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## Duo brings great food, craft beer to Kearny Mesa

By Allison Keltner MARCH 9, 2016



Common Theory

Cristian Liang and Joon Lee tossed around several business concepts and ideas before settling on Common Theory Public House. Once they started, it seemed natural and obvious — the two spent most weekends with friends, seeking out bars and restaurants in San Diego that offered great food and craft beer, which led to good times. The goal of Common Theory is to provide that experience to every customer.

With a broad selection of craft brews on tap and a menu focused on American-based dishes with accents from their respective backgrounds (Chinese, Korean and Mexican), the “common theory” of great food, craft beer and good times seems to be a good one. They have 30–34 rotating taps and the menu features what Liang called “pub-ish fare with an upscale twist.” Popular items include homemade tamales, ahi poke, Roasted Beet and Citrus Kale Salads, dill-seared salmon steak, and Cajun Chicken and Poblano Pulled Pork flatbreads.

### **Pros and cons of running a business with a friend?**

Liang: Good insight in each other’s personality, strengths and weaknesses. Con is that when money is involved, you can put the friendship at risk. Our deal was to focus on the success of our business, keep an open mind about every decision and have tough skin to take each other’s criticism.

### **Best part about doing business in SD?**

Liang: The best part, at least in the restaurant and craft beer industry, is the potential for growth and the excitement for how food and craft beer is constantly changing right now!

### **CEO or company you admire and why?**

Liang: We’re so young and still learning, and there are so many awesome companies and restaurants that are miles ahead of us. We look up to O’Briens down the street—they’re pioneers of craft beer. They knew craft beer way before anyone. I admire and look up to Lee Chase of Blind Lady Ale House, Tiger!Tiger! and Panama 66. During our build-out, I was fortunate to meet Lee Chase. He was super kind and willing to lend a hand and answer any questions related to craft beer and draft beer systems.

**Advice for young entrepreneurs?**

Liang: Do it! Do it while you're young. The younger you are, the more time you have to bounce back.

**Favorite item on your menu?**

Liang: Citrus Kale Salad, adding seared salmon steak and avocado slices to get that dose of protein.

**Favorite San Diego brewery or beer?**

Liang: AleSmith Brewing Company is the reason why we love craft beer! That was the first craft beer brewery we visited.

Test out Liang and Lee's theory yourself — Common Theory's extended Happy Hour (Monday through Friday from 3–7 p.m.) gives you plenty of time to sample their menu and the current draft list with friends. For more information, go to [commontheorysd.com](http://commontheorysd.com).