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Celebrity chow with YouTube folk-pop musicians Us The Duo

WE LOVE FARM-TO-TABLE JOINTS



IN LOVE: YouTube stars Us The Duo, comprising folk-pop musicians Michael Alvarado and Carissa Rae, enjoying lunch at lobster eatery Pince & Pints at Duxton Road.

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Folk-pop duo Michael Alvarado and Carissa Rae like to think of themselves as atypical Americans.

“Most Americans are into eating lots and lots of food. We definitely don’t fit that stereotype,” said Rae, 23, firmly.

“Both of us prefer smaller portions.

“We enjoy checking out cool new places, and take our time to savour each course.”

Alvarado, 26, was blunt about his countrymen’s diet.

“American food is really boring.

“It’s all fried. Drop them into a fryer and there you have it.”

The married couple, who form Us the Duo, are from Southern California and specialise in a blend of folk and pop music.

They have more than 31 million views on their YouTube channel.

They were in town last week for the opening ceremony of the BNP Paribas Women’s Tennis Association Finals.

M met up with the couple over lunch at Pince & Pints on Duxton Road, where lobsters – served in a variety of ways – were the order of the day.

“We like tennis video games and watching tennis, but we’re not great when it comes to playing the sport,” said Rae with a laugh.

“Michael and I are huge fans of Serena Williams and Maria Sharapova, so we were definitely excited to catch them in action.”

This is your first trip to Singapore. Have you tried any local delights?

Alvarado: I went for a jog in the morning and stopped for a quick bite. The place had a Chinese character on its storefront. It was my first time eating eggs out of a shell (soft boiled eggs). Breaking the shell was a lot of fun! I also had toast with a thick slab of butter.

The video of you singing at your own wedding party has nearly 2.5 million views. What kind of food did you have at the reception?

Rae: We held our wedding buffet in the backyard of a friend’s house. The weather was perfect.

Alvarado: By doing our wedding in a backyard,

we saved money, which meant we could spend more on quality food for our guests.

We hired an Italian chef. I remember doing a taste test of all the dishes beforehand. He made chicken masala, alfredo-based dishes, stuffed mushrooms and appetizers. They were delicious.

Do both of you like the same food?

Alvarado: She didn’t like seafood at all (initially). Her mum was allergic to it and she thought she had an allergy too. Six months ago, she tried her first oyster.

Rae: Very late, I know. (Laughs) Now, I love oysters, clams and mussels to bits. I’m so much braver.

Alvarado: There are similarities in our heritage as well. She’s Filipino-American and grew up with a lot of rice and meat. I have Puerto Rican lineage, so it was mainly rice and beans. Culturally, we’re pretty close.

What are some of your favourite foods and eateries back home in Southern California?

Alvarado: We’re very into the whole farm to table movement. There are many such eateries in the US, especially California. More chefs are taking local ingredients and putting them fresh on the table.

We don’t eat a lot of meat but when we do, we choose high quality meat like Wagyu beef.

Rae: One of our favourite restaurants is Craft in Los Angeles. It’s a casual, farm to table joint with very good food. The chef is Tom Colicchio, a judge on Top Chef.

Alvarado: We had our best ever meal at Melisse, a French-inspired, fine-dining restaurant in Santa Monica. It’s near the pier, so after eating, you can stroll along the beach and ride the ferris wheel.

Do you cook? Who’s the better cook between the two of you?

Rae: Definitely Michael. I don’t cook at all. (Laughs) I eat!

Alvarado: Carissa’s very patient with me. She deals with my good and bad meals. I can make seared scallops very well.

Rae: I do bake. I like making peanut butter cookies and lemon bars, which are refreshing for the summer.

