

# Wine & Dine

JUNE 2002

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# Soul Food

By Anne Loh

**MUSHROOM LOVERS** unite! Those in love with these earthy gifts of nature can indulge to their hearts' content at The Mushroom Pot. Located on one side of the Singapore Indoor Stadium, the restaurant is not blessed with a view of the river, and hence encourages diners to focus their attention inwards.

Sporting dark furniture with bright orange walls, the colour scheme calls to mind mushrooms which have predominantly dark brown caps with lighter gills (the underside). One thing is for sure, whether you eat mushrooms for their nutritional value or just because they taste so good, you will learn more about these fungi here than you could ever anywhere else, short of some natural history museum of course!

The main premise for this restaurant is the mushrooms and nowhere do they let you forget this – from the prints on the wall to brochures highlighting some 16 types in both English and Mandarin, such as porcini, horn of plenty and morel. All the mushrooms are imported from various regions in China and this is especially pertinent since Xiamen in the province of Fujian, was where co-owner Liza Wang first came across the concept of the mushroom hotpot and felt it would really take off here.

Although there are several choices of mushroom-based soups, the house specialty is the wild mushroom soup with its intense, complex flavours. Then look through the menu for a selection of mushrooms such as the matsutake, a large and tender fungi; one of my favourites,



the CVM (short form of its latin name), a large, white and fleshy mushroom; and horn of plenty, a trumpet-shaped black mushroom. An assortment of fresh seafood, meats and vegetables are also available for dunking into the by-now heady broth. There are also other cooked mushroom-centred dishes which you can order as fillers between each batch of cooking such as golden mushrooms wrapped in sliced beef, stir-fried morels with asparagus and the popular potstickers (guotie) which to us, would benefit more from being 'charred' longer.

If you want to drain the broth to the very last drop, that's your prerogative but for those who have a little left, opt for the hot pot rice where service staff will add rice, egg, spring onions and a little white sesame and pepper to it, and what you have is cooked rice in the consistency of congee.

End the meal with the red bean paste pancake, which here has wafer-thin layers embracing the red bean paste and is lightly pan-fried. Now, wasn't that just the most healthy and satisfying meal you've ever had?

**The Mushroom Pot 2 Stadium Walk #01-02 Singapore Indoor Stadium tel: 6342-3320**

