

Yauatcha serves a classy version of Chinese dumplings

By [Nina Wu](#)

June 15, 2017



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Ellen Kim, left, and Stella Han enjoy a meal at Yauatcha Waikiki, a hip, contemporary dim sum teahouse at the newly designed International Market Place.



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Yauatcha's happy hour is called "Flow & Prosper." Hours are from 3 to 6 p.m., and it takes place only at the bar.



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Dim sum, at right, clockwise from the bottom: Roasted Duck Pumpkin Puff, Chive Flower Dumpling and Phoenix Tail Shrimp Shu Mai. At left, tasty cocktails from the "Flow" section. Pictured are the Flower & Stone, left, and Ginger Smash.

Yauatcha Waikiki, a contemporary dim sum teahouse, offers another reason to visit the new International Market Place. The teahouse offers a decor inspired by the five elements of feng shui: wood, fire, metal, earth and water. It's an outside, open-style venue — brick mixed with dark wood on white floors, with pendant lights and pops of blue, green and red.

Truly international in style, Yauatcha is just one of a number of restaurants owned by the Hakkasan Group, with two locations in London, four in India and one other U.S. location: Houston.

Rather than happy hour, Yauatcha calls its afternoon specials "Flow & Prosper," with drink and dim sum specials from 3 to 6 p.m. weekdays. According to the menu, the number six ("liu" in Chinese) sounds like "flow" and is considered lucky, so there are six cocktails available for \$8 each. The number eight ("fa" in Chinese) sounds like the word "prosper," and thus, eight dim sum choices are offered for \$6 each. Both are offered at a \$1 or \$2 discount from regular prices.

THE EXPERIENCE

There are no carts rolling by here, nor the loud clatter and chatter that usually accompanies dim sum. The "Flow & Prosper" specials are available only at the gleaming white bar, a giant rectangle that continues seamlessly between the covered lanai and interior of the restaurant.

If evening has hit and you want to enjoy tradewinds, choose the lanai, shielded partially by blue glass panes, but if the humidity of summer has you slumping, you can opt for the air-conditioned interior inside the sliding glass doors.

Chairs are tall, with decorative, square backs, and plentiful. Service is attentive and professional.

Validated parking in the International Market Place garage (enter via Kuhio Avenue) costs \$2 for two hours. Yauatcha also has a pedicab service that will pick you up and drop you off in Waikiki.

YAUATCHA WAIKIKI

>> **Where:** Grand Lanai, International Market Place
>> **Info:** 739-9318, yauatcha.com/waikiki

Happy hour: 3-6 p.m. Monday-Friday

>> Chive Flower Dumpling, \$6
>> Roasted Duck Pumpkin Puff, \$6
>> Crisp Prawn Dumpling, \$6
>> Specialty cocktails, \$8

THE FOOD

Dim sum is an ideal food for pau hana, with appetizers presented in threes. The “Prosper” selections of dim sum at Yauatcha are tasty, artfully presented, contemporary interpretations of traditional dishes.

One of my favorite bites of savory and sweet was the roasted duck pumpkin puffs, with a salty mix of pumpkin, mushroom and roasted duck with oyster sauce inside a crisp, chewy covering of mochi rice flour. It's shaped to look like a miniature pumpkin, with a few stems of green herbs on top to complete the look.

Chinese chive flower dumplings topped with goji berries looked like little glimmering purses mixed with a touch of jade.

The Shanghai siew long bun, better known as the popular street food xialongbao (small, steamed buns), were moist inside. These steamed appetizers were just right and not too greasy.

Next round, I'd love to try the dramatic-looking, crisp prawn dumplings with decorative strips of dough that remind me of kataifi.

THE DRINK

Most of the time, you think of dim sum with tea, but the cocktails on the “Flow” list are beautifully crafted and presented.

My Ginger Smash was served in a generously tall glass, topped with fresh mint and ginger candy. The mix of Virginia Black whiskey, ginger, cardamom, vanilla, lemongrass, lemon and ginger beer was sort of like drinking a glass of ginger candy.

The Flower & Stone, a mix of Bombay Sapphire East gin, strawberry, fennel, apricot, yuzu, mint and rhubarb, is delicate, fruity and subtle, with a pretty flower floating on top.

THE VERDICT

Sure, it's fun to visit dim sum places with the carts and clattering dishes and chopsticks — but this venue is classy, the cocktails and dim sum are great and the Flow & Prosper menu offers a great deal, so it's definitely worth a return visit. A pricier version of dim sum, Yauatcha is ideal for date night or guests from out of town. It's meant to impress — and it did.