



Keyaki Entrance.

Put on a happy face

Lucas McMillan is one of the happy faces that will be part of the new Pan Pacific Singapore.

He is now the chef at Zambuca, which will be a major part of a complete renovation and rebranding of the hotel, planned to begin in March next year.

The air is fairly abuzz with palpable excitement around the hotel because, not only will the entire building be refurbished, much of it will be completely redesigned – including the entrance, the lobby and the Atrium Bar.

It will be a chic, new-look hotel and the Singapore property is the flagship of a global rebranding strategy by the energetically expanding chain and, with the rebranding, will be a ‘re-rating’ – to take it up two notches – star-wise, design-wise and guest service-wise.

Pan Pacific is already noted for some pretty radical ideas. For example, it is the first hotel in Singapore to devote an entire floor to be a round-the-clock business centre, complete with meeting rooms large and small and the Executive Lounge where food and beverages are served. This will be retained, as will the SERVICEONE telephone service whereby you dial just one number for any service you require – and in several languages: English, of course, Mandarin, Japanese and



Chef Lucas.



Hai Tien Lo Restaurant.

Korean.

Pan Pacific opened in 1986 and was even then a cutting edge hotel of 37 stories designed around an atrium. It is in the heart of Marina Bay and connected easily by walkways to several malls, the Suntec Convention Centre and the arts precincts.

The group has become a leading brand of hotels and resorts in Asia and around the Pacific Rim, including North America. They now have 30 hotels and 10,000 rooms with their two brands: Pan Pacific and Parkroyal.

In Singapore, there are 778 rooms and suites, all with a view, and the front wing overlooking Marina Bay. It also has the Pacific Club, which will also get a major facelift with its décor, business facilities and food concepts.

The design is still a well-kept secret but we can guess it will not be too distant from the current idea of a ‘city resort’, exemplified in the Pacific Club with its oriental artworks and palette of resort colours – timeless and hip, by WATG Design in Honolulu.

They will, of course, keep the award-winning Keyaki Japanese restaurant in its own garden and Hai Tien Lo, the Cantonese restaurant

on the 37th floor. Both are hugely popular, especially with the locals, so it would be silly to change those.

What will change is Zambuca. Not the name but it will no longer be Italian. According to new F&B manager Craig Cook, it will be ‘a Pacific Rim restaurant,’ not necessarily the recipes but the best of ingredients that are produced around the countries that border the Pacific, including fresh seafood from the ocean itself.

They have taken on the young and energetic Australian Lucas McMillan as chef and he is already thinking about new menus and ingredients. “I have already discovered fresh bar-amundi in Singapore,” he enthuses. “They are farmed here from stock brought from Australia and they are delicious.”

The hotel will close for four months while the \$80 million dollar renovation happens. Watch this space!



Fire Dancers at Warisan 20th Anniversary Party.

20 gala years in Bali

For many years, Warisan has signified fine dining in a glamorous tropical Bali setting. Astonishingly, the elegant restaurant celebrated its 20th anniversary this month – after an amazing two decades of parties, fashion shows, glamour events and art exhibitions – not to mention fine food and a wonderful setting: a centre courtyard surrounded by a space filled with precious antiques.

This courtyard has been the scene of many celebrations, romantic dinners and not a few marriage proposals.

After an extensive renovation,

Warisan is bigger and better than ever and the food is top notch, thanks to new chef Vincent Denayer.

To celebrate 20 happy years, Warisan owners Dayu Sri and Cetin Candan hosted a party with the theme of Hollywood.

It was an evening where friends old and new gathered to party and toast the success of Warisan – which means heritage – and wish it success for the future. And yes, you can still enjoy the famous foie gras dishes from a full Mediterranean menu that now includes tapas snacks at the grand new look bar and lounge.



Beach Clean Up Day at Meliá Bali

Meliá Bali – clean and green

If you are a beach resort and your beach is ugly, you will not go far. With this in mind, the Meliá Bali Resort is constantly making sure the white sand of Nusa Dua out front is regularly cleaned.

Their ongoing Cleaning Blitz Program is organized by their Safety & Environment and Human Resources Departments. It ensures not only a cleaner and healthier beach around the hotel but it is also a simple way of maintaining a ‘green’ en-

vironment.

This initiative highlights Meliá Bali’s commitment to sustainable tourism as Asia’s only EarthCheck Platinum Certified company.

More than 40 staff members eagerly joined in the cleanup and removed all the rubbish from the beach, especially plastic and cigarette butts but other detritus as well.

Not difficult and everyone feels better – not least the tourists who appreciate a clean beach.



Private Pool Villa at the Balé.

Brand New Balé

The luxurious Balé resort in Bali is about to undergo a huge renovation. The hotel, in Nusa Dua, will close for four months, beginning next January while the refurbishment takes place. There are currently 27-pool pavilions, two restaurants, spa and public areas, which will remain but there are a couple of surprises planned. These include ‘stylish food and entertainment venues.’

Good news for Nusa Dua fans who will now not have to travel to Seminyak for music and entertainment. “There is a casually hip

rooftop-dining scene concept in the blueprints and with vistas of the ocean on the horizon so we expect the venue to become quickly popular within Nusa Dua, often regarded as a quiet, family destination,” says MD Jose Luis Calle.

Along with The Balé Nusa Dua, owning management company Lifestyle Retreats operates a clutch of small, luxury resorts in Bali including The Menjangan, an upmarket nature retreat set within the West Bali National Park and The Amala in the fashionable district of Seminyak.

They are popping up everywhere

Strange little temporary restaurants are (literally) popping up all over the western world. You will find them in America, in Britain, Australia, and in many places in Europe.

They have been named the ‘pop-up restaurant’ – which means they are something other than a bricks-and-mortar fixture. They sometimes occupy a short-term rented space, sometimes a borrowed eatery; other times just what was once a lowly food truck. The thing is: they serve great food – but rush to be one you like because it won’t be there forever.

You will not find ‘pop up restaurant’ on dictionary.com yet. Perhaps, the best definition comes from something called the Guerrilla Culinary Brigade in New York, which creates one-off culinary events (for some often VIP clients) in a, well, hit-and-run way.

“Guerrilla culinary is a form of irregular restaurant or gastronomic event, also known as a POP-UP RESTAURANT, in which a small group of foodies, including but not limited to, chefs and restaurateurs, but creative minds who use underground culinary tactics along with extraordinary imagination, the element of surprise, and astonishing mobility to harass larger and less mobile restaurants, thereby creating memorable culinary and social moments that exist briefly and disappear almost immediately.”

Pop-ups are part of a growing consumer movement that marketing professionals call planned spontaneity. The fact that they’re fleeting gives pop-ups a powerful sense of excitement and urgency that can inspire the stingiest customer to spend.

Some gurus have put it down to a general ennui with the traditional restaurant or eatery. Others are more down to earth, blaming a very dicey world economy.



Pop Up Restaurant

In the West, of course, this would be (due to health and zoning laws for a start) illegal. But they seem to be getting around all these.

There are certain ingredients you need to make it work: first, a good chef and interesting food (short menu, fresh local ingredients cooked to five-star quality). Then there is location: it should be funky and probably off the beaten track. You need a groovy staff (no amateurs, please) who know about food and service.

These places are simply perfect for modern marketing so, with the instant communication provided by the social media (Facebook, Twitter, the blogosphere and all the others), you don’t need expensive advertising and PR. This is also a way for the food-savvy to get the latest on what is around.

Then there must be a use-by date: this is part of the excitement if people know it is now and not forever. Pop-ups are perfect for the trend-gullible whose catch cry seems to be the word: Next!

Pop-up chefs can take risks without the threat of foreclosure. Since there is very little invested, there is very little to lose. Aah, the recession!

And don’t think this is just an idea for young guns out to show diners just what they can do. Quite a few star chefs (Stephen Carr, Ludo Lefebvre, Pierre Koffman, Jason Atherton, Grant Achatz and many others) are pioneers of the idea.

Even Thomas Keller whose three-star French Laundry restaurant in California was several times voted best in the world has entered the pop-up scene. Albeit, in a rather cheeky way: he is showcasing his food in a temporary space inside the ultra-luxurious Harrod’s department store in London.

And, still in London, two people who have little in common but their surname: the Prince of Wales (you all know him) and Barbara Windsor (elfin actress from the Carry On movies) are involved.

Next door to Charles’s pad Clarence House is another large resi-

dence called Lancaster House where an eatery has popped up. And it is a smash, possibly because people are believing the rumours that Charles and Camilla, not to mention Prince William and Princess Catherine may actually be among the diners.

But the food is serious: force backstage at this pop-up restaurant is Jamie Grainger-Smith, who set up Fifteen with Jamie Oliver and the organic Acorn House restaurant in Soho.

In line with the PoW’s green leanings, there is a bar made from bamboo and other sustainable wood. And they serve organic beer and wine out in the garden.

No doubt the trend will find its way to Asia. Well, come to think of it, it already has – a couple of centuries ago and it is still going strong. We are not strangers really to temporarily-housed street food. In Hong Kong we call it the *dai pai dong*. In Indonesia and Malaysia, we call it the *warung jalan* or the *kaki lima*.



Interior at Rose Cafe.

A little truffle goes a long way

For lovers of the delicate white truffle then il Mare Italian Restaurant at the Hotel Mulia Senayan is the place to be in October. From the 20th to the 30th of October the seasonal delicacy will be the star of a special promotional autumn menu at il Mare.

The special white truffles are flown in from the Piedmont region of Italy, just a two hour drive from Milan. The white truffle season starts at the end of September and runs through to early January.

So truffle lovers, unless you are going to Italy in the coming months we suggest that the Hotel Mulia Senayan will be the place to be in October.



White Truffle dish at Hotel Mulia Senayan.

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