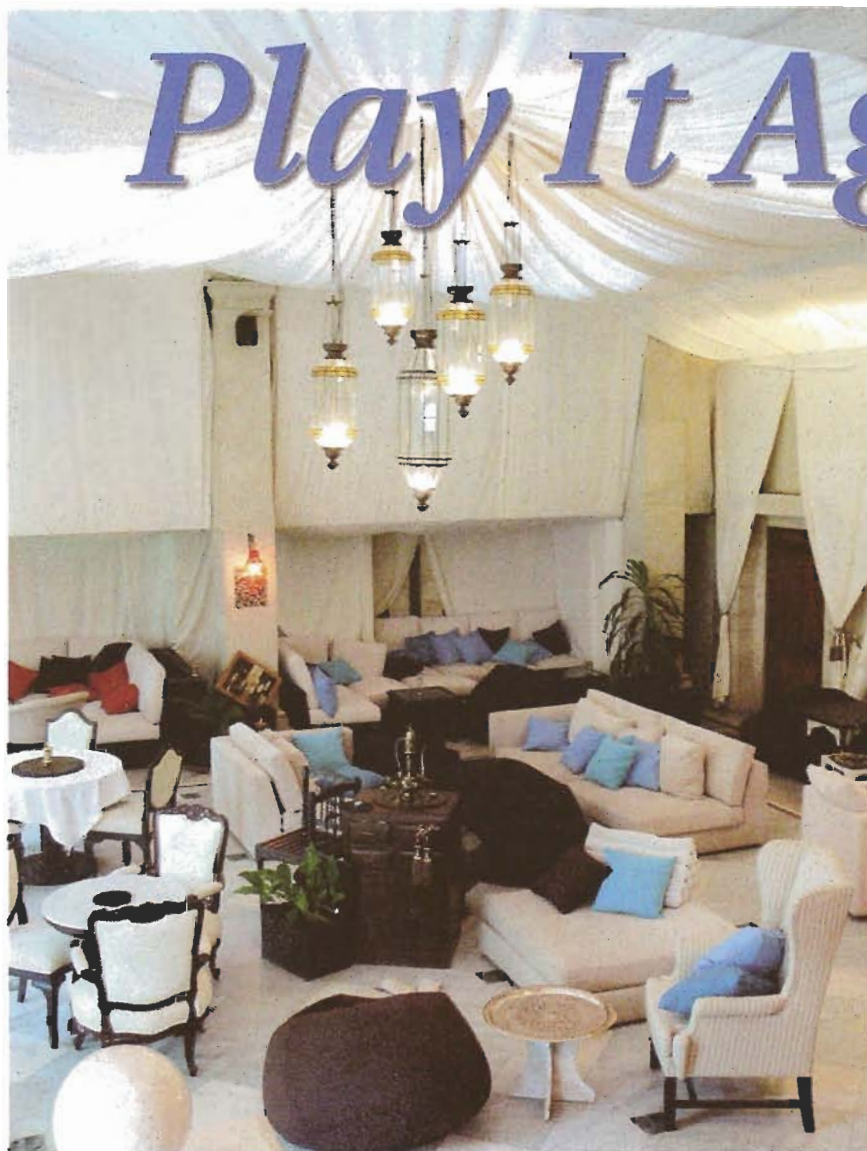


GURUWINE ME DINE ME

ARGLIT BOONYAI

Play It Again, Sam



DESPITE BANGKOK BEING ONE OF THE MOST COSMOPOLITAN CITIES IN ASIA

we do not have as wide a selection of restaurants and cafés as we could have. Sure, Italian, Japanese, Chinese and French eateries are plentiful, but outside the realms of staple cuisines Bangkok is severely lacking. While there are a couple of places offering up Indian, Lebanese and Mexican foods there are not half as many as there should be and there are little or no alternative diners. By alternative I mean, for example, Taco bars, Jamaican BBQ huts or even Moroccan tearooms.

But wait, a new addition to Bangkok's eating scene has arrived, and it is attempting to break new ground by offering up Moroccan tea. Decked out like a sheik's pleasure dome, Al Majlis finds its niche through large comfy Arab-style sofa, plump beanbags and is swathed in flowing white drapes from floor to ceiling. Also arabesque teapots and sheesha pipes are laid out lovingly to add to the atmosphere. Aside from the indoors seating area there is also an al fresco lounge spot fitted with lounge chairs, more beanbags and plenty of shade.

between the crispy pita bread and the soft filling is akin to the Indian samosa, but with a less pungent taste.

Finally, one cannot go to a Moroccan tearoom without trying some of the tea, so two pots were ordered to accompany my Al Majlis cheesecake (B105). The Moroccan mint tea (B80/160) is a traditional green tea infused with mint leaves and served with a little syrup. It is a refreshing way to cleanse the palette and a wonderfully healthy option. The second pot of tea was the slightly more audacious mixture of green tea with mango and ginger (B80/160). This is a tea better designed to taking with dessert. Whereas the mint tea is designed to be enjoyed with good conversation, and an afternoon





Al Majlis
Moroccan Tearoom
Pradu Spa Club,
83/8 Soi Charoen Chai,
Ekamai Road
Open Mon-Sat
4:30pm-1am
02-392-2345



Al Majlis markets itself as a Moroccan tearoom, but rather than taking on the full concept, it is better to say it is 'inspired' by Moroccan tearooms – so Al Majlis works to Thai tastes. Being a tearoom, the food menu focuses mainly on snacks and light appetizers, with sandwiches and salads making up the bulk of the offerings.

To ease my way into Moroccan cuisine (but not wanting to come across as clueless as that couple in *Babel*), I began with the Moroccan chicken salad (B140). This is a perfect introduction to the North African cuisine as it has been diluted enough for Thai palates but still retains its Moroccan flare. Marinated, grilled chicken breast is doused in a mustard-style dressing and served with a crisp, leafy salad. The aromatic herbs are strong enough to add an original flavor, but subtle enough not to deter Thai customers. Following this was the Arabic pita pizza (B160). Using a yogurt base instead of tomato and smothered with delicious cheese and marinated chicken, again this dish allows Thai mouth to experience Moroccan flavors through something we already know – pizza. However, as creamy and cheesy as this pizza is, I would not recommend it for anyone who is lactose intolerant or has an aversion to dairy, as it is decidedly lush.

My final snack came in the form of the Al Majlis wrap (B150). The easy winner, these little, toasted pita bread pockets are quintessential North African delights. Rich in meat, beans, herbs and spices this is a wonderfully original dish that will give the more adventurous diners something to write home about. The contrast in textures



siesta, the mango and ginger tea offers drinkers a tangy boost for sweets and pudding and can even prepare you for a couple of glasses of wine.

Al Majlis is a wonderfully different spot to hang out, there's good food, wine, desserts and fresh tea. It is perfect for those looking to experience new tastes but are aware that they may not be entirely ready for those tastes. Perhaps as Al Majlis grows in popularity and people become accustomed to these new tastes, we'll see more adventurous dishes such as tajine and couscous. But until then, grab a beanbag, some Moroccan tea and sit back and think of Casablanca. **E**