



The Sunny Side
Up dessert at
Savor, Mumbai,
featuring multi-
cultural
and
fruit cream

rough and chunky, unlike the creamy smooth versions we've been used to. There are goat brain and pork belly tacos, crunchy and sharp *esquites* with charred corn kernels and *cotija* cheese, *torrejas* (a Mexican version of a French toast) and even *menudo* (the classic, slightly spicy tripe soup).

Despite the fact that Italian has always been well-received in India, few high-end specialty Italian restaurants have come from outside starred hotels in recent years.

Cin Cin in Mumbai marks a refreshing change to the trend, due in large part to the vivacious Karyna Bajaj's vision of a fun, casual space that doesn't compromise on food and drink. Bright colours, a buzzing in-out bar and a display kitchen give the space a distinct liveliness. The curated wine flights are served in stemless glasses, circumventing the snobbishness of wine drinking. *Cicchetti* – traditional Venetian bar

snacks – like the spicy *salsiccia di Calabria* and smoked salmon with a piquant dill sauce pair well with the wines. And then there's the divine *tomino*: melted Brie and sautéed mushroom, flavoured with truffle oil for something quite earthy and indulgent.

Sly Granny in Bengaluru can best be described as cuisine-agnostic – the menu is a patchwork of globally popular dishes reimagined with local ingredients. It's also an unusually quirky setting: Ostensibly the home of a grandmother revelling in a second life, it's filled with bric-a-brac suggestive of a dual life. A framed print of a bare-torsoed Arnold Schwarzenegger with pineapples is mounted on a wallpaper of the same design. On the plate, a rich pork pastrami taco, meaty lamb *koftas* with pesto, chorizo-stuffed *kulchas* and a classic *gambas al ajillo* speak of the varying culinary influences on its menu.

In 2018, it's not just what we're eating that's changed dramatically; it's where we're eating too. The restaurant still dominates, but the proliferation of pop-ups has opened up alternate spaces. Fixed menus are now a thing of the past. This flexibility has allowed **Savor**, a permanent pop-up space run by former banker Kanu Gupta and Chef Sushil Multani in Mumbai, to flourish. A staircase from the kitchen leads to a dining room that seats about 35. Here, a dinner might be inspired by Murakami's writing, contemporary Sindhi cuisine, an unconventional single malt, or comprise of a nine-course dessert menu.

So, does all this mean that it's finally time for a Michelin guide for India? The dining scene has improved dramatically and we're not as far behind the curve as we used to be, particularly when it comes to service and restaurant design. It may well be that in another five years, my opening line to such a piece will be: Indian diners have never had it so good before.