

Award Winners

TIO PEPE ITV LONDON RESTAURANT OF THE YEAR

SUCCESS STORY

Amaya



Halkin Arcade
Motcomb Street, London, SW1



020 7823 1166



Karunesh Khanna



Masala World
(Namita Panjabi and
Ranjit Mathrani)



Charcoal-grilled grouper
with mustard, chilli and
peanut marinade

Scallops in their shells
with coriander sauce



AMAYA'S arrival on the London restaurant scene has had, in a remarkably short period of time, a profound effect on the image of Indian cooking in this country. The popular perception of creamy, calorific dishes, served in safe if uninspiring surroundings has been swept away as Amaya has rewritten the rule-book with its paired-down grilled food. Portions are delivered quick-fire for sharing and prepared theatrically in front of the diner, seated in the most sophisticated of interiors. Amaya has proved that Indian food need not be heavy, oily or greasy, and that Indian restaurants can be trendy. Forget starched table cloths, Amaya is elegant, sleek, marbled and beautifully finished. And so it should be, having cost a cool £1.5 million to create.

Of course if any duo were capable of reinventing Britain's most popular cuisine, it is the Panjabi sisters, the geniuses behind some of the UK's most respected Indian restaurants, including Chutney Mary which has now been running 15 years.

The sisters' aim for the 99-seat Amaya was to expose British diners to an ancient style of Indian cooking, but one that has not been properly realised in this country, until now. The basis for the food is three styles of grill – the sigri, tawa and tandoor – which are used, depending on the base ingredient, to create some of the world's most magnificent kebabs.

Who would have thought an Indian grill would become London's top restaurant and in only a matter of months after opening?

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