

Chefs cook in support of women

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Huang Lijie

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PARKINSON'S disease and a broken collarbone are not going to stop renowned British chef Fergus Henderson from presenting his signature offal dishes at a charity event here on Nov 13, hosted by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (Unifem).

To be held at the Conrad Centennial Singapore, the Say No To Oppression Of Women (Snow) Benefit aims to raise \$160,000 in support of Unifem's anti-trafficking initiatives in the Mekong region.

Proceeds also go towards the Cambodian Women's Crisis Center, which helps women and girls who have been illegally trafficked reintegrate into society.

The nine-course gala dinner, jointly organised by Unifem Singapore and the Financial Women's Association of Singapore for the third year, will feature four chefs from the world's top 100 restaurants, as rated by the prestigious British food magazine, Restaurant.

The other three chefs are Shannon Bennett, 31, of Vue de Monde in Melbourne (ranked 71), Sam Leong, 41, of My Humble House in Singapore (ranked 94) and Justin North, 32, of Becasse in Sydney (ranked 96).

Ms Karen Ho, chairman of the benefit, lets on that table sales for the event, limited to 250 people, have been brisk. Tables for 10 and 12 persons are going at \$5,000 and \$10,000 respectively.

Henderson, whose restaurant St John in London is ranked 34th, was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 1998 and his condition had kept him from working in the restaurant kitchen for some two years between 2003 and 2005.

He told LifeStyle over a phone interview from London last week that he broke his collarbone because he had lost his balance and fallen into a valley while at a friend's wedding in the English countryside of Gloucestershire two months ago.

'I must've had too much wine,' quipped the 44-year-old.

While his collarbone, which fractured in three places, has been fixed with metal plates, the injury is interfering with his Parkinson's condition and causing mild twitches in his left arm. These tremors had been previously subdued by deep brain stimulation surgery, which he underwent in 2005. The surgery allowed him to return to the kitchen.

Nonetheless, Henderson is adamant about attending this event, where he will be supervising Chris Gillard, the executive chef of St John.

He adds: 'I hope to make happy eaters out of the guests, who've donated generously to the event.'

To book a table at the Unifem Snow Benefit, 2007, log on to <http://www.unifem-fwaw-snowbenefit.org>