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TIM BOBOSKY | PHOTOGRAPHER

Don-Mike Cambra, bar manager for the Ring of Fire, shows two caramelizing rings of fire as he prepares glasses for Spanish coffees.

■ Restaurant review

Fire and spice: Thai restaurant serves more than the usual fare

What the restaurant lacks in convenience and cost, it makes up for in food and original atmosphere

BY NATASHA CHILINGERIAN
SENIOR PULSE REPORTER

All the ingredients for an exotic evening await behind the doors of Ring of Fire, a full-service restaurant specializing in Thai and Pacific Rim cuisine.

Inside, leafy plants and Asian art accent a backdrop of coral-colored walls; low lighting and tribal music further enhance the mood. The food is equally impressive — it stretches beyond typical Thai fare with inventive flavor and spice combinations.

Adjacent to Ring of Fire's main dining room is the stylish Lava Lounge, a good place to start if pre-dinner drinks are on the agenda. Good for groups (or twosomes if you're really thirsty) is the Volcano Bowl, a flaming pot filled with a fruity alcoholic beverage, orange and pineapple chunks and maraschino cherries; straws are provided for team sipping. A lengthy list of beer, wine and trendy mixed drinks

is also available.

The menu's descriptions of intensely flavored dishes do not exaggerate. Curries are served with jasmine rice and come in varying degrees of heat; Panang, a red curry, is quite spicy but its delicious combination of bamboo shoots, basil and red peppers will make you want to keep munching even while you sweat. Matsaman is a milder yet filling choice containing potatoes, onions and a creamy coconut milk sauce with a hint of cinnamon. Peanut Sauce Curry, which features angel hair pasta, vegetables and a rich topping, is delightfully nutty, sweet and hot.

A lighter choice is the Thai Noodle Salad, a fresh mix of steamed noodles, broccoli, carrots, sprouts and peanuts that gets its flavor from a sweet, translucent lime sauce. Appetizers of satay and tempura, soups, noodle dishes and meat-heavy choices are

also up for the picking. Vegetarians will be pleased at Ring of Fire, as many menu items offer tofu and tempeh as protein choices. Portion sizes are generous and sharing is encouraged.

Although I understand that Ring of Fire's powerfully flavored food requires careful preparation, service is often slow at the restaurant, which can be a pain. The price range is moderate to expensive — entrees run from \$10-\$17, so this restaurant is best saved for a special occasion. Located at 1099 Chambers St., it's a little off the beaten track (students who are looking for a hip place to walk to from campus are out of luck). But Ring of Fire is an attractive spot with exciting Thai food that's worth the wait and the distance. Couples, friends and groups will delight in the sleek ambiance that makes way for conversation, romance and laughter.

Ring of Fire is open from 11 a.m. to midnight Monday through Thursday, 11 a.m. to 1 a.m. Friday and Saturday and noon to midnight on Sunday.

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Music and Dance UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

UO School of Music & Department of Dance

OCTOBER CONCERTS

For more information on School of Music events, call 346-5678.

Tue. 10/12 ESMA REDZEPOVA: Queen of Romani Music
World Music Series 8 p.m., Soreng Theater, Hult Ctr.
\$15-\$20, \$5 discount for students. Call 682-5000.

Wed. 10/13 SEQUENTIA: Lecture-Demonstration
Guest Ensemble 5 p.m., Beall Hall
Preview of the Oct. 18 concert (see below). FREE

Thur. 10/14 FACULTY SHOWCASE
New performing faculty in concert. 1 p.m., Beall Hall
FREE Admission

Fri. 10/15 HOMECOMING CONCERT
Oregon Wind Ensemble, Oregon Jazz Ensemble
7:30 p.m., Beall Hall FREE Admission

Mon. 10/18 BENJAMIN BAGBY & SEQUENTIA
"Lost Songs of a Rhineland Harper," featuring 11th-century European secular music. 8 p.m., Beall Hall
\$9 General Admission, \$5 students & senior citizens

Thur. 10/21 ST. LAWRENCE STRING QUARTET
with Todd Palmer, clarinet
UO Chamber Music Series 8 p.m., Beall Hall
Music by Beethoven and a premiere by Osvaldo Golijov. Reserved seats \$12, \$25, \$29; in advance from Hult Center (682-5000) or EMU (346-4363).

Fri. 10/22 MUSIC OF EUROPE: 1886-1945
Faculty & Guest Artists 8 p.m., Beall Hall
Chamber music for flute, oboe, violin, bassoon, piano. \$9 General Admission, \$5 students & senior citizens

Sat. 10/23 JAMES DASHOW, Composer
Guest Artist; audio-video works 8 p.m., Beall Hall
\$5 General Admission, \$3 students & senior citizens

Tue. 10/26 ANNE AZÉMA, SHIRA KAMMEN
Guest Artists 8 p.m., Beall Hall
"The Unicorn," featuring medieval French songs and poems about mythical animals. FREE Admission

Sun. 10/31 A HELMUTH RILLING ENCORE:
University Symphony & Choirs
Bach's Magnificat & Mozart's Mass in C Minor
3 p.m., Silva Hall, Hult Center FREE Admission

For our complete calendar, check: music.uoregon.edu

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