



The Romance of India's Cinema The Magic of Indian Cuisine

Sitaaray is a new Indian dining concept from Old World Hospitality, New Delhi that also operates the well-loved Chor Bizarre in Mayfair as well as the stylish Tamarai, situated below Sitaaray. The restaurant is designed to combine the very best of authentic food and cuisine – with a celebration of the best in Indian arts and culture.

Old World Hospitality selected this site for Sitaaray keeping in mind the fact that it is in the New London Theatre building and the theatre (of 940 seats) can be hired for Sitaaray events by the Sitaaray Culture Club. In December 2006, at a glittering sneak preview party, legendary Indian Actress Shabana Azmi and leading lyricist and script writer Javed Akhtar, formally opened Sitaaray and also launched Sitaaray's first cultural event 'Kaifi Aur Main' – a play based on the life of Kaifi Azmi with Akhtar acting (for the first time) as Kaifi and Shabana playing her mother Shaukat.

In April, Aishwarya Rai, Indian Cinema's best known face overseas, inaugurated 'Faces', a photographic exhibition by legendary lensman Gautam Rajadhyaksha.

Sitaaray (Hindi for 'stars'), as the name itself implies, is set against a stunning cinematic background, celebrating 75 years of Indian cinema. The restaurant features posters and photographs of a host of film legends from Madhubala to Aishwarya imaginatively put together in booths honouring the icons.

The Menu

However, the real star of Sitaaray is the food.

To create the Sitaaray menu, Executive Chef Manpreet Singh Ahuja (who also oversees the kitchen of Chor Bizarre) travelled extensively across India, and also researched dishes from the Northwest Frontier, the original home of skewered and char grilled meats.

Ahuja has compiled a selection of authentic recipes – some from the fabled kitchens of Awadh (prepared by a master chef who is a descendant of the traditional chefs of the royal family).

At dinner, for a set price of £22.95 per person for as much as you can eat, your starter course is a selection of popaddams, chutneys, salads and accompaniments. For your main course you are invited to choose from a frequently changing menu offering a wide choice of lesser-known meat, fish and vegetarian kebabs, some of which are rarely ever served in the UK. Try the Lamb Kakori, 'melt in the mouth' minced lamb, combined with papaya to tenderise the meat and then cooked on a charcoal grill. Vegetarians might enjoy the Yam Galouti, shallow-fried yam subtly spiced with cardamom, black pepper and cloves. All brought to you hot off the tandoor by the chefs themselves – your hosts at Sitaaray. A Chicken Firdousi, Dal, Vegetable Miloni, with a selection of breads including Bakarkhani and Sheermal accompanies these dishes. Puddings include a Pistachio Kulfi Faluda and a Honey and Ginger Ice Cream.

The lunch menu at Sitaaray brings you the 'box office' favourites of popular Indian food in a new and refreshing way. Starters include Aloo Tikki Chaat (a pan-fried potato cutlet stuffed with green peas and spices and topped with mint, tamarind chutney, yoghurt and spices) or the Mini Idli Platter (steamed rice dumplings, with tangy lentils, vegetables and coconut chutney), both priced at £3.50.

As a main course you can choose from a range of Dosas (Indian pancakes) with traditional fillings such as classic masala or onion and chicken. Alternatively, select one of the substantial kabab platters, for example the Kathi Kabab, where chicken tikka is wrapped in egg-coated flatbread, priced at £7.50.



Other lunchtime platters include seafood (Ajwaini Fish and Salmon Shahi Tikka), lamb (Lamb Shami and Lamb Methi Chaamp) and a large vegetarian selection, each priced between £7.50 and £14.50.

To further enhance the Sitaaray concept, wine expert Tim Atkin has assembled a wine list designed to complement the menu, and the Gorgeous Group has created a playful cocktail list.

The Design

With seating on both the ground and mezzanine levels, the design of this intimate and amusingly theatrical space is cinematically inspired.

Smouldering red walls meet gold ceilings furnished with opulent gilded frames and etched mirrors, interspersed with classic posters of landmark Indian films. The overhead lighting ranges from classic jewel-like chandeliers to retro revolving lights, encapsulating the evolving design, of 75 years of Hindi film.

The restaurant has individual booths dedicated to different film icons. The much-loved faces of Hindi film heroes and heroines, villains, vamps and legendary romantic couples surround you. Screens installed in each booth show memorable scenes and songs from this popular cinema genre. Along with the owner's personal collection – most of the photographs of Indian Cinema icons are by legendary lensman Gautam Rajadhyaksha. Artist Kanchan Chandra has further embellished some of the landmark film posters.

The sumptuous and lighthearted décor, combined with the unique Indian cinema memorabilia in the heart of London's theatre land and authentic grills served in a unique style makes Sitaaray a refreshing addition to the sometimes all too serious London dining scene.

Sitaaray Events

- ☆ 'Sitaaray' aims to bring to patrons and members of the Sitaaray Culture Club an added leisure and entertainment opportunity. Sitaaray has an area, which can adapt into a screening room for 40 and is the venue for retrospectives and screenings regularly. Sitaaray aims to bring you 'stars' of popular Indian culture, the best of contemporary Cinema, Theatre, Music, Arts and Literature from India to be showcased in a dynamic calendar of events through the year.
- ☆ As its December launch event at New London Theatre (directly above Sitaaray), Sitaaray presented two of the biggest stars' in Indian Cinema History – the award winning actress and this year's Gandhi International Peace Prize recipient, Shabana Azmi and her husband, India's leading poet and lyricist, Javed Akhtar in 'KAIFI AUR MAIN'.
- ☆ In April 2007, Sitaaray hosted 'Faces' - an exhibition of photographs by Gautam Rajadhyaksha, which was inaugurated by Aishwarya Rai.
- ☆ October 2007 saw Sitaaray, pay homage to one of the true legends of the industry, Dev Anand, as he visited London to launch his autobiography '*Romancing with Life*'.
- ☆ Sitaaray had also flown in 11 of India's top artists for an Art Camp. The artists included Anjolie Ela Menon, Jogen Chowdhury, Nayanaa Kanodia, Paresh Maity, Satish Gupta, Shobha Broota, Shuvaprasanna, Sujata Bajaj, Yusuf Arakkal, Sidharth and Amit Pasricha. The theme of the Sitaaray Art Camp was the synergy between Indian cinema, entertainment and cuisine – the areas that Old World Hospitality straddles.