

Meet Chef Olaf Niemeier from Germany, whose culinary creations have been likened to works of art



CHEF OLAF NIEMEIER has designed the new menu for Fusion 9

Picasso of pots and pans

NANDITA RAVI

DECCAN CHRONICLE

Such is the brilliance of his culinary creations that he's known as Chef Picasso in the culinary world. In fact, Chef Olaf Niemeier needs no introduction for those familiar with fine fusion dining. In Chennai for the first time, this culinary wizard has created a wonderful blend for Fusion 9's exciting food festival to be held until August 29.

Explaining how he earned the moniker 'Picasso', he says, "An American food writer and I were discussing fusion cuisine when he pointed out that Picasso's techniques and mine ran parallel. Picasso had moved classic art to a new level. He was all about distorted lines and unusual abstracts. In a similar fashion, I like to take traditional dishes and give it my own interpreta-



tion; turning them into modern, fused opposites."

The festival will see a fine amalgamation of Eastern and Western cuisines in 25 specially crafted dishes. "I have designed the entire menu using fresh and local produce. Mille-feuille of methi chicken, duck cappuccino, marinated Indian murrel fillet, Bulgogi marinated roast tenderloin,



orange noir samosa, coconut saffron cream brulee with manomaki, tequila mousse, chocolate rasmalai ginger terine - are all part of the special menu that I have created for Fusion 9," the chef explains.

India is this German chef's favourite culinary destination. "I have worked in Europe, USA, China, Taiwan,

Hong Kong, and Bangkok but my favourite is India. My whole cooking style has undergone a transformation with Indian ingredients, south-east Asian spices infused with modern and traditional European cooking. I love cooking and eating Indian food," he remarks.

A self-confessed lover of curry leaf, Olaf says it's his favourite Indian ingredient to work with. "I love working with curry leaves and any kind of Indian spice," he says. The talented chef however is no stranger to India, having worked here in the past.

In fact, Olaf Niemeier began to combine his experience in Asian and Indian cooking with traditional western cuisine during his time in the country. However, it is his first visit to Chennai. "I am looking forward to getting to know the local cuisine," he says excitedly.