

Ann Hingpin

od pair . . . chef Paul Pairet has strong views on just what French cuisine should be and he is out to teach Hong Kong palates.

## Chef out to shock Hong Kong

By ROBIN LYNAM

PAUL Pairet has strong views on French food and is aiming to convert Hong Kong diners to his way of thinking.

As *chef de cuisine* of Regal Hotels International, he has already introduced a number of culinary innovations to the Restaurant de France in the group's Kowloon property and to the Riviera in the Regal Hong Kong Hotel.

Pairet, 29, was born in the south of France and completed his training in 1986 at the Hoteliers Management University in Toulouse.

Before joining Regal he worked in a number of well-known French restaurants including La Bourgogne, La Grace de Dieu and La Maison Blanche.

But coming to Hong Kong was something of a culture shock.

"The French cuisine in Hong Kong

is really classical. We have to make the onion soup, the lobster thermidor, all these well-known dishes. It's no longer interesting, it's no longer what is happening now. We are about 10 years behind," Pairet said.

Having sampled the food in a number of Hong Kong's French restaurants, he concluded that local tastes in fine dining were essentially conservative and that chefs were generally unwilling to take the sort of risks that were expected of top chefs in France.

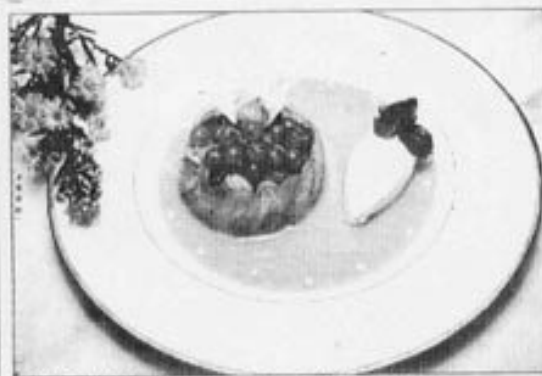
"The French restaurants in this town lean too much on classical cuisine and people have the impression that French cuisine is very heavy and creamy with a lot of butter," he said.

Pairet said the French attitude to *haute cuisine* was much the same as it was to *haute couture*. Fashions come

and go quickly and occasionally diners expect to be shocked.

"Fine dining should be food that you like or you dislike, but if you have no reaction it is not fine dining. You have to take some little risks. For example if you're using olive oil use a lot of olive oil, but get a reaction," Pairet said.

THURSDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 1993



NEW MENU: Red fruit tart is one of the features.

Thursday, 30 September 1993

THE GOOD LIFE

## Chef adds creative touch to classic French cuisine

CLASSICAL French cuisine and style characterise the premier dining room of Le Restaurant de France at the Regal Kowloon Hotel.

There, under the glow of candlelights and stained glass, guests can dine on superb food prepared by newly-appointed *chef de cuisine* Paul Pairet.

Pairet, a French native, brings extensive experience to the position despite being only 29 years of age.

Using the freshest seasonal produce, Pairet creates modern French cuisine with an emphasis on simplicity of presentation and on bringing out the true flavour of the food. There is also a hint of Mediterranean influence in Pairet's dishes.

As part of his new *a la carte* menu, Pairet prepares classical dishes for those with traditional tastes, and dishes of his own creation for those willing to try something different.

For appetisers he recommends the Fall Moon of seafood tabbouleh, a roll of smoked and fresh salmon rillettes, French snails wrapped in brick pastry served with beef juice and lemon grass followed by a delicious duck soup enhanced with lentil juice and duck's liver.

For the main course, recommendations include succulent King prawns caramelised and served with a mushroom

stew, roast turbot with mashed and crispy potatoes flavoured with olive oil or luscious lamb cutlets with braised potatoes and onions. The veal knuckle and savoy cabbage are also excellent.

Pairet has prepared a tailor-made executive luncheon menu at just \$158 for those busy people who still have time for good French cuisine.

There is also a set dinner menu. Reservations on 722 1818 ext 201. *Bon Appetit*.