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Sunday March 7, 2010

Pho you to savour

Compiled by RENITA CHE WAN
Pictures courtesy of the bloggers

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THESE days, the Internet is really handy when it comes to looking for more places to indulge one's gastronomic appetite. And it's just as well that there are numerous food bloggers out there who are willing to share their latest finds on the Malaysian food trail.



Summer Roll

One of these is *kampungboycitygal* of the *kampungboycitygal.com* fame who recently tried out the food at Pho Hoa, a Vietnamese restaurant in Tropicana Mall, Petaling Jaya. Their account of the visit is brief but informative enough and the pictures of the food are so good they make the mouth water just by looking at them.

To introduce the place, they write that *Pho* (pronounced

"fuh") refers to the Vietnamese national soup while *Hoa* means harmony in their language. *Pho Hoa* is essentially a family style restaurant that takes pride in their *pho* and the affordable prices, they write.

They found the restaurant's simple setting, with murals illustrating the life of a typical Vietnamese and colourful lanterns decorating the wall, quite refreshing. "Do you know that Pho Hoa is also the largest Vietnamese restaurant chain in North America but not in Vietnam?"

They did their best to satisfy their appetites, sampling such Vietnamese favourites as spring rolls with minced chicken, vegetables and yam (RM3.25 per roll); Lemon Grass Chicken at RM7.95 (four sticks per plate); Summer Roll consisting of shrimp, chicken, salad and rice vermicelli (RM3.95 per roll); and Sugar Cane Prawns at RM7.95 (four sticks per plate); and *pho*, of course.

Their verdict: "Crispy on the outside and juicy on the inside, the spring roll was very addictive.

"Imbued with the flavours of lemongrass and lime, the chicken pieces were very flavourful. My only gripe is that the texture is slightly dry.

"The Summer Roll consisting of shrimp, chicken, salad and rice vermicelli was fresh, light and refreshing.



Noodle Soup (with steak and flank)

"We absolutely adore these Sugar Cane Prawns. The shrimp paste was springy with a light hint of sweetness coming from the sugar cane sticks."

When it came to the *pho*, the bloggers took time to explain what it was and how it could be ordered to suit one's palate. Ordering is easy as there is a pictorial guide showing what ingredients to include in one's bowl.

The *pho* noodles are made from 100% rice flour and imported from Vietnam, they add. "The restaurant owner taught us a special method to savour the *pho*. First, sample the original flavour of the *pho* before adding the fresh coriander leaves, bean sprouts, hot chilli padi, lemon wedges and basil leaves. Then pour in some special sauce that Pho Hoa brings in from North America (the sweet sauce and spicy sauce). It will make the soup hot and fiery with extra intense flavour.

"Our bowl of *pho* was really good! The broth was flavourful and the various beef parts (especially the tendons) were so soft and tender."

They posted great pictures of desserts too, like the Chocolate Banana Tower, a serving of fried banana with ice cream (RM6.95); Cha Gio Re Kem, a spring roll consisting of yam, sweet potato and mung bean with vanilla ice cream (RM5.95); and Cendol Kem, a concoction of cendol, red bean with coconut milk, gula melaka and imported coconut ice cream (RM6.95).



Fried Spring Roll

"Pho Hoa is definitely the place to be for a delicious bowl of *pho*. The decent serving size proves to be great value for money; a large bowl can easily feed two persons!"

To read the full account of the bloggers, see: <http://kampungboycitygal.com/2010/02/pho-hoa-tropicana-city-mall-pj/#more-2110>

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