

FOOD & FOOTBALL FRENZY @ JHAAL FAREZI

It was a fabulous frappe of food, football and fraternising (do pardon the dribble of punning) last Friday night. The party, hosted by Harsh and Madhu Neotia at their very own Jhaal Farezi, was all about watching football on a giant screen, while partaking of its brand new all-day dining football menu. Italy playing Costa Rica were the clear favourites.

The viewing was part of the game, for the never-ending snacks and the specially created beverages and the live counters were a parallel attraction. With the eclectic mix of fashion designers, business heads, sports personalities, popular faces from the entertainment industry and hoteliers, camaraderie was at a new high. Predictions were traded, and previous match results recounted, amidst mouthfuls of Mexican Potato Skins with their accompanying salsa and sour cream dips, Deep-fried Crispy Calamari, Chargrilled Spicy Prawns, freshly made pastas (the broccoli and pesto Brazilian Aglio e Olio being a great hit), the on-the-spot prepared thin-crust pizzas (the Mango-Chilli was the most sought after) and the Mozzarella Ciabatta with onion marmalade, tomato, rocket, pesto and hummus.

That's not all. People were making a beeline for the Spinach and Ricotta Tortellini with pesto and cream, and the Watermelon and Mango salad. There were some unusual desserts too — the Lemon Cheesecake and a Chocolate-Orange Cointreau Dome which was my personal pick. Some colourfully crafted beverages did the rounds, once more with mango coming to the fore in a sunset-tinged mango-chilli mocktail.

I hear that there's a Sunday brunch in the offing where the live counters will be as live as the football with all you can eat and as much as you want to watch being the pull. And the Jhaal Farezi cafe downstairs intends to run a special all-day menu designed for the entire football season, with some of the specialities that I have mentioned, with match viewing thrown in, naturally.

The party incidentally reached a high point when Costa Rica pulled off an upset with its 1-0 victory to stake its claim to qualify for the knockout stages.

Rita Bhimani

Pictures: Rashbehari Das



Hostess Madhu Neotia with Utsav Parekh and Kiran Uttam Ghosh



Harsh Neotia



Mozzarella Ciabatta with onion marmalade, tomato, rocket, pesto and hummus



Shaheb Bhattacharjee and sister Sonam watch the game



Mohun Bagan's Brazilian striker Jose Ramirez Barreto and Sneha Singhi of Paris Cafe check out the spread



ITC GM Atul Bhalla



Raj Mahtani



Oberoi GM George Kuruvilla with wife Ritu