

## Career profile

Name: James Li

Job title: Restaurateur



### Packing a punch in Asian restaurant management



Second generation Brit, James Li initially embarked on a career in finance and banking in Shanghai, returning to the UK to take over the management of his father's restaurant, Fu Tze Ltd. The restaurant became so successful that James went on to open the Taindi in Bude and the award-winning, Fullam Chinese restaurant in one of the UK's oldest coaching inns in Barnstaple.

#### What do you enjoy the most about your job, what do you find most exciting?

The most satisfying part of the job is simply creating great venues that make people (both guests & staff) happy!

#### How did you begin your career in hospitality?

My father started the business and as he retired, he offered me the opportunity to take on his restaurant. I would have never taken up the offer unless I thought I could add something to the existing business.

#### What's your best career moment?

The best moment in my career in hospitality is when we are able to create those tiny moments that make a difference to our guests and our crew. Just being nominated for the Gordon Ramsay's F words best local restaurant was pretty cool too.

#### If you could go back in time would you choose a different career?

No regrets, but I would go back in time to amass much more industry experience in other restaurants before running my own.

#### What's your dream job?

Sorry, it is not in hospitality. It would have to be a presenter of Top Gear!

#### Who is your idol?

Stereotypically, it's Bruce Lee. He represented sheer dedication and hard work that broke through many socio-cultural barriers.

**What's your favourite food?**

Variety is my favourite. However, if I HAD to nominate something it would be Char Siu (The humble Chinese Roast Pork)

**What's the weirdest thing you have ever eaten?**

Grasshoppers and silk worms

**What did you want to do when you were in school?**

I had NO IDEA!

**Tell us an interesting fact about yourself**

I once received a 'Good Citizens Award' that I feel I didn't deserve.

**Any unusual hobbies/talents?**

I love cars, interior design, photography and mixed martial arts.

**What's the secret to success?**

Unfortunately, it's hard work first, passion and respecting others is also crucial.

**What advice would you give to other people who want to work in hospitality?**

Make sure you love being around people and have a good attitude. You can teach the skill but you can't teach the attitude.

**Has the immigration cap affected your restaurants and how do you cope with it?**

The immigration cap is a disaster for our business. If we cannot find a way around it soon we will simply have to close down the operation, simple as that.

**Further information**

For further information on career opportunities in hospitality visit [www.hospitalityguild.co.uk](http://www.hospitalityguild.co.uk)