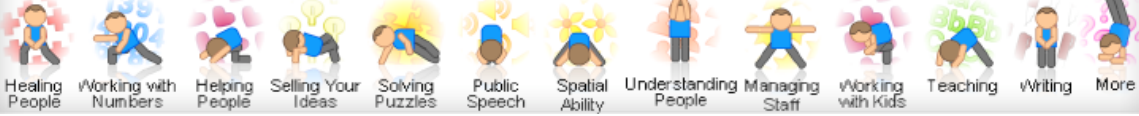


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### Henry Yee's name is the same, but the cuisine is new

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April 16, 2009

BY LEE LITAS Contributor

The name on the door may be the same, but that is where the similarity ends for Henry Yee's Restaurant in Libertyville. Established in 1961, this previously Cantonese eatery changed hands two years ago and has since gone through a metamorphosis that transformed everything from the decor to the very essence of the menu.

"It was a dark place that looked more like someone's den instead of a restaurant," said new owner Tina Tsui of the old ambiance which included a playroom at the entrance. Tsui, along with husband, Kevin, and business partner, Executive Chef Chen, removed everything that did not belong in what they considered to be a clean, light and friendly restaurant. The new owners remodeled, added new booths and tables.

#### Changed styles

They also changed the menu from Cantonese to Szechuan and Hunan styles that originate in the middle and southwestern provinces of China. The cuisine they seek to offer now is bold in flavor and spiciness from the liberal uses of garlic and chili peppers. Alternately, they've also introduced lighter fare in an effort to offers healthier options.

While some changes are still developing, such as the need to make the restaurant handicap accessible, others, such as eliminating the use of MSG are easier to correct. According to Tsui, "All Chinese restaurants still use MSG in their cooking. It makes that flavor that people are used to when eating Chinese food. But you can request that we don't put it in," said Tsui.

The newest additions to the menu are the Mini Pork Egg Rolls, so new they're not even listed yet and need to be specially requested. Looking like mini cigars, they come eight to a serving and should be considered bite-sized, if a little greasy (\$5.25/8).

Their Hot & Sour Soup is classically made, and even a bit on the hot side but then, the title tells you exactly what you're in for (\$1.75).

Chef Specialties are a new signature item on Yee's menu. The Four Treasures combines large chunks of shrimp, tender beef, sliced chicken and pork with vegetables in brown garlic sauce (\$12.95).

The Orange Beef is a real treat here made from well-done flank steak that is cooked together with fresh orange peel that adds a sweet floral bouquet while spicy red peppers and tangy brown sauce add a welcome bite (\$12.95).

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### Terrific tofu

A truly memorable dish is the Chinese Eggplant and Tofu (\$10.95). Now for those who are categorically against tofu, take note: This perfectly-seasoned, tangy concoction offers delicately fried eggplant in rich brown sauce and the combination makes for a filling and guilt-free meal, something that is a rare find, indeed.

Yee's is also experimenting with different vegetables, like asparagus that is not typical for Chinese cuisine. Their Sliced Chicken w/ Asparagus (\$9.95) hits just the right consistency offering light-as-a-feather tenderness in the meat while keeping the vegetables crunchy and adding an extra dimension of texture in every bite.

All dishes come in one size which makes the prices points very clear.

Henry Yee's Restaurant

624 North Milwaukee Avenue, Libertyville. Street Parking, not handicap accessible. Open 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday; 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday. Call (847) 362-2292, fax (847) 363-2373 or visit [www.henryyeerestaurant.com](http://www.henryyeerestaurant.com)

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