

Wine Spectator

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WINE & DESIGN

At Home With Anita Lo

The New York chef shares her weekend retreat on Long Island's Moriches Bay



BY LIZZIE MUNRO

Although the commute from Anita Lo's apartment to her award-winning restaurant, Annisa, in New York's Greenwich Village, couldn't be more convenient, the chef-owner's 450-square-foot residence is less ideal for at-home entertaining.

"I once roasted some lamb chops and I smoked up the entire building," quips the chef, who prefers to host guests at her home in East Moriches, N.Y. A far cry from her city accommodations, the getaway boasts waterfront access for fishing, as well as a spacious kitchen. But in keeping with the style of her weekend of cooking—less complicated than her restaurant fare—the chef opts for natural tones and clean, simple lines in the property's design.

"I don't like anything that is ostentatious," says Lo. "I am pretty reserved at the core."

Lo bought the clapboard home nine years ago, after having first considered merging her apartment with the unit upstairs. The allure of living on the water, however, combined with the city's steep real estate prices, clinched her decision to buy a weekend house instead. Though the residence has remained largely unchanged since Lo's purchase, the one area the chef decided to remodel was the kitchen.

"It really wasn't a bad kitchen before—it was just old," she explains, citing limited counter space, and linoleum flooring that she replaced

TOWN AND COUNTRY

Chef Anita Lo, of New York's Annisa, purchased her waterfront home in East Moriches, N.Y., nine years ago, lured by the prospect of entertaining guests away from her small apartment in the city. While the house retains much of its original design, Lo has extensively renovated the kitchen.

with hardwood oak. In addition, she installed new appliances, cabinetry and, most noticeably, charcoal-colored soapstone countertops. "I just think it's a really great all-purpose countertop," says Lo of the addition. Soft enough to be oiled and buffed free of nicks and dents, the cool stone also provides an ideal surface for rolling out pastry.

Conveniences were integrated into the kitchen's design as well, including a faucet above the stove that allows pots to be filled while on the burner. Heavy or cumbersome appliances, such as the stand mixer, are tucked away on shelves that can be lifted to counter level and locked into place when in use. Another important consideration was shelving for Lo's cookbooks. A cookbook author in her own right, Lo turns to the classics for inspiration.

"I'm a big fan of *The Joy of Cooking*," she says with a laugh. "I love *Baking with Julia*; I love Marcella Hazan's *Essentials of Classic Italian Cooking*. I don't cook a lot by recipes, but when I do it's nice to look those things up."

Lo's Chinese-American heritage and classical French training have

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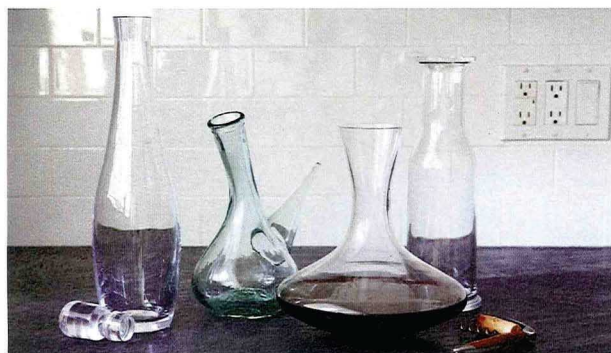
GO FISH

Given her proximity to the shore, Lo relishes the opportunity to cook using fish she catches herself. In addition to reeling in sea bass, fluke and kingfish, the chef grows her own herbs and forages for clams on the beach.



OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND

Lo has added many convenient touches to the house's kitchen, including retractable storage shelves for cumbersome appliances, such as her stand mixer, that can be lifted and locked into place when in use.



SEASONAL SELECTIONS

Lo maintains a varied and versatile wine collection in the basement of her home, amounting to approximately a dozen cases, with selections of summer whites, reds for fall, Manzanilla Sherries, and sparkling and still sakes.



SPICE OF LIFE

The extensive pantry is stocked with a global array of staples and spices, including *yuzu kosho*, coconut milk, fennel pollen and Korean *gochujang*, a fermented condiment made from chiles, sticky rice, soybeans and salt.

influenced her unique take on cuisine, and her global style is reflected in her pantry. "I've got some seriously multicultural condiments and spices," she says, pointing out an exhaustive list of kitchen staples: "I keep *yuzu* and *yuzu kosho*; I've got anchovies; I've got fish sauce; I've got coconut milk, and lots of different kinds of pasta. I've got fennel pollen, hoisin, Korean *gochujang*, and sumac," says Lo, before adding, "and the usual stuff, like garlic, onions, carrots and lemons. You have to have lemons."

No less varied is her wine collection, which she stores in the basement. Among the estimated 10 to 12 cases of wine, Lo keeps late-summer favorites on hand, such as Pazo de Señorans Albariño Rías Baixas 2011 and Olivier Sumeire La Croix du Prieur Rosé Côtes des Provence 2012, plus bottles of Eva Fricke Riesling Schlossberg 2011 and a selection of Amarone from Zenato for fall. In addition, she has a taste for Sherry, especially Manzanilla Sherries from Equipo Navazos' La Bota series in the warmer months. She enjoys sakes, both still and sparkling, year-round, especially Narutotai Ginjo Namagenshu and Urakasumi

Zen Junmai Ginjo.

"I try to have a cellar that's versatile," explains Lo. "Sometimes I'll consult my beverage manager about what wine we should be drinking with what we're eating."

As for the menu, it's often simple and straightforward. "Annisa's [menu] is very ingredient-focused, but there's a lot of manipulation involved. I think on the island it's simpler," she says. Oftentimes, she'll let the local produce—or what she's caught after an afternoon of fishing and clamming on Moriches Bay—dictate what she'll make for dinner.

Lo says that she's caught sea bass, fluke, kingfish and blowfish, and has foraged in the sand for hard-shell clams—such as littleneck, cherry-stone and quahog—as well as soft-shelled steamers. She also has access to fruit trees, juniper berries and fresh herbs in her backyard, and uses homegrown or freshly caught ingredients whenever possible.

"If I can use something I've grown, or catch my own fish or dig up clams, that's when I'm happiest," explains Lo. "It's just the most amazing feeling." □