



BRIDGE ACROSS TIME

Chef Andrew Wong's food takes inspiration from his life: it is an amalgam of east and west; modern and traditional; then and now

words VANI MALIK

Growing up, Andrew Wong left his family restaurant business because he wanted to do something different. He took up Chemistry at Oxford and then read anthropology at the London School of Economics and was all set for a different life... but, soon, his father passed away and he was compelled to return to the business. The rest, as they say, is history.

He began helping his family run the four restaurants they had back then. He was only 22 and once he got back to the family business, he started pursuing a degree in French culinary science. Chef Wong has been in the food business ever since.

Growing up in London, Chef Wong was exposed to a multi-cultural environment and became technically accomplished as a chef but he was not happy with his learning of Chinese cuisine; his own heritage. "I knew Cantonese food and Sichuan food but I wanted to learn more – about Hunan, Fujian, Xinjiang, Shandong, Anhui and so many of the other provinces in China," says Chef Wong.

So, in 2010, he left London with the intention of working and travelling around China. For six months, he learnt various aspects of Chinese cuisine. He studied at the Sichuan Culinary Institute

Chef
Andrew
Wong,
Mentor
chef at
Baoshuan,
The Oberoi
New Delhi



(Left, bottom and opposite page)
Dong Po Braised Pork Belly at Baoshuan;
Emperor Yao's Pleasure at Baoshuan;
Grilled 5 Spice Bektı with steamed rice and a glass of champagne at Baoshuan
The Oberoi, New Delhi



The name pays homage to the largest vessels in the fleet of Chinese merchant ships, which were called *báochuán*

and learnt the specialised techniques of Chinese roasting. “In Beijing, I learnt the ancient skill of cooking traditional Peking duck. In Hong Kong, I learnt how to make their famous Cantonese dim sum,” says Wong, adding “I was fascinated by how food in China differed so dramatically according to region and culture.”

Being both a Londoner and a Chinese, he wanted the food he developed for his own restaurant to showcase that. So when he opened A. Wong, his famous Michelin-starred restaurant in London’s Pimlico, in 2012, the menu presented a modern take on his heritage cuisine. “Since opening, me and my team have introduced diners to the cross-cultural delights and an incredible variety of Chinese cuisine,” adds the chef. A. Wong is now regarded as the highest bar of authentic Chinese cuisine in London. Andrew Wong went on to release his debut book *A. Wong* in 2015 and in October 2017, he received the coveted Michelin star.

Mentor of the menu at Baoshuan, the Chinese rooftop restaurant at The Oberoi, New Delhi, Chef Wong brings this same modern-traditional sensibility to the table – Baoshuan is an innovative take on traditional recipes and a rich exploration of China’s tremendous culinary diversity.

The name pays homage to the largest vessels in the fleet of Chinese merchant ships, which were called *báochuán*. These vessels would sail during the 15th century, led by Admiral Zheng. Both he and the *báochuán* are legendary in Oriental history for their voyages across the Indian Ocean laden with treasure troves of luxurious Chinese goods. The series of wood and metal-framed glass panels adorned with Chinese embroidery and decorative tassels that line the walls inside evoke a sense of history.



“ Among the signature dishes is the Peking Duck London 1960, a British interpretation of the traditional Peking duck recipe ”

CHEF ANDREW WONG



(Left) Weekend brunch at Baoshuan



(Above) Peking duck, London 1960, pancakes and plum sauce at Baoshuan, The Oberoi, New Delhi

The food is dim sums and small plates, but more importantly, each dish tells a story. The service is a very interactive experience. The restaurant strives to tell diners the story behind what they eat, not just offer them good food. The Baoshuan experience centres on this concept – of stories, of sharing food and memories.

Among the signature dishes is the Peking Duck London 1960, a British interpretation of the traditional Peking duck recipe, which comes garnished with Oscietra caviar. Then there's the Crispy Lamb, a spicy lamb dish cooked in tempura and coated in chilli caramel, a recipe that was historically enjoyed within The Forbidden City Palace in Beijing. Everything at Baoshuan has a story and a reason to be there. Every cock-

tail that you find on the menu has been infused with unique flavours from the Orient, including Szechuan tinctures, Chinese five-spice mix, shiso and kumquat. "So there are cocktails like Plum Old Fashioned, a take on the traditional cocktail that has a mix of bourbon, plum wine, Darjeeling tea and crushed cardamom, which is interesting as well as delicious," adds the Michelin star chef.

Baoshuan now offers a Weekend Brunch, which is a good way to sample the variety of the food on offer. From Cantonese cuisine such as dim sums and Sichuan's Thousand Chilli Chicken, and of course, the Peking Duck, it will be an exciting experience for someone who wants to try out many types of dishes over long, lazy hours.