



## A NEW PLACE TO DINE DOWN THE BLUE: LE TRAN

✍️ MICHAEL HOLLAND (05 January, 2017) **FOOD AND DRINK**

"This was a rich, sweet, tangy dish of mouth-tingling joy"



There's a new place to dine in The Blue and one where you can eat very well in the evening, which is something that has not been available in that part of Bermondsey for far too many years, leaving it pretty much a ghost town after dark.

Le Tran is just a couple of weeks old and already they have had returning customers, which is a good sign, and going by what I and Boy Burkett had I would bet that Le Tran will soon be having a packed restaurant on most evenings. Everything is cooked from fresh on the premises, no bought in and microwaved stuff here, and Cindy, the lady in charge, wants to make sure it stays that way.

I began with a Hanoi Beer, a Vietnamese light lager to refresh the palate and wake up the taste buds, while my companion had a Vietnamese Lemonade.

Very soon after my first sip the dishes began arriving. We had two 'salt and pepper' dishes – Soft Shell Crab and Squid – and both were delectable. The batter on the squid was so crisp it balanced out nicely the texture of the seafood inside. They came with a spicy dip that set them off well. There was also a plate of



promote good Vietnamese food, something lacking in this part of town – until now.

Another dish landed, this time Vietnamese Spring Rolls. Again the freshly cooked crispiness put these above any Chinese versions of this classic starter. These were accompanied by a fish sauce and chilli dip that was spot on. We knew we were in danger of feasting too much on these excellent first dishes that we would be too overfed for the main event, so we planned to save some to take home and thereby leave room for the following courses.



And follow they did: Vietnamese Rice with Pork was a good dish, the pork marinated nicely before being grilled; Singapore Noodles, an old favourite done very well here; and Deep Fried Sea Bass with Lemon Grass. The fish was cooked beautifully but the stand out part of this for me was the sweet and sour sauce that it came with. Again tamarind gave that special tang when combined with the lemon grass. Oh how I wish I could replicate it at home.

I was ready to lie down for a few hours by now but Brother Burkett had a determined look in his eyes and I knew he was going to fight his way through the remaining courses.

Dessert was supposed to be just dish one that we would share but Cindy wanted us to try a traditional Mango & Semolina Pudding from Vietnam. This was a rich, sweet, tangy dish of mouth-tingling joy. Your teeth might fall out with this but you would not care.

Finally, Banana Fritters with Ice Cream. The fritters were stupendous. Once more the crispiness of the batter before you reach the soft banana inside raised them above any others I have tried.



My compliments to the chef who doesn't just cook well but ensures the food he sends out is very well presented; the dishes are as good to look at as they are to eat.

Ignore the bill total, we were given far much more than anyone would normally eat, and we left carrying home more than we had actually eaten in there, but Cindy wanted us to sample some of the highlights of her restaurant so gave us more and more.

Le Tran has already made a mark on me and I'm sure it will be making a mark on The Blue and the rest of Bermondsey before long.

#### **The Damage:**

*Soft Shell Crab* £6.80

*Squid* £7.50

*Grilled Pork Dumpling* £5.80

*Hanoi Beer x 2* £7.00

*Lemonade x 2* £6.00

*Chicken Salad* £6.50

*Vietnamese Spring Rolls* £5.50

*Vietnamese Rice with Pork* £9.50

*Singapore Noodles* £6.50

*Sea Bass* £11.80

*Mango & Semolina Pudding* £4.00

*Banana Fritters + Ice Cream* £4.50