and Sport Council (1st PCC Greenhorn Sponsor), Tourism Malaysia (Waiter Race & Flyer Sponsor), Nestle Professional, Asahi Kitchen Equipments, Convotherm, Pritchitts Millac Gold Cream and MPPP. **ha**

The Art Of Food

Iconic French chef and restaurateur Pierre Gagnaire will be appearing at InterContinental Bali Resort for one day only on 21st April 2012. Pierre Gagnaire will be showcasing his own brand of cuisine that is poetic yet simple and created to evoke the senses. It is a style that has put Pierre Gagnaire at the forefront of the international culinary scene and secured three Michelin Stars for several of his restaurants.

The events at InterContinental Bali Resort will include a master cooking class and an exclusive wine dinner at Bella Singaraja. Gagnaire will be designing an intuitive set menu that celebrates food as an art form by allowing the ingredients to set the distinctive rhythm of each dish. [ha](#)



Above: DJ Angus Wong has set dates for a W residency
Right: Cooking class with maestro Tony Bilson

Meeting Of The Ws

W Retreat & Spa Maldives has announced the return of DJ Angus Wong for his second residency at the retreat on 27 and 28 April.

DJ Angus has toured the world as part of the W Hotels and burn studios DJ Lab global tour and has been spinning for guests of W's in Barcelona, Paris, London, Seminyak, and Hong Kong. W Hotels Worldwide and burn studios launched the DJ Lab music platform, which was developed by burn, a globally leading energy drink from The Coca-Cola Company, in August 2011, in Ibiza, Spain. [ha](#)

Epicurean Excellence

The 'Godfather of Australian Cuisine', Tony Bilson, impressed an enthusiastic dining audience with his signature brand of intelligent food during a recent three-day event at InterContinental Bali Resort.

During his time at the Resort Bilson created a menu that was served at two gourmet wine dinners held on consecutive nights at Bella Singaraja. Bilson's six-course degustation menu paid tribute to local ingredients and slow cooking innovation. Notable dishes included a full-flavoured Aiguillette of Duck with Creamed Spinach & Baby Vegetables expertly paired with a Pinot Noir, Chandon from the Yarra Valley.

Bilson also hosted two master cooking classes at KO where he shared a selection of his all-time favourite recipes. This involved an early morning visit to the local Jimbaran fish market to source island-fresh seafood. The finest ingredients culminated in an array of dishes that were savoured by the participants during a private luncheon. Both classes enabled a group of budding cooks to refine their kitchen skills under the guidance of a true culinary maestro. [ha](#)





Left: Live action station at Essence
Below: A table set to delight for Malaysian food bloggers

Egg-citing Easter

Hopping its way to Sheraton Imperial Kuala Lumpur's Essence Restaurant on April 8, the Easter Special will delight adults and children with an endless array of colourful and sweet tempting delights and a spread serving International and local delights. **ha**

World's Best Sandwich

A sandwich made with a dash of turmeric was named the Best Sandwich in the World at the recent Delifrance Sandwich World Cup competition in France. Created by Malaysian chef Darren Chin, the sandwich consisted of pork combined with herbs and spices and decorated with vegetables.

The Sandwich World Cup, which was organized by cafe-bakery chain Delifrance, took place on Feb 14 at the Paris School of Bakery and Pastry, and eight international entrants presented their sandwiches before a panel of international culinary experts.

The sandwiches presented in the competition had to meet certain criteria, including flavour association, speed of preparation and ease of assembly and consumption as well as "nutritional and cost price". **ha**



Blogger Bash

Knowing that the face of food reporting is changing, Hotel Armada Petaling Jaya took the initiative to begin getting to know food bloggers by inviting a select group to join them for a Valentine's Day menu tasting in February. The select group comprised of veteran blogger Rebecca Saw from RebeccaSaw.com, food writer and editor Karen-Michaela Tan (Food Tales & Trails) and Pamela Yeoh from malaysianfoodie.com.

The team from Armada presented plated versions of their buffet selections which were a smorgasbord of flavours and world cuisines.

Some of the offerings included Heart To Hear Chicken Terrine, broccoli soup, poached mackerel in curry gravy, butter prawns and golden egg floss, escalope of salmon with spinach oyster gratin and chocolate cheese brownies for dessert. **ha**

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Say goodbye to
polishing.



New flavours designed by Daniel Koh

Personalized Food Tour

Chef Daniel's Kitchen, the establishment helmed by Chef Daniel Koh and perched on the rooftop garden of Iluma mall, Singapore, has introduced new beginnings.

Following his success of pioneering modern Chinese cuisine in the 1980s, he is drawing inspiration from all of Asia. In line with Iluma mall's ongoing makeover, Koh has also introduced a main change at Chef Daniel's Kitchen – the quarterly Curated Menu Collection. Each Curated Menu is based around a central theme, and serves as an ideal platform for him to express his culinary creativity.

At the heart of his Curated Menus is the DK7 spice mix, a base sauce for Modern Asian cuisine and the result of his past five years of research in the kitchen. According to Auguste Escoffier, the famous French cookbook author in the late 1800s, sauces in French cuisine can be traced back to the five mother sauces – Hollandaise, Bechamel, Espagnol, Veloute and Tomato. Koh's desire to create a version of Asia's mother sauce prompted him to create the DK7 spice mix.

Made from seven spices and herbs familiar to Asian diners, a plethora of sauces and dishes can be created from one base sauce mix, a demonstration of its versatility. **ha**

Party In The Maldives

Escape to W Retreat & Spa Maldives, a private island and luxury playground in a wonderland of white sand beaches and turquoise lagoons where the UK music duo DJ Klaus and Ameet 'El Bongo' Jugnauth will perform at a pulsating beach party on May 26.

The unique combination of traditional club DJ and raw live music creates a sound and visual cocktail that is irresistibly infective and heightens the audience experience.

Between the pair they have played all over the world with a host of celebrity DJs and stars including Pete Tong, Shakira, Hot Chip and Bob Sinclair. Besides their London based residencies in Eclipse Bar and Boujis nightclubs, the duo also take London Beats abroad with regular performances at W Barcelona and W Doha.

The retreat has customized an exclusive package for the event with rates starting from US\$1335 for a minimum of 2 nights booking; which includes seaplane transfers from Male International Airport for two, cocktails at the SIP bar, dinner for two on the beach the night of the event, two tickets to the exclusive beach party, and a special gift. For more information, visit www.wretreatmaldives.com. **ha**



Hot ticket act LondonBeats has made a date with W Retreat & Spa Maldives

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Spirits, Sunsets And Style

When visiting the former Imperial city of Hue, one expects to encounter crumbling citadels, peaceful pagodas and picturesque streets; one does not expect to find a well-preserved sanctum to the glorious art-deco years, stocked with first-rate spirits and Cuban cigars, no less.

Oozing with 1920s elegance, Bar 'Le Gouverneur' at La Residence Hotel and Spa greets visitors in from the humid streets with refreshing airiness and comfy, red-cushioned armchairs crafted from dark wood in the low Vietnamese style.

Aside from a full list of premium cocktails, spirits, wines and cigars, Le Gouverneur also offers patrons a handsome billiards table, flat screen television, and wireless internet. **ha**

Drop Anchor

The Anchorage Bar at Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa is a place that makes you want to stay for a long time, taking in the panoramic view of the ocean, enjoying gorgeous sunsets, or relaxing under the stars with great cocktails and snacks while cool, ambient background music completes the experience. **ha**



Winds Of Change

The year of the dragon is said to be a transformational year. Ti Chen, which means Palace of the Emperor in English, is ushering the New Year completely transformed. Located at the Saujana Golf and Country Club, the restaurant has gone through a major refurbishment and is set to welcome diners from 13 January 2012 onwards.

Ti Chen's new interior evokes an atmosphere of elegance, surrounded with high rise pillars and rustic beams crossing from one corner to another and wooden chairs with specially designed upholstery. With a breathtaking view of the fairway, Ti Chen is a popular venue for Chinese weddings and is mostly known for its vibrant Cantonese and Sze Chuan cuisine. **ha**

*Top: Bar 'Le Gouverneur' at La Residence Hotel and Spa
Above: Anchorage Bar at Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa*

The Best Of Italy

Sheraton Imperial Kuala Lumpur, together with Sunrise Wines & Spirits Sdn Bhd hosted a fabulous wine dinner at Villa Danieli which brought together some of the best aspects of Italian culture.

Key to the merrymaking was Frescobaldi Wines' Erika Ribaldi, the brand's Asia Pacific Area Manager cum wine maker. Bold, vivacious and multifaceted, Friscobaldi eschewed stiff, formal presentations and wine lectures. Instead, she took her guests on a walking, tasting, sniffing tour of her beloved brand, explaining the nuances of each wine in layman speak, with flourishes of poetry in between, such as when she described the Nipozzano Chianti Rufina Riserva DOCG 2007 as "a kiss with red lipstick; sensuous and warm."

Villa Danieli's chef Simone La Gamba rose to the occasion with a five-course menu which set off the wines to perfection. The fresh tuna and scallops provided a perfect foundation to the fresh and flirty Albizzia Chardonnay Toscana 2010, while his grilled fish and seafood lent sea richness to the well-rounded, plump languidity of the Sangiovese/ Cabernet Sauvignon Remole Toscana 2010.

Distilling the art of wine making to the bare bones of grapes and salt, the charismatic Ribaldi had the guests eating comfortably out of her hand as she imparted the history, traditions and little anecdotes of the wines in her cellars. Possibly one of the best wine dinners this year, this was possibly the best way to arm guests with new wine knowledge. **ha**

In Love With Cinta

Cinta Restolounge is Kuala Lumpur's latest exclusive food & beverage club, located on Jalan Kia Peng. Its 8000 sq ft, with exclusive VIP Lounges, nightly live band performances, and 150 parking lots make Cinta a place to go.

Menus for events range from RM60 nett onwards, with a la carte menus ranging from RM10 nett onwards. Happy hour begins from 5pm – 8pm with beers going for as low as RM10 a mug. **ha**



Above: Cinta Restolounge is the newest comer to KL's hot dining scene

Left: Sheraton Imperial Kuala Lumpur's Villa Danieli did justice to the Frescobaldi wine dinner

Three's The Charm

Nerofico is another year older, as the vibrant fresco dining terrace celebrates its third birthday this year, inviting entertainment line ups, electrifying live music and fabulous Italian food for its patrons. Everyone had a blast with a memorable party and a fun-filled time with free flow drinks, food and great entertainment from the best in music, comedy, and storytelling all night long.

Hosted by actor Edwin Sumun as Shelah!, acts included comedy by actor and TV personality Razif Hashim, storytelling with 'The Big Fish' organized by Elaine Foster of Poetry Slam and music performances by Elvira Arul, John Thomas Trio and international band, Q Sound. Nerofico, Kuala Lumpur latest entertainment venue showcases the best in local, regional and international music talents, storytelling and comedy shows. It is a not-to-be-missed venue for live entertainment performances by leading bands, both local and international. **ha**

What A Coup!

Atop the stunning Marina Bay Sands SkyPark lies a new retreat, rising above the urban fray. A peerless venue that commands uninterrupted views of Singapore, where the striking city skyline can be enjoyed while savouring the finest cuisine, a perfect cocktail, or simply lapping up the sun by the infinity pool. KU DÉ TA, the famed iconic lifestyle brand has arrived on the shores of Singapore.

Featuring separate yet integrated outlets on top of the iconic Sands SkyPark, KU DÉ TA Singapore injects a new energy and sophistication into the city's nightlife.

This rooftop oasis will provide an instant retreat from the frenetic city life, where well travelled urbanites can escape. This expansive venue which spans over 14,500 square feet, and is perched 200 metres on top of the three Marina Bay Sands Hotel towers, will redefine the city's entertainment scene as it brings together a world class team of chefs, mixologists, sommeliers, and DJs, whose aim is to create Singapore's finest lifestyle venue. **ha**

Ku De Ta arrives in Singapore



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South West Wines

By David Bowden

The first thing visitors to Western Australia's Margaret River region notice is just how extensive it is and just how small the township of Margaret River really is. The wine region that most know as Margaret River extends from Cape Naturaliste in the north to Cape Leeuwin in the south, a distance of over 100 km with vineyards being located along the coastal strip. Other recognized wine regions in the southwest include Blackwood Valley, Geographe, Pemberton, Peel and Great Southern. This means there are over 150 vineyards to visit in these southwest wine regions that extends from Mandurah fronting the Indian Ocean to Albany on the Southern Ocean.



Top row (left to right): Margaret River vineyards; Vasse Felix Margaret River signboard
Above: Chardonnay grapes in hand
Right: Julian Wright, Marri Wood Park

A Mediterranean climate (hot dry summers and mild wet winters) makes Margaret River ideal for grape growing. What Margaret River lacks in terms of wine heritage (wine production only started in 1967) it makes up for in quality. While many figures are bandied around, Margaret River is best known for its quality rather than quantity.

The region's wine reputation was founded on its Cabernets and Cabernet Merlot blends. Other grape varieties that do well are Semillon, Sauvignon Blanc, Shiraz and Chardonnay. One of the region's iconic blends is Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon. Some winemakers are crafting excellent wines from Chenin Blanc and the Great Southern Region produces award-winning Rieslings.

Distinctive Producers

There are many well-established and well-known producers with some of the old guard like Cape Mentelle, Cullen, Evans & Tate, Leeuwin Estate, Madfish Moss Wood, Saracen, Vasse Felix and Voyager Estate being household names.

Creativity, innovation and reinvention are characteristics of the region with some exciting new developments being noted at the following wineries.

Hay Shed Hill is a classic old vineyard in the heart of the Willabrup Valley, a premium sub-region in Margaret River. Here, winemaker Michael Kerrigan produces wines under the Hay Shed and Pitchfork labels. In addition to his flagship wines of Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon, Kerrigan also produces a Shiraz Tempranillo blend with liquorice

region lends itself to producing fine Chenin Blanc wines. His Reserve Chenin Blanc stands against the best from France, with the flavours of oak and fruit perfectly balanced.

Just south of Margaret River township is the delightful Xanadu which has reinvented itself over the past few years with possibly its most recent noteworthy wine being the 2010 Next of Kin Shiraz. Winemaker Glenn Goodall produces classic straight varietals such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz, Chardonnay, Viognier and Semillon as well as a classic blend of Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon. He also produces a Rosé, fortified Shiraz and a delightfully delicious Cane Cut dessert Semillon/Sauvignon Blanc wine. The vineyard is also home to one of the smartest lunch-time restaurants in the region.



Above (from left to right): Voyager Estate Margaret River tasting room; Marri Wood Park wines and cheese; Howard Park vineyards

characteristics but a lighter wine for drinking in warmer climates such as Asia.

Howard Park was established in 1986 with its associated Madfish label being well-established throughout Asia. Howard Park is a family-owned business that has wineries and cellardors in both Margaret River and Denmark in the Great Southern Region. While it produces many impressive wines, Howard Park Riesling is making connoisseurs sit up and pay attention. Riesling thrives in cool weather, and microclimates in Western Australia's southwest work their magic to produce fully-flavoured grapes which are treated with loving care by the Howard Park winemakers.

While named after one of the famous forest trees of the region, the comparison between this and the fine wines of Marri Wood Park end there. Leading bio-dynamic winemaker Julian Wright and his charming wife Lisa believe that the

Grape Escapes

Many Margaret River wines are distributed throughout Asia. Considering Perth is just over five hours flying time on AirAsia X's daily flight from Kuala Lumpur, it is understandable that Margaret River is a popular destination for those living in Asia. From Perth, Margaret River is another 300 km or three-hour's drive south of the West Australian capital.

For those who appreciate fine wines, creative cuisine and contrasting landscapes, a stay of at least two to three days is recommended to really appreciate the beaches, forests, galleries and vineyards that contribute to making this a great destination to explore and absorb.

The region's climate makes it ideal for holidays and for those who like to include some wine touring on their holiday itinerary, the southwestern of Western Australia is the perfect destination. [ha](#)

Kingson Kok ▶

Director of Food and Beverage
InterContinental
Kuala Lumpur,
Malaysia

A graduate of Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne with a Bachelor of Science in International Hospitality Management, Kingson Kok has been working with various IHG hotels. Notable postings include

InterContinental Hong Kong, InterContinental Chicago and Crowne Plaza Beijing.

In his new position as Director of Food and Beverage of InterContinental Kuala Lumpur, Kok will play a pivotal role to implement long-term strategic plans, spearhead innovative Food and Beverage promotions and improvements in service quality for the Food and Beverage department. He will be responsible for managing the six restaurants and pub along with the extensive conference and event facilities to ensure the continued growth of the Hotel and of course, most importantly to increase both restaurants and banquet revenue.



▲ Gilbert Uy

Director of Food and Beverage
Dusit Thani Manila, Philippines

Gilbert Uy has spent 25 years in the hospitality industry. In his present post he plans to continue to strive to pioneer and improve services and offerings in food and beverage. He has developed some new concepts like the Family Sunday Brunch, Dusit Green Hour that was an off-shoot of the Earth Hour, Wine Stock Market promo and seasonal promos.

While it was the glamour of serving beautiful people in an elegant environment that attracted him to the hospitality industry, it is the non-stop happenings that keep his love for the field alive and spontaneous.

Uy uses a quote from his grandfather: a winner never quits, a quitter never wins as his adage for success.

◀ Errol De Castro

Food and Beverage Manager
Grand Park Orchard, Singapore

Errol De Castro joined Grand Park Orchard as Food and Beverage Manager in May 2010. Under his helm, Open House clinched the Gold Winner in the "Most Unique F&B Concept" (2011 – 2013).

Castro brings with him the synergy of knowledge, expertise and more than 25 years of experience in the hospitality industry. Prior to joining Grand Park Orchard, he had undertaken hotel openings and worked in prestigious hotels including Ritz Carlton, Fullerton, Hyatt, Hilton, Westin Kuala Lumpur and more.

With years of invaluable experience and knowledge of the hospitality industry, Castro is committed to driving the Food and Beverage operations and to advocate the success of the hotel.

