

CENTRAL COUNTY

CONTRA COSTA TIMES

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DO SIT THAI CUISINE

★★★

- **FOOD:** ★★★
- **AMBIENCE:** ★★★
- **SERVICE:** ★★★
- **WHERE:** 1520 Palos Verdes Mall, Walnut Creek.
- **CONTACT:** 925-933-3889, www.dositthai.com.
- **HOURS:** 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Mondays-Saturdays, 5-9:30 p.m. Sundays-Thursdays, until 10 p.m. Fridays-Saturdays.
- **CUISINE:** Thai.
- **PRICES:** \$\$.
- **VEGETARIAN:** Six dishes including Spicy Tofu with Basil and Vegetable Curry. A green "V" indicates a dish can be made vegetarian.
- **BEVERAGES:** Sodas, wine, beer, fruit juices and Thai tea and coffee.
- **RESERVATIONS:** Recommended.
- **NOISE LEVEL:** Mild.
- **PARKING:** Plenty of convenient shopping center parking.
- **KIDS:** Chicken satays and barbecue dishes.
- **PLUSES:** Large menu with many options under \$10.
- **MINUSES:** Closed for lunch on Sundays.
- **DATE OPENED:** May 22.

POLICY

We don't let restaurants know that we are coming in to do a review, and we strive to remain anonymous. If we feel we have been recognized or are given special treatment, we will tell you. We pay for our meal, just as you would.

Star key

- ★ Fair
- ★★ Good
- ★★★ Great
- ★★★★ Extraordinary

Price code

- \$ Most entrees under \$10
- \$\$ Most entrees under \$20
- \$\$\$ Most entrees under \$30
- \$\$\$\$ Most entrees under \$40

PREVIEW DINING OUT

Walnut Creek's Do Sit Thai gets it all right

By Jessica Yadegaran

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FOR ME, THE quality of a Thai restaurant can be measured by its Tom Kha, the cuisine's chicken coconut milk soup. The best go beyond the creamy sweetness of coconut, blending the savory weight of dark leg meat — save bland chicken breast for the grill, please — with a balance of cilantro, lemon grass and galangal, a root with a perfumed spice.

Do Sit Thai Cuisine in Walnut Creek makes the most memorable Tom Kha I've tasted. While I have yet to slurp the soup in Thailand, I can tell you this newish restaurant in the Palos Verdes Mall will not disappoint even the most ardent Southeast Asian foodies.

As I see it, Do Sit Thai Cuisine elevates the experience of strip-mall dining. Open since May, the restaurant has a chic color scheme: Off-white leather chairs, chocolate-brown tables and matching exposed wood beams. The space is intimate without being claustrophobic and the service is excellent.

Recently, my husband and I made a reservation for 6:30 p.m. on a Thursday. When holiday errands delayed us, we didn't bother to call and decided to take our chances on getting seated. We arrived at least 30 minutes late and they had saved the table for us.

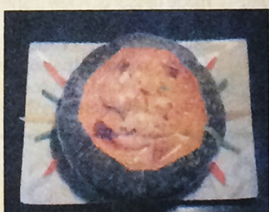
To start, we ordered the Steamed Mussels (\$9.95). They arrived in a clay pot, simmering in a broth of white wine, garlic, lemon grass, onions, bell peppers and basil, and a spicy lime dipping sauce. The broth was so good — soothing with a kick — that we finished it off by the spoonful. I recommend using the lime dipping sauce. Not only was it tasty, but it helped moisten the mussels, which were a bit rubbery due to all the steam.

Next came that impressive Tom Kha (\$8.95), a portion large enough for two people to have seconds. For entrees, we ordered the BBQ Pork (\$9.95) and Pumpkin Curry (\$15.95), a seasonal special served in a fresh, hollowed kabocha squash. I'm so obsessed with peanut sauce, rice paper rolls and curries that

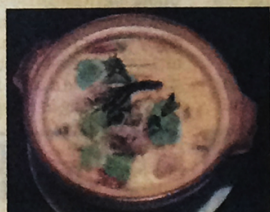


SHERRY LAVARS/STAFF

Situated in the small Palos Verdes Mall in Walnut Creek, Do Sit Thai Cuisine offers superb Thai food.



Pumpkin Curry is served in a hollowed-out kabocha squash at Do Sit Thai.



Tom Yum Gai's a hot and sour chicken soup made with Thai herbs.

I don't often order off the grill at Thai restaurants. But I'm glad I did here.

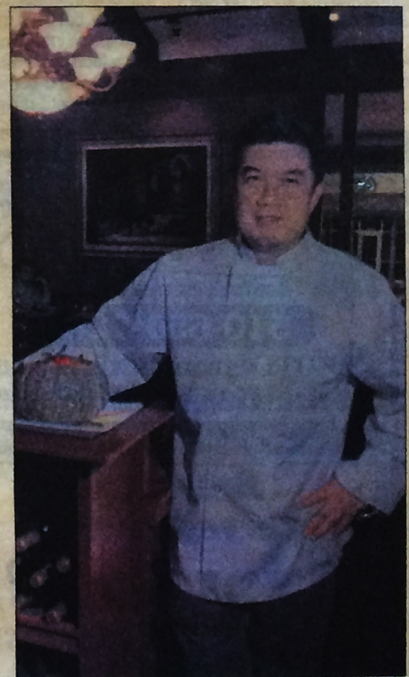
Thinly sliced, the pork was marinated overnight in garlic, Thai herbs, peppers and cilantro. It was juicy, full of flavor and rocked with the accompanying spicy garlic sauce. When I reheated the pork in the microwave the next day, it was still tasty. Impressive.

But, back to that Thai curry obsession. I was really pleased with the freshness, presentation and flavors of the Pumpkin Curry. Shrimp, scallops, baby corn, crunchy green beans and chunks of eggplant swam in a chili-flecked, coconut milk-based curry sauce that was as fragrant

as it was delicious. We soaked our steamed jasmine and brown rice (\$1.95 each), but even without the sauce, the curry's heat was subtle enough so we could eat the dish sans starch.

I was so satisfied with my meal I could've ended it there, but among the five desserts was Thai Iced Tea Ice Cream (\$3.50), which intrigued me enough to order it. Unfortunately, the ice cream had that buttercream quality that coats the palate and lacked the dynamic flavors of the other items coming out of Do Sit Thai Cuisine's kitchen.

No matter. When you make Tom Kha the way they do, who cares about ice cream?



Jakkrid Laongsuwan is the owner and chef at Do Sit Thai in Walnut Creek.