

CITY EXPRESS

Chennai, Monday, 3 September, 2012

PLAY TIME

Tamil Play Achu Asal by Augusto at 6:45 pm at Mylapore Fine Arts Club. For more details contact 24997755



Lifestyle

NOT A SIP of water for this chef

Celebrated German chef Olaf Niemeier has stayed off the 'elixir of life' for four decades, and opts for coke, beer & coffee instead

Goldie Hawn, Bill Gates and the Queen of England has an ever-growing fan base around the world.

In Chennai for a fusion fest that began recently at Fusion 9 on Sterling Road, the culinary expert has a reputation for art on plate. So it is little wonder that he is often referred to in his field as simply, Chef Picasso.

Asked about how his pal-

ette for fusion cuisine came about, and his story begins at the spice market in Hong Kong. Chef Olaf takes a drink from his coke glass and explains, "That was my fourth posting in a different country and I wasn't employed to

cook oriental cuisine." He adds, "Once I got to experimenting with the spices, I started to use them in everything." Curry leaves make for a wonderful addition in nut chutney and ginger offers a good pungency to Japanese

marinade, for instance. But it must be a complicated category of cuisine for first time customers to grasp, yes? "That's I why I don't like to use the word 'fusion' too often," he admits: "It often leads my customers to 'confusion,'" the culinary master adds with a laugh.

"Instead, I tell people that I don't play with cuisines, I play with spices." Think odd combinations like the Duck cappuccino for a starter with samosas on the side, a rack of lamb cooked tandoori style and to top it off, a Tequila mousse! Now that's thinking out of the box.

Interestingly enough, Chef Olaf — until a few years ago — had an Asian restaurant set up in Germany — com-

plete with a tandoori oven shipped from India.

He reveals proudly, "We even won the best Asian restaurant in Germany," and adds, "this was ironic, because we didn't have a single Asian chef!"

The food beckons at this point and our time is nearly up.

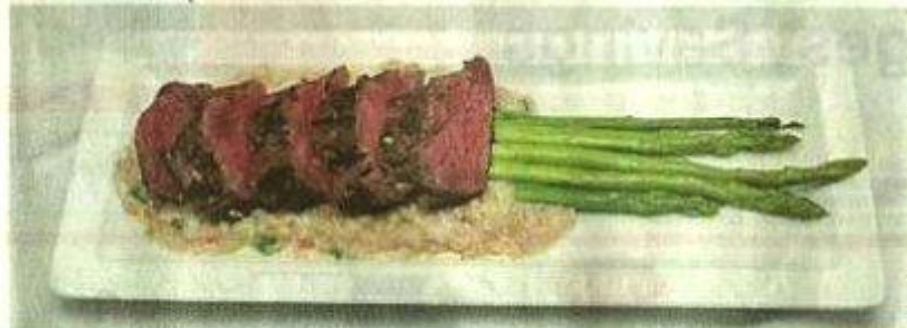
But before we finish, one had to ask — just what gave this chef his aversion to water? He responds, "Fish swim in water, they mate in water, they even excrete in water." Then points to my glass. "Do you still want to drink that?"

— Sonali Shenoy



He doesn't smile for photos. He's a German chef with a penchant for Asian spices. Most bewildering of all, he doesn't take too kindly when the waiter offers him a glass of water. "I haven't had a sip of water in the last 40 years," says Chef Olaf Niemeier. He goes on, "Well I drink coke and coffee instead." He adds, "Instead of beer that I'd like to drink at the end of the day, I have apple juice sometimes— just to make my wife happy." And apparently, his doctor says, all is well.

The fusion chef extraordinaire, who has cooked for the Eikes of Richard Gere,



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