

m.a.x. concepts



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Hong Kong's largest scale winemaker dinner programme in 2009
unveils even more ambitious sequel in 2010**
*m.a.x. concepts, Damon Yuen, and Cottage Vineyards (International) join forces again
for a second year of 'Discoveries Winemaker Tour'*

HONG KONG, 4 March, 2010 – Beginning Thursday 25th March, 2010, Hong Kong's wine and food lovers can again experience a whole year's itinerary of gastronomic excitement when the three partners of Hong Kong's largest-scale winemaker dinner programme in 2009, launch a sequel 12-tour programme in this New Year of the Tiger, the Discoveries Winemaker Tour ("DWT") 2010.

With a couple of added twists, the new programme developed by (1) Maxim's Group's m.a.x. concepts division ("m.a.x. concepts"), (2) cool-climate boutique wines specialist Cottage Vineyards (International) ("Cottage Vineyards"), and (3) Hong Kong wine instructor Mr. Damon Yuen ("Damon") promises to beat last year's record which climaxed with a record of 277 participants in a single "winemaker tour", garnering an average of almost 200 participants per month.

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The inaugural tour, entitled, “A Royal Tuscan Reunion” gives oenophiles and foodies the choice between two Brunello di Montalcino winemaker dinners on Thursday 25 March, 2010 and Saturday 27 March, 2010, at SimplyLife Foodplace and Maxim’s Café Cityhall respectively.

Both of these events will be led by Castello Romitorio’s winemaker and second generation owner Filippo Chia, whose 2004 Brunello di Montalcino (to be featured in the present round’s dinner) has recently drawn ratings of 92 points and 93 points respectively from Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate and the Wine Spectator.

Despite the differences with the 2009 programme however, the new DWT 2010 programme stays true to the roots which made the original programme wildly successful in the first place:

1. Helping wine lovers discover “some of the wine world’s best kept secrets”, and to discover these matched to different cuisines;
2. Bringing the exotic appeal of overseas’ wine growers’ experiences to a local context through Cantonese explanations by a local wine professional; and
3. Helping wine lovers preserve their memorable wine-pairing experiences alive through the mechanism of a souvenir passport which they could carry with them through the whole year’s set of tours.

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And therefore, like the 2009 programme, each themed monthly tour, with the respective winemaker and Damon acting as the tour guides, will bring wine and food lovers to experience one specific wine producer's/wine region's wines matched with a rainbow of different cuisines in m.a.x. concepts' range of restaurants including American, European-continental, south-east Asian, and Japanese cuisines.

The 2010 will also include a new DWT 2010 passport, embellished to help participants better preserve their experiences with each event.

Said Mr. Thomas Hahn, m.a.x. concepts General Manager, "Over a period of 12 "tours" over almost 12 months, the DWT 2009 has gathered critical mass and community. Many of the participants in the tour have become friends and regulars who have adopted our programme as a destination for monthly gathering. Therefore, besides allowing m.a.x. concepts to showcase the quality and innovation of our group's cuisine, the new DWT 2010, is just a natural extension, a natural gesture by our company to show our appreciation for this community's commitment, a kind of loyalty programme which feeds upon itself with each additional tour. As we have gone so far up the learning curve together, partnering with Cottage Vineyards and Damon again just makes sense, and their impulse not to rest on their laurels, but to consistently innovate, fits with m.a.x. concepts's core philosophy ."

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Ms. Ada Leung, Managing Director of Cottage Vineyards said, “The DWT 2009 was just the beginning to whet the appetite of many of Hong Kong’s new wine drinkers, to pave the way for them to explore the infinite possibilities in the world of wine and especially wine and food pairing. With this new tour, besides engaging in food- and wine-pairings where little or no references exist, we hope also to deepen participants’ exploration of the food cultures from which the wines were born, and hence we will both engage in cross-cultural and unusual pairings and educate on the wine’s cultural food heritage. Working with a group with cuisines as diverse as m.a.x. concepts and with chefs as well-versed as the group’s Senior Executive Chef Simson Kwan certainly makes it easier for us to reach these goals.”

The programme’s third partner, Hong Kong wine instructor Damon Yuen remarked, “I am so glad to be able to work again with m.a.x. concepts and Cottage Vineyards. High quality, inspiring cuisine and high quality, inspiring wines provide the perfect environment upon which I can help to make the learning experience both fun and practical”

The inaugural “A Royal Tuscan Reunion” tour aims to bring new perspectives to the way we can enjoy the great wines of Tuscany, particularly the Brunello di Montalcino, saluted as the “King of the Tuscan wines”. Therefore the tour moves forward in two opposite directions with two opposite designations.

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The first event on Thursday 25 March, 2010, a 6-wine, 6-course “Organic Cuisine, Tuscan Wines” winemaker dinner at SimplyLife Foodplace seeks to bring the Tuscan experience into a more approachable and fresh light. One original pairing is the marriage of the Castello Romitorio Sant’ Antimo Rosso ‘Romito del Romitorio’ D.O.C. 2006 (60% Sangiovese Grosso / 20% Cabernet Sauvignon / 20% Canaiolo Nero) with SimplyLife’s signature chicken curry bread. The price is also approachable, only HK\$508.00 NET per person.

The second designation, “Tour of Italian Cuisine, Tuscan Wines”, a 7-wine, 7-course winemaker dinner set in Maxim’s Café Cityhall and priced at \$688.00 NET per person seeks to introduce wine and food lovers to the richness and diversity of Italian cuisine. Thus, the dinner features dishes stretching from Toscana, Piemonte, Veneto, Sicily, to Alto Adigé, climaxing with a famous Toscana dish, Braised Pheasant with chestnuts paired to the Castello Romitorio Brunello di Montalcino D.O.C.G. 2004.

All events require advanced ticket purchases to enable the operators to keep ticket prices to a minimum. From 3rd March, 2010 onwards, interested parties can purchase tickets for the event from SimplyLife Citibank, Maxim’s Café Foodplace or through Cottage Vineyards by Tel. at (852) 2395 1293 or by E-mail at tastings@cottagevineyards.com.

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A media information session reviewing the statistics and providing a “behind the scenes” look at the DWT 2009 programme and explaining and providing a preview of the new Discoveries Winemaker Tour 2010 programme involving top management from m.a.x. concepts, Cottage Vineyards, Mr. Damon Yuen and Mr. Filippo Chia of Castello Romitorio, is scheduled for Thursday 25th March, 2010 3:30pm at SimplyLife Citibank.

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About m.a.x. concepts

m.a.x. concepts, a restaurant line of Maxim’s Group, has been diversifying its portfolio of characteristic restaurants since 1998. m.a.x. concepts believes a perfect dining experience comprises great food, pleasant ambience and attentive service; and they are indeed the fundamental of every m.a.x. concepts restaurant. The 25 restaurants deliver distinctive cuisines with innovative ideas – Western, Japanese, Vietnamese, Thai and international cuisine. m.a.x. concepts has also brought internationally renowned restaurant chain Lawry’s the Prime Rib to Hong Kong.

About Cottage Vineyards (International)

Cottage Vineyards (International) Limited is a wine merchant established by wine lover, Ada Leung, with the mission of helping wine lovers in Hong Kong and Greater China “discover the wine world’s best kept secrets”. Specialized in the offerings of cool-climate wines produced by boutique wineries focused on creating and producing premium wines with unique characters, the company is the realization of Ms. Leung’s dream after her founding of Hong Kong-listed company, Finet Holdings Limited (E-

finet.com) (HKEx: 8317), where as the company's Chief Operating Officer, she helped devise and execute the business, marketing and Public Relations strategy which made the E-finnet.com Website Hong Kong's leading financial portal.

About Damon Yuen

Damon, one of only a handful of Certified Sommeliers granted by the Court of Master Sommeliers, is a Free-Lance Wine & Spirits Educator, Writer & Consultant offering wine & spirits education and consulting services in Cantonese, Mandarin, and English including wine & spirits courses, tutored wine tasting, corporate wine events, wine dinners and food pairing, wine list design, and wine consultancy services.

With twenty-seven years' Hong Kong industry experience in the hotel food and beverage sector, nineteen at a management level in four- and five-star hotels, Damon possesses twenty years' Food and Beverage Training experience with specializations in cocktail, wine and spirits training. He is a regular instructor at the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions Spare Time Study Centre, the Hong Kong Cocktail School, HKU SPACE, PEAK, and the Vocational Training Council. His last post prior to expanding his career full-time in the Wine & Spirits education and consultancy sector was Beverage and Catering Manager at the South Pacific Hotel in Causeway Bay.

Damon is a Founding Committee Member in the Hong Kong Sommelier Association, the China Hong Kong Bartenders' Association, and the Hong Kong Cocktail School respectively.

SIMPLYLIFE FOODPLACE / DINNER
‘Organic Cuisine, Toscana Wines’ Winemaker Dinner,
Thursday 25 March, 2010, 7:00 —10:30pm
HK\$508.00 NET per person

APERITIF

Peter Zemmer Sudtiroler Pinot Grigio 2007

1ST COURSE

Peter Zemmer Sudtiroler Pinot Grigio 2007

Green apple and green bean salad

青蘋果青豆角沙律

2ND COURSE

Peter Zemmer 'LA LOT' Pinot Bianco 2008

Pork sausage & mixed vegetable soup

豬肉香腸什菜湯

3RD COURSE

**Castello Romitorio Morellino di Scansano D.O.C.G. 2007 (85%Sangiovese /
10%Cabernet Sauvignon / 5% Syrah)**

Tagliatelle with mixed cubes of beef and pork sausage, tomato sauce
and olive oil

鮮茄牛肉粒肉腸寬條麵

4TH COURSE

**Castello Romitorio Sant' Antimo Rosso 'Romito del Romitorio' D.O.C. 2006
(60%Sangiovese Grosso / 20% Cabernet Sauvignon / 20% Canaiolo Nero)**

Simply Life's signature chicken curry bread

香焗咖哩雞肉包

5TH COURSE

Castello Romitorio Brunello di Montalcino D.O.C.G. 2004 (Sangiovese Grosso)

Braised chicken in red wine sauce with carrots, button mushrooms, and onions

紅酒煮雞

6TH COURSE

Natale Verga Moscato D'Asti DOCG

Panna cotta with fresh berries

義式鮮奶布甸



MAXIM'S CAFE / DINNER
'Tour of Italy Cuisine, Toscana Wines'
Winemaker Dinner',
Saturday 27 March, 2010, 7:00—10:30pm
HK\$688.00 NET per person

APERITIF & 1ST COURSE

Peter Zemmer Sudtiroler Pinot Grigio 2007

Carpaccio of Swordfish and Tuna with Fresh Herbs and Lemon Dressing

鮮魚薄切配新鮮香草檸檬汁

2ND COURSE

**Castello Romitorio Morellino di Scansano D.O.C.G. 2007 (85% Sangiovese /
10% Cabernet**

Sauvignon / 5% Syrah)

Carpaccio of beef tenderloin, smoked eggplant, truffle oil and roquette

牛腰肉薄片 · 煙茄子 · 松露油芝麻菜

3RD COURSE

Peter Zemmer 'LA LOT' Pinot Bianco 2008

Zuppa d'Orzo e Cannellini (Traditional Trentino-Alto Adige vegetable soup with barley
and cannellini beans served with rye bread croutons)

傳統意式小麥紅腰豆什菜湯

4TH COURSE

Castello Romitorio Rosso di Montalcino D.O.C. 2007 (Sangiovese Grosso)

Risotto of wild forest mushrooms and black truffle

黑松露野菇燉飯

5TH COURSE

**Castello Romitorio Sant' Antimo Rosso 'Romito del Romitorio' D.O.C. 2006
(60% Sangiovese Grosso / 20% Cabernet Sauvignon / 20% Canaiolo Nero)**

Tuscan Lamb Chop Skillet

托斯卡尼煎羊扒

6TH COURSE

Castello Romitorio Brunello di Montalcino D.O.C.G. 2004 (Sangiovese Grosso)

Braised Pheasant with chestnuts

傳統意式燉栗子山雞

7TH COURSE

Natale Verga Moscato D'Asti DOCG

Tiramisu

意大利芝士蛋糕