MoMo: “Eat, Drink, Tell All”

Posted on



Momo Wattala, a new foodie hotspot

With a mission to bring five star to the street, MoMo has become a culinary phenomenon.

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Asanka, the man behind Momo

The winsome logo imagined by Asanka Karunaratne for his restaurant is a peach, his favourite food. He named the place Momo, which is the Japanese word for this fruit. With a red leaf and a green leaf, representing autumn and spring, the symbol captures the simplicity yet the very enduring variety, which is at the heart of this restaurant.

This avid restaurateur had been a hospitality veteran in Australia, and the void in Sri Lanka for proper restaurants struck him when he was on holiday in 2010. When Asanka opened, the stress was on fresh food, completely free of artificial flavour enhancers and additives, ensuring good health. This restaurant also attempts to minimise their carbon footprint by cutting down the use of polythene greatly, by 70 per cent and by wrapping their food in foil or banana leaf.

Walking into MoMo, you will be struck by the wooden flooring, the open kitchen and a warm feeling of home. The décor, done by Asanka himself, includes the bamboo walls made up of 15,000 to 25,000 pieces of bamboo.

The concept lying at the heart of MoMo is to “bring five-star to your doorstep”. MoMo spares nothing in whipping up a highly affordable five-star fare, down to the chicken extract which they make themselves, boiling chicken in vats for 12 long hours. He feels gratified looking at the diners MoMo gets, from all ages and stations of life: evidence that five-star has indeed reached many a doorstep.

The menu at MoMo is almost a culinary world map, with dishes from all corners of the world. This is because Asanka believes that his restaurant should cater to anyone who walks in. Sri Lankan, Western, Thai, Indian or Chinese, there is something for every palate. Their culinary team comprises an Indian chef and a Chinese chef among others, while Asanka presides over Western cuisine.

All the food is made with high standards of hygiene. In their own authentic, plump burgers, the bun as well as the patty is homemade. Diners see this for themselves as the kitchen is all open, and the chefs can see their food being appreciated by diners.



The rooftop is a magical place to dine in the evening

Among the firm favourites is the sensational fish head curry with roast *paan* and *pol sambol*. Sundays are the high point at MoMo, when the restaurant gets filled to capacity. This is the “street food day”, with a surfeit of treats starting with *mani pittu* and *babath, gam kukul mas,* string hoppers, egg hoppers, plain hoppers, *dunthel buth* and *helapa, dodol* and *thala guli*.

At MoMo, freezers are barely used seeing as only the lamb coming from Australia is frozen. Chicken and fish come fresh, everyday, all the seafood coming from Negombo.

Among the cult favourites is the crab *kottu* the original and hybrid “warm *bibikkan* (type of Sri Lankan coconut cake) with butterscotch sauce and vanilla ice cream.” Their kebabs are a great sensation while the lunches, with over 20 curries, is heartily enjoyed.

Among future plans are the all new range of “guilt-free” beverages, which include the “Slightly Black Pepper Passion Fruit”, “Lime and Mint”, “Wild Berry Tank”, and “Dr Sugar Blaster”, a healthy drink infused with *pol pala* and star fruit.

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