

DINING

Visit New Bangkok Cuisine for a flavorful introduction to Thai

By RENEE SKOGLUND
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Friday and Saturday nights are always a blur of color at New Bangkok Cuisine in Northville as the waitresses, dressed in long coral and gold skirts from Thailand, hurry back and forth between the kitchen and the tables carrying platters of Crispy Duck, Spicy Shrimp and Pad Pak Curry.

Flavorful seems to be the operative word here, from the traditional hot and sour Tom Yum Gai soup to the cool, delicate homemade coconut ice cream.

If you've never had Tom Yum Gai soup, New Bangkok is a good place for an introduction. The clear and spicy soup — made with chicken, vegetables, lime juice and chili paste — is simply delicious.

And the coconut ice cream, served with a light topping of toasted coconut and finely chopped peanuts, is heavenly. Paul Hurschmann, the Plymouth-Canton Observer photographer, declared it the best he's ever had.

Such compliments are graciously received by owner May Vang, who moved back to Michigan from Oklahoma a few years ago to help her father in his Novi

restaurant with the same name. When it came time to open another restaurant, Vang was ready.

"I learned everything from my dad. I just love this business," she said.

Consistently good

Her enthusiasm shows. New Bangkok's waitstaff is well-trained, the food consistently good (I've eaten there several times), and the warm brown-toned decor is easy on the eyes.

Vang often helps out in the kitchen, cooking side-by-side with her husband, Toua Vuu, and turning out specialties like the popular Thai Pepper Steak. Customers love the dish's brown sauce, she said. "We don't use a lot of oil. We use a lot of vinegar so the sauce is not too thick."

Too timid to try Thai? Rest assured, your timid tastebuds are safe at New Bangkok. "We have people who never had Thai food before because they think it's too spicy. It isn't. We start them off with the Pad Thai, a noodle dish. Now we have people eating their food hotter than I would eat it," said Vang.

The Crispy Duck is not spicy hot, just flavorful. It's first gently boiled to remove fat, then dipped in soy sauce and quickly

New Bangkok Cuisine
Where: 250 N. Center St., Northville, (248) 344-7808, fax (248) 344-7825.

Novi location — 43436 W. Oaks Drive, Novi (across from 12 Oaks Mall), (248) 347-6098

Menu: Thai cuisine. Specialty items include three duck dishes, all prepared differently. Lunch \$5.95-\$6.95, Dinner \$7.95-\$11.95. For dessert, try the coconut ice cream or banana "cake." Take-out available.

Atmosphere: Lovely. Warm brown tones with just enough accents for interest.

Open: 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday-Saturday; closed Sunday.

Credit cards: All major cards, except Discover.

Reservations: A good idea on weekends, unless you don't mind a short wait.

deep fried. The result is one sweet, succulent and tender duck. However, if you're determined to stick with the Pad Thai, a real comfort food, do so. It's Vang's favorite.

Ask your server

Rely on your server for suggestions. They are very knowledgeable



STAFF PHOTO BY PAUL HURSMANN

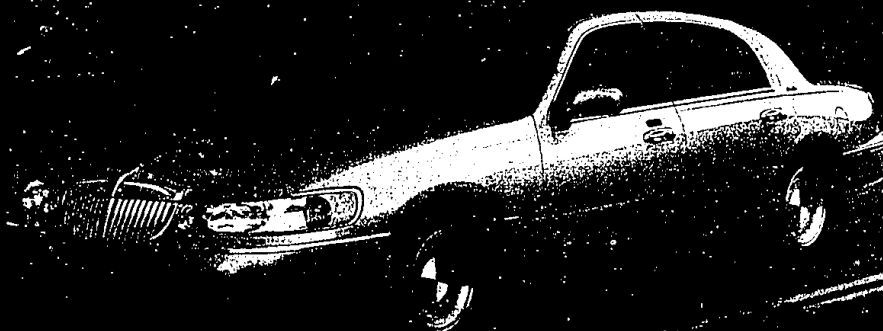
Thai time: New Bangkok is all about hospitality and flavor. Owner May Vang (right) displays a platter of Crispy Duck; her husband, Toua Vuu offers the Pad Thai; waitresses Mai Vang and Linda Yang show off the Siam Rolls and Tom Yum soup.

able and anxious to please. During a recent visit, I asked my waitress to recommend a veg-

etable dish. She suggested Pak Pak Curry — bell peppers, broccoli, eggplant, carrots and mush-

rooms in a zesty curry sauce. Like everything else at New Bangkok, it was delicious.

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