A Feast to Behold

Posted on



Akasa Kade

Beyond the innumerable miniature buildings and the turquoise sea, Colombo’s skyline was a blue patch tinged with soft white clouds. Dining at Akasa Kade and Raja Bojun is indeed an experience.

Words Chamindra Warusawitharane Photographs Damith Wickramasinghe

AKASA KADE

Seated at a dining table at Akasa Kade (rooftop restaurant), I gazed at the panoramic view of the Colombo Harbour, the Indian Ocean, the Beira lake and the cityscape below from the 13th floor of Ceylinco House.

Having begun in the year 1963, Akasa Kade is rich in history. Gazing across my table I mused about those days when this restaurant used to be at the top of Colombo's tallest building (then) and how it has witnessed the constant change in the landscape below. Glass walls flanked the restaurant presenting a panoramic view of Colombo's landscape.

The lunch buffet spread out in one corner of this restaurant invited guests with a fusion of Sri Lankan, Indian and East Asian dishes. Guests could choose from the spread of nasi goreng, chapatti, naan, mushroom curry, tangy mango curry, pepper chicken as well as a choice of fiery lunu miris (a mix of onions, lime, maldive fish and salt) or seeni sambol (sweet and spicy fried onion) and much more. The hopper corner however was the undisputed favourite with the chef being asked to whip up seafood or egg hoppers frequently. Then came the choice of desserts, seven in all including watalappan (a dish of jaggery, coconut milk, raisins and cashew), caramel pudding, chocolate mousse and fruit salad.

Akasa Kade is filled with choices not only when it comes to dining but also when it comes to enjoying the view from above.

At night guests can enjoy the cityscape with flickers of light creating an almost magical atmosphere while Chandimal and entertainment serenades them with western and oriental music as they savour rice and curry, Indian food or kottu.

RAJA BOJUN

Aptly named Raja Bojun restaurant (feast for kings) serves authentic Sri Lankan meals. An ancient bullock cart, a life-sized elephant form and larger than life statues of a man and a woman from a bygone era, laden with vegetables adorned the entrance. Beyond the tall glass walls of the restaurant I could see the sea waves crashing on the sandy beach below. Long wooden tables stood waiting in the shade of many trees.

It is a sunny spot with a sea view, air conditioned to shield diners from the extra heat, an ideal spot to savour authentic Sri Lankan cuisine. My feet led me towards the buffet wagons with thatched roofs where a lavish spread of dishes sent a tingle

down my taste buds.

The salad corner looked inviting with its pleasing spread of healthy salads while the red, white and vegetable rice dishes presented a choice for the main course. Raja Bojun's signature dish of zesty crab curry took centre stage along with the 'maalu ambul thiyal', a truly Sri Lankan tangy fish curry. Walking up and down along the wooden wagons, I spied one of my personal favourites, mallum, slightly stir-fried fresh leafy greens shredded and seasoned with turmeric powder, salt, lime and shredded coconut. Lunch at Raja Bojun usually features ten to fifteen dishes of vegetables. The last buffet wagon I visited was the hopper corner where a chef in white displayed the art of hopper making with a flourish.

Directly opposite the buffet wagons, lay the drinks bar where a cluster of orange king coconuts enticed me. The drinks bar presents freshly squeezed watermelon, papaya, mango and orange juice as well as king coconuts.

Leaning on the drinks bar I scrutinised the restaurant where a throng of lunch time guests were already taking their seats, sporting fresh juices, gazing at the sea or making their way towards the lavish spread at the buffet wagons. I could just about imagine how it would look during starlit nights. While the band plays tune after tune, guests can dine on noodles, kottu roti, pittu, pol roti, string hoppers and rice while enjoying the cobalt blue sky studded with silver and the lingering presence of the salty waves.

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