

# Chinese wedding feast serves new taste treats

A 10-course Chinese wedding feast awaited members of the Chaine des Rotisseurs gourmet society at David Lum's Rikshaw Inn in West Bloomfield.

Lum closed down his restaurant, in the Orchard Mall, one recent night so a roomful of Chaine members and their guests could sample authentic dishes and pastries served at a wedding celebration in China.

Despite expectations of groaning platters of food, the meal actually consisted of dishes prepared and served in fairly simple fashion.

That's not to say there wasn't plenty to eat. And the courses featured such delicacies as a squab (young pigeon), Mongolian beef, Cantonese lamb and barbecued pig.

BUT THESE were served from large platters, where the bird or beast was cut into bite-size strips you could put on your plate with chopsticks.

The first course of squab was presented in a decorative "nest." The strips of rich-tasting squab went onto an individual bowl of rice.

The Mongolian beef was exceedingly hot (spicy). More so than the average taste might desire but just what devotees call for. The Cantonese lamb was a new experience that left me unconvinced but, again, perhaps you have to develop a taste for it.

The suckling pig, also cut into small strips, was not as tempting as slices of roast pig. This dish was enjoyable, however.

The coconut chicken course may have been the easiest to prepare and it was probably the most delicious, except for the squab.

One of the more interesting dishes was the soup, which contained what was rumored to be a "white fungus." Later last Lum confirmed that it was an ocean fungus and said the Chinese have been way ahead of the West, for centuries, in getting nourishing food from the ocean.

TO A WESTERNER this fungus has an unusually chewy texture, kind of rubbery, that bounces back when you attempt to eat it. A fried shrimp ball was another course served that has a gummy quality.

These are dishes a bit different than what we're used to.



Ethel Simmons

The pastry at the end of the meal was ordered from New York by Lum, who does not have a pastry chef. The pastry was not exceptionally sweet and, in fact, looked more like a breakfast roll than a high-calorie dessert.

Wines served with appetizers included a Chinese wine and one designated as a "mystery wine." The mystery was solved when Dr. Patrick Daoust, bailiff (president) of the Chaine, explained it was an inexpensive Gallo Chenia Blanc.

Lum said the Chinese don't normally drink wine with a meal. In addition to wine served with the banquet, the diners were given the more-usual beverage, Chinese beer.

BEFORE THE DINNER began, the bailiff detailed the rules of the Chaine. No water with meals, no smoking and no flowers (which could compete with the scent of the wine).

"They're low profile," said Daoust, amused.

The ever-smiling Lum, himself a member of the Chaine, obviously took the society's dictum seriously. In moments all the flowers were removed from the room.

"When I was younger, I used to go with my dad to the deli," Kirsch said. "I used to deliver. I know the good and bad products."

He said all the meat is kosher and the deli is kosher-style. Jewish-style rye is one of the breads. Kirsch uses "the best of everything."

He cooks all the corned beef and pastrami. Chicken salad and tuna salad are made fresh daily. Kirsch and Lum alternate to make fresh soup daily.

A resident of West Bloomfield, Kirsch attended West Bloomfield High School. He worked at the Embers Deli at Maple and Lahser for three and one-half years, worked under Chef Zimmerman at the Meeting Place for eight months. He studied in the culinary arts program on the Oakland Community College Orchard Ridge campus.



Songtime

John Mallon, leader of John Mallon & Us, is appearing with his group at Dewey's in the Michigan Inn, Southfield. Comedy and song are offered. Mallon plays five different instruments, as well as doing vocals. The other band members also sing lead and back-up vocals. Show time is 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. through Saturday.

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