

THAILAND

PRESTIGE

EVERY BEST IN LIFE

FEBRUARY 2011



BERNARDINI
CARL LAGERFELD
THE KAISER'S NEW
CLOTHES

SWISS HAVEN

FASHION
DISAPPEARING
ACT

BAHM
AN AFFAIR
WITH THAI
CUISINE

February 2011

80 BAHT



EKACHAI &
VACHIRA
KOSITANONDH
A LOVE SET IN STONE



FIT FOR A KING

Siwametr Boonyarittiwong demonstrates outstanding culinary prowess amid the refined elegance of Bonjour restaurant, reports John K. Lindgren

WHO DOESN'T KNOW A BIT OF FRENCH? S.V.P. - VOULEZ VOUS, Croque Monsieur, Comme Ci, Comme Ça, C'est Bon, Foie Gras, Merci et Bonjour... Bonjour is also Bangkok's de rigueur French restaurant. The talk of the town since its opening in 2008.

The restaurant sits in a small, sleepy cul-de-sac off Sukhumvit five minutes from Ekamai BTS. A two story edifice in salmon pink looking like a Provencal mansion. Entrez. The décor in the ante chamber greets you with Burgundy red walls, a comfy black arm chair and sofa set. In the dining room large windows, over sized lamps, white upholstered rococo chairs and a dozen tables all decked with crisp, starched linen and tall wine glasses. As I absorb the sophisticated ambiance a young man in a chef's attire approaches. "Bonjour, Monsieur. I am the chef de cuisine" says Siwametr Boonyarittiwong in fluent French. His nick name is 'Baum'.

"I'm a Bangkokian. I grew up in Chinatown. At university I first read engineering which was not my cup of tea so I switched to culinary science at Vatel Institute, Silpakorn University International College."

With a degree under his belt and working experience at Grand Hyatt Erawan, LeNotre in Bangkok and Novotel de Cannes, the French Riviera, Baum recalls "300 breakfast covers, tons of croissants, and coffee enough to wash elephants. I learned the language and the French cuisine. I became a Francophile".

On his return home, he began working as a Kitchen Operation lecturer at Vatel, his Alma Mater, when he met Xavier Pierre Olaf Bruzaud-Grille, a racing aficionado and the founder of Bonjour.

Voilà! Khun Baum was now Bonjour's sous chef, assisting the French master Chef Thierry Enderlin. After Enderlin's departure for Morocco last year, the 27 year old Baum became Chef de Cuisine.

The first dish on Bonjour's new menu arrives on white china: Pan Fried



Chef Siwametr Boonyarittiwong

Escalope of Foie Gras, Apple Cider Jelly, Apple Chips and Port Wine reduction. It is accompanied by a glass of Sauternes, an iconic white Bordeaux. A heavenly match with the silken rich Roug e foie gras and the gusted, golden Sauternes Chateau Doisy-V edres 1993. "So many of our guests love this dish", says Chef Baum.

And now the scallops arrive. Deliciously al dente with black truffle shavings in a brown French butter emulsion. "Scallops, is one of our big favorites", says Chef Baum. "The Hokkaido's are out of season so we use the Californian scallops. And fresh vegetables from the Royal Project."

Next comes the chef's Cray Fish au Gratin. A masterpiece of Cray fish tails flambe with pasta. Covered by a savory, light, crispy and tad salty Parmesan tile or tiles, a symphony of flavors balanced on my palate complemented by a magnificent Louis Latour 2007 Grand Ardeche Chardonnay.

The dessert is the molten dark chocolate pastry creation with vanilla de Madagascar. This is French Patisserie. Oh, la, lah! Sinfully delicious.

Chef Baum & the Bonjour team are at the top of their game. This is the fine art of cooking and patisserie. La Gastronomie Francaise – or what Julia Child called "this delicate triumph of French cooking." ■■

Bonjour, T el. 02 714 2477 www.bonjourbangkok.com