

A taste of summer at Viet Flavor in Bristow

By **SANDY O'CONNOR**
Observer staff

"I treat customers as if they were the people in my family," stated Minh-Chau, the owner of the local Vietnamese restaurant known as Viet Flavor. "This is a family run business." Viet Flavor is located in Bristow Center and takes pride in serving fresh food prepared to order. "My mother prepares everything fresh, including all the marinades and sauces that we use," Minh-Chau explained. "We insist on providing a good meal that will be enjoyed by our customers."

Viet Flavor is by far the best getaway food place when people have had enough of the infamous humid, hot days of summer in our local area. As soon as they enter the doors of Viet Flavor, they literally walk into another world, which likely makes them forget the sultry, humid, hot weather outside. Instead, they are instantly transported into the calm of the orient. The ambience alone is worth the visit. The lighting is low key, and soft music plays in the background. It doesn't take a lot of imagination to feel transported into an oriental setting that is totally relaxing.



Sandy O'Connor / Bull Run Observer

Left to right: Sebastian Frenning, waiter; Minh-Anh Nguyen, Viet Flavor employee and sister of owner, Minh-Chau; Lan Nguyen, employee and cook at Viet Flavor.

"We actually brought the decorations for the restaurant from Vietnam," Minh-Chau pointed out. Beautifully displayed, the authentic Vietnamese decor features Asian embellishments, hanging from the ceiling, and various decorative items, placed purposely in carefully selected areas of the restaurant. These features remind all that it is time to put their worries to rest, cool off and get ready to enjoy a light but nourishing summer Vietnamese

dish. A restful atmosphere pervades the premises.

Viet Flavor has a number of entrees reflecting a lighter fare that doesn't leave diners with that all too familiar "stuffed tummy," sometimes experienced when dining out. Customers are treated to fresh green vegetables, grilled meat, noodle soup, appetizer rolls, a myriad of salad choices, rice vermicelli dishes and last, but not least, the house specialties. House specialties in-

clude shrimp cakes, crispy chow mein combo, claypot rice with seafood and more.

It isn't long before diners begin to relax and forget the notorious hot, humid weather on the doorstep. The Washington oppressive heat is rapidly becoming a distant memory all the while enjoying savory entrees. Vegetarians have their own special choices on the menu. A customer, who explained that she was, indeed, a vegetarian, stated, "I am a vegetarian, and I finally found a place that uses vegetable broth instead of beef broth in the vegetarian pho."

A regular customer at Viet Flavor came with a friend to enjoy some peace and quiet and her most favorite Viet Flavor cuisine. Debbie Miller, a former teacher and resident of Warrenton, insisted she always orders from the pho selection of the menu. "I always get the same thing here, which is the seafood pho," she stated, while tasting her scrumptious bowl of pho. "It is wonderful; everything is fresh, and it is always that way. I enjoy this quiet, clean little place with servers and greeters that go out of their way to please you."

Sebastian Frenning, a waiter at Viet Flavor, who is working to help pay for college, shed some light on the Vietnamese dish known as pho, which appears to be popular year

round. "It is actually a Vietnamese noodle soup, consisting of broth, usually linguine shaped rice noodles, a few herbs and a meat of some kind. It is a popular street food in Vietnam." Even the children's section of the menu has Kid Pho, featuring the choice of one meat. Frenning noted, "Pho is often a favorite of customers but also the vermicelli patties and spring rolls are popular."

The beverages featured at this oriental haven will easily satisfy a parched summer thirst, hankering for just the proper refreshment to cool off. On the menu there are fresh squeezed lemonade, coconut juice, iced coffee, iced espresso and smoothies, made from real fruits.

The restaurant seats 70, and, in addition to dining in, it allows for pick-up business, delivery and catering.

Viet Flavor offers that perfect respite where diners can sit back, cast away their current woes a while and eat nutritiously all at the same time.

Viet Flavor is located at 10278 Bristow Center Drive in Bristow and can be reached at 703-743-2542. Viet Flavor is open Sunday-Thursday 11 a.m.-9:30 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. The website is www.viet-flavor.com.