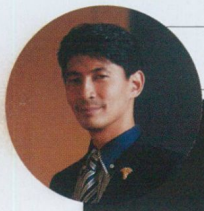
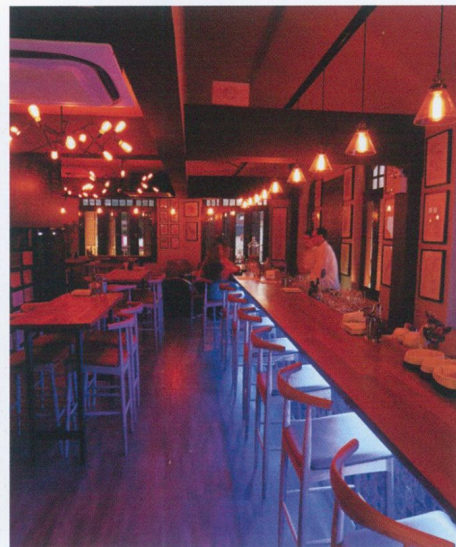




Serious revelry

It's about time for smarter wine bars to shine. Don't expect frou-frou Enomatic machines or the party crowd; these new spots offer wine-centric enjoyment with the most personal touch.



La Terre

Co-founder: Award-winning sommelier Daisuke Kawai is the immaculately put-together host of this polished Japanese-styled wine bar and retail.

The name: Refers to the produce that comes from our earth, from which we enjoy wine, whisky and cheese.

The look: La Terre comprises a retail area upon entry, which then leads to a blindingly white onyx wine cellar that momentarily disorients the senses. Stepping, finally, into the wine bar area brings a sense of serenity and simplicity.

Wine list: Mostly imported directly by Kawai, offering a tremendous value 300-plus list that will grow to 500 labels in the next month or two. The breadth is admirable, for executives looking to splurge on a Romanee-Conti, or regulars wanting to discover something new, like a Corsican French white at \$108. There's also an extensive whisky list with an enviable collection of cult Karuizawas, ranging from \$1,632 to \$44,188. Some whiskies are available by dram, while wines by the glass will depend on Kawai's selection of the day.

To eat: A limited but fine selection of cheese (\$6 for 25g) and charcuterie such as *saucisson* (\$12) and jamón ibérico (\$28), along with nibbles like chips, chocolate and pickles. The *Épouse de Bourgogne*, washed in local pomace brandy, is ideal with a soft red or Sauternes.

#01-01, 11 Upper Circular Road. Tel: 6532 1031

13% Gastro Wine Bar

Founders: Former managing directors of ewineasia Bruno Vaillant and chef Geoffrey Weckx are the affable Parisian and Belgian friends-turned-partners in this new venture.

The name: Refers to the average alcohol percentage of wine.

The second floor area is decked out like a charming European living room in rustic woods and a mosaic bar, while the third floor up a winding stair is a private wine room for eight diners. Tall windows offer a splendid view of the surrounding shophouses and cityscape.

Wine list: Seventy percent of the 110-plus label list is from France, featuring approachable wines with personality. Bottles start from \$41 for a Bordeaux Rose and \$67 for a Bierzo red, to Champagne magnums and Pomerols in the \$200 range. There're about six wines by the glass at any given time, depending on what Vaillant feels like opening on the day. "This isn't the kind of bar where a standard bottle is opened and kept for days," he admonishes.

To eat: There are hot meals to be had here, from warm crispy three-cheese *gougères* (\$8) and à la minute tatins (from \$16) to grilled ibérico, Wagyu or French spring chicken (from \$35). The baked upside-down tatin is a caramelised treat.



#02-01, 14 Aliwal Street. Tel: 6291 6816