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LET'S EAT

Warm up with seafood, noodles and buns at Delicacies of Asia

BY VICTORIA DAVIS | Special to the Cap Times

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Delicacies of Asia is a new restaurant located at 506 State St. in Madison.

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Snowfall and icy roads cover Midwest cities this time of year. Delicacies of Asia chef and owner Ting Cai Zhou wants to offer a place for Madisonians to thaw out over a bowl of steamy Japanese ramen, spicy Singapore noodles, hot, handmade Chinese dumplings and more.

“Being in the center of downtown, a lot of students are our main customers,” said Zhou, who manages the restaurant with his wife and business partner Jing Li. “We couldn’t focus on just one kind of cuisine because these students are from multiple nations and countries. We have to be diverse. Luckily, I’m able to cook multiple styles.”



Tonkotsu ramen is made with roasted pork, pork broth, soy sauce, noodles, soft-boiled egg, fish cake, bamboo, ginger pickle, wakame seaweed and scallops at Delicacies of Asia.

RUTHIE HAUGE

Delicacies of Asia, which opened two months ago at 506 State St., features an extensive menu with nine appetizers, eight broth noodle soups, five types of dumplings, four rice platters, four kinds of ramen and four sweet rice balls. There are also 16 “chef specials”

(\$11.95) from General Tso's tofu and chicken lo mein to shrimp stir-fry and beef with broccoli. Delicacies of Asia serves warm tea and sweet treats too, like red bean buns and custard buns (both \$5.50).

Zhou says the restaurant's most popular orders are the Singapore noodles with shrimp and veggies, plus the sweet and spicy deep-fried General Tso's chicken, named for a Qing dynasty statesman and served with broccoli. Tonkotsu-style ramen (\$13.99) is also a favorite, served with a choice of roasted pork or braised chicken (chashu) in a smooth pork broth. Among the toppings are a soft boiled egg, fish cakes, bamboo (menma), pickled ginger, seaweed (wakame) and scallops.

These are also Zhou's go-to dishes. "If I'm hungry, these are the ones I'll cook for myself," he said.



General Tso's chicken is a spicy fried chicken dish served with broccoli at Delicacies of Asia, a new restaurant located at 506 State St., Madison.

RUTHIE HAUGE

'Get your hands dirty'

Zhou is originally from the capital city of Fuzhou in the Fujian province of China, and Delicacies of Asia's menu does include dishes Zhou is familiar with from home. But, after being in the United States and in the restaurant business for more than 20 years, Zhou says his skills have improved. The chef moved to Madison eight years ago and has been running restaurants around the city for many years, including Ragin' Cajun Seafood on East Washington Avenue, which he still currently runs.

"What I like most about Delicacies of Asia is that it's located in an area where there are a lot of people around," Zhou said. "There's the hustle and the bustle of the downtown area. There are lots of students, lots of families. It's a nice area that brings people together and was an attractive place to set up a restaurant."

He adds, "In all my time in the United States, I've never met such nice people as I have in Madison."



Taiwan style pork and rice are on the menu at Delicacies of Asia, a new restaurant located at 506 State St., Madison.

RUTHIE HAUGE

Student customers often come into the restaurant looking for a quick meal. But for those who want to linger — and love seafood — the “Get Your Hands Dirty” menu is ample, with shrimp, snow crab legs, crawfish, clams, mussels and lobster tails. It’s a unique no-rush kind of dinner, served in half-pound and full-pound portions.

“For those dishes, you don't use chopsticks,” said Zhou. “You don't use a knife or a fork either. Instead, you wear plastic gloves and you use your hands to directly serve food from the plate to your mouth.

“It has a bit of a raw and primitive feeling that goes with it. But also practically speaking, for foods like shellfish, it's difficult to use chopsticks or utensils anyway.”



Jing Li and Ting Cai Zhou are pictured at their restaurant, Delicacies of Asia.

RUTHIE HAUGE

A full experience

Zhou and his wife Li work are hoping to add even more menu items, like sushi, once they hire more staff. “What we add to the menu will depend on what kind of chef we can get,” said Zou.

Until then, they’re hoping to draw people in so Zhou can “show off my cooking,” as he said. “A family of four or five can get a meal for under \$50. If you show up, you’ll be satisfied.”

Like many other restaurants working to thrive despite a global pandemic, Zhou hopes to utilize Delicacies of Asia’s large dining space to build a community around iconic food from

across Asia.

“With the pandemic, indoor dining has been cut down and it’s just not as full of an experience,” said Zhou. “We’ve got a wide space, as you can see. So we, of course, would like more people to dine in and have that full experience.

“We have the space and we also want to see people come in so the state sees businesses like ours flourish.”

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Delicacies of Asia

506 State St

(608) 467-6211

delicaciesofasia.com

HOURS:

11 a.m.-10:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday

11 a.m -11 p.m. Friday-Saturday

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