

HOMESTYLE DINING!

KALICO KITCHEN Restaurant

15% OFF
Total Guest Check
VALID MON-FRI
Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner

Not valid with any other discount, coupon or 2 for 1 special pricing.
Expires 3-31-20

KALICO KITCHEN
Best of Chico
CN&R

2396 ESPLANADE • 530-343-3968

GRAND OPENING

SON of a WICH
EST. 2019
sinfully crafted paninis

(530) 809-1412
1008 W. Sacramento Ste. H

All You Can Eat \$9.25

SPAGHETTI

Every Sunday & Monday Night
4:00pm - Close



2525 Dominic Drive
Chico 324-7771
Open 7 Days • 6am-9pm

2234 The Esplanade
Chico 343-7000
Open 7 Days • 6am-10pm

www.TheItalianCottage.com

CHOW

A dose of flavor

Potli's cannabinoid-enhanced honeys, oils and vinegars for your pantry



PHOTO COURTESY OF POTLI

When Christine Yi and Felicity Chen first met, they weren't entirely sure they'd be friends, let alone business partners. It was 2011 at Boston University, where the two freshmen discovered they'd been randomly paired together as roommates.

by **Zack Ruskin**

"It was a pretty big coincidence," said Yi, 26. "We were both Asian-Americans, daughters of immigrants and we were both from the East Bay, yet we met

across the country in Boston."

Initially, the topic of cannabis didn't come up very often between them. That's because Yi, who grew up in Pleasanton, and Chen, raised in Hayward, confess their experience with pot was all but nonexistent before they left for college.

"The one time that I tried to smoke weed in high school I was with my dance group," recalled Chen, 26. "We somehow found some weed. First, we tried to smoke it with an apple, then we tried with a Coke can. It tasted terrible."

Now, nearly a decade later, making pot taste good is the pair's full-time profession.

Founded in 2016, Potli is a San Francisco company that bills itself as a purveyor of cannabis-infused pantry items, including honey, chili oil and apple cider vinegar. The products created by Yi and Chen are notable for being locally sourced and impressively versatile.

The two say their vision is to give consumers the freedom to control their dosage by creating products that aren't constrained by portions and that are easily incorporated into what customers are already eating.

"These are all just ingredients, and that way you can dose yourself as opposed to eating one full cookie or whatever the predetermined dosage may be," Yi said. "I think empowering customers to dose themselves is something that we're bringing to the table with Potli."

In addition, the co-founders take pride in the premium they place on local ingredients. Among other sources, they rely on an olive orchard in Carmel run by two brothers and Chen's own family beehives, started by her father when she went off to college.

Chen suspects a touch of empty nest syndrome may have partially inspired her dad's new hobby.

"I'm an only child, so I felt a little like I was being

replaced," she said, wryly.

Part of his motivation for setting up beehives was also in hopes that local honey might benefit his wife, who suffers from asthma, by helping to build her tolerance to regional pollen. His efforts were rewarded with some delicious honey. During the 2016 Thanksgiving holiday, Yi recalls being given her first taste of what Chen's father had been collecting.

"It was like, 'This is the first real honey I've ever tasted,'" she said.

At the time, the now wildly popular cannabinoid CBD was also just coming into vogue, presenting Potli's co-founders with further inspiration.

"It basically started with us tasting that honey and thinking, 'We should really put some weed in this,'" Chen said, laughing. "Initially the concept was that there are people like my mom who have asthma, which means they can't smoke, but we wanted to be able to consume with her."

The result was Potli's flagship product: jars of infused honey available either with THC or featuring solely CBD. The company also offers olive oil, apple cider vinegar and a chili oil in both variations, with the latter product inspired by an old recipe from Yi's family.

The newest product is an infused Sriracha sauce, which Chen and Yi launched at a Lunar New Year's party last month. In addition to believing that hot sauce goes with pretty much everything, they want to see more diversity in dispensary offerings.

"You don't see many cannabis products that pull from ethnic heritage," Yi said. "I think it's really important that we ensure the industry becomes more inclusive and more accurately mirrors the population overall. That's what we're trying to do by offering Sriracha and chili oil. We're excited to celebrate our culture by creating these elevated versions of things that we grew up eating."

Potli's products are available from many California dispensaries—from the Bay Area to Redding.

As they look ahead to the future, Yi and Chen both express pride in what they've accomplished thus far.

"I love that with Potli we can share our culture," Yi said, "and what we love and put it out there in a way that hopefully helps people." □