

# The Peak of Gastronomy

What a week it was! Masterchefs enthralled, vintners educated and guests were thrilled to bits at the annual World Gourmet Summit, held from 7 to 14 April.

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## Arun Sampanthavivat

Hosted at Club Chinois

A winner of the American Express Best Chef: Midwest in the James Beard Awards 2000, chef Arun, of Arun's in Chicago, charmed palates with his inventive take on traditional Thai flavours. The fried curried crab and pork quenelle is a tasty patty enhanced by a perky Thai herb vinaigrette, and artfully garnished with two criss-crossed chive stalks. Guests were also treated to an enlightening chicken curry, where the meat encases winter melon and bamboo shoot in a roll, roasted with thyme and nutmeg seasoning, and prettily perched on a timbale of Jasmine rice. It was the curry sauce that set tongues wagging at the table – resplendent with spice and silky to boot, thanks to the use of kabocha squash, potatoes and coconut milk. A sweet end was found in the distinctly Chinese-inspired almond mousse with red bean paste and black sesame cream.



## Marcus Samuelsson

Hosted at mezza9, Grand Hyatt

Executive chef of Restaurant Aquavit in New York, chef Samuelsson has been bestowed with numerous accolades. Little wonder, every Scandinavian-inspired dish was indeed memorable for its ingenuity, lucidity and most of all, punchy flavours. Take the spicy starter of yellow tail sashimi served with lentils, saffron, a salad of roasted garlic and a reduction of galangal (blue ginger), lemongrass and kicap manis (Indonesian sweet sauce) – creative as it is assertive. The architecturally-presented paella stuffed shrimp ball with soft shell crab and octopus arrived on a 'tic-tac-toe grid' and was a recreation of paella flavours "without the rice". The handsome Kobe beef ravioli was served dramatically in a huge black bowl, snugly wrapped around mashed taro root and poised in powerful truffle tea broth – its sensuous texture was sheer delight. One star that received an adoring thumbs-up was the above-mentioned foie gras ganache – unctuous, fragrant and ever so oozy, it was cleverly paired with a crisp-tasting Asian pear and mint yoghurt sorbet.



## Sergi Arola

Raffles Grill, Raffles Hotel

Two Michelin-star Spanish chef Arola showcased a radical menu that marries regional flavours of his country and an innovative play on textures. Monkfish was presented ceviche style, every velvety mouthful an exciting burst of spicy, tangy and savoury flavours. Dainty bits of fresh sardine, mussel, raspberry and cauliflower were arranged like a 'clock' on a tiny plate, and drizzled with olive oil and fried shallots – simply good. The meal took a robust turn with the supple lamb



kidney wrapped in a paper-thin potato crêpe, and a hearty beef tenderloin served with comforting apples, chestnuts and spicy butter. Presented in an avant-garde linear fashion, the latter dish showcased two vertical lines of meat and fruit 'cubes'. The well-loved pumpkin is given a modern touch in the form of 'carpaccio' – a thin layer of purée surrounded by green apple sauce and topped with vanilla ice cream, served on a striking glass plate.

## Philippe Padovani

Hosted at Blu, Shangri-La

Influenced by French-Mediterranean-Hawaiian flavours, chef Padovani presented a charming carte of the freshest country produce. Particularly praiseworthy were the meaty sautéed shrimp in a zesty heart of palm, green beans and sweet onion salad, and succulent roasted muscovy duck breast served in a superb honey-sherry-vinegar-ginger-duck stock-reduction. The sugar pineapple gratinée oozed natural sweetness, that when combined with macadamia nut, nougatine and poha berries, was an end worthy of several 'ooh la la's!'



### David Senia

**Hosted at Snappers, The Ritz-Carlton Millenia Singapore**  
Chef Senia's artichoke salad with crispy sardine was an exercise in contrasting textures, as was the next dish. Cubes of firm foie gras terrine were alternated with fresh shredded daikon and ponzu jelly – a coming together of sweet, sharp and salty notes. The dish which proved the most surprising was the pan-fried langoustine served with pigeon jus (which had bits of liver in it) as this was an unusual combination, it took a little getting used to. Baked stromate (a firm fleshed fish) with cold vanilla flavoured leeks took some aback with the strong vanilla presence. The roasted mint tea lamb with flavoured cherry vinegar sauce went down well although the tea flavour was barely discernable. De Loach wines were poured with David Senia's cuisine.

### David Laris

**Hosted at Town, The Fullerton Singapore**  
Chef Laris is admittedly very versatile where cooking is concerned, having worked in countries such as Australia, Vietnam and Hong Kong, and is not adverse to using some Asian ingredients and flavours. For example, his sesame-crusted tuna loin with ponzu dressing had shredded salad that was tossed through with shallot oil. Another dish served which exhibited chef Laris' penchant for using Asian ingredients is his duck breast served with bok choy. Boutique Californian wine Duckhorn was served with David Laris' cuisine.

### Philippe Legendre

**Hosted at One Ninety, Four Seasons Hotel, Singapore**  
Speaking little English proved to be no barrier to anyone appreciating chef Legendre's cuisine. These dishes showed a strong entrenchment in the classic tradition, yet with no reservations where new flavours are concerned. Take for example his blancmange of sole with Sevruga caviar – smooth texture of the blancmange with marinated avocado underlying sweet, savoury and nutty flavours. Extremely serious about keeping to the fine reputation of French cuisine, chef Legendre believes only the best of ingredients delicately handled is the secret to great cuisine. His intense fricassée of smoked and roasted lobster with chestnuts from the Corrèze Region was delightful. Pigeon is a 'game' bird that is standard fare on most French menus – here chef Legendre roasted it, and as accompaniment, he has a date purée providing the requisite sweetness and preserved lemon in cumin sauce. The simplest things are the hardest to do well and chef Legendre's warm brownie with caramel ice cream was absolutely addictive – the outside dry and the inside moist. Chateau Rauzan-Segla's wines accompanied chef Legendre's menu.



### Ettore Bocchia

**Hosted at Pontini, Grand Copthorne Waterfront**

Italian chef Ettore Bocchia visited our shores earlier this year to study the climate before devising his menu featured at this year's Summit. This is not unusual of the man who entwines aspects of nature into his culinary creations. Appetisers such as the clear crab canederli and basil timballo in tomato consommé are skilfully prepared with the right touch of sweet and tangy. The crunchy fried mango and spaghetti potato filled with foie gras and served with red cherry sauce delighted with its bright red colour and velvety texture. Fish carpaccio is marinated with sesame seeds and balsamic vinegar, and served with an addictively intriguing oyster ice-cream. For the mains, we enjoyed the gratinated venison cutlet in chocolate crust, fondant potatoes and glazed fennel-hazelnut sauce, what with tender meat and a robust chocolate crust complemented by glazed fennel-hazelnut sauce. A very homely stewed squid was stuffed with courgette blossoms and served with candied tomato. Wonderful desserts provided the perfect end. In particular, the white chocolate soufflé warmed our hearts with its soft raspberry centre, while the gorgonzola ice cream served with a honey tulip crust and a pear poached in red wine was creamy, yet crunchy. Chef's Bocchia's cuisine was paired with wines from Pio Cesare, Italy.



### De Loach

**Snappers, The Ritz-Carlton Millenia Singapore**

The glitzy Ritz Carlton hotel hosted De Loach wines to match the cuisine of MasterChef David Senia from Ritz Carlton Osaka. Cecil De Loach, a former San Francisco fire fighter, acquired De Loach winery in 1970. Since then, this Sonoma, Russian River winery has and continues to produce some of the sunny estate's most acclaimed wines from over 900 acres of vineyards. Two white and three red wines, together with a dessert wine, were served during the wine dinner at Snappers restaurant. The well-balanced flavours of pronounced lychee and fresh acidity of De Loach Late Harvest Gewurztraminer '99 was the outstanding wine at the De Loach wine dinner.



### Bodegas Torres

**Raffles Grill, Raffles Hotel**

The sole Spanish representative, Bodegas Torres, impressed with its single estate's wines at the Raffles Hotel. The classy Raffles Grill was the chosen venue that showcased nine of Torres' signature wines including a brandy, Aqua d'Or (Penedes) 2000, as an after dinner. The



distinct differences between these wines were evident of the tremendous effort and time spent producing fine wines at the award winning winery. The San Digno (Curico) 2001 and Fransola (Penedes) 2000 represented the best Sauvignon Blanc wines of the Bodegas – the former

seems to mirror the crisp and refreshing New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc wines, with a touch of cat's pee scent, an old association of a classic dry Sauvignon Blanc; while the Fransola was more subtle and subdued in its bouquet and flavours, though equally interesting on the palate.

The Chardonnay from Milmanda (Penedes) '98 and Chardonnay from Russian River Valley, was also distinctively different in style and flavours. The Californian Chardonnay displayed typical cool climate Sonoma characteristics, while the Penedes exhibited a close association to a Somontano Chardonnay. Bodegas Torres's red wines were ironically, a shade paler than its white wines. The Jean Leon, Gran Reserva '88 in Imperial bottle and the Gran Corona Mas La Plana '85 were typically Spanish in its bouquet and palate, with flavour concentration somehow lacking in the mid palate. Its younger 'peer', Gran Muralles (Conca de Barbera) '97, managed to outshine its senior with a more fruity scent and flavours both on the nose and palate, ending with chocolaty notes. The sweet taste of Vendima Tardia, Riesling (Curico) 2000 was not as balanced as expected, though overall a pleasant dessert wine to complete a delicious wine dinner.

### Schlossgut Diel

#### Club Chinois

A short distance from the border of Spain came a reputed German winemaker and winery – Schlossgut Diel. This German winery specialises in producing fine white wines, with 40 acres producing 70% Riesling, 20% Grauer Burgunder (Pinot Gris) and 5% Weisser Burgunder (Pinot Blanc). Additionally, the small winery also produces a minute amount of Blauer Spatburgunder (Pinot Noir) from its two acres of Pinot Noir vines. Armin Diel, owner and winemaker of Schlossgut Diel, was present to guide diners at Club Chinois on his special selection of the winery's wines – one of which was a vintage 2000 Riesling Sparkling wine that impressed with its wonderful citrus and pear flavours though it is Brut (dry) in style. Three different levels of Rieslings were the highlight of the evening – Riesling Kabinett '99, Spatlese '97 and Auslese 2000. Even though Germany is not known to produce credible Pinot Noir, Diel crafted a well-framed and structured Pinot Noir '99 with sufficient freshness, although lacking in apparent fruitiness usually expected of good Burgundy red wines. Then again, this noble Burgundy grape varietal is from a country renowned for producing white wines; certainly worthy of praise.



## World Gourmet Summit Awards of Excellence 2002

### REGIONAL AWARDS



#### Asian Cuisine Article of the Year

The Road Home  
by Noelle Tan, Loh Hsian Ming, Amy Van & Sharon Soh  
*Wine & Dine*, August 2001



#### Wine Article of the Year

French or New World  
by Lim Hwee Peng  
*Wine & Dine*, November 2001

#### Electrolux Culinary Institution of the Year

Singapore Hotel and Tourism Education Centre (SHATEC)

### CULINARY AWARDS

#### Chef of the Year

Emmanuel Strobant, *Saint Pierre*

#### Executive Chef of the Year

Christophe Megel, *The Ritz-Carlton, Millennia Singapore*

#### San Pellegrino Rising Chef of the Year

Nam Quoc Nguyen, *The Lighthouse*

#### Asian Ethnic Chef of the Year

Sam Leong, *Jade*

#### Inniskillin Icewine Pastry Chef of the Year

Kenny Kong, *Raffles The Plaza & Swissôtel The Stamford*

### RESTAURANT AWARDS

#### Restaurant of the Year

mezza9, *Grand Hyatt Singapore*

#### Asian Ethnic Restaurant of the Year

Club Chinois

#### Martell Cognac Food & Beverage Manager of the Year

Sjefke Jansen, *Food & Beverage Manager, Raffles Hotel*

#### WMF Restaurant Manager of the Year

Christopher Conway, *mezza9, Grand Hyatt Singapore*

#### Christofle New Restaurant of the Year

*Saint Pierre*

#### Screwpull Sommelier of the Year

Aby Tan, *Les Amis*

#### Wine List of the Year

*Les Amis*

### ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

#### Lifetime Achievement

M P S Puri, *Senior Vice-President – Operations, Raffles International*

