

Yauatcha

Traditional Asian hospitality and cuisine in elegant contemporary surroundings

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CoolBrands

YAUATCHA
丘記茶苑

The Chinese have a colloquial saying: ‘yum cha’, meaning to have tea, but since the rules of hospitality dictate that drink shouldn’t be served without food it has, of late, come to refer to the social ritual of catching up with friends over dim sum. Yauatcha, London’s first specialist dim sum restaurant and teahouse, provides a modern setting for eating, drinking tea and socialising, the traditional Chinese way.

Yauatcha first opened in 2004 as an all-day (and evening) dim sum restaurant. Alan Yau – the face behind Michelin-starred restaurant, Hakkasan – is also the brain behind Yauatcha, continuing his quest of blending what he describes as the “fusion overdosed West with real far-Oriental cuisine”.

The venture demonstrates Yau’s trademark approach of marrying high quality cuisine with cutting-edge design. Yauatcha gained immediate critical acclaim, emulating its sister restaurant Hakkasan by receiving a Michelin star within a year of opening, the only two Chinese restaurants in Europe to have achieved that accolade.

Situated on the ground floor and basement of Richard Rogers’ Ingeni building in Soho, Yauatcha has – like Yau’s two other London restaurants,

Hakkasan and Busaba Eathai – been designed by Christian Liaigre. The two levels have contrasting ambience, from the light and airy ground floor teahouse with its white marble and full-height fish tank, to the cavern-like basement illuminated by electronic ‘candles’ and fibre optic ‘stars’, with glimpses of the kitchen behind a blue glass screen.

The brand logo, originally created by North Design, is currently being developed by graphic designers Made Thought, in line with Christian Liaigre’s design of the dim sum restaurant, teahouse and retail area, which offers a selection of patisserie and sweet delicacies created by Stephane Sucheta, formerly of Pierre Herme in Paris. Further brand related products will include tea-scented candles, incense and a range of exclusively designed tea sets, the first of which has been designed by acclaimed Japanese product designer, Shin Azumi.

Dim sum at Yauatcha is prepared under the expert supervision of head dim sum chef Soon Wah Cheong whose high standards have been recognised by influential industry bodies including the Michelin Guide, Zagat and The Tatler, as well as the Mötet Restaurant Awards. By taking one of the great etiquette-free grazing experiences – alongside sushi, tapas and meze – out of the context of the ordinary Chinese menu, Yauatcha’s aim is to make dim sum more accessible. Future brand expansion will therefore consolidate the restaurant and teahouse elements as the operational focus, with the retail strand developing into an independent entity based around the concept of the ‘tea spa’, a new enterprise specialising in every aspect of tea within a lifestyle context.

