

Pursuits

Food

The Best New Restaurants in Singapore, as Chosen by Top Chefs

From a star chef's casual French spot to incredible Indian food, these are the 13 places to eat at now.



The wood-fired grill at Nixta. *Source: Travis Masiero Restaurant Group*

By [Joanna Ossinger](#)

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For a place with a [notably strict shutdown policy](#), Singapore restaurants have held their own since the start of the pandemic. The food-obsessed city-state, which has one of the world's highest vaccination rates, has watched its best-known restaurants evolve and a spurt of new eateries and creative concepts open.

In November, restaurants totaled S\$706 million (\$521 million) [in food-and-beverage sales](#), according to the Singapore Department of Statistics, the highest level [since March 2021](#). The most upscale restaurants have done solid business—well-off locals spent money on dining when they couldn't travel, and many

places expanded their business model with products like S\$55 ice cream at the Michelin three-star Les Amis. As Singaporeans continue to clamor to go out, places can be booked weeks or even months in advance.

Now, there are more new dining rooms for them to try. High-end chefs are trying their hand at more casual concepts. Julien Royer, the chef-owner of Odette—ranked Asia’s Best Restaurant by World’s 50 Best—opened the engaging French spot, Claudine. Creative Indian food is having a moment at both Firangi Superstar and Revolver. And a revolutionary restaurant, Magic Square, spotlights a rotating list of Singapore’s rising stars. Not surprisingly, they all have places on the list of the 13 new spots the city’s best chefs want the world to try.

Firangi Superstar



Firangi Superstar *Photographer: Owen Raggett/The Dandy Collection*

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Chef Thiru Gunasakaran, who grew up in Malaysia, calls his restaurant “a foreigner’s love letter to India.” Walls are lined with old photos, portraits, and artworks that evoke the subcontinent. “I simply loved all the spices, flavors, and aromas,” says Melissa Revilla. “Each dish I tried had subtle nuances, yet was deeply flavorful and complex, making it easy for everyone to enjoy.”

The menu is a luscious collection of plates such as Tikka Takeaway, with tandoori octopus, onion petals, and mint raita naan crumbs. Another one, Holi Cow, features bone marrow and crispy and masala beef. The Punjabi Frontier is a grilled Iberico pork chop with curried fennel puree. *Recommended by Melissa Revilla, executive chef at the Dempsey Cookhouse & Bar*

Claudine



The bouillabaisse at Claudine. *Photographer: Hosanna Swee/Claudine*

Julien Royer, best known for rarified dining at his three-star-Michelin restaurant Odette, is trying his hand with more everyday fare at Claudine. The concept, set in an old colonial chapel on Dempsey Hill, presents the kind of intimate French cooking that you might find at a beloved neighborhood spot. Highlights from executive chef Julien Mercier include the bouillabaisse with John Dory, scallops, razor clam, mussel, fennel, and saffron rouille; herring and potato salad; and vol-au-vent, or pastry, stuffed with sweetbread, morels, cockscomb and quenelle.

“It’s classic French cuisine done well, with a lot of sensitivity and good products,” says chef Aitor Jeronimo Orive. Claudine also has such lovely lounge with cocktails as It’s A Secret, made with blanco tequila, fresh

watermelon, and smoked paprika chili salt. *Recommended by Aitor Jeronimo Orive, chef-patron of the Michelin-starred Basque Kitchen by Aitor*

Canchita



Octopus Ala Brasa at Cancchita. *Source: Cancchita*

This Peruvian spot, from owner Daniel Chavez and his wife and head chef Tamara, is spread over several buildings in the Dempsey neighborhood. “Between the nature-forward space reminiscent of the Amazon rainforest and the menu, which boasts a wide selection of Latin American delicacies and authentic Peruvian staples and spirits, a night out at Cancchita transported us back into the lively streets of Peru,” says Emmanuel Stroobant, chef-owner of Saint Pierre.

Likewise, chef Damian D’Silva, a local advocate for Singaporean heritage cuisine, appreciates the menu’s authenticity. “Canchita gave me a deeper insight into the Peruvian culture and history,” he says. “I saw the similarity in the melting pot of cultures here in Singapore.” He calls out the ceviche, which has a “balance of acidity, earthy sweetness, freshness and savoriness of the Tigers’ Milk [citrus-based marinade], accompanied by textures of corn, onions, and chunks of fish.” He also recommends the Cantonese Peruvian fried rice with pork, scallops, vegetable tempura, and achiote mayo. *Recommended by Emmanuel Stroobant, chef-owner of Saint Pierre, and Damian D’Silva, chef partner of Rempapa*

Osteria BBR by Alain Ducasse



Marinated sea bream with Amalfi lemon at Osteria BBR. *Source: Raffles Hotel Singapore*

Celebrity chef Alain Ducasse’s spacious dining room is set in the extensively renovated Raffles Hotel. “I love how relaxed and unpretentious the whole experience was,” says Louisa Lim, pastry chef of Odette. “Each dish showcased the produce extremely well.” A standout for Lim was the multicolored tomato salad served with Apulian burrata. On the sweet side, “the Baba la Limoncello was the perfect spin of the classic French rhum baba.”

“I am drawn to the comfort that Osteria BBR offers, from the moment I step into the spacious restaurant to the rich authentic flavors of the food and the energetic vibes that the social space exudes,” says Francesco Di Marzio, chef de cuisine at La Dame de Pic. “My favorite dish on the menu is the constoletta di vitello alla Milanese, a tender and flavorsome Milanese-style veal chop fried to perfection and presented with cherry tomatoes and arugula salad. I love its flawless execution and the truly delicious sense of comfort that it evokes.”

For those who want to immerse themselves in the historic courtyard at Raffles, there's also outdoor seating. *Recommended by Louisa Lim, pastry chef of Odette; and Francesco Di Marzio, chef de cuisine at La Dame de Pic*

Nixta



Nixta's signature spit, herb-roasted chicken. *Source: Travis Masiero Restaurant Group*

At the end of buzzy Amoy Street, Nixta highlights the food of Mexico, exporting such ingredients as avocados and corn to create transportive dishes. It's the latest from Travis Masiero, who also has Luke's Oyster Bar and Chop House and Blue Label Pizza & Wine.

"Travis' concepts are always good. You could trust that they had good service and high standards, and Nixta is no exception," says Rishi Naleendra, chef-owner of Cloudstreet. "His use of high-quality ingredients and authentic take on Mexican cuisine definitely shines through, and the dishes are bright, tasty, and well-executed." He adds: "I especially loved the wood-fire grilled whole fish a la Contramar, the churros, and their amazing margaritas."

The imported ingredients are the focus for Dave Pynt, chef-owner of Burnt Ends. "Nixta is about getting the best Mexican products—and making really tasty Mexican food," he says. *Recommended by Rishi Naleendra, chef-owner of Cloudstreet; and Dave Pynt, chef-owner of Burnt Ends*

Revolver



Malabar crab at Revolver. Source: *Vim & Vigour*

This open-kitchen at chef Saurabh Udinia’s restaurant features a custom-built wood-fired grill, a smoker, and tandoor. He uses them all to turn out inspired Indian dishes, often featuring unconventional ingredients. His tasting menus include such dishes as rock lobster Manchurian with egg fried rice, and black truffle and morel kulchette, a flatbread. The drinks pairing is a mix of cocktails, wine, and sake.

“It was only a matter of time for someone to take the many and beautiful flavors of Indian food traditions and peg them to the tried-and-tested barbeque model,” says Ivan Brehm, chef-owner of Nouri. “It’s an exciting and energetic menu, with flavors that could be repetitive in the hands of less-skilled people but in their hands just deliver.” He also notes the restaurant’s well-curated wine list. *Recommended by Ivan Brehm, chef-owner of Nouri and the research kitchen, record bar, and events venue Appetite*

Asador



Rodaballo, Spanish turbot, at Asador. *Source: Asador*

In the hip Joo Chiat neighborhood is Asador, a grill-oriented Spanish restaurant, where the specialty is suckling pig, brined then cooked in a handmade stone oven to achieve the classic golden and crispy finishing. The menu also features dishes like txangurro, a Basque-style spider crab stew; cangrejo, grilled crayfish wrapped in pancetta with aji sauce; and chuletas de Cordero, or grilled lamb chops with salsa verde and pistachios.

"The chuletas is a favorite from the Basque country," says Dave Pynt. "It's always a must-have." *Recommended by Dave Pynt, chef-owner of Burnt Ends*

Sommer



Chou farci with crayfish at Sommer. *Source: Ebb & Flow Group*

In its first year, this intimate space at the Sail at Marina Bay has already garnered a Michelin star for Lewis Barker's superb modern European menu. Among the over-the-top dishes: lobster with caramelized cauliflower, jasmine tea, and finger lime; pigeon with chestnut, salsify, and black garlic; and chou farci with crayfish, jamon, foie gras, and white truffle.

“I was very impressed with Lewis’s inventive technique on seasonal ingredients and how he translated his culinary philosophy to his food and its presentation authentically,” says one of the city’s top chefs, Sebastien Lepinoy of Les Amis. “The beef Wellington stands out with its generous slice of juicy tenderloin encased in a thick layer of mushroom duxelles and a beautifully baked butter puff pastry.”

Ryan Clift, chef-owner of the Tippling Club, is also impressed with Barker’s work: “The quality of the ingredients and the skill applied to them speak volumes about the young chef’s talent.” *Recommended by Sebastien Lepinoy, director of culinary and operations at Les Amis, and Ryan Clift, chef-owner of Tippling Club*

Hamamoto



Hamamoto Source: Hamamoto

Seasonal Japanese fare is the focus at chef Kazuhiro Hamamoto’s 12-seat restaurant on Tras Street. Customers who order the Fancy Omakase menu that starts at S\$550 might get selections such as ise ebi, or spiny lobster, sashimi, and uni with kaluga caviar, and wagyu sumiyaki. The restaurant even has its own private-label sake. Dishes are served on custom ceramic lacquerware handmade by an old friend of Hamamoto’s who uses an ancient technique to fuse porcelain and lacquer.

“The new restaurant is luxury Japanese fine-dining excellence. It’s elegant, interactive, and stunning food,” says Tristin Farmer. “Kazu is a real showman who is super passionate about using the best ingredients and talking with his guests about the producer, grower, why they are special, and how he prepares each menu item.” An insider tip from Farmer: “As you get to know Kazu-San, he likes to create an off-menu dish for his guests at the end of the meal, based on their experience, preferences, and favorites. “Ask for the spicy tuna,

or Kobe beef and uni.” *Recommended by Tristin Farmer, executive chef of Restaurant Zen*

Kausmo



Spiced short rib with coffee cream at Kausmo. *Source: Les Amis Group*

Chef Lisa Tang and manager Kuah Chew Shian opened Kausmo with the aim of challenging food norms that create unnecessary waste. They use such ingredients as seafood from the region’s small farming communities; native greens like Ulam Raja leaves and flowers, wild pepper leaves, and Tonkin Jasmine flowers; and fruits and vegetables that are overstocked, over-ripened, and oddly shaped and sized. They also feature secondary cuts of meats such as chuck tenders, using marinating and traditional slow-roasting techniques to bring out tenderness and flavor.

The place doesn’t have a fixed menu. Instead there’s a Carte Blanche menu based on product availability, with dishes such as sea bass with wild pepper and calamansi or chipotle-berry glazed Wagyu beef D-rump with veg jus and roasted cauliflower and Chinese petai.

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“It’s heartening to witness how Lisa is harnessing culinary art as a medium to make a stand and drive positive change.” says Kirk Westaway, executive chef of Jaan. “Every dish is well-executed, reflecting a modern culinary approach that marries flavor and genuine artistry. What’s arresting is how Lisa intently elevates ‘unattractive’ ingredients with finesse to provoke thought and embody a meaningful perspective.”

Recommended by Kirk Westaway, executive chef of Jaan by Kirk Westaway

Nae:um



Interior of Nae:um. *Photographer: John Heng/Nae:um*

Chef Louis Han’s restaurant has a uniquely punctuated name that he translates as “a fragrance that evokes memories.” His specialty is contemporary Seoul cuisine, with options such as the noodle dish someyeon, with buckwheat, kimchi, and Kristal caviar; and naengchae, the jellyfish salad with French chicken, abalone, and soybean.

“The restaurant was booked out for months almost as soon as it opened,” says Annette Tan. “And it’s absolutely worth the hype. Louis has brought an elegant lightness to Korean food. There are inklings of each dish’s traditional Korean roots, yet they are all presented in refreshing, original ways. I found myself wanting more of every single course, which is so rare.” *Recommended by Annette Tan, chef and founder of the private*

Magic Square



Magic Square *Photographer: Ken Tan Loon*

The goal at this unconventional restaurant, which now has a permanent location, is to showcase Singapore's up-and-coming culinary talent by giving them the experience of running a restaurant. The nine-course menu rotates monthly, as does the small wine list that pairs with the food. The November meal included John Dory with Jerusalem artichoke, nashi (Asian pear), and a liver torchon. Another was belimbing (starfruit) with botan ebi and grapes.

Keirin Buck of Le Bon Funk believes it could be a game-changer in developing chefs and cooks in the city-state. “Magic Square is an institution in the making,” he says. “It’s a platform for Singapore’s next generation of culinary talent under 30 to take center stage and realize running a restaurant doesn’t have to be a pipe dream.”

It does, however, operate under strict rules: Customers must create an account in order to purchase tickets, changes are not accommodated, and latecomers will not be served dishes they’ve missed. Nor is tap water an option; there’s only bottled still or sparkling. Owner Ken Tan Loon says the restrictions stem from considerations including the low price of the tickets—currently S\$98—and a desire to keep things simple for chefs who are still learning. *Recommended by Keirin Buck, chef-owner of Le Bon Funk*

Basque Kitchen by Aitor



Basque Kitchen by Aitor *Source: Basque Kitchen by Aitor*

Last year, Basque Kitchen by Aitor took over the Fullerton Waterboat House space, which sits in a premium spot near such landmarks as the Victoria Theatre and the Singapore Cricket Club, with views of the city’s waterfront.

Chef Derek Cheong is a big fan of the lunchtime tasting menu, starting at S\$198. “The flavors were very interesting, featuring premium produce from the Basque Country. My personal favorite was the sea anemone paired with bomba rice and sea succulents,” he says. “It was my first time having sea anemone, and the texture is comparable to deep-fried oysters with the flavor of escargot.” Cheong also calls out the menu’s charcoal grilled hake with razor clams. For more casual food and drinks, try the new Pintxos Bar, installed at the front of the restaurant. *Recommended by Derek Cheong, winner of Singapore MasterChef Season 2*

(Updates with the addition of Asador restaurant. Corrects by removing Casa by Remy Lefebvre, which is now closed.)

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