

WHAT A GREAT RIDE!

SEEN FROM SEASIDE

R.J. MARX



David Lum of Lum’s Auto Center is the co-founder of one of the region’s preeminent businesses. Lum’s is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. We spoke with Lum at his office above the showroom in Warrenton.

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Q: Where were you born?
Lum: Columbia Hospital in Astoria, Oregon. Nov. 19, 1933.
Q: How did your family get here?
Lum: If you look at the history of Astoria, there were 3,000 or 4,000 Chinese. The Irish and Chinese built the railroads in the early 1800s.
All the Chinese in this area came from the “Supreme Province,” the province of Canton. Now they’ve changed the name to Guangdong.
When they built the railroad and they were done, then the Chinese either went home back to China or were looking for jobs out here.
They were building the jetties, working in the fish canneries. A lot of them went into the gold mines after the railroad, and they migrated to that area. The miners wouldn’t let them dig for gold, but they did all the grunt work.
Just like the fishing industries. The Chinese didn’t own the fishing industries or the jetties, but they were hired by the contractors who built the jetty. Dangerous work, and they were willing to work for less money.
Q: How did your father make a living?
Lum: In those days they didn’t have Safeways, Costcos.
My father had an uncle who owned a little grocery store in Astoria, Lum-Quing Grocery. We had a couple of grocery stores, one on Sixth and Bond, for close to 70, 80 years. It’s called Chinatown because most of the Chinese lived in the area.
Q: How did your mother come into the picture?
Lum: After my father came here in 1896, 10 or 15 years later, my uncle gave the store to my father.
In those days, it was prohibited for Chinese to marry anyone but Chinese. My father wanted children, and he was introduced to her by other Chinese.
She was born in Wheaton, California. My mother didn’t know how to read or write Chinese. She did not know how to read or write English. She was a very bright person, but she wasn’t educated.
My mother married my father when she was 15 and he was in his 40s.
I was the last of six kids. I came in 1933, when my dad was 62.
Four or five years later, he had a stroke. He was bedridden for 10, 11 years.
Q: How’d you keep the store going?
Lum: My brother came home. He ran the grocery store.
Q: So you had an All-American childhood in Astoria?
Lum: Yup. I was here from ’33 to the early ’50s. My mother became a pillar of the First Baptist Church. She learned how



Lori Lum; Marcus Williams, assistant general manager of Toyota Portland region; David Lum; and Julie Lum.



David Lum, second from right, playing football for Astoria in 1951.



Shirley and David Lum at their wedding, Aug. 17, 1958.

to read and write from the congregation. They taught her to read the Bible.
Q: I heard you were a football star.
Lum: I wasn’t a star.
We were in the state finals when there were just A and B divisions. Anything under 100 students-and-under was a B school. We had about 300 or 400 kids in Astoria. We played Central Catholic, Portland schools, David Douglass.
Our starting quarterback went on to Stanford. He played in the pros. We had an All-American halfback, Dick Pavlat, who was the front cover of Parade Magazine in 1953.
A guy named Jerry Gustafson went on to play with the 49ers and the B.C. Lions.
Q: What was it like growing up here?
Lum: God bless I was born in America. It’s the relationship you have with your classmates and your teachers. The teachers wanted me to learn. I was kind of the underdog.
I was taught to be very respectful. Everyone was “Mr.” or “Mrs.”
I had people help me who didn’t even know me very well.
I have to be more blunt than this. I was Chinese, I was different, I was thrown into white society, one of the few. There were a few Chinese kids, but mainly we were a minority.
My big thing was to have people like me. I was very respectful to the elders. We’d avoid fights. My folks taught us life’s

too valuable. I may not agree with you, but I’ll listen to you.
Q: What were your next steps after high school?
Lum: I went on to Linfield College. I became only the second Chinese teacher in the state of Oregon. There was one elementary teacher who got a job before I did. She’s still alive. She’s 93.
Q: Tell me about your teaching years.
Lum: I taught at a high school in Echo, Oregon, near Pendleton. My first job paid \$3,750 a year. I knew I wanted children. I knew we could maybe have one (on my salary). If my wife worked, we could just make it.
Q: So you left teaching in order to raise a family?
Lum: I became a busboy. I was a waiter, a bartender, sold insurance.
Q: How did you make the jump to auto sales?
Lum: Roger Riutta owned a little gas station and we were buddies in high school. He had a partner, Tom Utti. The three of us got together and we started building up. I was 35, Tommy was 25.
Q: What year was that?
Lum: Fifty years ago, in 1969. This is our 50th year.
Q: In the Warrenton location?
Lum: We’ve only had this 10 years. We started right where the grocery store was on Sixth and Bond.
Q: You sold Toyota vehicles only?

A boomer’s guide to dining the millennial way

VIEW FROM THE PORCH

EVE MARX



It was my birthday weekend and our son and daughter-in-law in Portland decided to blow me away with an eating and drinking extravaganza. I rarely get off the Coast so every trip to Portland is a trip. Our kids are serious foodies who enjoy turning me on to their latest discoveries.
At Culmination Brewing at 2117 NE Oregon Street I let them choose my beer, the Portal Jump Hazy IPA, which at 6.5% alcohol, even on an empty stomach didn’t knock me on my butt. My husband got the Sour Flower with strawberries and lychee; my DIL had the Neon Valley Nitro Sour with raspberry, almond, and vanilla. I wasn’t paying attention to what my son ordered. I’m guessing he went for the Sahti Scandinavian Farmhouse. With an early dinner reservation looming ahead, we were modest in our food order, sticking with the house pretzel, candy bacon, roasted Brus-



The house pretzel at Culmination Brewing comes with mustard and brown butter. For another dollar, add beer cheese.

sels sprouts with spicy aioli, and curry fried cauliflower. I definitely want to return to try the East Coast sub or the candy bacon BLT.
After a mid-afternoon caffeine infusion at Water Avenue Coffee, we took the dogs for a walk and rested up for our happy hour dinner reservation at Jacqueline located at 2039 SE Clinton Street. My son booked our table a month in advance, a good idea because when we got there, the line was halfway around the block.

Oysters on the half shell are a specialty. The staff only lets you order a dozen at a time, so we had the Shuckers Dozen twice. We followed this up with a series of small plates: we had yellowtail crudo with avocado and grapefruit; Wagyu steak tartare with fish sauce and Serrano chili oil. We had Dungeness crab toast with saffron hollandaise, and warm sweet potato rolls served with whipped honey butter that were as sweet as cake. We had charred beets with crispy quinoa, red-veined sorrel and hibiscus vinaigrette, and scallops with lacquered pork belly and lime leaf coconut.
The next morning at Bella’s Italian Bakery located at 9119 SE Woodstock, I really wanted to try the hazelnut-cocoa nib granola with yogurt and seasonal fruit but I was still too full from dinner. To go with my cappuccino, I settled on a dainty apricot pastry. My son got the breakfast slider, an herbed frittata layered with salami and provolone.
Our son loves talking politics. For the most part, we’re on the same page. Then the conversation veered into territory new to me. Until that moment I didn’t realize

because of my age I’m in danger of being an object of scorn and pity, i.e., an “OK boomer.” OK boomer is internet slang that calls out or is dismissive of the out of touch or close minded opinions associated with the baby boomer generation and older people in people in general.
I don’t disagree. I strive to be more “woke,” which means I’m working on adopting basic contemporary lingo, like “cisgender” and acknowledging that banning straws and paper products might seem like a small thing anyone can do to help the environment, but at the same time could be considered ableist. I get it that I wear my white privilege if not like a badge, at least a cloak. I understand privilege isn’t just a thing I’ve been given, but also the things I was never subjected to.
A friend my age recently commented, “How many times did you say ‘Never trust anyone over 30? That was our “OK, boomer.”
Meanwhile, the next time I’m in Portland, I need to return to Culmination Brewing. I’ve got to try that candy bacon BLT. I find when spending time with millennials, beer always helps.