

Review: The Vedas

01 March 2009 By Colin Drury

WE didn't go all the way to Todmorden for a curry.

You wouldn't unless you were in the know, not with the Asian gastro-paradises of Bradford and, increasingly, Halifax just down the line.

We went to run an errand or two, and then, because our train wasn't due, we had a quick drink.

And then, because it was Sunday and the News Of The Screws was running some story about some minor celebrity who'd been caught snorting white powder, we had a slightly longer drink while we read the papers.

And then, because the pubs in Todmorden always exude a certain malevolent charm, we had a couple more drinks.

And then suddenly it was dark and late and although The Vedas frontage – a vast blacked-out stretch of window – doesn't look particularly welcoming, its Indian and Bangladeshi fusion menu really does, and so we fell inside to the bright and white of its sweeping, gallery-style interior, and before we knew it we were ordering wine and poppadoms and a pickle...

Ah, poppadoms? Not here, sir. Don't sell them.

For nearly four years The Vedas has fed the diners of Tod.

Nearly four years, and in that time it has fed them so well, it now not only accommodates 130 diners spaciouly seated either side of a central bar, it has gone forth and multiplied with a new branch in Bolton.

Yet in all that time, not a single poppadom has passed the lips of a Vedas diner.

A popular Indian restaurant which refuses to provide that most popular staple of Indian restaurants. Go figure. We certainly couldn't. We like our poppadoms.

It meant the starters had to be something special – and actually they were. The meat samosas were crispy on the outside, piping hot (in both senses of the word) inside, and served with this delicious salad mix which dragged the spices from the filling and slapped them about on your taste buds.

But it was the Thai fish cakes which were particularly impressive.

This is fusion food so the menu contains a range of dishes which are not traditionally north Asian – there's some Greek, some English, some Italian – but all with a kind of spiced twist.

And the fish cakes – infused with a variety of mysterious flavours – were as good as anything you might come across in a Thai place. Indeed, so lovely were they, if you shut your eyes you could almost imagine sitting at a beachside table in Pa Tong with the Indian Ocean lapping gently in the background. Minus, of course, the inevitable gap year student talking about, like, finding themselves.

Recommended, in other words.

As is the lamb jalfrezi enjoyed by my partner.

Thick chunks of lamb were covered in an equally thick red sauce. She knows a good jalfrezi when she has one, and this, with the gravy clinging deliciously to the meat and a distinct lack of excess oil, was most definitely one.

My own lamb shatkora bhuna was a little tame in comparison.

Cooked in lime juice and served with chunks of lime, the citrus added a tangy texture that somehow extinguished the fire of the richly textured curry. A pleasant dish for fans of something more timid, perhaps.

We also had a coriander and garlic naan and pilau rice. Both were decent accompaniments to the curries.

Which left just enough room for a scoopful of ice cream as sweet. It was icy and creamy and sweet and, therefore, ticked all the required boxes leaving us well fed and with stomachs pleasantly full.

And then, content, we stumbled back out into the Todmorden night.

Details

Name: The Vedas

Address: 26-32 Rochdale Road, Todmorden

Telephone: 01706 814009

Courier reviews conducted without the prior knowledge of the restaurant

