

SHERLOCK AS SORCERER SUPREME

TAMIM BIN ZAKIR

At long last, the Sorcerer Supreme makes his big screen debut in Marvel's *Doctor Strange*. Benedict Cumberbatch plays Doctor Stephen Strange. He's an arrogant, bordering-on-cruel neurosurgeon who is nevertheless respected due to his incredible dexterity. And in the great tradition of fictional medical geniuses, noble friends like Rachel McAdams' Christine Palmer sticks with him despite his egotistic antics. But one night, Strange goes barreling through a treacherous crash in his Lamborghini that renders his hands unusable, destroying his career.

Stephen Strange has one of Marvel's most clear-cut origin stories, which makes the long delay in bringing the character to the big screen somewhat baffling. Then again, the idea of a superhero who does most of his crime-fighting as a disembodied astral being was, no doubt, daunting to even the most open-minded filmmakers. But after eight years of confounding everyone who has annulled Marvel Studios' ability to bring some of its most outlandish comic book characters to the screen, the time was right for Doctor Strange. Oddly enough his roots as a comic book creation have ended up working both for and against the movie.

Under the direction of horror movie



specialist, Scott Derrickson, *Doctor Strange* lives up to its advance billing as perhaps Marvel's weirdest and most visually audacious movie yet. The acting, the visual fireworks and Michael Giacchino's distinctive, Eastern-influenced score all go a long way toward disguising the fact that we are once again watching an origin story.

The cast, one of Marvel's finest, definitely sells everything. Benedict's aristocratic presence and simmering intelligence make him the perfect Strange. Much alike Robert Downey Jr. as Iron Man or Chris

Evans as Captain America, it instantly becomes difficult to imagine anyone else playing the role. Tilda Swinton already seems like she's from a different realm, so playing a thousand-year-old wizard isn't much of a stretch. She tackles this with serenity and a mischievous twinkle in her eye. Chiwetel Ejiofor (from the spectacular *12 Years A Slave*) as Baron Mordo and Benedict Wong as the librarian of Kamar-Taj, bring out the appropriate demeanor and even though Marvel villains continue to lag behind the gold standard of Tom

Hiddleston's Loki, Mads Mikkelsen (of *Hannibal* fame) manages to inject a little complexity and humour into his otherwise standard bad guy.

By forcing themselves to make an action film, Marvel has come up with some delightfully cool set pieces where the combatants are conjuring magic weapons, manipulating gravity, and even reality so that the various battlefields become a violent kaleidoscopic mess while retaining physical mass. One major set-piece involves people fighting in real time but the explosions and debris of the city collapsing around them is actually moving backwards in time. These jaw-dropping sequences make the price of the ticket worth it all on their own.

The production values are aces, the action scenes are inventive, the visuals are gorgeous and the cast are terrifically-realised characters whose world you can't wait to see more of and whose integration in the broader Cinematic Universe makes the prospect of several future films all the more exciting... even if their debut film could have stood to be a just a bit more strange.

Tamim Bin Zakir aka Shwag_Lord (PSN ID) is an enraged individual who seldom thinks of being generous to others. Feel free to devour his tranquility at niloy.tbz@gmail.com

HANGOUTS



PHOTOS: ZOHEB MASHUR

Where Vogue meets Value

MUHAMMAD MUHTASIM JAWAD

For quite some time now, I had been looking for a multi-cuisine eatery that provides warm ambience, scrumptious food and a wallet-friendly menu. It's pretty hard to find one which can hit that sweet spot in Dhaka these days. But as I walked towards the Bashundhara gate from the residential area a week back, I encountered this gem of a place named Viaan Restaurant.

Viaan fashions itself as a restaurant that is perfect for families and friend circles, while keeping room for elegant dates too. In the background, the soothing music from the '80s surely helps set the mood. The medium-sized TV ensures that you wouldn't have to miss your favourite match as you chow down your food.

I'll start with the Italian food. The lasagne Bolognese was cheesy, meaty and you'd be hard-pressed to find something this good within Tk 350. Try out the seafood pasta or the penne with smoked chicken too, as they are top-notch. Their

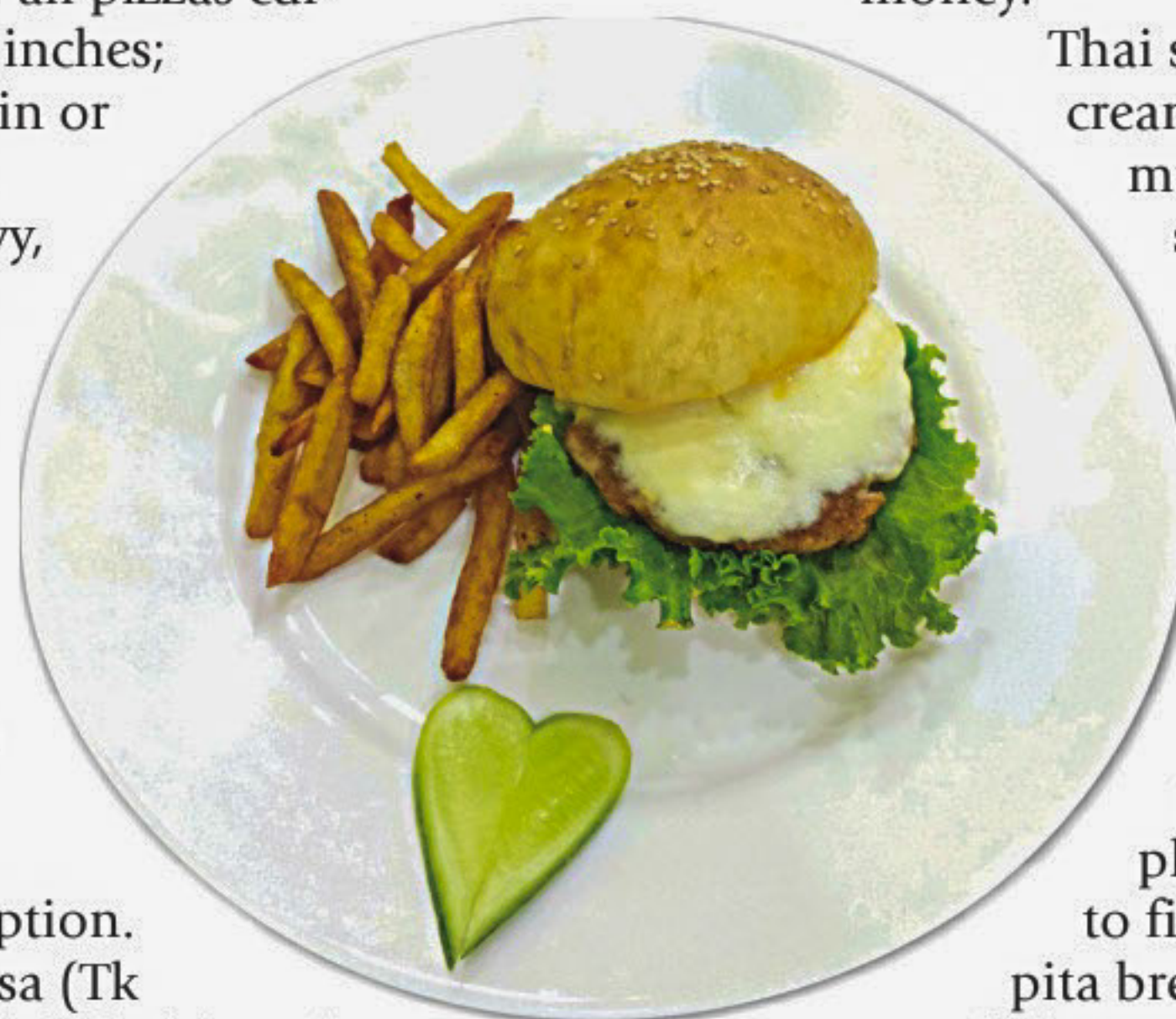
pizza game is pretty strong. I ordered a Viaan special pizza topped with tomato, egg, cheese, mushroom and spinach.

Point to be noted: all pizzas currently come in 10 inches; you can ask for thin or thick crusts. Tuna, pineapple, anchovy, ground beef, and seafood – the varieties are well-balanced, while staying between 380 and 500 bucks.

Middle-eastern food is always fascinating, and Viaan's is no exception. The chicken khabsa (Tk 300) was simply delightful, and I would strongly advise you to have it while it's hot. I made the mistake of taking it home once – it was nothing like the taste you get in the restaurant. I am really excited about trying out their Koel or

Pigeon Khabsa too! The Arabian Shwarmas are delectable enough to give the nearby shwarma places a run for their money.

Thai soup, corn soup, cream of chicken or mushroom, minestrone soup – you name it, they have it. For a soup fan, their range is pretty exciting. Thai and Chinese food are also available although I am yet to try them. I was pleasantly surprised to find hummus and pita bread, alongside fish and chips at Viaan.



I saved the best for the last. If you love desserts, the tiramisu here can be the happy ending to your culinary adventure. It was a joy for my taste buds, as I took time in devouring the goodness. Tea?

Coffee? Brownies? Pudding? Pie? Viaan has it all.

Just like their well-lit interior, Viaan makes it clear that they have nothing to hide. The prices in the menu are all VAT inclusive, so there's no need to worry about rummaging your pocket for unplanned expenses. I would most certainly commend the waiters for being hospitable. Alkaline water is complimentary. There's home delivery starting soon, and the place takes reservations for special programmes as well.

In my opinion, the abundance of options is quite the double-edged sword – it might take you ages to figure out what to settle for. But Viaan's tagline "A quality, multi-cuisine experience at affordable prices" truly does justice to whatever they offer. There is something for everyone and that is exactly what makes it such a great place for frequent hangouts.

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