

NO MYSTERY HERE!

The **Mystery Box**, a new patisserie nestled in a sparsely crowded bylane of Bandra, is our new one-stop-shop for an occasional, after-lunch dessert fix. **Shirley Mistry** tells you why

Started by home baker and ex-*Masterchef India* contestant Shahzad Variava and co-owned by Ajay Agarwal, The Mystery Box borrows its name from the popular challenge that is part of the reality food show. After gaining valuable experience on the show, Shahzad decided to take his passion for baking further with this venture.

Although the patisserie houses a tiny display for the desserts, it is definitely worth checking out. Shahzad tells us that they only bake limited portions of each dessert, so that they sell out during the course of the day and aren't thrown away or carried forward to the next day — an idea that we wholeheartedly support. Also, since they bake the desserts fresh every day, you can store them at home for 2-3 days without worrying about them getting spoilt. We tried a few of their popular desserts and here's how they fared.

- **Sea Salt Caramel Hazelnut Crunch (₹140)**: I am not particularly fond of hazelnut, but I was pleasantly surprised with this dessert. The dessert lives up to its name, with distinct flavours of burnt caramel, hazelnut and sea salt peeking through. For its price, the dessert is a must-try.
- **Mousse cake with citrus and roasted almonds (₹135)**: A dessert that beautifully showcases Shahzad's knowledge of flavours and his ability to balance them, the chocolate mousse cake was divine, wasn't over loaded with gelatine and was rich in flavour. The citrus element cut through the richness beautifully and the shaved almonds added a nice textural element.
- **Blueberry dome (₹120)**: The only disappointing link in our tasting box was this dessert, as it was dry, cloying sweet and tasted artificial. Although it is a good option for those who are looking for a gluten-free dessert, the flavours just didn't sit well with us.
- **Chocolate with infused cherry and brandy (₹80)**: If you love decadent Black Forest cake, but usually stay away from syrup-soaked, whipped cream laden versions, this dessert deserves a chance. Although it is only faintly reminiscent of a Black Forest cake, the cherry infusion is lip smacking and the brandy adds a nice finishing touch.
- **Chocolate ganache with seasonal compote (₹100)**: If you want a real treat, pick up this dessert. Made with dark chocolate and fresh fruit compote (in our case it was



made using fresh raspberries), this dessert is dark, decadent and delicious. If there's one thing you should try at The Mystery Box, it is this treat.

- **Truffles (₹35)**: The Mystery Box has a splendid range of truffles, featuring usual as well as slightly unusual flavours such as kafir lime and basil. We tried the latter and were rather impressed. Also, at ₹35 a pop, these truffle are extremely affordable as well.
- **Chicken croissants (₹80)**: The only savoury item on the menu that day, these croissants we're lovely. A flaky, buttery outside gave way to moist cubes of spiced chicken, making it a filling and tasty evening snack.

While the fare at this hole-in-the-wall bakery is delicious, bear in mind that they only use fresh ingredients, so everything is not always available. Also, they are still experimenting with their menu, so you can sign up at the store to give your feedback on new dishes and also to reserve your favourites. So, when they do bake your favourite treat, they will give you call and you can ask them to set aside a slice for you, which you can pick up later.

Where Mystery Box, Shop No. 3, Sai Pooja Building, 16th Road, Bandra (w)
Contact 9920099381



>> Although, we didn't try the Tier cake, it definitely looked delicious

GO NATURAL

Paperboat's new website and additions to its refreshing juice menu make it even easier to fill up your online shopping cart. **Rhea Dhanbhoora** gives you a flavour breakdown

If you're like me, you're going to spend a good couple of minutes (or more) on the Paperboat website. The site is interesting, to say the least, with an easy shopping experience that makes you want to sample the drinks.

We received all the flavours that they have on offer in an attractive orange cloth bag and after fighting a little over who got to open which well-packaged bottle (it's no surprise that once you're done drinking it, each paper bottle can be made into — you guessed it — a paper boat!), we settled in to try each flavour.

There's nothing spectacular about the drinks when you first try them, but they're very easy to get addicted to, not only because the bottles are easy to drink from, but also because they're very refreshing, perfect for a hot afternoon.

Each flavour from Paperboat is completely healthy, with no preservatives. The biggest surprise is that at ₹30 for 250ml, they're also extremely affordable. We initially tried the original seven flavours available on the website: Aamras, Jaljeera, Imli Ka Amlana, Golgappe Ka Paani, Kokum, Jamun Kala Khatta and Aam Panna. As we were wrapping up our opinions about them, we were delivered a little surprise, as two new flavours landed up in an attractive paper box: Tulsi tea and Ginger Lemon tea, both with flavourful Darjeeling tea as their base, for when you want iced tea instead of a flavoured juice.

THE FLAVOUR BREAKDOWN

- **Aamras**: I expected this to be a little watery, as store bought



aamras usually is. However, the 45% mango pulp content is more than apparent and the drink is as smooth as promised. It has a refreshing mango flavour that isn't too sweet, even with the addition of sugar. However, it can be a little too thick to drink the entire juice all in one go.

- **Jaljeera**: A favourite with frequent fliers (it's been available on the Indigo flight menu for a while) I was already familiar with this one, and my opinion of it didn't change. You can taste a hint of ginger along with all the other spices, and the tangy lemon flavour enhances its appeal.
- **Imli Ka Amlana**: I was really looking forward to a tangy imli bite, but this one was a little too sweet for my taste. It's a good drink for those who are craving an imli taste but can't handle too much of an acetic flavour.
- **Golgappe Ka Paani**: This was, again, slightly disappointing. Hoping to taste more of the green paani, we were treated instead to more of the sweet tamarind flavour. A little more spice would have made it irresistible.

- **Kokum**: This is one of my favourites — but it's not a breakout flavour in any way. If you're fond of the familiar taste of kokum juice, this drink will sit well with you.
- **Jamun Kala Khatta**: Kala Khatta is usually a crowd favourite, and it's nice to know your tongue isn't going to be purple when you finish this drink. The natural ingredients in this mixture prevent it from being sugary. I loved it, but it could sit badly with those who like their kala khatta less sweet.
- **Aam Panna**: While I loved the Aamras flavour as well, Aam Panna quickly became one of my favourites from their list. With a delicious mix of lemon and green mango, it strikes a good balance between tart and sweet.
- **Tulsi Tea**: I wasn't really looking forward to this, but it's surprisingly refreshing. The usually strong Darjeeling tea flavour is definitely more muted than I would have liked it to be, but it works well with the flavourful tulsi.
- **Ginger Lemon Tea**: I would have loved to taste more of the tea — but you can't go wrong with ginger and lemon. I'd pick this drink for when I need a pick-me-up and caffeine addicts will enjoy it more than the all-natural juices.

The new shopping website makes ordering these drinks even easier than stepping out to a local store (they're very easily available at most retail outlets) and with free delivery for a minimum order of ₹150, it's an affordable option, with the cash on delivery and 48-hour service adding to its appeal.

Where www.shoppaperboat.com