



I don't have to follow trends. I do what I feel is right and what works; it's always nice to be unique.

Chef Riccardo Ferrarotti



pan-fried foie gras in potato crust

## wild-caught king fish with black mussel 'brodetto' broccoletti (page 31)

By Chef Riccardo Ferrarotti

- 4 tsp extra virgin olive oil
- 4 wild-caught king fish fillets (200g each)
- 2 tsp sliced garlic
- 450g fresh black mussels
- 200g cherry tomatoes
- 200g baby broccoli
- 10ml (each) white wine and clarified fish stock
- Freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 40g fried pasta
- Fresh dill, for garnishing

- Heat the extra virgin olive oil in a non-stick sauté pan and sear the king fish fillets until browned. Add in the sliced garlic, black mussels, cherry tomatoes, baby broccoli, white wine and clarified fish stock. Transfer the sauté pan to a combi-oven and steam for about 10 minutes. Season to taste with freshly ground pepper. Remove the steamed mussels and place into each deep serving dish and top with a steamed king fish fillet.
- Return the same sauté pan with the resulting sauce on the stove and heat until sauce has reduced, for about a minute. Drizzle in a little more extra virgin olive oil and spoon the sauce over the steamed king fish fillets. Garnish with fried pasta and fresh dill. Serves 4

## Black Is The New Black

As you step into Nero Vivo (literally 'black live'), you might probably first observe the paintings on the wall, or perhaps the Italian gourmet products on display, but the centre of attraction must be the ocean of wine bottles neatly displayed on racks from floor to ceiling. In fact, if you look around a little more, you'd also notice that wine cartons are, apparently purposefully, left sitting around. It is, after all, an enoteca con cucina, Italian for 'wine house and kitchen'. Nero Vivo imports its own wines, among them some labels not available anywhere else in Malaysia. Currently, the restaurant boasts about 12,000 bottles and some 150 labels, sourced from various regions all over Italy. And like all Italians, Executive Chef Riccardo Ferrarotti is extremely proud of the cuisine served here. "Simplicity is part of our culture. There's a big variety, but the food is simple and uncomplicated." He elaborates, "The French have a standard recipe everywhere all over the world, but if you want a pasta carbonara, you can go to a hundred places and find a hundred different carbonaras. The reason Italian food is copied everywhere is precisely because it is simple to do, and which is why it is so successful. But the menu should always be based on what is freshly available." Chef Ferrarotti, whose father was a chef for over 30 years, entered the food and beverage profession at the age of thirteen. He graduated from a culinary school five years later, and has worked in Switzerland, Florida, Dubai, and Shanghai before moving to Malaysia. He recalls, "I learned a lot from my masters back in Italy, even though they weren't big names. I realised that even though I cannot ignore customer requests, I don't have to follow trends. I do what I feel is right and what works; it's always nice to be unique." And 'unique' is a most apt description of his dishes. Delicately crunchy on the outside but ever so moist, tender and rich on the inside, the pan-fried foie gras in potato crust with port wine reduction was truly a treat. His ravioli stuffed with cheese and topped with bagna cauda foam was soft, smooth, and subtle, with just a faint, elusive hint of bagna cauda. And the three-layered chocolate was a textbook of texture and flavour; crunchy on the bottom, smooth and luscious in the middle, and sublimely light on the top, the sweetness was balanced off by the pleasantly fruity and tangy passion fruit purée. As I finish off my meal, Chef Ferrarotti tells me about the dishes many customers come back for. And I thought to myself, "I, for one, would definitely be back." KL

- **Lafite**

11 Jalan Sultan Ismail, 50250 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Tel: (60) 3 2032 2388

- **Pacifica**

Kuala Lumpur City Centre, 50088 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Tel: (60) 3 2380 8888

- **Nero Vivo**

3A, Jalan Ceylon, 50200 Kuala Lumpur  
Tel: (60) 3 2070 3120

- **Senses**

Hilton Kuala Lumpur, 3 Jalan Stesen Sentral, 50470 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Tel: (60) 3 2264 2264

**Italian**

Other options **Mediterranean** p.380, **Pizzerias** p.383

**Sunway Resort**  
Bandar Sunway  
Petaling Jaya  
**Setia Jaya**  
Map 1 B3

**Avanti**

03 7492 8000 | [www.sunwayhotels.com](http://www.sunwayhotels.com)

Sunway Lagoon (p.192) is a popular 'resort within the city' in the KL suburbs and the water park, shops and restaurants make it a one-stop entertainment hub. Avanti is one of its dining outlets with a lively atmosphere and Italian-inspired dishes. The dual-level outlet has pressed-metal ceilings and stained-glass windows, and diners can eat in booths or at tables. The food includes popular Italian favourites such as pizza, pasta and mains such as beef tenderloin and sea bass. The Sunday smorgasbord brunches are well worth the drive into the suburbs. Diners are entertained by a resident pianist, while guest artists perform on special occasions. This is a popular spot for groups and families, and you can hire the upstairs space for private functions.

**3 Jalan 26A/70A**  
Plaza Prisma Ville  
Desa Sri Hartamas  
Mont Kiara  
**KL Sentral**  
Map 4 C4

**Il Divo**

03 6201 4445 | [www.ildivokl.com](http://www.ildivokl.com)

Il Divo is located in suburban Desa Sri Hartamas, close to Mont' Kiara and is the Italian of choice for many. The inviting exterior has a glassed entrance, mood lighting and planter boxes to soften the harshness of this commercial precinct. An all-white interior gives the impression of space and is creatively broken up with several colourful paintings. While no pizza is served, most other standard Italian dishes are on the compact menu which is more fine dining than casual trattoria. Select from dishes like beef carpaccio, seafood risotto, homemade pastas, angus tenderloin and several salads. Desserts like homemade gelati, panna cotta and tiramisu are supported by a high-quality cheese platter. There's a respectable all-Italian wine list with reasonable prices. A good map is on the website and may be required for first-time diners.

**Somerset**  
8 Lorong Ceylon  
City Centre  
**Raja Chulan**  
Map 13 A1

**Neroteca**

03 2070 8530 | [www.neroteca.com](http://www.neroteca.com)

This vibrant restaurant has a unique concept and diners could be mistaken for thinking they were in an Italian trattoria or corner store. Every inch of wall space is taken up with shelves of Italian produce like olive oils, pastas, herbs and an enticing selection of Italian wines. At the far end display fridges are full of pastries, cheeses, sausages and hams. The restaurant is non-halal and a speciality item is whole roasted suckling pig, although this must be ordered two days in advance. The sit-up bar is popular for those seeking coffee, grappa or some reading space. While the mood is relaxed, there's nothing casual about the food preparation and diners can order sandwiches, cold plates, pastas and mains such as grilled Italian sausages and mash, and fried spare ribs in mushroom sauce. Wines are available at realistic prices and are even cheaper for takeaway. Neroteca's trendy feel attracts young urbanites but it's the food that keeps them coming back.

**3A Jalan Ceylon**  
City Centre  
**Raja Chulan**  
Map 13 A1

**Nerovivo**

03 2070 3120 | [www.nerovivo.com](http://www.nerovivo.com)

This trendy, inner-city bungalow boasts authentic Italian dishes, many of which are prepared in an open-air pizza oven. Guests can dine inside with air conditioning, alfresco with views of Menara KL or enjoy an aperitif at the bar. The owner and host orchestrates the evening with great gusto to ensure everyone is content upon leaving. The menu features creative cuisine and regional specialities, various pastas with traditional sauces, and meat and fish mains. Meat dishes are based upon northern Italian recipes, while the seafood leans to Sicilian cooking styles. Try dishes like bistecca fiorentina and chocolate flan to appreciate the skill of the kitchen staff. There's a superb selection of well-priced

wines with an inevitable Italian bias. Nerovivo offers one of the city's best set lunches at just RM20 for antipasto or RM48 for antipasto, main, dessert and tea or coffee.

**67 Jalan Bangkung**  
Bukit Bandaraya  
Bangsar  
**Bangsar**  
Map 6 E1

**Opus Bistro**

03 2092 4288 | [www.opusbistro.com](http://www.opusbistro.com)

Opus is in a quiet neighbourhood near Bangsar with ample and free parking. The menu features a wide range of authentic Italian appetisers, salads, soups, pastas, mains and desserts. Enjoy dishes like seafood antipasti, bruschetta, soups, clams in white wine, seafood risotto and lobster thermidor. A signature dish is roasted cod with lemon caper sauce. Desserts include tiramisu and honey affogato (espresso, icecream and violet crumble). Cocktails and a wide selection of wines are available, with Wine Cellars (03 2093 1919) next door ensuring a good flow of booze. While the restaurant is situated in the area of Bangsar, the map on its website is useful. The ambience is as relaxed as the location, with seating for just 50 patrons. Guests can dine inside or alfresco on the sidewalk veranda.

**The Westin KL**  
199 Jalan Bukit Bintang  
Bukit Bintang  
**Bukit Bintang**  
Map 13 C1

**Prego**

03 2731 8333 | [www.starwoodhotels.com](http://www.starwoodhotels.com)

Prego is a contemporary Italian restaurant in an upmarket and design-oriented downtown hotel. The open kitchen and wood-fired pizza oven are the heart and hearth of the action. While the staff don't take themselves too seriously, they are one of the city's more professional outfits lead by a manager who knows his stuff. Guests can dine in a covered area that flows onto the busy Bukit Bintang pavement or inside on one of two levels. The cooking leans to northern Italian cuisine and don't be surprised if staff appear with slices of complimentary pizza between courses. A few lesser known dishes like braised oxtail add variety to the menu, while king prawns served with arugula, olive oil and a dash of chilli add some spice. There's a well considered wine list by the glass or bottle and this is supported by several types of grappa. Kids are also well looked after with their own menu. The Sunday, free-flow champagne brunch at just RM168 per person is always busy and great value, with a clown providing distraction for the kids.



Neroteca



Prego



# nerovivo

...a humble, friendly trattoria in the very best Italian tradition.

Though its on-street façade is sleek and elegant, Nerovivo is actually a humble, friendly trattoria in the very best Italian tradition. It is located in a refurbished colonial bungalow in the peaceful privacy of Ceylon Hill. Inside, a lively and passionately Italian atmosphere prevails.

Offering authentic homemade pasta, hearty main courses, delectable desserts and smoky, wood-fired pizza, Nerovivo is the brainchild of restaurateur Paolo Guiati. On top of the innovative menu and awe-inspiring wine list, he has created a pleasant atmosphere of genuine relaxation in which

guests are not afraid to raise their voices, laugh and chatter to their hearts' content, the Italian way.

Signature dishes at Nero Vivo include the seafood soup and tiramisu. From the portions to the ingredients and unique presentation, they receive full marks here. The soup is a delicious mouthful of succulent frutti di mare in a tangy broth, while the tiramisu is heavenly. Piled within a delicate biscuit bowl, the crunchy surprises suspended in its light mousse give this timeless favourite a contemporary twist. The pannacotta with hot chocolate sauce melts in the mouth, too.

*THIS PAGE: The stylish Nerovivo is a true find for lovers of authentic Italian food.*

*OPPOSITE (FROM TOP): Order a pre-dinner drink from the bar; al fresco dining is available.*



Recommended main courses include the Angus tenderloin with rich mushroom sauce, pan-fried lamb rack Milanese, grilled fresh jumbo prawns and roast cod fish in creola sauce. For pasta, try the linguine with live scampi and homemade potato gnocchi with fresh gorgonzola.

The pizza menu is extensive. Alongside staples such as tasty capricciosa, spicy diavola and rich gorgonzola pizza is the house special, the Nerovivo—juicy tomato, mozzarella, anchovies, sea scallops and rocket salad heaped onto crisp black olive dough. The ever-changing antipasto buffet displays such delights as beef carpaccio, seared imported scallops and pan-fried duck foie gras.

Nerovivo offers wine from Italy's most fêted producers, with many bottles imported directly from the winery. They are eminently affordable too, from light Pinot Grigio and bubbly Prosecco to bold, seductive Sicilians and grand Super Tuscans from the picturesque vineyards between Florence and Siena. The restaurant also boasts one of Malaysia's largest Grappa collections, as well as an impressive range of imported liqueurs and digestifs. The homemade frozen limoncello is designed to raise a few eyebrows.

With its warm hues broken up by striking exhibitions from locally based artists, Nerovivo is a welcoming trattoria to which one visit is rarely enough.

**seats**  
115

**food**  
authentic Italian

**drink**  
premium wines • Grappas • liqueurs

**features**  
bar • al fresco dining • authentic wood fire  
pizza oven

**nearby**  
Jalan Alor • Bukit Bintang • KL Tower

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