



# Classical Thai Cravings

On a personal quest to learn more about himself, Jason Bailey owner and chef at Classical Thai Cravings, discovered more than he had hoped for.

He fell in love with a country, a culture, a cuisine and a beautiful woman, all of which continue to be the flame that burns so brightly in this passionate man.

With his spiritual approach to life reflected in his cooking, Classical Thai Cravings has become the quintessential dining experience for those who love the food of this South East Asian country.

Southern Highlanders fill his Mittagong restaurant each evening from Tuesday-Sunday and come away with more than a meal – they are educated, enthralled and enhanced by the synergistic flavours that Jason enthuses into his food.

Learning his craft at the highest level at the Blue Elephant Cooking School in Bangkok and later with the Bangkok Chefs Association he met Bee, his future wife, who escorted him past street vendors and into royal salons, where he mentally documented each

spice and herb used in Thai Cooking.

Jason first sought out a venue in tropical Queensland for his restaurant. Instinct and the call of four generations of ancestors in the Southern Highlands, brought him to the Mittagong Shopping Centre on Pioneer Road.

Here Classical Thai Cravings was born in the hardest of economic times.

After six months the restaurant was doing a roaring trade and the word was spreading. Classical Thai Cravings now boasts two dining areas in the mall, which both succeed as staff calmly, manage food service with serenity and efficiency.

Food preparation begins at midday each day and is completed by 5pm in time for the dinner rush.

Despite the frantic pace in the kitchen, the entire experience leaves you feeling relaxed and satisfied.

Service is kept simple to further allow the story behind the food to shine.

Although the menu is classic Thai, Jason has

“renovated” the historic recipes and moulded them to harmonise his Australian background with his knowledge of Thai food. His Pad Thai has seven flavours instead of the usual three.

The kitchen prepares and makes its own curry paste, coriander, garlic and galangal from scratch each day.

Careful attention is given to ensuring the layers of spice – sweet and sour are allowed to stand out individually and are not swamped by each other.

The dishes are not overtly spicy and are delicate yet filling at the same time.

The décor depicts the “dawn of happiness” - the Sukhothai period in Thai history - with muted earth tones and tranquil greens in the crockery.

There is still so much more to be done by this young man and we are lucky enough to enjoy his wonderful food and restaurant in the Southern Highlands. ■

**Opening for lunch in early December.  
Classical Thai Cravings: 02 4872 3007.**