

LIFESTYLES

COOKING CLASS



Andi Cody, Caitlyn Cody and Priscilla Garza prepared one of the two dishes learned during the Thai food cooking class.



Each team had a selection of ingredients to measure and use in their dishes.



Chef Goy Laoraowifoj presented a recipe before letting the class attendees work in teams to execute it on their own.

HANNAH COYLE, PHOTOS

CLASS *for* FOODIES

Step up your cooking skills at Grand Fête



Chef Goy Laoraowifoj chops green onions to add to the Kai Jeaw with shrimp.



A spicy Pad Ka Prao Gai was on the menu. This dish resembles a stir-fry.

BY HANNAH COYLE
Staff Writer

Grand Fête's cooking classes are like watching Food Network, but in person.

The cooking classes at Grand Fête are so much more than a recipe and some instruction.

On May 31, I attended the "Thai at home...simple meals" with chef Goy Laoraowifoj and 10 other individuals aspiring to bring Thai to their home kitchens.

We learned to cook two authentic dishes, Kai Jeaw with shrimp and Pad Ka Prao Gai, while incorporating our own preferences into the meal, like spice level, and learning from each other.

After watching Laoraowifoj make the dish, though she admitted she doesn't measure, just eyeballs it, we got a shot at it.

Split into three teams of four, we scrambled eggs, chopped green onions, measured soy sauce and sauteed everything in a healthy amount of vegetable oil.

Each team had the chance to put to practice their skills, or try to hone them. Flipping the Kai Jeaw, the Thai version of an omelet, for example, was a challenge. When followed by praise from our local expert, it felt like I, too, was part of the Food Network show.

Kay Timm, owner of Grand Fête and Grand Fête Marketplace, has been offering classes since she opened Urban Olive and Vine in 2010.

"I just feel like people want a way to learn and participate," Timm said.

When she sold Urban in 2016 to open Grand Fête, she kept hearing how people wanted those classes to continue.

Timm gave the people what they

wanted, and it's been nothing short of a success story ever since.

I'll preface the rest of the story with this – if you want your pick of classes, I suggest booking in advance. They're popular and for good reason.

Each class offers hands-on learning, like the Thai class I took. Attendance is typically capped at 12 people. Other demo classes offer a wider range of participants.

There are a variety of classes, from pasta to Cuban to charcuterie board making. Some of the classes, like the charcuterie ones, are run by Timm, but most of them are run by local talent.

Class date and times vary as well, depending on when instructors are available.

And they're meant for everyone. It doesn't matter if you're a pro at flipping omelets or you haven't scrambled an egg in your life, all are welcome and encouraged to participate.

Some classes, like knife skills, are organized just for kids.

Throughout the class, conversation about ingredients, Thai travels and cooking experience could be heard.

"The goal when everyone comes in here is they have an experience," Timm said.

After two hours at Grand Fête, I learned that as much as the experience of taking a class is about cooking skills, it's just as much about spending an evening with a family member, significant other, friend or making one along the way.

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Alicia Miller, Kathryn Getty, Bria Zeuli and Kristen Van Vleet met up for girls night at Grand Fête.



Snuggled in the back of Grand Fete is a little kitchen set up, with a mirror above and a video screen so all have a visual of the demonstrations.