



Art Vassy/SouthtownStar

Owner Cindy Koi displays a plate of crispy pad see ewe at Spy Thai in Palos Heights.

Friendly food

By **Eloise Marie Valadez** | Correspondent

In a nutshell: The quaint Thai restaurant features a variety of Asian specialties with some unique twists. Healthy recipe preparations star at the eatery.

Decor: Assorted artwork, including hand-painted pictures on the windows and a sculpture of a Thai goddess in traditional dress add to the small restaurant's charm.

History: Owner Cindy Koi opened the restaurant in March 2007. Koi, who employs three cooks in her kitchen, has developed all the recipes at Spy Thai. She's inspired to create new dishes by her love of dining out.

Menu: Among the dishes featured are drunken noodles (\$6.95), Bangkok chicken (\$7.95), pepper steak with stir-fried vegetables (\$7.95), chicken coconut soup (\$3.75), tilapia with garlic sauce and assorted vegetables (\$10.95) and beef salad (\$6.95). Alcohol is not served at the restaurant, but diners may bring their own beverage.

Owner's 2 cents: Koi aims to offer a "unique, cozy and clean" setting that features healthy Thai recipes. "I want people to feel like they're coming into their friend's kitchen and that a friend is cooking for them. I want them to feel comfortable." Her focus

SPY THAI

Address: 7208 W. College Drive, Palos Heights (in the Tiffany Plaza).

Phone: (708) 923-6467.

Hours: Noon to 9 p.m. daily.

Credit cards: All major cards accepted.

on healthy preparations, she said, is important because she likes to eat healthy. She said the emphasis is on fresh ingredients cooked with minimal oils and no monosodium glutamate. Healthy whole grain brown rice is also available.

Popular dishes: Papaya salad combination (\$10.95), which often appears as a special at the restaurant; shrimp saute (\$9.95); and cashew chicken (\$7.95). Lunch specials (\$5.95) appear daily and include a variety of popular dishes such as red curry, mixed vegetable stir-fry, Panang curry and chicken basil.

We tried: During a leisurely two-hour luncheon on a recent Tuesday afternoon, we chose the pad see ewe and beef ginger luncheon specials. Both

dishes included a choice of spring or egg roll and a cup of soup. Our meal began with a delicious cup of chicken noodle soup with tofu, bean sprouts, onion and carrots, which was perfect for such a cold winter day. We tried an order of spring rolls and an egg roll; both were served with a slightly sweet, tasty sauce. The pad see ewe featured a good selection of fresh vegetables combined with wide rice noodles and a sweet brown sauce. The beef ginger, served with rice, was equally as good and had a bit of a kick to it, enhanced by Thai spices and peppers. The servings were just the right size and left us satisfied without feeling stuffed. Hot tea and mildly sweet Thai iced tea were our drinks of choice. As we dined, we enjoyed relaxing background music from a CD, including the sounds of Sade.

Crowd: A mix of ages, including families and couples frequent the eatery.

Entertainment/special events: A "Single Mingle Party" is scheduled for March 1. Koi plans to offer the party on the first of every month. Call for details.

Carry-out: Available.

Parking: Plentiful parking in Tiffany Plaza strip mall.