



PHANTOM'S REPORT CARD FOR MASALA ART 88 "GOURMET GREATNESS"



Masala Art is hip Indian eatery known for its incredible spice library and full flavored clay oven dishes. For an unparalleled dining experience, sit at the spice bar and dig into a multi-course adventure cooked before your eyes.

ATMOSPHERE: 9

Masala Art in Needham is a hip Indian eatery where colored silk cushions light up the window seats and glowing lamps are carved into the wall. The lengthy blue lit bar is backed by mythical Indian images, and the curved spice bar offers a unique, interactive dinner education.

MENU: 10

The regional Indian cuisine uses unique blends from their spice library in a vast variety of vegetarian, chicken, and lamb dishes.

APPETIZERS: 9

For appetizers, pieces of firm mild cheese came batter fried and hot, as the perfect finger food for dipping in tangy mint coriander chutney. The sizzling tandoori shrimp combined incredible juiciness with terrific charcoal flavor, enhanced by a spritz of lemon plus grilled peppers and onions.

ENTREES: 10

Next, the barbequed lamb chops unleashed subtle spice and defied the bounds of tenderness, falling from the bone in grand succulence thanks to a 3-day yogurt marinade. The unforgettable coconut tamarind chicken smothered incredibly moist meat in creamy curry, souped up with chili heat, green beans, and onions.

DESSERT: 8

A sweet finale of unusual Indian bread pudding overlapped crunchy, sugared toast points in a luscious honey custard sauce, topped with pistachio ice cream.

PORTIONS: 8

Portions seem small, but the (complementary) saffron basmati rice and (optional) puffy baked breads are incredibly filling.

SERVICE: 8

Service came in pampering waves, with a thorough waiter followed by the water attendant and busboy.

CLEANLINESS: 8

Cleanliness scored well, although the dark carpet couldn't conceal every crumb.

VALUE: 10

Value soars at any price; appetizers average \$9, and entrees have an excellent range of \$11 to \$20. The daily lunch buffet is a steal at \$10.

LOCATION: 8

Masala Art has a lovely suburban address on Great Plain Ave. in Needham.