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Tantalizing Thai is easy on the wallet

JOHN KERNAGHAN
 The Hamilton Spectator

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The stunning wood facade of Bangkok Spoon Deluxe suggests a rich experience. Inside, it is delivered. The restaurant promises pure Thai cuisine and scored well on most counts.

It is located in the old Deluxe restaurant, the diner that gave Dundas' King Street West some notoriety as a backdrop in several movies. Now the diners are the stars and servers the supporting cast on an attractive stage.

Blue-green walls, indirect lighting and simple Thai art create a highly agreeable environment.

I tried a medley of starters, checking out the tom yum goong soup (\$5.95), Thai lamb satay (\$6.95) and calamari (\$7.95).

The soup featured two large and juicy shrimp still outfitted in shell skirts sitting in a sweet lemongrass broth with chunks of mushroom and the sharp accent of chilies.

That set up the opening protein portions of four skewers of tender lamb with a spicy peanut dipping sauce and a good-sized serving of calamari.

There was enough lamb to serve as a main, so it is wonderful value at \$6.95. But how would the strong taste marry with the peanut sauce? Despite some misgivings, the high-quality chunks of meat and sweet and spicy sauce actually formed a powerful combo.

The calamari was a fine contrast of flash-fried seafood rings that were light and tender with a sweet, clear sauce and small salad of greens, cucumber and bell pepper.

Chicken and beef platters didn't impress as much as the starters. Thai mango chicken (\$9.95) provided a memorable taste but the mango, the source of that unique taste, was a bit thin. You were left wanting more of a good thing. The chicken component was ample with moist chunks of sliced breast commingled with cashews, onions and the mango cubes in a sweet mango sauce.

Panang neur (\$10.95) was distinctly different with sliced beef in a coconut milk curry that was advertised as spicy. I found it understated, perhaps because the sweet mango dish overpowered it. The beef was plentiful enough and OK, not brilliant.

Altogether the platters served two well with enough left over for another meal.

Service varied from experienced to a bit green, but staff was eager to please and the various courses arrived promptly.

Bangkok Spoon Deluxe gets a nod of approval.

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Bangkok Spoon Deluxe

57 King St. W.

Dundas

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The look: Stylish

The feel: Informal, relaxed

What you'll pay: Appetizers range from sticky rice with peanut dipping sauce for \$3.95, spring rolls at \$5.95, calamari or coconut shrimp for \$7.95 to shrimp cake at \$8.95. Salads run from green mango or green papaya for \$7.95 to duck or spicy salmon for \$10.95. Soups include hot and sour for \$3.95 and po tak seafood for \$5.95. Main platters include the deluxe fried rice with seafood for \$12.95, curry pad Thai at \$11.95, ginger chicken for \$9.95, beef in red curry at \$10.95, marinated grilled pork for \$8.95, basil lamb at \$9.95, cashew nut tofu for \$8.95 and deep-fried snapper at \$18.95. Desserts range from \$2.50 for coconut or mango ice cream to \$5.95 for sweet red bean with choice of ice cream.

Hours: 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday to Friday and noon to 10 p.m. to 11 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Wheelchair accessible.



Gary Yokoyama, the Hamilton Spectator

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