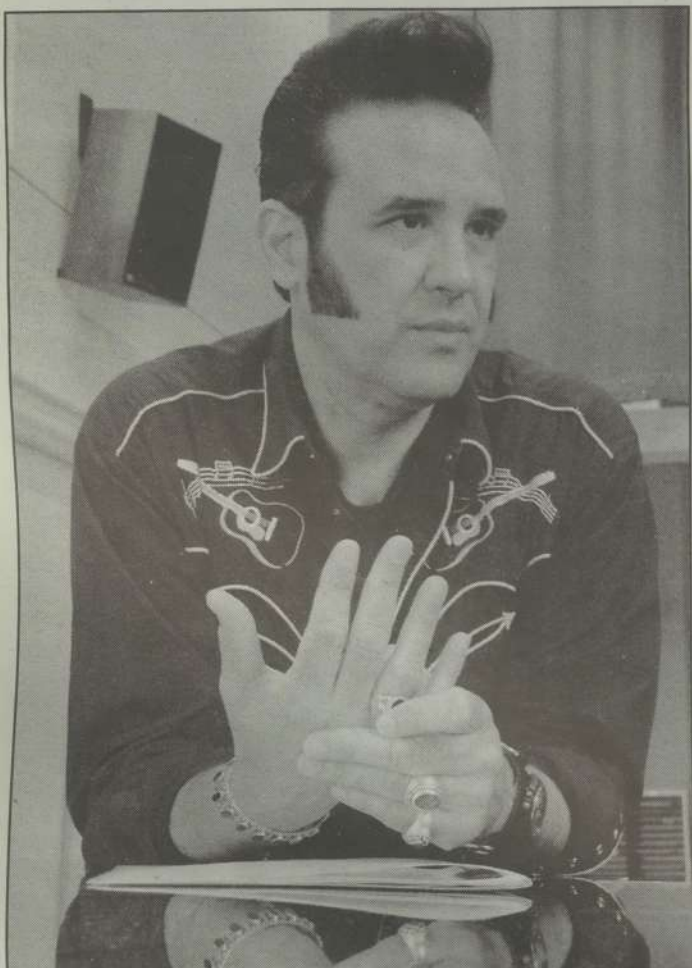


Elvis has entered the classroom



Michelle Newby Clackamas Print

Ray Herrera, also known as Rayvis, the campus' own Elvis impersonator, hangs out in Niemeyer after singing to his teacher LeaAnne Denbeste after class last week.

Abigail Neet Arts & Culture Editor

About 10 years ago a coworker bet Ray Herrera that if he shaved off his mustache he would remind people of Elvis. It turns out she was right.

"Best \$10 I ever lost," Herrera explained.

Herrera was not always aware of his connection with the infamous rock god. He lived much of his life not impersonating the celebrity. It all started with the bet.

After being told he reminded people of Elvis, he began to do his homework and found many similarities between the two. "I identified with him," said Herrera.

Herrera had done karaoke as well as gospel music in church as a young child but had no vocal instruction until coming to Clackamas, where he began to understand techniques. He is currently in LeaAnne DenBeste's Music 116-01 class.

"I'd highly recommend it. LeaAnne is a very excellent teacher," Herrera remarked.

DenBeste also thinks many lovely things about the Elvis impersonator, whose stage name is Rayvis.

"He's got such a gorgeous voice," DenBeste said. She went on to say that he is fun to teach

because he is so committed to what he is doing and even said she would open her home to him. "He is so real."

Herrera has a Bachelor of Arts in communication and has worked for the state department, but now his full-time job is being Rayvis.

He wouldn't say how much money singing bluesy love songs to diehard fans makes, but he did say he was able to buy a brand new truck with cash.

Herrera attributes much of his success to the classes he has taken at CCC and said, "For those who think school doesn't pay off, it does."

Being Rayvis includes but is not limited to: meet and greets, concerts for businesses or private parties and even singing telegrams.

The Elvis impersonator has big plans for the summer. The city of Portland Parks and Recreation Department hired Herrera to be the official Elvis for the free summer movies in the parks.

Herrera was the official Elvis

last year, doing six shows in different parks in Portland usually on Fridays at dusk.

corn and snow

are given away

"He is im

popular. He

lowing. He

whole lot to

gram," Jeff

Portland Pa

Recreation

Services

said of Herra

Being El

vides lots

memories

Herrera rec

of his favori

ries after a

the groom's grandmother

him for a picture and

he obliged. After the

explained, she got this

eye and looked up at him

"I've always loved you

He finds his job to be

sonally fulfilling and claim

like work at all.

Of course when the

was over Rayvis said,

you, thank you very much

Memphis way.

"He's got such a gorgeous voice."

LeaAnne Denbeste
choir teacher

Tiny establishment big on taste and affordability

Nick Kornafel Feature Editor

Thai food - that's like Chinese food right? No, it's way better.

Although Thai food, like Chinese food, is also Asian cuisine and at first glance may look similar, its unique, exotic flavor puts it in a category of its own. This fact is made evident at "Thai Fresh."

Thai Fresh opened on Nov. 1, and since then they have been doing great business, relying mostly on word of mouth to attract customers and so far it has worked as it states on their Web site "Our menu keeps customers coming back and bringing their friends."

And, come back is what the customers do. The chefs Kemphone and Thongbay prepare all the food fresh to order using ingredients from local markets. They have food to accommodate any diet or food allergy, none of which contains MSG.

Starting with appetizers, the vegetarian salad rolls and chicken sauté were sampled. The salad rolls contained rice noodles, bean sprouts, carrots and cilantro wrapped in rice paper and served with a plum sauce that put all other restaurant's plum sauce to shame. The chicken sauté, served on wood skewers, was cooked perfectly and served with an excellent peanut sauce; that's not bad for an appetizer. In

fact, that's great for an appetizer.

Bring on the main course. Sampled dishes included the lemongrass chicken, drunken noodles with squid, black pepper and garlic tofu and mixed vegetables all served with sides of either rice or rice noodles. Each dish blended sweet and savory flavors to create a meal that was out of this world. For those who are bolder than others, customers can choose the level of spiciness without any worry of masking the flavor.

The drunken noodles are wide rice noodles cooked with vegetables and stirred in chili paste. All dishes allow customers to choose a tofu, veggies, beef, chicken, pork, shrimp, squid or seafood combo. Squid was chosen for this dish, and although chewy and rubbery in texture, it tasted great and went perfectly with the dish.

The lemongrass chicken is marinated in lemongrass seasoning and topped with peanut sauce. The chicken was delicious and the peanut sauce complemented it perfectly. The mixed vegetables came stir-fried in light soy sauce and contained mushrooms, carrots,

snow-peas and mango for a hint of sweetness.

When it came to dessert, all they had to offer was sampled. They of course had unique flavors of fresh homemade ice cream such as mango and coconut, but they also offer two seemingly bizarre rice deserts. These included sweet man-

go over coconut rice topped with coconut milk and purple rice topped with egg coconut custard. Although both were very good and worth a try, the fresh ice cream was my favorite.

Because the restaurant is so small and the ingredients are local, customers can have a full course meal without breaking their budget. Starters range from about \$3 to \$6 and can be shared with others, the main courses are on average about \$7 or \$8 and desert is about \$5 and can also be shared or customers can get ice cream for \$1.75 for a small or share a large for \$2.50.

The atmosphere of the restaurant enhances the dining experience with its exotic decor. Even the bathroom is worth visiting. And, the foreign easy listening Thai music is a relaxing background filler.

Each dish blended sweet and savory flavors...



The tiny Thai Fresh, 8409 S.E. Division St. in Portland leaves a big impression on those willing to give it a

The restaurant, located on S.E. Division Street, is tiny and very easy to miss. It shares a building with a café on the left and the Xotic Tan on the right. They can only seat about 38 people so you are sure to have good service knowing that the waiters are never in some other section of the restaurant.

Thai Fresh serves up a meal that is high in flavor, low in price and very healthy with friendly service and an overall great dining experience. For more information visit their Web site at www.thaifreshpdx.com or call them at 503 774 2186. It is located on 8409 S.E. Division St. Suite D in Portland. Don't blink or you might miss it.



Contributor