

# What Next For The European Food Festival?

By MYANMORE - June 29, 2016



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Of all the reasons that make Yangon an increasingly attractive place to visit, discover or even live, the potential for gastronomy excellence is among the most vibrant ones currently evolving. This, together with its unique history, landscape and climate, were more than enough reasons to inspire Magnus Sherr of Mahlzeit German restaurant to organise the first European Food Festival in Yangon.

"The idea came from a conversation with an industry colleague in Vientiane, Laos. He told me they were organising their fifth such event, and I wondered if anything like this had ever been arranged in Myanmar. A quick search on Google for European events in Yangon revealed the numerous places I could watch the European Football, a European Film Festival came up, but nothing related to gastronomy," explains Magnus.



Mediterranean Booth, La Taverna

It didn't take much persuading for the other European restaurants in Yangon to join Magnus's enthusiasm, many commented they had been waiting for such an event to come along. Two months after the initial idea, the *European Food Festival* on 24th June brought a rich selection of national and international foodies to the Mahlzeit Function Hall in Sanchaung Township. More than 23 restaurants and suppliers from different origins came to seduce the Yangon community from every age and taste with their original and diversified offer. From Romanian wine and chocolate, Myanmar Coffee served with Dutch waffles, to Mediterranean fare, European beer and French Champagne, visitors took their taste buds on a culinary tour through Europe in the space of an afternoon.



"We wanted an event that showcased the best of each restaurant and nationality, but more importantly we wanted to created a space where a wider audience could experience our culinary finesse", elaborates Magnus. "An entry ticket of 15,000 Kyat meant that the general public could have a taster of the restaurants and meet suppliers they may not know about. All the food and drink today is sponsored by the exhibitors, which means the ticket proceeds can be donated to our designated charity, the Myittar Yang Chi orphanages. I estimate this to be in the range of USD 7,000."

These activities play an increasingly important role as tourism and restaurant activity agents in local economies, with impact on attracting the local community, retaining tourists and visitors, as well as catalysers of investment on the region. Such food festivals are a new gastronomic concept, with great success in cities such as Lisbon, Berlin, Paris and London, with the main goal of showing that besides the traditional hot-dogs, sandwiches or kebabs, the menus at European restaurants can also adopt an original take on well-known favourites, with great quality and a gourmet line.



Italian Booth, La Opera

The European diversified gastronomy has a valuable role in Yangon's promotion abroad, both as a tourism destination and an ambassador in foreign lands. The importance of this first European Food Festival can be quantified on its attendance. More than two hundred and fifty attendees turned out, with demand for tickets way exceeding capacity at this year's event.

So what happens next? Magnus already has plans brewing. "We were completely sold out weeks ahead of the event, and I was inundated with calls and emails for more tickets. It's been a phenomenal response and as a first event of this kind it's been a great success. We can certainly learn from today, take on board the feedback from the visitors and exhibitors, and grow future events from here. Next year is clear...we go big, much bigger than this, and the enthusiasm from all sides has been overwhelming and greatly encouraging."

To keep up to date on plans for their next event, follow their Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/europeanfoodfestivalinmyanmar/](http://www.facebook.com/europeanfoodfestivalinmyanmar/)