

The Exotic Botanik Bistro and Bar

Posted on



The brightly lit restaurant with a tropical décor

Chic and modern with a feel of the Mediterranean, Botanik Bistro and Bar brings together a unique food and drink experience that is inspired by all that is botanical.

Words Udeshi Amarasinghe
Photographs Menaka Aravinda and Vishwathan Tharmakulasingham



Dmitri Jayasuriya, CEO together with his sister Nadira Jayasuriya, Director

Situated on the rooftop of the Fairway Colombo hotel in Fort, Botanik was conceptualized as a bar and restaurant where both indoor and outdoor spaces would create a laid-back yet upscale atmosphere. Having opened just a few months ago, as Dmitri Jayasuriya, CEO explains, “Botanik is evolving day by day”.

Once you reach the top, and step into the bistro, you are immediately drawn into the pleasant and bright space, with the soothing feel of pastel shades of the flowers and greenery from the foliage. The murals take centre stage on the walls. “We spent hours on the piece of art, which displays tropical trees, plants and flowers of Sri Lanka. This theme flows into the food and beverages. Every dish is specially curated with fresh, seasonal produce, while placing an emphasis on international cuisine with localised ingredients, he further stated.

The indoor dining area is simple yet elegant. There is a rustic and modern feel with the ceiling completely removed to expose the industrial detail of the roof. The open kitchen is set on a slight elevation so that diners can see the action as their meals

are prepared. Exposed brick walls and potted plants add to the character of the place. All of which come together perfectly to fit the theme.

As the sun sets, the outdoor bar is beautiful and the Mediterranean aesthetics continue with comfortable seating in pastel shades and green hues. The view from this level is magnificent and gives a bird’s eye view of Colombo Fort. The handmade mosaic tiles that adorn the bar area enhances the elegance of Botanik, thereby being contemporary as well as bringing a sense of soothing warmth at the same time. What is also unique about this bar is that some of the plants are actually herbs and spices such as coriander and peppercorn that are used in the cuisine as well as the various concoctions of beverages. While it may take another six months to see the full wild growth of the greenery, patrons will see the space evolve on a weekly and monthly basis.

Dmitri Jayasuriya and his team envisages that Botanik Bistro and Bar will become a place where people can spend their time throughout the day. Having initially started with serving evening drinks and dinner, they now serve lunch as well. Types of coffees and snacks are also provided so that patrons can come and relax and also work in a leisurely manner. USB points and plug points have been placed even under the bar counter for the ease of the patron. “As the day progresses, the venue metamorphoses into its evening persona. You can also just come and sit at the bar and do your work during the day and stay on till the night, enjoy a delicious dining experience and then as the lights go down, the music begins,” he explains.



The mesmerising view of the city from the rooftop

The menu was developed by Sri Lanka's first Michelin Star Chef, Rishi Naleendra. Having shown him the space and also the concept of Botanik, the chef was tasked with creating a modern menu with sophisticated and high quality cuisine. "We wanted it to be exciting and edgy," said Dmitri. The menu will continue to be small as it will be changed on a regular basis to give the diner diverse range of dishes over a period of time. Emphasis has been given to cooking techniques where the menu features certain meats slow cooked for 12 hours, confit or sous-vide (vacuum sealed and placed in hot water). But Dmitri stresses that this is not fine-dining but comfort food in bistro style. A bar menu too has been introduced where it takes on a sophisticated twist of the Sri Lankan favourites such as 'devilled' items that are presented in an innovative manner. The cocktail menu has been developed by a Mixologist from France who has incorporated spicy flavours and character of an Asian palette while using European techniques.

Catering to a diverse clientele that spans all age groups, Botanik Bistro and Bar provides an experience unlike any other. As dusk turns to night and the music flows, nothing is loud or bright, everything is in soothing volumes and tones. The play list is unique to Botanik too and they have their own in-house DJs.

Dmitri takes pride in saying that "From the concept to the end product everything was created in-house. And, a lot of heart went into this." That truly is felt as you step into Botanik Bistro and Bar, with a sense that it indeed will be a very special experience.

Opening times:

Lunch

Wednesday to Friday: 12pm to 3pm

Dinner

Tuesday to Thursday: 5.30pm to 12am

Friday and Saturday: 5.30pm to 1am

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