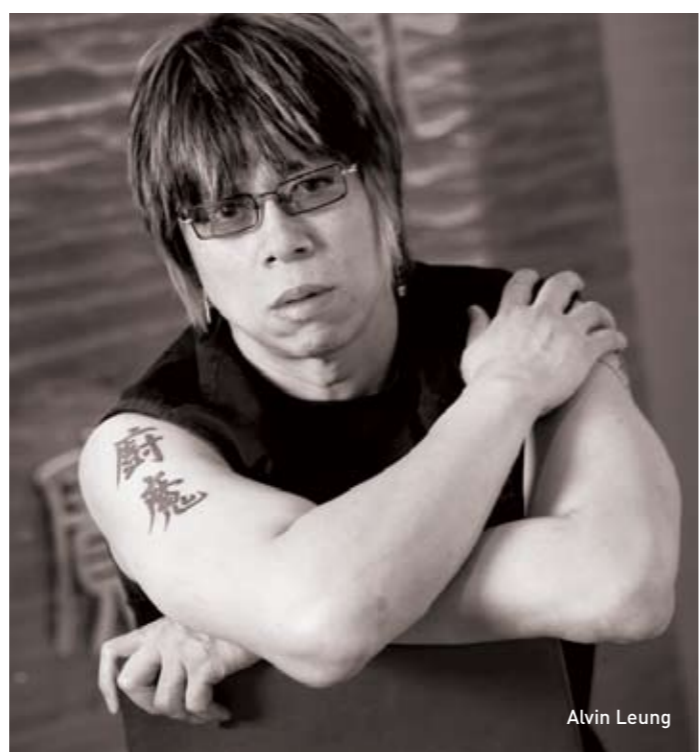


78 A Personal Touch

ONE OF THE MOST ANTICIPATED GOURMET LIFESTYLE EVENTS IN ASIA, THE RAFFLES HOTEL WINE, FOOD & ARTS EXPERIENCE CERTAINLY COUNTS AS A CLASSIC IN OUR BOOKS. WE CHAT WITH SOME OF THE BIGGEST NAMES GRACING THE 15TH RHWFAE TO REVEAL THE PERSONALITIES BEHIND THE MICHELIN STARS, INTERNATIONAL AWARDS AND THEIR SHINING CLOAK OF CELEBRITY



Alvin Leung

ALVIN LEUNG
MICHELIN 2-STAR CHEF, BO INNOVATION

Q: When did it occur to you that cooking is the path for you?
A: I started cooking when I was 10 because my mother wasn't a good cook, and since it's something I've always enjoyed. However, I ended up being trained as an engineer to fulfil my parents' expectations. My moment of epiphany came when I became a shareholder in a private kitchen and realised I could cook better than their chefs — so I took over the kitchen.

Q: What was the first dish you ever created?
A: Spaghetti and meat-sauce made with Campbell's and ground beef hamburger. I added in curry powder to make it different. But it's not something I cook now!

Q: Who are your sources of inspiration?
A: Alain Ducasse for his brains, Joel Robuchon for his heart, and Ferran Adria for his courage.

Q: The most important lesson learnt in your years of cooking is...
A: That there are many more lessons to be learnt.

Q: How would you describe your own style of cooking?
A: I am trying to challenge people's expectations, to surprise and excite them. My aim is to have people say 'That was the best meal I've ever had' and I just work backwards from that. In Cantonese, Bo means treasure — we take the treasure, the essence of traditional Chinese cuisine, to create dishes that push the boundaries of expectations so that our customers taste the familiar in ways they could never imagine. At the same time we are trying to bring Chinese food to the world fine dining table.

Q: Do you see your food as a reflection of your character? Or a representation of the environment?



Marc Haerberlin

MARC HAEBERLIN
MICHELIN 3-STAR CHEF, L'AUBERGE DE L'ILL

A: My food is a reflection of my character, in that I am different and like to stand out from the masses.

Q: Is there an ingredient which you are obsessed with now?
A: I think a chef shouldn't be obsessed with any one thing. When you have too many signatures, your menu becomes stagnant. The things I care most about are versatility and balance. I will also say that I am obsessed with high quality ingredients and proper execution of a dish. While I don't have one particular signature dish, I would say lap mei fan put me on the map, however, I feel it is more important to have a library of dishes rather than a bookcase of signature dishes.

Q: What do you hope most to achieve with your food?
A: My objective is to introduce Chinese flavours to the whole world. I want to change people's perceptions of what Chinese food is and what Chinese food could be — and I am doing that with X-treme Chinese (cuisine).

Q: What to you, is the significance of being part of the Raffles Hotel Wine, Food & Arts Experience (RHWFAE)?
A: I am very honoured to be part of the RHWFAE as Singapore is an important gastronomic city in Asia and the Raffles Hotel is one of the most prestigious hotels in Asia. I will have the opportunity to present my cuisine to Singapore — which I am looking forward to in view of the possibility of opening something here later.

Q: What should diners here look out for on your menu to be presented at the RHWFAE?
A: I will try to incorporate as many local ingredients and local favourites into my menu. I think they will be in for a surprise — I hope a very pleasant one!

Q: What is one thing few people know about you?
A: Beauty is a source of inspiration to me, especially women!

Q: What do you hope most to achieve with your food?
A: Serving good food that is well-balanced with the natural flavours of each ingredient coming through.

Q: What to you, is the significance of being part of the RHWFAE?
A: It is an honour in itself to be invited back to the Raffles Hotel for the third time — and this time being part of such a big event as the Raffles Hotel Wine, Food and Arts Experience! Through this experience, I want to be able to guide guests in their discovery of Alsatian cuisine and Alsatian wines.

experiences. These include travelling, going to the market, and seeing the change to my surroundings with the turn of each season.

Q: The most important lesson learnt in your years of cooking is...
A: To be humble and never believe that everything is perfect. To strive for continuous improvement and always questioning and challenging myself.

Q: How would you describe your own style of cooking?
A: My style of cooking is very much classic. However I understand how people's palates change and are influenced by trends. Thus, while I retain the original tastes of the dishes, my techniques may vary to adapt to the modern palate.

Q: Do you see your food as a reflection of your character, or a representation of the environment?
A: I make the best use of what Mother Nature can provide. The best illustration is my (autumn dish of) rotisserie poultry with an accompaniment of a baeckeffe with black truffle, which is slowly cooked in a sealed ceramic casserole dish.

Q: What is the ingredient you are obsessed with now?
A: Two ingredients: potato and black truffle.

Q: What do you hope most to achieve with your food?
A: Serving good food that is well-balanced with the natural flavours of each ingredient coming through.

Q: What to you, is the significance of being part of the RHWFAE?
A: It is an honour in itself to be invited back to the Raffles Hotel for the third time — and this time being part of such a big event as the Raffles Hotel Wine, Food and Arts Experience! Through this experience, I want to be able to guide guests in their discovery of Alsatian cuisine and Alsatian wines.

SANDRINE GARBAY, CELLAR MASTER AND WINE MAKER, CHÂTEAU D'YQUEM

Q: When did it occur that wine is going to be your life's work?

A: At 18 years old, I was still unsure about my future career. Then I discovered this amazing field of study, Oenology. I was always interested in science from a young age, including biology. I also had a great passion for wine, which I discovered during my first internship involving winemaking in 1987 at the 1er Grand Cru classé winery in Pauillac — Château Latour. Thus I am in this profession which exposes me to both science and wine, which is a noble and culturally enthralling subject.

Q: What was the first drink you've ever had and what you thought of it then?

A: The first drink that I tasted was probably Champagne (It's a French tradition to give a drop of Champagne to children at a young age to help them discover the taste of wine). The first wine that I remember tasting was a red wine from Bordeaux which I had at the age of 15. It was very bitter and not pleasant at all. Since then I have waited 19 to 20 years before starting to appreciate wine again!

Q: Who were your mentors and what did you take from them?

A: I discovered the world of wine through people who make wine, such as Jean-Louis Mandrau and Aline Lonvaud-Funel. Each individual became my mentor in their own way especially with their positive attitude and enthusiasm. All of them provided many words of wisdom and definitively influenced me greatly throughout my career with wine.

Jean-Louis Mandrau is winemaker of L'Entre-deux-Mers, where I did my internship in 1988. With him, I learned to be confident and most importantly, I learned to have respect for the grape. Aline Lonvaud-Funel is a professor of the Faculty of Oenology in Bordeaux and a specialist in the lactic bacteria. I participated in many researches with her and learned to take a



rational approach to the wine.

Q: The most important lesson you've learnt?

A: While at d'Yquem, I learned the wisdom of being patient and to think before acting! An extraordinary wine like d'Yquem requires great attention and fine measurement during the development process.

Q: What are five of your favorite wines?

A: The Yquem 1967, because it is d'Yquem and it was produced in a great year — my year of birth! A Latour from

any year: I have a great affection for this fabulous wine which never disappoints me. Meursaults of Arnaud Ente because it reminds me of the first visit to Burgundy, which remains a great memory for me. There is such delicacy and purity in this wine, it is fascinating!

I have also become increasingly interested in the charms of Champagne. I learned and discovered them during the meals organised at the Château for our guests. Now I admit to have a greater interest for Champagne, especially Dom Pérignon for its mythical bottle, the

delicacy of the bubbles and the perfect definition of its basic wine.

And finally, Klein Constantia, a delicious sweet wine from South Africa which I love for its aroma (which is exotic for me) and for its balance in the mouth, sufficiently sharp for the liquor to remain very elegant.

Q: What to you, is the significance of being part of the RHWFAE?

A: First of all, it is a great honour to take part in this beautiful event in such a prestigious hotel. We are proud to see that d'Yquem has its place within an establishment that delivers beautiful gastronomical experiences of the world. (This event) creates an opportunity for us to showcase our premium wines — and the magic of Château d'Yquem — to a variety of people from Southeast Asia coming for the event.

Q: What do you hope most to share with the diners through the RHWFAE?

A: The RHWFAE dinners are very privileged moments where one can experience the work of significant and talented chefs — and these dishes bring out the best qualities in wines which you thought could not get any better. To share such an experience with wine and food lovers is always a pleasure. I also can't wait to see the d'Yquem pairing with Chinese cuisine. I often speak about it, yet never got a chance to try it. After RHWFAE, I will have a broader opinion regarding d'Yquem's pairing with Asian cuisine.

Q: What is one thing few people know about you?

A: That I have never been to Asia. This will be my first visit but I'm sure it won't be the last...! ☺

ERRATA

Chef Shuzo Kishida of Restaurant Quintessence was awarded three Michelin stars, rather than two as mentioned in issue 35 (November 2009). Look out for our interview with this brilliant young talent from Japan in our March 2010 issue.

THE 15TH RAFFLES HOTEL WINE, FOOD & ARTS EXPERIENCE HIGHLIGHTS

27 - 31 JANUARY 2010

WEDNESDAY 27 JANUARY

- CHÂTEAU D'YQUEM LUNCH WITH THE CUISINE OF ALVIN LEUNG, MICHELIN 2-STAR CHEF, BO INNOVATION
12 NOON RAFFLES GRILL | **\$308**

- THE CUISINE OF MARC HAEBERLIN, MICHELIN 3-STAR CHEF, L'AUBERGE DE L'ILL, WITH WINES FROM CHÂTEAU LA CONSEILLANTE
8PM RAFFLES GRILL | **\$398**

THURSDAY 28 JANUARY

- THE CUISINE OF MARC HAEBERLIN, MICHELIN 3-STAR CHEF, L'AUBERGE DE L'ILL, WITH WINES FROM CHÂTEAU LÉOVILLE LAS CASES
12 NOON RAFFLES GRILL | **\$238**

- THE CUISINE OF SHUZO KISHIDA, MICHELIN 3-STAR CHEF, RESTAURANT QUINTESSENCE, WITH WINES FROM SINE QUA NON
8PM RAFFLES GRILL | **\$398**

FRIDAY 29 JANUARY

- THE CUISINE OF SHUZO KISHIDA, MICHELIN 3-STAR CHEF, RESTAURANT QUINTESSENCE, WITH WINES FROM CLOS DE LOS SIETE
12 NOON RAFFLES GRILL | **\$238**

- THE CUISINE OF ALVIN LEUNG, MICHELIN 2-STAR CHEF, BO INNOVATION, WITH WINES FROM CHÂTEAU CHEVAL BLANC
8PM RAFFLES GRILL | **\$398**

SATURDAY 30 JANUARY

- GALA DINNER WITH THE CUISINE OF MARC HAEBERLIN, SHUZO KISHIDA & ALVIN LEUNG, AND WINES FROM ALL WINERIES
8PM RAFFLES GRILL & TIFFIN ROOM | **\$688**

SUNDAY 31 JANUARY

- BRUNCH WITH THE STARS FEATURING MARC HAEBERLIN, SHUZO KISHIDA & ALVIN LEUNG
11AM GRAND HOTEL LOBBY | **\$268**

Information is accurate at the time of printing. For the latest news, please visit www.rhwfae.com

For enquiries and reservations, please call 6412-1007 or email wfae.rh@raffles.com. All prices quoted are subject to 10 percent service charge and applicable government taxes, including Goods & Services Tax, unless otherwise stated.