

## 2008 HONOREE

## JEFFERSON EVANS AWARD



## PENG S. LOOI

## Chef

**C**hef Peng S. Looi's life is as eclectic as the dishes he serves. He was born and grew up in Ipoh, Malaysia before continuing his high school education in Manchester, England. In 1981, Chef Looi came to the United States and earned his degree in civil engineering. He soon realized his heart was with cooking, not engineering, while completing an internship.

In 1987, Looi opened his first award-winning restaurant, August Moon Chinese Bistro ([www.augustmoonbistro.com](http://www.augustmoonbistro.com)), featuring contemporary Chinese cuisine with Southeast Asian influences reflecting his ethnic background. In 1994 came the upscale casual Asiatique ([www.asiatiquerestaurant.com](http://www.asiatiquerestaurant.com)) serving his own unique and artful interpretation of Pacific Rim cuisine. Local and regional food critics have quoted Looi's work as "works of edible art."

Recognition came soon, with exceptional reviews from every Louisville-area food writer and other national features in The Courier-Journal, Louisville Magazine, Leo Magazine, American Automobile Tour Guide, Mobil, Scene Magazine, and Vegetarian Times. Looi's works were also featured in Asian Restaurant News, Bon Appetit and Chef's Magazine.

His first establishment was awarded 'Best Oriental Restaurant' by Louisville Magazine. In addition, the restaurant received the Leo Magazine's 'Outstanding Chinese Restaurant' award for multiple years. It recently won the 'Best Upscale Casual' award by Prep Magazine.

Asiatique was awarded 'Best Asian Restaurant' by Louisville Magazine and Leo Magazine. It has also won the Citysearch's "Best Asian Food" award.

Chef Looi has been invited to cook at the prestigious James Beard House four times and was a master chef at the World Gourmet Summit in Las Vegas 2006. In 2007, he was invited to judge at the prestigious Culinaire Malaysia 2007, the biggest culinary competition in the South East Asian region.

Well-known for his commitment to community and charitable causes, Looi is a willing and enthusiastic participant in the annual 'Taste of the Nation', which is a nationwide affair. In addition, he is a 'celebrity chef' participant in other fundraisers like 'Dare to Care,' 'The Healing Place,' 'Juvenile Diabetics,' 'Kentucky Harvest' and many others. Chef Looi has been the coordinating chef for the Asian All-Star dinner, the major annual fundraiser for the Crane House (an Asian Institute based in Louisville, Kentucky).