

The Higher Taste

As you wend your way to Hare Krishna Hill, you will encounter automobiles in stasis, their occupants flinging baleful stares at one another. And yet, hundreds of Bangaloreans undertake this journey, fraught though it might be, every single day. They do so in search of succour offered by the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Every day, the air at Hare Krishna Hill, which harbours one of Bangalore's largest temples, is suffused with chants. In time, these jubilant

sounds might find an unlikely addition: contented belches.

The Higher Taste, the new restaurant at the temple complex, carries forward the gastronomic impulses of Iskcon: the use of fresh produce, minimal processing and the absence of any pungency (no evidence of onions or garlic).

On the afternoon of our visit, we decided to divide our attention to dwell upon both the geographies that inform Higher Taste's menu – we ordered south Indian food as an

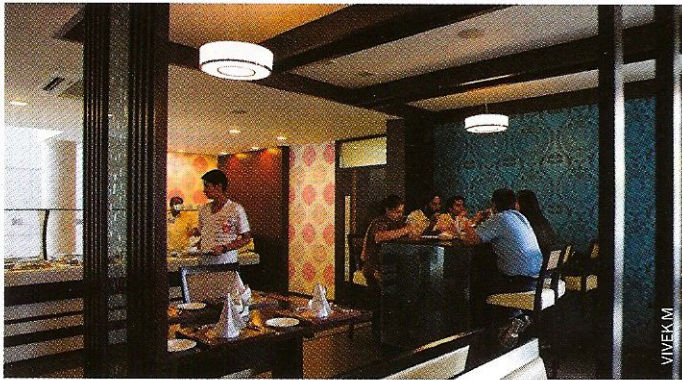
appetiser and went with north Indian fare for the main course. First to arrive was the soup: nellikai charu (Rs 90). It is not very often that you'll get to taste gooseberries in soup and when you do, the experience can be surprising.

The berries wade about in the thin, spicy liquid and can easily be mistaken for slightly greenish wedges of radish. They are crunchy at first bite and do not betray a hint of the sourness that they are famous for – instead, what you get is a dense, full-bodied taste with just a fleck of lemony aftertaste. Then came the inji vadai (Rs 90), deep-fried dal cakes with ginger flakes. While these are standard fare in most south Indian restaurants, the vadai at Higher Taste threw in a surprise late into the plot with a few fennel seed bursts. The last of the south Indian dishes was a Tamil Nadu breakfast staple, sukku paniyaram (Rs 90). Steamed globes of lentil and rice batter, these fluffy clouds of spice are usually consumed with chutney. While the chef at Higher

Taste didn't deviate too far from norm with the dish, he did betray a particular trait that was to dog us through the rest of the meal: a tendency to err on the side of sweetness. The paniyaram, and what followed, subz-e-khansama (Rs 162) with chilli cheese naan (Rs 72) and tandoori roti (Rs 36), while flavourful and robust, lacked the balance between heat and mellowness.

All told, the food at Higher Taste is competent, well constructed and frightfully healthy, but it isn't exemplary. So, if you're planning the long haul to Hare Krishna Hill and are of a religious bent of mind, include a few circumambulations of the temple sanctum in your itinerary. *Jaideep VG*
Hare Krishna Hill, Chord Road (2276-6501). Daily 11.30am-3pm, 7-10.30pm. All major cards. Meal for two Rs 550. Temple timings daily 4.15-5am, 7.15am-12.50pm, 4-8.20pm.

Time Out reviews anonymously and pays for meals.



We'll give you veggies *The Higher Taste serves healthy food*