

RESTAURANT REVIEW:

VEERASWAMY, MAYFAIR

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After 90 years of serving high-quality Indian cuisine to curry-loving Londoners, Veeraswamy has finally gained a highly coveted Michelin star. This Mayfair establishment has welcomed royalty and elevated curry night to a fine art. The Resident heads down to see what all the fuss is about...

Words: Alexander Larman

In the fickle London restaurant scene, where remaining open a decade is seen as a noteworthy achievement, the astonishing 90-year longevity of Veeraswamy is a truly impressive feat – and there's nothing at all fuddy-duddy or old fashioned about the experience. Food, service and atmosphere are all top-notch, and the whole shebang has the professionalism and class that you'd expect from its owners the Real Indian Food company, who also run Chutney Mary and the Michelin-starred Amaya.

I visit with a trio of friends, and convivial evenings with plenty of wine and food are what Veeraswamy excels at. It's a bustling and slick operation, where customers new and old are greeted as if they're friends by front of house, and where the food treads the fine line between traditionalism and innovation.

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We start with two enormous sharing platters, one vegetarian and one non-vegetarian; the Raj kachori, a large wheat puri full of delicious treats, is suitably regal, and a venison scotch egg entices as much as it surprises. A tandoori green prawn is every bit as good as anything at Amaya. The comprehensive wine list presents a delicious New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc; the evening passes joyfully.





The prices of the main courses aren't cheap (nothing below £20, more pushing the £30 mark), but Mayfair has always been expensive, and the quality of what we eat is superb. Lamb pasanda is miles away from the mediocre curry house slop that shames the name, and the Kerala prawn dish manages to pack a fiery kick that does credit to its name.

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A side dish of pineapple curry is unexpected and superb, showing that fruit needn't only be used for sweet purposes. The cheery sommelier recommends that we switch to an Indian Pinot Noir at this stage, a superb recommendation.

Desserts are never the main attraction at restaurants of this type, but the quality of the puddings here is a definite notch above the average. If this fine institution were to survive for a further nine decades, one would be surprised if it ever stopped producing food of this calibre. Long may it continue.

THE KNOWLEDGE

Cost

Dinner for two around £150

Good for...

Excellent Indian cuisine in one of London's most historic restaurants

What to eat...

The vegetarian and non-vegetarian platters offer a comprehensive overview of all the small dishes and starters

What to know...

There's a set-price Sunday lunch menu without a Yorkshire pudding in sight

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