

eateries

Tuptim place to Thai one on

RESTAURANT REVIEW

BY JULIE HALPERT
News Special Writer

It's been a few years since I've visited Tuptim Thai Cuisine, which I often frequented for carry-out. It was always reliably good.

The restaurant offers solace from the bustle of Washtenaw Avenue. There's one large room for diners. Warm colors of red and gold make it feel casual, yet intimate.

Thailand native Kris Vilassakdanond and his wife, Prayoon, opened Tuptim Thai in 2002 after moving to Ann Arbor from Hawaii, where they had owned a Thai restaurant for 15 years. Kris says the restaurant sets itself apart from other Thai eateries by offering different kinds of specialties, like sea bass, crispy duck and scallops. He added, "We're very lucky. People like our food."

On a recent Friday night that was evident, as every table was occupied. After being seated promptly, we waited, waited and waited some more. It seemed there were only two servers to handle the entire restaurant. Finally, after waiting roughly

15 minutes with no server to greet us or give us menus, I approached a server. Once she realized we were there, we were attended to promptly and the rest of the evening went smoothly.

Tuptim Thai has been a favorite ever since it opened, receiving Ann Arbor News Readers Choice awards over the past few years. It offers all the Thai standards, including various dishes prepared with chicken, beef or tofu, Thai curries, soups, seafood and noodles and rice specialties, as well as seven separately listed vegetarian specials.

Appetizers were very good. Satay chicken was tender and moist, served in a delicious peanut sauce. I especially enjoyed the Thai spring rolls, several triangular pieces, lightly fried and served piping hot, with a first-rate plum sauce. There were big chunks of shrimp, perfectly seasoned, in the Thai garlic shrimp. Pad see-ewe featured delicate, tender noodles that were nicely complemented by a sweet soy sauce, with fresh broccoli and pea pods.

The rest of the dishes we sampled weren't quite as good. Chicken in the chicken fried rice was dry and the whitefish tasted a bit bland, and so was the Pad Thai, usually one of my favorite Thai dishes.

Tuptim Thai Cuisine

4896 Washtenaw Ave.,
Ann Arbor.

734-528-5588

Traditional Thai classics, including tofu, beef and chicken, plus curries, rice and noodle specialties.

Hours: Lunch – Monday-Friday 11 a.m.-2 p.m.; Dinner – Monday-Friday 5-9:30 p.m.; Saturday noon-9:30 p.m.; Sunday noon-9 p.m.

Plastic: Visa, Mastercard, Discover, American Express.

Liquor: No.

Prices: Moderate. Most dishes are in the \$10-\$15 range.

Value: Very good.

Noise level: Medium. It can be noisy when the place is crowded.

Wheelchair access: Yes.

Smoking section: No.

The bottom line: Tuptim Thai remains an Ann Arbor favorite for Thai food, though some dishes outshine others.

I was impressed with the traditional desserts. Mango cheesecake was an appealing, refreshing blend of sweet fruit with a creamy filling, and the butter pecan ice cream was topped in a caramel sauce, decadent and delightful.

Tuptim Thai doesn't have quite the magic that I recall, but it remains a popular destination, and good choice, for well prepared Thai food.

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Tuptim still a favorite for Thai food. **PAGE 2**

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