

## Food Review: Indian Accent

BY AVNI MEHROTRA MAR 5TH 2014 AT 1:07PM

### What's hot:

Every dish on the menu; everything from the nomenclature to the style of presentation comes as a surprise, making you eagerly await the next dish. The chef's use of the most basic and authentic Indian ingredients such as jackfruit, bitter gourd and eggplant, as well as his creative plating make dining here a feast for the eyes as well as the palate.

### What's not:

Honestly, nothing apart from the fact that The Manor is tucked away so deep inside Friends Colony that it takes a while to get there. And the cover; it takes days to get a reservation here.

### Luxpresso verdict:

Indian Accent is one of India's leading restaurants, and rightly so. So it's not hard to see why this restaurant made it to Asia's 50 Best Restaurant list. I am not exaggerating when I say this, but it is a privilege to dine here.

### EDITOR'S RATING:



Atta and semolina puchkas, coriander chickpea tabbouleh and five waters

'No, I am not going to rave about the restaurant just because it's won every single award in the Best Modern Indian category (they're even on **Asia's 50 Best Restaurants list**) . No, I am not going to let the property's celebrity stature decide my take on the meal. And yes, I'm going to steal myself against Chef Manish Mehrotra's charm.'

These were some of the many standing instructions I gave myself minutes before I was led to this small, yet regal, restaurant at the Manor Hotel in New Delhi. After all, Indian Accent is considered the pioneer in presenting simple Indian food in a modern avatar.

As I entered, Chef Mehrotra greeted me warmly at the front desk. I was charmed. I tried to remain professional by frantically taking notes while he poured out a glass of Moët, until he threw me a mock glare that said business would not be discussed that night.



Chef Manish Mehrotra cooking up a gourmet delight

What followed can be described as one of the best food plays any gourmet will experience. We started with the pulled kathal phulka taco, whose basic ingredients - jackfruit and roti - are staple dishes in every Indian house. This was followed by a potato sphere chaat and white pea ragda; an haute cuisine fusion of Delhi's chaat and Mumbai's beloved ragda patice.

Now let me tell you that I'm not fond of karela (bitter gourd) and eggplant. At all. Yet I was craving more of the churan ka karela served with quinoa puffs, bitter melon crisp and baigan bharta cornetto and goat cheese butter. The humble karela and baigan have never looked this chic.



Churan ka karela served with quinoa puffs, bitter melon crisp

Mehrotra is pretty hands on; he spent time circulating among diners, talking to them about his food and cooking style. And we couldn't help but notice expat diners enjoying his delightful take on the pani puri, as they tucked into atta and semolina puchkas, coriander chickpea tabbouleh and five waters.

Great attention to detail has been paid to all aspects at Indian Accent. The ambiance is sumptuously Indian, with the use of marigold flowers and vintage photographs capturing the true essence of the country; and the menu design and taste is marvelous. As each dish outscored the previous and you are kept guessing as to how creative the chef will get with the next course. The entrees caught our attention, but the mains left us longing to experience them all over again. We started with the khandvi ravioli, mixed cheese mash, khakhara crisp along with the polenta-crusterd malai corn, sarson ka saag; bihari sattu parantha, jalapeno, sundried tomato and a childhood favourite, dal moradabadi.



Baigan bharta cornetto with goat cheese butter

It's said that a successful meal is supposed to rekindle a memory. Our dinner at Indian Accent revived many. I stashed my notes away and binged on. The desserts were a treat, with a warm doda burfi treacle tart, homemade vanilla bean ice cream, basen laddoo tart, mithai cheesecake, winter fruits and a fancier version of the street vendor's specialty - fresh tandoori figs, desi daru reduction, daulat ki chaat.

The food at Indian Accent is extraordinary, not because it requires some outlandish culinary techniques or exotic ingredients, but because it brings out simple preparations from an Indian kitchen and puts them straight under the limelight. At a point where everyone is embracing Tibetan or Mongolian cuisines, Indian Accent reacquaints you with traditional Indian flavours, and convinces you that come what may, it is food for the Indian soul.

If you are an Indian, you will be proud to trace how brilliant and creative Indian food can get, if prepared with a dash of ingenuity and innovation. If you are visiting from abroad, dine here and look no further since you have possibly tasted Indian cuisine in its most authentic and outstanding form.

*Address: The Manor, 77, Friends Colony, New Delhi; price for two: Rs 3000 (excluding taxes and alcohol).*