

# EURO DINING AT JELITA

Expect modern European cuisine and a good range of wines at the second branch of Friends restaurant

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A COUPLE of years ago, I dined at Friends at Chomp Chomp, Serangoon Garden Village, and had a rather enjoyable meal there.

So, when I heard that Friends had set up a second branch at the Jelita Cold Storage building on Holland Road, I decided to check it out as well.

Like its first branch, the eatery offers Modern European dishes alongside a good range of wines.

Personally put together by the owners, husband-and-wife team Thomas and Jane Chiam, the collection features 200 labels of Old and New World wines, rare and back vintages and First Growths.

My friend and I were there for an early dinner on a week night. There weren't many people when we got there, but the place soon filled up with groups of families, possibly living nearby, dressed casually in shorts and sandals.

We decided to try some of the signature dishes that were exclusive to the branch at Jelita, one of which was the Ukrainian *borsch* (\$12.90).

The boldly flavoured soup was a good start, thanks to its delicious chunks of beetroot and tender beef.

We also ordered the timbale of salmon *tartare*, topped with guacamole, caviar and tomato vinaigrette, (\$16.90) which we thought was somewhat ordinary.

Oddly, the dish came with two slices of hard-boiled egg which had unsightly black rings around the yolks.

Thankfully the squid ink *pappardelle* (\$19.90) was a lot more enjoyable. The

flavourful pasta was tossed with ham, sundried tomato, basil and Parmesan cheese.

This dish is really delicious, but do not order this if you're on a date as your teeth and lips may be unattractively smudged with the black squid ink when you slurp up the pasta.

Next, I tried the braised beef short rib *bourguignon* served with roast vegetables and mashed potato speckled with bacon (\$32.90).

Stewed for hours in a red wine reduction, the beef was intensely flavoured and tender though the sauce was a little too acidic and sharp.

Also delish was the roast *kami sakura* chicken with ricotta cheese, mushroom and truffle jus stuffing (\$19.90) — another special on the menu.

I was told that organic chicken is used for this dish. Bred using Japanese farming methods, the chicken was succulent and full of flavour.

For dessert, we shared a warm Valrhona chocolate cake with mango ice cream (\$14.90). Luscious and moist, it was one of the better molten chocolate cakes we've had.

I wasn't sure if mango ice cream was the best complement for the chocolate, although it was a refreshing touch.

Vanilla would have been more ideal for me.

Apart from these specialities, the new menu also includes dishes like oven-roasted red snapper fillet topped with macadamia nut crust, sautéed *ratatouille* and lemon butter sauce (\$26.90), as well as grilled swordfish belly on tomato and basil fondue served with a salsa of orange, lemon, olive and garlic (\$25.90).

Wine buffs will be able to enjoy the restaurant's BYO Thursdays, where the usual corkage of \$20 is waived.

Wine dinners are also a common event at both Friends outlets where visiting wine-makers will be featured.



Squid ink *pappardelle*



Roast *kami sakura*



Valrhona chocolate cake with mango ice cream



Owners Thomas and Jane

PHOTOS: JASON HO

## FRIENDS

**ADDRESS:** 293 HOLLAND ROAD, #02-04, JELITA COLD STORAGE BUILDING (COMPLIMENTARY OUTDOOR RESERVED PARKING LOTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR GUESTS)  
**TEL:** 6463 1011  
**OPENING HOURS:** 12PM TO 11PM DAILY

## FOODNOTES

### A TASTE OF PENANG

YOU don't have to go all the way to Penang for a taste of its delectable treats.

Celebrity chef Moses Lim, who is also Penang's food ambassador, has selected several showcase dishes from Penang at a unique culinary collaboration between Swissotel Merchant Court and Tourism Penang that will be held at Ellenborough Market Café until July 29.

Tuck into *char hum* (fried half-shell cockles with garlic, chilli and ground peanuts), Penang fruit rojak, *char moey* (fried rice congee) and *kao yoke* (pork belly braised with yam).

In addition, free flow of durians will be



served *al fresco* style outside the restaurant.

Diners may even eat their way to Macau with a loved one. Every dine-in receipt qualifies diners for a chance to win a gourmet trip for two to Macau with Moses Lim worth over \$2,400.

The lunch buffet (noon to 2.30pm) from Fridays to Sundays, as well as the dinner buffet (6.30pm to 10pm) from Mondays to Thursdays, are priced at \$42++ (per adult) and \$21++ (per child aged three to 12 years old).

Dinner buffet from Fridays to Sundays (6.30pm to 10pm) are at \$45++ (per adult) and \$21++ (per child).

Call 6239 1848 for reservations.

### A TASTE OF SUMMER

IT MAY be summer all year round in Singapore, but the team at the Jewel Box atop Mt Faber have still made the season special.

This summer, as part of their successful Four Seasons campaign, the theme is A Midsummer's Night Dream. Until the end of the month, diners can enjoy a one-off Summer Sensation three-course set lunch menu at \$25+++ per person, which includes a free return-trip cable car ride between Mt Faber and Sentosa. A four-course dinner is priced at \$70+++ per person.

There is also Summer Colours, a semi-buffet dinner that is served at the Faber Hill Bistro or the *al fresco* Faber Rock Bar. At \$38+++ per head, diners can help themselves to a spread of appetisers and dessert as well as a choice of seven main courses.

— SERENE HUANG

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