

KITCHEN ARENA

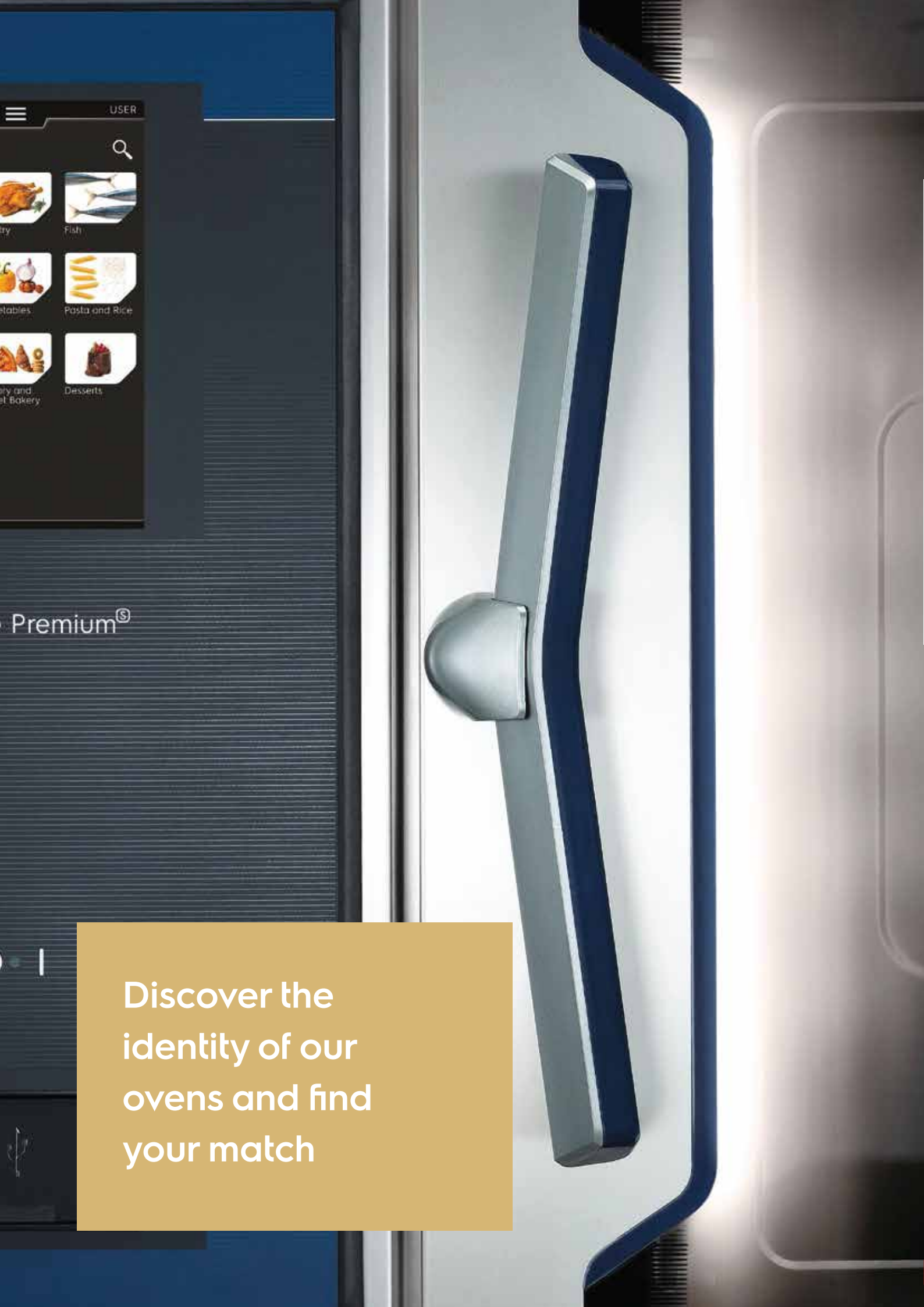
ISSUE 02

Simplifying Choices



The Future of F&B





Discover the
identity of our
ovens and find
your match

SkyLine Premium^s

Up to +10% extra profit** thanks to green efficiency technology. SkyLine Premium^s offers smart technology, unmatched usability and uncompromising, truly replicable performance.



Automatic mode

Simple and fast to use automatic cycles for all food types and 11 new **special cooking Cycles**†.

Program mode

Save, organize into categories, and share up to **1.000 recipes** via USB or OnE connectivity.

OptiFlow

Perfect, even cooking results thanks to revolutionary high-tech **OptiFlow** air distribution system which guarantees uniform heat distribution.

6-sensor probe as standard

Precise measurement of the exact core temperature of your food.

Lambda sensor as standard

Precise real-time measurement and control over the humidity in the Oven chamber.

Touch panel

Super-intuitive, simple-to-learn and -use and customizable touch screen interface designed to make life easy. Color-blind friendly. Available in over 30 different languages.

101 humidity settings

Add variety to your cooking with **101 humidity settings** from 0% to 100% boiler-generated steam, with automatic exhaust valve opening for extra crispy food

OnE connectivity ready

SkyLine Premium^s connectivity gives real time access to your appliance from any smart device.

Advanced features

Simplify your life and make your workflow leaner by personalizing your **SkyHub homepage** with your favorite functions. Use **MyPlanner** to plan your daily work and receive personalized alerts for your tasks. **Plan-n-Save** organizes your loads in the most time- and energy-efficient way possible.

FIRST in the industry for Plan-n-Save

SkyClean

Cut your cleaning costs up to 15%***. Flawless cleaning results, **green functions** and **automatic boiler descaling** and Flexible choice of 3 different chemicals to serve you better: **solid, liquid or 96% biodegradable**** enzymatic**.

An extra effortless benefit

Stress-free efficiency and productivity with **SkyDuo**. Anticipating your needs with the self-intuitive connection between SkyLine Premium^s Ovens and SkyLine Chill^s and viceversa. The appliances guide you through the Cook&Chill process.

Touch panel

Boiler

Triple-glass door*

OptiFlow

Sky Hub

Lambda sensor

Sky Clean

Sky Duo

Human-Centered Design

Green Spirit



* Green version (dedicated models) thanks to the insulated triple-glass door

FROM THE EDITOR



The first quarter of 2020 has been a trying and terrible time for many communities around the world. Whether you're in China, Australia, or Italy, the COVID-19 infection has forced a significant portion of the population to retreat into the safety of their homes. Not to mention that it has caused a ridiculous wave of people panic-buying toilet roll. But for what exactly? No idea. Your guess is probably as good as mine.

Fast forward a few months into the new normal, and everything seems a little bleaker than it had been when we entered the first phase of the Movement Control Order. In this post 'Rona landscape, it is easy to see how much things have changed. Malls are now mere monuments bearing witness to the increasing appeal of online shopping, highways have become a ghost of their usual congested self and getting a haircut seems to be the pinnacle of luxury.

The F&B scene for one, is irrevocably transformed as the culture of communal dining seems to be undergoing a revolution. It is a well-known fact that Malaysians are especially fond of dining in large groups of people, but now, all this must change. Even when we are finally allowed to venture out to public places under the significantly relaxed Conditional Movement Control Order, there will always be the lingering threat of a dangerous, invisible enemy (at least until a vaccine is found and everyone gets a shot, pun intended).

In the midst of restaurant and hotel closures across the country, it is not surprising that this has inadvertently led to the slowdown of commercial equipment purchase. And therein lies the challenge of reinvention and sustainability in a time when home-based businesses and food delivery services have seemingly struck gold.

But while things will never be the same again, sometimes change can be for the better. For instance, we have witnessed the rise of cloud kitchens, but it never really got this big until the virus struck. Not to mention that the delivery economy suddenly boomed and we are made to witness just how much we have come to depend on delivery workers. And all of a sudden, gig jobs became so much more attractive to the general population as an increasing number of people are being laid off.

As we slowly come to terms with the new state of the world we live in, it is time for us to focus on the little things that foster happiness and gratitude.

Nathelie Tay

New Openings 3 restaurant opening



Momosita

This self-service taco bar is a brand-new casual concept housed in a loud, cheery space. The vibrant energy is further accentuated by regular musical events and pop-up performances.

@ Momo's Kuala Lumpur, Chow Kit



108 Matcha Saro

This is the first Malaysian outlet of the famous Hokkaido matcha speciality shop. Here, matcha ranges supreme, with offerings ranging from soft-serve to parfait, warabi mochi and of course, their signature Obanyaki.

@ Lot 251, Level 2, Suria KLCC Mall, KL



YEES Yogurt

This drinkable yogurt brand hails from Sydney, Australia. With more than 20 different flavours such as Acai, Purple Rice and Bird's Nest, all their drinks are made with top-quality fresh Jersey milk from a local dairy farm.

@ various locations across the country

THE FUTURE OF F&B

It is no surprise that Malaysians have a great love for food, and that has translated into a significant market for the local F&B industry. With an annual growth rate of 25.5 percent, the foodservice industry is primed for a myriad of developments and 2020, in particular, will be an exciting year for consumers and entrepreneurs alike.

As industries and communities around the world are reeling from the coronavirus' raging transmission, one of the many things that has changed is the way people interact with each other. With social distancing being a part of the new norm, booking apps such as Offpeak are due to make a major comeback. The Malaysian-based startup operates via an app that offers off-peak hours dining at discounted prices. Certainly, its biggest draw will be that eating out can be easier on the pocket depending on what time you're dining, but with the COVID-19 pandemic having reared its frightful head, it is also the smarter way to dine. Essentially a booking app, it allows diners to plan ahead for dine-in and at the same time, limit contact with other patrons. By utilizing the downtime at an establishment, it also gives the staff ample time to wipe down and sanitize every crevice, ensuring the safest environment possible for dining.

Frozen meal prep delivery has also emerged as the next big thing. While food delivery services were previously confined to ready to eat meals and not so much to the raw, frozen side of things, the onset of the pandemic has prompted many to begin stockpiling food with frozen foods becoming the ideal choice in the face of potential food shortages. At the same time, concern over food waste, demand for customizable diets and a desire for simple meals, has been driving the preference for frozen foods even before then. With many restaurants switching to food delivery as a way to stay afloat during lockdown, the foray into frozen meal delivery was a natural progression that will only continue on. Unlike hot food delivery which must be consumed with a period of time, frozen food can be stored for longer and kept as a last resort for days when one doesn't feel like cooking from scratch. From the businesses' standpoint, it is also a model that allows them to work at scale, preserve food and reduce food waste.

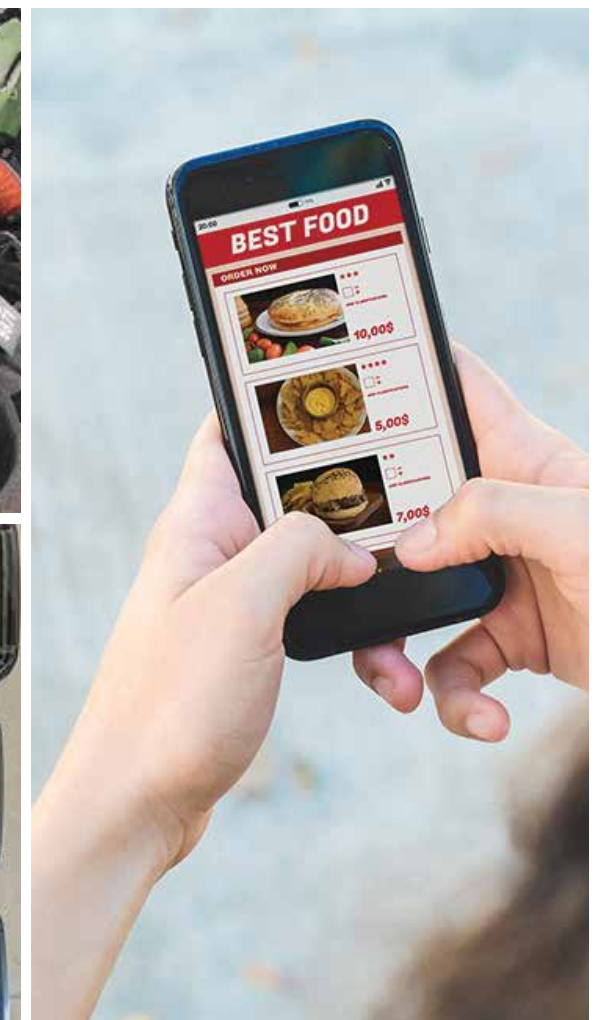
A secondary economy, namely that of the prosumer market for kitchen equipment is also on the rise. With the coronavirus outbreak having resulted in widespread unemployment, many previously-employed individuals have resorted to starting home-based food businesses and the response is, to say the least, very encouraging. It is a section of the industry that has a low barrier to entry and many are accommodating to the extra orders by simply utilizing their existing setup to produce more volume. However, it is not always possible to scale up production when the equipment used is better suited to small-scale domestic usage. To that end, commercial kitchen equipment manufacturers are coming up with new products for the prosumer market range, hoping to recapture the drop in sales of their commercial equipment segment.



With the surge in home-based food enterprises, consumers are also afforded with more choices of home-cooked meals. What used to be a small pool of home-styled offerings of lunch boxes and loaf cakes have expanded into a veritable selection of paella kits, seasonings, luncheon meats, Japanese cream puffs and so on. Whether it's the heightened awareness about the use of high quality ingredients or the assurance of knowing the person who is cooking it, the appeal of homely food is experiencing a resurgence. It is also a way for many to show their support for those who have become a casualty of the coronavirus-fuelled layoffs.

Another rising trend is that of cloud kitchens, a result of the growing popularity of food delivery and ordering apps, along with the ever-changing customer behaviour. Also referred to as ghost kitchens or dark kitchens, these kitchens occupy no physical space and have no dine-in or takeaway facility. It exists digitally by relying on third-party integrations or home delivery orders. Unlike conventional kitchens that require a physical location, operators can save on rental and overhead costs, while simultaneously increasing their profitability without the need for the physical infrastructure of a full-fledged restaurant. Cloud kitchens are also emerging as the investment of choice for existing and new entrants to the food business.

Then, there is big data analytics. As foodservice is a highly dynamic industry, there is understandably a large amount of information and insights for the taking. It can encompass everything from production to distribution, from sourcing to supply and all the people within the industry. By using big data, operators can obtain important data that will help them make informed decisions on processes and product selection. As for consumers, the data collected from their interactions and usage patterns via apps or social media can be used to provide them with a more personalized experience. The use of big data also helps the collection of real-time data which is then used by food delivery companies to ensure smoother deliveries and efficient functioning of the system. Elsewhere in the kitchen, big data is also paving the way for smarter equipment which will eventually lead to more efficient production and better purchasing decisions. As technology becomes more prevalent than ever, the move towards a data-driven culture is inevitable and it is only expected to impact more and more areas of operations across the foodservice landscape.



OUR STORY

KITCHEN ARENA

MARKETPLACE

The Marketplace is the latest venture by Kitchen Arena.

As a business entity that started off as an online retailer of commercial kitchen equipment, we are aware of the wastages that occur in the industry. When restaurateurs who had invested so much in their kitchen equipment decide to cease operations, moving on to their next gig could be an expensive and wasteful affair.

Inspired by the online marketplaces that sell anything and everything, our marketplace focuses on used commercial kitchen equipment. While we believe that new equipment should be anyone's first choice, some may prefer to opt for pre-owned equipment.

This is very much our way of making commercial kitchen equipment more accessible to everyone who has ever entertained notions of setting up their own F&B establishment. Whether it is an economic decision or pre-startup jitters, it does make a certain sense to start small and eventually scale up when business is looking up.

In much the same way as our sister site, the Marketplace offers the largest inventory of preloved commercial kitchen equipment. Choose from a variety of kitchen equipment to satisfy all your food equipment needs. We have plenty of used equipment to suit all price points.

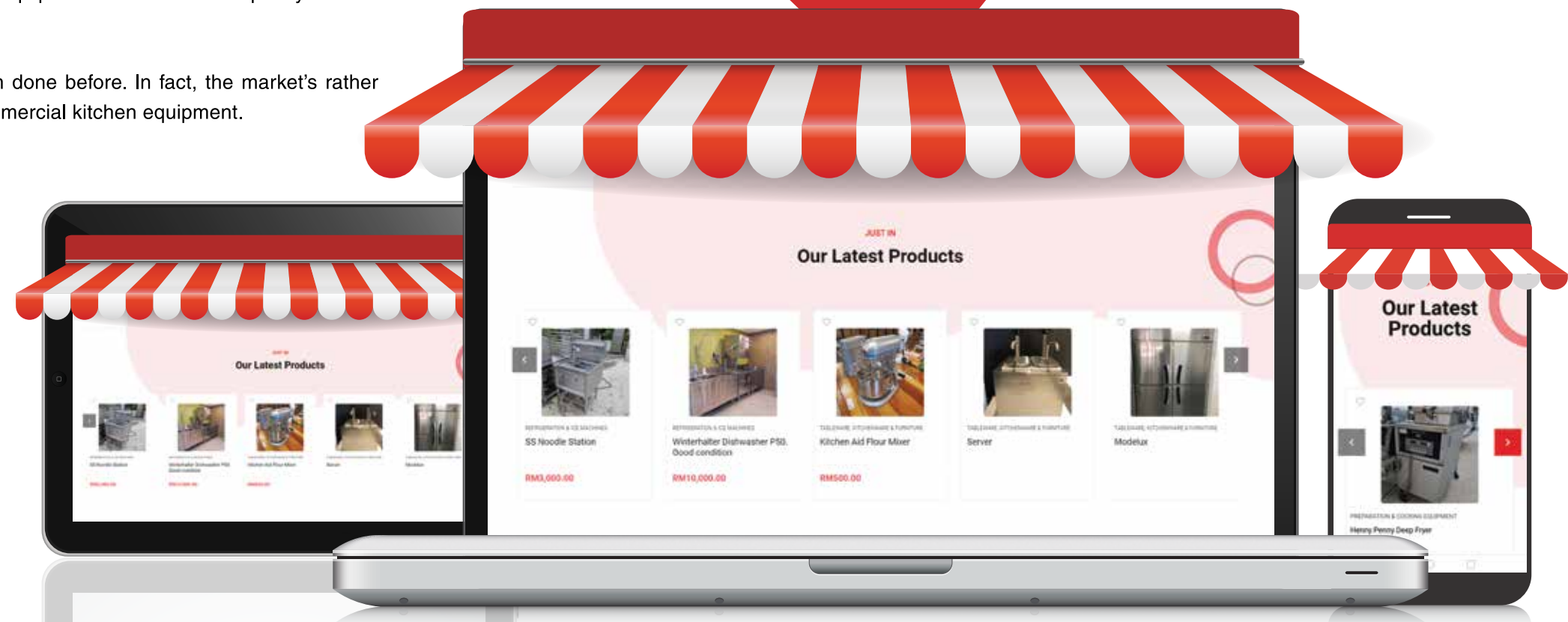
That is not to say that the trading of used kitchen equipment has never been done before. In fact, the market's rather saturated but no one has done it quite like us with a dedicated platform for commercial kitchen equipment.

As with all marketplaces, this marketplace is catered to vendors and buyers alike. At this moment, the primary role of this marketplace is to connect sellers with buyers. Unlike the Kitchen Arena website which comes replete with various payment methods for online purchase, the eventual purchase of the used equipment occurs offline.

We believe this is the best for transactions to take place in a safe, confident environment where user satisfaction is paramount. We do our utmost to screen the listings and ensure that all listings are accurate.



SELL HERE





INTERVIEW KA TEAM



Lee Zhen Foong
Web Developer



Lee Kar Phing
Assistant Sales & Operation Manager

Kitchen Arena: What kind of improvements would you like to see at Kitchen Arena?

Kar Phing: I hope that we can Increase the public awareness about Kitchen Arena's online platform. When people want to buy kitchen equipment, they will think of us and buy from our online store.

KA: How does being in Kitchen Arena contribute to your personal development?

KP: Being here is an opportunity for me to acquire more kitchen equipment knowledge. It also helped to improve my skill and ability in time management and planning. For example, when I have to make arrangements with external parties (suppliers, customers) and our staff.

KA: We have recently launched our Marketplace. Do you see any potential in that direction, and if so, why?

KP: Yes, as it is a new platform specifically for the public to sell or buy used equipment.

KA: Tell us something about yourself that your colleagues don't know

KP: I actually enjoy cooking, but it's something that I'm currently learning to be better at.



KA: What kind of improvements would you like to see at Kitchen Arena?

Zhen Foong: I see a lot of potential for Kitchen Arena to modernize its current business model. Kitchen Arena can launch product live channels and virtual reality (VR) showroom. Other than that, Kitchen Arena may provide better staff benefits to attract potential employees.

KA: How does being in Kitchen Arena contribute to your personal development?

ZF: In Kitchen Arena, I have learned how to deploy various IT solutions to improve current business especially by handling website development projects. I have also learned to integrate SEO (Search Engine Optimization) and SEM (Search Engine Marketing) into our website to increase our website visibility in search engine results pages.

KA: We have recently launched our Marketplace. Do you see any potential in that direction, and if so, why?

ZF: Yes. We cannot stop waste production, but we can reduce the wastage with the 3R (Reuse, Reduce, Recycle) concept to make a significant contribution. Besides that, it can help the seller to generate income from their used equipment and the buyer can save money by purchasing used kitchen equipment. This is a win-win situation for all parties.

KA: Tell us something about yourself that your colleagues don't know

ZF: Besides my web development skill, I also have experience in mobile app (Android) and artificial intelligence development skill. I hope that I can apply those skills to the future of Kitchen Arena by using big data.



CHEFTOP MIND.MapTM ZERO



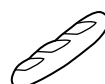
35 minutes
full load
of roasted potatoes



3 minutes
full load
of fried eggs



28 minutes
full load
of steamed potatoes



14 minutes
full load
of frozen demi-baguettes

up to 80%
Less water compared to
cooking in boiling water

High Quality



Low Price

12 minutes
full load
of sea bass fillet (0.3kg)



50 minutes
full load
of yellow curry chicken



26 minutes
full load
of steamed rice



22 minutes
full load
of frozen croissant

up to 40%
Less energy compared to
a traditional grill

Now everyone can own an affordable
combi oven in the kitchen.

WHAT'S TRENDING

With bubble teas slowly losing their appeal to the masses, yogurt drinks are the next big thing. In comparison to the brown sugar drinks that have always come under fire for its high sugar content, the latter does appear to be a healthier option.

On its own, plain unsweetened yogurt is loaded with nutrients. Whether it's to help regulate bowel movements, promote a healthy gut or fight infections, the addition of yogurt into drinks is a simple way to reap its health benefits.

This, paired with fresh fruits appears to be a winning combo that has successfully captured the taste buds of Malaysian drinkers coming down from a boba high. To put it into context, a single street in Cheras is now home to Tien Tien Yogurt, HEY! I AM YOGOST and YEES Yogurt.

We can certainly see the appeal of these vibrant, tart drinks, and we're hooked!





IN FOCUS

STEVE POI



When we first got to know about MyDapur, it was through the brand Naixer that they were bringing in for the Malaysian market. And the brand might sound as unfamiliar to you as it was for us.

It is for good reason that MyDapur takes it upon themselves to bring these brands to market when no one else would. Being a Chinese brand, it is bound to draw a certain dismissive response but it is, in fact, giving much-established brands a run for their money.

We had the opportunity to sit down with the owner, Steve Poi. to get to know his business, and what he has in store for the company for the rest of the year.



KA: What were you doing before this?

SP: You could probably tell from my surname that I was one of the guys behind F&B Equipment. I was their technical head for the entire region back then and what I did there was manage all the technical aspects of the company's operation. I created their spare parts ordering system which I think is still being used until today.

KA: I suppose you could say that spare parts are the focus of your business at MyDapur?

SP: Well, you could. But it wouldn't be quite the right way to describe what we are doing here. Currently 70% of our business is in providing after sales service and what that means is that we deal in spare parts, preventative maintenance contracts and chain account breakdown calls.

We also work very closely with the factories for brands such as Rational, Electrolux, Welbilt, to name a few. In this regard, we will be the one servicing those who use their machines during the warranty period.

To put it in one way, you could say that the factories are our indirect clients and the end users are the paying customers.



KA: Your company's motto is "changing the world through smart kitchen solutions", can you elaborate?

SP: Our area of business is focused on high-tech kitchen equipment, such as combi ovens and dishwashers. Our customers are predominantly those with a huge business volume and also the big boys such as Ecolab, Winterhalter, including dealers such as Allied, NKR. In addition to dealing with the factories, we also deal with wholesalers from US, Japan, Korea, Europe, China, so what we do is actually for the industry across the board.

We consolidate plenty of spare parts, and by being the go-to supplier for these sort of things, we are providing a solution whereby clients can rest easy knowing we have all the technical aspects covered. This way we can change the perception that having a high-tech kitchen is troublesome and encourage businesses to embrace smarter, newer tech to really bring their business to the next level and catch up with the global market. We are all about transferring knowledge to the right people, and transforming kitchens for the better.



KA: What sets MyDapur apart from the rest?

SP: When you get into the equipment business, after sales plays the biggest role. I daresay that it is our strength which allows us to beat so many other players, no matter big or small. We also know the equipment thoroughly. Take for instance, dishwashers. We provide the whole solution including chemicals and dispenser. A lot of the major players outsource chemicals, But we buy in bulk from OEM manufacturers with Halal cert and we get the dispenser. Why? Because we know the dispensers very well.

KA: What has been the best part about being in this business?

SP: I always love to help clients to create new food trends in the industry. Seeing F&B companies successfully open and doing great in their business gives me a sense of satisfaction and they are also indirectly giving the public new exposure to the latest food and beverage trends. On the other hand, I also help to resolve after sales issues in the market for foodservice equipment manufacturers and also major clients. By being able to solve the unthinkable parts and service issues that the F&B players are facing daily gives me a great sense of purpose and fulfillment. It is the reason we have sold more than 200 brands of parts in the 7 years since MyDapur was incorporated.

KA: If you could give a piece of advice to yourself when you first started this business, what would it be?

SP: Hard work, dedication and be prepared to work during the holidays.

KA: What would you like to see from the local foodservice industry? As in how F&B business owners can help the industry grow in terms of equipment usage and demand?

SP: In the current situation, F & B players need to adopt more automated or higher efficiency foodservice equipment. They need to be willing to spend either to reduce the reliance on manual labour or increase production to support delivery services such as Grab, Foodpanda, DeliveryEat and etc. The older model where businesses rely on dine-in customers will not be a profitable model anymore. The change have to begin now.

To our fellow foodservice vendors, please promote higher productivity and more efficiency equipment; and stop pushing those outdated machines to the market where we as whole also should be responsible when the market fails.

MECA+

NEUTRAL ELECTROLYZED WATER

Disinfection: Sodium Hypochlorite (NaOCl)





COMBI OVEN



Combi ovens are one of the most important equipment in commercial kitchens. It is a highly versatile equipment that works by cooking food using steam, convection or a combination of both.

As such, having the right combi oven for your operation is of paramount importance. With the right one, you will be able to enjoy major savings in terms of time, energy, space and money.

Below is a comparison of combi ovens from the top four brands in the market.

MODEL	RATIONAL SCC61E	UNOX XEVC-0511-EPRM	CONVOTHER M 4 easyTouch 6.10 EB	ELECTROLUX SkyLine Premium
DIMENSIONS	847 x 776 x 782mmH	750 x 773 x 675mmH	876 x 794 x 762mmH	867 x 775 x 808mmH
WEIGHT (KG)	111	70	111	137
TECHNICAL DATA				
CAPACITY	6 GN1/1	5 GN1/1	6 GN1/1	6 GN1/1
TEMPERATURE RANGE	30-300°C	30-260°C	30-250°C	25-300°C
USER INTERFACE	8.5" touch screen	9.5" touch screen	9" full-touch screen	Touch screen
NUMBER OF PROGRAMS	1200 with up to 12 steps	384	399 with up to 20 steps	1000 with up to 126 steps
SAFETY FEATURES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HACCP data output and software update.• Safety temperature limiter for steam generator and hot-air heating.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Automatic fan stop on opening the door• Power modulation of electricity or gas depending on actual need	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Door handle with safety latch and sure-shut function• Data storage for HACCP and pasteurization figures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fitted with integrated door shields• Extra safety with special 30° stop position to prevent the door from swinging out
CLEANING & CARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7 cleaning stages for unsupervised cleaning and care - even overnight• 100% biodegradable Cleaner and Care tabs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choice of double concentration or eco friendly detergent and rinse aid• Water filtering and reverse osmosis filtering systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Four selectable cleaning levels• Fully automatic dispensing of cleaning fluid• Final steam-disinfection and drying cycles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flexible choice of 3 different chemicals: solid, liquid or 85% biodegradable enzymatic• Automatic boiler descaling
ACCESSORIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ventless condensation hood• Software to operate units from computer• Preventative maintenance kits• Mobile oven racks and finishing plate racks• Transport trolley for mobile oven and plate racks• Heat shield• Condensation breaker	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ventless hood• Air extraction system add-ons• Smoking kit• Cooking and holding oven• Neutral cabinet• Plate rack, mobile shelf rack, transport trolley, thermal cover• Washing kit• WiFi and 3G connectivity kit• Wheels kit with safety chains	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Condensation hood with grease and odour filter• HACCP and cooking profile management PC software• External operating-state indicator• Banquet system• Plate rack, mobile shelf rack, transport trolley, thermal cover• Racks in GN or BM versions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• External connection kit for liquid detergent and rinse aid• Castor kit for base• Probe holder for liquids• Universal skewer rack kit• Plate rack, mobile shelf rack, transport trolley, thermal blanket• Washing kit• Heat shield
WARRANTY	2 Years	1 Year	1 Year	2 Years



▲ RATIONAL SELFCOOKING CENTER
ELECTRIC COMBI OVEN 10 TRAY 2/1
GN (3NAC 415V) SCC 102E



◀ ROBOT COUPE VEGETABLE
PREPARATION MACHINES
CL 50 ULTRA



GTEK DISHWASHER ▶
GT-D1MTC



▼ TAMAGO EGG BOILER TC-50



TAYLOR SOFT SERVE FREEZER ▶
SINGLE FLAVOR C152



◀ AFTERNOON
SNOW ICE FLAKES
MACHINE CIM-209WT



CAJYUTTA ▶
FRUIT JUICER
CJT3-04



▲ CONVOTHERM
4 ELECTRIC BOILER 10.20
C4ET10.20 EBDD



ONE STEP MOBILE ▶
AND WASH SINK



▲ HOSHIZAKI SUSHI SHOWCASE



FRESER FRUCTOSE DOSING ▶
MACHINE ET-9EN



▲ AR CAKE DISPLAY CHILLER



▲ UNOX BAKERLUX



◀ MARUZEN AUTOMATIC
NOODLE BOILER
(330MM) MRY-L03L



◀ VULCAN ENDURANCE SERIES
36" ELECTRIC RANGE WITH
3 HOT TOPS & OVEN BASE
EV36S3HT240



▼ MECA PLUS DISINFECTANT WATER
5 LITERS & 20 LITERS



▼ POWERLINE MICROWAVE OVEN
PRC511TS-B



▲ ONE STEP SOAP AND
SANITIZER STAND



REDOR UPRIGHT ▼

BARGAIN HUNTER

RESTAURANT REVIEW UO SHUO



It is a well-known fact that the Hartamas neighborhood is known for its Japanese expat population. This explains the high concentration of Japanese restaurants that have sprouted up in recent years. The latest of these restaurants is Uo Shuo, a restaurant that has taken up space at Plaza Damas.

It may only be just 2 weeks old, but this restaurant is no newbie. Prior to this visit, I was told by a close friend that the owner and chef was also the person behind Kushiya Kuni. At the time of my visit, the previous yakitori place, also located in Plaza Damas is currently being run by a different management team.

Having dined at his establishment before, I knew I had to come here for the sushi. Plans were made and here we are, eager to satisfy our craving for Japanese food on a humid weeknight.

If you're someone who rarely ventures out into this neck of the woods, it might be a little difficult to find. For us, we had no difficulty in locating it on the upper levels of the plaza. From the outside, Uo Shuo looks like your typical Japanese restaurant.

Judging by the bouquets upon bouquets of flowers on its entrance, clearly its opening have been welcome news for those in the know.

We arrived at the rather deserted block, and save for a few cars parked by the curbside, there wasn't much of a crowd. Or so we thought.



We slid the paper-screen doors to the sight of a well-stocked chiller filled with Japanese sake, wine and champagne. In our minds, we were already jumping ahead with what to order, but alas, a waitress materialized and informed us that all seats were taken. She reassured us though that we could leave our names and it will take about 30 minutes or so for a table to become available.

Well, we're not about to brave all the after work traffic for naught, so we decided to wait.

As promised, we were seated half an hour later and wasted no time in flipping through the menu. It was a straightforward, no-frills affair with pages punctuated by simple images of its specialty offerings. Think crafted appetizers and desserts that are perfectly matched to go with their otsumami and sushi dishes.

A glance around the restaurant revealed a majority of Japanese diners, which is a good indication of its authenticity.

For the two of us, we ordered a Salmon ikura don and a Kaisendon for our mains. And of course sashimi, which was well-presented on a platter consisting of 5 kinds of items with 2 slices of each.

When our cameras had eaten enough, we dived into the well-portioned kaisendon and salmon ikura don. Suffice to say, it was absolutely delicious and comparable to those served in many of the other restaurants we've dined in before.

As for the sashimi, it was equally good and pretty fresh. The tako was succulent and you'll notice that there's quality in the selection of fish that they use. The maguro and hirame were super fresh that it actually bounced back.



Overall Restaurant Rating

Cleanliness - ★★★★★

Food - ★★★★★☆

Price - ★★★★★☆

WIR - Definitely Yes!!

Address: N-1-4, Plaza Damas,
Jalan Sri Hartamas 1, Sri Hartamas.

Open daily: 12pm-2.30pm, 6pm-11.30pm.

Tel: 03-6211-1771

CAFE REVIEW GOOD LUCK KOPITIAM 好彩南洋茶室



With most university lessons being relegated to online classes, there is no better time to visit one of the most recent additions to the UCSI University neighborhood. As anyone who has studied there or had reasons to visit the area regularly knows, the congestion here is horrendous. Not to mention that parking here is always a nightmare with cars parked at every available corner, much to the annoyance of students and non-students alike.

Good Luck Kopitiam is yet another addition to the local kopitiam scene, bringing a dose of nostalgia via its eye catching pastel green hue to the student-populated locale. It occupies a corner lot that was previously home to yet another kopitiam, lending it a spacious and airy feel. There is a choice of either indoor and outdoor seating.

As soon as we entered, it was plain to see that the outlet drew its design elements from the Hong Kong style “chaa chaan teng”. Think mosaic tiles, marble tabletops, wood furnishings and vintage neon signages on the walls. At the outdoor area, lush greeneries were used to great effect to bring out the green color scheme.

The menu was handed to us as we sat down and we immediately looked through it, fully intending to get our orders in before the lunch crowd arrived. My dining companion took less than a split second to order his chicken rice while it took me significantly more time flipping back and forth to finally pick mine. Dry-style pan mee, it is.

The rest of the menu was populated by the usual Malaysian favourites, such as curry mee, onion omelette rice, nasi lemak and chee cheong fun. Other food items include dim sum, toasts, swiss roll, old school butter cakes, kaya and tong sui.

Unable to resist, we ordered a mix sauce chee cheong fun and kaya-shredded coconut bun to share.



In the drinks section, you can expect the usual suspects of coffee, herbal teas and soy milk. The particular standout, however, was ‘Hor Ga Sai’ which literally translates to ‘Tiger bites lion’ in the Hokkien dialect and is widely available in Taiping. For drinks, we opted for a hot cham and a kopi-peng.

When the chicken rice was served, it became quickly apparent to us that the chicken rice was good stuff. Succulent, moist cuts of chicken were topped with fragrant garlic oil that hits the nose before we even began eating. A spoonful of the chicken oil-and-garlic-infused rice was enough to confirm our thoughts on how good it is, and the chicken only further substantiated the fact. The ginger garlic and chili provided on the side were the perfect dipping sauce.

Next, the pan mee arrived, and presentation-wise, it looks like your standard bowl. To be honest, there’s really not much to pan mee, at least not visually, so it was expected. It was topped with generous servings of spring onion, anchovies, black fungus, mushroom and minced pork. Once it was all tossed together, every bite of the rough-cut noodles was flavourful and coated with just the right amount of soy sauce. The belacan chili was equally good and the sweet leaf soup was a comforting touch.

The chee cheong fun came after, along with the bun. It was a decently-sized plate with plenty of fried shallots and dried shrimps to give it enough bite. The sweet sauce was more on the mellower side of things and personally, I prefer it sweeter. In comparison, the chili packs a much stronger punch.

The bun was fluffy on the outside and oozing with their homemade kaya and a cut of cold butter. It was a nice size to get a bite of everything inside. Coffee was mediocre, despite being a frothy, chilled concoction. The same goes with the cham, which had a higher proportion of tea to coffee.

Overall Restaurant Rating

Cleanliness - ★★★★★

Food - ★★★★★☆

Price - ★★★★★☆

WIR - If I'm in the neighborhood, perhaps.

Address: No. 49 G, Jalan Menara Gading 1, Taman Connaught, Cheras.

Open daily: 8.30am – 8pm

Tel: 03-9107 8978

INTERVIEW WITH BUSINESS OWNERS WILDFLOWERS

Recently, Petaling Street has become a hotbed for various new F&B openings. Of course, the street itself has always attracted a steady stream of tourists but locals, probably not so much.

However, the opening of Kwai Chai Hong which is an alley of shophouses tucked in between Jalan Petaling and Lorong Panggung, has reinvigorated interest in this area of town. Ever since it came to be, local and foreign tourists alike have flocked to the history-rich lane of restored pre-war buildings for photo ops.

It eventually became the focal point for the many eateries that took up occupancy within said shophouses, their entrances opening up to the lane. Be that as it may, Wildflowers KL is the most visible, a lush modern presence occupying a corner lot that greets you as soon as you enter the area.

Wildflowers KL is operated by the folks behind one of KL's most popular cafe, Merchant's Lane that is still drawing huge crowds up till this day. We had the opportunity to speak to Ken, one of the partners who's usually taking charge of things in the restaurant.

KA: What were you doing before this?

Ken Ho: I was an engineer and then I was in finance. So I got back from Hong Kong in 2014 and I've been in the F&B industry since. I burned out, got tired and came back to Malaysia after being abroad since I was 19 years old. An old friend asked me to join him in his new business venture and here I am. I entered the industry selling pastries and coffee and then I got into kitchen stuff, opened a cafe and then finally a restaurant and bar.

KA: I'm certain that living abroad has had significant influence on you. Could you explain?

KH: Of course. I cannot imagine being able to come up with what I've had without it. I eat alot, many of which are at Michelin-starred places. It's like now i get to bring it back here, making the food attractive to a local person. Like a mass- market person, someone like my dad. Not only for those with a refined palate.

KA: Let's talk about your first cafe, Merchant's Lane, how did it come about?

KH: Having grown up on Petaling Street, I always knew that I will open my first cafe here. Our family had a shop here but a family acquaintance offered to rent to me the first floor that's now Merchant's Lane. Back then, Chinatown was a very rundown area.



KA: Merchant's Lane got famous pretty quickly, and everyone else was going there for the 'gram. How did its aesthetic came about?

That time, Instagram just took off, so we just based it all around the idea of what would make it big on social media. Even now, we exist as a very social media savvy brand. We went for East-meets-West and fusion. On one hand, we try to keep as much of the old as possible while on the other hand, everything else is modern and funky.

KA: With one cafe already to your name, what prompted the opening of Wildflowers?

KH: It wasn't supposed to happen when it did. I was waiting for the perfect location and the landlord proposed a nearby location to me that I didn't really like. Then he offered this corner lot to me and asked me to move Merchant's Lane here. I told him I'd start a new one. I was always ready to start something new so I decided that the new one will be an evolution of Merchant's Lane.

KA: Have you ever considered transforming Merchant's Lane into your vision for Wildflowers?

KH: I don't want to change Merchant's Lane. It's a one-of-a-kind cafe that I can never replicate. It also holds a personal meaning for me, so it's very close to my heart and it will always be the one and only.

KA: What sets Wildflowers apart from Merchant's Lane? Other than the obvious aesthetic aspect, of course.

KH: Wildflowers is a lot more experimental and ever-changing. It's an evolution for my staff and myself. There is more freedom over here, in terms of what we can offer on the menu. Wildflowers also serve alcohol. We pull in a lot of nighttime crowds and reservation is usually needed.

KA: Any plans to expand anytime soon?

KH: For a while, I was actually entertaining the idea of opening in Ipoh. But it didn't happen because I couldn't find a location and decided not to. Now, with Wildflowers, my hands are pretty full. If I'm opening another, it will probably be another Wildflowers but it will be more towards fine-dining. Or more accurately, finer than this current joint.

KA: What do you hope to see at Petaling Street?

KH: Currently, there is some rejuvenation happening at Petaling Street. But they should also clean up the middle parts. At the same time, I hope they could retain some of the grittiness and not feel like it's too sanitized. Singapore is one such example that feels like it has been stripped of many of its values. It has to be balanced, like now we still have some grittiness and the old vibe. Ho Kow is a good example of the so-called grittiness.

KA: How does our local F&B scene compare to those overseas?

KH: It's very weak here. It's not competitive and everyone's lazy. But of course, some of them are really good at what they do. I consider the people behind Red Bean Bag, The Owls Cafe and Yellow Brick Road as some of the people whom I respect and make things look cool. It's all about setting a standard.

KA: What is your recipe for success?

KH: Differentiation. And you also have to focus on everything. It's something that you have to look at everyday and you have to pour a lot of soul into it. It's like a plant. You need to water it every day and take care of it. You have to show up, take care of your people, respond to customers, create new things, maintain everything. And you have to want to do it. You have to be ready to cover and anchor the business. Here we are not looking at it as building a business or as an investment, looking at the returns and all that. It's not all about numbers. We care more about things like helping our staff grow and making sure that they are happy to work here.



UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH CT POS SOLUTIONS

These days, you'd notice that the setup at the cashier is entirely different from what it was many years back. Back then it used to house a bulky-looking cash register and over time, it began to take on the form of digitally integrated models.

This eventually led to the emergence of tablet-based point-of-sale (POS) systems which overcame the limitations of the cash register as we know it. From that point onwards, it became possible to manage every aspect of the business from a single POS with a tablet.

Chef Technology is one such company that specializes in offering POS systems as a business and management solution for F&B entities in the country. Recently we had the opportunity to speak to its founder, Max Toh about the business and to shed some light on what a POS system is.



KA: So, how did Chef Technology came about?

CT: Prior to this, we were already in the F&B industry, but it was in 2016 that an investor approached us with the idea to promote another type of service to their clients. Of course, we saw the potential of the new business and took it. Since networking and IT is something that we have always done, we know what we were getting into.

KA: This brings us to the next question, what is Chef Technology?

CT: It is the name which we registered the company with. We refer to ourselves as CT Pos Solutions, which is primarily a solutions company where we don't focus on selling a particular product. In this day and age, everyone can sell a product but we are much more than that. Our main line of business is selling solutions to help food business owners manage and streamline what they're doing. We build intelligent, integrated digital ecosystems for the F&B industry.

KA: Does that mean you don't represent a particular brand in the market?

CT: Actually we do. Our flagship product is the DINLR POS which is a strong cloud-based point-of-sale system but we don't emphasize too much on that. Instead, we'd like for people to think of our technicians as the focal point of what we're doing here.

As a service-centred entity, we want people to recognize our staff and how they're here to provide their expertise and knowledge. The products we carry are merely to complement them doing their best work for our clients.

KA: Can you explain what's a POS system?

CT: Point-of-sale system is a tool that helps to manage business transactions and streamline daily operations. It also plays an important role in optimizing the overall system performance. The 2 main components are hardware and software.

Some of the common hardware include register screen, barcode scanner, credit card reader, receipt printer and cash drawer. Software-wise, the options are more like enhancement modules which can be added on to the basic POS system function. These can include customer relationship management, inventory, kitchen display system, customer display system and so on.

KA: How much does a basic system typically cost?

CT: It will be around RM5,500 including a one-year software package and one set of hardware.

KA: Do you sell hardware too?

CT: Customers usually source their own hardware, but if they wish to get it from us, we do carry stocks for printers. We currently have two brands, Epson and Star Micronics because these are more stable and we are confident that our customers can rely on them.

KA: With so many brands in the market, what makes DINLR POS different from some of the established names in the market?

CT: First let me clarify one thing. We are more F&B oriented than the other systems available out there. Our system can generate very detailed reports. For example, it can tell you how much of your orders are from dine-in, delivery and takeout orders.

In addition, what sets DINLR apart from the rest is that it offers a scalable solution and also creates an ecosystem. By scalable, we mean that the system keeps adding on new features. It's not a system that just exists but evolves, and keeps giving back to the clients. For instance, you are currently operating a cafe and you want to open a fast food outlet next. So these are two distinct business types and what the system allows you to do is to manage it simultaneously via the same backend.

It is also an ecosystem, with options for endless modules to empower your business. Some of the additional features are QR, kitchen delivery system, inventory, web ordering, TV queuing system and many more. The features are aplenty and it all depends upon the needs of your business.



KA: One of the misconceptions about POS system is that it's something optional and not entirely necessary for a foodservice operation.

CT: We explain to our customers that it is a tool to generate sales. You might think that because you're running a small operation, it might have no value but that's not it at all. It also helps to simplify your operation with a single streamlined system to do most of it for you. And of course, less manpower and you can save cost from the inventory side of things.

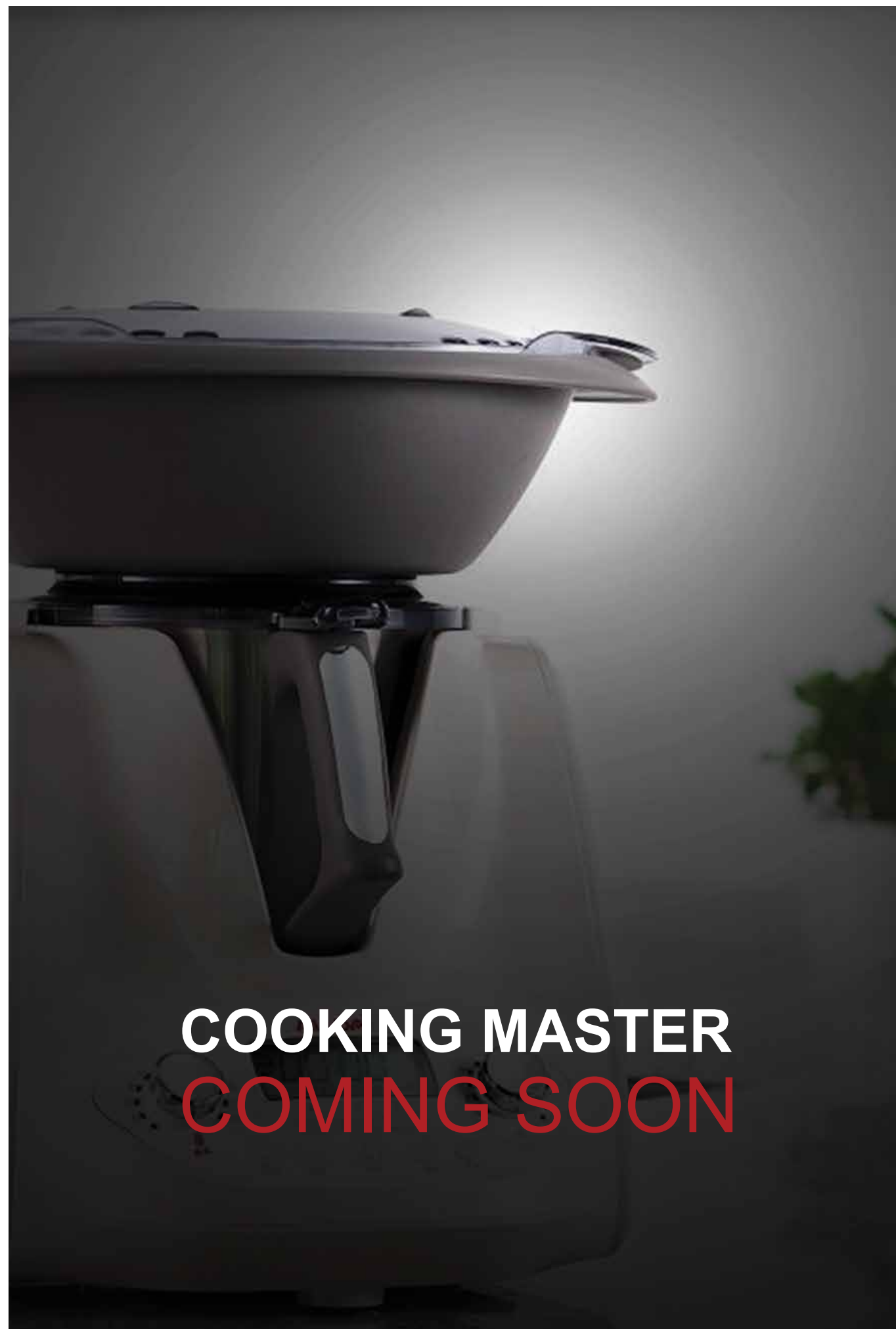
KA: What's the latest POS system technology that is sweeping the market?

CT: Dynamic ordering. It's something like the self-ordering system but the code is dynamic as it changes with each customer. It's a code that's issued for your specific table and you have to scan it to place your order. When you try to scan the code again after leaving the outlet, you can't.

What's good about this system is that it helps to reduce frontline manpower and when you order on your own, you get to take your time to decide what to order instead of having the waitstaff breathing down your neck. It can sometimes be really stressful when you simply can't decide on what to order.

KA: Say I'm a customer opening a new restaurant and I'm interested, how do I proceed?

CT: You can contact us via call, email or drop us a message on Facebook. Then you can drop by at our showroom for a demo. Alternatively, if it's not convenient for you, we can go over to your location anywhere within Klang Valley. If both options are not possible, we can demo via video conference and we'll do our best to provide the solution you need.



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Specifications & designs are subject to change without prior notice



Suzuchu Automatic noodle boiler



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"Suzuchu equipment"

is the certified gas appliances that are designed to resist heating up room temperature by exhausting intensively and insulating hot part to lower the radiant heat on the surface of equipment. Therefore, the temperature is kept low so you can touch and convert the work place much more comfortable and safer. ("Suzuchu" is a trademark and [涼厨] is the registered trademark of Osaka Gas.

DINING OUT IN A POST-RONA LANDSCAPE

With the country's Movement Control Order now in recovery mode, F&B establishments are slowly but surely starting to offer their tables for dine-in. It had been welcome news, of course, when the government made the announcement that eateries could return to serving customers the way they used to.

Even so, reopening was easier said than done. There is so much more to consider with the pall of potential infection hanging heavily in a post-Covid environment. With the revenue for most restaurants being nearly down to zero in the past 3 months, health and hygiene is another expense that needs to be incurred, in addition to fixed costs such as salaries, rentals and taxes.

It is heartening, however, to see some businesses successfully keeping their momentum going in spite of the MCO. With their ability to quickly adapt to the situation in the early lockdown days, they are faring much better than the rest. Some have been largely successful thanks to their ability to quickly train their staff for clean and contactless deliveries, but others are doing more than just that.

For instance, Littlepeople launched their quarantine starter pack, a move eventually replicated by others. Tommy Le Baker rolled out their HomeBake Sourdough Baking Kit. TAPS Beer Bar began offering beer delivery services and Happy Stan got crafty with cocktails ala "ikat-tepi" style that only needs to be chilled before consumption. Tealive introduced their DIY bubble tea kits. Spade's Burger came up with the MCO Self-Pickup (MSP) service, allowing customers to try burgers at lower net prices when they opt for takeout.

At the same time, many are scrambling to meet the needs and demands of social distancing while simultaneously finding a sustainable way to do so. With no large gatherings allowed, the seating capacity in restaurants has been greatly reduced and restaurateurs are left to come up with new ways to survive. As safety is now the utmost priority when customers decide to dine-in, it is their obligation to make customers feel safe, in addition to making sure that their employees are well protected during this time.

While the measures to be taken by restaurants in order to reopen with social distancing seems straightforward enough with guidelines from the government, the biggest challenge rests on the shoulders of the restaurant management team. What used to be simple day-to-day choices have become tactical.

How can they safely serve customers while taking care of their employees? How can they operate as efficiently as they did previously with new standard operating procedures (SOP) in place? Which employees should they retain and for how long? How do they justify staying open when they're not making as much? What are some other ways to drive revenue? How can they enhance and drive awareness for their brand in times such as these? What does the future hold if they manage to survive this? There are so many questions to be answered and none of them easy.

It is now a common sight to see tables separated with plexiglass screens, waitstaff decked in visors and facemasks and signs reminding diners to register with the MySejahtera contact tracing app. Even before one gets seated, the entire experience has already been bogged down by the need to get temperatures checked and to check-in. It all feels way too procedural for the simple act of dining out, one that many of us have taken for granted in pre-pandemic times.

Restaurants are also looking different than it used to. Between having tables spaced two meters apart or having dividers placed between tables to separate groups of guests, these changes are also killing the ambiance of the restaurants. Eating out is not solely about the food but the experience. It really is the first thing that we all do when we enter, scoping out the aesthetics. When the ambiance is great, it will encourage patrons to enter, stay longer, consume more and ultimately increase the restaurant's profitability.





"Food is very important but many other things come into account. There must be a warm, festive ambiance, a simple decor that gives the feeling of freshness, crispness and cleanliness. We want the dining room to sparkle." -Charles Masson Jr. of La Grenouille in Manhattan

Having said that, it is probably better to avoid a restaurant that looks exactly like it did before the pandemic. It would also be wise to keep an eye out for places where there is plenty of interaction going on between the staff and customers in close proximity. It is important to ensure that we are eating out in a safe manner and doing all we can to prevent the transmission of the virus. Some restaurants, however, can be a tad too extreme when even a family of five diners have to be separated. Which, logically speaking, makes no sense at all. After all, they're all living under the same roof when they're not out and about.

With all the SOPs put in place by the government, it is easy for operators and diners to be lulled into a false feeling of security. However, as anyone who has dined out recently can attest to, proper adherence and strict enforcement of the aforementioned SOPs are an altogether different matter. Many restaurants have simply resorted to placing a logbook and a pen at the entrance just so that they will be considered as being compliant and are therefore allowed to open. Where restaurants used to make sure that they have an individual performing temperature checks, more and more establishments are making it into a self-administered process. Not to mention that sanitizers are becoming increasingly absent at entrances as it is an additional cost to businesses and many are choosing to not even provide that.

This is further compounded by the fact that many Malaysians themselves are seemingly equally unperturbed by the fact that this pandemic is far from over. Most, if not everyone, appear to think that wearing a mask is the single most important thing and everything else just falls to the wayside. So much so that there seems to be this fear of being subjected to extreme judgement and serious side-eye in the event that we are without one in public. And boy, there is no telling when the elastic would snap, or when the only pair we have with us gets jettisoned during the course of our daily activities.

While the filling in of personal information and the scanning of QR codes before entering premises are now being widely practiced, it is something that doesn't quite work without supervision. And baby boomers be damned. While most of us millennials are tech-savvy and scanning a QR code is something that just comes naturally to us, many from the older generation are often seen struggling to use it. Which brings us back to the necessity of placing someone at the entrance, to make sure that everyone is in the system. In this regard, institutions with a sufficient budget at their disposal are the most well-equipped as they can purchase facial detection scanners that keep everyone in the database.

The human interaction that takes place in restaurants have also become markedly different from one that we used to know. In this new normal, going contactless has permeated almost every aspect of the dine-in experience and it's certainly not doing any favors for the service-based industry. Now, customers could pre-book their meal through apps, or do so via their smartphone when they arrive and are seated. Once finished with the meal, they can make payment on their smartphone or head over to the counter and just wave and pay using the payment terminal. By limiting contact for now and in the foreseeable future, restaurants could go a long way in maintaining social distancing and hygiene norms.

While restaurants are back in full swing, it will take time for the F&B industry to pick up the pace of pre-Rona times. With many still preferring to take their meals at home and restaurants still reeling from the economic brunt of it all, there is no normal to return to. Moving forward, restaurateurs will be looking at consumers with needs and demands that are far different from before the outbreak. Nothing will ever be the same again.

5 QUESTIONS WITH ALAN TUNG



FIC Kitchen Solutions is one of the leading F&B kitchen equipment and furniture suppliers in Malaysia. They specialize in the project management of commercial kitchen fabrication, layout design and consultation. In addition, they are also known in the market for their food trucks and “Meal Box”.

We met with their director, Alan Tung at their headquarters in Balakong, to get to know more about their company’s past, present and future.

KITCHEN ARENA: You have been in the business long enough to make some important observations about the industry. What’s your biggest takeaway?

ALAN TUNG: The industry is ever-changing and it’s always looking towards the next big thing. Improvement seems to be the common goal here. The market here is very large, thanks to the fact that Malaysia is a multicultural country. So the advantage is that they’re very accepting of most cuisines and this creates a very conducive business environment for kitchen suppliers and food entrepreneurs alike.

KA: How do you differentiate FIC Kitchen from your competitors in the market?

AT: Design, consultation and customization is our specialty. We are always trying to do things differently so we are always eager to fulfil clients’ requests, no matter how unconventional. Whether they require a different design, have different cooking or display needs, we can do anything. Additionally, we are also strong in the technical aspects of product development for hot, cold and gas kitchen equipment. We also helped the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (MDTCA) to develop the MYStandard for gas equipment, which is a guideline on the safety standards for the production and distribution of said equipment in Malaysia.

KA: What is the biggest challenge in getting to where you are today?

AT: I probably shouldn’t say this, but collection is frankly a challenging aspect of the business. Other than that, I wouldn’t say that it’s been a challenging ride for us. But, the coronavirus situation has presented us with some fresh challenges. For instance, customers are worried about the economic and political situation in the country. Not to mention that, investors are also more cautious about investing into this industry at the moment. As for our existing clients, many of them have put their projects on hold until next year. On the other hand, we are still getting new clients, so I’m optimistic about the future.

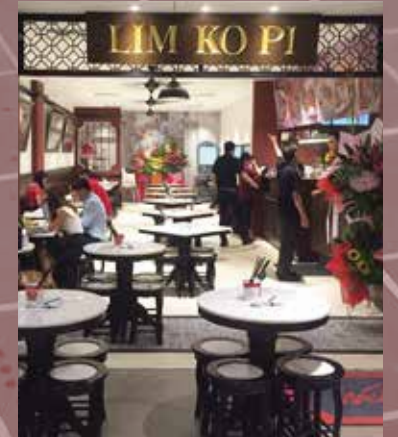
KA: Where do you see FIC Kitchen in five years’ time?

AT: We hope to be more than we currently are. It’s not so much about increasing our sales but more about improving the quality of our products and services. When we can do that, customers will know that we are the best in the business. When we can instill such confidence in them, they will be the ones contributing to our revenue and that is how we hope to run the business in the long run.

KA: As a business owner, what do you think is the most important value to have?

AT: Honesty. In the Cantonese dialect, there’s a proverb that says, “Honesty is gold” and we even have it on the plaque at our office’s entrance. I personally believe that integrity is integral to one’s character, especially when you’re a businessman. Knowledge, skills and experience can all be learned over time, but honesty is something that you can’t acquire with time. And that’s what makes others trust you.

FIC KITCHEN SOLUTIONS



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