

Fabulously fusion

Prashant Shetty had the surname, but little else to start him on his journey as a restaurateur. It's a good thing he did not sweat the small stuff and just trusted his instincts! **The ADC** meets him to see whether the confidence was misplaced



Where Seven Sevens, 157, Dhiraj Dham, Jain Society, Near Old SIES College, Sion (W)
Meal for two ₹800
Alcohol served No

We are going to tell you how to get to Seven Sevens. Not because we don't trust your sense of direction. If we don't, you might miss it or dismiss it as a jumped up Udipi. So, from Sion Hospital, come straight towards Jain Society and take a left at Dominos. Then keep going, cross a road within Jain Society, till you can see a corner restaurant with a deep red signboard and very cheerful interiors, on your left.

It's not a big place, with eight tables downstairs and a mezzanine that seats 12 in slightly cramped conditions. Downstairs, there is a large influx of ladies who want to have a last-minute Kitty lunch. Prashant Shetty, less than a year ago employed with TCS, is on hand to welcome them. They sit with the confidence of a group that has been there, done that before.

So what's the story, we asked Shetty, in his early 30s, still a bit dazed, we think, at his success. It used to be a regular Udipi that was in the family for 50 years, run by his grandfather. On his passing, the restaurant was taken over by his father and his uncle.

"I always wanted to be a restaurateur and I finally took the plunge. The family did not approve but I did it anyway, giving up a secure job, taking a bank loan for renovations and paying EMIs," he says.

First he decided what kind of place he wanted to run in an area inhabited largely by Gujaratis who like it all. "I thought what could I give them that is different? I knew the new generation liked westernised cooking, so I decided to go fusion and started looking for chefs. Last April when we opened, there was a staff of seven. Today we have 20 people."

If numbers are an indication, then Prashant, a

believer in numerology, is on to a good thing — he loves sevens in particular, hence the name.

But those tell only part of the story, the rest is about three months of fine tuning the menu 'about 100 times' and testing out everything till he felt it was really good. Then he opened and watched the place fill up. He has been getting several takeaway orders as well, and one that amuses him most is from a Dadar resident who said, "We're opposite this pizza place".

Mocktails included a Pina Colada, frothy, with pineapple and coconut cream, Sparkling Mint with lemon and pineapple juice and Coco Banana, with pineapple, bananas, coconut and vanilla ice-cream, all priced at ₹150. The Seven Sevens special is a must-try, with mango juice, ice-cream and syrup, at ₹160.

The starters (₹100 - ₹130), include Jacket Potatoes, Cheese Cornballs (a hot favourite), Hummus with Pita & Salad, Bruschetta, Tacos and Wedges. The Pasta Salad (₹135) is a mix of oregano, black olives, chilli flakes and black pepper. Daddy's House Salad has cherry tomatoes and iceberg lettuce.

For the mains, besides lasagnas, pastas and bakes, there is a 12-inch specialty pizza (₹390) prodigal with paneer, paprika and sauces. Try the Veg. Singapore, golden, tangy and spicy (₹155), the Bamboo or pot rice (₹210) and the Thread Paneer (₹190, popular but not on the menu), cottage cheese dipped in a hot and sour sauce, wrapped in thread and cooked till it's crisp outside and mushy on the inside.

Of course, it is all vegetarian. There is only so far you can push the average Gujarati! But if the proof of the pudding is in the eating, Prashant has little left to prove!

Gâteau Français

If you didn't understand that, you need to brush up on your French before you head over to newly opened **La Folie** at Kala Ghoda. **Rhea Dhanbhoora** tells you more



>>> La Folie serves a black forest cake that is extremely close to the German original, complete with cherry Kirschwasser

If you're still pondering over the title, it means French cake. Don't worry, that's not all La Folie has to offer. Bringing Parisian sparkle to Bombay, Sanjana Patel's new patisserie is home to treats she's perfected, while adding a good dose of French to her vocabulary, as you can see from the menu that's replete with French terms and phrases that only two types of people will be able to decipher — those familiar with French terms and those familiar with patisserie terms. For the rest, there are friendly staff ready to take you through the menu, so don't despair.

The first thing you'll notice about La Folie is that it's tiny. However, the best things come in the littlest packages. Whether it was the impressive photos lining the walls, the sparsely filled dessert trays that suggested exclusivity or the pretty boxes, there was something about the shop that had me entranced. It's not down-to-earth, but I doubt that's what they were aiming for. In fact, the stripped down logo, the sparse décor — it's all a well-executed plan to make sure there's nothing that stands out more than the pastries. They use imported ingredients that make a big difference in taste. Sanjana studied under greats such as Jean-Charles Rochoux and the inimitable macaron king, Pierre Herme, so I wanted to sample the pretty, colourful and uniquely flavoured macarons more than ever.

Macarons are expensive here (₹75), but one bite of the lemongrass and basil one and you won't be thinking about money. Delicately flavoured, the lemongrass complemented the basil instead of contrasting starkly against it. The matcha tea macaron needed less sugar and a little more matcha and the paan and rose gulikand macaron was just so-so.

If you're vegetarian, try the eggless Infinite Caramel, a pastry that contains delicately flavoured, silky soft caramel cream and a delicious nougat-like base. The Candy Cake is inspired by childhood sweets, so when you bite into it, you're going to have Melody and Eclair toffee flashbacks before you get to the minty fresh Mentos-like marshmallow and chocolate biscuit base. It seemed like it contained too many flavours (seven!) for it to taste good, but surprise, surprise — like everything else at La Folie, it was so well-balanced that the unlikely flavours actually fused to form a pretty delicious concoction! I'm not sure if I'd eat it again, but you should try it at least once.

If you're in the mood for some raspberry coulis atop a flourless

chocolate cake, try French pastry chef Gregory Quere's contribution to their menu, GQ. And don't miss out on the Pabana either. With perfectly blended passion fruit, mango and key lime in a coconut mousse, you'll never question the combination of flavours again.

A surprise hit for me was the Forêt-Noire. Don't let the fancy name confuse you, this is a black forest cake. And, I dislike black forest cakes. Unless of course, they're light cakes with sweet cream, chocolate-loaded, sprinkled with kirschwasser (a German cherry brandy) and balanced with dark cherries so as to not overdo either sweet or sour. Of course, at most Indian patisseries, the German cake consists of thin white cream, watery cake and too many sickly sweet red cherries. Lucky for me, La Folie decided to serve a delicious black forest just like it's meant to be served.

By the time I made it to the chocolates, I was sure nothing was going to wow me more than it already had. But, out came the 70% Venezuela chocolate. The dusting of cocoa powder on top of the most delicious dark chocolate square left me complaining about just one thing — it was way too small! They sell their chocolates in boxes of nine for ₹495 and you should buy as many as you can, because they're all amazing. Desserts here might cost a little more than you're used to, but they'll taste a lot better too.

WHAT'S COOKING?

Celebrate The Little Door's Birthday

The Little Door Turns 2

Celebrate Little Door's birthday this weekend with Jager shots, Jagerbombs, an offer to double drinks such as Absolut from 30ml to 60ml, Kingfisher pitchers from one to two and free shots all night. You could also win a bottle of vodka or a pitcher of beer as the celebrations continue. Not to mention t-shirts, sippers and return gifts that you'll be walking out with after the night is done. Entry to the party is free.

When: March 1, from 8pm onwards

Where: Shree Siddhivanayak Plaza, Off New Link Road, Andheri (W)

Contact: 9892649040

Where 16 Commerce House, Rope Walk Lane, Kala Ghoda, Fort
Contact www.lafolie.in