



TEXT
MICHELE KOH

Tharen's

Host a fancy dress party at this libertine's lair

Step into this Parisian fantasy-themed restaurant in Sydney, and it feels like you've just stumbled onto a 17th-century French bordello, or the set of Baz Luhrmann's *Moulin Rouge*. In fact, not many people even know that restaurants like Tharen's exist. With its Baroque interior with chandeliers and plush velvety cushions, this is the sort of place to stage birthday parties and hen's nights.

The idea behind Tharen's is simple: if you want to have a party or a special night with your friends, just come up with a theme, and Tharen's will make it come alive with sparklers, special cakes, hats, boas, wigs and masks.

Opened in 1979, this restaurant bar is born out of the urban legend of an orphan named Tharen. Legend has it that after her bourgeois parents were killed by the Nazis in Paris, young Tharen was forced to flee to the hills of Bordeaux. After the war, she

travelled to Sydney and opened the doors of her home to libertines and revellers. Whether or not the story is true is unclear.

The staff here are all dressed as historical or fictional characters: Marie Antoinette with a white wig and stockings, Snow White or Alice in Wonderland. Be greeted by Count Dracula, while the Queen of Hearts shows you to your seat and Prince Charming serves you a glass of wine. Your party will also have fun with hats and props to fit your chosen theme.

The night begins with fancy cocktails, followed by a three-course meal with dishes such as tomato paprika, slow-roasted pork belly with preserved lime, and south Australian mussels in tomato bouillabaisse broth. Each course comes with a wine pairing. Add a couple more drinks, and the DJ and staff will see to it that everyone ends up singing, and perhaps dancing on the table, by the time the night is over.

WHERE

13-15 Kellat Way, Kings Cross, Sydney, NSW 2011, Australia

CONTACT

+61-2-9326-9510
www.tharens.com.au

WHEN

Open Tues to Sat
7pm-midnight

PRICE

A three-course meal
from around A\$55
(US\$37 or €28)



Just three minutes by foot from the nearest Zhongshan subway exit, and located next to three Japanese shopping malls, the Tango Nanshi hotel is a real gem on the bustling Nanjing West Road.

The hotel's modern glass wall design exudes a sense of class and privacy amongst its neighbouring shops and eateries. Walk in and be greeted by Taiwanese hospitality at its best. The staff are friendly, bilingual and professional and are always ready to answer any query (or Google it if they can't).

Tango Nashi has 52 rooms, including four Tango Suites that have a mini-garden with a view. Each room itself is a delight for anyone who needs comfort and modern technology on their visit: wi-fi access is on the house, and an all-in-one remote control is all you need to draw the curtains, turn up the Pioneer theatre system, dim the lighting and channel surf on the wide-screen Sony Bravia LCD TV.

It's quite amazing how the room also manages to fit in a workstation with an ergonomic chair, a luxurious Contessa armchair and a sturdy bed with goose down comforters, and yet still have space

for guests to lay out a suitcase or two on the floor.

The bathroom deserves a whole paragraph on its own. All Tango hotel rooms feature a TOTO electronic-controlled toilet that warms the toilet seat, washes with spray jets and sprays deodoriser into the air after you're done. A separate shower and bathtub gives you a choice between a 168-hole showerhead or a soak in the jacuzzi bathtub with massage tubs. And inside here there's another Sony LCD TV with its own surround sound system and colourful LEDs.

Breakfast is an assortment of Japanese, Taiwanese and standard continental selection that's served in a 24-hour lounge beside the front desk.

The Tango Hotels Group also runs two similar outlets in Taipei: the Tango Xinyi and Tango Linsen. They've certainly got the boutique hotel market cornered, and they are definitely top picks when you're looking for a reliable and classy stay in Taipei.

WHERE

3 Nanjing West Road, Taipei 104, Taiwan

CONTACT

+886-2-2567-9999
www.tango-hotels.com

PRICE

NT\$4,600 (US\$140 or €100) onwards for a Superior Studio

TEXT
JEAN QINGWEN LOO

Tango Nanshi

Stay in style in Taipei

