

BANGALORE BITES

Priya Bala

The Druid Garden: Super-Sized, Super Fun

0/1 Century Corbel Commercial,
3rd floor, Sahakara Nagar Main
Road, Sahakara Nagar,
Bengaluru 560092

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Meal for two: Approximately ₹1500
+ taxes, with alcohol

Massive is evidently a virtue at *The Druid Garden* in Bangalore's Sahakara Nagar, just off the airport highway. It can seat 500 people at a time, the in-house brewery (to launch soon) is one of the – if not the – biggest in these parts, both in terms of space and volume of Czech beer it'll be brewing, and the multi-cuisine kitchen is a sprawl, a luxury few restaurants can afford.

While it's a vast space, it's cleverly tiered, providing seating at various levels and in niches. The retracting glass roof is a marvel and there's a high-end grill and pizza oven lending warmth to the place. The colours and lighting are subtle, the style understated. Such a huge restaurant could easily have gone over the top with the décor; that, thankfully, has been averted.

The long bar makes a speciality of its cocktails. Some, like the *Moscow Berry Mule* (vodka, fresh berries, ginger beer) and *Breakfast Martini* (orange marmalade,



Cointreau, Bourbon) were superb, while others such as the *Basil Sees Red* (red pepper, basil, tequila, soda), were unremarkable.

The chefs deserve congratulations for the bar snacks menu which has on it *Spiced Latino Chips* of sweet potato, tapioca and plantain and *Fried Okra Slivers*. No nachos or potato wedges in sight and we were pleased. *The Druid Garden* menu is a mix of Indian and global cuisine and covers a vast range; we can only imagine all the activity in that humongous kitchen. The *Campagna Burrata* (fresh cheese, heirloom tomatoes, blood orange dressing) from the salad list was one

of the picks of the menu for us, as was the *Asian Spiced Tofu Tacos* with crispy quinoa and *wasabi* mayo. Reflecting the scope of the menu was the Scandinavian-inspired *Smorrebrod with Anchovy Paste*. These dishes feature in the Small Plates menu. Then, there are Burgers, Sandwiches Wraps, Pizza, Grills and Large Plates which run the gamut from *Karimeen Polichathu* and *Andhra Kodi Pulao* to *Crab Ravioli* and *Tamale with Chicken*.

The beef from the grill, we were told, is locally sourced and it was of very good quality and came perfectly cooked. *The Druid Garden* has a Thai chef and he delivered super quality in the spicy *Tom Yum* and *Pineapple Fried Rice*. We find chocolate desserts in most places just too creamy or mousse-like. *The Druid Garden's Hazelnut Torte*, was a work of art, with lush textures, intense flavours. We were also recommended the *Aztec Coffee* – espresso martini, vodka-proofed coffee, chocolate, cardamom foam – for an after-dinner cocktail. It comes in a Champagne tulip coated in cocoa and cinnamon and there was just too much going on there. Serving it all with a smile and a spring in their stride was the staff. Here is a team that appeared highly motivated and so very happy to be on the job.