

This exclusive *satvik*-cuisine restaurant, a first-of-its-kind in Bengaluru, combines the flavours of Indian spices with the expertise of their chefs to provide a unique dining experience, says **Rupali Dean**

AMBROSIA ANYONE

As devotees from all over the world know, ISKCON's premises offer complete seclusion, away from the city's bustle and crowds and are yet just about a 20 minutes' drive from its centre. They've also always known and enjoyed the food served at the various kitchens that serve delicious, wholesome and authentic fare.

For those with a healthy appetite for life's finer things, the brand new Higher Taste is a culinary journey definitely worth taking. I'd say that it is a restaurant with much more to savour than any other dining place in Bengaluru and has it all – serenity of surroundings, a delicious extensive *satvik* menu that uses only traditional recipes, elegant decor and service that's unobtrusively attentive.

The 90-cover restaurant extends over two floors, its contemporary decor complements the chef's modern yet uncompromising take on traditional *satvik* cooking.

Coming to the food at Higher Taste, on offer is a 'heritage' cuisine that's been enjoyed for its flavours and benefits for centuries and still is for its relevance to current lifestyles.

About *satvik* cuisine, the preparations are strictly vegetarian, and only the purest ingredients (no eggs, onions, garlic or caffeine) are used, particularly vegetables that won't induce *tamas* (denseness), and freshly-ground spices in recipes that strictly follow the age-old recipes from across India.

Recommendations go all out for the South Indian culinary traditions to conjure up Arisi Paruppu Saatham, a wholesome *pulao* of *dal*, rice and poppy seeds and Raja Bojanam, a ghee-rich peppery curry of assorted nuts: almonds, cashews and pistachios. Another dish that caught

my fancy was the Vetrilai Thakkali Saatham a rice preparation with a rare blend of betel leaf and tomato. Kudos to the chef for the Mangai Kilangu Thodukari a soul-stirring curry with raw mangoes and potatoes finished with handpicked aromatic spices.

From the North, there are interesting dishes like Sounfiyani Aloo alias baby potatoes tossed in fennel and select masalas, Saagwala Channa which is chickpeas in piquant spinach gravy served with breads like Kesariya Seermal and mouthwatering desserts to finish, such as the signature *paan* ice cream and coconut *payasam*.

All in all, I would say it is a fantastic concept! The goal at this restaurant is to offer its culinary

competencies to access the health benefits of India's great storehouse of heritage cooking as most people nowadays want not just a good meal and a great evening, but also the assurance of knowing what they're

eating is holistically good for them.

Today's emphasis on a healthy lifestyle and the pressures of looking good and staying fit mean that dining out has to be as nutritious, environmentally responsible as it is great-tasting. Open everyday for lunch and dinner offering an a la carte menu and a buffet option. The buffet menu is a good way to discover the variety of the *satvik* menu. Higher Taste is gaining a reputation as a gourmet destination quite unlike anything elsewhere in Bengaluru. ■

CHEF RECOMMENDS
STARTERS: Tiranga Paneer tikka, Inji Vadai, soup of the day
MAIN COURSE: Thakkall Paruppu masiyal (Lentils cooked spices), Elaneer Karaisal (curry made with tender coconut and cashewnuts), special dosa
DESSERT: Kulfi on faluda rose, rice kheer

Fit for the gods: (Facing page, clockwise from top left): Tiranga Paneer Tikka, Saufiani Aloo and Kesari Seermal; Elaneer Karaisal and Special Dosa; the soothing interior of the restaurant; the delicious Sukku Paniyaram and Vetrilai Thakkali Saatham

>>> CHECK IT OUT

Higher Taste, ISKCON Temple, Hare Krishna Hill, Chord Road, Bengaluru.
Meal for two: Rs 850 plus taxes (a la carte), Rs 600 plus taxes (buffet).
For reservations: 080 22766501