



Out with the Thai music

RENN THAI (above)
 #B1-037 Suntec City Mall
 Tel: 6338-2066
 Opens: 11.30am-3pm, 6-10.30pm daily

WHEN Renn Thai first opened in Ngee Ann City, the owners went the whole hog with tradition, decking it out with teakwood, Thai artefacts, smiling mannequins, masks and classical Thai music.

"But our customers said it wasn't lively enough. They preferred a more modern look," says Mr Alan Goh, who owns the restaurant with his wife, Katherine.

So when they opened their new outlet in Suntec City Mall three months ago (the Ngee Ann branch closes tomorrow after 3½ years), they turned things around completely.

With its minimalist black and white chairs, streamlined furnishings and the occasional Buddha Bar soundtrack, you'd think it is a cafe with the usual offerings of sandwiches and cheesecakes.

There is not one mask or mannequin in sight.

The only giveaways to its style of cuisine are the Thai silk cushions, uphol-

stery and mustard-gold curtains.

"We want something modern, but not so expensive that it would intimidate people. We wanted to appeal to the younger generation," Mr Goh says.

But the authenticity of the food, he adds proudly, is not compromised.

Helmed by six Thai chefs, the restaurant offers the full range of Bangkok-style restaurant food, including phad thai (fried flat noodles), mango salad, tom yam soup and stuffed chicken wings.

On weekends, it also offers a tempting and reasonably-priced one-dish meals, including papaya salad (\$3.80), tom yam noodles (\$7.80) and spaghetti green curry (\$8.80).

The owners are so confident that its modern approach will work that they are set to open another outlet in Clarke Quay in November.

What's good: Yum tak rai (banana flower salad with prawns), \$10; gai yang (barbecue chicken served with papaya salad), \$16; phad thai (fried flat noodles with prawns), \$8.50.