

Corianders' colonial addition to the central city



Street in the city, just in from the corner of Manchester St, the new Coriander's Indian Restaurant is one of the city's most striking examples of colonial architecture. But it's the restaurant's interior ode to India which really sets the building apart.

It's the biggest, grandest Coriander's yet and while the first thing you see is the striking exterior façade, inside is a whole separate experience.

Featuring a unique Bollywood room seating groups of up to 50, two separate casual dining spaces, a unique tiger booth seating more intimate groups of eight, a contemporary bar and a separate entrance for takeaways, Coriander's has achieved what many seek to do – transforming a large space into intimate dining areas with their own unique ambience feeding into the overall design scheme. "Coriander's owner Amardeep Singh is such a great restaurateur who has developed a high quality brand," explains Steve Rosling, director of Element 17, the commercial fitout specialist behind the restaurant's interior. "We wanted to align the interior fitout

with the high quality of the restaurant it was representing."

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A plush upmarket space, the Bollywood room is separated from the other dining spaces by an intricate webbed trellis, allowing privacy without feeling closed in. With its marble tabletops, ornate leather chairs and striking tilework, the red-and-gold-themed room with its Bollywood collaged walls is popular for corporate functions, birthday parties, engagement celebrations and gatherings of anywhere from 20 to 50 people.

The Holy Grail of the neighbouring

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green-and-gold-themed dining space is the striking sandstone Taj Mahal carving which adorns the five-metre-long back wall, overlooking seating arrangements intended for groups of two to eight and the unique tiger booth with its visually magnificent painting.

"Steve Rosling from Element 17 really got our ideas," Coriander's owner Amardeep explains.

"A lot of designers want to design from their own ideas. Steve took what we wanted, incorporated his years of

experience designing commercial spaces and brought our ideas to life."



A separate bar space enables walk-ins waiting for a table have a modern, fun space to relax in while they wait. The adjacent dining space offers smaller seating arrangements of two to four. An open verandah which extends the full length of the front façade offers a popular option for the summer months, catering for

groups of 35 to 40 with LED lighting, fans and outdoor heating.

A separate takeaway space at the back of the premises makes pickup a breeze, with a car park available at the Welles St entrance.

"We are really proud of the finished product," Steve explains.

"To have such a huge area which maintains those atmospheric pockets is



And although the dinner menu is the same as the other venues, it won't be long before some additions are made. "We're looking forward to adding four to five new dishes to the menu especially for our city venue."

Coriander's also offers dining hours which are unique on this side of the world,

great. Between the mural artists, the Taj Mahal, the Bollywood collage and the tiling, there's so much interest within the greater space. You can go back two, three, four times and have a completely different experience each time."

■ Not just physical appeal

It's not only the striking interior that sets the St Asaph St venue – the fifth South Island Coriander's restaurant – apart in a crowded marketplace. At Coriander's in the city, a lunch menu is available from 11.30 to 4.30 every day and just \$9.90 gets you an exciting tapas meal. "We offer much more than just curries," Amar says. "We also offer a wide range of afternoon snacks, drinks and coffees."

The menu at Coriander's is extensive, with both vegetarian and non-vegetarian choices and ranges from starters and entrees through to a wide selection of main dishes. There are the popular Indian dishes of Bombay Chicken, Butter Chicken, Mango Chicken, Chicken Do Payaza and Prawns Jalfrezi.

There is also a wide range of seafood options such as the Goa Fish Malabari and Prawns Jalfreze and vegetarian options like Kadal Paneer and Mushroom Masala which offer great alternatives to meat dishes. Plus, there are side dishes and every type of naan you could think of.

There is also a growing demand for dining out," Amar says. "The city location offers ambience, with its elegant interior, use of bold colours, classy décor and unique artworks."

The new Coriander's in the city building, which features four commercial offices on the second floor, was completed by local build, design, renovation and project management firm Miles Construction, followed by a two-month fitout before

opening in November.

Never expecting the lunch menu to be such a hit, Amar was surprised when the restaurant began filling up more and more during the lunch hours every day, until there was a full house on the first Friday.

Later that day 60 guests filled the inner city venue, with everyone involved in the development coming together to celebrate its completion, and the following week 150 guests came along for the official opening.

"Since we started talking about this project, both Miles Yeoman and Craig Newbury from CPI were super excited. They were so passionate about making this building unique," Amar says.

CPI now has an office above the restaurant and they are regularly showing their clients through. Steve from Element 17, Nancy and all staff were fantastic, Amar says. Amar's friend from India, Avijet from Design Studio, also worked along Steve on the interior fitout, and Steve appreciated his ideas.

"We are just so thankful to absolutely everybody who played a role in this project," Amar explains.

"Every single person involved in the development had an important part to play and every single one of them deserves our thanks."

It's also proved an exciting new venue for Salsa Nights, and every Thursday dancers come along to dance. It's a great mid-week opportunity to gather some friends for

a couple of drinks. There's no entry fee, just arrive from 9.30pm or earlier if you wish to dine first, with music starting at 10pm.

Coriander's is an institution unto itself – a fine Indian restaurant which has been operating in Rolleston Square since April 2007. Now with five South Island stores, its popularity continues to outlast the years. Whether you are in Rolleston, Edgewater Village, Hanmer, Kaikoura and now the Christchurch CBD, you're promised a magical culinary experience with all the colour, culture and charm of India just a short drive from home.

"Good food, good service and value for money are key," Amar says.

"We are always welcoming and we do not compromise on our food."

To see the new Coriander's in the city visit 222 St Asaph St, open seven days from 11.30am to 1am, phone 365 5557 or visit www.corianders.co.nz to check out the menu.

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