

The year 2007 has been an eventful one for me and I have had to deal with a lot of changes, have come to many realizations and have had to face quite a few challenges. My realities have become different this year. Since this has been a banner year, my thoughts are to celebrate it OUT in a banner way - let's bid adieu to 2007 in a unique way for its uniqueness! Here are some very unique and different *darus* to help you do just that.



In my typical fashion, and true to my style, let me share a story with you about an experience from the other side of the spectrum - a story about the most disgusting drink I ever had. It all began on an overcast evening in the city of New Delhi many years ago, when yours truly and one of his cousins found themselves flat broke but in need of some booze. Cushions and pillows were overturned, pockets were emptied out and cars were cleaned in the effort to gather some loose change. After a good hour of frantic searching for any cash we could get our hands on, we were able to gather enough change to buy a ¼ of the local desi *tharra* (moonshine or country liquor for the angrez). Having procured this fine treasure, we first tried to sip it. This mode of imbibing the alcohol was quickly rejected and different

mixes were used to disguise/mask/remove the original taste of this *daru* which we had worked so hard to get to and which tasted very close to what turpentine probably tastes like! We soon realized that, in true Hindi movie fashion, the only way to drink this *daru* is to gulp it down and hope that it doesn't touch any of your taste buds as it burns its way down to your stomach. Overall, I highly recommend people to become teetotalers before they submit to trying this vile concoction which should not even be called an alcoholic beverage!

Moving on to the business of talking about the finer *darus* out there...

OBAN 32 YEAR OLD

This scotch has a sweet fruity complex with a floral hearty aroma with the characteristic Oban saltiness. The best place to enjoy this drink is in the dessert room at Bern's Steak House in Tampa.

THE MACALLAN 1926

This 60-year-old single malt Scotch whisky is made by The Macallan Distillery which was launched in 1824. This particular scotch comes from the Speyside region and will run you upwards of 100 dollars. The fragrance is oaky and fig-like while the taste is that of a dried fruit which is extremely woody and robust.

MORTLACH

This is a 60 year old single malt made by Mortlach Distillery, which dates back to 1823. This scotch comes in one of the most beautifully crafted bottles, which is enclosed in a velvet-lined box. The fragrance is smoky and musky while the taste is soft with a little hint of sourness and burnt wood. An excellently aged premium smooth scotch.

I go back to my old stopping grounds of New Delhi at the end of this year and I promise to bring you new and exciting tales and recipes from the home country. Have a great holiday season and an excellent new year - I will see you on the other side ... cheers.

Please send your comments to daru@citymasala.com.



Restaurant Review: Dakshin Indian Cuisine

By: Team Masala



Reggie D'Souza, the owner of **Dakshin Indian Cuisine** in Orlando, comes from a background that is infused with the passion for food, its originality and authenticity.

After having successfully run a restaurant called Far Pavilion for 10 years on International Drive, which offered mainly north Indian cuisine, Reggie decided to take a jump into a different kind of cuisine and a different location. He decided on the Lake Buena Vista area for his new restaurant.

It took 8 months for Dakshin to open its doors to its customers. In this time, Reggie was consumed with wanting to offer something extraordinary in his cuisine. He traveled to the Middle East (he comes from Kuwait where his father owns many eating establishments and loves to flirt with different forms of cuisine) and to India to get ideas. He grew up with food from Mangalore and Kerala and found himself leaning toward authentic south Indian cuisine other than just the general fare of *dosa*, *idlis* and *vadas*.

He knew that with a location almost within the Disney compound, he could perpetuate the feeling of fantasy Disney offers - an ambiance of being in another world with cuisine that is delectable and different from any other that you've ever tasted before - a coastal curry restaurant.

Reggie married Jennifer in January of 2002 and made more trips to India where he sampled amaz-



ing curry dishes. He started to work on his recipes from original parts of south India. He tweaked them and started to offer them in his restaurant, Far Pavilion, to see how they would fare. Some did very well and others wouldn't move and he started to refine what Dakshin would eventually offer.

The whole dining experience at Dakshin is completely from the southern part of India. Complimentary *rasam* is brought to each table, the place mats are laminated banana leaves (the original, a banana leaf from India), there is lemon rice, tama-

rind rice, curd rice with pickles, a *thali* system and 9 oz copper cups for water.

The cuisine sustains its originality and constancy because of Reggie's eagle eye and keen sense of what is authentic and what isn't. He knows his trade inside out and controls it with a genuine passion for what he offers in his restaurant.

Some of the unique foods that you can enjoy at Dakshin are *Kottayam Fish Curry (Kerala)* - sword fish cooked to a pungent Kerala style curry flavored with tamarind; *Lobster Balchao (Goa)* - lobster prepared in a popular Goan pickle masala curry sauce; *Fish Chutneywali ((Bombay)* - 2 medium sized pomfrets marinated in a spicy Bombay masala, stuffed with green chutney and shallow pan fried; *Malabar Lamb Masala (Kerala)* - lamb cooked in a thick gravy with tomatoes, onions, curry leaves and fresh ground pepper corns; *Kori Gassi (Mangalore)* - succulent pieces of chicken breast cooked in finely ground fresh masala with coconut milk; *Pachadi* - a traditional Kerala style yogurt flavored with curry leaves, mustard seeds, onions and spices and *Calicut Porota* - Kerala style white flour bread.

Catering within a 250 mile radius across the state of Florida, Dakshin also offers special catered events and in-house banquets. Their seating capacity is for 88 people. Dakshin is currently taking reservations for Christmas parties. For more information, call 407-827-9080.