

#RESTAURANT REVIEW

HOUSE CAFÉ

rekindles Dhaka's café culture of the past



Some cafés beg to be photographed, and then there are a few rare ones that make you sit down, breathe, and stay a while. House Café does not try to dazzle. It doesn't want to be your next Instagram backdrop. What it does, rather successfully, is revive a mood, a whisper of the '70s and '80s, when café culture was not curated for virality but for comfort, conversation, and the occasional pause.

Tucked away in Dhanmondi, House Café is a slow-burner. You feel it in the lighting, warm, soft, with no sharp white glares trying to sterilise your thoughts. The décor does not shout either; it murmurs. Embracing what the founders call "quiet luxury", the interior of the café has a minimalist approach that feels anything but cold.

Displaying monochromatic portraits of some of the most celebrated films, outfitted with simple lines of furniture, and stylistically furnished with textural variety, the entirety of the space reads as intentionally designed rather than haphazard.

After a year and a half of trial and error, the founders arrived at a small, small and thoughtful menu. They took a little initial quiet inspiration, mostly from Mediterranean, Spanish, and Mexican cuisines, and while they are not really overly experimental nor aggressively traditional, they made it all fit in with the client's parameters.

The shrimp aglio olio is as straightforward as it sounds but comes with enough garlic and bite to make you sit up. The roast beef sandwich, on the other hand, is a rich, satisfying meal disguised in simple packaging. For lighter affairs, the chocolate croissant is already becoming a bit of a favourite — buttery, flaky, and not cloyingly sweet. If you are leaning towards dessert, the vanilla milk cake with pistachios deserves your attention.

The drinks menu is not a secondary thought either. The iced lemon tea feels rejuvenating, especially when paired with the croissant. For the coffee addicts, the classic café latte is clean, no fuss, no burnt beans masquerading as coffee.

What's perhaps most refreshing

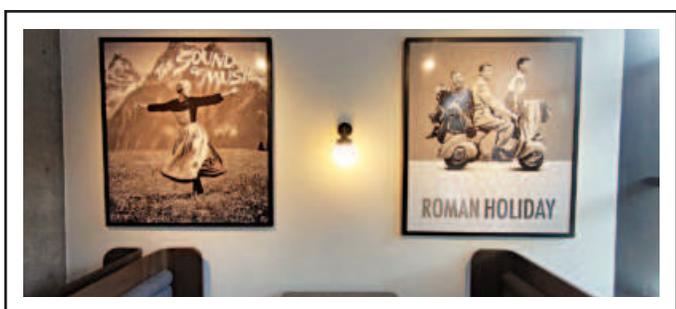
about House Café is its refusal to follow the noise. While many eateries in Dhaka sprint to ride trends and seasonal fads, House Café moves with its tempo. And it appears to be catching on. With one

location established in Gulshan 2 and another arriving in Tejgaon, there is expansion taking place (not fast, but slow and meaningful).

In a city that could sometimes use a pause, House Café reminds us that not everything has to be an immediate, loud, intensive haul

from a hundred choices. Sometimes the best places are the ones that take time and encourage you to take your time.

By Maisha Tarannum Iqbal
Photo: Courtesy





Typhoon

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