

BAWARCHI IN PLYMOUTH ROCKS

THIS NEW HOT SPOT IS ANYTHING
BUT PREDICTABLE.

BY PETER LILIENTHAL

When we arrived mid-evening on a Friday at Bawarchi Biryani Point, the then 4-month-old Indian bistro in the former Grand Szechuan digs in Plymouth, there were well over 20 people crowded into the compact entry area waiting for a table or takeout. Fortunately, we'd called ahead and placed our name on the waiting list or scoring a table for six would have been problematic that night.

Without any fanfare to speak of, Bawarchi has clearly become a go-to place for the Indian community, and the packed house is a testimony to some undeniably terrific food. What's even more mind-boggling is that this is a franchise operation with roots in Texas via India!

Most Indian menus tend to offer the same predictable repertoire of tandoori, korma, vindaloo, and naan. Not the case here. We found twists and turns from northern to southern Indian, dosas, an assortment of Indian Chinese items, and numerous daily specials.

Our biggest challenge was figuring out an ordering strategy, as the busy servers didn't have time to walk us through the many unknown items and comparative details. A good example is the biryani category with more than 16 different versions and main ingredients ranging from chicken and ground goat to *avakai* pickle and "horse gram" sauce. We opted to try the Natukodi fry biryani that was described as a house favorite. This Friday-only dish was everything a good biryani should be—fluffy basmati rice, tender pieces of chicken, and a potpourri of seasonings that includes coriander leaves, garam masala, and turmeric. However, I have no idea whether it's close to the standout in its category, there are so many.

Dosas comprise another lengthy com-



pilation. For this sampling, we opted for onion dosa—a large, flaky crepe baked with onions and served with bowls of coconut, ginger, and tomato chutneys plus lentil soup. The sides offered a range of flavors that varied between sweet and pleasantly piquant. This was definitely a crowd pleaser.

Curry-style entrees are served in small bowls and tend to be light on proteins (and if you want rice, you have to order it separately). Nevertheless, all three of the items we tasted possessed a wonderful depth of flavor. The best was the mutton korma—pieces of tender goat simmered in the classic creamy Mughlai gravy.

We also quite enjoyed the *royyala vepudu*, fried shrimp served in a spicy

onion-laden sauce, and the richly flavorful chicken tikka masala. I would also very highly recommend the yummy chicken hakka noodles—a generous helping of smoky stir-fried noodles mingled with lime, egg, onion, and chicken.

There are a couple of separate dining areas, comfortable vinyl booths, and movable faux marble tables to accommodate the animated crowd. I was told that things tend to be a bit less frenzied on weeknights. Nonetheless, there's a reason that the Indian community is flocking to Bawarchi, this was definitely one of the better sub-continent meals I've had in the Twin Cities. 187 Cheshire Ln. N., Ste. 100, Plymouth, 763-777-8140, bawarchi-biryani.com ■