

# Charly's chicken has character

**Magdalen Ng**

The newest chicken joint in town does not just sell juicy roasted birds, it sells a story as well.

Charly T's, located on the ground floor of Nomu, a condominium in Handy Road, is named after a fictional character cooked up by the people who run it.

Mr T apparently loves food, art and travel. He was born in a kampung here, and has travelled to many places such as North Africa, the Americas, Germany and Britain.

The food served at the restaurant – rotisserie chicken with exotic sauces ranging from chimichurri to ginger and lemon Japanese soy, empanadas from Mexico and pastilla, a savoury-sweet pie from Morocco – reflect his travels.

On the walls of the casual home-style restaurant are pieces of artwork.

It all sounds uncannily like the man who started the restaurant: the urbane hospitality veteran Richard Helfer, who founded the Singapore-based hotel group Raffles International, which owns the iconic Raffles Hotel and Fairmont Singapore.

The 60-year-old now runs RCH International, a consultancy business which focuses on hospitality and tourism.

The revamp of Sculpture Square in Middle Road, which took place last year, was also envisioned by the avid art collector.

He adds that the idea for the restaurant was conceived more than a year ago, and the place opened two months ago.

"We have been thinking about it for some time," he says. "The ideas start somewhere in your imagination and are inspired by different places and different people."

Pegging the restaurant name to a character is a good business move.

## Charly T's

20 Handy Road, Level 1 Nomu  
(beside The Cathay), tel: 6336-7789

**Opens:** 11am to 11pm (Mondays to Wednesdays), 11 to 2am (Thursdays to Fridays), 9 to 2am (Saturdays) and 9am to 11pm (Sundays)

"Because Charly is a person, he can continue travelling and bringing more inspirations for the food here," he says, adding that there are plans to open two more Charly T's in Singapore within the year and expand outside the country to cities such as Beijing and Shanghai.

Diners can expect to pay under \$20 for a complete meal with starter and dessert. A whole chicken costs \$36.95, and a slice of chocolate coconut pecan pie costs \$6.95.

Chicken takes centre stage here, and the slow roasting keeps the juices sealed in, making the meat more tender.

This is why Helfer also takes pride in the food, which is good enough for diners to "take home", and not merely "take out".

He said: "I remember trying to impress a young woman and finding a place where I could buy a pre-cooked Beef Wellington. Then I just needed to pull it out of the oven and 'Wow, it's just in time, just for you'," he says with a hearty chuckle.

He adds: "Well, she was impressed, but I moved away shortly after, so I don't know what could have happened. I'm sure the food here will impress many others."



Naming Charly T's after a fictional character is a good business move, says Mr Richard Helfer. ST PHOTO: SHAHRIYA YAHAYA