

Oriental Cuisine opens branches in city

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Pune: Oriental Cuisine, the Chennai-based food chain promoter, has opened its three eatery brands, including South Indian food speciality restaurant Kokum, resto-bar Zara and bakery business The French Loaf, in the city.

The company's CEO, Vishwadeep Kuila, said on Wednesday that the expansion was part of the company's plan to open its branches across metros and major two-tier towns.

Founded by non-resident M. Mahadevan in 1984, the Oriental Cuisine has many food outlets, including Thai restaurant Benjarong, Chinese cuisine options China Town and Noodle Home, and a few in food court format, including Planet Yum, Kuila said.

Kokum will be a speciality restaurant with an elaborate spread of Goan, Mangalorean, Keralite and Chettinad

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food and has a capacity to seat 110 people. Zara will be a designer resto-bar which will cater Spanish multicuisine fare, while French Loaf will dish out many exotic varieties of bread and bread-based meal items, Kuila said.

The company wants to add 14 eateries across brands to its existing 27 restaurants by the end of 2009, Kuila added.

The company presently has four Zara resto-bars, including two in Chennai and one each in Kolkata and Bangalore. Another three — one each in Mumbai, Delhi and Hyderabad — will be added soon, Kuila said.

Coastal capers!

and even some bland ones," says executive chef Babu Abdullah.

Interestingly a small corner of the restaurant also flaunts an open mini kitchen where a lady from Kerala will be preparing appams and other typical south Indian specialties to lend an exclusive homely ambience to the restaurant. Best suited for a family lunch or elaborate dinner, the restaurant can accommodate up to 110 diners at one go. And if you are an amateur foodie, when it comes to appreciating south Indian cuisine, a luncheon or supper at Kokum will be an enlightening experience. It helps put many things into perspective, whether it is enjoying the right combi-



DEVJANI ROY

BRINGING the authentic flavours of the southern coastline to menu cards of Pune's food circles, Kokum, the newest restaurant in the city proffers a mouth-watering invite to all foodies with an penchant for south Indian cuisine. Kokum, by Oriental Cuisine, takes you on a delightful journey through south India not just in terms of the food being served but with the ambience as well. Located at Viman Nagar, the joint lets you savour good food, while listening to some traditional south Indian music and adding on to the magic of southern coastal food with its seating area amidst palm trees.

"Our team of experts went to around 14 villages along the southern coastline to know more about the traditional recipes of local dishes. Based on their feedback and research, we have tried to

Kokum, the new fine dining restaurant in town offers gourmet coastal cuisine with a wide spread of authentic dishes

keep our food as authentic as possible," says Vishwadeep Kuila, CEO, Oriental Cuisine.

From Goanese prawns to Mangalorean chicken curry and vegetable stews, the range of delicacies is wide and contains both vegetarian and non-vegetarian savouries. "We will be serving dishes suited for all kinds of palettes, ranging from highly spicy to medium

nation of dishes or getting familiar with the typically nomenclatured varieties. Also, the restaurant staff seems quite cooperative and efficient at their job.

Interestingly, Pune is the first city in the country where Kokum has opened shop. From the cultural capital of Maharashtra, the owners plan to take it to Chennai. "We picked Pune as our first stop because eating out is an in thing here and food outlets have always done well in this city." While crispy appams and delicious coconut chutneys lure you to the family restaurant, the price rates are such that you are not left grumbling after relishing the southern coastal delicacies. So, the next time you have a craving for some authentic, delectable coastal food, you know where to head to. And rest assured that for once, coastal cuisine would imply more than just fish curry and chicken vindaloo.

Oriental Cuisine pilots Kokum brand in Pune

Bureau

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Oriental Cuisine Pvt Ltd (OC-PL), a south-based group that specialises in Asian cuisine, will be opening 14 restaurants in different formats in major Indian cities next year.

“At present, the company has 27 restaurants in eight different formats in Chennai, Kolkata and Bangalore. The company is piloting its new brand Kokum, specialising in southern coastal cuisine in Pune and will be taking this to other cities soon,” Vishwadeep Kuila, chief executive officer, Oriental Cuisines Pvt Ltd said. “People in India are now more open to different cuisines and there is huge scope for specialty restaurants, Kuila said. Kokum covers food from the southern coastal line right from Goa to Tamil Nadu, Mangalore, Kerala and Vishakapatnam. COO Regi Mathew and food consultant Chandri Bhat chose some villages in these regions to bring these cuisines for customers. The next Kokum will be opened in Chennai soon.

Besides Kokum, the company will be opening its Spanish resto bar Zara and patisserie French Loaf in Pune soon. The other formats that would be opened in Delhi, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Pune include Benjarong, Ente Keralam, Zara, Noodle House and Wang's Kitchen among others. OCPL raised PE funds from a Mauritius-based fund worth Rs 45 crore last year. Kuila said the company be investing around Rs 2 crore per new restaurant.