

EATING OUT



Main course: Tender and juicy lamb cutlets drenched in a rich mushroom sauce



Delectable: Homemade Tagliatelle with Winter Vegetables and Pecorino.



Reds and whites: A pairing of award-winning wines of Castello Banfi with fine food at Senja, The Saujana Hotel Kuala Lumpur.

Inspired by Tuscany

A wine pairing affair tailored to meet the Malaysian palate



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Photos by **ROHAIZAT DARUS**

A JOURNEY through the heart of Tuscany featured sensational flavours from the award-winning family-owned Castello Banfi estate in a wine pairing affair at Senja in The Saujana Hotel Kuala Lumpur recently.

In collaboration with international wine purveyor, AsiaEuro and the winery's resident chef Domenico Francone, Banfi's internationally acclaimed range of the region's Brunello di Montalcino wine took centre stage amidst a five-course meal.

Known for premier quality wines since 1979, Banfi regional manager and sommelier Guillaume Blanchard explained that each of the wines were paired to a cuisine crafted accordingly to the Malaysian weather and palate.

"Banfi has a wide range of wines but we have specially selected these wines to suit to the Malaysian palate and range of dishes," he said. Assisted by Sicilian chef Filippo Giunta, resident chef Francone said they had identified the local customers' taste to prefer less salt in their dishes.

"We never compromise when it comes to our ingredients, even the olive oil is imported from Sicily. "However, we always try to adjust, in terms of toning down the use of salt in our dishes to the preference of Malaysians.

"Due to the humid weather here, we have also designed the menu to include dishes which have more fresh flavours such as rock melon to provide relief from the heat," said the chef of 20 years, adding that the portions of each meal were adequately smaller to ensure it was not too heavy for



Juicy steak: Black angus tenderloin with sautéed spinach, fresh porcini mushrooms and brunello in Montalcino sauce

diners.

The five-course set dinner began with the Cannolo di Branzina con Sedano e Melone, a sea bass *cannolo* with celery and rock melon appetiser which comprises a tube shaped fried pastry dough shell that holds the tender sea bass fillet, accompanied by crunchy rock melon pieces.

Paired with Principessa Gavia Gavi 2013, a white wine with crisp freshness and a hint of lemon and green apple, a tinge of spritz, the peppery flavour of the appetiser was well balanced.

Next was the, Agnolotti di Patate ed Astice al Pesto di Fragoncello which is potato and lobster agnolotti pasta with tarragon pesto.

Creamy textures of the ravioli and pesto sauce was beautifully matched with the strong crisp taste of the San Angelo Pinot Grigio 2012 giving an explosion of flavours.

Homemade Tagliatelle with Winter Vegetables and Pecorino Cheese known as the Tagliatelle con Verdure di Stagione e Pecorino, was a diversity of flavours with the crunchy bell peppers and the saltiness of the sheep's milk cheese when paired with the Chianti Classico Riserva 2011.

While the standard menu served a main course of black angus ten-

derloin with sautéed spinach, fresh porcini mushrooms and brunello in Montalcino sauce, the chef had specially prepared a grilled lamb cooked to medium perfection with porcini mushroom sauce dressing as an option for non-beef diners such as myself.

Tender and juicy cutlets of lamb drenched in a rich mushroom sauce was brilliantly complemented with the Brunello di Montalcino 2006 and Poggio All' Oro Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 2004, a true balance of colour, and aroma.

Ending the splendid meal was the exquisite Milk Chocolate Croccante or Brittle with Caramel Biscuit Ice Cream, which was paired with the fizzy and rich rose scented desert wine, Rose Regale 2013.

■ SENJA, The Saujana Hotel Kuala Lumpur, Saujana Resort, Jalan Lapangan Terbang Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah, Shah Alam, Selangor. (Tel: 03-7843 1234 ext 6122) Business hours: Noon-2.30pm, 6.30pm-10.30pm (Tues-Fri), 6.30pm-10.30pm (Sat, Sun & public holidays). Closed on Monday.

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