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What's common between French and Bengali kitchens?

Sonal Ved | June 14, 2018

This new South Mumbai restaurant explores



The fact that both French and Bengali cuisines share a penchant for the same pungent ingredient and both cuisines are eaten in a course by course format—are factors that Mustard, a new restaurant at Atria Mall, Mumbai, explores.

Serving a French-Bengali-centric menu that is divided into small and big plates, and a bar menu featuring classics, twisted classics and signature drinks—all of Mustard's menu has roots or influences coming from either cuisine.

Take for example a drink called Mustard Bloody Mary, that has the base of Bloody Mary spruced with kasundi, a traditional Bengali mustard sauce. You'll find this ingredient scattered across the menu, especially as a dip to go with the Bengali chops and kebab.

This side of the menu is curated by consultant chef Prita Sen, while the French side is helmed by chef Greg Bazire, who has previously been associated with restaurants such as Om Made Café in Goa, and Taj Tea House in Mumbai. Bazire's idea was to do a traditional yet core French dishes and therefore the menu sees croquettes stuffed with Gruyere, classic French open sandwich or tartines, Atlantique coast's Salade de Raie au Citron, which has slivers of sole fish spruced with capers, lime flesh, capers and potatoes.

Brainchild of Punam Singh and Shilpa Sharma, the duo that has formerly worked with FabIndia, Freedom Tree, Tarun Tahiliani and Viari, this is Mustard's second outpost after a run in Goa.

Chef Pritha Sen says, "Mustard wasn't borrowed by French from India or vice versa. It has been a part of cultures from Biblical times, or even before." In Bengal, it grew in abundance even during 8th and 9th century and as was used as currency during a certain period of Bengal's history.

Sen's curation involves dishes such as Begun Pora, or charcoal roasted brinjal mashed with onions and mustard oil, Palong Sager Bhorta made of steamed spinach with fried garlic, Kumror Chhyanchra which is a mash of red pumpkin, fish, and other lesser-known dishes.

Bhetki flavoured with mustard powder, mustard oil and tomato paste stands out as it is smoked on a bed of puffed rice, jaggery, husk and wheat flour, giving it a distinct flavour.

Very neatly, their dessert menu too has representation from both the worlds. There is bhapa doi flavoured with mango, tender coconut flavoured sandesh known as daab sandesh or mishit paturi from the Bengali side, and crème brûlée or financiers from the French world. Another thing common between both the cuisines: perfection when it comes to making intricate desserts.

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Mustard opens doors in the first week of July. Address: Dr Arnie Besant Rd, Next to Royal Garden, Opposite, Lotus Colony, Worli, Mumbai

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