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Feature Story

## A taste of 11-Michelin Stars

For those who've never experienced or haven't tasted the exquisite taste of Bocuse d'Or, well, you want to get your tickets for World Gourmet Summit 2004. The event is certainly kicking off with a spectacular start - befitting of this year's theme, A Theatre of Taste. All the way from Norway, winners of Bocuse d'Or 2003, Charles Tjessem and Terje Ness, will be in Singapore to display their culinary skills. Known for their finesse in seafood, the two ambassador chefs will be hosted by The Fullerton Singapore in a culinary masterclass on 21 April. Joining them will be Eyvind Hellstrom, owner and chef for Restaurant Bagatelle, the only Two-Michelin Star restaurant in Oslo, Norway.



Along with these Norwegian stars, Masterchef Gualtiero Marchesi, also known as the first godfather of Italian cuisine, will proudly showcase his culinary expertise at Pontini, Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel Singapore. He is the first Italian to receive a Three-Michelin Star rating and is bound not to disappoint Italian enthusiasts. Rising stars including America's Laurent Gras (prodigy of Jacques Maximin, Alain Ducasse and Alain Senderens), and Mauricio Guerrero Cruz will also be joining the cast.

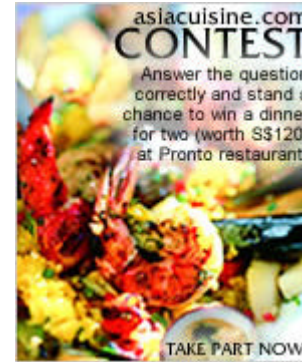
But if you delve deeper into the play of events at WGS2004, it's more than just the razzle and dazzle of guest stars with a combined worth of 11-Michelin Stars. Experiencing the culinary brilliance behind these chefs is certainly not to be missed.

Visit <http://www.worldgourmetsummit.com/> for more details.

Written by,



Ruth Tay



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### Have you heard?

## Fatting Up The Awards

Professor Gérard Ailhaud of the University of Nice-Sophia Antipolis has clinched the Ajinomoto Association Prize for Research in Nutrition for his outstanding contribution to the understanding of how fatty tissues work. The Ajinomoto Association Prize, which is chosen by a scientific committee chaired by Professor Bernard Guy-Grand of Université Paris VI, Hôtel-Dieu, Paris, awards those who contribute significantly to the expansion of scientific knowledge in the field of nutritional research. Professor Gérard Ailhaud's research included the development of adipose, which led to the discovery that not all fatty acids have the same impact. This discovery can mean an increase in nutritional knowledge to assist us in better diets and well being.

## Return Of The Tomato Leftovers

Research carried out by the European Union (EU) has discovered that tomato waste contains an abundance of untapped nutrition. Instead of throwing the excess waste for animal feed or simply discarding them, the EU TOM project suggests putting the tomato waste to use as natural food additives. Tomato by-products are found to be rich in proteins, sugars, fibre and oils. The project plans to help process the tomato leftovers in a clean and cheap way - free from chemicals. Already, EU has contributed €425 000 towards total costs of over €361 000 to help in the funding of this two-year old project, whose main aim is to develop new food additives and extracts from tomato leftovers.

## Small farms pose difficulty in purging bird flu

Containing the bird flu has become a challenging task, says the UN Agency to *Bloomberg*. The virus has spread to countries where 80% of poultry is being reared on small farms "making it harder to control," according to *Bloomberg*. Within some of the eight countries involved, wild birds can be healthy carriers of the virus and may also have owners with valuable birds, such as fighting cocks, hiding their animals to "keep them from being culled" - the countries apart from Thailand and Vietnam being South Korea, Japan, China, Indonesia, Cambodia and Laos. "Taiwan, Pakistan and the USA have reported outbreaks of less-virulent bird flu strains."

In a study on ten human bird flu patients, WHO found "all had fevers of more than 38°C (100.4 Fahrenheit), coughs and difficulty breathing, with no rashes, nasal congestion, sore throats or conjunctivitis. About half had watery diarrhoea or loose stool." WHO (World Health Organisation) advises that countries should maintain high vigilance and continue intense efforts to control the disease.

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### Chef News

## Welcoming Chef Cueff at Hilton Singapore!

A graduate from the Centre of Formation Professionnelle in France, Chef Cueff is the latest



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addition to the Hilton family. He was restaurant director and executive chef of the Citronelle Restaurant in Santa Barbara, California USA for ten years and later at the highly-revered Michelin Star Daniel Chambon prior to joining Hilton Singapore in January 2004.

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## Chef of the Month

### Singapore: Eric Teo

"It's always important to practice humility. We must never forget to treat all with respect, from the top dogs to the lowest ranked." A humbling piece of advice coming from the multi-medallist Eric Teo, who is executive chef of Orchard Hotel and team captain of Singapore National Culinary Team.



The chef's bubbly personality is infectious – the interview was relaxed to what seemed more like a chat between two old friends. It's hard to imagine anybody with as much achievements behind him to be as amicable and modest as Teo.

His ascension from an apprentice to his present installation as executive chef has been a challenging but fulfilling one. After going through a basic course in culinary skills at Singapore International Hotel and Tourism College (SHATEC), Teo went on to build a strong foundation with the Grand Hyatt Singapore in 1986. His talent and zeal were already evident in the early years – he was quickly promoted to *chef de partie* at Grand Hyatt Singapore. "I was very inspired by chefs like Otto Weibel, Ivan Yeo, Tony Khoo and Terrance Chew. I was determined to be like them and worked very hard at it," said the merry chef with a chuckle. He carried this optimism with him to Raffles Hotel Singapore, where he earned the position as *sous chef*.

Then in 1996, he struck gold. He was asked to lead an entourage as executive chef in the Royal Brunei Polo Club. Chef Teo seized the chance to work for the prominent brother of the Sultan of Brunei, Prince Jefri. "Working with the Prince was stressful in the beginning," he said. But the pressure kept him on his toes, "Prince Jefri's palate has been showered with the best the world has to offer, and I was not about to present him with anything short of that."

Competing in culinary competitions since his early days at Grand Hyatt Singapore has taught him much. "I hear of people saying that competition chefs can't cook and I can't disagree more," said Teo. "Competitions have groomed and sharpened my skills. Everything, from preparations to presentations, must be done with utmost creativity and care, and these are very useful applications in an operating kitchen," elaborates the chef. He believes that the success of the Singapore National Culinary Team lies in teamwork and cool heads. "We wouldn't have been able to perform half as well if we hadn't been able to work together as a team," he says.



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So what's his secret to clinching medals? "I think my passion for art has helped me inject creative elements in my dishes," says Teo, who also sketches cartoons whenever he finds the chance to doodle. His response, when asked what alternative career path he would have chosen, was immediate, "An actor; a comedian preferably!"

Although extremely jovial and genial, Chef Teo takes his food seriously, "I expect only the best effort in the preparation of every dish that's sent out from my kitchen." The buffet spread at Orchard Hotel certainly attests to his statement, what with live cooking stations churning out live prawns and crabs.

When not whipping up a storm in the kitchen, Chef Teo devotes himself to his wife and two kids. "Juggling family life with the long hours that my work demands is not easy. That's why my Sunday off days are dedicated to them wholly," says Teo.

A family man, a successful chef, an artist and all-round nice guy, we honestly can't find anything we don't like about the guy.

by Jay Sim

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## International: Cassian Tan

Cassian Tan is no stranger to the culinary industry in Singapore. In fact, this pastry chef had already carved a name for his fine dessert work, and was justly awarded the Inniskillin Pastry Chef of the Year at the World Gourmet Summit Awards of Excellence 2003. He has, however, since the last year hopped across the Causeway to Kuala Lumpur and is helming the executive pastry chef position at the Shangri-La Hotel KL.



Tan has not forgotten his roots. "I have many mentors, such as Kenny Kong (executive pastry chef, Raffles the Plaza and Swissôtel the Stamford), Vincent Bourdin (pastry consultant, Valrhona), Peter Knipp (managing director, Peter Knipp Holdings), Martin Aw Yong (executive chef, The Regent KL) and many more," he shared. He does draw special attention to the one he admires most – Otto Weibel, director of Kitchens at Raffles the Plaza and Swissôtel the Stamford – a fatherly figure who has imparted in him the inspiration and desire to push boundaries.

Even though Tan has been noted for dramatic pieces of creation, he still maintains that "to master the basics and be strong on the classical items" is what matters. "If there is one single most important tool to measure my standard of my pastries, it is when it should feel there is 'an explosion of flavours in my mouth and there should not be a lingering taste that lasts too long. It is always the scientific factors that come first, then followed by the artistic involvement. You must have lots of passion for it," he said. Having gone to good pastry schools and trained in numerous places, he still uses the five senses to appreciate." It's not just pastry, it is precision pastry," he added. To date, he has crossed many milestones, and he lists the Inniskillin Pastry Chef of the Year award as one. "I felt honoured and it was a wonderful yard stick," he recalled. Even today, he is asked about the award – did he build an edible showpiece or cake? "It's more about the professional

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culinary impact of not only quality, but consistency and innovation. This award is about the people's choice," he shared.

He has, since then, gone on to other challenges. After eight months in Shangri-La Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, he cites one boon is the ease one is able to get young and energetic staff, something he is thankful for. "If an establishment believes that a candidate for kitchen crew must speak English, something is wrong. I don't speak good French and I can be strong in patisserie and getting better by the day. Why should someone who cannot speak Queen's English be turned away? It is important but ultimately, it is the passion that counts." It is no surprise then, to find out that he is a good teacher, and often encourages young cooks to take part in food competitions and take bigger responsibilities to improve the food standards locally and internationally. He stated, "Guys in the team will then say 'my boss is good because he can cook the best and he also helped put my country on the culinary world map.'"

He is glad for his current team, which he believes is the strongest culinary team so far in the city, with 30 staff in the pastry department to handle 14 F&B outlets. His latest project was the refurbishment of the pastry shop, an extension of the reputable Lemon Garden Café, called Lemon Garden2Go. A unique set up and an area for wedding cake showcase and the first in the region, this concept is the first in the region and as Tan describes, is recognised as "the Louis Vuitton of pastry work".

Good news for all aspiring pastry chefs – Cassian Tan plans to stick to teaching in the future as that is his passion. With this, he ends with a morsel of delectable advice: "I am only as good as my next dessert or edible showpiece creation!"

by Jenny Tan

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## Hotel & Resort Conrad in Bali

Situated on the southern coast of the island of Bali, only a short drive from Denpasar Ngurah Rai International Airport and next to the Nusa Dua resort area, the Conrad Resort at Bali is all about contemporary chic, with rooms wired with the latest technology. Leisure options include a 33-metre swimming pool, a jogging track with landscaped gardens, floodlit tennis courts, Jiwa Spa, and a fitness centre with the latest equipment. Special facilities for children such as the Kura-Kura club, a supervised activity programme are available, complete with 'pillow menus' for those who prefer to stay in bed.

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## Female Power

According to an article released on [businesstraveller.com](http://businesstraveller.com), 40% of business travellers are women but they are not necessarily made to feel like valued customers. The industry, however, is starting to value them with efforts to make more feminine touches to services such as displaying female magazines in rooms and a more healthy menu as lone women



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travellers prefer to dine in rooms. Now, that's what we call female empowerment!

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## Health and Nutrition News

### Diabetic Distress

Is there a link between diabetes and chronic liver diseases and cancer of the liver? According to the February issue of *Gastroenterology*, a study by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the US National Institutes of Health has uncovered a link between liver disease and diabetes, though it isn't clear whether liver disease causes diabetes or vice versa. What the study did show is that of 173,643 patients with diabetes and 650,620 patients without diabetes, liver diseases were about twice the incidence with diabetic patients than of those without. Meanwhile the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reports that a separate study has found that higher iron stores are linked to an increased risk of type 2 diabetes in healthy women. The study investigated the blood samples of 1,414 women and found that increased levels of iron raised the risk of diabetes with those in the highest levels of iron.

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## Up & About (promotions)

### Moletto in the City

Oenologist, wine speaker and eldest son Mauro Stival of the Moletto winery in Veneto, Italy will be in Singapore to host a wine dinner at Harbour Grill & Bar, Hilton Singapore, on 4 and 5 March. The family-owned winery has won awards at Vinitaly and other wine competitions and will feature five of its wines. Priced at S\$85+++.

For reservations, e-mail [mailto:%20events@ctventuresg.com?subject=Equiry \(from Asiacuisine.com E-zine\)](mailto:%20events@ctventuresg.com?subject=Equiry%20from%20Asiacuisine.com), or call (65) 6489 2590.

### Release and Review

Castagna wines, known for its food-friendly wines, such as the Genesis Syrah will be showcasing the latest releases as well as past vintages at Vue de Monde restaurant in Melbourne, Australia. Winemaker Julian Castagna will host the dinner, and Chef Shannon Bennett will be cooking up his usual fine fare.

For more information, visit <http://www.vuedemonde.com.au/>.

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