

plate & palette

# Feast of fine art

## Located inside the Kolkata Centre for Creativity, Grace caters to the hunger pangs of art enthusiasts

LOCATED on the second floor of the Kolkata Centre for Creativity, Anandapur, Grace is a restaurant that serves vegetarian fusion food, made with locally produced vegetables, and simple cooking techniques.

The plush interiors, done up in sparkling white, has soft overhead lights and pleasant music playing in the background, which adds to the sense of peace and quietude prevalent in art galleries or libraries. "We wanted to make vegetarian cuisine exotic, and one-of-its-kind in Kolkata, with a place that offers a café-style yet formal dining experience," says Richa Agarwal, CEO of Emami Art.

"Grace highlights vegetarianism as an ecological need of consuming the lowest form of life, and at the same time, encourages a sense of organic creativity. Grace was the constant emotion while we were developing the idea for the restaurant and it fitted the menu beautifully," says Richa with a smile.

The food here, as we discovered later, is not just about the dining experience but also about art, as a seven-member team of chefs works ceaselessly to present unique and innovative dishes created out of all the known, yet obsolete items from a veggie's kitchen. They also cater to special needs of diners, such as gluten-free food, which we find specifically mentioned on the menu.

As we settled on to the bar stool chairs, the first thing awaiting us was a starter called Nostalgia, made of homemade banana chips, which is baked, along with a dash



Hoogly cheese & Arugula

of Bandel cheese and chat masala praline, with a Hajmola candy flavour.

The starter not just fuses together edible items that can be cherished for their evocative flavour, but also acts as a good appetiser, followed by Hoogly Cheese and Arugula, a salad which combines Lollo Rosso and Arugula leaves, with Pomelo, and a dash of Asian sauce, made of plums and hoisin.



Winter radish, potatoes & beets

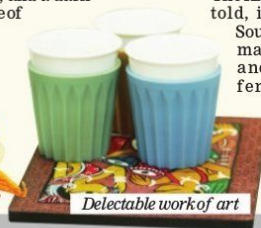


Interior shot

Pics: Satwik Paul

While the tangy and fruity bits of our very own *batabi lebu* blended well with the smooth and creamy Bandel cheese, the leaves marinated in Asian sauce retained the balance of spice and salt. But what followed, became the most favourite part of the menu: two drinks—namely, *Panagan* and *Jugalbandi*.

The first drink, we were told, is inspired by a South Indian drink, made with ginger and sugar syrup, fermented for a couple of days, and served with soda and *kaffir* lime leaf. The



Delectable work of art

second drink is a mix of cranberry and orange juice, served from a clay pot, on caramelised orange and star anise, with grated nutmeg and a spice called *Ratan Jot* in it.

The *Panagan* is a surprisingly cool drink made of ginger, which is usually associated with warm brews, while the *Jugalbandi* was full of surprising tastes, be it of caramelised orange or cranberry or a mix of spices—it had us guessing till we finished it. This might just become the most popular drink for patrons this summer.

The *Papri Chaat* Modern Indian followed next, with baked *papdis*, coriander wasabi and *aam ada glaze*—a ginger which smells of mango. For those, who love the *Aloo Kabli*, do try the Winter Radish, with Potato and Beet. It will change the way you think of carrots, as they are roasted with coffee beans and surprise you with its natural sweet taste, courtesy slow cooking.

Our gastronomic exploration ended with a dessert, in the form of a pine-nut *laddoo*, stuffed with compressed berries, and served with almond and pine nut cream, a sprinkling of almond dust and sunflower petals dust, simply called *Thumri*.

Price for two: ₹1,000.

— Vinita Tiwari

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