



Press Release

Tamarai restaurant and bar launched with an exclusive preview party hosted by **Tatler** to celebrate **Jimmy Choo's** 10th Anniversary. This was followed by **Sir Paul Smith's** dinner hosted in honour of GQ Magazine editor, **Dylan Jones**. The **Tamarai Gallery Launch** saw guest of honour **Meera Syal** read poems from iconic artist **Satish Gupta's** latest book, while Gupta painted to the accompaniment of a flute recital. Gupta's specially commissioned collection – 'A Floating World' was the first exhibition at Tamarai followed by Miki Yamanouchi's Water Lilies – both showcasing the lotus flower – Tamarai's design inspiration.

Celebrity parties and events aside, first and foremost Tamarai is a serious restaurant. Based at 167 Drury Lane, Covent Garden, London serves Pan Asian cuisine and can seat 110 for lunch and dinner with a bar capacity of 300. Rare among London restaurants, guests dining at Tamarai can able to enjoy a late night license and complimentary parking in the building.

Concept

The lotus, a symbol of the sun, of creation and rejuvenation is considered to be the first flower to appear on earth and is intrinsic to the folklore of some of the world's ancient civilizations. Symbolising the eight-fold path to enlightenment in Buddhism, as well as in Hindu mythology, the lotus is a form that has inspired art and emotion through the ages and is the design and cuisine inspiration for TAMARAI (*from thamarai – chettinad/tamil for lotus*).

The southern Indian region of Chettinad is located at the coastal line of the Bay of Bengal and is the name for a group of villages where the Chettiars, a prosperous banking and trading community live. In the 19th Century the Chettiars ventured to South and South East Asia for trade. There was a flow and assimilation of culture that has survived the passage of time. Not surprisingly, the Lotus is one such enduring symbol. The fact that almost every part of this incredible plant is edible, contributes in no small measure for it being a leitmotif for all that is good. From the roots to the stem and the seeds, all have found their way into the culinary lexicon of Asia, leading the Tamarai chefs on the Lotus Trail from Chettinad to Burma, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia and Vietnam - the countries that the Chettiars traded with.

Manish Mehrotra, head chef

Tamarai's head chef, Manish Mehrotra has traveled and trained extensively within these regions and has brought with him specialists in each cuisine including a master chef from Chettinad and dim sum chefs.

The menu features dishes such as *Sweet Chilli Lotus Root, Smoked Salmon Thayar Satham, Soft Shell Crab, Duck Spring Roll, Grilled Chicken and Mango Ginger Salad, Curry Leaf Tiger Prawns, Thai Green Curry, Jasmine Rice, Seasonal Fruit Satay, Roasted Sesame and White Chocolate Semi Freddo.*



tamarai

Wine List by Charles Metcalfe

Charles Metcalfe is one of the best-known, most spontaneous and amusing wine critics in Britain. He presented drinks and occasionally food items for 12 years as one of the Richard-and-Judy team on the ITV programme, 'This Morning', and was drinks expert for 'Great Food Live' (UIK Food) and 'Taste Today' (Taste TV CFN). He has also presented many TV wine and food programmes. He is co-chairman of the International Wine Challenge, the world's biggest wine competition, held annually in London, and was one of the founders of Wine International magazine.

"The new Tamarai list spans the globe, from the heart of classical Europe to the further fringes of the New World with grapes from Albariño to Zinfandel. The wines have been chosen to partner chef Manish's creative menu of pan-Asian dishes, with an eye to current economic circumstances as well. So there are more crisp aromatic whites than blockbuster reds, and plenty of reasonably-priced wines to help guests enjoy their evening without worrying too much about the financial aftermath. And if they want to celebrate, we've plenty of excellent champagnes (don't ignore the pink English fizz either!)" says Charles Metcalfe.

Design

Tamarai is designed by Studio US (one of India's leading restaurant design firms) with architectural and local support by Design LSM UK (Pied a'Terre, Galvin Bistrot de Luxe, Apt 195, Carluccios). The spiritual form of the Lotus combines with the healing energies of crystals and both elements are explored in imaginative renditions in the interiors. From the fibre optic lotus that creates the first visual impact on entering to the hundreds of subtly embedded crystals - the lotus is dramatically and covertly omnipresent.

The lotus pattern cut in leather on the fascia of the bar counter embodies the spirit of Tamarai in more than just a design reference. Like the munificent flower, Tamarai transforms into multiple modes and magical moods at different times. A specially created lighting design enables Tamarai (like the white lotus that blooms at night) to metamorphose through the day, offering a beautiful spectacle throughout its transformation. Designed as hybrid hub - it is first and foremost a serious restaurant but also during non restaurant hours becomes a perfect choice for business meetings, launches and screenings. From an art gallery, a lazy lounge, to a post 11 pm late night bar, Tamarai re-invents itself seamlessly. Delhi based global accessory brand Janavi has worked on the crystal embellished upholstery and sheer curtains and also designed the stunning outfits for the staff.

Entertainment

Multiple LCD screens form an integral part of the interior design. Specially commissioned video content created by video artist Jean Pierre Dangmann add another dimension to the Tamarai experience. From soothing and healing ambience images to quirky and contemporary club mixes, the music and visual are fine tuned to match the moods. Visiting DJs and guest VJs and other live entertainment acts will feature regularly as part of the Tamarai late night schedule.

Tamarai is Old World Hospitality's second London restaurant after Chor Bizarre, Mayfair. The company operates India's largest food and entertainment centre as well as 11 restaurants in New Delhi.



Some Press Excerpts

*Awarded Best Late Night Bar in U.K. **Theme Bar & Restaurant Awards 2008***

*I guess what flabbergasted me was that a place as chic and hip as this multi-functional venue should have such an excellent kitchen serving the best pan-fusion food I've had in London. Everyone should eat here at least once. **E.S. Magazine***

*Awarded Best Wine List in London 2007. **The Independent on Sunday***

*Tamarai is London's latest Pan Asian restaurant mixing Chinese, Thai, Chettinad, Malaysian, Singaporean, Vietnamese and Burmese dishes. One of London's hippest venues. It is, and we can't stress this strongly enough, hot. **G.Q.***

*Hybrid bars are the way ahead and now the new and very swish Tamarai rolls them all into one: bar, restaurant, gallery, club, screening room and there's even a massive free car park. **Elle***

*Yum and again Yum... there's real attention to detail on the menu front all around. **Metro***

*The best cocktail & wine list we have seen in ages. **Time Out***