

Eight restaurants win inaugural awards

MALAYSIA offers a diverse range of cuisines. The restaurants that continue to mushroom in Kuala Lumpur provide an eclectic selection.

In an attempt to find out which restaurants in the capital city offered the best food and service, *KL Lifestyle* magazine organised the KL Lifestyle Awards 2005 in which diners voted for their favourite restaurants from a selection determined by the magazine's panel of food connoisseurs.

For three consecutive months, readers voted for their favourite restaurants in eight categories via sms, which culminated with the awards ceremony on May 10.

The Ship won the Favourite Steakhouse category, while Hotel Istana's Bologna was voted Favourite Mediterranean/Italian Restaurant. Hotel Equatorial KL received two awards, with Etoile Bistro winning Favourite Fusion Restaurant and Kampachi named Favourite Japanese Restaurant. The other winners were Tamarind Springs (Favourite Indochinese / Thai Restaurant), Unique Seafood (Favourite Seafood Restaurant), Chynna Hilton KL (Favourite Chinese Restaurant) and Ah Tuan Ee in Berjaya Times Square (Favourite Nyonya Restaurant).

"Awards like these help keep the outlets on their toes and encourage them to be competitive, innovative and service-oriented," said Deputy Tourism Minister Datuk Donald Lim Siang Chai when presenting the awards.



Lim (front row, centre) presented the KL Lifestyle Awards 2005 to the winners. Standing next to him are MTrans Group chairman David Chew (front row, third from right) and Ahmad Rejal Arbee (front row, second from right).

"The Tourism Ministry has received suggestions that 'star' ratings should be given to restaurants, just like hotels. The ministry will have to think carefully and explore the option. We welcome views from restaurant operators and owners regarding this suggestion.

"Meanwhile, it is hoped that not only do all restaurants offer good food, but also reasonable prices, and a good environment that comes with clean toilets. Restaurant staff must also wear proper attire and practise hygienic habits," said Lim.

He added that the ministry spent RM200mil a year in 2004 and 2005 to

promote Malaysia and 16.4 million foreign tourists visited in 2005.

"The Government is spending RM1.8bil to upgrade Malaysia's tourist destinations and infrastructure. Under the Ninth Malaysia Plan, the Government hopes to see 24.6 million tourists in 2010."

Speaking on behalf of the magazine, KL Multimedia Sdn Bhd executive director Datuk Ahmad Rejal Arbee said:

"As *KL Lifestyle* matures, and the awards with it, we hope to be able to expand and incorporate more categories to reflect the spectrum of food choices that KL has to offer."