



INDIAN CUISINE

PRESS KIT

MARCH 2019

www.tiffin.com

AMERICA'S NEXT TOP RESTAURANT FRANCHISE

Dear Mr. Munish Narula,

Congratulations!

The team at The Franchise Edge and Sysco are pleased to inform you that your restaurant has been selected as a Top 25 finalist for America's Next Top Restaurant Franchise. This year is the second year of the contest and we had over 150 entries from throughout the United States and Canada representing all styles of cuisine.

Between now and the end of September someone from The Franchise Edge will visit you and your concept to get a better feel for your food, your brand, and your potential to be America's Next Top Restaurant Franchise. The winner will receive a franchise development package that includes the legal documents, operations manuals, franchise marketing materials and branding package. During our visit our evaluation team will examine your P & L's, operations manuals, employee handbooks, and daily operating procedures that you currently use as well as sample your food, tour the facilities, and meet with your key personnel.

We look forward to meeting you during our visit and learning more about your business. In the interim, please overnight us a copy of your menus, any press you have on your concept, any collateral you deem appropriate for consideration. Please make sure we receive these items no later than September 7th so that we can book our travel. To help expedite the process, please use our FEDEX account number: 467584464.

We will follow up with a phone call on Tuesday September 7th or feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

We look forward to meeting you!

Sincerely,

The Franchise Edge Team



Tiffin answering the question, 'How many calories in curry?'

Updated: JUNE 20, 2018 – 11:02 AM EDT



Marianne Kelly, a consultant who computed the nutritional breakdown of Tiffin's menu, with restaurateur Munish Narula at Tiffin's flagship location on Girard Avenue.

Restaurant nutrition info should provide little shock value nowadays, six years after many chains were ordered to list calorie counts on menus.

Big Macs at McDonald's, apple crunch muffins at Panera, the petite filet at Ruth's Chris all are out there on display under Food and Drug Administration guidelines designed to help people make informed choices about the food they eat.

But how about biryani with chicken, korma with paneer, or tikka masala with shrimp?

Nutritional information has seldom if ever been offered by an Indian restaurant chain in the United States.

This week, Tiffin, the Indian restaurant chain that has grown to nine locations from a storefront on Girard Avenue, will begin posting complete nutritional information for more than 100 menu items, from biryani, curry pots, and other entrées to breads and even the sides of chutney.'



At 45, he said, “when my friends and I get together, the topic of conversation comes around to, ‘what diet are you on?’ We’re all taking stock of what we eat.”

Another reflects the reality of business. Narula is beginning to franchise Tiffin. Most Indian restaurants are mom-and-pop operations with at most three or four locations.

Since 2010, Philadelphia has had what many consider to be the most stringent menu-labeling law in the country

(<http://www.phila.gov/health/pdfs/Menu%20Labeling%20Requirements.pdf>), requiring chain restaurants with 15 locations or more to list calories, saturated fats, trans fats, carbohydrates, and sodium on printed menus, if practicable. Even though there are only three Tiffin locations in the city itself, the chain would have to follow the law once it opened its 15th location anywhere.

A federal labeling law (<http://www.restaurant.org/Menu-Labeling>) that will go into effect May 5, 2017, will require any chain of 20 units or more that sells ready-to-eat or prepared foods - including restaurants, movie theaters, and convenience stores - to show calories on their menus. They also must post information about sodium, fat, carbohydrates, and the like.

Narula hired Marianne Kelly, whose company OrganizeNation helps businesses organize and complete varied projects. (Among Tiffin’s other in-house projects is a centralized call center based at the Girard Avenue location - and not, as you might cheekily assume, outsourced to India.)

For months, Kelly was embedded in Tiffin’s kitchen, breaking down each recipe. She then fed her notes on each dish into a computer program called Menu ProfitPro. Available to customers of the food-service distributor US Foods, MPP allows restaurateurs to calculate nutritional information and costs of recipes. Many but not all Tiffin ingredients were included in Menu ProfitPro’s database. Kelly had to research some.

Narula said there were few surprises in the nutritional breakdown, though “we had to run the numbers for naan four times. It’s really common sense.”

Tiffin provides the nutritional information per order, not per portion. Few customers will eat an entire order of an entrée, Narula said.

A 2013 Drexel University study

(<http://drexel.edu/now/archive/2013/November/Restaurant-Menu-Labeling/>) reported that customers of full-service restaurants use nutritional labeling on menus to make healthier food choices.

Narula said Tiffin would not tinker with recipes, but planned to introduce a series of portioned combination meals under a certain calorie threshold, such as 600 or 700 calories.

Here is the Tiffin nutritional information

(http://media.philly.com/documents/TiffinIndianCuisine_NutritionalData_20160617.pdf).



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10th Restaurant Location opens in Newtown Square

Philadelphia, PA - For 11 years the Philadelphia area's pioneering Tiffin Indian restaurant chain has grown steadily with a winning formula for building the mainstream popularity of South Asian cuisine.

With the Grand Opening of the 10th location in Newtown Square on Thursday August 16, the Wharton MBA founder and CEO of Tiffin, Munish Narula has engineered the disruption of his own successful formula with a dramatic change in the menu approach and kitchen set-up.

The result is consistently high quality authentic dishes produced without the traditional Tandoor ovens that are central to most Indian kitchens. The new Tiffin at Springton Pointe Plaza in Newtown Square, also has no fryer or freezer, which assures healthier and fresher meals.

The 1600 square, 36 seat, first Delaware County outpost of Tiffin will serve as the template for all future Tiffin franchises

"After opening the first Tiffin franchise in King of Prussia last summer I realized that we had to make some fundamental changes to grow this chain to its full potential," says Munish. "Fortunately our first franchisee was a longtime Tiffin manager who knew the cuisine and the very traditional cooking operations."

As Munish started talking to new franchisee prospects it became clear that the original Tiffin format required a level of cultural familiarity with the food and the specialized preparation techniques that limited the pool of prospective franchisees and available skilled kitchen help.

"We needed to make Tiffin as easy to operate as any other food franchise operation that was selling burgers, fried chicken or tacos," says Munish.



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To revise the tried and true formula, nearly a year of research and development followed. First the Tiffin team studied the data on hundreds of thousands of food orders placed over the last 11 years at their 9 other locations, and selectively culled a list of the best selling dishes and trimmed the overall menu by eliminating dishes that just didn't sell that well.

To rework the recipes and processes Tiffin brought in Sanjiv Raj, a 20 year veteran of Indian food industry who led the process along with other Tiffin and local Chefs.

Finally after conducting rigorous test and revisions with the Chefs of Rational, the manufacturer of Combi-Ovens, Tiffin started preparing all Tandoor and fried dishes according to pre-programmed settings in the combi-oven, with an equally efficient sauce and ingredients selection.

The result is better tasting, fresher dishes that can be produced more efficiently by fewer people with less storage and waste.

"This operation is now designed so that operators with little to no experience preparing Indian cuisine can come into one of our newly designed kitchens and get right to work turning out excellent Indian specialties," says Munish. "We even have a separate simple turntable style oven to produce naan and other bread specialties."

Most importantly the new Tiffin is capable of replicating all the dishes very precisely and efficiently, which is at the heart of every successful chain restaurant concept.

Munish Narula opens this 10th Tiffin as a company owned store, with plans to alternate franchises and company owned units as the Tiffin chain continues to expand regionally and nationally.

DAILY TIMES

www.delcotimes.com

Community Briefs: Tiffin to join Delco's diverse dining scene with grand opening in Newtown Square

By Peg DeGrassa, pdegrassa@21st-centurymedia.com, @PeggyDe5 on Twitter
Posted: 08/13/18, 11:25 AM EDT |



DAILY TIMES

www.delcotimes.com

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Tiffin Indian restaurant will hold a grand opening celebration this Thursday, August 16, at its newest location at Springton Pointe Plaza in Newtown Township. The restaurant will offer fresh Indian cuisine, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

NEWTOWN TOWNSHIP For 11 years, the Philadelphia area's pioneering Tiffin Indian restaurant chain has grown steadily with a winning formula for building the mainstream popularity of South Asian cuisine. The restaurant will officially open its tenth location in Newtown Township next week.

Tiffin Indian restaurant chain will hold the grand opening of its newest location on Thursday, August 16 at Springton Pointe Plaza in Newtown Square. The Wharton MBA founder and CEO of Tiffin, Munish Narula, has engineered the disruption of his own successful formula with a dramatic change in the menu approach and kitchen set-up. The result is consistent, high-quality, authentic dishes produced without the traditional Tandoor ovens that are central to most Indian kitchens. The new Tiffin also has no fryer or freezer, which assures healthier and fresher meals.

The 1600 square, 36 seat, first Delaware County outpost of Tiffin will serve as the template for all future Tiffin franchises. Tiffin prepares all Tandoor and fried dishes according to pre-programmed settings in the combi-oven, with an equally efficient sauce and ingredients selection. The result is better tasting, fresher dishes that can be produced more efficiently by fewer people with less storage and waste. Munish Narula is opening this 10th Tiffin as a company-owned store, with plans to alternate franchises and company owned units as the Tiffin chain continues to expand. Like all other locations, Tiffin Newtown



Tiffin Indian Restaurant Opens Shop In Newtown Square

The popular Indian food purveyors are now serving up South Asian cuisine in Newtown Square and a grand opening is set for Aug. 16.

By Max Bennett, Patch Staff | Aug 9, 2018 2:18 pm ET | Updated Aug 9, 2018 4:57 pm ET



NEWTOWN SQUARE, PA – It's open now, but a grand opening is slated on Aug. 16 for the new Tiffin Indian restaurant in Newtown Square.

The eatery's Newtown Square outpost is its 10th location and will be serving up its most popular menu items based on ordering data compiled for over a decade.



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Tiffin in Newtown Square's Springton Pointe Plaza will not have a microwave, fryer, traditional Tandoor ovens, or a freezer to give customers fresher meals.

Tiffin founder and CEO Munish Narula decided to disrupt his own formula with a change in the menu approach and kitchen set-up.

The 1600-square-foot, 36-seat, first Delaware County outpost of Tiffin will serve as the template for all future Tiffin franchises as the eatery moves forward in expanding and franchising.

"After opening the first Tiffin franchise in King of Prussia last summer I realized that we had to make some fundamental changes to grow this chain to its full potential," Munish said. "Fortunately our first franchisee was a longtime Tiffin manager who knew the cuisine and the very traditional cooking operations."

As Munish started talking to new franchisee prospects, he realized the original Tiffin format required a level of cultural familiarity with the food and the specialized preparation techniques that limited the pool of prospective franchisees and available skilled kitchen help.

"We needed to make Tiffin as easy to operate as any other food franchise operation that was selling burgers, fried chicken or tacos," Munish said.

To revise the formula, nearly a year of research and development followed.

The Tiffin team studied the data on hundreds of thousands of food orders placed over the last 11 years at their nine other locations and selectively culled a list of the best-selling dishes and trimmed the overall menu by eliminating



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dishes that didn't sell that well.

Tiffin also brought in a 20-year veteran of Indian food industry to lead the process along with other Tiffin and local chefs.

After conducting rigorous test and revisions with the Chefs of Rational, the manufacturer of Combi-Ovens, Tiffin started preparing all Tandoor and fried dishes according to pre-programmed settings in the combi-oven, with an equally efficient sauce and ingredients selection.

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"This operation is now designed so that operators with little to no experience preparing Indian cuisine can come into one of our newly designed kitchens and get right to work turning out excellent Indian specialties," says Munish. "We even have a separate simple turntable style oven to produce naan and other bread specialties."

The new Tiffin is capable of replicating all the dishes very precisely and efficiently, which is at the heart of every successful chain restaurant concept.

Tiffin Indian is located at 202 S. Newtown Street Road.

The Times Herald

King of Prussia restaurants to host dineKOP Restaurant Week for fourth year

by Gary Puleo Feb 27, 2018

Another newcomer to the dineKOP realm, Tiffin Indian Cuisine, is keeping its Restaurant Week specials simple.

“Our lunch menu features any chicken or veg entrée and for dinner you can choose any entrée on the menu,” noted Tiffin founder and CEO Munish Narula, who launched the first Tiffin – an Indian-English word for a light midday meal – in 2007 in the Northern Liberties section of Philadelphia, with a pioneering attitude of raising the standard of traditional Indian cooking, along with public perception, and branding the specialty ethnic cuisine in a way that hadn’t quite been done before.

Dinner also includes a choice of appetizers, breads and desserts.

“Tiffin is offering a special prix fixe menu for the DineKOP event but created it to give diners the flexibility to be able to have their usual favorites or try something new. Most of the participating restaurants are around the mall or in the Town Center, so we’re inviting people to get away from the crowds and have an open menu along with a great price,” Narula said.

For its ninth location in 10 years, Tiffin Indian Cuisine took up residence at 254 W. DeKalb Pike, King of Prussia, last June, smartly perched overlooking the highway in the newly re-named Valley Forge Plaza Shopping Center.

“CHOP is a great neighbor for Tiffin in Philadelphia and now at our King of Prussia location so the decision to participate in DineKOP was instantaneous,” said Narula. “We feel very much at home in King of Prussia and the response to our restaurant here has been tremendous. This is a great opportunity for us to give back to the community that has opened its arms to us.”

Narula said that since the King of Prussia location debuted, he has been receiving a lot of calls about other franchise opportunities.

“Right now we have opportunities to grow both organically and through franchising,” he said.

philly grub

Exploring Philadelphia & South Jersey's Food Scene

**Posted on August 9, 2018 by
MARILYN JOHNSON**

For 11 years the Philadelphia area's pioneering Tiffin Indian restaurant chain has grown steadily with a winning formula for building the mainstream popularity of South Asian cuisine.



With the Grand Opening of the 10th location in Newtown Square on Thursday, August 16, the Wharton MBA founder and CEO of Tiffin, Munish Narula has engineered the disruption of his own successful formula with a dramatic change in the menu approach and kitchen set-up.

The result is consistently high-quality authentic dishes produced without the traditional Tandoor ovens that are central to most Indian kitchens. The new Tiffin at Springton Pointe Plaza in Newtown Square also has no fryer or freezer, which assures healthier and fresher meals.

The first Delaware County outpost of Tiffin, which at 1600 square feet has 36 seats, will serve as the template for all future Tiffin franchises.

"After opening the first Tiffin franchise in King of Prussia last summer I realized that we had to make some fundamental changes to grow this chain to its full potential," says Munish. "Fortunately our first franchisee was a longtime Tiffin manager who knew the cuisine and the very traditional cooking operations."

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The Times Herald

by Gary Puleo Jun 13, 2017



At Tiffin Indian Cuisine in King of Prussia are Rajesh Byanjankar, left, co-owner of the King of Prussia franchise location; Munish Narula Tiffin founder; and Rajan Bindukar, co-owner of the franchise. Gary Puleo – digital first media

UPPER MERION: The appetite for authentic Indian food these days seems to be growing as fast as a well-known restaurant chain that's at least partly responsible for its soaring popularity.

For its ninth location in 10 years, Tiffin Indian Cuisine has taken up residence in King of Prussia, smartly perched overlooking DeKalb Pike in the newly renamed Valley Forge Plaza Shopping Center.

"There's always room for more good Indian restaurants," noted Tiffin founder

Munish Narula, who launched the first Tiffin – an Indian-English word for a light midday meal – in 2007 in the Northern Liberties section of Philadelphia, with a pioneering attitude of raising the standard of traditional Indian cooking, along with public perception, and branding the specialty ethnic cuisine in a way that hadn't quite been done before.

“If somebody had never tried Indian food before and then they try a restaurant and didn't like it, their reaction is that they don't like Indian food at all, not just that it was a bad restaurant. We want to change their attitude toward Indian food,” Narula said. “When we opened 10 years ago. I believe there were eight or nine Indian restaurants in Philadelphia. Today there are about 58. It's very gratifying to see us grow because it's not just a business. It's a family.”

Following Northern Liberties, Narula had opened a string of Tiffins in places like Elkins Park, Wynnewood, South Philadelphia and Cherry Hill.

King of Prussia has been in the game plan for a long time, Narula said.

“We saw what was going on with all the commercial development here. This spot was more economically feasible for us than some others we saw. It's a very high visibility spot and the day we came to see it we knew we were taking it,” he said of the former State Farm insurance office.

King of Prussia is the first Tiffin franchise, owned and operated by Rajesh Byanjankar, a veteran Tiffin operations guy who hired chef Durga Rai to demonstrate his mastery of the complex flavors of Indian cuisine with such dishes as Chicken Tikka Masala – the top Tiffin menu item since the beginning – Saag Paneer (creamy spinach with cottage cheese cubes) and traditional curry (ginger, garlic, cumin and garam masala) in the wide-open Tiffin kitchen.

Narula is proud of the no-secrets accessibility that allows customers to see all steps of food preparation from any table in the intimate dining room, which seats about 28 diners.

“People find it very interesting to see the food being cooked, especially the breads, the tandoor and things like that,” he said. “But it also brings in that satisfaction that everything is clean and being handled properly. Bringing comfort

to customers, puts them at ease that it's a nice clean environment, especially if they may have had a buffet 10 years ago in a dirty restaurant or something like that."

A common misconception is that all Indian food is excessively spicy, Narula noted.

"That's not true at all. But we try hard to keep the food the way it's supposed to be. We don't try to dumb it down or make it less spicy," said Narula, who had been entertaining the idea of franchising since the outset.

"I had to be comfortable with someone putting their hard-earned money into a business, to be at a point where I felt it would be a success. I think I'm more worried about someone else's money," he added, laughing.

"We control the branding and the marketing, like any franchiser. We have set the standard. They have all of our resources ... all they have to do is follow them."

Although Indian lunch buffets have popped up everywhere in the last few years, Narula is not a fan of the all-you-can-eat concept.

"We make everything to order and want to give people fresh food, not food that's been sitting on a buffet for two hours," he noted. "We have lunch specials so that people can get the value they're looking for. And all of our menu items are reasonably priced so that customers don't have to worry about spending a lot of money."

Tiffin recently became one of the first Indian restaurants in the country, and possibly in the world, to release detailed nutritional information about all of its dishes.

Friends and acquaintances had tried to discourage Narula from taking the nutritional leap, he recalled.

"They said people will believe what they want to believe. It will backfire. But the response has been nothing but positive," he said. "And once you get to 20

restaurants you have to have your nutritional info available anyway. We want to grow very quickly, but we didn't do it for that reason. We did it because we wanted people to have the information."

Marianne Kelly, Tiffin's director of communications, completed the nutritional content of every dish using sophisticated software, she explained.

"It's based on portion sizes as they're served to the customer," Kelly said of the nutritional profiles, available at www.Tiffin.com. "Overall, I think people love the food and that they aren't necessarily as concerned about what the nutritional content is, although it's generally a fairly healthy option. There have been some people who've wanted to know about it. I just got a question recently from someone who wanted to keep Indian food in their diet as they started a diet."

Narula is so devoted to the company's use of technology he is fond of saying he is in the food tech business..

"We will be launching our app soon. How many Indian restaurants can say they have an app?" Narula said. "You can do everything with the app: order, pay, look at your rewards program, place an order in advance. And we'll be adding curbside service to the app soon. So there are a lot of things we're doing that a mom and pop operation wouldn't even be thinking about."

Tiffin Indian Cuisine is located at 254 W. DeKalb Pike, King of Prussia.

Free delivery is available within a three-mile radius.

For more information, call 484-231-8128 or visit www.tiffin.com.

MAIN LINE TODAY

Tiffin to Open in King of Prussia

The Indian restaurant franchise will open in Valley Forge Shopping Center

BY RONNA DEWEY Photo by Jared Castaldi



The number of new restaurants rolling into King of Prussia keeps growing. The management of Tiffin recently announced its first official franchise location is scheduled to open in early 2017 at Valley Forge Plaza Shopping Center. Tiffin currently has nine locations, including in Wynnewood and Bryn Mawr. Franchisee Rajesh Byanjankar, a nine-year veteran of Tiffin and one of the restaurant's first employees, will head up the new restaurant.

"We started to see a pattern several years ago as former employees would open their own restaurants. It occurred to me I'd rather turn my employees into partners instead of competitors," says Tiffin founder and CEO Munish Narula. "The experience Rajesh brings to the first Tiffin franchise is enormously valuable and helps ensure its success."

"This is a great opportunity for me to build my own business based on my 9 years of training at various new Tiffin locations," says Byanjankar.

The meteoric success of Tiffin since its opening in 2007 is reflected not only by its own growth to nine locations throughout Philadelphia and neighboring Pennsylvania and New Jersey suburbs, but also

the spike in the number of competitors in Indian cuisine—there are more than 50 Indian restaurants operating in the same trading region.

Narula is proud of the proliferation of Indian restaurants. To prepare for regional, and eventually national, expansion, Narula has devoted the past year to upgrading the ordering technology and delivery scheduling protocols to reduce wait times. As they improve their model, he expects the chain to continue its rapid expansion.

MAIN LINE TODAY

Tiffin Opens in King of Prussia

The first franchise location of the Indian restaurant opened in Valley Forge Shopping Center on June 8.

BY RONNA DEWEY

We've been anxiously awaiting the opening of Tiffin for some time and are excited its first franchise, located in Valley Forge Shopping Center, officially opened its doors on June 8.

The first franchisee is Rajesh Byanjankar, a 9-year veteran of Tiffin and one of its first employees.



“We started to see a pattern several years ago as former Tiffin employees would open their own restaurants. It occurred to me I’d rather turn my employees into partners instead of competitors,” says Tiffin founder and CEO Munish Narula. “The experience Rajesh brings to the first Tiffin franchise is enormously valuable and helps assure its success.”

“This is a great opportunity for me to build my own business based on my nine years of training at various new Tiffin locations,” says Rajesh.

The meteoric success of Tiffin since its opening in 2007 is reflected not only by its own growth to nine locations throughout Philadelphia and neighboring Pennsylvania and New Jersey suburbs, but also the spike in competitors in the once-marginal Indian cuisine category. Today, there are more than 50 Indian restaurants operating in the same geographical area as Tiffin.

Narula is proud of the proliferation, some founded by former employees, others by his pioneering work. Tiffin's standards have raised the bar in this fast-emerging ethnic specialty cuisine, he says.

To prepare for regional, and eventually national, expansion, Narula has devoted the past year to upgrading the ordering technology and delivery scheduling protocols to reduce wait times.

Tiffin became one of the first Indian restaurants in the United States to publish detailed nutritional information on all its menu items, as required of restaurant chains of more than 20 units. Narula expects Tiffin growth to ramp up rapidly over the next 18 months.

254 W. Dekalb Pike, King of Prussia, (484) 231-8128, www.tiffin.com.

The Inquirer

DAILY NEWS philly.com

Tiffin opens a branch in King of Prussia

by Michael Klein, STAFF WRITER, Posted: June 5, 2017

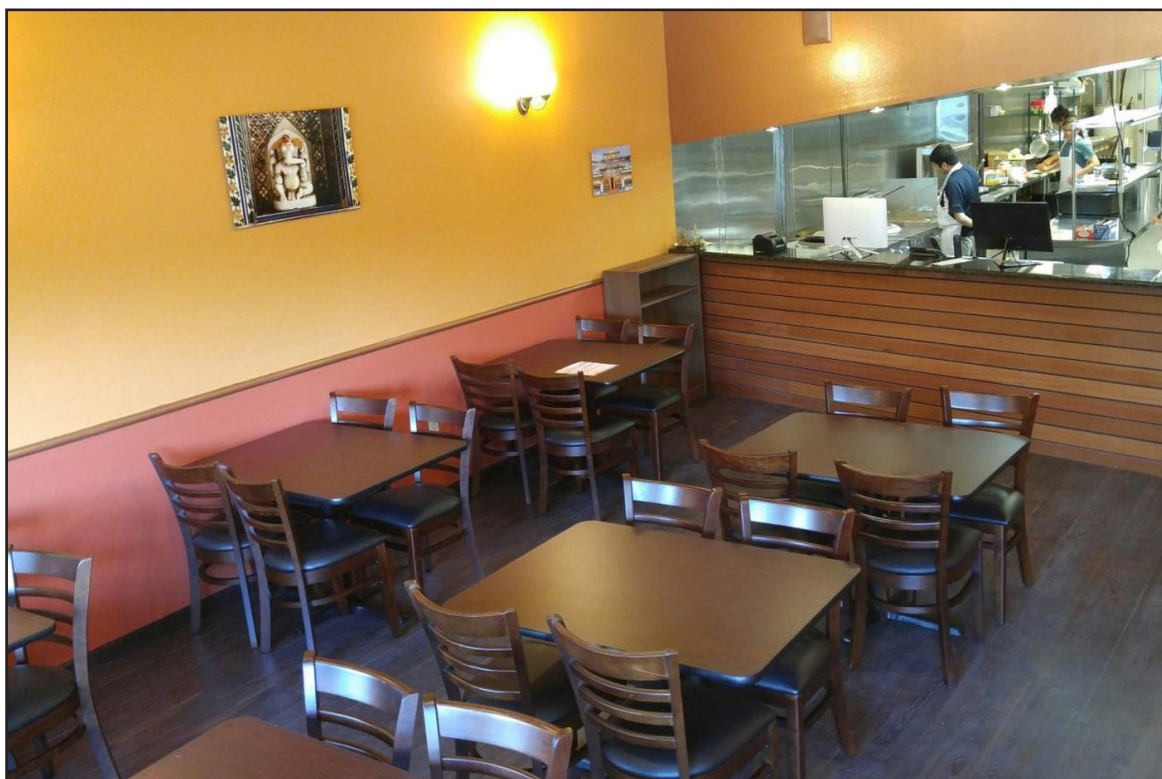


PHOTO BY GEORGE POLGAR

Rajesh Byanjankar, who's worked for the Indian chain-let Tiffin for nine years, has opened a franchised Tiffin location in King of Prussia's Valley Forge Plaza (254 W. Dekalb Pike). Grand opening is June 8.

It has the same menu as the eight other locations.

As former Tiffin employees went out to open their own restaurants, Tiffin founder Munish Narula said he decided to turn the entrepreneurs into partners instead of competitors. Anticipating growth, Narula last year commissioned a nutritional analysis of the entire menu to provide information to customers.

Hours are 10:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. weekdays, 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. weekends.



Freely Magazine

Just Add Spice: A Take on Tiffin

Mai Do December 4, 2017



From left: Butter chicken, Kakori Kebab, Chana Masala

In 2014, my father and I traveled around Bagan, a city in Myanmar dotted with over 2,000 temples. I've always enjoyed Indian food but the meals I had in Bagan made me realize that I had never tasted real Indian food before. The mouth-watering curries steeped in rich sauces and the Tandoori chicken we tried were more flavorful than any Indian dishes I had eaten back home in Vietnam.

I was intrigued when my friend Ishita, an international student at Temple University Beasley School of Law, told me about Tiffin on a car ride to a friend's house. "Tiffin has the most authentic Indian food in north Philadelphia. You've got to try it!" Ishita exclaimed. She raved about their butter chicken and biryani, a spicy mixed rice dish.

When Munish Narula created Tiffin.com in 2006, he never expected his delivery-on-



Freely Magazine

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ly eatery would explode in popularity. Customers demanded dine-in options, and Narula converted his storage unit in Fishtown into a tiny dining room. Today, you can find almost a dozen Tiffin restaurants throughout Philadelphia and Cherry Hill. Perhaps Tiffin's success amounts to their convenient takeout – they deliver thousands of tiffins (containers of home cooked meals) every day.

Although my trip to Bagan made me skeptical of ethnic restaurants in America deemed 'authentic,' I decided to give Tiffin a try. On a chilly evening in November – the perfect weather for spicy food! – I met my friends, Liz, Ishita, and Sara, Jigsaya at the restaurant. Situated on a tiny corner of Gerard Avenue, Tiffin looks quaint from the outside; inside, the capucine red walls and sleek lacquer furniture add an unexpected touch of luxury and brightness to the dining room.

Throughout our meal, service was fast and attentive. I was surprised to find that Tiffin's appetizers play it safe – the chana masala, a spicy chickpea curry made with chana and kala (black) chana chickpeas, reminded me of a typical yellow curry takeout. The dish had flavor, but it was missing some much needed spice.

The butter chicken dish left me pleasantly surprised. The chicken was tender and covered in a delicious red sauce that was at once tangy and savory, spicy and sweet and made me hungry for more – by the end of dinner, I sheepishly asked to scrape out what was left over in the bowl. An array of seasonings, from fenugreek and garam masala, and several hours of marination in a rich gravy sauce give this dish its complex flavor profile.

We finished our meal with a kakori kebab, grilled lamb skewers seasoned with mace and caraway. Slices of daw papaya add a delicious element of sweetness to this dish, a unique take on Middle Eastern fare. Despite being well seasoned, the lamb could have been juicier – it was slightly overcooked for my liking.

If you've never tried Indian, Tiffin's is a fine introduction to traditional Indian cuisine. Although their recipes don't take bold risks, I praise Tiffin for recreating classic Indian dishes with a twist.

Philadelphia RESTAURANTS

foobooz

Tiffin Turns 10

And they're celebrating with a week's worth of deals.

by **JASON SHEEHAN** · 1/23/2017, 3:03 p.m.



All this week, Tiffin is celebrating its 10th birthday as a chain. And they're doing it by offering cheap meals for one day at each of its area nine locations, for nine straight days.

Which means that today, for example, all entrées are \$8 at the original Girard Avenue location. Tomorrow, it'll be the same deal in Bryn Mawr—\$8 entrées for all comers. So if you haven't dropped by your neighborhood Tiffin in a while, here's the

perfect opportunity.

Don't worry, we've got the full schedule below.

Philadelphia

RESTAURANTS



Tiffin Turns 10

\$8 entrées, January 23-31

Jan 23 – Monday – Girard (kicking it off where it all began)

Jan 24 – Tuesday – Bryn Mawr

Jan 25 – Wednesday – South Philadelphia

Jan 26 – Thursday – Wynnewood

Jan 27 – Friday – Cherry Hill

Jan 28 – Saturday – Voorhees

Jan 29 – Sunday – East Hanover

Jan 30 – Monday – Mt. Airy

Jan 31 – Tuesday Elkins Park

In other news, Tiffin's first franchise location is due to open soon at the new King Of Prussia mall food court and, according to owner Munish Narula, the restaurant group has an aggressive expansion strategy, with plans to open anywhere between 20 and 100 additional locations over the next several years. On tap right now? New Pennsylvania locations in North and South Philly, Mt. Airy, Bryn Mawr, Wynnewood and Elkins Park. And in New Jersey, new Tiffins in Voorhees, Cherry Hill and East Hanover.

No specific details yet, but you'll know as soon as we do.

India Abroad

A Window Into the Indian-American World

Tiffin Indian Cuisine: A Problem Of Plenty

May 26, 2018



What started as an order and delivery only service in 2007 has now grown to 9 full service dine in locations offering online ordering, delivery and take away, with a 10th slated to open this summer. Tiffin Indian Cuisine has long been known as being ahead of the curve.

Founded by Munish Narula, a Wharton grad and a former investment banker with a Master of Restaurant Management from Johnson & Wales University, Tiffin is often credited for establishing the once mysterious Indian cuisine as a favorite go-to mainstream choice. This has led to the opening of more than 50 other Indian restaurants in the greater Philadelphia area, some by former employees of Tiffin.

Narula is very proud to have fueled this demand for Indian cuisine but adds, “Competition is good for the entire industry, but I like the idea of creating more partners than competitors, and that’s where our focus is now.”

He goes on to say, “the only thing we can’t keep up with is the demand for more locations.”

Narula jokes that this is a good problem to have but is very serious when he says he is looking for more entrepreneurial minds that want to join a successful concept and brand.

Having already opened his first franchise location in King of Prussia, PA, less than a mile from the legendary mall of the same name, Narula is about to open his next company owned location in Newtown Square, Delaware County, PA. He is focused on a dual expansion track that combines franchise units along with expansion of his corporate owned restaurants, saying that this approach “keeps the corporate entity sharp and current in operations.”

Narula has devoted the past few years in preparation for an even wider regional and eventually national expansion. He has upgraded the ordering technology and delivery scheduling to reduce wait times, developed standardized menus and highly efficient kitchen operation protocols, developed an app for easy ordering and published detailed nutritional information on all its menu items as required of restaurant chains having more than 20 units, a number that he plans to achieve in the next 18 months. Tiffin has also introduced all new branded materials including customized takeout containers, bags and staff uniforms and is launching a fleet of Tiffin branded delivery vehicles.

The ideal Tiffin franchisee is someone with some restaurant experience and an appreciation and understanding of the cuisine. Narula says he and his team are prepared to offer future franchisees full support and development in all aspects of restaurant management plus the benefit of his experience in developing the cuisine in the US.

“We’ve put in the time, effort and research to know what works and what doesn’t,” says Narula. “The advantage we offer our fellow South Asians is not only the complete franchise package but also a valuable understanding of the American food marketplace. We’re ready to pass that on to other committed hard-working entrepreneurs who want to grow with us, so we can all be successful together.”

Interested business owners are encouraged to contact Tiffin at (267) 825-3997 or email at **franchise@tiffin.com**



MONTCO.TODAY™

Celebrating the Montgomery County Experience

King of Prussia to Get First Tiffin Indian Food Restaurant Franchise



The Tiffin Indian food restaurant franchise will open its first location in King of Prussia at the Valley Forge Plaza Shopping Center early next year.--photo via ListSurge.

Posted By: Lance Knickerbocker Posted date: November 21, 2016 In: Culture, Dining

Fans of Indian food in King of Prussia are about to get a treat as the Tiffin Indian food restaurant chain is opening its first franchise at the Valley Forge Plaza Shopping Center early next year, writes Kenneth Hilario for Philadelphia Business Journal.

Started nine years ago in Northern Liberties, Tiffin quickly grew to nine locations. The owner and CEO, Munish Narula, then decided to expand even further by franchising the business.

Narula had been considering a number of locations for several months, and decided on the Valley Forge Plaza Shopping Center. The restaurant will be led by Rajesh Byanjankar, one of the company's earliest employees and now its first franchise location head.

“We started to see a pattern several years ago as former Tiffin employees would open their own restaurants,” said Narula. “It occurred to me I’d rather turn my employees into partners instead of competitors. The experience Rajesh brings to the first Tiffin franchise is enormously valuable and helps assure its success.”

Read more about this new addition to King of Prussia’s eateries at Philadelphia Business Journal by [clicking here](#).

Philadelphia RESTAURANTS

foobooz

Tiffin's First Franchise Comes to KOP in June

It's the first of a regional and national expansion planned by the chain.

by **ALEXANDRA JONES** 5/16/2017, 10:56 a.m.



When **Tiffin** founder and CEO **Munish Narula** noticed that former employees of the popular Indian spot were opening their own restaurants, he decided to give them the opportunity to become partners rather than competitors.

And in early June, King of Prussia will have its own Tiffin — the first franchise

— helmed by a nine-year veteran of the company and one of its first employees, Rajesh Byanjankar.

The location at 254 West Dekalb Pike in King of Prussia's Valley Forge Shopping Center is the first in what Narula hopes will be a regional and then national expansion; the chain currently has nine locations in Philly, its suburbs, and New Jersey. In preparation, he's prioritized upgrades to ordering and delivery scheduling technology to reduce wait times, and the chain will roll out newly branded uniforms and packaging, too.

Another Tiffin, this one in Jersey City, is also slated to open in the near future.

Courier Post

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

An innovative Indian concept, Tiffin joins South Jersey dining scene

Steve Wood, Courier-Post Published 12:10 a.m. ET Oct. 22, 2014 | Updated 5:55 p.m. ET Oct. 22, 2014



Nearly eight years ago, Munish Narula eyed a small unit on a sketchy stretch of Philadelphia's Fishtown district as the perfect first spot to debut his fresh business concept:

An Indian eatery no one would eat in.

Narula hatched tiffin.com, a restaurant designed to offer only web ordering and de-

livery, in "not one of the prettiest areas" partly "because we thought nobody would ever come to us so it didn't matter. We would go to them."

But even the plans of Wharton Business School graduates don't always work out exactly as envisioned.

"It was a huge success right out of the gate," Narula says, "but people kept calling me and asking me, 'Well why can't I just pick it up?'"

When Narula offered carryout at the storefront, customers wanted dining. When he converted the dry storage area into a 10-seat dining room, customers formed lines out the door, demanding more seating.

After he bought the second floor of his building for extra dining space, out-of-town customers would tell Narula, "Why don't you do something here? We

have nothing here.”

The reluctant restaurateur brought five more Tiffin bistros to Pennsylvania, as well as the glitzier French-Indian restaurant Tashan to Philadelphia, racking up awards along the way, before answering a familiar plea across the bridge.

“South Jersey people have been asking for it because a lot of them go to our Philadelphia restaurants,” he says. “I know a bunch of people who pick up food from there and bring it here. It was a request that was made of us several times.”

As the 43-year-old has learned, the customer is always right.

After opening a Tiffin in Voorhees in September, Narula is set to deliver restaurants in Cherry Hill later this month and in East Hanover in November. With Thursday being Diwali, or the festival of lights, he knows the timing for an Indian celebration couldn’t be better.

“The market is more mature now and is more accepting of ethnic food,” he says. “South Jersey has a huge (Indian) population compared to Philadelphia.”

New Delhi to New Jersey

Initially known for an e-commerce model predating the likes of Domino’s and Papa John’s, Tiffin plans to capitalize on the fact that many South Jersey eateries don’t offer delivery.

Narula can only hope his food carriers can be as efficient as the dabbawallahs of India, who reportedly pick up and transport more than 350,000 tiffins – or containers of home-cooked meals – to office workers each workday.

“It’s a spread-out market, which actually makes it better for our delivery,” he says. “We don’t have to deal with the traffic issues that we experienced in Philly, so it’s a catch 22: it’s a little more spread out, so the density is not there on Federal Street, Girard (Avenue) or Mount Airy, but also from a delivery perspective, a lot of our places don’t have parking.”

Tiffin isn't news to those who are accustomed to seeking it out.

Cherry Hill couple Mike and Mimi Berry, for instance, dined at the original location in 2008 while living in Philadelphia.

"There was a lot of excitement about Tiffin," recalls Mike Berry, 39. "We always thought it was the best Indian food in the city."

Narula knows Indian options in this region aren't as rare as before. In fact, from Indiya to Indebblue to Coriander, discerned South Jersey diners have some very worthy options without crossing the river.

Tiffin was voted the top Indian restaurant on PHL 17's Philly Hot List the last eight years, besting a field of only 11 restaurants in 2007 compared to 38 competitors this year.

He welcomes the extra competition.

"I do not worry about Indian restaurants opening up," Narula says. "I worry about crappy Indian restaurants opening up because they kill the market."

Narula champions the success of other Indian restaurants as both fan and businessman, knowing the average person rarely gives niche foods second chances.

"If you've never had Indian food and you go to a bad restaurant — and this is for any food — you'll come out and say I don't like Japanese food," he says. "You never say 'Maybe this restaurant was just bad.' More Indian restaurants are not a problem. The pie is huge."

The pie is especially large in Voorhees, where Bombay Local Pizza serves Indian-inspired pizzas such as their signature samosa pizza pie.

"More than anything else, I think Voorhees is very, very cosmopolitan," says Parg Poonawala, a 29-year-old Marlton resident who co-owns the Voorhees pizzeria with his older brother Sagar. "South Jerseyans like to try new things, people are

interested to try new things.”

Since opening in Dec. 2012, Bombay Local Pizza has piqued the interest and curiosity of South Jersey and Yelp! reviewers by infusing Indian and Italian ingredients, a practice the brothers picked up in Bombay while working for a venture capital fund.

“I didn’t see why it couldn’t work out here,” says Parg, a graduate from the University of Pennsylvania. “... “There’s a very large Indian population in New Jersey that continues to grow. I’ve lived in South Jersey for four years and I didn’t know why there was a lack of Indian food. That’s no longer the case. There’s a lot of different options which is nice.”

Most of its pies possess a zesty blend of Indian spices and herbs, in addition to traditional tomato sauce and mozzarella. The combination appeals to a mixed audience.

“Fifty percent have had Indian food and they know what they’re looking for and the other half are people who have a high level of curiosity to see what it is,” Parg says.

Tiffin will also compete with Indebblue, whose chef-owner Rakesh Ramola left the original Tiffin to open the popular Collingwood restaurant in 2009.

Like Narula, Ramola has followed customers over the bridge, expanding his Indebblue into Center City in 2013.

It’s hard to oversaturate the market when there are many subsets of Indian food to explore, Narula says.

“When people say Indian cuisine, it actually consists of so many different regionally cuisines,” he says. “Our menu is more North Indian than anything else. People in Western Indian, it’s a totally different food. Southern part of Indian, it’s a totally different food.”

Inspirations

Narula supports his employees decision to leave, even if cuts into the Indian market.

“Everybody wants to do well in life, so I’m not holding it against anyone who wants to move up in life,” he says. “That’s what I did. I quit my job and did this. How can I hold it against people? I tell people if you ever want to leave, tell me and I’ll help you.”

Before banking on his native cuisine, the Wharton MBA worked Wall Street as a Credit Suisse investment banker.

“I think my motivation was all wrong,” he admits. “I think I went there because I wanted to get rich quickly.”

He chuckles, “That didn’t quite work out.”

Aside from souring on his job, experiencing 9-11 while in a Manhattan Marriott spurred Narula, his wife and their baby boy to check out from New York City for good.

“Then I decided it just wasn’t for me,” he says. “It’s time to do something else.”

Narula leaves the door open for the right employee to become a future franchisee.

Tiffin beat out 170 candidates across the country in 2010 to be named “America’s Next Top Restaurant Franchise,” a contest co-sponsored by Sysco Corporation.

Though the nation’s top food service provider will cover the costs associated with franchising Tiffin, valued at \$100,000, Narula says the brand is not yet ready for such an undertaking.

“We have not done a franchise yet because we do not feel confident and comfortable,” he says. “We feel like we need to grow organically a little bit more and build a bigger corporate team in order to support a franchise.”

Fresh takes

Narula takes a similar conservative approach to Tiffin’s dining menu, keeping it small, stocked with standards and the items spicy only if requested.

Appetizer vegetable mimosa resembles a fried turnover with potato and peas filling.

A vegetarian favorite, saag paneer sacraaneer dunks homemade cottage cheese-like cubes in spinach sauce and herbs.

Besting fish and chips for the national dish of the United Kingdom, chicken tikka masala is the most popular entrée, consisting of cubes of tandoori chicken breast cooked and served in a tomato and coriander sauce.

When the Berrys moved to Cherry Hill in 2010, not even a \$5 bridge toll could keep them from such favorite entrées as chicken korma and baingan bharta, an eggplant dish.

And this commute was just for takeout.

“We cross the bridge many times just to go there,” says Berry, a software engineer. “... With young kids, it’s so much easier to eat at home.”

Berry reasons certain dishes are hard to find at other eateries, such as the elusive appetizer aloo papri chaat, or lentil wafers topped with potatoes, chick peas, yogurt and chutney.

“They have items on the menu that you can’t get anywhere else,” says Berry, who has ordered takeout at the Voorhees location already. “I don’t know anywhere else you can get that in the city.”

A small menu, Narula says, allows for freshness and better execution.

“If you look at any fine restaurant, they have a small menu,” Narusa says. “I dare you to find a four-star restaurant that has 15-page menu. I think they understand by having fewer menu items you’re controlling the quality of the product, you’re controlling the freshness of the product.”

Evident of the open kitchens at nearly every Tiffin location, including Voorhees and Cherry Hill, Narusa finds complete transparency necessary to quell the fears some have about Indian food.

“I think we’re really proud of our food,” he says of Indian-Americans. “Before it wasn’t presented in a good manner.”

Food that travels

As an undergrad studying hotel management more than 20 years ago, the New Delhi native recalls driving a half hour to the nearest Indian restaurant.

And once he found it, he didn’t necessarily like it.

“At the end of the day, I truly believe people only remember what they ate at the restaurant,” he says. “They forget everything else. Was my service good? Was my dish good? Not ‘I will try item 577 on the menu next time.’”

Great tasting food translates everywhere.

Narula says he is looking at Delaware and west Pennsylvania as potential future Tiffin locations. Then again, he might take his chain to Kazakhstan.

During a month-long seminar at the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton Business School, Narusa turned many senior-level executives onto Tiffin, including an entrepreneur from Kazakhstan.

“He reached out to me and said ‘I love it, I love it. You should do this over there, we have nothing,’” he says, “and he was so insistent and he kept enlightening

me.”

And?

“I ended up taking a trip to Kazakhstan,” he says with a grin.

Even the home of “Borat” beats a dry storage area.

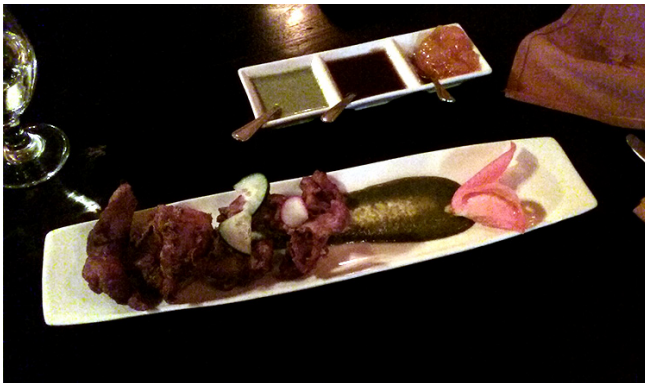


bluejeanfood.com

Tiffin – Cherry Hill, NJ

Posted on August 9, 2016 by Bluejeanfood

I find that great service goes a long way. Great service and good food go even further. I enjoy dining with my wife and three-year-old son. Some establishments I can see the hostess, server, or owner cringe when they see a toddler walk through the door. Others such as Tiffin embrace it. The staff at Tiffin was not only impressed with my son's palate, they treated him like family and made sure he enjoyed himself and felt right at home. That alone would make me want to go to Tiffin again, but thankfully Tiffin served up some pretty good food as well.



I would be served fish kali mirch which was tilapia marinated with crushed black pepper and fried, garlic naan, and lamb roganjosh which was cubes of lamb leg cooked with spinach, spices, and herbs. Tiffin's food was not the best Indian food in the area, but they held their own, were very affordable, and were the first Indian restaurant that embraced a family dining atmosphere that I have dined at. A decent meal that the whole family can enjoy is hard to come by, and I commend Tiffin for being able to deliver.

philly.com

Tiffin celebrates its eighth anniversary with eight days of deals



Starting on Friday, Jan. 9 through Friday, Jan. 16, the number eight gets really lucky. Not lucky as in you came up with a good reading on your magic eight ball, but lucky as in it's Tiffin restaurant's eight-year anniversary. In honor of the Indian eatery's eight-year anniversary, all eight locations in Philadelphia and its surrounding regions will offer all entrées for ... yep, you guessed it, \$8. Did I say eight enough? I think so.

Here are the dates of the \$8 deal being offered at each specific restaurant. Limit eight entrées per order.

Friday, Jan. 9 Tiffin in Northern Liberties (710 W. Girard Ave.)

Saturday, Jan. 10 Tiffin in Bryn Mawr (847 Lancaster Ave.)

Sunday, Jan. 11 Tiffin in South Philadelphia (1100 Federal S.)

Monday, Jan. 12 Tiffin in Elkins Park (8080 Old York Rd.)

Tuesday, Jan. 13 Tiffin in Mount Airy (7105 Emlen St.)

Wednesday, Jan. 14 Tiffin in Cherry Hill, NJ (1892 Marlton Pike East.)

Thursday, Jan. 15 Tiffin in Wynnewood (50 E. Wynnewood Rd.)

Friday, Jan. 16 Tiffin in the Echo Shoppes in Voorhees, NJ (200-300 White Horse Rd.)

EATER

PHILADELPHIA

Philly's Popular Indian Restaurant Chain Is Ready for National Expansion

First up, King of Prussia and Plymouth Meeting

by **Alex Tewfik** Nov 16, 2016, 12:34pm EST



Wall Street-investment-banker-turned-restaurateur Munish Narula is the man behind Tiffin Indian Cuisine, a local Indian restaurant chain with five locations in the Philly-area and three across the bridge in New Jersey. Now, he's ready for his brand to go national.

Two days ago, **Foobooz** reported that Narula's first franchise restaurant — from long-time Tiffin employee **Rajesh Byanjankar** — will open in one of the hottest

restaurant towns of 2016: **King of Prussia**, specifically at the **Valley Forge Plaza Shopping Center**. Today, Eater learns that Plymouth Meeting is up next—the exact location hasn't been solidified just yet.

Why franchise? It's clearly in the company's DNA:

In 2010, Sysco Corporation named Tiffin "**America's Next Top Restaurant Franchise**" with a \$100,000 reward, so that makes sense.

Two popular Indian restaurants in Philadelphia, **IndeBlue** and **Ekta**, were born of Tiffin origins. "We started to see a pattern several years ago as former Tiffin employees would open their own restaurants. It occurred to me I'd rather turn my employees into partners instead of competitors," said Narula.

To ready his empire for the aggressive expansion, Narula's implementing a company-wide upgrade to its ordering technology and delivery scheduling protocols to reduce wait times for customers. Also on deck: Tiffin-branded materials, like customized takeout containers, bags, and uniforms.

Opening date for KOP is sometime in 2017. As for Plymouth Meeting, check back for updates.

PHILADELPHIA BUSINESS JOURNAL

Tiffin Indian restaurant scouting franchise locations, planning mobile app rollout



Kenneth Hilario

Reporter Philadelphia Business Journal

Jul 14, 2016, 2:52pm EDT Updated Jul 14, 2016, 2:55pm EDT

A local Indian restaurant chain has been implementing new technology to streamline operations and better service customers, and there are plans for more, including a dedicated mobile app – all while it is currently under expansion.

Tiffin, which first opened in 2007 in Northern Liberties, has grown to nine locations throughout the Philadelphia region, with more on the way after owner and CEO Munish Narula decided to franchise.

Local Indian-cuisine restaurant Tiffin will be exploring and implementing new technology.

TIFFIN FACEBOOK PAGE

The first franchised location is targeted to open sometime this year. The company and the franchisee have already agreed on the terms, and locations are being scouted, including areas on the Main Line.

The plan is to grow “close to home” first, Narula said.

The Wharton School MBA grad last September closed his Tashan Restaurant & Lounge after four years in operation in order to focus on Tiffin’s growth.

It’s a business decision,” Narula said last year after opening three Tiffin locations in New Jersey. “We have increased the Tiffin business significantly. ... That is clearly our path to regional, national and even international growth.”

Narula now plans to re-introduce Tiffin as a restaurant concept driven by multiple categories, including technology.

Streamlining business

The food-delivery business makes up 65 percent of sales in some Tiffin locations, and Narula found the traditional point-of-sales technology, or POS, was causing disruptions and delays.

Now the company is running on a new Cloud-based POS system that doesn’t require proprietary hardware, giving Narula and store managers the ability to watch the progress of every order in every restaurant in real time, including walk-in orders, carry-out and delivery.

When a customer places a delivery order online, the information goes directly to the kitchen of a specific Tiffin restaurant based on the origin of the order, which the software automatically determines.

“From a business function cost standpoint, this system is revolutionary, literally giving us the capability of running our entire POS system with thousands of orders a week on the most basic PCs or even standard tablet devices and smartphones,” Narula said.

To handle the growing phone orders, the company is building a call center in the former upstairs dining room in Northern Liberties. It’s slated to open in September.

Once it’s open, all phone orders from the Tiffin restaurants will be handled by call center associates, allowing the restaurant staff at each individual location to focus on food production and eat-in service priorities, Narula said.

Mobile app & rewards program

The restaurant group has the goal of “bringing people together with tech,”

Narula said, so the company is also developing a mobile app for Android and Apple customers.

Instead of just including the menu and contact information, Tiffin’s app will include the ability to place orders; track your delivery driver — think of it like Uber’s tracking system; and a yield management-type of function for the restaurant in which users will get notifications on their phones when sales are taking place, including when it’s raining outside, to get them through the doors.

An exact launch date has not been set, but Narula said the app could launch by the end of August.

Tiffin’s rewards program, which launched less than two months ago, has already been a proven revenue driver for the restaurant concept, which saw a 14.5-percent, year-over-year revenue increase since it launched.

The rewards program works like a cash-back program. Among other ways to get money back, customers can get 10 percent back when they place an order on the Tiffin website.

The company will eventually roll out the rewards program for walk-in and dine-in guests.

Technology side, Narula said the goal is to create a company based on value since customers expect to get value when they enter a food-and-beverage establishment, Narula said.

The technology will be a way to help enhance the company's value. Conshohocken, Pennsylvania-based Saladworks is also exploring new technology to bring into its stores and operations, including the possibility of adding touchscreen kiosks.

Kenneth Hilario covers hospitality, restaurants and takes on general assignments and breaking news.

Tiffin hits the big time

Opinion

ARTHUR
ETCHELLS

ARTHUR ETCHELLS

Published: November 10, 2010 9:48 p.m.

Last modified: November 10, 2010 9:52 p.m.

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Print article

Text size

When Munish Narula opened his first **Tiffin**, did any of us think we were witnessing the birth of an empire?

The Wharton-educated restaurateur opened his first outpost on the outskirts of Northern Liberties in late 2006, to the excitement of some food nerds (you know a few: always looking for that next food trend, critiquing and bemoaning the lack of whatever authentic cuisine they are grouching about that day).

Those first devotees found Tiffin and became fans — big fans. From that storefront on a lonely stretch of Girard, Tiffin delivered authentic Southern Indian staples to an increasing number of Philadelphians who found that they were, suddenly, always craving Indian food. The store's delivery zone expanded, and more of the city began getting dinner delivered by well-dressed Indian men.

Today, there are five Tiffin locations scattered across Mt. Airy, Elkins Park, Wynnewood and Bryn Mawr. And now comes word that Tiffin has been selected from 170 concepts as "America's Next Top Restaurant Franchise" in a contest sponsored by SYSCO and The Franchise Edge. As part of the honor, they'll receive \$100,000 in development services.

Could that mean we will see a Tiffin on every corner as Indian truly becomes the next Chinese, accepted into American cuisine and culture? More and more, we're hearing exactly that, and with the success of Tiffin, why would you believe differently?

-Arthur Etchells is a local food blogger. Read more at www.foobooz.com.

Metro does not endorse the opinions of the author, or any opinions expressed on its pages.



METRO FILE FOLDER

Munish Narula's mysterious new restaurant is coming soon to 777 S. Broad Street.

More about food

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- ▶ WHY Krispy Kreme? WHY?
- ▶ New eats for the new year
- ▶ Your new eating game plan

Not just takeout

It isn't just Tiffin that Munish Narula is creating. He recently held an open house at **777 S. Broad Street** where he will be opening a new, higher-end Indian restaurant complete with a liquor license and lounge. The space is still just a concrete shell for now and the restaurant doesn't have a name yet. It does have a chef, but Narula isn't divulging that either. What we can tell you: The renderings do show an exciting space with an open kitchen and seats for more than 100.



November 10, 2010

Tiffin hits the big time

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–Arthur Etchells is a local food blogger.

Philadelphia

RESTAURANTS

foobooz

Where to Eat Indian Food in Philadelphia: The Ultimate Guide

From traditional snack spots to modern fusion dining to comforting buffets, here are the best Indian restaurants the region has to offer.

by **JASON SHEEHAN**

The Indian Restaurants You Must Try First

Tiffin, Multiple locations

One of Philly's OG Indian operations, Tiffin has had an interesting growth curve. It started as a web-only delivery service (hence the name) long before Doordash and Postmates. Tiffin evolved into what founder Munish Narula calls a "multi-platform restaurant," offering dine-in, take-out, delivery, and a variety of spin-off operations like the high-end Indo-French Tashan (RIP) and Tiffin Bistro, which basically takes the Tiffin formula and adds a bar. With 10 locations on both sides of the Delaware, it remains one of the most accessible entry points for folks getting their first taste of Indian food – and a dependable standby for when you just want some saag and chicken korma on a Tuesday night.

PHILLY HOTLIST

BEST INDIAN
FOUR YEARS IN A ROW!

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Let's Do Lunch: Tiffin

Sometimes your favorite food goes beyond great taste. A special dish can remind you of a special someone or can connect you culturally. In this week's edition of "Let's Do Lunch," Aditi takes us somewhere that does both. (Published Tuesday, Feb 1, 2011 | Credit: NBCPhiladelphia, Aditi Roy)







Local Indian Restaurant Chain to Open 1st Franchised Spot in KoP

By Kenneth Hilario | Philadelphia Business Journal

Published Nov 17, 2016 at 7:56 PM



The first franchised location of a local Indian restaurant chain will open in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, an area that lately has seen a surge of new restaurants, both local and national.

Tiffin, which first opened in 2007 in Northern Liberties, has grown to nine locations throughout the Philadelphia region, and additional locations were always in the books after owner and CEO Munish Narula decided to franchise.

Narula had been scouting locations for a few months now, with the first location slated to open early next year at the Valley Forge Plaza Shopping Center. The restaurant will be led by franchisee Rajesh Byanjankar, a 9-year veteran of Tiffin and one of the company's first employees.

"We started to see a pattern several years ago as former Tiffin employees would

open their own restaurants. It occurred to me I'd rather turn my employees into partners instead of competitors," Narula said. "The experience Rajesh brings to the first Tiffin franchise is enormously valuable and helps assure its success."

Wharton School MBA grad Narula closed his Tashan Restaurant & Lounge last September after four years in operation to focus on Tiffin's growth. It's no surprise Narula decided to expand in the Philadelphia region first; he told the Philadelphia Business Journal earlier this year that the plan was to grow "close to home" first before tackling other markets.

To prepare for regional and eventual national expansion, Narula over the past year upgraded Tiffin's ordering technology and delivery scheduling protocols to reduce wait times. New branded materials will also be introduced, including customized takeout containers, bags and staff uniforms.

King of Prussia has become a hotbed for a number of restaurant concepts, including ones at the King of Prussia Town Center and the King of Prussia Mall. The past year has seen the openings of both national restaurant chains and those based in the Philadelphia region.

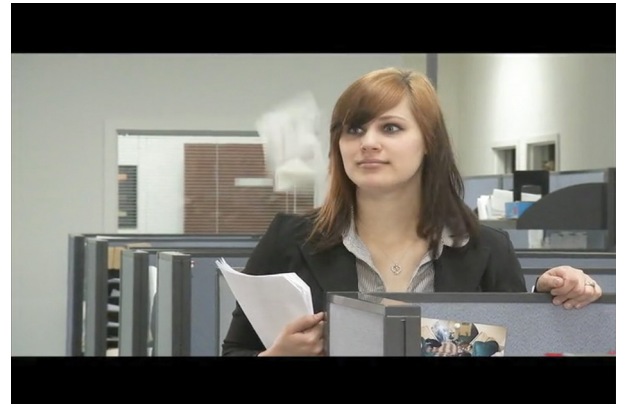
"Restaurants are a serious growth industry these days, both in the city and in the surrounding suburbs," said Eric Goldstein, executive director of King of Prussia District. "King of Prussia, in particular, is experiencing an exciting surge of new restaurants and so many of them are unique concepts, first-to-market locations."

Watch List: Foods

The Watch List identifies products, services and companies emanating from the Wharton community that are worthy of your attention. In this case: food-related brands and companies.



Now with five locations, Tiffin restaurants have made former banker Munish Narula WG01 an empire builder, thanks to traditional Mumbai cuisine and Internet ordering.'



The Inquirer

DAILY NEWS philly.com

PhillyDeals: Ex-banker finds success in Indian restaurant chain

Posted: November 10, 2010 - 3:01 AM

By Joseph N. DiStefano, Inquirer Staff Writer



AKIRA SUWA / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Jay Shah and other members of his family are positioning Hersha Hospitality Trust to capitalize on what they see as a coming economic recovery.

Munish Narula took his Wharton MBA to work on Wall Street. Didn't last, he said: "I was an investment banker for a couple of years, at Credit Suisse First Boston. A lot of money. No fun."

So the New Delhi native went into the food business. Narula earned modest local fame over the last four years as he built his Indian lunch take-out idea,

Tiffin (an Indian-English word for lunch, also take-out trays), into a mini-chain of Philadelphia-area restaurants (top seller: Chicken Tikka Masala, in creamy tomato gravy, \$12).

Indian food has penetrated corporate Philadelphia “thanks to the Sidhus and Guptas who have exposed people to the food,” says Narula. He means local bosses like Jay Sidhu, head of Customers Bank and formerly of Sovereign Bank, and Raj Gupta, head of chemical-maker Avantor Performance Materials Holdings, and formerly of Rohm & Haas.

How did Narula raise money for new sites in this economic slump? “We have no [outside] investors,” he told me. “Valley Green Bank has been our partner.”

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Narula met Valley Green founder Jay Goldstein at City Hall last year when the Merchants Fund and the city gave Tiffin \$50,000 to fix up the storefront of its second restaurant, on Girard Avenue.

“Larger banks were very reluctant to lend. So we moved our banking relationships from PNC and Wachovia to Valley Green,” Narula said. “They were more than willing to work with us.”

Now Narula is preparing a larger dinner restaurant for developer Carl Dranoff’s 777 South Broad Street apartments. “Carl is a visionary,” Narula said. “He says we have to do something big.”

Narula just won a contest sponsored by food supplier Sysco Corp., beating 170 competing restaurants for the title “America’s Next Top Restaurant Franchise,” plus legal and advisory services to expand.

And he’s thinking bigger still. He’s been watching South Philly sandwich shop Tony Luke’s add new stores, from the Jersey Shore to the Arab island nation of Bahrain, by partnering with Swedesboro-based, mass-market butcher and side-dish specialist Rastelli Bros.

Narula says he's started talks with potential partners to take Tiffin and its Indian lunches global.

Room service

Members of the Shah family, who run Hersha Hospitality Trust, are betting big on the economic recovery.

The family arranged Tuesday to borrow up to \$250 million from TD Bank and other lenders - almost double their old \$135 million credit facility. The Shahs raised more by selling five hotels in upstate Pennsylvania, western New England, and other slow-growth markets.

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Hersha will use the cash to buy more hotels around New York, Philadelphia, Boston and Washington, says chief executive Jay H. Shah.

Founder and chairman Hasu P. Shah remains in Hersha's old Harrisburg headquarters. But his Ivy League-educated sons, CEO Jay and president Neil H. Shah, now work from the Penn Mutual tower in Philadelphia's historic district, closer to the company's East Coast growth markets.

The Shahs opened their newest hotel Tuesday, a \$150-a-night HyattPlace, on the renovated King of Prussia site where they formerly ran a \$120-a-night Mainstay Suites.

"We have taken a bet on the recovery," Jay Shah told me. "We're relying on the corporate transient traveler in the Northeast markets. You've got the recovery in financial services. You're starting to see signs of life in the pharma industry."

Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia President Patrick Harker provides positive... The Shahs say they called the bottom of the market in 2008, when Hersha bought New York's Tribeca Hilton Garden Inn for a price that works out to \$400 a room; recent Manhattan deals, Jay says, have boosted prices back to \$500, raising Hersha's value.

At around \$6 a share, Hersha stock remains down at the same price it fetched in the early 2000s. But it is up 132 percent for the year, compared with 39 percent for other real estate investment trusts, and 46 percent for other hotel REITs, according to Bloomberg LP. It kept paying a steady dividend through the downturn.

Contact Joseph N. DiStefano at 215-854-5194 or JoeD@phillynews.com.

Posted: November 10, 2010 - 3:01 AM

By Joseph N. DiStefano, Inquirer Staff Writer



Tiffin owner planning new Indian spot for South Philly

by Albert Stumm on April 2, 2013

Munish Narula, whose seven-restaurant empire dominates the Indian scene in Philly, is planning a Tiffin Bistro for South Philly, Foobooz reports.

After a series of profitable quarters for Tashan, Munish Narula is getting back to opening restaurants. His next restaurant will not be a Tiffin or a Tashan, but rather a Tiffin Bistro, slated for South Philadelphia. Narula declined to reveal the exact location until the lease was signed but did fill us in on several other details.

One confident-sounding commenter suggested that it would be going into the former Kris, which we just told you this morning that it was closing after a year and a half at 11th and Federal streets.

We've been hearing a rumor about an Indian restaurant in South Philly for two months, though the rumbling was that it would be further south than Kris. We obviously weren't been able to confirm that.

One thing that lends some credibility to the 11th Street location is that Narula said he planned to sign a lease this week and open in six weeks. That means wherever he moves into would need to be built already. He also plans a liquor license, and Kris does have a bar set up.

Foobooz also noted that Tiffin Bistro would have a more upscale feel than his other Tiffins, though not as fancy as Tashan. "Upscale" would also seem that 11th and

Federal is more likely than what we heard.

No matter where it is, this is pretty exciting. Our mouths are watering already.

UPDATE: The Insider confirms that Tiffin Bistro will be in the former Kris at 11th and Federal. Michael Klein says Tashan's David Costanzo will handle the booze and chef Kirti Pant, formerly of Junoon in New York, Amber India in San Francisco, and Cinnamon Club in London, will handle the food. Insider also got a sample menu.

Apps:

Cauliflower Bezule: Stir fried cauliflower florets, coconut cream, mustard seeds and curry leaves

Egg Plant Chaat: Crispy sliced baby eggplant with yogurt, tamarind, red onions and chaat masala

Noorani Kabab: Two layered kabab, mince lamb and chicken; green chili and fresh cilantro

Gunpowder Scallops: Pan seared with spicy south Indian gunpowder masala

Lasooni Calamari: Calamari in chili garlic sauce

Main

Chicken Telicherry Pepper: Chicken breast cubes in "Tellicherry" peppercorn sauce

Lal Maas: Chunks of lamb in hot yogurt sauce; flavored with cardamom and dry red chili

Bagarey Baingan: Baby eggplant simmered in a peanut sauce; enhanced with coconut, curry leaves and tamarind

Lamb Kolhapuri: Lamb in a spicy green chili based sauce, roasted coconut, star anise and white poppy seeds

Murg Lababdar: Sliced tandoori chicken in a tomato onion sauce flavored with fenugreek and ginger.

New Jersey

MONTHLY

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Tiffin

A Philly-based chain of casual restaurants serving Indian food that can be surprisingly good. The vegetarian dishes at the Cherry Hill location get the thumbs up.

By Adam Erace | July 23, 2015

Munish Narula, the New Delhi-born entrepreneur (and Wharton MBA) behind Tiffin, the Philly-based chain of casual Indian eateries, opened his first Jersey Tiffin in Voorhees last year. Business was good, so he did what he's done since opening the first Tiffin in Philadelphia in 2006—asked his customers (in this case, the Jersey ones) where he should open the next Tiffin. Cherry Hill got the most nods.

The 30-seater with persimmon walls and parquet-tile floors opened in December. One night, top-40 tunes played intermittently, punctuated by screams from a (horror?) movie some of the staff were watching behind the counter. Despite the distraction, I was drawn to the display behind the counter—tubs of cinnamon, cardamom, mace and other spices that give Tiffin's cuisine its layers of flavor.

Chef Ashok Budhamagar, originally from Nepal, ably executes the chain's classic menu. "Instead of offering everything under the sun, like many [other Indian restaurants in America]," Narula explained, "we keep the menu small and focus on quality." Budhamagar cooks each sauce separately, and in them I could detect the glimmer of individual spices: cardamom in the lush cashew Korma, fragrant curry leaves in the coconut-based Chettinad. Cubes of lamb or chicken appeared in various curries, each tender and moist, not always the case in these long-braised dishes.

Traditional bone-in tandoori chicken was moist under its appealing char. Juicy

cubes of lasooni chicken breast, smoky from the tandoor, had a most delicious tang, thanks to its garlic-yogurt marinade.

Deep-fried nuggets of chili chicken, however, were spongy, and their glaze insipidly sweet. The shrimp in a peppery Kerala-style curry were overcooked, but its fantastic, roasted red chili sauce, simmered with curry leaves and mustard seed, almost compensated for that error.

Tiffin's menu is strong in vegetarian dishes. I loved the heat in the chana masala, a bowl of creamy garbanzo beans stewed with tomato, onion and pomegranate seeds. Cubes of firm, white paneer cheese in the paneer butter masala glistened in a creamy red masala sauce. In the eggplant chaat, fried coins of sweet baby eggplant—smothered like nachos with tamarind chutney, yogurt and chopped, raw red onion—contributed to a vivid variation on papri chaat, a favorite Indian snack. When the eggplant was gone, I dragged strips of potent garlic naan, a soft flatbread (\$4 a basket), through the splatters and swirls of sauce.

Tiffin's other soft flatbreads include a terrific chili naan with a heat that slowly builds as you chew; cheese kulcha, a flatbread stuffed with gruyere, mozzarella, garlic and onion seed; and the subtly sweet peshawari naan, filled with crushed pistachios, cashews, almonds and coconut. This made a way better dessert than the treacly orange rice pudding.

When not watching movies, the staff was genial, but waiting on tables seemed less a priority than filling take-out orders. If service and atmosphere are what you're after, other Indian restaurants do it better. For (mostly) commendable cooking at an affordable price, Tiffin is tops.

MUNISH NARULA: AN EMPIRE IN THE MAKING

POSTED IN [RESTAURANTEU OF THE MONTH](#)



One look at Munish Narula's empire of Philly restaurants and it's clear why we chose him as the January "Restaurateur of the Month". With a vision for restaurants that serves him well all on its own, Munish's success is additionally backed by a strong business background. He formerly worked as an Investment Banker and has a Bachelor of Science in Hotel Restaurant Management, an MS in Hospitality Administration from Johnson & Wales University, and an MBA in Finance from Wharton. Although he originally got his start in the food business at a chain restaurant, Munish eventually went on to found the acclaimed Karma restaurant in Philadelphia. Shortly afterwards, he realized the demand for fresh, nutritious Indian food at affordable prices and decided to launch Tiffin.com.



“Our focus is on expanding the Tiffin brand and making it a regional chain.”

While Tiffin started as an online delivery only concept run out of a small store front, it quickly evolved into a multi-functioning restaurant taking Online orders, and offering delivery and carry-out. Based on the success of the initial store, Munish has since opened several other locations around Philadelphia. His most recent venture is Tashan, a beautiful 5,000 square foot restaurant serving sophisticated Indian small plates. When we asked Munish what inspired him to apply

the tapas concept to Indian cuisine, he said, “Small plates allows people to try many more menu items than they would otherwise. It works especially well for people who are trying Indian food for the first time and we try to send a constant flow of food to the table so they can enjoy the experience as much as the tastes.” In an effort to stay innovative and on top of trends in the restaurant industry, Munish regularly visits restaurants around the country to look for inspiration and new ideas. It’s his commitment to upholding high standards, attention to detail, and consistent execution that keeps customers raving about his establishments and coming back time and again.

As far as plans for the future, Munish is focused on expanding the Tiffin brand to make it a regional chain over the next few years. By offering quality Indian food and creative dishes that often appeal to mainstream Americans, he’s certainly proving that Indian cooking isn’t just about curries and spices. So what is his favorite thing about being a restaurant owner? “Meeting new people every day. Tashan gets a steady flow of celebrities and it’s always exciting to meet them. I also love the idea of creating a culinary brand that will hopefully become a widely recognized chain one day.”

With his stellar track record to date, he certainly seems on the right path to making his culinary dreams come true.





What's Cooking on 1060: Indian Cuisine, Football Food and Thai Tacos



By Hadas Kuznits

PHILADELPHIA (CBS) — Three new Tiffin Restaurants will be opening in New Jersey beginning in September.

Munish Narula, owner of the Narula Restaurant Group, says their new locations — something carefully selected — include Cherry Hill, Voorhees and East Hanover.

“It’s more the education, travel — so we look at the demographics in a slightly different manner. We also look at the breakdown of age. We find that younger people are more likely to eat and be adventurous or if they have never tried it before be more likely to say, ‘Okay, let’s go there’s a new indian restaurant let’s go try it; or another new ethnic restaurant let’s go try it.’”

Lincoln Financial Field renovates its club level, adding new restaurants and offerings just in time for football season.

Gabriel Montalvo, Aramark sous chef and concessions executive at the Linc, says among the many new options, they're adding a Pizzeria Vetri to the mix:

Gabriel Montalvo, Aramark sous chef and concessions executive at Lincoln Financial Field. (Credit: Hadas Kuznits)

Gabriel Montalvo, Aramark sous chef and concessions executive at Lincoln Finan-

cial Field at the new Pizzeria Vetri. (Credit: Hadas Kuznits)



“We’re doing the margharita taglio-style pizza. We’re also doing the salchicha-style pizza. We’re also featuring their rotolo. It’s almost like and inverted stromboli all baked in our new wood-fire oven.

And a new taqueria opens on South Street in September, melding together Thai and Mexican cuisines.

Chef Alex Boonphaya and a partner are set to open Tuk Tuk Real at 429 South Street mid-month:

“We’re gonna be using a lot of thai-based ingredients – lemongrass, basil, thai chilies, galanga, a lot of herbs. Since Mexican food has a lot of flavors that we use such as salt and lime it blends very well.”



And for this week, that’s “What’s Cooking on 1060!”

The Daily Journal

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK



Inside the box

Steve Wood, Courier-Post Published 8:59 a.m. ET Oct. 27, 2014

Nearly eight years ago, Wharton graduate Munish Narula eyed a small unit on a sketchy stretch of Philadelphia's Fishtown district as the perfect first spot to debut his fresh business concept:

An Indian eatery no one would eat in.

Narula hatched tiffin.com, a restaurant designed to offer only web ordering and delivery, in "not one of the prettiest areas" partly "because we thought nobody would ever come to us so it didn't matter. We would go to them."

But even the plans of Wharton Business School graduates don't always work out exactly as envisioned.

"It was a huge success right out of the gate," Narula says, "but people kept calling me and asking me, 'Well why can't I just pick it up?'"

When Narula offered carryout at the storefront, customers wanted dining. When he converted the dry storage area into a 10-seat dining room, customers formed lines out the door, demanding more seating.

After he bought the second floor of his building for extra dining space, out-of-town customers would tell Narula, “Why don’t you do something here? We have nothing here.”

The reluctant restaurateur brought five more Tiffin bistros to Pennsylvania, as well as the glitzier French-Indian restaurant Tashan to Philadelphia, racking up awards along the way, before answering a familiar plea across the bridge.

“South Jersey people have been asking for it because a lot of them go to our Philadelphia restaurants,” he says. “I know a bunch of people who pick up food from there and bring it here. It was a request that was made of us several times.”

As the 43-year-old has learned, the customer is always right.

After opening a Tiffin in Voorhees in September, Narula is set to deliver restaurants in Cherry Hill later this month and in East Hanover in November. With Thursday being Diwali, the festival of lights, he knows the timing for an Indian celebration couldn’t be better.

“The market is more mature now and is more accepting of ethnic food,” he says. “South Jersey has a huge (Indian) population compared to Philadelphia.”

New Delhi to New Jersey

Initially known for an e-commerce model predating the likes of Domino’s and Papa John’s, Tiffin capitalizes on the fact that many South Jersey eateries don’t offer delivery.

Narula can only hope his food carriers can be as efficient as the dabbawallahs of India, who reportedly pick up and transport more than 350,000 tiffins – or containers of home-cooked meals – to office workers each workday.

“It’s a spread-out market, which actually makes it better for our delivery,” he says. “We don’t have to deal with the traffic issues that we experienced in Philly, so it’s a catch-22: it’s a little more spread out, so the density is not there on Federal Street, Girard (Avenue) or Mount Airy, but also from a delivery perspective, a lot of our places don’t have parking.”

Tiffin isn't news to those who are accustomed to seeking it out.

Cherry Hill couple Mike and Mimi Berry, for instance, dined at the original location in 2008 while living in Philadelphia.

"There was a lot of excitement about Tiffin," recalls Mike Berry, 39. "We always thought it was the best Indian food in the city."

Narula knows Indian options in this region aren't as rare as before. In fact, from Indiya to Indebblue to Coriander, discerning South Jersey diners have very worthy options without crossing the river.

He welcomes the extra competition.

"I do not worry about Indian restaurants opening up," Narula says. "I worry about crappy Indian restaurants opening up because they kill the market."

Narula champions the success of other Indian restaurants as both fan and businessman, knowing the average person rarely gives niche foods second chances.

"If you've never had Indian food and you go to a bad restaurant — and this is for any food — you'll come out and say 'I don't like Japanese food,'" he says. "You never say 'Maybe this restaurant was just bad.' More Indian restaurants are not a problem. The pie is huge."

The pie is especially large in Voorhees, where Bombay Local Pizza serves Indian-inspired pizzas such as their signature samosa pizza pie.

"More than anything else, I think Voorhees is very, very cosmopolitan," says Parg Poonawala, a 29-year-old Marlton resident who co-owns the Voorhees pizzeria with his older brother Sagar. "South Jerseyans like to try new things; people are interested to try new things."

Since opening in December 2012, Bombay Local Pizza has piqued the interest and curiosity of South Jersey and Yelp! reviewers by infusing Indian and Italian ingredients, a practice the brothers picked up in Bombay while working for a

venture capital fund.

“I didn’t see why it couldn’t work out here,” says Parg, a graduate from the University of Pennsylvania. “... There’s a very large Indian population in New Jersey that continues to grow. I’ve lived in South Jersey for four years, and I didn’t know why there was a lack of Indian food. That’s no longer the case. There’s a lot of different options, which is nice.”

Most of its pies possess a zesty blend of Indian spices and herbs, in addition to traditional tomato sauce and mozzarella. The combination appeals to a mixed audience.

“Fifty percent have had Indian food and they know what they’re looking for, and the other half are people who have a high level of curiosity to see what it is,” Parg says.

Tiffin also will compete with Indeblue, whose chef-owner Rakesh Ramola left the original Tiffin to open the popular Collingswood restaurant in 2009.

Like Narula, Ramola has followed customers over the bridge, expanding his Indeblue into Center City in 2013. On this side of the river, Indeblue has added live music and brunch.

It’s hard to oversaturate the market when there are many subsets of Indian food to explore, Narula says.

“When people say Indian cuisine, it actually consists of so many different regional cuisines,” he says. “Our menu is more North Indian than anything else. People in Western India, it’s a totally different food. Southern part of India, it’s a totally different food.”

Inspirations

Before banking on his native cuisine, the Wharton MBA worked Wall Street as a Credit Suisse investment banker.

“I think my motivation was all wrong,” he admits. “I think I went there because I

wanted to get rich quickly.”

He chuckles, “That didn’t quite work out.”

Aside from souring on his job, experiencing 9/11 while in a Manhattan Marriott spurred Narula, his wife and their baby boy to check out from New York City for good.

“Then I decided it just wasn’t for me,” he says. “It’s time to do something else.”

Narula leaves the door open for the right employee to become a future franchisee.

Tiffin beat out 170 candidates across the country in 2010 to be named “America’s Next Top Restaurant Franchise,” a contest co-sponsored by Sysco Corp.

Though the nation’s top food service provider will cover the costs associated with franchising Tiffin, valued at \$100,000, Narula says the brand is not yet ready for such an undertaking.

“We have not done a franchise yet because we do not feel confident and comfortable,” he says. “We feel like we need to grow organically a little bit more and build a bigger corporate team in order to support a franchise.”

Fresh takes

Narula takes a similar conservative approach to Tiffin’s dining menu, keeping it small, stocked with standards and the items spicy only if requested.

Appetizer vegetable samosa resembles a fried turnover with potato and peas filling.

A vegetarian favorite, saag paneer dunks homemade cottage cheese-like cubes in spinach sauce and herbs.

Besting fish and chips for the national dish of the United Kingdom, chicken tikka masala is the most popular entree, consisting of cubes of tandoori chicken

breast cooked and served in a tomato coriander sauce.

When the Berrys moved to Cherry Hill in 2010, not even a \$5 bridge toll could keep them from favorite entrees such as chicken korma and baingan bharta, an eggplant dish. And this commute was just for takeout.

“We cross the bridge many times just to go there,” says Berry, a software engineer. “...With young kids, it’s so much easier to eat at home.”

A small menu, Narusa says, allows for freshness and better execution.

“If you look at any fine restaurant, they have a small menu,” Narusa says. “I dare you to find a four-star restaurant that has 15-page menu. I think they understand by having fewer menu items you’re controlling the quality of the product, you’re controlling the freshness of the product.”

Food that travels

Narusa says he is looking at Delaware and west Pennsylvania as potential future Tiffin locations.

Then again, he might take his chain to Kazakhstan.

During a monthlong seminar at the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton Business School, Narusa turned many senior-level executives onto Tiffin, including an entrepreneur who came from Kazakhstan.

“He reached out to me and said ‘I love it, I love it. You should do this over there; we have nothing,’” he says, “and he was so insistent, and he kept enlightening me.”

And?

“I ended up taking a trip to Kazakhstan,” he says with a grin.

Reach Steve Wood at (856) 486-2474 or at stewood@gannett.com. Follow him on Twitter @CP_SteveWood

Tiffin (new locations): 300 White Horse Road, Voorhees. Call (856) 888-2775; 1892 Route 70, Cherry Hill. Call (856)888-1155. Visit tiffin.com

Aloo Gobi

Servings: 4

2 large potatoes (about 2 cups), scrubbed, peeled and cut into ½ inch cubes
2 tablespoons olive/vegetable oil
1 medium cauliflower (about 3 to 4 cups), cut into medium sized florets
1 large onion, finely chopped
1 teaspoon ginger-garlic paste
2 cup chopped tomatoes
½ teaspoon cumin seeds
½ teaspoon turmeric
2 tablespoons coriander
½ teaspoon garam masala
½ teaspoon paprika
½ teaspoon dry mango powder

Salt to taste

Chopped cilantro for garnish

Heat oil in a medium pan.

Add cumin seeds and allow to sputter on medium to low heat.

Add turmeric powder and chopped onion; mix well and sauté for 3 to 4 minutes.

Add ginger-garlic paste, mix and sauté until oil starts to separate from the onions while stirring frequently.

Add tomatoes, mix and cook until oil again separates from the mixture while stirring frequently.

Once oil has separated from the tomato mixture add coriander, garam masala, paprika, dry mango powder and salt – mix well.

Add potatoes, mix well to coat all potatoes, cover and cook for 20 minutes.

Add cauliflower and mix well to evenly coat the cauliflower – cover and cook

until all veggies are tender but not mushy and falling apart.

Garnish the dish with chopped cilantro before serving.

Recipe provided by Tiffin restaurant.

Dhaba Chicken

Servings: 4

1 pound of chicken
4 tablespoons olive/vegetable oil
1 to 2 dried bay leaves
1 to 2 cinnamon sticks
1 cup chopped onions
2 cup chopped tomatoes
¼ cup lemon juice
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon black pepper
1 to 2 garlic cloves
1- to 2-inch piece ginger root
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
½ teaspoon turmeric
2 tablespoons coriander
½ teaspoon garam masala
½ teaspoon paprika

Salt to taste

Ginger juliennes for garnish

Mix lemon juice, salt and pepper into a marinade and rub into washed chicken. Set aside for 30 minutes.

Prepare the paste by grinding onions, ginger and garlic and set aside.

Heat oil in a pan and add bay leaves, cinnamon stick and cumin seeds. Stir as they sputter on low heat.

Add turmeric, stir and add the onion-ginger-garlic paste. Keep heat to medium and cook until the paste thickens and changes into golden brown paste. Keep stirring the paste so as not to stick to the pan.

Add salt to taste, paprika, coriander and chopped tomatoes. Keep heat to medium and stirring occasionally until tomatoes blend into smooth and loose paste.

Add garam masala and chicken pieces. Reduce the heat to low, cover the pan and cook while uncovering and stirring occasionally. Let the chicken simmer for 20-25 minutes until it is cooked and the gravy turns into thick consistency.

Once the chicken is cooked well, use ginger juliennes to garnish the dish before serving

Recipe provided by Tiffin

The bells: One more time

What a fine dining year it's been: A maturing Philadelphia scene enjoys confident second restaurants, exciting neighborhood action, Belgian pubs, and more tasty surprises.

Posted: December 29, 2007 - 10:31 AM

By Craig LaBan, Inquirer Restaurant Critic`



A dangerous new addiction in the butter chicken from Tiffin, which has redefined ethnic takeout with its perfectly timed, GPS-guided delivery guys. And then, of course, there was the eight-course autumn feast at Talula's Table in Kennett Square, the splendid new gourmet market from Django founders Aimee Olexy and Bryan Sikora, who cook dinner for just one private party each night. It was my Most Memorable Meal of the year, even though it wasn't formally

rated. I'll need at least one more dinner there before I can toll those bells, and the next available seating isn't until July. Yet another reason to look forward to 2008.

Tiffin

710 W. Girard Ave., 215-922-1297; www.tiffin.com and www.tiffinstore.com.

Order your "tiffin" boxed meals online or call for tandoori the old-fashioned way, because this clever Indian project from Karma founder Munish Narula not only is redefining ethnic delivery food, it's also the best Indian kitchen in town. The dowdy Girard Avenue dining room has expanded to an upgraded upstairs room, making the restaurant itself more worth a visit.

Craig LaBan

Best chef: Jose Garces.

Best restaurant: Osteria.

Best meal: A “farm table dinner” at Talula’s Table.

Best ethnic delivery: Tiffin.

Best relocated classic: Fuji.

Best new BYOB: Blackfish.

Best single bite:

Tinto

‘s blue-cheese-smeared

“montadito” toast topped with duck confit wrapped in Serrano ham, crowned with a black cherry.

Best raw food: Scallop and watermelon sevice at Xochitl.

Best updated bubbe food: Veal kreplach with artichokes at Rae.

Best cheeseburger: The cheese-stuffed wonder at the Good Dog Bar.

- Craig LaBanEndText

Posted: December 29, 2007 - 10:31 AM

By Craig LaBan, Inquirer Restaurant Critic



Without Tiffin, this city might not be enjoying its current love affair with all things Indian. What started as a little delivery business back in 2007 is now a full-blown phenomenon with two locations, a legion of devoted fans, and a crop of Tiffin wannabes nipping at its heels. As the business has grown, so has our devotion to it, especially now that the Girard Avenue location offers a spacious, comfortable upstairs dining room for eating in. And after all those visits, we still can't get enough garlic-studded naan, yogurt-y chaat, lamb kebabs, samosas and vindaloos. Order: Malai kofta

Tiffin's Indian-food delivery empire is growing not only in size (look for spots in Wynnewood and Bryn Mawr), but also in breadth. This unusual spin-off, which serves Indian pizza, opened in late summer, right next to the original Girard Ave location. While the most Italian-Americanized pie, a thin-crust pizza with mozzarella cheese, tandoori chicken and a runny tomato sauce doesn't quite add up, the tandoori vegetable version, with a cilantro-mint pesto sauce, has all the spice associated with Tiffin's best dishes. The real menu stars, however, are the kati rolls, grilled street-food-style wraps made with Indian flatbread. Insider tip: Even Indian pizza calls for beer; don't forget to BYO when dining in.



Tiffin Best of Philly 2007: Indian

We're thinking we might have to retire the Best of Philly Indian category, because it's hard to imagine an Indian restaurant better than Tiffin Store. The fare is primarily Northern Indian, so you'll have to get your dosas elsewhere. But other than that minor complaint, we adore this tiny operation (in the process of expanding), whether we're dining in, where the service is incredibly attentive, or getting delivery, with food that arrives hot and spicy. Our favorites? Quite literally, everything from the chicken tikka marsala to the baingan bharta.

Tiffin has evolved rapidly from a delivery-only service to a full Ikea-furnished dining room. The diners demanded it. This is a city hungry for Indian food—and for well-priced every-night dining. Thankfully, the pressures of a daily lunch and dinner crowd haven't distracted from Tiffin's complex dishes, served without fuss in portions guaranteed to produce leftovers.



Indian small plates? Munish Narula on his new sorta-South-Philly restaurant



By: Drew Lazor

Meal Ticket just chatted with Munish “The Naantrepreneur” Narula to get some early details on the as-yet-unnamed restaurant he’s got planned for the 777 S. Broad building at Broad and Catharine.

Narula runs six spots in the greater Philly area, but this concept marks something completely new for the restaurateur. “We realized there were a lot of customers looking for Tiffin in South Philly,” says Narula, who had been hunting for an address for his takeout/delivery-driven brand down that way for a year and a half. But when the opportunity to sign on to developer Carl Dranoff’s just-debuted 777 property arose, Narula and Co. decided to capitalize on the 5,000-square-foot space and execute a concept they’ve been sitting on for several years now.

“I don’t want to call it fine dining,” says Narula of the new restaurant, which is slated to open in December, “but it’s more upscale in terms of the space itself, and the ambiance.” There’ll be a lounge, plus an open kitchen, with room for more than 100 all told. Narula tell us the food will be largely small-plate in approach, with a focus on healthier preparations — no heavy sauces, cream or oil on the menu; the fare “will be lighter, yet just as flavorful as people are used to.” They’ll lean on tools like the tandoor (clay oven), sigri (charbroiler) and tawa (cast-iron griddle) to achieve these results. And just like Tiffin etc., expect some non-traditional twists on dishes spanning all regions of India.

The restaurant does not have a name yet but Narula is opening the floor up to his Tiffin email list subscribers, as well as to the greater paratha-eating public. Any thoughts?

PHILADELPHIA citypaper

City Paper Choice '09

"People, groups and institutions who've had a killer year, and whose trajectories portend bright futures for themselves — and for the city."

Food and Drink — Tiffin Owner Munish Narula



In Mumbai, it is common to see dab-bawalas (literally "one who carries a box") bearing huge flats of dabbas, a sort of Indian lunchbox, on their heads while riding the city's metro system. They are delivering tiffins (Old English for "light lunch") to office workers across the city. This low-tech but highly accurate (99.7 percent) system was the inspiration for Munish Narula's high-tech second restaurant, Tiffin (701 W. Girard Ave., tiffin.com).

Though Narula used his Wharton master's to construct a business plan allowing for first-year losses, early press lauding Tiffin's revolutionary Web ordering system and low prices made the delivery service an instant hit. Customers hungry for Tiffin's savory masalas, tandoor breads and dals were soon clamoring for another location. "It was almost a grassroots movement," says Narula, who opened a second Tiffin in Mount Airy in July 2008.



Expansion has snowballed since. Narula gave his favorite Indian street food, kati rolls, a home when he opened Tiffin etc. next door to the original. In addition to expanding palates on Girard Ave., Narula has more Tiffins planned: Elkins Park (October), Wynnewood (December) and Bryn Mawr (spring 2010). Narula is also investigating locations in Bensalem.

"We targeted a Southeast Asian customer base," says Narula. "So the biggest surprise was 90 percent of our customers are not!"

Narula cites the uptick in quality Indian restaurants. "Since we opened Tiffin, nine new Indian restaurants have opened. Four of them are owned by my former employees! I love it. Everyone is raising the bar"

Philadelphia

m a g a z i n e

Let Them Eat Korma

How restaurant revolutionary Munish Narula sparked Philly's Indian explosion

By Lauren McCutcheon Posted on 5/28/10

Photograph by Nick Antony

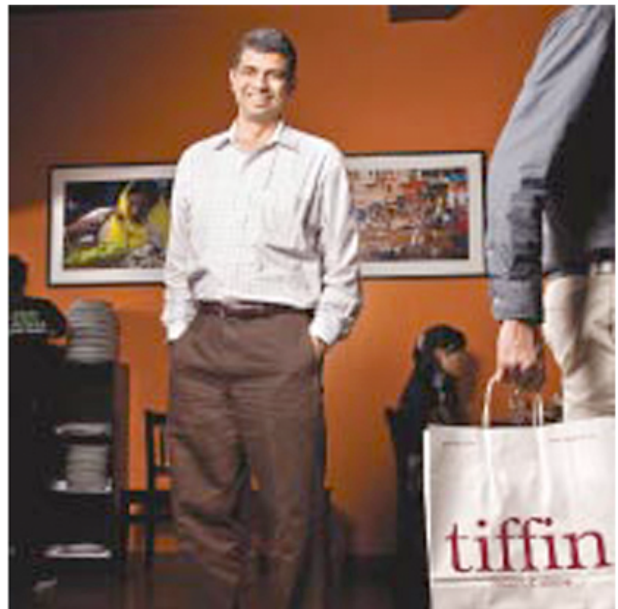
Eons ago, it was Georges Perrier. Then Neil Stein, then Starr, then Garces. Right now, the mantle of Philadelphia's most up-and-coming restaurateur seems to have fallen to Munish Narula, a soft-spoken New Delhi native with a master's degree from Johnson & Wales, an MBA from Wharton, C.V. mentions of Wall Street and Denny's—and a three-and-a-half-year-old operation called Tiffin, where entrées average \$10 and usually come in plastic tubs.

Six years ago, Narula left his job in corporate development at Bala Cynwyd broadcasting giant Entercom to open Karma restaurant in Old City with some pals. With its dark decor and lunchtime buffet, Karma was nice but predictable. Narula longed for a more modern approach. His partners didn't. So they bought him out, and Narula created Tiffin, a Web business named after and inspired by Mumbai's famously efficient meal-delivery service. His plan: Customers would order from a menu on Tiffin.com; his kitchen on Girard Avenue would fill the orders; a tie-wearing courier would deliver them. Narula—along with the Wharton professors he consulted—predicted a slow build of customers of Southeast Asian origin. They were wrong.

From day one, Tiffin's clients were 95 percent non-Indian. They were also demanding: e-mailing and banging on the door to request farther deliveries, phone ordering, eating in. Narula adapted quickly. Within days, he found himself running Philly's first—by all accounts, the country's first—multi-platform restaurant. He didn't always get it right—he's still disconsolate about a lamb saag paneer delivered to a vegetarian—but he kept at it. "Our projections went out the window," he says. His new model was a hit.

It wasn't long before others clued in. Two summers ago, as Narula was opening a Mount Airy Tiffin, his former chef Raju Bhattarai unveiled Ekta, a takeout/delivery spot—not Web-based—a few blocks from the first Tiffin. Soon thereafter, two more former employees separately opened modern Indian concepts of their own: IndeBlue in Collingswood, and Saffron Indian Kitchen in Bala Cynwyd. If Narula's rankled over his -employees-turned-competitors, he doesn't say so. (As Tiffin-like websites popped up in New York, Boston and Bangalore, he barely batted an eye.) Still, map every Indian place that's opened since his—Narula counts at least 14—and the vindaloo boom is remarkable. He attributes the success to setting up shop near affluent, young, liberal-leaning, globally-aware customer bases. Last fall, Tiffin the third came to Elkins Park. Then, a second Saffron in Ambler. Bryn Mawr got an Ekta deux in February; in April, Tiffin IV broke opening sales records in Wynnewood. This month, a fifth Tiffin debuts in Bryn Mawr, two blocks from Ekta Two.

Meanwhile, Tiffin the Brand is on fire. In 2008, Narula introduced a line of spices, then added catering, then debuted "a tiffin and a movie," delivering Bollywood flicks along with his samosas. He's just announced plans for a high-concept eatery serving traditional grilled Indian food and tapas. Projected revenue for 2010: \$4.35 million. After that, it'll be another Tiffin or two, maybe an Indo-Chinese or an Indo-Latin restaurant. Sound out-there? Not to Narula. "At some point, that's gonna happen in the city," he says, "whether we do it or not."





Tiffin going into 777 S. Broad St.

by Michael Klein, Posted: June 21, 2010

Munish Narula, the owner of Tiffin, is partnering with Dranoff Properties on an upscale Indian restaurant that will be opening this winter at Dranoff's new project at 777 S. Broad. All seats will have a view of the open kitchen and the restaurant will wrap around the corner of Broad and Catharine.

No name yet, according to Narula, whose Tiffin has locations in Northern Liberties, Wynnewood, Elkins Park, and Mount Airy. (A Bryn Mawr location is on the way

In a statement, Narula says the new restaurant will use sophisticated Indian grilling methods including Tandoor (a clay oven), Sigri (char broiler), and Tawa (cast iron griddle). "Food will be seasoned with subtle, yet complex marinades and seasonings then cooked using one of these ancient methods and served in small plates," he says.



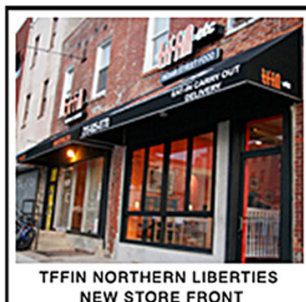
An open kitchen will be the visual centerpiece of the restaurant where every seat will provide guests with a view of the artisanal custom made ovens.

This new concept, unlike Tiffin, will not focus on takeout, and it is unclear as of now whether it will be offered.

Tiffin Brings Kati Rolls to the Streets of Philadelphia

by Ben Kessler (Unbreaded // Sandwich Smash)

There has been an explosion in popularity of Indian food takeout in Philadelphia in recent years, and all routes trace back to one catalyst: Munish Narula. The Wharton MBA carrying Narula has extensive experience in the food industry, which he harnessed to open Tiffin, a mostly delivery and takeout based restaurant in Northern Liberties. The concept of Tiffin is affordable yet extremely flavorful Indian cooking, delivered to your door quickly, and with love. Tiffin, which now has two locations, on Girard Avenue, and in Mt. Airy, has added an entirely new concept to its ever expanding empire.



With the help of chef and partner Hari Nayak, Narula has developed Tiffin Etc. an Indian pizza and sandwich shop. Drawing from street foods found in several parts of India, Tiffin Etc. continues the tradition of serving fresh and exciting new flavors at a great price. Narula and Nayak both pride themselves on the innovation they have



Paneer Tikka and Hari Mirch
Tandoori grilled cottage cheese, "Makhani" sauce, green chilies and Mint

accomplished with the menu at Tiffin Etc., these foods have typically not been done before in the U.S., and especially not Philadelphia. The pizzas are all based on traditional Indian dishes, but everything had to be reformulated and tested until the right balance of sauce, cheese and toppings was achieved. Favorites like the Murg Makhani and Lal Mirch (think chicken tikka masala) and the Paneer Tikka and Hari Mirch (mint-based pesto sauce with fried cottage cheese) are perfectly executed, and baked in a traditional pizza oven on a naan-like thin crust.



Paneer Paratha
Homemade cottage cheese and herbs

Indian Summer Eats and Treats at Tiffin Etc.

from Phoodie.info



Saag Paneer Pizza
Creamed spinach, ricotta cheese and crumbled homemade cottage cheese

The institution that Tiffin has become is no fluke. Visionary **Munish Narula** created an eatery that perfected the flavor and art of Indian food, while paying attention to the details of running a successful franchise (Tiffin is opening another location in Elkins Park, along with the Tiffin To Go which can be found on Temple University's campus). The latest addition is Tiffin, Etc., which opened up right next door to the original on Girard Avenue touting 'Indian Street Food' as well as a never-before-seen Indian Pizza.

'People might not be ready for the savory drinks here, or the flavors, but we're gonna give it to them,' says consulting chef **Hari Nayak**. Those flavors of what he speaks can be found in the numerous shakes available, most of which are salty and refreshing. First was the **Masala Lassi**, which is hard to describe. Imagine the base of **Raita** with chili's added and crushed ice, and you're getting close. My personal favorite was the **Thandai**, a pinkish hued almond flavored drink with fennel and rose.



Murg Tikka Kati Roll
Tandoori chicken kebabs with chutney



Keema Mattar
Minced tender lamb, English peas, cilantro mint pesto and ricotta cheese

The pizza is what everyone has waited for, and surely doesn't disappoint. I tried the **Keema Mattar** version, which consists of minced lamb, English peas, cilantro mint pesto, and Ricotta cheese. The crust is absurdly thin and hefty enough to hold the toppings above, yet still supremely tender and flavorful. The lamb is so juicy without being greasy, and the toothsome peas add the needed texture to the pie. The Ricotta is lightly kissed atop the meat in an organized mess, and the whole pizza itself is quite the looker. Oh yeah, the pie is only \$5. Deal with that.

Craig LaBan On Tiffin Etc.'s Pizzas

Posted by Foobooz on 1st October 2009



Craig LaBan enjoys **Tiffin Etc.**'s unexpected but tasty fusion of Italian pizza dough combined with ingredients from India.

My favorites so far have been the creamy tomato curry and tender meat of butter chicken ("Murgh Makhni"), the cuminy crumbles of ground lamb over minty cilantro-almond pesto, and the spicy creamed spinach of the saag paneer. Wash them down with a lemony nimbu pani soda (or better yet, mango lassi spiced with green chiles) and give the old pizza party a taste of Bollywood.



BEST NEW RESTAURANT-TIFFIN BEST INDIAN-TIFFIN

Published: Jan 30, 2007
Source: <http://www.citypaper.net>

Tiffin Store: A Northern Liberties service battles Ghee Fatigue.

If you've ever taken advantage of one of the local Indian buffet lunch deals, you're familiar with the phenomenon I like to call Ghee Fatigue. With no portion control, you eat until you're slumped over your desk, stuffed with pakoras, completely useless for the rest of the day.

In India, however, workers eat lighter lunches called tiffins, delivered by a complex network of tiffin-carriers. Inspired by this 200-year-old tradition, restaurateur Munish Narula (formerly of Old City's Karma) has opened Tiffin.com, a Northern Liberties-based service that makes fast, inexpensive and, most importantly, light Indian food accessible to Philadelphians and their office-mates.

Online or by phone, customers can order box meals of two entrees, dal, raita and pickles. The real tiffins are homemade lunches, and Tiffin.com is aiming for authenticity — it's the meal your wife would make you if you lived in India and had a wife who made you lunch. The food is cooked in smaller batches, with less oil than restaurant food. This fact is obvious in the vivid colors and distinct flavors of the curries themselves, like the rosy gold aloo gobi with its turmeric-stained cauliflower, potatoes and zingy bits of ginger.

Tiffin.com is part of a growing trend in the United States: Last year, The New York Times reported on a similar service in San Francisco called Annadaata, as well as a less-official network of homemakers offering meals to the Indian workers at Microsoft's Redmond, Wash., campus.

Narula also caters to those who don't want to risk dripping raita on their keyboards. He's added a few brightly colored, organic-shaped tables to the Tiffin.com headquarters and named it Tiffin Store. The kitchen-to-table delivery distance is much shorter here, but the food is still technically on wheels. (Servers use a plastic rolling cart.)

In-Store dining affords a full menu of choices — Tiffin.com has more limited options — and each item arrives piping hot and full of flavor. (If you like your food spicy, you need to ask for it.) There's a mean appetizer of fried tilapia nuggets, their crackly surface sparked with pepper and cumin. Tender-skinned samosas flake open to a rich, buttery filling of peas and potatoes.

It's easy to overdo it buffet-style on the hefty portions of smoky eggplant stewed with tomato, and lamb Chettinad's creamy, coconut gravy flecked with minced curry leaves. And I wanted to curl up with the Peshawari-style naan, which envelops a layer of sweet coconut and finely chopped nuts in warm tandoor-speckled dough. But to my surprise, even after feasting at Tiffin Store, no nap was needed.

The Philadelphia Inquirer

December 21, 2006

On the Side | Dal-to-door food service currying favor

It was getting late, at least for a delivery promised between 11 and noon; 11:45 to be exact. I'd ordered Indian comfort food - charcoal-roasted eggplant curry and sauteed minced lamb, some lentil dals, rice and raita - from tiffin.com, the new online outfit.

I had a pretty good idea it would be tasty, having sampled a few dishes (an outstanding, warm-hearted dhaba chicken, for one) the day before at tiffin.com's reality-based mother ship - the mango-walled Tiffin Store, at Seventh and Girard.

But the question regarding tiffin.com was (and it was no small question): Could it deliver the goods?

Perhaps, "tiffin" isn't part of your vocabulary. It's British slang for a light lunch, and dates to more than a century ago when Brits held sway over colonial India and, well, Indians staffing English offices couldn't stomach the bland English fare.

Their solution? Meals freshly cooked at home (by wives, mothers or servants) and routed by an elaborate network of trains, bicycles, and fiercely loyal foot couriers - so-called dabbawallas - right to the office door.

On time. Every day. Like clockwork.

The tiffin-carriers continue to this day, most visibly in Mumbai (formerly Bombay) and have an astonishing 99.9 percent batting average, misplacing one lunch in hundreds of thousands.

Hmmm, it is now past 11:45 and I'm a bit antsy. My newsroom colleagues - plastic forks at the ready - are antsy, too.

They've been promised a free lunch for their critiques, and you can sense their concern that even this perk - puny though it may be - might be about to be taken off the table.

Munish Narula's plan for the defunct fried chicken place he'd bought at Seventh and Girard was modest: use the front room to store dry goods (rice, lentils, spices and such), and the back as a commissary to cook high-quality, low-oily Indian food for punctual home-delivery.

He'd been a founding partner at Karma, the well-received Indian restaurant in Old City. But for the past year, he'd worked on this "new" concept, borrowing from India's tiffin tradition.

Since many tiffin-carriers are illiterate, the stacked tiffin pail is color-coded to identify its destination. Narula is still working on his disposable containers; he wants them eventually to have customer's names and ingredients listed on them and, if he can, the nutritional break-out.

But the tiffins do take some planning (lunch orders must be in by 10 a.m., dinners by 2 p.m.). So Narula has created a separate and more extensive a la carte menu at a separate Web site, Tiffinstore.com, to accommodate the last-minute traditionalists - and that menu, usually delivered within the hour, has quickly become 80 percent of his business.

Granted, I've never made it through a complete online order without panicking and calling to confirm. And the dual-Web-site format is confusing. But it does work, despite the frustration of trying to find the online menu (just click "order online").

It's worth venturing beyond the tiffin specials, because chef Raju Bhattarai's cooking is reliably great, with sauces that taste distinct for every dish, and a flavorful brightness that comes from the freshly ground spices.

The bone-in tandoori chicken is plump and juicy, its yogurt and chile-marinated meat ringing with mustard oil and ginger and the singe of a charcoal roast. This kitchen works off-the-bone chicken wonders, too, as in creamy tomato butter chicken, the juicier dark-meat cousin to the white-meat "tikka masala," both of which exude cardamom and clove and smoke-toasted fenugreek leaves.

We also loved the special mint chicken, breast meat napped in an herbaceous green puree that pulsed with fresh chile heat and mint. The badami chicken tikka was another surprise hit, tenderized in a white marinade of sour cream, pureed almonds and roasted fennel seeds that proves flavorful Indian cooking isn't always incendiary.

Not that Tiffin shies from spice. The marvelously tender lamb chops and lamb leg boti kebab were as hot as the red chile paste that clung to the meat looked. The rich dark onion stew of the lamb roganjosh also had a swell of heat behind its aromatic fennel and garam masala. The big butterflied shrimp in coconut milk gravy flecked with rye seeds and curry leaves gave a full-flavored nod to a traditional South Indian brew.

The restaurant's many excellent vegetarian selections were also bolstered with a well-rounded tingle, though the chickpeas of chana masala were brightened with pomegranate seeds. And my favorites - the malai kofta vegetarian fritters in cashew cream, and the slow-cooked black lentil daal makhni - were memorable for their luxurious savor.

Such hearty stews are the reason Indian cuisine translates so well in delivery. But some things are still better served fresh in the restaurant dining room. Like the onion bhaji fritters, which are still crisp and lacy inside their delicate chickpea flour crusts. Or the refreshingly crunchy aloo papri chaat salad that layers lentil wafers and snappy chickpeas beneath cool streaks of sour white yogurt, herby mint chutney, and tangy sweet tamarind sauce.

Even the naan flatbreads, Tiffin's biggest weakness, were tender and soft when eaten on Girard Avenue. I loved the Peshawari style, lined with a sweet green paste of pistachios, coconut and raisins. It's as close as you'll get to dessert at Tiffin. But that course is just one of the many works still in progress here.

The tiny mango-colored dining room, for that matter, its 24 seats arrayed around odd, amoeba-shaped tables beside the open kitchen, is expected to shift upstairs to a double-sized space within weeks of this review.

Narula had never anticipated this address to be much more than a home-base kitchen for his delivery empire. But now, he envisions the downstairs becoming a chai salon, cultural bazaar, spice market and take-out lounge, where you'll be able to rent a Bollywood movie with your boti kebab.

And so, this well-curried answer to our home-delivery woes may soon be an even better excuse to eat out, as well.



philly.com
anything & everything philly

Feb. 02, 2007

Source: <http://www.philly.com>

And now for something completely tiffin
Order online, get great Indian food delivered pronto

By LARI ROBLING
For the Daily News

A man, a pan, and a GPS scan (global positioning system). That's pretty much the key to Munish Narula's enterprising start-up, Tiffin.com.

Narula left Karma Restaurant in Old City to found this new business. It borrows a tradition from his native India, and blends it with the self-avowed "number think's" Wharton MBA in finance and accounting.

"Tiffin" refers to the Indian practice of delivering homemade lunches in metal canisters by bike. It is an organized way to bring food from home kitchens to workers and students, rather than relying on street food. Prepared in the individual's kitchen, the meal adheres to personal religious restrictions and is less expensive. Tiffin wallahs, the famous Mumbai (formerly Bombay) deliverymen, are revered for their efficiency as they dash from a home kitchen to work or school. Tiffin also became a British noun for lunch.

Narula took this system and applied it to online delivery. By having all the lunch orders in hand at a central kitchen by 10 a.m., he can keep his food and delivery costs down. Most meal delivery is fairly expensive, around \$5 an order, but by only taking pre-orders and using GPS to plan the delivery route, he can cut that to less than \$2.

The biggest surprise to Narula is that his clientele is 20 percent Indian. A bricks-and-mortar enterprise, Tiffin Store, 710 W. Girard Ave., recently opened as BYOB in order to accommodate the many neighbors who were clamoring to eat in.

I went online and ordered lunch for a meeting. As promised, it arrived within the window of noon to 1 p.m. And before everything was on the table, I got a call that I was missing part of my order. It arrived in a few minutes with a complimentary dish of Chicken Biryani: no harm, no foul. (OK, forgive the pun - so, yes, there was fowl.) This is the kind of attention to service that wins repeat business.

You have several meal options when you log onto Tiffin.com. Each choice includes two main courses, dal (a puree of lentils), a large offering of basmati rice and an assortment of chutneys and pickles. Menus rotate throughout the days of the week. Order from Tiffin Store and you have more options; however, you lose some of the savings.

The hands-down favorite was the Lamb Dahiwala (\$9.50) a flavorful stew that went well with the rice. We also sampled the Subz Khada Masala (\$7.50), a mixture of cauliflower and potatoes with a signature blend of spices. Paneer Aloo Gobhi (\$7.50) was a delicious homemade cheese in a curry sauce. All three came with Bhindi Anardana (stewed okra) and dal. If you have vegetarians in the mix, this is an easy way to accommodate them.

There are plenty of add-ons to choose from, although there is an abundance of food in each meal combination. Fish Kali Mirch (\$4.95) was a fried fish finger - with just enough spice and texture to make it anything but Gorton's. Vegetable Samosas (\$2.50), a fried dumpling of sorts, were also one of the favorite items. The Lasooni Tikka (\$4.50), marinated chicken pieces cooked in a tandoori oven, was a little bit dry and overcooked, but the flavor was stellar and the mint chutney helped restore some moisture.

Each meal comes with condiments. There's a fantastic brown sauce that we described as an "Indian ketchup." And be sure to try the spicy, salty, vinegary pickles that really get your taste buds charged.

The online ordering is fairly simple, even if you are not well-versed in Indian cuisine. Everything is explained in detail, although on the delivery end, if you want to know what you are eating, don't separate the labeled lids from the dish. And, unlike most online businesses, you can actually reach a person on the phone - ironically, not in India but here in Philadelphia.

The one disappointment is the breads, and the best Indian breads should be a highlight of the meal. We tried the Tandoori Roll (\$1.50), Onion Kulcha (\$2), and Peshawari Naan (\$2.50). And Narula agrees. There's just no way to transport the hot breads without losing their character. The naan particularly suffers - if it is not served about two or three minutes out of the oven, it is a sorry, soggy mess.

Now, if he could devise a way to cryo-vac fresh hot breads, or maybe get a tandoori oven in the car to make the breads curbside right before delivery... well, there's a business plan!

Hmmm, it is now past 11:45 and I'm a bit antsy. My newsroom colleagues - plastic forks at the ready - are antsy, too.

They've been promised a free lunch for their critiques, and you can sense their concern that even this perk - puny though it may be - might be about to be taken off the table.

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He's also refining a hub-and-spoke system, and route-mapping for drivers equipped with GPS systems - the high-tech heirs to low-tech dabbawallas.

At 11:50, I give him a call. My food is on the way, Narula says. It should be there momentarily.

But the driver is a little green. He thinks 400 North Broad must be near Fourth Street, which is not the case. Not even close.

The clock is ticking.

Anyway, Narula tells me, his deal was to do delivery exclusively. He'd consulted his business profs at Wharton. Worked with software geeks in India.

But when word leaked out, a storm surged: "It was like the entire population of Northern Liberties wanted Indian food."

Gawkers started showing up at the storeroom-kitchen on the ungentrified block of Girard.

So many of them wanted a sit-down or carryout space that he relented, creating the bright, little Tiffin Store cafe, in what was to be the storage room.

It opened last week, even as tiffin.com was registering its first few hundred users, 85 percent of them, surprisingly, with recognizably non-Indian names.

You can order take-out the old-fashioned way from the cafe. Or navigate to tiffin.com online and order fresh-daily specials for up to a week at a time.

At the cafe, I'd seen where the chef's cardamon, poppy and cumin seed are ground in small flavorful batches.

I'd had creamy, tender eggplant that had been smoked over charcoal. And stretchy rounds of naan, hot and blistered from the 700-degree tandoor oven. And a dreamy chicken tikka Masala, in a rich, light-colored tomato gravy, far superior to your average Indian buffet fare. So I had a pretty good idea that tiffin.com's offerings from the same kitchen - among them a crisp-seared okra dish, and slow-simmered black lentil dal, and aloo gobi, which is cauliflower and cubed potato done with a oniony-tomato creole-style sauce - would be tasty.

And sure enough, they were (except for the wilted naan) when they showed up as promised.

At 11:59, to be exact.

COURIER-POST

South Jersey's Newspaper | courierpostonline.com

Sunday, March 4, 2007

Tiffin offers great food at great prices

For authentic ethnic food, sometimes one must venture out of one's comfort zone. The best native food -- and the bargain prices that usually accompany it -- is often discovered off the beaten path. Like Tiffin Store, the new Indian tandoor house in "Northern Liberties." I use the quotes because calling the sketchy crossroads of Seventh and Girard in Philadelphia "Northern Liberties" is a bit of a stretch.

The small, sunny cafe, however, is welcoming and bright, done up in shades of yolk-yellow, blue and tangerine. There are no diners at this hour, just a swarm of white-coated chefs buzzing in the open kitchen, but soon this BYOB's tables are jammed with empty-nesters and art students armed with bottles of sauvignon blanc crisp enough to quench Tiffin's spicy pan-Indian cuisine.

Whether the hungry literati are turning out for great food or cheap prices (nothing on the menu is over \$13), I don't yet know. But it seems like Tiffin Store is just what a neighborhood on the cusp of gentrification might need to lubricate its transition. For now, though, I'm happy to be seated by a genial gent next to the storefront window, where I can monitor my car parked out front.

He has thick glasses and a British accent. Suspenders stretch over his jolly belly like navy rainbows. Presenting us with menus, he asks about our wine and where we live and tells us about Tiffin Store's origins as a storehouse for its sister business, Tiffin.com.

In India, deliverymen called dabbawallas pedal through the streets on an intricate bike network bearing tiffins -- British slang for small lunches -- from mothers, sisters and grandmothers destined for men at work in downtown offices.

Tiffin.com is the stateside incarnation of this idea, only with GPS-enabled cars; customers place orders by Internet or phone, and a speedy dabbawalla is at their doors within the hour. The cafe was an organic maturation of this business plan, and when the Brit brings over our appetizers, I'm psyched to hear South Philly is in their delivery network. Unfortunately, South Jersey isn't.

Striking the golden mean between flaky empanada and crisp wonton, the vegetarian samosas stuffed with mashed potato (\$2.50) are feather-light despite a substantial jacket of pastry. Emerald peas are hidden inside the spuds as if a mother had tried to trick her kids into eating their greens. The corners are delightfully doughy, perfect for dipping into twangy tamarind barbecue or cucumber-green mint chutney that refreshes the palate like an herbal intermezzo.

Lamb seekh kebab (\$4.95) -- links of lamb-and-vegetable sausage -- is tasty, but hardly as transcendent as Tiffin Store's curries, at once lovely and aggressive. Shimmering like a luminous bath of liquid gold, shrimp curry (\$11.95) sings of Southern India, gloriously aromatic with yellow curry and a whisper of coconut.

Chicken tikka masala (\$9.95) is more delicate, the rich garam masala and slightly acidic tomato tempered by cool yogurt. Probing chopsticks produce hunks of tandoori chicken from beneath the sauce like sunken treasure. After they're gone, the sauce is still moving when drizzled on snowy Alps of white rice (complimentary) or singed florets of broccoli and cauliflower hot from the tandoor (\$6.95).

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There are no desserts on the menu, but the waiter brings over some complimentary gulab jamon anyway that's not as saccharine as some others I've had. These little Munchkins apple-bobbing in tepid sugar-water among green cardamom pods are downright addictive. The mushy texture isn't very appetizing, but I can't help going back in for more, though I'd probably rather have another dish of chicken tikka masala instead.

Forget for a minute that many food historians argue the dish was actually invented in the U.K. With a bite of that lush curry and your eyes closed, it feels like you're on the flowering veranda of some Bombay plantation, supping with Indian aristocrats or British emigres. An overhead fan and rosewater cocktail soothe the jungle-like humidity outside and the heat in your mouth. Because you're such good company, they of course invite you to stay for the night in their garden guesthouse. There's a teak soaking tub, spider monkey trilling in the treetops, and ESPN OnDemand.

You have a suite at the Mandarin Oriental, but hey, saying no would be downright rude, right? One can dream. I'll get there one day, and when I do I just hope the food is as inspiring as Tiffin Store's curries. For now, I'll head back to the crayon-colored cafe at the junction of Grit and Gentrification, or I'll just have a dabbawalla deliver a bit of India to my door.

South Philadelphia native Adam Erace was raised in a family of foodies, and has written about food most recently at Philly Style Magazine. Having also worked extensively in the restaurant business, he brings to the table an inside perspective on local dining. He can be reached at AEraceCP@hotmail.com.

TheChestnutHillLocal

Just opened, already packed every night
Tiffin currying favor with Mt. Airy and Chestnut Hill



Chef Rakesh Ramola prepares his fiery Indian dishes authentically with freshly ground spices from India

September 4, 2008 Issue
by LEN LEAR

When Munish Narula began looking for a location for his Indian restaurant, Tiffin, in 2006, he gave no more thought to locating it in Northwest Philadelphia than to locating it in downtown Camden.

"I did not think of Chestnut Hill and Mt. Airy as a potential market," said the tall, handsome 37-year-old Wharton School graduate who emigrated from New Delhi, India, to the U.S. 16 years ago. "If you had asked me about 100 places I had in mind to open a restaurant, Mt. Airy and Chestnut Hill would not have been on the list."

But a funny thing happened after Narula opened Tiffin in December, 2006, at 710 West Girard Ave. on the northern border of Northern Liberties. "I began to get phone calls and emails from Chestnut Hill and Mt. Airy," he said. "In fact, I got so many calls and emails that we started sending drivers to Northwest Philly twice a week all the way from Northern Liberties to make food deliveries."

Chuck Gupta, a 70-ish resident of Chestnut Hill and retired chemist who was also born and raised in India, has become a passionate cheerleader for Tiffin. "I went down there (to Northern Liberties) and loved the food, so I went back to eat about six or seven times. I also had the food delivered to my house every so often on Mondays and Thursdays, sometimes for private parties."

Tiffin, by the way, is a British word that refers to any lunch or light meal. It has also come to refer to the insulated multi-chambered metal containers that are used to deliver hot lunches to workers in office buildings in India. The often-barefoot deliverymen are called dabbawallas (but in Philly they wear shoes). Narula, who founded an Indian restaurant in Old City named Karma after graduating from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, originally planned Tiffin as a strictly takeout operation, using deliverymen equipped with GPS tracking devices. They delivered meals to Center City, Fairmount, Fishtown, Queen Village and University City, but because of the demand in Northern Liberties, they also opened the storefront BYOB at the Girard Avenue site.

When Narula realized Northwest Philadelphia was a fertile market for his product, he began scouting locations in our area but quickly nixed Germantown Avenue. "I drove up and down Germantown Avenue a few times during rush hour," he said, "and I realized that my drivers would be getting stuck in traffic. On a Friday night, we can have 50 to 70 deliveries, so the last thing we can afford is to have our drivers stuck in traffic."

Eventually, Narula signed a 12-year lease at 7105 Emlen St. in West Mt. Airy, which had just been vacated by Hamlet Bistro, a more upscale restaurant than Tiffin. The Mt. Airy Indian restaurant opened July 24 and has been a beehive since day one. About 60 percent of the business has been takeout and delivery.

We visited Tiffin on a Tuesday night in mid-August, but it seemed more like a Saturday night. Every table was occupied, and there were always people outside on Emlen Street waiting for a table to be vacated. All night long other customers were coming in to pick up orders, and drivers were returning to pick up new delivery orders.

"I am very thankful to the people who urged me to open a restaurant here, especially Chuck Gupta," said Narula. "We expected to do well, but this has been way beyond our expectations. The average wait for a table on a weeknight has been 30 minutes and on weekends, 45 minutes to an hour. We now make deliveries seven days a week, and we will soon start taking internet orders, and we will start deliveries to East Falls and Manayunk.

"And I never had to even put out a 'Help Wanted' sign. People from the neighborhood keep walking in here asking for work ... It takes about 25 to 30 minutes to get each order ready, so you're not going to get your order as fast as you would, say, a pizza, but Indian food travels well because of the spices and the sauces. Countries with hot weather have historically tended to eat spicier food because of their natural preservatives."

Unlike many ethnic restaurants, Tiffin does not tone down the hot spices for the generally tame American palate. "We cook the dishes the way they're meant to be cooked," said Narula, "and the fact that we are BYOB increases the value factor. At our Girard Avenue place, we've had groups come in with cases of beer or up to six bottles of wine."

Most appetizers at Tiffin are under \$5, and most entrees are between \$8.95 and \$11.95. There are 10 vegetarian entrees, all under \$10, as well as several monthly specials. You can't go wrong with any "tandoor" items baked in a traditional clay oven fired by charcoal, and you simply must get one of the "naan" (unleavened white flour) breads used to scoop up almost any of the dishes. My own favorite dish was the shrimp vindaloo — jumbo shrimp cooked in an incendiary sauce from the Western Indian state of Goa and accompanied by basmati rice and mango chutney. A dish like this will obliterate the subtle flavors of any good wine, but it's a perfect match with a cold craft beer.

I looked at several restaurant blogs to see what customers had to say about the original Tiffin, and they had a lot to say — almost all positive. The comment that really stood out was from Sarah on www.phillyfoodguys.com/restaurant-review/tiffin-an-Indian-surprise-in-northern-liberties: "Tiffin's a wonderful spot. We had them cater our wedding! And at the wedding, some friends of ours from Bangalore liked the food so much that they asked us to drive food from Tiffin up to New Jersey for their anniversary party. (And they live a few minutes from Edison!) We all stopped in to eat in the dining room, and my friends declared it the best North Indian food they've had in the U.S. (And they've been here for about 15 years.) I'm addicted."

And last December the Inquirer's acerbic critic Craig LaBan called Tiffin the "best ethnic delivery" restaurant in the city. In the February, 2008, issue of Philadelphia Magazine, Tiffin was rated number 30 among "Philadelphia's Top 50 Restaurants." (Believe it or not, Tiffin was only four slots below Le Bec Fin, and some outstanding upscale restaurants like Brasserie Perrier were not even listed.) Philadelphia Style Magazine wrote of Tiffin: "This brilliant Indian business is impossibly convenient, laughably inexpensive and uniformly delicious."

Tiffin does not take reservations. By the time this article appears, they expect to be serving lunch and dinner seven days a week. For more information or delivery orders, call 215-242-3656 or visit www.tiffin.com or www.tiffinstore.com



Owner Munish Narula stands in front of his new Mt. Airy restaurant, which is lit seductively at night

MtAiryTimesExpress.com

'Spicy but not hot' at new Tiffin

Posted on Tue, Sep 9, 2008

By Charing A. Ball Staff Writer

"Tiffin" is British informal slang used to suggest two chaps enjoying a bit of lunch - but here in Northwest, that slang is taking on a new and literally spicy meaning. Tiffin, located at 7105 Emlen Street, is a restaurant that opened to an existing fan club of those who regularly frequent its location in Northern Liberties and know it for its good but inexpensive cheap Chicken Tikka Masala. Those who have been asking on Philly-blogs as to when the Northwest could expect a good Indian kitchen finally have an answer to their spicy craving.

"We've been in Mt. Airy for [a few weeks] now and everything is really great here. A lot of our customers from our Northern Liberties location are from Mt. Airy and Chestnut Hill and they have been trying to convince us that this a good location. And so far, people have been coming out in full force to support us," said Munish Narula, owner of Tiffin.

Located in the same spot as the former Hamlet's Bistro, Tiffin is small, somewhat confined and very busy. It's not unusual to see Narula juggling telephone orders with one hand and drying dishes with the other.

Tiffin is not a large restaurant, with only seven tables, which pretty much guarantees that something of a wait for the Tiffin experience.

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But what Tiffin lacks in atmosphere it surely makes up for in quality of dining and affordability. The waiters are kind and patient, even when you botch the pronunciation of several dishes. Plus, they're ready to refill your water glass at every third sip. And both regular Indian cuisine lovers and novices alike will appreciate the diversity of its menu and the freshness of the ingredients.

"The thing about our food is that we grind our own spices right in-house so it gives it a fresh and unique taste. It's almost like having a fresh ground cup of coffee instead of Maxwell House," Narula said.

That attention to detail has also garnered Tiffin's Northern Liberties location awards from Philadelphia Magazine's "Best Of," the City Paper Choice Awards and My Fox Philly's Host List.

Narula, formerly the proprietor of Karma, a high-end Indian restaurant in Olde City, opened up the first Tiffin location almost a year and a half ago with the dream of bringing convenience to his cuisine. In addition to dine-in service, there is also take-out which can be delivered and ordered over the web.

Main courses run as little as \$8.50 for a Tandoori vegetable dish to a very reasonable \$14.50 for Masaledar Lamb Chops. Plus, the portions mean that there will be enough for your co-workers to drool over when you brown-bag it for lunch.

Price aside, the biggest selling point is the food, which Narula said represents cuisine from Northern India. Most dishes are heavy in curry, bay leaf and cumin seeds and are baked in a traditional clay oven fired by charcoal, which makes it spicy but not overpowering.

Each platter is complimented with a nicely cooked side of basmati rice, mango chutney and naan (unleavened white flour bread for you Indian food amateurs).

"The best way to describe our food is spicy but not hot. That's why I think people enjoy us, plus we're very reasonably-priced. People are really supporting us in Mt. Airy and I expect to be here for a while," said Narula.

Tiffin is currently opened for dinner from 5 to 9:30 p.m. but within a short time should also be open for lunch at 11 a.m. For more information call 215-242-3656. On-line orders can be made at www.tiffinstore.com or www.tiffin.com.



TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2010

Philly's Indian-box-lunch king plots world expansion

Munish Narula earned an MBA from Penn's Wharton School and went to work on Wall Street. But it didn't last: "I was an investment banker for a couple of years, at Credit Suisse First Boston. A lot of money. No fun."

So he quit and went into the food business. Narula earned modest local fame over the past four years as he built his India lunch-takeout idea, Tiffin (a British-Indian word that means *lunch*, also *takeout trays*), into a small chain of popular Philadelphia-area restaurants (top seller: Chicken Tikka Masala, in creamy tomato gravy, \$12.)

Indian food has penetrated corporate Philadelphia "thanks to the Sidhus and Guptas who have exposed people to the food," says Narula, a New Delhi native. (That would be local bosses like Jay Sidhu, head of Customers Bank and formerly of Sovereign Bank, and Raj Gupta, head of chemical maker Avantor Performance Materials Holdings, and formerly of Rohm and Haas.)

How'd he pay for expansion in the middle of the slump? "We have no investors. Valley Green Bank has been our partner." Narula met Valley Green founder Jay Goldstein at City Hall last year when the Merchant Fund and the city gave Tiffin \$50,000 to fix up the storefront of its second restaurant, on Girard Ave. "Larger banks were very reluctant to lend. So we moved our banking relationships from PNC and Wachovia to Valley Green. They were more than willing to work with us."

Now Narula is preparing a larger, higher-priced, as-yet unnamed flagship restaurant for developer Carl Dranoff's 777 South Broad Street apartments: "Carl is a visionary. He says we have to do something big."

He just won a contest sponsored by food supplier Sysco Corp., beating 170 competing restaurants to win "America's Next Top Restaurant Franchise", which grants him free legal and advisory services to spread his Indian lunches to other parts of the US.

And he's thinking bigger than that. Narula tells me he's been watching South Philly sandwich shop Tony Luke's expand, with new stores from the Jersey Shore to the Arab island nation of Bahrain, by partnering with Swedesboro-based mass-market butcher and side-dish specialist Rastelli Brothers.

Now, Narula says, he's negotiating with potential partners to take Tiffin and the Indian boxed-lunch concept worldwide.

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