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PHOTOS BY ERIC SEALS/DETROIT FREE PRESS



ABOVE: A 1924 bank building that was most recently a photo studio is the new home of Da Nang.

BELOW: John Tran serves bowls of pho to Jeremy and Andrea Vann of Bloomfield Township.

Good morning, Vietnam

AFFORDABLE DA NANG IN CLAWSON A WELCOME NEW ARRIVAL

BY SYLVIA RECTOR
FREE PRESS RESTAURANT CRITIC

Even the most avid ethnic food fans in metro Detroit probably couldn't name more than a half-dozen local Vietnamese restaurants.

Compared with the number of Chinese, Japanese, Thai and Korean spots that thrive in nearly every community, Vietnamese venues have always been too few and far between.

That alone would make Da Nang at Main and 14 Mile in Clawson a noteworthy new arrival.

But factor in its casually refined atmosphere, affordable prices, helpful service and interesting, well-prepared food and it becomes a worthy candidate for your try-this summer dining list.

Sisters Kim Dao-Waldis and Lan Dao opened the 56-seat restaurant in early March in a 1924 bank building that was most recently a photo studio. Kim — who handles the finances and the front

of the house — transformed the space into two serene, minimalist dining rooms with deep cedar-red walls and high ceilings accented by carved woodwork and exposed ducts.

Two oversized mirrors framed in black metal scrollwork accent one wall of the main dining room, while a flat-panel TV screen plays a slide show of photographs from Vietnam.

In such a tranquil space, the TV looks out of place at first. But the photos that dissolve silently from one scene to the next are soothing, beautiful and compelling — a reminder of the place, the people and the history that shaped Vietnam's light, flavorful, elegant cuisine.

From the menu by Lan Dao, who directs the kitchen, you must begin with goi cuon, Vietnam's signa-



DA NANG

★★★
out of four stars

1 South Main, Clawson
248-577-5130

www.danangrestaurant.com

Fare: Vietnamese dishes including pho (noodle soups), vermicelli bowls, grilled meats, stews, Vietnamese crepes, appetizers. Vegetarian options. Very affordable.

Scene: Eclectic clientele. Relaxed atmosphere in a refined setting. White tablecloths, black lacquered chairs, deep red walls and high ceilings in a 1920s storefront corner space.

Service: Friendly and welcoming. Servers are helpful if you have questions or want suggestions. Food may take time to arrive, especially at busy periods.

Price: Inexpensive. Appetizers \$4-\$9.

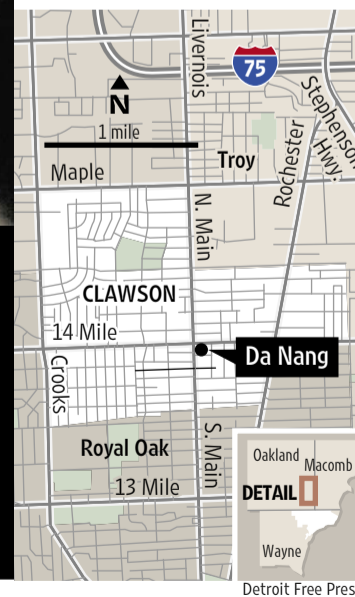
Entrées \$10-\$14. Beverages \$1-\$3.

Hours: 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Mon.-Sat.

Note: Smoke-free. Reservations suggested. No alcoholic beverages. Children's dishes on request. Park on street or behind building.

RATINGS KEY

- ★★★★ Exceptional
- ★★★ Superior
- ★★ Good
- ★ Unsatisfactory



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