

# Restaurant Review: Smoke House Deli



The folks at Impresario, the company that owns Salt Water Café and the Mocha chain of coffeeshops, have coined a term for their Smoke House Deli chain of restaurants. SHD, which has outposts in Delhi and Chandigarh and opened in Mumbai at Phoenix Mills last week, is what they call a “[hand made](#)” restaurant. It’s a literal reference to the hand drawn illustrations that fill the walls at their three outposts. The Bus Ride Design Studio, the people behind the cryptic drawings, [told us](#) that it was the most time-consuming feature of the design, and often kept them working post midnight a few days ahead of the launch.

Sure enough it's all we can talk about, after dining there last week. At the restaurant, we were told that you simply need to Google some of the captions, which are clues to cleverly masked Mumbai references. For instance a sketch of Bombay Harbour with 'April 14, 1944, the day began like any other...' as the caption lead us to [this link](#). It's a fun way to bide time while waiting for a friend or for your order of truffle-scented scrambled eggs, which is how we started our meal. The eggs were lightly seasoned with salt and cooked to fluffy perfection. The addition of the earthy and aromatic truffle oil elevated the dish from being a mere breakfast staple to a worthy dinner contender. The only regrettable part was the thick, dry and chewy croissant accompanying the eggs.

Next, we tried the iced chicken liver pate with apple marmalade, which tied with the devilled tenderloin bites for the honour of best non-vegetarian appetiser. The former, an elegantly plated dish comprised rusk-sized pieces of crisp baguette smeared with a subtle marmalade, the sweetness of which was nicely offset by the robust intensity of the smooth, chilled liver pate. The bite-sized cubed tenderloin snack, on the other hand, was like a more sophisticated version of a spicy Goan beef chilli fry served over a savoury, biscuit-like pastry swirl.

Vegetarians looking for matched excitement will find it in the creamy and fiery smoked pimento and jalapeno crostini rather than the bland chickpea and horseradish fritters. It's not possible to get a comprehensive sampling of the Smoke House Deli menu in one sitting, so we passed on the pasta, risotto and grilled mains in favour of soups, sandwiches and burgers. If ever there were a soup that could fit the chicken soup for the soul description, it's Smoke House Deli's baby fennel, smoked chicken and thyme offering. One guest heaped hyperbolic praise on the creamy, fennel flavoured broth, going so far as to say that she "wanted to swim in it". Let's just say it's the sort of soup that would be the perfect antidote to an emotionally exhausting day.

If we worked in the vicinity of Phoenix Mills, we would make their grilled tuna sandwich and chicken soup part of our weekly lunch routine. In fact, Smoke House Deli offers a soup plus half-sandwich meal option that's perfect for a working lunch. The wholewheat sandwich had what we suspected was a canned tuna filling that was gussied up with celery, scallions and what tasted like a measured dollop of Thousand Island dressing. The staff-recommended smoked chicken and oregano burger was our least favourite dish, because like the croissant, the burger bun was too thick and yeast-y. We had no complaints with the juicy, herbed minced chicken patty, but it was sadly let down by the insipid bread.

Despite the bread debacle, we expect to frequent Smoke House Deli for its casual, almost homely vibe, mostly great food and also to solve a few more of the graphic riddles. Its edge over most restaurants in Phoenix Mills has to be the prompt and attentive service, which is especially lacking at both [Indigo Deli](#) and [Café Moshe's](#) in Palladium.

*A meal for two costs approximately Rs1,400. This review was conducted anonymously.*

Tags: [Impresario Entertainment and Hospitality](#), [Restaurants](#), [Riyaaz Amlani](#), [Smoke](#)

[House Deli](#)

Smoke House Deli

**LOCATION**Next to Spaghetti Kitchen

High Street Phoenix

Phoenix Mills

Lower Parel

**PHONE**6561 9618

**HOURS**Daily, noon to midnight