

the reflection of true hospitality

# hospitality asia



Hilton Kuala Lumpur  
Distinctively Bold and Different

Clockwise:  
 Alburn William, President of Creative  
 Kitchen Planners International Sdn Bhd;  
 Executive Chef Milind Sovani of Vansh;  
 Executive Chef Roberto Galatti and Beppe  
 De Vito of The Garibaldi Restaurant Group



**C**ompetition is strife and intense in the foodservice business in the food and beverage industry. As more and more eateries mushroom about town, be they hotel dining options or freestanding establishments, it is all about satisfying discerning patrons. These days, customers are becoming more and more adamant and discerning with their dining options. As they become more health conscious as well as careful with their spending, customers these days are seeking out unique and extraordinary outlets that not only provide immaculate service, mouth-watering delights, but a striking ambience that is a cut above the rest. Today, dining out of the homestead encompasses a total dining experience that begins the moment the customers step into the restaurant.

With this as top priority, many restaurateurs seek and discover new and trendy methods to spruce up their outlets, to possess that winning edge over others. It seems that the customers have the last laugh when it comes to dining these days. There no longer exists the die-hard loyalty that seemed prevalent in the past where customers patronize the outlet for its tasty food and nothing else. Currently, the more talked about the restaurant and the greater the novelty, the more attention and customers the restaurant is bound to receive.

The first hint that Straits Kitchen was unlike most other restaurants that are in abundance were the colourful sights and sounds that greets the customers as they step into the restaurant. Located in the Grand Hyatt Singapore, Straits Kitchen is a Singapore-inspired restaurant that aims to present the best of local cuisine found throughout the island. As the namesake suggests, the name "Straits Kitchen" originated from Singapore's rich historical past – a time when Singapore was part of the "Straits Settlement" set up by the British colony. Set in a contemporary market-place setting, the restaurants features a 260-seat kitchen-theatre setting that features various "exhibition cooking" areas or "Show Kitchens" that take centrestage when. The chefs are the stars of the show and

# Food & Beverage Solutions

## Evolving Trends



display items on walls and counter tops come in the form of kitchen utensils and food ingredients. According to Robert Dallimore, Executive Assistant Manager, Food and Beverage of Grand Hyatt Singapore, "We want to position Straits Kitchen as a dynamic lifestyle restaurant embodying the excitement of celebrating Singapore food."

A visually stunning restaurant, Straits Kitchen is an architectural beauty that displays warm colours in contrast with the dark timbers in the interior of the restaurant. Instead of placing hot chaffing dishes of the usual buffet line, Straits Kitchen presents a series of "exhibition cooking" areas or "show kitchens". Featuring a variety of seating arrangements, customers are treated to a design drama where the ambience is energized with an emphasis on unique finishes ranging from metal to exotic woods. Plate ware comes in unusual shapes, colours and textures that will intrigue guests, present an element of surprise and enliven the restaurant atmosphere greatly.

Another offering from Grand Hyatt Singapore that showcases unique and delicious local Singaporean food is mezza9. Offering a multitude of culinary delights that is bound to satisfy the



taste buds of the most discerning and demanding customers, mezza9 is a lifestyle restaurant that provides none diverse dining concepts under one roof. Mezza9 emphasizes on delivering only the highest culinary standards with its 400 seating capacity.

At mezza9, customers can opt to sit in any one area and still order from other areas. This will enable the customers to have whatever their hearts

Straits Kitchen possesses colourful sights and sounds



The ever popular dessert and Dim Sum counter, particularly the ice-cream teppanyaki, at The Line



desire in one single venue, without the causing the disturbance to relocate to another venue for a different type of cuisine.

Garibaldi Italian Restaurant & Bar, located along the trendy and popular Purvis Street, provides a fine example of a stylish and modern Italian eatery. It is

well known among the locals as a modern, elegant yet friendly establishment with a dynamic team of staff coupled with excellent choice of food. The contemporary and hip atmosphere that Garibaldi is well known for has helped to make Garibaldi a classic Singapore social gathering hotspot.

Beppe De Vito, owner and General Manager of The Garibaldi Restaurant Group, remarked that the success of Garibaldi is primarily based on the restaurant serving well-prepared Italian food, executed with explicitness and taste, and served with flair, care and attention. "Our ingredients are only of the best quality, freshest produce and directly imported from Italy."

With a seating capacity of 60 pax (40 in the main room and 20 in the private room), this cosy yet chic eatery measures up to 2,200 sq ft. Employing the closed kitchen concept, the kitchen is approximately 30 per cent of the total restaurant build-up. "This is an important factor of Garibaldi as we believe that more attention ought to be paid to the kitchen as it forms the "heart" or the "engine" of the restaurant. Although we are aware that many establishments are into the trend of using open kitchens where the customers can view the maestros at work, it is imperative for us that the chef is able to set about his task without

any distractions. A good chef works with utmost concentration and not under the scrutiny of many customers."

De Vito's partner, Chef Roberto Galatti, shares his opinion that the kitchen is the integral part of a restaurant. As such, Garibaldi's kitchen is very well lit and bright and follows the local fire and sanitation authorities' regulations on hygiene and sanitation strictly. The bright lighting ensures that utmost cleanliness is always maintained and helps with the preparation of dishes. There are no hidden corners in the kitchen and the whole restaurant is tiled all the way from the floors to the walls. The tiles are also waterproof and non-slippery. Most importantly, it is easy to clean.

"Here at Garibaldi, we maintain a clear-cut boundary between the foodservice and the food preparation staff. This is an additional feature that we practice in order to ensure the highest levels of hygiene standards," added De Vito. "Our kitchen is also an extremely self-reliant kitchen."

Vansh is a contemporary restaurant that serves Indian cuisine with a fantastic lounge atmosphere decked in reds hues. Located at the Singapore Indoor Stadium, this waterfront restaurant is very unique where one can virtually find friendly and service-oriented waiters as well as chefs displaying and performing their skills in the open stainless-steel kitchen. According to Executive Chef Milind Sovani, "Before implementing the design and concept of a kitchen, we have to take into consideration of the type of cuisine that will be served. From there on, the menu can be conceptualized which will then determine whether a show kitchen or live cooking counter would be incorporated."

"Lighting for the kitchen has to be preferably a white light that should be from the top. We employ heavy-duty lights to remove the high heat that is generated from the tandoors and ovens. Storage areas ought to be brightly illuminated. However, should a restaurant requires fancy lighting, then the show kitchen ought to have concealed focus lighting," reiterated Chef Milind.

As for flooring, it is preferable that it is a non-slippery floor. According to Chef Milind, areas that are prone to be oily and constantly wet, rubber mattings should be placed in these parts of the floor. Another important factor that restaurateurs must adhere to is to use flooring that is easy to maintain, clean and wash. Water has to be able to drain effectively as well. When it comes to the design and layout of the kitchen, Chef Milind explained that in general, it is the architect that will first identify the

kitchen area. Thereafter, upon consulting with the chef, the kitchen consultant will then provide the layout of the kitchen. "A good and knowledgeable chef will always have a list of requirements in hand in accordance with the menu. The chef will also ensure that he works closely with both the layout and construction teams. This will make certain that a well laid out and designed kitchen will be achieved. With a well planned kitchen, one can be assured of smooth cooking activities as well as hassle-free service flow."

Fancy hot and passionate Latin tempo? The Westin Kuala Lumpur's Qba is a multi-Latin experience that will take guests back to nostalgic Havana that features a Latin Grill, Wine Bar & Cigar Lounge, Courtyard and Bar. Experience the innovative and classic tapas creations concocted by their chefs in the Latin Courtyard. Sip Qba's signature Mohitos and Caipirinhas at the Cuban Bar or enhance meals with a Spanish or South American wine from the extensive selection of boutique wines from around the world. The Wine Bar also offers a wide variety of wines, from the Old

The Vansh open kitchen design exudes creativity in food and beverage concepts





The plush interior of Vansh that spells seductivity

and New World. Boasting of Kuala Lumpur's largest rum collection, feast the senses with rum-based cocktail and groove to the beat of an array of music from current trends of today's top 40s to the hottest Latin rhythms. Guests can enjoy the beats of a live Cuban band nightly except on Sundays.

Located on the ground and upper ground levels, Prego is The Westin Kuala Lumpur's offering of an authentic Ristorante Italiano. With a seating capacity of 200 diners, Prego is a multi-level restaurant complete with a stone Terrazza overlooking the effervescent Bintang Walk and set against Kuala Lumpur's magnificent skyline. Guests can expect and be assured of a fun and lively atmosphere, from the friendly service to the ever-smiling chefs. Head to Prego to savour the classic pizzas, regional pastas as well as Northern Italian cuisine served. With an open kitchen concept, be mesmerized and entertained as Prego's culinary maestros compose a symphony of uniquely developed Italian culinary creations.

Creative Kitchen Planners International Sdn Bhd (CKP) offers a diverse range of consultancy

services to cater to both the hospitality and catering industry. CKP's services include kitchen and laundry facilities planning which encompass restaurant planning and conceptualization, and operational and development planning. According to Alburn William, President, "Kitchen and laundry facilities planning consist of a full scope of facilities design services that covers schematic and conceptual design, design development and services coordination with consultants, tender documentation, tendering and evaluation of bids, construction supervision and control of contractor's works – testing, commissioning and handover."

The restaurant planning and conceptualization service is provided to entrepreneurs and restaurateurs covering areas such as restaurant brand conceptualization and creation, evaluation of demographics and potential sites, development of the facility including technical assistance, managerial and operational advice. CKP also provides pre-opening and operational consultancy services.

According to William, CKP's clients are varied and many, ranging from hotels, clubs, business institutions, schools, theme parks, convention centers, hospitals to last but not least, restaurants. "Our clients come from various types of industries as well as over the world. CKP has projects in India, China, Thailand, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, Europe and Korea, among others." Some of CKP's most popular projects in the restaurant segment include Moevenpick Marche in Seoul, Café Too in Island Shangri-La Hong Kong, mezza9 and Straits Kitchen in Grand Hyatt Singapore, Villa Danielli in Sheraton Imperial Kuala Lumpur, Lord Jim's in The Oriental Bangkok and The Line in Shangri-La Hotel Singapore.

William explained that it is now imperative that an establishment should equip themselves with unique and top of the line food and beverage options to assist in driving room sales and thus, improve the occupancy rate. "The interior designers, such as Adam Tihany and Super Potato, are the concept drivers behind a newly set up restaurant. CKP then comes in to implement the foodservice systems and assists the restaurant operator in driving the design. We advise them on the ventilation systems and engineering systems of the restaurant."

William opines that the open kitchen concept enforces the chefs and the kitchen to be more presentable, not to mention clean! It is vital that customers possess the understanding that the food is fresh. **hs**