

RESTAURANT UPDATE

FEAST 219 Westheimer - Houston- 713.529.7788

This amazing establishment serves up what I would call rustic country cooking from England and France, with a healthy sprinkling of dishes from other countries as well...such as Morocco! The minute you enter the front door of this restaurant and savor the wonderful airborne flavors wafting out of the kitchen, you and your palate know you are in for a real treat. The logo of Feast depicts a whole pig, and many of the recipes feature cuts of pork, beef, chicken, and lamb not customarily seen on menus in the U.S.

Aperitifs and cocktails feature Kir Royale, Campari and soda, Leffe blonde (Belgian Trappist beer), Tio Pepe and several other sherries, Pimms cup (a gin sling English aperitif garnished with a cucumber slice), and Ricard ("pastis": anise liquor from Provence). The wine list is comprised of French, Spanish, and Italian wines. The menu is extremely varied and changes daily, and the following are representative items: Appetizers include French fish soup with croutons and rouille (garlic mayonnaise); Scallops topped with mushroom brandy cream sauce; Pork cheek and dandelion salad with roasted garlic and shallots; Black pudding, fried egg, peas, and mint; Rabbit and duck soup; Veal heart with carrot and coriander salad; Pig tails and parsley salad. For a main course, try Cock-a-leekie-braised chicken with cream and leeks, plums, bacon and red potatoes; Cassoulet (casserole) with confit duck leg, pork and beans; Crispy roasted pork belly, potato cake and red cabbage with apples; Braised oxtail with mashed potatoes and carrot; Pan fried rabbit loin with braised lentils and spinach; Sauteed snapper or tilefish with leeks and market vegetables; or Vegetable curry pie with buttered cabbage. Hankamer will be returning often to Feast!

INDIA'S 5704 Richmond Ave. - Houston- 713.266.0131

Operating in the same location since 1982, India's has proven itself as have few other restaurants in Houston. Buffet lunches at noon provide the curious diner an opportunity to make unlimited trips to reload his plate with a wide variety of items, which may include appetizers such as Murgh chat, shredded chicken with chopped onions and fresh coriander; Pyaz bhaji, sliced onion fritters; or Shammi kabab, lamb patties blended with ginger and mint, laden with yellow split peas and mild spices, shallow fried. Tandoori specialties may include Jumbo prawns tandoori, marinated and broiled on a charcoal flame; Tandoori chicken, spring chicken marinated overnight in yogurt and freshly ground spices, skewered and grilled; or Paneer tikka, cubes of fresh home made cottage cheese marinated and skewered and grilled in the tandoor oven. Fresh Indian breads are Naan, fine flour bread, soft and fluffy; Aloo paratha, whole wheat bread stuffed with potatoes, peas, and herbs; or Keema naan, fine flour bread stuffed with minced lamb, ginger, and cilantro. Besides many other lamb, seafood, and chicken specialties, India's offers vegetarian specialties, among which are Eggplant bharta, grilled over charcoal, then mashed and cooked with fresh tomatoes, onions, and spices; Dum aloo, potatoes prepared with herbs and exotic spices; Channa masala, garbanzo peas cooked with onions, tomatoes, spices, in a tamarind sauce; and Bhindi do peaza, fresh okra lightly sauteed with onions, spices, and tomatoes.

Personal to you: Hankamer sounded off recently in the Houston Chronicle Preview's Whine and Dine column about two pet peeves: mandatory valet parking where the valet parkers reserve the spots nearest the front door of the restaurant for themselves, sending the guests who prefer to self park to the most remote spots; and servers in restaurants who offer verbal "specials" and do not give the price, embarrassing the host into having his guests order items which are almost always more "special" price-wise to the restaurant than to the guest...in some cases such as America's restaurant, the specials can be twice the price of the average menu-listed entrees.

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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. The opinions expressed in Hankamer Commercial RESTAURANT UPDATE are the opinions of Hankamer only and these opinions may not be shared by RED News or any other advertising medium in which UPDATE appears. Copyright 2007 Ray Hankamer, Hankamer Commercial/Hankamer & Associates.