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DIPLOMAT

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RESTAURANT REVIEW

Venetia van Kuffeler visits the London outpost of global restaurant group Indian Accent in Mayfair



INDIAN ACCENT IS the brain child of Manish Mehrotra, born and raised in north-east India, who is often credited with redefining Indian cuisine. The original Indian Accent in New Delhi is India's most lauded restaurant, regularly ranking on the World's 50 Best Restaurants list. The London branch opened in Mayfair at the end 2017, and follows the original, which opened in 2009, and New York in 2016.

Found across the road from Brown's Hotel on Albemarle Street, the restaurant houses small intimate spaces, with racing green velvet banquettes. The atmosphere is chic, but definitely discreet. There are many tempting menus to choose from, including à la carte and a tasting menu, but I went for the recently launched express lunch menu, which promises the kind of food that Indian Accent has become famous for, but in a fraction of the time.

Priced at £24 per person including a starter, main course and five accompaniments, with the choice to add dessert for £5, this quick feast is available every day from 12pm to 2.30pm. The menu features an array of imaginative dishes, as seasonal and global ingredients are illuminated by the bold flavours of India. My waiter assures me that all food is medium in terms of spice. "No matter their taste, all diners should experience the flavour," he explains.

I thought I'd died and gone to heaven when the first amuse-bouche arrived: a smooth and spiced curried pumpkin and coconut soup, served alongside a perfectly dinky naan bread stuffed with blue cheese. Then came a crisp potato sphere chaat, served with a white pea mash, and a coriander yoghurt. All this spoke volumes of the exciting things to come.

Exciting menu choices included rawa idli with madras gunpowder and summer asparagus; chilli pork ribs with masala crackling and nettle oil; Kerala seafood stew with pink pepper tadka or roast beet, goat's cheese raita and pistachio chikki. My choice of the sticky raw mango prawns stack came laced with sharp black pepper, mango, coriander shoots and Jersey royal potatoes. Brilliantly tasty. The waiter implored that for my main course I should choose the chicken tikka dubba gosht. Arriving in a cast iron pot, the contents were rich, delicious and comforting, served with a baked egg on top. Main courses are served with various accompaniments including sesame vegetables, an outstandingly smooth black dairy dal, watercress and cucumber raita, plus a traditional butter naan. Despite only emptying half the various plates and bowls, he assured me I'd done well! I finished with the indulgent Doda barfi treacle tart and vanilla bean ice cream.

For diners with few afternoon commitments, there's a tempting cocktail menu including the 'green chili sour' made with hari mirch infused tequila, lemon oleo saccharum and mezeal, or the 'transcendental medication,' created with honey infused gin, mountain sage liqueur, thyme and lavender.

Indian Accent serves elegant, exciting and innovative food, and the new express lunch menu means diners can enjoy the experience at a snip of the à la carte price, without feeling shortchanged. If you're searching for a way to liven up your lunch hour, look no further! The restaurant can accommodate large parties for up to 70 guests over two floors or intimate gatherings for 18 to 30 guests.

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