

FoodPicks

Tan Hsueh Yun Food Editor recommends



**A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE AT PRINCE**  
Coffee houses used to proliferate in Singapore.

Places like Silver Spoon and Copper Kettle served Western food cooked by Hainanese chefs – pork chops, steaks, fish and chips. These were also places to go to for kids' birthday cakes and ice cream served in metal cups.

Recently, I stepped back in time at Prince Coffee House in Beach Road. Walk past and you will miss the place. It is completely nondescript. I was there because a friend had given me pineapple tarts from Prince and they were good. I had to check the place out.

The Pyrex crockery has been in use for 45 years, the placemats are laminated sheets of pink and white chequered paper and the dimly lit restaurant, which used to be at Shaw Towers where Prince Cinema was, looks decades-old.

A sprightly octogenarian, Uncle Jimmy, runs the front of the house. On my second visit, my sister points to photos on the wall of actors Chin Han and Lin Ching-hsia, who were guests at Prince in its heyday.

But all this charm means nothing if the food is not up to scratch and, in this case, the kitchen delivers.

Fried Seafood Hor Fun (\$7.50) has serious wok hei. Every strand of rice noodle is charred perfectly and that beautiful searing would have been much more apparent if there had been less gravy. House-pickled green chillies are the perfect accompaniment.

I must also try the Fried Beef Hor Fun (\$7.50). I would have, but for the fact that I'd ordered Prince's Special Ox-Tail Stew (\$30), a huge serving with two hefty chunks of oxtail and several smaller ones too, steamed potatoes, cabbage, carrots and green beans. With this dish, I would have loved much more of that savoury gravy, not overly thickened and just perfect with the gelatinous beef, cooked to total submission.

A restaurant worth going back to is one where I plan what I'll order next time. Hainanese Pork Chop (\$15, above) will always be on that list. The slices of pork are thin, but have a cracker crumb crust that stands up to the slightly fluorescent and zingy tomato gravy. Crinkle-cut fries are cooked to atomic crispness because they, too, have to hold their own with the sauce. And for old time's sake, the dish is dotted with canned peas.

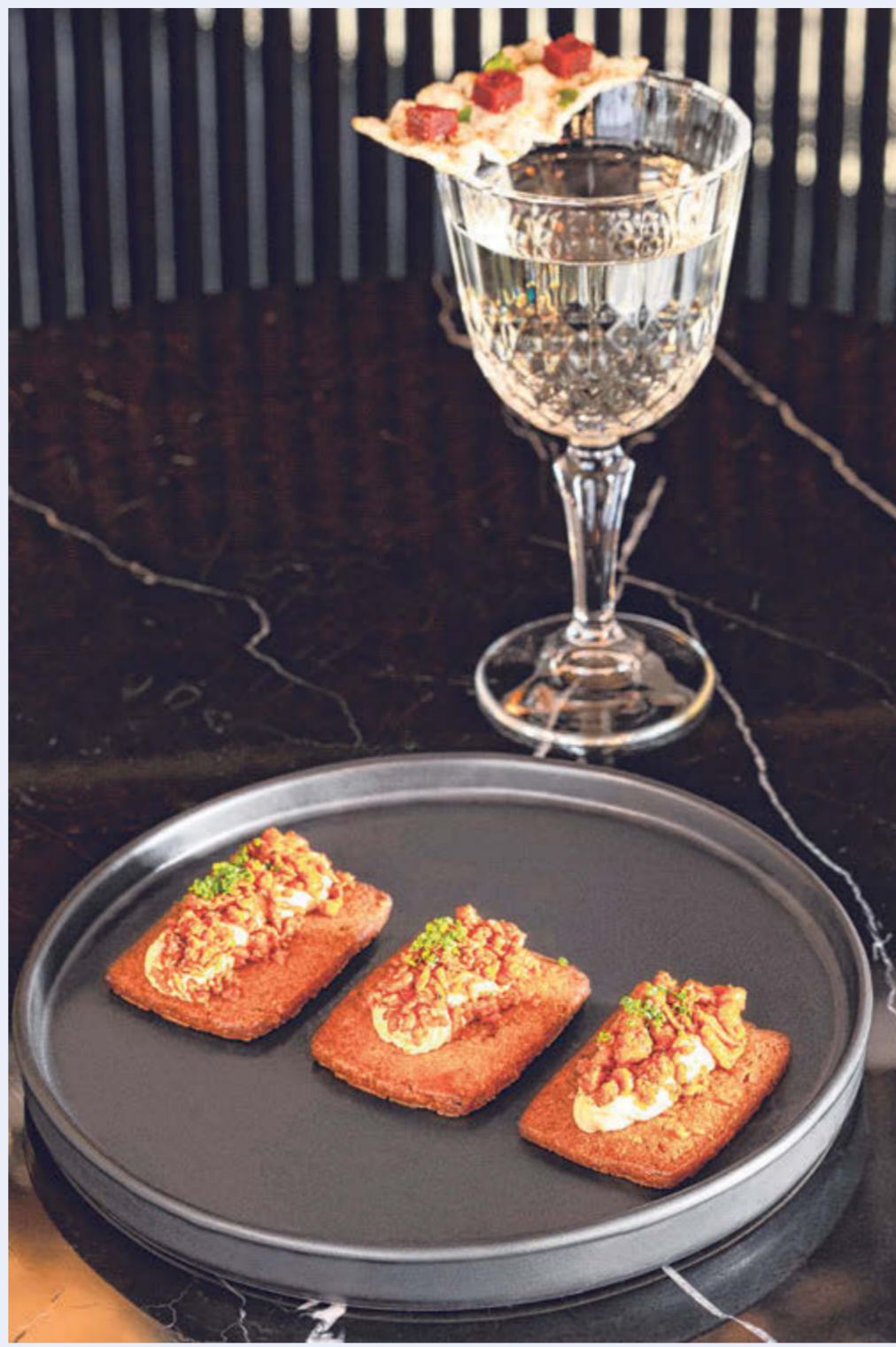
Dessert is on the house and it's usually chin chow or fruit cup. Pick the grass jelly – the thick chunks taste like the real deal.

At the entrance of the restaurant is a tempting array of housemade treats. Apricot Cake (\$10), loaf-shaped and studded with chunks of dried apricot and raisins, has a tender, crumbly texture and more than a hint of salt.

I love the crisp pastry of the Chicken Pie (\$7.50), but find the filling heavy. A layer of potatoes lines the bottom, then large chunks of chicken in a thick grey sauce, and then the golden top. Perhaps I can just demolish the pastry and leave the filling.

Of course, I have to tell my colleagues about the meal and one of them, too young to have gone to a coffee house, Googles the restaurant. She tells me that the slogan for Prince, written in Chinese, is: "It's not just nostalgia, it's the feeling and passion."

So important in this day and age, don't you think?  
**WHERE:** Prince Coffee House, 249 Beach Road **MRT:** Bugis **TEL:** 6468-2088 **OPEN:** 11am to 9pm daily



COMFORT FOOD AT JAM

I don't know how he did it, but chef Ming Tan, 33, managed to get onto my list of best-dishes-of-the-year twice.

There was Lolla's Sea Urchin Pudding in 2012 and Park Bench Deli's Kong Bak Banh Mi in 2015.

Can he do it a third time, at his new 42-seat restaurant, JAM at Siri House, in Dempsey Road? If he does, it will likely be for Chicken In A Biscuit (\$12, above). Of course, this snack is nothing like the salty cracker it is named after, and which the chef likes cold, out of the fridge. Instead, a brown, crisp and very short chicken fat cookie is topped with ginger and garlic cream cheese and crisp nubs of chicken skin. Every bite reminds me of poached chicken with ginger-scallion sauce, but a thousand times more decadent. And delightful.

His menu of mostly sharing dishes and a handful of main courses is not cutting-edge. But eating edgily every night is impossible, so the comfort-food vibe strikes a chord with me.

Chef Tan is not a one-trick-pony and Belinjo Crackers, Crab Fat Crema

(\$13), now on the specials menu, combines the richness of the Filipino condiment of crab roe and coral with the bitterness of the crackers. It is an inspired pairing and he would do well to keep the intensity of the crema, tempting though it is to water down its richness.

If richness alarms you, there are lighter options. Scallop (\$30) – sliced ones from Hokkaido with yuzu and truffle dressing, topped with trout roe and shreds of kombu – is a fresh, vibrant note in the meal. So is Tuna Tartare (\$26), shoyu- and mirin-cured chunks of the fish tossed with scallion oil and horseradish and topped with green grapes.

But I crave carbs and love Spicy Potatoes (\$16), another contender for best dish. Hasselback potatoes roasted perfectly crisp are slathered with mala mayonnaise and showered with beef lardons. There is something so addictive about the chilli and Sichuan peppercorn-laced mayonnaise, which stings the palate lightly and pleasurably.

Desserts by chef Charis Wong, 27, continue the down home vibe, but with sophisticated grace notes. The

PHOTOS: JAM AT SIRI HOUSE, TAN HSUEH YUN



SOURDOUGH TO LOVE

In Singapore, a person can get whiplash tracking restaurants. Places open in a flash. Places close just as quickly. The Bakery by Woodlands Sourdough at Serene Centre is no more.

Bakers Nurhasanah Johari and her husband Chalith Kanchara Kariyawasam are taking a break. Their business partner Bridget Emily Chen has been running Micro Bakery & Kitchen at the same premises since the start of the year. Making the sourdough loaves is Jasllyn Chua, 24, a home bread maker stepping up to the big leagues.

One bite of Micro's Ricotta (\$12, above), a slice of sourdough toast topped with housemade ricotta cheese, and I am jolted out of my end-of-the-work-week stupor. The bread is better than before. I loved The Bakery's toast, with its funky toppings. But when I bought loaves of the bread to take home, I always found the crumb a little wet.

That is no longer a problem. If the bread was just a little more tangy, it would be perfect. Micro should keep on making batches of ricotta. The soft cheese is just salty enough and is a plush landing pad for tomatoes roasted until sticky and sweet, spinach leaves and basil chiffonade.

Other treats include Lemon (\$5), a slice of loaf cake studded with chia seeds and with a bright, sunny vibe. Caramel notes infuse the Banana Walnut (\$5) loaf cake, although there could be more of the fruit in it.

Order a Chocolate Chip Sea Salt cookie (\$3), to go with the excellent coffee.

**WHERE:** Micro Bakery & Kitchen, 01-05 Serene Centre, 10 Jalan Serene **MRT:** Botanic Gardens **TEL:** 8339-4133 **OPEN:** 8.30am to 5pm (Wednesdays to Sundays), closed on Mondays and Tuesdays **INFO:** www.facebook.com/microbakerykitchen

FOOD

PROMOTIONS

Half-price On Selected Dishes At Paradise Restaurants

To mark the opening of its 100th outlet worldwide, Paradise Group is giving a 50 per cent discount on selected dishes, such as Poached Grouper Fillet In Chinese Rice Wine (Taste Paradise), Teochew Style Stewed Duck (Paradise Teochew), Assorted Balls Platter (Beauty In A Pot), Twister Prawn Roll (Le Shrimp Ramen), Steamed Kampong Chicken In Canton Style (Canton Paradise) and Braised Pork Rib With Scallion (LeNu). **WHERE:** Go to [paradisegp.com/restaurant-locator](http://paradisegp.com/restaurant-locator) for list of restaurants **WHEN:** Mon - Fri (except eve of & on public holidays) till April 26 **PRICE:** Various prices; discount applies for Paradise Gourmet Rewards members or payments by Citibank cards **INFO:** paradisegp.com/event-and-promotion

Weekday Dim Sum Set At Min Jiang

Min Jiang's Weekday Dim Sum Set Lunch menu highlights include Steamed Spare Ribs With Black Bean Sauce, Steamed Conpoy And Scallop Dumplings, Crispy Vegetable Spring Rolls, Pan-Fried Carrot Cake and Pork & Century Egg Congee. There are also supplementary dishes from \$8+, such as the signature Min Jiang Hot & Sour Soup or Daily Double-Boiled Soup, Ee-Fu Noodles With Shredded Duck or Braised Rice Vermicelli With Assorted Seafood and Wok-Fried Seasonal Vegetables. **WHERE:** Goodwood Park Hotel, 22 Scotts Road **MRT:** Orchard/Newton

**WHEN:** Mon - Fri (except eve of & on public holidays), Mon - April 26, 11.30am - 2.30pm **PRICE:** \$36++ for two people, supplementary dishes from \$8++ **TEL:** 6730-1704 **INFO:** E-mail [min\\_jiang@goodwoodparkhotel.com](mailto:min_jiang@goodwoodparkhotel.com)

Gourmet Burgers At Crossroads Cafe

Crossroads Cafe at Singapore Marriott Tang Plaza has a selection of gourmet burgers, such as Mr Rossini (\$38++) with a wagyu beef patty, foie gras and gruyere cheese, and The Bondi Iceberg Burger (\$34++) that comes with a crab cake, poached egg and avocado. Other choices are Santorini Greece Lamb Burger (\$33++) and The Italian Job (\$30++). **WHERE:** Singapore Marriott Tang Plaza Hotel, 320 Orchard Road **MRT:** Orchard **WHEN:** Till April 30, cafe opens 7am - midnight (till 2am on Fri & Sat) **PRICE:** \$30++ - \$38++ **TEL:** 6831-4605 **INFO:** E-mail [mhrs.sindt.fb.reservations@marriotthotels.com](mailto:mhrs.sindt.fb.reservations@marriotthotels.com)

Khmer Dining Edition At SPRMRKT

The seven-course gastronomic menu reflects rich Cambodian food culture. Dishes include steamed scallops with La Plantation Kampot green peppercorn, mushrooms and roselle flower sauce, grilled duck on crispy lbis brown rice, and Kromaonthong, a crispy green glutinous rice flack, stuffed in young coconut flesh and banana, passionfruit and caramel ice cream. The meal also comes with a complimentary welcome cocktail, Aspara Blush. **WHERE:** SPRMRKT at STPI, 41 Robertson Quay **MRT:** Clarke Quay **WHEN:** March 8 & 9, 7pm **PRICE:** \$178++ a person (add \$90++

for wine-pairing) **TEL:** 9736-4032 **INFO:** E-mail [contactus@sprmrkt.com.sg](mailto:contactus@sprmrkt.com.sg)

Gin & Cocktails At BeGIN

BeGIN is an industrial gin haven boasting more than 50 labels. Discover the roots of gin and start your night with Gin Flight (\$28) – a tasting of four types of gin. For food, there are contemporary British-Indian small plates such as Crab Bomb-A (\$13 for five pieces), Samboo-Sa pasties (\$11 for three pieces) and Nacho Del Goa (\$15 for five pieces). Cocktails include Yukie (\$22) for matcha lovers, the cocoa-infused rum Koko (\$23) and the signature Jagmohan (\$25) with spices and completed with the tomato, chilli and ginger chutney on the side with fried crisps. **WHERE:** The Penny Black Upstairs, 27A Boat Quay **MRT:** Raffles Place **WHEN:** Mon - Thu: 5pm - 1am; Fri & Sat: 5pm - 2am **PRICE:** Food: \$11 - \$15, Gin Flight: \$28, cocktails: \$22 - \$25 **TEL:** 6538-0584 **INFO:** E-mail [enquiry@begin.com.sg](mailto:enquiry@begin.com.sg)

Opus' 4th Birthday & Revamped Menu

Opus Bar & Grill at Hilton Singapore celebrates its fourth birthday with a fully revamped dinner menu and will give a free bottle of premium red wine (worth \$90++) with an order of any sharing steak from \$128++. New on the menu are items such as 600g New Zealand roasted tenderloin steak, hand-cut steak tartare with french fries, crab cake with celeriac remoulade and pink grapefruit; 600g grilled butterfied spring chicken; New Zealand rockling fish with saffron-marinated seasonal vegetables; and grilled jumbo prawns with garlic butter skewer.

**WHERE:** Lobby Level Hilton Singapore, 581 Orchard Road **MRT:** Orchard **WHEN:** Dinner: 6.30 - 10.30pm **PRICE:** Sharing cuts: \$128++ - \$158++ **TEL:** 6730-3390 **INFO:** E-mail [opus@hilton.com](mailto:opus@hilton.com)

Feast@East Heritage Feast

Feast@East Buffet Restaurant serves a mix of local cuisine and Peranakan favourites at its Heritage Feast, with dishes such as ayam buah keluak, chap chye, Katong laksa and durian paste. Singaporeans of the Merdeka and Pioneer generations enjoy special nett prices.

**WHERE:** Feast@East Buffet Restaurant, Level 3 Grand Mercure Singapore Roxy, Roxy Square, 50 East Coast Road **MRT:** Eunos/Dakota **WHEN/PRICE:** Lunch (noon - 2.30pm): \$46++ a person; dinner (6 - 10pm): \$52++; half price for children; special discounts for seniors, Pioneer & Merdeka generations **TEL:** 6340-5665 **INFO:** E-mail H3610-FB3@accor.com

EASTER

Takeaway Goodies From Pacific Marketplace

Pacific Marketplace offers two special Easter Bundles (\$182 to \$198 nett) comprising a gourmet roast – such as peppercorn-crust prime beef rib eye, herb-roasted bone-in pork loin and Greek-style roasted bone-in New Zealand lamb leg. Other takeaways include Animal Family Egg, Marshmallow Egg, cranberry cream cheese hot cross bun and mango passion gateau. **WHERE:** Pacific Marketplace, Level 1 Pan Pacific Singapore, 7 Raffles Boulevard **MRT:** Promenade **WHEN:** March 30 - April 21, 8am - 10pm

**PRICE:** \$6 - \$198 nett; 15 per cent early-bird discount till April 7 **TEL:** 6826-8240 **INFO:** E-mail [dining.ppsin@panpacific.com](mailto:dining.ppsin@panpacific.com) or go to [pacificmarketplace.sg](http://pacificmarketplace.sg)

Lime's Super Lunch

Have a feast of eggs at Parkroyal on Pickering's Lime Restaurant, such as sous-vide egg, mushroom and asparagus ragout, Scotch quail egg with hollandaise espuma, egg ravioli carbonara or Turkish baked fish with vegetables and eggs. Other treats include Cajun spiced boneless lamb leg, king crab and Boston lobster. Children can enjoy spaghetti in tomato sauce, fried chicken wings and mini pizzas and take part in the various activities at the Easter Kiddy Corner.

**WHERE:** Lobby Level Parkroyal on Pickering, 3 Upper Pickering Street **MRT:** Chinatown **WHEN:** April 21, 12.30 - 3.30pm **PRICE:** \$108++ - \$198++ an adult, \$58 a child (four - 12 years old) **TEL:** 6809-8899 **INFO:** E-mail [lime.prps@parkroyalhotels.com](mailto:lime.prps@parkroyalhotels.com)

WINE/WHISKY EVENTS

Freeman Vineyard & Winery Debut Dinner At Aura

Freeman Vineyard & Winery's four-course dinner at Aura will have dishes such as coho salmon, guinea fowl tortelli and Kagoshima wagyu with daikon, parsley root and prosciutto sauce. Besides the Jacquart Brut Mosaïque champagne served with the welcome canapes, other featured wines include Freeman Ryo-fu Chardonnay 2017, Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 2016 and Yu-ki Estate Pinot Noir 2015. **WHERE:** Aura Sky Lounge, 06-02 National Gallery Singapore,

1 St Andrews Road **MRT:** City Hall **WHEN:** Wed, 7pm **PRICE:** \$175++ a person **TEL:** 6866-1977 **INFO:** E-mail [book@aura.sg](mailto:book@aura.sg)

Lianhe Zaobao's Glendronach Dinner

The six-course dinner includes dishes that are not usually featured in Teochew Restaurant Huat Kee's regular menu. They include fried shark's fin wrapped in lettuce, braised fish with black olive, signature braised caramelised sea cucumber and 30-head abalone, and glazed pork belly with glutinous rice and mashed taro. Dishes will be paired with whiskies from The Glendronach and will include The Sherry Cask Connoisseurs. Diners get a bottle of The Glendronach Original 12 Years worth \$138.

**WHERE:** Teochew Restaurant Huat Kee, 02-01 RELC Building, 30 Orange Grove Road **MRT:** Stevens **WHEN:** Thu, 7pm **PRICE:** \$270++ a person (\$216 for payment by Citi cards) **TEL:** 6319-4038 **INFO:** E-mail [asianmasters@sph.com.sg](mailto:asianmasters@sph.com.sg)

Villa Giada Wine Dinner At Zafferano

Villa Giada owner-winemaker Andrea Faccio hosts this five-course dinner, which starts with a selection of the chef's canapes (paired with Villa Giada Suri Bianco D'asti DOP 2017), followed by wagyu beef tartare (Villa Giada Suri Barbera D'asti DOCG 2016) and slow-cooked veal cheek (Villa Giada Dedicato Superiore Nizza Barbera D'asti DOCG 2015). **WHERE:** Level 43 Ocean Financial Centre, 10 Collyer Quay **MRT:** Raffles Place **WHEN:** March 8, 7pm **PRICE:** \$108++ a person **TEL:** 6509-1488 **INFO:** E-mail [info@zafferano.sg](mailto:info@zafferano.sg)