The future of food is not so appealing

"Future foods" — you know, the kind of food that will increasingly take the place of regular (read: unsustainably produced) food as we know it — are already here, according to several articles I recently came across while doing research on where to eat on my upcoming travels.

Things like algae, lab-grown meat, insects and false bananas — yes, you read that right, they're becoming a staple in Ethiopia — were listed as examples of future food that are gaining traction.

If you're a foodie like me, then you're probably aghast at what the not-too-distant culinary future holds and hoping that tomorrow doesn't come too soon.

Singapore recently became the first country in the world to approve a sustainable protein powder called Solein, made in a Finnish lab using air, water, electricity and microbes. The turmeric-yellow powder, which supposedly has a nutty taste, can be used to make anything from bread to pasta.



Just pop a pill for meals to save time? No, no, no, that would be a nightmare.

It sounds promising, yes, but not particularly appetising — at least, not to me. It's going to take some mind-altering tricks for many of us to salivate over these future foods. Give me some good ol' fashioned beef steak any day.

But alas, steak is probably going to be one of the first things to go as the world is forced to become more climate-friendly. Who knew that the collective farts and belches of livestock, primarily cows, would become a major contributor to global warming? Here's a not-so-fun fact to chew on: About a third of human-caused methane emissions, a much more destructive greenhouse gas than carbon, come from livestock, mostly cattle.

If *Demolition Man* — that futuristic movie from the early 1990s that had a scene of Sylvester Stallone and a fresh-faced Sandra Bullock eating micro-foods in Taco Bell — is an indication of our future, then the future can't be that bright, can it?

But I suppose it could be so much worse. A friend recently suggested oh-so-flippantly that, with our busy lives, it would be so much easier if we could all just pop a pill for meals to save time.

No, no, no, that would be a nightmare. Not to mention, it would involve a complete overhaul of our lifestyles.

Would families come together over the dinner table just to each pop a pill? What kind of conversations are there to be had, anyway, over the three seconds that it takes to swallow a pill, never mind that it might hold all the nutrients one needs?

Food makes up so much of our lives, particularly in the case of Malaysians. We socialise over food, have long conversations over where to find the best food, fight over food (no, Singapore, chicken rice is ours!), travel long distances in search of certain food, put up social media posts about food. Heck, back in the 1500s, we were invaded by the Portuguese for our food. Okay, that may be an exaggeration — it was for our spices, so our history books said.

Food is just one aspect, but a key one, of things that will slowly but surely change as climate change becomes more real. That's a hard fact.

We should all really start to take sustainability a lot more seriously than we are. Hopefully, we'll get to keep food as we know it around for as long as we can without having to go down the worst-case routes.



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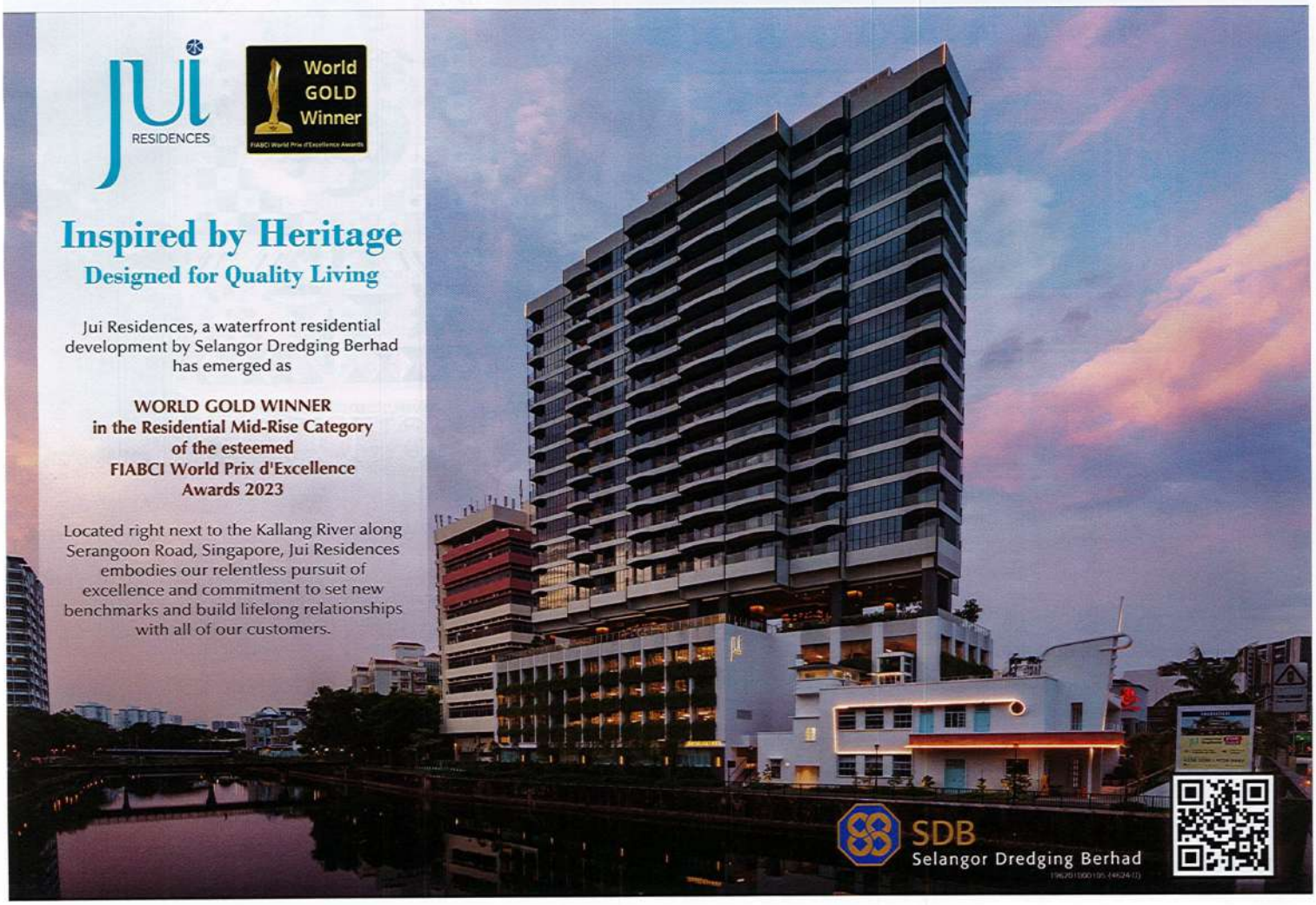
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