

Martin Yan Can Cook

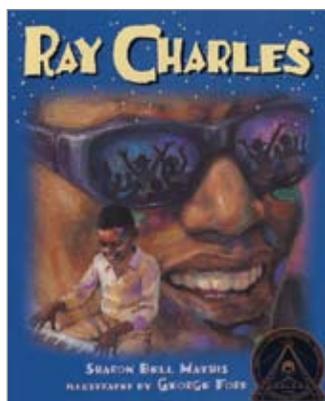
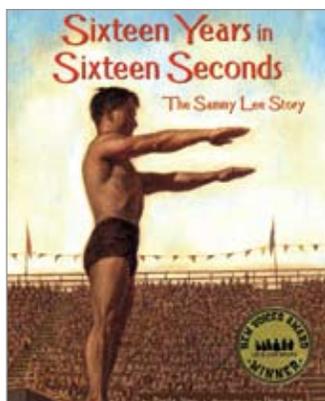
Colorful Stories From
Lee & Low Books

Michael Wong Leads
Ground-Cleaning Research Team

Kim Ng Keeps the L.A. Dodgers
On Top of American League West

A Spanasian Table:
How Two Vietnamese Brothers
Found Restaurant Success





Titles from Lee & Low Books tell the stories of colorful characters like Sammy Lee, Ray Charles and Ira Hayes.

Culture by the Book

Lee & Low Books is not the children's publishing house of your childhood. Among its award-winning titles, there are no stories about damsels in distress, green eggs and ham, or bunnies who lose their wool vests. Lee & Low books introduce young readers to characters such as Arun and Garang, kids with multi-hued skin tones and real-life experiences. The story lines — both real and fictional — are launch pads for learning about overarching historical and social themes.

"We identified a vacuum in children's books," according to co-founder Tom Low. "Most were targeted to Caucasians or contained animals or fairy tales. There was nothing dealing with contemporary issues and people of color. The few that did primarily focused on African-American titles." Resolved to inject America's vast diversity into a monochromatic industry, Chinese-American friends Philip Lee and Tom Low incorporated Lee & Low Books in 1991. Since then, the company's titles are acclaimed for their inclusion of African, Asian, Latino, Middle Eastern and American Indian cultures in both contemporary and historic settings.

Lee & Low's success has come despite an array of hurdles. "Our principal trouble when the company started was finding good stories," explains Jason Low, son of retired founder Tom Low and current publisher of the company. "This challenge affects publishers big and small, but we have been fortunate to find a number of great ones over the years." Calling the stories "great" might be an understatement. With more than 200 titles published in English and Spanish, Lee & Low's books have earned a roomful of major awards and honors, including a Coretta Scott King Book Award, a Pura Belpré Award, a Parents' Choice Award, a Jane Addams Children's Book Award, a Child Magazine's Best Book Award and many others.

To preserve this reputation for quality, the company initiated a novel practice that keeps the presses flowing with powerful stories. "Cultivating and nurturing minority authors and illustrators is a critical component of our mission," explains Jason. "So we created the annual New Voices contest." The contest encourages submissions from first-time writers with cash prizes and publishing contracts, and winners have gone on to win the Paterson Prize for Books for Young People and other prestigious industry awards. The contest is just one way that Lee & Low realizes its mission. *Bebop Books* is another. Headed by Jason's brother, Craig Low, *Bebop Books* is a Lee & Low imprint devoted to early readers. Its books introduce K-2 readers to new cultures while focusing on the five essential components of reading.

For Jason and Craig Low, publishing in this niche is a labor of love. "When I was growing up I

Jason, left, Craig and Tom Low.



certainly did not have the kind of books that my boys have today," recalls Jason. "I believe that my sons won't experience the same feelings of isolation and desire to assimilate that I once did." The company envisions a day when there will be no need for a word like multicultural. "We hope that referring to our stories just as stories will reinforce the belief that, despite one's background or the color of one's skin, we all have experiences in common," says Jason. (www.leeandlow.com)

Golden Idea May Save Our Groundwater

Despite a dearth of positive news about the environment our grandchildren will soon inherit, there are people who work night and day to solve difficult problems surrounding the earth's sustainable food, water and air supplies. Michael Wong, a professor of chemical engineering at Rice University in Houston, Texas, is one of those people. Wong is getting national attention for his application of nanotechnologies to clean up our underground water supplies.

First, a primer on TCE, or trichloroethylene. TCE is a nonflammable, colorless liquid with a somewhat sweet odor and a burning taste, but you really don't want to taste it, especially in your drinking water. TCE is used mainly as a solvent to remove grease from metal parts, but its industrial use is rather ubiquitous. To the point, TCE is frequently found in underground water sources as a result of pollution.



Michael Wong in the lab with Rice University students Yu-lun Fang and Kimberly Heck

And here is where Wong's research offers new hope for cleaning up the mess. "There are processes in place to remove TCE from many groundwater locations, but they are expensive to run," says Wong, "and not every contaminated groundwater location is being cleaned up." The eureka idea that has everyone excited is a process that is immeasurably faster, cheaper and far better for the environment in the long run.

And the catalyst for the new process is gold — more specifically, palladium nanoparticles encasing gold nanoparticles, interfaced with TCE molecules and groundwater to produce nothing but "happy byproducts," as Wong likes to describe it.

But Wong's discovery isn't one of those great ideas that are filed away under the heading "totally unrealistic." Wong and his team are talking to several Fortune 500 firms to build reactor units and put the research to field testing. The first reactor could be on line as early as this year, and positive results will be a major breakthrough in the tough fight to clean up our water supplies.



"San Francisco Cityscape," from the Urban Landscape series, by Zhan Wang. Photos courtesy of Asian Art Museum.

On Gold Mountain

Sculptures From the Sierra by Zhan Wang

Walk into any commercial kitchen and the amount of stainless steel is glaring — pots, ovens, service utensils, racks and bowls of all sizes, but you haven't seen anything until you've gotten close and personal with the artwork of Zhan Wang. Wang takes many of those same items, reorganizes them in a new space, and a breathtaking view of city streets and skyscrapers is born. It's an appetizing bit of creativity, and if you find yourself near the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco this month, you can see it. One of Wang's Urban Landscapes will be on exhibit through May 25, 2008.



Zhan Wang.

On the Cover

Top: "The Knitting" by John Tang. **Middle left:** Detail from the Urban Landscape series by Zhan Wang. **Middle right:** Professor Michael Wong of Rice University, photo by Will van Overbeek. **Bottom left:** Kim Ng of the Los Angeles Dodgers. **Bottom right:** Tea-Infused Chicken Kebabs prepared by Chef Martin Yan.

Wang is one of the most respected artists in his Chinese homeland, initially gaining fame as a sculptor of stainless steel "scholar rocks," which are the graceful, craggy boulders formed naturally and revered for their spiritual and intellectual inspirations. Part of Wang's exhibition features his stainless steel version of these rocks, polished and mirror-like, which were created from molds of real rocks found in the Sierra Nevada foothills where Chinese immigrants once labored in mines and railway construction.

But foodies will gravitate to the stainless steel cityscape, which is spread across a mammoth-size portion of the gallery floor. Wang uses pots, pans, strainers, utensils, everything but the kitchen sink, to re-create the peninsula upon which San Francisco sits. Chinese immigrants called the area "Jiu Jin Shan," or "Old Gold Mountain," hence the name of the exhibit. After an "Aha!" moment, the cityscape becomes instantly recognizable to those who know San Francisco for the myriad of misaligned grids that come together along Market Street, the hilly terrain and its distinctive neighborhoods such as Chinatown and Haight-Ashbury.

Wang's installation is also a metaphor for 21st-century Chinese mass production, and the exhibit's focus on Chinese immigration to the California gold country during the 19th century calls to mind the service industries to which many Chinese retreated after they were driven from the mining camps.

A re-creation of Beijing, China was featured in the spring 2007 edition of *Gastronomica* along with an artist interview, and you can learn more about the current San Francisco exhibit by visiting www.asianart.org.

Thao's Got It Down

Somehow folk music strummed from acoustic guitars seems the art form of the weathered and ivory-colored, counter-culturists who survived the 1960s. But, the times they are a-changin', as a folk star once crooned. Meet Thao, a young vocalist who set the indie music industry abuzz this winter with the release of "We Brave Bee Stings and All," produced on the Kill Rock Stars label. (visit www.thaomusic.com)

Thao's likeness to Madonna, Cher and Beyoncé ends with the single moniker. Her pared and precise lyrics are delivered in a reedy and pleasantly swaggering voice that can alternate to bubbly and bright, belying the wry insights and shadows lurking in her words. Her songwriting tweaks at adolescent rebellion and peeks into the corners of relationships and the other stuff that comprises — or compromises — our days and lives.



Thao

Thao first picked up a guitar at age 12. She taught herself to pluck the strings while working in her mom's laundromat after school — her ear on the artists of Lilith Fair, the late 1990s concert tour of women musicians. Her first live performance came in eighth grade, when she wrote and performed a song for her book report on "Lord of the Flies," one of the most chilling books ever written. She calls it "maybe the most intense live show I ever played."

Her first album, "Like the Linen," was a nod to folding and strumming in the laundromat. Her latest album's title is inspired by the throbbing pains of clambering into adulthood. Thao explains, "That line is just about resilience and trying to keep on, despite what others do and what you do to yourself."

This spring she closes a world tour before shooting videos for the new album. Then she's heading for San Francisco to work farmers' markets and volunteer in the Mission District. "I really like cooking and am incredibly impressionable when I read health food literature, so I will probably buy a lot of blue-green algae and try to use it in all my meals," she laughs.

The Silk Road

An Artistic Journey Down Eastern Asia

Asia is a multicultural mosaic, including more than 37 countries where more than 60 languages are spoken. One can hardly imagine the amazingly large and diverse body of Asian art that evolved over the centuries, traveling in piece and influence via the “The Silk Road.” The Silk Road — a vast network of overland and maritime trade routes crisscrossing ancient Eurasia, the Mediterranean and East Asia — created the first truly global

exchange of goods, money, foods and cultural traditions. Artwork featured on this and the following page represents a modern interpretation of the creativity that blossomed during those early times. Our three Asian-American artists represent Korea, China and Cambodia. The confluence of their traditional Eastern cultures and their Western experiences results in artistic expressions that make their works come to life.

Margo Vallone

Margo Vallone was born into a family of traditional Korean artists who share a passion for creativity, expression and respect for their Asian heritage. Her most valuable learning experiences stemmed from drawing alongside her mother. These memorable childhood moments created an influence and encouragement that continue to help Vallone expand her creative mood and sharpen her artistic skills.

Vallone’s 19 years as a marketing professional have also broadened her creative sense. “I developed an appreciation for commercially driven art, and it has revealed to me how this kind of work can be leveraged for impact and influence,” says Vallone. Currently, Vallone is a senior consultant to GEM Group, an award-winning marketing agency in New York City; an executive committee member of Marketing Agencies Association Worldwide, a global, forward-thinking organization dedicated to marketing executive leaders; and a judge in prestigious art competitions worldwide.

Vallone’s three artworks, a dramatic triptych pictured above, were created with charcoal and pencils. Although Vallone is of Korean descent, she has always been fascinated with the Japanese geisha. Geishas are professional women — trained from adolescence in the fine arts of conversation, dancing and singing — who entertain during professional or social gatherings. “Geisha Tea” was inspired by what Vallone imagines to be unguarded moments not commonly portrayed in Japanese art. “Geisha Mirror” depicts the intellectual side of the geisha in a moment of quiet self-reflection: She wonders who she has become. “Geisha Demure” portrays a modest and gentle woman who exudes effortless grace and fluidity even in everyday poses.

Vallone’s lifelong connection to the Japanese geisha continues to influence her portfolio of drawings and her continuing study of “a day in the life” of these magnificent women.



“Geisha Tea,” left, “Geisha Mirror” and “Geisha Demure” by Margo Vallone

John Tang

Journeying south from trade routes leading out of Korea, travelers and traders would eventually arrive at one of the great meccas of the Far East: Shanghai, China. Still one of the world’s most important cities, Shanghai is the birthplace of artist John Tang, who graduated from Shanghai Institute of Fine Art in 1976. *(continued on next page)*

“Country Kitchen” by John Tang





(continued from preceding page)

After furthering his fine art studies in Nanking, Tang was selected from among the country's leading artists to travel to the United States as an exchange student. He spent several years studying in New York and Canada while establishing himself as a master of putting oil on canvas.

Tang's works often reflect the Realist and Romantic traditions of 19th-century and early 20th-century Europe. They represent the homes and traditions of ordinary people rather than the religious and royalty motifs of prior eras. Featured here and on *Unity's* cover are three Tang masterpieces, "The Knitting," "Country Kitchen" and "Quiet Lane," where the artist searches for the past, trying to capture the peace, simplicity and quietness that stand in stark contrast to our busy and fast-paced modern world.

Walter Liedtke, curator of European paintings at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, is one of Tang's many admirers. "Mr. Tang shows us what is typical of daily life, and especially its objects and architecture, without making it obvious what country we might be visiting," explains Liedtke, adding, "These subjects, and the sheer love of painting that is so evident in these pictures, explain the universal appeal of Mr. Tang's work."

Tang's art, featured in prominent exhibitions across the United States and around the world, has garnered numerous awards along the way. His paintings are part of several permanent collections, such as those at the State University of New York, the History Museum of China and the Shanghai Art Gallery.

"Quiet Lane" by John Tang



Khiang H. Hei

Our final and southernmost point of travel on this journey is Cambodia, where we meet Khiang Hei, a documentary photographer born in the city of Phnom Penh. Hei's parents are of Chinese (Chaozhou) descent, yet they, too, were born in Cambodia. His grandparents migrated from China in the hope of finding better economic opportunities. Much for the same reasons, Hei and his parents migrated to the United States, where he eventually earned his master of fine arts from UCLA. During his studies, Hei continued to build on his international experiences and was able to re-trace and reflect upon his roots.

As a result of his multicultural upbringing, Hei's work is often concerned with contemporary social, cultural and political matters relating to Southeast Asia and China, and their intersection with his personal history and experiences. In 1989, while part of a student exchange program with Beijing Teacher's College, Hei documented the Tiananmen Square uprising. In the early 1990s, he retraced his steps as a Cambodian refugee and later worked on a project that documented Cambodia's countless land mines and their unsuspecting victims. From 1995 to 1997, Hei returned to Southeast Asia to document Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian social, economic and cultural recovery from the Vietnam War. "I see my photography as evolving from my personal history through historical events and across cultures," says Tang. The emotion runs deep as he further explains, "My childhood was disrupted by our war in Southeast Asia and the political and cultural turmoil of the Khmer Rouge's brutal re-ordering of Cambodian society."

While tragedy and suffering occur in this area of the world, there is a slice of life in Southeast Asia that is inspiring and less publicized in Western media. Hei's collection for *Unity* is from his Beach Vendor Series. These photos depict some of the delicacies that locals and tourists enjoy on the beautiful shores of Sihanoukville Beach in southern Cambodia. Hei finds great pleasure in returning to today's Cambodian beaches as a simple tourist, capturing both the foods and spirit of an unbreakable people.

Khiang's Beach Vendor Series

Pictured right, top to bottom: "Moto," a local favorite, is buns filled with meat and beans, which this vendor sells from the back of his motorcycle. "Deep Fried" is deep fried crayfish, a popular and crunchy treat. "Grilled Stick" is fresh grilled squid on a stick and a hot seller.



A Spanasian Table

Editor's note: April 30, 1975 was one very long and exhausting day for the people of South Vietnam, American troops and the citizens of Saigon. Without rehashing a difficult moment in world history, it's interesting to note that nearly 3 million Vietnamese fled their country to begin new lives all across the Americas and other parts of the globe. This story is in part a tribute to these courageous people who brought many gifts to the United States, including their love of food!

Some years ago, if you were looking for Tri Luong, the restaurant guy, you would have found him in front of a kitchen sink at Tio Montero, a little Spanish eatery in the sleepy Southern city of Charlotte, N.C. It was the early 1990s, and dish washing turned out to be Luong's first step into what would become a love for the restaurant business. He and his family were new to town and times were tough. Yet, there is an amazing and surprisingly little-known peculiarity among those who wash pots and pans for a living. If the person is observant, eager to learn and passionate about food, a dishwasher will often advance to become a chef, a manager or, perhaps, a food mogul with a slew of successful restaurants.

On a recent Saturday afternoon, in the quiet of Miró Spanish Grille, also in Charlotte, Luong tells his family's story while staring out the window. He speaks softly, deliberately, as if every step of the journey is crystal clear. Yes, he owns the place and a couple of other hot spots around town with his brother and partner Phong Luong, who is seated across the table. In a few hours, Miró will be filled with laughter, romance and the sounds of hungry diners enjoying tapas, sangria and Latin music. In another part of town, only steps from the old sink where Luong once washed dishes, more customers will fill Solé Spanish Grille and Zen Asian Fusion, both among the family's business holdings. If the Castilian overtones sound confusing, keep reading.



Phong Luong, left, Chi Zang and Tri Luong. Photo by Richard Rudisill.

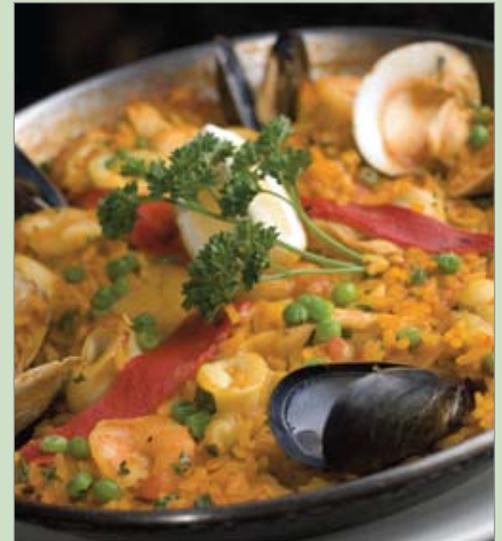
captured his heart while working at Tio Montero. The conversation turns lively, and it's obvious that the brothers are eager to celebrate the world of opportunities that can be found only in the United States. Tri went from washing dishes to management to ownership, all in just a few short years. Phong joined the business after earning a business degree and a short stint in hotel management. Their sister, Trinh Luong-Forstner, and Phong's brother-in-law, Chi Zhang, are also part of the team, and the family now sits atop a small empire of the best-reviewed restaurants in Charlotte.

As for the cuisine at the heart of the empire, it comes from Seville, Madrid, Valencia and Barcelona. From gazpacho to paella to churrasco de cerdo, the Luongs have developed a sensational menu of traditional Spanish recipes, and they present it in the fun-loving and casual style for which Spaniards are well-renowned. "In Spain, work is hard to separate from pleasure," explains Phong, "That is the Spanish way of life, a way of life in which people eat by whim, free of rules and schedules. It is meant for those who enjoy life to the fullest. Our Spanish restaurants hopefully give diners a chance to experience a little of life's beauty, a beauty that can be enjoyed every day," he adds.

Yet friends and longtime customers (*and probably current readers of this story*) have been slightly perplexed by the cultural crossover, and often asked if Asian food would ever make it on one of the Luongs' menus. The brothers accepted the challenge, and, with the help and backing of Chi, introduced their idea of Asian cuisine with the opening of Zen Asian Fusion.

The Luongs' story doesn't start in Charlotte, nor in Spain, but in Saigon, the Vietnamese capital now called Ho Chi Min City, where they were born. To say that Vietnam was a difficult place to raise a family in the '70s would be a colossal understatement. The Luong family, like thousands of others displaced at the end of the Vietnam War, packed up and moved, eventually making their home in Charlotte. The two-year trip was disastrous and lonely: One family member didn't survive.

Tri Luong's gaze out the window stops, and he's ready to talk about food — more specifically, the food that



Paella Valencia. Photo by Richard Rudisill.

Paella Valencia

- 1/2 cup white wine
- 1/2 cup finely chopped onion
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 red bell pepper, seeded and chopped
- 2 ripened tomatoes, peeled and chopped
- 1/4 teaspoon saffron threads
- 2 cups chicken or seafood stock
- 1 cup short-grain rice
- 12 raw shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 6 scallops
- 6 little neck clams
- 6 black mussels
- 1/2 cup frozen green peas
- 2 tablespoons parsley, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup roasted red peppers

Heat a large sauté pan, then combine first 6 ingredients and sauté for 2-3 minutes until everything is translucent.

Add saffron and stock, then add rice and bring to a boil over medium heat for 15 minutes.

Place all seafood items atop rice. Push them in, cover and cool over low heat for 10 minutes, turning seafood after 5 minutes. If the rice is not quite cooked, add extra stock and cook for a few more minutes until firm.

Add green peas, roasted peppers and parsley as a garnish, then serve.

Thankfully, for locals, business travelers and professionals moving to the area, the Zen menu is not a re-servicing of sweet and sour pork, but a robust and delightful interpretation of contemporary Asian-American cuisine.

Originally printed in Southpark magazine.

Yan Can Cook

Born in Guangzhou, China to a father who owned a restaurant and a mother who operated a grocery store, little Martin Yan kept all the ingredients to develop a passion for cooking right at his fingertips. Many years have passed since those youthful days in his parents' kitchen, but those years have been prolific for Yan, who is now Master Chef Yan with the credentials of a culinary superstar.

Yan is the celebrated host of more than 2,000 cooking shows broadcast worldwide, the author of more than two dozen prized cookbooks, a sought-after instructor for elite cooking schools, a consultant to food companies like Compass Group, a restaurateur and the owner of more awards than he can count. Yan's reason for success has always been his charismatic wit, which he wields as craftily as his signature kitchen knife, to dispel the mysteries of Asian cooking. Yan's followers leave the table with a better understanding of the cuisines birthed in Asia and the cultures that created them.

Twice-Cooked Duck

Duck is always a crowd pleaser at Chinese banquets. Here, the two different ways of cooking the duck result in a contrasting moist cooked interior and a nice, crispy exterior. I often serve Mandarin pancakes or flour tortillas and make duck quesadillas! Serves 4.

For the Poaching Liquid

- One 1-inch-long piece of ginger, peeled and thinly sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled and thinly sliced
- 6 whole star anise
- 3 pieces dried tangerine peel
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 1 1/2 teaspoons toasted Sichuan peppercorns
- 4 cardamom pods, lightly crushed
- 1/8 teaspoon black peppercorns, lightly crushed
- 1 1/2 cups soy sauce



Chef Martin Yan

Remaining Ingredients

- One 4- to 6-pound whole duck, halved lengthwise, rinsed and wing tips removed
- Vegetable oil for deep-frying
- Mandarin pancakes or small flour tortillas
- 1/2 English cucumber, julienned
- 5 green onions, julienned
- 1/4 cup hoisin sauce (for dipping)

To poach the duck, place the duck halves, skin side up, in a 5-quart pot and pour in enough cold water to just cover. Add the ginger, garlic, star anise, tangerine peel, cinnamon sticks, Sichuan peppercorns, cardamom pods, black peppercorns and soy sauce. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to medium low and simmer gently until the duck is just cooked through, about 30 minutes.

Carefully transfer the duck to a colander or wire rack, skin side up, and drain. Let cool to room temperature. Save the poaching liquid! Working with one duck half at a time, use a boning knife to carefully remove the breast meat from the breastbone, keeping the breast meat attached to the thigh. You will have two boneless breasts attached to a bone-in thigh.

Pour oil into a wok, stir-fry pan or large, deep skillet to a depth of 2 inches and heat to 350 degrees. Working with one half at a time, deep-fry the duck until the skin is golden brown and crispy, 5 to 6 minutes. Remove and drain on paper towels.

Carve, including the crisp skin, into thin slices. Garnish with cucumber and onions and serve.

Tea-Infused Chicken Kebabs

In most parts of China, grilling is not a common method of home cooking. So imagine my surprise when I discovered Xian's huge open-air food court, where Grill-a-rama meets Grill-a-mania! On an average night, 20,000 customers are served! For this recipe, I use a brining solution (salt and water) with tea to make the chicken moist and aromatic. Dish pictured on *Unity's* cover. Serves 6-8.

For the Brine

- 2 tablespoons salt
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 2-inch piece ginger, peeled and sliced into rounds
- 6 cloves garlic, peeled and lightly crushed
- 5 cups water
- 1/2 cup jasmine tea leaves

Remaining Ingredients

- 3 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves, cut into 1/2-inch-wide strips
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil

For the Sauce

- 1/4 cup Chinese black vinegar or balsamic vinegar
- 1/4 cup sugar

To make the brine, bring the salt, sugar, ginger, garlic and water to a boil in a 2-quart saucepan. Meanwhile, place the tea in a large, heat-proof bowl. Pour the boiling mixture over the tea and set aside until completely cooled, about 1 hour. Pour the tea through a fine-mesh sieve into another clean bowl, discarding the solids.

Add the chicken to the cooled tea brine, cover and refrigerate overnight.

Soak 15 6-inch bamboo skewers in warm water for 30 minutes. Drain.

Drain chicken, discarding the brine. Skewer each piece of chicken onto a bamboo skewer. Brush the skewered chicken with some of the oil.

Place a grill pan over medium-high heat until hot. Place the chicken on the grill pan and cook, turning once, until it is no longer pink in the center, about 2 minutes on each side.

Meanwhile, make the sauce. Bring the vinegar and sugar to a boil in a small saucepan over medium-high heat. Cook until the sugar dissolves.

Transfer the chicken to a serving plate.

Drizzle the sauce over the top and serve.

A Heavy Hitter From the Infield

As a stickball slugger in New York 30 years ago, Kim Ng (her last name is pronounced ANG) had no idea that her childhood swings in the driveway would eventually get her one base away from the top front-office position with the Los Angeles Dodgers. After all, in those days girls were rarely allowed in Little League, and there were no places for women at management levels in the majors. Fast-forward and peek in Ng's jewelry collection today: You'll be surprised to find a few unusual pieces. She's the proud owner of three World Series rings. Ng scored the bling



Ng analyzes the talent at the Dodgers' spring training camp.

during her four-year tenure as vice president and assistant general manager for the New York Yankees. She was recruited to that level at the incredibly young age of 29. Today she's the assistant general manager with the Los Angeles Dodgers, where she made history in 2005 as the first woman to interview for a general manager's spot in Major League Baseball. She didn't land the Dodgers' lead position, though Ng is widely considered the odds-on favorite to become the first female GM in a major league sport.

How does a young, Asian-American woman sit in the upper echelons of Major League Baseball's executive suites? "You have to be really comfortable with yourself and your ability," says Ng as she studies new recruits in spring training camp. "And if you are comfortable with yourself, not much can shake you. We all stereotype to a certain degree; you just try and educate. If you can change somebody's mind one day, that's huge." And change minds, she has. Originally noted for her gender and cultural heritage, now she's respected as a compelling and fair negotiator, as well as her encyclopedic knowledge of baseball's rules. She has helped

negotiate contracts for Derek Jeter and Mariano Rivera.

Yet there is still puzzlement sometimes about why she's traveling with the team, and from time to time security tries to prevent her entrance to the field. Ng refuses to let it get to her. Once a star infielder on the University of Chicago's softball team, Ng credits her philosophical attitude to having played sports. "I'm realistic. I know I'm out of the ordinary. Playing sports teaches you to have thick skin, to not worry about what other people think," she says. "You always have to be open to criticism from teammates, and ... you have to learn to channel whatever emotions you're feeling into something positive."

Which she finds easy to do in baseball. "I just love the game," she says. "The way it's structured, players can come out and fix whatever they did wrong the day before. There's the idea of constant renewal, unlike other sports where you may only get the chance once a week. In our sport, you get a new shot — a chance to win — every day."



Kim Ng, assistant general manager for the L.A. Dodgers

'AK' on the Fairway

Twenty-two-year-old Anthony Kim, a sophomore this year on the PGA Tour, doesn't wear his confidence on his sleeve but cinched around his waist. His belt buckle, a whopper bearing the insignia that is both his initials and nickname, "AK," is often noted to be as big as his talent ... and his confidence.

When Tiger Woods questioned Kim, the youngest rookie on the 2007 tour, about the conspicuous chunk of silver, Kim's quick reply was, "Well, Nike hasn't put my initials on anything yet." Though it sounds audacious, the "yet" is more than just a young man's swagger: It's generally agreed among critics and commentators that Kim is poised for golf greatness.

Born in Los Angeles to South Korean immigrants, Kim developed a love of the game before he could walk, let alone swing a club. His father, an avid golfer, stumbled upon an unusual secret to quiet his querulous tot.

Baby Anthony would quickly forget his wailing to be mesmerized by the televised matches among Greg Norman, Curtis Strange, Chip Beck and the other great golf players of those days.

As he grew older, Kim learned to swing quite handily by relentlessly hitting the fairways with his dad and even sleeping with his golf clubs. Something about the regimen and the game sank in deeply and quickly.

As a teen, he chipped to greens across the country and became a magnet for prestigious awards and top finishes: the Southern California Golf Association's high school championship, the Junior World Golf Championship and a scholarship to the University of Oklahoma. As a Sooner, he swung his way to becoming Freshman of the Year, a three-time All-American and a member of the U.S. Walker Cup Match winning team.

Kim earned his PGA tour card in 2006, and as a rookie in 2007, he produced five top-10 finishes and earned more than \$1.5 million.

Golf Magazine named him No. 1 on its list of the top 10 American golfers under the age of 25. Ron Sirak, executive editor of Golf World, says, "Kim is going to emerge as one of the very best players of his generation." As of this writing, Anthony Kim has not won a major PGA tournament, but the word "yet" should undoubtedly hang in the air like a long shot off the back tees. After all, the season is as young as Kim himself.



Anthony Kim
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Unity is a celebration of the food, art and culture of diverse communities throughout North America. Published seven times per year, its stories are positive, inspiring and offer new perspectives on America's changing culture. Unity is distributed exclusively to clients of Thompson Hospitality and Compass Group, both leaders in foodservice who are proud to serve you. For more information about Unity, or to offer feedback or suggest story ideas, send an e-mail to unity@thompsonhospitality.com.

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