Giggling Squid Announces Esher Opening

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The growing Giggling Squid family of Thai restaurants is to open in Esher on 17th November. Located at 58 High Street on the former Carluccio's site, this will be the family-run group's third site in Surrey – and its first inside the M25. Following a £100,000 refit the 120 cover restaurant will create around 20 jobs.

The company will create more jobs in Surrey when it establishes a group headquarters in Guildford, where it opened a branch in August, later this year. The company will recruit a financial director and finance team, an area manager, executive and development chefs plus posts in human resources, training and marketing.

The first Surrey Giggling Squid was opened in Reigate in July 2013.

Esher is at the centre of the Elmbridge Borough of Surrey, which, according to reports, pays more income tax than the whole of Scotland and the North of England combined. “Despite the well-heeled customer base, we felt the area really lacked for good places to eat,” said Pranee Laurillard who co owns the restaurant group with her husband Andrew, and added, “We lived a few miles down the road in Oxshott for a couple of years and usually ended up in Wimbledon when we wanted something decent.”

The Laurillards have since moved to Merrow, on the outskirts of Guildford.

Andrew runs the property management, marketing and financial side of things, while Pranee, who left her native Thailand to take her masters degree, takes care of restaurant design, operations and staff management.

Giggling Squid opened in Guildford in August. Andrew is currently negotiating on three more sites in the county. These will be larger than existing branches, such is the demand for their food.

The people of Surrey have really taken to the Giggling Squid brand of authentic, rustic Thai food, to the extent that the restaurants are busy for lunch and dinner services throughout the week. Only a hopeless optimist would try to secure a table at a weekend without pre booking.

The food, prepared on site from scratch by skilled chefs, using fresh ingredients is especially popular with health conscious 'yummy' mummies' and 'ladies who lunch'. The restaurants also benefit from the vibrant local economy and are frequented at lunch time by high numbers of office workers who work nearby, rather than having to rely on the evening trade of commuters.

Questioned as to why she feels Surrey, apart from the occasional Michelin star and some decent gastro pubs, is punching below its weight in culinary terms, Pranee Laurillard cites several reasons.

“The high rents don't help nor does the close proximity to the capital – talented young chefs want to make a name for themselves in London.

“And despite the best efforts of some artisan producers and farmers' markets – perhaps Surrey does not have a strong food identity with specific produce, in the same way that, say, Kent or Cornwall have,” she said.

However, the Laurillards feel that the local restaurant scene is changing fast. Speaking to industry analysts, commercial estate agents, the trade press and other restaurateurs – it transpires there are number of big names running the rule over the area.

Giggling Squid, it is believed, is at the vanguard of on influx of higher end restaurants that are coming to Guildford over the next few years.

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Editors' Notes:

Giggling Squid has established a strong reputation for its authentic, rustic and fresh Thai cooking with the emphasis on coastal specialities. The food, described by *The Times* as “exciting”, and Time Out as “simply divine”, is prepared by master Thai chefs using fresh ingredients, sourced locally where available.

With no central kitchen, meals are freshly prepared from scratch in each kitchen by top Thai chefs. Its healthy tapas menu has proved universally popular, especially at lunchtime with office workers, “yummy mummies" and “ladies who lunch.”

The lunch menu offers a choice of six Tapas-style 'tasting sets' that allow diners to sample several different dishes at a single sitting, costing between £8.00 and £10.50 with 16 individual dishes priced under £3.90. “Big” dishes with rice cost £6.50 to £7.95. “Combi” meals with starters are priced between £6.00 and £7.25.

The evening menu is more extensive with over 50 dishes available. The ever popular Thai Green Chicken Curry is £8.95.

Press contact: Hi res photos and menus available. To review or organise competition prizes call: George Shaw, Avocado Media. T: 01892 750851 M: 07860 695555 E: geo@avocadomedia.co.uk

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