

and stated that Kaiyami had filed a false DSP besides initiating criminal prosecution. complaint against them before this

Amazing creativity in presenting rice delicacies

R. MOHAN | DC
CHENNAI:

Rice might seem the plainest of the staple grains but it converts magically into delicious dishes. Creativity in preparing rice dishes in a form to please the gourmets has been attempted splendidly by celebrity chef Rakesh Raghunathan.

Taking the story beyond just rice to make it much grander, Rakesh has roped in dedicated protectors of indigenous varieties of rice in the Sempulam Sustainable Solutions to present a whole meal made from rice as the primary ingredient.

The celebration of indigenous rice takes on a whole new meaning in the special menu crafted for patrons at the Wild Garden Café at the Amethyst from tomorrow to May 24, 10 am to 11 pm.

The Seeraga Samba Ramzan Nombu Kanji came first as a tribute to the Ramadan season just concluded. Adding an exotic touch to the starters was the Kuzhiadichan Koshari, a dish from Egypt that lends rice a whole new taste. And to keep the meat eaters busy with starters was the Kalanamak Bannur Mutton Pulao Arancini.

The main courses bring forth the real taste of indigenous rice varieties carefully nourished in modern envi-



Rakesh Raghunathan



The Food Festival is being organised with the goal of assisting and encouraging farmers to conserve and market their products, as well as raising awareness levels among the urban population

ronments. The Adukkunel Baked Mediterranean Rice demonstrated the universality of the staple grain while the Ananadanoor Sanna Thengai Pal Sadam was all south Indian in taste. The Karunguruval French Onion Risotto may have suffered only in comparison to the more popular dishes.

The meat side of the table may have been pleased with the Mullan Kalma Kongunaad Mutton Biryani while the Sivappu Kowni rice would have gone well with the Thai red curry and the chicken. The biryani was presented as an aromatic green pulao, coated with panko crumbs and deep fried and served with yoghurt onion rings

The highlight was yet to come even after a full meal as the time for sweets opened up, but all of them were made

spectacularly with rice as the base, as in the Navara Riz au lait (a French rice and milk pudding) with Espresso Caramel melding into a delightful offering. The mango Phirni tart also came from a base of Thooyamalli rice while the Thanga Samba backed up the standard south Indian fare of an Akkaraadisil.

The story behind the scenes is one of deep commitment to creating something special out of ingredients available locally, from farm to table as it were, but with a lot of thought put into the cooking as an art form. The people behind Sempulam have put in considerable amount of work into growing rare varieties of indigenous rice strains while Rakesh is well-known for bringing out the attractions of traditional south Indian cooking, as in



his celebrated temple prasadams food festivals.

The attention to detail in a couple of dishes might serve to bring out the art behind it all. Take the Kaiyari Samba Ven Pongal Arancini with spiced tomato dip, which comprises "Panko crumb crusted even Pongal balls deep fried with a cube of cheese and served with a gothsu / tomato dip. It is cooked with the exquisite tasting, calcium, magnesium and folic acid rice Kaiyari Samba rice from the dry region of Thiruvannamalai." As many as a dozen rice varieties were used in preparing the dishes for the special fest.

