

SINGAPORE

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THE PEAK

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*The Singapore Space & Technology
CEO views space as
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invention, innovation
and inspiration.”*



THE BIG IDEAS EDITION

4 LEADERS INNOVATE
TO INFLUENCE IN THE
NEW ERA

OCEAN SCIENCE GETS A
STARSHIP ENTERPRISE

WATCHES WITH
DIALLED-UP DETAILS

Introduce Singapore Style Sambals to the US

Portland-based entrepreneurs Holly Ong and Pat Lau whip up flavours from home that are sibi ho chiak!

01 Sibiho sambals are made from family recipes.

02 Pat Lau and Holly Ong.

03 The founders used to host dinners at their homes.



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Portland, Oregon, in the Pacific Northwest is one of North America's top foodie destinations and is known for its high quality and varied agricultural products. It has more than 35,000 farms, of which over 90 per cent are family-owned and produce more than 200 food commodities. Many ingredients, such as onions, Dungeness crab and hazelnuts, are used in the culinary creations of Singaporean entrepreneurs Holly Ong and Pat Lau who founded their F&B enterprise Sibiho, meaning "very good" in Hokkien, in Portland in 2018.

The two met as colleagues in 2006 at Nike's Singapore office before being assigned to Nike Shanghai, and then to its Portland headquarters. During their time as expats, they would host dinners where they cooked elaborate Singaporean meals for their friends and colleagues.

"In most of the places where we travel to for work, we couldn't find good Singaporean food. Singapore food is very nuanced, and non-Singaporeans

are often unsure about the difference between our cuisine and others from South-east Asia, so we wanted to share the dishes we love with our friends," Ong says.

The idea to turn their hobby into a business came as they drove along the gorgeous Oregon coast and sampled freshly caught Dungeness crabs. Lau says, "We looked at the crabs and thought, 'why not make chilli crab for people who have never tried it?' We felt chilli crab would allow us to introduce Singapore to people in Portland by marrying a well-loved local ingredient with our flavours."

Sibiho Supperclub, a private catering business, was born from this idea. Ong and Lau host dinners at their homes every month, where guests tuck into chilli crab and more.

"When I travelled to Europe for work, I often used aggregator website EatWith, where you could rock up to people's homes for meal. Sometimes the host would be a chef, sometimes a

home cook. You wouldn't know who was coming, but everyone who came loved food and wanted to try new dishes and talk food with others. It was a wonderful communal experience, so we decided to start our Singapore version of something like that in Portland," says Ong.

"For us, it was a guerilla marketing experience. We had a basic website and an Instagram account, and just posted a few dates every month and waited to see what the turnout would be like," says Lau.

When their supper club launched in mid-2018, seats were quickly snapped up for all the dinners they held until the start of Covid-19 at the end of 2019.

When the pandemic struck and social dining was no longer viable, the duo shifted their business model to private catering and producing artisanal Sibiho sambals, which became so popular that they are now Sibiho's signature offerings.

Ong and Lau initially considered selling kueh or chicken rice as a way



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LITTLE RED DOT GOES ABROAD

Sibeiho isn't the only Singaporean-owned F&B business promoting our cuisine. Here are a few more.



NATIVE NOODLES, NEW YORK CITY
Singaporean Eurasian Amy Pryke launched Native Noodles at the Queens Night Market in 2019, before opening her first casual counter-service restaurant in February 2021. She started off selling laksa, but has now expanded her menu to include familiar favourites like wonton mee and roti john. "Many of our customers are trying Singaporean food for the first time through Native Noodles before becoming regulars. I believe the representation of Singapore in Hollywood movies and Netflix shows has helped put Singapore on the radar of more New Yorkers," says Pryke.
nativenoodles.com



RASA SAYANG, LONDON
Rasa Sayang opened in London's Chinatown in 2008. "At the time, Chinatown was dominated by dim sum and roast duck restaurants," says founder Ellen Chew. "Although they were good restaurants, there was a lack of choice for diners, so I decided that a Singaporean and Malaysian restaurant would be a great addition to the neighbourhood and to London. Since we launched, the British have become more open to trying new cuisines, and Singaporean food offers them dynamic and exciting and flavourful dishes. What's more, as we are a Halal restaurant, we also have many Muslim regulars."
rasasayangfood.com



SHIOK KITCHEN, CALIFORNIA
Shiok Kitchen began as a small 16-seat hole-in-the-wall eatery on Laurel Street in San Carlos during the height of the Silicon Valley boom in 1999. Since then, it has moved to Menlo Park, a city in San Mateo County in the San Francisco Bay Area, and has expanded its menu to include items like roti prata, Hokkien mee, hor fun, and beef rendang. "Now is an exciting time for Singaporean cuisine in the US. Thanks to the Food Network shows featuring Singaporean food, and *Crazy Rich Asians*, more people in the US want to try our cuisine," says Dennis Lim, owner of the restaurant.
shiokkitchen.com



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to adapt to the pandemic, but they decided to focus instead on sambals to give Oregonians a way to create their own healthy meal at home with a taste of Singapore.

"We remembered the homecooked meals of our childhoods and in a lot of the dishes there was always sambal; it is such a versatile condiment. Sambal is the magic sauce in everything we cook, whether it's a Chinese, Malay, Eurasian, or Indian dish. In Singapore, we are always eating sambal in one form or another—for example, there is the sweet sambal for nasi lemak, the chilli paste for char kway teow, and the coconut sambal that's served with dosa," says Ong.

Sibeiho's Boomz Sambal, OMG! Sambal and AF Chili Chunka Sambal, which won 2022 Good Food Awards given to responsible craft food producers in America, are available via their website and at major Portland supermarkets. "We make our sambals

from locally sourced ingredients. They are low in sodium and sugar, and do not contain MSG. Many of our customers are surprised at how healthy they are," Lau says.

According to Ong, many Oregonians are into eco-conscious, sustainable eating. "They are very particular about the origin of their foods. Most of Sibeiho's ingredients come from small local businesses that practise environmentally friendly, ethical farming. "We only have one planet, so it's important that we don't just consume mindlessly. We keep this in mind when we prepare our sambals."

Sibeiho opened its commercial kitchen and retail space in November 2020 on NW 23rd Ave in Northwest

Portland, a vibrant, eclectic neighbourhood full of unique shops and eateries. The delicious sambals and seasonal specialties such as kaya are highlights of the shop, where guests chat with Ong and Lau and buy porcelain ware from Supermama, and even cookbooks from Epigram.

"Rather than a restaurant, we are a hybrid space that does private catering and produces high quality, artisanal products. Many Americans associate Asian food with unhealthy, MSG-laden Chinese takeout. People will spend US\$15 (S\$20.40) for a jar of artisanal Italian pesto, but Asian condiments are perceived as cheap and of inferior quality.

"A proper Singaporean home-cooked meal with at least three meat

04 The award-winning sambals at a food market in Oregon.

05 Chilli Dungeness crabs were the inspiration for Sibeiho.



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or vegetable dishes and one slow-boiled soup takes more effort than preparing a Western steak and potato dinner. Our brand provides Americans with the opportunity to learn more about the flavours, history, and culture of our cuisine," says Ong.

"We may be far from home, but we want to represent our little red dot in a way that will make our family, friends and country proud." ㊦

"We remembered the homecooked meals of our childhoods and in a lot of the dishes there was always sambal; it is such a versatile condiment."

photos
WILDLAND LIMITED

text
MICHELE KOH MOROLLO

Highland Rewilding and Repeopling

Using slow, sustainable tourism, a Danish billionaire is rejuvenating the Scottish Highlands and revitalising its rural communities.

Killiehuntly is a 1,618-hectare Highland estate in the Cairngorms National Park.

01 Wildland's goal is to help "rewild" and "repeople" Scotland.

02 In Scotland, plunging into the icy waters of a loch or river pool is a long tradition.

03 Glenfeshie Lodge—featured in *The Crown* and *The Queen*—is one of many properties available for rent through Wildland.

Those who love nature and untamed places will enjoy Killiehuntly as a slow travel destination like no other. The remote 1,618-hectare estate lies within the majestic Cairngorms National Park in the Scottish Highlands, about 64km south of Inverness and 6km from the hamlet of Kingussie. And what was once a 17th-century farmhouse is now a luxury, four-room guest house with communal living and dining

spaces, and self-catering cottages. Each has been tastefully decorated in a style that combines Scottish ruggedness with Scandinavian warmth.

After chatting with the cook and other guests over a scrumptious breakfast (blackberries, apple compote, dried figs, granola with yogurt and Scottish smoked salmon, asparagus, and a poached egg), I explore the Caledonian pine forests, lakes and glens surrounding the farmhouse with my ham, cheese and chutney sandwich and homemade flapjack in a brown paper bag tied with string. Along the way, I see a black grouse and a red squirrel, and I am awed by the magic of ancient woodlands and lochs coming back to life.

Killiehuntly is one of 13 Scottish estates managed by Wildland Limited, a hospitality and nature conservation group owned by Danish billionaire and fashion mogul Anders Holch Povlsen. The CEO of multibillion-pound fashion company Bestseller, the largest stakeholder in British online fashion retailer ASOS, and the richest man in Denmark, he purchased his first Scottish estate Glenfeshie in 2007 and refurbished the estate's lodge that was built around 1880. Today, the Glenfeshie Lodge—featured in *The Crown* and *The Queen*—is just one of many properties available for rental through Wildland.

In total, Povlsen has bought around 93ha of private estates in Scotland since then. That is more land in the UK than the Queen and the Church of Scotland combined. On these estates, historic mansions, farmhouses and cottages have been meticulously restored and transformed into luxurious, off-grid, private self-catering lodges, event venues and bed and breakfast accommodations that employ locals and provide economic revival in these rural parts of Scotland. Wildland's tourism business profits go towards nature conservation.

Povlsen's goal with Wildland is to help "rewild" and "repeople" Scotland by restoring woodland and marine habitats





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“We wish to restore our parts of the Highlands to their former magnificent natural state and repair the harm man has inflicted on them. Not just the land itself, but also the other parts of Scotland’s rich heritage for which we are now custodians.”

ANDERS HOLCH POVLSEN, FASHION MOGUL AND OWNER OF WILDLAND LIMITED

and creating hospitality jobs within small rural communities near his estates. The ancient Scottish lairds destroyed the natural landscape for farming and hunting, which led to deforestation and the loss of native wildlife. Wildland plans to undo this with an ecological rehabilitation for the Scottish Highlands.

In an interview with Britain’s *The Sunday Times*, Povlsen said, “This [the Highlands] is not a natural environment any more. When you’re out there, there’s only heather, heather, heather. In some places, you will not be able to see a single tree for miles. Then we dig into the peat, and you will find it used to be a forest, and not only that, we can change it back to its splendour and natural state.”

To achieve Povlsen’s goal, the Wildland team has removed overgrazing sheep and planted more than four million trees across all the estates.

“We wish to restore our parts of the Highlands to their former magnificent natural state and repair the harm man has inflicted on them. Not just the land itself, but also the other parts of Scotland’s rich heritage for which we are now custodians. There are many vulnerable properties in our holdings that we have the wonderful and privileged opportunity to rehabilitate and restore to life. There are also archaeologically important structures that we have the responsibility to protect,” said Povlsen.

Among them are Aldourie Castle, a classic example of Scottish baronial architecture on the shores of Loch Ness, Kinloch Lodge—formerly the private shooting lodge of the Dukes of Sutherland—and Lundies House, a stone rectory built in

1842 in Sutherland, a historic county along Scotland’s scenic North Coast route.

Povlsen, who spent many childhood holidays with his family in Scotland, has a deep connection with the land. “This land moves me, it motivates me. Here in Scotland, it feels like we are at the vanguard of something,” he said. Using tourism and conservation together, he hopes to regenerate the natural environment and improve the quality of life for the local residents. It may seem romantic to imagine wealthy Highland clans, but Povlsen believes this idea is misplaced. “Yes, in some of the glens there might have been many families, but they had an impoverished life. The future of many places in the Highlands needs to be reimagined, and we hope conservation will be a part of this,” he said.

As I make my way back to the farmhouse for afternoon tea, I wonder if I will be lucky

enough to spot a pine marten. Maybe when I return here in the future, when the woods have become wild and hospitable enough for more animal species, I might even see the lynx, which has been extinct for at least 500 years in the Highlands. ☺

04 In Sutherland, Lundies House is a stone rectory built in 1842 on the edge of Scotland’s north coast.

05 The owners have dubbed Lundies’ interior as “Scandi-Scot”.

06 Locally-sourced produce from land and sea take guests on a journey of the Scottish landscape.

07 Kinloch, once the shooting lodge of the Dukes of Sutherland, is let on a whole-house basis, along with use of the majestic estate.



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