

# Why Spice Water Trail's treats are a joy to savour

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The gunpowder-laced Podi Idlis (and Cauliflower Bezule, not in the picture) pair very well with the Kokam Martini, whose sweet tanginess balances the fiery gunpowder

**A**S I get older, I must confess, I am developing this almost adulterous relationship with the much-ignored *gobbi* — if I get it made my way, without much intervention on the part of the cook, with its crunch intact, I feel I have found heaven on earth. To my horror, whenever I have *gobbi* at a restaurant, it arrives at my table smothered under a quilt of *masala*. Why can't cooks just leave my beloved *gobbi* alone?

If I am going gush-gush, you have to forgive me, because I have just had the best *gobbi* dish in town — the Cauliflower Bezule (light Mangalorean *pakodas*; ₹240) at Spice Water Trail made my heart do a butterfly jig, and made me kick myself for never having gone there before, despite the glowing reviews of my foodie friend Caroline Rowe. But I must say I have an excuse —

lame or not, you decide — for not noticing **Spice Water Trail**. It's somewhat lost in the GK-1M-Block Market, sandwiched between Yo! China (which I invariably call Yo Mama!) and the new Dunkin Donuts, but now I know how to locate it. Go to Prince Pan, have a *smbu*-cola to pump up your appetite, turn left and look up. You'll have to make a little effort, but you can't miss the unpretentious sign announcing the restaurant. And after you've climbed the stairs — I always run up just to prove my girth isn't a handicap! — you'll be transported into a pretty world with smiling faces and the best 'South Indian' food you get outside Dakshin at of course a quarter of the price.

People keep talking about the décor of **Spice Water Trail** — I admit it is striking, but you can't eat it, can you? But you can dig into the Kerala Masala Crab (₹300 per 100 gms, so beware if you're on a budget!), nearly break a tooth trying to bite open a claw, and then go on to polish off the last micro-gram of meat as if the crab was trying to run back to the Andamans or wherever it came from!

The juicy, fleshy crab, coupled with Gongura Chicken Fry (simply divine for ₹290 — being a lover of *gongura* pickle, I just couldn't stop behaving like a hog) and the delectable Cauliflower Bezule, makes you slip into the mood for a Kokam Martini (₹325) — delightfully sweet and sour — and then the Kodampuli Martini (₹325) made with the famously cholesterol-busting Malabar tamarind (which, incidentally, has an entire website spilling over with tempting recipes dedicated to it).

I loved the martinis and drank them too fast for my own good — the Kokam Martini could have been a little less sweet, but then it wouldn't have been so addictive! Paired with the baby Podi Idlis laced with gunpowder (₹260) and the shallow-fried rice and *urudai* dumplings, Uzhi Paniyaram (₹260), it was like making love twice over.

by Sourish  
Bhattacharyya

## DINING OUT

### SPICE WATER TRAIL

M-24, Greater Kallash-1  
Market (First Floor)

12 Noon to 00:30 a.m.  
DIAL: (011) 66487668 Ext. 582

MEAL FOR TWO MINUS  
ALCOHOL: ₹1,000-₹1,400 +  
VAT and 10% service  
charge



The extremely lovable *ko-dampuli* made another appearance in the Kingfish Curry (₹465), which was an absolute stunner, and I polished it off with a *neer dosa* followed by an *appam* (each ₹70 apiece). The Prawn and Raw Mango Curry (₹685) was running the risk of wallowing in neglect, but how could I let it happen? I had another delectable *neer dosa* to make sure not a speck of the gently tangy gravy was left behind.

**I**T WAS like eating at a friend's home — the food was light and reassuring. I even found out the secret of the homeliness of the menu items: the restaurant's kitchen is run by home cooks teleported from Karnataka. Unsurprisingly, the *gassi* at Spice Water Trail, I am told, tastes like *gassi* and not like some Punjabi recipe gone horribly wrong!

One had to have the Pineapple Halwa (₹170) to provide a befitting end to this grand treat for the senses. It was like starting another meal. You can't just stop eating the Pineapple Halwa once you have started it.