

Want some dim sum? Restaurants serve up Chinese delicacies

By Paul Bredderman
Staff Writer

One would expect to find authentic Chinese specialties served in restaurants in a big-city China Town, not in Chapel Hill.

But two local restaurants are proud to be among the few in North Carolina that serve "dim sum," a light meal made up of tiny delicacies in the form of dumplings, pastries and ambrosia.

"It's like a smorgasbord," said David Chu, a manager at Hunam Chinese Res-

taurant at 790 Airport Road. "You can order one item, or you can order 10 items."

Although former President Richard Nixon helped popularize Chinese food after his visits to mainland China, the tradition of dim sum has remained relatively unknown to many Americans, Chu said.

Hunam has offered a dim sum menu that has been growing for the past five years, but many UNC students and local residents still don't know about this type of Chinese cuisine, Chu said.

Chapel Hill resident Carol Martell tried dim sum for the first time Sunday at Hunam.

"I didn't come here until I talked to someone else who had already come here," she said. "I was afraid I'd walk away hungry. I just didn't understand how it worked."

At Hunam, customers are presented with a dim sum menu upon request. It consists of 52 items that are steamed, pan-fried, stir-fried or deep-fried, all cooked to order.

Customers order simply by circling

on the menu the items they wish to try.

Traditionally, many Chinese families look forward to dim sum because it is a time to talk, drink tea and enjoy a relaxing meal. Translated, the term means "pointing to your heart."

When Christina Lee came to Durham eight years ago after living in Hong Kong for more than 20 years, she hoped dim sum would become popular with local residents who knew nothing about it.

Now the Hong Kong Chinese Restaurant on Guess Road, where she is a manager, does booming business on weekends.

"I think at least 300 or 400 people come in (on Saturdays and Sundays)," Lee said.

Asian families come from as far as Fayetteville, Wilmington and South Carolina to eat dim sum at Hong Kong on the weekend, Lee said.

Unlike at Hunam, customers at Hong Kong choose what they eat as items pass by on carts and trays—the way it's done at "tea houses" and restaurants in

Hong Kong, China and Taiwan.

Larger restaurants in these East Asian countries serve dim sum on as many as 30 carts that unload dozens of items in minutes, Chu said.

At Hunam, items are cooked to order instead of being served on carts because there is not enough demand for dim sum at the restaurant, Chu said.

Dim sum is more popular in the southern, or Cantonese, region of China, where Hong Kong is situated, Lee said. "In Hong Kong, you could just go anywhere and (eat) dim sum, for dinner, any time you like."

Both Hunam and Hong Kong have hired chefs from Hong Kong who know how to prepare the hors d'oeuvres and desserts using special flours and ingredients that must be specially ordered.

Having a chef from Hong Kong, although expensive, is a sign of good dim sum, Lee said. Most dim sum dishes at the two restaurants are \$2 to \$3 each, but some cost as much as \$9.

Some of the food is quite exotic. "Not everyone can acquire a taste," Chu

said.

Beef tripe? That's cow's stomach. "Phoenix (chicken) feet" are also served; they are marinated, fried and then steamed and served in a black bean sauce. And how about some Lotus seed buns?

There are plenty of other choices, such as various types of dumplings, for the less adventurous.

"It's wonderful. We just kind of ordered some things and ate," said Lori Reynolds, a Chapel Hill resident who ate at Hunam on Sunday. She tried the roasted pork buns, stuffed crab claw, spare ribs in black bean sauce and one of the most popular items—the "hargaw," or shrimp dumplings.

Andrea Brown first tried dim sum three years ago at Hunam. "I immediately fell in love with it," she said, laughing as she attempted to sell the concept to her friends sitting beside her. "I came in here and ordered \$24 worth one time by myself."

"I like a variety of foods. It's an inexpensive way to try a lot of things."

PHE

Local resident Gaile Chaney compared PHE Inc. to propaganda groups around the world.

"They're like the KKK and neo-Nazis. We're getting jobs, but at what price?" she asked. "We must bring them under conditional use, for the health of the community and protection of property values."

Former town attorney and chief activist against PHE Inc., Lucius Cheshire Sr., said the company could not legally relocate in Hillsborough because it did not have a conditional-use permit to operate in the authorized zone.

"Nobody discussed with Horton a conditional-use permit before he moved here," Cheshire said. "Since he never applied for it, they could endanger public health, safety and general welfare."

RTVMP

More academically focused divisions, including the departments of sociology and anthropology, could use the resources of an RTVMP studies program to understand the impact of media on American and world cultures, he said.

But this shift may not sit well with incoming fall 1993 RTVMP graduate students, according to an RTVMP survey of the 103 expected fall enrollees. Of the 101 who responded, 72 students ranked radio, television and film production as their first choice, while only three students ranked documentary as their first choice and just one student put cultural studies as their track of choice.

Financial problems also were a central issue of the Wednesday discussion.

For that reason we can't grant it."

Cheshire added that a 15-year-old Hillsborough resident ordered a video and magazine from PHE Inc., which was delivered Tuesday.

"His father is in the courtroom. I'd point him out to you if they'd let me back in the room to speak," he added, after being thrown out of the hearing.

Cheshire attempted to show board members a 30-second clip from an X-rated video to demonstrate its moral indecency. Board members told Cheshire he could not show the video, but Cheshire proceeded to describe the video's contents.

"He licked her rectum," Cheshire said, before being restrained and thrown out by bailiffs.

The audience applauded loudly as

Cheshire left the room, waving to his sympathizers.

But PHE Inc. employees and citizens supporting the company said the company was a legitimate business that would not harm the community.

Donna Spurling, a former PHE Inc. employee, said the charges lodged against PHE were outlandish.

"I worked there from 1986 to 1988 and have yet to see a better-run organization," Spurling said. "They've been accused of murder, rape and everything under the sun, but they're really good people."

Carol Moore and Tim Zachery, two Hillsborough residents whose land borders PHE Inc.'s property, said they disagreed with the accusations about the company's negative influences.

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Students talked about the need for administrators to allocate more money for production equipment upgrading and maintenance.

"We're operating past the life of the equipment," said RTVMP Director of Operations Tyler Johnson. "The department has facilities it will not be able to support. We may have to shut down the TV studio."

Johnson said that when the department's budget was halved in the past, the RTVMP program had continued to maintain equipment with the lowered budget, but now the department could not provide for its upkeep.

"Basically it's a problem of reliability," he said. "Students need to be able to depend on the equipment."

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