



Rocky's monthly **wine dinners** are especially for people who appreciate **excellent food** paired with **exceptional wine** supplied by **FIN**.

A wine dinner, hosted by a quintessential Samui boutique resort, showcasing spectacular wines from a fastidious wine importer, paired with the dishes of an ingeniously creative chef. It's the kind of prospect that has people who cherish the finer things in life, crying out "wine me, dine me!"

This island has many alluring qualities, and one of the attractions that most people truly appreciate is its exceptional wining and dining scene. Now at *Rocky's Boutique Resort*, located just south of Lamai Beach (near Hin-Ta Hin-Ya, the famous Grandfather-Grandmother rocks) and already established as a part of Samui's blossoming culinary scene, they are introducing monthly wine dinners. To be held at their highly acclaimed restaurant *The Dining Room*, the dinners are open to outside guests and will have a regional or national theme each month. The slightly radical concept is for eminent wines to be selected first. And then a menu created to pair off dishes with the various wines' characteristics. A concept that certainly most wine lovers would be very interested in. Sure, an old-school chef may well try to argue this is like 'putting the cart before the horse'. But that's an outdated way of thinking, especially here in Thailand where sourcing truly exceptional wines is a difficult and challenging (but thankfully, not impossible) task. Whereas, sourcing great quality fresh food

produce is far easier. And a wide choice of just about every kind of imported food and ingredient is now easily obtained.

So once the selection of fine wines and theme for the evening is known, the fashioning of a menu to showcase both the wines and the cuisine, in their best possible light, can begin. Of course, this is a highly skilled job that requires an executive chef of a very high calibre. He needs to be courageous, audacious even, with broad culinary experience. And possess a sound knowledge of wine and food matching. Luckily for Rocky's and its guests, they have just such an adventurous young man leading the talented kitchen brigade. Malaysian born *Azizskandar Auang*, who joined Rocky's at the beginning of last year, has a solid culinary grounding, gained in the fine dining restaurants of the *Marriott*, *Hilton* and *Renaissance* hotels in Singapore and Malaysia. He won the 'Malaysia Young Chef Challenge', and when explaining his cooking philosophy, he insightfully stresses how important it is to use the best possible raw ingredients, so when cooked right, they stand on their own. His forté is classical French cuisine with a modern approach – perfect for wine matching.

The wine expertise will be provided by *FIN* (Fabulous Is Needed), a small 'exclusive events and boutique wine company', owned and run by the exuberantly social Thai lady, *Khun Benjawan*

Wisootsat, together with her wine connoisseur German partner (and previously a marketing executive), *Jan Ganzer*. Khun Benjawan clearly knows her wines very well, having visited the wineries, mostly in Europe, to personally select them. And during the dinners she informatively introduces each wine as it's served, joined by Chef Aziz, who is also invited to elaborate on his accompanying dishes. All the wines are hand picked 'boutique' wines. Unlike most wine importers, *FIN* does not target high sales volume. Their emphasis is very much on quality and rarity. Many of their wines are organic and biodynamic – which is organic taken to the extreme. The makers of biodynamic wines take into account every conceivable element that affects both vine and wine.

Not only are the expected, strict, all natural and holistic production standards adhered to, but revolutionary methods are also employed, such as taking into account the moon and sun's positions throughout the year. Biodynamic wines are obviously more expensive to produce, so their superiority needs to be very noticeable. And in recent years they have met (or exceeded) meticulous wine connoisseurs' stringent demands and expectations. A good example will jump out of the glass at you, with intense flavours and vibrant texture.

As biodynamic and organic wines can

undoubtedly deliver on their promise of freshness, intensity and vitality, the food really does need to be exquisitely crafted to keep up. And fresh, natural and organic cuisine is the logical chef's choice.

The combination of truly memorable wines, exemplary food and service, together with stimulating company (possibly guest winemakers in the future), live mellow jazz and traditional Thai style architecture, is an ambience that's hard to beat. On the cover of the stylish menus, *FIN* likes to describe these events as an 'epicurean extravaganza'. And for budding gourmets and wine buffs, a Rocky's wine dinner is, in every respect, a temptingly indulgent gastronomic treat.

Rocky's usually hosts wine dinners on the first Saturday of the month.
For reservations and further information, telephone 0 7723 3020.