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Enjoying the Art of Lunch at Veeraswamy, a timeless authentic taste of India

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By Denis Sheehan FIH Enjoying the Art of Lunch at Veeraswamy, a timeless authentic taste of India.



The art of lunch is best enjoyed with lashings of conversation poured over with friends. Last week I was privileged to indulge as such at Veeraswamy to discuss people, training, and accessibility with Sir Garry Hawkes CBE, and Professor Peter Jones MBE.



With the entrance hidden down a quiet alleyway tucked neatly away just off Regent Street, Veeraswamy has been transporting diners to the finest of Indian cuisine since 1926. As the oldest Indian restaurant in London, it has outlasted trends and fads for nearly a century, staying true to its roots, serving exquisite Indian cuisine in a gracious setting.

From the first floor, the restaurant overlooks the bustle of Regent Street and provides a tranquil atmosphere within the luxurious decor of antiques and artworks. Veeraswamy remains true to its heritage and culture, yet retaining a very current feel.



The menu deftly walks the line between tradition and innovation, introducing unique modern flourishes while honouring the authentic regional recipes and techniques honed over centuries. It takes you on a journey through India's historic royal kitchens, to the classical, and 'beyond the usual'. These dishes highlight the diverse flavours of the subcontinent, from creamy aromatic curries to intriguing fish and shellfish to beautifully spiced vegetarian dishes. When making choices, be bold and adventurous, you won't be disappointed.

The Roasted Halibut Karikal is a delicate halibut fillet enhanced with vibrant pandan leaf and nestled in a fragrant coconut-lemongrass sauce. The Roasted Coconut Chicken Curry is another must-try, with chicken pieces enriched in a decadent, richly spiced tomato-coconut sauce. The presentation is exactly as would be expected for a Michelin-star restaurant, feasting with your eyes, and then the sublime taste that takes the dish beyond your sensory expectations.



The service is as immaculate as the surroundings, and the discrete recommendations of the restaurant manager demonstrated great skill in understanding guests, ensuring the delivery of impeccable service, measured pacing, and just the right level of attention to detail. Never intrusive, yet very attentive.

With its matchless elegance, fascinating history, and impeccable cuisine, Veeraswamy offers a rare glimpse into the majesty and artistry of India's regal culinary heritage. It's a true London institution that has rightfully earned its designation as an Indian fine dining pioneer and destination for generations of connoisseurs.

We discussed people, training, and accessibility and were joined by Ranjit Mathrani, Chairman of MW Eat – the group of restaurants that includes Veeraswamy (one Michelin star), Amaya (one Michelin star), Chutney Mary, and four Masala Zone restaurants. The conclusions to those ongoing conversations will follow soon as they are part of a wider project.

Enjoying the art of lunch at Veeraswamy is probably best summed up by my two fellow diners.

Sir Garry Hawkes CBE: "This is a peerless restaurant that understands food, culture and heritage, served in an immaculate understated style, that truly sets it apart as an Indian restaurant without equal."

Prof Peter Jones MBE: "The very professionalism of Veeraswamy's shines through, in the ambience of the restaurant, the attentive and discreet service, to the creative and beautifully presented dishes. All of which demonstrates the passion for the Indian heritage with the understanding of what makes a truly modern fine dining experience."

Last and certainly not least, I must say **thank you** to Maureen Mills for arranging the art of lunch at Veeraswamy, "an absolute delight".

