

MIXING BUSINESS WITH PLEASURE

Whilst searching for a place to set up her office, **Lelian Chew**, founder of The Wedding Atelier and The Floral Atelier, was sold on Tiong Bahru's low-key, creative spirit and excellent local food.

I wanted The Floral Atelier—my event styling arm of my luxury weddings and celebrations company The Wedding Atelier—to be located in an area with neighbours that represent our philosophy and inspire our craft. I knew Tiong Bahru was the right place. The vibe here is laidback and understated, yet full of artistry and character. These qualities are what we wish to emulate in our atelier.

One of my favourite shops is **Tiong Bahru Galicier Pastry**. Each time I step into this unassuming bakery, I am transported back to the 80s. I love the Kueh Dadar here, which has the freshest grated coconut filling enveloped by the softest hand-made crepe. Things sell out fast, but the chirpy bakers are always happy to churn out more goodies—just ask nicely.

If I had a café, it will very likely look like **Plain Vanilla Bakery**. On my less busy days, I enjoy taking a slow stroll over to grab a late breakfast take-out. I have a soft spot for their Chocolate Honeycomb and Strawberry Custard Tarts because the flavours and textures are very balanced. They make excellent quiches too.

I am a proud Peranakan and I take my Nonya food very seriously. So it's always nice to find familiar flavours outside my own kitchen. I particularly like how the duck is prepared at **House of Peranakan Petit**. Their Itek Tim, a soup of duck, pork ribs, salted vegetables and assam, is always comforting, and their Itek Sioh, a braised duck in a rich tamarind and coriander gravy, is done perfectly. You will find many regulars here who let the owner have free reign over what they will be eating.

Another favourite of mine is **Ah Bong's Italian**, a tiny stall in a coffeeshop. It's only open four hours a day during lunch and



run by a Singaporean who was trained by a three Michelin-starred chef Bruno Menard. The menu changes daily, so you'll never know what pasta you'll find in your traditional Chinese porcelain bowl. I love their Birthday Pasta (pesto, bacon and broccoli) and Truffle Mac & Cheese.

I think **Ting Heng Seafood Restaurant** best represents the original Tiong Bahru charm. I've been visiting this hole-in-a-wall eatery for as long as I can remember and nothing's changed one bit. Regulars gather under the large trees and dine by the road, sitting on old school red plastic chairs. The fare here is fuss-free, comfort food. On balmy evenings, I love nothing more than to have a charcoal pot of their Fish Steamboat. I also enjoy their smooth and slippery concoction of Tofu with Enoki Mushrooms and Fish Paste. **WD**



- 1 Plain Vanilla Bakery
- 2 Itek Sioh at House of Peranakan Petit
- 3 Hae Bi Aglio Olio from Ah Bong's Italian