

the (sydney) magazine



Special food issue

Queen of the kitchen

The fabulous (and feisty)
Margaret Fulton

Terry Durack's verdict

Why our restaurants are
no longer world-class

The best of Asian Sydney

Top phos and laksas,
noodles and dumplings



CHINESE SYDNEY

Oh, where to begin with Sydney's Chinese marvels? In the 1980s, it was old-world Cantonese, barbecue kings and the Hong Kong dim-sum palaces. Then came Beijing dumplings, Shanghai buns, Sichuan chilli, north-western-style noodles and now cumin- and chilli-scented Hunanese. From Hurstville to Hornsby, with Ashfield, Haymarket, Chatswood and Eastwood in between, Sydney is one big Chinese eating house.

Best food strip: Liverpool Road, Ashfield

Your Ashfield adventure starts here. The ever-faithful Chen Wang Miao (267 Liverpool Road. Phone: 9798 7721) is one of about 10 Shanghai-style dumpling houses in this neck of the woods. Xiao lung bao – soup dumplings – are the house speciality. Alternatives include Shanghai Dumpling (1/337 Liverpool Road. Phone: 9797 6999), Shanghai Night (275 Liverpool Road. Phone: 9798 8437) and Taste of Shanghai (264 Liverpool Road. Phone: 9798 2877). Go on your own or head to the Sydney International Food Festival's Ashfield Big Yum Cha on October 16. siff.com.au.

Best dumplings: Din Tai Fung

Marvel through the window at the precision of the dumpling assembly line. First order is xiao lung bao – thin-skinned parcels of pork and a squirt of soup inside (\$8.80 for six). But spicy prawn and pork wontons in chilli and sesame oil (\$8.80 for six), tofu salad (\$6.80), braised beef soup (\$11.80) and tiny shao mai (\$9.80 for four) are fab, too. Level 1, World Square, 653 George Street, city. Phone: 9264 6010.

Best yum cha: Palace

At many Chinese restaurants, chefs change quicker than you can down a pork bun. But Palace (level 1, Piccadilly Tower, 133-145 Castlereagh Street, city. Phone: 9283 6288) is reliably good. Runners-up are Regal (347-353 Sussex Street, city. Phone: 9261 8988), Marigold (levels 4 and 5, 683-689 George Street, city. Phone: 9281 3388), Kam Fook (level 6, Westfield Shopping Centre, Bondi Junction. Phone: 9836 9889) and Iron Chef (84 Broomfield Street, Cabramatta. Phone: 9723 6228).

Best barbecue: Emperor's Garden

BBQ & Noodles

It's all there, hanging in the window: soy sauce chicken (\$18.80 each), char sui pork (\$24.80 per kg), duck (\$24.80 each), squid (\$26 per kg) and other sticky, yummy meaty bits. The service can be brusque but the flavours are spot-on. 213-215 Thomas Street, Haymarket. Phone: 9281 9899. An honourable mention goes to Mr Chao BBQ Bar (289 Marrickville Road, Marrickville. Phone: 9518 3186).

Best late-nighter: Golden Century

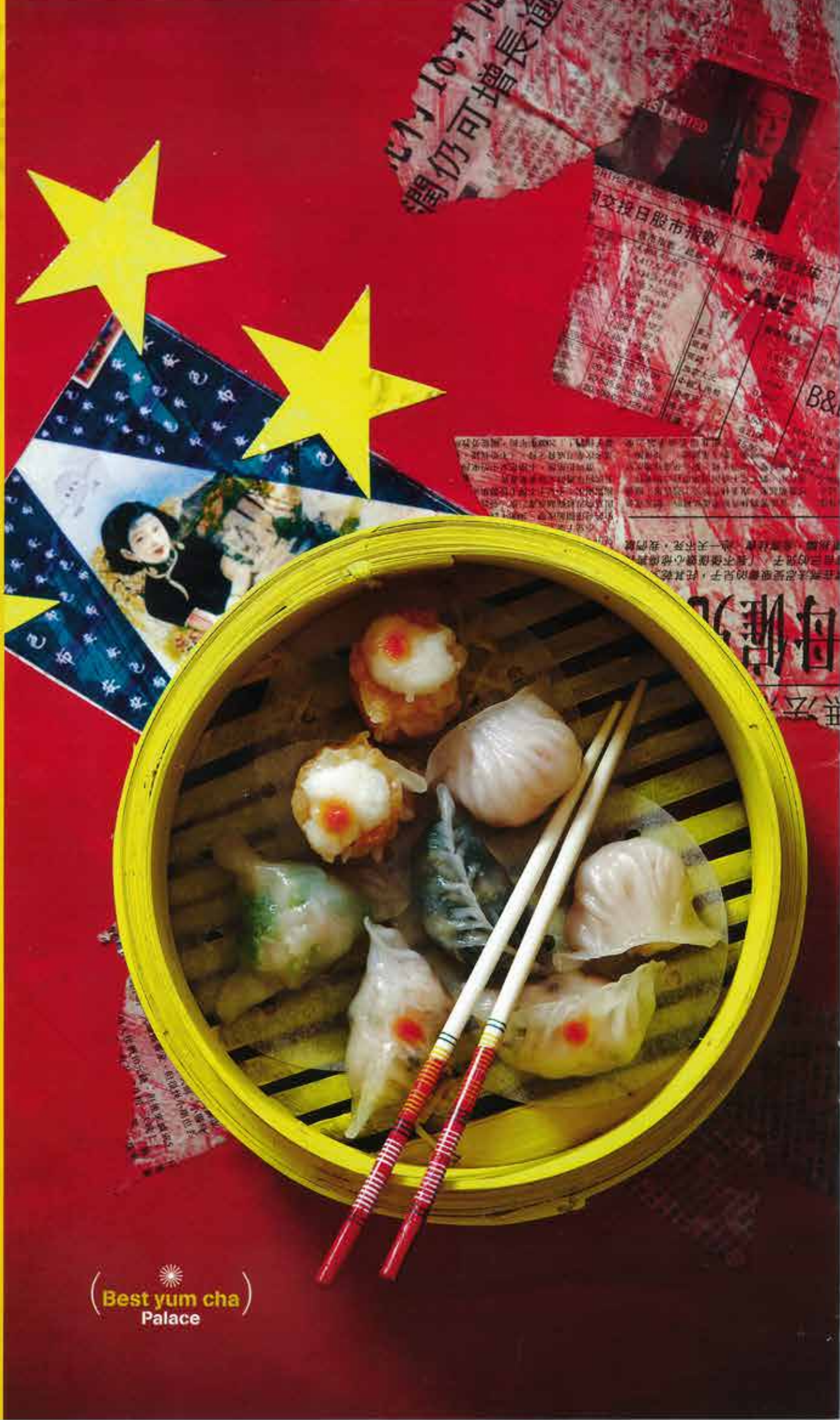
Try as you might, you'll find nowhere like the Golden for congee (after 10pm, from \$13.80), hotpots (from \$18.80), pippies with XO sauce (\$66 per kg) and something from the tanks 393-399 Sussex Street, city. Phone: 9212 3901.

Best regional: Chairman Mao

Who can resist cumin, Sichuan pepper, chillies and the homey cooking of Dingjun Li, who hails from China's Hunan province? She and husband Andrew Bao offer house-smoked beef and pork (\$18.80), beer-braised duck (\$28.80) and pork and tofu soup (\$18.80). 189 Anzac Parade, Kensington. Phone: 9697 9189.

Best supermarket: Thai Kee IGA

A one-stop shop for all things Asian, from every kind of Chinese sauce to Japanese lollies. From Thursday to Sunday, you can pop downstairs to Paddy's Markets for great-value Asian greens. Level 1, Market City, corner Hay and Thomas streets, Haymarket. Phone: 9211 3844 →



(Best yum cha)
Palace