

# Stepping out of T

Sick of the same old pad Thai? Then step it up a notch with a few new takes on traditional dishes

**T**hey are the dishes we always opt for, confused or intimidated by the remaining array of unfamiliar dishes on ever-expanding menus. But as the number of choices grows and new

dishes — or recreations of old ones — start to appear in restaurants, it's time you got out of that rut and started looking beyond pad Thai. We asked some of Sydney's top chefs to offer alternatives to the largely mundane dishes we always order.



## VIETNAMESE

Michael Thai's mother Bac Cang Nghieu started the first of the Bau Truong group of restaurants in Cabramatta before expanding into Canley Heights, then opening a more modern version in Marrickville.

Thai says that while many dishes look similar, taste-wise they are very different.

The banh hoi nem nuong of chargrilled meat (pictured above) in a DIY ricepaper roll is one example of an old favourite.

These popular dishes sell in both summer and winter; there is usually a choice of chargrilled pork, prawn cake on sugar cane, or beef with betel leaves, and Vietnamese chargrilled meatballs as the fillings to put into the rice paper roll.

"Typically, the meat tends to be marinated with a bit of lemon-grass, soy sauce, oyster sauce, fish sauce and sugar to get the sweetness, colour and a bit of the burn



flavour, so there isn't a lot of spice added when cooking the meat for the dish," Thai says. "It relies on the fresh herbs and the bit of chilli in the dipping sauce to add a bit of the kick to the dish."

His updated version is called banh hoi bo luoi and is curry spiced minced beef cakes, also served in rice paper.

"This is a new one that we put in our Canley Heights menu, there are a lot more spices and chilli added to the beef cakes and, combining with the light pickled radish and carrot and the fresh herbs with the soft rice paper, it is a lot more spicy compared to the more common Vietnamese dishes," he says. "But it's definitely one that we would love to recommend people try."

Other old and new combinations on offer include a new twist on the traditional banh hoi chao tom, or prawn cake on sugar cane, which is also served on the rice paper plate.

## ITALIAN

At Ormeau at The Spit, chef Al-

ian such as a classic veal tonnato (below). It's normally a dish of



## KOREAN

IN Eastwood, Strathfield and CBD there is a vast choice of traditional Korean eateries, of