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Bobbi Oshiro, from left, and fellow members of the Miami Pickleball Club: Noe Khlif, Eric Oncins and Milan Rane.
Photo courtesy of Major League Pickleball

In 2020, Bobbi Oshiro was coaching tennis at a country club near Fort Lauderdale, Florida, when a colleague asked her to play pickleball on nearby courts. She'd never heard of the game but agreed to try it out. She lost. In spite of losing, pickleball had captured her attention. That's when she bought her first pickleball paddle.

Oshiro began to practice often and played her first professional pickleball tournament in 2021. "I met a great community," Oshiro says. "They helped me get started."

Born and raised in Honolulu, Hawaii, Oshiro was named the 2011 Interscholastic League of Honolulu tennis player of the year while in her junior year of high school. She played tennis at Boise State University from 2012 to 2016 while majoring in health science. Oshiro moved to Plantation, Florida, where she currently lives, to coach at a high-performance tennis academy.



Pickleball pro Bobbi Oshiro is among the top 20 players in the U.S. Photo courtesy of Major League Pickleball

In 2024, Oshiro received more than eight medals on the Association of Pickleball Player tour, and gold medals in singles and mixed doubles at the USA Pickleball Nationals, held in November 2024 in Mesa, Arizona. Oshiro is in the top 20 players in the United States according to DUPR, Dynamic Universal Pickleball Rating, a ratings system ranging from two (novice) to eight (professional). Oshiro, at the time of this article, is listed as 5.941. Scores are based on wins and losses.

Oshiro works part-time at DUPR as a consultant, managing client accounts. This position gives her more flexibility to travel and compete in pickleball tournaments. She's excited to see pickleball grow where federations have formed in countries such as Australia, Canada, China, India and the United Kingdom.

"We're aiming for pickleball to be in the Olympics in 2032 or 2036," she says. "A lot of those countries are forming federations to help organize the sport with the goal of being able to make this a worldwide sport and eventually be in the Olympics."

Pickleball is one of the fastest-growing sports in the country, according to a 2024 report by the Sports & Fitness Industry Association. The number of players has grown 51.8% from 2022 to 2023.

"It's very easy to pick up and easy to learn," says Oshiro. "You can go out with your family, with your mom and dad, with your siblings, with your aunt and uncle. You can go out with a variety of skilled and not skilled players and have a really enjoyable game."

Reviving the sparkle of Chinatown's nightclub era



Founded by Cynthia Yee, the Grant Avenue Follies consists of Chinese American dancers over the age of 65.
Photo by Zabrina Deng

Cynthia Yee has been dancing since she was 10 years old, an unusual pastime for a Chinese girl growing up in San Francisco's Chinatown. Dancing was frowned upon in the 1950s, says Yee. Her family lived in the same building as the famous tap dance duo, Dorothy Toy and Paul Wing, known as Toy & Wing.

"I used to see Dorothy walking up and down the stairs with her toe shoes and makeup kit and looking so glamorous," Yee remembers. "I said, 'I want to be just like her.' I begged my mom for dance lessons."

Toy arranged for Yee to be trained by the same teacher who instructed her. Many years later, Toy offered Yee the opportunity to replace an injured dancer for the "Toy & Wing Oriental Review" for two months after high school. Yee accepted and toured with a cabaret show performing in dinner theaters all over the West Coast. When it was time for the original dancer to return, she changed her mind. Yee stayed with Toy & Wing for 10 years. The Chinese Sky Room in San Francisco was the show's homebase.

She returned to San Francisco, married and worked in the jewelry industry until she retired.

In the early 2000s, Yee began tap dance lessons at the local senior center. Yee and a few of the other participants from the nightclub era were asked to perform at a fundraiser. The women decided to pull from their past and wore costumes with fishnet stockings and feather headdress.

"Everyone dropped their chopsticks and said, 'Wow! What is going on?'" Yee says. "We got a standing ovation."

Yee founded Grant Avenue Follies, a nonprofit dance troupe with Chinese American women over the age of 65. The Grant Avenue Follies, based in

San Francisco and named for the main street in Chinatown, formed in 2003 with just four dancers. They've grown to 12 dancers and practice every Friday night before going out to dinner.

The dancers get requests to perform at banquets and special events. The shows last about 30 to 45 minutes. The lineup includes an opening dance, singing and a magic show, performed by Yee, who studied magic 20 years ago.

"I'd always been interested and intrigued by magic," Yee says. "I added some magic to our show. I do an audience participation. I start off with three oranges, ask a volunteer for a dollar bill. We make the magic work and somehow the dollar appears in the orange."

In 2018, filmmaker and visual artist Luka Yuanyuan Yang documented the Grant Avenue Follies as they toured in Las Vegas and Hawaii and overseas in Beijing, Havana and Shanghai. In Yang's first film, "Chinatown Cha-Cha," she shares the personal stories of the dancers, especially the late Coby Yee, a popular burlesque dancer from 1940 through 1970 at the Forbidden City, a nightclub in San Francisco.

"Chinatown Cha-Cha" premiered in China at the 2024 Pingyao International Film Festival, and at the Hawaii International Film Festival in October 2024. In 2025, the film will play at festivals throughout the United States.

"The Grant Avenue Follies embody the resilience of Chinese American performing artists who persevered despite decades of discrimination," Yang says. "These women found joy and strength through dance, and they're keeping alive the legacy of San Francisco's Chinatown nightclub scene while inspiring others through their performances."



The Grant Avenue Follies troupe gets requests to perform at banquets and special events.
Photo by Zabrina Deng

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Join us as we explore the personal histories, unique styles and lasting impact on modern and contemporary art through the contributions of artists Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Bumpei Usui and Yayoi Kusama.

YASUO KUNIYOSHI (1889-1953)

Yasuo Kuniyoshi was a painter, printmaker and photographer whose artistic vision blended traditional Japanese aesthetics with Modernist sensibilities. He became one of the most celebrated artists in the United States during the early to mid-20th century.

Born Sept. 1, 1889, in Okayama, Japan, Kuniyoshi immigrated to the United States in 1906 as a young man. He studied at the Art Students League of New York, where he created a style that often featured dreamlike, whimsical imagery. His early works included still lifes, circus scenes and female figures executed in soft, muted tones with bold outlines.

For example, in "Landscape" (1920), Kuniyoshi uses low-contrast hues of brown, green and yellow to create an abstracted scene of trees and a bull.



"Landscape" by Yasuo Kuniyoshi

"Strong Woman and Child" (1925) highlights Kuniyoshi's early fascination with the circus during a visit to Paris. The artist utilizes Cubist sensibilities to illustrate a voluptuous woman holding her child's hand while two French flags wave in the background.

During the 1920s and 1930s, Kuniyoshi gained recognition as an important figure in the New York art scene. In 1948, he became the first living artist to have a solo retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art. Despite his success, Kuniyoshi was never granted U.S. citizenship due to restrictive

immigration laws. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, he was classified as an "enemy alien," though he supported the U.S. war effort by creating propaganda posters for the Office of War Information.

In the postwar period, Kuniyoshi's work took

on darker, more abstract themes, reflecting his disillusionment with war and displacement.

Kuniyoshi died of cancer on May 14, 1953. His contributions to American art remain significant, as he helped bridge Eastern and Western artistic traditions, paving the way for future Asian American artists. His work is housed in major collections, including the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the Museum of Modern Art.



"Strong Woman and Child" by Yasuo Kuniyoshi

BUMPEI USUI (1898-1994)

Bumpei Usui was a Japanese American painter, framer and furniture artisan known for his precise realism and craftsmanship. His work, often depicting still lifes and everyday objects, gained recognition for its technical excellence and quiet introspection.

Born in Nagano, Japan, in 1898, Usui immigrated to the United States in the 1920s and settled in New York City. He studied at the National Academy of Design and the Art Students League. During this time, he developed a meticulous painting technique

influenced by European realism and American modernism that earned the respect and admiration of collectors and peers.

Usui's art captured ordinary objects with remarkable detail and sensitivity. His paintings often featured subtle lighting and rich textures, emphasizing the beauty in everyday subjects. "Portrait of Yasuo Kuniyoshi in His Studio" (1930) depicts Kuniyoshi and Usui's friend and colleague. The two met when Kuniyoshi employed Usui as his framer. Their congenial relationship becomes clear to the viewer through the relaxed manner that Usui renders him leaning into a chair with his legs crossed while smoking a tobacco pipe.



"Portrait of Yasuo Kuniyoshi in His Studio" by Bumpei Usui

The artist also became known for his flower studies. Critics often remarked on his use of vibrant colors to create beautiful depictions of nature's creations as seen in "Dahlias" (1938). The painting successfully exhibits the lushness of the leaves, gradating through shades of green and brown.



"Dahlias" by Bumpei Usui

Usui died in 1994, leaving a legacy of masterful still-life paintings that continue to be appreciated for their precision and quiet elegance.

YAYOI KUSAMA (1929-present)

Yayoi Kusama is a Japanese contemporary artist whose groundbreaking work explores themes of infinity, self-obliteration, mental illness and the cosmic interconnectedness of life. Best known for her immersive "Infinity Mirror Rooms," polka dot motifs and large-scale installations, she has become one of the most influential artists of the 20th and 21st centuries.

Born in Matsumoto, Japan, in 1929, Kusama experienced hallucinations as a child, often seeing

fields of dots and patterns extending infinitely. These visions became the foundation of her artistic practice, which she has described as an attempt to "obliterate" herself within her work.

In 1957, she moved to New York City and became a key figure in the avant-garde scene, influencing pop art, minimalism and performance art.

While in New York, Kusama developed a deep, complex and mostly platonic relationship with fellow artist Joseph Cornell. The two shared an intense artistic and emotional connection, with Cornell showering her with love letters and gifts. This period inspired Kusama to experiment with watercolor. She created several delicate, surreal landscapes that had long been forgotten until the Smithsonian American Art Museum rediscovered a collection of her lost watercolors in 2023.



"Fire" by Yayoi Kusama

Paintings like "Fire" (1954) and "Forlorn Spot" (1953) demonstrate her longtime use of dots in her work and how the motif has evolved in her practice.

Kusama's work explores the loss of self through repetition, vastness and immersive environments. Her "Infinity Mirror Rooms" create optical illusions that distort viewers' perception of reality. Her polka dots and "infinity net paintings" symbolize personal obsession and the dissolution of individuality into the infinite.

After returning to Japan in the 1970s, Kusama admitted herself to a psychiatric hospital, where she continues to live while working daily in her studio. Her art saw a resurgence in the 1990s. Today, her installations attract millions worldwide.



"Forlorn Spot" by Yayoi Kusama

To learn more about these artists, visit the Smithsonian American Art Museum's website at americanart.si.edu. The museum also has works by Usui and Kuniyoshi on view in their "Artist to Artist" exhibit until 2026.

Top-tier BBQ restaurant's secret sauce: Great friends



Friends for more than 30 years, Terry Wong, left, Quy Hoang and Robin Wong are the men behind Blood Bros. BBQ. Photo by Andy Dinh

Quy Hoang and brothers Robin Wong and Terry Wong opened the brick-and-mortar restaurant Blood Bros. BBQ in Houston, Texas, at the end of 2018. The trio grew up together in a diverse suburb of southwest Houston, Texas, called Alief. Their neighborhood bordered the city's Chinatown, where they spent a lot of time as kids.

It's reflected in our menu items," Hoang says. "Our high school and middle school had people from all nationalities."

After graduating from high school in the early 1990s, Hoang and the Wongs went their separate ways, seeing each other around town on occasion. The brothers opened a karaoke bar in Houston and Hoang worked with his uncle setting up aquariums. In 2011, Hoang started hanging out with the Wongs at the bar and by 2012, Hoang pitched an idea to run a steak night from the small kitchen on Wednesdays. Hoang expanded to grilling BBQ.

"I started cooking BBQ ribs and would take it down to the bar for the staff to eat," Hoang explains. "Customers would come in and smell the BBQ."

Hoang catered his first event, a Super Bowl party, with BBQ. By 2013, Hoang and the Wongs bought a smoker. For five years, they hosted pop-up events once a month while they worked full-time jobs.

Although Hoang is the pitmaster, handling the smoked meats and house-made sausages, Robin works with him to find sides to complement the proteins. Robin developed his own recipes when he owned the bar.

Hoang learned to cook by experimenting with what he saw on YouTube. "I learned all the BBQ stuff in my backyard," Hoang says.

Customer relations and front-of-the-house issues are Terry's job - his brother and friend say he knows everyone. They've also depended on advice from friends in the industry and cooks in their kitchen who bring techniques and tips with them.

In 2024, [Blood Bros. BBQ](#) received the [MICHELIN Bib Gourmand honor](#), an [award](#) for good quality, good value cooking. The MICHELIN inspector noted, "Few smokehouses celebrate the city's diverse cultural footprint quite like this one, where Texas barbecue traditions merge with Chinese, Vietnamese and Korean flavors."

The restaurant seats almost 100 people in its 3,500-square-foot space. The indoor area has booths, and there's an outdoor patio with picnic tables. The menu features brisket, ribs and sausage, known as the Texas Trinity; Korean-style glazed ribs; and brisket chowfun, one of the restaurant's best-selling dishes. Scratch-made sides include brisket fried rice, smoked gouda macaroni and cheese, and jalapeno creamed corn. Facebook and Instagram highlight the featured item of the day.



Photo by Jessica Attie

Chef cherishes Indian cuisine, childhood memories

Bhavin Chhatwani, the executive chef at Tamasha Modern Indian restaurant in Raleigh, North Carolina, grew up in Rajasthan, North, the western region of India. After graduating from culinary school in 2015, he worked with elite Indian chefs in Bangalore, New Delhi and other cities.

In 2019, Chhatwani moved to San Francisco to work as the senior sous chef at a two Michelin star Indian restaurant. In 2024, Tamasha opened with a menu inspired by Chhatwani's rich and diverse culinary journey.

Chhatwani recently shared favorite childhood memories and cooking advice with *Unity*.

How did you get started?

Chhatwani: As a child, I was fascinated by food – its flavors, origins and preparation. I'd often sneak into restaurant kitchens, observe street food vendors or watch my mother cook. I still remember being 6 years old and pestering my mom in the kitchen. To keep me busy, she gave me some flour to play with, and I ended up making perfect dough. She was surprised and asked where I had learned that. It came naturally from observing her daily. From then on, kneading dough became my little "job" at home, a memory I laugh about fondly.

Why is Kheema Kaleji important to you?

Growing up, one of my father's signature dishes was Kheema Kaleji: minced lamb with liver. It's a dish that brings back fond memories and remains one of the most delicious lamb preparations I've ever tasted. For Tamasha, I've reimaged this dish by pairing it with Parmesan, a potato mousse, and textures of potato with mint dust and dill oil. This modern version is deeply nostalgic for me, blending cherished childhood flavors with contemporary culinary techniques.



Now based in North Carolina, Chef Bhavin Chhatwani grew up in the western region of India. Photo by Harsha Sipani

What advice would you give a home cook interested in learning about Indian cuisine?

For beginners, I recommend starting with simple dishes using readily available spices. Understanding how spices interact with other ingredients is key, and you can experiment as you gain confidence. Pay attention to the order of cooking; whether spices are tempered in oil before onions or added later, it significantly alters the flavor profile.

See Kheema Kaleji recipe on page 8

Kheema Kaleji

Courtesy of Chef Bhavin Chhatwani

Servings: 5

Ingredients

- 4 cups minced lamb
- 1/2 cup lamb liver
- 1/2 cup oil
- 1 1/2 bay leaves
- 1/2 cinnamon stick
- 2-3 pods green cardamom
- 1/2 teaspoon caraway seeds (shahi jeera)
- 2 cups onions, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup ginger-garlic paste
- 2 cups tomatoes, finely chopped
- 4 teaspoons cumin
- 4 teaspoons coriander powder
- 5 teaspoons red chili powder
- 1 bunch dill leaf
- Salt to taste

Potato Parmesan Mousse

- 1 roasted potato
- 8 teaspoons butter
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 4 teaspoons Parmesan
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Small canister of nitrous oxide (N2O)

Garnishes

- 1 3/4 cups potato strings
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 cup fresh mint leaves (for mint dust)
- 4 teaspoons dill (for dill oil)

Directions

Clean the lamb liver, dice it small and put aside. Heat the oil in a pan and add the bay leaves, cinnamon, cardamom and shahi jeera. Let them crackle and release their aroma. Sauté the onions until golden. Add the ginger-garlic paste; cook for 2 minutes.

Add the tomatoes and cook till soft. Mix the cumin, coriander, chili powder and dill. Add the minced lamb. Cook 20-25 minutes until browned. Set the mixture aside.

For the potato Parmesan mousse, roast potatoes at 350 F for 45 minutes. Peel, then blend with butter, cream, Parmesan and salt. Strain. Charge with the N2O.

Fry the potato strings at 375 F until golden.

For the mint dust, dry mint at 105 F for 2 to 5 hours or oven-dry at 120 F for 1 1/2 to 4 hours.

For the dill oil, blanch the dill for 15 seconds, then place in an ice bath. Blend with the oil, and strain through cheesecloth.

Sauté the garlic until golden, and then add the dill leaves and lamb liver. Cook gently with lamb stock (optional).

Place the minced-lamb mixture in a bowl. Add the mousse and potato strings.

Garnish with the mint dust and dill oil. Serve with brioche bun.



Photo by
Harsha Sipani