

lunch with... Carrie Chong

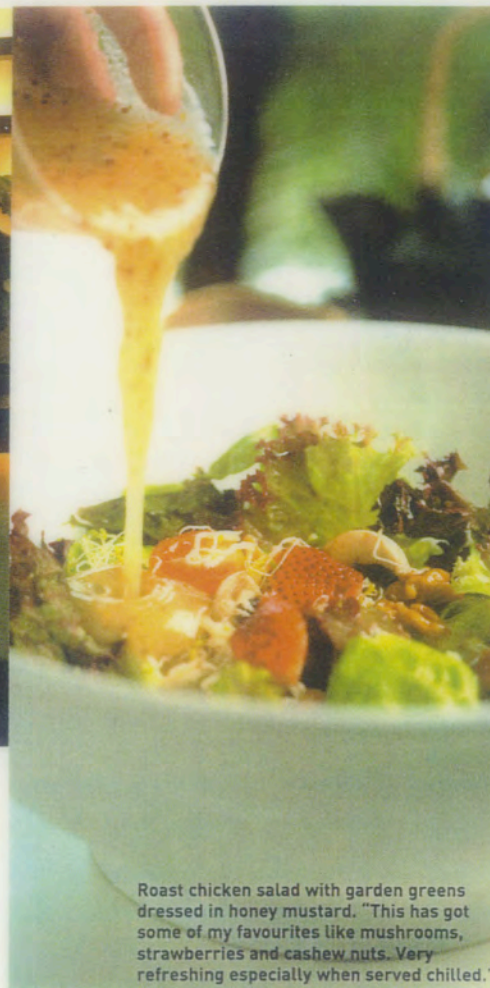
Perfect 10 deejay
Carrie Chong tells AILEEN LAI
why she's as feisty as chilli padi.



Chilled lemongrass gelo with tropical fruits; beancurd custard with sesame ice-cream; cream of mango with pomelo and sago pearls. "The chilled lemongrass gelo tastes like ice jelly, it's small and light so you can just gulp it down. The cream of mango is nice and creamy with a slight tangy flavour and the beancurd custard blends well with the ice cream, even though I'm not a fan of sesame."



The sublime interiors of Space@My Humble House.



Roast chicken salad with garden greens dressed in honey mustard. "This has got some of my favourites like mushrooms, strawberries and cashew nuts. Very refreshing especially when served chilled."



Roast duck cigar roll on a tropical fruit salsa. "The duck's very tender and it goes well with sweet sauce. Crispy on the outside, juicy on the inside. Yummy!"



IF LISTENERS TO THE LATE NIGHT SHOW on Perfect 10 ever need to get their song dedications on air, they can probably try to bribe host Carrie Chong with chilli padi. She keeps a stash of it in her fridge at all times, to dress up her other food favourite: fishball noodles.

The sweet-looking deejay may have been voted Carlsberg's Friendliest Radio Personality but be warned - her love for all things hot and spicy means that she's got an equally feisty temper to boot.

For one, don't try to fight with her for a parking lot. Carrie bristles as she recounts an episode when she was waiting to park her car at Holland Village. After what seemed like eternity, she finally spotted a parking lot. Just as she stepped on her gear to reverse, another car nosed right into the lot.

"I was furious and the guy had the audacity to say that he didn't see me and wasn't planning to budge. My boyfriend tried to pull me away. But not before I shouted a whole bunch of expletives at him. I was fuming all through dinner!"

Carrie's little outburst took me by surprise given her squeaky clean image on air - she's better known as an Aunt Agony to her teenage listeners.

Over lunch at Space@My Humble House, a chic restaurant in Esplanade Mall that offers local favourites with a twist, Carrie displayed none of her self-confessed spicy temperament.

PHOTOS BY THE PICTURE MAKERS ART DIRECTION SHAN STYLING CHIRY LAU/DRESSINGROOM MEDIA (TEL: 6224-4384) MAKEUP & HAIR JASHINE TONG (HP: 9459-1074) BUTTLE & NECKLACE CELADON

instead impressing me with a hearty appetite, gamely trying every dish that was served our way.

While filming for *Crossworlds*, a Channel 5 travel game show, Carrie had to complete three challenges in Edinburgh, one of which was food-related. "We went to this restaurant and horror of horrors, they served up this pig's head. It's cooked and garnished with little flowers and carrots but it's so icky because it's missing a body and staring straight at you. I swear they didn't even remove the hair sticking out of its ears!"

"It didn't taste that bad really," she adds. "There was a sauce at the side for you to dip the meat in and the cheek of the pig is supposed to be a Scottish delicacy."

The foodie in her literally comes across on air. Munching in the studio has brought along a slew of embarrassing moments for the choc-junkie, who professes a weakness for Ritter Sport whole hazelnut milk chocolate bar from Germany.

"Burping (on air) is common, especially after a heavy dinner, and hiccups too. I once broke into one in the middle of a sentence!" Her solution to not talking with her mouth full is to keep a sweet wrapper handy.

"When it's time to go on air, just spit it out and pop it back in two minutes later. I know it sounds gross but that's the only way to do it," she says, this time breaking into laughs.

If there was one thing better than chomping on this dark, sinful snack is to soak in it, she reckons. "I would love to jump into a tub full of smooth creamy chocolate. That's my ultimate chocoholic dream." ■

carrie's call

Here are some of Carrie's makan recommendations:

best service "Evertop chicken rice in Tanglin Halt. The owner's a very friendly dude and he always greets you with a smile and gives extra soup and rice. If I haven't been there for a while, he'd know and will ask where I've been. I think it's little touches like these that keep people going back to him."

best place not to get spotted "Au Jardin at Botanic Gardens (Tel: 6446-8812). It's nestled in a very exclusive location and the place itself is very private."



best ambience "Cafe Les Amis in Botanic Gardens (Tel: 6467-7326). Nothing beats having lunch al fresco amidst the waterfalls and leafy greens."

best value-for-money "Sushi Matsuo Japanese Restaurant at Goldhill Plaza (Tel: 6356-2603). A big bento set complete with the works - sashimi, tempura, sushi and all - costs only \$25. The food is good and very fresh."

best hawker centre "The revamped Bukit Timah hawker centre. It's one of the few that's on the second level (above the market) so you get a nice breeze while you're eating. Plus, the food is fabulous. Try the fish slice soup, satay beehoon and Hokkien mee!"

best dessert "Anything from Big O, and cold ice jelly or cheng teng from Tanglin Halt hawker centre, where they serve up generous portions at half the price."

best hangout with friends "Coffee Club right opposite Cathay Cineleisure (Tel: 6736-2081). It's open 24 hours, anytime you feel like great prawn pasta!"

