



Hand-embroidered silk wallpaper at Rau Ram.

RESTAURANT

The Road to Rangoon

A cool bistro in Burma blends the best of the region, but with a definite Vietnamese bent. BY JENINNE LEE-ST. JOHN

RAURAM has trotted across Asia and robbed a little bit from all our favorite flavors. Chef Kevin Ching, an American graduate of Le Cordon Bleu culinary school, has created a menu inspired by his pan-Pacific life and travels—from the *khanom chin* noodles hawked by his favorite stall in Bangkok's Chinatown to the oxtail stew "that my dad made for me growing up in Hawaii... with the volume turned up a bit."

The playful bistro launched in June by Pun + Projects, the team behind hip Rangoon gastropub Port Autonomy, was named after one of the most vital

Vietnamese herbs to emphasize how indigenous ingredients define national fare. "I wanted a name that would convey that sensory aspect of Southeast Asian cuisine," says founder Ivan Pun. Fast-changing Rangoon, Pun says, is "ready for innovative restaurant concepts that can compete on an international level of creativity."

Inside is a winning blend of chinoiserie birds hand-embroidered on silk wallpaper by Hong Kong décor brand Lala Curio, Burmese rattan and teak furniture by local firm Paribawga, a palm tree motif, and French brasserie

touches. The layered style means you'll feel equally at home sipping a potent calamansi mojito, sating your sweet tooth with Vietnamese coffee ice cream, or devouring Ching's favorite dish, his version of the rice vermicelli and grilled meat smorgasbord *bun cha*: "We serve ours like it's served in Hanoi, with spring rolls and pork meatballs, with the one addition of green sambal-laced *porchetta*—an homage to my days at the rotisserie at Appia in Bangkok." We can't wait to taste where these guys travel next. rauram.com; dinner for two K42,000. +