Coffee and tea too!

Founded in 1963 by Herbert Hyman in California, USA, The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf is one of the largest privately-owned, family-run coffee and tea companies in the world. On December 11, 2015, The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf launched its flagship store in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

This is the 1029th store around the world that The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf opened and this will be the last one this year. Operating for over 50 years, this famous brand has entered its 28th international market as it opened in Bangladesh. Popularly known as 'Coffee Bean', its operations in Bangladesh is a joint-venture between Sheba Group and Calamander Group of Singapore.

Chairman of The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf, Bangladesh, Roman Scott, said in his welcome speech, "This is just a start of The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf in Bangladesh. Soon we will come up with more outlets in all metro cities of this country."

Coffee Bean offers over 22 varieties of coffee and 20 kinds of tea. Their approach with this particular store, however, is to start with the top 20 drinks. As it is a new market, the menu has been shrunk in order to test the waters. Every 2-3 months the chain experiments and introduces new drinks and that is their plan for this store as well.

All ingredients are imported from around the world and only the milk is bought from the domestic market, and even then it is made sure that the quality is not compromised. The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf, Bangladesh, is paying 160 percent duty on coffee and they are doing it to ensure that the coffee experience that they have successfully provided all over the world is not a miss for the people in this new market.

Mohammad Feroz, Franchise Manager, The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf, Asia Pacific, shared with the audience that Coffee Bean is the proud inventor of ice blended coffee in the 1980s and before this coffee being served cold was unthinkable - all other concepts of cold coffee and frappuccino were followers of this trend.

Refreshments were served between the speeches and the guests mingled among themselves and exchanged niceties while tasting some chai latte, which is a blend of 14 unique ingredients, and also, one of their best sellers worldwide,

Asif Choudhury, Managing Director, The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf, Bangladesh, gave the vote of thanks. He regards this initiative as an attempt to bring a piece of South California to Bangladesh. He also thanked his local team as well as the team from Malaysia for the tireless efforts that went behind in order to bring the inauguration ceremony to life.

Standing on a location as prominent as Road #117 in Gulshan, The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf is all set to explore the Bangladesh market and woo all the coffee lovers here. Coffee Bean has put two years of planning behind introducing this outlet, so do pay them a visit to show them some love and make them feel welcome.

By Maaesha Nuzhat Nazmul

FOR THE LOVE OF FOOD
BY KANISKA CHAKRABORTY

Bohemian redux

If you live in Calcutta, or plan to go to Calcutta or are visiting Calcutta, you have to go to Bohemian. It is that good – I have said this before and I will say it again. No one is pushing the envelope of Bengali cuisine as much as the most excellent Chef Joy.

Bohemian introduced their new menu a while back, but I have not had the opportunity to go since, so this visit home was the perfect opportunity. My beautiful sister-in-law, who I had not seen in five years, what with her living in Australia, was visiting.
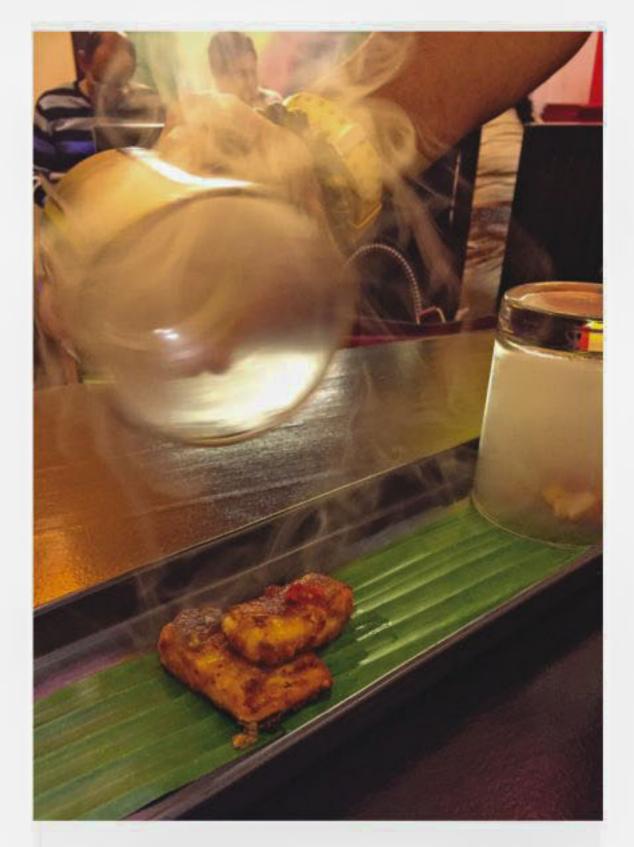
We decided to take her to Bohemian for dinner. My sister-in-law is a skeptic when it comes to food and does not do experiments. This, despite her being a chef in an Indian restaurant in Melbourne.

She loves her daal and rice and fish. So the gracious chef ordered an amouse bouche of lentil soup for us. Lentils cooked with garlic and coriander oil with whole chickpeas in it. Immensely comforting. Incredibly creative. Surprisingly subtle despite garlic.

Next was a deconstruction of another Bengali classic, Daab Chingri. Prawns in mustard paste cooked inside a young coconut. We were served one succulent prawn each on a soup spoon, cooked in mustard paste. The coup d'état was a piece of young coconut flesh resting on top of the prawn. Heaven in a mouthful.

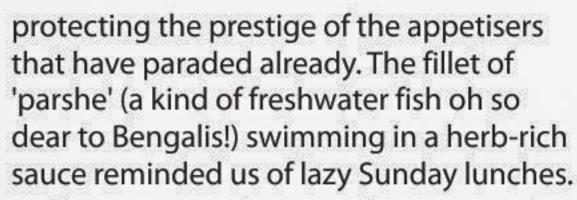By now, the skeptic moved on from frowning to a couple of well placed "yum".

That explosion of flavours was followed by cumin smoked becty. The presentation was nothing short of high drama. Soft cubes of cumin crusted fish came under glasses, almost shrouded with smoke. As the chef removed the glass with a flurry,

we inhaled deep aroma of roasted cumin in a smoke form. Sensual, seductive, sensational. Let me not go into the fantastic quality of the fish.

The main dishes were like gladiators protecting the prestige of the appetisers that have paraded already. The fillet of 'parshe' (a kind of freshwater fish oh so dear to Bengalis!) swimming in a herb-rich sauce reminded us of lazy Sunday lunches.

Prawns were simmered in a coconut milk gravy with lime leaves. A brilliant nod to our Eastern cousins of Siam. I have always marveled at the similarities between Thai and Bengali cuisine. The subtlety in both is unmistakable.

Possibly the biggest surprise for me was the goat meat stew with drumsticks.

Drumstick is a quintessentially Bengali vegetable but rarely if ever used with meat.

And I could never imagine goat meat in that light a gravy. No sign of onion and garlic paste that we so easily associate goat meat with.

The meal ended with a set mousse which sang the songs of adda, another thing close to the heart of a Bengali. The flavour of the mousse was tea and tobacco, two things without which an adda is incomplete.

We found the consistency of the mousse to be a little dense and as we mentioned that the very efficient waiters brought us another mousse to try. This time we were in haute couture zone. A coffee and cigar flavoured mousse. Never imagined that could exist.

The mousse was light and airy as it should be. The bold coffee flavour mellowed into a mild rich tobacco aftertaste.

To say it was satisfying would be the understatement of the century. Hence I say, Bohemian is a must if you are in Calcutta. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

Photo: Kaniska Chakraborty