

When stars align

Yiu settles into running Slurpalicious, local inn

BY M.J. CODY

Since visiting Astoria for the first time in 2018, Candy Yiu and her family have found a home.

Yiu is the new owner of Near the Pier boutique hotel. She also runs the local delivery service, Slurpalicious, with her husband Akshay Dua.

Yiu and Dua took their two sons to Astoria in December 2018 for a short trip.

"I fell in love with all the houses and downtown, the architectural details, all the cute shops and the Christmas lights. And the kids were crazy about the train tracks and the ships and running on the Riverwalk," Yiu said. "Even in the rain it was so healthy and fun. My husband and I agreed that it was just amazing, 'If we love it this much in winter, what's it going to be like in summer?'"

Yiu continued to visit Astoria.

"I was shocked that I agreed to come back to Astoria again and again. I'm a big traveler and I rarely like to stay in one place or visit the same place twice. I grew up in Hong Kong and it is so densely populated and confined. We are all like the frogs in the well, but I didn't want to be inside the well. I wanted to see the world," Yiu said.

There is a Chinese idiom, or fable, that tells the story of the frog that happily lived its whole life at the bottom of a well. One day a bird flew down and said to the frog, "Come up to the outside where it is bright and warm." The frog laughed at the bird, thinking that the well was the entire world.

The moral: don't discount things that lay outside one's own experience.

Yiu's passion to travel started young, though her parents were against her traveling. Her culture, she said, emphasized women and girls shouldn't "strive for things outside the norm."

"Even during high school, I would work hard and scrimp so I could travel, since it was easy to get to places like Taiwan and China or Thailand. During college I wouldn't go out to restaurants or cafes and ate bread and ketchup as cheap sandwiches to save money," Yiu said.

While backpacking around Europe, Yiu had little money and stayed in hostels. She found communal living and sharing bathrooms to be uncomfortable but enjoyed connecting with others.

"I loved cooking with others in the common kitchen and enjoyed the shared evenings when people would bring out guitars, or play the piano and share tips of places to go and things to do. I loved that open atmosphere so much — the friendships, the experiences, the conversations and the exchange of cultures," Yiu said. "I knew if I wanted a different life, I needed to dream. I needed to be safe. I needed to do it myself."

In 2004, Yiu arrived at Portland State University, where she earned a doctoral degree in wireless communication. After, she worked at Intel for 10 years.

"In the back of my head and in my heart, I was still dreaming about finding that perfect communal experience," Yiu said. "A place where people could gather and exchange music, food, friendship and



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Candy Yiu

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