

Tan Hsueh Yun Food Editor recommends



LA DOLCE VITA

Late afternoon, a secret location in Italy. You're sitting in the piazza, sipping a spritz. There is not one tourist in sight. No teeming hordes from cruise ships. You look up at the sky. It is tinged with pink. A couple of nibbles, lazy conversation. A sigh of contentment escapes your lips. Then comes another sigh. Not of contentment.

Because that right there is an outrageous fantasy. Nobody is going anywhere, for now. But when I want to pretend that I am anywhere but here, I'll head to Bar Milano, newly opened on Keong Saik Road. Yes, Keong Saik Road needs another watering hole. But only if it's this place.

The 38-seat all-day, indoor bar opened on July 8, but the look and feel of the interior suggest it has been here forever. Food offerings scrawled on mirrors, old-school lamps. Those plates, with deliberately faded patterns. The vibe is somewhere in between the high gloss of Cova in Milan, and that neighbourhood hangout in your secret happy place.

The food and drinks are terrific and, maybe, you will want to stay and cancel that dinner booking you made nearby.

From the Spritz Bar, order the Bianco (\$20), with Cocchi Americano, prosecco and basil. On a warm evening here, nothing is better. Except, perhaps, the Lambrusco (\$20), that very divisive red wine mixed with housemade cherry syrup

and Mancino Chinato.

I could skirt around the main courses and nibble all night. Must orders include Olives Ascolana (\$10), which I thought was available only in one Italian restaurant in all of Singapore. It's a speciality of Ascoli Piceno in Central Italy. Big green olives are spiral cut to remove the pits and then stuffed, breaded and deep fried. The filling here is pork. I find the armour a little more crunchy than it would be in Italy, but I will not quibble.

Steak Tartare (\$18, above), piled on sourdough toast, is full of umami from anchovy cream. I'll have another order, please.

Save some room for dessert. There is a terrific Carrot & Walnut cake (\$10) with a layer of mascarpone cheese in it. It reminds me of the jaw-dropping selection of cake at an Italian breakfast buffet. I love how the walnuts are properly toasted and how the cheese complements the slightly dry crumb of the cake.

And then because you can, order a Spiked Frappuccino (\$20) as a night cap. Coffee, spiced rum, coffee liqueur and vanilla syrup are blended together and topped with whipped cream.

I slept like a baby after dinner at Bar Milano. And I dreamt beautiful dreams of Italy. Ci vediamo.

WHERE: Bar Milano, 55 Keong Saik Road, 01-02 MRT: Outram
OPEN: 10am to midnight daily
RESERVATIONS: www.barmilano.sg

PHOTOS: BAR MILANO, REBEL REBEL, SAYBONS

WINECAVE

If you love natural wine and hearty food and think David Bowie is incomparable, you will love Rebel Rebel. Hanging out at this newish natural wine bar in Bukit Pasoh feels a lot like chilling at a friend's man cave, with natural wine, hearty food and deep conversation; all grown up from your rebel rebel days.

Co-owner Amanullah Khan, 44, has another business, Artisan Cellars, which sells some terrific labels he sources painstakingly. And the wine list at the bar is a showcase of some of the best. He and co-owner Eugene Goh, 42, are serious foodies, so of course, the menu is solid.

It is a concise one, but chef Deborah Yeo, 36, who worked at Cocotte and Burnt Ends, is looking to expand the offerings once she has more hands in the kitchen.

She does wonderful things with pig parts.

Pork Fat (\$6), whipped to ethereal lightness, is sprinkled with toasted grains of farro and barley that retain their crunch despite sitting in a savoury semi-brittle of honey, soya sauce, fish sauce and pork jus. Order Sourdough (\$8) made in-house, wave away the olive oil and butter and slather the slices with the lard.

Pig's Head (\$28, right), one of three main courses, is tagliatelle mixed with the aforementioned head, crunchy bits of pig ears and napped in a barely-there sauce that has a bright personality and a serious lick of chilli. It tastes of that vinegary hot sauce that used to be a staple before a raft of artisanal ones came onto the market. Sometimes, an oldie can lift a goodie.

While I would be happy with just these two offerings, please also order Prawn (\$12 for two pieces) – old school prawn toast made luxe with uni. That is as luscious as it sounds. Crab (\$20 for two pieces), is similarly compelling. Piles of blue swimmer



and king crab meat are piled on lettuce leaves with a celeriac salad. Crunch, sweetness and earthiness in one bite.

To drink, I would go with a glass of the Fujimaru Table Top Daidai Iro (\$20), an orange (well, more like a dusky pink) wine from Japan made with Delaware grapes. Some people find the funkiness of natural wine frustrating, but I like funk. It goes so beautifully with the lard and has hints of bubbles.

If you have ever tried to buy bottles of Beau Paysage wine from Japan,

and failed, well, Rebel Rebel has them on the wine list. At a rather eye-watering price. The 2014 Le Feu is a princely \$284 a bottle.

That, perhaps, reflects just how difficult it is to get any bottle from the winery. And the rise and rise of natural wines from Japan.

It's the next big thing, Mr Khan predicts. Go have some at Rebel Rebel. **WHERE:** Rebel Rebel, 14 Bukit Pasoh Road MRT: Outram **TEL:** 6224-5466 **OPEN:** 5 to 11pm (Tuesday to Saturday) **INFO:** www.rebelrebelwinebar.com

SAVOIR FAIRE

During the circuit breaker, lots of people got turned on to cooking and baking to keep sane. I did a lot of that too. But I stuck to simple things. Complicated, multi-step recipes with lists of ingredients longer than the eye can see are not for me.

So I baked bread, made cookies and grilled fish and was happy to leave some things to the experts. Saybons, the home-grown chain which serves crepes and soup, has a halal offshoot called Savoir and it offers the sorts of things I would never think to make.

Case in point: prawn noodle soup. Amassing prawn shells in the freezer is one thing, but then having to fry and simmer them to extract every last bit of flavour defeats me.

The path of least resistance would be to get a pouch of Singapore Prawn Soup (\$5.90 for 500g, right). The flavour is robust and the soup is thick and rich. Drink as is and you will find it too salty, as I did. But if you thin it out with water and add beehoon, kangkong and prawns, you will have a quick and easy hae mee that serves two to three.

The other one I like is Green Curry Chicken Stew (\$7.90 for a 500g pouch). It is filled with chunks of chicken thigh and eggplant. The pouch serves two and I would add only some chopped fresh coriander or basil leaves and mop up the gravy with bread. That I baked, of course.

WHERE: Savoir soups and stew, most Cold Storage and Giant supermarkets **INFO:** www.saybons.com



FOOD

PROMOTIONS

Window On The Park's One-for-one Buffet

Window on the Park reopens with a one-for-one a la carte lunch and dinner buffet. The halal-certified spread features more than 40 dishes such as slow braised Australian beef, and rendang.

WHERE: Window on the Park at Holiday Inn Singapore Orchard City Centre, 11 Cavenagh Road **MRT:** Somerset/Dhoby Ghaut **WHEN:** Till Aug 31; Lunch: Noon - 2.30pm daily; Dinner: 6 - 9.30pm daily **PRICE:** From \$65+ (for two people) for lunch **TEL:** 6733-8333 **INFO:** E-mail info.hisnorchard@ihg.com

NATIONAL DAY PROMOTIONS

Goodwood Park Hotel's National Day Celebratory Set Menu

The special menu (\$55+) comprises perennial favourites from all of the hotel's restaurants, such as pork shepherd's pie from L'Espresso, deep-fried sea perch with spicy lemongrass sauce from Min Jiang and chilled angel hair pasta with king crab, caviar, sakura ebi and white truffle vinaigrette from Gordon Grill. Dessert is the signature durian crepe from The Deli. Orders must be placed five days in advance. Available for pick-up and delivery (\$15 for minimum order of \$50, free for orders of \$120 nett and above). **WHERE:** Goodwood Park Hotel, 22 Scotts Road **MRT:** Orchard **WHEN:** Tomorrow - Aug 10; Pick-up and delivery: Lunch: Noon - 3pm; Dinner: 7 - 10pm **INFO:** Call 6737-7411 for pick-up or order at goodwoodparkhotel.oddle.me/en_SG

A Jamie's Twist

Jamie's Italian launches six locally inspired food and cocktail specials that will be available for the entire National Day week. The Italian dishes

with local flavours (from \$15.95) are black pepper crab bruschetta, chicken rice risotto and beef and lamb calzone. The cocktail specials (\$15.95) include Jamie's Bubble Tea - gin (infused with tea leaves), lychee liquor, milk tea and lychee pearls. The dishes are available for dine-in and delivery via GrabFood, Foodpanda and Deliveroo, while the cocktails are available only for dine-in at Jamie's Italian Forum. **WHERE:** 01-01 Forum Shopping Mall, 583 Orchard Road **MRT:** Orchard **WHEN:** Mon - Aug 10, 11.30am - 2.30pm, 5.30 - 9.30pm daily **TEL:** For reservations, call 6655-7676 **INFO:** str.sg/Jni4

OverEasy's National Day Party Package

OverEasy at One Fullerton has launched the Linebacker Platter Plus package (\$55) of American diner favourites - Good Ol' Fashioned Mac & Cheese, Spicy Buffalo Wings, Smoked Cheddar Corn Dogs, Sea Salt Tortilla Chips, Rosemary & Parmesan Fries and Veggie Sticks. Available for takeaway and delivery on Oddle. **WHERE:** OverEasy - One Fullerton, 01-06 One Fullerton, 1 Fullerton Road **MRT:** Raffles Place **WHEN:** Till Aug 9; Pick-up & delivery: Tue - Sun, noon - 9pm **TEL:** 9129-8484 **INFO:** Order at order.overeasy.com.sg/en_SG

Extra Virgin Pizza's Pizza Party Package

The pizzas in the Three's A Crowd Pizza Package (\$55) are handmade with Italian Caputo flour for a perfect crust. The set comes with a choice of two pizzas or pastas and one sharing plate. Available for takeaway and delivery via Deliveroo and Oddle. For Oddle, enjoy 30 per cent off beers and wines with the code "30OFFALCOHOL". **WHERE:** Extra Virgin Pizza, 01-04 Asia Square, 8 Marina View **MRT:** Marina Bay **WHEN:** Till Aug 9; Pick-up & delivery: Mon - Fri, 11am - 9pm; Sat & Sun, noon - 9pm **TEL:** 8299-4219 **INFO:** order.extravirginpizza.com/en_SG

Auntie Anne's Special Flavoured Pretzel

The special flavour is Heart-Shaped Coconut Pretzel with Gula Melaka Dip - the pretzel is toasted with fragrant coconut flakes and served with gula melaka dip. Available for takeaway and delivery via Auntie Anne's website (charges depend on location) and selected locations via Foodpanda and GrabFood. **WHERE:** Auntie Anne stores at Parkway Parade, Plaza Singapura, Paya Lebar Quarter, Nex, Jewel Changi & VivoCity **MRT:** Various **WHEN:** Tomorrow - Aug 31, 11am - 8pm daily **PRICE:** \$4.60 a piece, 55 per cent off with any purchase, minimum order & delivery fee applies for online orders **INFO:** order.auntieannesg.com

National Day Weekend Celebrations At Zafferano

Toast to the weekend with Champagne Brunch (from \$118++ a person) on Aug 8 and Aug 9 and enjoy a welcome cocktail of Singapore Sling on arrival. Then, indulge in Italian favourites including 10 starters, four main courses and three desserts. On the evening of Aug 9, Zafferano will present a special four-course dinner (from \$198++ a person). Highlights include orange-cured foie gras accentuated with raspberry and moscato, and housemade tagliolini with fresh Hokkaido sea urchin and enlivened with sudachi. **WHERE:** Zafferano Italian Restaurant & Lounge, Level 43, Ocean Financial Centre, 10 Collyer Quay **MRT:** Raffles Place **WHEN:** Champagne brunch: Aug 8 & 9, noon - 3pm; Four-course National Day special menu: Aug 9, from 6pm **TEL:** 6509-1488 **INFO:** E-mail info@zafferano.sg

National Day Specials Takeaways At Crowne Plaza Changi Airport

Enjoy Peranakan, western and Singaporean Bundle Sets (from \$108.07) from Azur at Crowne Plaza Changi Airport, specially curated for National Day. With any purchase of

the set, guests can place an order for 1kg signature chilli Sri Lanka crab with mantou at \$55+ (usual price is \$100+) and the bandung kueh lapis (\$55+). Available for pick-up and delivery on Oddle. **WHERE:** Azur, Level 2 Crowne Plaza Changi Airport, 75 Airport Boulevard **MRT:** Changi Airport **WHEN:** Till Aug 31; Delivery: 11am - 9.30pm **TEL:** 6823-5354 **INFO:** str.sg/Jni4

Yan's Taste Of Home Share Pack

The Taste Of Home package (\$55 nett, usual price is \$65 nett) offers selected dim sum items and

Yan's rendition of local dishes such as sauteed kway teow with shrimp, fishcake, Chinese sausage and soya chicken. For takeaway and delivery, there is a 20 per cent discount. Orders can be picked up at the loading bay along Supreme Court Lane of the National Gallery Singapore. Delivery costs \$14 with no minimum spend and is free for orders of \$100 nett and above. **WHERE:** Yan, 05-02 National Gallery Singapore, 1 Saint Andrew's Road **MRT:** City Hall **WHEN:** Tomorrow - Aug 31 (except on Aug 8 & 9, when Yan is closed for National Day); Takeaway & delivery: 11am - 9.30pm **TEL:** Call 6384-5585 or WhatsApp 9769-4283 **INFO:** www.yan.com.sg/estore

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SCAN TO LISTEN



str.sg/Jmu

The new normal in restaurant dining

- Dining out can be a hassle with ongoing safety measures. How can restaurants smooth out the process?
- The food takeaway and delivery model is here to stay. What dishes work best for this model and can restaurants juggle that with dining-in?

The Straits Times' senior food correspondent Wong Ah Yoke discusses these issues with hotelier-restaurateur Loh Lik Peng.



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