

Let's eat!

your culinary guide

NOVEMBER 2015 EDITION 75

An Evening of Glamour

Robert Marchetti The Plantation Grill

The Secret Garden

Gardin Bistro & Patisserie

HOOKED
— on —
CLASSICS



IDR 35.000 | AUD 3.70 | EUR 2.70

THE INNOVATOR

Combining western techniques mastered in three-star Michelin restaurants in Spain and New York, with the finest ingredients he can find in Indonesia, Chef Kevin Cherkas creates truly inspired, 'Cuca cuisine'.



Much loved by foodies in the know (including many of the island's top chefs,) Cuca is a true collaboration between Kevin Cherkas and his Spanish wife, restaurateur Virginia Entizne. Deciding on a sharing-style concept, they settled on a menu of tapas, cocktails and desserts, using only local ingredients, and by this they meant 100% local.

"Everyone said we were crazy," says Cherkas, "there was a perception that local ingredients have no value because they cost nothing." But the couple were not deterred and spent months searching the islands to discover the best ingredients in Indonesia, then set to experimenting to see what they could create.



“We just want to serve real food to real people who are looking to eat something delicious and spend time with each other.”

Although ingredients are local, the flavours are international, with more than a hint of nostalgia. Tastes are somehow familiar and comforting, but also slightly new at the same time. That’s the *Cuca* twist! The *Watermelon Salad* comes with feta,

mint and a rather inspired addition of shredded coconut. The *Cuban Corn* is a take on corn on the cob, but these grilled baby corn rolled in young parmesan, fresh lime and parsley could well be the best corn you will ever have. Meanwhile the

Meat and Potatoes – inspired by a traditional shepherd’s pie, is a hearty ragout, which Cherkas describes as, “The last thing you want to eat before you die.”

“Local ingredients are just a few hours from being cut from the tree, that matters in terms of quality, flavour and nutrition.”





► Warm Melting Cheese

This heavenly dish features a silky, slightly pungent cheese exclusively made by an Italian cheese-maker in Java. Forget the crackers, the texture here comes from crunchy candied granola and dollops of papaya jam.



▼ Rice Crusted Soft Shell Crab

"A real deep south kind of dish, like something you would find in New Orleans," says Cherkas. "Deep fried food needs to be wickedly crispy – you need to hear the crunch on the other side of the room." He achieves this with a thick rice crust encasing subtly flavoured crab from Kalimantan with a taste he describes as a 'Nuance of the sea'. Accompaniments are a good and garlicky Spanish-style aioli with parsley, and barbecued pineapple with lime vinaigrette, which acts like a palate cleanser by refreshing the mouth ready for the next bite.



▼ Caramel Apple

Who doesn't love apple pie? This version is deconstructed, but has all the traditional flavours and elements you would expect, "We built the components individually then combined them to create something new," says Cherkas. Juicy slow baked apples are braised with sour apple glaze, while an American-style waffle is broken into buttery croutons and scattered over the top for a crust-like texture. As a finishing touch Cherkas, has taken the spices out of the apples and put them into the Javanese black pepper ice cream which "Subtly warms the mouth while simultaneously chilling it."