

today



THE WEEKLY EATER
 Don't overindulge in the richness offered at Japanese B.B.Q. Restaurant Yoshi >> **D2**

COMICS & PUZZLES >> **D6-7**
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collaborations

Female farmers and chefs in the isles will team up to support local producers as well as honor International Women's Month

By Deborah Manog
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New York-based chef Dianna Daoheung moved to the Big Apple for a career in advertising, but it wasn't long before she retraced her footsteps back to the kitchen.

Daoheung grew up in Florida as mom's little kitchen helper, peeling garlic and chopping up vegetables.

"My mom would complain to my dad, 'Oh, my stir-fry is not coming out right because the flames are too small,'" Daoheung recalled.

Eventually her father built her mother a specialized wok-burner in the backyard so she could cook traditional Thai food in an American setting.

Prepping food with her mother seemed like punishment at a time when Daoheung preferred fast-food burgers over mom's home cooking. But it was her mother's knack for taking something that cost pennies and cooking up several dishes that

Please see **WOMEN, D4**



Chef Michelle Karr-Ueoka of MW Restaurant, left, visits Shin Ho at Ho Farms in Kahuku, walking through fields of green beans, above, and chard, at top. The chef and the farmer will be among teams of women presenting dishes at a benefit event at CookSpace on Monday.

COOL WOMEN, HOT FOOD, #MAKEITHAPPEN

A dinner of food grown and prepared by farmer/chef teams:

- >> **Where:** CookSpace, Ward Warehouse, Suite 2360
- >> **When:** 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Monday
- >> **Tickets:** \$99.47, to benefit Feed the Hunger Foundation
- >> **Information:** Call 695-2205 or visit cookspacehawaii.com

FEATURING

- >> Shin Ho, Ho Farms; and Michelle Karr-Ueoka, MW Restaurant
- >> Amy Shinsato, Shinsato Farm; and Dianna Daoheung, Black Seed Bagels
- >> Michelle Galimba, Kuahiwi Ranch; and Loan "Mama" Le, The Pig & the Lady
- >> Candy Suiso, Makaha Mangoes; and Christina Lilia Hee, Juicy Brew
- >> Sabrina St. Martin and Monique van der Stroom, Naked Cow Dairy; and Nanako Tsuji Perez-Nava and Carmen Montejo, Moana Surftrider

WOMEN: Childhood days spur some to culinary careers

Continued from D1

nourished Daoheung's own love of the craft of cooking.

"She taught me how to make 80 million things out of one ingredient," Daoheung said.

The chef, head baker of Black Seed Bagels, is in Hawaii to participate in CookSpace Hawaii's innovative "Cool Women, Hot Food, #MakeltHappen," an intimate dinner Monday featuring female chefs and farmers in honor of International Women's Month.

"Women control more than 70 percent of consumer spending in the U.S., so we thought this is a nice way to celebrate women chefs and farmers and have a little fun," said Melanie Kosaka, co-founder of CookSpace.

"The more we know about who grows our food, the better decisions we can make not only about what we eat, but also what shapes our community and local economy."

The family-style dinner is also meant to spark discussion about how to support a local food system in the islands. Each chef will be paired with a farmer to create a course that highlights products from that farm. Guests at each table will break bread with a participating chef and farmer, and Koko Head Cafe chef Lee Anne Wong will moderate a discussion.

Proceeds will benefit Feed the Hunger Foundation, founded by Hawaii natives Denise Albano and Patti Chang. The nonprofit aims to eliminate poverty and hunger internationally by providing microloans to entrepreneurs, primarily women.

"It's an amazing idea ... important for people to meet the farmers that are providing the tool for chefs to be creative," Daoheung said.

She is pairing with Amy Shinsato to present stuffed cucumber with Shinsato Farms pork and glassy noodles in a clear broth.

HO FARMS' Shin Ho shares a similar story, trading in a bustling city life to return to her roots. Ho, who grew up on her parents' 40-acre Kahuku farm, never envisioned a future in the family business. But after graduating with marketing and international business degrees and working in Los Angeles for several years, she returned home — to the red-, gold- and orange-tinted signature tomatoes Ho Farms is known for — to help her family run the farm.

She is teaming up with MW Restaurant's Michelle Karr-Ueoka, who is taking off her pastry hat to cook a spread of savory items, including Ho Farms' tomato



COURTESY MOANA SURFRIDER

A haupia cake made by Nanako Tsuji Perez-Nava and Carmen Montejo of the Moana Surfrider is filled with liliko'i curd from Naked Cow Dairy. The dessert, accompanied by a macadamia nut streusel, will be served at the Cool Women, Hot Food dinner Monday.

salad with pickled ume, a cherry blossom gelee and Ed Lima microgreens; kushi oysters and shaved cucumber namasu with cucumber mignonette; and eggplant "babaganoush" with MW taro flatbread.

Ho's work has her thinking constantly about the origins of her food options. "Does this product have any nutrition?" "What kind of manufacturing created this pasta sauce?"

The questions also stem from her childhood days on the farm when Ho's mother would cook up Southeast Asian meals every day with vegetables picked from right outside their home.

"Eating food closer to its source, I think it's key to what makes us healthy," Ho said.

Although being a young farmer comes with its set of challenges, including fluctuating temperatures, strict export regulations and perishable products, Ho says she is inspired by the rise in the community's demand

for local products.

"It's an amazing opportunity to change the way people eat," Ho said, pointing out that one of the farm's main goals is to provide residents with more options for fresh, less processed food.

Ho credits Hawaii's chefs for popularizing and increasing demand for local products. "They're the ones promoting foods that are fresh, local and more nutritious," Ho said.

IT MAY BE hard to believe now, but Karr-Ueoka, recently named a semifinalist for the 2015 James Beard Award for Outstanding Pastry Chef, had humble beginnings in Hawaii's food industry.

While obtaining a degree in travel industry management from the University of Hawaii, she held an executive-level externship at Alan Wong's, where the kitchen atmosphere ignited her dream to become a chef — even though she had no cooking experience.

"I told chef Alan, 'I don't know how to hold a knife.' I didn't even know how to turn on the gas stove," she recalled.

But Karr-Ueoka learned well, continuing her education at the Culinary Institute of America, where she landed another coveted externship, this time at the iconic French Laundry. There, even the humble tasks of dishwashing and potato peeling increased her appetite for the art of cuisine.

"Just being in the environment of a kitchen ... I knew was going in a direction that I really wanted," she said.

After graduation she returned to Alan Wong's, where she worked mainly as a pastry chef. Her love of working with desserts, pastries and bread brings her back to her first kitchen experience as a child, baking Christmas cookies with her grandmother.

In fact, Karr-Ueoka adapted a recipe from her grandmother's repertoire and now offers freshly baked "MW Grandma's Cookies" at her restaurant to share that memory of her grandmother with her customers.

The chef is excited about the collaboration dinner.

"It's nice to be able to get together, sharing your knowledge and learning from others," she said.

Karr-Ueoka believes chefs and consumers share the responsibility of buying local products to keep local farms in business. When they do so, the reward is more than a full tummy.

"The more people that farm, the better it is for us," Karr-Ueoka said. "That's what sustainability is about."

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