

Danish drops hit the spot

COLIN JACK - Denmark is a country with a lot of similarities to Canada; the Danes are among the world leaders in education, business development and standard of living.

Its beer industry is also dominated by two brands - Carlsberg and Tuborg, both owned by the Carlsberg Group.

There are also some established microbreweries.

CARLSBERG PILSNER
- 5 per cent, \$12.50 for 6 x 330 ml bottles

Famous among European football fans, as well as throughout Asia, this brew is crisp and dry with a bitter finish.

It's a refreshing lager but probably tastes a lot cleaner at home. Is it worth the money? There are several import lagers that fall into this category.

FAXE ROYAL STRONG
- 8 per cent, \$2.30 for 1 x 500 ml can

The Danes are notorious for producing strong beer. Faxe is surprisingly easy to drink despite its high alcohol content.

On the tongue the absence of a syrupy mouth feel make this beer very palatable.

Let the good times flow.

COLIN JACK IS AN OFFICIAL BEER AFICIANADO. CHECK OUT HIS WEBSITE JUSTHEREFORHBEER.COM. SEND QUESTIONS TO COLIN@JUSTHEREFORHBEER.COM



SEXY EATS

Nothing says sexy like pork cheeks

Sexy Eats scours the city looking for romantic haunts that dish up great food.

SARAH ROWLAND - There's nothing too noteworthy about a Thai restaurant that makes a mean Pad Thai.

But a Thai restaurant that serves up sensational braised pork cheeks? Now that's something to write about.

So here it goes: Maenam (1938 W. 4th Ave) is this sexy little unassuming Thai restaurant that makes the most amazing coconut cream braised pork cheeks (\$16).

In fact, every dish is amazing and there's a lot to choose from. But don't worry about ordering too much. The food tastes just as, if not better, the next day.

My only caveat is their medium spice is hotter than most, so if you're dining with someone who can't take the heat, order the mild.

Or just get your eating companion to wash it down with a nice sweet glass of Gewurztraminer to counter-

Part of what makes it such an inviting dining experience is the people who run it.

act the spice.

As for atmosphere, it's got an authentically hip little vibe going on too.

Ladies, you can kick it Kits-casual in jeans with your girlfriends or make a night of it with a hot date in a snappy little black dress.

Part of what makes it such an inviting dining experience is the people who run it. (Nothing turns me off my meal faster than watching a stressed-out, middle-management wanker crack the whip on his/her staff for all to see.)

At Maenam, there's none of that. The highly personable general manager, Tara Thom, is part of the crew and happy to interact with customers.

And that's about all I have to say about Maenam ... oh and p.s., yes, they do make a mean Pad Thai.



Maenam serves up a mean Pad Thai.

SARAH ROWLAND

Homemade noodles puts Oru at top of class

Ramen Quest, Episode 5: Vancouver's hidden gem.

RAJ TANEJA - If there's ever a place that will make you sit up and notice the food, it's Oru. The restaurant's concept is simple - serve home cooking from various Asian countries in an attempt to one-up grandma. Located in the recently opened and beautifully designed Fairmont Pacific Rim Hotel, chef David Wong has extraordinarily big shoes to fill.

During the development of his menu, the Nanaimo native made it clear that his staff needed to impart their

traditional generations' past recipes and his research would be carried out over home-cooked meals.

The result is food that most anyone will have an opinion about - whether it's two chefs under Wong's command having to meet in the middle as to the consistency of their adobo or visitors enjoying freshly made naan, cooked in Oru's very own Tandoor oven, that blows away the variations available on Main Street's Little India.

The chef's lack of compromise on the quality may



Shoyu ramen

have something to do with the immense popularity of this restaurant, but on the other, maybe he's just that loveable of a guy and the various grandmas who have helped Wong develop the menu may have just spilled their secrets.

As for the ramen, as in

everything they serve at Oru, they did a ton of research to come up with the recipe. It's a Shoyu ramen that is much lighter than others I've reviewed; they've gone all the way by making their own noodles - an anomaly in the ramen business.

Perhaps it's not too lofty a vision considering they're selling dozens, not hundreds, of bowls during the course of the day. In addition, with the quality that's built in, it's a worthwhile stop.

RAJ TANEJA RUNS URBANMIXER.COM AND CAN BE FOUND ON TWITTER WITH THE USERNAME 'TINHEAD.'

top 5

places to dine downtown

There's more to Vancouver than traffic jams and overpriced parking. Here are the top five restaurants to sample in the city centre:

ITALIAN KITCHEN

1037 Alberni St.
This trendy Italian eatery from Glowbal Group serves up plentiful portions of mouth-watering pastas, meat and fish. Be sure to order the pasta share plate - simply superb.

MIKU

1055 W. Hastings St.
This Japanese restaurant has garnered a slew of rave reviews. Sushi and Aburi (flame-seared) dishes are featured alongside a wide range of specialty sakes.

BACCHUS RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE

845 Hornby St.
A modern French eatery that boasts delectable fare and an impossibly romantic décor. The perfect spot for a date night.

GOTHAM STEAKHOUSE AND COCKTAIL BAR

615 Seymour St.
Considered the best steak in town, this high-end joint has the preparation of red meat down to an art. Bonus: Celebrities tend to flock here.

MARKET BY JEAN-GEORGES

1115 Alberni St.
This swanky Shangri-La eatery generated buzz the moment it opened its doors. Local ingredients combined with a chic interior make for a winning combination.

- KRISTEN MCKENZIE

Chef Don Letendre leaves Elixir Bistro

DHARM MAKWANA - There's a job opening in the kitchen at Elixir Bistro, but the applicant has large shoes to fill.

The award-winning eatery announced Thursday executive chef Don Letendre is departing from the kitchen staff he crafted more than eight years ago.

"From the beginning, Don

was extremely passionate about the Elixir and OPUS Bar brands, which clearly showed through his professionalism and dedication", OPUS Vancouver General Manager Nicholas Gandossi said. "His focus and determination were building blocks for Elixir's early successes, which allowed the business to

grow in other areas, most notably in OPUS Catering. We will certainly miss his leadership and humour, which we have all seen, and come to understand over the past eight years."

No one knows where Letendre will land but the luxury hotel is in the earliest of stages to find a replacement.

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