



## Hung Fat's A Chinese Restaurant with Pizzazz

by the Wandering Gourmet

Encounters with Chinese restaurants in the Kingdom of Thailand are often ho-hum affairs. Menus are dominated by Cantonese items and the establishments are often presided over by ageing matrons who smile only when the cash register tinkles. Decorations tend to be gaudy and are frequently dominated by tinsel left over from past New Year's celebrations. Hung Fat's at Kalim Bay on Phuket Island is a refreshing exception.

**D**esigned by John Underwood, a well-know Australian artist, designer and artisan headquartered in Phuket, it is simultaneously modern and retro in style. If you tend to yawn when entering local Chinese dining spots, you'll suck in air and feel a rush when entering Hung Fat's.

It possesses two floors and an ocean view – albeit through a jumble of electrical wires. Red colour themes, including striking red chairs and tables, dominate the distinctive oval shaped building. Marble floors, recycled wood walls, metal cables and irregular shaped beams provide additional interest to the design. Although this is all modern and trendy, the restaurant is unmistakably Chinese and there is a fascinating retro feel about the place.



Hung Fat's is not only the sole restaurant on Phuket featuring Sichuan food; it is one of only a handful of Sichuan restaurants in all of Thailand. Authenticity is insured by the chefs from Chengdu Province working in the kitchen.

Hung Fat's has an extensive menu with a range of traditional favourites and several dishes that are unique and seldom seen outside of China. Both set and a la carte menus are available. Starting with an array of exceptional appetizers, the menu includes live seafood from tanks, traditional Sichuan dishes, chef specialities, and dim sum, soups and noodle dishes. The menu has enough variety to satisfy those interested in a snack, couples seeking a romantic dinner or large groups eager to share a wide variety of dishes.

I enjoyed several items during my visit, but I was, of course, only able to sample a small amount of what was on offer. I particularly enjoyed the Giant US Scallops served with garlic and chilli sauce. The scallops were superb and the sauce added enough excitement to make the dish memorable. The Mapo Style Tofu served with minced pork and chilli was a dish I have had previously, but Hung Fat's rendition obviously benefited from being prepared by chefs from China. The Gung bao diced chicken, now an international favourite, was also delicious and is an excellent dish for casual diners who enjoy making their own 'Chinese-style' sandwiches.

Hung Fat's isn't only about food. On the second floor there is a stage and world class light and sound system where nightly Brazilian, Latin, and Jazz and Blues from international musicians is presented. Those dining on the lower level aren't left out; they can view what is happening on stage via large TV screens while the music resounds through the building. Hung Fat's has got things right and is a place everyone visiting Phuket should give a try.