



**C**hutney Mary on the New Kings Road opened in 1990

with a mission to bring regional Indian cooking to the denizens of West London. In the intervening 20 years it has built an institutional status especially amongst the well-heeled Chelsea fans on match days.

The chefs have apparently stumbled across an aphrodisiac as this restaurant (although perhaps apocryphally) has one of the highest rates of marriage proposals of any in the capital.

I was kind of hoping to witness that great set-piece of life during dinner. One furtively amorous looking young couple looked close but sadly

in the end no Poppadam. Recently refurbished, the downstairs dining area is dramatic. Atmospherically, backlit with a rouge palette, I was seated amongst kitsch water features in a conservatory festooned in what looked like Triffids.

My guest – recently returned from a tour of India and so suitably primed with opinions on

the cuisine – and I were instantly greeted by the manager, a native of Kerala, and subsequently given a brief tour in Indian cooking by the head chef.

If we measure wealth in terms of any of the things that really matter – spirituality, manners, inquisitiveness, inventiveness, dexterity, culture, history and food – then India would be one of the richest on the planet.

**T**he menu smacked of authenticity. In an attempt to replicate some street food favorites, my guest and I opted for a Tokri Chat to start. It came with steamed yogurt and chutneys and was encased in a latticed potato shell.

In the interests of variety, we followed up with the tasting curry platter including Punjabi lamb, Mangalore prawn, green chicken curry and bindi dopyaza rice. For anyone particularly smitten with Indian cooking this is the place to go, as both courses were exquisite.

We greedily indulged in the Chicken Biryani – beautifully aromatic, spiced and cooked in a sealed pot – and polished off a bottle of the house red, a voluptuous Rioja.

Staggering home afterwards our stomachs felt as tight as snare-drums.

*Chutney Mary, 535 Kings Road, SW10 0SZ. 020 7351 3113. www.chutneymary.com*

## REVIEW

# CHUTNEY MARY

Famed for the high rate of marriage proposals made within, this Indian restaurant has Scherzando Karasu smitten.

