

[3 Questions With ...]

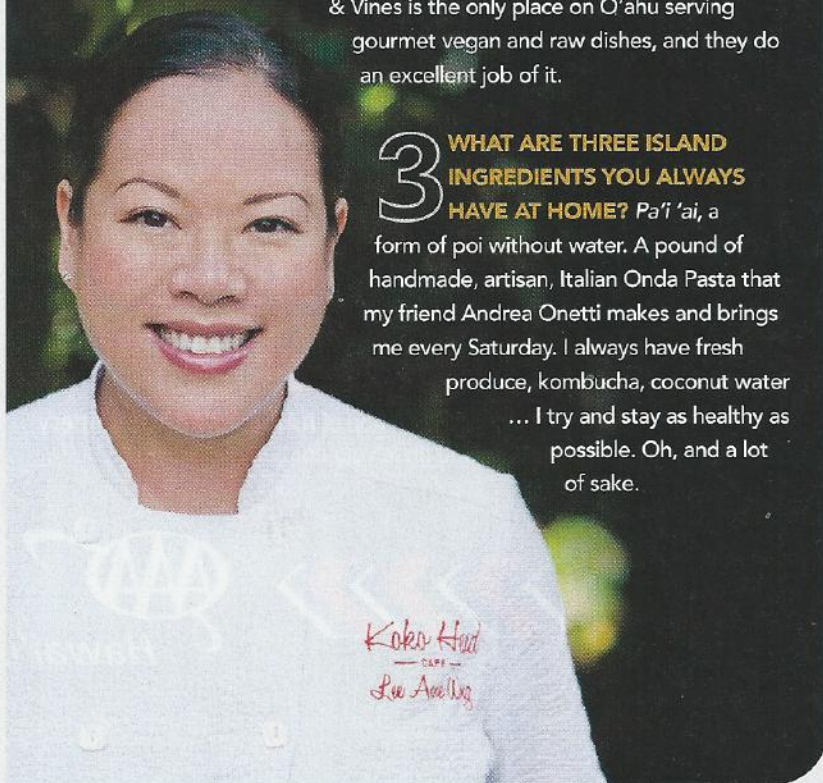
Lee Anne Wong

Chef Lee Anne Wong's path has been anything but linear. When it came time for college, the native New Yorker entered the world of haute couture via the Fashion Institute of Technology. An abrupt U-turn led to haute cuisine with a stint at the French Culinary Institute. Gigs followed at acclaimed venues, including Marcus Samuelsson's Aquavit and Jean-Georges Vongerichten's Restaurant 66. Next, Hollywood came calling with the first season of Bravo's *Top Chef*. Though she didn't win, she became the show's supervising culinary producer, the first of her many roles in the entertainment world. Ready for another change, she set her sights on O'ahu and the opening of her first restaurant, Koko Head Café (1145 12th Avenue, Unit C, Honolulu. 808-732-8920; kokoheadcafe.com). —Bekah Wright

1 WHAT WOULD YOU ORDER AT KOKO HEAD CAFÉ? It's my breakfast house; we serve brunch all day. Our menu is Island-style, reinvented lunch box. Everything has a bit of a twist to it. A popular item is the Breakfast Bibimbap that starts with fried, crispy garlic rice from the skillet that's topped off with sautéed bean sprouts, carrots, *ong choy*, and soy-mirin marinated shiitake, a combination of breakfast meats—Portuguese sausage, bacon, and ham—with a sunny-side up egg on top. Then there's our take on the loco moco, the Koko Moco; our Cornflake French Toast; and superlight, fluffy pancakes.

2 WHERE DO YOU DINE? At Izakaya Naru (2700 S. King Street, Honolulu. 808-951-0510; naru-honolulu.com), I order everything on the menu. I'm not kidding. Then there's Greens & Vines (909 Kapi'olani Boulevard, Unit B, Honolulu. 808-536-9680; greensandvines.com). When I was living in New York, I ate vegan and raw four days a week. Greens & Vines is the only place on O'ahu serving gourmet vegan and raw dishes, and they do an excellent job of it.

3 WHAT ARE THREE ISLAND INGREDIENTS YOU ALWAYS HAVE AT HOME? *Pa'i 'ai*, a form of poi without water. A pound of handmade, artisan, Italian Onda Pasta that my friend Andrea Onetti makes and brings me every Saturday. I always have fresh produce, kombucha, coconut water ... I try and stay as healthy as possible. Oh, and a lot of sake.



FROM LEFT: MARINA MILLER; COURTESY COAST GRILLE, HAPUNA BEACH PRINCE HOTEL

[Trending]

Sauces

"It is the sauce that distinguishes a good chef. The saucier is a soloist in the orchestra of a great kitchen." So said the great French chef-restaurateur Fernand Point (1897–1955), the father of nouvelle cuisine. Creative Island chefs are proving the truth of that claim.

—C.C.T.

Coast Grille

Hapuna Beach Prince Hotel
62-100 Kauna'oa Drive, Kohala Coast
(808) 880-1111; hapunabeachprincehotel.com



Liliko'i mignonette is the star among a trio of sauces served with Pacific oysters on the half shell. Executive chef Peter Abarcas Jr.'s twist on the traditional French mignonette uses fresh Hawai'i Island liliko'i,

which provides a nice citrus flavor without being overpowering.

Mission Social Hall & Café

553 S. King Street, Honolulu
(808) 447-3913; thepiligrimgroup.com

Chicken for a top-selling sandwich is marinated overnight in a chocolate miso sauce that doubles as a glaze that bastes the meat midway through roasting. According to chef Mark Noguchi, dark or bitter chocolate adds a subtle earthiness and luxurious mouthfeel to the sauce. Miso complements the sweetness with a bold, fermented tang. Onion, garlic, sake, and mirin complete the perfect "chord" of flavors.

Bread & Butter

1585 Kapi'olani Boulevard, Honolulu
(808) 949-3430; alohabreadbutter.com

It takes chef Masa Gushiken six hours to prepare the savory sauce for his Kona coffee–pinot Bolognese. He starts with *sofrito* (a Spanish sauce). Into that he blends and simmers local ground beef; fresh, diced tomatoes; herbs; spices; pinot noir; and two surprises—cold-brewed Kona coffee and tonkatsu sauce.