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BAILLIAGE — CHARLESTON NOVEMBER 7, 2025

JACKRABBIT FILLY - A CONSTELLATION OF CHINESE CULINARY DELIGHTS

By Paula Duncan, Dame de la Chaîne

How does a talented contemporary chef blend heritage, life experience and creativity? Fifteen members and guests of the Charleston Bailliage, South Carolina, ventured to Jackrabbit Filly restaurant on Sept. 4 to find out. Chef Shuai Wang emigrated from Beijing to New York City when he was nine years old and attributes his love of food to his grandmother and mother, who are great cooks. In high school he found his own love of cooking and subsequently went to culinary school at the Art Institute of New York City. After working at several restaurants in the Big Apple and meeting his now wife (and partner) Corrine, the Wangs moved to Charleston and have been on a remarkable culinary journey ever since.

Chef Shuai and Corinne first opened a food truck named Short Grains, which was named one of America's Top 50 Best New Restaurants by bon appétit in 2016. In 2017, Chef Wang was named



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Eater Magazine's Chef of the Year - Charleston" and was a semi-finalist for the James Beard Foundation Rising Star award as Chef of the Year. In 2019, they opened their first restaurant, Jackrabbit Filly. The restaurant's name is an homage to their Chinese zodiac signs, the Rabbit and the Horse, and Jackrabbit Filly is dedicated to serving heritage driven New Chinese-American cuisine.

The restaurant is extremely popular and Chef Shuai has earned national recognition for his food. He was a participant in Season 22 of the nationally celebrated television show "Top Chef", in which 15 talented and established chefs compete over the course of many weeks. The show aired from March to June of 2025, and Chef Shuai was one of the three finalists! He credits this experience, and the intensive collaboration and interaction with his fellow participants, with re-energizing his creativity and passion for his cooking. In 2025 Shuai was named a South Carolina Chef Ambassador, an honor which comes with the responsibility of promoting South Carolina's agricultural heritage and deserved reputation as a premier dining destination.

Our group of 15 members and guests dined in two large adjacent booths and shared a sumptuous family-style meal that offered many different tastes and textures. Each table had a very large "lazy Susan" that allowed each group to share several portions of each of the dishes, which were brought out in stages. Some of the early standouts included a bright and delicious cabbage salad, a unique and flavorful tuna tartare, some superb pork dumplings (Chinese) and potato and leek pierogi (Eastern European). These dishes hint at Chef Shuai's capability in pairing dishes based on his own family heritage with those that offer "interpretations" of the same theme from another culture.

Next followed "karaage" (Japanese fried chicken) with two different sauces. These are among his most popular dishes and have been part of his repertoire since his days as a food truck chef. The dry fried green beans and chili tofu brought us back to his interpretations of classical Chinese dishes, and both were outstanding! There was chili and heat in many of his dishes, but these were balanced and didn't overwhelm the many flavors in the sauces.

Finally, the servers brought us two types of noodles - pappardelle with mushrooms, shiso butter and pecorino cheese - as well as cold sesame noodles with pea tendrils and a spicy peanut sauce. Here again, we savored the similarities and contrasts between somewhat comparable dishes that showcased the different ingredients and flavors featured in different cuisines. We paired our meal with three excellent wines from the restaurant's wine list. For our white wine, we served an Aubron "Melon de Bourgogne (aka Muscadet) PetNat". This non-vintage, organic wine from the Loire valley in France is made from the same grape as Muscadet and is naturally sparkling. Crisp, with noted minerality and a hint of citrus, it paired very well with the early courses.

We moved on to an organic Zinfandel blend rosé from California, a 2022 vintage from Skull Wine Co., typically blended from 70% Zinfandel, 20% pinot gris and 10% alicante bouchet. It



was well received and paired well with the next set of dishes.

Finally, we moved to a 2023 “Vigna del Lauro” made in Friuli from the Refosco grape. This was a bigger, bolder wine that paired well with the remaining courses.

We had a great evening – enjoying generous amounts of a feast composed of dishes that offered so many textures, flavors, spice levels and styles. The family-style dining ensured a convivial and lively atmosphere and I’m sure that our 15 guests contributed to the festive atmosphere of the restaurant! Working with the restaurant prior to our evening was smooth and the service on the night of the event was superb. To end our event, we presented a bottle of Champagne Gerin Blanc de Blancs Grand Cru French Champagne to Bailli Michael Poynter. This was Bailli Michael’s final event as Bailli – and we wanted to celebrate and show our appreciation for his leadership!

Chef Shuai is committed to using local ingredients, to interpreting and presenting classical dishes from his Chinese heritage – but also to showcasing standout dishes from other heritages that present different culinary solutions to similar ingredients and cooking styles. In this vein, Chef Shuai and Corinne Wang own a second highly regarded restaurant, “King BBQ”, which features Chinese BBQ that has been enhanced and changed by being partnered with the rich South Carolina tradition of smoked meats and southern barbecue. In 2024, King BBQ was recognized as the best new BBQ restaurant by Southern Living Magazine and included in bon appétit’s 2024 list of the top 20 best new restaurants. Perhaps the Charleston Bailliage will plan a visit to King BB in the coming year to celebrate another facet of this talented and innovative new chef’s cuisine!

Vive la Chaîne!