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UNDER ONE ROOF

Shama Bano shares how her family is
spellbound by the magic of her V-ZUG ovens.

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Photography by **A PIXELS PHOTOGRAPHY**





The area along Keng Lee Road has seen its fair share of developments over the years. With increasing affluence, private lands have made way for condominiums and, in some cases, even private high-rise apartments. One such apartment block is a 10-storey building owned by Mustaq Ahmad, 62, the managing director of the famous Mustafa Centre in Little India.



Before the blueprint of the building was set in stone, her father enlisted the ladies of the family to come up with ideas for the kitchens.

Mustaq's second daughter, Shama Bano, greeted us when we visited the property for this article. As the 35-year-old homemaker held open the front door, her children dashed out and darted between the legs of adults. For all intents and purposes, this 10-storey apartment block isn't just an opulent property—it is home for the family, complete with the warm familiarity of an average Singaporean household.



ALL IN THE FAMILY

Shama and her family moved into the place in April this year. Before this, Shama, her parents, three siblings and their children were living on a plot of land that contained a two-storey bungalow as well as a three-level apartment. When her father decided to build a bigger home to accommodate everybody, he had only one thing in mind: to keep the family together. "The family has always been important to us," insisted Shama

as she gave us a tour of the apartment block. The fact that they were willing to continue living together is testament to how close-knit they are.

While the majority of the family occupies most of the units, the ninth floor is reserved for Shama's parents. The 10th and topmost floor, on the other hand, is a common area with a full-fledged gymnasium and a roof-top swimming pool. From here, one can see

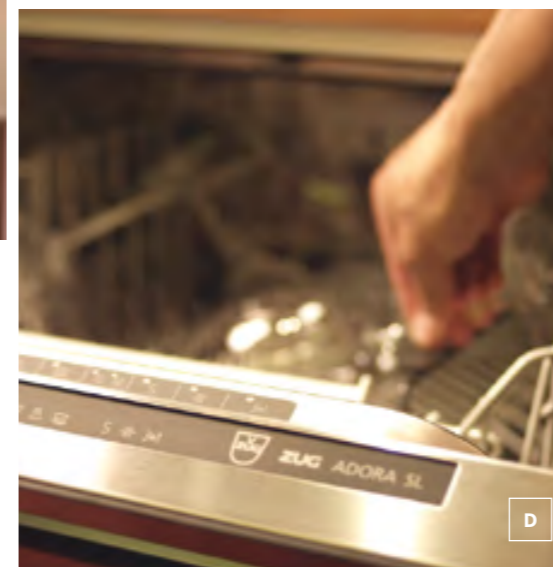


downtown Singapore, which explains why Shama has invited more than a few friends to this spot to watch fireworks on festive occasions.

One of the most memorable parties that the family hosted happened during this past Hari Raya Puasa. "I remember when the food came and it occupied the entire kitchen, and the whole place became a restaurant," recalled Shama. "It was also the first time that friends and family came together for an annual gathering in this house, and we really loved it."

"Food is a big thing around here. You can even say that everything is about food in this family."

- A. A family gathering
- B. Shama and her sisters
- C. Their well-stocked Liebherr refrigerator
- D. Washing up is effortless for Shama with the V-ZUG Adora SL
- E. Shama is an expert at using the V-ZUG ovens



FOR THE LOVE OF FOOD

The family may be physically under one roof, but what really binds them together is their love of food. "Food is a big thing around here. You can even say that everything is about food in this family," quipped Shama. In fact, before the blueprint of the building was set in stone, her father enlisted the women of the family to come up with ideas for the kitchens.

According to Shama, everyone wanted different things for their kitchens. Her mother, regarded as the head chef of the family, needed kitchen hobs on the first floor to accommodate the large pots and pans needed for heavy-duty cooking. The V-ZUG gas edition hobs her mother chose were perfect as they were wide enough to fit all the cooking utensils. And, since the family cooks mostly with fresh produce, Shama explained that the Liebherr range of fridges was ideal as they came equipped with the BioFresh food preservation feature.





BAKING LIFE

Shama revealed that she developed a love for cakes during her primary school days.

Ever the hands-on person, the young Shama began learning how to bake on her own. Over the years, she has become quite a proficient baker, and it showed in the appliances she selected for her own kitchen on the seventh floor. Aside from the Poggenpohl kitchen system, which neatly stows away her baking tools under an elegant countertop, she has three built-in ovens that she uses almost on a daily basis: one V-ZUG Comhair-Steam S and two V-ZUG Comhair SLPs. These three ovens allow her to create a wide range of sweet treats, from cookies

to cupcakes to carrot cakes. No wonder her kitchen constantly smells of baked goods!

In recent months, the younger members of the family have taken an interest in baking. While Shama's 15-year-old niece bakes scones with her from time to time, her own children also help out with decoration duties. Although they often leave a mess, Shama felt that it was important for the kids to try and learn baking from a young age. "I love the way the dough goes into the oven in one form and comes out in another. I was fascinated by that as a kid because it was like magic," Shama revealed. "That's why I am passing my passion on. I want them to love baking as much as I do."

- F. The spiral staircase connecting the ninth and 10th floors.
 G. Where the family escapes to for some peace and quiet.
 H. Shama making magic in the kitchen, which is entirely furnished in Poggenpohl system



"I love the way the dough goes into the oven in one form and comes out in another. I was fascinated by that as a kid because it was like magic."



LUXE LIVING
by Eunice Lew
Baking Boom

Move over, molecular gastronomy. Baking is a returning food trend that isn't going anywhere soon. *Kitchen Culture* takes a look at what has led to baking's resurgence. We also evaluate a handful of a baker's most important appliance.

Baking is booming in Singapore. International chains of bakeries as well as world-renowned pastry chefs have been setting up shop on our little island of late. Moreover, cable television's lifestyle channels are increasingly dishing out shows specialising in pastries and desserts, which viewers are eagerly lapping up.

Baking is unlike the modern food fads, such as supper clubs, molecular gastronomy, or even cronuts (a combination of donuts and croissants), all short-lived culinary crazes. The indispensable cooking method first flourished during the age of the Roman Empire, when it was considered a respectable profession. It has since become one of the most basic skills for anyone working in a kitchen. It met with a lull in popularity across the centuries, particularly in the 18th century after baked goods were declared too rich for consumption, and dependence on commercial baking led to a sharp decrease in the number of home bakers. But baking has now done an about-turn to become bigger than ever.

THE IN THING

"Baking is the hottest thing now," enthuses global baker Dean Brettschneider, a professional patissier and author from New Zealand, with bakeries in Auckland and Singapore. "There was a stage when everyone wanted to cook Gordon Ramsay's food, then Jamie Oliver's food, and now baking's in the spotlight."

Thirteen years ago, Brettschneider wanted to make a television series based on his new baking book, but studios weren't interested, as baking shows weren't the in thing. Now, everyone wants a piece of the pie, if you will, and baking shows are fervently followed by avid home bakers. "Everything goes through a cycle," Brettschneider explains. "And now bread's the new coffee!"

Some, including Brettschneider, attribute this trend to the recession that has hit economies worldwide. "When times get tough, people bake because baking makes comfort food," the Kiwi baker explains. It's a movement that has been verified by Alex Beckett, a senior food analyst with market research company, Mintel. He claims that home baking is now a form of leisure activity buoyed by television, because food is one thing people are unlikely to cut back on during hard times: cash-strapped people bake at home because it is significantly less expensive than buying prepared baked goods.



*Dean Brettschneider,
professional patissier and
author from New Zealand*

Home baking is now a form of leisure activity buoyed by television, because food is one thing people are unlikely to cut back on during hard times: cash-strapped people bake at home because it is significantly less expensive than buying prepared baked goods.

Increasing affluence worldwide also contributed to the rise of baking. As societies, particularly in economically stable countries such as Singapore, become more well off, people place a heavier emphasis on cooking with love and care, and thus would go for quality ingredients and equipment. Naturally, as people started cooking more for enjoyment than necessity, baking came into the picture. It certainly didn't hurt when pop culture inundated viewers with lifestyle ideals, such as when *Sex and the City's* Carrie Bradshaw devoured Magnolia Bakery's cupcakes and Julia Roberts vied for the last brownie in *Notting Hill*.

PROS AT HOME

The rising popularity of baking is most evident in the impressive viewership of baking shows, particular the *Great British Bake Off* on BBC Lifestyle. The first episode of the fourth season, which premiered this year, drew 6.3 million viewers—that's more than two million more than the third season's premiere.

Such is the popularity of baking that it has driven more home bakers to reach for the stars, wanting to either recreate the elaborate artisanal confections done by professional chefs or fashion their own creations. "Home chefs can definitely create the same products as hotel and restaurant chefs. The only difference is the scale of the equipment," executive pastry chef Gottfried Schuetzenberger of Grand Hyatt Singapore, says.

Where hotels, restaurants and bakeries have industrial-sized equipment, such as huge rotating or decked ovens because they mass produce their baked goods, home bakers have to adapt their recipes and methods to their kitchen equipment's idiosyncrasies. You might meet a few kinks here and there, but it's nothing a determined baker can't overcome.

Humidity is a challenge in Singapore, as most baked goods, such as cakes, pastries and meringue-based sweet treats, require dry air. "Most home kitchens don't have air-conditioning, so working with things such as macarons can be a problem," Schuetzenberger advises. "To solve this, you can switch on the air-conditioning in the living room and let the cookies dry there instead of in the kitchen. Or you can always heat your oven to lukewarm, maybe 30°C, turn off the heat, and let the macarons rest in the

dry oven. All these problems can be overcome by doing your research and having a passion for baking. "Today's world is so different from back when our grandmothers were baking. We have access to everything on the Internet, which is why bakers are now baking for fun rather than necessity. Look for four or five recipes online and always compare them to see if there are common things floating around. If they're all speaking the same language, they must be doing something right," Brettschneider suggests.

TOOL OF THE TRADE

Good quality home equipment comes into play as more people bake for leisure. The one appliance that bakers can't live without? "The oven!" Schuetzenberger declares. "You can do without a whisk or mixer, but you can never do without an oven."

Indeed, baked goods wouldn't be baked without one. The enclosed oven has been in existence since 600BC in ancient Greece, when there was a large demand for bread. Since then, it has evolved into the multi-functional appliance it is today, some of which can even proof your breads and bake goods at the turn of a knob. "The quality of your end-product is greatly influenced by the quality of your equipment. People also tend to forget that they wouldn't be able to bake, or bake as much, if they didn't have modern ovens—advances in technology has been really important for bakers," Brettschneider reveals.

And with so many choices—conventional or convection, gas or electric—it's not surprising that consumers are often left befuddled which model is best for their needs. Brettschneider's appliance of choice is the conventional oven. "When you use convection ovens with a sweet product, such as a cake, the outer layer tends to colour too quickly as the hot air swirls around, creating a sort of skin on the cake. This seals up the surface of your cake, causing the outside to

be hot while the inside remains cold. This will eventually cause the cake's surface to crack. Conventional ovens have static air, which works better for baking," he enthusiastically describes.

But you don't have to limit yourself to the



Gottfried Schuetzenberger,
Executive Pastry Chef,
Grand Hyatt Singapore

HOT STUFF:

An oven is the most important tool in the baker's arsenal. Here are six that can lift your pastries from good to great.

- A** FOSTER S4000
- B** KÜPPERSBUSCH COMPACT RANGE
- C** LA CORNUE W RANGE
- D** STEEL GENESI
- E** V-ZUG COMBI-STEAM
- F** WOLF E SERIES





RECIPE

CARROT CAKE FOR THE SOUL

As beloved American television chef Julia Child once said, "A party without cake is really just a meeting." Make your next dinner party a sure-fire hit by baking this farmhouse carrot cake, courtesy of global chef Dean Brettschneider.

INGREDIENTS

3 eggs
 170g granulated sugar
 170g brown sugar
 200g plain flour
 1½ tsp baking soda
 1 tsp mixed spice
 1 tsp cinnamon
 ¾ tsp salt
 275g vegetable oil
 150g grated carrot
 90g walnut pieces
 70g crushed pineapple from a tin, well drained
 chopped dried apricots, pumpkin seeds, poppy seeds and natural yogurt to taste

TOPPINGS

70g dried apricots, evenly cubed
 50g pumpkin seeds
 ½ tsp poppy seed

METHOD

- Sieve flour, baking soda, salt, mixed spice and cinnamon into a mixing bowl fitted with a beater.
- Add eggs, brown sugar, granulated sugar, oil, grated carrot, walnut pieces and crushed pineapple to the mixing bowl. Beat on slow speed for one minute, then scrape down the sides of the bowl. Beat for a further two minutes on medium speed.
- Lightly grease a 20cm-round loose bottom spring release cake tin and line the bottom and sides with non-stick baking paper to avoid over-baking. Pour the batter into the cake tin.
- Place tin directly into a preheated oven set at 150°C and bake for 1½ hours. Check that the cake is correctly baked by inserting a cake skewer into the centre of the cake. The cake is baked if it comes out clean.
- Allow the cake to cool in the tin for 30 minutes, then remove from the tin and allow it to cool completely. Remove the baking paper.
- Sprinkle a ring of chopped dried apricots, pumpkin seeds and a sprinkle of poppy seeds on the top of the icing approximately 1cm from the edge of the cake.
- Allow the cake to cool in the tin for 30 minutes, then remove from the tin and allow it to cool completely. Remove the baking paper.
- Cut into wedges and serve with a nice dollop of natural yogurt

CREAM CHEESE ICING

105g cream cheese
 90g softened butter
 190g icing sugar, sieved
 1 tsp lemon zest

METHOD

- Place the cream cheese, butter, icing sugar and lemon zest into a mixing bowl fitted with a beater. Beat on medium speed until the icing is white and fluffy. Use immediately.

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CULTURE CLUB



What have we been up to the past few months here at Kitchen Culture? Here's a wrap-up of some interesting activities that we organised or took part in.

SINGAPORE
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 Singapore 159086

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 #01-08
 Thye Hong Centre
 Singapore 159086

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 Bangunan Bangsaria
 Bangsar Baru 59100
 Kuala Lumpur

HONG KONG
 15/F, The Sun's
 Group Centre
 200 Gloucester Road

Shop B, Ground
 Floor & Basement of
 Bonny View House
 No. 63 & 65, Wong
 Nai Chung Road
 Happy Valley

Shop 202, Harbour
 Centre, 25 Harbour
 Road, Wanchai

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 Kav.04, Kuningan
 Jakarta 12950



/ NEW BEGINNINGS /

In June 2013, Kitchen Culture expanded its reach into Asia with the official opening of two new showrooms in Hong Kong. The more than 200 invited guests who turned up for the event—including valued principals, suppliers, customers, designers, architects and media—were given a tour of the stylish showrooms and treated to champagne and exquisite eats by Michelin-starred chef Jeremy Biasiol. The entertainment for the evening, which was emceed by Song Hey Lin, included the traditional lion dance, which represents prosperity and good luck for new beginnings.

The celebrations first took place at the showroom in Happy Valley. Brands taking centre stage here include Eggersmann, Liebherr, Fimes, Foster and Bluform. Complete with a unique copper wall, the modern interiors provide the perfect platform to showcase premium products from these brands. Guests were then transported to the Wan Chai showroom, where they were also presented with first-class designs and products from SieMat-ic and La Cornue, just to name a few. From luxury appliances and country interiors to contemporary designs and even a chicken on a rotisserie, both showrooms were stunning.

Commenting on the happy occasion, Executive Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Kitchen Culture, Mr Lim Wee Li, said, "As the gateway to China, I am very proud to attend not one, but two of Kitchen Culture's showroom openings in Hong Kong. By working closely with our partners, I look forward to seeing Kitchen Culture continue to expand and further build on our success."



/ WINE NOT? /

Kitchen Culture held an introductory talk on wine appreciation for locally appointed dealers of Sub-Zero and Wolf products in June 2013. The entertaining evening was held in the third floor showroom of the Kitchen Culture premises at New Industrial Road. On hand to welcome the dealers was Mr Mathew Sim, the General Manager of the Sub-Zero Wolf division.

Although numerous guests were delayed due to hazy weather conditions, they were soon soothed and refreshed by the range of wines and delectable treats from Wine Culture and Cookyn Inc respectively.

Guests nibbled on hors d'oeuvres such as prawn cocktail in vol au vent shells, mushroom bacon quiches, smoked salmon cheese pate with crackers, laksa leaf-cashew nut pesto with pita chips, and roasted carrot soup shots. They then tucked into the main course, which was roasted vegetable miso pasta with smoked duck and assorted vegetables.

After stomachs were filled, the main event got underway. Vincent Tan, a sommelier with Shelter in the Woods, faced a rather subdued audience at the beginning of his talk. But the



dealers relaxed as the wines were poured, and were soon shooting off pertinent questions about the nature of wine, how climate seemed to affect the style of wines, and how to store bottles in the local heat and humidity.

The wines presented that evening were in a wide range of styles. The tasting started with a champagne (Guy Charlemagne Brut Classic). It was followed by two white wines (Churton 2008 Sauvignon Blanc, from the Marlborough region of New Zealand; and Domaine Marcel Deiss 2010 Riesling). The tasting session ended with two red wines (Tatarrarra Heathcote 2007 Cambrian Shiraz from Australia; and Chateau De Fonbel 2010 from Bordeaux, France).

As the evening wrapped, guests left with a smile, thanks to the parting gift that Mr Sim and his staff were handing out: a bottle of wine, of course!



/ MASTER CHEFS IN ACTION /

Together with Club Le Meilleur, Kitchen Culture invited its clients to two special cooking classes led by Chef Pung Lu Tin, the Director of the Gim Tim Group of Restaurants, and Chef Daniel Sia, co-owner of The Disgruntled Chef at Dempsey Hill.

Held in June and September 2013 at Kitchen Culture's public showroom in Singapore, the classes saw the chefs preparing dizzying lists of recipes for participants to take home.

For his demonstration, Chef Pung served up Simmer Chicken Roll with Herbs and Chinese wine, Chilled Mini-Abalone with Chinese Rose Wine Sauce, and Pan-Seared Scallop with Red Grain Wine Sauce. In the other class, Chef Sia prepared Pan Roasted Seabass with Tapenade Crust, with sauce vierge drizzled on top. Using only the freshest ingredients, the seabass worked beautifully with the coriander leaves, tomatoes and black pepper, a delightful dish that paired well with the rest of his offerings, such as a starter of Pan-seared Foie Gras with Dried Fruits, Mesclun with Hazelnut Dressing, and a dessert of Sabayon of Red Fruits, Raspberry Sorbet, and Basil Coulis.

Both chefs used an oven and a refrigerator that are available from Kitchen Culture to cook and store the food items for their demonstrations.

At the end of each session, guests walked away with the chefs' recipes along with a Kitchen Culture goodie bag. "Chef Pung's explanations were very clear. I learnt a lot about Chinese wine and pan-searing," said one participant. Another participant was equally impressed with Chef Sia: "His culinary skills highlighted many of Kitchen Culture's products. I'd definitely come back for more."



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