

Going Out What's On Around Town

Thai restaurant has got the Edge

With its light and minimalist decor, Birmingham's Thai Edge doesn't visually scream that it is a Thai restaurant. Unlike a lot of Oriental restaurants, the only 'Eastern flavour' on show is, well, the flavour of the food.

The restaurant was busy for midweek, with city centre diners taking advantage of the beautiful weather last week.

Thai food can be light and refreshing, while at the same time spicy, and ideal for a summer bite.

Or you can leave the decision-making to someone else and gorge yourself, like my brother and me.

We opted for the set Royal Orchid menu which, at £21.50 each, offered a wide sweep of the menu. And very little disappointed.

First, we were brought a hefty plate of mixed starters.

These consisted of chicken satay sticks, spring and prawn rolls, chicken wrapped in leaves, and the pork 'golden bags' (which always taste better than they sound).

Everyone has their favourites, and the satay sticks were incredibly more-ish smothered in a peanut sauce.

I was sad to have to share them, actually... but he is family, I suppose. There were more than enough alternatives, though.

The prawn rolls were particularly nice, accompanied by a light chilli dipping sauce.

We didn't have long to wait for

Restaurant Review Thai Edge

the main courses. Service was helpful and fast – almost too fast, but that's far preferable to gazing longingly at other tables being served while you wait.

Green chicken curry is, for my money, the default dish when I eat Thai food, and any place worth its salt needs to get it right.

This one really hit the spot.

The meat was soft and tender, and the sauce was fragrant – the coconutty base perked up with basil and coriander – and pleasingly spicy.

Alongside were stir-fried beef (with a kick of chilli) and pork (with a mild garlic flavour). Both were simple but beautifully cooked dishes, and pleased my hungry, carnivorous brother.

A portion of stir-fried veg offered a light contrast to the heavier main dishes, while the kitchen was

happy to substitute the menu's egg fried for plain jasmine rice.

Never mind our plates – our table was nearly full after these were brought to us.

But, out of curiosity (an impulse that, I admit, is quite similar to greed), we also ordered the mixed seafood, or pad prik pao talay.

This filled me with a little guilt, as it meant we couldn't finish all of the green curry. But it was worth it. A plate of mussels, prawns, squid and lobster claws came wrapped in a beautiful sauce, that was good enough to eat as a broth in its own right. The oyster sauce made it deep in flavour and it had a slow-burning heat that had you coming back for more.

After all this, I could only face picking at some of my brother's exotic fruit plate.

With a couple of Singha beers and a bottle of still water, the bill came to around £65 – although, having learned about the generous

size of the dishes, I'd happily order less if I was just popping in for a quick bite.

Richard Jackson



A meal for two, with drinks, cost £66.80 at Thai Edge, Oozells Square, Brindleyplace, Birmingham. Tel: 0121 643 3993. www.thaiedge.co.uk



Stylish: Thai Edge in Oozells Square, and (below left) the mixed starters

Reasons to be Miserable...

Gig The Miserable Rich

Recording an album at home can be a challenge for even the most skilled musicians but, if getting the right sound wasn't enough for The Miserable Rich, they also found themselves battling angry residents, local wildlife, unsociable shifts and bad plumbing.

'The neighbours would get in from work about 5pm and start stomping on the floor above when Rhys Lovell was trying to record his double bass,' laughs guitarist Jim Briffett as he recalls the taped sessions in singer/percussionist James De Malplaquet's seaside flat.

'Plus the seagulls in Brighton are always trying to squawk on to people's recordings!'

Work on the record was interrupted several times when James' bathroom flooded, and Jim had to juggle sessions with a much-needed paid job.

Thankfully, despite the distractions and frustrations, the resulting album, *Of Flight And Fury*, is a baroque folk pop masterpiece that, unlike debut



Trying circumstances: The Miserable Rich

album *12 Ways To Count*, opts to ditch the multiple guest musicians format to focus on the core five-piece of Jim, James, Rhys, cellist/pianist Will Calderbank and violinist Mike Siddell.

'We'd grown as a band with a more solid line-up and months of touring together, so it would've seemed a bit weird to suddenly get other musicians in to record with,' says Jim, who was formerly with Clearlake. 'The album is really ours and ours alone, as it were.'

Before the release of *Of Flight*

And *Fury*, the band, who play Birmingham's Glee Club tonight, sneaked out an EP of surprise cover versions of leftfield 80s hits by the likes of The Stranglers, Pixies, Iggy Pop and The Eurythmics.

'The Stranglers' Golden Brown was really kind of straightforward and very fun to play live, but with something like Iggy Pop's *Shades* we've done a real deconstruction,' says Jim.

'We've ended up taking it back to the 50s, sweetening it and giving it perhaps more dynamics than the original.'

'I hope that Iggy's not offended by that!'

'A few of us have always loved the Pixies and personally I'm very happy with our version of *Gigantic* but that and Eurythmics' *Sweet Dreams* are generally our least favourite of the covers – it's not that easy to improve on perfection.'

Tonight, Glee Club, Arcadian Centre, Birmingham, 7.30pm, £7.50 adv, £8.50 door. Tel: 0871 472 0400. www.glee.co.uk



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