

Great addition to concoction

Celebrity mixologist finds a fun ingredient in limau kasturi

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WHO would have thought the calamansi or *limau kasturi* would be the ingredient to get American celebrity mixologist and chef Kathy Casey all excited on her maiden trip to Asia.

"I like the flavour very much, it is very interesting and so very cute!" Casey said during an interview at the MO Bar in Mandarin Oriental, where she was invited to train the bartenders.

Touted as the first bar chef Casey, who comes up with anything between 20 and 30 new cocktail recipes every week, said experimenting was key to making new cocktails.

"It also helps that I am a chef so I can practically 'mix' a cocktail in my head and know what it will taste like," the owner of Kathy Casey Food Studios - Liquid Kitchen and Dish D'Lish "Food to Go-Go" said.

She said the key to making a good cocktail was in the technique as well as measuring the ingredients that go into it.

"Putting too much of any ingredient could result in a completely different thing, maybe a bit too strong sometimes. To me, a good cocktail is a balanced one," she said.

No stranger to Asian food having grown up in Seattle where there's a sizeable Asian community, Casey saw other interesting things apart from the calamansi in Malaysia.

"There was the Malaccan



Drink up: (Clockwise from top) The orchid garnished Lemongrass Ginger Drop, Margerita with Fresh Pomegranate Foam, Mandarin Whisky Cocktail garnished with a golden cherry and the Mandarin Lychee Cooler are part of the cocktail list in MO Bar.

palm sugar and then I saw some of the hotel staff enjoying tea with calamansi in it. That was really interesting!" she said, referring to *teh 'o' ais limau*.

Touring the kitchens with the chefs was one of the first things Casey did at the Mandarin Oriental so she could check out the fresh local ingredients, to incorporate into her concoctions.

The result was 21 new specially crafted cocktail recipes that featured many local ingredients as well as twists to some of her own signature creations.

"I believe in creating a cocktail menu where there is something for everyone," Casey said.

The frequent television and



Mixing it fine: Casey came up with 21 new cocktail concoctions for MO Bar.

radio guest who keeps up with the latest trends in the culinary and cocktail scene shared with us what she would go for in MO Bar.

"I will go for the Mandarin Whisky Cocktail which uses rice wine among its ingredients or if I am feeling playful, I will go for the Lemongrass Ginger Drop," she said, adding that many of the cocktails would be garnished with cherry.

The mixologist has also come up with several new cocktails for a new bar in Mandarin Oriental called the Casbah, to be opened soon.



Different flavour: You can use ingredients like chilli, cucumber and cinnamon in your cocktails.

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