

## Xi Yan Restaurant: Private Dining with a Taste Of Asia

Reviewed by : [Lavinia Ching](#)

Emerging from vibrant Hong Kong , this exclusive restaurant is taking the culinary world by storm. Having no signage and located on the second level of a row of old shophouses in a quaint sideroad provides Xi Yan with just the right elements for a private dining experience. Celebrity chef Jacky Yu's splendid [culinary](#) creations aim to unite the roots of each of the various Asian cuisine, making them one.

The décor is of a modern contemporary oriental design, reflective of the cuisine served. A somewhat minimalist interior greets patrons, and upon venturing further into the fairly small dining space, one can expect a splash of colour; bright red wall-mounted cushions adorn the pure white walls, an array of scenic paintings and ceramic display pieces adding colour and character to its dining hall which resembles that of a living room with the intention of making this a homely enclave. Hosting only 6 round dining tables, all of its chairs are made of hardwood and plush suede cushions seats which blends in with the hardwood flooring perfectly.

[Xi Yan](#) exists to fulfill both Mr Thomas Choong (partner) and Jacky Yu's beliefs in a familial dining experience as well as a cultivation of a non-discriminatory perspective of what true Asian cuisine is all about.

As a starter, the Sashimi Yu Sheng had a modern touch to the Chinese New Year favourite. The crackers (representing gold coins) were replaced with deep fried Poh Piah skins, while the special sweet sauce was made with olive oil, honey and kumquats. Another refreshing difference in the dish was the unconventional incorporation of raw octopus slices, salt fish belly, various other greens like bell peppers, green and purple seaweed.

A signature dish would be the Japanese Tomatoes in Sesame Sauce. The two plump and succulent peach-coloured tomatoes came glazed with a thin layer of intense sesame and wasabi sauce. The exquisite burst of flavour coming from the sauce served to accentuate the freshness of the tomatoes. Look out for the Fried Lemongrass Shrimp Paste Grouper or Har Jiong Yu. Served on a bed of pomelo salad, the fish was marinated with lemongrass and shrimp paste and deep fried to a golden brown, crispy on the outside but firmly soft and smooth on the inside. For a twist on a familiar Cantonese favourite, try the Crab Roe Glutinous Rice, which was a superb version of the Lor Mai Fan or glutinous rice with shrimps and toasted ground nuts steamed in lotus leaves. The highlight will be on the glutinous rice instead of the crab and hence, explains the small portion of crab served. Our stomachs were warmed and comforted with the next dish that arrived at our table, the Furong Chicken Soup, reminiscent of the kind of chicken soup mothers cook for their children. The home-made meatball of minced chicken and tofu was soft and literally could melt in your mouth.

Eager for a touch of luck? Order the auspicious Young and Old Happy News; a vegetable dish of young baby dou miao young and pickled vegetables, a representation of the young and old respectively.

Last but not least in place of the usual Xi Yan Tang Yuan, we were soothed by the velvety creaminess of the Homemade Tofu ice cream with Pandan Glutinous Rice; a new feature for the Chinese New Year.

A lunch of 6 courses, goes at \$ 48++ per person and dinners of 12 courses, goes at 88++ (regular chef's menu, others on request basis) per person.

Prompt and efficient service from our smartly dressed waiters, decked out in a full suit of black, added to our dining experience.

In an atmosphere and service befitting of royalty, it is indeed an experience to dine at Xi Yan. Part of the reason why reservations are best made in advanced is to ensure freshness of ingredients are never compromised. Culinary creativity is apparent here. However, the dishes were small-portioned and perhaps a tad pricey for the ingredients used.

### About the Author

Lavinia Ching

Source: <http://>