

## Bacco

Osteria da Sergio

Sukhumvit Soi 53, 200 meters from Sukhumvit Road

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Sergio Forte, the Harley-Davidson driving owner of Bacco, calls his new restaurant an 'osteria.' Literally, osteria means a place where the owner hosts people, but usage has narrowed the definition. Today, an osteria, according to Sergio, is a restaurant that is big, spacious and designed for everyone. They are usually located in neighborhoods and emphasize drinking as well as dining. They are designed to be casual and comfortable.

Sergio's osteria definitely fits the definition. It's large (220 seats), in a residential area and has a warm friendly feel of lacking in places devoted to chrome, glass and granite. The center is dominated by a large island with a wine bar on one end and a massive pizza oven on the other. The main dining area surrounds the wine bar end of the island and overlooks the street. There is more dining at the other end, but it also contains the kitchen and a delicatessen with Italian items that can be purchased to take away. The décor conjures up visions of the Mediterranean and the walls are covered with striking paintings that Sergio had commissioned in Thailand.



Sergio's menu is large and contains a variety of items, including a pizza and pasta. The main emphasis at Bacco, however, isn't on pizza and pasta, but on variety of other – and in our opinion – more interesting dishes. We recently sampled several of these items and found some of them unique and unavailable at other Bangkok restaurants.

We had never tried *piada* and *cassone*, a specialty from the area around Rimini from where Sergio hails. They are sandwich like affairs made with thin round pieces of flatbread. The piada are cooked and then filled; cassone, on the other hand, are first filled and then cooked along with the filling. We were especially enamored of the B140 *Piada Cotto Mozzarella* of piada bread filled with cooked ham and mozzarella and the B180 *Cassone Verde* where the bread was stuffed with spinach, mozzarella and parmesan before being cooked on a grill. These are great snack items and go well with a nice glass of wine.

Another treat is Sergio's B750 *Gran Misto di Antipasti*, an appetizer platter consisting of tuna tartar with herbs and pomelo, a Parmesan cheese basket of rocket salad, Parma ham and melon, Italian sausage with mashed potatoes, foie gras with mango and raspberry sauces and a mussel in tomato sauce. Of the pastas we tried, our favorite was the ravioli in cream sauce with truffle, rocket and pieces of porcini mushroom.

There are several risottos on the menu and we found the B320 *Risotto al Tricolore*, a three color variety made with Italian rice, Parma ham and mushrooms very enjoyable. Our main course, a B900 *Saltimbocca alla Romagna*, veal topped with Fontina cheese, Parma ham and served with mashed potatoes and grilled vegetables was a big hit primarily because of the quality of the veal. It was real veal (not pork), imported from Australia and of incomparable quality.



There was a lot more on the menu, but simply didn't have the stomach space to try it. But the message was clear. This is an excellent restaurant for those who like to eat, drink and have a good. It is as we found, very much an osteria.

Bacco is open Monday-Friday from 11:30-14:30 and 17:30-24:00. On Saturdays and Sunday it stays open at lunchtime until 15:00 and opens for dinner at 17:00. There is ample on site and nearby parking.

