

BOUNTIFUL AT BO.LAN

Duongporn 'Bo' Songvisava is voted Asia's Best Female Chef 2013

MANTA KLANGBOONKONG
THE NATION

A Thai chef who has earned a reputation for sophisticated and interesting Thai dishes will become known internationally next week, as she steps up to receive Asia's Best Female Chef 2013 award.

Duongporn "Bo" Songvisava, co-owner of Bo.lan Restaurant on Sukhumvit Soi 26 will receive the prestigious award on Monday at Marina Bay Sands in Singapore.

The award is part of the announcement of Asia's 50 Best Restaurants. This new list, voted for by the same experts who produce the highly anticipated annual list of "The World's 50 Best Restaurants", ranks "The 50 Best Restaurants in Asia" and selects Asia's Best Female Chef.

The title celebrates the work of an exceptional female chef whose cooking excites the toughest of critics.

Bo held a small dinner party at Bo.lan earlier this month to celebrate, serving lots of delectable Thai dishes and addictive wines by Austrian winemaker Bertold Salomon who flew in to Bangkok for the occasion.

It was truly a foodie's heaven. The evening started with a pass-around plate of bite-sized crispy rice with lemongrass and crunchy rice cake with caramelised coconut, served with refreshing 2010 Ultra Brut Rose Sekt Solomon Undhof, to tease the guests' appetite.

Then the long and satisfying intricate dinner followed. The four-flight dinner included several dishes and two wines each. The highlights included a trio of lime cured scallop, Bo.lan cured pork and grilled sticky rice that went down beautifully with 2011 Gruner



CRISPY RICE with lemongrass and kaffir lime leaves.



MON-STYLE beef curry with ki lek leaves.

Veltliner Watchberg Kremstal and 2009 Gruner Veltliner Alte Reben. Spicy seafood salad, savoury Muslim-style herbal-fed chicken soup and bamboo-stuffed pork and red curry found an unlikely accompaniment with 2009 Reisling Undhof Kogl Reserve.

Even a very typical Thai dish with distinctive tastes like gaeng ki lek – beef curry with astringent, bitter local leaves – went hand in hand with reds like 2010 Pinot Noir Solomon & Andrew (New Zealand) and 2009 Fleurieu Peninsula Syrah Viognier (Solomon Estate, South Australia).

Thai-born Bo completed a Master's degree in Thai



Chef Bo, right, and her sister

Gastronomy at Griffith University in Adelaide, Australia, before returning to her homeland to hone her skills alongside Amanda Gale at Cyan at The Metropolitan Bangkok. There, a chance introduction to Australian Thai food



ANGKHANG tea smoked seafood salad with orange dressing.



LIME CURED scallop, cured pork and grilled sticky rice.

expert David Thompson proved a pivotal moment in her career.

While working at his Michelin-starred Nahm Restaurant in London, Bo rediscovered Thai cooking and met her future husband and business partner, Australian chef Dylan Jones. This Bangkok culinary power couple now runs Bo.lan, a progressive restaurant that boldly puts authenticity ahead of avant-garde techniques and Western influences.

Such is Bo's dedication to preserving the rich culinary landscape of her homeland, she also hosts the television show "Eat, Am, Are" on Thai PBS, which encourages people to eat well and safeguard local food wisdom and also organises a monthly artisan and farmer's market in front of her restaurant.