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Lung: The philosopher ???????

André Chiang's unique approach to haute cuisine has taken him to number one in Singapore and quickly up the rankings of the world's most revered restaurants. 憑著獨具巧思的高級法式料理，使江振誠登上新加坡第一名廚寶座，在全球最佳餐廳的排名更迅速攀升。By Tama Lung

The philosopher

廚房裡的哲學家

Outside the white stone façade of Singapore's Restaurant André stands a single olive tree. Shipped from the south of France and now thriving under difficult conditions, it's not unlike the chef who toils behind the restaurant's cobalt-blue doors. "An olive tree needs seasons and differences in temperature, not the constant heat and humidity of Singapore," writes André Chiang in *Octaphilosophy: The Eight Elements of Restaurant André*, his new book that takes readers through a year in the life of the award-winning eatery. "It needs to be protected and it needs support to grow. It's fragile in this environment, and so am I. But when we are together, we are stronger."

Chiang, 40, is one of the rising stars of the culinary world. Restaurant André, which opened in 2010, was recently awarded two stars in the inaugural *Michelin Guide Singapore*. It also holds the title of Best Restaurant in Singapore 2016 and is currently ranked 32nd on the World's 50 Best Restaurants index. Chiang, whose other restaurant ventures include Burnt Ends and Bincho in Singapore, RAW in Taipei and Porte 12 in Paris, was also named Chef of the Year at the 2016 World Gourmet Summit Awards of Excellence, which honours F&B and hospitality professionals and establishments in Singapore and throughout the region.

Born in Taiwan, the self-described "eccentric child" credits his mother, Tina Lin, for instilling in him an appreciation of nutritious food and home cooking. Chiang was 13 when Lin was offered a job running a Chinese restaurant in Yamanashi, Japan, and the experience of helping out in the kitchen sparked his desire to become a chef. A few years and intensive study of the *Michelin Guide* later, he volunteered to work with Jacques and Laurent Pourcel (twin brothers from the south of France and the youngest three-star chefs in the world at the time) during their 10-day visit to Taipei. Chiang's passion, motivation and attention to detail impressed the brothers so much that they invited him to work at their restaurant Le Jardin des Sens in Montpellier, France.

新加坡餐廳 Restaurant André 的白牆外立著一棵橄欖樹，成為這間享譽國際的法式餐廳標誌之一。這棵橄欖樹來自法國南部，遠渡重洋而來，卻在環境截然不同的異地茂盛生長，如同餐廳創辦人江振誠，他在鈷藍色餐廳大門後的廚房默默耕耘，憑堅忍毅力達到今日的星級地位。「橄欖樹需要四季分明、溫度各異的生長環境，不容易適應新加坡這種長期炎熱而潮濕的天氣。」江振誠在他的最新著作《八角哲學》（Octaphilosophy）中這樣寫道，該書帶領讀者細味餐廳一年365天的菜單。他續說：「它需要細心呵護才能茁壯。這種環境使橄欖樹變得脆弱，我也是。但是當我們在一起，我們會變得更強大。」

現年40歲的江振誠在烹飪界迅速打響知名度，他開設的 Restaurant André 自2010年開業迄今獲獎無數，包括今年得到新加坡版《米芝蓮指南》評以二星，亦是2016年新加坡最佳餐廳，目前在全球50最佳餐廳排第32位。除了 Restaurant André，江振誠還在新加坡開設 Burnt Ends 及 Bincho，以及台北的 RAW 和巴黎的 Porte 12，他更榮獲2016世界名廚峰會優秀獎（2016 World Gourmet Summit Awards of Excellence）的年度廚師，該獎項旨在表揚區內表現優異的餐飲及酒店業界人士與機構。

這位出生於台灣的名廚說自己從小就是個「古怪的孩子」，他將成就歸功母親，因為母親使他從小就懂得欣賞營養美食和家常料理。13歲時，他的母親應聘前往日本山梨縣經營一家中國餐館，他隨母親赴日，有空就在廚房幫忙，這些經驗觸發他渴望成為廚師的熱情。約20年前，努力鑽研《米芝蓮指南》數年之後，江振誠得知來自法國南部的學生名廚 Jacques 及 Laurent Pourcel 兄弟（他們是當時世上最年輕的米芝蓮三星廚師）應邀來台北客席10天，立刻自告奮勇為他們工作。他對烹飪的熱情、積極和一絲不苟的工作態度，讓 Pourcel 兄弟留下深刻印象，於是邀他前往他們位於法國蒙貝利耶（Montpellier）的餐廳 Le Jardin des Sens 工作。

EDMOND HO

“If today I have asparagus, what would be the best way for me to cook this asparagus? You have to honestly answer the question and eventually it becomes your style

如果今天我手上有一把蘆筍，我應該用什麼最佳方式來烹調？你必須誠實回答這個問題，因為這最終將成為你的風格”

Chiang, who didn’t even speak French at the time, jumped at the chance. He worked as an apprentice for four years, learning everything from how to shine silverware to the basics of French cuisine, before earning a paid position as commis chef and eventually working his way up to head chef of the group’s 250-cover outpost in Shanghai.

“I never think about how hard the work is going to be,” Chiang says during a visit to Hong Kong as part of his yearlong international book tour for *Octaphilosophy*, which was released simultaneously in English, French and Chinese in April. “I started when I was 15 and I worked in a three-Michelin-star restaurant with the best of the best. Every cook was so experienced and we were working 15, 16 hours a day, and I thought it was normal. I thought, ‘This is France and no one is complaining and that’s it.’ And after a while you get used to it.”

Chiang went on to train under other legendary French chefs such as Alain Ducasse, Pierre Gagnaire, Joël Robuchon and Michel Troisgros before moving to the Seychelles to join Maia Luxury Resort. It was there, on the islands off the coast of East Africa, that Chiang would develop his signature French-meets-Asian approach to fine dining, comprising the eight elements of pure, salt, artisan, south, texture, unique, memory and terroir.

“I was in France almost 15 years and in all those years I worked only in three-Michelin-star restaurants. The chefs are so characteristic in terms of style or their personal approach to food. After 15 years, it’s very hard to create a dish where you don’t have a shadow of other chefs,” Chiang explains. “So that’s when I decided I wanted to go to Africa, a place where I had no distractions. If today I have asparagus, what would be the best way for me to cook this asparagus? You have to honestly answer the question and eventually it becomes your style. It’s like trying to figure out your favourite colour.”

Chiang spent two years developing his identity as a chef. “If you say asparagus, I would say egg; if you say egg, I would say caviar; if you say caviar, I would say potato. Why?” he asks. “Subconsciously there must be something that influences us and I found that I always had a dish with no seasoning and just pure ingredients. I always had a dish about artisan, I always had a dish about texture. And I realised these are the things that are always there, and there just happened to be eight. So yeah, that’s me.”

This page and opposite: A selection of dishes featured in Octaphilosophy

本頁及對頁：《八角哲學》書中介紹的部分菜式



當時江振誠甚至連法語也不會講，卻毫不遲疑地接受這個機會。他在異鄉當學徒，從如何將銀質餐具擦得閃亮，到學習法式料理的基礎技巧，四年後才成為獲薪的廚師助手，最後再慢慢晉升為集團旗下位於上海的250座位餐廳的主廚。

今年4月，江振誠分別以英文、法文及中文出版最新著作《八角哲學》，同時展開為期一年的新書發表會，他在這趟世界巡迴之旅來到香港時表示：「我從沒有想過這份工作會有多難。我15歲開始學廚，可以在米芝蓮三星餐廳，跟著最頂尖的廚師工作。每一位廚師都有非常豐富的烹飪經驗，我們每天工作15、16個小時，我以為大家都是這樣。我心想，這裡是法國，沒人抱怨，做廚師就是這樣。過了一段時間，也就習慣了。」

之後江振誠繼續效力其他赫赫有名的大廚，包括Alain Ducasse、Pierre Gagnaire、Joël Robuchon及Michel Troisgros等，習得一身本領之後，他加入塞舌爾的豪華度假村Maia Luxury Resort。他在這個位於東非海岸的小島，發展出為入津津樂道的獨特風格，將高級法式料理融入亞洲特色，糅合八種元素：純粹 (pure)、鹽 (salt)、工藝 (artisan)、南法 (south)、質 (texture)、獨特 (unique)、憶 (memory) 和風土 (terroir)。

他說：「我在法國差不多15年，這段期間我只在米芝蓮三星餐廳工作。這些大廚的烹飪風格都非常獨特，處理食物的方式都充滿個人特色。在法國工作15年之後，我創作的每道菜幾乎或多或少都會受到其他大廚的影響。」江振誠解釋：「所以那時我決定去非洲，一個可以讓我專心創作的地方。如果今天我手上有一把蘆筍，我應該用什麼最佳方式來烹調？你必須誠實回答這個問題，因為這最終將成為你的風格，就像試圖找出自己最喜歡的顏色。」

江振誠花了兩年時間發掘自己的廚師身分。「如果你說蘆筍，我會說配雞蛋；如果你說雞蛋，我會說配魚子醬；如果你說魚子醬，我會說配馬鈴薯。為什麼？」他問道：「我們的潛意識一定會受到某些東西影響，我發現自己吃的東西總是不加調味料，純粹只是食材而已。我總有一道菜是為了表現工藝，一道菜是為了表現質感。我意識到，有些東西永遠存在，而且剛好就是這八樣元素。所以，這就是我。」



Lung: The philosopher ???????

“I always see ourselves as the medium between nature and diners. It’s how we transform that message

我總是把自己視為大自然和食客之間的媒介。重點在於我們如何轉化此訊息。”

Today, Octaphilosophy is the driving force behind every dish and every experience at Restaurant André. Each of the eight concepts is given an attribute that emphasises its individual characteristics: originality, simplicity, structure, imagination, flavour, emotion, craft and character. Chefs then plot the dishes they’ve created on an octagon, marking the importance of various characteristics to visualise the balance of tastes and a dish’s role within the menu as a whole.

With the exception of Memory – an unexpectedly light dish of foie gras royale, truffle coulis and chopped chives that Chiang invented while working at Le Jardin des Sens in 1997 – the menu at Restaurant André changes daily depending on the ingredients available (some of which come from Chiang’s organic farm in Taiwan).

When asked what it takes to be a great chef, Chiang says, “For me, it’s communication. I always see ourselves as the medium between nature and diners. It’s how we transform that message. You need to select the produce, you need to crack ideas, then you need to have good execution and presentation. And all that is a process of communication.”

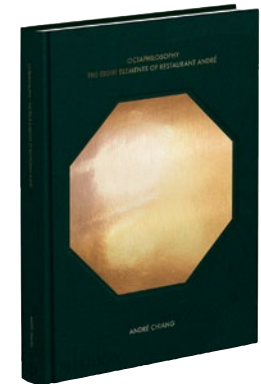
For Chiang, the process could involve gently sautéing leeks for a ravioli filling, playfully serving baked black bread mixed among real hot coals, or taking traditional French cheese and adapting it for modern Asian palates. While no two days are the same at Restaurant André – even the layout of the three-storey converted shophouse changes daily – the owner credits his years of training and repeating the same recipes over and over for transforming him into a chef.

“Passion, patience and persistence,” Chiang says when it comes to his advice for aspiring chefs. “Passion is doing something you really like. Patience is doing one thing, even if it takes you two years to get it perfect. Persistence is taking the pressure to go in the direction you want to go.”

Chiang also emphasises the importance of simplicity. “Nowadays there’s too much information,” he says. “In our time, we wanted to learn as much technique as we could. But for the new generation it’s about knowing when to stop. Just be simple if you want to be a good chef. Cook a good mashed potato and start from there.”

Opposite, clockwise from top: Chiang visits Manila’s Gallery VASK; interior and exterior views of Restaurant André in Singapore
This page: Chiang’s book, *Octaphilosophy*

對頁上圖起順時針：
江振誠客席馬尼拉的餐廳Gallery VASK；新加坡的Restaurant André室內及室外景致
本頁：《八角哲學》



今天，他的「八角哲學」是Restaurant André的每道菜、每個體驗背後的基础，當中的每個概念分別標誌了一種特色：原創 (originality)、簡單 (simplicity)、架構 (structure)、想像 (imagination)、風味 (flavour)、情感 (emotion)、技藝 (craft) 和個性 (character)。廚師會根據這個八邊形架構去創作菜式，記下各種特性的重要性，利用視覺表現味道的平衡，以及這一道菜在整份菜單中的角色。

除了「憶」這道菜，Restaurant André供應的菜式每日不同，根據當天的食材而定（其中有些來自江振誠在台灣有機農場）。「憶」是江振誠1997年在Le Jardin des Sens工作時所創，結合了鵝肝醬、松露碎及香蔥碎，口感出乎意料的輕盈，令人驚喜。

問他如何才能成為一個偉大的廚師，江振誠說：「對我來說，關鍵在於溝通。我總是把自己視為大自然和食客之間的媒介。重點在於我們如何轉化此訊息。我們必須挑選合適的產品，我們必須有創新想法，然後還要確實執行和呈現。這一切都是溝通的過程。」

對江振誠而言，這個過程可能是炒意大利餃的非菜內餡，搭配放在焦黑木炭上的烤黑麵包，兩者相映成趣；或是將傳統的法國芝士演繹成現代的亞洲風味。Restaurant André的菜單永不重複，橫跨三層樓的餐廳佈置每天亦不盡相同，他表示源源不絕的創意來自多年的廚師訓練，以及一遍又一遍反覆操練同一款食譜的過程。

對於有志成為廚師的人，江振誠建議他們必須有「激情、耐心和毅力。因為激情是做自己真正喜歡的事情；耐心是專注一件事，即使兩年才能至臻完美亦要堅持下去；毅力則是接受壓力，勇敢朝自己想走的方向前進。」

江振誠也強調簡單的重要性：「我們生活的環境籠罩著多不勝數的訊息。在我們的年代，總是想要盡可能學習更多技巧。但是對於新生代，重點在於知道什麼時候該喊停。如果你想成為一個好廚師，保持簡單就對了。想想怎樣可以煮出最美味的薯泥，就從這裡開始吧。」



OPPOSITE, TOP: IAN SANTOS, COURTESY PHAIDON PRESS; OPPOSITE, BOTTOM: EDMOND HO