

Thank you for smoking: (From left) Owners Sally & Nicholas, & chef William show off hunks of smoked flesh.



travels to America and Canada. "I wanted to bring that experience to Singapore. Before this, I was an amateur 'smoker' who smoked my own meats using covered barbecue grills and wood chips!" he shares. Assisting Nicholas is chef William Koh, 60, who has experience working in NYC eateries.

The food: Smoke Shack goes one up on the usual beefy offerings by also smoking salmon, duck and lamb. Most meats here (largely beef brisket, which takes well to slow cooking) are cured for days to soften the flesh before being smoked. **The Reuben** (\$8.50) has a Bukit Timah Hill-sized mound of fairly tender corned beef brisket sassed up



with tangy sauerkraut and melted Swiss cheese between toasted rye bread. Mm-mm. That said, **The New Yorker** (\$8.50) fares less well — the

▼ **Smoking machine:** Cured meats are placed inside this baby & cooked lovingly at a low temperature between 2-15 hours. Hickory or maple wood chips are thrown in for flavour.



pastrami (brisket marinated in a spicy peppercorn and coriander mix) is tougher than the corned beef. Love the zesty coleslaw stuffed within the sandwich, though. Funnily enough, the best-tasting creation of the lot is the **Smoked Duck, Blue Cheese & Apple Ciabatta** (\$7.90). The combo of soft, smoky bird, pungent cheese and sweet caramelised apple is more chi-chi café than gritty New York deli stuff — but who cares when it's this good? Tip: ask for your bread to be un-toasted. Pillowy dough is a far better vehicle for the meats.

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THE REUBEN

VERDICT: ★★★★★ An exciting addition to the sandwich scene. Maybe Meg Ryan, sorry, perhaps Felicia Chin, can consider filming here next.

HOLY SMOKE!

Two-month-old **SMOKE SHACK DELICATESSEN** is as close as you can get to the famous Katz's Deli in New York City.

PHOTOS: EALBERT HO

What: Occasionally, I fantasise about the scene where Meg Ryan faked an orgasm in *When Harry Met Sally* at Katz's Deli in New York. Not specifically about Meg's

moans, but the moan-inducing smoked meat sandwiches she was scoffing. Besides Meg, the Jewish deli has seen countless celeb fans such as Ben Stiller and Bill Clinton, and is known for its mounds of meltingly tender, house-smoked meats like pastrami between rye bread. At long last, Singapore has its very own Katz's — sort of. The unassuming little Smoke Shack deli on Market Street boasts a cabinet-sized smoking machine that slow-cooks various cuts of meat, rendering it cottony-soft and infused with an alluring

smoky flavour. All over our island, expats from New York are probably shedding tears of joy.

The people behind it: As I step into the simply decorated, tiny space one weekday lunchtime, I'm greeted by affable thirtysomething Nicholas Iman, an ex-banker who co-owns Smoke Shack with fellow ex-banker Sally Ng. In true Katz's fashion (though the service here is less surly), he offers me samples of meat before I decide on a sandwich filling. The Indonesia-born Singapore PR got hooked on smoked meat sarnies from Jewish delis during his



Moan river: Meg Ryan & Billy Crystal at Katz's Deli in NYC, the holy grail of smoked meats which partly inspired Smoke Shack.

TRY SMOKING YOUR OWN MEAT AT HOME

» You probably don't own an elaborate smoker like Nicholas does (see above story). So the nifty **Smoker Bag** (\$6.95) is your next best bet. Simply place some beef, pork ribs or fish into the foil bag filled with aromatic hickory or alder wood chips (don't worry — they're placed in a separate compartment of the bag), bang into an oven for about half an hour and you get a smoky feast. Don't expect super gourmet stuff; just treat this as fun culinary experiment on a dull Sunday afternoon. ☑

Available at Market Place supermarkets.

