

**Restaurant Review**

**GOYAA**

ASIAN

Global discovery. Again and again, that's the word that kickstarts my adrenalin. Be it while researching the world's first vegetarian guide to Paris or India's first city restaurant guide. And today's restaurant gives me that same tingly, happy feeling. It sits quietly in Byculla. Elbowed into the printers compound, in one of the warehouses. It faces a Parsi chawl (yes, there is such a thing) and yes, we did get lost trying to find it (because of some road closures) and ended up in Ghodopdeo village. We had a super time with great fun foodies, garment exporter turned banker Bindia Kripalani and Aruna Jehangir whose seafacing rental villas and Ayurvedic clinic in Goa are hugely popular. Yes! We will return. And make it a point to do so on Saturday... for the live-jazz night.

**DÉCOR**

Having negotiated your way into the winding Byculla lanes, walk into a low ceilinged reception area. And then wham! The warehouse's high ceiling, with amphitheatre-like steps comes as a surprise. There is a glassed in open kitchen, grey-toned industrial chic, and Nikita D'Silva ensures that the focus is on the food and the only pop of colour are the bright green plates.

**FOOD**

Our server in a black uniform (like the rest of the servers) brings us the comprehensive short menu of what he calls "upscale comfort food" and when we ask for a huge number of small and large plates of baos, burgers et al advises us to slow



At our delicious discovery GOYAA... with fab foodies Bindia Kripalani and Aruna Jehangir



Rashmi Uday Singh

The columnist visits the restaurants unannounced and pays her own bills

down. A riveting parade of dishes begins... complimentary Sticky Rice Balls with tangy sauces, Prawn Wafers with a dense bacon sauce. Tart, sweet, salty, fruity bursts pop in many of the dishes. We love the refreshing juicy watermelon tucked into the Belgian Pork Belly Bao with goat cheese enlivened with ginger coriander dressing. Sweet Persimmon Chutney sparkles the charred broccoli served with airy burrata foam Orange segments top the cast iron cauliflower, under a layer of mashed potatoes with Vadouvan butter, Citrus pesto in the seabass, guava in the pork belly... unexpected

marriages. Fleishy moist eggplant plump with flavour and kissed with sweetness, delicious dessert of PB & J – Peanut Butter Mousse with textured peanut brittle on a chewy macaron base. Must ask for this dessert... Pillows of marshmallow bursting with whisky over a callebaut mini molten lava cake sprinkled with miso caramel... Umami heaven.

**MINUS POINTS**

Open only for dinner. Uncomfy chairs. The location is at once a minus and also a plus point. They do have valet parking. Thick skinned duck dumpling and chewy pork ribs are avoidable. Please note, no take-aways and no kids.

**MY POINT**

Tucked into one of Byculla's warehouses, Goyaa has a wonderful feel of discovering a hidden

**TIMES FOOD GUIDE**

**GOYAA** Unit No 2, JAK Compound, DK Cross Road, Byculla (E)  
Open 7 pm to 1 am  
Average meal for two: ₹2000

RATING: ■ Food: 3.75  
■ Service: 3.75 ■ Décor: 3.75

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(5) Excellent (4) Very good  
(3) Good (2) Average (1) Poor

secret. It's a grey minimalistic high-ceilinged space. Vibrantly seasoned and creatively composed with unexpected flavour combinations, upscale comfort food of baos and more (plenty for vegetarians).

Not all of it works. Dishes priced at ₹275 to ₹350 (the most expensive being ₹450).

The whole experience (including getting lost due to the closed road) is an exciting story. "Goyaa" is the Persian word for the art of telling a story. An unpretentious delicious story!

PS: The twist to our story? We find out at the end... our unformed server is Siddharth Somaiya, the brilliant 30-year-old owner chef.

**FOOD OSCARS TONIGHT**

It's here. India's most prestigious Food and Nightlife awards 2019. Into its 16th edition, it is the longest running most credible awards of our country. Also, the most glamorous, delicious and well-attended. We honour the restaurants, bars, chefs and restaurateurs in an Oscar style, star-studded ceremony. This is followed by the award winning restaurants setting up stalls... a totally unique, once-a-year gastronomic feast. Only at... The Times Food and Nightlife Awards 2019.

Rashmi Uday Singh