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PO Box 2239, Oceanside CA 92051-2239 Change Service Requested The New Magazine for Executive Chefs CALIFORNIA & NEVADA

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ULINARY

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# CHINA — THE NEXT GOURMET FRONTIER Inspiration and investment draw chefs East

#### **Carleigh Connelly**

While the West Coast boasts one of the country's most progressive and trend-setting dining scenes, American food and wine establishments can push both their culinary and business boundaries further by looking east. No, for once we're not talking about New York; think further east, think bigger...China. With over 6,000 miles separating Shanghai from San Francisco, why should China be on California chefs' culinary radar? Two words: *inspiration* and *investment*.

Although California's green-driven cooking creed primarily draws inspiration from the area's bounty of sus-

tainable and seasonal ingredients, in today's connected community chefs would be wise to recognize diners' increasing demand for exotic and worldly flavors.

#### **Exploring Chinese flavors inspires innovation**

Jean-Georges Vongerichten, one of the most celebrated chefs on the planet and father of "vibrant cuisine," has created new flavors throughout his career by combining traditional French techniques with Asian ingredients. After cooking throughout France in the early stages of his career, his extensive travels in Asia led to his exploration of fresh spices, opening a vast palate of tastes from which to draw. His love for the exotic and aromatic flavors of the

**Above:** Left to Right: Toasting Chinese Wine on Great Wall, Duck de Chine's Modern Chinese Dining Room, Changyu Castel Vineyards in Yantai, Wangfujing Night Market in Beijing.

#### **LEMON & LEMON TART**

INGREDIENTS [Candied lemon] 10 lemons 3 liters water

#### METHOD

Select lemons with best natural shape. Cut a small hole in bottom of lemon with apple corer. Remove pulp with small Parisian scoop. Clean pith with Parisian scoop. Submerge lemon in water and simmer for 6 hours. Remove the lemon and cool at room temperature.

Remove the remaining pith and place into simple syrup, simmer for 6 hours. Remove and cool at room temperature. Remove pith from syrup and scoop remaining pith. Place lemons in syrup and simmer slowly for 6 hours. Bring lemons to room temperature in syrup.

#### **INGREDIENTS** [Simple syrup]

1 kilogram granulated sugar 1 liter water

METHOD

Boil two ingredients together.

#### **INGREDIENTS** [Lemon curd]

300 grams sugar 500 grams eggs 500 grams butter, cut 1 cm 500 grams lemon juice lemon peel

#### METHOD

Brink lemon juice to a boil. Mix eggs and sugar. Temper egg and guar with half quantity of hot juice. Add remaining juice, sieve. Cool at room temperature. Blend with butter and zest.

#### **INGREDIENTS** [lemon sorbet]

500 grams lemon juice 500 grams simple syrup

#### METHOD

Mix and freeze ingredients.

#### **INGREDIENTS** [Sable pastry dough]

800 grams butter 10 grams salt 600 grams confectioners sugar 200 grams egg yolk 1000 grams flour 200 grams coconut powder

East, have not only defined his culinary vision but also the way in which Americans eat.

Just as Jean-Georges's early food research and travels throughout France developed the beginning foundation of his signature cooking method, Executive Chef Wilson Lam of Beijing's Duck de Chine dedicated nine months to diligently tasting Peking duck at over one-hundred establishments in order to develop China's best version of the area's hallmark dish. After eating his way across the region, Lam collected the leading preparations from his culinary explorations and experiences, creating the ultimate Peking duck recipe. Each precise step of his final formula is a result of looking beyond his restaurant for inspiration, arguably producing not only one of the best ducks in Beijing, but perhaps even the world.



#### METHOD

Soften butter. Add all of the ingredients. Roll to desired thickness. Bake at 350°F for 15 minutes. Cut sable pastry dough. Brush it with sable glaze and rebake for 5-7 minutes.

#### **INGREDIENTS** [Sable glaze]

250 grams confectioners' sugar 250 grams water 200 grams burnt butter

1 orange segment

1 lime segment

#### METHOD

Boil confectioners sugar and water. Blend with burnt butter in vita-prep. Store at room temperature.

#### **INGREDIENTS** [Vanilla Chantilly]

500 grams cream 125 grams sugar

#### METHOD

Whisk ingredients together.

#### **INGREDIENTS** [Citrus segment]

1 grapefruit segment 1 lemon segment

#### IL

ASSEMBLY Add a small quantity of Chantilly to inverted lemon. Arrange citrus sections around the lemon. Flatten one

scoop of lemon sorbet on top of sections. Top with lemon curd. Invert onto spatula for plating.

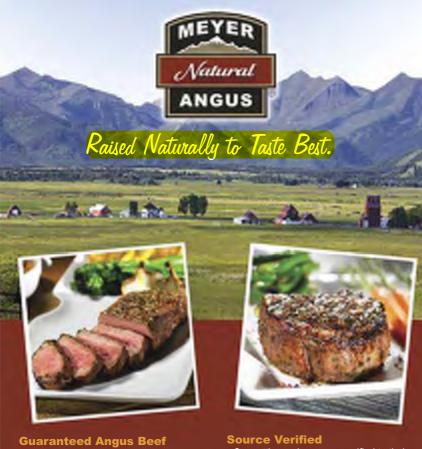


Executive Chef Paul Pairet Mr & Mrs Bund — Shanghai, China

Chef Lam cooks the four-and-a-half pound duck in a 460 degree wood fire oven, heated by apple wood that is between 60 and 70 years old, for exactly 65 minutes; achieving an exquisitely crisp skin that perfectly balances the unctuous duck fat with every bite. The juxtaposition of the silky and crunchy textures, in combination with the duck's savory character, makes for a winning dish that is undeniably addictive.

Jean-Georges concludes the "only way to expand your palate is to experience it firsthand by traveling," emphasizing that chefs can keep their menu fresh and exciting through interactive research such as eating, exploring and cooking abroad. The success of his nine U.S. restaurants, in addition to five world-renowned international establishments, demonstrates the benefits of coming into See China. Page 18 contact with new forms of inspiration. He further advises that, "You always want to keep clientele interested. Old chicken needs to be dressed up in different ways."

For instance, Jean-Georges takes a staple French appetizer, seared foie gras with caramelized fruit, and reinvents it by adding typical Chinese seasonings, such as sesame and galangal. The complex textures that charac-



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to learn more about Meyer Natural Angus, or visit www.meyernaturalangus.com terize both traditional and modern Chinese courses, help him develop food where the last bite is as exciting as the first.

#### Chinese dining model a source of inspiration

More and more culinary professionals are following the lead of world chefs, such as Lam and Jean-Georges,

> devoting their time to hands-on research outside the kitchen. Executive Chef Paul Pairet of Mr. & Mrs. Bund, a contemporary French eatery that shares the same building with Jean-Georges's Shanghai establishment, does not integrate Chinese ingredients into his dishes, but instead adopts a Chinese dining model into his chic restaurant by offering over 250 items on his menu.

> When asked why he offers such an extensive list of food options, Chef Pairet explains "That is precisely where we drew the inspiration from the menus: traditional Chinese restaurants. It's a great concept, and one which suits what I am doing at Mr & Mrs Bund: a 'declension' of dishes. Think about it this way: a traditional Western menu tries to avoid repetition at all costs; it tries to present very different items to the guest, But the fact is, if I truly want to do consensual cuisine - to offer guests the food they love best – the menu cannot be structured this way; it cannot be so limited. It needs to open up." Both Chef Pairet and Jean-Georges's restaurants share the foundation of French cuisine, but each chef integrates the influence of Chinese culture into their restaurants in separate ways. Their diverse culinary products illuminate the unlimited application of ideas that stem from exploration and experimentation.

# China, the next great wine country?

The Shandong Peninsula on China's Eastern coast is the birthplace of grape wine in China, boasting the golden grape latitude for the world, shared by both Napa Valley in California and Bordeaux in France. The similar climates of these regions, a steady increase in domestic and international investment in Chinese vineyards, in addition to consumer's rising curiosity in wines from China, are bound to culminate into a wine region worth keeping an eye on for years to come.

When Jody Ness, Owner/Executive Chef of Toronto's acclaimed Wildfire

Steakhouse & Wine Bar and host of CNBC's Wine Portfolio caught wind of China's burgeoning wine country, he immediately contacted EAST tours to arrange a food and wine excursion, giving him access to some of the most prestigious Chinese vineyards and celebrated chefs in the East. "For thousands of years, China has perfected a tapestry of rich and varied cuisines, so they know how to tease the senses. Using this attention to detail, their approach to wine will also revolutionize the way we think about drinking. As their confidence grows we'll see different grape varietals, new blends and innovative techniques, all designed to create a distinctly Chinese approach to wine. And that's guite exciting." Instead of wasting valuable time researching the multitude of hidden gems, inspirational kitchens and food markets throughout China, you can leave your trip in the hands of locals and travel specialists who can heighten your experience through their expertise. EAST Tours is a renowned veteran in private custom tours of China and Asia, known for making the potentially overwhelming preparation for an international trip manageable by creating tailor-made traveling plans.

Jody explains, "Wine Portfolio is a global television show that celebrates the wine lifestyle, and as such, I am always on the lookout for interesting wine destinations. China and all the potential of 1.35 billion consumers is the new frontier for wine consumption, and perhaps surprisingly, wine production. We wanted to travel to China to check out the wine scene firsthand. China is the world's largest wine consumer and as the country continues to grow, their consumption will only rise. It is like being at the epicenter of the new, 'new world.'"

Dawei Wu, Deputy Director of China National Tourist Office in Los Angeles, explains, "China's geography, weather and regional resources inspire our eating culture. Likewise, I believe the wine in China will become equally famous as our food. Ask those that have traveled the Silk Road how delicious Chinese grapes are, and you'll see the potential in wine. I am confident that the future is very good for Chinese wine producers."

From its burgeoning wine scene to its rich culinary heritage, China is a world of endless bounty. China not only presents a gastronomic playground for chefs seeking exotic flavors, but once-in-a-lifetime opportunities for culinary and oenology investors as well. When planning your next trip or business venture, don't forget to look east, Far East.





#### BEEF SHORT RIB WITH BORDELAISE CÈPE

**INGREDIENTS** [Beef bouillon] 1 part beef ribs 2 parts mineral water

#### METHOD

Submerge rib in bouillon. Simmer for 12 hours and then chill in fridge. To cut, rib must be very cold. Cut rib depending on fat quantity and quality of individual ribs. Scrape bone.

#### **INGREDIENTS** [Bordelaise]

1 liter beef jus 50 grams celery 10 grams garlic 100 grams beef glaze 100 grams port 50 grams port reduction 150 grams red wine reduction 25 grams balsamic soy reduction 25 grams Kikkoman soy sauce 25 grams cognac 25 grams sugar 10 grams licorice extract



#### METHOD

Infuse the Bordelaise base overnight. Add all of the ingredients together and boil.

#### ASSEMBLY

Brush rib with flour on cooking sides. Sear quickly on all sides. Glaze with Bordelaise. Bake until hot completely through. Reglaze.



Executive Chef Paul Pairet Mr & Mrs Bund — Shanghai, China

#### LOCAL HALIBUT CRUDO WITH CALIFORNIA TAPENADE & AVOCADO SALSA

#### **INGREDIENTS**

Albacore tuna or local halibut 1/4 cup California olives, such as Kalamata, Sevillano, Taggiasca, chopped 1/2 cup California olive oil peppers, such as cayenne, Fresno or Corno di Capra 2 avocados 2 lemons Garlic Walnuts, cracked and hulled Parsley, chopped finely

#### METHOD

Thinly slice albacore tuna or local halibut. It should be sashimi grade fish, sliced anywhere from 1/8 inch to 1/4 inch in thickness, according to preference. Season with just a touch of salt.

For tapenade, mix chopped California olives with buttery California olive oil, pickled peppers, preferably homegrown.

For avocado salsa, combine avocados with pureed lemon juice, several spoonfuls of olive oil, a few teaspoons of garlic, parsley.

Plate.

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Executive Chef Sean Baker Gather Restaurant — Berkeley, CA

