



Red Snapper occupies a huge space inside this old Dutch edifice

Push the heavy wooden doors of Red Snapper Seafood Restaurant and you enter the magical world of Poseidon. Dimly-lit, with silver fish adorning the walls and pillars, Red Snapper is a high-end seafood restaurant for the discerning

Words Yomal Senerath-Yapa | **Photographs** Isuru Upeksha



Frozen blue margarita

Red Snapper is found within a historical Dutch pile in Fort. Protected by the Netherlands government, not a single detail of the exterior of this building can be changed without permission. Though seemingly limiting, this rule is actually a perk for Red Snapper, because the contrast between the dour exterior and the luxury interior makes arriving a truly atmospheric experience.

Red Snapper's main speciality is fresh seafood. They do not limit themselves to one cuisine. Versatile executive chef Darrel Smith draws on experience gained all over the world to produce delicious dishes from a variety of culinary traditions.

The precursor to Red Snapper at this location was La Fiesta, at one time the only authentic Mexican restaurant in Colombo. Mexican foodstuffs not being available locally, many ingredients including tortillas and chillies were brought in from America. The Red Snapper has inherited the same fastidiousness and uses only the best produce and ingredients.

Red Snapper was mostly designed for corporate clients. The Red Snapper team calls their establishment a 'silent' restaurant, meaning private dining is the main aim, just as the business community is the main demographic.

"We are not the most sophisticated 5-star establishment; but we are very close to that", a staff member tells me with pride. This is a sentiment confirmed by an enthusiastic customer base.

Red Snapper is part of Colombo's latest reawakening. During the war this part of the city was closed off as a high security zone. With the roads now open and society increasingly upwardly mobile and western-oriented, Red Snapper is gaining more and more momentum.

Covering around 6 500 square feet, the restaurant can easily sit 150 people, and during

stand-up cocktail receptions the space can hold up to 600. There are enough nooks and crannies for private dining – comfortable, secluded and dimly-lit – but if you want to be seen as well as see at Red Snapper, that can also be arranged.

Shamrock is the Irish-themed pub adjoining the restaurant, grandly furnished with barrel tables. The Glenfiddich stag, the emblem of the famous brand of Scotch whisky, looks on, head raised majestically on the wall, as if to proclaim that this place has the real, authentic Celtic spirit.

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