



## *The Ladies Wine and Food Society of Melbourne (Inc.)*

### **KEKOU FUNCTION REPORT 20 May 2024**

On a chilly Autumn evening, 17 members and 3 guests were treated to a contemporary fusion menu at Kekou in Bridge Road Richmond. The food incorporated several Asian cuisines with head chef Oak Kunnalok gaining inspiration from his extensive travels and the experience gained at several notable Melbourne restaurants. The familiar flavours of sweet, sour, salty and spicy combined with some bold and less familiar flavours to give layers of complexity. This provided a challenge for the wine master, Jenny Pullar.



*Selecting the wine for this menu provided me with quite a challenge. Not only would the wine need to stand alongside an array of spices, each course contained different proteins. I decided to choose a wine for each dish similar to a wine pairing you would have with a degustation dinner rather than a pair of wines per the course. The discussion questions were around the food and wine pairing rather than focusing just on the wines. I have included my notes on pairing wine with Asian food at the end of this report. JP*

### **Canapés**

*lobster betel leaf, kerisik, finger lime, miang kum caramel, peanut  
spanner crab tartlet, padang sauce, shallot, saltbush  
crispy chicken ribs, spiced salt, cumin yoghurt*

### ***Piper Heidseick NV Champagne***

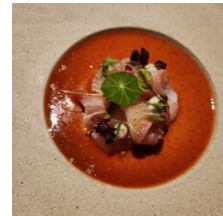
The Betel leaf dish was a favourite of many with its complex combination of flavours. Chefs Smith Pakdeepibul and Tom Kampinit shared with us the secret of the crispy coating on the delicious chicken ribs.

*With the Canapés I served the **Piper Heidseick NV Champagne**. When it comes to complex combinations of flavours Champagne is the ultimate low risk wine. Low in alcohol, low or non existent tannins, fruity and a hint of residual sugar. The Piper Heidseick didn't disappoint.*



## Entrees:

*kaffir lime cured **kingfish** sashimi, red nahm jim, lime pearl.*



**2009 Seppelt Drumborg Riesling.**

*applewood smoked **beef ribs**, yuzu tamarind jaew, toasted rice powder*

**2011 Valenciso Rioja Riserva.**



The delicate kingfish was given a lift with spicy sauce and lime flavours. The beef ribs were one of the highlights, the smoking process and slow cooking resulting in a melt on the mouth texture to the dish.

*The **Riesling** was a good match with the cured Kingfish. This did not look like a 15 year old wine. It still looked youthful with citrusy aromatics and a good acid backbone. The **Rioja** was a great match with the smoky beef ribs. Medium bodied, black cherry and dark berry fruit profiles, slight tobacco leaf, age softened tannins and with enough acidity to keep the wine vibrant.*

## Mains:

*kari **ayam chicken** curry, roasted pumpkin, betel leaf, thai basil*

*twice cooked **pork belly**, chilli palm caramel, pomelo mint salad  
wok-fried **eggplant**, umami mushroom, fermented chilli, black bean  
**roti canai**, peanut sauce*

**2018 Pieropan Soave Classico**

**2021 Rosi Schuster Blaeurfrankish Burgenland Austria**

The slow cooked pork belly was a stand out dish with its sweet palm caramel sauce and refreshing salad. The ingredients added to the eggplant provided a wonderful combination of rich flavours and while the roti was very different to the traditional version, the ladies thoroughly enjoyed it with the peanut sauce.

*I thought these wines would be good to look at with both these dishes. The **Soave's**, minerally, medium-bodied palate, acidity and citrusy flavours worked across all the dishes curry, pork belly and eggplant. The overall consensus was that the **Blaeurfrankish** worked better with the chicken curry and eggplant not so much with the pork belly.*

**Blaeurfrankish, the 'Pinot noir' of Eastern Europe. The typical bouquet of Blaufränkisch wine is of wild berries and cherries, a medium bodied red wine with a powerful acidity and elegant tannins.**



**Dessert:**

*calamansi parfait, white chocolate crumble, gula jawa caramel, kaffir lime meringue*

**Domaine des Bernadins Muscat Beaumes de Venise**

The meal concluded with a delicate dessert which was an excellent combination of textures and subtle flavours, the citrus based parfait complemented by the chocolate crumble and the topping of kaffir lime meringue slivers.



**Muscat Beaumes de Venise** a rich and full-bodied sweet wine made in Rhone.

*Muscat Beaumes de Venise is a Vin Doux Naturel (VDN) which means the natural sweetness of the wine is preserved by the addition of spirit to stop the fermentation process, as a result VDN have a slightly higher alcohol level which adds to the overall perception of body and richness.*

*Honey, quince and orange zest, the palate is luscious with fresh pronounced acidity. Perfect at the end of the meal.*

*I chose this wine to sit alongside the very petite dessert or to just to enjoy on its own.*

.....

Shine Tran, our head waitress went out of her way to contribute to the success of the evening and was assisted by Young Chang. Chefs Tom and Smith were happy to answer questions about their cooking techniques and the ingredients used and we really appreciated their time and efforts. The food quiz promoted interesting discussion as it tested out the ladies' knowledge of some of the more unusual ingredients in the dishes. Kekou in Chinese means delicious, a most appropriate name for this innovative restaurant. After such a delicious dinner, many ladies are keen to return with family and friends to experience more of what Kekou has to offer.

Food Master: Lauryn van den Akker

Wine Master: Jenny Pullar

## Pairing Wine with Asian Food

Asian cuisine comprises flavour profiles that run the gamut from sweet, spicy, sour, salty, bitter to umami with many dishes combining several in one.

Kekou is a fusion of Thai, Indonesian and Malay cuisine.

Thai food has everything your palate wants: salty, sweet, sour, bitter and umami, with the added complexity from the fresh herbs.

The key flavour profiles in Indonesian cuisine are chilli padi spice, saltiness (found in the dried salted fish and shrimp paste) and sweetness which mostly comes from palm sugar.

Singaporean and Malaysian cuisines are strongly influenced by Chinese, Malay and Indian cultures, the main bulk of people that came to settle in the straits in the past. They share a good use of herbs and spices that mainly dominate the flavour profiles of the Singaporean/Malaysian dishes.”

It's a challenge for the wine masters when faced with pairing wine with ingredients like soy, fish sauce, chilli paste, ginger, lemongrass, kaffir lime leaves, betel leaves, and hoisin, they all pack a punch. Spices and herbs such as cardamom, cumin, coriander, five-spice powder, and garam masala are not meek in aroma or flavour, especially since they're often used in combination. Flavours like these can flatten out many wines, rob them of their fruity characters, and make them taste dull, hollow, bitter, oaky, or alcoholic.

- Tannic wines fight with strong flavours, and the wines lose; they end up tasting bitter, lean, and mean.
- Too much alcohol and chilli can set your palate on fire.
- Oaky, toasty Chardonnay's can taste like all oak no fruit
- The best wines for Asian dishes are high in acidity. Snappy, clean, high acid wines that have a kind of refreshing vibrancy.
- Aromatic wines with pronounced fruit flavours work very well with aromatic dishes.
- Low-tannin red wines that are fruit forward can be a good pairing