

With flights so cheap, many of our readers are visiting London for weekend shopping. Over the next few weeks we will be reviewing some outstanding but different restaurants in London we tried recently, which are really worth a visit while you are there. These are restaurants that we doubt that you would discover without a personal recommendation, they are all sensibly priced and out of the ordinary.

## Indian with real class - Moti Mahal

If you like Indian food, this is a must, but expect to be surprised, this is probably unlike any Indian restaurant you have visited, its true 'Fine Dining' Indian style. First impressions are very good,



The Moti Mahal

a very spacious reception area, a very warm welcome, and as you are shown to your table, you can't help but notice the immaculate kitchens behind large glass panels. Everything is very modern and light with great views out into a spacious square with Drury Lane passing close by.

Take a look at the menu, and you know this is going to be different! There was a good choice of classic dishes, and many we had not heard of before, but we chose the 'Whisky Tasting Menu', each of the 5 dishes served with a different Bushmills Whisky, ranging from a 1608 Anniversary Edition, to a 16 year old Malt. We started with Steamed Dublin Bay Prawns with rice cakes 'Appams' and Coconut herb chutney.

This was followed by a mouth watering Venison 'seekh' Kebab served with Asparagus tikki and grilled fig. Each dish is so delightful and well decorated, that you really can't wait for more. Palak Paneer followed, a baked fillo parcel of paneer, (Paneer is a firm Indian cheese which soaks up the flavour of the marinade), with garden peas, creamed spinach and raisin chutney.

The next dish was particularly interesting for anyone who knows Portugal and its cuisine well. It's named on the menu as Irish Lamb Stew with Goan Sausage, served with potatoes, carrots and crusty bread. The delicious piece of lamb was in fact served on what can be best described as fried bread. Goa was a Portuguese colony, and in the north of Portugal they serve a superb traditional dish with lamb served with potatoes and on a bed of fried bread.

The dishes had so much similarity you could see easily how the original Portuguese dish may have travelled to Goa, and then returned to London, but somewhat adapted to a more sophisticated palate. A salad and sorbet finished off the meal beautifully.

It was very hard to fault any dish, or the imaginative presen-



One of the exquisitely presented dishes.

tation, each on large white plates, and artistically presented. All the ingredients were beautifully cooked and of the best quality. The wine list was extensive and the waiter's knowledge of his wines very good. The tasting menu was £40/€46 each, including the Whisky (and they were doubles).

The Moti Mahal is launching a new menu, in a quest to understand India's history and its influence on Indian regions and dishes, Head Chef Anirudh Arora has travelled the length of the Grand Trunk Road, starting from the shores of Bay of Bengal and covering the expanses of the Indus and Gangetic plains.

The menu follows the path of the Grand Trunk Road and true



Head Chef Anirudh Arora

to Indian custom dishes will be delivered in fluid succession as they are ready to be served. The recipes found on the menu have been handed down among generations, tempered by the conditions of nature and time.

Nostalgic and traditional dishes include the Bhalla Papadi Chaat, a tea-time favourite discovered in the 'gallis' streets of North India, with crisp fried pastry and chick peas; and the sublime Qabali Seviyan, a vermicelli and masala chicken supreme tossed with pine nuts and baked

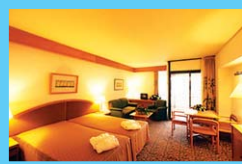
with egg custard.

As I said at the beginning of this article, if you are looking for a normal Indian restaurant, this is not for you, but if you want to experience superb Indian Cuisine cooked and served with flare and imagination, then the Moti Mahal is for you, don't miss it. We can't wait to go back.

Moti Mahal, 45 Great Queen Street, London, there website is: [www.motimahall-uk.com](http://www.motimahall-uk.com). Reservations are highly advised, tel. 00 44 (0)20 7836 0790

P.L.

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