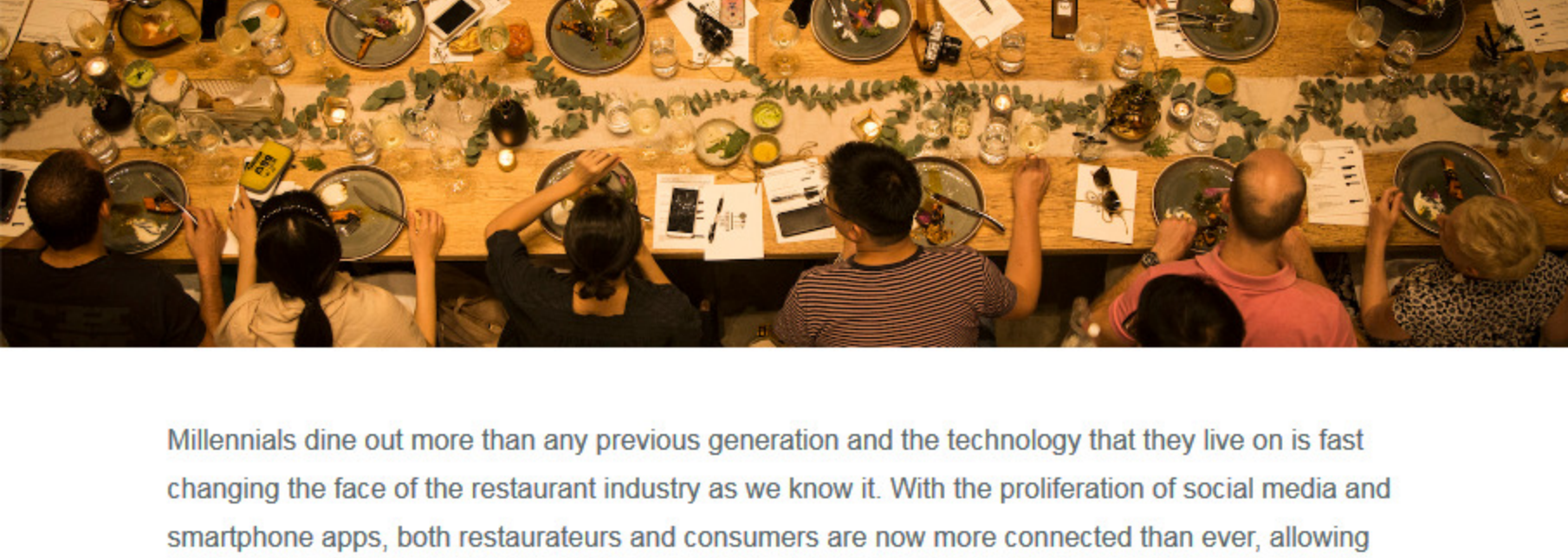


Experiencing Food In A New Light

Innovative concepts that challenge conventional notions of venue, cuisine and resource sharing are turning Hong Kong's dining scene on its head.

05 September 2017

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Millennials dine out more than any previous generation and the technology that they live on is fast changing the face of the restaurant industry as we know it. With the proliferation of social media and smartphone apps, both restaurateurs and consumers are now more connected than ever, allowing restaurants to take on different forms. We check out three establishments that are embracing the change in Hong Kong.



Test Kitchen invites chefs from all over the world to come and showcase their dishes in an ever-changing menu

Test Kitchen – International Pop-ups

The high-ceilinged warehouse lends a minimalist industrial chic vibe to the venue situated in trendy Sai Ying Pun while a long communal wooden table makes a rustic centerpiece to the cozy dining area and open kitchen. This is the stage where up-and-coming chefs from around the world come to display their culinary prowess or test a prototype menu. The star-studded line-up has included the likes of Toni Toivanen from NOMA, Carlos Garcia Rodriguez from Black Pig in Manila and Luis Aguilar from Safari in Tulum.

The brains behind this concept is Vincent Mui who returned to Hong Kong after a stint in culinary school in New York where he went on a cooking tour around the country as a traveling sous chef. "In those three months, we were traveling to a different city every week, cooking for a hundred to two hundred people each time. In that period I met so many chefs at different stages of their careers and when I returned to Hong Kong, I thought of how great it would be to create a platform for chefs to showcase their cooking," he says. Inspired by the experience, he wanted to bring the same sense of adventure and dynamism to Hong Kong, creating a space where chefs and diners can interact and communicate, and Test Kitchen was born.

He says he is heartened by the enthusiasm of the young chefs that he has met because they are the reason he set up Test Kitchen. "It is a valuable experience for our foreign guest chefs to come and learn about Hong Kong and our culture, and through them, we also learn new things about our own city."

Locals were initially very resistant to the idea of sharing a long communal table, so at the beginning it was mostly foreigners who came for the dinners. But more and more locals are warming up to the idea, attracted by the line-up of chefs and variety of menus. Vincent says that this also allows local Hong Kong chefs showcase their cooking to foreign visitors: "For example, when we had chef Luis Aguilar from Tulum here in late June, it attracted a lot of Mexican diners who had never heard of Test Kitchen before. Now, they might return as we introduce more local chefs."



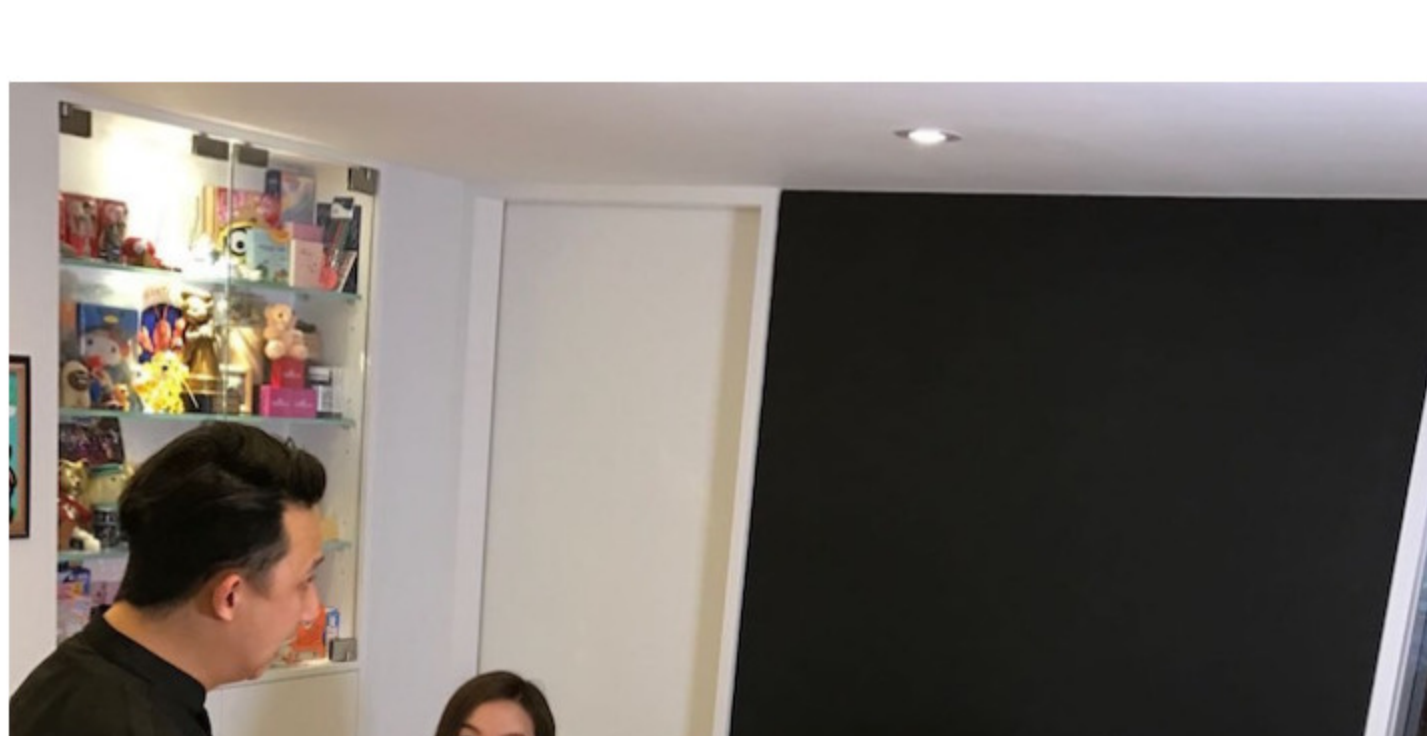
With PlateCulture, you dine at the chef's house, or at special 'secret' locations

PlateCulture – home-based supper clubs

In land-scarce Hong Kong where rental cost is astronomical for restaurants, chefs and aspiring restaurateurs are taking their businesses home, literally. Think Airbnb for foodies. PlateCulture lets diners book meals at strangers' homes, a process facilitated by the website which bills itself as a "community marketplace" for keen home cooks.

PlateCulture founder Reda Stare was inspired during her travels to Southeast Asia and India in 2013 when she was invited into a local's home in Kerala for a meal. She realized that eating in someone's home was the best way to learn and appreciate the culture of the land, and she founded PlateCulture to share that experience.

Regional Manager of PlateCulture, Boni Lin, said that they now have more than a hundred listings of different cuisines in Hong Kong. "Hong Kong is a multicultural city where diners are interested in delving deeper into the culture and history behind the food. With PlateCulture, diners not only get a meal, but experience real hospitality and share stories with the chefs whose homes they visit. This way, food becomes a bridge that connects cultures."



With MobiChef, a private chef will cook up a feast in your home, and clean up after

MobiChef – Chefs for hire

Want to host an intimate dinner at home but intimidated by all the cooking and cleaning that comes with the party planning? Mobichef founder Fanny Suen's website will hook you up with a private chef who will come to your home and whip up a fine meal and clean up your kitchen afterwards.

Menus start from HK\$480 and cover a plethora of cuisines from Egyptian to Sichuan, and hosts can be assured of the quality of food, with Suen personally screening each chef to ensure that on top of cooking well, they have the personality to engage diners and be quick-thinking enough to adapt to different kitchen environments. "We have about 25 chefs now who can cook a wide range of cuisines including Malaysian, Chinese, French, Japanese and even Egyptian, with plans to increase that number to 50 by the end of the year," Fanny shares.

To ensure consistent quality and to get photographs for publicity, Fanny sometimes accompanies the chefs when they do their grocery shopping and set up the kitchens and tables for dinner and shoots the whole process. "Recently a guest wanted to surprise his girlfriend on her birthday and conspired with her colleagues to hire an uber to send her back to her home after work where he was waiting with flowers and dinner cooked by a private chef."

The former Hyatt hotels marketer came upon this idea when she realized that the chefs she met through work often had stories to tell but little opportunity to interact with diners. "Now, when chefs cook at diners' homes, many guests seize the opportunity to ask the chef about cooking techniques and their thought processes behind dishes and the chefs are delighted to receive immediate responses to their cooking."

This article was written by Alex Lai and translated by Rachel Tan. Click [here](#) to read the original version of this story.

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