

superbly

In FOOD

Jamie Oliver Would Be Happy to Dine at Kausmo

September 20, 2019 *Lim Tsiao Hui*

PIN IT





Passionate ambassadors of mindful dining, Kausmo co-founders Lisa Tang and Kuah Chew

Shian (from left).

Kausmo (say “cosmo”) would impress celebrity chef Jamie Oliver, known for his campaign to reduce food wastage. This private dining restaurant serves up dishes cooked with imperfect produce and sustainably-sourced ingredients, omakase-style. It goes beyond minimising wastage to embrace conscientious cooking and dining.

At this restaurant at Shaw Centre, a meal is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you are going to get. There is no definitive menu. All you know is that it will be a six-course dinner (\$75++) at a private dining space.

And that is because the chef cooks with “rescued” ingredients.

Not expired food, no. Think overgrown microgreens too large to top a dainty dish in a five-star restaurant. Or portobellos that a supplier has overstocked for the week. Or bulbous Brussel sprouts that did not grow to the conventional shape expected of their kind. Generally, fruits and vegetables that fail to meet the stringent expectations of restaurants.

So instead of relegating them to the bin, suppliers would deliver them to Kausmo. Sometimes, it can be hard to predict what is available for the week.



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With a dose of creativity, Cinderella produce turns into delicious dishes.

Other than saving imperfect produce, co-founders, chef Lisa Tang and restaurant manager Kuah Chew Shian, source for native fruits and greens from local farms. Heard of batoko plum? Neither have we. With this red berry-like fruit, chef Lisa made sweet and tart jam to go with a velvety butter with smoked roe, served with soft, chewy and warm sourdough at our media tasting. Promising.

The inventive mix of ingredients is edgy. For the first starter, we had a morsel of battered and lightly-fried seabass belly with a smidgen of calamansi aioli and frilly mustard scarlet cress, served on a wild pepper leaf. Crisp, zesty and earthy, it's quite a heady combination – a lively cornucopia of flavours in a single bite.

Less exciting is the Mushroom Pate on Almond Crisp. I love mushrooms, but in a pate, they lose the bite that I so enjoy.





Batoko Butter (top) & Mushroom Pate on Almond Crisp (bottom)

It is a pity that the broth of the Roasted Tomato Tortellini in Kampung Chicken Brodo was laced with a tinge of bitterness, no thanks to ulam raja leaves, commonly used in Indonesia cuisine and dishes like nasi ulam.

The mains, however, are excellent. The Chipotle-Berry glazed Wagyu Beef D-Rump, a less popular cut, is roasted to a perfect tenderness that would put its pricier cousins to shame.

Wild Fish Congee sticks out like a sore thumb on the menu – traditional Asian comfort food in the lineup of European and fusion nosh. But it is a winner. Grains of brown rice, winter melon bits and firm Golden Trevally slices cavort in an almost creamy fish broth. The novelty is in the topping – coriander and Java ginseng leaves tossed in a salted plum dressing. The Teochew influence (which calls for salted plums in steamed fish) adds an unexpected but welcome tang to the toothsome porridge. Slivers of fried shallots complete it.

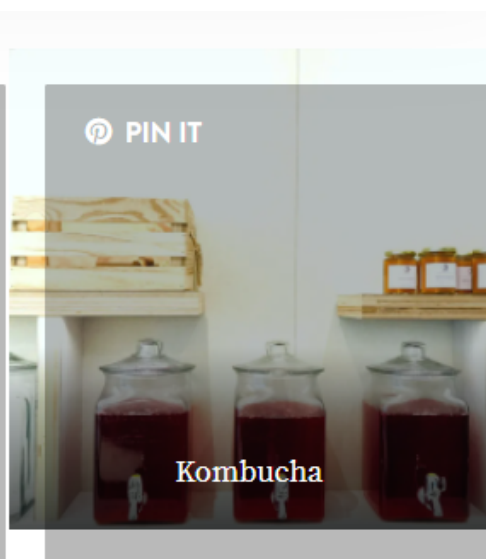
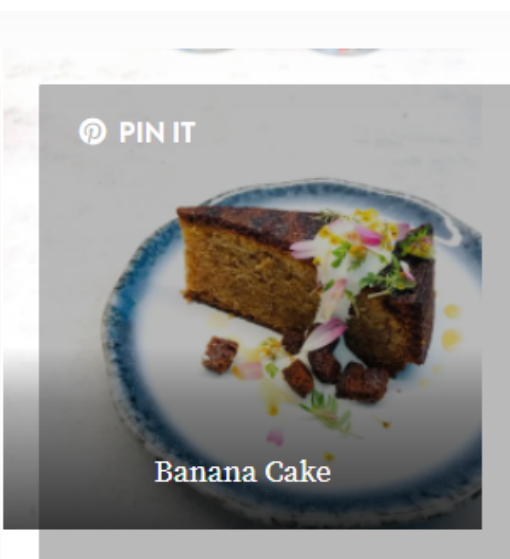




Wild Fish Congee, simple and so good.

Sustainably-sourced seafood is one of the goals at Kausmo. Its fish comes from Malaysian and Indonesian communities where traditional methods of catching seafood are the norm. With this supply, seafood from commercial farms and trawlers are unlikely to land on your plate.

Between the Lemongrass & Wintermelon Jelly and the Banana Cake, I prefer the lighter dessert to round up the meal. Do order their kombucha, all fermented in-house (\$9 a glass, \$20 for three glasses of different flavours and intensity, served throughout the meal). We tried three flavours — Jasmine, Hojicha and Red Hibiscus, all delightfully crisp and refreshing.



The restaurant is minimalist without being stark. Chef Lisa plates the dishes in an impeccably clean open kitchen that we want to re-create at home.

At \$75++ per pax, it calls for an occasion to make a booking. In partnership with the well-established home-grown Les Amis Group, this private space that sits up to 16 diners is flawless for corporate lunches, birthday celebrations with close friends and extended family gatherings. And its earnest commitment to cooking and eating conscientiously, and reducing food waste is inspiring.



Chef Lisa Tang plates her creations in an open kitchen decked out in high-end American brands Sub-Zero and Wolf.

Kausmo

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Opening Hours

Open for dinner only, with two sittings: 630pm and 830pm.

Closed on Mondays and alternate Sundays.

Pre-booking (for one to 16 persons) is required. For bookings less than 16 persons, diners may have to share the space.

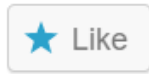
Images by Lim Tsiao Hui.

This was a media tasting by Kausmo.

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