

IN THE DOCK

Kasha Van Sant dines in the stylish and sophisticated surrounds of Dockmasters House

Overhauling a grand dame of a building is often no small undertaking and, with its Georgian credentials, Dockmasters House is every bit as imposing as it ever was. But with the input from Cinnamon Kitchen's Iqbal Wahab, there is no doubt that this Indian restaurant and bar will become a key player in West India Quay.

Upon entry, Dockmasters House is certainly a grandiose affair so I was keen to see if its menu would be equally as impressive. I should know the answer to this question having already sampled the culinary hand of Head Chef Navin Bhatia, formerly of Cafe Lazeez.

My guest and I were seated in the conservatory with its large cuboid windows nestling harmoniously amongst the original features of this building. Dark wood, deep plums and cafe au lait colours dressed the interior. The attentive waiter Casper, elegantly attired, was on hand with all menu queries as was Navin Bhatia who would emerge sporadically to explain his creations to eager diners.

The amuse bouche comprising a Vegetable Kofta (£14.50) – a soft and delicate potato and vegetable concoction rolled in chickpea flour served with a tangy coriander and green chilli sauce, was a tasty prelude to the chosen appetisers.

Being utterly spoiled for choice, upon Navin's advice we opted for platters. He created a bespoke one for me based upon the Mumbai Chaat Platter (£7.50) and added Chilli Dill Salmon Tikka (£7.50), Charcoal Grilled Saffron Prawns (£9.50), Potato and Pea Tikki (£6.50) and Crisp Wheat Shells with Chickpeas, tamarind sauce and pomegranate.

All were explosions of taste or texture, be



it the popping of pomegranate seeds or the supremely spiced, succulent and perfectly cooked prawns and salmon. My companion sampled a Kebab Platter (£11.50) comprising Lamb Burrah Kebab with coriander and chilli chutney, Tandoori Green Chicken Drumsticks, Ginger Lamb Chop and Charcoal Grilled Saffron Prawns. All were succulent and tender, and in both cases gentle swathes of yoghurt, apricot, chilli and coriander sauces decorated the plate beautifully.

In addition to this Navin insisted upon our sampling the melt in the mouth Baked Tamarind Halibut with Cumin Potatoes and Sweet Spicy Apricot (£20.50). The fish was milky and succulent, and perfectly matched with the soft and elegantly spiced potatoes.

For my main course I chose the Kerala Seafood Stew (£18.50) with mussels, scallops, king prawns, clams and fish. Light and aromatic it was not overpowered by the coconut and worked brilliantly with the basmati rice accompaniment. My companion chose the awe-inspiring Lamb Shank Nehari with Masala mashed potatoes and crispy okra (£18.50). After 6 hours of cooking, unsurprisingly the meat simply fell off the bone, onto the tangy potatoes – simply delicious.

It was looking increasingly obvious that dessert would have to put on a very impressive show, but it was not to disappoint. The Mango Pannacotta with Mango Sorbet (£6.50) was dreamily creamy and delicately flavoured, while the selection of sorbets, of which I chose the fabulously tart lemon and raspberry (£6.50) were right on cue to cleanse the palate.

As suspected, the Dockmasters House menu was elegant and sophisticated. Like the venue, which is sympathetic to its historical roots, so too is the menu. Traditional Indian cuisine with a very modern and grown up attitude. ■



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