

Steak House: Version Two

In October 2009, the Steak House in Chiang Mai was still destined to becoming what Manager Ajava-Riddhi Diskul had “envisioned.”

Although the restaurant’s layout was, in theory, designed for harnessing lively, themed eating and lounging areas, Riddhi felt that the ambience made it seem as though his customers were “sitting in a dark, stuffy cave.”

Furthermore, he deemed the Steak House – marketed as a guarantee for quality and service by essentially being a “younger sister” of Chiang Mai’s posh, Le Crystal restaurant – as being too proper and restricting.

It was offering a nearly formal dining experience tailored for a slightly older crowd. And as the rules of formal dining indicate: Three forks; two knives; two spoons. ‘And what do I use all of these for, anyway?’

“It gets a little intimidating for people,” said Riddhi. “Once you put a five-star restaurant name on a restaurant, people start drawing comparisons.”

Like shifting chessboard pawns, many renovations were attempted. However, Riddhi eventually was through with being patient. It was time for “a complete rebuild; a Steak House version-two,” where the only things remaining the same are the service and food taste – “how it should be and feel.”

The theme?

“This is going to be casual,” said Riddhi. “Casual dining to me is where nothing is set in stone, where you are allowed to order what you want, when you want it.

“And I want it to be lively and bright, almost opposite to the old Steakhouse feel.”

From the parking area, you will see a seating area emanating an “earthy feeling,” placed on tiled flooring.

If you wish to sit inside, a live band will be playing to welcome you. Maybe take a whiff of the meaty delicacies sizzling on the grill in the back; perhaps a flash of flame will dazzle you. To your left: a brightly-lit bar backdropped by a mirror, “extending the space.”

Where to sit? Look to your right. How about perching on the long-couch that is sporting raised cushions fronting the restaurant’s wall-size window. Or choose one of fifteen tables placed on a wooden floor encompassed by dark, wooden beams and light-colored walls below a vaulted ceiling.

“Because the place is compact, I will create as much of an open feeling as I can. Being airy and open doesn’t have to mean posh. This has everything to do with the customer’s feelings. I just want to present openness and a lighter colour.”

Located amid the lively JJ Market area, Riddhi is ambitiously aiming toward retargeting his clientele demographic to a younger, “working group.” An additional element of this “modern Steak House” strategy is also lowering the food prices, while still offering an optimal dining experience for all ages.

An average price tag for a top-notch course will be about 1,000 baht per person, with an average bill of about 500 baht (including a salad, steak or pork chop and a drink or two). And staff – unlike before, standing at attention in pristine uniforms – will be clad in casual dress, serving you in a fluid, light-hearted manner.

“I’m trying to make a big statement that this is casual...that it is affordable, and you can bring your kids, friends and family”.

Come. The new doors open in early-August.



Steak House

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