



Crunch of a Parmesan Papad

Indian cuisine's makeover attains a fun level at this restaurant that rolls out foie gras kebabs and wraps a smoked salmon around curd rice

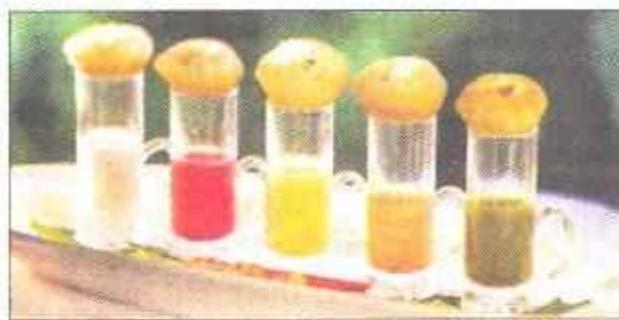
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INDIAN food is becoming haute and playful. Sautéed crab and curry leaves snuggle between layers of filo pastries. Tamarind juice is glamorously drizzled like red-wine reduction. Even samosas are deconstructed and exposed to make them look like Gisele Bundchen in a low-cut dress on a Milan runway. The makeover of Indian cuisine continues at the new restaurant Indian Accent located at The Manor, a luxury bungalow hotel set up in the 1950s, at New Friends Colony.

Here you can hear the crunch of Parmesan papads, the humble bharwan mirch gets encrusted with the Japanese breadcrumb panko

and puchkas come filled with couscous. The restaurant that opens this week is set up by Old World Hospitality, which took over the hotel from Aman Resorts, and the menu is influenced by the group's popular London restaurants like Chor Bizarre and Tamarai. Chef Manish Mehrotra carefully balances the spices, giving the food a subtle Indian accent, even as he indulges in foreign ingredients. The dishes can be paired with wines selected by the UK-based consultant Charles Metcalfe.

We begin with the amuse bouche Paneer Tikka Wrapped In Vietnamese Rice Paper — and it does make a ceremonious entry. A metallic grain scoop turns



up holding a shot glass enveloped in hot water and tiny icicles that give out a steamy Bollywood effect. In the glass rests our old paneer tikka wrapped in new Vietnamese rice paper.

Puchkas with Masala Couscous (Rs 225) is a teasing beginner. Five test tubes arrive with tamarind water, mint water, pineapple juice, pomegranate juice and lasooni curd, with a puchka filled with masala couscous balanced on each

rim. Then comes Smoked Salmon Thayar Satham (Rs 625) that will have orthodox Tam Brams go "ayyo". But give it credit. It looks like a pretty sushi with a fine slice of pink salmon wrapped around curd rice and anyone who has known the simple joy of mixing fried fish with curd and rice would wonder why this dish took so long to arrive. Even Chicken Salad (Rs 375) comes with a facelift. A large china brings in a stack of the popular Gujarati snack khakra, each topped with a spoonful of chicken tikka chaat. Among vegetarian items, there is Panko-Crusted Bharwan Mirch (Rs 325). A rectangular platter, sprinkled with turmeric and chilli powder for a Holi effect,

brings fried sticks of chilli stuffed with goat-cheese mousse and topped with aam papad chutney. You can also go for Roast Scallops (Rs 350 a piece) with Saboodana Papad and Kokum Powder where fusion is still fun.

Then there are Foie Gras Stuffed Galawati (Rs 650) served with strawberry chutney, Masala Morels (mushrooms) and Water Chestnut with a cone of paper dosa (Rs 875) and Rice-Coated Red Snapper with Pinenut Poriyal (Rs 725). Each dish is exceptionally flavourful but would we call them Indian? Maybe, we will learn to.

Among desserts, we try Apple Pie Topped with Shakarpara (Rs 375), which was good, but you can give a miss to Toffee Chyawanprash Cheese Cake (425) until you have really nostalgic memories of having the dark ayurvedic concoction along with your grandpa.

Meal for Two: Rs 2,500
(Tasting menu Rs 1,800 onwards)
Location: The Manor, 77
Friend's Colony West
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