

# THE STRAITS TIMES

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## Food Picks: Unkai Sushi, YWCA Fort Canning and Da Paolo



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Fans of The Black Sheep Cafe can rejoice, for a short time. Chef R. Rathakrishnan, 51, who closed his restaurant in Sin Ming last year after a 16-year run, is doing a pop-up at YWCA Fort Canning's Cafe Lodge.

Until May 15, he is offering a three-course set meal at \$48++ a person on Saturdays for dinner and Sundays for lunch. The menu features his signature dishes and they are pure comfort.

For starters, I have the Baked Brie, crusted with pistachios so the generous slices are crunchy on the outside and melty inside. Fresh greens and a perky citrus salad stop everything from being too rich. If rich is what you seek, have the French Onion Soup.

The chef's Duck Confit and Wagyu Beef Cheeks are on the menu for the main course, but I go with Braised Lamb Shank. The enormous shank is slow-cooked in red wine, with plump chunks of dried apricots offering a hint of sweetness and a Moroccan vibe. I finish every bit of the silky mashed potatoes. Crisp-tender asparagus and broccolini, as well as roasted red and yellow bell peppers, complete the dish.

For dessert, I would so love to have the chef's soufflé - in any flavour. But this being a pop-up, he offers Flourless Dark Chocolate Cake instead. I expect dense and rich, but it is not heavy, even though the cake is made with ground almonds and pistachios. In any case, there is raspberry coulis to perk things up, and the cake is served a la mode, with a scoop of vanilla bean ice cream.

Every diner who orders the chef's set menu gets a mocktail made with non-alcoholic merlot. It has a sangria vibe and is perfect with the meal.

The sunlit and spacious Cafe Lodge is the perfect place to enjoy the chef's food, if only for a short time.

**Where:** Cafe Lodge, YWCA Fort Canning, 6 Fort Canning Road

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