



# Dining Out

## Arcoba'leno

*Not just another Italian restaurant*

*Penelope Plaine*

Most expats and locals will remember the Babylon, a quirky little Italian restaurant on Huay Kaew Road established in the 70's by Magni Renato. Renato, as most people knew him, was a larger than life personality whose food and charisma attracted Royalty, as well as regular Thais and foreigners to enjoy his special Italian recipes. One quirky bit that you had to love about the place was that the light over a table was turned on only when it occupied with customers! As the table emptied, out went the light! Renato was in his 80's when he passed away not long ago. Until nearly the end, he was helped to a chair at the back of the Babylon where he could supervise, taste, and greet his guests with a wave and a buongiorno as they entered the door. With Renato no longer there, the family sold Babylon.

Arcoba'leno is the word for 'rainbow' in Italian. It is the name held in reserve by Renato for the bigger and better restaurant that he had always dreamed of opening. To honor the memory of her father and his famous recipes, his daughter, Elena has opened Arcoba'leno in a former large residence with lots of room for tables, lots of light, and oodles of parking. Mama Renato is the cook and no one knows Renato's recipes and secrets better. The crispy on the outside, soft on the inside Italian rolls are

baked daily. The fresh vegetables used at Arcoba'leno are still grown on their farm. The pasta is home made, the wonderful Italian salad dressing is home made, the gorgeous gelatos are home made. No, my friends, Arcoba'leno is not just another Italian restaurant!

As you arrive at Arcoba'leno, you are greeted at the door by Rit, Renato's long time maitre 'de or his daughter, Elena. The décor is simple but pleasant with Italian masquerade masks, wine bottles and a large collage of family photos. The furnishings imitate rustic Italian and you feel comfortable right away. The menu is amazing! It initiates with a front page of Ultra Specials



and continues to invite you to try anything from fresh Norwegian salmon to frog legs, to lamb imported from France, to duck, to lasagnes, pastas and thin crust pizzas. There is something for everyone, including vegetarians, on this menu which actually



makes a good read just trying to make a dinner decision!

Our party began with the wonderfully fresh, crisp Mixta salad with homemade Italian dressing which arrives with hot rolls and herb butter. If you like the dressing as well as we did, you can buy a bottle to take home with you. We found that some of the best items are on the Insalata Antipasti section of the menu. The Arcoba'leno signature dish, crab meat au gratin is exquisite and the crab meat and fresh spinach crepes gratinee are just as heavenly. The excellent calzone with ham, mushroom, fresh spinach and mozzarella cheese arrived hot and crispy. The egg plant parmigiana and lasagne verde al forno were deliciously perfect and more than we could eat, but somehow we managed to save room for dessert! The tiramisu was creamy and tasty. The zablione for two, a luscious,

airy dessert of whipped eggs with Marsala wine is served warm and just right after a heavy dinner. Nor can you go wrong by choosing among the eight flavors of homemade gelatos. Dinner accompanied by a generous carafe of the satisfying house red wine will usually cost from B600-B800 depending on how hungry you are.

Arcoba'leno accepts take-away orders for pizzas and most other items on the menu with only a B5 charge for the container. They are open daily 11:00a.m. - 2:00p.m. and 5:30p.m. - 10:00 p.m. You will find Arcoba'leno at: 60 Na Watket Rd., Phone: 086-672-1532, 089-700-2469, 053-306-254



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