



# Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

Hearing Date: August 24, 2020

## THE WOK SHOP

*Application No.:* LBR-2016-17-064  
*Business Name:* The Wok Shop  
*Business Address:* 718 Grant Avenue  
*District:* District 3  
*Applicant:* Tane Chan, Owner  
*Nomination Date:* January 20, 2017  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor Aaron Peskin  
*Staff Contact:* Richard Kurylo  
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

### BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

The Wok Shop is a Chinese kitchen supply store opened by Tane Chan in 1972. The original location was at 804 Grant Avenue, and through times of success and difficulty, Chan opened and closed several Wok Shop locations throughout the city, but never ceased operation for any stretch of time and always maintained at least one location in the Chinatown neighborhood.

The store is famous for its extensive collection of Chinese cookware; most notably the woks, hanging like Chinese roasted ducks from the ceiling of the shop's interior. The Wok Shop is currently located at 718 Grant Avenue, where it has thrived since 1991. As a third-generation Chinese American female business owner, Chan has faced and overcame many obstacles, but has been rewarded with success and recognition. The Wok Shop has been featured on PBS-TV's *Yan Cooking* in 1982, was hailed by author Grace Young in her cookbooks *Stir-Frying to the Sky's Edge* (2018) and *The Breadth of a Wok* (2019), was featured as an outstanding small business on *American Express's* website, and received a *Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition of Outstanding and Invaluable Service to The Community* by Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi in February, 2020.

The Wok Shop's service and location in the Chinatown neighborhood have served as a staple to locals and tourists alike. The store's 1970s original pagoda sign is a beacon for Chinatown's intangible, home-cooking culinary heritage and has represented this cultural and culinary staple for almost 50 years in the neighborhood. Today, the store also has an online presence and hosts "Wokology 101" on their website and features "Wok Wednesday" social media posts, to reach and teach broader audiences.

The business is located in a Category A (Historic Resource Present) structure on the east side of Grant Avenue between Sacramento and Commerce Streets in the Chinatown neighborhood.

### CRITERION 1

**Has the applicant operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?**

Yes, The Wok Shop has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years:

#### Legacy Business Program

Office of Small Business  
City Hall Room 140  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
(415) 554-6680  
legacybusiness@sfgov.org  
[www.legacybusiness.org](http://www.legacybusiness.org)





804 Grant Avenue from 1972 to 1992 (20 years)  
838 Grant Avenue from 1973 to 1978 (5 years)  
The Cannery, 2801 Leavenworth Street from 1974 to 1979 (5 years)  
Stonestown Galleria, 3251 20th Avenue from 1975 to 1985 (10 years)  
Crocker Galleria, 50 Post Street from 1977 to 1982 (5 years)  
Ghirardelli Square, 900 North Point Street from 1978 to 1983 (5 years)  
718 Grant Avenue from 1991 to present (29 years)

## CRITERION 2

**Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?**

Yes, The Wok Shop has contributed to the history and identity of the Chinatown neighborhood and Chinese American culture and cuisine in San Francisco.

The Historic Preservation Commission recommended the applicant as qualifying, noting the following ways the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community:

- The business is associated with Chinese and Chinese American cookware and cooking.
- 718 Grant Avenue has Planning Department Historic Resource status codes of "A" (Historic Resource Present) because it is located within the California Register-eligible and National Register-eligible Chinatown Historic District. The building location is within the boundaries of an on-going Chinese American Cultural Context Statement. The building itself was surveyed in 1978, 1994, and 1997, and determined to hold "Contributory" and "Contextual Importance" to the historic districts. Although The Wok Shop has no other locations besides 718 Grant Avenue at this time, it has formerly been located in other "Category A" historic properties, including: The Cannery, Ghirardelli Square, 804 Grant and 834 Grant (both located within the eligible Chinatown Historic District).
- There have been a number of features on Tane Chan and The Wok Shop, both locally and nationally, regarding the Chinese cookware and culinary industry. The Wok Shop has been featured on PBS-TV's Yan Cooking in 1982, was hailed by author Grace Young in her cookbooks *Stir-Frying to the Sky's Edge* (2018) and *The Breadth of a Wok* (2019), was featured as an outstanding small business on American Express's website, and received a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition of outstanding and invaluable service to the community by Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi in February, 2020.

## CRITERION 3

**Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?**

Yes, The Wok Shop is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business.

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that The Wok Shop qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) and recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Retail market for woks and other Chinese cookware.
- Original (1970s) pagoda neon sign.
- Maintaining a location within Chinatown.
- Promoting and teaching Chinese and Chinese American foodways.

**Legacy Business Program**  
Office of Small Business  
City Hall Room 140  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
(415) 554-6680  
legacybusiness@sfgov.org  
[www.legacybusiness.org](http://www.legacybusiness.org)





## **CORE PHYSICAL FEATURE OR TRADITION THAT DEFINES THE BUSINESS**

Following is the core physical feature or tradition that defines the business that would be required for maintenance of the business on the Legacy Business Registry.

- Kitchen supply store.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include The Wok Shop currently located at 718 Grant Avenue in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo, Program Manager  
Legacy Business Program

### **Legacy Business Program**

Office of Small Business  
City Hall Room 140  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
(415) 554-6680  
[legacybusiness@sfgov.org](mailto:legacybusiness@sfgov.org)  
[www.legacybusiness.org](http://www.legacybusiness.org)





# Small Business Commission

Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_

August 24, 2020

## THE WOK SHOP

*Application No.:* LBR-2016-17-064  
*Business Name:* The Wok Shop  
*Business Address:* 718 Grant Avenue  
*District:* District 3  
*Applicant:* Tane Chan, Owner  
*Nomination Date:* January 20, 2017  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor Aaron Peskin  
*Staff Contact:* Richard Kurylo  
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

**Adopting findings approving the Legacy Business Registry application for The Wok Shop, currently located at 718 Grant Avenue.**

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; or

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, has had no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, has significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included in the Registry, faces a significant risk of displacement; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and identity; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

**WHEREAS**, at a duly noticed public hearing held on August 24, 2020, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Small Business Commission hereby includes The Wok Shop in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Small Business Commission recommends safeguarding the below listed physical features and traditions at The Wok Shop.

**Legacy Business Program**  
Office of Small Business  
City Hall Room 140  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
(415) 554-6680  
legacybusiness@sfgov.org  
[www.legacybusiness.org](http://www.legacybusiness.org)





Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Retail market for woks and other Chinese cookware.
- Original (1970s) pagoda neon sign.
- Maintaining a location within Chinatown.
- Promoting and teaching Chinese and Chinese American foodways.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Small Business Commission requires maintenance of the below listed core physical feature or tradition to maintain The Wok Shop on the Legacy Business Registry:

- Kitchen supply store.

---

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on August 24, 2020.

---

Regina Dick-Endrizzi  
Director

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

Ayes –  
Nays –  
Abstained –  
Absent –

**Legacy Business Program**

Office of Small Business  
City Hall Room 140  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
(415) 554-6680  
legacybusiness@sfgov.org  
[www.legacybusiness.org](http://www.legacybusiness.org)





# Legacy Business Registry

# Application Review Sheet

*Application No.:* LBR-2016-17-064  
*Business Name:* The Wok Shop  
*Business Address:* 718 Grant Avenue  
*District:* District 3  
*Applicant:* Tane Chan, Owner  
*Nomination Date:* January 20, 2017  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor Aaron Peskin

**CRITERION 1:** Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?  
 Yes  No

804 Grant Avenue from 1972 to 1992 (20 years)  
838 Grant Avenue from 1973 to 1978 (5 years)  
The Cannery, 2801 Leavenworth Street from 1974 to 1979 (5 years)  
Stonestown Galleria, 3251 20th Avenue from 1975 to 1985 (10 years)  
Crocker Galleria, 50 Post Street from 1977 to 1982 (5 years)  
Ghirardelli Square, 900 North Point Street from 1978 to 1983 (5 years)  
718 Grant Avenue from 1991 to present (29 years)

**CRITERION 2:** Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?  
 Yes  No

**CRITERION 3:** Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?  
 Yes  No

**NOTES:** N/A

**DELIVERY DATE TO HPC:** July 21, 2020

Richard Kurylo  
Program Manager, Legacy Business Program

**Legacy Business Program**  
Office of Small Business  
City Hall Room 140  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
(415) 554-6680  
legacybusiness@sfgov.org  
[www.legacybusiness.org](http://www.legacybusiness.org)



Member, Board of Supervisors  
District 3



City and County of San Francisco

**AARON PESKIN**  
佩斯金 市參事

January 20, 2017

Director Regina Dick-Endrizzi  
San Francisco Office of Small Business  
City Hall, Room 110  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Director Dick-Endrizzi:

It is my honor and privilege to nominate the Wok Shop, located at 718 Grant Avenue, for inclusion on the Legacy Business Registry.

For over forty years, the Wok Shop has sold Asian cookware and is renowned for the largest wok selection outside of Hong Kong and China. Legendary owner Tane Chan is internationally known for her teaching and expertise of Chinese cooking. Tane Chan has popularized and promoted the art of wok cooking and Chinese cuisine to mainstream America.

The Wok Shop would benefit greatly from being added to the Legacy Business Registry, and I look forward to its inclusion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aaron Peskin".

Aaron Peskin

## Section One:

### Business / Applicant Information. Provide the following information:

- The name, mailing address, and other contact information of the business;
- The name of the person who owns the business. For businesses with multiple owners, identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business;
- The name, title, and contact information of the applicant;
- The business's San Francisco Business Account Number and entity number with the Secretary of State, if applicable.

<b>NAME OF BUSINESS:</b>		
The Wok Shop		
<b>BUSINESS OWNER(S) (identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business)</b>		
Tane Chan		
<b>CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:</b>		<b>TELEPHONE:</b>
718 Grant Ave. San Francisco, CA 94108		(415) 989-3797
		<b>EMAIL:</b>
		thewokshopstore@gmail.com
<b>WEBSITE:</b>	<b>FACEBOOK PAGE:</b>	<b>YELP PAGE</b>
wokshop.com	https://www.facebook.com/wokshopsf/	https://www.yelp.com/biz/the-wok-shop-san-francisco
<b>APPLICANT'S NAME</b>		
Tane Chan		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Same as Business
<b>APPLICANT'S TITLE</b>		
<b>APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:</b>		<b>TELEPHONE:</b>
		( )
		<b>EMAIL:</b>
<b>SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:</b>		<b>SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (if applicable):</b>
056557		C4046695
<b>OFFICIAL USE: Completed by OSB Staff</b>		
<b>NAME OF NOMINATOR:</b>		<b>DATE OF NOMINATION:</b>



## Section Two:

### Business Location(s).

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business. If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address. For businesses with more than one location, list the additional locations in section three of the narrative.

ORIGINAL SAN FRANCISCO ADDRESS	ZIP CODE	START DATE OF BUSINESS
804 Grant Ave.	94108	1972
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?	DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	1972-1992	

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
838 Grant Ave.	94108	Start: 1973
		End: 1978

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
The Cannery, 2801 Leavenworth St.	94133	Start: 1974
		End: 1979

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
Stonestown Galleria, 3251 20th Ave.	94132	Start: 1975
		End: 1985

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
Crocker Galleria, 50 Post St.	94104	Start: 1977
		End: 1982

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
Ghirardelli Square, 900 North Point St.	94109	Start: 1978
		End: 1983

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
718 Grant Ave.	94108	Start: 1991
		End: Present

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

## Section Three:

### Disclosure Statement.

#### San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public Information Release.

This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses are current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This information will be verified and a business deemed not current in with all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not be eligible to apply for the Business Assistance Grant.

In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

- I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.
- I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.
- I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.
- I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City's labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.
- I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.
- I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.
- I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds.

Tane Chan

11/7/2019

*Tane Chan*

Name (Print):

Date:

Signature:

## **THE WOK SHOP**

### **Section 4: Written Historical Narrative**

#### **CRITERION 1**

**a. Provide a short history of the business from the date the business opened in San Francisco to the present day, including the ownership history. For businesses with multiple locations, include the history of the original location in San Francisco (including whether it was the business's founding and or headquartered location) and the opening dates and locations of all other locations.**

The Wok Shop is a Chinese kitchen supply shop in Chinatown since 1972 currently located at 718 Grant Avenue. It has been in business for nearly 50 years. It is considered to be a place for foodies, home cooks and chefs.

The Wok Shop was founded by Tane Chan, a native from Albuquerque, New Mexico, and third generation Chinese American. Her grandfather was killed in a dynamite explosion as a railroad laborer. Her father later married a picture bride, Lin Ong, and they traveled through Angel Island to New Mexico. The term picture bride refers to the practice in the early 20th century of immigrant workers selecting brides from their native countries via a matchmaker, who paired bride and groom using only photographs and family recommendations of the possible candidates. The hardworking couple established a grocery store and a restaurant, and raised nine children.

At the age of 14, Tane visited San Francisco with her sister and brother-in-law and fell in love. She then saved up her money from working at the family restaurant for a future move to the Bay Area. Her leadership skills could be seen from an early age as she was class president in high school.

After high school, Tane decided to move to the Bay Area to attend UC Berkeley. Her mother was not supportive of the idea, but Tane came to San Francisco against her mother's will. She worked part-time in Chinatown gift shops to pay for her living expenses. Understandably, due to the lack of transportation to Berkeley and being exhausted from constantly working, she eventually had to transfer to San Francisco State University. Although she studied to become a teacher, she eventually realized that she enjoyed business a lot more than teaching.

In 1969, she opened a small gift shop named Yum Yum with her husband after receiving a \$3,000 small business loan from Bank of America from the bank manager, Fred Huang. Tane wanted a name that sounded Chinese but not too much so, and Yum Yum fit the bill. It was also easy to remember. However, President Nixon's visit to China in 1972 changed the fate of her store. It was the first diplomatic visit to China since 1949, when the communists took over mainland China and the nationalists fled to the island of Taiwan. China had rebuilt from WW2 and the civil war. During the visit, the media and news showed the American public menus in Chinese restaurants in China. People were curious and started showing up to San Francisco's

Chinatown to ask about Chinese cuisines prepared in “woks.” Tane referred them to many of the hardware and grocery stores in Chinatown, but due to the language barrier, many westerners didn’t understand how to use a wok. Being a small business owner with great acumen, Tane sensed an opportunity to open a store dedicated to Chinese cuisine. The concept of The Wok Shop was born.

Yum Yum was still profitable, so she sought a new space for The Wok Shop. Chinatown was very different than what it is today. There were few vacant storefronts, and most of the merchants in the neighborhood only spoke Chinese. Finding a location for The Wok Shop was no easy task. During the search, an owner asked Tane about her family and was surprised to learn that Tane’s parents were the ones who had buried an older man named Louie who died alone while passing by Albuquerque. The property owner happened to be related to Louie, and after Tane told him she was from Albuquerque, he asked if she was the same Chinese family that buried Louie. He decided to let Tane lease the location at 804 Grant Avenue.

After the Wok Shop was established, Yum Yum’s rent at 736 Grant Avenue increased tenfold, so Tane decided to close it.

As business was booming, Tane decided to take on another lease in Chinatown to expand her business. She was pregnant with her firstborn, Mark. Now, a driven young woman was eager to do well with her store to provide a future for the family. In 1973, she stumbled upon a vacant space in the Empress of China building located at 838 Grant Avenue, 2nd floor. Because it wasn’t located on the street level, business was slow at that location. She had to close the store as soon as the lease was over.

As an ambitious young lady, she eventually found another location to expand to in 1974 at the Cannery in Fisherman’s Wharf. The Cannery at the time seemed like a logical decision as Fisherman’s Wharf was close to Chinatown. However, the store didn’t do well as tourists there only wanted to walk around. According to Tane, the only store that did well there was the candle store. The rest of the stores suffered, including The Wok Shop.

Then she thought she’d try something different, perhaps more of a shopping destination. That’s when the idea of entering a shopping mall came to mind, and she signed a lease for a storefront at Stonestown in 1975. Not only was she trying to open her new store, but she was also pregnant with her second child, Julie. Some were concerned at moments when she was climbing a ladder while pregnant, but Tane was determined to make the store work. And it did! The Stonestown location stayed open for 10 years.

With the success of her Stonestown store, she was determined to open a location at Crocker Galleria in 1977. By this time, she was pregnant with her third child, Lisa.

By 1978, Tane opened another store at Ghirardelli Square. Her babysitter often brought her kids to see her in the store.

In 1979, her niece, Zetta Payne visited and wanted to expand her store to another city. Then, still determined to open more stores, Tane allowed her niece to take care of her store in Sausalito. Three years later, her niece resigned. And the store in Sausalito was closed.

By 1991, Tane established her current store at 718 Grant Avenue.

Then in 1992, Tane's husband, Albert was diagnosed with lung cancer. Tane, at this point, not only had to take care of the stores and the kids, but she also had to take care of her husband. In 1994, her husband passed away and left medical bills of 6 figures at St. Mary's Medical Center. The co-pay alone was \$110,000 by the time her husband passed away.

All the stores were closed one at a time due to high rents, difficulty finding great employees and time commitments raising a family. Tane then established wokshop.com in 1999 when her son said, "Mom, you have unique products, and you should go online because that's the wave of the future." Tane hadn't thought of showcasing her business online, but was willing to adapt to the modern world.

As a minority woman small business owner, Tane faced many obstacles, but she was able to survive each obstacle and thrive in the end. Through her shop, she has transformed Chinese American cuisine one wok at a time.

**b. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for more than six months?**

The Wok Shop has been in continuous operation since its founding in 1968 – always in San Francisco and always in Chinatown.

**c. Is the business a family-owned business? If so, give the generational history of the business.**

The Wok Shop has been owned by only one person, Tane Chan, all these years since it was founded in 1968.

**d. Describe the ownership history when the business ownership is not the original owner or a family-owned business.**

The present owner, Tane Chan, is the original owner of The Wok Shop.

**e. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years, the applicant will need to provide documentation of the existence of the business prior to current ownership to verify it has been in operation for 30+ years. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.**

Not applicable. The Wok Shop has always been owned by Tane Chan.

**f. Note any other special features of the business location, such as, if the property associated with the business is listed on a local, state, or federal historic resources registry.**

The historic resource status of the building that houses The Wok Shop is classified by the Planning Department as Category A, Historic Resource Present, with regard to the California Environmental Quality Act. The building, Hotel Republic, is a four-story brick building designed by architects Smith & Stewart and constructed in 1912. It appears to be eligible for the National Register as a contributor to a National Register-eligible district through survey evaluation.

## **CRITERION 2**

**a. Describe the business's contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community or San Francisco.**

The Wok Shop is a cultural staple in Chinatown. It has been in the neighborhood for over 50 years, and in several other locations around the city. It has evolved with the Chinatown neighborhood, and not only survived but thrived in its 50+ years of its existence. The Wok Shop represents Chinese culture to the very core of its existence: food.

**b. Is the business (or has been) associated with significant events in the neighborhood, the city, or the business industry?**

The Wok Shop suffered a loss of business, as did much of Chinatown, after the Golden Dragon massacre in 1977. The Golden Dragon massacre was a gang-related shooting attack that took place on September 4, 1977, inside the Golden Dragon Restaurant at 822 Washington Street, just one block away from The Wok Shop at 804 Grant Avenue. The five perpetrators, members of the Joe Boys, a Chinese youth gang, were attempting to kill leaders of the Wah Ching, a rival Chinatown gang. The attack left five people dead and 11 others injured, none of whom were gang members. The perpetrators were later convicted and sentenced in connection with the murders. Chinatown suffered after the shooting. Nighttime dining in Chinatown was depressed as restaurant reservations were cancelled en masse following the shooting. Business and tourist traffic remained depressed for several weeks following the shootings.<sup>1</sup>

**c. Has the business ever been referenced in an historical context? Such as in a business trade publication, media, or historical documents?**

Martin Yan, a Chinese-American chef and food writer with an award-winning PBS-TV cooking show *Yan Can Cook* since 1982, has talked about The Wok Shop on his show. Martin calls Tane Chan a “cultural ambassador.” This is who Tane Chan is, a cultural and culinary ambassador

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden\\_Dragon\\_massacre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Dragon_massacre)

who had shown America how to use a wok and another traditional Chinese cookery since the 1960s.

Grace Young, dubbed “The Stir-Fry Guru” by the New York Times, has mentioned The Wok Shop in many of her cookbooks including *Stir-Frying to the Sky’s Edge* and *The Breath of a Wok*. According to Grace, “She (Tane) ended up introducing countless non-Chinese to woks and has the largest selection of traditional-style woks- not the modern nonstick kind- outside of China and Hong Kong. This type of dedication to introducing to the west the Chinese style of cooking can’t be taken for granted.”

Many Chinese recipes bloggers have recommended The Wok Shop as a location to pick up supplies for cooking, which include commercial-style pots and Chinese pickling jars.

The Wok Shop has been awarded by American Express for its customer service as a small business. American Express recognized the ability for a local store to be able to ship goods internationally in conjunction with Fedex. The Wok Shop was also spotlighted on the website of American Express.

The Wok Shop received a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition in recognition of outstanding and invaluable service to the community by Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi in February 2020.

**d. Is the business associated with a significant or historical person?**

Martin Yan has talked about The Wok Shop on his PBS-TV cooking show *Yan Can Cook*. In 1973, Martin Yan was teaching food science at UC Davis, and he brought his students to take tours in Chinatown. The Wok Shop was included in his stops. Since this point of contact, he stayed in contact with The Wok Shop and can sometimes be spotted shopping there.

Grace Young has included The Wok Shop in two of her cookbooks. Grace Young has devoted her career to celebrating wok cookery. Her accolades include a James Beard award for her cookbook *Stir-Frying to the Sky’s Edge* and a James Beard nomination in 2018 for *The Breath of a Wok* video. She has won five IACP awards including the prestigious 2019 Culinary Classics Award for *The Breath of a Wok*, (the “youngest” book to be inducted into the Cookbook Hall of Fame). It also won the Jane Grigson Award for distinguished scholarship. Grace’s latest video, the *Wok Therapist* was released in 2019. Her family’s wok, which dates back to 1949, is currently displayed at the Museum of Food and Drink’s Chow exhibit and will soon be relocated to the Smithsonian National Museum of American History where it will continue to serve as a significant artifact of Chinese American culinary history.

**e. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?**

Tane Chan has donated to many community organizations in the neighborhood including family associations; Community Youth Center; the Chinese Railroad Workers Descendants Association;

lion dancers such as White Crane, CYC, Yau Kung Moon, Cherng Loong, etc.; and other cultural organizations. She is constantly encouraging youth to embrace their Chinese culture and has been an advocate in the Chinese American community for over 50 years.

**f. Provide a description of the community the business serves.**

The Wok Shop serves cooks, bloggers, locals, tourists and many others who are interested in Chinese cooking.

**g. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building/structure/site/object/interior?**

Tane has moved her stores and has occupied more than three locations in Chinatown. At one point, she was located inside the Empress of China, Ghirardelli Square and the Cannery. Currently, the business is located in an SRO building inside Chinatown. The store has an original sign from the 1970s with the original pagoda neon sign.

**h. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?**

The Wok Shop is a cultural icon in Chinatown. Many tourists visit Chinatown just to check out the store. It has been a staple and a necessity of how Westerners and Chinese alike learn to cook in a Chinese style. Can you imagine San Francisco Chinatown without the Wok Shop?

### **CRITERION 3**

**a. Describe the business and the essential features that define its character.**

Wok Shop of course sells woks, including carbon steel flat or round bottom wok sets, traditional cast iron woks, iron/enamel classic woks, stainless steel woks and iron “Pow” woks. Following is a list of accessories sold in the store.

Wok handle holders, ladles, lids, racks, rings, scoops, skimmers, spatulas, strainers, utensils and whisks; flaxseed oil for wok seasoning; oil canisters, fine mesh sifters, cooking chopsticks; steamers; cleavers; knives; knife sharpeners; slicers; pots; casseroles; bowls; dishes; chopsticks; soup spoons; sushi plates; mooncake molds; garnishing sets; fruit and vegetable cutters; mortars and pestles; skewers; peelers; Chinese tamale molds; stone flour mills; Chinese rolling pins; dumpling presses with bamboo spreaders; sesame grinders/toasters; tea pots; picking jars; Thai rice servers; electric herb pots; rice steamers; Chinese lunch boxes; scrub pads; hot pots and stoves; rice cookers; sushi making sets; sake sets; and Chinese tea thermoses.

Each customer has a unique case of culinary needs, and the Wok Shop identifies their needs and sells them exactly that. Besides cookware, the Wok Shop also sells cook books including *The Breath of a Wok* by Grace Young, *Stir-Frying to the Sky's Edge* by Grace Young, *The Wisdom*



*of the Chinese Kitchen* by Grace Young, *The Hakka Cookbook: Chinese Soul Food from Around the World* by Linda Lau Anusasananan, *Dim Sum* by Rhoda Yee, *The Intriguing World of Chinese Home Cooking* by Angela Chang, *Oriental Vegetables* by Joy Larkcom, and *Stir-Fry Recipes*.

Customers can also visit [wokshop.com](http://wokshop.com) for Wokology 101, where they can learn everything about a wok as well as how to season a wok. There are also other educational videos, as many customers who stumble across The Wok Shop have never cooked with a wok before.

Grace Young, whom Tane had been friends with for decades also started a Wok Wednesday Facebook group for Chinese cooking enthusiasts where customers of Tane show off their cooking done in woks sold by The Wok Shop via Facebook.

**b. How does the business demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the historical traditions that define the business, and which of these traditions should not be changed in order to retain the businesses historical character? (e.g., business model, goods and services, craft, culinary, or art forms)**

The Wok Shop has woks hanging from the ceiling like Chinese roasted ducks. Every spot of the store is filled with cookware and items that are distinctly Wok Shop merchandise for Chinese parties to add ambiance for Chinese dinners.

**c. How has the business demonstrated a commitment to maintaining the special physical features that define the business? Describe any special exterior and interior physical characteristics of the space occupied by the business (e.g. signage, murals, architectural details, neon signs, etc.).**

The Wok Shop has an original pagoda neon sign that was registered with the neon sign restoration program. The neon sign restoration program will restore the pagoda neon sign that's been there since the 1970s. The store itself is located in a typical SRO building in Chinatown.

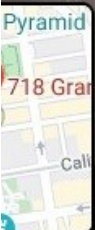
**d. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years; the applicant will need to provide documentation that demonstrates the current owner has maintained the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.**

Non-applicable.









the  
**WOK SHOP**  
www.wokshop.com



the  
**WOK SHOP**  
www.wokshop.com

the  
**WOK SHOP**

the  
**WOK SHOP**













# The Wok Shop

## News Articles

### University of New Mexico

“An Albuquerque ‘First Family’”

<https://www.unm.edu/~toh/china/story-04.html>

### San Francisco Chronicle

“Tane Chan's Wok Shop stirred up a trend”

July 27, 2013

<https://www.sfgate.com/food/article/Tane-Chan-s-Wok-Shop-stirred-up-a-trend-4691440.php>

### San Francisco Chronicle

“The Wok Shop story provides glimpse of old Chinatown”

July 29, 2013

<https://insidescoopsf.sfgate.com/blog/2013/07/29/the-wok-shop-story-provides-glimpse-of-old-chinatown/>

### Take Part

“Jane Says: It's Time to Buy a Wok”

February 5, 2014

<http://www.takepart.com/article/2014/02/05/how-stir-fry>

### Hoodline

“For Nearly 45 Years, Chinatown's Wok Shop Has Catered To Curious Cooks”

March 28, 2016

<https://hoodline.com/2016/03/for-nearly-45-years-chinatown-s-wok-shop-has-catered-to-curious-cooks>

### American Express

“How Listening to Customers Helped a Cookware Store Grow”

September 5, 2017

<https://www.americanexpress.com/en-us/business/trends-and-insights/videos/listening-customers-helped-cookware-store-grow/>

### 49 Mile

“SF Guide: 25 Reasons to Visit San Francisco’s Chinatown”

<https://49miles.com/2017/25-reasons-to-spend-more-time-in-san-franciscos-chinatown/>

<https://www.sfgate.com/food/article/Tane-Chan-s-Wok-Shop-stirred-up-a-trend-4691440.php>

# San Francisco Chronicle

## Tane Chan's Wok Shop stirred up a trend

By **Tara Duggan**  
Saturday, July 27, 2013



Tane Chan became a culinary ambassador when the Wok Shop opened in S.F. in 1972.  
Photo: Russell Yip, The Chronicle

If not for President Nixon's 1972 trip to China, there would be no **Wok Shop**. And without the Wok Shop, Chinatown wouldn't have a culinary ambassador named Tane Chan.

Chan founded her groundbreaking store just after Nixon's historic trip. Newspapers had published photos and menus of a multicourse banquet held in his honor in Beijing, showcasing food that was way more sophisticated than what could be found in Chinatown's standard chop suey houses.

The banquet represented Chinese cooking at its best. And Americans wanted to try it.

"Everyone was coming into Chinatown asking for woks," recalled Chan, an Albuquerque transplant who owned a gift shop on Grant Avenue at the time. She would send them to the Chinese grocers, but most were defeated by the language barrier.

Sensing a niche, Chan opened an Asian cookware store and called it the Wok Shop. "It was a market that was literally untouched for Westerners," she said.

Chan's willingness to teach customers about woks - the key tool in Chinese cooking - has made her an international resource. With the largest wok selection outside of Hong Kong and China, she sells more than 200 of the curved pans each week at her flagship Grant Avenue store and through her website, which draws customers from as far away as Australia and Africa.

"Tane has done so much to popularize and promote the art of wok cooking and Chinese cuisine to mainstream America," said restaurateur and TV personality **Martin Yan**, who met Chan in the 1970s while leading tours of Chinatown.

Although her parents were Chinese immigrants, when Chan opened the store she barely spoke Chinese and knew nothing about woks, so she could relate to novices. She asked for advice around Chinatown and experimented with wok cooking at home until she was ready to pass her knowledge on to her customers, which she still does with classes and YouTube videos.

"For her it's really about promoting Chinese culinary culture and passing on the culinary traditions," said New York cookbook author **Grace Young**, who has featured Chan in her wok-focused book, "Stir-Frying to the Sky's Edge."



Wok Shop owner Tane Chan (left) assists Parul Patel in choosing a wok. Chan sells more than 200 woks a week online and at her shop on Grant Avenue in Chinatown. Photo: Russell Yip, The Chronicle

Chan specializes in traditional steel woks, which sear food so well it feels like you're cooking with fire. In recent years, many home cooks, both here and in Asia, have converted to the lighter, nonstick "stir-fry pan," a Western version that is easier to maintain but doesn't conduct heat nearly as well and doesn't improve with age as steel woks do.

"For 2,000 years the wok has been the iron thread that's linked Chinese history," said Young, a native San Franciscan who also grew up in a wok-less Chinese American household. "No one seems to realize this old-fashioned tool is the original nonstick pan."

Despite being well past retirement age (she won't give her birth date), Chan works at the store every day. She'll go home for dinner, take a short nap and then return to her computer late at night.

Inside her jumbled shop with woks and paper lanterns hanging from every square foot of ceiling, Chan is constantly on the phone advising customers how to select and use woks, and she rarely forgets a name.

"I see by your number you're from the East Coast," she said to a caller on a recent workday. "Are you a friend of Bob's in Boston?" Yes, the caller replied, he was a friend of Bob's.

### **Wok bonding**

Since many customers are intimidated by seasoning woks - oiling and heating them to prevent rusting - she sometimes will do it for them. But she'd rather teach them to do it themselves for "important wok bonding time," as she puts it.

After 40 years in the business, she can size up customers right away.

"Men come in and walk right to that 'pow' wok," she said, pointing to a hefty model that must be held with one hand. "They pick it up and they say, 'This is great, this is awesome.' Women don't do that - they don't flex their muscles. It's a macho wok."

Chan's woks range from \$9.95 for a 13-inch cast-iron from China to \$150 for a large U.S.-made pan. Customers often think they need the more expensive models, even when she insists her \$20 woks, many of which are made to her specifications by **RW Metal Spinning Co.** in Hayward, will last a lifetime.

Chan learned about customer service from her mother, **Lin Ong**, who ran a general store in Albuquerque while raising nine children. It was Lin's generous spirit and a good deed she did for a stranger that would one day play a key role in her daughter's success.

Lin Ong was a picture bride from Guangzhou, China, an educated woman who married Chan's father, Wing Ong, in 1928. Wing had come to Colorado as a young boy to join his father, a railroad laborer who soon after was killed in a dynamite explosion. Wing went to Albuquerque to live with people from his village in China, the closest thing he had to relatives.

Wing returned to China to bring Lin to the U.S. They landed on Angel Island, then spent one night in Chinatown before heading straight to Albuquerque.

It was a harsh transition. Lin had heard tales of the prosperity in the United States, but when she stepped off the train in the dusty Southwestern city, "She said, 'This is America? The land of opportunity and gold streets?' " Chan recalled.

There were few Chinese families in Albuquerque, and the Ongs lived in the mostly Latino Baretas neighborhood. Wing opened what would be a series of restaurants, and Lin ran her store.

"With the language barrier, whom could she speak to? There was nobody to share her experiences with. Nobody to get help from," Chan said.

### **Beans and tortillas**

They ate the local food: tortillas, rice and beans, and red and green chiles. Lin couldn't get Chinese ingredients, let alone a wok, so she used a frying pan to stir-fry regular



green cabbage, instead of Chinese cabbage, with a little smoked bacon to stretch it for the whole family.

It was in the middle of the Depression, and Lin had to make her daughters' dresses from flour sacks. Still, she extended credit to her customers and each Christmas sent her children out with gifts for all the neighbors.

"She instilled in us even though we're having a hard life, some people had it even harder," Chan said.

When Chan was 14, her sister and brother-in-law took her along on a vacation to San Francisco. She fell in love with the city, and resolved to return for college by saving up the tips she earned at the family restaurant. By then her father owned New Chinatown Restaurant in Albuquerque, which became a city landmark that only recently closed.

After graduating high school in 1956, Chan made her way to San Francisco against her mother's will, enrolling in San Francisco State's teaching program and working at a gift store in Chinatown.

### **Learning about her culture**

"I wanted to learn about my culture and to speak the language. I never succeeded in the language part" - she still speaks better Spanish than Cantonese - "but I learned so much about my Chinese culture."

While at the job, she discovered she was more drawn to business than teaching. "I liked dealing with people and the public, with tourists. I just liked that excitement," she said.

In 1968, she married Al Chan, and together they opened a gift shop. They didn't have much trouble finding a space for it, but when they were ready to open their larger cookware store in 1972, they worried about getting a good location. Neither was a local, and Chinatown was mostly closed to outsiders.



Tane Chan (second from left) with her parents (center) and eight siblings in 1960. Her parents owned a general store and Chinese restaurant in Albuquerque, where she grew up.

When Chan inquired about renting 804 Grant Ave., the landlord, a member of the Louie family, asked where she was from and who her parents were. He was stunned by her answer.

"That's the name of the family that took care of somebody in our family," he said.

Many years before, an old man, also a Louie, had died alone while passing through Albuquerque. Because he was Chinese, the coroner called Chan's mother to see if she knew him. She contacted the Louie Fong & Fong Family Association in San Francisco, one of Chinatown's oldest fraternal organizations. No one there was a close relative, but they asked Lin to make sure he got a decent burial. She took care of the arrangements and sent his effects - the few dollars in his pocket - back to the association.

"You have such good parents, you can have the store," the landlord told Chan.

"The community in Chinatown never forgot my mother's kind act," she said.

Chan didn't know the story and called her mother, who reminded her of the grave that Chan and her siblings brought flowers to each Memorial Day.

"That's the old gentleman who's buried there," said Lin.

### **Teaching the world**

The Wok Shop stayed in the same spot until 1988, when Chan moved it to its current location at 718 Grant Ave. She also opened additional locations in Stonestown Mall, Crocker Galleria and Ghirardelli Square, which she has since closed, replaced by her online business.

Chan has run the business alone since her husband died in 1994, although her brother, Randolph Ong, also helps out. Her daughter Lisa Chan, one of her three children and a Bay Area resident, said her father mostly shuttled the kids to school and soccer practice while her mother worked and still got home in time to make dinner each night.

What has always driven Chan is teaching the world about woks. And because Chinatown is such a big tourist destination, she's had a chance to reach a wide audience over the past 40 years. And no one can leave the store without a better understanding of Chinese cooking, says Martin Yan.

"Normally you go to a department store like Macy's, and everything is packed up in boxes," he said. "She has woks hanging from the ceiling just like the roast ducks hanging in the Chinese delis. You go over there and you feel like you are going back in time."

*The Wok Shop, 718 Grant Ave. (between Clay and Sacramento streets), San Francisco, (415) 989-3797. [www.wokshop.com](http://www.wokshop.com).*

Tara Duggan is a San Francisco Chronicle staff writer.

<http://www.takepart.com/article/2014/02/05/how-stir-fry>

# takepart

## Jane Says: It's Time to Buy a Wok

With the right equipment and simple ingredients, this Chinese cooking method can produce a multitude of meals.

FEB 5, 2014



Jane Lear is a regular contributor to TakePart and the executive editor of CURED, a magazine devoted to the art and craft of food preservation. She was on staff at 'Gourmet' for almost 20 years.



*Cooking with a wok. (Photo: Kirk Mastin/Getty Images)*

*“I’m trying to save money by not eating out, but I really miss Chinese food! What do I need to know before I attempt stir-frying at home?”*

*—Mary Burton*

I can’t think of a more healthful way to kick off the Year of the Horse than learning how to stir-fry. There’s no better cooking technique for transforming small amounts of humble ingredients into delicious, harmonious abundance with minimum fat, time, and cooking fuel. In other words, once you know how to stir-fry, you’ll never be at a loss for a quick, economical meal again. And there is no reason you have to plan and execute an entire Chinese meal; stir-fried broccoli and carrots, for instance, are just as delicious with your favorite roast chicken recipe as they are with kung pao.

I was also delighted at the opportunity to reach out to stir-frying authority [Grace Young](#). “There’s nothing like a home-cooked stir-fry,” she emailed back. “It’s far superior to anything you can eat in a restaurant.” Young crisscrosses the country—more correctly, the world—teaching the tenets of stir-frying and being an all-around wok ambassador. Her most recent book, *Stir-Frying to the Sky’s Edge*, is definitive without being intimidating; the heady, illuminating mix of history (both ancient and modern), methodology, and foolproof (i.e., meticulously tested) recipes practically impels you into the kitchen. Young’s search for recipes evolved into a global look at the Chinese immigrant experience, and dishes such as Jamaican Jerk Chicken Fried Rice and Chinese Trinidadian Stir-Fried Shrimp serve as mouthwatering reminders that fusion food is nothing new.

### **Why You Need a Wok—and What to Look For**

“All pans are not well suited for stir-frying,” Young wrote. “It’s essential to use a 14-inch flat-bottomed carbon-steel wok.” That sounds a little nitpicky, but Young has her reasons: A 14-inch wok is the size you need for a main-course stir-fry for two people or a side dish for four (see “Don’t Crowd the Pan,” below). Carbon steel heats up and cools down quickly, and a wok that’s flat-bottomed can sit directly on the burner, allowing it to get hotter than a round-bottomed wok perched in a wok ring for stability. (Not convinced? OK, your next-best alternative is a 12-inch heavy-duty stainless-steel skillet such as All-Clad, but more cooking oil will be required to prevent food from sticking, and you risk spilling out an ingredient that has volume—spinach or watercress, for instance—while cooking it.)

Buying a wok is a great reason for a trip to Chinatown (especially if you leave enough time for dim sum); one terrific online source is Tane Chan’s [Wok Shop](#) in San Francisco. Avoid a round-bottomed Chinese cast-iron wok, the style beloved by Cantonese home cooks; it retains heat and in less-than-expert hands, it can easily result in overcooked food. Avoid, too, nonstick models, which don’t caramelize ingredients properly; a recipe simply won’t taste the same. Instead, spring for a carbon-steel wok that’s been adapted for the Western kitchen with a long (removable) wooden handle and a small helper handle. At the Wok Shop, such a pan [is a bargain](#) at \$24.95, and they’re available for even less in a Chinatown department store. As for seasoning a wok, [Chan’s method](#) couldn’t be simpler: She oils and bakes the wok just once, then adds a bit more oil and stir-fries a generous handful of garlic chives until they are well and truly charred.

If you live near an Asian market, you've probably seen garlic, or Chinese, chives—the long, narrow, flat leaves are sold in fat bunches and are delicious [steamed, sautéed, or in a Korean pancake](#). If you can't put your hands on them, though, don't let that stop you. Scallions will do, and once you char whatever it is you use, you're in business: The wok is ready to go, and it will continue to season itself (and become more beautiful) each time you cook in it.

While you're wok shopping, pick up a shovel-shaped wok spatula (*wok chuan*) too. It costs about five bucks, and its contours give you great control as you repeatedly push the ingredients up onto the wok's high, sloping hot sides—which function as an extension of the cooking surface—and let them tumble down.

One item you should pass on, however, is a stiff bamboo brush for cleaning the wok. Meant for restaurant use, it will take the seasoning right off your wok. Grace Young just puts hot water into her wok, lets it sit about 10 minutes, and wipes it out with a sponge. To remove any sticky bits, she uses the rough side of a sponge recommended for cleaning nonstick cookware. Then she dries the wok completely over low heat.

### **A few Notes on Ingredients**

Avoid buying meat precut for stir-frying. You don't know what you're getting, and odds are it's sliced all wrong, which can make even a tender cut tough. Flank steak is a good case in point: Because of its long fibers, it's critical to first cut the steak *with the grain* into 1½- to 2-inch-wide strips, then cut each strip *across the grain* into ¼-inch-thick (i.e., bite-size) slices; if you cut the bite-size slices on the bias, there will be more surface area to sear.

As for vegetables, they should be absolutely bone-dry before they're added to the wok; they should crackle in the hot oil, and their aroma should bloom. If they're still wet from rinsing, the wok's temperature will drop, and the vegetables will steam instead of stir-fry in that excess moisture. “Most of all, remember that stir-frying accentuates the flavor and texture of super-fresh, seasonal ingredients,” Young wrote.

And because a stir-fry takes virtually no time at all, have all your ingredients [chopped and close at hand](#). Once you start cooking, you won't have the time to prep as you go.

### **Preheating Is Key**

In her classes and demos, Young never fails to emphasize that intense heat is the secret to a great stir-fry. What most people don't realize, though, is “the wok must be preheated on high heat before adding a high-smoking-point oil such as peanut or grape-seed.” So crank up the heat and place your hand about an inch above the bottom of the pan. In about 10 to 60 seconds (depending on how powerful your stove is), it should feel like a hot radiator, and a drop or two of water sprinkled into the wok should vaporize immediately.

## **Don't Crowd the Pan**

The instant raw meat or poultry hits the searing-hot pan, it should start to sizzle, and that sound should remain constant throughout the stir-fry. That's why you shouldn't overcrowd the wok with too much food, Young stressed. "More than one pound of chicken or meat will crowd the pan and take down the temperature, turning your stir-fry into a soggy braise."

Don't start stir-frying immediately; let the meat get a good sear on before you begin channeling your inner Iron Chef. Otherwise, it will turn gray and stick to the wok; trust me, it's as unappetizing as it sounds.

## **Have Everything Else Ready to Go**

Stir-fries are meant to be eaten immediately to best appreciate the quality of *wok hay*—the elusive, ephemeral seared taste and aroma prized by generations of Chinese cooks. So have the table set and a pot of rice cooked.

You'll find any number of stir-fry recipes online, including [these from Grace Young](#). Several of them would be especially appropriate for the Chinese New Year: One last look at *Sky's Edge* revealed that chicken symbolizes a proper beginning and end; scallions, intelligence; shrimp, happiness and laughter; pork, bounty and family unity; and cilantro, compassion. Happy trails!

## **About Us**

TakePart is the digital news and lifestyle magazine from [Participant Media](#), the company behind such acclaimed documentaries as *CITIZENFOUR*, *An Inconvenient Truth* and *Food, Inc.* and feature films including *Lincoln* and *Spotlight*.

<https://hoodline.com/2016/03/for-nearly-45-years-chinatown-s-wok-shop-has-catered-to-curious-cooks>



## For Nearly 45 Years, Chinatown's Wok Shop Has Catered To Curious Cooks

by *Nathan Falstreau* [@NFalstreau](#)

March 28, 2016



Photos: Nathan Falstreau/Hoodline

Union Square has [Williams-Sonoma](#) and the Ferry Building has [Sur La Table](#), but for locals seeking a different flavor of cookware, [The Wok Shop](#) has been a kitchen-supply destination for Chinatown, North Beach and beyond for nearly 45 years.



The shop, located at 718 Grant Ave., opened in 1972. It's run by Tane Chan, a native of Albuquerque, New Mexico, who previously owned a small gift shop on Grant Avenue. When she saw Westerners' interest in Chinese cuisine had increased, she decided to open a shop exclusively selling Chinese cookware.

Though Chan wasn't an expert in wok cooking at the time she opened the Wok Shop, she used her Chinatown neighbors as resources and quickly became well-versed in wok techniques, many of which she's since passed down to her customers.



Her customers come from all over the world, and their degree of cooking experience varies, Chan told us. Some people may feel intimidated by wok cooking, but “[ultimately], everybody wants to wok.”

Though Chinatown restaurant owners are some of her steadiest customers, Chan said that online sales make up more than half of the Wok Shop's business. (The store has had a website since 1999.) Orders come in from all over the country, and Chan responds to each email personally. “I have to respond to everyone who contacts us and places an order, because we appreciate it so much,” she said.

She even provides free customer support for anyone who purchases a wok from her shop. “I just answered an email from someone in Kansas who bought a wok from us, and needed some advice on how to season it.”



Some of the woks Chan sells come from China, while others come from a custom manufacturer in the Bay Area, which can create woks designed around customers' specific needs. “If the manufacturer can do it, and they don't have to retool their machines, they will make any type of wok most customers will want,” she said.

Woks come in a wide range of sizes and prices. Chan said that a decent wok costs an average of \$50, but some sell for as low as \$20. Larger woks, ideal for commercial kitchens, can go for as much as \$150.

Chan told us that a wok should last a lifetime if [seasoned properly](#) (which usually entails rubbing oil on the pan and sauteeing something pungent like green onions or leeks, to prevent rusting). “A good wok should be practical, functional and affordable,” she said.



Chan told us everyone can learn to wok, and the pans can be used for more than just stir-fries. The Wok Shop sells bamboo steamers that can be placed in the wok and piled on top of each other. Chan even used to do special wok cooking demonstrations at the shop, in which she'd show students how to steam pork, fish and dumplings in separate bamboo baskets at the same time, in the same wok.

Though Chan has had to discontinue the classes in recent years, due to other commitments, the Wok Shop's website aims to help fill the knowledge gap. It offers numerous recipe ideas, as well as a teaching section called "[Wokology 101](#)," for those just learning how to cook with a wok.

The Wok Shop isn't just about woks, either: "We sell knives, cleavers, bamboo steamers, wok utensils, anything for the Asian kitchen," Chan said. "There are all kinds of woks for all walks of life"—pun intended.

*The Wok Shop (718 Grant Ave.) is open from 10am–6pm daily.*

<https://www.shopchinatown.org/places/the-wok-shop/>



## The Wok Shop

(415) 989-3797

718 Grant Ave, San Francisco, California 94108



When you enter The Wok shop, you will feel as if you are stepping into a real-life Chinese kitchen.

The common cookwares are displayed in a unique way around the store. Since 1972, Tane Chan has been the ambassador of wok cooking art. On that year, President Nixon made his first trip to China with the whole country watching. After that famous trip,

newspapers across the country published photos of the famous multi-course banquets held in Beijing. Americans flooded into Chinatown looking for the sophisticated food.

Sensing this niche, Tane opened the Chinese kitchenware store and named it The Wok Shop. She studies all of the techniques and built upon her skills herself. She quickly became well-versed in the art of cooking. Tane decided to pass the Chinese wisdom down through her [website](#) and [YouTube videos](#). This allowed her to reach customers from around the world!



The Chinese steel wok was created during the Qin Dynasty, around 200 BCE. The thermal conductivity of the iron woks served great for cooking and has led to the formation of delicious Chinese cooking techniques. The quick cooking at high heat helps retain color and texture. It significantly preserves more nutrition compared to boiling. A good wok should be practical, functional and affordable. The bamboo steamer uses curved wood along the diameter and bamboo strips at the base; it is extremely sustainable for the environment.

You can find more of these sustainable ideas rooted in the products at The Wok Shop! The Wok Shop provides all of your kitchen supplies in Chinatown and beyond!



Sunday, July 28, 2013

# San Francisco Chronicle

SFGATE.COM | PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER | \$3.00 \*\*\*\*\*

## SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

### Policies on rites start to evolve at some churches

**By Bob Egelko**

For the last four weeks, gays and lesbians in California who want to get married have been able to visit their county clerk, obtain a license and schedule a civil ceremony. But those who want a religious wedding have to check their denomination's policy — and sometimes look even a little closer.

Take the United Methodist Church, which has about 7.5 million members in the United States and a formal policy, called the Discipline, declaring that homosexuality is "incompatible with Christian teachings."

Last week, 82 retired ministers in California and Nevada signed an agreement to perform ceremonies for same-sex couples — marriages in California, "holy unions" in Nevada — at any Methodist church that lacked a pastor. The Rev. *Churches continues on A15*

## SUNDAY PROFILE Tane Chan

### Wok Shop, and a gift for teaching, stirred Chinese cuisine trend

**By Tara Duggan**

If not for President Nixon's 1972 trip to China, there would be no Wok Shop. And without the Wok Shop, Chinatown wouldn't have a culinary ambassador named Tane Chan.

Chan founded her groundbreaking store just after Nixon's historic trip. Newspapers had published photos and banquets of a multicourse banquet held in his honor in Beijing, showcasing food that was way more sophisticated than what could be found in Chinatown's standard chop suey houses.

The banquet represented Chinese cooking at its best. And Americans wanted to try it.

"Everyone was coming into Chinatown asking for woks," recalled Chan, an Albuquerque transplant who owned a gift shop on Grant Avenue at the time. She would send them to the Chinese grocers, but most were defeated by the language barrier.

Sensing a niche, Chan opened an Asian cookware store and called it the Wok Shop. *Chan continues on A14*

Russell Yip / The Chronicle

**Tane Chan became a culinary ambassador when the Wok Shop opened in S.F. in 1972.**

index

lifetime.....43

Editorial.....E10

Letters.....E11

.....L1

**Weather**

Fog and drizzle, then cloudy.

High: 88

Low: 50

C6-C7



---

## Business Details

---

(415) 989-3797

718 Grant Ave, San Francisco, California 94108

Monday: 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Tuesday: 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Wednesday: 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Thursday: 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Friday: 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM

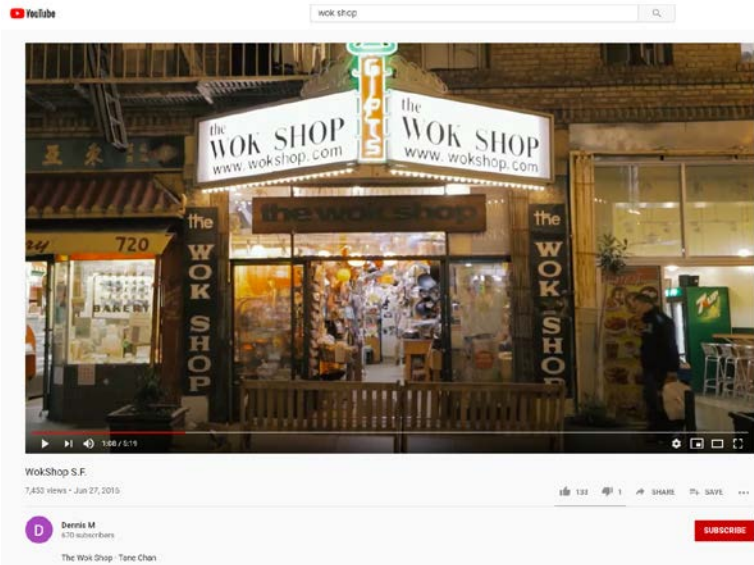
Saturday: 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Sunday: 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Website

Yelp

# VIDEOS



## WokShop S.F.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5O5mPcAh1U>

Published on Jun 27, 2016

Posted by [Dennis M](#)

“The Wok Shop - Tane Chan”



## Shop & Dine in the 49: The Wok Shop & Dragon Papa Dessert

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kr1woISjjM>

Published on Jul 12, 2017

Posted by [SFGovTV](#)

“San Francisco has launched a citywide campaign to raise the visibility and importance of buying local called Shop + Dine in the 49. In collaboration with Shop Small and San Francisco’s Buy Local campaign, Shop + Dine in the 49”





# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

## Legacy Business Registry Executive Summary

HEARING DATE: AUGUST 19, 2020

*Filing Date:* July 22, 2020  
*Case No.:* 2020-006874LBR  
*Business Name:* The Wok Shop  
*Business Address:* 718 Grant Avenue  
*Zoning:* Chinatown Visitor Retail (CVR) Zoning District  
50-N Height and Bulk District  
*Block/Lot:* 0226/018  
*Applicant:* Tane Chan, Owner  
305 Divisadero Street  
San Francisco, CA 94108  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor Aaron Peskin  
*Located In:* District 3  
*Staff Contact:* Katie Wilborn - (415) 575-9114  
[katherine.wilborn@sfgov.org](mailto:katherine.wilborn@sfgov.org)  
*Recommendation:* Adopt a Resolution to Recommend Approval

1650 Mission St.  
Suite 400  
San Francisco,  
CA 94103-2479

Reception:  
**415.558.6378**

Fax:  
**415.558.6409**

Planning  
Information:  
**415.558.6377**

### BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

The Wok Shop is a Chinese kitchen supply store opened by Tane Chan in 1972. The original location was at 804 Grant Avenue, and through times of success and difficulty, Chan opened and closed several Wok Shop locations throughout the city, but never ceased operation for any stretch of time and always maintained at least one location in the Chinatown neighborhood. The store is famous for its extensive collection of Chinese cookware; most notoriously the woks, hanging like Chinese roasted ducks from the ceiling of the shop's interior. The Wok Shop is currently located at 718 Grant Avenue, where it has thrived since 1991. As a third-generation Chinese American female business owner, Chan has faced and overcome many obstacles, but has been rewarded with success and recognition. The Wok Shop has been featured on PBS-TV's *Yan Cooking* in 1982, was hailed by author Grace Young in her cookbooks *Stir-Frying to the Sky's Edge* (2018) and *The Breadth of a Wok* (2019), was featured as an outstanding small business on *American Express's* website, and received a *Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition of Outstanding and Invaluable Service to The Community* by Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi in February, 2020. The Wok Shop's service and location in the Chinatown neighborhood have served as a staple to locals and tourists alike. The store's 1970s original pagoda sign is a beacon for Chinatown's intangible, home-cooking culinary heritage and has represented this cultural and culinary staple for almost 50 years in the neighborhood. Today, the store also has an online presence and hosts "Wokology 101" on their website and features "Wok Wednesday" social media posts, to reach and teach broader audiences.

The business is located in a Category A (Historic Resource Present) structure on the east side of Grant Avenue between Sacramento and Commerce Streets in the Chinatown neighborhood. It is within the Chinatown-Visitor Retail (CVR) Zoning District and a 50-N Height and Bulk District.

## STAFF ANALYSIS

### *Review Criteria*

1. *When was business founded?*

The business was founded in 1972.

2. *Does the business qualify for listing on the Legacy Business Registry? If so, how?*

Yes. The Wok Shop qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- i. The Wok Shop has operated continuously in San Francisco for 48 years.
- ii. The Wok Shop has contributed to the history and identity of the Chinatown neighborhood and Chinese American culture and cuisine in San Francisco.
- iii. The Wok Shop is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the organization.

3. *Is the business associated with a culturally significant art/craft/cuisine/tradition?*

Yes. The business is associated with Chinese and Chinese American cookware and cooking.

4. *Is the business or its building associated with significant events, persons, and/or architecture?*

Yes. 718 Grant Avenue is located within the California Register-eligible and National Register-eligible Chinatown Historic District. The building location is within the boundaries of an on-going Chinese American Cultural Context Statement. The building itself was surveyed in 1978, 1994, and 1997, and determined to hold "Contributory" and "Contextual Importance" to the historic districts.

5. *Is the property associated with the business listed on a local, state, or federal historic resource registry?*

No. However, 718 Grant Avenue has Planning Department Historic Resource status codes of "A" (Historic Resource Present) because of its location within the California- and National Register-eligible historic districts.

Although the Wok Shop has no other locations besides 718 Grant Avenue at this time, it has formerly been located in other "Category A" historic properties, including: The Cannery, Ghirardelli Square, 804 Grant and 834 Grant (both located within the eligible Chinatown Historic District).

6. *Is the business mentioned in a local historic context statement?*

No.

7. *Has the business been cited in published literature, newspapers, journals, etc.?*

Yes. There have been a number of features on Tane Chan and The Wok Shop, both locally and nationally, regarding the Chinese cookware and culinary industry. The Wok Shop has been featured on PBS-TV's *Yan Cooking* in 1982, was hailed by author Grace Young in her cookbooks *Stir-Frying to the Sky's Edge* (2018) and *The Breadth of a Wok* (2019), was featured as an outstanding



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

---

## Historic Preservation Commission Draft Resolution No. 1133

HEARING DATE: AUGUST 19, 2020

*Case No.:* 2020-006874LBR  
*Business Name:* The Wok Shop  
*Business Address:* 718 Grant Avenue  
*Zoning:* Chinatown Visitor Retail (CVR) Zoning District  
50-N Height and Bulk District  
*Block/Lot:* 0226/018  
*Applicant:* Tane Chan, Owner  
305 Divisadero Street  
San Francisco, CA 94108  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor Aaron Peskin  
*Located In:* District 3  
*Staff Contact:* Katie Wilborn - (415) 575-9114  
[katherine.wilborn@sfgov.org](mailto:katherine.wilborn@sfgov.org)

1650 Mission St.  
Suite 400  
San Francisco,  
CA 94103-2479

Reception:  
**415.558.6378**

Fax:  
**415.558.6409**

Planning  
Information:  
**415.558.6377**

**ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR THE WOK SHOP CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 718 GRANT AVENUE, BLOCK/LOT 0226/018.**

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has contributed to the City's history and identity; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business is committed to maintaining the traditions that define the business; and

**WHEREAS**, at a duly noticed public hearing held on August 19, 2020, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed documents, correspondence and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry nomination.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends** that The Wok Shop qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated for 30 or more years and has continued to contribute to the community.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends** safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for The Wok Shop.

***Location(s):***

Current Location:

- *718 Grant Avenue from 1991 to present (29 years)*

Previous locations:

- *804 Grant Avenue from 1972 to 1992 (20 years)*
- *838 Grant Avenue from 1973 to 1978 (5 years)*
- *The Cannery, 2801 Leavenworth Street from 1974 to 1979 (5 years)*
- *Stonestown Galleria, 3251 20th Avenue from 1975 to 1985 (10 years)*
- *Crocker Galleria, 50 Post Street from 1977 to 1982 (5 years)*
- *Ghirardelli Square, 900 North Point Street from 1978 to 1983 (5 years)*

***Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:***

- *Retail market for woks and other Chinese cookware*
- *Original (1970s) pagoda neon sign*
- *Maintaining a location within Chinatown*
- *Promoting and teaching Chinese and Chinese American foodways*

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the **Historic Preservation Commission's findings and recommendations** are made solely for the purpose of evaluating the subject business's eligibility for the Legacy Business Registry, and the Historic Preservation Commission makes no finding that the subject property or any of its features constitutes a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a).

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs** its Commission Secretary to transmit this Resolution and other pertinent materials in the case file 2020-006874LBR to the Office of Small Business August 19, 2020.

Jonas P. Ionin  
Commission Secretary

AYES: Hyland, Matsuda, Black, Foley, Johns, Pearlman, So

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

ADOPTED: Recommendation for Approval

small business on American Express's website, and received a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition of outstanding and invaluable service to the community by Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi in February, 2020.

### ***Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business***

#### **Location(s) associated with the business:**

##### Current Location:

- 718 Grant Avenue from 1991 to present (29 years)

##### Previous (nonextant) locations:

- 804 Grant Avenue from 1972 to 1992 (20 years)
- 838 Grant Avenue from 1973 to 1978 (5 years)
- The Cannery, 2801 Leavenworth Street from 1974 to 1979 (5 years)
- Stonestown Galleria, 3251 20th Avenue from 1975 to 1985 (10 years)
- Crocker Galleria, 50 Post Street from 1977 to 1982 (5 years)
- Ghirardelli Square, 900 North Point Street from 1978 to 1983 (5 years)

#### **Recommended by Applicant**

- Retail market for woks and other Chinese cookware
- Original (1970s) pagoda neon sign
- Maintaining a location within Chinatown
- Promoting and teaching Chinese and Chinese American foodways

#### **Additional Recommended by Staff**

- None

## **BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The Department recommends the Historic Preservation Commission adopt a resolution recommending the business listed above be adopted by the Small Business Commission to the Legacy Business Registry.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

### Draft Resolution

#### Legacy Business Registry Application:

- Application Review Sheet
- Section 1 – Business / Applicant Information
- Section 2 – Business Location(s)
- Section 3 – Disclosure Statement
- Section 4 – Written Historical Narrative
  - Criterion 1 – History and Description of Business
  - Criterion 2 – Contribution to Local History
  - Criterion 3 – Business Characteristics
- Contextual Photographs and Background Documents