

FOOD

DOWNTOWN BEAVERTON

New Thai restaurant blooms in Beaverton

Friendly hospitality and authentic Thai cuisine has put Thai Bloom on the map

Story by Nicole DeCosta | Photography by Jaime Valdez

Bringing beauty, authentic cuisine and warm hospitality from Thailand's "land of smiles," Thai Bloom at 3800 S.W. Cedar Hills Blvd. in Beaverton is booming with business. And General Manager Walter Bowers attributes the 10-month-old restaurant's success to its authentic Thai cuisine. Each plate is presented as beautifully as the ingredients working together.

"I love watching the magic," Bowers said of watching the accomplished chefs. "Each dish is a work of art."

Bowers, a Beaverton resident, has visited Thailand many times and Head Chef Sayan Promwongsa is a native of Thailand who spent more than a decade studying with accomplished chefs in Bangkok and South Africa before being awarded the 1998 bronze metal and 1999 gold medal by the Thailand Chef Association.

The location — at the corner of Southwest Cedar Hills Boulevard and Westgate Drive — has been a Thai restaurant location for 25 years, Bower said. But to open Thai Bloom, the new owners did an extensive remodel to the 3,600 sq. ft. space that can accommodate 98 people inside — and more on the patio. Warm wood floors and wall paneling, a contemporary bar and enhancements to the kitchen create a comfortable, modern environment.

Dishing up smile

Adding to its sense of family is the popular head server Somphone "Sam" Saisiri who greets guests with his signature smile. He recently earned a hospitality award from Washington County and tends to impressively call every guest by name.

And while the restaurant has an impressive following from the Thai community, serving staff enjoy making recommendations for those new to the cuisine.

"We have lots of Thai clients who always order the Hoi Joh," Bower said of the seafood meatballs with crab, prawns, pork, shitake

mushroom and water chestnuts dish served with a tangy dipping sauce. "And the pink Yhai Yen Ta Fo is popular."

That dish consists of rice noodles in a sweet and sour broth with prawns, squid, fish balls, stuffed tofu, white fungus mushrooms, spinach leaf, yu choy, topped with garlic oil and a crispy prawn wanton.

REGULAR HOURS:

*Monday to Thursday
11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.; 4 to 9 p.m.*

Friday 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.; 4 to 10 p.m.

Saturday noon to 10 p.m.

Sunday noon to 9 p.m.

HAPPY HOURS:

Daily 4 to 6 p.m.

*Monday to Thursday
8 p.m. to close*

*Friday to Saturday
9 p.m. to close*

All day Sunday

are really popular."

The menu is labeled neatly to differentiate gluten-free and vegan items, and dishes that are mild, medium and very spicy.

"Every single dish is made to order," Bowers said. "We don't use one big wok in the back. We have 16 burners, and every single dish is specially made. We can make changes to any dish for you. You can even go 'Thai spicy,' if you want."

A family affair

Bowers said the restaurant staff is a big family. His wife, Aum, is a chef — and her uncle is part owner. And the atmosphere is much different than his former techie corporate positions; if they want to make a change at the restaurant, they make it today.

"After dinner, we now serve our guests a hot lavender-scented towel," Bowers said. "And we love customer feedback and read each review online on Yelp, Google+ and

P e r h a p s more familiar to American palettes is the Cashew Chicken, Beef Broccoli, Salad Rolls, Drunken Noodles and various Pad Thai varieties.

"The Drunken Noodles are a bit more experimental if you're looking to try something new," Bowers said, "and the curries



Thai Bloom co-owners Syan Promwingsa and Wally Bowers find Beaverton to their liking.

Urbanspoon."

The restaurant's logo — a lotus bloom — represents "a new beginning." Prior to launching Thai Bloom, Bowers was the co-founder and technical director of a successful software development and integration company for retail enterprises. His former office was located above a Thai restaurant on Northwest 23rd, where he dined often and met his wife.

Thai Bloom offers fine dining, happy hour, take-out, catering and delivery services. And in the near future, Bowers hopes, the

restaurant will have an online ordering service to accommodate the 60 percent of hits to its website from mobile and tablet devices.

"The restaurant has grown faster than I imagined," he said.

The staff is happy, and the restaurant adheres to high standards for each dish served and the treatment of all employees.

"We get fresh produce every other day, and we only use top-of-the-line produce and ingredients," Bowers said. "Consistency is key, and we genuinely care about each dish

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