

■ SPECIAL REPORT ■

HOT SPOTS

TOP CUISINE ON CANTON ROAD

The Tsim Sha Tsui neighbourhood is known for its eateries – some of them Michelin-starred restaurants – that offer a variety of delicious dishes, from Singaporean and Chiu Chow to American-style burgers and shakes, writes **Vicki Williams**

As a dining destination, Canton Road has a lot of draw factors, the biggest being Hong Kong’s largest mall, Harbour City, which houses Michelin-starred restaurants, a variety of cuisines and plenty of new openings. We feature seven must-try eateries with top dishes from their menus in this Tsim Sha Tsui neighbourhood.

Amelia
OT G63, Harbour City, 3-27 Canton Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, 3705 1983



Grilled octopus à la gallega at Amelia. Photo: handout

Amelia, which opened recently, is the first restaurant in Hong Kong from award-winning chef Paulo Airaud. Airaud has a Michelin-starred restaurant of the same name in San Sebastian, Spain. The Hong Kong restaurant serves a monthly menu of modern European cuisine, featuring innovative offerings and reinterpretations of classics. There is a wide selection to choose from, and dishes that have impressed so far include beef and oyster tartare with

pickled mustard seeds and toast, and grilled aubergine with hazelnut, stracciatella and kalamata olives. There is also the opportunity to try dishes served at the San Sebastian restaurant, such as home-made bread with bone marrow, and the iconic, playful dessert of caviar with banana and rum ice cream. Complementing the cuisine is a wine list of over 200 selections, many available by the glass. The expansive space offers indoor and outdoor seating with views of Victoria Harbour.

Umai SushiKan
OT, G04A, Harbour City, 2115 9956

Umai SushiKan is originally from Tokyo, and is known in the Japanese capital for serving the freshest sashimi and sushi, thanks to its locations in famous seafood markets. The Hong Kong restaurant imports fresh seafood from Japan. In addition to sashimi and sushi, it also serves donburi (rice bowls). While the platters are always popular, other seafood



Umai SushiKan. Photo: handout

signatures include the 12-piece tuna set, the King of Seafood donburi, California roll with crab roe salad, and oyster motoyaki – baked oysters topped with a mayonnaise-based sauce. Pair these sea bounties with a great selection of sake and plum wine.

BLT Burger
OT L3, 301, Harbour City, 2730 2338, diningconcepts.com



Spicy fried chicken burger at BLT Burger, Harbour City. Photo: Dining Concepts

Another overseas concept from a noted chef – in this case Laurent Tourondel – is BLT Burger, which has transplanted successfully to Hong Kong. The well-established restaurant has been open for 11 years, and continues to attract people looking for the quintessential American burger and shake experience. All-time favourite appetisers include chicken wings and fried mozzarella sticks. Burgers to try are the spicy Kowloon chicken burger (spicy fried chicken, red cabbage slaw, scallion, Thai basil, cilantro, hoisin and Sriracha), and the classic burger

featuring a certified Angus beef combo patty (sirloin, short rib, chuck and brisket), tomato, lettuce, onion and a pickle. New items, such as spiced barbecue back ribs, are regularly introduced. In addition to traditional milkshakes, there are boozy options for adults, such as the Kowloon biscuit, which incorporates vanilla vodka.

Quan Alley
OT G57, Harbour City, 3188 2840, quanalley.com

Culinary art is a speciality at Taiwanese import Quan Alley, which classifies itself as a hotpot restaurant. But this is hotpot like no other. The Insta-worthy items are so stunning that it seems almost a shame to eat them, although the consolation is they taste delicious. An example is Nougat, inspired by the popular tourist souvenir, served in 2cm x 2cm blocks, “the perfect size for women to fit into their mouths with grace”. Ingredients include squid ink, ground squid, curry and chicken cartilage, to add that crunchy texture of nougat. Also demonstrating culinary



Quan Alley. Photo: handout

creativity are the lollipops – glazed tofu sheets with sesame sauce, white sesame and spinach. The soup bases are equally intricate, complex and layered. The visual feast extends to the restaurant’s splendid interior, which features valuable antiques.

Épure
OC L4, 403, Harbour City, 3185 8338, epure.hk



A lobster dish at Épure, Harbour City. Photo: handout

Michelin-starred Épure serves elegant French cuisine that celebrates premium ingredients through uncomplicated dishes that look as delightful as they taste. The restaurant typically only serves seasonal tasting menus of signature dishes, although an à la carte menu is available on special request. Current signatures include white button mushroom soup with baby spinach gnocchi, featuring champignons de Paris (King Louis XIV’s favourite mushroom); Cévennes onion, where each onion segment is stuffed with winter black truffle

paired with a crispy spelt; and for dessert, raspberry and chocolate featuring a dark chocolate ganache, juxtaposed with a raspberry sorbet and crispy beetroot. For the complete experience, ask the sommelier for the recommended wine pairings.

GaGiNang
OT L3 310, Harbour City, 2116 9068

GaGiNang serves contemporary Chiu Chow cuisine, including modern twists on classic dishes. With such a wide selection, it can be hard to know where to begin, although one of its marinated supreme soya options is a good choice. These include marinated goose, duck and pork – duck tongue, goose fillet and pork belly. Seafood is also highly recommended; there is a plethora of offerings, including pan-fried oyster omelette, stuffed sea cucumber with Yunnan ham and mushroom in abalone sauce, and baked king prawn with preserved olive. It also has a good choice of dim sum, with over two dozen



GaGiNang is known for its Chiu Chow cuisine. Photo: handout

varieties, including steamed pickled ginger and chicken buns, pan-fried pork and leek dumplings, and pork and shrimp dumplings in supreme broth.

Satay Inn
Shop 3, Tower 1, Podium Level China Hong Kong City, 33 Canton Road, TST, 2738 2368



Hainan chicken rice at Satay Inn. Photo: handout

Beyond Harbour City, along Canton Road is Satay Inn, which has a solid reputation for its Singaporean food. It is best known for the Hainanese chicken rice and laksa, which rank among the best in Hong Kong. Other popular dishes from its signature menu include satay served with home-made peanut sauce, fried fish skin with salted egg, and chilli crab. Traditional specialties include Hokkien prawn mee with fresh king prawns, lean pork and egg noodles in a fragrant prawn soup, and fried carrot cake – sautéed carrot cake with egg and shrimps. The restaurant is also known for its warm atmosphere and the seaside views from the outdoor patio.

NEW RESTAURANTS

Despite the downturn, there are new eateries to relish

Tracey Furniss

It has been sad to see many restaurant closures over the past 12 months, with the trickle becoming a flood since Covid-19 disrupted our way of life. But it has been good to see a few new restaurants opening of late. Shore Hospitality closed Hunter & The Chase in Central recently but has opened a new American sports bar in Sai Wan Ho called The Blind Pig. “The protests brought our business down dramatically even after they slowed down and eliminated all our large corporate parties in November and December, and then Covid-19 put the nail in the coffin. While our landlord had given some relief, in the end it was too little, too late,” says Shore Hospitality CEO & founder Mark Cholewka about the closure of Hunter & The Chase. But he says he is now focussing on opening in smaller neighbourhoods. “This had been our strategy for a number of years. We will continue to look at various areas around Hong Kong particularly in residential districts. I would say your concept has to be compatible with the area,” continues Cholewka. He has two other restaurants in the same area besides The Blind Pig: The Salted Pig and Cull n’ Pistol. The Salted Pig provides an English-style farmhouse dining experience while Cull ‘N Pistol is inspired by New England’s storied seafood traditions. The Blind Pig serves cocktails, craft beers and farm-to-table pub food. Signature dishes include grilled Angus beef burgers, Big City Reds beef hot dogs, classic patty melts, Frank’s redhot Buffalo wings and crispy pork knuckle fingers. Harbour City has seen a few closures, the latest being Maze Grill by Gordon Ramsay, but there are some new openings, too. Dang Wen Li by Dominique Ansel opened its first bakery/restaurant in Asia recently. Popular here is its take on the pineapple bun – it’s made with coconut mousse, coconut dacquoise, salted mascarpone



The Blind Pig is an American sports bar in Sai Wan Ho. Photo: handout

cream, pineapple lime and passion fruit jam. There is a sit down area with a few savoury items such as turnip cake English muffins with soft scrambled eggs, silk egg katsu sando and omelette souffles, and pastries such as ham and cheese croissants and pain au chocolat. In the same spot where Maze Grill once was is Western steakhouse Harbour Side Grill. At Gateway Arcade, café@Off-White offers a range of teas, coffee, milkshakes and smoothies with an all day menu featuring pasta, pizza, panini and mains. Café@Off-White is by Italian luxury fashion label Off-White by American designer Virgil Abloh. Also at Gateway is West Coast American-style restaurant J.S. Foodies which is part of a restaurant chain founded by Japanese fashion label Journal Standard. The decor is Japanese minimalist with industrial touches, and the menu offers burgers and pasta plus savoury or sweet pancakes. Over at The One shopping centre, i.t orange forest debuts Afuri, one of Japan’s most celebrated ramen restaurants. People queue up in Japan to try chicken broth infused with yuzu; there are several variations of this combination on the menu in Hong Kong. Besides ramen, other items include donburi and dumpling dishes as well as small plates such as Kaiso seaweed salad and Kakuni pork buns. Sai Kung is a neighbourhood whose restaurants have not been as affected as other areas by Covid-19, as the seaside town is a

weekend escape for many who live in the city. There have been three new restaurants opening in the past few months, including Joe-San, a casual dining restaurant on the waterfront which serves all day fare from breakfast to dinner. Breakfast dishes include egg and cheddar muffins, bacon and eggs benedict and pancakes with vegetarian options. For dinner there are sharing plates including seared tuna with salsa, crab cakes, and hummus with pita bread and mains dishes include spaghetti and meatballs. It is also a great place for sundowners; we especially like their espresso martini. Sai Kung’s first vegan restaurant opened in ‘the square’ recently. It’s called 2084 and serves tapas such as Peking wraps made from crispy Peking oyster mushrooms with cucumber, spring onion and hoisin sauce, and tofu satay with coconut rice. They also serve a choice of curries, such as adobo made with black and kidney beans and mushroom rendang. Cozy Coffee has also opened its third outlet, this time in Sai Kung on Po Tung Road, which is the main road as you drive into the town. The decor is inviting, with an open front inside/ outside bar at the main entrance, which is good for the summer months. They are famous for their syphon coffee with beans and flavours changing regularly. There is also an all-day menu featuring slow-cooked spring chicken, US Angus beef burgers, pasta and lobster roll with fries.



Since 1994, our restaurant was founded inside the back alley of Stanley Market, Southside of Hong Kong. When the founder returned to England, Henry, one of the original chefs here, took over the restaurant and continue the secret tradition of the restaurant which has been a firm favourite with locals and visitors from further afield..... The restaurant features dishes and cuisines from all over the world, and an eclectic mix of reasonably priced wines. Its repertoire of favourites includes Salmon Fishcakes, Feta Cheese Souffle and Pecan Pudding..., which are rarely off the menu. Simplicity and the enjoyment of good food will always be important at Henry’s!

G/F, 64 Stanley Main Street, Stanley, Hong Kong
 Reservation: 2813 9055