

GOURMET FOOD & WINE MAGAZINE

EXQUISITE Taste

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• ASIA'S BEST STEAKHOUSES • THE CLASSIEST AFTERNOON TEA SERVICES •

A FEAST FOR THE SENSES

at Ultraviolet by Paul Pairet, Shanghai

After simmering in Paul Pairet's think tank for over fifteen years, Ultraviolet emerged as a fully immersive, multi-sensorial dining experience that transgresses the rules of fine dining in a fantastical and utterly astounding way. Uniting food with sensory-tingling technologies, Ultraviolet is the first restaurant of its kind, and it will shake your gustatory emotions.

*By Louise Henderson
Photo: Scott Wright of Limelight Studio*





Mandarine Mandarine



Ostie Apple-Wasabi

THE JOURNEY

A van with tinted windows arrives, and a driver wearing black beckons us to step inside the vehicle. We are driven to nowhere; dark streets, winding and bewildering. A crumbling factory comes into view. We must be lost. Doors open. One long table, ten chairs and white walls. No décor, no artefacts, no paintings, no views. It is the dining room that at first glance seems sparse – empty and emotionless. But this is where the story begins, where Paul Pairet's 20-course avant-garde set menu is served. It is a blank canvas that will soon be painted with colour, touch, smiles, smells and passion. How? Well, the dining room is equipped with multi-sensorial, high-end technology, and each course is enhanced with its own taste-tailored atmosphere. It is ascetic by nature, dressed up by lights, sounds, music and scents. A cool air blow, an immersive projection, images and imagination... and of course, sensational food.

All of the guests sit together, and dinner unfolds as a sensory play choreographed by Chef Paul Pairet and the

Ultraviolet team. Don't be mistaken though; this is not a theatre or a dinner show, nor is this a show-off display of pretension. It is a breakaway from the constraints of a la carte; a celebration of the senses; an enhancement of flavour. The dinner is all about the food; the food leads, then the experience follows.

Guests receive the same 20-course menu at the same time, pushing the experience towards the essence of what a meal is all about: a communion. Dinner may begin with just one or two-bite dishes, moving onto more substantial fare with each course in an uphill series of expression. Suddenly, the “pivotal movement” - the meal suspends its synchronisation to include a choice. The menu will then shift downhill for a series of digestives and sweets in diminishing sizes. What dishes make up the series is entirely flexible.

Think lemon tarts that appear as a whole edible lemon. Or a beef short rib that glistens on an over-sized bone.



Truffle Burnt Soup Bread



Hibernatus Gummies & Cola Rocks

Mix in a symphony of expertly-perfected sounds, smells and touches, then cue the adjectives of sensory-tickled guests: influential, entertaining, interactive, delicious. This is a bold and exclusive dinner party that engages all the senses, and it delivers the ultimate luxury: emotion.

Twenty courses. Ten seats. Five senses. One unforgettable dining experience.

THE WHAT'S AND WHY'S

Why only ten chairs on one communal table, you might ask? Well, the size was specifically chosen to maintain control and synchronisation of each individual's experience with their food. But it also exudes a sense of intimacy, uniting people in their curiosity. Intimacy and control maximises the best of both a home dinner party, and a five-star restaurant.

But what inspired this experimental masterpiece? It's a little something called "Psycho Taste", and it captures every aspect about taste, but the taste itself. It is the expectation and the memory. It is the before and after; the mind over the palate. If you see a tomato, your mind calls upon its memory to tell you its taste. When you smell bread baking, you can taste the finished loaf. We all psycho taste before we eat, with salivation being a primary effect. And at Ultraviolet, the technology incorporated into the meal simply drives the psycho taste, and enhances the perception of the food.

THE GENIUS

It might not surprise you to learn that Paul Pairet was a former science student, with his experimental nature oozing from every unique dish that dances into the dining room. The smells, textures, aromas and flavours of Paul Pairet's travels have styled and rooted his very distinctive genre of cuisine, leaving behind a lasting impression. Pairet's style has been set as avant-garde figurative, but above all, it tastes assertive, often sending taste buds into raptures, and the mind travelling on a bite through countries or found memories.

Pairet's philosophy is simple: "A dish is ready when there is nothing left to add or take away. A dish could be: interesting, new, daring — perhaps shocking — beautiful, maybe comforting, even funny, but always good."

Supported by the Vol Group, Ultraviolet has only been open for a little more than a year, yet it is already securing itself a reputation as one of the most avant-garde restaurants on the culinary map. Recognised as the 60th best restaurant in the world, together with Paul Pairet's Mr & Mrs Bund restaurant reaching 14th place in this year's Miele Guide, it seems appropriate that this ingenious chef has recently been awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award at Asia's 50 Best Restaurants gala event in Singapore. This chef has some big ideas, and Ultraviolet is one you won't want to miss. ☞