



Siraj Mohammed and Khaleel Ahmed of Shahi Pakwaan

Exotic Hyderabadi cooking close to home

Review by Seetal Savla

Asian flavours can be found close to home with the arrival of Shahi Pakwaan on Aylmer Parade. Specialising in Hyderabadi fare from central India, owner Khaleel Ahmed's mission is to overturn the misconceptions of Indian food and service by offering authentic dishes from home.

His vision is brought to life by chef Siraj Mohammed, a close family friend who spent several years mastering his craft in India, Mexico and California before moving to London. Both have lived in East Finchley for many years and are keen to share their beloved classics with their neighbours.

Regional dishes

While the menu features familiar favourites like onion bhajji, tandoori chicken and lamb bhuna gosht, it's the lesser-known regional specialities that best showcase the chef's skills. Chicken 65 may not sound very inspiring, but the lightly battered chicken pieces, deep fried then cooked with curry leaves, garlic, ginger and chillies, are tender and tasty with a hint of heat to finish.

For mains, the biryani is a must: delicately spiced rice and meat served in a decorative clay pot. Diners with a sweet tooth will love the spongy, soothing Ras Malai to round off their meal.

While the restaurant can seat 25-30 people, Shahi Pakwaan also offer a takeaway service via Just Eat and Hungry House within a 2.5-mile radius (10% discount on collections). A set lunch with a draft beer or soft drink for £6 is available on Tuesdays (12pm-3pm) as part of EFAB's Silver Service programme for customers aged 60 and over.

Gorgeous greenery

Garden lovers will want to make their way to Hampstead Garden Suburb Horticultural Society's annual plant sale at Fellowship House, 136a Willifield Way, NW11, on Saturday 13 May from 10.30am to midday. Expertly grown flower and vegetable plants will be on sale.

Marcella was a friend to so many

By Jo Harper and Caroline Hunt

It was standing room only at St Mary's Catholic Church on 31 March as family, friends, neighbours and colleagues paid tribute to Marcella Hampson, née Mullally, who passed away in hospital after a courageous four-year battle with cancer. Despite the size of the gathering, the service was personal and moving, with emotional eulogies from family and friends.

Marcella, known to many as Marcie, moved to East Finchley in 1999, and quickly made many longstanding friendships, not least through the local NCT. She was a familiar face on the High Road, helped with the East Finchley festivals, and sang in north London choir The Angels of Chaos, who performed at the church and at the (lengthy) wake at Madden's Bar.

Actress and friend Michelle Collins, recalling Marcella's love of the arts, said: "She would come along whenever I performed... she always had time for people."

Born in Muswell Hill, Marcella studied English and Drama at the University of Kent, arriving, in the words of university friend Sue Kelvin, as a "flame-haired Irish beauty with a glorious voice and a vibrant sense of humour" who cut a dash as a "seriously cool London rock chick".

During an accomplished 25-year career in PR, she was a director for leading agency Hill & Knowlton and, more recently, worked at East Finchley-



Marcella Hampson

based Hallett Retail, where she became director of marketing and PR in 2010. "Marcella was an inspirational woman with an amazing passion for life," said founder Wendy Hallett MBE. "She will be deeply missed."

Marcella was clever, funny, kind, strong and generous; a

devoted mother and a great friend. She leaves her mother, brother and sister, and her beloved sons, Daniel and Matthew. But her selfless spirit lives on. She asked for any donations to go to the fight against cancer: <https://mydonate.bt.com/fund-raisers/marcellahampson>

The race is on again

Entries have opened for this year's Race the Neighbours, which sees friendly runners competing in the name of East Finchley or Muswell Hill on a 10k route between Cherry Tree Wood and Alexandra Palace.

East Finchley has won the Cherry Tree Cup for the last two years so Muswell Hill will be hoping to take the trophy for the first time. It will be the third year for the race and all 450 places are expected to be snapped up early.

Runners will set off from Cherry Tree Wood on the morning of Sunday 2 July. Organisers are also appealing for volunteers to act as stewards along the route. To enter or to volunteer go to www.race-theneighbours.com and find more information on Twitter @NorthLondon10k.

RICKY SAVAGE ...

"The voice of social irresponsibility"

It'll be all white on the night

Away from London's metrocultural world there are strange places where you can see both the future and the past, places that are truly weird for a 48%-er. I know, I've been there so that you don't have to, so follow me on a journey into the Heart of Whiteness.

You don't need to go far to find that perfect English village with its cricket team, country pub and old church where the vicar's daughter dreams of grammar schools. Here, The Sun is something that never sets on the British Empire rather than a tabloid printed in Wapping. Here you will find the Brexiteers with their wish list of a purer 1950s England.

Top of the list is a return to the old blue passport. Don't ask me why, but they want it back. And they say no more kilos; they want to bring back pecks and bushels that no one under 80 remembers or understands.

In the theme park that is 1950s England, all football teams will be as white as their shirts, cricket will be played on grass in impeccable whites with a red ball and beer will be warm. And foreigners will only be allowed to play if they promise to lose.

The icing on this very English fruitcake is a return to proper English justice. None of this being nice to children; most of the people I'm talking about here are old enough to have been flogged at school and what was good enough for them should be imposed on everyone else. Time to welcome back the school sadist. It's what made England great.

The death penalty is their touchstone. The EU won't let countries kill people, so time to leave and return to the good old 18th-century black code when you could be hanged as easily for a sheep as for a lamb or a handkerchief.

Why should any of us worry about the future when we know that in this funny food-free, no-foreigner, proper-beer, hanging-and-flogging future-past, it will be all white on the night?

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