

XTRAVAGANZA



LA TOUR D'ARGENT has a sixth-floor riverside view of the Latin Quarter and Notre Dame Cathedral.

TERRAIL OF LA TOUR

How do you keep a four-century-old restaurant at the top of the listings?

MANOTE TRIPATHI
THE NATION

Andre Terrail, owner of La Tour d'Argent in Paris, was in Bangkok again last month sharing pressed ducking at Le Normandie at the Mandarin Oriental.

His restaurant turns 429 years old this year, and it's the mission of Terrail – the third-generation president – to keep it a family business.

Terrail, 30, is keeping things modern and fresh by enlivening its history.

Founded in 1582, La Tour d'Argent has a sixth-floor riverside view of the Latin Quarter and Notre Dame Cathedral. Its best-known dish is "bloody pressed duck", served just as it has been since the late 19th century, with an identifying number tag.

Bangkok's French gourmets went home happily with postcards bearing the stamped registration number of the duck they'd eaten. Their food was seasoned with momentous history, too. La Tour d'Argent counted King Henry IV and members of Louis XIV's court among its regulars. King Chulalongkorn dined there in 1907, and Her Majesty Queen Sirikit was a guest in 1992.

Terrail reports that the restaurant still has the letter of appreciation that Chulalongkorn left behind, preserved by his grandfather after he took over the establishment in 1910.

Claude Terrail took the reins in 1947 and maintained its prestige as a place for royalty and other celebrities.

For more than 50 years the restaurant had the ultimate gastronomic accolade of three Michelin stars, but since 1996 it's lost two of them.

Claude died in 2006, and Andre, his son, took the helm, three years after getting a degree in business administration from Babson College in Massachusetts in the US.

"In four centuries, the restaurant has been run by only three generations," he says. "It's a matter of great pride. It's an institution in France and around the world, the first to have three stars. People know it so well. And it's my duty to keep it that way. I'm trying to introduce small improvements little by little."

Terrail often finds himself torn between worthy and outdated tradition. In one memorable shift to modernity three years ago, he jettisoned the house rule that gentlemen must wear ties.

"We realised that you can look elegant without a tie. That was my decision and it was a difficult one. But we still insist that male guests wear a jacket. We have jackets to lend them if they turn up without."

Le Tour now also boasts a modern menu introduced by Terrail, with fewer choices, to let the chef concentrate on quality, but a selection that changes every five weeks.

Terrail trusts his chef so much that he lets him add dishes to the menu without sampling them himself. "But I work with him closely. I'm always in the dining room to hear feedback from guests. If something goes wrong I'm the first to know."

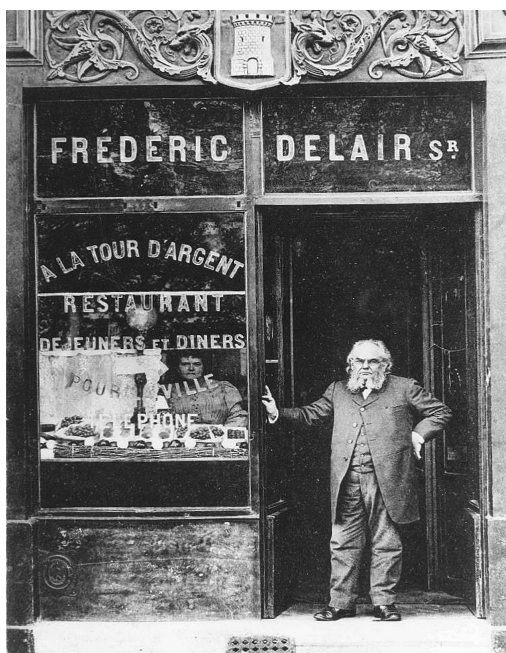
Still a young man, he has "fun" coordinating a staff of 115 and organising and attending overseas events. He regularly scouts new locations and is currently considering a third branch overseas after the hugely successful 30-year-old Tokyo outlet.

The guests back in Paris "ask a lot about



ANDRE TERRAIL plans to open new overseas branches of the restaurant that's been in his family for three generations.

NATION/ANANT CHANTARASOOT



THE RESTAURANT'S best-known dish, 'bloody pressed duck', has been served just as it has been since the late 19th century.

where I'm going next", he says. "They feel an attachment to the house."

They might complain that wine isn't available by the glass, but they keep coming back, particularly for special occasions. That, says Terrail, is because of the "perfect meal."

"A perfect meal consists of good company,

“A perfect meal consists of good company, good conversation, laughter, a good choice of wine and atmosphere. I tell my staff we shouldn't worry about having the best cuisine, but the best atmosphere.”

ANDRE TERRAIL

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Terrail checks out the competition and makes a point of visiting Michelin-star restaurants wherever he goes. He had dinner at Nahm at the Metropolitan Bangkok and was duly impressed, but found the food so spicy that he couldn't finish it.

"I can be happy with a sandwich if the bread is good, the ham is good and the butter is good. With a glass of rose and a bunch of good friends, you're the happiest man in the world!"

TO SEE & TO DO

E-mail artsandculture@nationgroup.com



Bach to Joplin

Ibycus and the Metropolitan Opera of Bangkok will present a cello quartet concert by Thai Cellissimo on **August 28** at 6pm in the sixth-floor Rehearsal Orchestra Room at Chulalongkorn University.

Kittikhun Sodprasert, Apichai Leamthong, Yukihiisa Nakagawa and Ekachai Maskulrat will play music by Bach, Scott Joplin and others.

Tickets cost Bt500 (Bt200 for students). Call (02) 932 9208 or e-mail ibycus_music@yahoo.com.



Full potential

The Venerable Anni Zamba, a British-born Buddhist nun, will give her perspective on ways to realise your "human potential" to members and guests of the Siam Society on **August 16** at 7.30pm.

The one-time student of the Dalai Lama will reveal how anyone can benefit from a glimpse of the limitless potential within.

Find out more at info@siam-society.org.



Ramadan lecture

The second of two talks about Ramadan takes place at the Indus restaurant on Sukhumvit Soi 26 on **August 13** at 10.30am.

Imtiyaz Yusuf of Assumption University and Bangkok Post columnist Imtiyaz Muqbil will explain the 30-day Muslim festival, marked by fasting to cleanse the body and soul.

There's no admission charge, but you should reserve a spot with Seksan at (02) 258 4900.

Fashion from the inside out

Actress Demi Moore adds her style stamp to Ann Taylor ads

SOLVEJ SCHOU
ASSOCIATED PRESS

As a teenager, before the fame, paparazzi, front-row seats at fashion shows and motherhood, Demi Moore regularly passed an Ann Taylor store at a local mall, taking note of the clothes.

In the years since, she's been a red-carpet rebel, jeans-wearing mum, bikini globetrotter and Versace model. Now her style evolution has come full circle, and Moore is the star of the Ann Taylor autumn ad campaign.

She is the latest Hollywood connection for a company that previously tapped Katie Holmes and Naomi Watts to court its shoppers. "I feel like I've known Ann Taylor since I was a kid. I've watched the clothes move into support for the working woman," says Moore, 48, during a break at a recent photo shoot in Los Angeles. "It used to be a lot of suiting. I've seen as we've changed, that they've changed, reflecting on how we live as modern women, which is wearing things that take us from day to night, from workout to work to weekend."

Looking at Moore's own fashion history, she's changed a lot, too. She has done the menswear thing,

the retro siren and many plunging necklines. She's been bald and buff – and totally bare. (Remember the *Vanity Fair* cover when she was pregnant in 1991?)

In recent years, she has developed more of a sophisticated and sultry look, winning her praise from fashion insiders.

"We have to remember it's okay to take risks. Sometimes it will work and sometimes it won't. For me, I know there's a certain kind of balance of criteria. I like things that are classic. I want to know that I'll look in my closet five years from now and that piece still has a place. I don't have room or time for something's that just absolutely of the moment."

She has no problem taking some cues from the past, though. "I look at Katharine Hepburn, from the '30s and '40s, and the women of the '70s, Bianca Jagger," says Moore. "When we're young, we're finding ourselves, what we like. I can say there are certain things that remain a constant. I've always loved vintage. I've rested in a place that's classic, with a twist."

That's the look you see in the Ann Taylor ads, shot by top photographer Patrick Demarchelier at one of Rockefeller Centre's rooftop gardens in New York City against a backdrop of towering buildings. In one ad, the star of "Ghost" and "A Few Good Men" stands confidently, hands on her hips, wearing a '60s-esque beige wool cape and a black

blouse edged in lace.

In another shot, she sports a sexy-chic long V-necked grey sweater accented by faux fur. Moore hadn't worked with Demarchelier since he photographed her as the cover of an issue of *Harper's Bazaar* in the '90s, one of her favourite shoots, she says.

The collection also includes animal-print jackets, tailored tweed, wide-legged pants and bling-y statement jewellery. Moore added her own creative slant to the ads, suggesting the pairing of a leopard-print shirt with khaki pants, and the faux fur-trimmed sweater.

"That was actually one of my favourite pieces, when I first looked through the collection," she says.

Moore still can push the envelope. For example, to this spring's Costume Institute Gala at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, she wore a strapless Prabal Gurung gown dripping in black feathers topped by a Philip Treacy head piece.

"Some of the kind of unspoken rules of what we're allowed to do at this age, and what you can get away with, really comes down to what's in your comfort zone, what makes you feel good about you," Moore says. "I think a part of it is on average we're living 34 years longer, so it's really changing, how we look at ourselves at different times. There might have been a time when we would say, 'Post 40, dress above the knee, I shouldn't

be doing this.' But that depends on the person. Fashion style really comes from the inside out."



MOORE, 48, still pushes the fashion envelope whenever she appears.

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