

## Eclectic and elegant flavours

METRO NEWS

Friday, 21 Feb 2020

By JEREMY TAN



Among the Straits Nyonya dishes are (clockwise from lower left) Otak Otak, Blackened Top Hats, Pais Buah Keluak, Apom Bongwka, Sago Gula Melaka and Pineapple Prawn Curry.

STRAITS Nyonya recipes and European classics dovetail at Java Tree, an elegant new restaurant at the iconic Eastern and Oriental (E&O) Hotel in Penang.

Replacing the former Sarkies Corner in its newly renovated Heritage Wing, it is named after a Java olive tree (*Sterculia foetida*) that towers over the seafront gardens.

Known as Ketupang locally, the deciduous tree is said to have been planted before the hotel's establishment in 1885.

It is a fitting symbol for the eclectic heritage flavours served such as the heartwarming Nyonya selection with starters like Otak Otak made with local mackerel and Itik Tim soup.

Equally enticing are the Blackened Top Hats. Better known as Pie Tee, they are easy to pop into the mouth and contain jicama, carrot, cuttlefish, egg and salmon roe.

Notable among the European starters are Homemade Gravlax, French Onion Soup and Waldorf Salad with shredded and glazed apple, candied walnuts and grapes.

For mains, the Nyonya highlights include Pineapple Prawn Curry with juicy deep-sea crustaceans, and Pais Buah Keluak which has a snapper fillet coated in spices and the paste of an exotic fruit considered the Asian truffle.

Time-honoured dishes like Beef Wellington and Beef Bourguignon are the European stars. The former has juicy tenderloin in puff pastry while the latter is slow-braised in red wine and served with a medley of vegetables.

Duck Breast a l'Orange, Chicken Fricasse, Dover Sole a la Meuniere and Salted Cod Fillet are also worth a try.

For desserts, there is Cannoli, Apple Streusel Tart, Mango Souffle and Hazelnut Fondant.

Those preferring Nyonya sweets will love the Sago Gula Melaka or Apom Bongwka. Otherwise, get servers to wheel over the dessert trolley and pick from the day's selection of cakes and pastries.

Java Tree also offers a Nyonya Signature Set featuring eight items at RM135. There are fine wines and beverages to complement your meal.

As Java Tree is a semi-formal restaurant, a smart casual dress code applies.

Opening hours are 6.30pm to 11pm daily. For inquiries or reservations, call 04-222 2000.

**What do you think of this article?**

**It is insightful**

**Not in my interest**