

Thai Seasons

Traditional Thai Cuisine Offers Fresh Vegetarian Options

by Keith Waller

Always on the lookout for healthy dining options that accommodate vegetarians, vegans and those looking for special food choices, *Natural Awakenings*



was alerted to a new restaurant recently opened in North Myrtle Beach. The old Hawg Wild Saloon biker bar and restaurant, previously at 1004 Highway 17 South in North Myrtle Beach, has been exorcised. In its place stands Thai Seasons, with healthy fresh options and a genuinely pleasant, serene and welcoming atmosphere, proving perhaps that the Universe has a very keen

karmic sense of humor.

Sak and wife Ti came to the US from Thailand in 1999. After finishing a Masters degree in Kansas, Sak has achieved a dream he and Ti shared, to open a restaurant here in North Myrtle Beach. "I grew up in Bangkok, watching my mother cook each day," says Sak, "and I learned the recipes." A gold medal kick-boxer during his high school years, Sak was conscious of healthy eating, and the typical diet he found in America was a surprise. Returning to his dietary roots, authentic Thai cuisine was the answer to what so many



Americans are looking for. "Thai food is fresh, low calorie and healthful," Sak explains.

Each dish is individually prepared and fresh, which allows choices according to personal preferences, including the type of lean meats and shrimp, or no meat at all, or to accommodate food sensitivities or other

dietary requests. Many dishes can be prepared fresh, mild and delicate, or for those that prefer, sauces and hot spices are provided for full fireworks or a subtle low-flame. "Everyone thinks all Thai food is spicy hot," says Sak. "That is not true. Thai cooking is a balance of contrasts, using fresh herbs, oils and spices. It's a balance of sweet, sour, salty, spicy and bitter."

The vegetables are steamed and crisp, and the mild Swimming Angels entrée includes shrimp and chicken – steamed, not fried – with broccoli, tomatoes and cilantro. As a low-carb, low-fat alternative to fried Veggie Spring Rolls, the Thai Fresh Rolls are filled with crisp raw vegetables, basil and rice noodles in steamed rice paper, and served with sweet and tangy sauce—shrimp optional. Rice options include steamed Jasmine or natural brown. The extensive menu also accommodates those less interested in diet and more interested in exciting flavors as well, Crispy Chicken with Ginger among the favorites. A tour of the kitchen allowed us to see our diners being specially prepared, and Sak let us check the labels of imported Thai sauces, which clearly stated "no MSG included," meaning that fresh food, herbs and spices create the flavors, instead of chemical additives. Since peanuts, cashews and other nuts are common in many Thai dishes, prepared in the kitchen alongside nut-free foods, anyone with a severe nut allergy may have concerns. Those well versed in the health benefits of specific herbs will appreciate the use of fresh herbs in many of the dishes.

Sak and Ti greet most patrons, stopping by each table to meet and chat with diners and make sure their meals are perfect, attention and care not typical in a restaurant where dinner entrees are generally between \$8 and \$10, and lunch entrees from \$6 to \$9. Each of the Thai restaurants in the Grand Strand has its own unique style and flavor, and Thai Seasons is no exception. Yum!

Thai Seasons is located at 1004 Highway 17 South in North Myrtle Beach. See ThaiSeasonsMyrtleBeach.com or call (843) 663-9300.