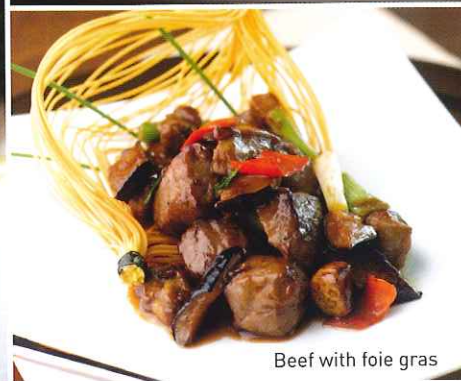




Les Amis' ciabatta-wrapped crispy Japanese egg



Jing's signature crispy duck



Beef with foie gras



Jing's chic interior

Chef Armin's cuisine is well grounded in European classics, served with a deft contemporary touch. You will find the likes of pan-fried Dover sole paired with lomo Iberico (\$90); Maine lobster poached in brown butter (\$85); truffled Bresse chicken paired with foie gras, corn blinis and Brussels sprouts (\$80); and char-grilled Wagyu beef entrecote (\$145). His dishes are all built on top grade ingredients, and certainly, the quality of the produce shows. Elegant but not so fine as to be skimpy, it is food that leaves you heartily satisfied but not weighted down.

We were greeted with luscious slivers of salmon marinated in truffle oil about five minutes after we sat down at our table. This was soon followed by a simple, familiar and immensely satisfying dish of smooth, creamy foie gras terrine layered with sweet glazed pears and served with toasty brioche. And those were just the amuse bouche.

The pan-seared John dory served with French onion soup and croutons topped with melted Comte gives a lovely briny twist to the French onion classic, offering a memorable blend of sweet, salty, savoury flavours and different textures. Lovers of the porcine should try the Berkshire black hog (\$80) that's seared then slow-roasted at 160°C in an open oven till perfectly cooked, with a shy blush of pink in the centre. The meat was tender but firm, flavourful and meaty. I also

enjoyed the pairing with slightly tart braised red cabbage and fried potato gnocchi that's crisp on the outside and pillowy inside.

If your appetite veers on the miserly side, pace yourself, exercise restraint and save some room for the sizeable, straight-out-of-the-oven madeleine that's served with your petit fours at the end of the meal, one for each guest. Warm, golden and snug, each bite of these scalloped cakes lightly flavoured with lemon brought forth a little sigh of pleasure from my dining companion and I. Without a doubt, they made for a most humble yet satisfying end to what was a very posh meal. 'An exquisite pleasure had invaded my senses...' Proust wrote of these lovelies. Indeed, that was our sentiment as we polished off the last crumb.

— *Joyceline Tully*
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JING This sister outfit to the hugely popular Majestic Restaurant at Majestic Hotel certainly has plenty to live up to. The latter, helmed by Executive Chef Yong Bing Ngen, formerly of Pan Pacific Singapore's Hai Tien Lo, very quickly established itself as one of the hot spots on our sunny isle for top modern Cantonese cuisine, with foodies flocking in for favourites like Boston lobster noodles and claypot shark's fin soup with

crabmeat. No surprise then that all eyes were on Jing when it opened at One Fullerton last September.

As modern Chinese restaurants go, Jing is swanky and stylishly so, with an understated, contemporary space dressed in muted browns, gold and deep, forest greens. The food, meanwhile, caters to a modern palate at home with both Western gourmet ingredients such as foie gras and Oriental flavours. You will get the occasional East-meets-West dish such as sliced Peking duck served with gleaming Russian black caviar and paired with pan-seared foie gras (\$38 per person), which sounds like a cholesterol overload, and the odd 'modern' fusion dish such as cold kailan served on ice with wasabi soy dressing (\$16), which is, well, an odd ball. But for the most part, the menu is Cantonese, gently modulated by a Southeast Asian predilection for fruit and spice. The flavours on your plate are therefore a little more robust than what you'll find at more traditional establishments, and the pairing of ingredients a little more adventurous.

The Chinese like variety — the more, the merrier, the more propitious, we believe. Accordingly, Jing's menu is suitably large. Traditional stalwarts still reign here: roasted chicken (\$28), barbecued duck served with sweet plum sauce (\$18) and a stellar roasted pork (\$12 as starter) with a lovely crackling



Jing's crispy coated durian ice cream



Skinny Pizza's fresh crackly treats



Skinny Pizza

and tender meat. Jing's signature crispy duck (\$28) is definitely a must-order — the bird is marinated with Chinese herbs and then steamed for over an hour before it is deep-fried, yielding a crisp, tasty skin and smooth, unctuous meat that's doubly flavoursome when paired with a tangy, sweet sauce.

Other Cantonese staples on the menu include the requisite double-boiled soups (from \$8), shark's fin soups (from \$28 per person) and abalone dishes (from \$25 per person), and the live catch of the day steamed in light soy sauce 'Hong Kong style', or cooked in any of eight other ways — from crisp-fried to braised. A solid selection of seafood is a must at any Cantonese table, and here you'll find a rich bounty gathered from around the world: Australian lobster (\$20 per 100g), Boston lobster (\$13 per 100g), geoduck (\$13 per 100g) and jumbo oysters (\$10 per piece) from Canada, and razor clams (\$10 per piece) from Scotland.

Some dishes we particularly enjoyed are the double-boiled winter melon consommé (\$8 per person), a simple, comforting soup for the soul with wintermelon, yellow fungus and mushroom; the Chilean seabass fillet (\$16) liberally glazed with honey then baked till the flesh is just firm and tender; braised noodle with lobster (\$75) that's satisfying enough just on its own. Thin homemade ee-fu noodles are stewed in a rich, savoury broth spiked

with shredded ginger and chopped scallions alongside a whole lobster — plenty to feed up to three people (or just a very hungry diner).

To round off your meal, enjoy some unusual sweets at Jing. Apart from traditional offerings like double-boiled Chinese pear with almond seeds (\$8 per person) and sweetened almond puree with sea olives (\$8 per person), more adventurous diners can indulge in the likes of jello with Champagne sorbet topped with raspberry juice (\$10 per person); cream of avocado with ice cream served in young coconut (\$10 per person); and last but not least, a definite nod to our Southeast Asian heritage — crispy coated mouth-melting durian ice cream (\$8 per person). Yum!

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SKINNY PIZZA Re-think your idea of pizzas — flat, doughy carbohydrate comas smothered with greasy melted cheese. What we tried at Skinny Pizza, the Spa Esprit Group's latest food and drink project, banished whatever preconceptions we had about the Italian stalwart, now turned on its head and totally re-invented.

With a super crackly thin base that tastes more like flatbread, what you can expect are lip-smackingly delicious freeform creations generously topped with fresh ingredients (no

tomato purees either) and always, a liberal shower of peppery arugula leaves. Forget Hawaiian or margherita — there's none of such options here anyway. Try the classic Caesar (\$16), itself a wicked salad meal, with the crust serving as croutons and the Caesar dressing spread over the base instead of tomato paste. Also good are the chorizo almond (\$18) which packs a wallop of flavour with juicy roasted chorizo, crunchy almonds, freshly grated Parmesan, red chillies, olives, onion, garlic and capsicum; and the heartier curry chicken baba ganoush (\$15) that comes with smoky baba ganoush, Madras curry chicken, hardboiled eggs, fresh mint and coriander. The squid ink (\$18) — fresh calamari and prawns, tomato salsa, onions, squid ink and parsley on a squid ink crust — delivers a lighter, cleaner taste. For fungi fans, their wild truffle mushroom (\$18), lavished with pureed porcini mushroom and white truffle oil and topped with fresh Parmesan and juicy portobello mushroom sautéed with garlic — beats the standard al funghi variety hands down. Wash it all down with cups of refreshingly zippy French farm-grown apple cider (from \$9.50). We like! Note: Forget take-aways. The crackly pizzas are best eaten soon as they are made.

— *Josephine Soh*

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