

Under One Roof

In Singapore, designers, creatives and restaurateurs are maxing out spaces around town with quirky collaborations. **DESIREE KOH** discovers it's possible to have it all.



You say mee pok tah (egg noodles tossed in a spicy minced meat sauce), we say pizza. You say manicure, we say macchiato.

It only makes sense that in Singapore's melting pot of cultures and international inspirations, multi-sensory experiences don't have to be mutually exclusive, whether they're cohabiting in a colonial shophouse, shopping mall or pre-World War II coffee shop.

In the Tiong Bahru neighbourhood, Two Face Pizza & Taproom (#01-46, 56 Eng Hoon Street, Tel: 65 6536 0024) exemplifies the transformation that has taken place in the enclave over the last few years – from one of the country's oldest housing estates to hipster haven.

By day, gossip and business deals are traded over yong tau foo (stuffed beancurd and vegetables) and vegetarian stir-fries at an unassuming kopitiam (coffee shop; left); at 3pm, Two Face co-owner Victor Tan takes all of 10 minutes to transform the space into a charming al fresco spot, hiding the hawker stalls behind customised blackboards (left) on which the menu of Western-style bar bites – such as battered oyster mushrooms, smoked duck pizza and bacon aglio olio pasta – and craft beers are fashionably scrawled.

"I've always been a believer of retaining heritage and preserving the old as much as possible," says Tan. "I love to create things and concepts, and try out new things."

Go spoil yourself with the luxury of choice at these other all-in-one spots. ■



MANICURIOS

It took three guys to figure out what a girl wants: dazzling nails, artisanal coffee and heavenly pies, and cleverly curated shopping. Between mani-pedis applied by technicians specialising in hand-drawn nail art, cuppas crafted from coffee supplied by local roasters Papa Palheta and design-driven apparel, this Beach Road shophouse is a girl's Willy Wonka fantasy come true.

"You can get complementary and customised nail art for whatever you buy – a bag, sunglasses, jewellery or even your dress," says co-founder Shawn Tan. "We want to be a one-stop location and are always looking to push the boundaries."

manicurious.sg



ARTEASTIQ

Primarily, this boutique tea house in Mandarin Gallery features custom-blend loose leaf infusions served in bone china tea sets. But it also has a cosy studio space where guests are given a blank canvas and all the acrylic paint, brushes, sponges and palettes they need to let loose their inner Picasso and Rembrandt in three-hour sessions.

"Lots of customers have never painted in their lives and are surprised they can do it well. Tea is a form of relaxation, and art jam is a therapeutic experience, and the two come together well at Arteastiq," says owner Ivan Teo.

arteastiq.com



PACT

At this eclectic boutique in Orchard Central, opened by three established local businesses specialising in different lifestyle offerings, you can devour Italian-Japanese-Vietnamese eats by Kilo, enjoy Japanese-technique salon styling by Pact+Lim, and buy locally-designed menswear and accessories sourced from all over the world by K.I.N.

"We are the smaller version of a department store trying to interpret intrinsic value as opposed to simply putting the product out there and hoping it will sell. We need to do things in a more intriguing way and be savvy about how we do it," says co-owner Suraj Melwani, of K.I.N, on independent stores carving a niche in Singapore's sprawling shopping scene.

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