

# 林能平

## PHILLIP

## LIM

故事

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ON THE ART OF  
THE MODEST CELEBRATION







It's an unfortunate fact that the Lunar New Year always falls around New York Fashion Week, but Chinese American fashion designer Phillip Lim and his team at 3.1 Phillip Lim always find a moment to pause—and most importantly, eat. “The last dinner party I had was like a week before [the Fall 2019 Ready-to-Wear Show], and I had my design team over and we did a potluck,” he told *Burdock*. “It was a celebration of Chinese New Year because it's a big Asian team.” Lim made *tom yam ghooong*, a Thai lemongrass soup, for the team—and he's sharing it with you, too, in his first cookbook: *More Than Our Bellies*, photographed by Dutch artist Viviane Sassen. “This traditional Thai soup recipe is a wonderful remedy for jetlag (one of the only downsides to traveling) and decompression, and so is my go-to for a post-flight pick-me-up,” he writes in the 12-recipe book. The images in the cookbook focus on the ingredients rather than on the finished dishes; in fact, you won't see a single stylized photograph of any of the recipes in the book, whether it's Hainanese Chicken Rice or Market Roast Duck, which means you don't know what the dishes look like until you cook them. And that's exactly in line with Lim's ethos. Why intimidate you with professional stylings of simple, delicious recipes when you should be throwing together these meals for yourself, for your friends, for your own team? Make them your own—he'd say the same about how he wants you to wear his clothes.

Lim cooks at least five days a week. He'll make an effort to eat every dinner at home, even if it means inviting friends to join him. (This is no small feat for someone who is the creative director of his own label, a business he's been running for the last 14 years. And in New York City, no less, where there are new restaurant openings every week.) Home is frequently mentioned in his cookbook, and it seems to be a concept that Lim has thought deeply about, as the son of immigrants from China who lived in Thailand before immigrating to America. His father was a professional poker player and his mother was a seamstress—the Chinese diaspora and the American Dream rolled into one. “New York is home, even though we've always been a global brand,” he said. “From day one, I designed clothes for people like myself, people around me, friends, peers, colleagues, strangers from the other side of the world that kind of had the same aesthetic point of view or were connected to it.” In December 2018, 3.1 announced a two-year collaboration with Italian sportswear brand FILA launching exclusively in China. Lim is a rare darling in the fashion world—he pleases everyone. His privately-owned label is commercially successful, but it is also critically acclaimed and beloved by the staunchest of front row attendees.



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Lim credits his success to having a humble but talented team, having a great business partner, maintaining a point of view, and being in the right place at the right time. 3.1's CEO, Wen Zhou, is an immigrant from China who moved to New York at age 12. "For me, being political is not about posting and cutting-and-pasting slogans. It's really about being present and surviving as an Asian American-led company," Lim said. "To show that my business partner is a Chinese American woman who is the CEO of a fashion company. Do you know how rare that is?"

Lim also isn't chasing downtown it-girls to be his muses (though plenty of them would be honored if they were asked) or hosting extravagant post-fashion week parties that rake in the Instagram posts. He'd rather host a small dance party for his team after the work is done. "They're the ones that need to be celebrated," he said. "In fact, the idea of, 'we already did this show'—kind of a day party for an audience that we invite—it's almost exhausting when you think about another party, a night party for them. Why not flip the switch, flip the narrative, and have our night party for the thing that we actually put the work into?"

The low-key, private celebrations have been part of the DNA of 3.1 since its earliest days. Back when he was just developing the brand, Lim went to Rubirosa to get a slice of pizza to celebrate his first milestone. "Time is the most valuable commodity, and so to give myself a moment to be present felt surreal," he recalled. "Having my own slice of pizza in a city that was brand new to me—New York City!" And then, he went back to work.

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