

**FoodPicks**

**Wong Ah Yoke Senior Food Correspondent recommends**

**DELIGHTFUL RAMEN**

Among the many Japanese ramen brands to arrive here recently, Afuri Ramen must be one of the most anticipated.

Since it opened in the new Funan Mall last month, it has been thronged by long queues, rivalling those seen at Afuri outlets in Tokyo since the brand started in 2003.

What makes the ramen here (right) stand out is that yuzu is added to the chicken broth.

There is a choice of shio (salt) and shoyu (soya sauce) ramen. I usually prefer shio because it has a cleaner taste, which enables you to actually taste the broth base.

But in the case of Afuri, the shoyu version is quite delightful as the citrusy yuzu juice brightens and lightens the flavours.

The thin noodles work well with the light broth and there is plenty of shredded bamboo shoot to provide crunch. A half-egg, a slice of chashu and a sheet of seaweed complete the bowl.

There is also a spicy ratan ramen, but this is strictly for chilli lovers because the yuzu is barely discernible here.

There are also two versions of tsukemen on the menu – spicy and non-spicy. These are dry noodles served with a dipping sauce that is spiked with yuzu. The noodles are wholegrain and thicker to stand up to the stronger-tasting sauce, accompanied by chashu that is cut into cubes instead of sliced.

For tsukemen too, opt for the non-spicy version if you want to enjoy the yuzu sparkle.

All noodles are priced at \$15.90 a bowl.

**WHERE:** Afuri Ramen, B1-29 Funan Mall, 107 North Bridge Road **MRT:** City Hall **OPEN:** 11.30am to 3pm, 5 to 9pm daily **PRICE:** \$15.90 a bowl **TEL:** 6970-1386



**HOTPOT STALWART STILL DELIVERS**

Sometimes, you forget about restaurants that have remained at the same location for a long time with no menu or decor changes.

But after writing an article about hotpot eateries from China recently, I was reminded that the pioneer of mala hotpots here was The Magic Of Chongqing Hot Pot at Tanglin Shopping Centre.

It opened in 1994 and, after 25 years, still serves an authentic version of the Sichuan pot with options of spicy and non-spicy broths (above).

The mala broth is more aromatic than fiery and food cooked in it tastes good without being overly spicy or oily.

There is an a la carte menu, but the a la carte buffet prices are so

attractive that you go for the works instead. The lunch buffet (with 56 items) is priced at \$22.90 from Tuesdays to Thursdays and \$24.90 on weekends, while dinner (with 78 items) is \$35.90 on weekdays and \$38.90 on weekends.

If you cannot find what you like in the buffet, just add an a la carte order. Fresh scallops, for example, cost \$28.

If you love beef, you can also go for the ongoing US beef promotion. For \$55 a person, you get free flow of US beef along with the buffet.

And to celebrate National Day, a serving of Boston lobster is going for \$54 instead of \$88 until Aug 12.

**WHERE:** The Magic Of Chongqing Hot Pot, 04-06/07 Tanglin Shopping Centre, 19 Tanglin Road **MRT:** Orchard **OPEN:** Noon to 3pm, 6 to 10.30pm daily **TEL:** 6734-8135

**MALA RAMEN WITH KICK**

Menya Kokoro is not new, but the ramen brand from Japan opened a new outlet in 100AM mall recently and introduced a mala flavour just for Singapore.

Kokoro is known for mazesoba, which is a dry version of ramen that is best described as a Japanese bak chor mee.

Its Mega Tokyo Maze Soba (from



\$12.80), an upsized version of its signature ramen, comes with a minced meat sauce that is cooked for four hours.

The noodles are also topped with chashu, poached egg, nori, green onions, chives, chopped garlic and ground saba fish.

The Furious Mala Mazesoba (from \$14.80) has a dose of Sichuan peppers, dried chilli and chilli oil to liven up the flavours. If you prefer a soupy version, there is the Furious Mala Ramen Soup (left, \$14.80).

Both come in three levels of spiciness. My choices are level three for the mazesoba and level two for the soup. But I am quite the chilli fiend, so if you cannot handle mala flavours, I suggest you go a notch down.

And be prepared to sweat.

**WHERE:** Menya Kokoro, two outlets including at 02-10 100AM, Tras Street **MRT:** Tanjong Pagar **OPEN:** 11am to 9.30pm (Sundays to Thursdays), 11am to 10pm (Fridays and Saturdays) **TEL:** 6443-1727

**A CULINARY TOUR OF EUROPE**

Gordon Grill at the Goodwood Park Hotel is going on a culinary tour of Europe these two months by presenting iconic dishes from different European countries in three set menus.

Available for lunch as a three-course set (\$78 a person) and dinner as a four-course set (\$98 a person) or an eight-course degustation menu (\$168 for two persons), the dishes cover places such as Greece, France, Hungary, Italy, Spain, Britain, Germany and Austria.

My favourites are the French classic pan-fried foie gras, served with balsamic-marinated cherries, and the Hungarian goulash, a hearty soup made with onion, beef, potato, sweet paprika and caraway seed.

Deciding on the mains is a bit more difficult as almost everything sounds good.

But if you are a light eater, I would say go for the Portuguese grilled tiger prawn, which is fresh and sweet. It comes with eggplant puree and tomato paprika rice.

Otherwise, get the Spanish grilled



Iberico pork pluma, which boasts delicious, succulent meat.

The honey-glazed salmon from Norway and the Angus tenderloin from Britain are dependable picks too.

For dessert, the Austrian sacher-torte is my choice.

**WHERE:** Gordon Grill, Goodwood Park Hotel, 22 Scotts Road **MRT:** Orchard **WHEN:** Till Sept 29, noon to 2.30pm, 7 to 10.30pm daily **TEL:** 6730-1744

PHOTOS: AFURI, GOODWOOD PARK, MENYA KOKORO, THE MAGIC OF CHONGQING HOT POT

**FOOD**

**PROMOTIONS**

**Grill Ninety Nine, Kava Roll Out New Menus**

Grill Ninety Nine, through its newly acquired business brand Kava, has launched a new initiative offering restaurant and cafe menus under one roof. Signature dishes include Angus beef rib (\$49.90), oysters (\$49.90 a dozen), rack of lamb (\$29.90), crispy crab cake (\$12.90), roast barramundi (\$25) and Jawbreaker Burger (\$22). **WHERE:** 142 Arab Street **MRT:** Bugis **WHEN:** Noon - 10pm daily **PRICE:** \$10 - \$49.90 **TEL:** 6292-7363/9731-2902 **INFO:** instagram.com/grillninetynine

**A Taste Of Spain At La Taperia**

With La Taperia's new menu, diners can start with cold tapas (\$16++ to \$45++), such as the mixed Iberico platter with Manchego cheese, or warm ones (\$15++ to \$30++) such as soupy seafood saffron rice (\$24++). Mains include grilled Australian lamb rack (\$38++), charcoal grilled wagyu rib-eye (\$26++/100g) and Asturian seafood stew of shrimps, clams, squid, scallops and rockfish (\$36++). **WHERE:** 02-10/11 Shaw Centre, 1 Scotts Road **MRT:** Orchard **WHEN:** Noon - 3pm, 6.30 - 11pm **PRICE:** Tapas: \$15++ - \$45++; mains: \$32++ - \$72++; dessert: \$8++ - \$22++ **TEL:** 6737-8336 **INFO:** E-mail lataperia@lesamis.com.sg

**Hearty Vegetable Harvest At Min Jiang Goodwood**

Min Jiang's Hearty Vegetable Harvest menu highlights vegetables such as pumpkin, lotus root and cauliflower in creative dishes. The new classic and

contemporary Cantonese dishes by master chef Chan Hwan Kee include a la carte options such as deep-fried lotus root slices and prawns with durian mayo sauce (\$36++ a portion), stir-fried Iberico pork with orange and purple cauliflower (\$36++ for small, \$68++ for large) and pan-seared wagyu beef with ice plant in Japanese goma dressing (\$78++ for small, \$138++ for large). **WHERE:** Goodwood Park Hotel, 22 Scotts Road **MRT:** Orchard/Newton **WHEN:** Till Sept 13, 11.30am (Sun from 11am) - 2.30pm, 6.30 - 10.30pm **PRICE:** \$10++ - \$38++ **TEL:** 6730-1704 **INFO:** E-mail min\_jiang@goodwoodparkhotel.com

**Pasta Frenzy At Blue Potato**

Blue Potato, Swissotel Merchant Court's poolside restaurant, is serving pastas in various styles this month - crustacean with capellini (\$24++), angel hair pasta with crispy soft shell crabs in spicy tomato sauce, penne arrabbiata (\$20++), short tubular pasta with baby root vegetables and wild mushrooms in spicy tomato sauce; spaghetti pescatore (\$26++), with prawn, squid, black mussel and clam in white wine sauce; and pumpkin ravioli (\$24++). **WHERE:** Level 2 Swissotel Merchant Court, 20 Mechant Road **MRT:** Clarke Quay **WHEN:** Till Aug 31, lunch: noon - 3pm; dinner: 6.30 - 10pm **PRICE:** \$20++ - \$26++ **TEL:** 6239-1847/1848 **INFO:** E-mail dining.merchantcourt@swissotel.com

**Vegan Tok Panjang At The Peranakan**

The Peranakan restaurant is launching its vegan Tok Panjang, or long table. The Bibik set (\$48++ a person, minimum two diners) includes

omnipork sup bakwan keping, ngoh hiang, omnipork buah keluak, mutton rendang and ikan assam pedas. The Baba set (\$68++ a person, minimum two diners) has additional items such as duck curry, terung with anchovies and chilli crab cakes. **WHERE:** Level 2 Claymore Connect, 442 Orchard Road **MRT:** Orchard **WHEN:** 11am - 10pm **PRICE:** \$48++ - \$68++ a person **TEL:** 6262-4428 **INFO:** E-mail friends@theperanakan.com

**Weekday Lunch And Weekend Brunch At Salt Grill & Sky Bar**

Salt grill & Sky bar has introduced a weekday lunch and weekend brunch menu. The three-course set lunch features Wagyu Cut of the Day and other Australian dishes such as Geraldton kingfish with Yarra Valley salmon pearls, avocado cream and herb oil; and roasted butternut risotto with pumpkin seed and house ricotta. Brunch (a la carte) starts with small plates such as cold-smoked Aoraki king salmon (\$22++). Next are large plates such as miso-glazed Bangalow pork chop (\$39++). **WHERE:** 55-01 Ion Orchard, 2 Orchard Turn **MRT:** Orchard **WHEN/PRICE:** Lunch (11.30am - 1.45pm, Mon - Fri): \$49++ a person; brunch (11am - 2.30pm, Sat, Sun & public holidays): \$18++ - \$108++ **TEL:** 6592-5118 **INFO:** E-mail info@saltgrill.com

**NATIONAL DAY**

**Mao Faber Durian Appreciation Night**

In celebration of the Singapore Cable Car's 45th anniversary, One Faber Group is presenting the first Mao Faber Durian Night featuring quality

Mao Shan Wang durians from Pahang, durian-themed interactive stage games and local delicacies. **WHERE:** Faber Deck on Mount Faber (near Carpark B) **MRT:** HarbourFront **WHEN:** Tomorrow, 6 - 10pm **PRICE:** Free entry, market prices for durians, \$5 discount for first 200 to pre-register through One Faber Group's website **INFO:** onefabergroup.com

**Otak Otak Kushikatsu, Laksa Oden At Kushikatsu Tanaka**

Kushikatsu Tanaka has added Singapore-inspired items to its signature golden fried skewers. For example, otah is dipped in special batter and deep-fried to create Otak Otak Kushikatsu (\$3.50). Laksa Oden (\$10) features Japanese ingredients such as chikuwa, egg and tofu in a hot oden and laksa soup. **WHERE:** 01-01B Merchants' Court Clarke Quay (Block A), 3A River Valley Road **MRT:** Fort Canning/Clarke Quay **WHEN:** Mon - Thu: noon - 2.30pm, 5pm - midnight; Fri & public holiday eve: noon - 2.30pm, 5pm - 2am; Sat: noon - 1am; Sun: noon - 11pm; public holidays: noon - midnight **PRICE:** \$2.50 - \$10 **TEL:** 6258-3789 **INFO:** E-mail contact@kushi-tanaka.com.sg

**Milksha's \$5.40 Singapore Red Bean Ice Blended**

Taiwanese bubble tea Milksha has launched its ice kacang-inspired beverage this National Day. The Singapore Red Bean Ice Blended is made with Azuki beans from Taiwan. **WHERE (MRT):** 02-375 Suntec City Mall, 3 Temasek Boulevard (Promenade/Esplanade), 02-K07 Funan, 107 North Bridge Road (City Hall) **WHEN:** Till Aug 31, 11am - 10pm **PRICE:** \$5.40

**INFO:** facebook.com/milkshasingapore

**Alkaff's Touch Of Singapore**

All three concepts under The Alkaff Mansion are adding a touch of Singapore to their menus, with Wildseed Cafe offering a chicken burger with salted egg sauce (18++), At TXA Pintxo Bar (from 5pm), East and West come together to present Satay Pintxo (\$4++), using wagyu beef. Head to Una (level 2) for chilli crab paella (\$52++ to \$72++) and add a touch of luxe to your celebration with a whole fresh lobster (\$60++). **WHERE:** The Alkaff Mansion, 10 Telok Blangah Green **MRT:** Telok Blangah **WHEN:** Till Mon, **PRICE:** \$4++ - \$72++ **TEL:** 8126-8844 **INFO:** E-mail enquiry@thealkaffmansion.sg

**MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL**

**Wan Hao Premium Gift Set**

The highlight of this season's offerings by Singapore Marriott Tang Plaza Hotel is the Wan Hao Premium Gift Set (\$238 nett), comprising Gold Dusted Red Date Baked Mooncakes with Pistachio, Jambon de Bayonne, Sesame & Salted Egg - accompanied by a 375ml bottle of Chateau Rieussec Cru Classe Sauternes, France 2015. **WHERE:** Forecourt Stall (hotel entrance), Singapore Marriott Tang Plaza Hotel, 320 Orchard Road **MRT:** Orchard **WHEN:** Till Sept 13 **PRICE:** \$70 - \$238 nett **TEL:** 6831-4708 **INFO:** singaporemarriott.com/mooncakes

**SAKE/WINE EVENTS**

**Yamagata Sake Dinners**

The Yamagata Prefectural Promotion Board is holding two

sake-pairing dinners. Chopsuey Cafe Dempsey (Aug 20) and Noka Restaurant (Aug 21) will each present a six-course menu of its respective cuisines paired with six sakes - three each from sake houses Benten and Gasanryu. **WHERE (MRT):** Chop Suey: 01-23, 10 Dempsey Road (Farrer Road); Noka: 07-38 Funan, 109 North Bridge Road (City Hall) **WHEN:** Aug 20 & 21, 7pm **PRICE:** \$108++ a person, book seats at tinyurl.com/y3v3e6yv (Chop Suey) or bit.ly/NokaKampai (Noka) **TEL:** 6708-9288 (Chop Suey)/6877-4878 (Noka)

**Margaret River On Tour**

Taste more than 80 different wines paired with canapes by Margaret River chef Evan Hayter of Arimia Winery & Restaurant and Grand Hyatt Singapore, accompanied by a sharing of travel experiences. **WHERE:** The Gallery, Level 1 Grand Hyatt Singapore, 10 Scotts Road **MRT:** Orchard **WHEN:** Aug 22, 6 - 9.30pm **PRICE/INFO:** \$77.87, includes all wine-tastings, canapes & a Plumm wine glass (worth \$25++); tickets at margaretriverontour.com

**Dinner At Zafferano With Library Wines From Italy**

The four-course menu will feature dishes such as hand-cut beef tenderloin tartare (paired with 2010 Calcano Nerello Mascalese Feudo di Mezzo IGT) and charcoal-grilled lamb rack (2001 Franco Martinetti Monferrato Rosso Sulbric DOC). **WHERE:** Level 43 Ocean Financial Centre, 10 Collyer Quay **MRT:** Raffles Place **WHEN:** Aug 29, 7pm **PRICE:** \$143 (\$114.40++ for HSBC cardholders) **TEL:** 6319-4038 **INFO:** goustoitaliano.com.sg