



Nahm's New Course

ONE OF BANGKOK'S MOST CELEBRATED THAI RESTAURANTS IS WOOING DINERS WITH A COMPLETELY REINVENTED MENU.

BY CHRIS SCHALKX

Few names in Bangkok's culinary scene are as revered as Nahm, the signature Thai dining room at the COMO Metropolitan hotel. Opened by Australian chef David Thompson in 2010, it has received scores of accolades—including a Michelin star—for its finely plated but real-deal Thai fare. So when Thompson announced his departure last year, foodies were shocked. Succeeding him was Pim Techamuanvitt, a California-based Bangkok native who had forged a career in Silicon Valley before moving on to open a casual Thai restaurant called Kin Khao in San Francisco. She had no formal culinary training, though that didn't stop Kin Khao from bagging a Michelin star in 2015. Nahm was to be her first foray into the world of fine dining, and an opportunity to spend more time in the city where she grew up.

Earlier this year, Nahm closed for a four-month refit. While furnishings were being reupholstered with Jim Thompson silk and a local ceramist was enlisted to design tableware inspired by ancient Ban Chiang

Above, from left: Dishes on the new menu at Nahm include charcoal-grilled wagyu with burnt relish, and a "jungle curry" of pork, herbs, and toasted rice; chef Pim Techamuanvitt inside the restaurant.



pottery, Techamuanvitt took the time to rethink the menu. Inspiration came from market visits and heirloom family recipes, recreated by carefully layering the best version of each flavor, but keeping cooking techniques and presentations as authentic as possible. "Thai cuisine at its most refined doesn't need to be elevated," she says. "When you really consider Thai cuisine, the intricacy of the cooking and the demanding techniques, that's already fine dining."

Nahm had always been a family-style affair, but the new menu trades in à la carte orders in favor of degustation dining. At lunchtime, the Nathi ("water") and Pathapi ("land") sets focus on seafood and meat-centric flavors, respectively: think *gang bon*, a tangy Isan-style curry of snakehead fish and Indian taro stalks; or the moreish *massamun* curry with beef and burnt shallots.

Of the four dinner menus available, Essence is a wonderful introduction to the gastronomic tricks Techamuanvitt has up her sleeve. Meanwhile, Discovery pulls out all the stops with a table-spanning feast of dishes that stray far beyond the confines of Bangkokian cuisine—spicy northern-style *larb* of guinea fowl, say, or *gapi pla*, a fishy relish from wild Songkhla prawns and Chumphon shrimp paste—all balanced out by lighter sides like the deliciously smoky *pad pak goot*, a stir-fry of chili and young fiddlehead ferns.

What hasn't changed is the chef's near-obsessive focus on premium ingredients, most of which are sourced from small-scale farmers and producers around the kingdom. It all goes to prove, yet again, that Thompson's successor is perfectly capable of continuing the legacy of this big-ticket restaurant, even as she builds one of her own. ●

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