



For the potato-pineapple terrine served on the side, the sous-vide preparation encourages gelatinisation, breaking down potato starches so it can naturally meld with the pineapple. The ideal temperature for this to happen is around 84°C – anything less than 80°C halts the process and anything more than 90°C will cause the potato to crisp up. This process takes about an hour and a timer is set next to the large red digits on the thermostat, with the circulating coil in the water bath emitting the requisite heat to keep the temperature steady.

All this is done with minimal fuss, as sous-vide enables chefs to prepare their food ahead of time. The genius of this method, according to Lee who also holds a degree in Food Science and Technology, is that the ingredients' quality can be fully brought out, through an understanding of measured, scientific processes. When the time is up, the meat and potatoes are removed from the bath and immediately immersed into an ice bath. The cold shock removes residual heat and stops the ingredients from cooking any further. At the very end of the process, just before serving, the meat and terrine is lightly browned and seared to create the right amount of caramelisation and a perfect serve.

*The revered cognac house of Martell embarks once again on its Pure Gourmet signature, a philosophy that celebrates a journey of truly understanding what pure, real food and drink is all about – a culinary approach to exquisite gastronomy where quality ingredients and perfect techniques are the undisputed stars. At the core of this philosophy is the inspiration drawn from the pure method of cognac creation, as embraced by Martell. Founded in 1715 in Cognac, France, Martell has always had close links to gastronomy and Pure Gourmet is the first and definitive step in further developing this passion and preparing a base of exquisite gourmet creations with which to pair the Martell cognacs. As Jean Martell himself said, "Quality is the most powerful weapon we can use." The next Martell Pure Gourmet will be held on October 29 and 30. For reservations, please contact +6019 317 9237*

MARTELL  
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PURE GOURMET

## PERFECTION ON YOUR PLATE

Here are five easy tips from Chef Eugene Lee to ensure that your next sous-vide adventure results in a flawless, flavourful meal.

❖ Vacuum sealing pulls air and moisture. Place the ends of the pack – not the middle bit – on the sealing strip, so the ingredients don't dry out and oils aren't sucked out and into the machinery.

❖ When seasoning the ingredients, use an even spread before sealing it. An entire sprig of thyme will strongly flavour the part of meat which it comes in contact with while the untouched ends will taste very weakly of thyme. Chop the herb finely and toss it with olive oil to create an even spread.

❖ Vacuum packing is a bit like squeezing a sponge. When it comes out of the packing, the ingredients will re-absorb the seasoning and sauces in the pack. Hence, flavour your ingredients before the sealing process, be it Korean sauces, sesame, pepper, salt or oils, so that aromas and tastes are properly infused.

❖ The duration of the water bath determines the tenderness while the temperature determines the doneness. Eggs in 62.5°C for an hour come out poached. Anything more in temperature will result in a different texture on the egg as proteins react to heat levels. This is true for anything else; seafood, meats, poultry or vegetables.

❖ To finish off the dish, the pan or grill must be made very, very hot. It's important to remember that sous-vide already cooks the food. So all that is required is a quick sear – about two minutes – to create that crispy layer of char and caramelisation.

## THE WHY OF SOUS-VIDE

In the present day, sous-vide has found great purchase among culinary heroes such as Ferran Adrià, Joël Robuchon, Heston Blumenthal and Thomas Keller, so one can imagine how useful this technique is in top kitchens. The reason is manifold; a key point is because the sous-vide is error free. By using lower temperatures and longer durations, food doesn't get over- or undercooked. Meats, vegetables and seafood are beneficiaries of a gradual, even heat and because of the vacuum packing, the ingredients do not suffer a loss in nutrients.

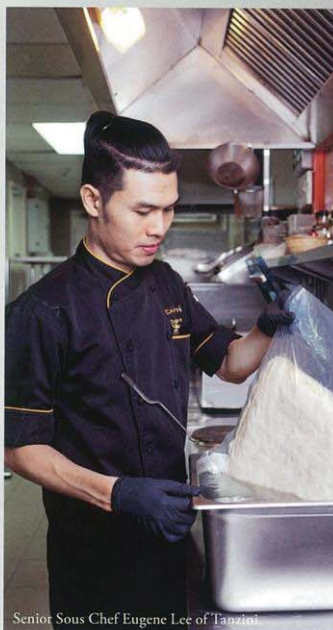
In most of these ingredients, the lower temperatures do not cause cell walls to burst – as might a strong heat – thus carrots still retain their crunch and scallops their bite. A slow heat also hydrolyses tough collagen into a gelatin, thus softening tough connective tissue. On the other hand, proteins are kept soft, braised in their own juices instead of losing moisture from exposure to dry heat. By working heat into food using sous-vide, results are consistent and repeatable every time. Most amazingly, this technique is a very democratic one, and can be applied to anything from slow-poached eggs, beef tenderloin, a slab of salmon and even fruit coulis. The technique has been perfected to such an extent that a properly done chicken breast is tender enough to be cut with just a fork.



## HOW TO APPLY SOUS-VIDE IN YOUR KITCHEN

At Tanzini's Upper Deck, where modern European fine dining takes place, senior sous chef Eugene Lee says that sous-vide is necessary to ensure consistently high quality. According to Lee, the world of fine dining expects a lot, and sous-vide often does the trick. He then proceeds to demonstrate how this is so through the preparation of the restaurant's famous Tajima Wagyu Tenderloin with Potato-Pineapple Terrine.

First, the prime cut of tenderloin is prepped two hours ahead of time, chilled – not frozen – and mixed with herb oil. It is then sealed with 80 per cent of the air sucked out, and put into a water bath of 56°C for an hour to achieve a medium rare doneness. This temperature and duration combination is the result of countless experimentation by the kitchen, which has a list of ideal times and temperatures pinned up on the wall with entries that include chicken, halibut, vegetables, pigeon, lobster tail and duck eggs.



Senior Sous Chef Eugene Lee of Tanzini.

