

# Basil Aims to Serve Best in Thai Cuisine



**Susan M. Botich**  
Best Bets

The Basil in Carson City is chef Nan Watanar's dream come true.

She and her husband, Bob, came to the United States 22 years ago and started their first business, Pegasus Food Machinery Corp., in California. After moving to Carson City, the opportunity opened for Watanar to realize her dream of owning a fine-dining restaurant that would serve Thai cuisine in a family atmosphere.

"Unlike some other Thai restaurants, everything we serve at the Basil is 100 percent Thai," Watanar said. "The Basil does not mix Thai cuisine with Chinese or other Asian cuisines."

Dinners are served in the traditional Thai style.

"Most dinners come traditionally with at least three sauces for dipping," Watanar said. "Usually, these are a peanut sauce, a chili sauce (a little spicy-hot) and a third, depending on the dish. Jasmine rice is served on the side."

The Basil is happy to accommodate those who may have special dietary needs, Watanar said.

"We always try to accommodate our patrons," she said. "The Basil is not here to just make [money](#). This is my love, my dream. I want to serve people the very best in Thai cuisine."

The new co-owner of the Basil is "Mick" Pongpun Vorapipat.

"Everyone calls me 'Mick,'?" he said, grinning. "All are welcome at the Basil. Once you step inside, you are part of our family. We pride ourselves in offering excellent service. When you eat here, you are our friend."

The Basil reflects the exotic elegance of Thailand with its soothing atmosphere and traditional Thai decorations throughout. Soft browns and golds with subdued greens and reds add to the tranquil atmosphere of the open dining room. Glass-top tables are accented with green silk tablecloths and white china settings.

"All the decorations throughout are meant to reflect Thai traditions and beauty," Watanar said. "I love this part of having the restaurant as much as creating all the different kinds of dishes we serve."

The Basil offers a selection of wines, beers and sake. Though referred to as fine dining, the aim of The Basil is to offer a family-style atmosphere, Watanar said.

"In Thailand, when you go to a restaurant, everyone likes to share a little of each dish," she said. "We encourage our customers to try a little of each other's plates. In this family-style way of dining, you can enjoy many different dishes, each with their own unique flavors, spices and herbs."

Each dish is made to order with fresh herbs and spices, Watanar said.

"The Basil is done to the highest standards," she said. "Food is art. Healthy food is art for the people. Fresh herbs and fresh spices help us with our health. It's good for you to eat everything fresh."

Curried dishes are popular favorites at the Basil. The degree of spiciness is up to the diner's preference.

"We use a one-to-five rating system," Watanar said. "One is mild, and five is for people who really like it hot. We call that 'nan hot.'"

Salads on the menu include green papaya salad with shredded green papaya marinated in lime juice, tossed with tomatoes, chilies and garlic; or the traditional Thai salad of vegetables, shrimp, chicken, tofu, sliced eggs and crispy onions served with peanut sauce.

Dinner entrées include Topless Seafood with scallops, shrimp, bell pepper and coconut milk in a light curry sauce; or ginger duckling with sautéed boneless duck, ginger roots and vegetables served with a special [house](#) sauce.

A favorite dessert with customers is the coco banana served with house-made silky coconut ice cream. A winter season sweet treat is the creamy pumpkin custard.

Large parties of up to 60 can be accommodated if the restaurant is notified at least 10 days in advance.

Wedding parties, anniversary celebrations and other special events are welcome. If given enough advance notice, Watanar said she is happy to open on Sunday for a special event.

*Susan M. Botich is a freelance writer.*

### **The Basil**

311 N. Carson St., Carson  
City

841-6100 or

[thebasilrestaurant.com](http://thebasilrestaurant.com)

Hours: Lunch from 11 a.m. to  
2:30 p.m.

Monday through Friday and  
dinner from 5-9 p.m. Monday  
through Saturday

Price range: \$9.95 to \$21.95

[www.gotorenatahoe.com](http://www.gotorenatahoe.com)

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