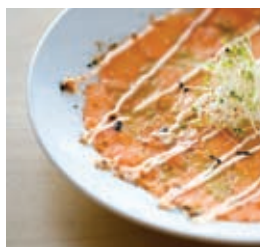


Good restaurants in Singapore are aplenty, but to find one with a charming setup and nonconformist menu is hard to come by.

MillionaireAsia's Joann Chia goes wild over this bistro.



Wild Rocket – Mt Emily's Hidden Gem



Top left, clockwise: Spicy Crabmeat Linguini with Chilli Tomato Cream & Seafood Crustacean Oil Spaghetti; Ribeye Steak with Pioppini Mushrooms; Strawberry Cheesecake; Infused Panna Cotta with Gula Melaka; Salmon Carpaccio with Wasabi Dressing & Ebiko

Opened more than three years ago by Willin Low, a lawyer-turned-cook with no prior culinary experience, Wild Rocket is a harbinger of hope: Hope that a self-taught chef can carve an impressive career from the kitchen; Hope that the food scene in Singapore is not about to hit a plateau.

Wild Rocket serves a modern Singaporean cuisine, merging Western styles of cooking with local ingredients and influences. The menu here changes once every three to four months and promises to be a refreshing shift for the palate each time.

An Exotically Familiar Menu

Italian inspired with a tinge of Japanese flavours, the *Salmon Carpaccio with Wasabi Dressing & Ebiko* makes for a good appetiser. The thinly sliced raw salmon delicately melts in the mouth, while the assertive taste of wasabi dressing, seaweed and alfalfa sprouts lingers as a reminder of how simple yet delectable this dish is.

One of the recommended mains is the *Spicy Crabmeat Linguini with Chilli Tomato Cream & Seafood Crustacean Oil Spaghetti*, a creation inspired by the local

ta-mee. A generous serving of *hae bee* (dried shrimps) and scallops, tossed with succulent prawns and chilli flakes, makes this a flavoursome gastronomic treat which until today, still rouses my tastebuds whenever I think of it.

The *Consommé of Giam Chye & Duck Ravioli* turned out to be a pleasant surprise. Though lacking in its presentation, this dish immediately won back my appetite with its distinct salted vegetable essence that evoked memories of the *giam chye* soup my mother would make. The duck was a straightforward match for the consommé. Served as a ravioli, it offers a whole new perspective to this local dish.

Be sure to leave space for after meal sweet treats. The selection of desserts at Wild Rocket is as impressive as the main courses. My favourite has to be the *Strawberry Cheesecake* – a modern interpretation of the conventional cheesecake that we're all too familiar with. This one's dismembered and put together again in an unorthodox way, served in a cocktail glass but still tastes the same – if not better.

Other recommended desserts are the *Pandan Infused Panna Cotta with Gula Melaka* and *Orh Nee Millefeuille*.

A Welcoming Hangout Spot

Being able to enjoy drinks alfresco is one of the enticing offerings at Wild Rocket. The rooftop of Hangout Hotel has been transformed into a Balinese-themed garden, the perfect spot to wind down under the stars and gaze at the CBD skyline. It is also Willin's "marketplace" – his humble supply of sweet basil, laksa leaves, mint leaves and chilli plants which he uses as fresh ingredients.

The restaurant itself exudes an aura of quiet confidence. Sunlight seeps through the sheer drapes gracefully, lighting the bistro in a dreamy and relaxing manner. Located in District 9 but nestled on a hill away from the city lights, Wild Rocket has the advantage of being accessible yet charmingly distant. ■

For more information, please call +65 6339 9448 or visit wildrocket.com.sg