

*APR.3 Prime* is a small restaurant on Guoxue Street. Despite its limited space, it is decorated with colorful, framed photographs and delicate exotic ornaments, bringing out a feeling of warmness and novelty. You may easily overlook its small signboard, but you will never miss the appetizing smell of mix spices. The theme of this special restaurant is—travel, curry, and good tea.

There are currently four kinds of exotic curry available at *APR.3 Prime*, including Thai green chicken curry, northern Thai chicken curry soup with noodles, Japanese style curry with pork, and Indian butter chicken. Each of them is unique and fascinating in their own ways.

Different from the curry cuisines in most restaurants, made of ready-made curry dice, the curry at *APR.3 Prime* is completely homemade. From the process of buying fresh spices and ingredients in early mornings, creating exclusive recipes, to cooking, and ripening, the owners devote themselves entirely to making satisfying and exquisite curry dishes. It takes them at least three months and over 100 times of failures to complete a new recipe.

The aromatic curry sauce plays the most important role and is served separately in an ivory white shallow plate, coming with chewy Fuli rice from Hualien, freshly baked Pita bread, and a cup of fragrant tea. Indian butter chicken is the most timeconsuming yet the most popular in this compact restaurant. The first time the owners tried this curry was in the ethnic district Little India in Singapore. Although Indian curry is often made of various spices and with peppery and piquant flavors, the one they tried was different, which was made with dairy and tomato base. Therefore, they made up their mind to bring back this delicacy to *APR.3 Prime*.

To reproduce the taste and flavor in their memories, they not only searched for information on the internet, but also borrowed books from the library to study. At last, undergoing countless trials and errors, the recipe of this savory cuisine was completed. The ingredients of curry sauce of Indian Butter Chicken are cardamom, clove, bay leaf, and cinnamon, and the chicken leg is roasted with amchur powder, fenugreek leaves, and other rare complex spices, only available in certain spice shop in Taipei.

Indian Butter Chicken soon received rave reviews from customers after launching. Although it seems to have no differences from ordinary curry from its look, the tangy taste of roasted tomatoes, onions, yogurt, cheese, honey, and other spices is undoubtedly marvelous. "It is my first time having meal here," said Audrey Sung, a student of National Taipei University. "But I am very willing to visit here again to have more Indian butter chicken, even if it is the most expensive one."

**CURRY** SPICES THINGS UP!



Besides the special homemade curry sauce, another feature of *APR.3 Prime* is that every set of meal comes with freshly baked Pita bread. Pita bread, or Arabic thin bread, a staple of the Middle East. At *APR.3 Prime*, it plays the role of cleaning the plate. Since the curry sauce is often left in the plate, customers can use the crunchy Pita bread to finish it up.

As for the drinks, there are 7 types of tea provided, including Thai iced tea, Bi Luo Chun green tea, honey scented black tea, and osmanthus flavored green tea. Among them, Thai iced tea is the most favored. Coupled with the sharp-flavored curry, the pinkish-orange, sweet, and milky Thai iced tea is a good choice that helps to smooth the heat.



To make the authentic taste of Thai black tea, the owners import the tea leaves directly from Thailand, and even bought a special cotton filter from Thailand to purify the tea from the grated leaves. Besides, the Thai iced tea at *APR.3 Prime* is served with no ice, allowing customers to indulge in the rich flavor from the first sip to the last.

In fact, *APR.3 Prime* is run by three close friends and named after the acronym of their English names, Allen Pan, Patricia Yang, and Ryan Hsiao. As for the word "Prime," it represents the three friend's initial dream and the belief of making the best quality of meals. By May Zhang 💡

"This restaurant is the realization of our dream," said Patricia, who is Allen's wife. "We love traveling and delicacies, and *APR.3 Prime* is the combination of these two elements."

The three owners of this restaurant came from different backgrounds, including Japanese language, food and restaurant service, and accounting. The turning point of the career was their two-year working holiday in Carnarvon, Australia, from 2013 to 2015. After returning to Taiwan, they found it difficult to blend in Taiwan's working environment, which was different from that in Australia.

"We want to work together to create more memories. So why not start up our own business?" said Ryan. The three friends soon collected their thoughts, made up mind to open a restaurant, and spent over six months to carry out the details of their restaurant as well as figuring out the theme.

2018 marks the second anniversary of *APR.3 Prime*, yet there are still many challenges waiting for the three novice entrepreneurs.

"The pricing is a difficult problem," said Patricia. Located in the neighborhood of NTPU, *APR.3 Prime* has to attract students as the main resource of customers, yet their price is relatively high for students, compared to other restaurants nearby. It costs at least NT\$200 to savor a set of exotic curry, and at least NT\$130 for a la carte at *APR.3 Prime*.

"Our price is slightly expensive, because we invest as much time and money as possible," said the three owners in unison. "But we hope people who love our curry can visit here from time to time, giving us a greeting, and that will be enough."





#### HUMBLE HOUSE with WARM HUMAN HEARTS



By Alan Lee 💡

Located around the side gate of NTPU, *Amour.Sacrifice* is a beverage and light meal diner both students and local residents frequent. Despite its size and low-key appearance, it can be easily distinguished by its door, a glass pane crated with hollowed-out wood bars showing the silhouette of a Shiba Inu, a temperate breed of dog of diminutive stature. Such lovely decor with a giant lush cypress in front of it creates a vigorous but soothing vibe.

"I hope customers don't shy away from coming in after seeing our décor," said Jun Hsu, a 39year-old shopkeeper. A glance into the shop is enough to stun you. Rustic brown wooden walls and tables lay out under warm yellowish light, with shadow and hues relieving your nerves and tension. Photos of a Shiba Inu hung on the wall along with adorable icons on menus make you grin in delight. You deserve all these without being ripped off like in many fancy restaurants.

Amour.Sacrifice, though, does not offer highend cuisines. It provides comfort foods and diversified drinks of quality at affordable prices. You can enjoy a refreshing cup of tea at the price of NT\$25 or satiate yourself with a hot sandwich served warm with grilled crust outside and larva cheese, succulent chicken, lettuce and all savory goodies inside at NT\$85. The story of Amour.Sacrifice unfolded three years ago when the 35-year-old former runner, Jarek Hsu, Jun's younger brother, was an elementary school teacher. He adopted a stray dog which had contracted skin diseases and heartworms. Jarek sacrificed his time off work to tend the dog with love. In his boyhood, Jarek always craved for a dog. So desperate was he that he came up with a name for his first dogto-be. The name, Lafy, finally came into use. It took a whole year for Lafy to restore its health and walk like a normal dog.

Lafy's belated recovery exhausted Jarek as well as his family. He, however, was grateful. It was during the time spent with Lafy that Jarek slowed down his hectic life and reflected on himself instead of working around the clock. He learned how to devote himself without requesting paybacks, yet feeling contended.

Now the bistro has been passed down to Jun Hsu as Jarek expanded two stores in Shanghai, China. As long as Jarek is back to Taiwan, he would bring Lafy along to this warm little place. The lovely smiley doggy would wave you a cordial "hi" with its tail wagging.

Among a wide collection of original drinks on the menu, "Alumi," a combination of mung bean, pearls and milk green tea, has been customers' top choice. On hot summer days, take a sip and you'll find your mouth quenched with fragrance of green tea, a delicate trace of milk, nutritious mung beans, and bouncy pearls. The second place goes to "Salted Pork Slices Hot Sandwich." Inside the golden crust are crazy amount of salty pork, fresh crunchy lettuce, and soft boiled eggs. Jun, a Hakka descendant, infuses his yearning for his hometown as well as remembrance for his deceased father in the dish. In Hakka culture, pork is marinated with peppers, garlic, rice wine and assorted spice powder so as to preserve the meat in the years when food was scarce. The longer you chew salty pork, the more flavor comes out. The pork melts; the aroma lingers. Residents nearby even ordered a loaf of readymade salty pork from Jun.

As for Jun himself, his all-time favorite is "Hand Made Pork Chop Hot Sandwich" and "Devilish Macchiato," which is iced Americano topped with milk foam. We cannot help but wonder how Jun and Jarek hit upon novel ideas and carry them out. "We often cook at home, during which we find specific combination of ingredients tasty," said Jun. "Sometimes my brother tells me his idea for new items, which are usually drinks, and I put them into practice."

Asked about peculiar names of the items, especially drinks such as "Nigunigu" and "Alumi," Jun jocundly replied "the items are named randomly." Take Alumi for example, the moment Jun came up with its recipe, something made of aluminum came into his sight.

A large portion of customers are students at NTPU. Alvin Wu, a senior from the Chinese Department, said, "Long before the establishment of Amour.Sacrifice, the shopkeeper ran a franchised tea shop called 'The Red Sun.' I miss some items I used to order there. In terms of food and decoration, Amour.Sacrifice is still doing well as a signature tea shop around NTPU. I would definitely recommend it to my friends."



Nicole Lin, a senior student from the Department of Public Administration and Policy commented, "Beverages in Amour.Sacrifice are unique and diversified. I have take-out drinks literally every day, which costs me a lot. If there are special discounts for students, I think students would visit the shop more often."

Aside from students, workers also stop by. Steven Du, 25, a clerk at a convenience store, remarked, "Posters and menus are well designed for they clearly show the ingredients and pictures of the real items. When it comes to my favorite, I would say hot sandwich with soft boil eggs and thick, juicy pork fillet is definitely a bargain." However, there is a 'space' for improvement. "The number of seats in the shop is limited whereas the sitting area is not spacious enough. It's a pity for customers having meals here," said Du.

On weekdays, Amour.Sacrifice is open from 9:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. On weekends, it opens one hour earlier. The long working hour burdens Jun, who has run his own company before taking over the shop from his brother. Now Jun has two jobs which he deems equally important. He continues to work on his own business when he comes home, while aspiring to expand his business in Southern Taiwan, his hometown.





TiJo Kitchen is somehow inconspicuous. From its outward appearance, hardly can you recognize it as a restaurant. Located on Daguan Road, TiJo Kitchen is two blocks away from the front gate of National Taipei University. You may pass through it without noticing its existence if you do not pay enough attentions.

TiJo Kitchen was established on September 30, 2016. The name "TiJo" is the combination of Tim and Joyce, the owner and his wife. The couple operates the restaurant together. "It was out of my older sister's recommendation we chose to settle in Sanxia," said Tim Wu, who is also the chef. Before moving to Sanxia, they had operated restaurants in Taipei and Changhua. "I think Sanxia is suitable to have a warm and exquisite restaurant," said Tim.

However, things did not all go smoothly in the beginning. "It was hard to operate a restaurant around the campus," said Tim. "Students can't afford the prices. Compared to other restaurants nearby, the cost of our foods are around 30 percent higher." Once a college student, he knew what kind of requirements students would like—having generous portions with a cheap price. Yet, with the persistence on their ingredients, they insist on using probiotic pork, organic rice from Hualian, and S&B Golden Curry from Japan, which are all pricy ingredients.

"When we first started, our business was not great, or you can say it was awful," Tim said. "I could not remember who the customer was, but from her handwriting, I guessed it's a 'she'. After finishing her meal, she left just like everyone else without anything special. Still, while cleaning the table, I found that she wrote 'Never say never' on the paper cup of her drink with a big smile face behind the word."

He said that although it was just a simple sentence, it really gave him a lot of encouragement.

Doing part-time job in TiJo Kitchen for about two years, Louis Lee, a senior student who major in sociology at National Taipei University, rewound that he was afraid of the boss at first. "Seldom did he show his emotion, he was always in a poker face without any facial expressions." Louis regarded Tim as a serious and strict boss. "But after working for about one month, I realized that he is an easygoing person. We will chat together like friends when we are not busy," said Louis.

It is not the first time that Tim operates a restaurant. Before entering the catering industry, he was working in the electronics industry. "I quit because I think the work was too tiring and stressful, and I wanted to slower down my pace," said Tim. Tim also hopes customers would have a sense of coming home while eating in. He does not like the crowding atmosphere, so he only provides 26 seats in TiJo Kitchen. "I think having a meal is a kind of relaxation, so I hope customers would feel stress-free in here."

Tim and his wife Joyce Lai got the idea of decoration from a small café in Taipei. "We took pictures from that café and asked interior designer to design a similar setting for us," said Joyce. Not only curry on rice, TiJo Kitchen also provides black curry with Sanuki Udon, a kind of famous Japanese noodle.

People might never have heard of black curry, so one may wonder what it is. "I was a little shocked when I first saw the black curry," said Rena Chang, a junior student who major in business administration at National Taipei University, "It was beyond my imagination." Yet, after having a taste of it, Rena fell in love with the delicious flavor and became one of the regular customers at TiJo Kitchen.

"Compared with normal curry, I think black curry is a little spicier in its taste, and it is addictive," said Rena. Customers will have their orders placed in a wooden tray with a small cup of salad and a glass of drink. The meal customers order will be placed in the middle of the wooden tray. The plate will be separated into two parts—black curry and rice on each side, decorated with green broccoli, tomato and a slice of lotus root.

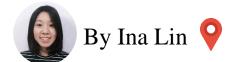
"It is a kind of visual pleasure," said May Wu, a junior student at FLAL. "I think eating is a kind of enjoyment. For me, the purpose of eating is not only to satisfy my appetite— what I care about is its decoration, because the first impression is very important."

Colorful combination of vegetables can make customers whet their appetite. "Not only seeing black and white, but a variety of colors can stimulus their appetite," said May. "When feeling frustrated or facing difficulties in daily life, you are welcomed to visit TiJo Kitchen. Order a plate of black curry, you will immerse yourself in the delicious taste of it and forget all the annoying things. After having a short rest in TiJo Kitchen, you will be able to rediscover your direction and brim with energy."



# HEALTHY CUISING

### **GYM-LIKE** RESTAURANT FOR BODYBIULDING AND EOR



"I used to be really fat," said Johnny Huang, now robust. "So I know how hard it is to become fit." He is a fifth year student majoring in leisure and sport management at NTPU, who runs Johnny Bro's, revealing his original motivation for opening this place.

This cozy "gym-like" kitchen on Daguan Road catches passersby's eyes with its white-and-green-word signboard outside and the exercise bike set inside.

The menu shows the food style they serve, with calorie estimation as less than 500 calories of each item. This restaurant offers eight kinds of low-fat rice boxes with three versions each—original, meet-added, and vegetable-added. They also have four flavors of all-fruit smoothies. The cuisine of Johnny Bro's core feature is healthy.

It may look like a boring rice box when the dish first comes to the table, served in a round bowl with black rice, boiled meat with little seasoning, everyday-different boiled vegetables and a boiled egg cut in a half. But the taste will open your eyes and your mouth. Not too salty, nor spicy, it's better to say it lingers a sense of fresh and light delicacy. To mention the reason for opening this restaurant, it's due to the owners' diet concern. They do worry about the oily food surrounding Sanxia district; however, the secret origin is just about love. "Actually, I started this place for my girlfriend," Johnny Huang smiled, "I don't want her to face hardship searching for a job, so I opened Johnny Bro's and hired her as the store manager."

Being a shop owner is not Johnny's only job. He is a professional gym trainer with personal trainer certification, who is also a bodybuilder. "Lots of my students didn't control their diet, so I started a business offering healthy food, in order to help them not only in the gym but also in the dining room."

So now, his students can grab meals here at any time they want. "I'm going to collect 100 times check-in here on Facebook," said Raymond Huang, a junior student from the Department of Finance and Cooperative Management, who has become one of their patrons and comes for lunch and dinner every day. Johnny himself spent a lot of time learning cooking; moreover, he paid for all of his cooks to take cooking courses hold by professionals for cookery certificates. "I'm not afraid of closing down this restaurant," said Johnny with confidence. "The staffs are rather capable of opening a normal bento shop."

Gary Chiu, a fifth year student majoring in foreign languages and applied linguistics, is one of the cooks in charge of the frying table. He said that they are often busy during lunch time on the weekdays. "We called that time the turbulence of orders." Gary Chiu described, "We were always blessed that we weren't taken away by this flow."

If you hold high quality, people will naturally come for it. Johnny Bro's doesn't do the same thing as other newly-opened restaurants do. They did little advertising for promotion during the first three months. "If we cannot afford the large quantity of consumers, and end up letting them wait for too long, no matter how good our food is, people will consider it bad." Thus he keeps his faith and decides to start their marketing strategies after all 15 workers are on track.

"Also, I want people to come here by words of mouth," said Johnny. He has confidence in his meals, believing that customers would keep coming back.

Tracing back to the time Johnny started this business, he said, "It's about the time I was a senior." They started to sell lunch boxes online, and posted forms on the NTPU Facebook group to let people place their orders.

Initially, their target customers are those his own, not only who have work-out habit or gym VIPs, but also owns gyms and it turned out that they mostly cook for themselves. "This is the fact of doing business. What you assumed in the beginning might not always meet the reality at last," said Johnny. Customers are someone look for healthy food or intend to lose weight. "Moreover, it's still n



However, Johnny warned that it's not totally healthy to only eat boiled meals. It's a longexiting myth. "Bodybuilders eat the piece of boiled chicken breast only for its protein. We don't eat this as our every usual meal. Moreover, from the perspective of nutrition, human beings need to absorb fat, or the absorption of our small intestine will become worse," he cautioned.

Still studying at college, he knows the needs of NTPU students in this area. He offers a NT\$10 discount for students with NTPU ID. "Maybe we will rent a booth inside the campus and sell special meals during lunch time," Johnny said.

In addition, he aims to help his underclassmen in his department. He provides jobs for them, so they won't encounter tough times upon graduation. He also wants this restaurant to be a place that he can train his staffs for his future business.

"It is impossible to meet everyone's needs. We can't sell food suitable for all customers. Mothers want healthy and organic food,

but the

price would be too high for students to afford," said Johnny. The process of opening up a business is long, and sometimes you need to sacrifice a lot."

About the future plans, Johnny has already had a full blueprint. utmost goal is to build up a brand of his own, not only selling healthy food, but also owns gyms and makes clothes. "Most people would plan to fulfill the goal at the beginning, but I don't want to be hasty. I do it step by step," he said.

"Moreover, it's still not the time yet," Johnny analyzed. "There are already too many gyms now, but people's value hasn't changed. Workout hasn't become everyone's habit. But, if one day you see muscular men all over the street, then it means the era of this trend has finally arrived."



#### By Crystal Chao 💡

Stewed beef soup, made of tender flaked beef and fresh broth, is a traditional food in Tainan. To try this featured food from southern Taiwan, NTPU's students do not need to go all the way for it. There is a small restaurant on Daguan Road that sellsTainan's stewed beef soup and other Taiwanese signature foods.

We Like Beef Soup has been opened for five years by Andy Lin. The first owner was Andy's cousin, who managed this restaurant for a year before going to work in mainland China, so Andy took over the business.

"Taking over from my cousin has been smooth," said Andy. He had owned a factory of his own when he was 36 years old, when he decided to take over the restaurant business four years ago with his wife.

There is no kitchen in the small, home-styled eatery, with all dishes made in the trolley at the front. There are just eight seats inside. "I didn't do any decorations, I just adjusted the light so it would be brighter at night, and put on some notes over the advantages of eating beef, together with our menu, on the wall," said Andy.

#### stewed tender beef soup: the AUTHENTIC Tainan way

Andy thinks that the area of dining is very important, and he hopes his customers can feel like eating at home. "It can create a setting of no burdening when eating healthy food in my shop," said Andy.

We Like Beef Soup insists in using Taiwan Yellow Cattle as their ingredients, which is way different from the beef offered at the supermarkets. The cattle will be slaughtered every morning and transported to the restaurant from Tainan. "Without any refrigeration, the meat tastes fresher," said Andy.

According to the note he posted on the wall, the Amino acid of beef can boost immunity, with its Amino acid composition being closer to human needs than pork. It includes rich protein but low fat, and the taste is fresher and more delightful. As beef contains rich nutrition, it is suitable for physical growth, postoperative care, repair blood loss and organization.

The items are very simple on the menu, with the signature dish being stewed beef soup. There are other items like curry beef rice and stewed beef noodles. Apart from beef, the main courses include pork cartilage rice and minced pork sauce rice. For the side dish there are dried bean curd, smashed cucumber and soft boiled egg.

The food of this restaurant needs a lot of time to prepare. The pork cartilage has to cook with the pressure cooker for an hour. The minced pork sauce has to cook for seven hours, and the beef soup has to stew for more than ten hours.

Spending lots of time preparing for foods, Andy doesn't like his customers eating too fast. "I spent a long time for cooking, but they just use a while to eat them. It's just like swallowing food but not eating them. I don't like this, and it will be harmful for the digestive system too," said Andy. He thinks that the customers should eat slowly when they are eating healthy food.

Hoping his customers can be healthy, Andy insists not to put additive in the food. "I am used to a healthy life, and I donate my blood twice a month," said Andy. "I am also a volunteer lifeguard for more than 20 years because I have a healthy body, so I hope my customers can have it too."

"The health of my customers is the main thing," said Andy. He doesn't like his customers to be picky eaters too. Once, an early twenty-year-old student came and requested no carrot in his curry beef rice, originally with carrot and potato. At the first time Andy pick out all the carrot as requested, but the second time Andy put the carrot in it.

"If his manager from work comes with him for a meal, the manager will have a bad impression on him because of his picky eating habbit," said Andy. "Besides, eating a variety of foods can help absorb more nutrition, and putting some carrot into the curry can make it more colorful."



"The food offered in this restaurant is very delicious, and the pink beef medium inside the stewed beef soup was very tender, and the soup was fresh and sweet too," said Geoffrey Lee, a regular customer. "I also tried the pork cartilage, which melted in my mouth even though I was eating the bones. That was a surprising taste, and I can't believe how they turned the bones so soft."

"I usually eat pork cartilage rice when I am dining in this restaurant because that is my favourite food," said Amy Liu, another customer. "The pork cartilage is very tasty. It contains no monosodium glutamate. I am so relieved of their food and it is full of old-time flavor too."

Being appreciated for food and hospitality by the customers, Andy said that the attitude is very important. "Feeling the hospitality by customers is more important than the business, because I can get respect from it. I like interacting with my customers, which is the advantage of a small restaurant, and I usually make friends with them. Some of them even brought us souvenirs after they traveled."

"The trick to make delicious food is freshness of its ingredients," Andy continued. "What customers eat in the food is the original taste of the fresh ingredients. There is no other secret."

As the beef is transported from Tainan every morning, and the cost of transportation is high, so few people dare to do the same. After the beef arrives, Andy uses natural ingredients, like apple, onion, ginger, cow's bone and cooks the soup for twenty-four hours. "That's why our beef soup is full of delicate flavor," said Andy. Making food this way and being kind to the customers, it is no surprise that We Like Beef Soup has a lot of fans.





#### By Peggy Chuang 💡

"It is named after my sister's husband, *Goldie*, a Scot," said Jill Chen, the owner and the baker of *Goldie New City Bakeshop*, a café standing on Guoxue Street, close to NTPU. It is sometimes inconspicuous with the metal door half-opened, with dim light coming through the glass door shining on the street.

As you step into this shop, you will be impressed by the smell of freshly-baked desserts. There are various kinds of desserts displaying in the refrigerated showcases, such as apple pies, rice pudding, Tiramisu and lemon tarts. Looking up, you can find the blackboard with the handwritten price list on it. Apart from those desserts, they also sell salad, sandwich and pizza.

In Jill's philosophy, desserts have the magic to heal and care for people—students buried in piles of books, office workers burdened by too much work, and those who are stressful from this rapid changing world.

"Desserts are not only what they seem to be. They are a kind of lifestyle," said Jill. Due to different cultures, Taiwanese only have cakes on birthdays or some special holidays. However, to her, desserts should be a part of life. She wants her desserts not to be thought of only on particular days. Jill's brother-in-law is a Scot, so some of the desserts sold in *Goldie* are originated from Scotland. For example, carrot cakes and scones. A baked, cut-in-half scone accompanied with Clotted Cream or jam, with a cup of hot black tea, constitute a traditional British afternoon tea.

Carrot cake is another traditional dessert in Scotland, and then it passed down to England and become well-known during the World War II. The price of sugar was quite high at that time and carrot could be seen as a kind of nutritious ingredient with natural sugar.

"I highly recommend the carrot cake," said Cindy Chang, a customer who is an alumna of NTPU. "I have been to England for years. I cannot find the carrot cake as delicious as Goldie's because the cakes there are too sweet for me." She took a bite of the cake with contentment. "I miss the carrot cake in Goldie a lot." When it comes to the signature desserts in *Goldie*, people will definitely think of the rice pudding, made from rice mixed with water or milk and other ingredients such as cinnamon and raisins. It can be seen as either just a dessert or a full dinner.

People who created this dish didn't want to have leftover on every plate, and so it has become more popular since, especially in Asia where rice is the main thing when it comes to food. Since ricepudding is widespread around the world, the recipe also varies from countries to countries.

"I have never eaten rice-pudding before. As a matter of fact, it was my first time to learn about this dessert," said Tina Lee, a senior from the Department of Chinese Literature of NTPU. "You can find the rice and raisins in this pudding. The bottom is tart and on the top of pudding is a slice of peach. It tastes like panna cotta rather than pudding."

Apart from desserts, pizza is another popular choice at *Goldie*. However, only regular customers will know about that because they don't serve pizza every day.

Different from pizza in other restaurants, which is made of ready-made curst and sauce, the pizza at *Goldie* is completely homemade. From the process of kneading the dough, making sauce to baking pizza, Jill and her sister do it all by themselves. "It's totally beyond our ability if we prepare both pizza and desserts. That's the reason why pizza is only available on the weekends, and the number we provide each day is also limited," said Jill.

The flavor of pizza customers usually order is teriyaki chicken. Teriyaki is a kind of Japanese style sauce, and it tastes a little sweet. Spread with tender chicken, mushroom, sweet pepper, onion, homemade teriyaki sauce and a layer of stringy cheese, teriyaki chicken is popular among both adults and children.

*Goldie* has been opened for 15 years. At the beginning, the store set up nearby National Taiwan Normal University. In 2011, they moved and settled down in Sanxia. Jill prefers suburb to urban areas, and she also enjoys the slow pace and the living environment in Sanxia.

"It was my sister's idea about starting a business by ourselves," said Jill. "I didn't think long and hard at that time. If I had, I wouldn't have been a baker now." "It was all my intuition, I guess," she added, smiling.

Jill mentioned that because of some problems of her heart, she is often not feeling well if she eats out and has a meal with food additives. That's why Jill insists on what ingredients she adds into their desserts.

She will check every source of ingredients and make sure that they are all-natural ingredients without food additives. Testing and refining through years and failures, she finally find the best version of her desserts and modify her recipe with less sweetness level. "I want my customers to eat both healthily and happily."



"Only when we start a business by ourselves will we learn it is never an easy thing. I think the most difficult part is that what I insist on and believe in cannot be respected," said Jill.

Although Goldie is located in the neighborhood of NTPU, their customer base is not students. Unlike the strategy of many restaurants nearby school campus to set the price low to earn from students, Jill and her sister still keep their initial belief to offer the best desserts to their customers. "What I care about is the quality of our desserts. I will never use low-quality ingredients to keep the costs down," Jill said.

*Goldie* is a good choice to spend the whole afternoon either with your friends or by yourself. Ordering a cake and a cup of hot Earl Grey tea help you relieve all the burden on your shoulders. As you enter Goldie, try to forget all the thing outside this door, get rid of the tiring and annoying business in your brain and just enjoy your afternoon tea time. As you walk out, you will feel completely refreshed again.

## Simply **OLD-FASHIONED**, but you may also want something **JUST LIKE THIS**

Wisps of smoke wreathing up from a traditional steamer, customers follow the smell of food finding their ways to come to *Just-Like-This*, an eatery decorated simply with classic old-time flavors on Daguan Road.

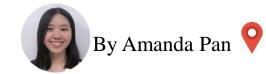
Just-Like-This, a little foodery with eight dining tables arranged, opened in July, 2017. Two owners, Eva Lin and Terisa Tsai, quit their works in a café two years before that, preparing for their own business. "Both of us are fastidious about food, having worked side by side for twelve years in a café in Taipei," said Eva. "From colleagues, to friends, to partners in business, we get to know each other very well."

"Her personality, preference, and family," said Terisa. "Everything about her I am so getting used to now." Therefore, she continued, when they came up with an idea to start their own business, their families were all supportive.

If you visit this foodery, you will first be impressed by the type font of the sign board, with distinctively childlike innocence. "The sign board was drawn by Eva's ten year-old niece, and it was her sister to name it Just-Like-This," said Terisa.

They want something just like this. "The taste is something we've been searching for," said Eva. "I've lived in Sanxia for forty years, while it's a pity that there isn't much food you can call a real bargain, because the quality of food doesn't really match its price. Therefore, we want to sell food with quality while the price is acceptable."

One of their signature dishes is Gua Bao, also known as Taiwanese hamburger, which is made of Chinese steamed buns filled with braised pork belly, topped with spices like pickled mustard green, coriander and peanut powder. The shape of the food faintly resembles a piece of pork devoured in a tiger's mouth, so in Taiwan, it's been called "tiger biting a pig".



Unlike other foodery's Gua Bao, Eva and Terisa cut the pork belly into cubes. They have tasted Gua Bao from northern to southern Taiwan, noticing that the braised pork belly either too fatty or lean, with the texture either too greasy or chewy. Therefore, braising pork cubes in their secret recipe sauce and stewing it for hours, they devote themselves to solving the dilemma to bite and chew the whole slice of braised pork belly, achieving their goal of combining fat meat with lean meat to make a tender but rich formula.



"Coming here twice a month, I find the eatery quite cozy," said Albert Chen, a senior student who major in business administration. "I always order a bowl of vermicelli and Gua bao. I like its soft meat inside, with great combination of fat and lean meat. And this combo only cost NT\$100."

Having the same belief in cooking, Eva and Terisa insist never adding MSG in their foods. "We want our customers enjoy the food while eating healthily," they said. Take their signature dish, intestine vermicelli, as an example, they never thicken intestine vermicelli with potato starch. "That would be cheating and not conducive to health, because, after all, we are what we eat," said Eva.

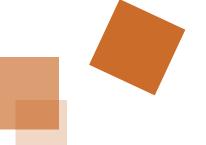
"The foodery is clean and their food is clear, all making me feel comfortable and relieved," said Sam Lee, a resident living two blocks away. "That's why I come in once a week, putting my trust in their food. I like their flavor, which would leave a pleasant aftertaste. "



"We put efforts and time to manage it all," said Terisa. "We spent seven months doing their homework before opening on flavors, picking and choosing ingredients, keeping tasting the food while cooking, and creating secret recipe on our own."

The devil is, indeed, in the details. The ingredient—pork intestine—might be one of the most common ingredients in Taiwanese food, but they don't cook it sloppily. From marinating and braising the pork intestines with six kinds of traditional Chinese medicine for three days, to clear their inside and cut them into pieces, they do all of the processes with their hearts and souls.

Furthermore, they are conscious of water quality, so they decide to use the Reverese Osmosis drinking water filter, the most complete purification way of removing bacterium and contaminants. In this way, they serve their customers with safe food.



Another signature dishes, daikon soup—or white radish soup—might not be as easy as it looks and tastes. Eva gets up early at six o'clock every day, simmering four to five kinds of fruits and vegetables for hours in order to make sure the freshness be extracted from them. She wants to make the soup taste sweet and soothing, creating the flavor you would like to try again and again.

Their business hours are from 10:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. At noon, the customers stream in. Different from other restaurants on Daguan Road, they don't have a lunch break. "We want to absorb some customers groups from them during their lunch break," said Eva. According to her, there are approximately 120 customers each day, around 30 percent of them are students.

Their dedication to food reflects in customers' acceptance and popularity. Eventually, they make it a real hit. Even they themselves are surprised at the success, the fact that their food is unexpectedly popular among people in Sanxia. Maybe you will also want something "just like this."

## With **ROOTS** deeply planted, this café is here to **STAY**



The signature dish is *Mushroom Omelet Set*. It contains an omelet decorated by mushrooms, soft French cheese bread, and Italian roasted broccoli, sweet potato, and baby corns. Ruby Chang, a 20-year-old NTPU student said, "The Omelet is soft and the mushrooms on it are tasty with seasoning."

Other dishes like *Cinnamon Rolls Set* and *Egg Salad Toast Set* are also among customers' favorites. *Cinnamon Rolls Set* includes mouth-watering cinnamon rolls and brown sugar yogurt. Amy Lee, another NTPU student, said, "When I eat the cinnamon roll, I can feel the strong favor of cinnamon."

*Egg Salad Toast Set* include brown sugar yogurt as well. The specialty lies in the egg salad toast. The creamy egg salad is lied between two slices of toast. Vivian Chang, another customer who studies at NTPU, said, "When I bite into the toasts, I can feel the rich flavor of egg and salad mixed together, which becomes a perfect match with the toasts."

Not only the food is worth a try but the story behind the coffee shop is also telling. In Chinese, Chai means firewood. It can also be separated into two words—"this" and "wood". Literally, this word has two meanings. One is the core value of this coffee shop. "This wood" symbolizes the root of the motivations on operating the coffee shop. Therefore, it can remind the owner, Kiwi Chang herself and the workers again and again that they should not forget their passion and desire to work in this coffee shop in the very beginning.



By Penny Wang 💡

Hiding on the Daguan Road, Lao Chai Café House may not be at the most attractive spot; it stands humbly at the corner of the community. Every day, it insists on their quality of services, atmosphere to relax, and memory to settle. It is hard to forget this comfortable place once you have visited.

Opening the door, what comes into view are dim light, couple of dark wooden desks with chairs, and many coffee roasters. Meanwhile, sunshine gleams at the back of the space, striking a balance with the first impression. Sitting at the desk with a cup of coffee seems ordinary. However, when something ordinary happens in somewhere extraordinary, it makes a difference. Within a short time, the atmosphere releases your anxiety, reduces your pressure, and slows your pac

Lao Chai boasts its handmade coffee. There are two types of coffee—handmade and instant. The former is simply made with coffee pot by using selected coffee beans. The types of coffee bean would change every month or two; Kiwi Chang, the owner, would select on the coffee market. The instant coffee is used for making latte, mocha, or cappuccino, because it is a perfect match with milk. The taste would be smoother than handmade coffee.

A 40-year-old resident lives in Sanxia. He has visited Lao Chai Café House regularly almost every afternoon for about two years. He said, "I really enjoy having a cup of handmade coffee when I am working with my laptop. I have difficulties looking for a coffee shop with handmade coffee I love, but here I found my beloved coffee."

Lao Chai also features its adorable dishes, and the most popular are light meals. There are four light meals, all of which contains Italian roasted vegetables, developed by staffs themselves. They design the dishes to let customers not only feel satisfied but also eat healthily. The other meaning is that Kiwi Chang would like to keep in mind that foolish as it may seem as a beginner, but she does not want to forget that connecting to customers with their stories and their services is more important than earning money without any interactions with them.

Kiwi Chang is a believer that coffee is a lifestyle, "I am grateful for what I am doing. Therefore, although the rents has doubled compared to eight years ago, I feel like operating the coffee shop for as long as I can."

Hsiao-Wei Chu has been a manager here, herself a NTPU graduate. She plays an important role in supporting Lao Chai Café House. She said, "I could never imagine a decision of doing a part-time job may change my life. Frankly, I simply wanted to save some money in the beginning. However, when I was about to graduate, Kiwi asked me if I would like to be the manager. I simply agreed."



Hsiao-Wei Chu indicated that had it not been for her willingness to try on this part-time job, she would not have enjoyed the fun on roasting coffee and researching new types of coffee beans. Also, she learned a lot of knowledge about coffee from some customers, which makes working in this environment even more interesting.

She still remembers once there was a tarot reader in the coffee shop. Some residents would come to have a cup of coffee and ask about their fortunes. Also, there is an exhibition space on the second floor.

"The most impressive ones I can recall is the volunteering in Nepal in October, works from a famous local artist, Mei-Shu Li every year, and works from children," said Hsiao-Wei Chu.

With its selected coffee, meals, and relaxing atmosphere, many customers visit Lao Chai regularly. For them, Lao Chai offers a space to unload their pressures and get ready to face the challenges in life. A 25-year old customer pointed out that it was the atmosphere and decoration that attracts him to walk into Lao Chai Café House. He said, "I really enjoy being alone here. It's a nice place to do my work."

Indeed, before walking into Lao Chai, customers have their own life experiences. However, they shared a part of their life in Lao Chai once they came in, and allow at least a part of it to be purified. Drinking a cup of coffee can be a comfort in every single exhausting day, as Kiwi Chang pointed out, coffee is a lifestyle.'





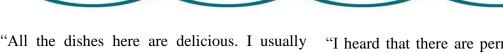
Attracted by a large blackboard decorated with hand-painted hamburgers, sandwiches and beverages as well as a shelf with brochures and little figures by the entrance of the shop, one may wonder what is inside and like to give it a try. This unique eatory is Zao Dian Breakfast Club, located on Daguan Road near National Taipei University.

It has been opened since June, 2015. There are about 150 customers each day, and 85 percent of them are students. In addition to the decorations outside, the atmosphere is also different from other breakfast restaurants. Surrounded by indie music, the customers will be amazed by the posters about public issues hung on the wall when stepping in. "I would like to share what I have enthusiasm for with my customers while providing them delicious dishes," said Ronald Kuo, the owner of this unique breakfast restaurant.

Ronald is a person with his own style, reflected in many aspects. One of them is the design of the dishes. The most popular dish, plate meal, is also his favorite one. Customers can choose three items from various selections, including Chinese omelet, thick cut toast, French fries, and German sausage. Moreover, they get scrambled egg with corn for each for free. "I would like my customers to choose what they want to eat freely. Freedom is Zao Dian's original intention," said Ronald.

#### A unique breakfast place with good tastes

for india music and politics



order a plate meal because it is economical that I can taste different delicious food within a dish by spending only NT\$70. Besides, German sausages are juicy," said Sandy Chen, a junior FLAL.

Speaking to the design of the dishes, there is also a special item—Heirloom Braised Pork on Rice—on the menu. "When I began to run this shop, I wanted to provide dishes which were different from others'," said Ronald. Thus, he and his family developed and improved the braised pork eaten at home, and this item became the first featured dish. It would easily attract customers' attention because few breakfast restaurants sell braised pork on rice.

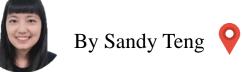
Ronald launches new dishes irregularly. Usually, these new dishes are different from other shops. Take Burger King James for example, a hamburger which made its debut at the end of August this year. It is composed of a patty, a hash brown, purple onions, curry scrambled eggs and lettuce. His hand-drawn posters about them make them even more attractive to the customers. "These posters are unique. You can tell how creative and unique the owner is," said Paul Lin, a NTPU student who first visited Zao Dian.

In addition to the dishes, music plays another part of Ronald's unique style. Unlike some people who are mad about pop singers or music, he loves indie music and would like to promote it to the public. The reason why he decided to own a breakfast restaurant has something to do with this idea. "I heard that there are permanent exhibitions about indie music in galleries whose ticket prices are reasonable for the public. However, people have to pay much if they want to appreciate the music every day. In a breakfast restaurant, they can enjoy indie music when having a hamburger, which costs lower than gallery tickets, if they want to. This was what came to my mind when I was pondering which type of shop to own," said Ronald.

Letting more people know the music style he likes has always been his hope. Therefore, he plays a variety of indie music and music of European, American, Taiwanese and Japanese bands which have strong effects on him, like Fire EX., so customers are surrounded by it when they are savoring breakfast. The posters on the wall and peripherals of bands set around also show the owner's passion for indie culture.

Ronald is also a big fan of National Basketball Association (NBA), especially Lakers, the team with long and rich history in Los Angeles.

He has come up of a promotion that whoever wear a jersey to order the meals will get a 10 percent discount. As he recalls, a customer wore the same jersey to the shop for four days in a row. "I doubted whether he washed that jersey or not," said Ronald. Sometimes, he even gives a 50 precent discount when the customer wore a rare jersey. Instead of earning money, he thinks it is priceless to recall precious memories by seeing those jerseys.



Besides music, dishes and basketball, Ronald concerns about public issues. Posters as well as posts on its fans page about public issues are telling, like stray cats and political issues. For example, there was a post promoting International Black Cat Day on 27<sup>th</sup>, October. Its purpose is to protect black cats, which are discriminated by most people.

"Public issues are seldom discussed because most people do not dare to touch them. Therefore. I hope to reveal these issues in my shop to let more people concern about what is happening around us," said Ronald.

Although Zao Dian is just a breakfast restaurant, it has a message for the public. Be the master of yourself is what Ronald wants to convey. He thinks people nowadays care about others' opinions too much, so they often forget to listen to their own hearts when they are trying to reach their family members' or teachers' expectation.

Ronald faced this situation before. At first, some residents living near his shop questioned why he cannot serve the dishes more quickly. They also had questions like why didn't he sell sandwiches, which were made faster and more convenient. However, he decided to run the shop his own way. Perhaps this is what keeps this eatery its own features.





Strolling on Daguan Road, it's easy to miss Donburi Ya at the end of the road. This restaurant is not at a visibility point, but regular clients have a well-kept secret of endless aftertaste.

The most important thing at Donburi Ya is that the owner wants its customers to eat happily and safely. "This is imperative," said Allen Dong, the owner and chef of this tiny but warm restaurant.

In here, Allen's compact menu includes donburi with some different kinds of fried vegetables, fried rice with minced meats, and udon with sour source.

"Usually there are about fifty clients a day, mostly students," said the hostess Mary Dong. Most students choose donburi, fried rice, or Udon noodle, depending on which day it is, because at the beginning of the month, students will choose relatively high priced donburi. When it comes to the end of the month, students will choose lower priced fried rice.

"My dinner today is ham and egg fried rice," said William Wu, a client who came for the first time for dinner. "Because my budget is not much, so I think fried rice will be suitable for a poor student like me."

### A small DONBURI YA swill Lien dreaming big through thick and thin

Donburi, a kind of Japanese cuisine, filled with rice in a large bowl, and covers the dish on rice to an invisible extent. It is widely loved by people of all ages. When it comes to fried pork chop, it is a cuisine that clients who like to eat meat and fried stuff cannot miss. "When dining here, I usually order surf and turf donburi," said one of the clients, David Wang, who lives nearby.

Spreading the flour, eggs, and bread flour on the outer layer of the pork, and then fry it in the pan. Finally place the pork chops with soy sauce and egg liquid on the rice, a Japanese flavor is finished. In this store, the most popular dish is surf and turf donburi. The choice of turf includes fried chicken chops or fried pork chops, and the surf part is fried shrimp. The amazing thing is that although it is fried, it will not be greasy. Also, the fried skin is not too thick.

Want to eat cold udon noodles? Then you must try the noodles here. The noodled is easy to chew and you can choose how much sauce you want, which tastes a little sweet and is really suitable for the summer.

Donburi Ya uses noodles that are thinner than the common udon noodles, but greatly increases the taste. "Today my order is udon noodles," said Alyssa Lin, a client who is just off work. The refreshing sensation is also taken out when chewing every bite. Of course, in addition to cold noodles, hot noodle is also provided. The udon noodles are served with a broth, and it is absolutely warming to eat a bowl of noodles.

Allen settled in Taipei three years ago while taking part-time job in other restaurants in the morning. He chose to open a restaurant because he realized being an employee wasn't what he wanted, especially in the catering. At that time, he had the idea of starting his own business. "At first, I was very optimistic. Before I had the enough money to rent my first shop, I tried to take two part-time jobs at the same time and opened a street vendor, and it was really a hard time that others cannot image," said Allen.

He mentioned that the most impressive thing was that once he was selling on the street, a police walked to him and gave him a ticket, which was the first time in his life. For paying that ticket, the money he earned that night was all gone. "From then on, my belief of having my own shop became stronger than before."

However, the thing of opening a store involves a lot of money. So Allen had to raise money on his own, and he decided not to take money from home. "It was not a long time of preparation, but it was very action-oriented. After earning enough money to open a store, I immediately rented a house and purchased equipment."

But after having his store, the challenge and hardship began. "This store is not a franchise chain, but a store that I managed till now. Honestly, it has not been an easy ride," Allen smiled and went silent for a while.

There are only Allen and Mary serving in the store, even at the busiest dining hours. "As you can see, our store did not hire other employees, only my boyfriend and me. All of these rely on our own strength to keep the dream alive," said Mary, who is the hostess and also the only waitress here. "A lot of things go beyond out ability, and there are many difficulties that the beginners like us would not have thought before," said Allen. "In the past you thought things would turn out alright naturally, like ordering goods, replenishment, and the management of the whole business, but when you had to do everything by yourselves, it would not be easy."

Allen wants his customers to feel like coming home when they are dining. The store is small, with only six tables. But the dining space makes customers feel relaxed and as comfortable as at home. So next time when you pass by this store, don't forget to try the good taste of their meals and also the warm atmosphere in it.





Song Buo Yuan dubs itself as an "eatery that serves Taiwanese traditional snacks at a cheap price." However, Song Buo Yuan is no ordinary snack stand. It is the biggest restaurant in the vicinity, standing majestically beside Sanshu Road for over a decade. Every night, families, colleagues, friends, and lovers flock to the restaurant to enjoy a delicious feast, creating a lively scene of exuberance and joy.

"Today's special is chicken rolls with taro," yelled Mrs. Chen Shu-Fen, the cashier of the restaurant who has been working at Song Buo Yuan for six years. "So nice to see you today, the usual dinner set?" asked Chen.

"The total price for today's meal is 640, but I'll give you a discount because you're a loyal customer," said Chen while attending other customers. She can multitask gracefully with ease, easily mistaken as the owner because of her commanding presence, but the owner of the restaurant is actually hidden in the main kitchen, just behind the cashier.

Every day, Li-Yun Lin, who owns the restaurant, arrives at the kitchen by 9 a.m. to inspect the quality of the ingredients. These ingredients are grown by local farmers in Sanxia, not for the sake of promoting local agriculture, but for their merit. "You don't see poached Makino bamboo shoot very often on a menu of a typical, cheap and casual restaurant like ours," said Mrs. Lin. "But it would be a crime not to put it on the menu when Sanxia just happens to grow such juicy and aromatic veggies."

## A home eatery that brings back the good Childhood memories



Besides locally-grown Makino bamboo shoot, Song Buo Yuan also uses chives, scallions, carrots, cabbages, and pork from Sanxia in their signature dumplings. "My son asked me last week if I knew how many ingredients were used in our dumplings," said Mrs. Lin with amusement. The answer was over a whopping twenty ingredients, which explains the aromatic flavors that bursts out with each bite. "We have a lot of items on our menu, but our dumplings gave Song Buo Yuan its reputation and popularity today."

The restaurant's determination for serving great dumplings is also exemplified by the poster on the wall, which reads "Now looking for patient and hardworking dumpling chefs!"

Song Buo Yuan hires professional chefs whose sole job is to make dumplings with their complete focus. They produce over 5,000 dumplings each day, which is usually consumed within three days.

Another highlight on the menu is pork shank vermicelli, and you guessed it: Song Buo Yuan uses black pig from Sanxia, for their succulence and lusciousness is crucial for the overall taste.

Pork shank vermicelli is commonly regarded as a meal to drive away bad luck and encourage longevity. In other words, it is a classic Taiwanese cuisine with numerous symbolizations. This is why Song Buo Yuan sets the dish's price at a visually pleasing, symmetrical, and lucky number of NT\$100, even if it's less profitable than other dishes.

Besides the items on the menu, the restaurant also serves small dishes of snacks according to the traditional market's daily freshest produce, such as poached eggplants, sliced bitter gourd, or taro cubes. These snacks may be miniature, but they are prepared with equal patience, effort, and love.

For instance, sweetened taro is usually cut up randomly in terms of shape and size in most restaurants, even the high-end ones. Yet, the chefs of Song Buo Yuan takes the time to slice the taro into small cubes and arrange them into small pyramids. "We slice the taro into cubes, not after, but before they are steamed and dipped in syrup.", said one of the chefs. This is to ensure that the taro is evenly cooked and the parts that the syrup cannot soak is minimized.

Mrs. Lin misses the good old days. In fact, this is one of the primary reasons why she decided to establish Song Buo Yuan, as it enabled her to preserve and promote the best foods from her childhood, such as steamed egg topped on rice.

It is a combination that most of us love and is very familiar with, yet no one would go out on a limb and say that it a gourmet. Mrs. Lin disagrees, and reinvented the combination by using chicken broth, Japanese soy sauce, shiitake, and minced pork. With every bite, the chewy rice swam in synchronization with the silky and aromatic steamed egg, creating a symphony of texture and flavor.



Besides the items on the menu, the restaurant The experience made a fading childhood also serves small dishes of snacks according memory come to life.

By Sean Chou

Sanxia is a place that has been rapidly growing in the past decade, attracting ambitious people and fresh graduates from other cities in Taiwan. Song Buo Yuan gives these youngsters warmth and support that can only be experienced in the comfort of one's home.

This is why Song Buo Yuan doesn't just serve "cheap snacks". Every dish is a precious fragment of our childhood memory, for it is prepared with an unyielding focus on quality, just like our parents did back in the days. "I have been frequenting this restaurant ever since I came to Sanxia for work because it reminded me of home," said Mrs. Hsiao, who brought her colleagues at work for dinner. "In fact, I witnessed Song Buo Yuan's expansion into five restaurants over these years."

As for future aspirations, Mrs. Lin said, "Song Buo Yuan was established in a hurry. There were architectural and interior design ideas that weren't implemented due to insufficient time. I intend to replicate these elements in the next restaurant. She continued, "I feel like I'll finally be satisfied once the new restaurant is built."

She said that the new restaurant, just like the current five restaurants, will also be established in Sanxia. It is certain that the new one will be as popular as Song Buo Yuan, for the brand has found its niche in the market and is loved by residents across generations.

### Enjoy your well-deserved brunch as if you were in TOKYO () By Dana Chen



If you are unwilling to be ordinary, then try to become extraordinary. That is the story of Steven Xie, the owner of Rooster Burger&Cafe.

As a previous office worker in a trading company, Steven was tired of daily trivial works. At the same time, there was a voice increasingly growing louder in his mind, and that was to start up a business on his own. But why choose a Bruch? The answer was due to his dietary preferences.

He preferred eating burgers and sandwiches, and had tried all over the places he knew. With the passion and enthusiasm, he decided to run a brunch restaurant in Sanxia—Rooster Burger&Cafe. These tasting and traveling experiences became an idea of providing Sasebo burger in his restaurant, which has become a signature dish and attracted many customers to step in.

Located by the gate behind the College of Public Affairs, on the Guoji 2nd Street, Rooster Burger&Cafe catches customers' eyes by its signboard with a red rooster on it. Rooster, literally means male chicken, has been used to name the restaurant because it shows that it's a place for breakfast. However, students at NTPU come for lunch more frequently than breakfast. "The price there is a bit high for breakfast," said Peggie Lee, a student from FLAL. "Students always think that our breakfast is at a higher price, but we provide many options with fair prices instead," said Steven. A tuna salad toasted sandwich for NT\$45 may be higher than that in traditional breakfast restaurants. But compared to the quality with others, sandwiches in Rooster Burger&Cafe are three layers with full filling, and the crispy toasts are two times thicker.

It has been one and a half year since Steven began his business of running Rooster Burger&Cafe, and it was a long journey filled with ups and downs.

From the estimation of risk assessment of running a restaurant, the decision of interior design, and the choice of ingredients, and those have not accounted for difficulties not expected at first. In early stages, every time he got positive feedbacks from customers, no matter how frustrated he originally felt, he would bounce back and keep moving forward. For instance, a frequent customer once commended that their new product, Sasebo burger, was bigger and more economical than the ones in Japan.

"The soft boiled egg salad here seems full of nutrition, compared to others," said Joyce Chen, one of the customers enjoying breakfast with her mother in Rooster Burger&Cafe. It was her first time here, but she was really fond of the cozy atmosphere and delicate dishes, and of course, the main reason that customers may probably take in consideration—the fair prices.

Seeing the salad that Joyce Chen ordered, you may notice that what she mentioned was not an exaggeration, with the plate full of different kinds of vegetables and fruits with their special Caesar dressing. And economically, customers only have to pay 80\$NT for one.

Hearing these words, Steven knew that it was worthy to hold the quality of ingredients and several invisible details he kept insisting on. He would like to distinguish his brunch restaurant with others nearby, and the secret to stand out is not complicated at all. "Quality is the best policy," he said with a firm tone and a big smile.

As for the interior decoration, Steven said that he got the inspiration from one famous chain coffee shop in Tokyo, which is called Blue Bottle Coffee, headquartered in Oakland, California. In the early 2000s, like the position of Apple in the electronic field, it was regarded as the biggest name in the coffee world. Therefore, it soon took the world by storm.

Differing from the culture and scenery in countries and cities, every Blue Bottle Coffee shop was meticulous designed to tune with authentic culture. Blue Bottle Coffee shop in Tokyo was the first branch in Japan, following the industrial style of the city, and created an integrate lifestyle.



Despite the fact that the interior decoration depends on the style of the street or city it was located, there is also a typical element that stays the same—the classical use of color with blue and white.

Following the classic element of Blue Bottle Coffee, Steven held the belief that he could convey his philosophy toward life through the decoration. "I hope that customers here can feel completely relaxed and enjoy the pleasure of simple in life, the same as what I got in Tokyo," said Steven. That was the reason why the interior decoration in Rooster Burger&Cafe was in a minimalistic style rather than a luxurious way.

Sitting on the sofa booth near the French casement window, Livia Tian was having a great morning time with her husband and child. She said that they usually spend two days a week enjoying breakfast together. Talking about the space inside the restaurant, Livia preferred the relaxed and slow-paced atmosphere here that she could start her early morning in a cozy way.

"The outdoor seating area with an open space really meets our need as if it was specially designed for parents who bring children to brunch," said Livia. Children can have fun in the open space spontaneously when their parents are chatting or savoring those delicate plates.

"I want to regale my customers with exquisite cuisine of fresh ingredients and high quality," Steven insisted. Instead of providing a place for people taking gorgeous photos to post on social media, he kept working with efforts to make Rooster Burger&Cafe a place to meet people pursuing delicacies. "Appearance does not last for long, but inner beauty does." This was the belief that Steven has kept at heart, and the sense was applicable in business management for sure.



#### **Burnt toasts for breakfast**



"This restaurant makes me feel homesick, especially makes me think about my grandparents," said Lynn Chen, one of the student at NTPU. Once you stepped into TIAN CAI's Burnt Toast, the decoration in this eatery will amaze you. Study desks and chairs from elementary school as dining arrangement with the menu written on the blackboard represent the nostalgia of the childhood. "The motorcycle displayed outside even reminds me the time my grandpa rode me around the park when I still lived in Hsinchu," Lynn said with laughter.

"The name of this restaurant is not only for hoping the business to flourish but for being in memory of my grandpa," said Ivan Lin, the owner of TIAN CAI's Burnt Toast. Tian Cai, the name of Ivan's grandpa, symbolizes their faith for every dish and also the courage of chasing dreams.

The restaurant's signature dish, Pork Chop and Fried Egg toast, is also one of their childhood memories. Their grandpa always made that for them as the breakfast. "My grandpa was quite a rigorous person who got Japanese education. He always formally dressed with slicked hair when going out, even just for grabbing food in the street vendors. His conscientious attitude made him a picky eater but also a gourmet," Ivan smiled. When it comes to his idea of running this restaurant, he said that one simple belief is to possess his own brand at the place he is familiar with. "I had worked on the restaurant business in other place for several years, so I always wanted to set up my own restaurant in Sanxia."

It has already been three years since he ran this restaurant. Now it has already been the weekly routine for people who live around this community bringing their family to dine here together every weekend. "I ate a hearty breakfast and then set off," said Ashley Ge, one of the residents who live in Sanxia district. "TIAN CAI's Burnt Toast offers reasonable prices and amazing dishes. It's like a valued breakfast property portfolio to me."

"The philosophy of our dishes is having the same price with others, but we endeavor to keep and make sure the quality of ingredients," said Ivan.

The items are the same, but the ingredients are different. Unlike the breakfast chain stores on the street, Ivan does not purchase ingredients with breakfast food suppliers. He persists to use joints of meat and marinates them by himself instead of buying the restructured meat, and there are also some other selected ingredients such as Hsinchu Fuyuan peanut butter and NKU ranch milk which represents Ivan's efforts to this restaurant.

Even though the costs are higher, Ivan has his perseverance. "There were several serious food safety problems in Taiwan when we just set up this restaurant. So I hope that we can build on consumers trust."

Speaking of their dishes, Ivan holds the spirit of the same items with others, but different contents. They have their own pace for launching new products. For now, they have burnt toast, Chinese omelet, and Sizzling Spaghetti respectively with different flavors as their main dishes.

with **ZEAL** and **MEMORIES** 

Compared to the usual breakfast chains, their Sizzling Spaghetti is not merely with mushroom sauce or black pepper sauce but with handmade Taiwanese minced pork sauce. With regard to the Chinese omelet, they order the special galette which is crispier and fluffier than usual to enrich the taste.



Talking about one dish that Ivan would like to recommend the most, he pondered a while, and then replying with laughter. "How many dishes can I recommend?"

The most selling dishes were the grilled meat with egg toast and the chicken drumstick with egg toast, but his favorite ones would definitely go for the beef tendon with egg toast and the sausage with egg toast. He always tries to combine Taiwanese elements with western food. Taking the sausage with egg toast as example, when it comes to sausages, most of the breakfast diners choose German sausages, but TIAN CAI's Burnt Toast is different. Ivan teams up Taiwanese traditional sausage with exotic sandwich. With these ideas in mind, he said that he will regularly visit other restaurants and try different meals. Taking others' dishes as references, he then comes up with thoughts for the new cuisine.

When you take a closer look in TIAN CAI's Burnt Toast, you'll find that the creativity isn't only inhibiting on the menu, but also in their queue tickets. Unlike many restaurants which only show the numbers, TIAN CAI's Burnt Toast is inspired by politics. The queue tickets are written the name of politicians in a different and interesting way.

Therefore, when it was your turn to pick up your food, the clerk may call out names of popular politicians. Little surprises are always hidden in our life. "As a Taiwanese, I hope that everyone can care more about politics, so these queue tickets are the little wit to remind my customers to pay more attention on this issue," said Ivan.

"I can always feel the efforts and warmth through their perfect services and food, and that is the reason I eat here again and again", said Joyce Lee, one of the students who just graduated from NTPU.

A great restaurant is one that makes you feel like you're not sure whether you eat out or you eat at home. TIAN-CAI's Burnt Toast is one that does the trick, a hearty breakfast diner with memories, perseverance, and efforts.





In modern days, people prefer a healthy diet, and may not care to spend more if they can avoid unhealthy food. Eating organic food is not enough; less oil would help to accomplish the goal.

"We insist to use less salt and oil in our meals in order to make customers eat healthy," said Kelly Chen, who runs YiRou Kitchen on Xuefu Road around our campus. It is a vegetarian restaurant with a warm and homey feeling, featuring no monosodium glutamate (MSG) in their cuisine.

As a vegetarian, Kelly wants to let everyone know that vegetarian foods are more delicious than you think, and even if you are not a vegetarian will like it.

This restaurant has been opened for a year, and on their signboard there is a slogan—Healthy Vegetable Food. Kelly recalled that one of her neighbor's children often felt ill, with digestive system problems and chronic diarrhea. However, after accepting her suggestion not to use MSG in the cuisine, the child became healthy and his problems with stomach were cured.

The use of MSG has been a critical issue for many years. In 1996, a book titled *Excitotoxins: The Taste That Kills*, written by Dr. Russell Blaylock, a neurosurgeon, mentioned that excessive use of monosodium glutamate causes high blood pressure or cardiovascular diseases, while some scholars consider MSG will not cause serious health problems at all.

## **Organic veggies** are the secret recipe for eating healthy



No matter what the answer, Kelly determines not to put it in the cuisine while she cooks for her customers.

Kelly also insists that they prepare ingredients for lunch in the morning, and prepare for dinner in the afternoon, in order to guarantee that the food is fresh

Furthermore, the sauces are house-made, and the fruits and vegetables they use are organic. Kelly gets used to going to the market once every two days to see what vegetables are currently available before placing orders to the retailers.

Sitting in the restaurant, you will notice that the workers are people of principles. Another slogan of YiRou Kitchen is customers first. They do not want customers to be bothered while dining, so they will ask customers if they have any opinions or questions first. They will feel sorry if their customers do not have an enjoyable time there. This definitely is a suitable manner for serving their customers.

"There are about 40 to 50 customers a day," said Tracy Huang, a waitress at her late 20s, who has been working here for half a year. The most popular dish is bibimbap, which tastes differently from Korean bibimbap.

For that dish, they use brown rice instead of white rice. "While vegetarians are lack of Vitamin B12, eating brown rice can supply it and the nutrition is balanced as well," said Kelly. Apart from brown rice, there are seven other ingredients in it, including corn, carrots, and tree mushrooms. They will also change the ingredients with as seasons change; therefore, customers can be served with the same dish in different taste.

I usually like to order bibimbap every time when I come to this restaurant, and I also recommend it to my friends," said David Yang, one of the customers. Bibimbap can sell up to 20 to 25 services a day, being obviously the most popular cuisine in YiRou Kitchen. Besides, it does not have MSG in it, and the oil they use is grape seed oil, so customers do not need to worry about any hazards for health.

Kelly also recommends turnip cakes for customers. They are hand-made, and are made with *al dente* indica rice. "Turnip cakes are my favorite, and I have ordered several

packs once or twice when I dine at this restaurant", said Mandy Wu, another customer.

Compared with normal turnip cakes, Yi Rou Kitchen uses indica rice and grinds it into rice peanut milk. The whole process is done by Kelly and her chef, Ruby Lin, who is Kelly's mother. To emphasize the slogan again, the ingredients are fresh, clean and healthy.

Recently, YiRou Kitchen has offered Chinese Cedar sauces as well. Chinese Cedar not only can help our body reduce cholesterol and blood sugar, but also build up immunity while improving blood circulation. The Chinese Cedar sauce is sold for NT\$150. Turnip cakes have two flavors. One is taro, and another includes mushrooms, and vegetarian hams, priced at NT\$240 and NT\$220 respectively. You will also notice that the beverage at YiRou Kitchen looks like milk tea, but in fact it is soybean milk mixed with black tea. It is because Kelly and her mother Ruby do not like eggs and milk, and milk tea is not beneficial to our body, too.

"The taste of this beverage is special. I have not considered that soybean milk can be so matched with black tea, said the customer, Mandy Wu. Kelly puts less sugar in it, but it still tastes delicious, and is popular among customers.

Apart from the food, the decoration of Yi Rou Kitchen is also impressive. Entering the restaurant, you can see a Christmas tree besides the window. "It is always there, not because Christmas is coming," said another waitress, Amy Chang, who worked here for a year. Kelly said that her birthday is in December, and that Christmas tree is a present from her husband, now working abroad.

The process of setting up the restaurant, for Kelly, is difficult, but her friends helped a lot. One of her friends lent her money and designed the menu with her. Kelly was touched because the friend never urged her to repay money quickly.

Kelly's biggest dream is to make people like vegetables. It does not mean people should become vegetarians, but what she wants is to let those who think vegetable is not savory have a different view.

Moreover, Kelly is also afraid that she cannot afford the rent and the salaries of workers. This can be her biggest vexation, but actually there are many customers a day, and most of them come with their families. Kelly said that their target customers are based on family; hence, the decoration and ambience of this restaurant is more like a home, which makes customers feel cozy and relaxed.

The location of this restaurant may not be noticeable, but people who are looking for healthy food will come and recommend it to friends. After all, when you are enjoying the meal, your body will find out whether it is healthy or not.





Without any chemical ingredients added, the freshly-baked dessert heals people swamped with too much work, giving them a chance to slow down and relieve the stress. "We hope our customers can enjoy the food made with natural ingredients," said Chillisa Xia, the owner and the chef of Smiling Cat Café, a restaurant located on Daguan Road near NTPU.

Upstairs in the dining area, a huge lovely cat image on the dark wall comes into sight and attracts customer's attention. With cat dolls, cat pictures and cat images everywhere, you will find here a paradise for cat lovers. The soft music in the background soothes the stressed souls, allowing every customer to throw away all the worries temporarily and have a short respite.

Showing the pictures of her cats, Chillisa said that she has adopted two cats, one is called Nini, a marmalade cat, and the other is Miao Miao, a tuxedo cat. Whenever she hugs them, she feels her cats smiling at her. "That's the reason why I name this restaurant Smiling Cat Café," she said. Chillisa likes animals, but she especially loves cats because they are quiet, elegant and mind-therapeutic. "I hope the customers coming here can find tranquility, put their feet up and spend a few hours enjoying the dessert and meals." Dessert is the specialty of the house. Chillisa said she has sweet tooth and has been interested in dessert since she was little. However, the desserts she bought from other stores usually contains too much flavoring essence or sugar. Therefore, she started to learn how to make dessert herself.

By Ruby Chou

There are various kinds of dessert in the café, including fresh cream Swiss roll, half-baked cheese cake, chiffon cake, tarte and pound cake, while each kind of dessert can be diversified in flavors. For instance, there are eight different flavors of chiffon cake in the store. The kinds of fruit tarte will also change depending on the season.

To keep them in best condition, the dessert in the café is freshly baked every day with limited offer. Also, the kinds of dessert sold in the store changes every day. Hence, before visiting here, customers often have to make a call to ask if the dessert they like is sold on that day.

Row Yang, a barista of Smiling Cat Café, said before working here, he didn't like eating dessert since most dessert sold outside tastes sugary and usually stale. "However, after eating their dessert, I totally change my thought," said Row. When asked about his favorite dessert, he recommended the 85 percent Nama chocolate cheese tarte. "I'm afraid to eat cheese, but the dark chocolate on the cheese tarte can balance the strong flavor of cheese," he said. Among the desserts, chiffon cake is the best seller. The café sells eight different flavors of chiffon cakes, such as lemon, earl grey tea, and coffee caramel. "The coffee caramel chiffon cake has velvety and soft texture. The caramel on the top is not cloying, making the aroma of coffee richer," said Cokie Lin, a junior majoring in finance at NTPU. "What's more, not as greasy as readymade fresh cream, their homemade fresh cream melts in your mouth and you won't get tired of it," she said.

Chillisa said she insists on not using any processed product since she has allergies to food additives. "You can't find any chemical ingredient or preservatives in our meals. I ensure our customers to eat healthy, eat at ease."

Even the syrup used in their drinks and dessert is made by themselves. A customer once asked Chillisa not to add syrup in her meal since she's allergic to syrups. Chillisa asked the customer if she's also allergic to sugar, and the customer's answer is no. "If she can eat sugar, then she can rest assured that our dessert won't cause any allergic reaction to her, because we only use coarse granulated sugar and water to simmer the syrup."

In addition to dessert, brunch is also a top-rated item at Smiling Cat Café. Originally, Chillisa just planned to sell dessert. However, after running the café for two months, she found if she just sold desserts, she couldn't reach out to more customers. Therefore, she tried to diversify the items and offer brunch. "To my great delight, it's quite successful, earning many customers' hearts," said Chillisa.

Instead of purchasing from food suppliers, Chillisa selects high-quality food ingredients from hypermarket. In addition, to ensure the quality, Chillisa chooses the meat that has passed Certified Agricultural Standards. Not using any frozen food, she processes and marinades the meat herself.



Chillisa knows that the restaurants around campus usually set the price low to attract more students. "However, with that low price, you can also know the quality of their ingredients," she said. "What I care about is the quality of food. I would set the price higher rather than use low-quality ingredients to reduce the costs."

Rosalynn Kim and Benjamin Ko, a couple living near Beida District, said this was their first time visiting Smiling Cat café. "But we may become a regular from now on," they said. "Their meals are truly enjoyable," said Benjamin. "It's really a hearty brunch— chicken thigh, omelette, salad, yogurt, bread, and coffee." He said he used to live in Taipei, and it's hard to find such a generous meal at this price there. "Actually such high-quality meals deserve higher prices," he said.

"Besides their food, I also like the atmosphere," said Rosalynn. "It's really cozy and like you're at your home. Here you won't feel the time passing by, and you can put on breaks and stop racing against the clock."

Just like a quiet and elegant cat, Smiling Cat Café stands silently in the alley, waiting there to heal the exhausted souls always pressed for time. If you want to slow down your pace, spend some time taking a sip of coffee, and relax yourselves, this is the place to be. With the aroma of coffee and delectable dessert, Smiling Cat Café is a good retreat to stay away from the hustle and bustle of city life.



### RESTAURANT INFORMATION

APR.3 Prime (APR.3初) Recommended Dishes Indian butter chicken, Japanese style curry with pork, Thai iced tea Open Monday to Sunday 11:00-14:00, 17:00-20:30 TEL 02-2763-0403 No.20, Guoxue St., Sanxia Dist., New Taipei City 237, Taiwan (R.O.C.)

Amour.Sacrific(慢思) Open Weekdays 09:30-21:00, Weekends 08:30-21:00 Recommended Dishes Alumi, handmade pork chop hot sandwich, salted pork slices hot sandwich TEL 02-2674-2313 No.25, Guoji 2nd St., Sanxia Dist., New Taipei City, Taiwan (R.O.C.)

#### TiJo Kichen

Recommended Dishes deep-fried horse mackerel black curry rice, black curry rice Open Monday day off, 11:00-14:00, 17:00-21:00 TEL 02-8672-5116 No.12-2, Daguan Rd., Sanxia Dist., New Taipei City, Taiwan (R.O.C.)

Johnny bro's (Johnny bro健康廚房) Recommended Dishes Korean kimchi pork, stew low-fat beef shank, banana blueberry smoothie Open Weekdays 11:00-20:30, Weekends 08:00-20:30 TEL 02-8674-3987 1F., No.115, Daguan Rd., Sanxia Dist., New Taipei City 237, Taiwan (R.O.C.)

We Like Beef Soup (豪哥牛肉湯) Recommended Dishes stewed beef soup, pork cartilage rice, curry beef rice Open Monday to Sunday 11:00-22:00 (irregular holiday) TEL 02-8672-0386 No.303, Daguan Rd., Sanxia Dist., New Taipei City 237, Taiwan (R.O.C.) Goldie New City Bakeshop (高迪) Recommended Dishes rice pudding, apple pie, fruit cake roll Open Wednesday to Sunday 7:00-19:00 TEL 02-2671-9866 No.16, Guoxue St., Sanxia Dist., New Taipei City 237, Taiwan (R.O.C.)

Just-Like-This (就這味) Recommended Dishes Gua Bao, intestine vermicelli, white radish soup Open Wednesday day off, 10:30-20:00 TEL 02-8671-0081 No.30, Daguan Rd., Sanxia Dist., New Taipei City 237, Taiwan (R.O.C.)

Lao Chai Café House (老柴咖啡館) Recommended Dishes mushroom omelet set, egg salad toast set Open Weekdays 9:00-20:30, Weekends 8:30-20:30 TEL 02-3501-2656 No.113, Daguan Rd., Sanxia Dist., New Taipei City 237, Taiwan (R.O.C.)

Zao Dian Breakfast Club (找点早點) Recommended Dishes plate meal, Chinese omelet with hotdogs, heirloom braised pork on rice Open Monday to Sunday 7:30-13:30 TEL 02-8674-2050 No.28, Daguan Rd., Sanxia Dist., New Taipei City 237, Taiwan (R.O.C.)

Donburi Ya (御炸坊) Recommended Dishes Udon noodle, ham and egg fried rice, surf and turf donburi Open 11:00-21:00 TEL 02-3501-2776 No.116-168, Daguan Rd., Sanxia Dist., New Taipei City 237, Taiwan (R.O.C.) Song Buo Yuan (松柏園)

Recommended Dishes Pork Shank Vermicelli, Cabbage/Chive dumplings, Pickled Cabbage Hotpot Open Tuesday to Friday 16:30-21:30, Weekends 11:30-21:30 TEL 02-8674-1239 No.192, Sanshu Rd., Sanxia Dist., New Taipei City 237, Taiwan (R.O.C.)

Rooster Burger & Cafe (路思特早午餐) Recommended Dishes poached eggs on the toast, tuna salad toasted sandwich, soft boiled egg salad Open 8:00-16:00 TEL 02-8671-8338 No.21-1, Guoji 2nd St., Sanxia Dist., New Taipei City 237, Taiwan (R.O.C.)

Tian Cai's burnt toast (添財號) Recommended Dishes chicken drumstick with egg toast, grilled meat with egg toast Open Weekdays 8:00-13:30, 8:30-13:30, Weekends 17:00-20:00 TEL 02-8671-8672 No.39, Guoji 2nd St., Sanxia Dist., New Taipei City, 237, Taiwan (R.O.C)

YiRou Kitchen (益柔廚房) Recommended Dishes Bibimbap, turnip cakes, soybean milk mixes with black tea Open 11:00-14:00, 17:00-20:00 TEL 02-2671-5388 1F., No.36, Xuefu Rd., Sanxia Dist., New Taipei City 237, Taiwan (R.O.C.)

Smiling Cat Cafe (微笑貓咖啡) Recommended Dishes chiffon cake, blueberry tarte, fried chicken thigh with fruit salad brunch Open Tuesday day off, Weekdays10:30-19:00, Weekends 9:00-19:00 TEL 02-8762-1332 No.117, Daguan Rd., Sanxia Dist., New Taipei City 237, Taiwan (R.O.C.)