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RESTAURANT UPDATE

MAY 2011

PONDICHERI CAFÉ

2800 Kirby (Suite B132-West Ave) Houston 77098 713.522.2022

This extremely slick and efficient Indian restaurant has a "Café Express feel" to it: order at the register, gather up your utensils and bev, and wait until your food is brought to you. Anita, the owner, began with Indika in far west Memorial, which subsequently moved to lower Westheimer, to continuing acclaim. At WEST AVE she joins AVA and Eddie V's, with Cru to come, and Armando's and Taco Milagro just across the street. Breakfast and lunch offerings include House made saffron yogurt and fruit; Breakfast Frankie-roti wrap with masala eggs; French toast with fruit and jaggery syrup; Vanilla bean crepe with bournvita & bananas; and The American, 3 eggs, toast, & potatoes. Sides are Potato curry, Toast, or Desi fries. Morphing into the lunch menu one finds Samosas with chutney; Papdi chaat, semolina crackers, sprouts, cumin yogurt, cilantro and tamarind chutneys; Barley salad-mint, jicama, beet, pickled turmeric, & walnuts; Kachumber-cucumber, mango, & peanut salad; and Texas wild shrimp salad: beets, mango, cucumber, & sprouts. Frankies & burgers include Chicken Frankie, a roti wrap with chicken tikka masala; Keema Frankie, roti wrap with beef keema masala; and Lamb or Fish burger, with chutneys, onion masala, and pickled onions. Dinner appetizers tease with Sindhi pakoras, chick pea & vegetable fritters with tamarind date chutney; Pondicherry oysters, baked with coconut, mustard, & green chili; and Chicken kebab with green masala. Seared Daily fish with amchur & curried garbanzo; Daily fish masala with greens, potatoes, & caramelized onions; Shrimp & asparagus in a south Indian curry; and Lamb curry with mushrooms & Indian red beans round out the dinner menu. Sweets are Mango ice, Bournvita ice cream sandwich; Guava raspberry sorbet with chili & lemon, and milk & cookies. Drinks range from Lemonade to Masala chai, to various tisanes such as Shakti, served with almonds, cumin, coriander, & orange rind. Lots of new names and flavors: go give it a shot! You will walk away smiling!!

REVIVAL MARKET

550 Heights Boulevard Houston 77007 713.880.8463

Basically a very upscale mini-market, Revival specializes in high quality meats, sausages, confits, terrines, and other forms of what the French call "charcuterie." There is also an espresso bar, and a bakery section, as well as racks of fresh vegetables. Sandwiches made to order from the surrounding fresh ingredients may be munched on the sidewalk in the relaxing and tree-shaded atmosphere of Heights Boulevard. Try the Market BLT, thick-cut bacon, herbed mayonnaise, and local arugula; Revival dog, smoked Mangalitsa hot dog, green tomato relish, chicarron, slow dough pretzel bun; Andouille banh mi, jalapeno, cucumber, carrot, nam pla, slow dough baguette; Shrimp salad sandwich on pain de mie; Smoked lamb sandwich with house lemon yogurt, Texas gruyere, and baby arugula. Or try the Farmer's market veg plate, cornbread, marinated beets, mushrooms, sugar snap peas; or Duck confit salad, shaved cabbage, green onion, lime ginger dressing. Soups are fresh and tasty, and change daily. Sides are Sumac flatbread, Ginger lime slaw; and Local baby greens vinaigrette. Eat on-site, and don't forget to carry home some ingredients for your own home cooking!!

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Note: By way of qualifications for reviewing restaurants, Hankamer has owned and operated numerous restaurants, coffee shops, hotels, discotheques and banquet halls over the last forty years; he has travelled to over 70 countries and has studied and lived in Europe for over three years; he was co-owner of a home delivery wine of the month club and imported his own wine labels for years. Copyright 2009 Ray Hankamer, Hankamer Commercial/Hankamer & Associates.

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