

A FRENCH KISS WITH ASIAN FLAVOUR

KHETSIRIN PHOLDHAMPALIT
THE SUNDAY NATION

Palm Seafood Pavilion's romantic setting on Hua Hin Beach is the location for a marriage of Asian and French (mainly) seafood flavours. At the colonial-style conservatory in Sofitel Centara Grand Resorts & Villas Hua Hin, diners get a taste of bygone grandeur and a choice between the 46-seat interior and the 40 poolside seats overlooking the Gulf of Thailand.

The hotel's new executive chef, Adrian O'Herlihy, has created a tempting menu of contemporary, light and healthy dishes.

"I was trained in traditional French cuisine and those are still my roots, but I've adapted my cooking for a health-conscious clientele. I've been to Beijing, Tokyo



TUNA TARTARE with herb salad and ginger vinaigrette



TARTLET OF grilled vegetables, Montrachet goat cheese and grilled tiger prawn

and Chiang Mai and that's reflected in the fresh herbs and flavours, like lemon grass and kaffir lime, that I use in my creations," says O'Herlihy, who followed up his classical French training in Dublin with an advanced course in Thai cuisine at the Bangkok Oriental's Thai Cooking School.

For a starter, O'Herlihy recommends the tartlet of grilled vegetables, Montrachet goat cheese and grilled tiger prawn (Bt440). A layer of red-onion marmalade lines the bottom of the tart, supporting a tomato fondue and mousseline that is balanced with two intertwined fresh tiger prawns.

Light touches like these extend to another healthy dish, the tuna tartare with herb salad and ginger vinaigrette (Bt380).

Chef Adrian O'Herlihy plays some delightful games with his customers' tongues at Hua Hin's Palm Seafood Pavilion

The well-chilled tuna tartare is ringed with cucumber slivers and spiced up with chopped Thai bird's-eye chillies and wasabi powder. Shiso leaves, coriander, sesame seeds and scallion provide the herb hit along with a garnish of baby frisee, lolla rosa and coriander leaves. Toasted baguette slices finish the whole thing off.

For the hardened carnivore, O'Herlihy suggests the harlequin of rabbit and black pudding wrapped in parma ham, broad bean and sweetcorn sauce (Bt600). The concoction of rabbit and black pudding is carved in half diagonally and arranged beside Irish-style chive-potato hash topped with corn sauce.

The restaurant brings a sizzle to the beach every Friday with its barbecue buffet - an array of fresh seafood, meats and desserts for Bt1,500 net per person. But if classic French dishes are what you're after, drop by the hotel's other restaurant, the Railway, which serves a Cafe de Paris dinner buffet for Bt1,700 net per person. Expect foie gras, sauteed frog legs, bouillabaisse and chicken in wine sauce.

» AT A GLANCE

The restaurant is open daily from 7 to 10.30pm. Call (032) 251 2021-38 extension 710. The patio serves lunch and snacks daily from 10am to 6pm for guests relaxing at the pool or by the beach.



THE TERRACE with the view of Hua Hin Beach.