

AFTER a veritable roundabout of restaurants, cooking multiple styles of food in several countries, Thai chef **Nu Suandokmai** has gone right back to his roots - back to the sort of cooking his mother taught him at the family farm at Ayutthaya, the former Siamese capital 80km north of Bangkok.

His re-emergence with his own restaurant, **Lantern by Nu**, has been welcomed not only those who fondly remember his original restaurant, Nu Thai, which he opened with wife Jane in 2000, but anyone who craves the sort of authentic cooking most commonly found in Thai street markets.

You could do worse than stick to the "street bites" tapas-style menu sitting at high tables flanked by the large open kitchen at one end and a bar at the other, with an icy Singha or Chang Lager to go with snacks such as miang khum, betel leaves with prawn, caramelised coconut, peanut and lime; or sliced house-made northern Thai sausages with shards of ginger, fresh coriander and green chilli wrapped in cos lettuce.

The green papaya salad, som tum thai, is pure street food - lots of chilli, fresh lime, palm sugar, snake beans and chunks of heirloom tomato, a dish with real zing. So, too, the pad thai, a generous plate of fresh rice noodles packed with chicken, tofu, sprouts, tamarind and blended dried shrimp.

There's a bit of restaurant theatre with jungle curry served in a clay pot kept warm over glowing charcoal, again a generous dish with a red curry base, lots of heat from strands of green peppercorn, with pickled wild ginger, cracked rice and currently with local whiting.



Boat noodle soup is probably Thailand's most famous noodle soup and, again, as street food as it comes. It's based on beef stock rendered down over two days, seasoned with star anise and cinnamon, containing pork balls, lots of beefy bits, thickened a little with pig's blood, topped with crunchy pork crackling and served with condiments, including fish sauce, sugar, dried chilli and pickled chilli. Lantern by Nu, 120 Selby St, Adelaide. Open for brunch Saturday and Sunday, lunch and dinner Wednesday to Sunday; phone (08) 7078 3559.

Better known as a wine bar with a multi award-winning wine list created by owner **Paola Coro**, after 15 years **The Apothecary 1878** has well earned its reputation for having the best medicine in town.

But The Apothecary also continues to build its reputation as a restaurant with a range of warmly furnished dining spaces spread over several floors, from rustic, brick-lined cellar to snug mezzanine and intimate ground floor "drink dispensary". It's here that gorgeous mahogany pharmacy cabinets, originally from London and dating from 1878 - hence the name - have been restored and line the walls. Thonet chairs, solid marble tables, chaise lounges and warm velvets and chandeliers complete the European bar experience.

Recently appointed head chef **Mirco Ruthoff** is continuing the tradition set by his talented predecessors with contemporary, wine-friendly dishes. But the savvy way to

eat here is to order from the range of smaller dishes and ask for them each to be paired with 75ml or even smaller serves of wine. Owner Paola Coro enjoys any opportunity to lead her customers through a procession of tastes and flavours, choosing wines to go with dishes such as mustard and horseradish fish croquettes with romesco sauce to start, chicken roulade with leek, chestnut and parsley, or an exemplary beef tartare with cured egg yolk and caper leaves. Main courses include braised beef cheek with soffritto and salsa verde, or sliced strip loin with pickled mushroom, burnt onion and tarragon. You may be tempted by the desserts but the extensive cheese and chocolate menus are the more discerning choice. The Apothecary 1878, 118 Hindley St, Adelaide. Open for dinner daily; phone (08) 8212 9099.

Convivial outdoor dining spaces are always at a premium in the CBD but for al fresco summer dining **Cos**, now owned by wine aficionado **Jason Goodridge**, is hard to beat.

Its heritage-listed Victorian building has a light and breezy style, with polished floors and windows opening to the street providing a very pleasant restaurant space.

Chef **Ollie Morris** provides perfect al fresco fare from Eyre Peninsula oysters through entrees such as hand-cut eye fillet tartare or seared Hokkaido scallops, to main courses such as twice-baked cheddar souffle with a waldorf salad or Goolwa cockles with squid ink spaghetti.

Cos remains one of Adelaide's safest refuges for anyone in need of a properly aged and accurately cooked steak - choose from a 250g grass-fed Angus eye fillet to a 400g grass-fed Cape Grimm sirloin. Not surprisingly the wine list more than keeps pace with the food. Goodridge, who has a parallel life as a software developer, is also a wine collector who travels far and wide in building a list containing at least 60 wines at any time, mostly from South Australia and mostly from small, boutique producers and often at very good prices. Cos, 17 Leigh St, Adelaide. Open for lunch Monday to Friday, dinner Monday to Saturday; phone (08) 8231 7611.

*Top: Lantern by Nu restaurant interior.
Left: The Apothecary 1878 interior.*

