



## **An initiative by Autogrill and the Commercial Affairs Office, Royal Thai Embassy Thai cuisine showcased for two weeks in Italy's main airports and at Stazione Termini**

Rome, 29<sup>th</sup> November 2010 – Thai cuisine can be enjoyed from 1<sup>st</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> December in nine of Autogrill's Ciao restaurants in major Italian airports and at Rome's Termini railway station. This initiative, entitled "Enjoy the taste of Thailand", is being promoted in collaboration with the Thai Commercial Affairs Office, the Royal Thai Embassy, Office of Agricultural Affairs, Tourism Authority of Thailand and Thai Airways International Airline.

The promotion will involve Ciao restaurants in Roma Fiumicino, Milano Linate, Milano Malpensa, Napoli Capodichino, Bari Palese, Catania Fontanarossa and Bologna Marconi in airports, in Roma Termini rail station and the Carosello di Carugate shopping centre near Milan.

Customers will be able to try out 8 dishes prepared by four well known Thai chefs, featuring specialities such as Pad Thai Kung (rice noodles with shrimps) or Pad Thai Kai (rice noodles with chicken).

This is the first time Autogrill has organized an event dedicated entirely to ethnic cuisine. The focus is Thai cuisine, a segment that is still "niche" but growing rapidly more popular.

"Enjoy the taste of Thailand" is a great opportunity to introduce consumers and operators in the sector to the value of Thai cuisine," explained Suchana Chucherd, Minister of Trade at the Royal Thai Embassy, "but it's also an opportunity for two cultures and traditions to meet and dialogue".

"Autogrill is an effective monitor of new food trends, and three years ago it successfully launched "Asia corners" in some of its Ciao Restaurants to promote oriental foods," said Giuseppe Cerroni, Autogrill's head of Communication and Corporate Affairs.

In 2009 "Asia corners" in Autogrill restaurants had around 31,000 customers, which is 10% of the total customers of these outlets. A new "Asia corner" will be opening at Roma Fiumicino Airport in December.

### **Italians and ethnic food**

Interest in ethnic food has been growing in Italy in recent years, rising from 28% of the population in 2008 to 37% in 2009.

The phenomenon can be explained by frequent trips to "exotic" destinations, the discovery of new aromas and flavours and the presence of foreign communities in Italy.

15 out of 100 hundred families now eat ethnic food at home. And around 5% of adults go to ethnic restaurants, spending an estimated €80m a year.

The most popular ethnic restaurants in Italy are oriental (around two thirds of the total), including Chinese, Japanese, Indian and Thai. There are still relatively few Thai restaurants in Italy but they are very well rated.



### Europe’s passion for ethnic food

Consumption of ethnic food in Europe is growing constantly and now represents a market worth around €4.1 billion a year. The countries where ethnic food is most popular are the UK (€2.3 billion), France, Germany and The Netherlands.

Across the continent, Chinese and far-eastern cuisines are the most popular (42%), followed by Mexican and South American (27%) and Indian (25%). Among emerging cuisines, Thai, Japanese and Caribbean are the most successful.

### Italian-Thai relations

Thailand is a traditional partner of Italy in South-East Asia.

In 2009, the two countries celebrated 140 years of bilateral diplomatic relations.

Trade with Thailand reached \$2.7 billion in 2009: Italian exports amounted \$1.4 billion and imports to \$1.3 billion. The main imports to Italy are raw materials, industrial machinery and food products. In the last few years imports of Thai food have grown thanks to on-line shopping. Italy’s main exports to Thailand are industrial machinery, steel products and chemical products. (source: Thai Commercial Affairs Office, Rome).

Thailand is a very popular holiday destination for Italians. In 2009, Thailand receive 164,000 visitors from Italy. Around 5,000 Thai citizens live in Italy, around 1% of non-Italians in the country (source: ISTAT, Italian Statistics Department). In Thailand there are around 1,700 Italian residents and over 500 enterprises in which Italians have invested (source: Italian Embassy in Bangkok).

### “Enjoy the taste of Thailand” calendar

| Restaurants                                      | Period            |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Stazione Roma Termini                            | 4 to 7 December   |
| Aeroporto Roma Fiumicino                         | 5 to 7 December   |
| Aeroporto Milano Linate                          | 1 to 15 December  |
| Aeroporto Milano Malpensa                        | 1 to 15 December  |
| Aeroporto Bologna Marconi                        | 5 to 7 December   |
| Aeroporto Napoli Capodichino                     | 9 to 11 December  |
| Aeroporto Bari Palese                            | 10 to 12 December |
| Aeroporto Catania Fontanarossa                   | 10 to 12 December |
| Centro Commerciale Carosello di Carugate, Milano | 1 to 15 December  |

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