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meat madness

**JUICY GRILLED
STEAKS AND
BARBECUED
STICKY RIBS +
HOW TO SMOKE
YOUR OWN MEATS**

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Bordeaux for
families
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Jakarta's
best weekend
brunches

All we did was mention 'smoked meats', and an all-male participant lineup turned up for our latest masterclass: Leong Tai Heng, producer; Alvin Lee, founder of Cultinary, a digital portal for budding and professional chefs; Viknesh Ramanathan, managing director of a financial group; Johannes See, director of media agency Com3 Singapore;

Andrew Pang and Yang Min Xiang, directors of Iki Shouten, an online boutique for premium whiskies; Hiroshi Oh, senior marketing director of a real estate firm; and Alex Chong, freelance hairstylist; were all ears.

There couldn't have been a more apt venue than Hilton Singapore's Opus Bar & Grill, where meats are hung in Himalayan salt tile cabinets to facilitate their dry-ageing process. Guests were introduced to the restaurant's signature, a hulking Rangers Valley 28-day marbling score 4 OP rib, which executive chef Vijayakant Shanmugam slapped on the grill over licking flames for a caramelised char. Then, all it took was setting woody herbs like rosemary, oregano and thyme ablaze in a covered pot to infuse herbaceous notes into the slab of meat.

Mastering... smoking techniques

When ignited, tea leaves, herbs and flavoured woods lend complex flavours through their perfumed cloud.
By Maria Singh



One way to attain deep hickory flavours without any use of heat is to use a splash of liquid smoke. Shanmugam demonstrated this with a careful dose of Raukal RB seasoning into a barbecue marinade that was used to baste a rack of pork ribs.

Guests also learnt the key difference between cold and hot smoking, namely that the cold process takes place in temperatures below 40°C. To achieve this, start a smoking process with green tea leaves, rice and sugar then drop the temperature rapidly by adding ice cubes into the mix. The cooler fumes lent smooth textures and more subtle flavours to a salmon confit, which Oh absolutely loved. "If you prefer stronger nuances, the level of smokiness can easily be played up with the use of lapsang souchang, a Fujian black tea that is smoked over pinewood embers for an entrancing aroma," said the chef.

The group didn't pass up the chance to end the meal with sweet grilled pineapples in smoked caramel sauce. Shanmugam appealed to the gadget geeks by whipping out a smoke gun, which fired up in no time with applewood chips loaded as fuel. By the end of the class, Lee was already trying his hand at the sleek contraption and adding it to his culinary wishlist.

