



Amazing Aramee

Alison Abbott enjoyed fantastic food and great customer service at the hospitable, and charitable, Aramee Bangladeshi & Indian Restaurant in North Shields.

Aramee was opened in 2002 by Mr Cherag Goni. At the time, it was the first indian restaurant to be established in the North Shields area and has gone from strength to strength ever since.

Mr Goni previously owned a restaurant in Hexham for ten years, before setting his sights on opening the North Shields eatery.

It is very much a family orientated business: three years after opening the restaurant, Mr Goni's brother, Joned, joined him at Amaree after spending a career in

the fitness industry.

It was a dark Thursday night in mid January when we went to Aramee, but the warmth of the restaurant and the greeting that we received more than compensated. It was 7.30pm and the place was bustling, which was good to see.

Their head chef has been with them for more than seven years now and looks after a busy kitchen which has to deal with both diners and a thriving takeaway business, so commands a team of four or five every evening.



Both Mr Gonis are well established in the local community and every year they hold a charity evening to raise funds.

This year, the charity evening will take place on the last Saturday in April and will see them host a fundraising evening for the NSPCC (and as it will be ten years since the restaurant first opened, I definitely feel they should celebrate this landmark).

Anyway, to the food!

The food Amaree offers is sourced locally wherever possible.

We started our meal with poppadoms, I always love having them with pickles whilst I am choosing from the menu. We were brought lovely crispy ones which, happily, appeared with the aforementioned chutneys and pickles while we decided what we were going to order.

To entice new customers and bring the regulars coming back for more, Aramee changes its menu every year to 18 months, so there is always something new for people to try.

When ordering from a menu in an Indian restaurant many of us are afraid to try anything out of our comfort zone, but this is where Joned, the front of house manager, comes into his own.

He has the knack of advising you on what to choose, or slight variations to what you would normally have (and I must say that I, for one, am pleased I took his advice).



“With helpful service and incredibly friendly staff, Aramee is the place to dine in North Tyneside.”

My starter was *Maceyr Boza* - a lovely fresh white fillet of flaky fish, covered in onions and with a delicious sauce of tamarind, corriander, mustard seeds, green chillis, garlic (and a couple of secret ingredients!). It was gorgeous.

My husband had a *Kathi Kebab* which was juicy chunks of gently seasoned and spiced lamb, again in a delicate sauce, wrapped up in a chapati - he thoroughly enjoyed it.

While we were waiting for our main courses, I took the opportunity to talk to four lovely ladies: Joyce, Ann, Carole and Diane.

They started coming to Aramee when it first opened, after a school reunion, and have been coming back every four or five weeks ever since. I wanted to know their reasons for returning.

They explained that they have been made to feel welcome since the start.

They “love the crystal glasses and crisp starched linen on the tables,” they get “good service” and brought up the point that “you can bring anyone here,

including people with disabilities, as access is not an issue”. Their final comment said it all really: “they are one of the best”.

Now we were ready for our main courses. I had their signature dish of *Sizzler Murgh Bahar*, which is unique to them, with their own blended sauces and their own way of making a classic *Shashlik*. It was excellent - lovely tender chicken breasts, juicy and perfectly cooked.

It was very well presented on a sizzler and expertly served to me, with a small side salad. I am not surprised that this is their most popular dish!

Chris's *Lamb Balti* looked equally stunning, arriving in a traditional balti dish. He described it as, “absolutely lovely” - the meat was tender, the sauce just perfect and our choice of *Garlic and Coriander Naan* and *Keema Pilau Rice* complemented both dishes brilliantly.

Although the desserts sounded equally as magnificent as our first two courses, there was no way we could have found space for it.

Two reviving hot towels appeared on our table, accompanied by a dish of sweets placed in a crystal dish, which I thought was a very nice touch.

We chatted with Cherag and Joned before we left, and the passion they both share for the hospitality trade is very much in evidence. I couldn't help watching them chatting to each and every customer, with a courtesy that is rarely seen these days.

If you're after more than just gorgeous food, then go to Aramee. With helpful service and incredibly friendly staff, Aramee is the place to dine in North Tyneside. **L**

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