

FOR a place so small that its very name obliterates it when viewed on Google Maps, Hong Kong is one of the most fiercely competitive when it comes to new restaurant openings. On average, the life cycle of a hapless new venture is 18 months as rents climb ever higher and ruthless landlords continue to carve up space in order to maximise revenue. So when a 750sq m extravaganza complete with swish-sounding rooftop in the very heart of glitzy Causeway Bay (the place with a lot of neon) opens, it raises lots of eyebrows. Russian restaurant company Bulldozer Group has its debut venture **Seafood Room** which sources the freshest seafood from across the globe. Unusually for a Russian-backed enterprise, the food is simple and without pretence, with the menu carved up into 12 sections, including Carpaccio, Tartare, Ceviche, New-style Sashimi, Hot Dishes, Sashimi, Pasta, Chinese Dishes (prepared by their in-house Chinese chef), Meats and more. Helmed by chef **James Cornwall** (previously of London's historic seafood restaurant J Sheekey) Seafood Room also offers an uninterrupted postcard-style view of Hong Kong harbour and features artwork from Murakami and Adrien Brody who set hearts aflutter when he flew in for the grand opening. Seafood Room, 26/F, Tower 535, 535 Jaffe Rd, Causeway Bay; phone +852 3708 9668.

Now open in Wan Chai's revamped heritage district next to the much treasured Blue House, **Samsen** owners **Adam Cliff** and **Bella Kong** are serving up Thai street food with an emphasis on authentic Thai noodle dishes.

"I'm deeply passionate about the diverse characteristics of Thai cuisine, especially the authentic and memorable flavours of its vibrant street food," Cliff said. At Samsen, all of the noodles and most of the ingredients are flown in fresh daily from vendors in Bangkok to ensure authentic flavour and firm texture. In order to sate Hong Kong diners' obsession with high quality beef, Wagyu arrives as Samsen's signature Wagyu Beef Boat Noodle. Samsen, 68 Stone Nullah Ln, Wan Chai; phone +852 2234 0001.

Swire Group's standalone restaurant, **Continental**, has reopened with a new executive (and ex-Cafe Gray) chef **Joey Sergentakis** on board and a tempting six-course tasting menu championing the best in seasonal produce. Up for grabs (so to speak) is also a bounteous 1kg



of roast Brittany Blue lobster served with lobster risotto and tarragon gratin. Unusually for Hong Kong, there is a large and sunny patio area - complete with a DJ booth - and a moveable bar that now offers a larger drinks list with more wines by the glass and perhaps for the more adventurous business lunchers, an array of Absinthe cocktails. Hailing from Brooklyn, Joey is half Greek and credits his family for cultivating his love of food - his grandmother's cooking, his father who was a chef and the time spent with his grandfather, who owned a butcher shop down the street. "I am trying to source the best seasonal products then see where they take me," he said. Unit 406, L4, Pacific Place, 88 Queensway, Admiralty; phone +852 2704 5211.



Top: Seafood Room restaurant interior.
Middle: Food from Samsen restaurant.
Bottom: Food from Continental restaurant.

