

# ARTY AFFAIR

A space that already dons several hats, **Artisan** at Sofitel is back in a brand new avatar. **Rhea Dhanbhora** finds out whether it's snooty or delightfully luxurious

## SI JOLIE

If our knowledge of French extended beyond stock phrases, my dining companion and I would have had a little more to say about the pretty, French-inspired décor that was interspersed through the recently revamped Artisan. With French windows letting you bask in the sun (the air-conditioned interiors will keep the sweat away, don't worry) and high-backed armchairs allowing you to enjoy a lazy sunset, everything about the Épicerie, Pâtisserie, Chocolaterie, Boulangerie and Charcuterie (including the French community table), spells chic. What's more impressive than the French theme (that any other restaurant could pull off with ease), are the grills, woven through and around the restaurant, lending it a decidedly Indian vibe. You could argue about which is the dominant culture in the décor (Is it French? Is it Indian? Is it Indo-French? You decide!), the intricate paintings adorning the walls and distinctive cutlery at each table make one thing clear — this is not a restaurant for those who are uncomfortable with luxury. If it wasn't for the music in the background, we would have been obliged to speak in hushed tones through the night to preserve Artisan's allure. The outdoor seating is perfect for cooler evenings, where you can dine under the stars.

## TO THEIR OWN TUNE

Speaking of music, an important aspect of the revamped Artisan is the live music. From jazz and blues to sounds catering to different

moods (according to a theme), from 7pm onwards, the music at Artisan enhances the experience. The lighting and ambiance add to the overall tone, so it's safe to say that we were looking forward to seeing what else was on offer.

## CHAI TIME

Well, not literally. One of the best drinks on the menu is the Chai Tapri. At ₹800 a glass, it had



>> Ask for their recommendations from their drinks menu; you won't be disappointed!

**Where** Artisan, Sofitel Hotel, C/57, Block G, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (E)  
**Meal for two** ₹1,500 (without alcohol)  
**Alcohol served** Yes (pint of beer approximately ₹370 onwards)  
**Contact** www.sofitel.com



to be worth its weight in gold and lo and behold — it was! Even if you hate vodka, the citrus twang infused with masala chai and garnished with fresh mint will leave you licking your lips. If fruit infusions rock your boat, pick Grass. Also priced at ₹800, the mixture of vodka, curry leaves, fresh pears and lychee juice is a startling combination. The classic Mai Tai (₹800) doesn't disappoint either, but I'd rather pick from the first two. We were also served a special pineapple and orange concoction made by the bartender. Asking for recommendations and specials at Artisan will work wonders for you.

## LET'S GET IT STARTED

If you think paying ₹350 for a bowl of peanuts is a bit much, you haven't tried Artisan's Deconstructed Peanut Masala. The artisan style appetiser is mixture of a delicious potato patty, peanuts and spices. Our favourites from their small tapas menu included the succulent Nalli Nihari Pizza (₹500), which needed a more generous helping of meat. The Albondigas (₹450) too are a must-try. For the uninitiated, these are beef dumplings dunked in tomato gravy. We were delighted with this

dish because the tomato gravy was tangy, did not resemble ketchup in terms of taste or consistency and seeped into the tender beef dumplings perfectly. The Pan Fried Scallops (₹650) however, were the star of the meal. They're not affordably priced and you'll have to fight with your dining companion to get the last bite — but the good thing is that they are worth the fight. While I avoided most of the chilli jam, the green pea purée was delicious and the micro greens added a delightful crunch to the smooth scallops. We were licking our lips right until dessert arrived.

## À LA MACARON

Speaking of dessert — it was only apt to finish our meal with a tasty Artisan macaron. A flavour apiece, we were satiated. Although the macarons were not the best we've ever had, they added the only other bit of French flavour to the meal after the décor, which was much appreciated.

The bottom line is that although Artisan is not a one-of-a-kind restaurant, the food is tasty and the ambiance certainly adds to the experience. We're going to go back to see what a luncheon by the French windows is like.



**Where**  
[www.theproteinbakeshop.com](http://www.theproteinbakeshop.com)  
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# HEALTHY DESSERTS

The **48Hrs Team** sampled goodies from the **Protein Bake Shop** — a brand that offers healthy desserts. Free from trans-fat, wheat and dairy, we tell you how the treats fared in terms of taste

The next time you are watching your weight, but are craving for something sweet, don't work yourself into a sweat! Protein Bake Shop, a venture by Rashi Chowdhary, a nutrition expert and diabetic educator, makes eating your favourite desserts extremely healthy. Made with protein isolate to maintain a healthy carbohydrates to protein ratio, their cookies, biscotti, brownies and nut butters are proof that you don't have to compromise on the good stuff even if you are looking to eat healthy.

We tried their Chia and Flaxseed Slice (₹500 for four pieces), made with fresh bananas, protein powder, honey, chia seeds, flaxseeds and 70% dark chocolate chips. Each slice contains 9.9g carbohydrates, 3.2g fat, 6.5g protein and 89

calories. The slice was moist and resembled the texture of a chewy brownie. The chia seeds and flaxseeds added crunch and the chocolate chips lent just the right amount of decadence to the snack. Perfect as a mid-morning treat (as long as you don't mind the taste of bananas) this one keeps you full for hours.

We also tried the Paleo Rawnola (₹500 for 220g), made with almonds, cashews, coconut flakes, honey and super seeds. Without any sugar and added preservatives, it was a healthy eat. However, it was quite oily and heavy on the stomach. We couldn't eat more than three teaspoons in one go and it worked as an entire meal rather than just a snack. If you want to give this a try, do so for its nutritional value, but, if you are looking for something that is both healthy and delicious, then this snack is probably not for you.

The Paleo Biscotti (₹500 for eight pieces) comes in an attractive brown paper bag, with an informative label telling you about its contents. With eight pieces of biscotti that contain almond flour, coconut flour, honey, almonds and chocolate chips, each piece contains around 60 calories, 1.5g protein and 2.9g fat, with 7.7g carbohydrate content. It looks and smells delicious, but getting used to eating it takes a while. It starts off slightly too nutty, with a sawdust-like texture. But, after you finish the first piece, you can get through the rest of the bag pretty easily, since it's quite

addictive. You also begin to like the taste as you continue to eat. After the second piece, we found ourselves craving another, and another... It keeps you full for quite a while, which means that you won't snack unnecessarily in between.

For the price, these treats are a good option to curb your sweet cravings once in a while, but are on the expensive side if your sweet tooth pops up often. Having said that, we'd love to try some of their other products, such as the chocolate stacks (₹500 for four pieces), almond butter (₹400 for 200ml) and their paleo pizza — the only savoury snack on the menu.

