

# Meet Mai Pham

MAI PHAM IS THE CHEF/OWNER OF NATIONALLY ACCLAIMED LEMON GRASS RESTAURANT AND LEMON GRASS ASIAN GRILL AND NOODLE BAR, INCLUDING THE NEWLY OPENED LOCATION AT THE SACRAMENTO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. SHE RECENTLY LAUNCHED STAR GINGER, A FAST CASUAL CONCEPT THAT FEATURES SOUTHEAST ASIAN STREET AND COMFORT FOODS.

MAI IS THE AUTHOR OF *PLEASURES OF THE VIETNAMESE TABLE*, WHICH RECEIVED A PRESTIGIOUS JAMES BEARD AWARD NOMINATION, AND *THE BEST OF VIETNAMESE AND THAI COOKING*, WHICH WAS FEATURED ON NPR'S *FRESH AIR* AND *MARTHA STEWART LIVING* TELEVISION SHOWS. CURRENTLY SHE'S WRITING AND EDITING THE FORTHCOMING *FLAVORS OF ASIA*, A COLLABORATIVE BOOK WITH THE CULINARY INSTITUTE OF AMERICA THAT SHOWCASES SEVEN ASIAN CUISINES.

A FOOD COLUMNIST FOR THE *SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE* AND HOST OF THE FOOD NETWORK SPECIAL "MY COUNTRY, MY KITCHEN: VIETNAM," MAI IS THE WINNER OF AN IACP BERT GREENE AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED JOURNALISM. A FREQUENT GUEST CHEF INSTRUCTOR AT THE CIA, SHE ALSO TEACHES SOUTHEAST ASIAN FLAVORS THROUGHOUT THE U.S. AND LEADS CULINARY TOURS TO SOUTHEAST ASIA ON BEHALF OF THE CULINARY INSTITUTE OF AMERICA. HER INAUGURAL TOUR OF VIETNAM WAS FEATURED IN A TWO-PART CNN *TRAVEL NOW* SPECIAL.



MAI WAS BORN IN SAIGON, VIETNAM AND RAISED IN VIETNAM AND THAILAND. IN 1975, AT THE END OF THE VIETNAM WAR, SHE CAME TO THE UNITED STATES WITH HER FAMILY, AND COMPLETED A DEGREE IN JOURNALISM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND. FOLLOWING A SEVEN-YEAR CAREER AS AN ON-AIR CORRESPONDENT FOR A NUMBER OF ABC NEWS AFFILIATES AND LATER AS A SPEECHWRITER FOR THE THEN GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA, SHE RETURNED TO HER LOVE OF FOOD AND LAUNCHED LEMON GRASS RESTAURANT IN SACRAMENTO.

MAI HAS TRAVELED EXTENSIVELY OVER THE YEARS IN ASIA, STUDYING THE BEST OF HOME COOKING, RESTAURANT AND STREET FOOD TRADITIONS, AND LEARNING FROM VILLAGE COOKS, NOODLE MAKERS, SPICE MERCHANTS, ACCLAIMED WOK CHEFS, AND MANY OTHER CULINARY EXPERTS.

