

# Where quality is always on the menu

By Sarah Pacheco

Take one part creativity, two parts passion and mix with some of the best food on the island and you've got the recipe for Alan Wong's Restaurants.

Opened in 1995, on the third floor of a downtown office building, Alan Wong's has since grown into one of Hawaii's most enterprising restaurant chains, with a second location, The Pineapple Room by Alan Wong, added in 1999 at Macy's Ala Moana, and two cookbooks released a decade ago. And the secret ingredient to its success, according to human resource manager Carrie Perdue-Graham, is a dedication to both food quality and service.

"At both Alan Wong's Honolulu and The Pineapple Room, we hope to provide our guests with a unique dining experience where they are able to 'taste Hawaii,'" she said. "We want our



Carrie Perdue-Graham

guests to feel welcomed, at home and appreciated through our service, and we are committed to doing our best for our guests every day."

To achieve such high standards of customer satisfaction, Perdue-Graham said that above all else, employees need to have a positive attitude and willingness to learn.

"We value basic knowledge in the culinary industry, such as knife skills or service standards, but having a passionate and positive attitude is always most important," she said. "With a positive attitude, the employee will grow with the company and, even more importantly, grow personally too."

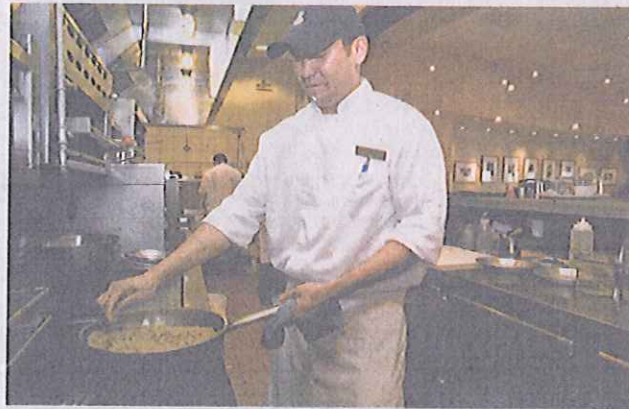
In fact, the company encourages employment advancement. Perdue-Graham said many of the individuals on her management team have worked their way up in the company and have been mentored by Alan Wong personally.

"I appreciate that we are a coaching, counseling, mentoring and educating kind of company," she said. "We want to educate our employees, our guests and the community."

Currently, the restaurant is looking for a line cook, pastry cook, sous chef, busser and restaurant manager to join the team. And like the dishes on Alan Wong's menu, the benefits (see below) are plentiful.

"The employees are the most enjoyable part of the job at AWR," Perdue-Graham said. "Our staff reflects a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences, so we know that with the right attitude, knowledge and skill can be acquired and learned."

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Sous chef Sean Walsh whips up another culinary delight at Alan Wong's Honolulu.

Leah Friel photos

## Wong prefers keeping it local

Just 20 years ago, a group of 12 local chefs partnered together with local farmers, fishermen and ranchers to form Hawaii Regional Cuisine, a movement that helped establish Hawaii as a sought-after destination for ethnic-inspired cuisines made with fresh, local products.

Among the group's founding members was Alan Wong, who today continues the push toward sustainability at his two restaurants — Alan Wong's Honolulu and The Pineapple Room by Alan Wong, as well as other community initiatives.

"We believe in supporting our local community by supporting local agriculture to do our part in increasing Hawaii food self-sufficiency," said human resource manager Carrie Perdue-Graham.

In fact, Wong offers mentoring opportunities to staffers through field trips to various farms and places of cultural significance, such as Hawaii's Plantation Village.

"Our management team is dedicated to providing supplemental learning opportunities for their staff," Perdue-Graham said. "We believe in investing in people, providing them with opportunities to grow and learn in a variety of ways."

## The 411

**Company:**

Alan Wong's Restaurants

**Address:** 1857 S. King St., Honolulu, HI 96826

**Web:** [alanwongs.com](http://alanwongs.com)

**Phone:** 949-1939

**Owner/Chef:** Alan Wong

**Founded:** 1995

**Employees:** 150

**Restaurants:** Alan Wong's

Honolulu and The Pineapple Room by Alan Wong

**Now Hiring:** Line cook, pastry cook, sous chef, busser and restaurant manager

**Benefits:** Two weeks annual vacation; health and wellness benefits that include medical, dental, vision, prescription plan as well as chiropractic and acupuncture care; Aflac supplemental insurance; 401(k) retirement

plan; flexible work schedules; numerous learning, training and educational opportunities; employee referral program; employee restaurant discount; room for advancement opportunities and additional management benefits.

**Noteworthy:** Since its inception, Alan Wong's Restaurants has received numerous recognitions, including a James Beard Foundation nomination for the nation's

"Best New Restaurant" in 1996; ranking as one of "America's Best 50 Restaurants" by *Gourmet Magazine* in 2001 (No. 6) and 2006 (No. 8); and 10 Hale Aina Awards as the state's "Restaurant of the Year." The eatery also has been voted by the Ilima Awards as Hawaii's "Best Restaurant" for nine years and continues to receive top ratings in *Zagat*, *Gault Millau* and *Wine Spectator*.

