

Hotel Vagabond

media coverage table

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Putting the art in artisanal cooking

5th Quarter (Opens in September)
Hotel Vagabond, 39 Syed Alwi Road
☎ 6291-1936

Opens: Tues to Sun, noon-2.30pm,
6pm-10.30pm; Closed on Mon
www.5thquarter.com.sg

COME next month, the arts will take centre stage in unexpected territory - the new luxury boutique hotel Hotel Vagabond in Syed Alwi Road.

Not only will there be specially-curated artworks decorating the walls, it will also be the first hotel in Singapore to offer an "Artist in Residence" programme, emphasising writing, photography, and performance art. They will even have an Artist Cocktail Hour every evening at 6pm, where guests can meet and talk with the artists in residence.

"We want guests to feel truly immersed in an artistic and vibrant environment when they visit us," says the hotel's owner, Indian-born luxury real estate developer and boutique hotelier Satinder Garcha.

'Good food is a basic requirement but you need to also be unique. We want to always add a different dimension to our offerings. Concept, food, service, ambiance are all equally important to the modern restaurant.'

Entrepreneur Loh Lik Peng



ARTISTIC BENT

5th Quarter (artist's rendering above) will offer lesser-known cuts of meat, cooked on a Jospier grill, as well as elements of smoking, curing, and pickling; chef Nocente (right) will also be making his own charcuterie in-house. PHOTOS: 5TH QUARTER

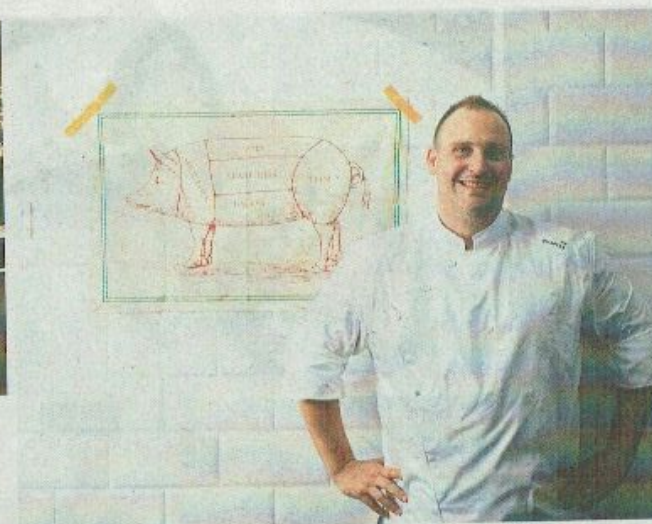
It's for that reason that he has chosen to collaborate with hospitality group Unlisted Collection, by entrepreneur Loh Lik Peng, to have their latest restaurant 5th Quarter in its premises. He explains: "5th Quarter is not just a plain grill but a charcuterie with a strong artistic bent in terms of how the meats are prepared and cured ... I feel Loh Lik Peng's philosophy is very much in line with that of Garcha Hotels - We both look to work with heritage buildings in historic surroundings, with each

concept being unique and fitting the individual personality of the premises."

5th Quarter is a contemporary grill restaurant focusing on cured meats and charcuterie (cold cooked meats), and its executive chef Andrew Nocente describes the concept as one which showcases "lesser-used or lesser-known cuts of meat, as well as techniques that highlight these cuts".

The menu will feature meat cooked on a Jospier grill, as well as elements of smoking, curing, and pickling. Although the selection of dishes isn't entirely fixed yet, some examples include a rum-cured pork belly and salt & pepper tripe. The chef will also be making his own charcuterie like salami, saliccia, lardo, and coppa in-house.

"Charcuterie was the first skill I learned when I was young and living on a farm," says chef Nocente, who used to work at the steakhouse SKIRT at W Singapore.



"Once a year we used to butcher a pig and cow, from this we would make charcuterie. I can still remember waking up early slaughtering the beast and my mum cooking the brains and other offal for breakfast. Fresh is best," he recalls.

For Mr Loh, he believes having a strong concept is key an increasingly essential ingredient for a restaurant to survive in today's competitive restaurant scene.

He says: "I think it works as a package. Good food is a basic requirement but you need to also be unique. We want to always add a different dimension to our offerings. Concept, food, service, ambiance are all equally important to the modern restaurant ... We try to make sure the customer has a good time and can get something from us that he can't get elsewhere. It's really as simple as that."

rachloi@sph.com.sg
@RachellLoiBT