

HT CITY

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Food 9

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Bites of heaven

Innovative platters: (above) Puchkas with five types of water; (right) Chicken tikka chaat and khakra mille feuille; (below) Black tiger prawns and button onions in tellicherry pepper sauce

Talking turkey MARRYAM H RESHII

The Manor in Friends Colony West is buzzing nowadays. Deservedly so, for after a long time it has acquired F&B that is worthy of its classy interiors. Indian Accent may be new to the city, but it is the country cousin of Delhi's Oriental Octopus and Chor Bizarre as well as Tamarai in London. It is a path-breaking restaurant because it is a taste of Indian food fifty years from now.

I'd gladly close my eyes and order the tasting menu (Rs 1,800 veg/Rs 1,900 non-veg) or light lunch (Rs 700/800) with Rs 1,000 for 5 half-glasses of wine paired by no less than Charles Metcalfe. However, the menu is one-of-its-kind, so here are the best things on it:

Puchkas (Rs 225) are taken to the next level altogether, whether you use presentation as your yardstick or sheer ingenuity (there's watermelon and cinnamon *pani* or pineapple juice). Why has nobody ever thought of these combinations before? Foie gras stuffed galawat with strawberry green chilli chut-

Indian Accent takes Indian food to the next level thanks to an ingenious combination of flavours

ney (Rs 650) is a mind-boggling combination. Chilli brings out the essence of strawberry and galawat kebabs are the Indian answer to foie gras, in that both of them have been teased out of their natural form into something to be put on show. Chef Manish Mehrotra has excelled himself in this menu.

My favourite combination, however, has to be smoked salmon with thayar satham and tomato thukku (Rs 625). Conceived as a maki sushi, real Scottish smoked salmon takes the place of nori and in place of koshihikari rice, there's the Tamil vegetarian favourite curd rice, thair satham. Salmon roe garnishes the sushi, sprinkled over with a dot of tomato pickle. It is no short of brilliant and it's a marriage made in heaven.

Roast scallops balchao, saboondana papad and kokum powder (Rs 350 per piece), by comparison, is a marriage of unequals, yet still works. The homely taste of authentic Goan balchao is set off by a single perfect scallop. A tiny wedge of sago papad is more for textural contrast than for garnish and the kokum powder adds a subdued buzz in the background.

What is so special about the never-seen-before combinations at Indian Accent is that all of them work because of the tightly controlled portions of flavour accents. There's no clash of civilisations on your palate. Other dishes are more or less straight interpretations of classics, with premium ingredients used.

Keep space for desserts. Coconut and jaggery brulee (Rs 375) is even better than the original; teamed with pink grapefruit, it's a perfect ending to a world-class meal.

VITAL STATS

Indian Accent, The Manor, 77 Friends Colony West
Tel: 26925151

Open from: 12 pm to 3 pm and 7.30 pm to 11 pm

Average cost of a meal for two: Rs 3,000

Alcohol served, credit cards accepted

