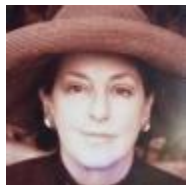


# Kimmy Tang's 9021Pho Comes to Sherman Oaks and Glendale

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BY GERRY FURTH-SIDES



Kimmy Tang

She is, as my mother would say, as “big as a minute” but her energy fills a room. So Chef Kimmy Tang, owner-chef of the **9021Pho**, always “had me” just with her radiant smile and bear hug. But that would downplay her exquisite Asian Fusion Vietnamese-centric menu with a French and California twist, and her upbeat, attentive staff.

**9021Pho Restaurant** is named after the popular, healthy and pleasing Vietnamese national soup dish, Pho, and the original eatery's zip code in Beverly Hills. A second,

more luxe version (originally designed for Wolfgang Puck) has nestled into the Russell Ranch Road half-circle off Lindero in Westlake for over a year.

And now, San Fernando Valley diners can judge for themselves how they feel about Kimmy's refined comfort food dishes. Two new spacious locations just opened at the entrances of the Glendale Galleria and Westfield Sherman Oaks (replacing CPK). Kimmy describes the newly constructed dining rooms as "retro-modern." As with all the 9021 Pho eateries, customers watch chefs cook in the exhibition kitchen. New is the 9021 Vegetation Wall where chefs can "pick" fresh herbs.

Where Tang's formal, former Michelia restaurant in Beverly Hills epitomized French-colonial formal dining with savory Chinese and Vietnamese dishes, her more casual current concept appeals to a wider range of customers.



Traditional Vietnamese Pho soup

Here steaming bowls of pho, the traditional Vietnamese soup, her signature appetizers and warm familiar main dishes pop with vibrant spices and her special high-energy touch. Fans include celebrities as diverse as Keith Richards and Sofia Vergara.

Kimmy's glorious energy feels as though it is infused into the food and homey service. Selections (\$8.95) are hearty and generous enough to serve two, and offered in five versions.

The gloriously rich Spicy N'Sour Soup jumps out in the menu. Shrimp, sole, straw mushrooms, pineapple, baby corn, bok choy and rice noodles served in a broth of lemongrass, chili and tamarind veggies make it a meal. The spicy snap is just enough to tickle and leaves a lingering dancing taste.



Crab Cakes

For protein lovers like me, “low Carb High Protein (less noodles more meat) options are available for a couple of dollars more. My favorite is the popular “Grilled Beef Wrapped in Vine Leaf” (\$7.95) served on a bed of mixed greens, sprinkled with Vietnamese vinaigrette. Also the Crab Cakes (\$8.95), prepared with taro and water chestnuts, dressed with the house basil sauce.

“Michelia” crunchy, delicate Spring Rolls are legendary. Almost translucent wonton shells wrap up crab meat, shrimp, chicken, taro, shallots and tree ear mushrooms, all deep-fried to a golden crisp (\$5.95). A Vegan version is available with soy ham, tree ear mushrooms, taro, jicama, shredded carrots, noodles and onion.

Kimmy’s (very Chinese!) accommodations are also apparent in the long menu, which include Salads, Pasta & Rice; Seafood; “From the Land,” and Noodles & Fried Rice.



Grilled Beef in Vine Leaf

Chef Kimmy’s family is Chinese but she was born and raised in Saigon. After a harrowing family story of escape and relocation to California after Saigon fell, Chef Tang first followed her artistic bent in the fashion world, then became widely considered a pioneering visionary in the Asian food market with her formal but pleasing Michelia restaurant..

In 2008 Kimmy packed up Michelia and set out to explore the world. She revisited her birthplace, Vietnam, and Europe. It was in Romania that Chef Tang became a culinary consultant for the largest film studio, and a very popular local TV cooking show host.

It was as a volunteer in the Romanian orphanages that ignited in Chef Kimmy a heartfelt desire to help children. Kimmy currently aids Romanian orphan immigrants and sells the artwork of Children's Hospital patients on 9021Pho walls to benefit the Healing Arts Reaching Kids (H.A.R.K.) program of Children's Hospital Los Angeles. It continues Chef Kimmy's personal goal to "make a deposit in the universal bank of good."



The retro-mod interior has a vegetation wall where chefs pick fresh herbs.

**[Click here for exact locations at Westfield Sherman Oaks, Glendale Galleria, Beverly Hills and Westlake.](#)**

*Gerry Furth-Sides is a photojournalist, with a specialty in food and cultural diversity. Her experience ranges from Newsweek editorial and television broadcasting to west coast radio-TV tours, representing the California food growers, and co-hosting the TV show, "To Your Health," with Dr. Bradley Frederick. Writing credits include American Institute of Wine and Food Newspaper (AIWF); Frommer Guidebook series, America on Wheels; LA Family Magazine ("Kids in the Kitchen" column).*