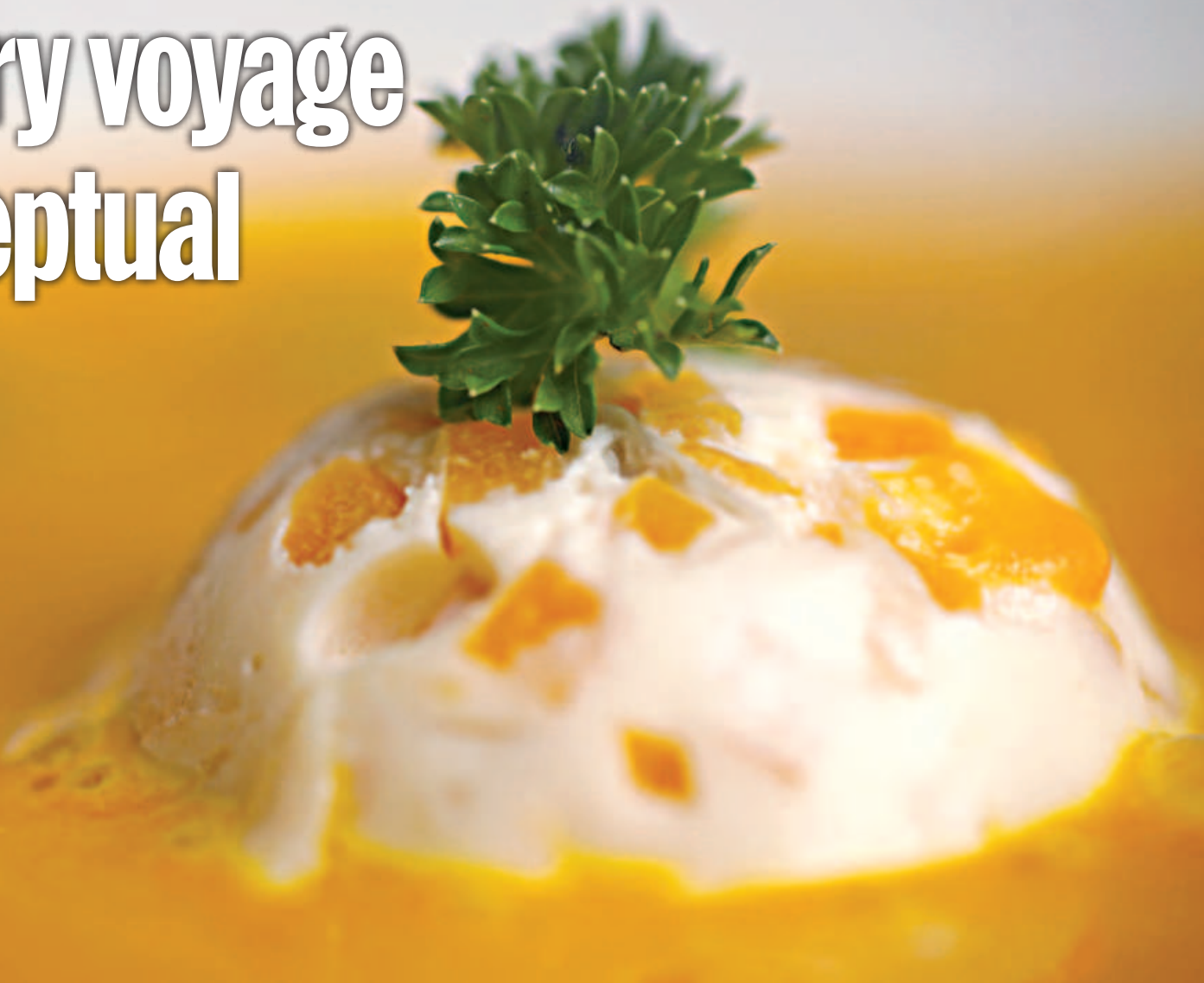


#FOOD & RECIPES

A culinary voyage of conceptual delights



Manzo is an exquisite fine-dining restaurant nestled in the heart of the bustling metropolis of Dhaka. Eagerly, I ventured into this gastronomic sanctuary, curious to unravel the conceptual wonders that awaited me within its elegant confines.

Upon crossing the threshold, a verdant expanse of foliage enveloped my senses, infusing the atmosphere with a serene aura. It was a prelude to the visual feast that awaited me. My gaze wandered, and in an instant, it was captivated by a symphony of artistry adorning the walls. Local talents, both established and emerging, had found their muse here, their captivating masterpieces casting a spell upon the ambience. The decor, a resplendent fusion of creativity and reverence for the local arts, evoked a profound sense of appreciation within me.

As I settled into my seat, perusing the menu that promised a culinary voyage like no other, I was struck by its minimalistic charm. A deliberate choice, it stemmed from the desire to eliminate the overwhelming abundance of options that had bewildered the minds of the founders. Instead, the menu at Manzo embodied a refined curation, allowing the ingredients of the season to take centre stage and showcase their true essence. Every week, the Executive Chef, Zohra Maliha, transforms the culinary symphony of Manzo, seamlessly integrating new creations while respectfully bidding farewell to others.

Among the many culinary delights that graced the specials menu, one dish beckoned me with its intriguing allure—

the scallop carpaccio with iced apple. The fleeting season of the ice apple endowed this delicacy with a rare charm, a fleeting indulgence reserved for those fortunate enough to experience it.

Raw mangoes, vibrant and tart, danced upon my taste buds, infusing the dishes with a zesty citrus flavour. Ripe mangoes would soon make their appearance, not only in the realm of desserts but also in



savoury delights, promising to elevate the culinary journey to new heights.

Plating, a true art form in its own right, became the canvas upon which the culinary creations of Manzo unfurled. Each dish was a picturesque masterpiece, meticulously arranged to evoke wonder and awe. Random inspirations guided the hand of the Executive Chef, Zohra Maliha, who passionately embraced the realms of modern cooking and plating techniques. A myriad of experiences shaped this visionary's perspective, resulting in a symphony of flavours and aesthetics

transcending the ordinary.

Behind the scenes, the quest for exceptional quality produced extended beyond Dhaka's boundaries. Manzo's tireless pursuit led them to traverse villages, forging connections with farmers and vendors who remained concealed from the public eye. Rooted in a commitment to integrity and excellence, they endeavoured to source ingredients from their very core, ensuring that only the finest elements graced their tables. This meticulous approach fostered an environment where the young and spirited team thrived upon the exposure to innovative techniques that set them apart. The attention to detail echoed throughout the establishment, mirroring the unwavering dedication of the three founding partners, who graced the restaurant with their presence daily, tending to every aspect of the dining experience.

The pinnacle of surprise awaited me in the form of an unexpected combination that had defied convention—dark cocoa shavings on mushroom soup. A marriage of contrasting flavours that serendipitously unfolded left an indelible mark on my palate. Such audacity and creativity were emblematic of Manzo, where boundaries were mere illusions waiting to be shattered.

Service at Manzo mirrored their culinary philosophy—an unwavering commitment to meticulousness. The true essence of hospitality, far surpassing the mere notion

of the customer as king, reigned supreme.

Extensive research and a tireless pursuit of knowledge equipped the team with a profound understanding of hospitality, a craft they skilfully honed. The service, characterised by a hands-on approach, was a testament to their ceaseless dedication. Yet, in their humble confidence, they acknowledged that their journey had only just begun, humbly embracing the infinite possibilities that lay ahead.

Manzo's inception sprouted from a seed of possibility planted by a visionary founding member who dared to dream. From its humble origins, nurtured by an unwavering commitment to integrity, the restaurant has blossomed into a haven of culinary excellence. Supply chains intertwined with their farm, ensuring the provenance and authenticity of every ingredient. This harmony of ingredients and space was not imposed; rather, it unfolded organically, guided by the intuitive prowess of the team. Each day brought forth new revelations, and Manzo, in its ever-evolving essence, remained open to the winds of change that could reshape its concept entirely.

As I bid adieu to this enchanting culinary haven, I carried with me the memories of an evening bathed in conceptual brilliance and gastronomic delights. Manzo, a testament to the creative spirit that thrives within the starry streets of Gulshan, had left an indelible mark on my palate.

By K Tanzeel Zaman
Photo: Manzo