

World cuis

Now you can sample food by 13 celebrity chefs without stepping out of Singapore - the World Gourmet Summit Masterchef Safari will bring them to you

By **TEE HUN CHING**

ONE way to feast on the gastronomic creations of top-notch chefs is by touring the world, but you would have to pay through the nose.

An easier way to sample their specialities is at the homegrown World Gourmet Summit's (WGS) Masterchef Safari, where you pay just \$290 for a spread.

Since its debut in 1997, the event has been a sell-out highlight every year.

This year's safari is no different - it is also fully booked.

Gourmands here crave for the epicurean odyssey that takes them to different restaurants, each serving a course by a different masterchef.

Each safari takes in about 30 people.

To cope with the growing demand, organisers of the summit have increased the number of safaris from six last year to 10 this year.

In town for the week-long gastronomic adventure, which kicks off today, is a stellar cast of 13 world-class culinary artists.

Mr Francis Poulouse, general manager of Peter Knipp Holdings, which is co-organising the World Gourmet Summit with the Singapore Tourism Board (STB), says: "Instead of having Singaporeans go to these chefs, we bring the chefs to them in the comfort of their own country."

Contrary to popular belief, the safaris are not peopled by just the well-heeled crowd either, he adds.

Students, tourists and foodies from all walks of life are also hungry for the experience.

"Basically, it's anyone who has a passion for food. They don't sign up just because this is a premium event, but because they want a taste of

something good and different," he says.

The organisers scour the world every year for "masterchefs who have excelled in their field and made a name for themselves in the culinary world", says Mr Lim Chwee Seng, STB's director of events marketing.

The buzz that they pick up from the industry grapevine also helps them identify prospective talents, says Mr Poulouse.

For instance, after getting wind of two promising Sydney-based Japanese chefs, the summit's organisers tracked the pair down quickly.

So best pals Harunobu Inukai and Noriyuki Sugie from Sydney's Restaurant VII, famed for its Japanese-French cuisine, will be pampering diners' palates at Restaurant 360.

Mr Lim adds: "Apart from looking for masterchefs who have attained international stature, we also try to balance the representation from across the globe.

"This is to ensure that there is variety in the selection of cuisine and culinary styles presented."

Past culinary luminaries who have graced the summit include celebrity chefs Tetsuya Wakuda from Sydney and Charlie Trotter from Chicago.

This, say the organisers, is important in elevating the status of the event.

Says Mr Poulouse: "When we first started, everyone would ask, 'What's the World Gourmet Summit?'"

"But after five years, we have a whole network of chefs and culinary contacts who have been involved in it and who can help spread the word about the event."

To sustain the whiff of novelty, several new themes are developed for the Masterchef

sines at your do



The only hunting you will be doing at the food safaris hosted by the World Gourmet Summit will be the tracking down of good food.

Safari every year.

This year, for instance, consumers have a choice of the Heritage, Art Of Sound and Art Gallery safaris apart from the Masterchef Safari.

All are fully booked.

Mr Lim has a tip for future

World Gourmet patrons.

He says: "For those of you who are able to attend only one WCS event, my advice is that the Masterchef Safaris are a must."

◆ While the safaris are sold out,

other events in the World Gourmet Summit line-up are still open for booking. For enquiries and reservations, call the summit hotline on 6270-1254 during office hours or you might want to visit www.worldgourmetsummit.com

orstep



Sharing their recipes are Anton Mosimann (left) from London and Ettore Bocchia from Italy.

Who's cooking where

ANTON MOSIMANN

(London)

Where: Equinox at Swissotel The Stamford, the former Westin Stamford

What: Hailed as a pioneer in Europe's gastronomic culture, he has garnered countless accolades, penned 13 cookbooks and graced numerous gourmet lifestyle TV programmes in Europe such as BBC Food & Drink and Hongkong TV's Taste Of Life.

In 1985, he created a healthy style of cooking called Cuisine Naturelle, which eschews the use of fat and alcohol, and earned him a place in culinary history.

After establishing himself in various top establishments such as the prestigious two-Michelin star Dorchester Hotel in London, he established Mosimann's, his first exclusive dining club in 1988.

Since then, his portfolio has grown to include The Belfry — a highly-personalised dining venue, Mosimann's Party Service, a party or catering service for royalty and VIPs and Chateau Mosimann in Switzerland.

He will be whipping up specialities such as Anton's caesar salad and Anton's bread and butter pudding at Equinox.

ETTORE BOCCHIA

(Italy)

Where: Pontini at Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel Singapore

What: Many gourmands make it a point to travel to the Grand Hotel Villa Serbelloni in Italy's Lake of Como just to sample Bocchia's Italian and International menus.

HEMANT OBEROI

(India)



Where: Rang Mahal at The Pan Pacific Singapore

What: The main creative force behind the many trend-setting dishes of Mumbai's posh Taj

Mahal Hotel restaurants, he was named Executive Chef of the Year by the prestigious Hotel & Food Services Excellence Awards in 1993.

Fans of his eclectic Indian fare with a French-Californian twist include former American president Bill Clinton.



The pair, Haru (left) and Nori, will tantalise your tastebuds at Restaurant 360 at One Fullerton.

HARUNOBU INUKAI AND NORIYUKI SUGIE

(Australia)

Where: Restaurant 360 at One Fullerton

What: Known affectionately as Haru and Nori, the pair of rising stars are behind Sydney's much-hyped Restaurant VII, which was named the Best New Restaurant by The Sydney Morning Herald recently.

Its "Japonaise" (Japanese-French) *haute* cuisine and elaborate French service have raised a buzz among critics and gourmands alike.

The two chefs met in 1998 when Sugie, who was working for celebrity chef Tetsuya Wakuda, dined at Tony Bilson's Ampersand, where Inukai was based.

The friendship blossomed and when the latter decided to strike out on his own, he invited Sugie to join him.

ZHANG JIN JIE

(China)

Where: Asian Restaurant Bar

What: The only female among the cast of world-class chefs, this artist and classical musician also owns Beijing's famous Green Tea House.

Her creations are infused with Chinese teas, spices, flower petals and the restaurant's signature garnish, green tea powder, and have won an international cult following.

ARUN SAMPANTHAVIVAT

(USA)

Where: Club Chinois

What: One of Chicago's most celebrated chefs, he also runs a renowned restaurant called

Arun's in the Windy City that serves Thai cuisine with an edge.

The eatery has been awarded a four-star rating, the highest accolade by The Chicago Tribune.

The Thai native has also bagged other top awards such as The Ivy Award in 1995 from Restaurant & Institutions magazine and was inducted into the Fine Dining Hall of Fame in 1996 by the Nation's Restaurant News.

Culinary excellence aside, the soft-spoken man is also noted for his academic qualifications.

He has a degree in literature and foreign languages from Chulalongkorn University in Thailand, a master's degree in international relations at Tokyo's Sophia International University in Tokyo, a master's degree in political science and, later, a PhD in Asian affairs at the University of Chicago.

DAVID LARIS

(London)

Where: Town at The Fullerton Singapore

What: Australian-born Laris is the man behind Mezzo in Soho, the flagship eatery of famed designer Terrance Conran and one of Europe's largest restaurants.

His hallmark style is unusual and contemporary Asian, Mediterranean and Middle Eastern creations known for their zesty flavours.

He developed a passion for ethnic cuisine after working at prestigious establishments throughout South-east Asia including Mezzaluna Manda-



Feast on dishes by chef Zhang Jin Jie from China at Asian Restaurant Bar.



Celebrated chefs Arun Sampanthavivat (from left) and Marcus Samuelsson from the United States, and David Laris from London.

rin Oriental in Macau, BB's Brasserie in Hongkong and The Press Club in Hanoi.

Using only the freshest ingredients is a culinary philosophy instilled in him by his grandfather, he says.

MARCUS SAMUELSSON
(USA)

Where: Mezza9 at Grand Hyatt Singapore

What: America's most talked-about celebrity chef is also the youngest chef ever to receive a

three-star restaurant review twice from The New York Times in 1995 and last year.

He was also named the Best Rising Star Chef by America's prestigious James Beard Foundation in 1999 and named one of The Great



cuisine a fresh interpretation. To top it off, he has also been voted one of America's top five bachelors by People's magazine.

PHILIPPE LEGENDRE

(France)

Where: Four Seasons Hotel Singapore

What: Just two months after opening Le Cinq at the Four Seasons Hotel George V in Paris, the executive chef was awarded his first star from the Michelin Guide.

He earned his second star less than a year later in March last year, a feat that is unprecedented in the culinary fraternity.



PHILIPPE PADOVANI

(USA)

Where: Blu at Shangri-La Singapore

What: Famous world-wide for his stringent standards, this perfectionist with 31 years' experience is best known for his signature French-Hawaiian-Mediterranean cuisine.

He is the founding member of Hawaiian Regional Cuisine and runs restaurants around the world, including his Padovani's Restaurant & Wine Bar in Hawaii.



SERGI AROLA

(Spain)

Where: Raffles Grill at Raffles Hotel

What: At 33, the Spaniard won the Vitoria Creative Haute Cuisine by Young Chefs in 1996 and was later named Chef with the Greatest Scope by the International Gastronomy Academy.

Four years after opening La Broche in Madrid, he has booked himself a place among the gastronomic elite by earning his first Michelin star in 1999 and the second in 2000.

DAVID SENIA

(Japan)



Where: Snappers Seafood Restaurant at The Ritz-Carlton Millenia Singapore

What: After 13 years experimenting with French and Spanish cuisine at restaurants such as two-Michelin-star L'Oasis in La Napoule and the prestigious Hotel Negresco in Nice, Senia now rules at The Ritz-Carlton in Osaka.

Whipping up more goodies are (from top) Philippe Legendre, Philippe Padovani and Sergi Arola.

Chefs of America by The Culinary Institute of America.

Born in Ethiopia, raised by a Swedish family and trained in Switzerland and Austria, the 30-year-old then established his career in New York, where he gave Scandinavian