

# The Telegraph India

Sunday, April 26, 2015

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## The ice creamwallahs

### - Meet the Pabrai's — Calcutta's new-age ice creamwallahs



Pabrai's Fresh and Naturelle at 28 Sarat Bose Road, opposite Samilton Hotel. Serves best between 11am and 1am

Summer 2015 just got cooler with the city's latest ice cream parlour — on Sarat Bose Road.

The parlour happens to be the second stand-alone venture in the city by Pabrai's Fresh & Naturelle, known for their naturally-flavoured, no-preservative, no-artificial ice creams.

So park yourself on one of the colourful stools and go slurping on their popular flavours such as Nalen Gur, Paan and South Indian Filter Coffee. Or try some of the recent innovations such as Jackfruit, Mascarpone Cheese, Fig-and-Pinenut and Black Sesame.

Muskmelon, Watermelon, Chikoo, Orange, Toffee, Bubblegum, Cinnamon, Ginger Honey, Wasabi, Chandan, Masala Tea and Lemongrass are some of the other flavours available here. All flavours are available in 500ml takeaway packs too. The ice creams are priced between Rs 39-plus and Rs 119-plus per scoop, and the Sundaes cost Rs 151-plus.

Okay, we haven't told you the best deal. The shop is open till 1am! So, now you know where to find your midnight scoop.

*Ramona Sen*

**The iconic:** Hillary Clinton loved it. Virat Kohli had it and then got it packed for Sachin Tendulkar. Sonia Gandhi and children Rahul and Priyanka relished it. Countless Calcuttans swear by the brand's iconic Nalen Gur ice cream, introduced in 2008. "I would like to be



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remembered as the man who invented Nalen Gur Ice Cream,” laughs Anuvrat Pabrai. No wonder it was the only other nomination in the Sweets category for Chowzter’s Tastiest Fast Feasts in Asia Awards, 2015, along with Sancha Ice Cream of the Taj ice cream brand from Mumbai.



**The classic:** Paan ice cream. “One of the most difficult ice creams to make,” says Anuvrat. Why, you ask? There are 17 different ingredients that need to be carefully balanced against each other, with none taking the upper hand. The Jagannathi leaf he uses is found in the suburbs of Calcutta. Its shelf-life is just a week.



(L-R) The Pabrais — Nishant, Anuvrat and Kunal

Following in his parents’ footsteps, Kunal Pabrai has become one of the leading men behind Pabrai’s Fresh & Naturelle Ice Creams — Calcutta’s largest “concept” ice cream venture that has spread its flavours across 22 outlets in 10 cities in India. t2 met the 29-year-old entrepreneur at his Ballygunge residence-cum-office for a chat.

**Why ice cream?**

After all we are ice creamwallahs! Making ice creams is what we have been doing for a long, long time.



Bubblegum

at Tulika's on Russell Street.

#### **When and how did you start?**

In 1985 my father [Anuvrat Pabrai] opened an ice cream parlour on Russell Street and named it Tulika's, after my mother. In 2008 Tulika's had to be shut down because of financial and union-related problems. Just one year earlier, I had left my job at Ernst & Young in Bangalore and returned to Calcutta to work on creating ice creams using natural ingredients. So when Tulika's shut shop, I began Pabrai's Fresh & Naturelle.

#### **Wasn't it risky to start another ice cream brand immediately after the Tulika's debacle?**

Yes, it was a very difficult time for us. But we had the concept ready and I was determined to give it a try. Luckily, in the first six months we got a turnover of over Rs 13 lakh!

#### **How has the journey been so far?**

It has been a phenomenal journey. There has been a tremendous growth. My brother Nishant also joined me.

#### **Your favourite ice cream as a child?**

The Hot Chocolate Fudge Sundae served in a beer mug with tripple scoops of ice creams

#### **We hear your ice cream has a lot to do with your love life?**

Yes, that's true. My wife is the only person who used to buy institutional packs of ice creams for domestic consumption! She used to buy ice creams in gallons. I had to marry her *(laughs)*.

#### **Which ice cream takes care of your midnight craving?**

Rich Chocolate Brownie.

#### **Fave international brand...**

Haagen-Dazs.

#### **Favourite ice cream parlour...**

It's Haagen-Dazs's own parlour at Champs-Elysees in Paris.

#### **Most innovative flavour you've ever tried...**

The Paan ice cream. It happens with many customers also. They think there's only a paan essence. But when they taste it, their eyes pop open.

#### **Your vision...**

We will take our ice cream to all four corners of the country and the world. So a Bengali in New York should be able to have Nalen Gur ice cream.

#### **Are other frozen desserts like gelato and frozen yogurt a threat?**

Indians like rich food. Though we are becoming health conscious, things like samosa, jalebi, biryani and ghee ke laddoo will never go out of fashion. You will eat them and hit the gym afterwards.



Muskmelon

#### **CITY SERVES**

- ◆ In most of the five-star hotels in Calcutta, including Taj Bengal, ITC Sonar, Swissotel, The Park and The Gateway.
- ◆ They also supply ice creams to more than 50 restaurants in Calcutta including Mainland China, Oh! Calcutta, 6 Ballygunge Place, Bhojohori Manna, Sholoana Bangali... the list goes

on!

◆ In Calcutta there are seven outlets — Spencer's (South City, Mani Square), 13/D Russell Street (next to Floriana), Bengal Club, Bengal Rowing Club and now on Sarat Bose Road.

◆ The Pabrai's have spread to nine other cities including Delhi, Chennai, Bangalore, Mysore, Ajmer, Bhubaneswar and Siliguri.



#### ICE CREAM FACTS

◆ They manufacture ice creams with 100 per cent natural ingredients. Their sugar-free ice creams use only probiotic sweeteners, which "do not harm" the digestive system.

◆ They term it "concept ice creams just like concept cars" and cater to restaurants and caterers for select menus and occasions.

◆ They also have stand-alone and in-shop outlets across 10 cities in India where you can get some of their popular flavours like Paan and Nalen Gur.

#### TOP SCOOPS

◆ Wasabi, Black Sesame, Matcha Green Tea, Red Bean and Pink Ginger flavours for Japanese restaurants.

◆ Tender Coconut, Muskmelon, Star Anise, Five Spice flavours for Chinese restaurants.

◆ Khajur Ke Gur, Paan, Rose Petal, Kesariya Rabri Malai, Chandan flavours for Indian restaurants.

◆ Ginger Coconut, Galangal, and Kaafer Lime flavours for Thai restaurants.

◆ Fresh Orange with Basil and Ricotta with Honey, Peanut Butter and Jam flavours for Italian restaurants.

◆ Mascarpone Cheese with Candied Fruits, South Indian Filter Coffee, Alphonso Mango

and more!

#### COMING SOON

◆ Savoury ice cream flavours like aam ke murabbe, cucumber, pudine ki achaar.

◆ A range of flavours based on the Indian ayurvedic ingredients such as brahmi, ashwagandha, jashti madhu or mulethi and green pepper.

**Sibendu Das**

*Pictures: Rashbehari Das*

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