

# ESTONIAN TREATS

Forget marzipan covered cakes and sink your teeth into a rich, marzipan ball instead.

Rhea Dhanbhora tells you why **Nordic Kandie Magic** should be on your wishlist

One of the first memories that I have of this time of the year, is biting into marzipan, wondering what this sweet, soft and delicious delight was. With time, I started to notice that the more marzipan I ate, the less satisfied I was with it. Some of it was too greasy. Some was hard and crumbly. Some had too much rose water in it and on other occasions, it was almost bland. A majority tasted only of sugar syrup and crushed nuts. I slowly learnt to separate the marzipan I liked from those that I didn't, often simply by sniffing it, or pressing it gently with my fingers to see whether it was hard and crumbly (which I hate) or soft and gooey. Not too many types made the cut, and those made with cashew (which I learnt are actually the most common) were my least favourite. It was too sticky and messy to make on a whim and so, after splurging on some Waitrose golden marzipan, I more or less gave up and forgot about it.

## A BITE OF HISTORY

Thea Tammeleht must have felt the same way in her search for marzipan (marzapan in Estonia) that tasted exactly like the kind she had as a child. The only difference here, is that she took her 6-generation old, family recipe and turned it into Nordic Kandie Magic. The art of Estonian marzipan making is something you will be told about at the store and if you don't follow, read the brochure because it's very interesting. But, what's so special about it apart from a little slice of heritage? Well, there's the handpicked Mamra almonds that are used to make the marzipan, sourced all the way from Iran, the edible Belgian chocolate and organic sugar used for the coating... Oh, and did I mention the edible gold and silver? That's right, Florence-based Giusto Manetti Battiloro is the source for these gold leaves. Buying the gold and silver coated marzipan will make you the proud owner of a TÜV Certificate of authenticity.

## STEP INTO MY STORE...

So, with all this flutter and hype, it's no surprise that they had orders coming in from the minute they set up shop. With their flagship store, they may see a few more — because even if I wasn't there for work, curiosity would have led me to the massive



>> Nordic Kandie's marzipan spells luxury

royal blue door standing on a corner at Peddar Road. It's difficult to stop a vehicle here, but I would have anyway, drawn to it by the swinging chandelier blinking down from across the street. The flagship store has high (and I mean really high) ceilings, intricately carved pillars, angel sculptures — it can all get a little much, but since its swathed in pristine white, it has a very soothing vibe.

A tiny display case houses the handcrafted pieces, with fourteen flavours — new ones catering to the Indian palate created in collaboration with chef Vicky Ratnani. They sounded terrible (anjeer and chilli marzipan? Ugh!), but taste surprisingly good, the chilli in

particular. As I began to eat my way around the case, I quickly found my favourites — the heady cinnamon, crisp nutmeg, refreshing green apple and tart, but oh-so-delicious raspberry-lemon that I went back for seconds of. Peanut butter and orange ranked low on my list, but fig and strawberry were surprising hits, even though the strawberry flavour can get a little too sweet. The chocolate is a flavour for those who do not want to experiment. In a nutshell, if you're expecting marzipan that's slightly greasy and smooth on your tongue, you're going to be really disappointed. But, hopefully, that will soon translate to joy when you taste the crunchiness of the almonds mixed with the chocolate and subtle flavours.

## PERFECTLY PACKAGED

It's important to mention that I still have the box my marzipan was placed in. It's just *that* gorgeous. The individually wrapped marzipan balls (prettily decorated and individually tagged so you can pick your flavour) are placed in a stately, imperial blue box, wrapped with a lavish, dull gold ribbon and placed in an equally majestic imperial blue bag with gold lettering. Even individual pops come in their own little boxes — I was extremely impressed.

Nordic Kandie has delicious treats, but I'm going to be honest. I'm not going to pop in to buy too much of this marzipan. Not because it isn't delectable, but because I'm not rolling in money. The marzipan is exorbitantly priced (₹205 for one and ₹1,850 upwards for a box of nine) — even if I do understand why. You can taste the luxurious quality and the packaging is beautiful enough to buy even without any sweets inside it. However, this is going to become one of those treats you really look forward to, or hope someone gifts you ever so often. If you're looking for a luxury treat for a marzipan lover (or yourself), don't hesitate to order a box. And, if you've got a few hundreds to spare and are passing by, pick up a pop. But, leave the daily marzipan cravings to the greasy stuff we're used to and put this on your Christmas wishlist.

**Where** #1, Vasant Villa, Peddar Road, Kemps Corner **Contact** info@NordicKandieMagic.com



## BOX OF DELIGHT

Five Fat Monks promises to serve good food at affordable prices. Yamini Walia & Sara Shah visited the restaurant to see if it's true

Five Fat Monks is a place you'd visit on a cheat day. The décor is done up in white and orange and the bustling atmosphere makes for the perfect ambience for a hot, comforting meal.

We first ordered the Tangy Hot and Sour soup (₹90) and Egg Drop soup with prawns, (₹90). The hot and sour hit the spot just fine. The egg drop soup on the other hand, was bland, but delicious. Starters included Silky Dim Sums (₹200) and Smoky Yakitori Chicken Skewers (₹200), and while the skewers were great, the dim sums were disappointing. We decided to make our own meal, with the Flat Noodles with Kung Pao sauce and chicken, with a garnish of coriander, chives and spring onions (₹295) which turned out to be spicy, but tantalising. We also ordered Flat Noodles in Black Bean Sauce with Fish (₹295), which was rather average. For dessert, we ordered the Coconut Panna Cotta (₹135) and Crispy Honey Noodles with Ice Cream (₹135). The panna cotta was delicious, but lacked the signature smooth texture, leaving us unimpressed, but the noodles were sweet and made for the perfect dessert.

The value for money at Five Fat Monks makes it a great option for a local hangout. You won't get a fine-dining experience, but who cares when there's ambience and satisfactory food.

**Where** The New Kamal Society, Waterfield Road, Linking Road, Bandra **Contact** 30151420

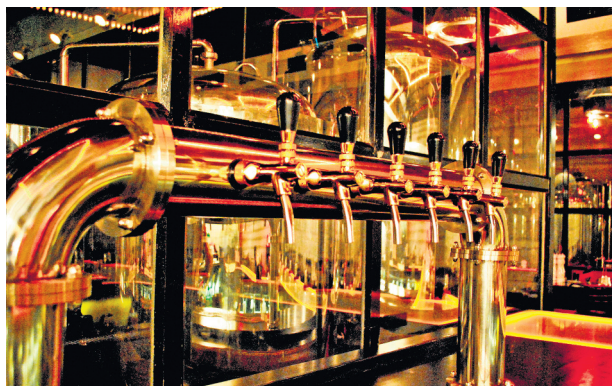
# BOTTOM'S UP!

The White Owl finally has a license for its brewery and so, Shirley Mistry trooped over to sample their four new, bubbly offerings

I love micro-breweries, because they move away from bottled beer and experiment with flavours, fragrances and undertones. Not a big beer fan myself, I prefer the brews and the flavour pairings always leave me pleasantly startled. So, my expectations while visiting The White Owl were fairly high.

The atmosphere was relaxed and their music is just the right amount of peppy. If four beers seem too few, fret not, as they're going to expand their range shortly. Currently, they have four brews that cater to a variety of strengths and bitterness, which means that they have something for everyone — from the occasional beer drinker, to the hardcore beer fan.

First up was Diablo (₹245 for 330ml), an Irish red ale. The moderately mild brew, with a mild caramel and roast flavour and moderate bitterness, was an instant favourite and had a slight sweetness to it. The very mild roast and medium body makes it easy to drink more than one. Next, we tried Halcyon (₹285 for 330ml), a German Hefeweizen. This one had a fruity aroma, with banana and clove. Only mildly bitter, the light beer sounded odd on paper, but the flavours paired well and barring my personal dislike



**Where** One Indiabulls Center, Tower 2 Lobby, Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel **Contact** 24210231 **Meal for two** ₹2,000

for clove, it was delicious. Moving on to stronger stuff, we tried Shadow (₹325 for 330ml), an English porter beer, with a strong aroma and roast, with a chocolate flavour and then Torpedo (₹325 for 330ml), a strong, American pale ale. It has more body, a strong citrus flavour and a bitter bite. Beer lovers won't find any fault with it but I was grateful for its tropical, fruity undertones.

To accompany our drinks, we tried small plates off their special menu. We settled for Orange-Chilli Duck Baskets (₹525), Char-Grilled Bratwurst (₹525) and Fire-roasted Pumpkin Quiche (₹375). The duck meat was moist and succulent and the phyllo pastry that encased the filling, along with the micro-greens topping the baskets, added just the right amount of crunch. The bratwurst was amazing; atop a bed of fluffy mashed potatoes, the divine grilled sausages are served with caramelised onions, sautéed beans and beer jus. The pumpkin quiche had a perfectly-made shortcrust pastry, which acts as a case for the creamy, light and well-seasoned filling.

If you don't know what to pick, try the tasters first. We'll be going back for their acoustic acts — with a chilled glass of Diablo in hand!