

FoodPicks

Hedy Khoo ST Food Online Editor recommends



OLD-SCHOOL MIN JIANG KUEH

In an age of shortcuts, the owners of He He Min Jiang Kueh, which sells old-school Chinese pancakes, still make their batter daily.

They also make the red bean filling from scratch and the toasted coconut filling using fresh grated coconut every morning.

The bestsellers of the corner stall on the second floor of Hougang Hainanese Village Centre are Peanut Pancake, Red Bean Pancake and Coconut Pancake (\$0.90 each, additional filling at \$0.20, above).

I find the red bean filling to be a little thin and suggest ordering the pancake with extra filling.

Stall-owner Chan Sock Kiang, 67, started her business in 1983. Her son Chew Chee Keong, 36, joined her full-time in 2008.

No effort is spared in perfecting the pancakes – even the griddles were custom-made according to Madam Chan's specifications.

She says in Mandarin: "The griddle size matters because it affects the cooking time and heat control. I want our pancakes to be soft on the inside and with crispy edges."

Indeed, her pancakes are spongy and moist in the middle, while the edges are wafer-thin and crispy.

She keeps the sugar level low to keep her snacks healthier and also does not use eggs, although the items are not dairy-free.

The stall also offers Cheese Pancake (\$1.10) and Chocolate Pancake (\$1.30).

WHERE: 02-16 Hougang Hainanese Village Centre, Block 105 Hougang Avenue 1

MRT: Kovan **OPEN:** 6am to 2pm daily



LATE-NIGHT PORRIDGE AND FRIED HUAI SHAN

Here is where you can have a decent meal at a late hour as the 130-seat Le Xiao Chu opens until 5am.

Restaurant owner Alex Lim, 47, is particularly proud of the Seafood Claypot Porridge (\$68+/\$88+/\$108+), which is served in traditional-style claypots that he sourced from China.

He first ate the dish last year in Shenzhen. Enamoured by one version he tried at a restaurant, he took his executive chef to the Chinese city so he could develop his own version.

Instead of long-grain rice, the seafood porridge here is cooked using a specially sourced short-grain rice from China. It comes with Sri Lankan crab, clams and prawn.

The porridge texture is lusciously thick – somewhere between Cantonese porridge and Teochew muay. Despite the generous amount of seafood, it could be a little tastier and sweeter.

Add-on choices include lobster (\$38+ for 500g) and scallop (\$18+ for six pieces).

A dish worth ordering is Golden Huai Shan (\$12+). Fresh pieces of huai shan (Chinese yam) are dipped in batter, fried to a golden crisp, then coated in salted egg yolk and garnished with pork floss and toasted black sesame. The dish is served with a mayonnaise-based dip, where plain mayonnaise is mixed with condensed milk and lemon juice for greater sweetness and tang.

Another signature dish is French Beans with Shrimp (\$12+/\$18+). The beans are blanched quickly in oil, then stir-fried with plenty of dried prawn which lends the dish a refreshing crunchiness.

Mr Lim recommends adding some of the dried prawn topping to the seafood porridge for added flavour.

WHERE: 457 Balestier Road

MRT: Novena **TEL:** 6265-3863

OPEN: 11am to 5am daily (last order at 4.30am)

Clockwise from top left: Golden Huai Shan, French Beans with Shrimp and Seafood Claypot Porridge. ST PHOTOS: HEDY KHOO

OFF-MENU PORK HOR FUN

Let me let you in on a secret. The best dish at 72 Xiao Chu Zhi Jia is not on its menu.

The signature dish mentioned on its signboard is Seafood White Beehoon. Skip that.

Instead, ask for Pork Hor Fun (zhurou hefen in Mandarin, right). For a medium portion that is good for two to three persons, get the \$6 version with an additional \$2 of pork. For a larger portion, order the \$8 dish with an additional \$2 of pork.

For those who equate the colour of hor fun with wok hei, don't expect it here.

Head cook Lee Kah Ming, 36, who is from Ipoh, does not use dark soya sauce to pre-fry the hor fun. Instead, he uses premium light soya sauce to season the hor fun while pan-frying it over high heat.



You can taste his mastery of heat in the hor fun. While it appears plain and lacks the caramel colour, once you

taste it, you will be surprised by how savoury it is, complete with that sought-after smokiness.



Usually, when the chef lacks skill in pan-frying the hor fun, the starchy gravy becomes a crutch for flavour.

Not in this case. The hor fun is packed with flavour and pairs perfectly with the gravy that is well-balanced and not overly starchy or overpowering in the taste of oyster sauce.

The pork slices are expertly marinated and tender.

But save space for the Crispy Prawn Paste Chicken (\$10 for eight pieces, \$15 for 12 pieces, left). The well-marinated mid-joint wings are flavourful.

WHERE: 01-52 Upper Boon Keng Market and Food Centre, Block 17 Upper Boon Keng Road

MRT: Kallang

OPEN: 12.30 to 9.30pm (weekdays); 11.30am to 9.30pm (weekends)

INFO: Upper Boon Keng Market and Food Centre will be closed from Monday to Wednesday for spring-cleaning.

FOOD

PROMOTIONS

Senior Citizens' Special At Azur

Those 55 years and above can enjoy over 50 per cent off lunch and dinner buffet at Azur. No further credit card discounts are applicable for this promotion.

WHERE: Azur, Crowne Plaza Changi Airport, 75 Airport Boulevard
MRT: Changi Airport **WHEN:** Daily
PRICE: Lunch buffet: \$28 nett, dinner buffet: \$38 nett **TEL:** 6823-5354
INFO: changiairport.crowneplaza.com/azur

A Taste Of Denmark – Culinary Fairy Tales

Enter a fairy tale of flavours at Gardens by the Bay when Danish chef Jesper Danielsen and Pollen's Steve Allen create culinary interpretations of The Ugly Duckling, Clumsy Hans, The Princess And The Pea and other tales by Hans Christian Andersen. The experience includes a theatrical live performance of The Nightingale, a guided tour of Gardens by the Bay's Nordic Poinsettia Wishes 2019, a five-course beautifully crafted fairy-tale menu with drinks, and goodie bags with culinary delicacies from Fyn, Andersen's birthplace.

WHERE: Pollen, 01-09 Flower Dome, 18 Marina Gardens Drive
MRT: Bayfront **WHEN:** Nov 22, 7pm; Nov 23, noon **PRICE:** \$180++ for lunch, \$250++ for dinner
INFO: singapore.um.dk/en/events-en

Meet The Chefs Of Botanico And LeVeL33

Chefs Sujatha Asokan of Botanico and ArChan Chan of LeVeL33 present specially created set menus that showcase their strengths and the unique virtues of their kitchens.

The dishes feature modern European techniques and presentation with generous touches of Asian flavours and ingredients – and the beer-centric elements particular to LeVeL33. The highlight of each evening is the Chef's Table, featuring a seven-course set menu, with each course personally presented by the chef behind it.

WHERE: Botanico at The Garage, 50 Cluny Park Road
MRT: Botanic Gardens
WHEN: Nov 22 - 24, 7pm
PRICE: \$78++ for five-course menu in main dining room, \$98++ for seven-course menu at Chef's Table
TEL: 9831-1106 **INFO:** thegarage.sg/2019-botanico-level33/

New CinnaBurger At 25 Degrees Singapore

This innovative cinnamon roll-hamburger hybrid (\$18++) consists of a mouth-watering beef patty with all the sinful trimmings – applewood chip-smoked bacon, melty cheese and runny sunny-side-up egg – and topped with a punchy coffee-infused BBQ sauce, then sandwiched between two lightly toasted cinnamon buns.

WHERE: 25 Degrees Burger, Wine & Liquor Bar, Hotel G, 200 Middle Road
MRT: Rochor **WHEN:** Till Dec 22, 11 - 2am **TEL:** 6809-7990
INFO: www.randblab.com/25degrees-sg

Sri Lankan Crab Creations

The celebrated Sri Lankan crab, also known as mud crab, is famed for its luscious and succulent pearly white meat. Wan Hao Chinese Restaurant offers eight a la carte creations, including Deep-Fried Singapore Style White Pepper Crab Bun, Poached Crab Dumpling with Crab Roe Superior Stock and Deep-Fried Crab with

Chicken Floss and Salted Egg.
WHERE: Wan Hao Chinese Restaurant, Singapore Marriott Tang Plaza Hotel, 320 Orchard Road **MRT:** Orchard
WHEN: Till Dec 27, weekdays, noon - 3pm (lunch), 6.30 - 10.30pm (dinner); weekends & public holidays, 11.30am - 3pm (lunch), 6.30 - 10.30pm (dinner)
PRICE: \$8++ - \$58++ **TEL:** 6831-4605
INFO: singaporemarriott.com

Classic Afternoon Tea: Revelry

Inspired by the culinary philosophy of the wintery northern European region, which emphasises local produce, a diverse dairy selection and prized fruits of the forests, highlights from this new afternoon tea presentation include sweet dishes such as Dark Chocolate Mousse with Lingonberry Confit and savoury treats like Eclair with Foie Gras Mousse and Grape Compote.

WHERE: The Lobby Lounge, Level 1 InterContinental Singapore, 80 Middle Road **MRT:** Bugis
WHEN: Till Jan 31; Mon - Thu, 2 - 5pm; Fri - Sun, 1 - 3pm, 3.30 - 5.30pm
PRICE: From \$88 for two
TEL: 6825-1008
INFO: singapore.intercontinental.com

New Beauty Collagen Soup Broth At Da Miao Hot Pot

Available in Yuan Yang Soup Pot (\$32) or Whole Soup Pot (\$42), the creamy broth is prepared using mainly collagen-rich star ingredients such as pork bone and fish maw. A variety of ingredients including pig skin, chicken feet and pumpkin is then added into the blend. The pumpkin adds a tinge of sweetness and gives the broth its pleasing hue. The broth is simmered for more than six hours over medium heat until the bones and all-natural collagen are melted in.
WHERE: Da Miao Hot Pot, 01-11 The Cannery, Clarke Quay Block C, 3C River

Valley Road **MRT:** Fort Canning
WHEN: Sun - Thu, 11.30am - 10.30pm; Fri & Sat: 11.30 - 3am
PRICE: \$32 - \$42
TEL: 6250-9969
INFO: damiaohotpot.com

Saturdate Lunch

This four-course menu of signatures features a tasting of cured fish; couscous of basmati rice with pistachio and Pierre Robert cheese; Toh Thye San duck with mole madre, blueberry aigre-doux and sauce Rouennaise; and the restaurant's iconic dessert Apple.
WHERE: table65, Level 11 Hotel Michael, Resorts World Sentosa, 8 Sentosa Gateway
MRT: HarbourFront
WHEN: Every Sat, noon - 2pm
PRICE: \$85++ a person
TEL: 6577-7939
INFO: www.rwsentosa.com/table65

Jag Anniversary Charity Dinner

To mark its first anniversary, Jag invites diners to indulge in a luxurious Five-Expression meal, where each guest, instead of receiving a bill, is encouraged to donate to the restaurant's chosen beneficiaries: Singapore Hospice Council and New Hope Community Services. All proceeds will be donated.
WHERE: Restaurant Jag, 76 Duxton Road **MRT:** Tanjong Pagar
WHEN: Nov 25, 6.30pm
TEL: 3138-8477
INFO: restaurantjag.com

WINE/WHISKY EVENTS

Ding Dong X Aux Deux Amis Dinners

Ding Dong welcomes one of Paris' most rambunctious natural wine bistros, Aux Deux Amis. Aux Deux

Amis' chef Matthieu Perez and Ding Dong's head chef Miller Mai will present a six-course dinner that combines big and bold South-east Asian flavours. Natural wine expert Eduardo Bayo of Drunken Farmer will serve a wine-pairing selection curated from more than 90 natural, organic, biodynamic and sustainably farmed labels sourced straight from winemakers all over the world.
WHERE: Ding Dong, 01-02 115 Amoy Street
MRT: Telok Ayer
WHEN: Nov 27 & 28, 7 - 10.30pm
PRICE: \$85++ for six courses (add \$55++ for four natural wine pairings)
INFO: bit.ly/DDxADA27 (Nov 27); bit.ly/DDxADA28 (Nov 28)

Modern Italian-Japanese Four Hands Gastronomic Experience

il Cielo's resident chef de cuisine Yohhei Sasaki and chef Patrizia di Benedetto – the first Michelin-starred female chef in Sicily of Bye Bye Blues Restaurant – will present a five-day, four-hands experience. A showcase of each chef's culinary flair, the curated tasting menu comes with the option of an exquisite wine flight pairing from four glasses from \$68. The hand-picked wines are from Frescobaldi winery in Tuscany.
WHERE: Level 24 Hilton Singapore, 581 Orchard Road
MRT: Orchard
WHEN: Dec 9 - 13; noon - 2.30pm (lunch, weekdays), 7 - 10.30pm (dinner, Mon - Sat)
PRICE: \$68 (four-course lunch), \$188 (six-course dinner), \$68 (additional wine pairing of four wines), \$78 (additional wine pairing of five wines), \$88 (additional wine pairing of six wines)
TEL: 6730-3395
INFO: hiltonsingaporerestaurants.com/ilcielo