



Regina Lee's Crazy Rich Feast will be served at the Pacific Institute of Culinary Arts on Saturday, Oct. 20. PHOTO SUPPLIED

West Van chef creates Crazy Rich Feast menu

Inspired by hit film, Regina Lee digs into her Singaporean roots to come up with a special dinner

■ **Crazy Rich Feast.** Bistro 101 at Pacific Institute of Culinary Arts, Saturday, Oct. 20, 6:30 p.m. Tickets: \$128. For details visit picachef.com/crazyrichfeast.

MARIA RANTANEN
Contributing writer

Regina Lee has lived around the world and she has tasted and cooked many types of cuisines, but, as she's gotten older, she has come back to her Singaporean roots, partly to share her culture and partly to help preserve a disappearing culinary art, the Peranakan tradition of cooking.

Lee, who has settled in West Vancouver with her family after living around the world for 20 years, has come to realize that instead of trying to blend in with other cultures, she should celebrate her own Singaporean

roots and share it with her daughters and the broader community. This and the recent book and blockbuster movie *Crazy Rich Asians* have inspired her to create an event featuring Singaporean foods and treats, made in the traditional Peranakan tradition, aptly named Crazy Rich Feast. "One thing that's very big for me is food and connecting with people through food," she said.

"It's my first pop-up event of the year, my start for the year, to curate and to create shared connections through meaningful food experiences."

Lee's family is partly Chinese but part of her family is Peranakan, descendants of Chinese and Malaysians who inter-married in Singapore where they were working as traders.

Lee said she used to try to blend in wherever she was living, but has realized she wants to keep her own cultural identity and share that with others.

"The more I'm away from home, the more I want to retain my traditions, but then when you come to a new country, how do you share that, how do you retain your culture, teach your kids where you're from, and integrate with other cultures and share that," she said. "Now I realize, the other way is more fun, when you share your culture, people understand you more, you get a bond, you get a community and actually that diversity can be a stronger element."

Peranakan cuisine was fusion cuisine long before fusion cuisine was even a thing, combining Chinese cooking with Malay and Indian spices along with influences from the British and the many nationalities passing through this Southeast Asian trading post.

This is the cooking of Lee's grandmothers and aunts and she has been collecting Peranakan recipes for years to

keep this tradition alive.

Preparing Peranakan cuisine is intricate and tedious using a wide variety of ingredients and complicated cooking methods, but it is being lost in today's fast-paced world, Lee said. The nonyas, the women, used to spend all their days in the kitchen, chopping, cooking and baking, preparing these meticulously designed foods for their families.

Lee has created a truly traditional Singaporean menu for the Oct. 20 event, set to take place at Bistro 101, the restaurant of the Pacific Institute of Culinary Arts on Granville Island.

One of the menu items is popiah, a fresh spring roll made from thin crepe with a lettuce wrap, filled with stir-fried jicama, bean sprouts, French beans, shredded carrots, shredded omelettes, Chinese sausage, ground peanuts and shrimp with a dipping sauce made of soy sauce, hoisin and shrimp paste. Another dish will be the famous Hainanese chicken, poached with ginger and served with rice cooked in chicken broth. There will also be laksa, a spicy noodle soup made of rice vermicelli with chicken, prawn or fish and served in a spicy curry coconut sauce. Other menu items include fried carrot cake, rojak – a spicy fruit and vegetable salad – roti prata with dhal curry, and beef rendang.

There are three desserts on the menu, Kueh Lapis, a grilled spice cake that is baked two millimetres at a time until it's three inches high, chocolate chiffon cake, the subject of much discussion in *Crazy Rich Asians* and that Lee had to bake four times until she got the exact consistency she wanted, and Southeast Asian fruits.

Lee said Singapore is a lot like Vancouver with a mixture of cultures, and she wants Crazy Rich Feast to be a fun way to bring people together and raise awareness about the sharing of cultures – it's a throwback to the movie and book.

"It's not just eating – we wanted to recreate the

See Lee page 24



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ARTS CALENDAR

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voice to the unheard stories of
women Friday, Oct. 12 at 11:45
a.m. Free.

**Cap Classics – South of the
Border:** Violinist Nancy DiNovo
and pianist Monica Pfau
perform Friday, Oct. 26 at 11:45
a.m. Free.

CENTENNIAL THEATRE
2300 Lonsdale Ave., North
Vancouver. 604-984-4484
tickets.centennialtheatre.com

Road to Divalicious: Cayla
Brooke shares songs from her
album and stories from her life
Oct. 10-12 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets:
\$20.

**Beethoven's 5th – The Three
Bs and Beyond:** Lions Gate
Sinfonia performs Saturday,
Oct. 13 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets:
\$45/\$39/\$25/\$12. Pre-concert
chats with Maestro Clyde
Mitchell at 6:30 p.m.

Live in Vancouver: Leila
Forouhar performs Sunday,
Oct. 14 at 8 p.m. Admission:
\$35-\$70. Tickets: 604-904-8866
or through the Iranian Yellow
Pages.

A Play, a Pie and a Pint: Teapot
in the Tuba with Mike Allen
on the clarinet and Kathryn
Peterson on the accordion
performs traditional Roma,
pop and seasonal tunes
Wednesday, Oct. 31 at noon.

The performance is followed
by a meat or veggie pie and a
beverage. Tickets: \$25/\$22/\$10.
DEEP COVE COFFEE HOUSE
Mount Seymour United Church,
1200 Parkgate Ave., North
Vancouver.

**DELBROOK COMMUNITY
CENTRE**

851 West Queens Rd., North
Vancouver.

Love Andre Rieu?: Light
classical and fine music

performed by Bill Dobinson's
Virtual Orchestra Saturday,
Oct. 6 at 2 p.m. Admission:
\$10. Tickets: [facebook.com/
myclavinova](https://facebook.com/myclavinova) or bill.do@live.com.

**HIGHLANDS UNITED
CHURCH**

3255 Edgemont Blvd., North
Vancouver.

Matinee Series: The Vancouver
Cello Quartet comprised of
Lee Duckles, Luke Kim, Cristian
Markos and Kevin Park perform
Wednesday, Oct. 17 at 1:30
p.m. Admission: \$20. Info:
vancouverchambermusic.com.

KAY MEEK CENTRE

1700 Mathers Ave., West
Vancouver. 604-981-6335
kaymeekcentre.com

**Cap Global Roots Series – Mad
Dogs & Vancouverites:** A

re-imagining of the classic Joe
Cocker album led by Steve
Dawson Oct. 12 and 13, 7:30-
10:30 p.m. Tickets: \$56/\$53.

Cabaret Series: The Marc
Atkinson Trio comprised of
multi-instrumentalist Marc
Atkinson, bassist Joey Smith and
rhythm guitarist Brett Martens
perform with guest violinist
Cameron Wilson Oct. 18 and 19
at 7:30 p.m. Tickets: \$38/\$36.

Dang Show: The Blue Light
Theater Group Inc. performs an
eclectic music style combining
piano, saxophone, vocals and
percussion Friday, Oct. 19,
8-9:30 p.m. Tickets: \$30-\$60.

**LYNN VALLEY UNITED
CHURCH**

3201 Mountain Hwy., North
Vancouver.

Friday Night Live: A storytelling
and musical experience for all
ages Fridays at 8 p.m. Schedule:
Oct. 5, Cate Richardson accompa-
nied by Matt Grinke; Oct. 12, Craig
Addy; Oct. 19, Melanie Dekker; and
Oct. 26, Illiteratty. Tickets: \$15 at
the door. Info: fnlnorthvan.com.

**PARKGATE COMMUNITY
CENTRE**

3625 Banff Court, North
Vancouver.

Love Andre Rieu?: Light
classical and fine music
performed by Bill Dobinson's
Virtual Orchestra Saturday,
Oct. 28 at 3 p.m. Admission:
\$10. Tickets: [facebook.com/
myclavinova](https://facebook.com/myclavinova) or bill.do@live.com.

Theatre

ANNE MACDONALD STUDIO
333 Chesterfield Ave., North
Vancouver. 604-990-3474
plththeatre.org

Bodacious: A monthly reading
series of new plays by and
about women the last Saturday
of every month at 7:30 p.m.
Admission by a suggested
donation of \$5 at the door.

DEEP COVE SHAW THEATRE
4360 Gallant Ave., North
Vancouver.

Rebel Women: A theatre
verbatim play where women's
actual words and songs are
used to create the play Oct.
12, 13, 17-20 and 24-27 at 8
p.m. with a matinee Oct. 21
at 2 p.m. Admission: \$20/\$18.
Tickets: 604-929-3200 or
deepcovestage.com.

FIREHALL ARTS CENTRE

280 E. Cordova St., Vancouver

Cain and Abel: The Biting
School presents brothers Arash
and Aryo Khakpour in Cain
and Abel, until Oct. 6 at 8 p.m.
Tickets: \$20

KAY MEEK CENTRE

1700 Mathers Ave., West
Vancouver. 604-981-6335
kaymeekcentre.com

Play Series – The Piano

Teacher: A concert pianist
rediscovers music and love after
the death of her husband Oct.

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Lee hosting two Crazy Rich Feast cooking classes at the school

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moments of the movie and
the book where it's fun, and
people can dress up as their
favourite character, as simple
as Rachel Chu or as fancy as
Astrid – basically to have fun
over good food and laughter,"
Lee said. There will be enter-
tainment and music as well.

Lee has seen *Crazy Rich
Asians* twice and loves both
movie and the book. Her love
of the movie is two-fold – she
loves how it shows families in
all their craziness, something
she thinks is universal, and
she loves that it's a foodie
movie and book.

Lee said she could relate
to the movie and book as
the main character struggles
with an identity crisis, fam-
ily expectations, love – she
called it the Asian Pride and
Prejudice.

"It shows how families can
be so crazy, whether it's in

the Western world or Asian,"
Lee said.

People look at Lee and,
they have a hard time figuring
her out because she's picked
up different pieces of different
cultures on four continents in
the past 20 years – she is also
married to a British-Italian.

Lee grew up in Singapore,
but she and her family have
been in Canada for three years
after having lived in Kentucky,
Denmark, Dubai, Viet Nam,
Kiev and New Zealand.

"We chose to come here
because we loved this place
so much, it has all the values
that me and my husband
have, and it's a great place
to raise our girls," Lee said.
"Having moved around a lot
we see this place as being
truly amazing place in so
many ways, in regards to val-
ues, and nature and sports."

Lee has started a culinary
business on the North Shore
as well, called Gaia Kitchen,

where she prepares frozen
Asian meals and desserts
from fresh, natural ingredients
that can be ordered and then
cooked and baked at home.

After the event on Oct.
20, Lee will be holding two
Crazy Rich Feast cooking
classes at the Pacific Institute
of Culinary Arts that will be
open to the public. The first
one will be a holiday theme so
participants can learn to make
tasty canapés for upcoming
Christmas parties.

The second one will
feature a lesson on cooking
Hainanese Chicken, the most
famous Singaporean dish that
many people fly to Singapore
to taste.

Crazy Rich Feast takes
place at 101 Bistro, at the
Pacific Institute of Culinary
Arts, 1505 W. 2nd Ave.,
Vancouver, on Oct. 20 from
6:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. For infor-
mation, go to [picachef.com/
crazyrichfeast](http://picachef.com/crazyrichfeast).