

of his charity aren't limited to the gay community or people living with HIV/AIDS, either; in the past he's donated proceeds from fund-raisers to homeless shelters and senior citizens, among others.

"It's important to me that people know I'm not loaded financially," he stresses. "I've worked really hard to get where I'm at. If you want something bad enough, you work at it. I don't care what anyone says, America is still the land of opportunity."

Hypocrisy bothers him, whether it's on the left or the right; he prefers to live his life in moderation. "The older I get, the more I see that on both sides," he says. "People who say one thing and do another. They don't practice what they preach. I own an SUV, and some people in Portland would look down at me for that, but I only use it when I need to. I ride the bus; I take the train to Seattle."

The Magician Reveals (Some of) His Tricks

Step inside Chameleon today, and chances are you'll feel at home immediately. No thoughts of a fish 'n' chips emporium will enter your head: The place has been thoroughly converted into a den of unique epicurean charm. The food is superb and the prices upscale, but the atmosphere is cozy and laid-back, classy without being fussy. This is not a place that will turn you away if you don't come in a suit. Clearly, Jeung sets out to create this ambience of comfort, leisure and the good things in life: food, drink and friendship. He is the craftsman not only of the dishes but of the environment in which they are served. Toward the end of the evening he might play some music to set the mood, or project a film onto the walls.

"You want people to be comfortable, to go with the flow," he says. "I'm not doing this to get rich. It's a labor of love; it's what I enjoy. I have many friends who make a lot more money than I do."

He speaks of his travels, of which there is much to speak. Once or twice a year he travels abroad in search of new recipes. "I call it an eating and cooking tour," he says, and claims his trips are "75 percent business," but this is undoubtedly a man who has figured out a way to combine business with pleasure, as a perusal of his photo albums shows. To enable his freedom to travel, Jeung closes Chameleon for at least a month every September, often longer, and sometimes twice a year. He packs his own spices—Thai curries, lemongrass and so on.

Jeung closed Chameleon in September 2006 and traversed no less than seven countries in the space of a month. In Tuscany he presided as guest chef at a fabulous wedding in a pastoral villa attended by more than 200 people. "I did a lot of cooking with the other chefs beforehand," he remembers, "but the day of the wedding I got to just relax and taste everything before it went to the guests. It was an incredible experience."

His continual travels keep him from burning out and are reflected in the ever-changing and highly eclectic Chameleon menu, which is updated every six months—not a complete makeover, but a gradual shifting and rotation. "My cooking has a heavy Thai influence," Jeung observes. But that's not the only source. Chameleon's culinary eclecticism is probably best described as pan-Asian with a side of pan-European. The current menu ranges from traditional favorites—Caesar salad, spring rolls, bruschetta—to exotic surprises like beef sirloin goulash with herbed dumplings (a Hungarian recipe inspired by his time in Budapest last September) and seasonal delights such as butternut squash ravioli.

Toward the Future

Jeung is said to be working on a book, tentatively titled *Deep Roots*, about his travels in Italy. "It's taking a long time," he says. "I've never written a book before. Six years ago, I spent 2 1/2 months in Europe, mainly Italy. I did a guest spot cooking for a catering company that serves really high-profile clientele. In Italy people are not as open to foreign food. They have their own history, and it's amazing. There's so much history there, and everywhere you look there's a beautiful landmark."

His book, when it is published, and if it finds success, might be the first in a series. He envisions it as a combination travelogue and cookbook, fusing a textual account of his travel experiences with recipes and colorful photographs, often taken by Jeung himself. "I'm also an amateur photographer on the side," he says.

Quite the Renaissance man, Chef Jeung: epicure, world traveler, businessman, amateur artist and photographer, gracious host. But after all his travels, around the globe and back many times, and his real-life limbo-to-luxury story, where does he call home?

"I love Portland," he says. "It's home." It's home for some of his large family, as well. "One of my sisters owns a Thai grocery in the Gateway district. My youngest brother lives here, too."

Clearly, Jeung isn't the type of person who could be happy in a state of stagnation. He has further ambitions for the future. Within a year or two, he plans to buy some land in the country, outside the city, but not too far from it. "Say 10 or 20 acres, maybe in the Columbia Gorge," he speculates. "I want to do organic farming there, grow all my own stuff for the restaurant. I see it as not just a grow-and-sell place but also a parklike property where I can have weddings and host my friends. It's been a long-term goal of mine to own some land. I'm going to do it for sure; it's just a matter of when."

An additional ambition is to have his own cooking show. "A cooking show with a twist," he calls it, but says he can't reveal too much about the concept in case someone steals it from him. "I have a good idea," he shares coyly. "It won't be like other cooking shows you've seen." He especially wants to depart from the stereotype of the Asian specialty chef, which he feels often depicts the chef as a buffoonish figure of fun rather than a person whose culinary experience and prowess demand respect.

Looking even further ahead, Jeung sees his soon-to-be-purchased land as a semi-retirement place. That, naturally, is "the ultimate goal," though still years in the future.

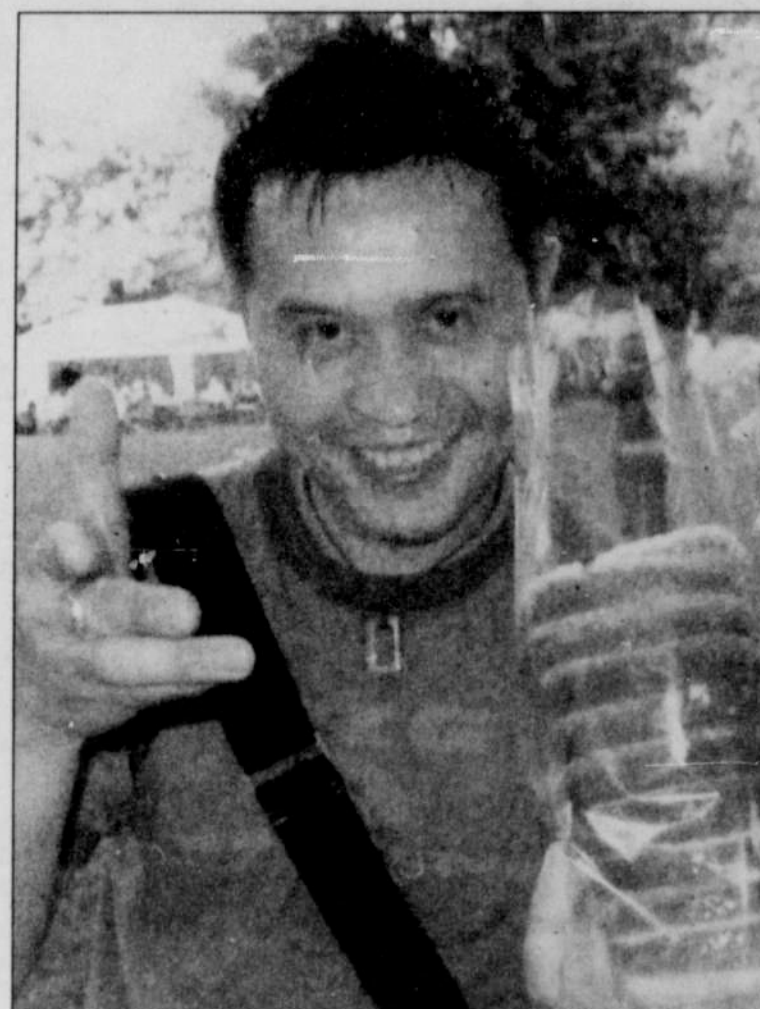
Even now, far from over, Pat Jeung's life is the kind of life a person can look back on with pride and contentment, when the time finally comes to rest and enjoy the fruits that long labors have earned. It's the kind of life that marks a fine balance between learning and teaching, struggling and enjoying, surviving and flourishing—the kind of life that makes for a lot of good stories, the kind of life you could write a book, or many books, about. 10

The 10th annual CHAMELEON RESTAURANT HAT PARTY takes place from 7 to 10 p.m. Jan. 14 at 2000 N.E. 40th Ave. The suggested donation is \$25. Proceeds benefit Dress for Success and Equity Foundation. An after-party starts at 10. The suggested donation is \$5. To RSVP call 503-460-2682. For more information visit www.chameleonpdx.com.

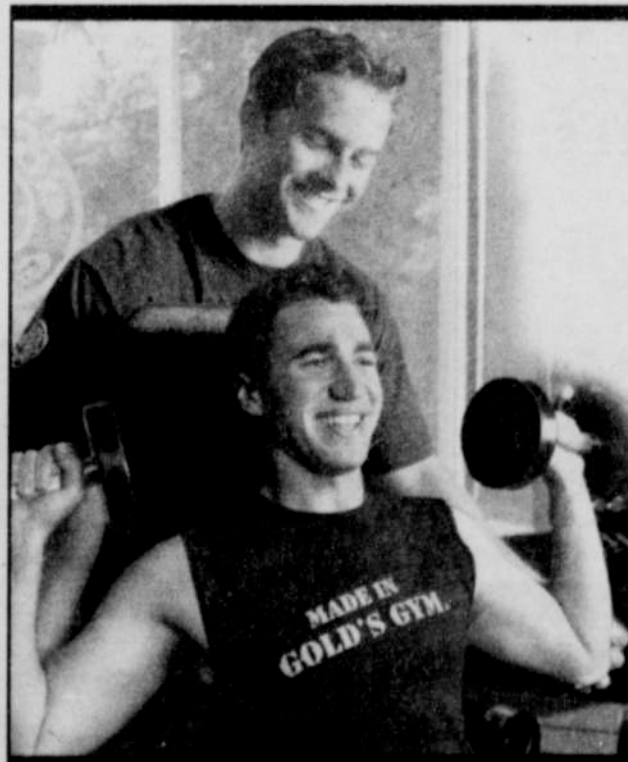
TONY LE TIGRE is an artist, writer, student, fledgling publisher and brazen male hussy. E-mail him at anthonylockwood@gmail.com.



Revelers at Chameleon's Halloween 2005 party.



Jeung attends the Budapest Wine Festival.



Change your body, Change your life!

Join today! Mention this ad and get
FREE PERSONAL TRAINING.

GOLD'S GYM

Portland's Premiere Personal Training Center
with 21 Trainers just waiting to have at your body!

Locally owned & operated at 2025 NW Overton, NW Portland • 503 228-2626
Over 660 clubs nationwide for your convenience • www.goldsgym.com

