

Restaurant Sahib:

good food, good company and a relaxed ambience

Lunchtime in the West Island serves up a familiar sight as scores of people leave large office buildings, industrial parks and science labs, heading for more comforting and inviting locales. For the last five years, the destination of choice has increasingly been the relaxed ambience of Restaurant Sahib, welcoming a full house daily for the area's most spectacular and authentic Indian cuisine.

Founder and owner Rajiv Chopra, busily watching over the gourmet dining room, explained that Sahib is not strictly a buffet restaurant, "but we discovered that our clients really appreciate a freshly prepared buffet (at lunchtime). It allows them to enjoy all their favourites and perhaps try something new, yet still have the time to chat over a leisurely lunch hour."

Indeed, Sahib's famous buffet is virtually wiped clean at the end of the busy lunch period. Ingredients are all freshly prepared, and nothing is ever reused. Most of the offerings are changed daily, but certain dishes are longstanding favourites among diners. "Butter chicken is probably the favourite," said Chopra, adding that "new vegetarian choices each day are also popular."

Choice and variety has helped make Restaurant Sahib the ideal dining spot for groups of colleagues, family or friends. Whether your palate craves a fiery vindaloo, a lean sumptuous chicken tikka or vegetarian fare, there is something for everyone and it is all authentic. "We brought four hotel chefs in from northern India," Chopra explained, "and they possess the expertise to create authentic Indian foods with the right ingredients and the right methods. One taste and you know you are getting the real deal." From tandoori specials to seafood, lamb and beef curried dishes – with all levels of spiciness – Sahib's menu is sure to please any appetite.

Sahib's specialties include bhojan platters of vegetarian dishes served with homemade yogurt, lentils, nan bread and dessert; a tandoori grill feast of jumbo prawn, lamb and chicken; and now the unique balti style of dishes – hot food cooked and served in a bucket-style pot – wildly popular in Britain and finally made available on the West Island thanks to Restaurant Sahib.



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To match those tastes and aromas, Sahib offers an extraordinary choice of imported and domestic beer to accompany any meal, including Indian and British beers naturally brewed to complement the spiciest foods. The restaurant's fully licensed bar offers a complete wine list and cocktails in a casual environment, perfect for friendly gatherings or just following a hearty meal with a beer and watching rugby, soccer and cricket matches on a large plasma screen.

Open seven nights a week for dinner, Sahib can seat up to 114 and has facilities for private functions of up to 60 people.

A catering service can bring those splendid dishes to your own special event, and the takeout and delivery business is a big hit: "Curry in a hurry," Chopra said with a laugh. Posting the full menu online helps people decide on takeout orders – a perfect solution for convenient, affordable and exotic cuisine freshly prepared and packaged to take home or deliv-

ered across the West Island.

Located on Hymus just west of St. Jean Blvd., Restaurant Sahib is easily accessed from both Highways 20 and 40. Chopra and his team of chefs offer a mouth-watering selection of delectable early-bird specials from 5 to 6:30 p.m., providing the perfect excuse to wait out the traffic and making it even easier to just park the car and enjoy a good meal.

The variety is not only evident in the extraordinary menu, but in the diners as well, as Restaurant Sahib continues to serve an increasingly diverse clientele. Montrealers of all origins have discovered and come to appreciate the superb tastes and aromas of fine Indian cuisine; on some days, Chopra said, the dining room is almost entirely filled with regulars. "We know everybody here, and they know we appreciate their presence."

Indeed, the restaurant's motto – and Chopra's favourite – is the ancient Sanskrit

proverb: "Athiti devo bhava," which means "A guest is equal to God."

"We try to make people feel special here," Chopra said – a goal that's achieved through the personal touch, delivered professionally and courteously, by the entire staff. Success is evident in a quick glance around the restaurant: large groups gathering at the end of the work week in a relaxed atmosphere, someone discovering an exotic beer or bold new flavour for the first time, cheers in the neighbouring bar over a cricket match. Clearly, this is a winning recipe.



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