

## Culinary & Beverage: **A Feast of Delicacies**

EmpressM offers an authentic and immersive experience of China's richly diverse regional cuisines while honoring the admirable work ethic and perseverance of women.

EmpressM's regional Chinese cuisine elevated with innovative touches is a thrilling feast of delicacies for all the senses. Diverse flavors, textures and aesthetics, including a traditional dim sum menu, provide guests with a wealth of options at any time of day. EmpressM's visionary selection of classic dishes represents China's eight greatest regional culinary traditions, while a vegetarian- and vegan-friendly variety of dim sum and main dishes supports EmpressM's commitment to providing the highest-quality experience for every guest. Standout offerings include:

- Empress Roast Duck with Steamed Buns, Cucumber Shreds, Scallions & Sweet Soy Paste
- Sichuan Spicy Fish with Cucumber, Hot Chili & Sichuan Peppercorn
- Mongolian Lamb Chops, Grilled with Mongolian-Style Spices
- Shanghai Spring Rolls with Cabbage, Carrot, Mushroom & Glass Noodles (Vegetarian)

## **Restaurant Timeline**

- Soft opening in December 2020 (Delivery, take-out and outdoor dining)
- Official opening in 2021 (Date TBD, pending COVID-19 protocols)

**Coming Soon** EmpressM will soon offer the finest beverages—balanced in character and refined in style—to enhance the flavors and subtleties of each individual dish. Thoughtfully curated wine pairings from Empress Court Vineyard will provide a tantalizing compliment to a range of satisfyingly bold menu flavors. A spectacular tea menu will become an essential ingredient for a truly luscious dim sum experience. And the savory, fragrant complexities of China's evocative sorghum spirits will come alive in a baijiu-forward spirits menu.

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Concept & Design: **Fit for a Queen, Created for an Empress**

EmpressM honors the lasting contributions made by women's admirable work ethic and perseverance. The restaurant draws inspiration from the sole female monarch in more than 3,000 years of Chinese history: Empress Wu ZeTian (624—705 A.D.), a venerated Tang Dynasty political leader and arts patron renowned for her intelligence, strength and charisma.

Empress Wu entered imperial life as a member of the court's circles before officially beginning her political career as empress consort to her devoted husband, Emperor Gaozong. Well-educated and decisive, she was Emperor Gaozong's closest counsel on all matters of state. Unexpectedly, the emperor passed away from a debilitating stroke and two of Empress Wu's sons assumed the throne in succession. After providing political guidance and strategy from behind the scenes, Empress Wu assumed full political office herself from 690 to 705 A.D.

While the culinary and beverage menus provide an empress' view of China's eight greatest culinary traditions, EmpressM's interior and exterior designs expresses the passion and dynamism of Chinese culture. Regal, custom-commissioned works of art, including portraiture of Empress Wu, decorate the walls and symbolize her support of the arts. Vibrant red accents imbue a sense of excitement and good fortune into the dining spaces. Outdoors, artfully landscaped gardens designed by Jonathan Tanis create an ideal atmosphere for peaceful relaxation, natural inspiration and magical afternoon tea services.

## **Building Specs**

- 5,000 square feet of indoor space, plus outdoor dining
- 240 total capacity for indoor dining, private dining, bar and outdoor dining
- Situated on a half-acre along the iconic Silverado Trail in the Napa Valley
- A collaboration with Design Architect Scott Elledge at J Scott Design

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## About Margaret Wong, Owner

Margaret Wong is an entrepreneur, investor, restaurateur and philanthropist who has been affectionately nicknamed the “Empress” of China-California business by her admiring peers. Ms. Wong’s remarkable personal journey from a childhood of hardships to an exceptional career of business leadership has established her as a genuine role model of success for women everywhere. Born in Hong Kong, Ms. Wong’s incomparable work ethic and perseverance helped her immigrate to the United States and establish a number of successful businesses in Sacramento, CA. Through her success she has been able to open doors for other female business leaders on both sides of the Pacific. EmpressM, her first restaurant venture, embodies Ms. Wong’s devotion to the Golden State and her delight in sharing China’s culinary and cultural heritage with her local community. Ms. Wong is based in Sacramento, and enjoys spending time with her two children and three grandchildren.

## About Peter Huang, Executive Chef

Executive Chef Peter Huang is an award-winning chef and restaurateur. An industry veteran, Mr. Huang is the founder and owner of Yue Huang Dim Sum Restaurant in Sacramento, CA, one of the region’s best Chinese restaurants, and previously owned several other restaurants, including Tasty Kitchen. His innovative culinary approaches have been recognized by *The Sacramento Bee*, *City Voter* and *Asian Star TV*. He has also participated in the prestigious Worlds of Flavors Conference hosted by the Culinary Institute of America, where numerous celebrity Chinese chefs gathered to exchange menu inspiration and culinary techniques.

## About Thomas Megna, Production & Concept Designer

Thomas Megna is an entrepreneur, restaurateur and consultant for production and concept design in the entertainment and hospitality spaces. Raised in a family

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of culinary specialists and creative leaders, Mr. Megna began his career as a theatrical designer and technical director before discovering his deep passion for creating world-class guest experiences for entertainment and hospitality. He has over twenty-five years' experience leading the design and production of attractions and venues for the most highly regarded entertainment corporations in the world. He is also a global citizen, having lived and worked in Japan, India and, most recently, China. Mr. Megna brings a first-hand understanding of Chinese culture to his production and concept design work for EmpressM.

## The California-China Connection: **Napa Valley**

The story of Chinese immigration to the Napa Valley parallels the construction of the U.S.'s Transcontinental Railroad in the mid-nineteenth century. The construction process marked the area's first significant arrival of a Chinese immigrant population, tasked with sourcing natural materials for the railroad's construction. Following the railroad's completion in 1869, an additional wave of Chinese laborers arrived in search of new forms of work. Their long days of hard physical labor—the work of digging wine barrel storage caves, plowing the vineyards, planting grapevines and harvesting the resulting fruits, often for extraordinarily low compensation—helped make possible the region's later transformation into one of the premiere wine-growing regions in the world.

Small Chinese neighborhoods sprang to life with shops, restaurants and houses of worship, including a tiny Chinatown in St. Helena. But immigration slowed with passage of the U.S.'s Page Act of 1875, which specifically restricted the immigration of Chinese women, and then halted when the Chinese Exclusion Act was signed into law in 1882. Anti-Chinese sentiment was widespread in California and beyond. It would take more than sixty years for the only federal law in U.S. history to restrict immigration based on ethnicity or nationality to finally be repealed, albeit with heavy restrictions, and another ten years for the elimination of direct racial barriers to immigration.

Facing legal pressures and the impact of Prohibition, many Chinese workers relocated to urban areas with better-established Chinese communities. But their contributions to the agricultural infrastructure and success of the Napa Valley remain indelible, as meaningful as cultural contributions made to the urban landscapes of cities like Sacramento, Oakland and San Francisco. Today, EmpressM is proud to walk in the footsteps of this unique and vital heritage, a heritage brimming with assiduousness, perseverance and inspiration.