

‘Bringing Food to the Table’ tackles Southeast Asian culinary journey in Washington

Written by Philippine Embassy DC
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From left, Patrice Cleary, owner and chef of Filipino-American restaurant Purple Patch; Seng Luangrath, owner and chef of Lao restaurant Thip Kao; and NAAAP DC President Katie Apolinario at “Bringing Food to the Table,” a tableside conversation, held at the Chancery Annex Building in Washington on April 17, 2018. (Philippine Embassy photos)

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WASHINGTON — The Philippine Embassy and the National Association of Asian American Professionals, Washington, D.C. Chapter (NAAAP-DC) co-organized “Bringing Food to the Table,” a tableside conversation, with female Southeast Asian chefs and restaurateurs, at the Chancery Annex Building on April 17, 2018, as part of the 2018 programming of the ASEAN Women’s Circle-Washington DC (AWC-DC).

Patrice Cleary, owner and chef of Filipino-American restaurant Purple Patch; and Seng Luangrath, owner and chef of Lao restaurant Thip Kao, were the guest speakers at the event.

NAAAP DC President Katie Apolinario moderated the discussion.

Asked about how they started in the restaurant business, Chef Patrice and Chef Seng both said that they did not begin cooking professionally until they were in their 40s.

However, they had always held a passion for cooking, nurtured by their mothers’ influence, that eventually drove them to put up restaurants dedicated to their native cuisines.

The guest speakers shared how being representatives of their cultures is both an honor and a responsibility.

“You feel this anxiety because you want to do it well,” said Chef Patrice with regard to Purple Patch’s being the first Filipino restaurant in Washington, D.C.

“I don’t consider myself a pioneer. It’s about passing the torch,” she further said.

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Chief Patricia Cleary (left) and Chef Seng Luangrath chat before the tableside