



Names of cricketing greats are scribbled across the front of the menu. Inside the booklet, are a variety of dishes, each named after a cricketer. The menu is that of the Cricket Club Café, a cosy set-up tucked away on one end of Queen's Road.

Words Madhushala Senaratne Photographs Menaka Aravinda

The Café opened its doors 14 years ago. Various cricket memorabilia, documenting the many memorable names and moments of cricket, adorn the walls of the restaurant, inviting not just the ardent cricket fan, but also anyone else to step in through its doorways. In fact, the Café has attracted many cricketers from around the world, says James Whight, of Cricket Club Café.

The Café offers mainly Western dishes, and its menu ranges from seafood to burgers, steaks and salads. They include Murali's Mulligatawani, Imran's Pakistani Pumpkin, Mahela's Matricana, the Match Winning Marinara, the Skipper's Seafood Pie and the David Shepherd, to name a few. The salads are particularly popular among the customers, while the Café also enjoys a good reputation for its seafood dishes especially crabs and prawns, says Whight.

The menu has grown over the years, with new dishes added to suit the tastes of the customers. What started with a mere 20 dishes, now offers over a 100 choices. "Whenever we introduced a new dish, the guests didn't want us to take out what was already there," Whight explains. With each dish bearing the name of a cricketer, many often purchase the menu as a souvenir.

The atmosphere is cosy and inviting. Outdoor dining is available for about 25 at a given time, while customers usually opt to sit out at the terrace. The doors leading to the hall are left open during the day, while at night, they're shut to create a different ambience. The Café also consists of a bar area.

Yet this is not all. "There is always some sports event to watch," says Whight, adding that various sporting events and matches, including cricket, soccer and football are shown live at the Café, thus allowing anyone to catch the action of their favourite sports.

With the cricket world cup to be held next year, plans are already underway to create the perfect atmosphere for fans. Some of them include upgrading the memorabilia collection

and introducing new garden furniture.

Whight lays emphasis on consistency and quality. Many of the staff of Cricket Club Café are those who have been working throughout, since the inception of the Café, thus ensuring that the tastes remain the same over the years.

The Cricket Club Café began as a space for Whight to display his collection of cricket memorabilia and to bring them ever closer to cricket loving folks of the country. Over time, new items of interest have been added to the collection, while new flavours have been introduced to arouse the taste buds of the patrons. And as in the past, the trend is set to continue in the coming years...

Open 11am to 11pm

Cricket Club Café, 34 Queen's Road (Off Duplication Road), Colombo 3

Tel: (+94 11) 250 1384

cricket_cafe@sltnet.lk

thecricketclubcafeceylon.com