

Billy Ho

BILLY HO BRINGS SOOTHING SOLACE TO CANGGU THROUGH THE COMFORT FOOD OF HONG KONG, JAPAN AND SOUTH KOREA – BY WILL MEYRICK

Every culture has its culinary comfort zone, from the *Cha Chaan Tengs* of Hong Kong to Japan's *Izakaya* and the *Hanoks* of South Korea, and now Billy Ho recreates this nurturing and indulgent atmosphere in the heart of Canggu, Bali. Although each culture is unique, at Billy Ho there is a similar and consistent philosophy of providing restoration of the soul through food, drinks and company. In many cultures, traditions in cuisine originate in the desire to take some time out from the craziness of life and simply enjoy the moment encapsulated in a meal. By elevating the epicurean experience to a reflective and peaceful experience, the enjoyment of a meal nourishes more than just the body.

In Hong Kong, the Cha Chaan Tengs are 'retro-quirky' or 'old-school original' places where the citizens go to find simplicity and respite from the manic bustle of the city. Traditionally they serve a curious mixture of 'nursery noodle' dishes, sweet milk toasts, and luncheon meats over macaroni. Pork buns and pineapple "bo lo yau" buns are also staple in these establishments served with cups of steaming milk tea.

In Japan, the Izakaya create a neighborhood hangout where friends congregate without agenda. Originating as far back as the late 19th century these communal neighborhood establishments provided a place for the growing population of working, or salary men to blow off steam before returning home to their families. The Izakaya serve traditional snacks such as sashimi, yakitori, grilled meat and seafood, salads, pickles, fried foods, regional delicacies, hot pot dishes, rice and noodle dishes, shared snack style at a sitting bar where conversation is not mandatory, but drinking is, although the more traditional bars have a time limit for customers, thoughtfully sending them home after two hours.

In South Korea many people like to spend their precious recreational time at teahouses, or *Hanoks*, where the architecture and atmosphere is central to the experience. Often an oasis of calm, the *Hanoks'* shelves of ornaments, soft lighting and traditional music are popular with university students, writers and all who seek the delicacy of an ancient tea tradition. Healing teas like the five berry omijacha are coupled with tiny sweet morsels and *patjuk*, a bean and rice flour porridge known to clear the mind.

Billy Ho captures the essence of these gathering places, providing a calm and inviting atmosphere to kick back, forget the world outside and enjoy a meal and a few drinks away from Bali's crowded streets. The restaurant offers a communal dining table and a 7-meter bar that sits before Canggu's first 'beer wall', showcasing hand-crafted beer and the Billy Ho take on classic cocktails.

Slow, authentic and adventurous, combining grassroots sensibilities with a twist of inspiration best describes how Chef Tim Bartholomew likes to cook. Caring about food and produce at every point—from its origin and how it is stored and treated, to how it is cooked and prepared, Tim likes to share his vast knowledge in creating excellence in all aspects of his craft.

Chef Will Meyrick and Tim Bartholomew's menu at Billy Ho is a unique and sophisticated take on the comfortable cuisine of Hong Kong, Japan and South Korea. Guests might begin with a selection of starters such as *tuna sashimi with smoked chilli ginger flower and black tabiko* and *torched tokusen beef rump with fried garlic charred leek tare shoyu and salted egg yolk sauce* before a special salad dish such as *Korean style Ssam of smoked pork belly with pickled chilli mustard green, aged daikon,*

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fresh lettuce, shiso leaf, 3 kinds of wild mint and wheat flour pancake or tuna tataki with green chilli koshu, pickled jalapeno, wasabi mayo and som saa dressing. Billy Ho offers a selection of roasted meats served with maderin pancakes or steamed boas such as roasted pork belly served with pickles kim chi and condiments and BBQ Peking duck served with choy sum and hoisin dressing whilst the Yakatori and grilled selection includes B.S. duck meat balls, yakitore sauce, shoyu and egg and octopus served with fermented chilli and kimchi cucumber. Main courses include twice cooked short rib beef with tamarind and homemade shrimp paste glaze, wok tossed wild mushroom salad and served with fiery nam prik gupi and grilled red miso grouper served with pickled red cabbage with green chilli cashew nuts and white miso crustacean sauce.

Billy Ho is the latest offering by master chef Will Meyrick, the genius behind some of Bali's best and most authentic restaurants. Will is well-known across the country and one of the most respected maestros of the South-East Asian food scene. He continues to explore the culinary landscape of Asia, taking inspiration from the unique food culture of each destination. He can be found at street stalls, in neighborhood kitchens and backyards, at markets, getting off the beaten track to get to the heart of the dishes that move and shake him, tracking down the original recipes that are handed down through generations.

The space at Billy Ho has been beautifully designed by Rob Sample, with a high ceiling decorated with giant black bamboo. The wall behind the bar is created with coloured *sirap* wood whilst guests enjoy chairs made from local leather in the seating area, as well as wicker chairs, hand woven loom chairs and a tattoo-inspired feature mural showing native flowers, by local Canggu artist Ogud, well known for his work in Bali.