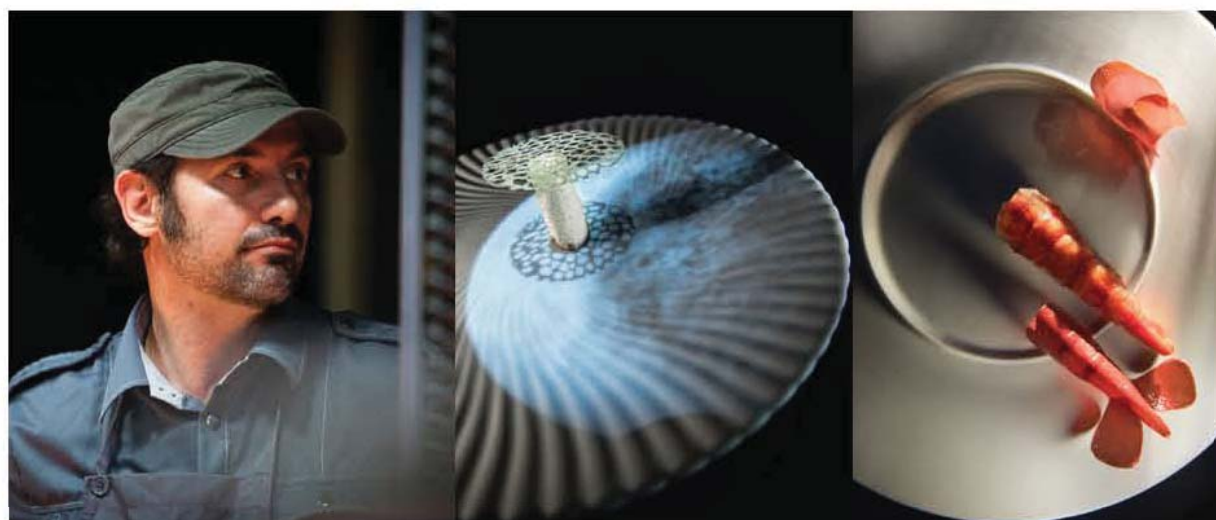




# How Art of Hospitality Award winner Ultraviolet by Paul Pairet marries taste with outstanding service

GIULIA SGARBI



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Header: Paul Pairet, Lunar Mushroom and Carabineros De Huelva (images: Scott Wright)

***Ultraviolet by Paul Pairet*** – the avant-garde, multisensory, top-secret Shanghai restaurant by the French chef of the same name – has added a new accolade to its list: the **Art of Hospitality Award at Asia's 50 Best Restaurants 2018**. We look beyond the awe and media buzz to understand how hospitality is masterfully executed at this unique restaurant.

A meal at Ultraviolet by Paul Pairet is nothing short of a performance that triggers and stimulates all five senses (and perhaps more). The creation of each dinner experience – and even each dish – requires the work of a full team, with every member working in unison to create a gastronomic choreography that surprises, delights and satisfies at the same time.

It is perhaps the inner workings of the small restaurant – which seats only 10 people at a single table – that epitomises the outstanding hospitality mastered at Ultraviolet. For diners, the experience starts when they meet at Pairet's other Shanghai eatery Mr & Mrs Bund, before being blindly led to the secret location of Ultraviolet. But for the restaurant team, the process starts much earlier.

Pairet's vision begins with the food – there are three rotating menus, named UVA, UVB and UVC – and from there, it propagates across all aspects of the dining experience. Pairet directs the entire production while his team, including restaurant director Kim Quach-Oughlissi and head chef Greg Robinson, give their input into how the food and flavours can be enhanced through various sensory stimuli, then expertly guide each of the diners through the experience.



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Ultraviolet's dining room during 'Seacoast Waves' (image: Scott Wright)

Ultraviolet's purpose-built dining room in an undisclosed location behind an unmarked door in Shanghai is the stage for the performance. Much like in a theatre, the stage can be transformed for many different scenarios, from green meadows to a rocket bound for the moon. As guests enter the dark room where only the seats and their names are dramatically lit, the magic begins behind the curtains.

The 20-plus courses on the menu are presented with hypnotic rhythm by expertly trained staff, who combine personable attention with discretion, allowing guests to discover and enjoy the flavours on their own. A master illusionist, Pairet plays with expectations of taste in his menus – what he calls psychotaste – resulting in courses that can sometimes trick the eye while stimulating other senses.

Dishes are accompanied by projections on the dining room's walls, olfactory stimulations, sound effects or light shows. The flawless coordination of all the different parts that make up the whole experience, each playing its own essential part, is an outstanding testament to the attention to detail and expertise that is applied within the dining room too.



Tomato Mozza and Again (image: Scott Wright)

Pairet, ever innovative and provocative, plays with sensations on the plate too: one of his signature dishes, Tomato Mozza and Again, is a study on the classic Italian salad made of tomato and mozzarella cheese. It is served on two dishes, with one (Tomato Mozza) made of savoury elements, while another, seemingly identical (Again) tricking your expectation of taste by reversing the sweet and savoury flavours found in the first.

One of the (anonymous) voters for Asia's 50 Best Restaurants says that "after more than a year, you still remember all the details of your experience", while another highlights that Ultraviolet by Paul Pairet "brings high drama, comedy, extreme emotion, musical theatre and of course painstakingly technical cuisine to life".

Receiving the award, Pairet says: "I am very happy, and very happy for the team. It's true that when thinking about Ultraviolet, people don't usually think about the service and guest care, which are essential parts of the fully immersive experience. We didn't expect it – it was a wonderful surprise!"

Before winning the Art of Hospitality Award for Ultraviolet, Pairet also won the Diners Club® Lifetime Achievement Award when it was first introduced to Asia's 50 Best Restaurants in 2013, and was subsequently voted by his peers as the winner of the Chefs' Choice Award in 2016. True hospitality is, at its heart, attention to people, whether diners or peers – and Pairet has shown that he has plenty to give, along with creativity, flair and deliciousness.

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