



'Sagar' on King Street

## SAGAR

*I was very pleased to be taken to Sagar, the Indian vegetarian restaurant on King Street, for four reasons. Firstly, I had never been to an Indian vegetarian before, quite an admission but there it is. Secondly, and due to the aforementioned lapse, it wouldn't have been on my radar as a destination. Thirdly, the food was very tasty, satisfying and novel to me. And fourthly, I had a very good time!*

As always with Indian restaurants, I prefer to go in a crowd. That way, a number of dishes can be ordered, placed in the centre of the table and shared, maximising the taste experience. As it was on this early evening weekday, as five of us were led into the restaurant on the recommendation of a hefty rugby player who had already tested the Sagar menu on several occasions before. He animatedly told us that Sagar was a South Indian 'Dosa' restaurant, not a curry house, and it specialised in 'Udupi' cuisine from Karnataka. Well, the rest

of us nodded, the proof of the pudding would be in the eating!

As a first time visitor I didn't feel equipped to order with confidence, so was happy to let our 'host' discuss the menu with the very helpful and smiling waiter. The waiter was himself from South India and was happy to explain the ingredients that went into any particular dish.

Whilst the ordering was going on I focused on the décor. The restaurant seemed very clean and bright. The walls were covered in a blondwood with what appeared to be matching tables, and the minimal decoration of brass figurines inset into the walls gave the impression of style and opulence. I took a look at their take-away menu and noticed they were advertising a lunch special for £5.25 and a take-away lunch box for £3.25 which both looked to be great value.

The starters soon arrived and looked interesting and inviting. We had varieties of idlis (steamed rice dumplings), vadas (lentil doughnuts), Upma (wheat) and Puri all prepared with combinations of indian spices, chutneys and other ingredients – you will have to read the menu or ask the waiter! A recurrent theme on the menu is sambar and coconut chutney. As I understand it, sambar is a dal made of lentils which is used widely in South India.

For the main course, we were presented with a couple of familiar sounding curry dishes but in a vegetarian format (kurma and masala) but, as far as I

was concerned, of real note were the variations of filled dosas (rice and lentil pancakes) and utthappams (rice and lentil pizzas) with different toppings which tasted simply great.

I was the only one in our party who had dessert. I chose the gulab jammun, described as home made condensed milk rolled into balls, deep fried and soaked in sugar syrup. I hadn't had one of these since I was a child and when counting calories was of little importance! Our final surprise was the pleasantly modest bill. Now inducted to the vegetarian cooking of South India and aware of idlis, vadas, dosas and utthappams, I certainly intend to return for more!

*by Harry Smith, May 2009*

### Sagar Ratings

**Category:**

*Indian Vegetarian Restaurant*

**Ambience:**

*Very pleasant, light and airy atmosphere*

**Service:**

*Helpful, courteous and smiling*

**Food Quality:**

*Good*

**Value for Money:**

*Very Good*

**Overall Rating:**

*Definitely worth a visit*