

Sweet treat that meets the mark

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By Jarod Lim



Staff dishing out black sesame paste. — Photos: SAMUEL ONG/The Star

MY quest to find a decent bowl of fa sang wu (peanut paste) dessert came to an end recently when I stumbled upon Restoran Ruby Desserts in Pudu, Kuala Lumpur.

Also known as sweet peanut broth, it is one of the first desserts I tasted as a child and have been fond of ever since.

After I started working in Petaling Jaya, I would always keep a lookout for the dessert but none quite met my expectations over the years.

They were either not thick enough, too sweet, lacked the aroma or had a combination of all three issues.



A worker grinding sesame seeds in a vibrant corner of the restaurant.

Although the restaurant's fourth generation owner Ricky Kan claims Ruby is king of chi ma wu (black sesame paste), it is well known for other desserts like the fa sang wu too.

"The more-than-a-century-old recipe was handed down from my great-grandfather Kan Seng who came from Guangzhou, China.

"He started making the dessert in 1888 and wrote down the recipe and benefits in a book which we display at the shop," he said.



Ruby's appetising Fa Sang Wu (right) and Chi Ma Wu desserts.

The dessert is prepared fresh daily, said Kan, adding that he would not hesitate to reject a batch if it was not up to par.

“We have a daring statement which is ‘If you are not satisfied, we don’t expect you to pay’. This reflects the confidence we have in our desserts.”

However, some customers have taken advantage of the guarantee and claimed the desserts were not good enough despite having emptied their bowls.

“If you do not enjoy the dessert, why finish it? Fortunately, however, such situations have been rare.”



Kan's great-grandfather's recipe book is on display at the restaurant.

Ruby's menu of eight other desserts are almond paste, walnut paste, Yin Yong peanuts (almonds and peanuts), Yin Yong black sesame (almonds and black sesame), cha wu (peanuts and black sesame mix), moon wu (walnut and black sesame mix), steamed egg custard and wolfberries steamed egg custard.

The pleasant aroma of peanuts in the bowl of fa sang wu I had was appetising and had a great consistency in its texture that was neither too thick nor watery.

The balanced sweetness was perfect while the peanut flavour was on point. It was certainly one of the best I had tried in the city. The photographer who had the black sesame paste also praised his dessert.



If you're lucky, you might get your mixed dessert with “art” on it much like a coffee barista would create for lattes.

Kan said the art appealed to Ruby's young customers looking to snap Instagram-worthy photos.

The coffee shop where Ruby is located also boasts a number of food stalls so diners can have their meals before enjoying the dessert.

The shop is located at 32, Jalan Kancil, off Jalan Landak, Pudu. It opens daily from 11am to 12.15am, except Tuesdays (unless it is a public holiday).