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BANGKOK RESTAURANT REVIEW:

Soul Food Mahanakhon

Thai



The buzz: Long-time food journalist for beloved American magazine The Atlantic and elsewhere, Jarrett Wrisley recently decided to cash in his chips and transform an old, unused shophouse on Thonglor into an American-style, Thai-food-serving izakaya. It now looks all set to be the new place to be, drink and eat one of the most lovingly curated gab glaem et al menus we've seen in a long while.

The décor: The vibe here is WTF meets Hyde and Seek meets your friend's living room, with some left field touches, like a som tum station beside the bar and great music. Wood paneling throughout, stone floors and green hanging lamps. The art pieces are custom-made by an artist in Jatujak Market, and one features the cooks from Wrisley's favorite street stalls. The second floor has additional seating, where we especially like the mon ink floor set-ups for parties of two.

The food: Gab glaem with a quality touch, regional highlights, and some substantial curries and nam priks. The products are sourced responsibly from various farms in Thailand (not all, incidentally, Royal Projects). The rice (white, sticky, brown, red) comes from Isaan farms part of the Alternative Agricultural Network. The menu is brief, but features exciting, textured dishes like mieng kham (with butterhead

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lettuce leaves, fatty pork and all the fixin's, B150), Burmese-style kaeng gaeng lay (B150) with chunky, tender pork belly, and the moo krob in the banana flower salad that accompanies the thick-battered kai thod Hat Yai (B120)

The drinks: Wrisley imported his favorite fancy bartender from Saigon who's come up with an original signature cocktail list (B180) which uses lots of local inspiration and contemporary touches. The Som-O Som, for example, involves maraschino liquor, Havana Club Silver, pomelo and lime juice, while the Bun Bang Fai mixes tequila, lime juice, chilli, almond syrup and egg white. They're also hard at work on their wine list, picking ones that pair well with Thai food and feature several options under B1,000. The usual hard liquor and beer is also available, of course.

The crowd: Mostly young and hip (even possibly hipster) farangs and Thais in large groups—basically a WTF kind of crowd in search of a substantial dinner. Of course, this being Thonglor, the occasional wildcard is to be expected, but overall we suspect this is going to be a great place to eat, drink and chat with attractive people.

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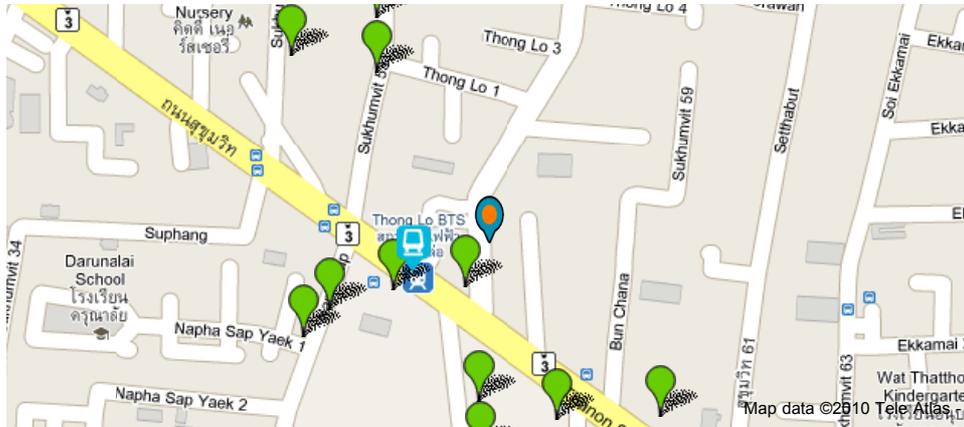
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Opening Hours:
Daily 6:30pm-1am

Nearest train: BTS Thong Lo

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