



918

PHOTO BY TESSA MARGUERITE OUTLAND



OFF MENU

# The proof is in the pot stickers

BY TESSA MARGUERITE OUTLAND

**For Jennifer Wan, a confident first-time business owner, finding “success” means serving her community with love—and pot stickers.**

A yellow banner with the words “Gam Le Sing” in bold print hangs proudly in the front yard of a gray Victorian home on S Street in Midtown Sacramento. Several tables are scattered in the patio area, and there is a pleasant scent of soy sauce and steamed veggies. It may take more than a first look—as it did for me—to realize that this “home” is actually a Chinese restaurant.

Inside, a petite woman with an affectionate smile greets me and invites me to sit down. Glancing around, I notice one of those ceramic, waving cats on the counter and several menus hanging on the walls listing daily specials. The restaurant-house is small, but warm.

Depending on the season, the menu may change slightly to allow for the freshest ingredients for dishes such as Green Bean Chicken, Honey Pepper Beef and Chinese Sausage Fried Rice. Gam Le Sing’s house General Chicken is deliciously deep fried with a sticky, sweet sauce; it’s listed as spicy, but is far from flaming.

And the savory mix of fresh flavors in the pot stickers are steamed to perfection and accompanied by a spicy soy sauce.

Wan was born in China and moved to Los Angeles with her parents in 1975. She was 13 years old when she left her home country and missed her home, friends and all the familiar flavors.

Now, having lived in Sacramento for almost 35 years, Wan feels a strong connection to the community.

“I love my Sacramento,” she beamed as her smile grew. “Now this is my hometown.”

After working for Cal Fire as an accounting manager for many years, Wan retired to pursue a completely different career, something closer to her heart and taste buds. She bought the restaurant in 2017. Wan said she chose to go into the food service industry as a way to serve and love her community with authentic Cantonese dishes.

“With food, I thought it would be a communication,” explained Wan. “I use my heart.”

In learning how to be a small business owner, Wan said the hardest—and best—part is the customers. Many are loyal and

appreciative, while some can be critical.

“My favorite part is talking to people and when people enjoy the food,” said Wan. “I feel like success in that way.”

Gam Le Sing, which means “success” in Cantonese, is different than many Chinese restaurants. American Chinese food is often greasy, battered, deep fried and covered with sticky sweet goo. Not that those gooey fried meat chunks aren’t appetizing, but they’re quite different from traditional Cantonese cuisine.

At Gam Le Sing, Wan wants to change how people think about Chinese food by using fresh ingredients and healthier recipes—without losing that amazing tangy, sweet or savory flavor.

The dishes offered at Gam Le Sing are not too spicy and many are vegetarian. The menu is extensive and portions are perfect to share (or to take home for lunch the next day). Wan wants her food to be traditional, but is also finding new ways to cook certain dishes in healthier ways. □

Visit Gam Le Sing at 918 S Street, (916) 446-6888; gamleisingchinesetogo.com.

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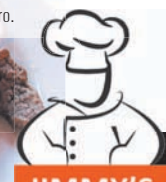


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