



An important objective of the UAE is to make Abu Dhabi a multicultural city; an epicentre of international customs and cuisine. Ushna, in the Qaryat Al Beri souk between the bridges, certainly plays its part, though perhaps not in the way originally intended by its owners.

This 'contemporary north Indian' restaurant looks and feels like it belongs in the Moroccan city of Marrakech rather than the Middle East or even Northern India.

Yet, this is no bad thing. Instead, Ushna reflects the gradual migration of reputable restaurants and hip hang out spots from the island to new locations, and between the bridges certainly seems to be a hot favourite. This is a world away from your average Indian eatery, so you certainly won't find pseudo-Indian offerings such as a king prawn balti or chicken tikka masala here.

Ushna's polished and impeccable décor is echoed in both its menu and impressive beverages list which focuses largely on the New World, with a number of offerings from across Australia, South Africa and California. In addition, the refreshingly knowledgeable staff are more than happy to provide advice and suggest what drink would complement your choice of food. At first, the some-

Diners in Abu Dhabi can now satisfy their cravings for high-quality Indian food at **Ushna** restaurant. **Scott Snowden** tucked into an exotic treat in the UAE's capital

what limited options of French and Italian reds was a little disappointing, but after a lengthy discussion and a leap of faith, it was successfully proved that, in fact, a slightly 'heavier' South Australian beverage would suitably enhance the flavours of the food.

One visit to Ushna is certainly not enough to appreciate its extensive menu. Some of the highlights include the starters *machli tawa fry* and the *resha galouti*. The former is a plate of hammour cooked on a griddle and marinated in lemon juice, mustard oil and spices, served with salad.

The latter consists of very traditional-tasting and tender shredded lamb patties and seasoned yoghurt, smoked with screw pine nuts and is, as the menu explains, inspired by the customary *galouti* kebab (the term *galouti* actually means melt-in-the-mouth).

Main course suggestions include the *gosht seekh kebab*: a skewered

kebab of lamb flavoured with cardamom, cloves, ginger, coriander and cinnamon — similar in principle to the *resha galouti* starter, so don't order both — and the *murgh malai tikka*. This is a creamy kebab of chicken breast, flavoured with traditional spices, cheddar cheese, coriander, green chilli and ginger.

As you'd expect, a multitude of rice dishes and accompanying breads are also on offer as well as a number of vegetarian options.

To top off this taste sensation, the only option is to opt for Ushna's sweet dreams — the chef's selection of homemade ice cream and sorbet, typically including apple, mandarin or lemon sorbet and vanilla, date, coconut or ginger ice cream. It's just the right amount for two to share.

The only issue preventing a perfect score is that there's only one gentleman's bathroom, which can result in a little nightclub-style queuing if the restaurant is busy.

What we liked: The staff, the venue, the view outside, the food, everything.

What we didn't like: The minimal facilities

Dh270 for a meal for two
Ushna, Qaryat Al Beri souk, between the bridges
02-558 1769