

Guy Rubino, 37, is the younger of the Rubino brothers. With his brother Michael, 40, he owns and operates two of Toronto's 'hippest' restaurants, Rain and Luce. They also run Mercer Street Productions, which produces *Made to Order*, a reality cooking programme shot in Rain, whose menu is more often than not, Asian-inspired. Guy and Michael were recently in Hong Kong to shoot the third season of the series.

Are you still excited about *Made to Order*?

Its odd, but we are more excited than ever. The first season was very much about the work in the restaurants, and the second was more personality based. The third season is the most exciting, because in making it we have gone international. Hong Kong is just one destination for season three, and the other locations in your region are Singapore and Malaysia. Michael is glaring at me, so I am obviously not supposed to say anymore! In this season we get to be like Marco Polo and go where we haven't gone before, and explore new things that we wouldn't have seen back in Toronto.

You read politics in University. Was this what you thought you'd be doing for a career? Is your celebrity status what you wanted?

This is really not what I'd thought I'd be doing at all. I didn't think we'd be as successful as this. *Made To Order* is aired in about 75 countries at the moment, and we are getting noticed on the street. I'd rather not get noticed that much; I feel that I am not a celebrity at all. I'm a chef and just grateful that I can do what I'm passionate about as a career.

My personal mandate is to explore food for the rest of my life. I don't know everything about food and if any chef says he knows everything, then he is lying! Often as we shoot on location or create a new recipe, we are just as surprised as the audience will be when they see it for the first time. That way it's always fresh and exciting for us too.

Is it all glitz and glamour like what people might think?

Sorry to disappoint you, but the glitz and glamour is actually non-existent in my life. I am very much a hands-on chef. I manage two kitchens and am actually so busy that I have no social life and my girlfriend doesn't even see me often. The only time that I make for myself is the hour I spend in the gym everyday. Sometimes, I get to play the drums in my spare time. If I'm not chef-ing then I'm doing *Made to Order*.

Why does Asian cuisine feature so heavily in your cooking style? Isn't it odd for a Canadian of Italian descent to be cooking with Asian ingredients?

There is a huge Asian community in Toronto, and I live five minutes from the Asian markets in Toronto's Chinatown. I can get everything there that you can get in Singapore and Hong Kong. From an early age I was always fascinated with Asian ingredients and my cooking is a direct consequence of growing up in that environment.



that kind of guy

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CANADIAN CHEF OF ITALIAN DESCENT GETS HIS HANDS ON A WOK? GUY HOH TALKS TO GUY RUBINO, CHEF AND MANAGING PARTNER OF TORONTO RESTAURANTS RAIN AND LUCE, TO FIND OUT

in the Toronto Asian community who put up with my questions and explain things to me. When I am in Chinatown, I never feel like an outsider.

Italians cook a lot in the home just like many Asian families do, and it is another common cultural thread that we all have. We love family meals, good food, good wine and great company.

What about the French and Italian cooking techniques that also are a part of your cooking style?

I see Asian cuisine as handling a dangerous article or explosive. It is so powerful that I studied traditional Asian cuisine for a long time before I felt comfortable with it. Only then did I start applying other techniques to it, to make it into a style that I can say is my own. I believe very strongly in keeping the integrity of the Asian flavours on the Rain menu. If I apply French techniques of concentrating sauces and reductions for example, the flavours that are in the sauces are still Asian.

As an example of being true to cuisine styles, I never cook with dairy, which I



Left to right: Yuzu Kimizu oysters, mango praline scallops and miso cured mackerel with black miso caramel

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think is just betraying the roots of Asian cuisine. I try not to alter the integrity of the ingredients. I use the European techniques, but stay true to the cuisine's basic flavours. I'm not a great fan of fusion cooking. I think my Asian cooking style is actually just an evolution of traditional Asian food done the way we like it.

Is it really hard working with your brother?

We fight when our areas of responsibility clash. I am

super passionate about the food, and frankly he (Michael) calls me a perfectionist. We are under pressure pretty much all the time. So we do snap at each other, and when its your brother, I guess you can snap a little more simply because you've been having brotherly spats all your life. Truly though, we get along because we respect each other.

What do you really like to eat?

I cook for myself and often for Michael, every night. I find that I cook and eat depending on what kitchen I spent the least time in that night. Say if I've been working in Rain all night then I may go home and have pasta or a pizza. I eat predominately Asian food and Italian food, simply because those are the cuisines I like the best. Our favourite has to be pork, it is central to Asian (Chinese) and Italian cuisine. I try to do simple noodles and simple peasant-style Asian foods. When I have a craving I'll do it, it doesn't matter that it is in the middle of the night when we normally eat.

What are your ingredients of the moment?

Nothing and everything really... the world is getting much, much smaller. Toro, Wagyu beef, Kimizu oysters and Chinese vegetables are all favourites of mine. We try as much as possible to use organic and free range stuff, but in all honesty it is sometimes very difficult to get consistent supplies. We make it a point to use the best and eat the best, because all good food starts with the best ingredients you can get. Asian and Italian cooking focuses on presenting natural flavours and not masking or cloaking food with different tastes. It's honest cooking. We always use the freshest herbs like garlic, coriander and basil, to compliment and enhance the ingredients.



Tomago rolls with grapefruit curd, white peach lassi and red currant agar dumpling

The second season of *Made To Order* starts November 3, 8 pm on Discovery Travel & Living, Channel 16 on StarHub Cable Vision.