

# New theme restaurant set for grand opening

**S**PORTS is a human endeavour that brings people together. People of all ages and backgrounds put aside their inhibitions and can truly become engrossed in their favourite pastime. And there is nothing better than a live sports event to create an atmosphere and set the adrenaline pumping.

The concept of introducing a sports themed restaurant is new not just to Malta but in many parts of the world. Indeed the name of the restaurant, World Sports Cafe Malta, that is set to open in St George's Bay, St Julian's, is a bit misleading.

The truth is that this is just as much a restaurant as it is a cafe, meeting place and venue for conferences, presentations and special events. Unlike sports cafes around the world that are more cafe than restaurant, World Sports Cafe is more of a restaurant, although you would also go there for a good espresso or one of their colourful cocktails or long drinks.

Set out on two floors, the upper part consists of the main eating area, an open kitchen, three of the six themed booths and a bar. The themed booths can seat six-eight people comfortably (12 at a squeeze) and each consists of its own monitor and Sony PlayStation unit. The themes cover soccer, boxing, basketball, tennis, Formula 1 and American football.

Downstairs there are another three

themed booths and another bar, apart from a raised area and central control area where the 50 17" colour TV screens, two giant screens, three direct satellite links, and full conference and video facilities can be manipulated.

A collection of sports memorabilia is a major attraction, apart from the first poster of the Sydney 2000 Olympics and miniature posters of all the Olympic Games in the modern era. Downstairs, pride of place is given to a 1994 Formula 1 Ford Cosworth 3.5-litre V8 engine.

Along the walls and spread around World Sports Cafe you will find an F1 race suit made of fire-proof material worn by Martin Brundle, a collection of American football team helmets, an autographed Ronaldo shirt of Inter and two shirts autographed by the entire teams of Real Madrid and Mallorca.

To complete the collection the World Sports Cafe is waiting for three oars and a sweep oar used in a Coca-Cola Surf Race boat in South Africa, an actual Damon Hill race seat and belts, and F1 tyres and rims.

Operated by Exalco Holdings, the theme restaurant cost some Lm500,000 to bring to reality and, according to managing director Alex Montanaro, aims to be a standard-bearer for quality, with an accent on excellent food and all the tools necessary to make for a satisfying day, evening or night out.

Over the past fortnight or so, there



ORDERS being taken in the upstairs restaurant at the World Sports Cafe in St George's Bay

has been a soft opening, with all the venue's systems and co-ordination being fine tuned. Headed by general manager Pierre B. Camilleri, the staff of 40 have undergone some six weeks of training in both theory and practice.

The restaurant offers a variety of

cuisine, all with sports titles, aimed at an international audience. Lunch is served from 12.30 p.m. (last orders 2.30). The bar downstairs opens at 2 p.m. (up to 2 a.m.) and the restaurant then opens for dinner at 6 (last orders 11.30).

The World Sports Cafe will offi-

cially be inaugurated on August 26 but you may get a sneak preview by phoning 382382 for reservations, visiting their web site: [www.w-sportscafe.com](http://www.w-sportscafe.com) and e-mailing orders: [info@w-sportscafe.com](mailto:info@w-sportscafe.com).

**M.J. Naudi**

**W**INE has become a fashionable and social drink, and its popularity is growing everywhere. Even in traditionally beer-drinking countries like the UK and Australia, the consumption of wine has increased dramatically, and many young and not-so-young people are now preferring a glass of wine, instead of a glass of beer or a short. Over the last few years, many pubs, bars and restaurants have become wine friendly and the popularity of wine bars has helped to increase the love, interest and demand for wine. The atmosphere of fun and joy that good wine bars have created is truly unique, especially where wines are served by the glass.

Naturally, here in Malta wine has also become fashionable and our consumption is growing daily. We already have a few wine bars and the concept of 'wines by the glass' will soon become part of every decent wine list in our catering establishments. Of course, many of our restaurants will have to learn the meaning of

## 'A glass of wine'

by Michael Tabone

a glass of wine. Traditionally the choice was 'red' or 'white' and very often meant that the owner could resell the little bit of wine that some other client left in a bottle, one or two weeks before.

In some cases, and sometimes encouraged by some of our wine importers, it also meant that our restaurant and bar owners could get rid of their 'passed it' wines. You know, 'Soave 1986' or 'Beaujolais Nueve 1990'!

Of course the concept of offering 'wine by the glass' is very different to the above. The idea behind having a good selection of wines by the glass should be to give the wine lover the widest possible choice and to enjoy the advantages that this brings to the total culinary experience.

Food and wine matching will become easier. You will then truly be able to have a wine to complement every course of your meal. No more problems with you preferring red and your partner(s) wanting white. For the newcomers to the world of wine, 'wine by the glass' gives the chance to taste and experience various styles of wine from different regions in one outing.

For the more passionate, they can have a fruitful discussion with Isis, relax with a 'mate' like De Bortoli's Shiraz, dance the 'Flamenco' with Marques de Riscal and have an affair with the terroir of Chateau Soleil. Of course, all of this can be done without spending more than you would have normally, and within limits, you will be able to drive home.

My congratulations go to a small number of wine bars and restaurants that have already started offering a wide selection of 'wines by the glass' covering all the different styles, including sherrys and Champagne, and many regions including Spain and the New World. Let us all raise a glass of wine and congratulate them.

While on the subject of glasses and wine, it is truly a shame that so many people drink so much good wine and only appreciate half its potential because it is served in the wrong glass. It is a bit like the difference between watching *Titanic* or *Ben Hur* on TV instead of at the cinema.

Once complained in one of the top restaurants of Malta about the glasses on offer and the answer back was that the glasses formed part of a set and that they were very expensive. So what... shape, thickness and colour of glass is what counts. There are many good glasses available in Malta and these range from everyday stuff at around 50c, to the world famous Riedel's range of glasses, that start at around Lm4.

Whatever the price, ideally you want clear glasses that are not too thick. They should be large with a good bowl, which narrows towards the top so that when you swirl the wine around all the perfume and fragrance collects in the top of the glass.

Riedel have done a lot of research into the effects that glasses have on wine and it is clear that certain styles and types of wine look, smell and taste better in a certain glass than in another. Over the years, this Austrian glass producer has come up with a shape of glass that enhances most popular wines, however the Bordeaux glass is a good universal glass that works very well for most red wines, while the Burgundy Chardonnay glass works well for most white wines.

Another wine that is always served wrong here in Malta is Fino Sherry. To start off with, Fino Sherry should be used within two or three days of opening, providing it is properly closed. It should be served very cold and in what the Spanish in Andalusia call a *copita*. A *copita* is like a glass of white wine with a smaller bowl. Very much like the vintage port glass. A bottle of 75cl sherry should approximately serve six glasses.

One last thing. There is no point in having the right kink of glass if it is dirty or smelly. Before wine is poured in a glass, always make sure that the glass is clean and free from odours, such as detergent or mould smells, and never fill the glass more than two thirds.



RED BURGUNDY

RED BORDEAUX

VINTAGE CHAMPAGNE

BURGUNDY CHARDONNAY

RIESLING