

## ASK THE FOODIE SHAUN ANTHONY



Shaun Anthony of  
Madame Sixty Ate.  
Photo: David Wong

## Well-travelled palate brings a world of flavour

Vicki Williams

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Shaun Anthony grew up in Ontario, Canada in a food-oriented family – his grandmother was a chef, and his mother's siblings were butchers and bakers, “people who worked with food”. But he left for London in 2003, aged 25, to work under Gordon Ramsay at the British chef's eponymous flagship three-Michelin-star restaurant.

After two years, he moved to the south of France to work as a private chef, a job that took him to Monaco and Moscow.

From there he worked in noted kitchens in Sydney, Shanghai, and Abu Dhabi. Last July he accepted the position of head chef at contemporary European restaurant Madame Sixty Ate in Wan Chai, and has progressively been making his mark on the menu.

### Did you always want to be a chef?

No, when I was younger what I really wanted to be was a guitarist. I became interested in food more by accident than design. At first, working in a kitchen was just meant to be a pay cheque until the music career kicked off, but after a couple of years working in a fine-dining environment being a chef became the priority.

### What appealed to you about becoming a chef?

Several things. The outlet of creativity – starting with basic ingredients and turning them into something spectacular. The dedication and precision that is needed to perfect the craft. The adrenaline rush you get from being in the kitchen on a busy night when it all goes well. Plus the history and connection between food and people, which evolve together.

The [new] dishes reflect the personal and professional experiences that I have had

### Which chefs do you admire?

Two I worked for and two from a distance. Anthony Walsh, who taught me about innovation, passion and tasting as a young chef. Also Peter Gilmore, who has a great respect for herbs and natural plant ingredients. Through reading about them, [Noma's] Rene Redzepi and [Mugaritz's] Andoni Aduriz. I like their philosophy of all ingredients having value, not just so called high-end ingredients such as caviar and truffle.

### What changes have you made at Madame Sixty Ate?

This month will see the menu changes I have introduced completed. While the cuisine remains modern European, the dishes now being served reflect the personal and professional experiences that I have had, they all have a personal connection.

For example, the dessert Kind of Blue includes a jelly made from cedar leaves and this combined with notes of thyme and the various blueberry components are linked to the experience and smells when walking in a forest picking berries. Hopefully diners that have picked berries will get that and I just hope those that haven't enjoy the dish. I will also be working with ingredients that I became familiar with in Europe that I think are interesting. For example, the tuber crosne (also called Chinese artichoke), which when roasted has a deep flavour and will be paired with halibut. The restaurant's philosophy of making what it can in-house continues. For example, the chorizo we use in our smoked octopus carpaccio.

### Why introduce a entirely new menu?

Partly because as a chef you like to cook your own food, not another chef's, and because you can get bored of executing the same dishes, which is one reason that seasonal cooking appeals. The response from regular diners has been positive.

### What do you think of the Hong Kong dining scene?

This is a fast-paced, exciting city and its cuisine reflects that. I have had some enjoyable meals, including dim sum at Fook Lam Moon, and at Iwanami. I also like 22 Ships, it has a great vibe and simple food done well, and St Betty was quite nice.

### Do you like to cook on your days off?

I do, but I don't like cleaning up. And I have a small kitchen, so that is limiting. I usually cook something basic, such as roast chicken with crispy roast potatoes served with an arugula salad, or a pasta dish.

## 15 MINUTE CHEF GAI PAD KRAPOW

This Thai dish needs to be made with the dark meat of the chicken because the breast is too dry. Most supermarkets sell only minced chicken breast, so you'll need to hand-chop it yourself. It's not difficult – you just need a very sharp knife (a cleaver is even better) and a bit of time and patience.

Recipe

**About 125ml cooking oil, divided**  
**500 grams boneless, skinless chicken leg, either minced or hand-chopped**  
**4 garlic cloves, chopped**  
**4 shallots, chopped**  
**12-15 fresh curry leaves**  
**6-10 red bird's eye chillies, chopped**  
**25ml soy sauce**  
**10ml Thai fish sauce**  
**25ml oyster sauce**  
**30 grams holy basil leaves**  
**2-3 eggs, at room temperature**  
**Steamed white rice**



- Heat 80ml cooking oil in a wok over a high flame. Add the garlic and stir-fry for a few seconds.
- Put the minced chicken in the wok and stir-fry, breaking up clumps of meat with the spatula. Cook until it loses its pink colour, then add the shallots and the curry leaves.
- Stir-fry the ingredients for about 30 seconds, then mix in the chillies, soy sauce, fish sauce and oyster sauce.
- Reduce the heat to medium, scrape the ingredients to the centre of the wok and simmer for a couple of minutes.
- Taste the mixture for seasonings and adjust, if needed.
- Stir in the holy basil leaves.
- Heat the remaining oil in a skillet. Crack the eggs, add them to the skillet and fry until they're crisp at the edges, with a runny yolk.
- Put the rice on two or three plates, add the chicken mixture then top each portion with a fried egg before serving.

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## TABLE TALK

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**Angelini** Italian restaurant at the Kowloon Shangri-La in Tsim Sha Tsui is featuring the cuisine of Abruzzo in a promotion that runs until the end of March. The menu changes monthly and, for January, the five-course set menu includes a choice for the pasta course of home-made chitarra pasta with l'Aquila black truffle and Farindola and cacio cheeses, or half rigatoni pasta with baby scampi, cherry tomatoes and Chieti hills extra virgin olive oil; and a choice for the main of Adriatic Sea seafood platter or lamb skewer with friggatelli spinach sauce and Frantoio d'Onofrio olive oil powder. The dinner is HK\$880 plus 10 per cent, or HK\$1,240 with a wine pairing. Bookings: 2733 8988

**Kaetsu** at the Grand Hyatt Hong Kong is serving Japanese hotpot dishes until the end of the month. Dishes include chicken dumplings in soya milk paper hotpot (below), with ingredients such as minced



chicken balls, bean curd sheets and sesame tofu; and Hokkaido hotpot with salmon, king crab, scallops, cuttlefish and home-made bean curd. Bookings: 2584 7722

**Hotel Nikko** in Tsim Sha Tsui will hold cooking classes this month and next. The two-hour classes, taught in Cantonese, focus on Chinese dishes (such as deep-fried crab claws stuffed with minced shrimp, and scrambled eggs with fish maw and crab meat) on Tuesday, January 8, and Japanese on



February 19 (dishes include stewed clams in sake, assorted tempura). The price of HK\$485 includes lunch. Bookings: 2313 4222

**The City Café** at The Cityview Hotel in Yau Ma Tei has seafood on the dinner buffet until the end of January. Dishes include

tiger prawn and mango Newburg (left); crawfish jambalaya; Hong Kong-style shrimp toast; shrimp and bacon skewers with béarnaise sauce and tandoori prawns. The buffet is HK\$468 plus 10 per cent (HK\$428 for seniors, HK\$368 for children). Bookings: 2783 3287

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