

# Enjoying the moment at Bittersweet Café

The iconic Bittersweet Café springs back to life by kindling emotions of old nostalgia. Taking aboard new ownership for its second voyage, the café has restored both its former site and the simply-sublime pleasure of a dine-out here.



Although Bittersweet has changed considerably from its former glory days, you will still stop to appreciate the creaky staircase leading up to the café and the faintly-optimistic neon sign next to its door — both the same as before and both touching nods to its past.

Push through the doors of Bittersweet to be in awe of what has been done to the place. The café is still elegant and softly-lit, but the bubbling dining room is now rimmed with monochrome banquettes and panelled with honey-coloured wood. Its old and familiar bordello chandeliers and regal upholsteries have been switched out for mid-century modern tables, sofas and bar stools — a different translation of the same reclined chic that made us fall in love with Bittersweet in the first place!

Bittersweet has never been, and still is not, reserved only for special occasions; in fact, it's the ideal lounging spot for anyone on any Tuesday, or any other day of the week for that matter!

It's a joy to see Bittersweet flourishing in a new setting. The duo of co-owners, Sadiq Quddus and Rummaella Siddiqui, are the ones responsible for keeping the place still ticking. Their vision is simple — to provide

a comfortable place with hearty meals that will keep their customers warm for the long winter ahead and even beyond. And their superpower is double-sided, dedication to service and a stellar rapport with diners.

"I love talking to customers and getting to know them. It's exciting but, at the same time, it's a reassurance to them that whatever we are trying to do at Bittersweet, we are doing for our customers," humbly states Rummaella Siddiqui.

It's this idea you will find the pair practicing when taking care of the café, let it be cleaning, disinfecting or serving. Not even a month old now, the café's administration is

a fantastic joint effort by the co-owners and the staff, all in service to valued customers.

Upon asking what drives her to run Bittersweet with such nuanced authority, Rummaella refers to her father's timeless advice, "Work is work and you're not above anything. If you don't get grit and dirt under your fingernails and don't feel the sweat on your back, you haven't accomplished anything."

The result of this belief? The pair's personal pull towards the café, their knowledge of the ins and outs of the place and a dependable but respected relationship with staff.

condiments that invites the diner to simply build their own! You will fork it away, lost in chatter, only to soon realise looking down at the very last scraps that you will miss it when it's gone.

A rendition of the Malaysian curry soup, laksa, with tofu, fishcake and coconut milk is another culinary delight, fit for a feast to unwind long hours and personal worries.

The classic lasagna makes a comeback in the revamped menu with layers of mozzarella and ample supplies of béchamel sauce. Also, on the list, you will find the banh mi, a Vietnamese sandwich with spicy beef cradled in the crispy crust of baguette. And their vegan option, the spinach-pesto white pizza is the perfect half-and-half blend of flavourful and healthy.

Bittersweet's delectable chocolate soufflé remains a crowd pleaser and their bite-sized profiteroles glazed with caramel and other goodness is the perfect end to a satisfying feast.

Wash your meal down with quaffable drinks, steaming coffee or bubbling sodas only to clock just how well you have been fed here!

Thank god for restaurants that lift us out of our gloom to take us on a joy-ride to someplace more affable. The world outside may roar on but Bittersweet is the 'someplace' that exists to take us away. At Bittersweet, you feel you are home, where everything is alright, just like old times.

**By Ramisa Haque**

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