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# Lee's Chinese Garden

Posted by MWoody - 2008/02/01 18:00

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His Review: Mike Woody

While the building is small, Lee's Garden Restaurant is big on taste as it serves the finest offerings of Chinese cuisine.

Upon arriving, I was glad it wasn't busy as the dining room only consists of seven tables and a few seats at the bar. There was no line so we were able to sit right down and were immediately met by our server with a pot of hot tea and waters.

The menu includes all the traditional Chinese items, homemade by Lee himself. For proof you can even watch as the kitchen is open.

To get the best value for our buck, Christina and I decided on the Dinner for Two, which included our choices for the main course, plus soup and egg rolls for \$11.95. I selected the Kung Pao Chicken, a spicy blend of chicken, peanuts and chile peppers.

Within minutes our table was filled with food as our egg rolls and soup were brought out with the salad and Crab Rangoons that we ordered for additional appetizers.

Christina insisted that I try the salad due to Lee's homemade dressing. Yes, I said salad, which I had never had at a Chinese restaurant before, probably because they don't know Lee's recipe for the dressing. The flavor of soy sauce was evident but the rest of the ingredients for the savory taste remains a mystery.

One of my favorite things about Chinese food is the egg roll, and the flaky crispy crust of Lee's is clearly homemade and made me more anxious for the main course.

Between bites of the salad and egg roll I also had the egg drop soup, which was my only disappointment as it seemed bland. However, like everything else it was homemade and I had plenty of other options to satisfy my taste buds.

Our table resembling a buffet, we also had an order of eight crab rangoons which were split between us. They are usually not a personal requirement when I have Chinese but had tried all the other appetizers. I was deliciously pleased with their flavor and had no problem with disposing of them.

After already having consumed enough for a full meal our main courses arrived with fried rice. It's the first time I had seen white fried rice as I'm accustomed to it being brown. Of course just like in everything else color isn't important.

The Kung Pao chicken arrived steaming, fresh out of the kitchen and with a load of flavor. It is a spicy dish, but is reserved enough not to set your mouth on fire unless you bite into one of the chile peppers, which I did.

At Christina's request I was brought a pair of chop sticks for beginners (children) which are tied together at the end with a rubber band and has a napkin folded up in to a square at the top. They are easier to operate than the traditional chop sticks, I was at least able to hold them but wasn't able to pick up big enough bites. To keep myself from taking two hours to finish my meal, I went back to the fork.

Our friendly server kept our water glasses filled as well as our tea kettle and was pleasantly consistent on checking if there was anything we needed.

Located at 121 E. Staunton Road, by the railroad tracks in Troy, Lee's Garden Restaurant is a taste of homemade Chinese cuisine from the comfort of your own community.

Her Dining Review

By Christina Smith

When Mike gave me the task of picking the next restaurant for this review, I had quite a few places I wanted to take him. As the weeks got closer, Mike was asking me if I had made up my mind and it wasn't until the day before that I finally broke down and picked one of my choices.

Lee's Chinese is close to the downtown area of Troy. As you are heading out of town on State Route 55, you cross over the railroad tracks and to your left sits a small building with about 7-8 parking spots.

I knew that the sooner we got there, the better luck we would have at getting a seat. Lee's capacity is only about 35 people, and this place gets busy at both lunch and dinnertime. Lee's the chef; he and his wife, co-own the business and

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have been in the Troy area for quite some time. In fact, this is the restaurant where I learned that I liked Chinese food as a little girl.

Before going to Lee's, my parents used to get my brother and I Happy Meals from McDonalds. I remember the first thing I ever tried, lo-mien noodles. I used to call the dish "rubber bands". My parents got me to try it because they said it was like spaghetti. My parents quickly found out that having us try something they enjoy is not always a good thing to do, because then they get less food. From there, I found out that I had taste buds for other Chinese foods such as fried wontons, wonton soup, chicken with cashews, and much more. I never really went for the sweet and sour dishes, but my brother loved them. Also, I learned how to eat with chopsticks thanks to Mr. Lee's teaching chopsticks. Now I can't eat Chinese food with a fork; it's simply uncultured.

My parents stopped taking me to Lee's because it was hard to get seated within a decent time, and so my family ventured to other places such as the Chinese buffet uptown. It had been at least ten years since I had tasted Mr. Lee's cooking and this was the reason I picked his restaurant.

From an outward look, the restaurant could stand to use a little TLC, such as new interior decorating, but don't let that fool you. The food is awesome! Mr. Lee and his wife get there early to prep the kitchen everyday (except Sundays and Mondays) and it really makes the difference.

Mr. Lee cooks with traditional Chinese recipes. The food is always fresh, including his spring rolls, which he does himself every morning. His fried rice is white and sticky. He even makes his own one-of-a-kind salad dressing. He will not give you the recipe, but he will let you take an 8oz foam cup serving home with you for about two bucks. This is definitely a restaurant for those that are looking for healthier choices and lower sodium dishes.

The Lee's have a smaller meal selection, but if you ask nicely, Mr. Lee would probably make-to-order. He serves his food family style. Family style meaning served as a platter dish and shared among the table. He also offers complementary hot tea. You can even watch him right from your table as he cooks your meal, from a semi-open kitchen!

The building itself has a beautiful view of the Miami County Courthouse. If you like trains, one goes by every hour and isn't too disruptive. There is one bathroom: unisex. The building is one level, but would be hard for a person in a wheelchair to maneuver around in if the place was semi-packed. Overall, the service was excellent. The food was fresh, warm, and tasty. The atmosphere was cozy and enjoyable.

Mr. Lee didn't let me down. To this day, I still think about the Lees every time I eat Chinese food. Thank you Mr. Lee, for without that first wonderful encounter of "rubber bands" and chopsticks, I would be missing a decade of delicious food.

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