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## A taste of his own medicine

It's French cooking- meets-TCM at Red White & Pure, Eu Yan Sang's new store concept

By Sarah Ong

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**YUMMY MISTAKES: Chef Gamon says coming up with the recipes which incorporate Chinese medicine was more error than trial.**

AMERICAN chef Raphael Gamon got interested in acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) when he was a boy.

His father, who had converted to Buddhism, was interested in both and that rubbed off on him. Encouraged by his Dad, he began to read books on the topics.

And although he later enrolled in cooking school in Switzerland, he never lost interest in them.

Now, 28 years later, the Swiss Culinary Academy graduate is fusing TCM with his French culinary skills.

The 44-year-old heads the kitchen at Red White & Pure, a new \$5-million spa, shop and restaurant outlet in VivoCity mall. It is run by the Eu Yan Sang group, which deals in health-care and TCM products.

The chef, who worked in Thailand before coming here, gives interesting twists to familiar dishes like Chicken Cordon Bleu (\$20.50++), usually a boneless, breaded chicken breast stuffed with ham and Swiss cheese.

His version is stuffed with blue cheese, dates and wolfberries. More commonly known by the Chinese name gou qi, wolfberries is said to improve eyesight. Red dates, often used in Korean and Chinese medicine, are believed to alleviate stress.

For dessert, there is Birds' Nest Ice-cream (\$10.50++), a delicate treat which is said to improve the complexion.

Chef Gamon describes the experimental process of coming up with the recipes as 'more error than trial', and says that the menu took about six months to finalise, with help from consultant herbalist Lee Jok-Theng.

The chef, a bachelor, says he often cooks for his friends and always incorporates Chinese medicinal herbs in his dishes.

'Cooking is a lifestyle, and I treat my TCM ingredients with great respect,' he says.

It is the kind of vibe Eu Yan Sang wants to create in the 10,300sqft store, which is spread over two levels.

Aside from the spa, which offers massages and acupuncture, there is also a shop that sells TCM products like American Ginseng, a 17m-long bar serving beverages such as tonics spiked with ginseng and ginkgo biloba, a terrace for drinking wellness teas and a 68-seater restaurant.

The sleek decor, with clean white walls and walnut-wood furniture, is quite different from the group's more traditional TCM stores.

As Mr Richard Eu, the group's chief executive, puts it: 'It's not just another medical hall.'

He says the aim is to help people relax and counter stress and environmental pollution in an urbane setting.

'We're bringing TCM's philosophy about balance to people in a language they can understand.'

**Red White & Pure is located at 02-141 VivoCity. Tel: 6827-0118.**

**Opening hours: 10am to 10pm daily.**

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