



« Alexander Palermo – Cube Cafe & Marketplace

Adam and Josh Dragotta – The Greasy Weiner »

Dominic Lau – Don Chow Tacos

By Virginia Ginsburg



Restaurateur Profile: Dominic Lau

Co-Owner: Don Chow Tacos

Location: Anywhere (it's a truck)

<http://www.donchowntacos.com>

Yelp: 3.5 stars

Interview Date: Saturday, April 24, 2010

In my quest to get “behind the food,” I couldn’t possibly leave out food trucks, which have exploded in popularity throughout Los Angeles over the past 12 months. Curious to find out who is behind the wheel of those trucks, I met up with Dominic Lau at the [Silverlake Flea Market](#), where about six food trucks gathered to feed shoppers and passerby.

“We opened a year ago on April 22, 2009,” says Dominic (partner is Lawrence Lie). “We’re considered a ‘granddaddy’ of food trucks just because there were only four of us at the time, and now there are at least 90.” Dominic started Don Chow Tacos as an “experiment” with Lawrence, and he recognizes that even though their business might be considered ‘established’ by food truck standards, they still have a lot of room to grow and learn.

“We basically saw what [Kogi](#) was doing and thought it was a cool idea,” says Dominic. “We took our Chinese heritage and mixed it with the best thing about living in Los Angeles – Mexican food – to create the concept behind our truck.” This explains the Mexican-Chinese fusion menu that was created based on “our mothers’ and grandmothers’ and friends’ moms’ recipes.”

Dominic and Lawrence started out by going to bars Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. “It was crazy – we started out in Venice, and those bars can get really insane, says Dominic. “We started the same week as [Calbi](#), and it was a time when Kogi was leading the charge, but people still didn’t really know about [Twitter](#) ... times have definitely changed since then!” With both of them holding down full-time jobs, the “night shift” was hard at times, but they kept on until they felt ready to hire the staff that today runs most of the day-to-day operations.

Dominic is quick to tell me that he’s not a chef, but he does love food! He has a “day job” at the [University of Southern California](#) (USC) doing IT support for the [Engineering Department](#). He also has a BS in Economics, a Masters in Education, and is currently pursuing a doctorate in Education (EDD) from USC. Dominic and Lawrence met while pursuing their undergraduate degrees at USC. According to Dominic, this truck is all about having some fun and learning something. “We’re different from a lot of the other trucks because we aren’t in the truck every day – we really have the best of both worlds here.”

In addition to touring the city and parking to feed hungry followers, the truck also is available to cater public and private parties and events. “I love the flexibility to move around – take the kitchen with us – and be wherever we

want to be,” says Dominic. “Half the fun of this business is the novelty of showing up at a party or wedding and seeing how excited everybody gets when we’re there.”

Dominic says that his favorite part of owning a food truck is the joy his customers express. “The smiles after they eat the food is awesome!” he says. “I didn’t truly understand the power of compliments until we did this.”

The hardest part of owning a food truck (aside from the parking tickets) for Dominic is finding the balance between the fun side and the business side. “We want to make sure that we keep the fun side happening,” he says. That means balancing bar and street fair appearances with catering gigs to keep things interesting and fresh while also managing cash flow.

Look for Don Chow Tacos with Guy Fieri on the [Food Network](#) June 28th!

Note to fellow Trojans: You know those awesome bacon-wrapped hot dogs that you chow down after the games? Don Chow Taco’s ‘Ultimate LA Taco’ is a tribute to those! They are topped with bacon and grilled onions. Yum!

[Ads by Google](#)

[Local Coupons](#)

1 ridiculously huge coupon a day. Get 50-90% off your city's best!

www.Groupon.com

[Free Restaurant Coupons](#)

Why Pay Full Price? Check Out Our Free Restaurant Coupons & Save Now.

couponmountain.com/RestaurantCoupon

[M.Ed. Program—Online](#)

Earn your Masters in Education with our online program—Request info!

Education.cu-portland.edu

[Apartments near USC](#)

Off Campus Student Housing near USC USC Student Housing

www.nupac.com

Tags: [dominic lau](#), [don chow tacos](#), [food truck](#), [lawrence lie](#), [los angeles](#), [mexican asian fusion](#), [mexican chinese fusion](#), [restaurant entrepreneur](#), [yelp](#)

This entry was posted on April 26, 2010 at 9:07 pm and is filed under [Uncategorized](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site.

 Like Be the first to like this post.

Leave a Reply

Enter your comment here...



Guest



Log In



Log In



Log In



Email (required)

Your email address will not be published.

Name (required)

Website

Notify me of follow-up comments via email.

Notify me of new posts via email.

Post Comment

