

HD Greenhills hosts executives out for a power lunch

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There are not a lot of romantic restaurants in the Greenhills area but the restaurateurs here sure know how to cater to one of their biggest markets: the executive class. Here are a few restaurants where you can seal a deal over a power lunch. Cowrie Grill A great juicy steak in a pristine setting seems most appropriate for executives in power suits. This is what The Cowrie Grill offers. It brings you to a five-star hotel setting, even if it is located in the outskirts of the bustling Greenhills mall. That is because the restaurant is still managed by The Manila Hotel, which created The Cowrie Grill, originally located beside the all-day buffet of Cafe Ilang-Ilang in 1977. Service is likewise hotel-inspired. Waiters are attentive. A basket of **bread** and fancy **butter** are offered within five minutes of being seated to assuage a growling stomach while waiting for your orders. The only thing missing is valet parking. The menu is straight up and traditional.

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You will find neither fusion nor confusion here, just good ol' American-style steak. They offer a grade 8 US Wagyu striploin; a US Angus Tomahawk ribeye; a US-certified Angus tenderloin; a young prime Angus Porterhouse; and a young prime T-bone. The fanciest items on the menu are the Chateaubriand and the Entrecote, still on the lines of straight up steaks. Not a meat-eater? There is seabass with orange beurre blanc and lobster thermidore, **sold** at market prices. For dessert? For the ultimate executive, a chocolate gâteau to be paired with cognac. Or for the more dainty, a New York cheesecake. The power lunch comes with power prices, though. While the Porterhouse is at a reasonable P2,200, and the Tomahawk, at 21 ounces, is at a reasonable P3,700, the US Wagyu ribeye, at 10 ounces, costs P6,700. How's that for a meal to seal the deal? Gloria Maris Nine out of the 10 tycoons in the Forbes 2014 Top 10 Richest People in the Philippines list are **Chinese**. So it is crucial to have a **Chinese** restaurant on this list and the biggest **Chinese** restaurant on the block is Gloria Maris—literally. The restaurant now boasts of an astounding 7,500 square meter area with two floors and five sections. The second floor accommodates a hundred tables, perfect for weddings and corporate events; and also has 13 VIP function rooms of various sizes. On the massive ground floor, the fine dining hall has forty tables while the adjoining areas with around 50 tables are used for the more casual hotpot and dimsum dining. People still come here to enjoy their famous hakaw, two-tone almond seafood soup, and Peking duck (although Peking Garden still reigns supreme for duck orders). Interestingly, they now also offer Japanese items on the menu. The starter of Chiu Chow cold cuts has salmon sashimi and California maki incorporated in the order. Another unusual combo is the half order of suckling pig with California maki. They have also developed modern **Chinese** creations such as the pan fried stuffed fresh mushroom with abalone, a delightfully chewy and gooey savory starter, in spite of its diversion from abalone as traditionally served. While the old reliables are present, there are admittedly some items on the menu that are not as stellar. The Rich Man's Fried Rice is poorer in terms of flavor and ingredients than, say, a Yang Chow Fried Rice or a Seafood Fried Rice. The Fried Mashed Taro Duck is a depressing experience reminiscent of mush and rubber, considering it is priced at P700. But as with any other restaurant, you just need to know what to order. Gloria Maris' winter melon soup has an excellent broth. And the pigeon stuffed with liver sausage is so delicious it is worth a seven-year wait. (Service may be slow.) Nevertheless, that this gigantic space is full even on a weeknight with businessmen, families as big as armies, and a wedding, is testament to its reliability as a restaurant. Best of all, sometimes they offer promos that give you 50 percent off if you use a specific credit card. Now that's a winning deal! Choi Garden This isn't in the Greenhills complex but close enough, along Annapolis. You will initially feel like you're walking into either the Moulin Rouge or a watermelon because of the red area before the tunnel that you need to cross to get to the main dining section. But power lunchers can get a private dining room and negotiate over Choi Garden's pigeon or **Hong Kong**-style **Chinese** fried chicken, an off-the-menu item tipped by the gourmet senator from San Juan. And for executives who want a perfect balance of Yin and Yang, the Double Soup in Pot is perfect for you: the left side offers a very Yin broth while the right side of the pot is a fiery Yang. A bonus (or not) is that you

might bump into politicians and tycoons at this resto. For some reason this is a politico fave. But with the privacy and the hot pot that the restaurant offers, it's easy to see why. Wafu Another favorite cuisine for businessmen—and everyone else (!)—is Japanese. (Why else would Gloria Maris have Japanese items on their all-**Chinese** menu?) Kimpura and Sugi are still around, but the recent revelation at Greenhills is Wafu, just behind Gloria Maris. It is a huge restaurant with two floors and a deck for private dining on the steps leading to the second floor. Executives can appreciate teppanyaki without stinking up their Hugo Boss suits as the owners have invested in teppanyaki tables with special vents. And in case you have guests whose identities must remain confidential, there is also a private room with a special elevator that you can take from the underground parking lot. Best of all, they offer hard-to-find items like otoro and botan shrimp from Japan. Feed this to any connoisseur and he or she is bound to be instantly won over! House of Wagyu A **group** of six would easily set the host back P20,000 at this restaurant. But the Australian Wagyu that can be personally cooked by guests on the restaurant's customized stone grills ensures a first-rate first impression. This restaurant is owned by Melo Santiago of Melo's, that hit steakhouse of the 1990s. Consider this the chicer and wiser version of his eponymous restaurant, capitalizing on the intricate marbling of Australian-bred Japanese Wagyu. Enjoy their ribeye offered in various grades with the restaurant's equally impressive **wine** list. And don't be afraid to overdress; the restrained elegance of the Chito Antonio-designed interiors (from Tangerine, the previous restaurant at this location) allow it. * * * With all these restaurants now open, Greenhills is proving that it's no longer just for bargain hunting but for serious businessmen (and women) in power suits as well. The Cowrie Grill Missouri Street, Greenhills Shopping Center. Reservations recommended. Call 5270011. Open daily. Lunch 10 a.**m.** to 3 p.**m.** Dinner 6:30 to 10:30 p.**m.** Major credit cards accepted. Wheelchair accessible. Parking beside the restaurant close to impossible but you can park in the Greenhills parking area beside Promenade. Gloria Maris Missouri Street Corner Connecticut, San Juan. Reservations recommended. Call 5700921, 5700923, 5700924. Major credit cards accepted. Call to inquire about credit cards that offer discounts. Valet parking available. Ground floor is wheelchair accessible. Choi Garden Annapolis (approaching Edsa), San Juan. Reservations recommended. Call 7268987. Major credit cards accepted. Parking is limited. Ground floor is wheelchair accessible. Wafu Greenhills Shopping Center (behind Gloria Maris). Reservations recommended. Call 5703242. Open for lunch 11 a.**m.** to 2 p.**m.** and dinner 6 to 10 p.**m.** Major credit cards accepted. Basement parking available. Wheelchair accessible (except the lotus pods area). House of Wagyu Stone Grill McKinley Arcade cor. Club Filipino Drive, Greenhills. Reservations recommended. Call 7252811 or 7257450. Open daily from 11 a.**m.** to 11 p.**m.** Major credit cards accepted. Open space parking right beside the restaurant. Wheelchair accessible. Blog: margauxlicious.com. Email: margauxlicious.media@gmail.com. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram: @margauxsalcedo.

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