

"I like just about everything I have ever tried at Lian. Every time I go, I seem to overeat, so I try not to go too often!"

David Chu on Lian

Business has been bringing designer and entrepreneur David Chu to Hong Kong an average of four times a year since the 1980s, when he first achieved international success with his lifestyle brand, Nautica. Born in Taiwan, he left for New York with his family as a young teenager. But he still has family in this part of the world and, as he really enjoys travel, he relishes every opportunity to return.

Passionate about food, Chu is naturally well-acquainted with the Hong Kong restaurant scene. Contemporary Vietnamese and Thai bar and bistro Lian is one of his all-time favourites for a number of reasons, first and foremost of which is the food. "I'm very fond of Southeast Asian food: Vietnamese and Thai flavours are so good."

And Lian's masterful chefs can elevate ordinary dishes to exceptional culinary creations. "I like just about everything I have ever tried there," Chu declares. "I usually have the *pho*, the traditional rice noodle soup poured over raw beef with spice and lemon juice and lemongrass for extra flavour. Another dish that I order almost every time is the roasted pork neck. Every time I go, I seem to overeat, so I try not to go too often!"

Lian opened in October 2006, but Chu feels so much at home there that he feels the place has been established for much longer. The restaurant's layout makes it a great casual restaurant, ideal for family gatherings, he says. "During the Olympics I was there with three close friends and all our various family members. There must have been about 20 kids in total. We had the enclosed corner on the right-hand side of the restaurant all to ourselves, with several large video screens so that we could watch the Olympics while we ate dinner."

Another plus for Lian is that it is very conveniently located in relation to the Four Seasons, Chu's usual home away from home when he visits Hong Kong. The dramatic views here never cease to fascinate him. Chu started out by training to be an architect before switching to fashion design, but his architect's eye works overtime here. "I look at the mountain backdrop on Hong Kong Island and I'm staggered at how the buildings are all perched seemingly on top of one another. I have friends who live on The Peak and it's amazing to look down on the city from there. In good weather, the views are magnificent. How do these buildings stay on the slopes like that?"

It seems that Chu will have even more opportunities to enjoy Hong Kong's scenery and its restaurants as he is planning to spend more time here for business reasons. He launched a luxury men's collection under his own name in 2004, soon followed by



an upscale collection of sportswear and outerwear inspired by his favourite sport, golf. And he has been named executive creative director at Tumi, the international luxury travel, business and lifestyle accessories brand. He aims to expand all these brands in China and Hong Kong, but it won't be all working and eating, he says. "I'll be here for longer spells between November and April. I'm a fanatical golfer and that's the best season in Hong Kong," he says.



Clockwise from left: Raw Japanese Saga Wagyu beef soup with rice sheet noodles; freshwater prawn rice paper rolls; David Chu enjoys bringing his family to Lian



CHEF SIMSON KWAN

Aside from the jovial ambience, traditional dishes are given a local twist, giving Hong Kong diners novelty and familiarity in a single bite. Chef Simson Kwan finds inspiration from his travels around the world: "I don't confine myself to ultra luxury restaurants," admits Kwan, who spent two years perfecting his signature Vietnamese spring rolls which are light, crispy and succulent. "Chefs have to keep an open mind. One can even draw inspiration from street food. Consistent food quality and friendly service is a marriage that begets happy customers and repeat business."



LIAN
RESERVATIONS: Recommended **DRESS CODE:** Smart casual **LUNCH HOURS:** 11:30am - 2:30pm **DINNER HOURS:** 6:00pm - 10:30pm **SET MENU:** Lunch **BUFFETS:** No **VEGETARIAN DISHES:** 10+ **AMENITIES:** Lounge area **CAR VALET:** No **CREDIT CARDS:** AE, V, MC, DC, JCB **YEAR ESTABLISHED:** 2006

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