

SUPERIOR BANQUET

Patrick Loh had the most delightful dinner accompanied by good glasses of Castello Banfi reds and whites



Left
Shrimp with scallop

You can have your scrumptious *shoyu*-marinated salmon roe and Italian black truffle *pâté* or your grilled steak and lamb rack, but nothing beats the decadence of having your food accompanied by the right wine of proper notes and flavours. When it comes to food, Malaysians are really particular not only of the details present but also the power of flavours in a dish. Be it a local or international cuisine, flavours in a meal needs to be completed and what other way to have a perfect meal than serving Castello Banfi wines with your food?

Teodolinda Banfi was the first ever woman to start the Castello Banfi brand during the 19th century. The vineyard is built on high grounds over forests, mountains and hills where the temperature and soil is perfect to grow the freshest and juiciest grapes.

It's located at the Maremma coast – a historical monopoly of the Republic of Siena – the region's most attractive wine fields and Italy's most honoured vineyard estates. Castello Banfi has always been the favourite of chefs around Italy as well as food lovers, and we got to enjoy it first hand with dishes prepared by Chef Domenico Francone.

The first dish out of the kitchen was a sea bass *connolo* with celery and rock melon. Sea bass has a very strong river odour and not everyone enjoy the 'fishy' aftertaste. Thus, the dish was paired with the Vigne Regali Principessa Gavia Gavi, which is made up of 100% Cortese grapes. This white wine goes perfectly with any white meat, seafood, *hors d'oeuvres* and even poultry dishes. It's sweet, fruit forward and delicate to the throat; gently washing away the raw

seafood taste that lingers in your mouth and accentuating the natural sweetness of the sea bass and rock melon. An easy selection to start the night with, that's for sure.

When we were served the potato and lobster *agnolotti* with tarragon pesto after the appetiser, half of table gulped down this delightful dish in a matter of seconds. This dish was served with the San Angelo, made from 100% Pinot Grigio grapes,

which goes seamlessly with seafood. The food may be overloaded with flavours but this rich and very persistent white wine works to cleanse the throat to prepare you for your next dish. Take note that it's best to finish your dish before sipping on the San Angelo. Having the wine between mouthfuls isn't a bad thing, but not the best when it comes to being able to taste the wine as a whole.

Next we were then served the

homemade *tagliatelle* with winter vegetables and pecorino cheese. The *tagliatelle* is light and airy but the cheese could come off as too heavy for some. However, the taste comes together beautifully when paired with the Chianti Classico Riserva, made exclusively from Sangiovese grapes. The salty and pungent taste of the cheese blends nicely with the hint of spice found in this red wine, which goes really well with

any Tuscan cuisine and any Italian meat dishes. A self-appreciating Friday night in with a plate of spaghetti meatballs and a generous amount of parmesan with a glass of Chianti Classico Riserva anyone?

Not long after, we found our tables filled with huge plates of Black Angus tenderloin served with sautéed spinach, fresh *porcini* mushrooms and Brunello di Montalcino wine sauce – the wine was also served straight up to pair with the





Clockwise from top
Dumpling with Pumpkin Sauce; Scallop on Rice Biscuits; Milk and Chocolate Croccante with Caramel Biscuit Ice Cream; Ovetto di Cioccolato

Right
Principessa Gavia Gavi; Rosa Regale; San Angelo



dish. Also made from the Sangiovese grapes, the texture of the red wine is smooth and velvety with a great combination of liquorice, spices and light *goudron* note. Hence why the ingredient is perfect for cooking as well. Apart from that, we were also served the Poggio All' Oro Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 2004, the taste is slightly stronger – recommended to sip after you are done with your meal. Both these wines are of the same family line and they blend fantastically with red and game meats as

well as aged cheeses. Of course, you shouldn't miss out on desserts paired with wine. The milk chocolate *croccante* with caramel biscuit ice cream served was really sweet, rich and thick with flavours. Eating it on its own will induce a high diabetic risk, but when served with the Rosa Regale dessert wine made 100% from the Brachetto grapes, it became the perfect ending note to the dinner. It's soft and smooth with berries and Bulgarian rose flavours with a good mixture of almond

Clockwise from top
Chef Domenico Francone; Uovo Cotto; Ravioli with pumpkin sauce
4) Black Angus tenderloin

Left
Poggio All'Oro; Chianti Classico Riserva



and nutmeg essence. There's a perfect blend of bitterness and sweetness with sparkly bubbles to take away the sugariness of the dessert. In other words, the Rosa Regale acts as a 'mouth washer'. This wine goes impeccably with fruitcakes, pastries and chocolate desserts. So sit back, unbuckle your belt to let your tummy free and enjoy this ruby red goodness as you unwind the last few minutes before bed.

Some people drink wine for the sake of it but some are really particular with the notes that go with the different types of food. Castello Banfi has created a range of wine for us to pair our meals with for an exquisite palette experience.