



GOURMAND

Shredded dried codfish baked with cheese and white sauce.



Chef Antonio Coelho, below left, flambes chourico, a Portuguese sausage, for Stephen Ip and his son.



# TAIPA TREATS

## Stephen Ip goes Portuguese for lunch at Antonio

THOUGH THE three-Michelin-star restaurant Robuchon a Galera is usually my first choice for lunch in Macau, I also like to try out different Portuguese restaurants from time to time.

My family and I dined at Antonio in Taipa village. The restaurant is named after its Portuguese owner, Antonio Neves Coelho, who first set foot in Macau in 1970 while in the army. He perfected his culinary art under chefs around the world before returning to Macau in 1997. He opened Antonio two years ago, after he turned 60, with the aim of promoting Portuguese food culture.

The restaurant became an instant hit. Coelho has put up pictures of his well-known patrons, which include the chief executives of Hong Kong and Macau, Hollywood director and screenwriter Oliver Stone and Picasso's daughter.

It is also listed as one of the three Michelin-recommended restaurants in Macau.

Antonio boasts authentic Portuguese cuisine.

The pata negra, which has been cured for 24 months, is a Portuguese specialty, and Coelho enjoys slicing the smoked ham in front of his customers.

Chourico, a Portuguese sausage, is another dish worth ordering as the server will flame the sausage at your table.

Bacalhau is a signature dish in Portuguese cuisine. Antonio serves the salted codfish in a variety

of styles – poached, grilled with omelet, baked with white sauce and bread crumbs, and in a flavorful pie. Besides bacalhau, other seafood options include curry crab, sardines, lobster and prawns.

Coelho recommends the goat's cheese with olive oil and honey served on toast, with lettuce and balsamic vinegar for the appetizer.

My wife ordered the traditional Portuguese green cabbage soup while I went for the sauteed clams with garlic, coriander, olive oil and white wine. The soup was rich and creamy while the clams were sweet and succulent. We polished off both dishes in no time.

We then savored the shredded dried codfish baked with white sauce and cheese, charcoal-grilled sardines with boiled potatoes and salad, and African chicken with coconut milk sauce.

My wife loved the olives in the white sauce while I preferred the grilled sardine to the cod because it had a more intense flavor. We felt the African chicken tasted best when it was slightly spicy, as it went well with Portuguese reds.

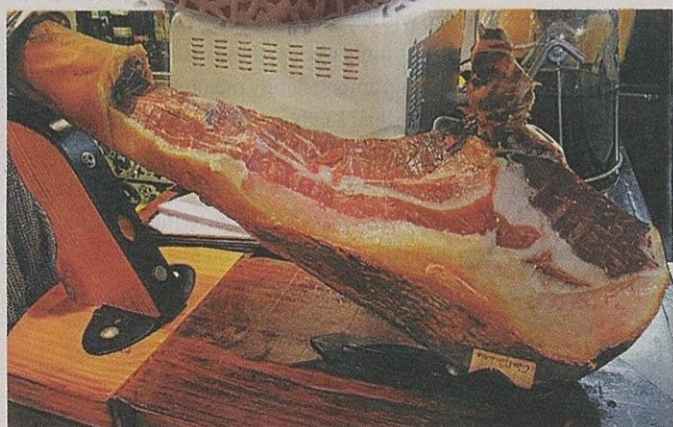
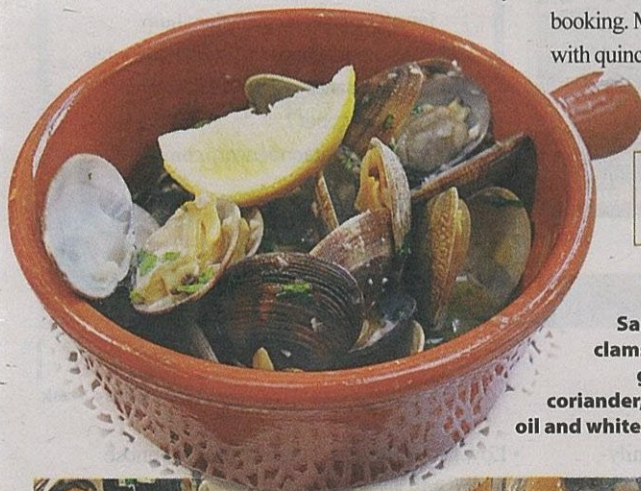
The wine list in Antonio offered lots of choices at bargain prices. Many Portuguese wines cost only HK\$100 to HK\$200 a bottle.

Rice enthusiasts can check out the duck or chicken rice. The rice, which is cooked in the blood of the chicken or duck, requires 24 hours' advance booking. My son loved the Portuguese cheese platter with quince jam and grapes for dessert.

It cost us HK\$400 per person for the two-hour lunch, which was reasonable.

Stephen Ip, the retired secretary for economic development and labour, is enjoying a second career as food critic.

Sauteed clams with garlic, coriander, olive oil and white wine.



Portuguese smoked ham, which has been cured for 24 months.