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Virginia Miller · Follow
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Copra's rasam poori (Photo Credit: Virginia Miller)

For a decade I've been raving about chef Srijith "Sri" Gopinathan's cooking, even before he became the only Indian chef in the U.S. with a two Michelin-starred restaurant for Indian fine dining at Taj Campton Place, San Francisco. I dined there after he started in 2008, when he started showing his range in his Spice Route menu, as he garnered a Michelin star, and again as he moved to two stars. Here, more than anywhere in the nation, I could experience the level of creative Indian cuisine I've relished for 23 years visiting London — and long to dig into in India. Then chef Sri opened Ettan in Palo Alto with Ayesha Thapar in the brutal year of 2020. I drove down a couple of times to write about it over 2020 and 2021. Chef's food was, again, delicious, more casual, still inspired. But a good 45 minutes drive south of SF, I wished I could visit more often. I was thrilled to hear of Thapar and Gopinathan back in SF, taking over the former Dosa on Fillmore to open Copra Restaurant (named after a coconut's dried flesh, elemental in southern coastal Indian food) focused on the coastal cuisines of India's southern states, including chef Sri's home state of Kerala and Tamil Nadu, where he grew up. There are also influences from neighboring island nation Sri Lanka (a delicious hopper!) Copra's crab curry with egg appam (Photo Credit: Virginia Miller)

My partner, Dan ("The Renaissance Man"), and I walked into Copra on a Tuesday night in March, not long after the restaurant's February 18th opening. It was packed and buzzy. It did my heart good to see the lofty space alive again, and especially good to see its upscale-casual Indian history remain intact. I regularly dined at Dosa on Fillmore since first attending its media opening, already a longtime fan of the original Dosa in the Mission, until it sadly closed in 2020. The long bar from Dosa days remains but otherwise, Copra looks completely different, including the upstairs mezzanine with fireplace. The Schoos Design-designed space is now white, bright and downright tropical. Think leafy plants and vines.

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Founding The Perfect Spot in 2007, Virginia is World's 50 Best Restaurants' Chairperson, judging & writing/editor at 60+ publications on dining & drink globally

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