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ADVERTISING FEATURE



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A sausage, a selfie and stock exchange priced beer - three uncanny Singapore experiences to find in Chinatown...



Clockwise from left; #Selfie Coffee - The Wuerstelstand - be emblazoned in coffee at #Selfie Coffee

by Steve Collins

I WAS wandering through Singapore's Chinatown when the heavens suddenly opened up. It was a typical tropical storm, raindrops as large as marbles fell in a torrent from the darkened skies.

Charging for the cover of a nearby food market I was nearly soaked after just a few seconds. When finally protected I looked around for something to drink and perhaps a small snack to keep me occupied for the duration of the storm.

I had started to love the local iced lemon tea, which is brilliantly refreshing in Singapore's hot and sultry climate. Being smack-bang in the middle of Chinatown I was expecting to order usual Asian fare, noodles, pork buns, perhaps one or two dim sum snacks. Then I saw a large sign for the Wuerstelstand which proudly advertised that it was the last sausage kiosk before the equator.

Truthfully, that's no idle boast for Singapore is indeed very close to the equator and sausage kiosks are not terribly common throughout Asia.

The stall was owned by Erich, an ex-pat Austrian,

who seemed to have the Singaporean market for German-style sausage pretty well covered. He also did a nice line in Backstube, Austrian-style muffins. Erich is a fantastic, larger-than-life, lanky character who is both garrulous and very entertaining. He was immaculately dressed in a

spotlessly clean, starched chef's jacket, and for me he even donned a tall toque. Erich would have looked at home in a Michelin three star kitchen.

His signature currywurst was indeed a delicious and very cheap accompaniment to the iced lemon tea.

The Wuerstelstand was not what I was expecting to find in Chinatown but my trip was definitely enriched by having the opportunity to taste and discuss sausage with Erich.

Singaporeans are known for their business acumen and in nearby Clarke Quay I found a bar that operates much like a stock exchange. By climbing a steep, dark staircase I entered a large space that is the beer market. Big screens were scattered

around the bar. Emblazoned across them were the brand names of beers, with their prices heralded in different colours in the next row.

These prices are changed every 20 minutes. I didn't ask why they magically changed after 20 minutes. Perhaps that's the average time for chugging down a pint? In which case, beer drinking is about the only pursuit I can accomplish in better-than-average time.

I learnt that if the price is unchanged, its colour appears as white. If the price has risen, green is the indicator. The one to look for is red, for this confirms that particular brew is cheaper than previously. The spot prices are based on popularity; the more a particular

beer sells, the higher its price. Those that are seldom purchased lose value.

Not all beers are initially priced the same, so that even if a poor-selling beer drops in price, it may still be more expensive than those on the rise. Reason being that not all beers are the same. Price depends on type, brand and especially alcoholic content, with strong beers costing more than light beers.

I had one beer, admittedly one that had fallen in price, then left, figuring that I would save a lot more money by not drinking beer at all.

There was one experience in Singapore that I have never had before - sucking my own face.

This was in one of my favourite areas, Kampong Glam, around Arab Street, which now is a really hip place. Whilst idling along Haji Lane which, with its garishly-painted buildings, cafes and boutiques, is full of interesting places to visit, I saw a shop called #Selfie Coffee.

Being naturally curious I ambled in to ask how it all worked.

They hand you a camera, you take a selfie, choose your brew, and it gets delivered with your face printed on the foam. I'm not at all into taking selfies, but this opportunity seemed too

good to dismiss, so I took the camera and pulled a stupid face, not that you can tell with me.

After ordering an iced coffee I sat at an outside table and waited. Soon, my drink arrived and, as promised, my face was emblazoned across the foam in full colour. I have no idea how the printing process works, but it was actually quite impressive.

So, I put a straw through my eye and started drinking.

This was much better than dieting because the more I drank the skinnier my face became. If I had of known this earlier I would have taken a full length selfie so I could watch myself get slimmer just by drinking iced coffee.

The saddest part is when you ingest the last of your face.

By then I really needed to get moving again, to walk off all those calories I'd just enjoyed.

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