



Le bistro du parc stands apart for its playful colours across the park from Flavors

AN INDO-FRENCH BISTRO BRINGS A WHIFF OF PARIS

by Sourish Bhattacharyya

NAINA de Bois-Juzan delivers her R's with the Gallic roll that is so unmistakably French, yet when she talks about her mother being rooted in her *pind*, which as far as I could gather was Greater Kailash, she emphasises the 'd' with the authority of a *saddi mundi*. Naina's father is from Brittany and her mother, from Delhi; she grew up in Paris and read Political Science at Lady Shri Ram College (the *alma mater* of her mother and her aunts); and she has spent the past one year, under the wings of the redoubtable AD Singh, planning the cutest littlebistro serving the most different food in the city.

For those of you blessed with a stretchable memory, Naina's Le bistro du parc is exactly where Jerome Cousins (presently famous for being the beefy chef-partner of Rara Avis) ran the late lamented Le P'tit Bar, which was owned by Tarsillo Natalone, whose devilish humour, sharp business sense and lovely wife have together ensured the enduring success of Flavors.

The difference is that Naina's 24-seater reflects her — it has a sunny look, compared to its predecessor's dark interiors, and the effect is highlighted by its playful navy blue and canary yellow scheme. Its bistro chairs, huddled tables, oversized picture with canary yellow frames of an unshaven man wearing a cheap sweater, and menu written with chalk on a blackboard, make you want to fall in love at first sight. It brings back memories of the days I would spend at Basil & Thyme in Santushti looking horribly out of place among the diamond-dripping ladies.

When you set your eyes upon the prices, of course, the glimmer of love turns into a fireball of passion. Appetisers (mainly refreshingly different salads) for ₹100 to ₹200; main course items for ₹300 to ₹500; and desserts for ₹150 to ₹300 (I still can't get over the joy of having the meringue-topped lemon tart). Where in this city can you get a meal served in generous portions at this price? You don't even miss

DINING OUT

LE BISTRO DU PARC

WHERE: A-57/59, Moolchand Market, Defence Colony

WHEN: 12 NOON to 3 P.M.; 7 P.M. TO MIDNIGHT

DIAL: 011-46780080

AVG. MEAL FOR TWO ((MINUS ALCOHOL):

₹1,500 + VAT, Service Tax and 10% Service Charge. Liquor licence expected by month-end

the alcohol. Naina assured me the licence was on its way by the month-end, when the bistro would add another 25 seats, and her wines would be affordable.

Le bistro serves the mandatory Salad Nicoise, but I'd direct your attention to the Salad Midinette, the seared chicken salad sexed up with green apple and celery, coated in a light parsley mayonnaise (the name is drawn from the old French word for a light noon-time meal that is now used for Parisian seamstresses); Salad Celadon, Naina's tribute to the guru of vegetarian cooking, Alan Passard, served on an

addictive green pea puree; Fricassee de Calamars

a l'ail, the most soft and fresh squids (soaked in milk to rid them of their rubberiness)

pan fried with fresh sliced garlic, black olives, cherry tomatoes and baby potatoes served with red chilli coulis; and the irresistible Mille

Feuille de Fromage de

Chevre, a chunky slab of goat cheese layered with confit peppers balanced by a virgin almond sauce.

This could be a meal for two, coupled with the baguettes that come gratis, but you'd want to have the chicken ballotine (boneless chicken, made creamy-soft by being allowed to sweat, stuffed with mushroom and served with carrot puree), even as you promise yourself that you'd dig the braised shoulder of lamb with dry fruits and pan-fried potatoes the next time you visit the bistro. As you round up the proceedings with the lemon tart and the Tarte Landais, apple baked with brand, butter and sugar, wrapped in filo pastry and served with brandy sauce, you're certain that next time would come soon.

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