



Passion, Perseverance & Love

By Karen Chiang

Photography by Chris Luk and courtesy HKJC

As a dedicated industry veteran, Chef Chan Sze Ling, Cling of The Hong Kong Jockey Club's The Racing Club is not only passionate about food but also nurturing the next generation of chefs

FT(Foodtalk): How did you get started in cooking?

Cling(Chan Sze Ling): I've been interested in food since I was young, starting with cooking for my family. But my first job was actually illustrating for a drafting services company, after which I received professional training in Western cooking when I was 19. My first position in F&B was at Furama Hong Kong Hotel as a junior cook, which was a wonderful starting point with many learning opportunities.

FT: What was your favourite part of that job?

Cling: I really enjoyed working in the banqueting department. It was a very different and completely new experience serving up to 1,000 people! It was so much more intense than working at a buffet or à la carte, and team work was a very important element.

以熱誠毅力 將愛融入美味

作為本地餐飲業的資深份子，香港賽馬會競駿會的菜式主廚陳思靈不但熱衷於廚藝，更樂意將畢生所學培育新一代廚師

FT(Foodtalk): 您的廚師之路是如何開始的？

Cling(Chan Sze Cling): 自從小時候為家人做飯開始，我便對食物產生了濃厚興趣。雖然我的第一份工作是在一間繪圖公司，但隨後我在19歲時有幸接受西式烹飪的專業培訓。我踏入餐飲業的第一份工作，是在富麗華酒店當初級廚師，那確是一個很好的起始點，我從中得到了寶貴的學習機會。

FT: 在您過往的工作中，您最喜歡的是什麼？

Cling: 我非常喜歡在宴會部工作。在同一場活動中為多達一千人預備菜式，那對當時的我來說是截然不同的體驗！跟自助餐或單點菜式相比，要求更是嚴格得多，也特別需要講求團隊合作。



Hong Kong Kitchen

“I always look to the younger members of my team for inspiration and in turn share my experience with them”

「我期望在分享經驗之餘，也能受到年輕團隊成員的啟發」

FT: How did you get your start at The Hong Kong Jockey Club?

Cling: I started here in 2007 through a friend's referral after experience working with several hotels. I was interested because I've never worked at such a huge organisation before and it was exciting to learn something new. I worked at both Sha Tin and Happy Valley racecourses. The rest is decade-long history!

FT: How did you end up at The Racing Club?

Cling: I worked at the racecourses for about eight to nine years before being invited to move to The Racing Club as they needed someone familiar with both western and local cuisine to be the Chef de Cuisine at that moment.

FT: What has kept you here in the same job for over a decade?

Cling: With two race meetings a week and events happening all the time, on top of new challenges and learning opportunities, there's never a dull moment at The Hong Kong Jockey Club!



Lightly smoked French bresse pigeon breast



Confit Canadian wild king salmon

FT: 您為何會加入香港賽馬會？

Cling: 我起初在幾間酒店有過工作經驗，後來因緣際遇，於2007年在朋友的推薦下開始在這裡工作。我之所以感興趣，是因為自己從未在規模如此龐大的機構工作，因此躍躍欲試。這些年來，我曾在沙田和跑馬地的馬場工作，轉眼也有十多年了！

FT: 您後來為什麼會當上競駿會的主廚？

Cling: 在獲邀擔任目前競駿會主廚一職時，我已在香港賽馬會工作了大約八、九年。當時競駿會需要聘請熟悉西方及本地菜式的主廚。就這樣，我便當上了競駿會的主廚。

FT: 是什麼令您在同一崗位工作超過十年之久？

Cling: 香港賽馬會的工作可謂多姿多采。帶來不同的挑戰和學習機遇。此外，每週兩場賽事和各類型節目亦令我的工作非常充實，從未有沉悶的一刻！

FT: 您過往曾炮製過不同地方菜式，這些工作經驗如何影響您自己的烹飪方式？

Cling: 能夠接觸不同的文化和美食是一種榮幸。在日常工作中，我不會死板地按照食物的來源而烹調。反之，我會自由搭配自己最心愛的食材和烹飪方式，務求煮出令人一試難忘的菜式。



FT: How does your experience working in several different cuisines impact your cooking?

Cling: It's a privilege to have been exposed to different cultures and cuisines. I mix and match my favourite ingredients and cooking techniques, and don't really label things according to their original culinary source.

FT: You've won several major culinary competitions. Which one is most memorable for you?

Cling: The first time I participated in a national team was 2013 at the Salon Culinaire Mondial, when we took home the championship for the first time for Hong Kong against Singapore and Switzerland. But soon after that the competition was cancelled so I guess we are still the reigning champions! Then in 2014 at the FHA Culinary Challenge we were once again up against Singapore and Switzerland in the final challenge and ultimately took home the win, which was very emotional for the entire team.

FT: Have you learnt new skills from participating in competitions?

Cling: Definitely – how to work with all kinds of people, and look beyond your own experience and opinions. Getting to see new ingredients, dishes and teams from other countries has also inspired me.

FT: 您曾奪得幾個大型烹飪比賽獎項，哪一場比賽最令您印象難忘？

Cling: 2013年，我首次以國家隊身份參加世界廚藝大師大賽 (Salon Culinaire Mondial)。當時我們首次擊敗新加坡和瑞士對手，為香港勇奪殊榮。不久後，比賽便不再舉辦，所以我相信我們至今仍衛冕著冠軍的名銜！其後在2014年的FHA烹飪挑戰賽中，我們再次在最終回合與新加坡和瑞士隊對壘，並取得勝利，整個團隊心情都十分激動。

FT: 您在參加比賽的過程中有否學到新技能？

Cling: 絕對有。在學習如何與各類人合作的同時，我亦跳出了自己固有的框框，從嶄新角度汲取知識和經驗。此外，接觸來自其他國家的新食材、菜式和團隊也令我深受啟發。

FT: 您有否從其他地方得到新靈感？

Cling: 作為廚師界的前輩，我相信自己有義務將機會傳授予團隊和行業中的新力軍。事實上，他們往往都有不錯的烹飪主意，只要稍微調整一下，便可



“ Having a love for your craft is probably the most important thing to keep you going, learning, and growing ”

「一旦培養了對這行業的熱誠，便會有不斷進步、學習和成長的動力」

FT: Do you get new ideas from anywhere else?

Cling: I believe in passing on opportunities to newcomers in the team and the industry. They often have in great ideas that simply need some refinement. That's why I bring the whole team into the conversation and process. I look to the younger members team for inspiration and in turn share my experience with them.

FT: As a chef, what do you think the most important quality is to have?

Cling: Passion. Of course there are other things like perseverance, understanding that the job comes with long hours and can be pretty tough. But having a love for your craft is probably the most important thing to keep you going, learning, and growing. I hope young people will increasingly see working as a chef as a great career choice and that more organisations like The Hong Kong Jockey Club will provide support, incentives and resources to nurture the new generation of chefs in Hong Kong.

將創意化成別具特色的佳餚。正因如此，我常常與各位團隊成員溝通，讓他們參與創作過程。我期望在分享經驗之餘，也能受到年輕團隊成員的啟發。

FT: 作為一名廚師，您認為加入這行業最需要擁有什麼特質？

Cling: 絕對是熱誠。當然還有其他一些特質是不可或缺的，例如毅力。必須明白這行業的工作時間很長，工作也可能較辛苦。縱使如此，一旦培養了對這行業的熱誠，便會有不斷進步、學習和成長的動力。我希望越來越多年輕人會視廚師為一個理想和有前途的終身職業。同時，也希望更多像香港賽馬會這些大機構能為年輕人提供支援、獎勵和資源，以培育本地的新一代廚師。🍴

