

CHARISSA ONG

The Malaysian-based publisher and author made headlines in 2016 for being the youngest self-made publisher when publishing houses turned her down. Charissa Ong took the reins herself and started her own publishing house and went on to publish her first poetry and short stories book "Midnight Monologues" which was awarded MPH's Best Book of 2016 and remained to be in the Best Seller list for the year, outdoing titles from Lang Leav, Jojo Moyes and Mitch Albom in 2017. KL Lifestyle magazine sits down with this storyteller to find out about her latest book, "Daylight Dialogues", and whether writer's block is a real thing.

BY HIRANMAYI AWLI MOHANAN



Bak Kut Teh



Chicken Rice

Firstly, tell us about yourself.

I'm currently a best-selling author for both my English poetry and short stories books, "Daylight Dialogues" and "Midnight Monologues". Being a self-published author and founder of my publishing company, Penwings Publishing aims to uncover young talents who have a dream of publishing their work for the public locally and internationally. Last year, my company published Singaporean author Timothy Joshua's book, "Questions to Our Answers". Penwings will be publishing for Zack Shah next year with his book, "More than Words". Penwings books are currently distributed and sold in the whole of Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines. The e-book versions are also available on Amazon. For my day job, I work as a UI/UX Design Lead for the e-wallet Boost by Axiata Digital Services. Both my day job and hobby excite me in different ways as I love both designing and writing and I am lucky to be able to do both at work.

Have you always loved writing?

Yes, I used to write short stories that didn't make sense when I was a child. Then, I moved on to blogging. I got a maximum of like five readers at the time. I think it's because my content wasn't really that great. I moved on to Instagram with @cotypoems as my handle a while later when my writing got serious.

What inspires the content of your books?

People around me, my personal life experiences, random events, movies, songs and the books I read.

What kind of research do you do, and how long do you spend researching before beginning a book?

I make it a point to write two pieces of poetry a week which takes about 20-30 minutes to write. For the short stories, I would research on the environment I'd want to write about first for about an hour, then start on the story. The research is always ongoing while I write.

Tell us about "Daylight Dialogues" and what it is about.

"Daylight Dialogues" is my second poetry and short stories book after "Midnight Monologues". It is divided into four parts as well, Echoes, Now, Reflections and Short Stories. 'Echoes' consist of the melodramatic, sad pieces everyone faces during their romantic relationships. 'Now' is written to portray the feelings we feel when we reexplore a new relationship and 'Reflections' are pieces that provoke the human mind about how we reflect about ourselves when we interact with others. It discusses about the impact of our actions and thoughts.

Is "Daylight Dialogues" a sequel to "Midnight Monologues"?

It's not. It's just a second poetry book that I have authored. You can read the second one first and it won't mess anything up. It has more writing challenges like anagrams, two-sided poetry, palindromes, prose and diminishing-escalating poetry. The writing styles definitely have matured and has a lighter tone to it as well. (and it's not just the colour of the cover.

How did Penwings Publishing come about?

Distributors will not give purchase orders to individual authors. They would need a company registration number to bill their invoices. I wanted to have more control with the design and content of my work, apart from other publishing houses rejecting my work.

Other publishing houses only publish educational books (a need) in Malaysia. Hence, they are not confident in marketing a book of fiction. Anyway, I've always wanted a business of my own that could help fulfil the dreams of others.

What is the first book you read that touched your heart?

"Twilight" by Stephanie Meyer. I was a book hater before I read that series. I was 17 at the time and I had to read it with an Oxford dictionary by my bedside. From that book on, I read a book every week. From book hater to best-seller, anything is possible right?

How long on an average does it take you to write a book?

1.5 years minimum.

Does writer's block exist?

Of course, it does! I have ways to deal with it. I'd usually put in key words on my keynote app and come back to it later. Key words help a lot. It's easier to work with a basic, terrible version of the piece rather than a blank piece of paper with nothing to work with.

How does it feel to be the youngest self-made author and publisher?

I was 24 at the time... Somehow, I think there's somebody out there in the world who has done it at a younger age. I don't think age really matters though. But I can see why people find that intriguing. It puts others in perspective about how they're treating their own dream timelines.

What's next for you?

Personally, I'm working on a novel at the moment. For my business, I'd definitely want to put my books out to more countries!

What is your advice to aspiring authors out there?

If you are writing for the public, know who you are writing for. Understand their behaviours, their likes, their thought process, etc. The higher your empathy, the better your pieces. If you are writing for yourself, then there are absolutely no rules! Go nuts.

What do you love most about the Malaysian cuisine?

I love that you can taste every flavour and have multiple textures in a single dish. I don't think I could ever get salty, sweet, sour, and umami tastes as well as soft and crunchy textures on any plate outside of Malaysia.

Finally, the local cuisine you can't live without are...

Chicken rice and Bak kut teh.



Food from The Heart All Day Long at The View Café

BY HIRANMAYIL AWLI MOHANAN

Nestled in Best Western i-City is an eatery that serves food from the heart, for breakfast, lunch and dinner. This inviting café dazzles patrons with its cosy ambience and vibrancy. The splashes of red hues in the chairs and the embellishments make this restaurant ooze chicness.

We fell in love with the View Café almost immediately due to its al fresco setting that overlooks the i-City Theme Park. As dusk approaches, patrons will experience the change in atmosphere, from vibrant to a sexier tone, perfect for a date night or to simply indulge in its offerings with a group of friends. Chef Azhari, the talented man helming the kitchen here, brought us on a culinary journey through his Western-Asian fare.

AVOCADO AND TOMATO TOAST

A perfect dish to start off a dining experience, chef Azhari's rendition of avocado and tomato toast was aesthetically pleasing and a palate teaser too.

BLACK PEPPER UDON

This creative Asian dish was my favourite. Using udon noodles and black pepper, it exuded an interesting savouriness with a hint of spice. Presentation is everything and here, the culinary team garnished this item with generous tiger prawns, capsicums and fish cakes.

MALAY SOTO CHICKEN SOUP

The soto here is one of View Café's signature dishes and we recently learnt why. Brilliantly prepared, compressed rice and chicken meatballs on skewers atop the soto which consists of shredded chicken infused with soya sauce and secret ingredient that contributed to the piquancy.

SEARED SCALLOP RISOTTO

While a risotto might be simple in appearance, it is power-packed with



flavour. The seared scallop risotto here is potent because you can't help but want more. Tomato concasse is amalgamated with the risotto and embellished with Hokkaido scallops, contributing to the delectable symphony of flavours.

LAMB RACK

The lamb rack arrived in all its glory, sitting on a bed of mashed potatoes, cannellini beans and sautéed mushrooms. The juicy flavours exuded from the lamb paired with its tender consistency was utterly delectable.

SALTED CARAMEL CHEESECAKE

After a savoury meal, it is necessary, nay, mandatory to order dessert and when at View Café, we recommend their signature, the salted caramel cheesecake. Garnished with fresh fruits, crumble and mascarpone cheese, it speaks to your soul and will guarantee a smile on your face.



Ebiko Egg Donburi



Creamy Carbonara Ramen



Cutie Churro Sticks



Fattie Bom Bom



Food by Fat Cat

Comfort, in a Bowl

BY HIRANMAYIL AWLI MOHANAN

Fat Cat Intermark, Lot LC-01-07,
Lower Concourse,
The Intermark, No. 348, Jalan Tun Razak,
50400 Kuala Lumpur.
Instagram: @fatcatmy
Facebook: www.facebook.com/fatcatmy

All Tasty Ideas, the mastermind behind The Good Batch and Nara Kitchen and Co has produced yet another impressive eatery, Food by Fat Cat. Having been in the F&B scene for about a year now, they have recently unveiled a new location in the heart of Kuala Lumpur, at The Intermark, KL. The façade of Food by Fat Cat KL is inviting, minimal yet radiating an air of elegance.

Differing slightly from the Sunway Geo menu, the dishes here are curated to suit the fast-paced, metropolitan white-collared workers who enjoy a quick, scrumptious bite. In addition, the menu at Intermark KL is more vegetarian-friendly and is essentially home to utterly delectable Asian-fusion fare as well as comfort food. At Food by Fat Cat, patrons are relishing in the best as most of the items are homemade, from the sauces to the meatballs and delivered from the central kitchen, Nara Kitchen and Co.

Fattie Bom Bom

As soon as we saw this bowl of goodness, our heart made a little cheer. The Fattie Bom Bom consists of Chicken Karaage that is fried to a crisp and generously drizzled with Dynamite Ebiko sauce. Complementing the

robust flavours are sautéed mushroom and a jiggly organic onsen egg topped with chopped green scallion and sesame seeds. This adorably-named dish is the epitome of comfort food. Upon digging in, it makes you want to curl up on a sofa at home, while bingeing on Netflix. Also, it makes a pretty picture for the gram.

Creamy Carbonara Ramen

Ramen lovers, assemble! Patrons of the Good Batch would probably find this item familiar. Well, that's because it's a Japanese rendition of the customer-favourite dish there. Its light consistency of the ramen and the carbonara sauce allowed us to devour in an entire bowl without any help needed. Don't judge! We quickly fell in love with the amalgamation of fresh mushrooms, blanched edamame (for a slight crunch), turkey ham, raw organic yolk and sesame seeds.

Cutie Churro Sticks

What a cutie indeed! Presented in bite-size pieces, the homemade churro sticks are fried to crispy perfection and complemented by seductive toffee-nut honey. The combination is out of this world and it made us yearn for seconds.

Level 5, Best Western i-City Shah Alam

A-GF-01, No.6, Persiaran Multimedia, CityPark, i-City, 40000 Shah Alam, Selangor
Tel: +603 5521 9000 . WhatsApp: +6011 2707474 . Email: enquiry@bestwestern-icity.my



The Porki Culture

Porkalicious Street Fare

BY JACQUELINE BENITA PAUL

Bangsar South is a corporate haven with plenty of eateries around. One of the few restaurants that stands out here is Porki Culture. The restaurant is the second outlet following the success of Porki Society, Seapark. The ambience of the restaurant has a chic and retro feel with the use of neon pink signage, pastel-coloured wooden tables and steel chairs. The menu offers an extensive range of Thai street food from sharing platters, boat noodles, pasta to skewers and more.

Of course, the common theme throughout the menu is the creative use of Thai-imported pork for customers to enjoy deeper the complex levels of flavour. During our visit, we were greeted by head chef, Josua Bong who has over 10 years of experience in the kitchen. He got us started with the crowd favourite – Pork Platter, a combination of BBQ Thai Pork Ball, BBQ Squid Minced Pork, BBQ Thai Sausage, Fried Pork Belly and Signature Grilled Porki Skewer served with a special Thai sauce topped with glutinous rice powder.

Then we tried the Thai-Style Krapow Spaghetti. The pasta was al dente and we were surprised by the spiciness of the dish (despite the disclosure on the menu). The spiciness matched the savoury flavour of the pork. Though we felt ourselves getting full already, we were excited to try the boat noodles. Our patience was rewarded with delicious broth from all four of the boat noodle styles. Personally, I prefer the Thai noodles but the Mee Hoon soup was comforting in the cold raining weather.

After being a little sidetracked from pork, we continued pigging out on the BBQ



UG-10, Level Upper Ground,
The Sphere, No. 1 Avenue 1,
Bangsar South, No. 8 Jalan
Kerinci, 59200 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: +603 - 2242 2063



BBQ pork ribs

A fun twist to the staple Thai dish, Porki Culture replaces the mango with jackfruit.



Thai grilled pork with signature sauce

Pork Ribs. As you would expect from high quality Thai pork, there was a burst of flavour in each bite. At this point, I regretted not ordering the Singha beer which would have been perfect for the occasion. Alas, it would be my excuse to return. We ended our meal as one would at a Thai restaurant by ordering sticky rice, only that Porki Culture puts its own twist to the traditional Thai dessert that is usually served with mango. It is served with jackfruit instead. It was certainly a welcomed change.

Other than the food, Porki Culture is also known for its colourful and delicious beverages including Thailand's famous milk tea. The lemongrass pandan is the drink for any occasion – whether you go for a heavy or light meal, it's a great palate refresher. The Thai Milk Tea is a creamy, rich and sweet beverage you'd want to pick up after your lunch break. Green tea drinkers can give the

Thai Milk Green Tea a shot. It doesn't have the bitterness one would expect from green tea or the overwhelming sweetness from added sugar; it's well balanced. Thai coffee known as "oliang" in Thai restaurants is one of Porki Culture's signature drinks that you simply cannot miss out on.

Overall, we quite enjoyed the dining experience at Porki Culture. As a pork lover myself, it was nice to share my love for pork through the sharing platter. The ambience makes for a conducive social environment, the food for conversation and the drinks for a sweet end to a satisfying meal.



Porki Culture offers a scrumptious selection prepared in exciting styles to be enjoyed in a group.

You can easily spot the restaurant with its vivid pink neon light and welcoming interior



LISTINGS OF CITROEN SHOWROOMS & SERVICE CENTRE

NAZA EURO MOTORS HQ (GLENMARIE)

NEM Glenmarie Showroom(1S) No 15, Jalan Pelukis U1/46 Seksyen U1, Glenmarie 40150 Shah Alam Selangor
www.citroen.com.my
Sales : 03-5566 3685

NAZA EURO MOTORS (PUCHONG)

Lot No. 18, 19 & 20GF, IOI BUSINESS PARK, Persiaran Puchong Jaya Selatan, Bandar Puchong Jaya, 47170 Puchong, Selangor
Sales : 03-8076 1788

SING HUAT PREMIUM SDN BHD

No. 11, Jalan Satu, Off Jalan Chan Sow Lin, Sungai Besi, Wilayah Persekutuan, 55200 Kuala Lumpur
Sales : +60 3-9222 9126

CITROEN SERVICE CENTRE

NAZA EURO MOTORS SDN BHD (PUCHONG 2S)

No: 10, Jln Serindit 3, Bandar Puchong Jaya, 47170, Puchong, Selangor
After sales - 03-5891 1310



Ra.ft cafe's bountiful and delectable offerings

Ra.Ft Café

Mont Kiara's Neighbourhood Gem

BY JACQUELINE BENITA PAUL

Just as I was reminiscing about my trip to Italy last year, I happened by Ra.Ft Café in Arcoris Plaza, Mont Kiara. I was instantly drawn to the café's casual exterior with red steel chairs underneath a patio umbrella and the freshly roasted coffee teased my senses. Little did I know, that was only the beginning of an unforgettable dining experience.

The Italian-style cafe was already established in Bijai 8 and had recently made its way to Mont Kiara. The name is the combination of the Italian founders' initials, Andrea Rossi, director of Bean Counting and Filippo Tomelleri, director of Storytelling. They worked in the restaurant business for six years prior to the inception of Ra.Ft and started the restaurant to bring a positive change to the F&B workforce. "Our team is at the frontlines, that's why it's important for us to take care of them as we would our food and our customers," said Andrea Rossi. You could hear the pride in their voices when they speak about their employees and that's most likely the secret to their success.

THE FOOD MENU AT RA.FT CAFE

In the spirit of simplicity, Ra.Ft keeps the food menu to a single page. It offers a variety of options which are versatile to meet the dietary requirements of its customers, whether it's gluten-free, vegetarian and more. The breakfast menu (available all day) is a personal favourite because I love customisation and the My Breakfast dish provides the option of choosing a variety of homemade breads (multigrain/ gluten free/ croissant/ English muffin), egg styles (scrambled, sunny side up, fried both sides, poached), proteins (chicken sausage/

pork sausage/ bacon/ homemade cured salmon) and two sides (mushrooms/ baked beans/ roasted tomatoes/ smashed potatoes).

The French Toast made with French brioche bread is the brunch indulgence everyone deserves. A bite into the thick soft bread with banana and chocolate sauce brought out our inner child and we shamelessly finished the whole thing in a matter of seconds – it's that good. For a light savoury breakfast, you can try the Eggs Benedict Gourmet (English muffin, crispy parma ham, poached eggs, hollandaise sauce) with one of Ra.Ft's healthy fresh juices.

For the main course, the off-menu Vegetarian Burger made with guacamole, black bean patty, jalapeno chilli and red bell peppers proved itself amongst carnivores. My friend, Hiran was smitten by the Pan-Seared Salmon Fillet and with good reason. The salmon skin was crisp with a moist and tender flesh on a bed of perfectly seasoned vegetables and green pesto that brought everything together visually and on our palates.

You might notice by now that Ra.Ft is not an Italian restaurant and that's because as foodies themselves, the founders did not want to limit the menu offerings to Italian cuisine alone. To be fair, what I missed most about my Italian dining experience was the quality of the ingredients, the passion for the food and the love for people, all of which you will find here.

Of course, if you are craving for some pasta, Ra.Ft offers five different pasta styles made the Italian way. For dessert, the Tiramisu and Ice Cream on Bird's Nest

made with Churros is a must-try, unless you're not a dessert person and prefer ending a meal with a cup of espresso or a glass of wine, which brings us unto another reason to visit Ra.Ft café – the coffee and wine.

THE DRINKS MENU AT RA.FT CAFE

I dare admit that in Italy, my liquid intake was predominantly coffee and wine. I would blame it on the cold weather but honestly it was so good that I couldn't stop. The house wines offered are the founder's personal favourites – Soave Classico Monte del Fra' (white) and Passimonto Romeo & Juliet Pasqua (red). It was quite unusual to find that a café would serve such high-quality house wine, but it is certainly testament to its commitment to quality.

The coffee beans here are roasted fresh daily and handpicked to ensure consistent quality. Prior to the opening of the café, the founders went through nearly 60 cups of coffee weekly over the span of two months to find the perfect blend to serve their guests. The café opens at 7.30 am, so feel free to drop by to get a cup before you head to work. While you're there, you can purchase the reusable coffee cup to reduce waste.

Initially, I thought I was going to hate myself for ordering without looking at the price first. I was pleasantly surprised when the bill came and put a smile on my face instead. On my second visit, I signed up for the membership because I knew I wanted to be a regular here. The membership of Ra.Ft offers plenty of value and I love that I am part of a café that takes active measures to reduce waste and plastic use way before it became a trend.

Ra.Ft Mont Kiara Café-Bistro Ra.Ft @ Arcoris Plaza (Mont Kiara)

Lot G16 & G17, Ground Level, Arcoris Plaza 10 Jalan Kiara, 50480, Mont Kiara Kuala Lumpur

www.raft.com . Tel: +603 6412 2127

Joloko

A Tropical Hangout

43, Jalan Kamunting, Off Dang Wangi, 50300 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 03-2694-1100
Website: www.bar-joloko.com

BY HIRANMAYII AWLI MOHANAN



Walking into Joloko could transport you to a vacation where you find yourself stumbling into a cool, tropical hangout. As you enter, you will pass some trees and when you make your way to its inner sanctum, your eyes are greeted with a medley of vibrant colours, murals embellishing the walls (by a local tattoo artist, Apoh) and the magnificent bar area that produces some buzzing cocktails, mezcal, natural wines and spirits of your liking.

The building in which Joloko resides is a juxtaposition of old and new, featuring beautiful, airy dining area in the courtyard that allows the natural light to stream in, perfect for picture-taking and an upstairs area that showcases cool murals and cascading lights. When the sun sets, the mood shifts to a sultry and romantic one, perfect to kick back after a long day at work or for a much-needed date night.

The Caribbean archipelago has a special place in Joloko's founder, Rick Joore's heart for its beauty and being a melting pot of culture and food, it was fitting that Joloko would take inspiration from the diverse country and materialise it through the little bits and bobs like its fare, and general vibe of the place. The cuisine at Joloko is an Afro-Caribbean one that boasts scrumptious BBQ from the grill, a suitable accompaniment for Mezcal and some Tequila. Joloko's comprehensive menu, ranging from breads and dips, mains to distinct dessert caters to most palates.

Walnut Hummus with Pomegranate Molasses

What a palate teaser this one was! The walnut hummus was thick in consistency and rich in taste, a great start to the culinary affair. We loved the bits of walnut and pomegranate that provided us with the crunch we were looking for. We've got to warn you that this dish is deliciously addictive so save some room for the mains.

Barramundi with Jerk Spice and Coconut

Beautiful, it came to our table. Sitting on a bed of grilled vegetables was a grilled barramundi that was generously doused in coconut sauce. As we sliced the fish, it came apart effortlessly and melted in our mouths oozing fresh, tropical flavours. Pair this with a glass of natural wine and you're good to go.

Caribbean Curry Goat

My colleague, Shamila, loved the flavours from the Caribbean curry goat. It met the list of everything a curry needs to be and more. The tender goat soaked up the piquancy of the curry and when you bite into the meat, you will experience a burst of spiciness, slight tanginess and an overall deliciousness.

Jamaican Jerk Chicken with Mango Relish

Also from the grill, the Jamaican jerk chicken, as its name suggests, is coated with seductive jerk spices, topped with mango relish and accompanied by a side of pickled cabbage. Grilling brought forth the spices and when amalgamated with the sweetness of the mango relish, sent us into a state of contentment and joy.

Joloko Chilli Cheesecake

We highly recommend saving some space for dessert and ordering yourself this godsend dessert. While it may look dense and daunting, you will be surprised how light in consistency it is. Paprika powder is lightly sprinkled on the cheesecake and only a pinch of refreshing spiciness is felt as the aftertaste.



Walnut Hummus with Pomegranate Molasses and Goat curd with cucumber and mint



Jamaican Jerk Chicken with Mango Relish



Paloma Faith

Lull into A Sweet Coma

Best places to get your Indian sweets fix

BY HIRANMAYII AWLI MOHANAN

Indian sweets, just like any other confections possess some hidden power that renders a person speechless and in sheer delight. Also known as mithai, these sweets are recognisable for their variety and vibrant colours that immediately attract. Perhaps it's the generous use of milk, sugar, spices and everything nice that grants the deliciousness. We came up with a list of the crème de la crème to get your fix of palkova, laddu, mysore pak, halwa, gulab jamun and more. Enjoy!

JAI HIND

Not only is Jai Hind home to the fluffiest chapatti, this establishment offers an assortment of Indian sweets that will make your mouth water at mere sight. Having visited Jai Hind numerous times, I can assure you that whatever type of sweet you choose, you will be filled with endorphins right after. The gulab jamun here must be made with love aside from great technique and ingredients because it is just melts in your mouth at mere bite, emitting the flavour of milk (a staple in Indian desserts) and an overall sweetness.

DALBIR SWEETS CORNER

Madam Dalbir of Dalbir Sweets Corner in Jalan Tengku Kelana, Klang has been a pit stop for all sweet lovers. Having

been in the Indian sweet business for nearly 40 years now, she purveys high-quality, homemade Indian sweets from the North Indian ones such as jelebi and barfi to South Indian confections like mysore pak. While most of Madam Dalbir's sweets are heavenly, one spoke to our soul and that was the laddoo. The gigantic laddoo is rich in ghee (another staple in Indian sweets) and mixed with nuts and fruits. It doesn't get better than this, honestly.

MOGHUL MAHAL

Moghul Mahal means Moghul Palace which is a perfect place to dine in comfort with all the authentic North Indian cuisine. If we don't fear being a diabetic, we would have Indian sweets at every chance. With its pastry chefs hailing

from Punjab, you are sure to get a taste of Punjab here in KL. Its barfi and rava kesari are our favourites for their richness in piquancy and authenticity. We won't judge you if you do a little dance in appreciation of their desserts.

SANGEETHA VEGETARIAN RESTAURANT

Sangeetha's is an excellent restaurant and a purveyor of delectable South Indian vegetarian food. Apart from the main dishes, Sangeetha also serves an array of vibrant, juicy and beautiful Indian sweets. Name what you want, you would probably find it there. We couldn't pick a favourite because everything looked utterly lip-smacking and could send you home with a happy sugar-rush.





Bangsar South

Foodie Haunt for Any Occasion

BY JACQUELINE BENITA PAUL

People who work in the Bangsar South area sure have it good with gorgeous landscapes to enjoy a brisk walk and easy access to good food. We explore a few of the popular food haunts in the area that offer diverse cuisines and dining experiences.

BOTANICA + CO

One of the most popular restaurants in Bangsar South for its lush green interior and chic furniture, Botanica + Co is a restaurant that offers an amazing selection of comfort food that you can enjoy all day long. In the evening, you can enjoy creative cocktails made with premium ingredients and top shelf liquor. Be sure to try out the Yuzu Mojito and Classic Lychee Martini if you enjoy refreshing cocktails.

Must-try: To do justice to the menu offerings, be sure to come here in a group of at least four people. From the Pizza section, order the Four Cheese which features the use of high-quality brie, mozzarella, parmesan, ricotta, porcini puree, rosemary and muscatels. Even if you are not a vegetarian, this is a dish that is easy to enjoy.

8, Jalan Kerinchi, Bangsar South,
59200 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 016-965 6422



THE ART COFFEE

A place to enjoy a fine dining experience without maxing out your credit card. The menu offers Western Oriental dishes that fuse Europe's vibrant culinary elements with local spices. Another reason to visit is to try their signature single-origin coffee beans that delights the senses.

Must-try: The Bangkok Style Bee Hoon Soup with Grilled Chicken is a hearty dish that will keep you nourished as you go about your day. Pair it with a single origin coffee and you're set.

Lot 1.8 First Floor, Nexus Bangsar south, 7 Jalan Kerinchi, Bangsar South, 59200 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 03-2242 3888.



BOCOSAN IZAKAYA

In Japan, an Izakaya is a place to enjoy a light supper over drinks. Bocosan Izakaya adds its own flavour to the concept with a gorgeous, chic interior and a Japanese menu that isn't afraid to be bold. The bar features a curated selection of wines, beers, cocktails and sake that would certainly be the highlight of your evening.

Must-try: From the lunch menu, the Bocosan Wagyu Don packs fantastic flavours and textures, thanks to the truffle sauce and pasteurised onsen egg. Otherwise, you can also try the sashimi platter that would be the perfect match for your afternoon sake (it's happy hour in some parts of the world).

Unit G-2A & Ground Floor, Vertical Podium, Avenue 3, Bangsar South City No. 8 Jalan Kerinchi, 59200 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: +6010 250 8188

String Hoppers

The best spots in town for this traditional specialty

BY JACQUELINE BENITA PAUL

Unless you're immersed in the local culture, you won't really hear about String Hoppers (known as idiyappam in Tamil). It is made from rice flour and goes through a meticulous process to form thin noodles which are then steamed and served with either curry or grated coconut with brown sugar. In conjunction with Deepavali, here are some spots to check out for your fix.



ALIYAA INDIAN RESTAURANT & BAR

(Pork-free)

If you are looking to savour the taste of authentic Sri Lanka cuisine, Aliyaa might be just what you're looking for. You can expect no less than the best when you're dealing with a restaurant that bagged several awards at TASTE MIGF (Malaysia International Gastronomy Festival). You are spoilt for choice to enjoy your String Hopper Kothu vegetarian-style or with lamb, chicken or seafood.

Address: 48 G&M, Medan Setia 2, Bukit Damansara, 50490 KL
Tel: 03-2092 5378

CHAT MASALA

(vegetarian)

Anyone who enjoys eating Indian food would have heard of Chat Masala. Nestled within the scenic Little India in Brickfields, the restaurant serves up a pretty impressive Indian cuisine menu of vegetarian dishes at reasonable prices.

Address: 259, Jalan Tun Sambanthan, Brickfields, 50470 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 03-2260 3244



ANJAPPARS INDIAN CHETTINAD RESTAURANT

(halal)

Anjappars distinguishes itself from most Indian restaurants as a proud flag-bearer of chettinad cuisine. As you enter the restaurant, your senses will be piqued by the aroma that will get your mouth watering. Other than the string hoppers, the Briyani in all its forms is something you simply must try. You won't be disappointed.

Address: No.35, Jalan 14/20, Seksyen 14, 46100 Petaling Jaya, Selangor
Tel: 03-7932 1508



Deep Blue by The Face Suites

Chicest Rooftop Bar in Town

BY JACQUELINE BENITA PAUL

Rooftop bars are a dime a dozen in Kuala Lumpur and are typically dependent on the panoramic view to entertain their guests. Deep Blue joins the nightlife scene and offers a 360° experience that goes beyond the panoramic view. The Deep Blue is a stunning indoor-outdoor rooftop bar and lounge on the 51st floor of The Face Suites. The club lounge is a picture of modern artistic expression with a long stairway decorated with silver balls adding glamour to the space without the glitter or gold. The outdoor area features more than just one breathtaking view with photographs of sailing yacht and cruises.

FOOD @ DEEP BLUE

Since we raced over after work, we decided to get dinner here. Typically, most bars would serve the food from the nearest sister outlet or light snacks. Luckily for us, Deep Blue's menu is a carefully curated selection to match the vibe of the space and sophistication of the beverages.

We started our meal with the Mexican Quesadilla, a delicious wrap with smoked salmon, cheese, mushrooms, spinach and a generous helping of guacamole. The portion could feed the four of us enough to get our appetite going. My guest ordered the Grass Fed Tenderloin (200G). The beef was tender and cooked to perfection – just the way we like it. The highlight of our dining experience was the Unagi Roll, a dish we haven't seen served anywhere else. As a Japanese food lover, I don't expect restaurants with a fusion menu to do justice to Japanese cuisine, that's why it was so surprising that Deep Blue served one of the best unagi rolls I've ever had. The ingredients were simply seaweed,



The highlights @ Deep Blue

unagi, wasabi mayo and sweet teriyaki dip, yet it could unleash such complex depths of flavours. It is a mystery I resolve to unfold in my next visit.

Other menu highlights include: Chicken Roulade

A moist and tender grilled chicken thigh complimented with beetroot puree, perfectly seasoned asparagus, grilled pumpkin and morel mushroom.

Mango Crème Brulee

After a sumptuous meal, the mango sorbet served with the crème brulee is the perfect palate cleanser to prepare you for the delightful mango crème brulee.

COCKTAILS @ DEEP BLUE

Deep Blue offers an ambitious assortment of cocktails with impressive presentations. We began our cocktail menu exploration with a little magic from the Butterfly Cosmo – a unique twist on the classic cosmo made with gin, grand marnier, Cointreau, butterfly pea mint syrup and lime. A special ingredient is poured into the mix once it's served, turning the blue drink to a gorgeous purple hue.

Want to get the attention of the woman or man that caught your eye from across the room? Order a Call Me Maybe and perhaps they just might. The drink features a combination of gin, rum, whiskey,

tequila, blue curacao, pineapple and lemon. It may look harmless but the alcohol content is almost 40%, so drink with caution. Also, don't forget to leave your number on the short piece of paper attached to the drink.

We also tried the Birdy Bull, a hardy drink made from whisky, lemon, calamansi, yuzu, kaffir lime leaf and Redbull. It had a robust tangy flavour that was well balanced out by the sweetness of the Redbull and the intensity of the yuzu.

The Malaya Mojito is a classy cocktail that incorporates the local flavours well. The use of local ingredients such as pandan, gula melaka syrup and selasih, this cocktail would be a great conversation starter if you are entertaining guests from other countries.

For those who prefer their cocktails to have a creamy body, you'd want to order the Mint n' Cream. The drink is made with premium ingredients such as Harvey's Bristol Cream, Green Crème De Menthe, Baileys, milk and cream.

In my opinion, Deep Blue is the perfect blend of music, food, ambience and stunning views which will most likely blow its competitors out of the water. It's the perfect spot for you to relax with your friends for a night you won't soon forget.



Mango Crème Brulee with Mango Sorbet

Level 51, The Face Suites,
Jalan Sultan Ismail,
50250 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 03-2168 1671

From the left Call Me Maybe, Butterfly Cosmo, Mint N Cream



The indoor lounge
of Deep Blue