



GEYLANG IS MORE THAN A DISTRICT FULL OF ASIAN GASTRONOMY. LET US INTRODUCE YOU TO TWO LOVELY RETAIL SHOPS AND A CAFÉ FROM THIS AREA THAT MAY NOT BE ON THE USUAL RECOMMENDED LISTS.

A wide range of sewing machines and threads

Ghim Soon Machinery Pte Ltd

**Block 129, Geylang East Avenue 2, #01-104,
Singapore 380129**

This shop deals in quality sewing machines and accessories. Family-run since the 1940s, the business started as a sewing machine repair service, Ghim Soon Sewing Machine Co, and moved into the current premises in 2001. The business re-registered as Ghim Soon Machinery Pte Ltd in 2006, and started an online store, stitch4you, in 2021.



Children's
sewing lesson

“We were previously located in Upper Boon Keng Road,” reveals Business Development Manager Alex Tan, part of the fourth generation of Tans running the shop. Alex says they relocated to an HDB estate to be where their customers are. “Business

is so much better now, as customers — some of whom come from as far away as Boon Lay — can locate us easily. We are also close to the Paya Lebar MRT station.” The bulk of their clients are office ladies and women homemakers. “They are mostly mums who sew after their family has gone to sleep; they find sewing to be therapeutic,” shares Alex. Their male clients are usually into making bags and other leather goods.

The top-selling brands here are Janome (from Japan) and Singer (from USA). But Ghim Soon is more than a retailer. “We are a one-stop solution for our customers’ sewing-machine needs,” Alex advises. Besides also retailing high-quality threads and ergonomic sewing tables, Ghim Soon provides complimentary training for customers who purchase machines from them. “We demonstrate how to better use the sewing machine stitch patterns and the

accessories that go with them. For embroidery machines, we share techniques, threads, needles and stabilisers to use, as well as troubleshooting tips,” explains Alex. This highly rated service enhances customer loyalty, which in turn drive up the sales.

Gim Hin Lee Pte Ltd

**Block 10, Haig Road, #01-363/365,
Singapore 430010**

Don't be surprised when you are greeted with “Bake King” instead of the company's name when you phone up Gim Hin Lee. After all, that is its house brand of baking ingredients, made in its factory at Kampong Ampat. The company also distributes ingredients by other brands, including Billington's and Silver Spoon. In terms of equipment, it stocks the whole gamut, ranging from cake tins and icing tools to cake boxes and candles.

All this is housed in two adjoining HDB units, which the company moved into in 1976, reveals Manager Joseph Chia. With mosaic flooring and no-frills product displays, the store exudes a heavy retro vibe. Joseph shares that the top-four best-selling items here are vanilla essence, plain flour, pandan paste, and pineapple paste. “We have people coming from all parts of Singapore — even from the far west,” he says, adding that the company serves a wide demographic of customers through different sales channels (online, in-store, business-to-business, exports, etc).

The company celebrated its 70th anniversary in 2022 with both in-store and online promotions. For customers who want to go deeper into the art of baking, Gim Hin Lee holds baking classes on the second level of its premises.



We have people coming from all parts of Singapore — even from the far west, and we have a wide variety of sales channels from online, business-to-business to in-store.

— MR JOSEPH CHIA
MANAGER
GIM HIN LEE PTE LTD



Some of Wishes Café's menu items (from left): truffle egg mayo croissant, *mala* chicken wings, Lychee Rose and Brownie ice cream on a croffle

Wishes Café

Block 36, Circuit Road, #01-414, Singapore 370036

This modern and Instagrammable café stands out from the other businesses in this rather vintage HDB estate, thanks to its refreshing yet cosy décor. Through the glass-fronted entrance, passers-by would be entranced by the pink-and-white *sakura* hanging from the ceiling.

Café assistants Jing Yi and Candy share that the café was set up about four years ago, and survived the pandemic despite being patronised mainly by neighbourhood regulars. It is heartening to observe the warm interactions between them and their customers.

This establishment is — first and foremost — an ice cream parlour. The Brownie boasted a rich, chocolatey flavour that was not overly sweet, while the Lychee Rose provided a delicate contrast with its floral-citrus notes. Ask for your ice cream to be served on a croffle, a cross between a croissant and a waffle.

While having an egg mayo croissant may seem mundane in a café, what upgraded the version served here was just the right amount of truffle oil added to the filling. Providing an unexpected oriental twist to this place were the *mala* chicken wings, which provided a strong flavour profile of Szechuan peppers.