

Blending Gourmet Entrees with Cultural Heritage

Chang THAI BISTRO

By Karen Greene

Located on Myrtle Avenue in Monrovia, Chang Thai Bistro serves a delightfully diverse menu with unique and authentic dishes that are not commonly found in one's average Thai restaurant. Appetizers include Mei Krob, sweet crispy noodles with shrimp, and Larb, a spicy ground beef or chicken dish, as well as a perfect chicken satay. The Gulf of Siam soup contains King crab, scallops, and additional fruits de la mer bathed in a delicate yet spicy lemongrass broth.

For a very traditional Thai entrée, guests are encouraged to try the Thai Trio: Thai barbecue chicken accompanied by sticky rice and a shredded papaya salad. As owner Tiya Titaya instructs her customers, the sticky rice is to be rolled into a ball and dipped in the papaya salad juices before accompanying the chicken in a perfect bite.

Another delicious dish that Chang Thai executes with exquisite precision is the duck curry. With similar perfection to the chicken satay, the duck curry has a well-balanced blend of spices and coconut milk. For everyone's favorite pad Thai, the chef has captured the perfect sweet-and-sour blend for the rice noodles, exercising care to keep the dish from being too sweet and heavy.

Owners Gof Chullanan and Tiya Titaya are strong proponents for healthy living and nutritious foods. In support of the local vegetarian and vegan populations, they have developed a meat-free side to their menu, with platters like the vegan surf and turf, which is made up of vegan shrimp and a tofu steak, grilled with vegetables and served with sweet-chili sauce. Each dish can be made vegetarian with tofu.

Chang Thai is scheduled to serve Thai beer and wine in less than two weeks at their Grand Opening. Another addition to look forward to is their martini list that will soon be available. Served with the finest Soju Vodka, martinis will come in all colors and flavors, including watermelon, apple, mango, mojito, and lycée.

Blending the Best of the Traditional with the Best of the Contemporary

Directly from Bangkok, Thailand, Chullanan and Tiya Titaya strive to bring every authentic detail possible to share with their American guests. Seasoned owners of 13-year-old Chandra in Pasadena, they have taken great care with each detail of their new restaurant. In the Thai language, Chang means elephant, an animal that continues to mean a great deal to the Thai people and remains an integral part of their culture. Today, elephants are greatly respected for their abilities and for their loyalty to Thailand and its people. Chang Thai's owners strive to represent the virtues of the elephant, friendliness and loyalty, in their restaurant and in each dish.

The elephant mantra can be found in each detail of the restaurant's décor. Walking into the restaurant, past the front-side dining patio, customers are immediately confronted by the hanging bamboo forest. The color scheme is warm and soothing with dusky reds and oranges. Bamboo chandeliers hang overhead, which Talia and Gof made by hand along with the bamboo forest. The bar is artfully suggestive of a subtle river, with pebbles at the bottom and ripples extending outward from bursts of light. It is evident that time has been given to each detail by both the owners and local Interior Designer Rick Crauseo. After the final remodeling touches, a back patio will continue the serene bamboo theme.

Saving the Best for Last

Chang Thai's food comes with the warning that it can be addictive. This is certainly true when it comes to the mango with sticky rice. This wonderful dessert will leave you craving the coconut and mango flavors long after you scrape the plate. Calling in beforehand to inquire as to the seasonal availability of the dish is recommended for die-hard addicts.

