

FOOD

PROMOTIONS

Japanese Boozy Weekend Brunch At Keyaki

The boozy kaiseki-style brunch at Pan Pacific Singapore's Keyaki, presented in an okonomi concept, features Japanese culinary favourites and speciality dishes. The menu starts with kobachi (three kinds of appetisers), followed by sashimi and yakimono (cod, chicken or prawn). Other parts are agemono or nimono, teppanyaki (beef, chicken or seafood), shokujii (California roll, Inaniwa udon, garlic fried rice or Japanese curry rice) and dessert.

WHERE: Level 4 Pan Pacific Singapore, 7 Raffles Boulevard
MRT: Promenade **WHEN:** Weekends & public holidays, 11.30am - 2.30pm
PRICE: \$75 - \$135 a person
TEL: 6826-8240 **INFO:** E-mail dining.sin@panpacific.com

Kushikatsu Tanaka Mega Cheese Festival

Kushikatsu Tanaka, known for its signature Osaka-style fried cutlet skewers, has added cheesy items, mains and bentos to the menu. The kushikatsu skewers launched include mega cheese chikuwa (\$6), unagi (\$2.50), hanpen (\$1.50) and mini taiyaki (\$2). The mains are cheesy chiritori nabe (\$18; beef, pork or chicken) and D-I-Y takoyaki (\$10 to \$11; prawn, tako or unagi). New bento sets include teriyaki chicken (\$15), buta kimchi (\$18) and Meaty 5 (\$18).

WHERE: 01-01B Block A Merchant Court, Clarke Quay, 3A River Valley Road **MRT:** Fort Canning/Clarke Quay
WHEN: Mon - Thu, noon - 2.30pm & 5pm - midnight; Fri & eve of public holidays, noon - 2.30pm & 5pm - 2am; Sat, 11 - 2am; Sun, 11am - 11pm; public holidays, 11am - midnight **PRICE:** Kushikatsu: \$1.50 - \$6; mains: \$10 - \$18; bento sets: \$15 - \$18
TEL: 6258-3789 **INFO:** E-mail contact@kushi-tanaka.com.sg

Whisky Char Siew Noodles At The Butcher's Kitchen

The Butcher's Kitchen has launched its whisky series, which comprises three mainstays: Whisky Char Siew (\$12.80++), Whisky Chips (\$5.80++) and Whisky Steak (\$27.80++). The Whisky Char Siew noodles come with housemade wonton (shrimp and minced pork). The Flaming Char Siew (\$10.80++), with a Chinese wine concoction, is torched and glazed with a sweet sauce.

WHERE: 02-472 Suntec City Mall, 3 Temasek Boulevard
MRT: Promenade/Esplanade
WHEN: 10am - 10pm daily
PRICE: \$5.80++ - \$27.80++
TEL: 9616-0111 **INFO:** E-mail marketing@thebutcherskitchen.sg

il Cielo's Blooming Spring Seasonal Menu

il Cielo rooftop Italian restaurant at Hilton Singapore celebrates its ninth anniversary with a seasonal produce menu that changes every two months to showcase seasonal ingredients from Italy and Japan. The Spring menu will feature Toyama firefly squid, Kyoto amadai fish, fresh spring Japanese cabbage, Italian white asparagus and premium Japanese Shorthorn wagyu beef.

WHERE: Level 24 Hilton Singapore, 581 Orchard Road **MRT:** Orchard
WHEN: Till April 30; weekdays, noon - 2.30pm & 7 - 10.30pm; Sat, 7 - 10.30pm
PRICE: \$118++ - \$168++ a person (add \$50++ - \$89++ for wine-pairing)
TEL: 6730-3395 **INFO:** E-mail ilCielo@hilton.com

Swissotel Merchant Court Goes Blue For World Water Day

Swissotel Merchant Court Singapore is marking World Water Day with blue-themed food-and-beverage items, such as the Blu Rhapsody cocktail (\$18++) at Crossroads Bar. Ellenborough Market Cafe will serve desserts such as Blueberry Cupcake and Pulut Inti, a traditional blue and white glutinous rice dessert, at its buffet.

WHERE: 20 Merchant Road
MRT: Clarke Quay **WHEN:** Today - Sun, various times **PRICE:** Buffet: \$52++ - \$68++ a person; cocktail: \$18++
TEL: 6239-1847/1848
INFO: E-mail dining.merchantcourt@swissotel.com

New Crab Dishes At Pince & Pints

Known for its lobsters and lobster rolls (\$32++ to \$68++), Pince & Pints is introducing five new crab dishes, including Crabmeat Fried Rice (\$18++). Whole live Sri Lankan mud crabs are used for the Chili, Black Pepper, Grilled and Steamed In Egg White (\$55++ to \$58++; 500 to 600g) dishes. There are also new starters, such as Crispy Soy Chicken Wings (\$12++; six pieces) and Nonya Prawns (\$14++), and mains - Ribeye Steak (\$30++; 200g) and Surf & Turf (\$65++), which features half a grilled live lobster and the steak.

WHERE: 32-33 Duxton Road
MRT: Tanjong Pagar **WHEN:** From Mon; weekdays, noon - 2.30pm & 5.30 - 11pm; Sat & public holidays, noon - 11pm **PRICE:** Crabs: \$55++ - \$58++ (500g - 600g), other dishes: \$12++ - \$68++ **TEL:** 6225-7558
INFO: E-mail info@pinceandpints.com

FoodPicks

Tan Hsueh Yun

Food Editor

recommends

INDIAN FOOD PACKING A PUNCH

When I want a sprawling night out, filled with good food and drink, I head with my friends to Keong Saik Road and spend the night hopping from one restaurant and bar to another. The street used to be lined with brothels in the 1960s, then became gentrified when boutique hotels set up shop in the 1990s. Since then, there has been wave after wave of restaurants.

Of the latest that have opened, the 37-seat Thevar is the most exciting to me. It is part of Meta Group, which owns Meta on the same street and Kimme in Amoy Street.

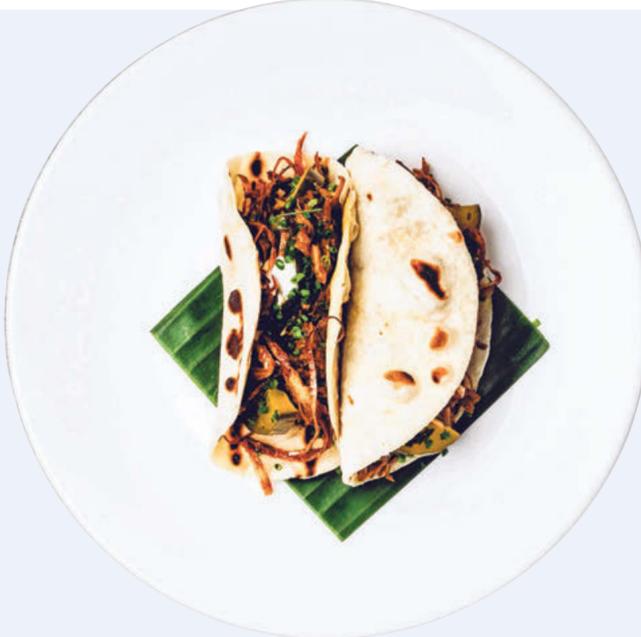
Penang-born chef Manogren Murugan Thevar, 29, who worked at Guy Savoy, Waku Ghin and Meat Smith, has a compact menu of snacks and sharing dishes, all creative, all punchy, all robust, and all of which I want to eat again and again.

My first meal there, a champagne dinner, knocked my socks off, and my second proved that the first time wasn't a fluke.

Chettinad Chicken Roti (\$16, right) is spicy shredded chicken folded into soft roti. There is no passive aggression with the flavours here. That is not to say the spice pummels the palate like a sledgehammer. Every bite is nuanced and exciting.

Rava Fry Hamachi, Potato Masala, Curry Crema (\$16) is another excellent snack. The fish is coated with semolina and spices, then deep-fried. The punchy masala and crema are beautiful accompaniments.

I wish, though, that the chef would find a better landing pad for his terrific rasam. It is zesty, spicy, tart and has a whisper of sweet. I could



just eat it as it is, shaved ice on a hot night. Unfortunately, its fabulousness overwhelms the Pacific Oyster (\$6) it is piled on.

But other things compensate. The menu changes weekly, but if Iberico Porkbelly, Medjool Dates & Soy Pickles (\$38) is on the menu, order it. The meat is tender and the fat has the stickiness I like. Tartness comes from the tamarind glaze and the charred corners are the best parts. This is sublime Indian-style char siew.

Also excellent is Malabar Roast Beef Cheek, Wing Bean Kerabu (\$38) - fall-apart tenderness countered with

phenomenal crunch; soft, warm spices contrasting with tanginess. It looks simple, like all the food at the restaurant, until you eat it and angels sing in the head.

I hope Cempedak Puff (\$6) remains on the dessert menu. A choux puff with a crackly top is filled with the most intense cempedak cream.

Each order comes with two puffs. Do not consider sharing.

WHERE: Thevar, 9 Keong Saik Road
MRT: Outram Park **OPEN:** 5pm to midnight (Mondays to Saturdays), closed on Sundays **TEL:** 6904-0838 **INFO:** thevar.sg

PHOTOS:
BAR CICHETI,
PASTA BAR,
THE OLD
MAN, THEVAR



LIQUID KUEH AND COMPLEX COCKTAILS FOR \$17

If I told you there was a bar in Singapore serving delicious, complex cocktails at \$17 each, you'd say I was crazy, right?

And yet, in Keong Saik Road is The Old Man, a cocktail bar inspired by American author and famous barfly Ernest Hemingway.

The 50-seater in Singapore is an outpost of the original 25-seat bar, which opened in 2017 in Central, Hong Kong.

In Singapore, the team is headed by founder and managing partner Andrew Yap, 45, who used to work at Neon Pigeon, and Stockton in Hong Kong. There is also Louis Tan, 30; Timothy Ang, 26; Kaustubh Singh Negi, 24; and Sebastian Edward, 24.

All are geeky cool about cocktails and can, if you want them to, talk to you about the rotovap, short for rotary evaporator, a gadget which makes it possible to concentrate flavours from fruit, spices and herbs into clear liquids; or tell you about the intricacies of making completely clear cubes of ice.

But really, you are there to drink, and the cocktails are all named after Hemingway's work.

A Farewell To Arms #1929 (above) is my favourite. Gibson meets dirty martini in this cocktail made with butter fat-washed gin, dry vermouth, sous vide nori and salted Pernod, with a pickled pearl onion inside. That fairy dust on one side of the glass is aonori, the powdered seaweed you find on okonomiyaki. Lick some off the glass and take a sip, so that savoury and boozy mingle. My cocktail disappears too quickly.

On to Death In The Afternoon #1932, which I don't think Papa (Hemingway's nickname) would approve of. Absinthe, sparkling wine, froth and nutmeg are mixed with coco-pandan yogurt. I giggle when I think of the hard-drinking writer sipping on this. But me? I can drink multiples because I cannot resist liquid kueh.

If lacto-fermented this and copra-fat-washed that make your head spin, just ask for Hemingway's favourite, the daiquiri (\$18).

So many versions are sweet. This one is not. It has a lot of character, like the writer and the bar.

WHERE: The Old Man, 55 Keong Saik Road, 01-04 **MRT:** Outram Park **OPEN:** 5pm to midnight (Mondays to Saturdays), closed on Sundays **TEL:** 6909-5505

HEARTY, RUSTIC PASTA

When did pasta become a thing here? Isn't everyone low-carbing or on a ketogenic or paleolithic diet?

Well, of course it was always a thing. Bak chor mee has never gone out of fashion, and neither has inauthentic pasta carbonara, or that staple churned out by unimaginative restaurants, pasta aglio olio.

The difference is that pasta places are springing up offering handmade stuff, in shapes that make spaghetti and penne look so prosaic.

Pasta Bar is one of those places - dim (I do not mean this as a compliment), buzzy and, for the most part, serving the sort of carbs you deserve on cheat day.

But protein first. A friend I bump into tells me I must order Veal Tongue (\$24), tender and melting, on salsa verde and with a side of terrific pickles. An excellent recommendation.

What made me very insistent about going to the restaurant though, was Reginette (\$34, above right). The frilly, ribbon-like pasta, also called mafaldine, is tossed with rabbit ragu, olives and pine nuts. Rabbit is an underused meat and I am glad the



restaurant has it on the menu. It is rustic and hearty. I'd order it again.

I might also order Ciriole Carbonara (\$29). The thick spaghetti has a delightful, chewy texture and the guanciale is expertly cooked, so it is springy and charred in the right places. I bite into a piece and my inner cavewoman roars with approval. But I would prefer noodles that are less saucy.

If you manage to make a reservation, ask if you can sit at one of

POP IN FOR A TASTE OF ITALY

When I first popped in for a drink at Bar Cicheti, I balked at one item on the menu - fried sage leaves with Maldon salt for \$8. That much for what is essentially a pile of leaves? Outrageous.

My colleagues raved about it, however, and when my friends and I returned for more than just drinks, I ordered it.

Salvia Fritta (\$8, right) are, I admit, delicious. The thick leaves from The Netherlands have sort of a meaty texture and are crisp from the rice, corn and wheat flour batter, which gets extra lift from carbonation.

As delicious as they are, I get more

bang for my buck with Polpetta Di Manzo (\$15), large, luscious meatballs made with ground brisket, short rib and chuck in a tomato paprika sauce. Milk-soaked bread is added to the beef and the meatballs are not too tightly packed. They fall apart if you look at them fiercely, which is what you want any meatball to do.

Lingua Di Manzo Tonnata (\$18) is equally good. Beef tongue is topped with tuna sauce and onion marmalade. The restaurant's take on vitello tonnato, I'm guessing.

When I want to take a break from Singapore and be transported, I'll head here. In that cosy bar, eating juicy meatballs, I can imagine myself

on holiday in Italy. Then I step back out to Singapore, head to The Old Man for a drink, then to Thevar for roti and puffs, then to Pasta Bar for rabbit ragu.

I might make detours along the way, but any night in Keong Saik must end at Kok Sen, the zi char institution. Prawn noodles in soup, sweet and sour pork and prawn paste chicken are the perfect ending for a night of gallivanting.

WHERE: Bar Cicheti, 10 Jiak Chuan Road **MRT:** Outram Park **OPEN:** Noon to 2.30pm (Tuesdays to Saturdays), 6 to 10.30pm (Mondays to Saturdays), closed on Sundays **TEL:** 6789-9801 **INFO:** www.barcicheti.com



Cocktail Dinner Inspired By Haute-Savoie Herbs At Jag

Chef Jeremy Gillon, chef-owner of French restaurant Jag, and Ethan Leslie Leong of Maison Ikoku will be curating a six-course gastronomic and cocktails menu - inspired by chef Gillon's selection of herbs from Savoie, France.

WHERE: 76 Duxton Road
MRT: Tanjong Pagar **WHEN:** Thu, 7pm
PRICE: \$258++ a person
TEL: 3138-8477
INFO: restaurantjag.com

EASTER

Bouncy Bash At Carlton City

Plate at Carlton City Hotel Singapore's Easter Bouncy Bash features a buffet and activities including a bouncy castle for kids. The Easter Sunday Brunch will have seafood on ice, herb-crusted lamb leg, roasted prime ribs, baked whole soya-sesame salmon, Guinness braised beef cheek and Easter-themed sweet treats such as rice cake and hot cross buns.

WHERE: Level 3 Carlton City Hotel Singapore, 1 Gopeng Street
MRT: Tanjong Pagar **WHEN:** April 21, 11.30am - 3pm (kids' activities: noon - 2pm) **PRICE:** \$42++ - \$82++ (adult), \$21++ (child aged seven - 12), free for those up to age six **TEL:** 6632-8922 **INFO:** E-mail f&b@carltoncity.sg

Deville Eggs At Lavo

Lavo Singapore will make its weekly Sunday Funday Champagne Buffet Brunch on April 21 an Easter-themed one, featuring special items such as devilled eggs and activities for children such as face painting and an egg hunt. The menu will include oysters, shrimp cocktails, chilled snow crab and canapes such as charred octopus with fennel, as well as Lavo's breakfast hits, such as mixed wild mushroom frittata, apple wood-smoked bacon and its signature meatballs made with imperial wagyu and Italian sausage.

WHERE: Sands Skypark, Level 57 Hotel Tower 1 Marina Bay Sands, 10 Bayfront Avenue **MRT:** Bayfront **WHEN:** April 21, noon - 3pm

PRICE: \$98++ - \$158++ a person (\$48++ for children aged four - 12) **TEL:** 6688-8591 **INFO:** E-mail lavo.reservations@marinabaysands.com

An Easter Experience At Blue Jasmine

Blue Jasmine's Easter Brunch Buffet will have dishes such as lemon steamed fish with vegetables, roasted garlic chicken thigh, generously sized Scottish eggs, grilled sausages with sauerkraut and mini chicken sliders. Diners stand to win a buffet dinner for two adults and two children in an egg hunt.

WHERE: Level 5 Park Hotel Farrer Park, 10 Farrer Park Station Road **MRT:** Farrer Park **WHEN:** April 21, noon - 2.30pm **PRICE:** \$52++ (adult), \$32++ (child aged six - 12), free for those up to age five **TEL:** 6824-8851 **INFO:** E-mail hello@bluejasmine.sg

Lime's Super Lunch Buffet

The Super Easter Lunch buffet at Parkroyal on Pickering's Lime starts at the Egg Station, with items such as

sous vide egg, mushroom and asparagus ragout; Scotch quail egg with hollandaise espuma; and parma ham Eggs Benedict. Move to the carving station for meat, and seafood bar for king crab and Boston lobster. Kids can enjoy fried chicken wings and mini pizzas and join Easter activities.

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

WHISKY/WINE EVENTS

Majestic Whisky Dinner

The menu by Majestic Restaurant's chef Yong Bing Ngen is paired with whiskies from BenRiach, GlenDronach and Glenglassaugh. The main dishes are stewed New Zealand wild dried abalone with wild rice and pearl barley; baked and sous vide sea bass in minced spring onions; and braised

kombo noodles with lobster bisque and onsen tamago.

WHERE: 04-01 The Heart (East Tower), 5 Straits View **MRT:** Downtown **WHEN:** Tue, 7pm **PRICE:** \$178++ a person (\$142.40++ with Citi cards) **TEL:** 6319-4038 **INFO:** E-mail asianmasters@sph.com.sg

Blossoms Treasures At Peach Blossoms With Orin Swift

Chef Edward Chong's menu is paired with the wines of Orin Swift, such as Mannequin Chardonnay, Slander Pinot Noir, 8 Years In Desert Blend, Abstract Syrah Blend and Palermo Cabernet Sauvignon. Dishes include essence of kampung chicken, sea perch with Nanyang sauce, slow-cooked US duck and Alaskan king crab on green bean noodle.

WHERE: Level 5 Marina Mandarin, 6 Raffles Boulevard **MRT:** Promenade **WHEN:** Thu, 7pm **PRICE:** \$188++ a person (\$150.40++ with Citi cards) **TEL:** 6319-4038 **INFO:** E-mail asianmasters@sph.com.sg