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#### LIFESTYLE / FOOD

# Food review: Jewel Cafe + Bar

Located at Rangoon Road, Jewel Cafe + Bar serves up juicy burgers and is a stylish stop for drinks too

27 March 2013 by Tan Hsueh Yun (/author/enalim)

Rangoon Road is a mad jumble of a street that can be frustrating and rewarding in equal measure.

Parking is impossible but once you secure a lot, there is a lot to do there. A clutch of eateries beckons, an Ayurvedic bakery too. My favourite furniture shop is located there and, for unwinding, there is Unique Spa.

But what really draws me there is coffee. Liberty, a roastery with a cafe that opens semi-regularly, was first to set up shop there last year.



Now, there is Jewel Cafe + Bar. There is a Jewel, coffee fans might know, at One Shenton Way in the central business district, a good grab-and-go sort of place. But if you want to linger, then its new Rangoon Road offshoot is the place to head to.





The cafe and bar, with its stylish facade, stands out on the street. Inside, crystal light bulbs, copper and brass panels hanging from the ceiling, and lots of wood make it a cool place to hang out.

Owner Adrian Khong, 43, decided to open a bigger place to house a roastery to provide custom blends for other cafes. But the benefit for customers is that there is also space for comfortable seating, with 48 seats on the ground floor and 33 at the loft level; and a proper kitchen for turning out more than sandwiches and pasta.

One of the best things I have eaten so far this year has been Jewel Rangoon's **Shio-Koji Octopoke (\$12)**. It is a take on Hawaiian poke, where cubes of raw fish are marinated in salt, sesame oil, seaweed and chilli.



Shio-Koji Octopoke at Jewel Cafe + Bar. PHOTOS: THE SUNDAY TIMES

Instead of salt, Jewel uses shio-koji, a salt substitute made with fermented rice innoculated with the same mould used to make sake and miso. It brings out umami in food and works brilliantly here.

The tender pieces of octopus are also mixed with wasabi and olive oil, and sit on chopped, ripe chunks of avocado. That haunting aroma which ties this starter together is shaved ginger flower.

The burgers here are over the top and fun to eat.

**Praise The Lard (\$18)** features bacon jam made in-house, a patty with cheese melting on top of it and tart slices of Granny Smith apple to provide relief from all the richness.



The OMG! burger at Jewel Cafe + Bar

Then there is **OMG!** (\$20), a behemoth burger with two slices of bacon, a slice of luncheon meat, cheddar over the patty, lettuce, tomato, onion and if that is not enough, a sunny side up egg too. It is a little difficult to eat elegantly but I would not give up any of those elements except the onion.

A Port & Blue Cheese burger (\$20) has enough aged Stilton in it to register on the palate and I like the gutsiness of it.

For dessert, order **Pan-Seared Watermelon Steaks (\$9)**. The juicy chunks are drizzled with balsamic glaze, topped with pineapple sorbet and sprinkled with salt. It is cool, refreshing and perfect for hot weather.



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Pan-Seared Watermelon Steaks at Jewel Cafe + Bar

Because this is a bar too, there is a list of sakes, beers, wines and spirits. From the cocktail list, the No. 1 Yuzu (\$16), with vodka, Cointreau and yuzu juice has the right balance of sweet and tart.

Jewel Cafe + Bar, 129 Rangoon Road, tel: 6298-9216, open: Tuesdays to Sundays (8am to 10pm), closed Mondays.

This article was first run The Straits Times newspaper on March 24, 2013. For similar stories, go to sph.straitstimes.com/premium/singapore (http://sph.straitstimes.com/premium/singapore). You will not be able to access the Premium section of The Straits Times website unless you are already a subscriber.



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