

RestaurantSpy

THAI EDGE
7 OZELLS SQUARE, BRINDLEYPLACE B1 2HL. 0121 643 3993.

Perhaps it's Thai time to reassess my views

By Paul Fulford

THAI food wouldn't rank in my top five of favourite cuisines.

It's done too crudely by so many restaurants who batter you about the head with a length of lemon grass, set fire to your tastebuds with too much chilli and seek to douse the flames with a slick of fish sauce.

So it takes a good Thai restaurant to cause me to rejoice. And, I think, Thai Edge is such a place.

The decor is calming and sedate, the service exemplary.

But, more importantly, there's a touch of finesse about the cooking that delighted me.

The platter of starters that I shared with my wife and two sons set the trend.

Large, succulent prawns enveloped in a light, crisp batter were wonderful things.

Better still were chunks of moist, tasty chicken fragrant with spices and wrapped in banana leaves.

Fishcakes were good, if a little chewy.

Satay chicken was equally enjoyable, though the spring rolls were surprisingly ordinary – not bad, just unremarkable.

The three dipping sauces served with these morsels were wonderful examples, especially a light plum sauce.

But things moved up a gear with my main course.

My choice, choo chee phed, combined excellent quality duck with coconut milk, a spicy paste called choo chee, kaffir lime leaves and chilli created a satisfying dish of quite outstanding balance and harmony.

If much remained uneaten, it



BIRMINGHAM Mail.net
Restaurant Spy
Food critic Paul Fulford reviews the city's eateries. Visit birminghammail.net and then click 'blogs'.



was simply because the portion I was served was so generous.

Lynn was pleased with her

fesity chicken curry while Murray and Ewan expressed delight at the mussaman curries they ordered, all of them dishes exhibiting balance and poise.

We shared between us a bowl of plain rice and another of noodles.

None of us, though, had space for dessert.

Prices at Thai Edge aren't low. But, then, it's in a prime location, is expensively fitted and serves very fine food.

In the past, I'd been a little underwhelmed by visits to this place.

Not on this occasion – for it awakened even my jaded and cynical palate to the joys that can be had from Thai food.

Our bill included a bottle of rather agreeable Malbec, a couple of beers and a cola.

By the time we left after an early evening, midweek visit, the place was filling up nicely.

Quite right, too. It's got a bit of class.

Verdict

How much? £109 for four
Vegetarians? Options
Child friendly? Yes
Disabled access? Fine
Parking? Nearby
Go back? Happily
★★★★☆

OUR TOP 5... FOR SPICE

LASAN
Fantastic, modern, light food. Dakota Buildings, James Street, Birmingham. 0121 212 3664.

MAHARAJA
Old favourite that serves quality curries. 23-25 Hurst Street, Birmingham. 0121 622 2641.

ASHA'S
Great cocktails, pleasant decor, good food. 12-22 Newhall Street, Birmingham. 0121 200 2767.

JYOTI
Tremendous South Indian veggie fare at a great price. 1045 Stratford Road, Hall Green. 0121 788 5501.

PUSHKAR
Stylish food, drinks and cuisine. 245 Broad Street, Birmingham. 0121 643 7978.

The Spice Is Right



BY BISHAL RASAILY

Essential part of chat masala

AMCHOOR

"AMA" in Hindi means mango and "choor" means powder so it is a powder of mango.

The unripe, sour fruit of green mango (pictured) are peeled and the flesh is thinly sliced and dried in the sun then ground into powder (the dried slice can also be used). It is available only in Asian supermarkets and usually in powdered form.



The beige-coloured powder is slightly fibrous and very rich in vitamin C. It is tart but with a hint of sweetness.

While storing, this powder tends to get lumpy very easily so has to be crumbled well before use.

Amchoor is used as a souring agent and meat tenderiser in Indian cookery. It is an essential flavour and ingredient in chat masala, and the chat masala is almost an essential finishing ingredient for tandoori kebabs.

It is used particularly in north Indian cooking for chutneys, marinades, vegetables, soups and pickles, but mostly used as a finishing spice to sprinkle on top of cooked food, especially fried vegetable savouries and snacks or dal.

■ Bishal Rasaily is head chef at Pushkar, Broad Street 0121 643 7978, www.pushkardining.com

Steve's Top Tips



One way to keep the doctor away!

Q I've got a glut of cooking apples. Any ideas?

A There are lots of good and tasty things to do with cooking apples. Baked apples are also very nice.

Take out the core and fill with a mix of equal amounts of butter, brown sugar and soaked raisins.

Bake in the oven for about 40 minutes on 160 on a tray covered with foil and a little water in the bottom to help keep it moist while cooking.

Serve with ice cream, creme fraiche or clotted cream.

■ Steve Love owns Loves Restaurant (www.loves-restaurant.co.uk) at The Glasshouse in Canal Square. Send your questions to paul.fulford@birminghammail.net or post them to Paul Fulford, Features Editor, Birmingham Mail, Floor 6, BPM Media, Fort Dunlop, Fort Parkway, Birmingham B24 9FF.



CheapAsChips

★★★★☆

BROMFORD LANE CHIPPY, BROMFORD LANE, ERDINGTON B24 8JR

THIS clean, bright shop had some potentially annoying muzak on in the background during my recent visit – but the song playing sounded like a great choice for a chip lover's anthem. It was a 1976 No 2 hit for

The Real Thing, with lyrics: 'I can't get by without you, I need you more each day'.

I last visited 18 months ago when the chips disappointed in that dead time around Christmas/New Year. It's now under new ownership.

My 90p cone weighed a substantial 520g on my in-car scales and the spuds were OK if you like 'em soft.

Altogether now: 'You to me are everything, the sweetest chips that I could sing...'

GRAHAM YOUNG