

FOOD REVIEW



WATCHA DOING? Watchara Sirvanjanakul has been treating Durban to sumptuous eastern treats for the past 23 years Picture: JACKIE CLAUSEN

BOTLE OF THE WEEK

This rock star swings both ways

NEIL PENDOCK

Bottle of the Week: Stellenrust Cabernet Franc 2012

How much and where? R140; www.stellenrust.co.za

Why?

Cabernet franc is the feminine version of cabernet sauvignon: lighter in colour, more nimble on the tongue and more fragrant. A David Bowie of the vineyard, giving a healthy dash of androgyny to *dikvoet* reds.

Just like Mr Jones, Franc is unexpected. This one is redolent of cherries and tobacco, herbs and blueberries. A great match with marog, African spinach, but with earthier and more robust flavours. Add some Feta cheese and garlic for a substantial vegetarian alternative to flesh, which is way more carbon-friendly.

The grapes grow on the Helderberg, the St Emilion of the Cape. Ground Zero for wines of maximal finesse and elegance. Stellenbosch calls itself the "Kingdom of Cabernet Sauvignon" in its marketing positioning, while DNA analysis confirms that the parents of cab are franc and sauvignon blanc.

These days the best blancs come from Elgin (Stellenbosch being too hot), while franc is the blending component that no one talks about. Single varietal bottlings such as these confirm the cultivar as the glam rock star of the winelands.

Rating *****

***** The Bewlay Brothers

**** TVC 15

*** Suffragette City

** Sound and Vision

* Rock 'n Roll Suicide

Mango unchained

Ignore the decor and savour the sensational food, writes **Greg Arde**

I ONCE cooked with Watchara Sirvanjanakul, aka Roger, in a sweaty cubbyhole at his restaurant in Avonmore Centre in Morningside. The experience conjured up images of *The Year of Living Dangerously* and I felt, fleetingly, like Mel Gibson.

Only, whereas old drop-dead-gorgeous Mel struggled to find his feet in the political turmoil of Jakarta, I grappled with the heat and Roger's accent.

I foolishly clutched a wok, as if to make myself useful, and Watchara whirled around with alarming Asian efficiency.

Roger is a likeable, hard-working fellow who has introduced his magic to bustling Umhlanga, the trendy little seaside 'burb bursting at the seams. There is no shortage

of happening pubs and eateries; Roger's Green Mango is next to a Portuguese joint and below a Burger King.

He has spent 23 of his 32 years in Durban as a chef.

He's a maestro who churns out sumptuous eastern treats.

Style gurus won't be bowled over by Green Mango's simple, functional décor but it is comfort-

able and welcoming, the service fantastic and the food sensational.

Well mine was, anyway. You either have to know your way around the extensive menu at Green Mango or get lucky.

I did. My wife didn't.

I'd avoid the starter platter. A lacklustre deep-fried spring roll was only barely rescued by a mild chilli sauce.

But a spring roll is a spring roll, is a spring roll. There was also an okay chicken kebab with peanut butter sauce.

Rather droll and gratefully, it paled in comparison with the tuna and prawn Ngiri. The fish was firm, fresh and delicious.

Sushi at Green Mango is obviously a firm favorite and patrons were eagerly tucking in. My wife ordered "E-san fillet", passable fare of tender beef atop stir fried veggies.

My duck, on the other hand, was sublime. It was mouthwatering: a symphony of rich, salty, crispy.

So if, like Roger, you know what you are doing, get down to Green Mango. Or go anyway and, like Mel Gibson, live dangerously. You could get lucky.

NEED TO KNOW

When to go: Seven days a week, from noon.

Who to take: Hungry, chatty people. It's a bustling spot, with a busy vibe.

What not to do: Miss the sushi or the duck.

What to drink: They've got an ample wine selection.

How much do you need: R650 for a starter, two mains, dessert, a bottle of wine, a couple of beers and tip.

Address: Shop 50, Protea Mall, Lighthouse Road, Umhlanga.
Phone: 031-836-3680

RIGHTEOUS RECIPES

Top health farm delivers second helping

SHELLEY SEID

BROOKDALE Health Hydro, that little piece of healthy heaven in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands, has been around for almost 25 years.

Brookdale was never a boot camp kind of retreat. Unlike many other weight-loss hydros, Brookdale actually provides food; healthy and low calorie, but always a far cry from celery sticks and boiled eggs.

Over the years the food on offer just got better and better until in 2012, to celebrate its 20th anniversary, owners Wendy and Tony Somers-Cox decided to publish the visually and culinarily delightful *Heavenly and Healthy Foods*.

Four odd years and as many reprints later, the sequel has been launched.

It is as gorgeous as the first, filled with beautiful photos and a clean, crisp layout.



The recipes, again complied by Brookdale dietician Caryn Davies and chef Juliet Stephenson, are easy to prepare and tempting.

There's a Thai slaw with a spicy red pepper dressing that I have my eye on and a cocoa and coconut mousse which would make Tim Noake's heart miss a beat.

We spoke to Brookdale's general manager, Marilyn

Cox, about the book

Why a second book? Demand! Our chef does cooking demos twice a week which are very popular, and guests were constantly asking if the new recipes are in the book. So we relented. The ingredients are easy to find and it is easy to follow for those who don't cook.

Book's most popular dishes? All the salads are winners and our aromatic fish curry is very popular.

Your food philosophy? It's been the same since the outset. Moderation and balance. Plenty of variety. Nothing drastic and no fasting.

What do you actively promote? We talk about portion distortion. You may be eating healthy food but if your portion size is out of control then there is a problem. New guests to the hydro are pleasantly surprised that they can eat our meals and don't feel deprived.

Is the sequel more of the same? The focus in this book is on nutrient-dense dishes — more use of herbs, microgreens, and ingredients that make you feel better. We also want to promote drinking water rather than empty calorie drinks. We have a host of lovely recipes for infused water. You won't believe how good the rosemary and ruby grapefruit tastes.

Do you keep up with the food and diet trends? While those Banting will find lots of recipes they can use (seed crackers, that mousse) and while we are happy that it urges people to cut out sugar we are not pro anything except balance and moderation.

VIETNAMESE PAPAYA SALAD
SERVES 4-6

Dressing:
1 small red onion, thinly sliced
1 garlic clove, crushed
2 tbsp coriander, chopped
1 tsp fish sauce
1/3 cup olive oil
1 tsp organic unrefined brown sugar or raw honey
3 tbsp lemon juice
1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
Herb salt and ground black pepper

4 cups papaya or mango, peeled and sliced
2 cups carrots, julienned
3 tbsp salted toasted peanuts or cashews or pine nuts
Sprigs of coriander to garnish

Combine all the dressing ingredients and allow onion to marinate for 30 minutes (optional).

Assemble the salad by placing the carrots on a platter first, then layer with papaya. Spoon marinated red onion, sprinkle with nuts and drizzle with dressing just before serving. Garnish with sprigs of coriander.

