

PHILLIPE

★★★☆☆

French. 20/15-17 Sukhumvit Soi 39, 02-259-4577

When the eight—and we counted—members of the police force pulled up outside Philippe restaurant just after we sat down, we were a bit nervous. We later discovered that Philippe is a regular hang out for businessmen and political big wigs—so we turned our attention back to the menu. The fare here is mostly traditional French country favorites including salads, hearty soups, grilled meats and stews. The atmosphere, from the funny bouquet of artificial flowers on the tables to an interesting painting of twisted cloth on a high wall, is country-inn-like, if only because of its innocent incongruity. What we found most impressive is the selection of moderately priced good wines on the menu including a Cru Bourgeois at just over B1,200. Philippe's herbed butter melts easily on warmed crusty bread and we had to stop ourselves from eating too much as we waited for the entrees. The lobster bisque (B210) was excellent, creamy and cut through with just the right sharpness. One of the evening's specials, roast quail on rocket salad (B450), did not make a spectacular dish. The quail came chopped into pieces on a bed of rocket that had wilted a wee bit and was overpowered by the quail's gaminess. The staff was ever alert, pouring wine and removing plates almost imperceptibly, even bringing us a refreshing sorbet between courses. We decided to share two different stews, the ox tail with olives (B320) and lamb stew with spring vegetables (B290). Like Momma used to make, they were both thick and rich with large chunks of tender meat each lending their own distinct flavor to their broth. The dishes were accompanied by fried mushroom and brown rice (more places should serve this tastier alternative to white). Fortunately the fresh cheese with raspberry sauce (B150) was a light dish, mingling two simple flavors with an elegant presentation. The verdict: Philippe is a homey spot to sample simple French cuisine and a variety of wines for very reasonable prices. Open Mon-Sat 11:30am-2pm, 6:30-10pm. AE,MC,V. 🚗 **BBBB**

