

For eight years, The Culinary Institute of America (CIA) has collaborated with the Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH) – Department of

Nutrition to stage the annual Worlds of Healthy Flavors conference at CIA's California campus, CIA at Greystone. On 28 November 2012, with the successful implementation of CIA degree programs in Singapore, the by-invitation-only retreat held its first Asian series, Worlds of Healthy Flavors ASIA, in partnership with the Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health, National University of Singapore, and Health Promotion Board Singapore.

The three-day event at the Raffles City Convention Centre saw the gathering of over 200 opinion leaders and trendsetters in all sectors of the Singaporean foodservice and hospitality industry, as well as forerunners in the medical and public health sectors. On opening day, Guest of Honour, Dr. Amy Khor, Minister of State for Health and Manpower, Singapore, delivered the opening speech.

Ang Hak Seng, CEO of the Singapore Health Promotion Board, followed by dispensing statistics on the snowballing rate of diabetics in Singapore. According to a presentation by Rob M. van Dam—adjunct associate professor in Nutrition and Epidemiology at the Harvard School of Public Health—the diabetes prevalence in Singaporean adults spiked from 8.2 percent in 2004 to 11.3 percent in 2010. Data from the National Health Survey, Singapore, also pointed to a higher incidence of diabetes mellitus with age, with a predictive timeline that one in three

# A wealth of health

As official media partner at the Worlds of Healthy Flavors ASIA 2012, *epicure* got a firsthand look at the best of world cooking and the latest in nutrition research.



Singaporeans will contract the chronic disease by age 70.

With the programme in full gear on Day Two, panel discussions, culinary demonstrations and educational presentations were conducted in a bid to nip rising public health risks in the bud. The priority intervention for addressing diabetes: tackling unhealthy diets. But the real question was whether this could be achieved without compromising our rich, local culinary heritage. Ang was of the belief that it could, citing success with the Singapore Healthier Hawker Programme.

With the use of wholegrain noodles in *char kway teow*, brown rice in *biryani*, chicken, and *char siu* rice, and lower saturated oils, Yuhua Hawker Centre has seen a 20 percent increase in business since the programme's inception in July 2011, vouched Karney Ngai, chairman of the Yuhua Hawker's Association. Greg Drescher, vice-president of strategic initiatives & industry leadership for the CIA, was heartened by this success. "People are starting to see how the great culinary traditions of Singapore can be preserved but adapted slightly to be more beneficial in the long-term," he said.

The final day of the conference saw more of such efforts, with chefs like Willin Low (Wild Rocket), Emmanuel Stroobant (Saint Pierre), Alexander Ong (Betelnut, San Francisco) and Pung Lu Tin (Gim Tim Group Restaurant) showcasing ways to incorporate lower sodium salts, healthier oils, whole grains, nuts, legumes, fruits and vegetables for a considerable and positive impact in everyday cuisine. "It's important for chefs to adopt a spirit of experimentation," Drescher continued. "Change builds upon itself and by understanding the general direction we have to head towards, we can see what works and achieve positive results in a thoughtful, sensible way."

Fabian Koh, general manager of restaurants at Kitchen Language, found the inaugural forum "informative and comprehensive", and is looking forward to "a more focused and technical conference where industry professionals are exposed to product trends and F&B operational techniques the following year". e

