

DISCOVER THE FINEST INDIAN CUISINE IN ORKNEY

Introducing...

DIL SE

INDIAN RESTAURANT

EVEN before Dil Se opened its doors on Friday, the Indian restaurant was exceptionally busy, with hundreds of people looking to try Orkney's newest dining experience.

Making a remarkable first impression, the restaurant, which can be found on Bridge Street, in the heart of Kirkwall, was completely full on both Friday, Saturday and Monday, as our picture shows!

Dil Se can accommodate up to 70 people over two floors, with the upper floor also available to hire for larger groups and private functions. But even with this capacity, every table was always full or awaiting a booking. At least as many people had to be turned away as the number who did get to sample the exquisite cuisine.

Dil Se's owner Anwar Hussain, who has been involved in the restaurant industry since childhood, said: "We hadn't even flipped the signs on the door when people started coming in and sitting down or asking for takeaways."

As the first night wore on, they became so busy that they eventually had to stop serving takeaways in order to concentrate on the customers in front of them.

"We are primarily a restaurant and our main focus is on the people sitting in," says Anwar. "The demand for takeaways was so high that things were taking a bit longer than usual. Even though some people were told it would

restaurant suppliers.

As well as traditional Indian dishes, curries such as tikka masala and vindaloo and appetisers like bhajis and somosas, Dil Se is offering a range of delicacies and chef's specials. Most main dishes are available with a choice of chicken, lamb, beef, seafood or vegetarian, accompanied by a wide selection of side orders and sundries. There should be something to suit everyone, with future menus due to evolve according to customer demands.

"The menu has gone down very well, especially the healthy options and the discounted meals," says Anwar.

"Their design is very user-friendly, with descriptions that are true to the tastes and a strength guide next to each meal so no one needs to ask how hot a dish is. This speeds up the ordering process and inspires confidence in the customer about what they're ordering."

So far, Dil Se's best sellers include the option to buy two meals together for a discounted price and the Chef's Special Platters on the takeaway menu, which include options priced between £6.75 and £10.45 for a complete meal, good value at 20% off the normal price.

Until the restaurant's drinks licence is transferred to the new management, which will hopefully be by the end of June, they are unable to sell alcohol on the premises. Until then,

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be an hour, or more, before we could provide their takeaway they said they were willing to wait! Eventually we just had to stop until the restaurant calmed down.

"All our food is cooked fresh to order, not pre-prepared or reheated. It may take a little longer to get your meal, but the quality should make up for it."

If you are told that there's a long wait for takeaways, Dil Se staff will take your phone number so that they can call you when the food is ready. This way, if it takes less time than estimated, your food won't be cold by the time you collect it. Alternatively, you can arrange for a taxi to deliver your takeaway direct to your door, a service that only costs £2.50 in the Kirkwall area.

The restaurant's meat, vegetables and fruit are being purchased locally, through Orkney suppliers, but all the herbs and spices used to give the food its unique, authentic Indian flavour are specially imported from India and Bangladesh by specialist Indian

customers are invited to bring their own wine to accompany their meal and the restaurant will provide cork screws and glassware that's necessary. A wide selection of soft drinks is available to buy.

Despite being busy, Dil Se's welcoming atmosphere was evident throughout the weekend. No one minded waiting as their food was prepared and once they had finished their meals, a number of people were content to sit for a while, enjoying their wine and the restaurant's ambience.

"Aside from the food, I think the atmosphere is what is going to keep attracting people to the restaurant," Anwar continues. "We want to provide a different, more lively environment where people can socialise, as well as eat."

"I hope to show that the concept of a contemporary restaurant with modern furnishings, fittings and up-market service works well in Orkney."

"So far, people have said that it's a real treat to see service like this. The food is going down



very well and we've had no complaints on the sit-in side. The first thing a lot of people have said when they come in is 'wow'."

Anwar and his team of hardworking staff may not have been able to rest all weekend, but they believe it was worth the effort to see so many customers leave feeling full and very happy with their meals.

"We even had some customers who were here on the first night coming back on the second, so we must have made a good impression!" says Anwar.

Jessica Hirschy and Ross MacDonald, from Virginia in the USA, were spending two weeks on holiday in Orkney and chose to eat at Dil Se on both Sunday and Monday.

"We enjoy Indian food back home and thought we would come into Dil Se to see how it compared," says Ross. "We were pleasantly surprised and decided to come back for a second night in a row!"

"The atmosphere is very nice, the service is good and the waiters are great!" adds Jessica. "Our meals were delicious, mild if you want it, and hot enough to make you sweat if you want something hot and spicy!"

"We also liked that the restaurant is open later than most," concludes Ross. "We're leaving today, so we won't be in tonight, but if we ever come back to Orkney...!"

Local teacher Chris Giles from Deerness was also in Dil Se on Monday night. He said: "I really like the decor, it's been transformed from what it was before and looks very attractive. The

food is really very good and I enjoyed it very much. The restaurant already seems to be very popular. I think it will be a great success."

Anwar says: "I want to thank everyone who came along to our opening weekend, especially all the local people, for their support and custom. Also thank you to all the businesses and professional clientele who came in. We had a good mix of people and everyone gave us a good welcome."

Anwar explains that the name of the restaurant, Dil Se, means 'from the heart'. In Indian culture, the words are most commonly used when describing a mother who cooks for the family, bringing everyone together to eat. If the food is good, then everyone knows that all is well and that the food was cooked from their mother's heart.

"Food brings everyone together," says Anwar. "People chat while they eat and food can open up many conversations, areas that might not otherwise be talked about."

"Eating out is a good thing and it can be healthy as well!"

"However, it's definitely best to book your table in advance. We had to decline so many people service at the weekend because they hadn't booked and we expect to be busy throughout the summer. If you don't want to be disappointed, booking is essential."

Dil Se is open from 4pm until 11pm, Sunday to Thursday, and 4pm until midnight on Friday and Saturday. It is open every day except Christmas Day.

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Restaurant and Takeaway • 7 Bridge Street • Kirkwall • Telephone 875242

OPEN Sun-Thurs 4.00pm-11.00pm • Fri-Sat 4.00pm-midnight • Every day except Christmas Day