



FABULOUS FEASTS

Each year epicures from around the world gather at Four Seasons Hotel Bangkok to enjoy their shared pleasure and passion for good food, good wine and good company. Laurence Civil reports

The 12th Annual World Gourmet Food Festival saw eight chefs from seven different countries gather at Four Seasons to show their expertise in creating food of signal quality. The event took place from September 5-11 with, among other things, each chef hosting two evenings in one of the hotel's restaurants. For every dinner ticket sold, the always charitable Four Seasons donated 500 baht to HRH Princess Soamsawali's 'Save A Child's Life from AIDS' charity project.

So what did the chefs bring to the table? Read on as we drag each of the eight chefs away from the kitchen to tell us about their personal contributions. First up for a grilling – well, a chat anyway – is Adriano, one of two chefs who was flown in from London.



ADRIANO CAVAGNINI

AMARANTO RESTAURANT, FOUR SEASONS HOTEL LONDON

"London is the capital of food and very competitive – with more Michelin-star restaurants in one square mile than in the whole of Italy," Adriano says.

"My food style," he continues, "is traditional with a modern twist. The menu I've created for this event is representative of the whole of Italy; it starts with a dish from Puglia, burrata on tomatoes done four ways. The next dish is a risotto cooked the way we make it in my region. I'm using seafood as it's abundant in Thailand and will add a touch of lemon and parsley to give a southern Italian twist. I am passionate about gnocchi and for this event I am creating a dish from the Veneto region. I like cooking it with any vegetable, but here I am cooking it with aubergine and balsamic vinegar. For my main course I've chosen a veal fillet stuffed with prawns and asparagus, wrapped in a cheek bacon with Bintje potato – which isn't typically Italian. Finally, for my dessert, I am creating three bite-sized sensations: hazelnut focaccia from the north of Italy, aubergine stuffed with spicy chocolate mousse, and Bigne di San Guiseppe, sugar doughnuts made with cherries and cream, a dish from Rome traditionally eaten on Italy's Father's Day."



DAVID LEE

NOTA BENE, TORONTO

"I believe in the Four Season's philosophy of culinary excellence," says David. "This is a great opportunity for me to visit Bangkok and to go to markets to absorb the new tastes and flavours."

"It's important for me not to overpower a dish," he says. "I prefer to let the ingredients talk for themselves, their quality is most important. I have been cooking sous vide for the last 12 years; it keeps the integrity of the ingredients, the flavours where they should be, and is marvellous for controlling portions. I am doing duck with green papaya, cucumber chilli basil and Tahiti mint that is finished as confit. Knowing how Thais love pork, I have brought suckling pig and will be making boudin noir with local ingredients. Another dish will be local crab cooked in court bouillon, with oven dried peppers and the best possible candied cherry tomatoes. I just wished that I could have had the time to arrive ahead of the event, visit the markets and put my menu together with what I could find."



ANTHONY DEMETRE

WILD HONEY, LONDON

"Last year at this event, I was cooking for Arbutus, my Michelin-starred restaurant located in Soho," Anthony explains. "This year I am cooking for Wild Honey, another restaurant I operate that is located in Mayfair. It is more elegant than Arbutus and has a clientele that is more pro fine dining."

"My menu starts with an organic hen's egg cooked at precisely 62 degrees for 45 minutes, poached in the shell to achieve a glorious cohesive consistency. It is served with sweet and sour caramel and parmesan veloute. Lincolnshire smoked eels were the only ingredient I brought with me and they are served warm with crisp boneless chicken wings, yuzu puree and turnip salad. That's followed by potato gazpacho with scallop, rock oyster and seaweed tartar. My main course is Wagyu short ribs with beetroot puree and is slowly cooked for eight hours. It's not a common combination but it works brilliantly for me. Everybody serves hot chocolate fondant; mine is cold with salted caramel ice cream and grated pistachio."



DOLLI IRIGOYEN

ESPACIO DOLLI, BUENOS AIRES

"It took me 30 hours to fly here from Buenos Aires," says Dolli, "first to Frankfurt, and then to Bangkok, but it's worth it to be part of this event. My cooking style is essentially Argentinian with Spanish and Italian influences due to migration. I like working with the best fresh local ingredients, showing respect for the product."

"My menu showcases the best of Latin America with elements from northern Argentina and Peru. It starts with causa limena trio, a typical Peruvian dish. It contains two balls of mashed potato mixed with the very hot Peruvian rocoto pepper and a third blended with a cilantro purée and stuffed with diced chicken, shrimp and scallops. Then there will be tuna tataki, lightly seared tuna that I marinate in soy sauce, ginger and lemongrass and serve with pomelo and avocado mousse."

Her main course, Argentinian short ribs, slowly braised in Malbec wine, was superbly smooth and served with potato cream, mushroom and chimichurri. This was followed by a goat's cheese mousse with preserved tomatoes and nut bread. The dinner finished on a sweet note, tocinillo del cielo, a passion fruit curd made with eggs, sugar, fresh coca berries and mango sorbet."



GUIDO HAVERKOCK

I PORTICI, BOLOGNA

"I previously worked eight years ago with Chef Daniele Cason, the Italian Chef at Biscotti, Four Seasons Bangkok's Italian restaurant, at Castello Banfi in Piedmonte. He was the one who invited me to join this year's event. I am German, but went to Italy when I was 21 and was seduced by Italian food and cooking. I have lived and worked in Italy for the past 16 years. I am currently Executive Chef of a theatre restaurant in Bologna, where we have a creative combination of modern art and traditional Italian cuisine.

"My menu starts with a seafood variation, followed by a lobster risotto with tomato and basil. Next comes a pasta dish of tortelli stuffed with oven roasted eggplant with an iced mozzarella cream. The main course is a trilogy of lamb: a herb crusted rack, a shoulder ragout with summer truffles and an oven roasted leg with leeks. The meal finishes with a dessert of Mascarpone foam with espresso granita and melted bitter sweet chocolate sauce, a lighter, fresher variation of tiramisu with a fun variation of hot and cold taste sensations."



IVO ADAM

SEVEN, ASCONA, SWITZERLAND

"It doesn't matter whether its fast food or gourmet cuisine," says Ivo, "its important to have variety and to dare to try new things. Lately I have been calling my cooking style 'pastel cuisine'. The flavour on the plate can be different but as a whole must be harmonious. Too many strong flavours shouldn't be mixed together at once or they will start fighting with each other.

"My menu starts with cucumber, kiwi and dill sorbet, followed by maize mousse on crispy bread with orange and basil – the taste is similar to Pizza Margherita. Then I serve a deconstructed curry with pomelo; the idea is to marry the flavours of sweet chilli sauce, cocoa and curry. Cocoa gives the crunch and the pomelo, coriander and lemongrass add perfume. Next is a simple avocado with sour cream and caviar, followed by beef tartar infused with pumpkin and cinnamon flower. Then I serve crispy skin seabass with sweet corn and caper puree, enriched with Australian river salt. My main course is a duo of veal: filet and cheek, creating two different textures. It is served with salty bread and butter pudding, accented with chocolate. The meal finishes with Italian moscato soup and almond cream with raspberry sorbet, lychee and rose water.



HARI NAYAK

ORISSA, NEW YORK

"I grew up in India but was never trained to cook there," says Hari. "I went to study at the Culinary Institute of America (CIA), and then worked in non-Indian restaurants in the States, entertained friends at home and wrote cookbooks. The positive feedback I got encouraged me to open my first restaurant. My cooking style has an Indian base, but the style on the plate looks different as it's fun deconstructed food. My latest cookbook My Indian Kitchen is published by Tuttle Publishing in Singapore.

"My menu here starts with Indian street food – potato and pomegranate chaat. I follow this with a trio of oysters, each with their own chutney representing the three colours of the Indian flag: green as an arugula and mint chutney, white as a pearl onion chutney and orange as a pepper chutney. My chicken tikka trio is done in the style of India's three colonial influences: British by chicken tikka, Portuguese by goan vindaloo pork tenderloin and French by mustard crusted prawn with green beans and coconut. My fish dish is a typical Kerala pan-seared seabass with a coconut lime turmeric reduction. The meat course is green chilli and fennel infused lamb chops with wild mushroom biriyani and the meal finishes with mango and cardamom creme brûlée."



KAZUMI SWADA

HOKU, GUANGZHOU

Swada-san was Executive Chef at Banreki Ryukodo when the restaurant gained a Michelin star in 2008, which it subsequently lost the year after Kazumi joined Four Seasons Tokyo. His style of cooking is gourmet Michelin quality and extracts the best possible from produce while cooking it "with respect".

A veteran of World Gourmet Food Festival, he appeared previously two years ago. His menu this time started with Hassun, a Japanese appetiser with bite-sized tidbits of seasonal ingredients. This was followed by Surinagashi, a vegetable purée with a bonito stock red capsicum sauce with roast tomato and crab meat, a dish from Kyoto. In Japanese cuisine it is common to marinate fish in miso, but he decided to apply the same marinade to the Wagyu beef and foie gras he served as a beef dish to add more flavour and aroma to the dish when grilled. Wanting to show what is currently in season in Japan, he then served takikomi gohan, cooked scallop rice with light soy sauce. To finish, he chose to serve a very traditional Kyoto dessert, kuzukiri kudzu – starch noodles with brown sugar syrup. The meal finished in typical Japanese style, with rice at the end of the meal.

