



# SPICE IS NICE

**SILK & SPICE** AT THE LOTUS BOUTIQUE HOTEL  
IN DEIRA BRINGS ALIVE HOT FLAVOURS FROM  
SRI LANKA AND INDIA

**BY BRIAN SALTER**

THEY SAY that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach; and being someone who loves his stomach almost as much as the rest of myself all put together, I couldn't wait to go back to a hotel that I had thoroughly enjoyed visiting not so very long ago to try out another of their restaurants, and to see if it lived up to the excellence of the first.

I am referring to the Lotus Boutique in Deira which had wowed my taste buds with a heady mix-

ture of Chinese-Thai cuisine, created by its resident Indian chef. This time, my companions and I were going to try Silk & Spice, serving a nouveau fusion of cuisines from India and Sri Lanka.

I have only been to Sri Lanka once, and well remember finding good food in abundance there, with a wide choice of cooking styles reflecting its Portuguese, Dutch and British invaders, as well as the Indian, Arab, Malay and Moorish traders



## Sri Lankan cuisine ranges from mild and subtly flavoured dishes to hot and spicy ones. The food is flavoured with a variety of herbs and spices, garlic, ginger, lemongrass and so on

who all contributed to the overall mix.

In essence, Sri Lankan cuisine ranges from mild and subtly flavoured dishes to hot and spicy ones. The food is flavoured with a variety of herbs and spices, garlic, ginger, lemongrass and so on, whilst the curries, I am led to believe, are prepared by blending together at least five different ingredients.

We decided to stick to the Sri Lankan side for the food (we have too much of Indian in any case!), and pitched for Indian desserts. We kicked off with a mustard and olive oil-flavoured cucumber salad, soaked in fresh yoghurt. Really scrummy, though with its preponderance of raw onion, you would be best to ensure your companions all partake of a nibble or two, so as not to back off from you as you breathe anywhere in their vicinity!

*Badhapu Melu* — fish filets soaked in tamarind and then fried in Sri Lankan spices — followed on and with a minty yoghurt drizzled over the top were top notch. Full marks so far!

The fish theme continued with *Mahi Dum Anari* — cubes of local hammour marinated in mustard, garlic and pomegranate seeds, and grilled in a tandoor. It is clear that Silk & Spice excels in its fish cuisine which guarantees to please.

Unfortunately the next dish — *Ehumas Baduma*,

or hot and spicy mutton curry — did not live up to the standard of the earlier offerings. We all tried a little and all thought it tasted of beef rather than lamb, though our waiter insisted that lamb it undoubtedly was. But the *Kukul Mas Baduma* — curried ginger spiced chicken — went some way to making up for this.

I should add that we also had some of the Sri Lankan Dal Curry tempered with butter and spices as well as garlic roti, so we shouldn't have been surprised that by now our stomachs were starting to complain of our trousers being too tight.

But we manfully carried on with some traditional deserts in the form of *Ras-*

*malai*, *Gajjar Ka Halwa* and *Gulab Jamun* before it was time to stagger out into the night air.

From a personal point of view, I think I would have to say that the Silk & Spice ranks in second place to its sister restaurant — the *OZone*; but that probably reflects my love of Chinese/Thai cooking, rather than in the quality of the food served to us that night.

To get there, drive through the Shindagha Tunnel towards Deira, passing the Fish Souq on your left. Turn right into Omar bin Al Khatib Road and drive into the service road just before the right hand turn into Naif Road. Valet parking is available.

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**What we liked:** The friendly service and wide choice of menu items

**What we didn't like:** The somewhat underwhelming mutton curry that tasted like beef

**Cost for dinner for two:** Dh200-300

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