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L.A.'s Restaurants Are Losing Business Amid the Hollywood Strikes

Inside Anomaly SF, the Intimate Tasting-Menu Restaurant Funded by a Kickstarter



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"India is one country with so many countries inside it. There's so much going on," he said. "The Deep South Indian food is foreign for even North Indians. We're on a mission to actually teach people and show people, what is the difference?"

He has been dreaming of opening this restaurant for nearly two decades. Last summer, Gopinathan left Taj Campton Place, the San Francisco hotel's restaurant where he had spent 15 years and earned two Michelin stars, to focus on Ettan—which opened in Palo Alto in February 2020 and received a mention in the California Michelin Guide—and opening Copra. Leaving, taking the next step in his career, was natural.

"I think I overstayed at Campton Place in many ways," he said. "I've never for one moment felt uncomfortable making the change."

While he does hope to open another tasting menu restaurant before he retires, a little gem that will be Michelin star-worthy, he's pleased to focus on a more casual style of service for now, one that can showcase a very specific and distant cuisine.

"We are in the process of creating a temple for South Indian cuisine in the United States," he said.

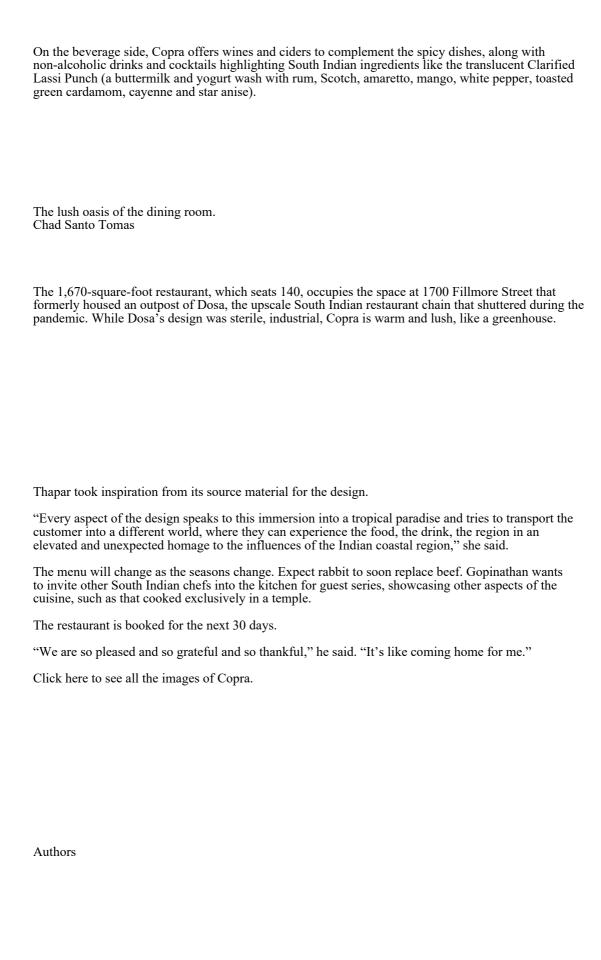
Cauliflower and Green Apple Curry Chad Santo Tomas

At Copra, the menu begins with kadi or "bites" such as Oscetra caviar served with warm Kallappam, a fermented rice and coconut pancake found in Kerala, and small plates like slow-cooked octopus, chargrilled bone marrow with chukka masala, and a sharable chutney and achaar (pickle) spread featuring unconventional ingredients like tamarind, ghost chilis and wild gooseberries. Larger plates include a braised lamb shank and a cauliflower-green apple curry, plus plenty of seaside dishes like homestyle crab curry and black cod cooked in banana leaves.

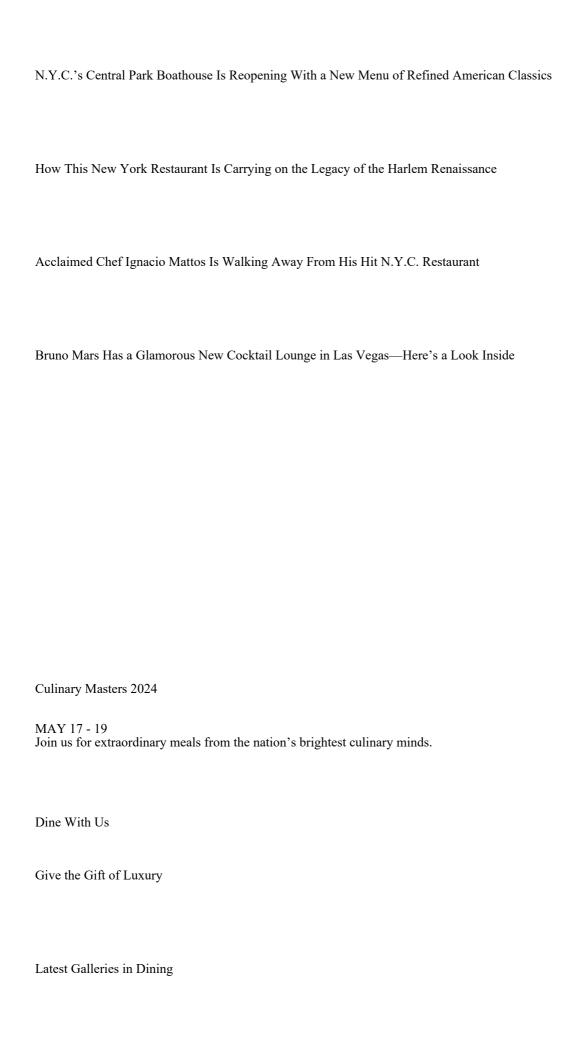
Gopinathan employs 10 varieties of rice at Copra and treats them all differently. Depending on the grains' shape and color, they may be boiled, steamed or fermented.

Copra is the second project between him and restaurateur Ayesha Thapar, who is from North India originally.

"Just reading the menu is educational because there's a lot of local terminology," Thapar said. "We didn't dumb the menu down so people would understand the dish. You could be a little bit intimidated when you read the menu for the first time. These are very unfamiliar words. Even for some Northern Indians, they are tricky words!"



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