

BRAISE RESTAURANT ADDS A TOUCH OF EUROPEAN TO SENTOSA

Sentosa seems set to become not only *the* leisure destination but one for wining and dining as well. With the opening of Braise, a modern European restaurant right on the shimmering sands of Palawan Beach, the dining scene on Sentosa Island just got booted up a notch.

A collaboration between Loh Lik Peng of Hotel 1929 and New Majestic Hotel, Chef Sebastian Ng of Ember Restaurant and Ms Dawn Teo, and fronted by Chef Desmond Lee, Braise is definitely more than just a convenient spot for beachfront eating.

Braise's cuisine style is classic French given a modern lift. It's about the best ingredients cooked with Chef Desmond's light hand and served to restaurant patrons in a simple and beautiful presentation.

French oysters and caviar are mainstays on the menu and will be a gracious start to an evening out. Enjoy the caviar with traditional condiments and blinis, or the Baeri as part of an appetiser with scrambled egg with vodka cream and lobster bisque – the perfect luxurious starter.

Another delectable starter is the pressed foie gras with sauternes and camomile jelly with vegetables à la grecque and sweet brioche toast. The duo of frog leg ravioli and tempura in a silky morel velouté will make fans of those who have never liked frog leg before. Lobster bisque lovers will love the balanced version here – packing a punch without being too heavy.

Among the selection of main courses, the roasted fillet of Western Australian beef served with savoy cabbage, beef cheeks in its own braising sauce is a hearty and intense dish. A definite must have is the Pork Three Ways of Confit Cheek of Pig, Pan Roasted Pork Belly and Pig Tail Roulade with Spice Port Wine Sauce. The Roasted Challan Duck Breast with Duck Medley and Green Peppercorn Sauce will also prove a best-seller.

The best of fish has also been chosen by Chef Desmond –the pan-roasted French seabass with sweet corn and hazelnut dressing, and the Tasmanian Pertuna Trout with Stuffed Zucchini Flower with Vin de Aubeis Sauce.

Another highlight will be the carefully chosen wines reflecting the best of the Old and New World. The glass cellar at the entrance to the restaurant will allow guests to view and select some rare and interesting choices to pair with their food. There is also a good selection of wines served by the glass so patrons can mix and match a variety during the course of a meal.

Desserts at Braise are difficult to pass on as Chef Desmond has catered to many tastes – the never-out-of-favour Chocolate Lava Cake with Coffee Ice Cream. The Pear Tart with Vanilla Ice Cream is wonderfully simple and delicious and the Grand Marnier Soufflé with Banana Ice Cream promises quite a kick.

To make guests feel welcome, they can redeem the Sentosa Island entry fee at the end of their meal.

With the beach lit up at night and a private buggy transporting diners from the beach car park, Braise will be a special place to dine on Sentosa.

DESIGN CONCEPT

Braise is housed in the old monorail station and stands on the edge of Palawan Beach facing west side of Sentosa Island. The main entrance is shared with a Chinese restaurant below and through a flight of staircases, one reaches to the 2nd Floor where Braise is located. A wall-clad with sisal rope with the name of the restaurant welcomes you. A large lit fish tank is located at the lobby, giving reference to the sea across. Once you penetrate the entry wall, guests are greeted with a view to the beach and the sea through a curtain of palm trees. The orientation and location searches for an intimate relation with the context; one attempts to break visual barrier allowing for a total transparency, leaving only the kitchen and service area facing the service road and the hill behind.

Designed by Bedmar and Shi, the restaurant offers different spaces like the open BBQ deck, an intimate alfresco section as well as indoor dining room. These spaces have been created to gel with the existing structure of the old monorail station, and each area offers a different setting for the guests.

The choice of materials has been limited to the minimum, with terrazzo, wood and sisal as the main components for the project.

CHEF DESMOND LEE

Chef Desmond Lee is a Raffles Hotel alumnus, as are many of the well-trained chefs now lifting the standards of the Singapore dining scene. With the classic training, he moved to work in Saint Julien with ex-Raffles Hotel Executive Chef Julien Bompard where he further honed his skills in classic French cooking. He has also spent time in the bastion of contemporary cuisine, the now-defunct Fig Leaf and last year Chef Desmond had the honor of completing an attachment with British celebrity Chef Gordon Ramsay.

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