



# Beyond Thai Cuisine

BY MACIEK KLIMOWICZ

You know what the biggest problem with Thai food is? It's too good! I mean really, you can have it every day of the year, and still get excited at the sight of a bowl of tom yum or a plateful of somtum – at least I do. But while having an easy access to an abundance of Thai food here in Phuket is a blessing, it might also be a bit of a curse – it stops one from exploring what else is there.



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And there is so much! Not thousands of kilometers away, in the kitchens of French or Japanese restaurants, but right across the border, in Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and beyond where Southeast Asian cuisine waits to be discovered. And now you can begin discovering it without even leaving Phuket. To do just that, visit Trilogy restaurant at Dream Phuket Hotel & SPA.

The Executive Chef at Trilogy, Alfie Jerome, knows a bit about discovery. He's been passionate about cooking since the age of eight, when he prepared a Shepherd's pie all by himself, served it to his father and... made him cry with joy and pride. "That's when I released how powerful food is," he tells me. After that, one thing led to another and Chef Jerome decided to follow his passion. Since then he has cooked in fine dining restaurants of Singapore, Malaysia and Bali and has also travelled to the US to showcase Singaporean cuisine.

Through this all, he remained faithful to his Southeast Asian heritage. "I've always believed in the importance of learning the techniques of French fine dining, but I still emphasize more on my southeast Asian roots," he says and adds "I prefer to learn cooking from the old ladies in the fresh markets than from other chefs."

And the proof is in the pudding. The dishes he presents to me at Trilogy's outdoor terrace in the airy green courtyard of the Dream Phuket Hotel & Spa, have all the comfort food qualities of a homemade Southeast Asian meal – they burst with aromas and flavors. And they also look simply great. "I think Southeast Asian cuisine is great, but I also think it lacks in presentation. If we combine the 'East and West', we can come up with the perfect thing - modern Asian cooking," he explains.

And as mentioned before, the meal goes far beyond just Thai cuisine. On my plate, Massaman curry meets Malaysian roti while

fresh Vietnamese spring rolls come served with sweet Indonesian sauce, to form a perfect union across the borders. And when a very local Thai dessert, featuring coconut milk and red beans, lands on the table, it does so with a dash of style - in a martini glass.

"People who come to Phuket, want to try local food and local culture. But it may be limited to only show them Thai cuisine, which is why I decided to showcase the cuisine of Southeast Asian," explains Chef Jerome.

People who come to Phuket will surely appreciate this approach. And people who live here will too. ■

Learn more about Trilogy restaurant and Dream Phuket Hotel & Spa on [dream-hotels.com/Phuket](http://dream-hotels.com/Phuket) and [facebook.com/DreamPhuketHotelandSpa](https://www.facebook.com/DreamPhuketHotelandSpa)

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