

From zi char to Japanese and more — you get a slice of everything at Bukit Timah.



Photos Jason Ho

Best of the West

In part three of our culinary trek, we head to foodie hotspot Bukit Timah for quaint eateries and great eats

Shermaine Wong
shermainewong@mediacorp.com.sg

WHEN it comes to food, you can call the Western part of Singapore the much-neglected district of the island.

Although great grub is often synonymous with the East, the West is not short on the delicious — particularly in and around Bukit Timah. A good starting point for foodies would be the stretch along Coronation Plaza. Then, work downwards to landmarks such as Turf City, Sixth Ave Centre and King Albert Park.

What the West lacks in laksa, Peranakan eateries and beachside seafood restaurants, it more than makes up for with delightful and cosy eateries — offering a diverse range of cuisines ranging from zi char to Japanese to French — tucked away in Bukit Timah's many enclaves.

For more proof that this stretch is as much a food paradise as the East, look at the number of gourmet and specialty food stores it harbours: Swiss Butchery, Culina, Meat the Butcher, German Market Place.

Go ahead and stubbornly stay put in the East. Let's see you order up a bratwurst with your Katong laksa.

CALLING ALL FOOD LOVERS

TODAY invites you to share some of the best meals you've had at food centres in Serangoon Gardens/Upper Serangoon Road, Joo Chiat, Bukit Timah and the Central Business District.

Email food@newstoday.com.sg and in no more than 50 words, tell us about your favourite stall (include the address) and why it is your recommended destination.

Selected recommendations will be posted online at www.todayonline.com.

TODAY's picks

Greenwood Fish Market
34 & 38 Greenwood Ave, Tel: 6467 4950



Theirs is a unique concept: Besides a restaurant, Greenwood Fish Market also houses a retail space hawking fresh seafood shipped every other day from countries such as New Zealand and Japan. You're guaranteed the freshest

catch. Go for the sashimi platter featuring succulent seasonal seafood like swordfish and tuna. The starter of silky homemade lobster tofu is another flavour-bursting delight, as is the spaghetti crabmeat vongole and the evergreen fish and chips. Starters range from \$8 to \$18, and mains from \$20 to \$65.

Forture Seafood Steamboat
887 Bukit Timah Rd, Tel: 6469 5957

Forture has been around for 22 years, and its zi char dishes are popular with both locals and the expat community. Lady boss Mdm Leow created dishes like the Mongolian-styled deer meat — the sauce is spicy, sweet and creamy — because she noticed that robust



flavours were popular with Caucasians. Most of the menu, however, remains locally-inspired. Think salted egg crab, delish cappuccino spareribs, herbal chicken and "Bhutan" prawns served on a sizzling hot-plate. Prices start from \$8.

Chiharu
779 Bukit Timah Rd, Tel: 6769 1929

Japanese restaurant Chiharu focuses on seasonal specialties, which means diners are always guaranteed the best in terms of quality and flavours. Try the delicate chawanmushi, poached sea bream head in sweet soy, and uber-fresh grilled large prawns with garlic sauce. Set lunches and set dinners are available. They start from \$35 and \$80, respectively, while a la carte dishes start from \$12.



Brazil Churrascaria
14/16 Sixth Avenue, Tel: 6463 1923

Brazil Churrascaria is without a doubt a meat lover's dream. At \$42++ per head (open for dinner only), have your fill of 14 different cuts of meat served

— all-you-can-eat — right to your table. Beef tenderloin, lamb shoulder, chicken thigh and sausages ... and that's just to start with. There are also 25 varieties of salads, pasta and rice at the adjoining salad bar for when your body starts physically rejecting meat. Wash it all down with a potent Caipirinha. Bliss.

Picotin
100 Turf Club Rd, Tel: 6877 1191

Charming Picotin boasts an ambience that, depending on what time of the day you

visit, can range from being quaint to cosy to intimate. Have your pick of French and Italian dishes here: Fresh grilled sardines with olive oil; Fjord pizza (crabmeat, capers, tomatoes and mayo); lovely braised beef cheek in pinot noir served with lovely potato mash; and end off with a refreshing lemon tart or honeycomb and citrus parfait. Prices of mains start from \$24.



CELEB PICK



"One of Pierre's (Png, her husband) and my all-time favourites in Bukit Timah is Valentino's (11 Jalan Bingka, Tel: 6462 0555). Whenever there's a special occasion, when we have guests, or when we feel like having Italian, we'll head there. Everything on their menu is sublime! But if I had to choose, my favourite would be the thin crust four cheese pizza — I always get them to add rocket leaves on the top. Pierre's favourite would be the crabmeat pasta. Their desserts are to die for, too. Perla, Valentino's sister, does all the baking personally, so you can be sure you will get that 'home-made' flavour and that they are fresh!"

MediaCorp artiste and director of CINQ Salon, Andrea De Cruz, who has been living in Bukit Timah since 2003.



a matter of taste.

by don mendoza
donm@mediacorp.com.sg

Recipe for disaster

Has our need to eat for pleasure outgrown our common sense?

HOLY mother of all mischief. What were we thinking when we decided that eating unnaturally fattened goose liver and severed shark's fin was in some strange way a sign of our cultivated predisposition for eating well?

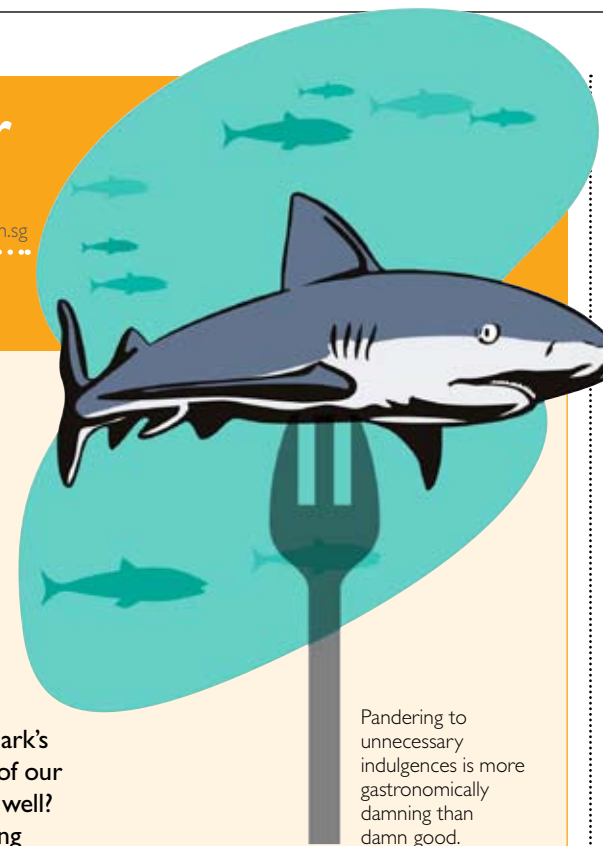
Ever since we stopped throwing rocks at woolly mammoths, food for us quickly went from being a necessity to (in extreme cases) a necessary evil.

Yes, I've ranted about it for as long as I can remember these ingredients being plated or sold. I had even blogged about it, naively hopeful that netizens shared a more global conscience.

And I'll say it as often as it is needed.

Pandering to such unnecessary indulgences is more gastronomically damning than damn good. Being fat-headed about the derogatory consequences of feasting on feted food faux pas just because we think we can in essence contradicts every iota of effort we've invested in building a gracious society.

It is one thing to turn a blind eye to the fact that a fast-growing percentage of everything we consume today is genetically modified (Google it if you don't believe me). But it's another to assume that the privilege of eating well comes with a "get out of jail card" where endangered and inhumanly



Pandering to unnecessary indulgences is more gastronomically damning than damn good.

sourced foods are concerned.

It's plain and simple. Being on top of the food chain only means that we are more susceptible to the changing quality and health of the resources we've grown dependent on.

There was a time when the high cost of prized victuals was an indication of their rarity. Now it's more about promoting massive consumption, whatever the price.

So, picture this: A dish of pan-seared foie gras in a shark's fin reduction topped with shreds of marinated bird's nest. Best served in a monkey's head, a fellow foodie so kindly added.

Is this a recipe for a banquet fit for a king? Or a recipe for disaster in the making? You decide, as only you can.

Me? I'm just hoping that more of us find it within ourselves the need to help preserve the collective traditions of culinary alchemy, while keeping the very same ingredients under consideration from becoming just another sweet memory.

Bangkok delicious

It may have taken a decade to reach our shores, but timing isn't everything



IF THERE is one thing many of us love as much as good Thai food, it is good beer. Just take a moment to recall the numerous trips you've made to Golden Mile Complex for that affordable, authentic mix of the sweet, tangy and oh, so spicy.

Then, quickly imagine how great it would have been to wash it down with a laudable pint of larger. Wait. Make that a boutique beer — brewed on site.

Now hail a cab and get yourself to one of Bangkok's claim to fame, Tawandang microbrewery and restaurant.

This award-winning brand is now available on our very own isle — the first outlet outside of the Land of Smiles — nestled in the lush surrounds of Dempsey Hill.

I know. I felt the same way. Just when you thought this unique mini culinary enclave could not have a more eclectic mix of charming dining options, up pops a renowned name in Thai cuisine with world class German beer to boot.

For the sake of purists and fans alike, let me first clarify that the food here is authentic fare with a modern twist — combining some of the best in central and North-eastern Thai cuisine.

Strange at first but apt, its experienced native chefs also dole out a house style dish of deep fried pork knuckles (\$25). There's clearly nothing wrong with the reg-



Tom yum kung (left) and deep-fried pork knuckles.

ular recipe, but Tawandang's is a less greasy yet no less scintillating rendition.

How is this possible?

Well, after a little gentle probing, the manager explained that the pork is first boiled to remove some of the fat.

I stand by my belief that more fat equals more flavour. But, like one of those pleasant exceptions to the rule, the dish survived my somewhat biased notion — with its characteristically heavily crisp skin and just the right amount of tasty fat clinging on.

Its tom yum kung with king prawns (\$20) was a gracious improvement to the norm. Not too heavy on the coconut milk but a little shy in the heat department — which the kind waitstaff assured me could be fixed with a simply request.

Given the fine luck I had been having with my orders, I decided to stick with the restaurant's signature dishes.

My recommended fish dish: Deep-fried seabass in fish sauce, served with a signature spicy seafood sauce. Just \$22 for a whole fish, fresh from the tank at the back, this is by far one of the best deals in town. Went nicely with the steamed squid dish with chilli and lime juice (\$18), too.

Whatever you decide to order up, pay careful attention to the individual dipping sauces and dressings — you will be gently puffing for more. Often taken for granted, they are, as is the band of smiling kitchen maestros, the unsung heroes behind this restaurant's winning menu.

DON MENDOZA

Tawandang
Where: Blk 26 Dempsey Road #01-01
Telephone: 6476 6742
Opening hours: 11.30-1am, daily

Luminous GRAND OPENING sales

Lush by victorious gems

STOREWIDE 50% OFF!
Additional 10% discount on top of that*

WIN CASH PRIZES of up to \$1000 in our LUCKY DIP with every \$500 purchase*
5 CASH VOUCHERS WORTH \$500 each to be given away with purchase above \$2000*
every day from 12th July 2009 to 31st August 2009

◆ FREE elegant jade pendant with any purchase*
◆ FREE exquisite jewellery case for all purchases above \$500*
◆ FREE classic ring pillow with purchase of wedding bands*

• Lush by Victorious Gems
01-22 Orchard Central
Singapore 238896
Tel: 6238 3833 Fax: 6238 3832
Website: www.victoriousgems.com.sg

• Victorious Gems
#02-53/68 Central (Clarke Quay MRT)
Singapore 059817
Tel: 6327 8293
Website: www.victoriousgems.com.sg

*Terms and Conditions apply