

Mama's Gotta Bake

she's bad, she's bold...and she likes sugar



Tag Archives: Kimmy Tang
9021PHO – Westlake Village



Pho heaven's sake, why did it take so long to get authentic, gourmet Vietnamese food in the west end of the valley!!! But let's count our blessings that it's finally here. Chef Kimmy Tang is the culinary force behind 9021PHO, her Vietnamese bistro that opened in Westlake Village a mere 4 months ago. Her flagship location is in Beverly Hills, and she plans to open a third very soon in Culver City. The space is open and contemporary. It's very zen-like on one hand, yet exudes a warm energy, much like Chef Tang herself.



Chef Kimmy Tang

When we ask Chef Tang where she trained, she tells us she is entirely self-taught. She said that she had opened her first restaurant called Michelia in 2001, but that she closed it 7 years later. She explains to my friend Gail and I how she traveled throughout Europe and Asia for several years, honing her culinary skills and expanding her horizons before opening the Beverly Hills location in 2009. We watch her as she buzzes from table to table, making sure her customers are happy and well taken care of. So let's talk about the pho.



Pho Chay with tofu

Pho, (pronounced fuh) is a traditional Vietnamese soup, with French and Chinese influences. She offers versions with beef, chicken, tuna or shrimp. Since Gail is vegetarian and we're splitting it, we order the Pho Chay (\$8.95) made with tofu, straw mushrooms, onion, baby corn and rice noodles in a vegetable broth. This serving was certainly enough to serve four diners. The broth is light and fragrant with star anise being the most prominent of the spices flavoring it. The big pieces of tofu don't make you miss meat at all, and the bok choy still had a nice crunch to it.



Panko friend sole

9021PHO boasts a rather large menu. It offers everything from a selection of appetizers, salads, noodle and rice dishes to seafood and meat dishes. Since we wanted a little taste of everything, we both ordered one of the lunch specials (\$9.95). It came with a crispy, crunchy egg roll, soup, a slaw type salad, rice and a dessert all within a bento-style box. I ordered the panko-crusted sole, and it was excellent. The best part was the French, spicy aioli that Chef Tang makes fresh everyday. The fish was moist and flavorful on the inside, and had a perfect golden, brown crunch on the outside. I couldn't finish it so I brought the rest home. However, when I walked in the house I popped the left-over in the microwave...and it was gone.



Gail the vegetarian ordered the tofu with onion, bell pepper, eggplant, straw mushroom and baby corn in a black bean sauce. They also offer a choice of jasmine rice or brown rice. Our server told us that every day the special comes with a different dessert. Today's dessert was a cold dessert soup of red beans and coconut milk. I've never tasted anything like this before.



Vietnamese iced coffee

Pho people who enjoy their coffee drinks, the iced coffee is a must. The Vietnamese coffee has a deep, bold flavor; it's mixed with condensed milk and served over ice. It packs a real punch, in fact as I write this, I'm still buzzing from it.

I think Westlake Village has a real winner on it's hands. It's obvious that Chef Kimmy Tang cooks with both her heart and her soul. In a sea of pho restaurants that dot the

city of Los Angeles, her flavors are more refined and elegant than most. I for one welcome her to the valley. If you give 9021PHO a try, I'd love to hear what your impression was. Tell Chef Kimmy I said hello!

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