

Chutney Mary



St James's £ £ £ £

TIME OUT SAYS



DETAILS

USERS SAY

The new location of this pioneering upscale Indian restaurant: astonishing quality, and wonderful service.

When Chutney Mary opened in Chelsea 25 years ago, it put refined Indian dining on London's culinary map. It's owned by the Panjabi sisters, who also run Veeraswamy, Amaya, the Masala Zone group, and Masala Grill.

Relocated to St James's in June 2015, it's a plush set-up. A long bar by the entrance leads to a spacious, lavishly decorated dining area. Dining here isn't cheap but the cooking is exemplary, offering classic dishes alongside lighter flavours. It's a place for entertaining business colleagues, for romancing over a candlelit meal, or even to keep mid-afternoon hunger pangs at bay with chilli cheese toast and a cold beer.

A dainty plate of chicken wings – is there such a thing? These were. Deboned fried meat was reassembled into neat cubes and then topped with a shard of browned skin and served on a syrupy pink puddle made from tart kokum (a dried fruit, used in a similar way to tamarind). A soupy rendition of nihari, a Mughal stew, was also top-drawer. Made with chicken instead of lamb, and sealed under a pastry crust, the rich, meaty broth unleashed a whoosh of spicy steam when the lid came off.

Grills go far beyond regular offerings. A reworked jardaloo masala showcased the tastes of the Parsee community, many of whom left Persia centuries ago to settle in India. In this version, a seared, pink-cooked duck breast was splendidly matched with caramelised onions, apricots (jardaloo) and jaggery (palm sugar), sharpened with ginger and vinegar, and topped with a tangle of potato straws.

The hit parade continued with lal maas from Rajasthan. This lighter take on a traditionally ghee-laden curry scored marks for its tender lamb morsels slow-cooked with garlicky browned onions, raunchy red chillies and charcoal-smoked cloves.

If you're having dessert, try the hot carrot halwa soufflé. Fudgy, milk-simmered cardamom carrots were transformed from a traditional winter warming Punjabi pud into an elegant finale. Service, as expected, doesn't miss a beat.

Despite Chutney Mary's change of location, it doesn't look as if the sun will be setting any time soon on the Panjabis' Indian restaurant empire.

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POSTED: WEDNESDAY MAY 6 2015