

Dining / Dishes destined to change minds

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- by [Wendy Johnson](#)
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JAPANESE cuisine is not everyone's favourite, but I highly recommend – for those tentative to try or who have decided to dislike it – that you book a table at Canberra's newest Japanese restaurant at the Burbury Hotel.

My bet is you'll try dishes not seen elsewhere in the capital and change your view.



Wendy Johnson.

As for those who already love this amazing cuisine? You'll love LiloTang.

LiloTang is the small sister to award-winning Malamay (and just across the foyer). It's part of the highly regarded Chairman Group, which also owns Lanterne Rooms in Campbell and Chairman and Yip in Civic.

LiloTang's contemporary interior features light-coloured pine sliding panels, which are on tracks and can be moved to configure spaces of various sizes, making dining semi-private if desired. It's a nice touch.

Want to start with the food or drinks menu? Let's go drinks.

If you fancy yourself a sake expert, you'll find more than 25 on the menu. LiloTang also fully respects bubbles, Japanese beer, cider and wines, with great drops available. There isn't a huge selection of reds or whites by the glass (start at \$10). Bottles hover between \$40 and \$190.

Sharing is in order at LiloTang and the staff is highly knowledgeable about the menu, which is divided into small dishes, salads, robata (grilled skewers), mains and desserts.

LiloTang's robata grill is massive. Chef Shunsuke Ota uses premium, condensed white charcoal imported from

Japan that heats up to 400 degrees. This expensive charcoal doesn't produce a lot of smoke which means food flavours stand on their own instead of being smothered by smoke.

We agreed the sashimi tuna and avocado salad with wasabi okra soy was to die for (\$14.50), the tuna absolutely melt-in-the-mouth, the avo creamy and the soy a third element that made the dish dance. One of the most popular options, the restaurant confirms.

The sake steamed pipi were an interesting combination with grapes and water spinach (\$26). The quail dish was sensational and the pork belly succulent (\$9.50). We weren't so enamoured with the cauliflower and walnut miso (\$7.50) which seemed bland by comparison, indeed bordering on boring.

Another wildly popular dish is actually served in a hollowed-out orange. This is a dish of roast vegetables (like Shitake mushrooms and Japanese radish), with each type of vegetable cooked in its own pot and in its own type of stock. The vegetables are then combined and orange miso sauce added (\$11.50). A must on my next visit.

Another must will be the traditional Japanese-style savoury pancake wrapped around a seafood mixture and served with barbecue wagyu on top, kind of a street-food "surf and turf".

LiloTang sits 100 people. Have a good look around while you're there. You'll discover some fascinating detail.

Burbury Hotel, Barton. Call 6273 1424.

