

Food Picks



Tan Hsueh Yun
Food Editor
recommends

NUANCED CHILLI PASTE

What is a chilli coward like me doing, eating harissa, the Middle Eastern chilli paste (above), right off the spoon? I cannot get enough of this condiment, made in-house at Pistachio, a restaurant in Zhongshan Mall.

It sings brightly of preserved lemons, which balance out the heat. So many versions I have had are just all burn, no subtlety. This nuanced condiment is a small part of my meal, but it is the one I remember long after.

I mix some in with the Moroccan Couscous Royale (above right, \$38, serves two) it is supposed to complement, making an already good dish even better. Smear some on the housemade Merguez sausage that comes with the couscous, and that is heaven in a forkful.

Wedge into a corner and sitting cheek by jowl with a toast and kopi store, this restaurant in a Balestier Road mall seems an unlikely place for good Middle Eastern food, but it has already built a following.



For one thing, Pistachio makes terrific pita bread (\$4), which is 40cm long. Cooked on a hot stone in the oven until it puffs up, the bread looks stunning and tastes even better. I break off pieces and dip them in the eggplant dip Baba Ghannoush (\$8) – garlicky, smoky and with just a hint of sweetness from the pomegranate arils on top.

Red Snapper Fillet Marrakech (\$28) is marinated in chermoula, a North African fresh herb and spice sauce, and arrives beautifully flaky. The aromatic basmati rice served alongside is a low glycemic index version from the Himalayas, says chef Khaled Elelimi, who runs the restaurant.

The 49-year-old, who has worked at, among other places, the Four Seasons Maldives and the Shangri-La here, makes much of what he serves in-house. The harissa alone takes

more than six months. It starts with the making of preserved lemons, which takes 15 days, before it is ground with chillies and spices, and the resulting paste sits, vacuum packed for six months, developing flavour.

His attention to detail pays off big time.

For dessert, I go with Um Ali (\$16), an Egyptian pudding made with pastry, nuts and flakes of coconut and baked with cream. I expect it to be very sweet, but it is not. That allows flavour from the crisp coconut and the nuts to come through. Turkish coffee (\$6.50) ensures I am not in a food coma for the rest of the day.

WHERE: Pistachio Middle Eastern & Mediterranean Grill, 01-15 Zhongshan Mall, 20 Ah Hood Road **MRT:** Novena **TEL:** 6262-6400 **OPEN:** 11.30am to 2.30pm, 5.30 to 9pm daily **INFO:** www.pistachio grill.com/

ST PHOTOS: TAN HSUEH YUN

FOOD

PROMOTIONS

Morsels' New Set Menus

Fusion restaurant Morsels switched out its a la carte menus earlier this year and has introduced more streamlined sharing set menus. For summer-autumn, there are dishes such as pork jowl char siew with housemade char siew sauce, paired with Hokkaido tellin clams, and beef rendang tartare featuring Stockyard Australian Angus oyster blade, cured in housemade rendang paste and mixed with a Morsels version of gherkins. Other highlights include cured Kuhlbarra barramundi, cordyceps chicken leg and Primrose Farms St Louis pork ribs. Diners can also choose from sharing or omakase menus.

WHERE: 01-04, 25 Dempsey Road **MRT:** Botanic Gardens **WHEN:** Lunch: Tue - Sat (noon - 3pm), Sun (11am - 3pm) Dinner: Tue - Thu (6 - 10pm), Fri - Sat (6 - 10.30pm) **PRICE:** Set lunch: \$45++ - \$65++; set dinner: \$85++ - \$115++; omakase lunch/dinner menus: \$95++/\$135++ **TEL:** 6266-3822 **INFO:** E-mail reservations@morsels.com.sg

Unlimited Appetisers With Taiwan Porridge At Goodwood's Coffee Lounge

Goodwood Park Hotel's Coffee Lounge, known for its Taiwan porridge and local fare, is launching its unlimited appetisers and Taiwan porridge menu and introducing eight small plates to go with a steaming bowl of rice or porridge. These include eggplant with chilli oil, chive flowers with sakura ebi, Fen Pin hot and spicy sauce, braised kao fu (resembling the texture of tofu), chilled jellyfish flower with cucumber, sambal anchovies and stir-fried silver fish.

WHERE: Goodwood Park Hotel, 22 Scotts Road **MRT:** Orchard/Newton **WHEN:** Tomorrow - Oct 7, noon - 2.30pm & 6 - 10.30pm **PRICE:** \$28.80++ a person **TEL:** 6730-1746 **INFO:** E-mail coffee_lounge@goodwoodpark hotel.com

\$1 Wings At Sticky Wings

Sticky Wings celebrates its first anniversary with three new Asian heritage flavours. Customers will be treated to one new mystery flavour each week at \$1++ for each chicken wing (limited to three a customer) and can win \$50 Sticky Wings vouchers by

voting for their favourite flavour. The winning flavour will become a regular menu item. The first 50 customers will also get a complimentary serving of the new curry mashed potatoes. **WHERE:** 02-05 Westgate Mall, 3 Gateway Drive **MRT:** Jurong East **WHEN:** Sept 7 - Oct 5; weekdays, 7.30am - 10pm & weekends, 8am - 10pm **PRICE:** \$1++ **TEL:** 6266-8455 **INFO:** www.stickywings.sg

SINGAPORE GRAND PRIX

High Octane Festivities At Pan Pacific

Besides its race-inspired decor, Pan Pacific Singapore is ready for the Singapore Grand Prix with events and offers such as the Bubble Lift Race, a pre-race barbecue buffet at Poolside Patio, a revved-up Sunday champagne brunch at Edge, a post-race supper menu, a DJ appearance and race dining highlights.

WHERE: Level 3 Pan Pacific Singapore, 7 Raffles Boulevard **MRT:** Promenade **WHEN:** Sept 16, noon - 3.30pm **PRICE:** Brunch: \$158++ - \$388++ an adult, \$79++ a child (six - 12 years old) **TEL:** 6826-8240 **INFO:** E-mail dining.ppsin@panpacific.com

MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL

Glutinous Rice Balls With Chui Huay Lim And Jumbo Seafood Set Menus

In celebration of the Mid-Autumn Festival, the set menus of Jumbo Seafood outlets (except NSRCC) and Chui Huay Lim Teochew Cuisine will come with glutinous rice balls. At Chui Huay Lim, sesame glutinous rice balls in walnut paste will be served with every order of the three-in-one set menu (\$238++ a set), which features specialties such as Teochew-style hotpot with seafood and Teochew-style roasted suckling pig (half). At Jumbo Seafood outlets, the sesame glutinous rice ball dessert will accompany every order of premium set menus (\$688++ - \$988++).

WHERE: Chui Huay Lim Teochew Cuisine, 01-02 Chui Huay Lim Club, 190 Keng Lee Road (Newton MRT); Jumbo Seafood outlets at East Coast Seafood Centre, Riverside Point, The Riverwalk & Dempsey Hill **WHEN:** Sept 14 - 24 **PRICE:** Set menus: \$238++ - \$988++ **TEL:** 6732-3637 (Chui Huay Lim), 6442-3435 (East Coast), 6532-3435 (Riverside), 6534-3435 (Riverwalk), 6479-3435 (Dempsey) **INFO:** jumbogroup.sg

AROMATIC LAKSA

For years, Madam Liew Kiaw Hoon's killer recipe for laksa was the stuff of legend among her extended family, kampung neighbours and her children's friends.

Now, anyone can sample a bowl of that laksa at Madam Liew's Recipes, a stall in an East Coast Road coffee shop right next to Siglap Centre. Her son Leslie Chua, 52, runs the stall with help from his sisters.

When he opened at the end of June, there was just one dish on the menu – laksa (\$4.80).

The gravy for Madam Liew's version is aromatic with spice. That rempah is what makes her laksa unique. While other versions are heavy with dried shrimp (never a bad thing in my book),



her rempah allows the spices to shine instead. The gravy is not overwhelmed by the dried shrimp or too much coconut milk.

Sliced fish cake, cockles and perfectly cooked prawns top the noodles. A dollop of sambal adds just the right amount of heat. If you prefer laksa unfiltered, go for Laksa Goreng (\$3.50, above), added to the menu early last month. The rempah is fried

with the noodles and there is no distraction from liquid or coconut milk. Squeeze calamansi lime into the noodles to give it zing.

Madam Liew, an 87-year-old mother of eight, by all accounts hale and hearty, has other recipes in her arsenal – for popiah and chicken curry, among others. If they are as good as the laksa, I would happily trek to Siglap regularly, first checking on Facebook that the stall, which does not have a regular day off, is open.

WHERE: Madam Liew's Recipes, 727 East Coast Road, 3838 Eating Place **MRT:** Paya Lebar **OPEN:** 8.30am to 4pm daily (check Facebook for days when the stall is closed) **INFO:** www.facebook.com/mdmliewrecipes



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