



# ON A COFFEE TRAIL

A BENGALURU HOTEL TAKES PARTICIPANTS THROUGH ENLIGHTENING COFFEE-BASED SESSIONS- FROM PLANTATION WALKS TO EXPERIMENTS IN THE KITCHEN **BY BINDU GOPAL RAO**

**‘JW MARRIOTT BENGALURU** invites you on a Coffee Trail with Chef Anthony En Yuan Huang’ read the invite I received recently. Being a coffee lover, I was quite intrigued as to what would be in store and I decided to jump right in. Incidentally Chef Anthony is known for his fine sense of balancing traditional food with a modern twist and I was looking forward to the experience. Being in Bengaluru helped as this was the shortest journey to make to reach my destination.

After checking into my luxurious room at the property, I decided to catch up with Chef Anthony to understand his thought process behind the trail. “Coffee is grown in Karnataka so widely and it has such a robust taste profile that we thought it would be a good idea to do something with coffee. In fact when

meats are marinated with coffee it gives it a wonderful flavour. I am a fan of grilled food and when you grill a whole chicken in coffee you get to experience a whole new taste profile.”

The next morning we started early to Coorg and reached Tarun Cariappa’s coffee estate comprising mainly Arabica which is the more premium bean. Incidentally rains here had advanced the harvesting season to November which typically begins post December. The air in Coorg was crisp and the unmistakable foliage of coffee soon lulled us into all things coffee. As part of the plantation walk, we were given an education of the entire process of how the coffee is made from bean to the cup. The beans are picked and are extracted from the berries in a large processor which gives the green



Top: the Bungalow 1934; left: coffee infused grills

## COFFEE TRIVIA

- Coffee beans are actually fruit pits.
- A coffee tree has a life of up to 200 years.
- India has about 410,000 hectares under coffee production.
- Karnataka is the largest coffee producing state of India.
- India grows coffee under a two-tier mixed shade canopy.
- India is the third largest producer of Robusta and fifth largest producer of Arabica coffee.
- The flavour of coffee varies on the crops that grow along with it like pepper, cardamom, vanilla, orange or banana.
- Chikmagalur is called as the 'Coffee Country of India'.
- Coorg is India's largest coffee producing district in India.

beans that are laid out in the sun until they become brown. Once they are brown, they are graded according to the size, colour and other criteria before they are sold. The best part was the berry plucking session, where we were told how to pick the ripe red berry. Incidentally it is a lot of women who work on coffee estates as they are diligent, mindful and have the experience to pick the right beans and then follow the right processes step by step to ensure your coffee cup tastes perfect. After checking into the quaint hotel 'The Bungalow 1934' we were given a master class on coffee inspired dishes by Chef Anthony followed by a bonfire dinner, compete with Coorg wines, coffee inspired food - coffee-rubbed drunken chicken for non-vegetarians and coffee-infused pasta for vegetarians and some local home cooked dishes striking a balance between coffee and local food. After understanding the coffee brewing process, we returned to Bengaluru to be treated to a lovely meal of both food and beverages inspired by coffee like the

Pandi Biryani, Coffee Marinated Tiger Prawns, White Miso and Kozhi Fry. The desserts were a clear winner made with different kinds like whole coffee, espresso that simply melted in my mouth.

To give an additional twist to the coffee trail, I also experienced an interesting coffee inspired spa session. The in house 'Spa by JW' has put together the choicest of coffee beans, and extracted the purest of powders to ensure that both you and your skin are replenished and rejuvenated. I decided to treat myself to their handcrafted 'Coffee Scrub' and 'Oil infused Coffee Massage.' Spa manager Manish Jaswal told me that my masseur Rosy was among the best he had and after a drink of honey, ginger, lime and honey in the relaxation room, I was led to my treatment room. Rosy started the session with an invigorating foot massage using sea salts in warm water that is said to be a stress reliever and a relaxant too. After that she starts the 30 minute scrub with sugar crystals and sugar mixed with massage salts designed to open all the pores and exfoliate the skin. After a shower, am back on the massage table for the oil infused coffee massage. Using olive oil infused with coffee, I slip into a coffee dream as Rosy uses synchronised strokes to remove all the knots and smoothens my rather tired muscles. This 60 minute session is pure bliss and with the room wafting with a lovely coffee aroma I am told that this treatment also helps protect the skin from harmful UV Rays leaving my body with softer, cellulite-free skin. This coffee journey for me was an eye opener as this made me appreciate the hard work that goes to ensure that I enjoy that perfect cuppa. So well, it's time to raise a toast to the cup that cheers. And the next time you sip into a coffee cup, spare a thought for the people who ensure you have the best start to your day. ■