



Wat Dong Moon Lek: a breath of fresh Thai air for Silver Lake

I used to drive down Fountain often, hoping that some day one of the forlorn Thai, vegan or Chinese restaurants between Sunset and Vermont would turn into something interesting. My prayers have been answered with the arrival in August of *Wat Dong Moon Lek*, a compact spot in the Fountain Ave. mini-mall anchored by the dubiously-named Point Dume Chinese restaurant. With turquoise walls hung with teak panels and a smiling, attentive staff and a blackboard full of specials, *Wat Dong Moon Lek* has a more modern and thoughtful take on Thai food than the old school Thai Town spots, and it's a welcome update.



Everything we tasted was full of bright and strong flavors, with just the right amount of heat to satisfy my heat-seeking self but not make Matt regret going out to dinner with me. Refreshing rambutan salad was a completely new idea to me, combining the lichee-like fruit with shrimp in a sesame-flecked coconut dressing that was good enough to lap it up like soup. I was intrigued by ham hock rice with pickled mustard greens, which is more Chinese-influenced. Our only mistake was getting the half order—just get the larger size, because otherwise you'll run out of the tender pork before you're done figuring out how to optimally combine just the right combo of sweet soy broth, hot sauces, rice and mustard greens with the pork.



Hainan chicken also comes recommended, but there were only two of us, so we also missed the signature Wong Dong Moon Lek beef or pork noodles. Instead we had tom yum udon with chicken—a classic, well executed and fairly spicy tom yum broth with the new addition of udon noodles. Panang curry with pork was also a classic Thai dish, flawlessly executed with a homemade taste to the well-spiced curry sauce. After devouring just about every bite of the four dishes, the only problem was not having enough room to taste the wonderful looking plates of caramelized bananas and berry tarts coming out of the kitchen from the owner's Cordon Bleu-trained pastry chef wife.



To drink, there are fresh fruit smoothies, or BYOB. Prices are quite reasonable for the quality of the food, though portions are restrained. Our ample dinner for two was \$30.

Tip: Try to get a table with real chairs instead of the backless stools; and save room for dessert.

Wat Dong Moon Lek

4356 Fountain Ave.

(323) 666-5993

<http://www.watdongmoonlek.com/>