

AMUSE

Spicy family-run restaurant channels flavors of Thailand

Key to success for The Spice is authenticity

Denise Roberg/Daily Staff Writer

3.22.07



The chef of The Spice, Thamason Thanapanyarak, cooks up a meal using the flame to his advantage in making the dish.

Brent Herrig/Iowa State Daily



When Supote Methiyapun and his family opened The Spice, they had no idea how successful their eatery would become. The Spice, 402 Main St., is one of only two Thai restaurants in Ames and was voted best restaurant on www.amesbeat.com.

The Owners

Methiyapun, a Thailand native, graduated from Iowa State in 1985. After graduation, he went back to Thailand to work in the veterinary pathology field. Methiyapun said he had always liked the Ames community and he felt Thai food wasn't well known around this area. With absolutely no prior experience in the restaurant industry, Methiyapun and his family decided to go ahead with plans for a Thai restaurant in Ames in March 2005. The Spice opened for business on April 1, 2006.

The Chef

Thanason Thanapanyarak has more than 20 years experience as a chef in Thailand. He has been an executive chef in five-star hotels around the world including the Oriental Hotel in Bangkok.

The Food

Thai food has influences from almost everywhere. Many of these influences come from India and China. One of the characteristics that sets Thai food apart from Chinese food is the spices. Lemongrass and basil are not typically seen in Chinese food, but are both used in Thai dishes. Another main ingredient used for Thai food is fish sauce, where the Chinese food includes soy sauce as a key element.

"Midwesterners think spicy means hot. Spicy means there are many spices and doesn't necessarily mean hot," Methiyapun said. What makes the food hot is the amount of chili pepper used in the dish. A Thai meal usually offers a mixture of flavors - sweet, sour, salty, hot and bitter. Methiyapun said a meal is best when there is a balance of ingredients and a balance of taste.

"Thai people are always sharing," said Methiyapun. The best way to enjoy Thai food is to dine with several people so dishes can be shared. Everyone should order a different entree in order to immerse themselves in the broad selection of food offered.

The Spice offers a variety of beverages including authentic drinks such as Thai iced tea and Thai iced

coffee, as well as Singha, a beer imported from Thailand. The restaurant also offers wines and teas.

The Atmosphere

The Spice has a very stylish and sophisticated atmosphere. It has a very upscale feel to it, but one will still feel relaxed and welcomed. The lighting is very modern and no detail has been overlooked. Methiyapun's daughter, Tanita, designed the entire look of the restaurant. She graduated from Iowa State in spring 2006 and now serves as the manager of the family business.

Recent ISU graduate Kara McMahon is a server at The Spice. She enjoys working for a family-owned business because she feels like everyone is part of the family.

"Everyone truly cares what the customer's experience was like," McMahon said.

Mitch Saienga, senior in hotel, restaurant and institution management, visited Thailand when he was in high school and loved the food there. He said he has eaten Thai food from restaurants all over the United States, but nothing compares to the food at The Spice.

The Spice
Thai Cuisine
402 Main St.
515-232-0200
www.thespiceames.com

Hours of operation:

- Lunch - Monday to Saturday 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
- Dinner - Monday to Thursday 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., Friday to Saturday 5 p.m. to 10 p.m.
- Closed on Sundays

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Teruo Miyagawa

posted 3/24/07 @ 8:21 PM EST

My friend at Bangkok send me this article. now I am at Hiratsuka city, 40miles west of Tokyo, Japan.

What's becomes small wrold day by day!

Food is the typical culture existance,it is the basic of the culture and it will be expanding forever. ([Continuedâ?!](#))

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Marea Tully

posted 3/25/07 @ 3:28 PM EST

Congratulations Supote and family. It was you and your lovely family that introduced me to Thailand and to Thai food for which I will forever be grateful. ([Continuedâ?!](#))

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