

Cantonese cuisine an old-school treat

Thursday, January 17, 2008 3:04 AM

Q2 Bistro, the upscale Chinese restaurant in the Polaris area, is observing its first anniversary.

Cantonese food has been out of favor for a couple of decades — ever since spicy Szechwan and Hunan cuisines stole the limelight from what had been the mainstay of traditional Chinese restaurants.

Q2 Bistro is an exception, devoting menu space and expertise to some of the myriad creations that make up Cantonese cuisine.

Accordingly, the Cantonese portion of its menu has some gems, such as the roast pork with bean sprouts (\$9.95). Chinese-style roast pork is cut into slivers and stir-fried at high heat with fresh bean sprouts and garlic. The dish is simple, but the nutty flavors developed by the high-heat stir-frying make it highly appetizing.

Thin, translucent mung-bean noodles are difficult to find on non-Cantonese menus. In one version at Q2, they're boiled and stir-fried with pork, onion, mushrooms and other vegetables to make the mild and satisfying Cantonese si fun entree (\$9.95).

Preserved black beans give a salty edge to calamari, which are stir-fried with chunks of bell pepper and slices of onion (\$10.25). In this context, the often-overbearing aspects of green bell peppers are harmonious.

Q2 can do other types of cooking: Its pad Thai (\$10.75) benefits from proper stir-frying of the shrimp, beef, chicken, egg and noodles. The crucial touch is cooking the rice noodles before the stir-fry stage: enough to remove brittleness but not so much as to make them soft.

The result: noodles with an excellent bite — fundamental for pad Thai.

-- Jon Christensen jac@iwaynet.net



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Proper stir-frying benefits pad Thai.

at a glance

Q2 Bistro

472 POLARIS PARKWAY
AT CLEVELAND AVENUE
(614-898-1988)

HOURS » 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.
weekdays, noon to 10 p.m.
Saturdays and 4 to 9 p.m.
Sundays

BOTTOM LINE » a Chinese
menu worth exploring