

Diningout

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Exotic Orchid blossoms at home

by Barry Bragger

HOW does someone who eats out at one of Wirral's top restaurants every week celebrate his birthday?
By eating at home, of course.
Orchid Catering is a new catering firm, which started in February this year. They specialise in providing authentic Thai cuisine at one's home and have menus to suit parties from six to 50.

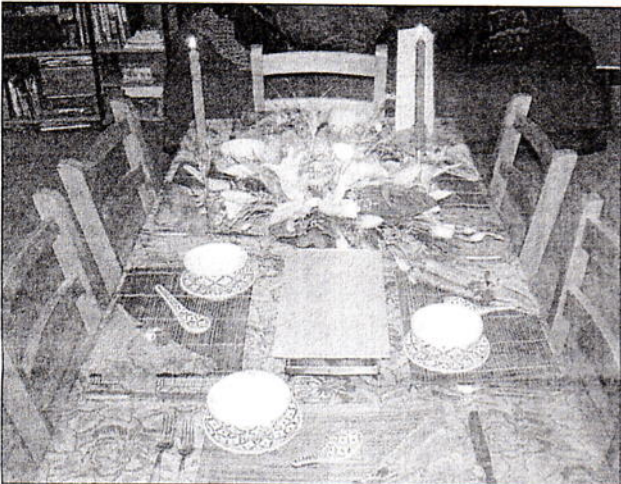
My wife had arranged for them to come to our house and cook a seven-course meal for four close friends and us. The business is owned and operated by Keith and his wife Saran. Keith came round to the house about a fortnight

authentic Thai music and our candle display had been enhanced by a delightful bowl of floating candles that was littered with small Thai orchids. They had even provided us with personalised menus.

When our guests arrived, Saran came through into the dining room dressed splendidly in traditional Thai dress and served us a tray of appetisers to begin yam tua thod

This is perhaps the most famous Thai dish and was cooked to perfection. We also had pla kratiem phrik - Thai stir-

'We had been warned about that chilli kick...'



before the meal for a meeting. At this meeting he assessed our kitchen and dining facilities and discussed menu choices and dietary requirements.

We had a vegetarian and a vegan to cater for in our party, presenting a challenge for Orchid.
Showing admirable attention to detail, Keith also noted the colour of my dining room in order to co-ordinate the table dressing and even measured the dimensions of the table.

On the evening Keith and Saran arrived just before 7pm, loaded down with equipment and fresh ingredients. We left them to prepare the meal while we got in the mood with a relaxing glass of wine and dug out our collection of music and candles.

When we returned to the dining room the table had been dressed with a crisp emerald green table cloth, bamboo place mats, quality cutlery and a stunning floral centrepiece in a stylish glass container of orchids, roses and lilies (This was later left as a complimentary gift).

In addition, the room was filled with

- everyone tucked into the selection of lightly salted cashew nuts, pine nuts, red and green chillies and spring onion.

We were warned about the chilli kick but the combination of flavours worked very well.

We were then seated as Saran brought in a tray of miang khum a selection of fried prawns, nuts, fried coconut, lime, ginger, chillies and onion, with a sweet sauce. She showed us how to wrap the ingredients into folded Thai leaves to make small parcels that were then eaten. The variety and freshness of this exotic dish was most welcome and provided a wake up call to the taste buds.

After this we were served tom yum hed. A spicy, clear soup made with mushrooms, fresh vegetables and lemon grass.

For our main course we were provided with a selection of dishes. Gaeng kiew wuan or famous Thai green curry, one dish with chicken and one with just vegetables for our vegetarian friends. Cooked in coconut milk, chillies, basil and limes.

fried garlic fish with pepper. Bite-sized pieces of fish stir-fried with garlic and pepper in a light, sticky batter.

These were quite exquisite and possibly the highlight of the meal for me. These dishes were accompanied by khao kratae - Thai fragrant coconut steamed rice with lemongrass and basil leaves and pad phak - stir-fried vegetables full of flavour and a crisp texture. There was also sum tam Thai salad expertly diced vegetables with a fresh chilli kick.

To finish the meal we were served polamai a mixture of exquisitely prepared fresh fruit including fresh pineapple, melon and grapes and Cha, Kafae, Mints Traditional Thai Tea, Coffee and mints.

The meal was a complete success with restaurant quality food and impeccable service in the comfort of our own home. Our meal was served and eaten at a leisurely pace and by the time we had completed it the kitchen was spotlessly clean. Keith and Saran left at around 11.45pm as we enjoyed one final drink with our guests.

Orchid catering provides more than just Thai cuisine. They attempt successfully to provide an authentic Thai experience. It is an original and innovative service presented in a truly professional manner.

The cost of the service varies depending on the numbers catered for and menus selected. Our chosen menu was reasonably priced at £34.50 per head and as we provided our own wine and had no taxi to pay for, the cost was comparable to many restaurants. For enquiries telephone Keith on 0151-670-0496

Live the Thai Life

Enjoy the taste, style and grace of Thailand in the comfort of your home. Orchid Catering offers your own Thai chef to cook authentic Thai meals for you and your guests.

Friendly service from the land of a thousand smiles

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- Thai Chef to cook authentic Thai meals
- A waitress in full Thai dress
- Full table setting including fresh flowers and a unique floral table centrepiece.
- Original Thai porcelain tableware
- and much, much more...

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