

3rd Anniversary Issue

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CELEBRATING INDIAN CUISINE WITH CHEF AMNINDER SANDHU



HAPPY 3rd BIRTHDAY TO US!
The year that was

THE CONSERVATORY

A place to bond over food in Bengaluru

By Bindu Gopal Rao



A space that is inspired from the iconic lung space Lalbagh's Glass House, The Conservatory is a new age space for food and friends to come together. "While food and friends form part of our everyday experience and memories, Lalbagh seemed to have somehow receded away from the contemporary culture of Bengaluru," explains **Akhila Srinivas**, Founder, The Conservatory. Located about 700 meters from Lalbagh, the star attraction is a 100-year-old vintage Bengaluru rain tree that acts as a canopy on the space. Therefore, the architecture of this space speaks of this inherited horticulture heritage of the city before anything else. A distillation of 'Bengaluru on a rooftop' as the setting for food experiences, with friends and family are the cornerstones of this culinary experiment.

No Rules Food Playground

Bengaluru has been the contemporary cultural capital of India for some time now and is often called as the melting pot for Indian and contemporary ideas that has shaped Bengaluru's cultural persona. The profile of the people here is the ones that are ready to explore, curious about cuisines and ready to pay for the differentiated experience. The space is really one where chefs can experiment without being bogged down by any rules and this has worked well for the city's denizens who are completely food curious. This has also ensured that the chefs could push their own boundaries to express themselves in new ways. In the aftermath of the pandemic, the space has morphed into a convergence of chefs and diners who are at the centre of this thought process. "The team hence envisioned food events that urges one to step out of one's comfort zone with the aim to make sure it pushed some boundaries and made it interesting for both chef and audience. Finally, this shared experience is fertile ground for communities to build



around food and food matters,” says Srinivas.

Transformative Journey

The space that started as The Courtyard is meant to be an intersection of artistic expression and public space. Having hosted several food popups and events, the team started the concept of The Conservatory after a while. “Post the pandemic, we ventured into exciting collaborations such as food pops with the talented **Chef Kavan** and **Eat Naru**. These endeavours served as a catalyst for the conception of The Conservatory as a space dedicated to culinary exploration,” says Srinivas. One of the hallmarks of The Conservatory lies in its ability to empower chefs to push the boundaries of their menus. This spirit of experimentation resonates deeply with their audience, who eagerly embrace the opportunity to embark on culinary adventures. “For instance, our kaiseki menus crafted by **Mizu** and **Ginkgo** have introduced patrons to traditional Japanese flavours, while our collaboration with **Chef Viraf** has allowed us to delve into the captivating world of Parsi cuisine. These experiences have truly immersed our guests in uncharted culinary waters,” adds Srinivas.

Food Fix

The space has conceived and hosted many food experiences and has consciously tried to maintain a mix of chefs and creators from out of town and local talent. They have visiting chefs once a month at least. With their Bengaluru chefs, they try to create concepts that have the potential to be long term associations and properties by themselves, like the High Tea, Breakfasts with Chefs, and Wine in Progress. “Throughout the journey, we have encountered valuable lessons and insights. Each pop-up event presents its unique set of challenges, which our team embraces and adapts to. We have established robust systems to address





the obstacles commonly associated with pop-up events, continuously striving to enhance the overall experience,” says Srinivas.

Future Perfect

As the space let's itself be used for various kinds of workshops and clubs, the team uses it for many kinds of activities. They have hosted several photoshoots and workshops that range from cooking classes to a wine tasting, gatherings for communities like sputnik farms, and the Bengaluru chapter of the Pune cookbook club. Looking ahead, Srinivas hopes to bring in international chefs to Bengaluru. “We want to bring in a lot more regional chefs and food makers from across the country especially lesser known, far-flung places, incubate younger chefs and their ideas for food and build a robust community of food connoisseurs who are very engaged with the chefs, their process and are up for experimenting with unique menus,” concludes Srinivas.

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