

A Primer on PAIRING

CH'NG Poh Tiong

“As a dish, it is not the function of fish to promote the taste of salt but the role of salt to highlight the fish. It is not the job of fruit to make the wine taste woody but for the oak – if any is employed – to accentuate the fruit. Food does not like oaky wines”



BONUS!
**TOP 30 CHINESE RESTAURANTS
OF THE WORLD 2025**



The Grand Cru of the Himalayas.

Welcome to an Epic Journey



Please enjoy responsibly.

dedication

A Primer on Pairing is written and published by CH'NG Poh Tiong and dedicated to the millions of tireless people who work behind the scenes of a restaurant. You are the kitchen hands who wash and clean your workplace day in day out, night in nigh out.

You make it possible for chefs to cook and customers to eat.
You were in the restaurant before we arrived
and you will still be there tonight
after we have left.

Thank You Very Much.

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Crafted in the foothills of Japan's Tateyama Mountains,
expertly blended by Richard Geoffroy, and matured to perfection,
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DRINK RESPONSIBLY





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THE ABUSE OF ALCOHOL IS DANGEROUS FOR YOUR HEALTH, PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY.

china's 8 great cuisines

The Middle Kingdom's original 'Four Great Cuisines' are Lu (Shandong), Chuan (Sichuan), Yue (Cantonese), and Huaiyang (Jiangsu). Four others were added later: Hui (Anhui), Min (Fujian), Xiang (Hunan), and Zhe (Zhejiang).

The oldest is Lu, named after the Kingdom of Lu (c. 1042 – 249 BCE). Arguably the least known cuisine even within China, Shandong Cuisine suffers from the fact it is simply not cool with the Chinese public. Heavy on dried seafood including sea cucumber and abalone, Lu Cuisine is costly and time consuming to prepare. The most popular cuisine in China is Sichuan. It is also the fastest and cheapest to whip up with its emphasis on green pepper and chilli *mala* in so many dishes.

Hui Cuisine is the saltiest imaginable and its most famous dish is Stinky Mandarin Fish where, after being fermented naturally, the fish is steamed. It's very much an acquired taste. Min Cuisine is rich in seafood. After all, at 3,750 km, Fujian Province has the second longest coastline in China. Zhejiang, with over 3,000 islands, has the longest at 6,400 km. Zhe Cuisine is equally rich in seafood. Xiang Cuisine is as hot as Sichuan but minus the green pepper. Hunan's most famous son is, of course, MAO Zedong.

Huaiyang and Yue are China's most refined cuisines. There's practically no spiciness involved. Yangzhou and Guangzhou are the beating hearts of those two culinary traditions respectively. Yue or Cantonese Cuisine is the world's most popular Chinese cuisine because being coastal and southern, millions of inhabitants have migrated from Guangdong Province to the four corners of our planet. Also, being just next door to Hong Kong, the former British colony had also helped spread the fame of Cantonese food.

Huaiyang is arguably the pinnacle of Chinese Cuisine. Just their most simple dishes are works of art. *Dou Gan Xi*, finely sliced doufu in a chicken broth or sauce marinade reminds of a Song Dynasty (960 – 1279) landscape painting. Yangzhou chefs, widely acknowledged as masters of the kitchen knife, are revered for their culinary sensitivity and artistry. ■



the two most versatile wines

Chinese – especially Sichuan and Hunan – and Indian, Indonesian, Malaysian, Thai, Korean, and Singaporean cuisines are getting spicier by the day. The culinary world is simply getting 'hotter'. Sherry and Tawny Port are the two most versatile wines in the world and are outstanding with sweet and sour and spicy dishes. Best enjoyed cool to chilled the bottles will remain delicious and vibrant days, even weeks, after they have been opened.



Ink Orchid

ZHENG Suo Nan (1241 – 1318) 25.7 x 42.4 cm

Ink on Paper

Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts, Japan

The original “Four Great Cuisines” of China are Lu (Shandong), Chuan (Sichuan), Yue (Cantonese) and Huaiyang. The most refined and subtle are Yue and Huaiyang. All great art, like cuisine, is also subtle. ZHENG Suo Nan (1241 -1318) was born during the Southern Song (1127 - 1279) and lived through its eventual collapse and ultimate defeat at the hands of the Mongols. By then, in his late 30s, the poet-painter famously refused to collaborate with the new rulers of China and assumed the mantle of *yimin* or “leftover subject”. Zheng hailed from Lianjian county in Fujian and was the leading painter of orchids of his time. *Ink Orchid* is his most famous painting. It is a dramatic statement of human longing. When asked why the orchid has no roots and that there is no ground underneath the orchid, Zheng Suo Nan replied that the China he once knew had been stolen under him, and that like the orchid, he has no more roots.

墨兰图卷

郑所南(1241-1318) 25.7 x 42.4 cm

水墨画

日本大阪市立美术馆

中国最初的“四大菜系”是鲁菜(山东)、川菜(四川)、粤菜(广东)和淮扬菜。最精微的是粤菜、淮阳菜。所有伟大的艺术，正如美食，也是微妙的。郑所南(1241 - 1318)，生于南宋(1127 - 1279)，目睹了南宋败亡于蒙古的过程。那时这位诗人和画家已近四十岁，不愿出仕元朝，自称宋遗民。郑所南是福建连江人，是当时兰花画的代表人物。墨兰图卷是他最著名的画。它戏剧性地表达了一个人的渴望。有人问他为什么他画的兰花无根无土，他说：“地为番人夺去，汝不知耶？”，意思指曾经认识的中国在他手下被夺走了，他和兰花一样，不再有根。

A Fundamental Right

If you enjoy a dish with a particular wine (or any other beverage), no one has the right to say you are wrong. Your freedom of choice is more important than any “expert” recommendation.

Don't Bother

If someone does not like a particular wine, it does not matter what food you pair it with. It's the same with food, if someone does not like raw oysters, it doesn't matter what wine you recommend. If you hate rap, 10 seconds is too long.

Soya Sauce vs Salt

Soya sauce has undergone fermentation. It not only adds to, but also transforms, the taste of ingredients. Salt, on the other hand, only enhances the original taste of ingredients. Pairing a dish with soya sauce must take this into consideration. If salt, instead of soya sauce, is employed to cook with, pairing becomes more straightforward and easier.

Only as Good as ...

A pairing recommendation is only as good – or not – as how many wines and cuisines the person has tasted. So, for example, if a person has only visited Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Tokyo, guess how many suggestions he can offer if you asked for a holiday recommendation.

State of the Tannins

Food loves wines where the tannins are ripe, evolved and resolved. Not young, raw, angry tannins. Heightened, jumpy tannins can be softened with a food that is fatty and high in protein or a dish in a rich sauce.

Oak Distracts

An oaky wine distracts from the fruit. Woodiness in a wine makes it difficult to pair just as too much black pepper, garlic or truffle oil in a dish makes it hard to taste what ingredients are in a dish. Food does not like oaky wines.

pairing pointers

pairing principles

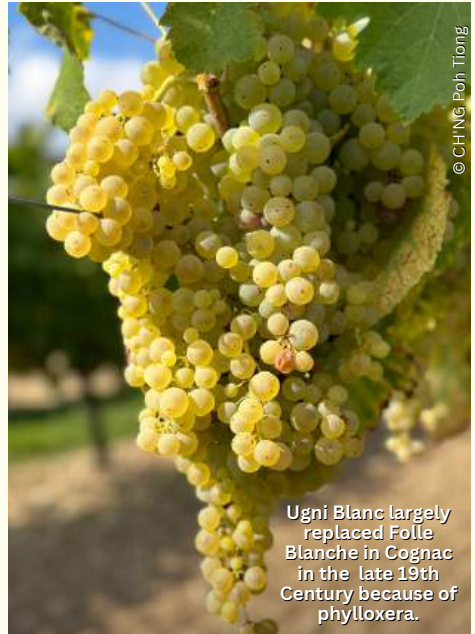
Three possible scenarios occur when a wine is introduced to food. The food and wine clash like a head-on collision. Like raw oyster with a full-bodied red, champagne with a Ribeye steak or Muscadet with Sweet & Sour Pork.

The second scenario is less dramatic. Wine and food do not clash nor do they pair. They are indifferent to each other. They do not clash but there is also no chemistry. Food and wine co-exist.

The third setting is the ideal. It's love at first bite and sip. The wine and food are locked in a tight embrace. They bring out qualities in each other which were not there on their own. It's a happy marriage. Like champagne with tempura, roast goose with Burgundy, Tawny Port with Sichuan Salivating Chicken, or Palo Cortado with Mutton Marsala.

The three scenarios are usually not a 100 percent outcome. There are shades and shadows in between. So, for example, where a wine and a dish co-exist, they may not be completely indifferent to each other and can, for example, pair to some extent although not entirely.

An example would be a flinty Chablis with an Omega 3 rich grilled Mackerel. Not the perfect match because a richer Meursault or creamy white Chateauneuf-du-Pape would be more ideal but, still, not a complete disaster. ■



wine by the glass • what is your pour?

Why do so many restaurants not tell us how much the pour is for a Wine by the Glass? When a wine is listed, we know it is a 750 ml bottle. Bars and restaurants even take the trouble to tell us whether the price of a beer is for a half or a full pint. Why not wine. Why this lack of transparency? When a wine is listed By The Glass at a certain price and the price of the full bottle is also stated, don't the consumer have the right to consider whether it is worth ordering that or the entire bottle?



Wine glass with a clear 150 ml pour line.

dish of the century

dong shun xiang pyramid

“For a long time, I thought about how to present the dish for a national competition. There were three criteria. These were:

- ingredients must be affordable and economical
- the dish must reflect the regional culture
- the dish should reflect and highlight the skills of the chef”

The interview with Chef DONG Shun Xiang was conducted at Wei Zhuang Restaurant overlooking the legendary West Lake in 2019 (he retired in February 2024). The tranquil setting was a fitting location for his awe inspiring creation.

Although Dong is the creator of the dish, he went behind the scenes to serve as coach of the team. And sent his apprentice to the 1997 competition. The dish duly won Gold medal.



An evolved Bordeaux, silky tannins and the uncanny fragrance of sandalwood (believed by the Chinese to possess spiritual qualities), is an epic pairing.

The mould used to shape one of Chinese cuisine's greatest creations.



“I chose braised pork because it is my favourite meat and also because back in the late 1990s, the country’s economy was doing well and we could afford meat. *Dongpo Rou* is of course very associated with Hangzhou. But, I thought it too sweet and I wanted to make it more nutritious so I combined it with vegetables. I chose dried bamboo shoot because that is one of the ‘Three Treasures of Hangzhou’.”

Why the shape?

“For half a year, I thought about how to present the dish. One day, I was playing with a piece of paper. After rolling it, I accidentally dropped it to the ground. I looked at it when I picked it up and thought it resembled a piece of architecture. As a result, I made a mould resembling a pyramid.”

So was born what is now a much copied creation throughout China, including Hong Kong, but which origin is entirely unknown except to a very tiny circle.

Dong Shun Xiang is incredibly modest and humble. In his outlook, he reminds more of a scholar than a chef. At Wei Zhuang Restaurant, the menu simply names the dish as *Gold Medal Braised Sliced Pork*. This is because of the accolade it achieved at the 1997 competition.

That, I feel, is too anonymous. And does not properly identify the genius who brought the creation into this world. It would be as meaningless as calling the ‘Eiffel Tower’ the ‘Iron Tower’.

Dong’s creation is the most beautiful Chinese dish created in the last one hundred years and more. To do proper justice and give credit where it is due, let’s now start calling the culinary wonder after the man who created it!

DONG SHUN XIANG PYRAMID! ■



the 4000-year-old noodles

In 2002, Chinese archaeologists made a stunning discovery.

Buried about three metres into the ground was an earthenware bowl. The archaeologists also discovered pottery, stoneware and human bones. This was a residential space and the site a human settlement. The earthenware bowl was in an inverted position, upside-down, and firmly embedded into the ground.

The bowl was complete, unbroken, and, except for a few small chips at the rim, in pristine condition. The inverted position of the bowl, as it turned out, had the effect of entombing the content, preserving it for posterity. The two archaeologists diligently recorded and listed their finds.

When the bowl was lifted, both the soil inside the inverted earthenware and its content were intact. The two young archaeologists, CAI Linhai (of the Qinghai Provincial Cultural Relics & Archaeology Institute) and ZHANG Xiaohu (of the Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing), discovered a spiralling bundle that resembled noodles.



While they knew they had discovered something special, they had no scientific confirmation. Not yet anyway.

The strands were very fragile. They were the exterior shell of something that had been a mass. Although the inside was hollow, what remained, the brittle, curly skin, resembled a bundle of noodles. What was also very telling was the colour, yellow. It was also discernible that the original thickness of the yellow threads was uniform. Suspicions aside, the archaeologists could not, for a certainty, categorically say what it was they had discovered.

The Lajia archaeological site (35° 49' 40' N, 102° 51' 15' E) dates to the Late Neolithic period of about 4,000 years ago and belongs to the Qijia Culture. Archaeological excavation had begun there in 1999. The site is geographically situated next to the Yellow River in Minhe County, Haidong Prefecture, Qinghai Province, in northwest China. The leader of the archaeology team (at the time an associate researcher) is Professor YE Maolin of the Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, whom we interviewed via email in 2018.

Very soon after the discovery, the earthenware bowl and its precious content were taken to Beijing. Two years later in 2004, scientific laboratory tests were initiated on the find.

The result was stunning. The Lajia archaeological team had discovered noodles made from millet dating back 4,000 years, the oldest ever discovered in the world.

The person in charge of the scientific tests was Dr LU Houyuan, a professor at the Institute of Geology and Geophysics, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing.

Prior to the discovery at the Lajia site, the earliest recorded reference to noodles had appeared in a book from the Eastern Han Dynasty (25 to 220 AD). And while there is evidence to suggest wheat was present in China about 4,000 years ago – encouraged and promoted during the Zhou Dynasty (1045 - 256 BC) – it was not widely cultivated until the Tang Dynasty (618 - 907). As for the discovery in 2002, until there is older evidence from elsewhere, the Lajia find all but points to the Chinese being the inventor of noodles rather than the Arabs or Italians.

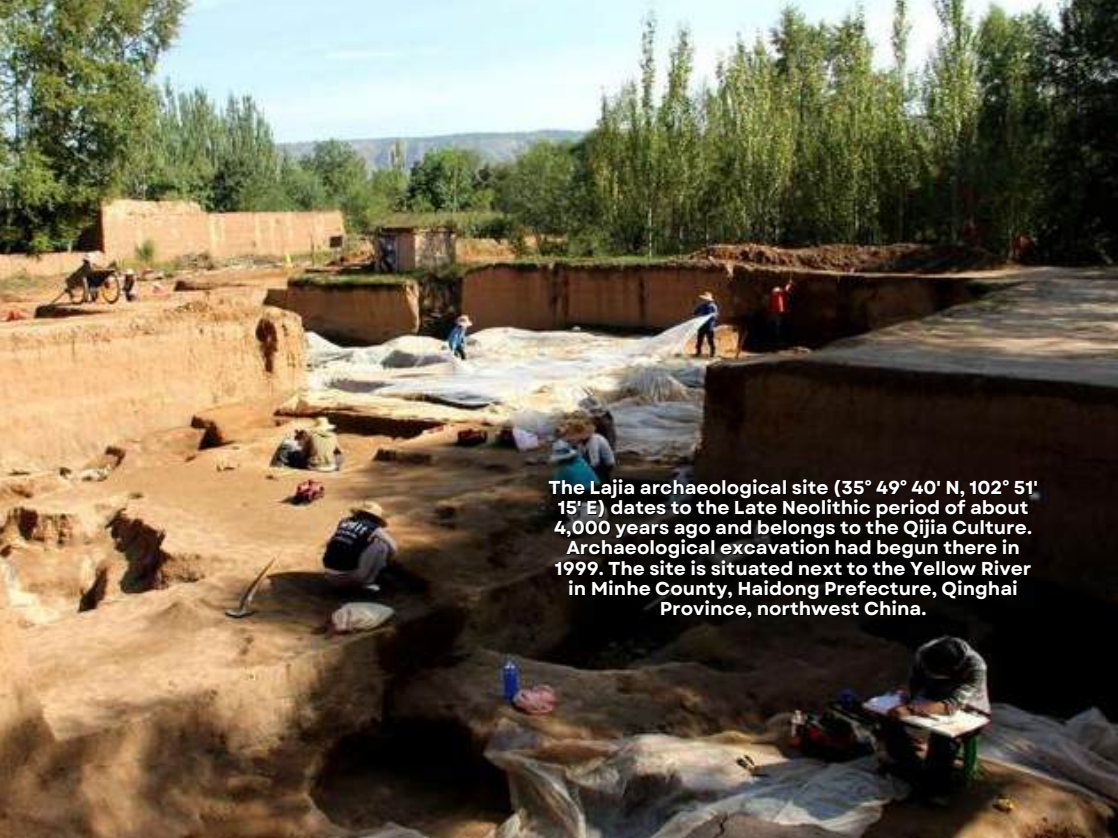


The earthenware bowl was in an inverted position, upside-down, and firmly embedded into the ground. The bowl was complete, unbroken, and, except for a few small chips at the rim, in pristine condition. The inverted position of the bowl, as it turned out, had the effect of entombing the content, preserving it for posterity.



In 2004, two years after the discovery, Professor LU Houyuan (photographed here at the Lajia archaeological site) of the Institute of Geology and Geophysics, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, conducted scientific laboratory tests on the find. Dr Lu discovered the noodles were made from millet. Till this day, in rural northern China, noodles are still made from millet.





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The site was a settlement. It is believed a massive earthquake took place four thousand years ago which triggered a tsunami and massive flooding. The inhabitants were caught completely by surprise. The team of archaeologists from Beijing's Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and Qinghai Provincial Cultural Relics & Archaeology Institute also discovered pottery, stoneware and human bones.

Professor YE Maolin

Leader of the Lajia Archaeological Excavation

Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Institute of Archaeology, Beijing

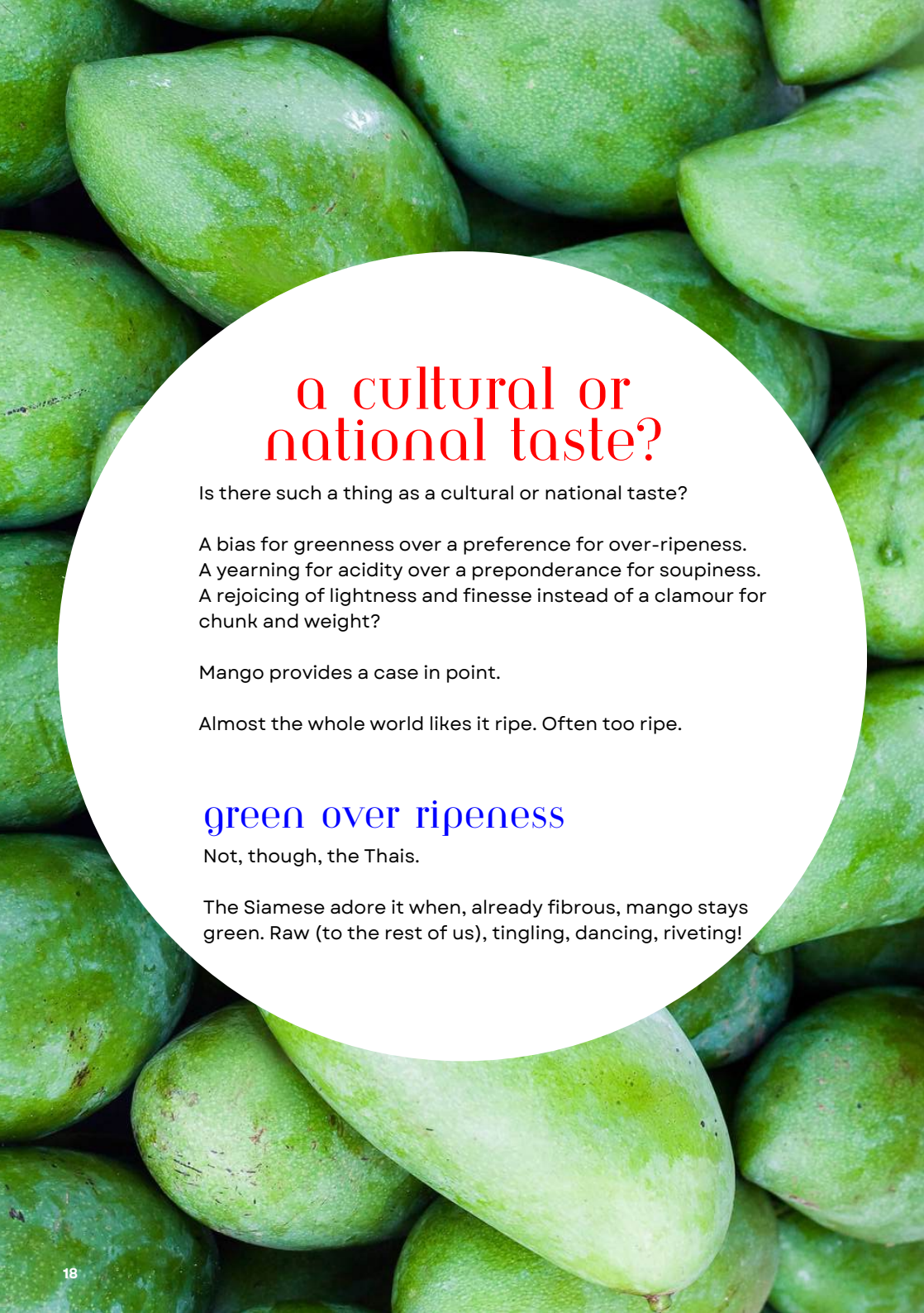


"I was not on the scene when the two young archaeologists, CAI Linhai and ZHANG Xiaohu made the discovery. They immediately reported the find to me. At that time (in 2002), the archaeological team had begun to use their first digital camera. And were able to take many photographs and see the results immediately. However, because the computer we transferred the photographs into had a small hard-drive, we were obliged to size the photographs small. As a result, we do not have any large photos, which we regret till this day.



"After reporting the discovery of the noodles at the Lajia archaeological site, many media started writing about it. Some of them, in their re-reporting and re-writing, made inaccurate claims, for example, that the noodles are la mian, which is wrong

"The noodles found at Laila are produced by pressing the dough through holes. Till this day, in rural parts of northern China, they still preserve this way of making noodles. They are called 'hele' noodles. Although I believe the Lajia archaeological discovery is of the oldest noodles ever found in the world, at least till now, this does not mean that all noodles around the world originate from Lajia. The other noodles may have their own sources." ■



a cultural or national taste?

Is there such a thing as a cultural or national taste?

A bias for greenness over a preference for over-ripeness.
A yearning for acidity over a preponderance for soupiness.
A rejoicing of lightness and finesse instead of a clamour for chunk and weight?

Mango provides a case in point.

Almost the whole world likes it ripe. Often too ripe.

green over ripeness

Not, though, the Thais.

The Siamese adore it when, already fibrous, mango stays green. Raw (to the rest of us), tingling, dancing, riveting!



acidity

As for wines which acidity defies gravity, the Italians are champions.

To begin with, Italians love their whites without any oak influence. Italians hanker for wines with laser sharp fruit that is in earnest competition with taut acidity.

Why the yearning for so much freshness? It has to do with upbringing which then evolves into DNA.

What is Italy's favourite vegetable or fruit(as some would contend)? Tomato, which bristles with acidity!

Culture does evolve into our DNA.

Why are Italian sports cars so effortlessly sublime?

More than 2,000 years ago when speed was determined by horses, the first sports car was a Roman chariot.

lightness of being

Some twenty years ago, over lunch in Napa, I asked the sommelier if I could have “a glass of light, refreshing white wine” with my first course.

“I am sorry sir but we do not make light, refreshing white wines in California”.

All due credit to the young American’s uber honesty and acute black humour.

Freshness, never mind acidity, can be considered a fault if you have been brought up on soft drinks.

A 355 ml can of Coca-Cola contains 39 gm of sugar which is about 10 teaspoons. Many people never grow out of this comfort drink. For most of such people, the other favourite drink is vanilla milk shake. Heavy and weighty.

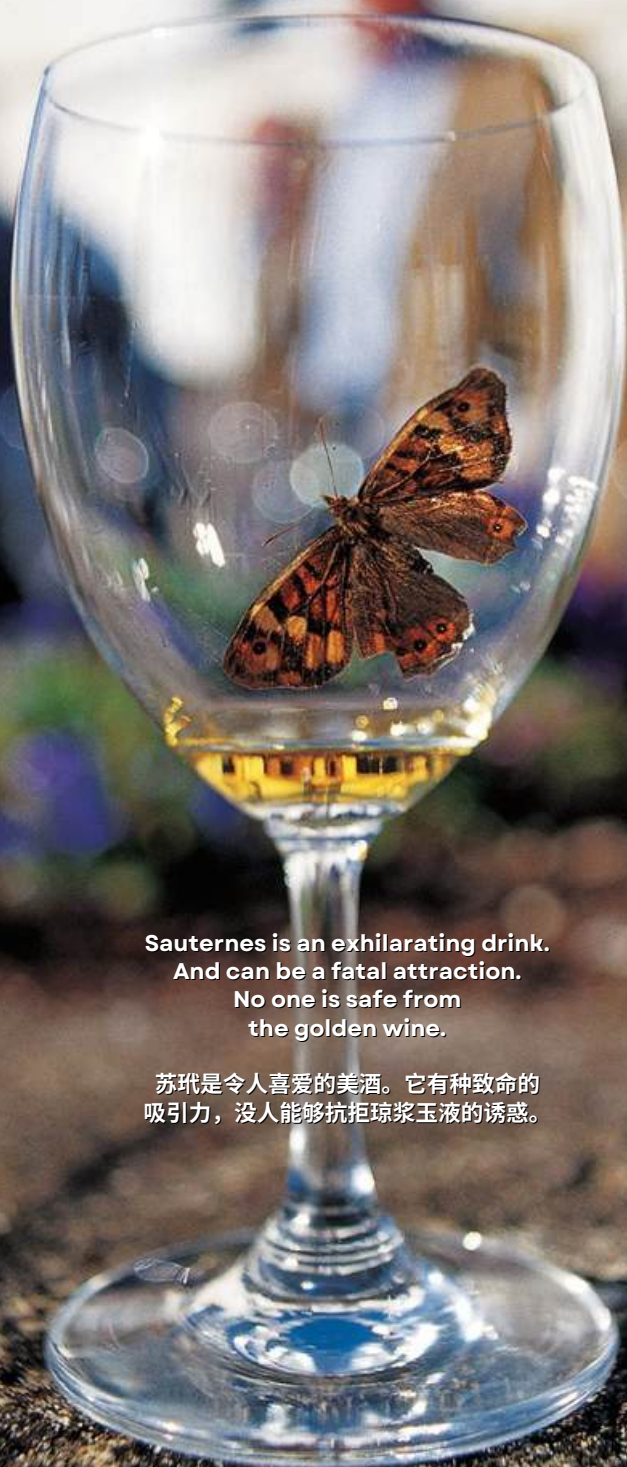
There is a culinary equivalent to all that vinosity.

The first time I had dinner at Nobu, there was so much sweet sauce drowning the fish my host had ordered, I realised the reason Nobu was so popular with the Hollywood set. Together with Nobu Matsuhisa, actor Robert de Niro is also a founder.

Nobu is Japanese food for people who don’t like real Japanese food. ■

**This sugar bomb contains 39 gm,
or about 10 teaspoons, of sugar.**





**Sauternes is an exhilarating drink.
And can be a fatal attraction.
No one is safe from
the golden wine.**

苏玳是令人喜爱的美酒。它有种致命的吸引力，没人能够抗拒琼浆玉液的诱惑。

price is irrelevant love conquers all

Most people consider it silly, absurd, even ridiculous to pair a simple dish with an expensive wine.

They regard it a terrible mismatch.

You should never entertain such a reservation if you will enjoy the dish and the wine in equal measure.

The same would be true of two people falling in love.

It matters not a bit if one is poor and the other wealthy.

What matters is their love for each other.

Whether food and wine or falling in love, don't be short-sighted and narrow-minded. Be open, bold, and daring. Set yourself free.

If you have a bottle of prestige champagne stashed away for a special treat, don't think twice to lavish it on your favourite meal even if it be a casual dim sum lunch comprising classics such as *siew mai*, deep-fried beancurd skin stuffed with prawn filling, *harkow*, and Chiu Chow dumpling.

The relatively humble cost of the dim sums is irrelevant. The primary consideration is whether you will enjoy them with the wine.

You owe that to yourself. You have no need to account for what others think and be miserable.

The same would be true of a costly delicacy paired with a value-for-money wine.



A Methusaleh of Amour de Deutz 2000 at £2,380 from Hedonism Wines at www.hedonism.co.uk.

A Methusaleh is 6 litres or the equivalent of 8 bottles.

If you enjoy the two together, what are you waiting for?

A dried 6-head Amidori abalone (US\$3,240 at Forum Restaurant, Hong Kong) will land you on Cloud 9 when savoured with an evolved Vigneti Massa Derthona.

The unoaked Piedmontese Timorasso seduces with complex layers of honey/apricot/pineapple fruit. Creamy in texture, all that richness and body will wrap itself around the abalone and its equally rich velvety sauce.

Another great match with the sea delicacy is an aged white Chateauneuf-du-Pape. The yellow floral notes, scented stone fruits – including peach, sometimes apricot – and vinosity of the exotic white Rhone demand a generous Burgundy glass to release all that pent up Southern abandon.

The two whites are generous in fruit and richly textured which make them ideal pairings. A skinny or mid-weight acidic white would simply bounce off the abalone and careen out of control.

Talking of the importance of succulent fruit and glycerol mouthfeel as the building blocks of the pairings, another die die must-try matchup would, of course, be the sumptuous, creamy Amour de Deutz. Suitably evolved, the opulent pure Chardonnay Blanc de Blancs has an intensity of fruit as rich, deep, and resonant as a Bach cello suite. ■





Dry Petit Manseng



Deep-Fried Beancurd



Cantonese Salt & Pepper Squid



Tempura



Siu Mai



Xiao Long Bao



Indian Onion Bhaji



Teochew Five Spice



Fish & Chips



Tortilla de Patatas



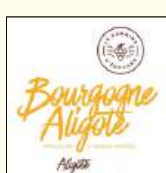
Cheong Fun

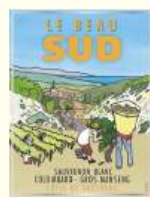


Yam Puffs



Shandong Deep-Fried Minced Pork Balls





Best unoaked Chardonnay of China



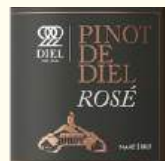
Spaghetti Carbonara



Deep-Fried Fish



Spring Roll



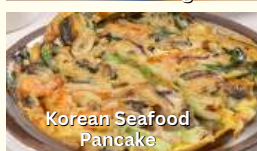
pairings



Fukien Oyster Omelette



Shrimp Paste Chicken Wings



Korean Seafood Pancake



Guo Tie



Pret a Manger Classic Super Club

"Unoaked whites - defined by purity of fruit and driven by acidity that gives structure and freshness to the wine - are exceptional with cuisine particularly deep-fried foods"



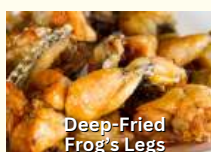
Pizza Napoli



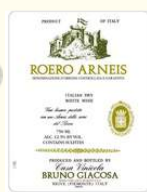
Pad Thai



Thai Shrimp Cake



Deep-Fried Frog's Legs





Raw Oysters

© Gillardeau



Sashimi Toro



Steamed Bamboo Clams



“Seafood brimming with Omega 3 call for a white with body, texture, and evolved fruit to marry all that richness. Smooth upon smooth is a winning formula”



Stir-Fried Lobster

© CH'ING Poh Tiong



Teochew Cold Crab



Shanghaiese Stir-Fried & Deep-Fried Shrimps

© CH'ING Poh Tiong

perfect



Lobster Sashimi



Cantonese Seafood Fried Rice in Lotus Leaf

© CH'ING Poh Tiong



Hainanese Chicken Rice



pairings



Lemon Chicken

© Yixin Restaurant



Crispy Egg Noodles with Seafood



Steamed Pomfret

shutting down • opening up

The overwhelming majority of sparkling and white wine is served too cold – often freezing – in restaurants around the world.

Dunking a bottle into a bucket of ice means the wine gets colder and colder, becoming more and more numbed. The old mantra – to *chambre* a bottle of red in order to bring it up to the room temperature after extricating it from the cellar – applies equally to sparkling and white wine although not to the same room temperature.

This is the test.

When we drink a wine that has come up in temperature – colder to warmer – the wine opens up. When the wine dips from a higher to a lower temperature, it closes up until, in the very extreme situation, it simply shuts up!

Let's say we want to drink a wine at 12° Celsius.

Two bottles of the same wine served at this identical temperature will taste very differently if one dived from 20 to 12° while the other rises from 5 to 12° Celsius.

Whatever the preferred temperature you wish to enjoy your wine, make sure it is opening up, not shutting down. ■



rosé needs an opulent glass

Burgundy and Pinot Noir need a wider glass to allow a more generous exchange of air and wine surface to release the delicate fruit. The same is even more true for rosé. Yet, almost everywhere, including Provence, rosé is served in a skinny white wine glass. One time over dinner at his home – Chateau Les Trois Croix – in Fronsac, Patrick Leon (1943 - 2018) served Garrus, the top wine of Chateau d'Esclans. (Following his retirement after almost two

decades at Mouton Rothschild, Leon was engaged by Sacha Lichine as Chief Winemaker at Chateau d'Esclans which he had acquired in 2006). After first tasting Garrus in a white wine glass, I asked Patrick if he had Burgundy glasses which he duly brought out and poured Garrus into. Twirling the rosé, nosing it, and sipping Garrus again, Patrick's face lit up. His smile said it all. It was as if we were tasting another wine!



icicles of rainbow

Champagne represents for me the only form of carbon dioxide gas without which life would be impossible.

That said, as much as I adore bubbly, I won't go as far as people who proclaim "Champagne goes with Everything".

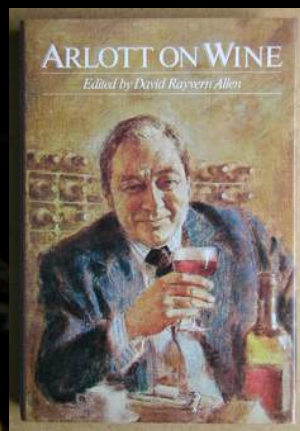
It doesn't. People who insist it does merely want to drink champagne over any- and everything else. There is, of course, nothing wrong with that except the claim is meaningless.

I have no wish, for example, to drink champagne with Cantonese Roast Goose or Suzhou Sweet & Sour Mandarin Fish or Mutton Marsala.

Champagne conjures up merriment. The bubbles propel us to a higher plane. Sipping champagne, we aim for the stars. We wish to spread happiness.

The best definition of champagne I have come across is not from a wine writer but an English schoolgirl moved by her first taste of bubbly. Her reaction is from the book *Arlott on Wine*.

"It's like icicles of rainbow in my mouth". ■



John Arlott (1914 – 1991) wrote on cricket and wine for the *Guardian* newspaper.
John Arlott • *Arlott on Wine*
Willow Books Collins • 1986

the most beautiful wine glass

The most captivating wine glass in the world is designed by the person who has tasted more champagnes than anyone else. Philippe Jamesse was, for 18 years, Chef Sommelier of Les Crayeres where their champagne selection is legendary. The glasses are manufactured by Maison Lehmann, also of Reims.

In 2019, Jamesse established DNA Champagne & Wine, offering champagne consulting. He has, since 2021, been Ambassador of AWA SAKE, the association comprising producers of sparkling sake. Together with Kimoto Glass of Tokyo, Philippe Jamesse also developed a glass specially for AWA SAKE. ■



Philippe Jamesse Synergie is versatile enough for champagne, white, rosé, and red wine.



Photographed in 1990 © CH'NG Poh Tiong

guardian lions

This *Fu* or Guardian Lion is one of a pair outside the palace in Beijing's Forbidden City. It is a lioness as denoted by the fact she is playing with her cub with its left paw. The number of knots on its head is an indication of rank. Officials below Grade Seven were not allowed to have *Fu* Lions in front of their houses. The highest number of knots is 13, for Grade One officials. This, though, is a Royal *Fu* Lion guarding the palace. Only the emperor can have 45 knots on each of his lions. *Fu* Lions originated from the time of the Eastern Han Dynasty (25 – 220 AD).

门狮

这尊“门狮”或“福狮”是北京紫禁城宫殿外的其中一对狮子。这是一只母狮，因为她正在玩耍并用左爪约束她的幼崽。门狮头上螺髻数量是等级高低的重要标志。只有七品以上的官员才能摆放门狮。一品官员府可以摆有13个螺髻的门狮。然而，这是一头守卫宫殿的皇家门狮。只有皇帝才能让他的每只狮子有45个螺髻。门狮起源于东汉时期(公元25-220年)。

fruit the reason we celebrate wine

The reason we drink wine is for the fruit. Imparted by the grapes, fruit is the voice of the wine. If the glass before us does not sing the variety, blend, or region, the wine has let us down.

The sensitive use of oak can transform, even enhance, the fruit.

My late friend Paul Pontallier (1956 - 2016), his Ph D thesis was the effect of oak on wine. His teacher was Professor Emile Peynaud (1912 - 2004) who went on to recommend him to Corinne Mentzelopoulos when she needed a winemaker in 1983. Although Chateau Margaux is aged in new oak, you don't taste the wood.

When oak smothers the fruit to the point the wine tastes of smoky staves, it is not wine we are savouring. We are, instead, drinking wood juice. There's a lot of that out there.

The same is true of food.

There is too much truffle oil, garlic, black pepper, and chilli in cooking. So much so that it is often difficult to know what we are actually eating. People have become less interested in taste than getting a sensation.

Once at a restaurant, I asked for the potato dish to exclude the truffle oil.

"Oh, you don't like the taste of truffle?"

"I happen to like the taste of potato," was my reply.

The overwhelming truffle oil used to splash over food around the world is artificial flavouring made from synthetic compounds. There is zero truffle in them. ■



Paul Pontallier (1956 - 2016) joined Chateau Margaux straight from the University of Bordeaux in 1983.



© CH'NG Poh Tiong

Osvaldo Forlino (left) and Walter Massa, saviour of Timorasso, the ancient white Piedmontese variety. The fathers of the childhood friends were mayors of their respective villages, Giarolo and Monleale respectively. Osvaldo Forlino has also always been an advocate of Timorasso. In his house in Giarolo, he has now planted the variety, making the vines the highest Timorasso grown in Italy at 800 metres above sea level. Photographed at No Menu, Osvaldo Forlino's restaurant in Singapore.

white or red • just as good

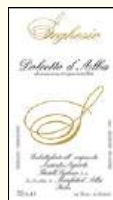
Doufu, Chicken & Pork are very versatile.

They are enjoyable with sparkling, white, rosé, and red.

When they are steamed, I prefer white.

When braised, roast, or deep-fried, red is my go-to.

Not a heavy, full-bodied, chunky red but, instead, a lighter, fresher proposition such as Beaujolais or Gamay, Pinot Noir or Sancerre or Alsace Rouge, Dolcetto d'Alba, or a fruity, aromatic, unoaked Valpolicella. ■



Steamed Doufu



Red Braised Doufu



Steamed Chicken



Crispy Skin Chicken



Steamed Pork



Siew Yoke Pork

© CH'NG Poh Tiong



Sichuan Camphor
Tea Smoked Duck



Xinjiang Roast Lamb

perfect



Teochew Braised Duck



Tandoori Lamb



Cantonese Beef Ow Lam



Cantonese Lap Mei Rice

Reds with fruit
contoured by holistic
tannins from the
grape – including the
pips and skin – and
just the right pitch of
oak enhance the
protein and taste of
meats. The wine also
refreshes our palates
when we savour the
skin and the fat of
meat, particularly if
cooked in its own oil.

pairings



Cantonese Beef Hor Fun



Cantonese Roast Goose



Nanking Salted Duck

the only seafood



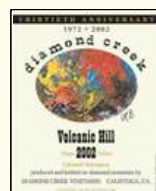
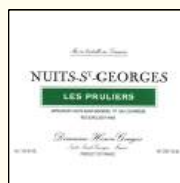
in praise of half-bottles

Half-bottles are wonderful. Particularly if you are dining on your own. A half-bottle allows us to enjoy less of one wine so we can savour one more half-bottle of another. The other bonus of half-bottles is they age and evolve considerably faster than a full 750 ml bottle. And, about four times sooner than a magnum if we calculate a half-bottle ages approximately twice as fast as a full bottle.

I particularly love half-bottle champagnes as, important as the bubbles are, they are more calm and the fruit rounder. The same is true of whites which acidity becomes more tame and not so piercing. The speeded up evolution allows the fruit to become more integrated with the freshness earlier. The texture is smoother, even creamy.

Reds come into their own in half-bottles. This is particularly true of those varieties or region where the tannins and acidity need more time to soften such as Nebbiolo, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Syrah. The wines are more aromatic because of the greater advanced evolution. The tannins are silkier and if decanting is needed, a shorter duration. Burgundy also benefits being in half-bottles because the climate being continental, the Pinot Noir shows so much more gloriously with time, particularly the great terroirs.

The Barn at Blackberry Farm, Tennessee, USA, has the greatest collection of half-bottles in the world. Here is just a dozen of their 146 half-bottles. ■



Champagne Pierre Paillard Les Parcelles Bouzy Grand Cru NV	US\$95
Garretson Wine Company Limoid Cior Roussanne Paso Robles 2005	US\$50
F. Weins Prüm Graacher Domprobst Auslese Long Gold Cap Riseling 2004	US\$65
Domaine Louis Michel & Fils Chablis 2018	US\$55
Domaine Etienne Sauzet Hameau de Blagny Puligny-Montrachet 1er Cru 2003	US\$105
Domaine Jean-Louis Chave Hermitage Blanc 1998	US\$290
Ken Wright Nysa Vineyard Pinot Noir Dundee Hills, Oregon 2007	US\$60
Diamond Creek Volcanic Hill Cabernet Sauvignon Diamond Mountain 2002	US\$390
Ridge Monte Bello Cabernet Sauvignon Santa Cruz Mountains 2013	US\$265
Domaine Henri Gouges Les Pruliers Nuits-Saint-Georges 1er Cru 2003	US\$135
Chateau de Beaucastel Chateaneuf-du-Pape Rouge 1999	US\$145
Gaja Barbaresco DOCG 1999	US\$240

duck the red origin of peking



I never pair Peking Duck with a red wine. Peking Duck is relished for the skin, not the meat. The breed named Pekin originates from China and is reared to 45 days for the dish (for Roast Duck it is usually 65 days). The white feathered Pekin is known for its light instead of gamey taste. The fact they are reared to just 45 days for Peking Duck, the meat is actually quite neutral in taste. France's Poulet de Bresse is considerably more flavoursome.

The crispy skin being the highlight of Peking Duck, I often just enjoy that on its own, especially when by myself. With guests, after a few slivers of that, I will have one or two pancake wraps comprising the skin, scallion, cucumber, and a little spread of the sweet bean sauce. Because of the sweet bean sauce in the wrap, ideal wines for Peking Duck are Champagne Demi-Sec, off-dry Sparkling Wine, Riesling Spatlese & Auslese, Vouvray Demi-Sec, Moscato d'Asti, Sauternes, Shaoxing Rice Wine, Oloroso, Palo Cortado, Tawny Port, Blended & Single Malt Whisky, Brandy, and Cognac.

As I only have a little dab of the sweet bean sauce with Peking Duck, I sometimes also pair it with a dry sparkling or Champagne Brut, Riesling, Chablis, Vouvray Sec, Sancerre, Muscadet, or dry Petit Manseng. ■

yongle emperor

Peking Duck originates from Nanjing. It arrived in Beijing during the early Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1644) when the Yongle Emperor shifted the capital from Nanjing to Beijing. ZHU Di – the personal name of the Yongle Emperor – was the Prince of Yan, the ancient name of the Beijing region for which he was enfeoffed. His father, ZHU Yuanzhang, founded the Ming Dynasty and reigned as the Hongwu Emperor, siting his capital in Nanjing. Following the death of the crown prince ZHU Biao in 1392, his son ZHU Yunwen later assumed the throne as the Jianwen Emperor in 1398 and began executing or demoting his powerful uncles. In 1399, the Prince of Yan rebelled against his nephew and finally overthrew him in 1402. Whether



the Jianwen Emperor perished in a palace fire or escaped, no one knows. What is certain is that in 1407, the Yongle Emperor decreed the transfer of the capital from Nanjing to Beijing as that was his original power base. The year before, Zhu Di had already ordered the construction of a new palace which was completed in 1420. This is the Forbidden City, Peking's Number One tourist attraction. The Yongle Emperor reigned from 1402 to 1424. China's oldest restaurant is Bianyifang. Although going by another name at the time, the Peking Duck restaurant was opened in 1416 in Beijing. In the 14th Year of the Reign of the Yongle Emperor.

my favourite yquem pairings

© CH'NG Poh Tiong



Singapore Chili Crab



Sichuan La Zi Chicken

© CH'NG Poh Tiong





Hangzhou Dongpo Rou



Sichuan Mapo Tofu



Suzhou Sweet & Sour Mandarin Fish



Cantonese Sweet & Sour Pork



Peking Duck



Cantonese Suckling Pig



Singapore Chili Crab



Thai Stir-fried Minced Pork with Basil and Chilli



Hangzhou Dongpo Rou



Korean Spicy Pork



Cantonese Sweet & Sour Pork



Many people imagine a full-bodied red will stand up to spicy dishes. It does not. Spicy dishes need sweetness – not richness – in a wine. Sweetness will also pair with sweet and sour dishes, and others which use a lot of black pepper, sweet sauce, or/and vinegar. All the dishes we recommended with Yquem will also pair magnificently with Champagne Demi-Sec, Riesling Spatlese or Auslese, Moscato d'Asti, Lambrusco Semi-Secco, Shaoxing Rice Wine, Sake, Oloroso, Palo Cortado, Tawny Port, Colheita, Whisky, Brandy, Cognac, and Grand Marnier.



Peking Duck



Sichuan Salivating Chicken



Dan Dan Noodles



Sichuan Mapo Tofu

pairings



Cantonese Suckling Pig



Indian Curry



Sichuan Boiled Fish



Sichuan La Zi Chicken



THE WORLD OF FINE WINE WORLD'S BEST WINE LISTS AWARDS 2024

worldoffinewine.com

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Champions' League Best Overall List 2024

Park Hotel Vossevangen • **Norway**

Best Long List (over 500 wines)

SW Steakhouse • Macau • **Asia**

Society • Melbourne • Victoria • Australia • **Australasia**

Sketch, The Lecture Room & Library • London • UK • **Europe**

Blue Penny Cellar, Constance Belle Mare Plage • Poste de Flacq • Mauritius • **Middle East & Africa**

Pappas Bros Steakhouse, Houston Galleria • Houston • Texas • **North America**

Graycliff Hotel & Restaurant • Nassau • Bahamas • **South & Central America & the Caribbean**

Best Champagne & Sparkling List

Restaurant Petrus at Island Shangri-La • Hong Kong • China • **Asia**

Quay • The Rocks • Sydney • New South Wales • Australia • **Australasia**

Affinitore • Milano • Italy • **Europe**

Blue Penny Cellar • Constance Belle Mare Plage • Poste de Flacq • Mauritius • **Middle East & Africa**

The Little Nell • Aspen • CO • USA • **North America**

Graycliff Hotel & Restaurant • Nassau • Bahamas • **South & Central America & the Caribbean**

Best Value List

Supernormal • Melbourne • Victoria • Australia • **Asia**

Doppo • London • UK • **Europe**

Archipel Restaurant • Constance Le Prince Maurice • Poste de Flacq • Mauritius • **Middle East & Africa**

Barcelona Wine Bar • Washington • DC • USA • **North America**

Best Spirits List

Ozen Reserve Bolifushi • Kaafu Atoll • Maldives • **Asia**

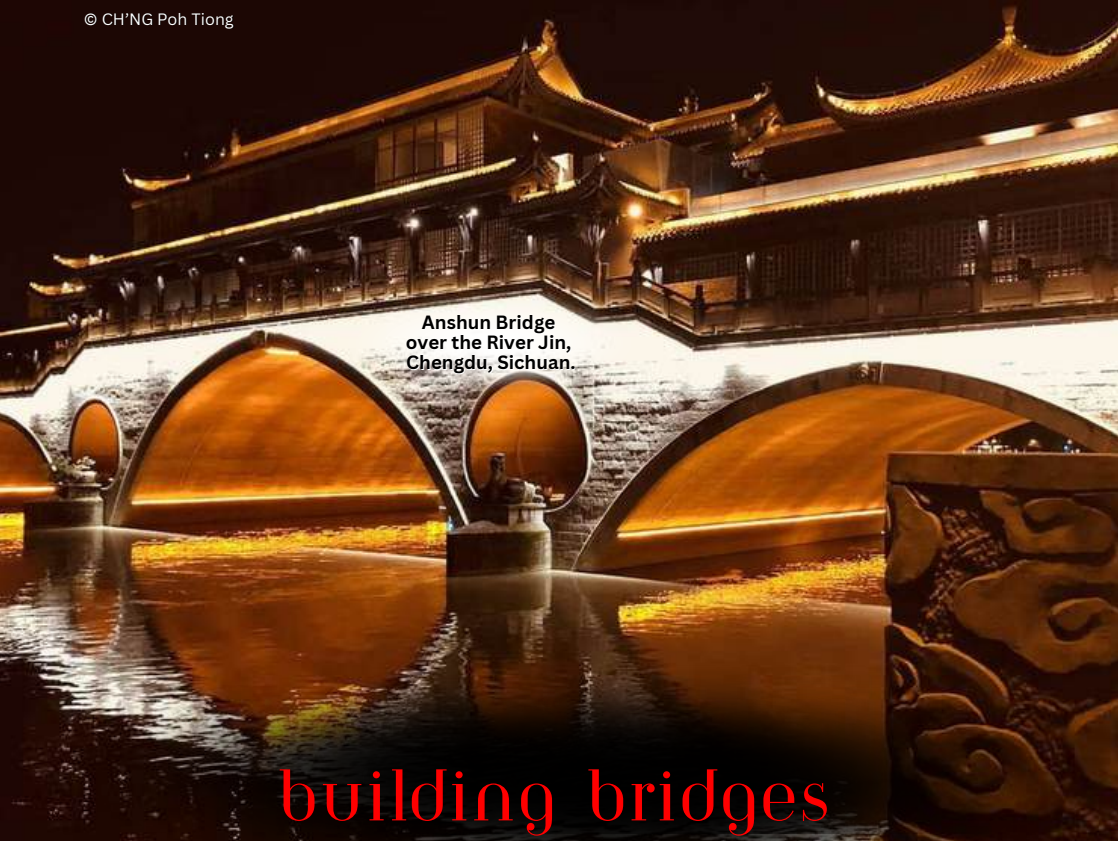
Society • Melbourne • Victoria • Australia • **Australasia**

Le Taillevent • Paris • France • **Europe**

Saxon Hotel Villas & Spa • Johannesburg • South Africa • **Middle East & Africa**

The Pines Modern Steakhouse • Highland • California • USA • **North America**

Graycliff Hotel & Restaurant • Nassau • Bahamas • **South & Central America & the Caribbean**



Anshun Bridge
over the River Jin,
Chengdu, Sichuan.

building bridges

The existential purpose of a bridge is to connect.

To span distances in order to bring people together.

Bridges allow us to get to a desired destination – or person – in a shorter time.

Bridges offer possibilities, opportunities.

We enter into the future – taking leave of the previous – when we cross a bridge.

Bridges invite optimism.

It is this optimism we need to harness.

I invite the wine communities of China, Japan, Bordeaux, the UK, and beyond, to build bridges so we can create a fraternity built on exchange, understanding, and grape friendship. ■



CHINESE WINE TASTING



**9 January 2024
Chateau Beychevelle
Bordeaux**

Photos by Frederic Guy



Lilian Barton Sartorius,
Proprietor of Chateau Leoville
Barton, ninth generation of
the Barton Family.



**Christian Seely, Managing
Director of AXA Millésimes.**



**Nicolas Glumineau, Managing
Director & Chief Winemaker of
Chateau Pichon Comtesse.**



Sara Lecompte Cuvelier,
Proprietor of Chateau
Leoville Poyferre.



Jean-Jacques Bonnie,
Co-proprietor of Chateau
Malartic Lagraviere.



Alexandre Thienpont,
Proprietor of Vieux
Chateau Certan.



From left, CH'NG Poh Tiong, Organiser of Chinese Wine Tasting; Christine Pinault, Director of Chateau Beychevelle; Olivier Tregoa, Technical Director, Chateaux & Domaines (France & Overseas) of Domaines Barons de Rothschild Lafite; Charles Treutenaere, General Manager of Domaine de Long Dai; Li Yong, Founder Proprietor of Silk Road; Philippe Blanc, Managing Director & Chief Winemaker of Chateau Beychevelle; Lily Zhang, Founder Proprietor of Chateau Copower Jade; ZHANG Jing, Co Founder/Co Proprietor & Chief Winemaker of Helan Qingxue Vineyard; Geraldine Marquay Santier, Communication & Public Relations Director of Chateau Beychevelle; WANG Qingwei, General Manager of Chateau Rongzi; Margaux Brengel, Cru Ambassador of Ao Yun; Joe Shen, Director of Jiangsu Dongchen Electronic Technology; and, Kayan YU, Business & Marketing Manager of chngpohiong.com.



Diana Garcia Berrouet (left), Managing Director of Domaines Jacques Thienpont; and Stephanie Danglade, Enologist of Chateau Pichon Comtesse.



From left, Damien Barton Sartorius, tenth generation of the Barton Family; Florent Cillero, Cellar Master of Chateau Brane-Cantenac; and Henri Lurton, Proprietor of Chateau Brane-Cantenac.



Pierre Montegut (left), Technical Director of Chateau Pichon Baron & Chateau Suduiraut; and Philippe Delfaut, Managing Director & Chief Winemaker of Chateau Kirwan.



Jonathan Choukroun Chicheportiche, Owner & Editor of VertdeVin.



Adrien Bernard, Proprietor of Domaine de Chevalier.



CHINESE WINE TASTING



**31 July 2024
Hilton Tokyo**

Photos by Ikuko Yamamoto



From left, Nobuko Sasaki, Sommelier of Aeon Retail Co., Ltd ; Master Sommelier Yukata Takano; Yumi Tanabe, Founder of 'SAKURA' Japan Women's Wine Awards; CH'NG Poh Tiong, Organiser of Chinese Wine Tasting; and, LIU Pingyuan, General Manager of Towashoji Co., Ltd.



From left, Yuka Ogasawara, Koshu of Japan; Yukiko Amano, Export Manager of Lumière; Shigeki Kida, fifth generation Proprietor & Winemaker of Lumière; and, WANG Fang, Founder Proprietor of Kanaan Winery.



From left, Fumio Shonai, Director of Tomi no Oka Winery; CHEN Lizhong, Founder Proprietor of Tiansai; and, Keiichi Shiina, Chief Enologist of Tomi no Oka Winery.



Standing (back row) from left, Kota Kudo, Sales Department of Koalaya; Yukari Tezuka, President of YU's Wine Salon; CHEN Lizhong, Founder Proprietor of Tiansai; Bel Lee, Business Development Manager of Domaine Franco Chinois & Canaan Winery; WANG Fang, Founder Proprietor of Kanaan Winery; Lily Zhang, Founder Proprietor of Chateau Copower Jade; Yumi Tanabe (behind her is Lily Zhang), Founder of 'SAKURA' Japan Women's Wine Awards; WANG Qingwei, General Manager of Chateau Rongzi; Dilefy Chung, Regional Sales Manager of Chateau Copower Jade; Ayana Misawa, fifth generation Proprietor & Winemaker of Grace Wine; and, CH'NG Poh Tiong, Organiser of Chinese Wine Tasting. Front from left, Kayan YU, Business & Marketing Manager of chnpohntiong.com; ZHANG Jing, Co Founder/Co Proprietor & Chief Winemaker of Helan Qingxue Vineyard; LI Yong, Founder Proprietor of Silk Road; Tina Jiao, second generation Proprietor of Chateau Copower Jade; Aiko Tsujimoto, Brand Manager of FWINES Co.,Ltd; and, Ronald Khoo, Wine & Spirits and Beverages Manager of Cathay Pacific.



From left, Tina Jiao, second generation Proprietor of Chateau Copower Jade; Lily Zhang, Founder Proprietor of Chateau Copower Jade; and, Ayana Misawa, fifth generation Proprietor & Winemaker of Grace Wine.



From left, Hayato Kojima, President of Wine & Newlife; Alex Lee, Proprietor of Chungking Szechwan and Rose Hotel Yokohama; Yumi Tanabe, Founder of 'SAKURA' Japan Women's Wine Awards; and, CH'NG Poh Tiong.



Aiko Tsujimoto, Brand Manager of FWINES Co., Ltd; and, Ronald Khoo, Wine & Spirits and Beverages Manager of Cathay Pacific.



From left, Aya Mizukami, Wine Writer of Forbes JAPAN; Ayako Ohgami; and, Li Yong, Founder Proprietor of Silk Road.



TOP CHINESE RESTAURANTS OF THE WORLD 2025

© CH'NG Poh Tiong



xiao long bao

An imperial lion guardian statue in Kaifeng, capital of the Northern Song (960 – 1127), Henan Province. *Xiao Long Bao*, a dish of more than a thousand years old, originates from Kaifeng, not Shanghai.

小笼包

一座古老的皇家石狮在河南省开封，这里是北宋（960 – 1127）的首都。小笼包是一道有着一千多年历史的菜肴，它的发源地是开封，而不是上海。



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made in china

Beijing



© CH'NG Poh Tiong

Duck Chef Liko Liu



© CH'NG Poh Tiong

Executive Chef LI Dong



© Grand Hyatt Beijing

There are, as you would imagine, many Peking Duck restaurants in Beijing. Practically every one suffers from a lack of consistent quality. Quality is not very useful if it is not consistent and only occurs once in a while. Consistency is a quality in itself. When you have consistency, you have reliability.

Made in China serves exceptional Peking Duck consistently. The white feathered Pekin specie is bred widely in America but had travelled there from China. When cultivated for Peking Duck, they are raised to 45 days for their skin rather than the meat which has a very light taste.

Another reason I patronise Made in China is because the wine list is reasonably priced for a 5-star hotel. The offerings include sparkling, white,

rosé, red, and sweet. The service is enthusiastic, professional and just the right pitch friendly without trying to be familiar.

Apart from their Peking Duck, Made in China has another fowl advantage. They have a Sichuan Salivating Chicken to fly for. The added touch of ground sesame in the Sichuan classic is genius. I always order duck and chicken when I visit.

Executive Chef Kent Jin Qiang retired in September 2024. The Beijinger had led Made in China since it opened in 2003. Taking over, LI Dong, also from Beijing, was Executive Chef of Jing Yaa Tang at The Opposite House which, under him, was awarded one Michelin star for five consecutive years. Chef Li is also Culinary Director of CCTV's 'Chef's Competitions' show. ■



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Skyline of Gobi Selection
Marselan Dry Red Wine

zhu rou po

Foshan



Founder WU Su Fen



© CHING Poh Tong



Excutive Chef LI Han Ming

Shunde is a district in the city of Foshan in Guangdong Province and one of the most affluent counties in the whole of China.

Many chefs in Cantonese restaurants in Hong Kong and around the world are from Shunde. Incidentally, Bruce Lee (1940 - 1973) was born in a town in Shunde.

The most acclaimed restaurant there is Zhu Rou Po. Such is its fame food lovers, movie and TV stars, and chefs from around the world continue to make a pilgrimage to the Shunde restaurant.

Zhu Rou Po is actually like a little village. There is a big hall where the main restaurant is situated, outside of which hangs many photographs of famous personalities who have visited, including

Hong Kong celebrities.

Private rooms are designed as cottages. Ingredients, including organic vegetables, and seafood are displayed openly for customers to contemplate and choose.

The restaurant is named for owner WU Su Fen who, when young, helped out in her family stall in the wet market selling pork. Hence, the affectionate nickname 'Aunt Porky'.

From that humble origin, she has become a household name of outstanding, traditional Shunde culinary classics. There are dishes here you will not find elsewhere.

Zhu Rou Po deserves a Nobel Prize for Cuisine. ■



長和翡翠酒庄
FEI TSWEI



Copower Jade Wines Limited
Eastern Foothill of Helan Mountain in Ningxia
18095391654/fei.ding@copowergroup.com



WeChat



Little Red Book



Sales Contact



bing sheng

Guangzhou



There are 11 Bing Sheng restaurants in Guangzhou. The 168 Tianhe East Road outlet we are recommending is in a modern district called 'Tianhe' or, literally, 'Heaven River'. The skyscrapers here include international chain hotels, office buildings, and shopping malls.

Founder Proprietor CAO Si Biao came out from a village to work at 16 years young. The family was very poor. He started with odd jobs selling things to slightly less poor workers.

In 1996, Cao opened Bing Sheng as a little stall. Business was passable. However, at one stage, it got so bad the young man considered closing the stall altogether. Cao persevered and launched a signature dish so he could stand out from the crowd.

This is the labour-intensive Shunde Raw Fish. Ultra fresh, very fine slivers of fish would be dipped in a sauce that includes peanut oil, ginger and shallot. The inspiration was a hit and Bing Sheng became identified with Shunde Raw Fish, even though Cao does not come from that county but another part of Guangdong.

Since then, other specialities have appeared including two different versions of Barbecued *Char Siew* Pork. One is sweet and the other a very exclusive part of the pork belly which is practically all fat. The skin, though, is razor-sharp crispy. This insane *Char Siew* is found nowhere else.

You would be crazy not to try the best *Char Siew* in the world! ■



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dining room

Hangzhou



**Peter Zhou, General Manager
of Park Hyatt Hangzhou**



© Park Hyatt Hangzhou



© CHING Poh Tiong

Deep-Fried Ribbonfish

The Park Hyatt Hangzhou is located in the Qianjiang New City Central Business District and just 20 minutes by car from the famed West Lake. Its premier restaurant Dining Room serves Zhejiang and Cantonese cuisines. On one entire side of the level 37 outlet, reinforced glass rises 5.2 metres from floor to ceiling. The food has to soar – which it does – in order to compete with the breathtaking view.

Dining Room is decorated with over-sized glass lanterns and delicate hand-embroidered silk panels from Suzhou, the Chinese city famed for the fabric. Park Hyatt Hangzhou's General Manager Peter Zhou is also from Suzhou.

At a young age, Zhou moved to Melbourne. His culinary journey began in 1988 with The Olive

Tree, an Italian restaurant in the Australian city. The multi-award winning chef started his hotel career in 1993 at Grand Hyatt Melbourne and then Park Hyatt Melbourne. In March 2002, Zhou returned to China as Executive Sous Chef of Grand Hyatt Shanghai, and then as Executive Chef of Hyatt Regency Hangzhou and, later, Hyatt on the Bund, before going back to Grand Hyatt Shanghai as its F & B Director.

In September 2013, he was made General Manager of Park Hyatt Ningbo. Five years later, in July 2018, Peter Zhou became General Manager of Park Hyatt Hangzhou. In October 2021, Zhou was promoted to Area Vice President Greater China for Zhejiang, Jiangsu, and Anhui Province. Since 2013, Zhou has been President of the China Delegation of Disciples of Escoffier. ■



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Nine Peaks

forum restaurant 1977

Hong Kong



Jacky LUK Chi Man
Chief Sommelier



William Yau
Proprietor & Executive Director



Adam WONG Lung To
Executive Chef

Established in 1977, Forum Restaurant moved from its original 485 Lockhart Road in Wanchai to Sino Plaza in Causeway Bay in 2014. Instead of referring to Forum Restaurant, most people and taxi drivers know the establishment simply as 'Ah Yat Abalone', literally, 'Number One Abalone'. Yeung Koon Yat was as instantly recognisable as movie stars in the city. Sadly, Yeung passed away 31 July 2023 at 90.

An icon in Cantonese cuisine, Ah Yat visited the restaurant he co-founded daily, greeting and charming his loyal clientele and fans alike.

Forum Restaurant serves outstanding dim sum for lunch but is most famous for its dried abalone. The world's foremost abalone specialist only uses Amidori, Oma and

Yoshihama abalones from Japan. Their other Cantonese dishes are equally outstanding.

The successor to Ah Yat is Adam Wong Lung To who started as an apprentice to Yeung Koon Yat in 1992. Everything the master knew, he selflessly passed on to Adam Wong who told us:

"While many master chefs do not share all they know, Mr Yeung Koon Yat was most generous when it came to his knowledge and experiences. He shared every detail, even secrets, to cooking our signature abalone dish."

Chef Adam Wong is Founder-President of the Chinese Culinary Institute Master Chef Chapter, and a member of the Ordre Mondial des Gourmets Dégustateurs. ■



DOMÆNE ROLAND CHAN

Our Land >

THE WACHAU

At Domäne Roland Chan, we are committed to preserving the Wachau's natural beauty. Our vineyards, spread across dry stone terraces, are maintained by hand with respect for the region's ancient winemaking traditions. As a certified sustainable winery, our philosophy revolves around environmental stewardship, ensuring future generations will enjoy this stunning landscape as much as we do today.

Each bottle reflects our deep respect for nature, a commitment to certified sustainable practices, and our dedication to the Wachau's rich winemaking traditions. As a proud member of Vinea Wachau since 2019, our wines embody the essence of our philosophy: One Family. One Philosophy. One Passion.

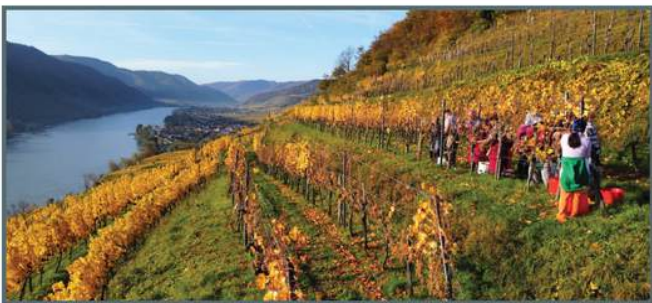


Our Story >

DOMÆNE ROLAND CHAN

Founded in 2017, Domäne Roland Chan is a boutique winery rooted in the heart of the Wachau, a world heritage region renowned for its distinct terroir. Our vineyards are nestled on dry stone terraces across Achleiten, Klaus, Bach, and Höll, where the unique combination of mineral-rich soils, microclimates, and steep slopes allows us to craft wines that are a pure expression of the land.

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Awards >

TROPHIES AND MEDALS WON OVER THE YEARS

Domäne Roland Chan has earned 3 consecutive trophies at the Hong Kong International Wine & Spirits Competition (HKIWSC), with 2 trophies and 8 medals awarded in the wine and food pairing categories. These distinctions showcase the remarkable versatility and precision of our wines when paired with a variety of cuisines.

We have also been honored with a Gold Medal and 9 additional medals at the International Wine & Spirits Competition (IWSC), further establishing our reputation on the global stage. Domäne Roland Chan consistently receives outstanding scores from James Suckling, including being ranked 25th in the Top 100 Wines of Austria. Our wines are also highly rated by leading Austrian publications like Vinaria and Falstaff, affirming our unwavering commitment to excellence.

Domäne Roland Chan
Kellergasse 102, 3610 Wösendorf, Austria
Website: <https://domaene-rolandchan.at/>
Email: office@domaene-rolandchan.at



fook wo kwong

Shanghai



Chef PANG Wah Yau



© CH'NG Poh Tiong



© CH'NG Poh Tiong

Steamed Minced Pork with Salted Fish

© CH'NG Poh Tiong

Fook Wo Kwong was inaugurated in Shanghai on 3 March 2024. Although less than a year old when our book is published, Fook Wo Kwong is considerably more renowned than the Cantonese restaurant would seem.

The kitchen team hails from Hong Kong's famed Fook Lam Moon – nicknamed the 'Tycoons' Canteen' – and Seventh Son restaurant, the brand started by the youngest son of Fook Lam Moon's founder (see Seventh Son • Hong Kong in this same book) when members of the family went their separate culinary ways.

Chef PANG Wah Yau counts some 40 years of experience in fine Cantonese cuisine. Born in Macau, he has worked in Excelsior Hong Kong, Flower Drum Melbourne, Fook Lam Moon

Kowloon and Tokyo. In 2004, Pang was transferred from Japan to Fook Lam Moon in Pudong Shangri-La as head chef. The restaurant garnered one Michelin star under him.

Incredibly modest, Chef Pang's humility belies a mastery of the highest order. The dishes that find their way onto the tables of Fook Wo Kwong sing his heartfelt culinary philosophy:

"Simplicity is key and authentic flavours of ingredients must be retained."

Michael ZHANG Yiji is General Manager of Fook Wo Kwong. He is also a Fook Lam Moon alumnus from the 1980s. Zhang has worked alongside chefs of the group in their Hong Kong, Tokyo and Shanghai restaurants. ■



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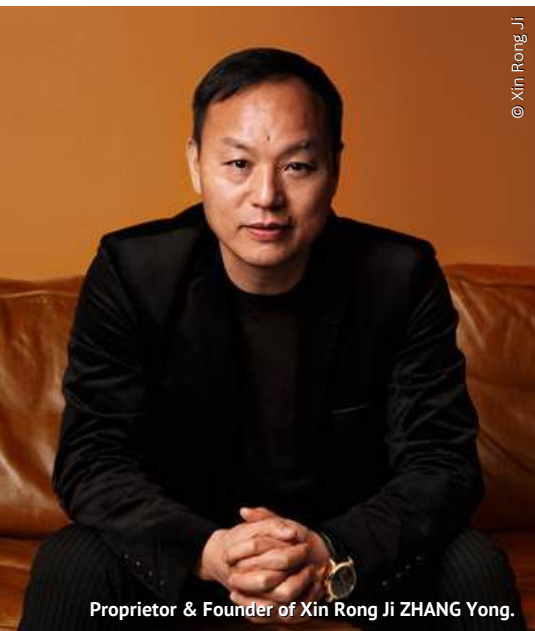


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xin rong ji

Shanghai



Xin Rong Ji was founded in October 1995 by ZHANG Yong in Linhai County, Taizhou City, Zhejiang Province. Apart from picturesque two storey wooden houses and granite paved alleys, there is also an ancient wall in Linhai.

Originally over 6 km in length, construction had begun during the Jin Dynasty (265 - 420) and continued into the short-lived Sui Dynasty (581 - 618) and Tang (618 - 907). Portions of the wall still exist including the northern, western, and southern parts along the Lin River.

Zhang Yong was born in Linhai. Thirty-five years ago in 1989, he opened a small eatery with a few tables and noticed that seafood, although locally sourced, were sold frozen to consumers and restaurants alike.

Fresh seafood was equally rare in the markets. The enterprising Zhang hit on the idea of a seafood themed restaurant and converted his small eatery into the first Xin Rong Ji.

From that hometown beginning the group now has more than 40 restaurants – including Rong Ji Beef and Seafood Hotpot, Rong Manor, Small Eatery Rong, and Rong Mansion Banquet – in Taizhou, Hangzhou, Shanghai and Beijing. In 2018, Xin Rong Ji opened its first restaurant outside the Mainland in Hong Kong, and on 28 February 2024 in Akasaka in the heart of Tokyo.

The Xin Rong Ji outlet we are recommending is in the Bund Finance Center. It has an open-kitchen concept, outstanding food, and ravishing views of the Huangpu River. ■



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ENDING WITH HARVESTING

The introduction of Silk Road Chateau

Silk Road Chateau is located in Yili valley of Xinjiang, embraced on three sides by the Tianshan mountains. This location is the one and only place in China influenced by the warm and humid airflow from the Atlantic Ocean and usually called a place with south-China-type scenery.

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Silk Road Chateau strongly believes the principle of Quality is Always Better than Quantity and follow the concept of organic growing and limited production in small and specific growing region where was certified with organic certificates ever since the year of 2019.

By following the philosophy of limited production and managing scientifically, we're growing over grape varieties like Cabernet Gernischt, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Riesling and Petit Verdot, etc on the land of 100 hectares in accordance with the conditions of various climatic characteristics.

As of today, We have been awarded with over 300 medals both domestically and globally, highly recommended and loved by the numerous wine experts and consumers, we're proudly proving the reputation that Yili Valley is becoming one of the best growing regions in the world.



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imperial treasure shanghai

Singapore



© CHING Poh Tiong

**Century Egg with
Beancurd in
Homemade Sauce**



© Imperial Treasure Group

**Alfred LEUNG Chi Wai
Founder of Imperial Treasure Group**



© Imperial Treasure Group

The Imperial Treasure Group was founded in 2004 by Alfred LEUNG Chi Wai. Today, the group has 15 outlets in Singapore, one in Shanghai, two in Hong Kong, two in Guangzhou, two in Seoul, and one each in London and Paris.

Imperial Treasure restaurants encompass Cantonese, Shanghaiese, and Teochew cuisines. Their Super Peking Duck restaurants are also mighty popular. The newest to open in September 2024 is inside Jewel, the sprawling shopping and food & beverage mall at Singapore Changi Airport.

Alfred Leung began his career in 1970. Originally from Hong Kong, he started by working for other restaurants. In the course of time, he saw gaps and opportunities on the Chinese restaurant

scene in Singapore and boldly went where no one else had been before.

Leung was the first to introduce la mian restaurants in Singapore and the first Peking Duck restaurant offering ducks of about 45-day old farmed in Malaysia. The same were roasted in a wood, instead of gas, oven. Prior to starting Imperial Treasure, Leung had co-founded the Crystal Jade Group in 1990 and served as its managing director. He also spearheaded that company's entry into China and Hong Kong.

Imperial Treasure Shanghai offers much more than Shanghaiese cuisine. There are Huaiyang cold dishes, Sichuan classics, even Yue or Cantonese favourites. It is quite the most versatile Chinese restaurant in Singapore. ■



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xie he

Suzhou



Proprietor YAO Guo Xian



Braised Pork



Steamed Taihu Lake White Fish

My favourite place in Suzhou is a hideaway. It is the two-storey Xie He, a favourite of locals in the know. This oasis of great cuisine is owned and staffed by people with a heartfelt devotion to authentic cooking without bling or fuss.

I was embarrassed – on my first visit in 2015 – when proprietor YAO Guo Xian, taking away what I considered the finished dish of Steamed Lake Tai White Fish, elegantly swept the remaining bits and strands of snow white morsels onto my plate. And offered this encouragement.

‘They are so very hard to buy now, these wild White Fish.’

‘Lake Tai Three Whites’ is an old saying

highlighting the three treasures of the lake: White Fish, White Bait, and White Shrimps. The shrimps are lightly stir-fried and the bait usually cooked with egg.

Xie He was opened in 1942 during the Japanese Occupation. The restaurant (at another address) was then owned by a Mr YU, the father-in-law of the present proprietor’s cousin. Xie He then closed during the Cultural Revolution (1966 - 76). In 1986, Yao’s cousin asked if he was interested in re-opening her father-in-law’s old restaurant.

They did that but the cousin left the venture six months later. Between 1989 and 1992, Yao learned to cook. He does the honours from time to time but is mostly behind the till. ■

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yechun

Yangzhou



For the last 17 years, Chef NI Qiu Xiang has been leading an army of kitchen staff to enthrall the millions who visit Yechun for breakfast each year. On festive occasions, they prepare up to 50,000 *baos* a day.

The heart of Huaiyang cuisine, one of China's original 'Four Great Cuisines', is Yangzhou. One establishment so stands out in the city it is not uncommon to hear people say "If you have not visited Yechun, you have not been to Yangzhou".

The teahouse traces its origins to the Qing Dynasty (1644 - 1912). It is believed Yechun began as the private garden of the poet WANG Shi Zhen (1634 - 1711) in the Hongqiao area of Yangzhou.

Yechun rose to word-of-mouth fame as a gathering place for scholars and intellectuals to enjoy calligraphy, poetry and painting. Former leader JIANG Zemin, originally from Yangzhou, visited Yechun on numerous occasions and even left his calligraphy on the wall of a private room.

Yangzhou was also a favourite of Qianlong (1711 - 1799). The Manchu emperor visited the city six times in his southern expeditions. Travelling in a royal procession of barges, there were imperial stops along the 1,800 km Grand Canal (the longest man-made waterway in the world).





© CH'NG Poh Tiong

The foremost meal you must experience at Yechun is breakfast. It is so popular there are three sittings: 7, 8 and 9 am. Several of the breakfast snacks are *baos* or Chinese buns. Some are vegetarian, others of pork, some even filled with crab roe. To give an indication of the numbers Yechun attracts, each day, 10,000 to 20,000 *baos* are made. That's just for a normal day. On festive occasions, the kitchen has to produce up to 50,000!



© CH'NG Poh Tiong

For the last 17 years, Chef NI Qiu Xiang has been tirelessly leading an army of kitchen staff to enthrall the millions who visit Yechun yearly for breakfast (the restaurant also serves lunch and dinner). Ni hails from an illustrious line of chefs and represents the fifth generation in her family devoted to Yangzhou cuisine. ■



© CH'NG Poh Tiong



Emperor Qianlong (1711 - 1799)



© CH'NG Poh Tiong

au bonheur du palais

Bordeaux



Au Bonheur du Palais was opened in 1985 by the parents of the present proprietors. Elder brother Andy is chef and Tommy is front of restaurant.

After leaving Guangdong in the 1940s, the Shans lived in Hong Kong, Japan, Sydney, Kuala Lumpur and Vanuatu (where they opened a restaurant in the capital Port Vila). SHAN Cheng – Andy and Tommy's father – was a trained chef while Madame Shan was a natural and picked up her culinary skills along the way. She was originally from Shunde, Guangdong.

In the early 1990s, Andy and Tommy became besotted with Sichuan cuisine. The back story to that is that in 1987, Montpellier and Chengdu became twin cities. Tommy had attended the University of Montpellier.

One time years later, an old friend from Montpellier called to say Sichuan Master Chef SHU Guozhong was going to be at his home.

Andy and Tommy left Bordeaux at six in the morning and arrived in Montpellier at 11 am. From that time until one the next morning, Shu whipped up one Sichuan speciality after another. No one was hungry that fateful day.

For a long time after that, every year or two, Andy and Tommy Shan would visit Shu in Chengdu to learn more from the maestro. On those trips, they also sourced spices including the famed Sichuan peppercorn, traditionally more quintessential to Sichuan cuisine than chilli which was only introduced into the Middle Kingdom about 300 years ago. ■

Children returning from school in an old Beijing tram bus.



Photographed in 1990 © CH'NG Poh Tiong

no kid's menu

There is no Kid's Menu in a Chinese restaurant. You eat and grow up. Or you don't. Chicken Nuggets is not a recipe handed down from one generation to the next. Chicken Nuggets was created in a laboratory by food scientists in white overalls. Chicken Nuggets can come in handy on the odd occasion. More importantly, though, is to remember, cherish, and celebrate dishes handed down to us as part of our upbringing and culture.

没有儿童餐

中餐厅里没有儿童餐。孩子们吃着吃着就长大了。当然也有可能不会长大。快餐店里的炸鸡块并没有代代相传的“食谱”。这些炸鸡块是在实验室里由穿着白大褂的食品科学家们研发出来的。炸鸡块偶然也是一个便利之选。但更重要的是，我们要记住、珍惜和赞扬作为我们的成长和文化一部分而流传下来的菜肴。

jin sha

Hangzhou



Senior Executive Chinese Chef WANG Yong



Shrimps with Longjing Leaves

WANG Yong is the dynamic but unassuming chef at Jin Sha. He loves travel and keeps an open mind in order to better experience and enjoy whatever comes his way. I first met Wang some 10 years ago when he visited the Four Seasons Singapore for a culinary promotion.

It's very reassuring when a chef tells you he has learnt cooking from his mother since a young age. That kind of bedrock beats any skills learnt in a classroom or gleaned out of a television screen. The cooking should always be the celebrity, not the chef.

The West Lake in Hangzhou is China's Number One domestic tourist attraction.

August is the most demanding time to visit.

Apart from the heat, summer is also when everyone is on holidays. Every pavement, walkway, path and road surrounding the fabled lake will be chock-a-block with tourists from within and outside China.

Jin Sha or 'Golden Sand' is situated inside the Four Seasons West Lake, one of the swankiest addresses in Hangzhou. Far from the madding crowd, there is no hustle and bustle in this retreat. No sound of traffic intrudes.

Jin Sha even has a miniature man-made lake in front of the terrace of the restaurant. It's a great location to have a sundowner while contemplating Jiangnan cuisine, 'Jiangnan' denoting Jiangsu Province and Zhejiang Province of which Hangzhou is the capital. ■

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chan kan kee

Hong Kong



Chan Kan Kee has its roots in a village in Chaozhou, Guangdong Province. It began as a movable stall selling *lu shui* specialties. The vendor was grandfather of present owners Eliza Chan and her family. The patriarch later migrated to Hong Kong and set up as a hawker in Heung Hing Lane, better known to an older generation as 'Chiu Chow Lane'. Helping him out was his 9-year old son CHAN Kwok Leung.

It was not until 1997 that Chan Kan Kee moved to a shophouse at 11 Queen's Road West. You will find authentic Chaozhou restaurants in this very Chiu Chow or Teochew area in Sheung Wan. Chan Kan Kee is particularly famous for its *lu shui*. The recipe for the *lu shui* stock is a closely guarded family secret and includes star anise, cloves, cinnamon bark, and ginger.

'The recipe has been recorded down. We also have a video of my father preparing *lu shui*,' revealed Eliza Chan.

Although able to do it herself, Eliza's elder sister CHAN Pui Ling comes to the shop to prepare the *lu shui* every day including of pork, pig's intestine, and goose. While the other ingredients can be in the same *lu shui* pot, pig's intestine – because of the smell – is done separately.

When Chan Kan Kee was selling *lu shui* in Heung Hing Lane, one regular customer was LI Ka Shing. Although Hong Kong's wealthiest man did not pick up the Chiu Chow classic himself, he had sent his chauffeur. Chan Kan Kee relocated from Queen's Road West to The LOHAS in Tseung Kwan O in 2020. ■

seventh son

Hong Kong



CHUI Wai Kwan is the youngest son of Chui Fook Chuen, founder of Fook Lam Moon. When members of the family decided to chart their separate courses in continuing the legacy left behind by their father, Chui started Seventh Son, a reference to his position amongst his brothers and sisters.

Chui was the only of his siblings to serve as apprentice to his late father. The younger Chui began work in his father's kitchen when only 14 (the very same age his father started working). Like so many arts and crafts, cooking is best learnt by following a master.

The founder of Fook Lam Moon had great confidence in his youngest son, teaching him how to perfect his slicing and cutting skills,

passing on traditional and signature recipes, and how to select the best ingredients, including dried delicacies such as abalone, fish maw, and shark's fin (our publication does not recommend shark's fin dishes as we are against the slaughter of sharks just to produce this ingredient).

Those were early days when Fook Lam Moon was still a catering business and not yet a restaurant. Clients who sought out their banqueting services were the elite, rich and famous of Hong Kong. The first Seventh Son in Hong Kong is on Lockhart Road, the very same stretch the original Fook Lam Moon opened in 1972 (before later re-locating to Johnston Road in 1985).

Today, there are five Seventh Son restaurants in Shanghai, Tokyo, and Hong Kong. ■

yixin

Hong Kong



Proprietor Sal To

Yaik Sang – now romanised as Yixin – was co-founded by WONG Jim Wan and partners in 1963. The flamboyant Wong was also proprietor of Winner House Hotel in North Point.

Photos in the main private room in Yixin reveal a debonair hotelier restaurateur immaculately turned out and with a ready smile. Yaik Sang attracted its fair share of the rich and famous of Hong Kong and showbusiness.

The restaurant was one of the places to see and be seen. The main draw though was – still is – the delicious Cantonese cuisine and dim sums. Although the restaurant was popular, high rental and some of the partner's retirement, led to Yixin's closure in 2002. Thankfully, that lasted but a year because a filial daughter of Wong



Barbecue Chef LEE Chee Tao (left) and Chef SO Yiu Chan



Third generation Proprietor Derek To

revived the restaurant (and whose son Derek To is now involved in Yixin).

Yixin is well known to Hong Kongers of an older generation who revere classic Cantonese cuisine. It is situated in Wanchai which boasts a high concentration of some of Hong Kong's most famous restaurants. A younger crowd is also finding its way to Yixin. They go there to celebrate dishes they have grown up with.

Lemon Chicken is reputed to have been created at Yixin which, therefore, makes it one of the most recent additions to the lexicon of Chinese dishes. There are scarce few restaurants in the world where we can say we are savouring a dish first created in the kitchen from which it emerges. Go Yixin Go! ■

zhejiang heen

Hong Kong

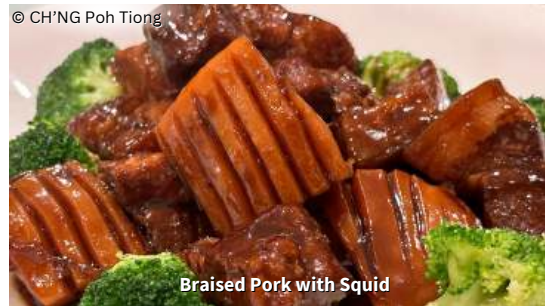


Executive Chef PAN Kau Lung



© CH'NG Poh Tiong

Sautéed Sweet Beans with Jin Hua Ham



© CH'NG Poh Tiong

Braised Pork with Squid

Zhejiang Heen was opened at 11 am, 11 November 2011. That precise arrangement was, no doubt, a tilt to Feng Shui considerations.

Zhejiang Heen earned 1 Michelin star in 2013. Chinese people have no worries or qualms about '13'. In fact, receiving the accolade in 2013 was very auspicious because the restaurant has kept the star every year since.

Zhejiang Heen is owned by 25 members – including honorary chairpersons – of the United Zhejiang Residents Association. The goal of Zhejiang Heen is to produce authentic, home-cooked dishes of Zhejiang Province and to spread their fame. The owners being lovers of Zhejiang cuisine, it was quite natural to situate the restaurant in the same building where the

offices of the United Zhejiang Residents Association are located. So that after gatherings and meetings, members can adjourn directly to Zhejiang Heen to savour food they grew up with.

Hong Kong saw a flood of emigration from Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Anhui from 1937 at the onset of the Second Sino-Japanese War up to 1946 because of the Chinese Civil War. A total of 1.4 million people are estimated to have fled to Hong Kong.

Zhejiang Heen is open to the public who can also join as members of the restaurant. You don't need to be a member of the association nor be connected with Zhejiang to do that. Members are accorded privileges including no service charge and no corkage fee. ■

oversea

Kuala Lumpur



Founder YU Soo Chye

Malaysia's most famous Chinese restaurant is the story of YU Soo Chye.

'Setting up a business is not difficult but to sustain and maintain it is always a challenge. You need to be hardworking, willing to learn and cannot be narrow-minded in doing things. You are employed to solve problems, not create them. You must look at problems without having to find fault with the people behind them.'

Yu Soo Chye was born in the state of Perak in 1945. At three years young, he followed his father back to Guangdong and only returned to Malaysia when he was 10. He had to start working and thought of being a car mechanic but his father objected. So, instead, Yu helped him sell wanton noodles and attended night

classes. In 1957, he began work as a kitchen helper washing plates and bowls, cleaning tables, and other chores. Yu continued working in the kitchen for various restaurants and, with time, learned to cook and was standing behind a wok by the time he was 18. In 1977, at 27, Yu was promoted to being a chef.

An even bigger, life-changing break happened in 1977. The proprietor of a small restaurant was looking for someone to take over the business. Yu grabbed at the opportunity and Oversea was born. In 2010, Oversea Enterprise was listed on the Malaysian stock market. On 7 August 2020, YU Soo Chye, his brother-in-law, and son sold their combined stake of 63.37% stake in the company for RM45.37 million (US\$10.8 m) to Anzo Holdings, a contractor company. ■

imperial treasure

London

©Imperial Treasure Group

**Peking Duck**

© CH'NG Poh Tiong

©Imperial Treasure Group

**Boiled French Chicken
with Spring Onion**

Launched on 18 December 2018, Imperial Treasure London was the group's first foray outside Asia. The Singapore-based company made the scope of their ambition abundantly clear by situating the restaurant in the most prestigious, exclusive enclave of Britain.

St James's is the aristocratic heartbeat of London. The palace of the same name was built by Henry VIII and, although displaced by Buckingham Palace in the late 18th Century as the home of the British monarchy, such is its traditional importance ambassadors and high commissioners to the United Kingdom continue to be accredited to the Court of St James. Here too are the most prestigious gentlemen's clubs (most now allow women to join), the auction houses, and Britain's oldest wine merchant still

in business, namely Berry Bros & Rudd – founded in 1698 – on 3 St James's Street.

Imperial Treasure London is at 9 Waterloo Place, near the Haymarket Theatre, Royal Automobile Club, 67 Pall Mall and, as mentioned, Berry Bros & Rudd. The restaurant is in a heritage building where the original interior and exterior of the building cannot be altered. Apparently, King Charles is the landlord. The shops of Regent Street are just round the corner.

The cuisine is Cantonese but also with a nod to the British favourite, namely Peking Duck. Maipo Doufu is also available. Before and after dinner drinks being so important to the British consideration, the glittering bar at Imperial Treasure London has a place of prominence. ■

golden dragon

Mumbai



The Gateway of India was built to commemorate the landing of King George V and Queen Mary. When the British royal couple visited Mumbai – known at that time as Bombay – in 1911, they were however only shown a cardboard model because construction did not start till 1915. It was on 9 December 1924 that the gateway was officially inaugurated by the British Viceroy, the Earl of Reading. Since then, the Gateway of India has remained Mumbai's top tourist attraction. Better late than never.

The most famous hotel and most renowned Chinese restaurant of Mumbai are situated in the same palatial architecture just next to the gateway. Golden Dragon is on the ground level of the Taj Palace, also referred to as the Taj Mahal of Mumbai. The hotel opened its doors on

16 December 1903 and had been commissioned by Jamsetji Tata, founder of the business conglomerate bearing his family name, and which today also owns Jaguar Land Rover cars. Those were two of the British Empire's most iconic brands which ironically are now a subsidiary of the Indian company Tata Motors.

Opened half a century ago in 1973, the Golden Dragon was the first Sichuan restaurant in India. It is also one of the oldest Chinese restaurants in the country. Even then, the Golden Dragon had also served Cantonese dishes which it continues to do. As is the custom in Chinese restaurants in India, dim sums are offered both day and night. If only more Chinese restaurants do the same. The Golden Dragon has an open-kitchen concept and offers several Indian wines by the glass. ■

plum garden

Nanjing



© CH'NG Poh Tiong



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Crystal Cured Pork with Shredded Ginger



© CH'NG Poh Tiong

Braised Bean Curd with Crab Meat

Nanjing Jinling Hotel opened on 4 October 1983. At 110 metres, its 37 storeys made it the tallest building in China in the 1980s. Such has been the breakneck surge in that country's economy and infrastructure the Jinling is not even amongst the top 40 highest buildings in today's Nanjing.

China has the most skyscrapers of any country in the world. As of 2023, it counted more than 3,000 buildings above 150 metres. At 632 metres, the Shanghai Tower is the tallest building in China and the third highest in the world, behind Merdeka 118 (678.9 m) in Kuala Lumpur, and Burg Khalifa (828 m) in Dubai.

Through the years, overseas and Chinese dignitaries have been accommodated at the Jinling. Former German Chancellor Angela

Merkel stayed on 28 August 2007. A decade before that, DENG Xiaoping slept at the Jinling on 17 February 1997.

Plum Garden is the Jinling's premier restaurant and specialises in Huaiyang cuisine although it also incorporates dishes from other branches of Chinese cooking. Nanjing cuisine itself is a mishmash of regional styles.

Plum Garden is the go-to culinary choice when Nanjing officials want to impress visiting guests. Located on level two, the restaurant has a capacity of 150 seats. Reservations are highly recommended. The Jinling Hotel Group was established in December 2002 and listed on the Shanghai Stock Exchange in 2007. The stock code is 601007. ■

nom wah tea parlor

New York



Nom Wah gets starring role in John Wick 3.

New York's Chinatown is one of the most impressive Chinese enclaves of its kind. The fresh produce includes different varieties of prawns and clams. When I visited, the fruit vendors were not just plying peaches and longans but also rambutans from Malaysia.

One of NYC Chinatown's oldest restaurants is Nom Wah Tea Parlor which opened in 1920 at 13 - 15 Doyers Street as a bakery and tea parlour and was particularly famous for its mooncakes.

In 1968, the restaurant lost its lease at 15 Doyers Street. As a result, Nom Wah moved into a brand new kitchen next door. It has, since then, been at 11 - 13 Doyers Street. The original proprietor of Nom Wah was the Choy Family. In 1974, they sold to Wally Tang, who had started working in



the restaurant in 1950 when just 16 years young.

By the time Tang reached 20, he was actually managing the place. Not much has changed at Nom Wah down the years. From the typeface on the front of the restaurant to the interior décor, visiting Nom Wah is like rolling back the years.

Sitting in the restaurant is not unlike being in a time capsule, lingering or languishing in Hong Kong when movies were black and white, including telephones. Little was mobile then. The range of dim sums is classic Cantonese although there are allowances to more recent taste, including *xiao long bao*. There are two other Nom Wah outlets, in Philadelphia (opened in 2015), and in 2016, New York's Nolita district. Nom Wah also has a kiosk in Pier 57. ■

imperial treasure

Paris



Chef YU Gang is from Nanchang, Jiangxi.



Chang Fen with Shrimp and Fried Tofu

Singapore-based Imperial Treasure Group lit up the City of Lights on Sunday 29 September 2019 when it opened its first restaurant in France. Three days earlier – Thursday 26 September – the restaurant was booked out by La Clef Champs Elysees for their official opening. This is the 5-star hotel which is part of the Ascott Group owned by Capital Land, itself owned by one of the sovereign funds of Singapore. Guests included then Ambassador of Singapore, H.E. Mr Zainal Arif MANTAH.

Situated on 44 rue de Bassano, Imperial Treasure Paris is housed inside La Clef Champs Elysees but has its own entrance. It is just a minute dash from the large Louis Vuitton shop on Paris's most famous boulevard. The handbag store is in an art deco building built in 1914, two

years younger than 44 rue de Bassano which was commissioned by the Hennessy Family of Cognac in 1912.

Social media has been a boon for Imperial Treasure Paris. Chinese tourists and Chinese resident in Paris are familiar with the restaurant. And post photos of the dishes and themselves. Bottles of wine included. Well-heeled, well-travelled French people also drop in.

Executive Chef YU Gang and his team deliver authentic fare including Huaiyang, Shanghaiese, Cantonese, and Sichuan dishes. Yu is from Nanchang, capital of Jiangxi Province, and has 20 years of experience in China including with Pan Pacific Suzhou and Cheng Long Hang in Shanghai. ■

shang palace

Paris



Executive Chef Tony Xu



Kong Pao Scallop



Red-rice Flour Roll with Shrimp

Situated in the 16th arrondissement, the Shangri-La Paris was the private mansion of Prince Roland Bonaparte, whose grandfather Lucien Bonaparte was the younger brother of Napoleon. Dating back to the 19th Century, some of the rooms and suites of the hotel have views of the Eiffel Tower.

The first Shang Palace in Europe opened in Paris in September 2011. The restaurant's Tang and Qing Ming private rooms can seat 12 and 24 respectively. In September 2024, Shang Palace installed a new chef following the departure of Hong Konger Samuel Lee (who joined in 2015).

Tony Xu, 36, hails from Chengdu and had previously worked for the group. In 2007, he joined the Shangri-La Chengdu as a chef de

partie before rising to become chef in 2010. His last previous appointment was as chef of The House Collective's Mi Xun Teahouse in Chengdu which earned a Michelin star for his Sichuan-inspired vegetarian cuisine.

Xu grew up alongside his grandmother and helped her prepare meals for family celebrations. That set the path for his culinary journey as at just 11, he took a course in cooking.

"The most moving moment of my career was when my grandmother came to taste the cuisine I had entirely imagined (at Mi Xun Teahouse), which earned me my first Michelin star. That award is also for her, for the early lessons she taught me, for the passion for taste that she passed on to me." ■

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de xing guan

Shanghai



Braised Pork Knuckle



Fried Pork Dumplings



Most people – including younger Shanghainese – do not associate pork knuckle with Shanghai cuisine. Their most go-to Shanghainese food would be *Xia Long Bao*, those small steamed pork dumpling that are not even Shanghainese in the first place. *Xia Long Bao* has been around since the Song Dynasty (960 - 1279) and originates from Kaifeng, capital of the Northern Song, Henan Province.

De Xing Guan was founded in the 4th year of the Guangxu Emperor in 1878 during the Qing Dynasty (1644 – 1912). Originally located at 529 Fujian Middle Road, it moved to 471 Guangdong Road in 1999. Although there are some 10 outlets, the two you should visit are the Guangdong Road outlet and the 416 Jingling East Road branch. Having visited both, I prefer

the latter. All De Xing Guan outlets serve casual dishes such as dim sum, dumplings and noodles.

Only the Guangdong Road and Jingling East Road branches offer more elaborate dishes including Braised Pork Knuckle and Eight Treasure Duck. In summer, a simple cold noodle dish with peanut sauce is utterly irresistible.

It is believed Braised Pork Knuckle was discovered by Qianlong (1711 - 1799) on one of his six visits to the south. One time travelling incognito, the emperor caught wind of an irresistible aroma and followed it to a little hut in a small village. Such was the impression the smell of the dish had on the ruler he told the palace chef who accompanied him it had to be included to the imperial menu. ■

imperial treasure

Shanghai



Founded in Singapore in 2004, this is the Imperial Treasure Group's first foray outside its home base. Imperial Treasure Fine Chinese Cuisine in Yi Feng Gallery is one of Shanghai's most popular restaurants. It's advisable to book well in advance. There are several reasons for this. The first is the high quality of the Cantonese cuisine (with a sprinkling of Shanghaiese dishes). The second is its location. Yi Feng Gallery is very near the Bund and just in front of the Peninsula Hotel.

Originally from Hong Kong, Alfred Leung came to Singapore in 1981 to work for the now-defunct Happy Valley, the most expensive Chinese restaurant at the time. Later, he also worked for Wah Lok in the Carlton Hotel, Kirin Court, and co-founded Crystal Jade in 1990 before leaving

to start Imperial Treasure.

In June 2015, the Singaporean sold the majority holding of Imperial Treasure to Malaysia-based private equity group Navis Capital Partners for a sum reported by Bloomberg to be between S\$60 and S\$80 million (US\$45 to US\$60 million). Leung remains a significant shareholder. Navis Capital very wisely retained him as the CEO of the group.

The Imperial Treasure Group is now also present in Seoul, London, and Paris. Tokyo is on the horizon. The selection of new markets is very focused. In the words of founder Alfred Leung, "In my travels around the world, I see a gap in the market for fine Chinese cuisine. Today, good food alone is not enough. Service, ambience and beautiful plating are also key considerations." ■

nanling

Shanghai



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Chicken with Scallion Oil

Nanling Restaurant was founded in Shanghai by CHEN Wangqiang in 1998. A lover of Peking opera, he is acquainted with many such artists. In fact, the restaurant was originally in an old building where one such star, ZHOU Xinfang (1895 - 1975), once lived. The name of the restaurant is a tribute to Zhou as he was regarded as the foremost Peking opera artist of southern ('nan') China, 'ling' being translated here as 'star'.

Zhou Xinfang was the founding director of the Shanghai Peking Opera Company which began in 1955. Just as southern Chinese opera is popular in the north, so Peking opera has always had a following in the south of the country.

Zhou's fame (his stage name was Qilin Tong) was

such that he was mentioned in the same breath as MEI Lanfang (1894 - 1961), the other Peking opera great from northern China. A statue of Zhou stands in the courtyard in what is now the renamed Peking Opera Center at 168 Yue Yang Road in Shanghai.

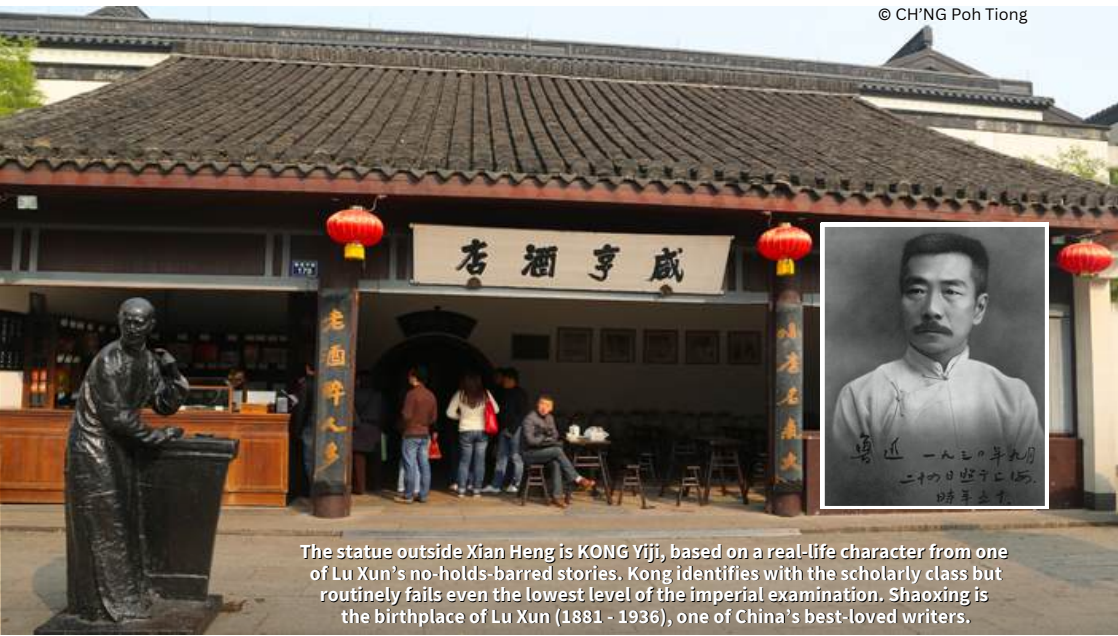
Nanling offers Huaiyang cuisine with Shanghaiese influences and Shanghaiese dishes. Although the restaurant is no longer next to the former Shanghai Peking Opera Company, Nanling remains a popular meeting place and magnet for opera buffs.

On my first visit, the table next to me was a group of Cantonese opera lovers from Hong Kong. Half-way through their meal, they were listening to opera songs via a mobile phone. ■

xian heng

Shaoxing

© CH'NG Poh Tiong



The statue outside Xian Heng is KONG Yiji, based on a real-life character from one of Lu Xun's no-holds-barred stories. Kong identifies with the scholarly class but routinely fails even the lowest level of the imperial examination. Shaoxing is the birthplace of Lu Xun (1881 - 1936), one of China's best-loved writers.

This is our only restaurant recommendation which is a self-service establishment. Xian Heng is the most well-known eating destination in Shaoxing, the city which also gives its name to China's fabled rice wine.

Shaoxing is the ancestral home of China's most beloved prime minister, the late ZHOU Enlai (1898 - 1976) and birthplace of ZHOU Shuren, whose pen name was Lu Xun (1881 - 1936). Xian Heng was opened by the author's paternal uncle in 1894. The statue outside Xian Heng is KONG Yiji, based on a real-life character from one of Lu Xun's no-holds-barred stories.

Kong is a complex character in an even more conflicted society. He identifies with the scholarly class but routinely fails even the lowest

level of the imperial examination and cannot, therefore, rise to the ruling class. Kong wears a long gown, the emblem of the wealthy class, except he has no money.

At the inn (now the Xian Heng restaurant), peasants, workers and common folk who wear short tunics have to stand outside to drink their rice wine as they are not worthy to be inside. The inner sanctum is only reserved for the wealthy, well-connected, and long-gowned officials.

The innkeeper also waters down the wine served to the ordinary people even though they pay the same price as the privileged class. Corruption is an old Chinese currency. I have visited Xian Heng twice and am delighted to inform they allow every- and anyone to queue. And pay. ■

shisen hanten

Tokyo



Third generation Chef Proprietor CHEN Kentaro

CHEN Kentaro's culinary pedigree is of the loftiest order. He is grandson of CHEN Kenmin (1912 – 1990). The late Chen was born in Sichuan and worked in restaurants in China, Taiwan and Hong Kong. In 1952, he arrived in Japan and in 1958 founded the first Shisen Hanten. Often credited with introducing Sichuan cuisine to that country, Chen Kenmin is referred to as 'Japan's Father of Sichuan Cuisine'.

Second generation CHEN Kenichi (1956 – 2023) joined the family business when he came of age and opened more branches. Born in Tokyo, he brought fresh ideas to the menu. Even more sensationally, Chen Kenichi became one of the first Chinese celebrity chefs when he appeared as an *Iron Chef* in the cult Japanese TV programme. Created by Fuji Television, the first



Twice-Cooked Pork



Dan Dan Noodles

episode was aired 10 October 1993 until 24 September 1999. There were 309 episodes.

In 2002, CHEN Kentaro became the third generation to join the restaurant founded by his grandfather. Kentaro further refined his skills by returning to his roots. From 2005 to 2008, he went back to Sichuan in order to work in various restaurants. Crucially, during that time, he learnt from Master Chef ZENG Guohua.

Just as his father Chen Kenichi increased the number of Shisen Hanten restaurants in Japan, Kentaro has gone, literally, further. In 2014, Shisen Hanten by Chen Kentaro was born. Set inside the Hilton Singapore Orchard, it is a joint-venture between the chef and OUE Limited, owner of the building. ■



salt merchant lu's mansion

Yangzhou



© CH'NG Poh Tiong



© CH'NG Poh Tiong

Smoked Duck on Glutinous Rice



© CH'NG Poh Tiong

Yangzhou Fried Rice

LU Shao Xu was one of the wealthiest men in China. In 1897, the prominent salt merchant built a new home covering nearly 10,000 square metres with more than 130 rooms. Situated along an important embarking point of the Grand Canal, it occupied one of the most prized and priced real estate locations of old Yangzhou.

Salt Merchant Lu entertained on a grand scale. The most significant room was the Hall of Banquets. Built entirely of precious Phoebe Zhennan wood (usually affordable only to royalty), it could seat 400 people.

Known today as the 'Former Residence of Salt Merchant Lu Shaoxu', the tourist attraction includes gardens and the Yangzhou Cuisine Museum. The restaurant showcases traditional

Huaiyang cuisine but also with some innovation. One such is an outstanding improvisation of the classic Smoked Duck which has become a signature must-have. Deboned slices of meat are layered over glutinous rice. The sensation of meat over moist grain is mouth-watering.

'Yangzhou Sanbadao', literally 'Yangzhou Three Knives' is a famous saying that alludes to the skills of its craftsmen. They are the kitchen knife, the pedicure knife for the bathhouse, and the barber's knife for grooming.

Yangzhou chefs are regarded as the best when it comes to slicing. Nowhere is this more mind-blowing than in Wen Si Doufu Soup where they are able to slice the softest of bean curd to the tinniest, unimaginable streaks. ■

chungking szechwan

Yokohama

© CH'NG Poh Tiong



There are 10 Zhang Daqian paintings in the Chungking Szechwan Restaurant Yokohama.

© CH'NG Poh Tiong



Proprietors Alex (left) & Teddy Lee

“It was founded by my mother in 1959. At that time, it was a wooden shed. We rebuilt it and it was inaugurated on 10 October 2018,” Alex Lee recalled.

Helen Lee had originally come from Guiyang City in Guizhou Province. Her family left China for Taipei and there, she met William LEE Hai Tien, who is from Tianjin in Hebei Province. They got married and moved to Yokohama in 1951, settling in that city’s famous Chinese enclave.

The couple, prominent members of the Chinese community in Yokohama, were good friends of Chang Dai Chien (1899 - 1983), also written as Zhang Daqian. Such is the painter’s talent and versatility Zhang is often referred to as the ‘Chinese Picasso’.

Helen Lee decided on Sichuan cuisine because William Lee was a good friend of a famous Sichuan chef named CHEN Jian Min who had come to Japan and opened a restaurant. Chen suggested to open a Sichuan restaurant and offered to help find a chef. At the time, Yokohama Chinatown had Cantonese, Beijing and Shanghainese restaurants but not Sichuan.

It is a testament to the foresight and business acumen of Helen Lee that Chungking Szechwan has become one of the most respected culinary names in Japan, with a total of eleven restaurants and six delicatessens in Yokohama, Tokyo, Nagoya and Okayama. Alex and elder brother Teddy Lee are also owners of Rose Hotel, situated a few buildings across the restaurant in Yokohama Chinatown. ■

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CH'NG Poh Tiong with Judy & Hugh Johnson OBE at the
10th Anniversary Party of *The World of Fine Wine*. 30 April 2014 • London

my inspiration

The finest book on wine in the English language is **WINE** by **Hugh Johnson**.

I read it during university and was under a spell every time Johnson waved his magic wand around a wine. His conjuring up the imagination made me impatient to try it. I did. Every wine. Fact is, Hugh Johnson could be writing about dog or cat food and we will be eating out of his hand.

Great writing is just that, great writing. Whatever the subject.

I was very lucky that, years later, my hero became a friend.

I interviewed Hugh when he visited Singapore and, later, as wine consultant to Jardines Singapore, we met again when he passed through as Jardines International Consultant.



**Hugh Johnson • *Wine*
Simon & Schuster • 1966**

I visited Hugh in his flat in London in Saint James's and he took me to lunch. Another time, it was dinner and with his daughter Kitty who had just returned from a trip. There was also the occasion I drove out to visit Hugh & Judy in their house in the Loire. A very memorable sunny day it was.

In 1991, Hugh and I – together with Pamela Vandyke Price, Johnnie Hugel, and Alexis Bespaloff – were invited by South African Airways to make their wine selection. The person responsible for rounding up the international judges for SAA was the wonderful Peter Devereux.

I will never forget the lunch in London. After the food was ordered, the most prominent wine writer in the world passed the wine list and asked me to choose a white. Such was the kindness and generosity Hugh lavished on a budding writer. ■

ch'ng poh tiong

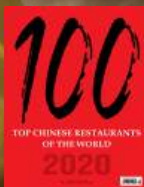
publisher & writer

A Bordeaux specialist (with more than a hundred trips to the wine region), **CH'NG Poh Tiong** is also a world authority on Marselan, Chinese wine, and Japanese Koshu. He has written six books on pairing wine with Chinese cuisine and is the world's foremost authority on the subject. Ch'ng has – since its inception in 2004 – been Regional Chair Asia **Decanter World Wine Awards**. He also contributes on China and Japan to the world's best-selling wine guide **Hugh Johnson Pocket Wine Book**. He has, since its inauguration in 2014, been a Senior Judge of **World of Fine Wine's** Best Wine Lists of the World Competition. Ch'ng is Chairman, **Koshu Expert Committee of Japan**; and, Co Chair, **Young Talent Escoffier Competition Asia Pacific**. In 2012, CH'NG Poh Tiong was inducted at Blair Castle, Perthshire, as a **Keeper of the Quaich**, the highest honour in Scotch Whisky. He is, since 2000, Wine Consultant to **FairPrice Finest**, Singapore's largest supermarket chain and largest retailer in wine. A trained lawyer, Ch'ng holds a postgraduate Certificate with Distinction in Chinese Art, **School of Oriental & African Studies**, University of London. He is a past Honorary Ambassador of **TEFAF** (The European Fine Art Foundation), organiser of the world's premier fine art fair in Maastricht, and a Life Member of **The China Society** of Singapore. Ch'ng Poh Tiong is known in China by his romanized pinyin name ZHUANG Buzhong. A first-generation Singaporean, his paternal ancestry is Hui'an, Quanzhou, Fujian Province, while his maternal ancestry is Shunde, Guangdong Province.

CH'NG Poh Tiong has served as **International Judge** at:

- South African Airway's Wine Selection
- Perth Royal Wine Show
- Sydney Royal Wine Show
- Hunter Valley Wine Show
- Japan Wine Challenge
- Air New Zealand Wine Awards

He was a **Keynote Speaker** at the **Master of Wine Symposium 2002** in Vienna, Austria, where he delivered the famous **"Coca-Colonisation of Wine"** speech. Ch'ng Poh Tiong also spoke at the **Master of Wine Symposium 2010** in Bordeaux.






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'Cultured and intelligent, independent and informed, passionate and succinct, Ch'ng Poh Tiong is one of those precious few writers on food and wine who can see a world in a grain of rice and a heaven in a sip. I am as much in awe of his ability to write equally engagingly and insightfully about food and wine as I am of his good friend Hugh Johnson's ability to do the same about wine and trees. A colossus straddling two worlds, he knows more about both than most food and wine writers know about either. And by allowing us to sit on his shoulders he gives us an unrivalled overview of the crucial nexus between the two.'

Dr Neil Beckett*, Editor, *The World of Fine Wine*

*Doctorate in Medieval History (Magdalen College, Oxford) and a Research Fellowship of the Royal Historical Society



'For CH'NG Poh Tiong wine and food are historic and cultural phenomena always driven by people with a passion to express the reality and truth behind their product. His experience, observance and integrity tell their story with uncompromising admiration.'

Steven Spurrier (1941 - 2021)

'Deeply passionate and highly knowledgeable on the topic of food and wine, Poh Tiong has an unparalleled expertise in the art of fine wine and Chinese gastronomy. In this beautiful book, Poh Tiong takes us on a journey of both discovery and wonderful stimulation of our senses with the magical wines of Bordeaux and the delicious creations from the great Masters of Chinese cuisine. Simply Sensational!'

Gerard Basset, OBE, MW, MS (1957 - 2019)

