

# expat LIVING

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## Family-friendly Fare

**Zaffron Kitchen**  
135/7 East Coast Road  
6440 6786

It's been open since July, and Zaffron Kitchen is pulling in the crowds. Very family-oriented, the cheerful and brightly lit Indian eatery belongs to First Gourmet, the Chinese-owned group that also owns Prata Wala and Ottoman Kebab & Grill.

One corner features a sort of Wendy house; next to it is a play kitchen with an impressive array of miniature appliances to keep the under-sevens happy. And – though I generally avoid reviewing the washroom – Zaffron's is notable for offering nursing and nappy-changing facilities, plus a tot-sized toilet.

It's been a tough week on the copy-editing coalface, so Harriet and I are more than ready for a drink. While she dutifully sips a **mango lassi** (\$5), I'm straight into a glass of the house wine (\$9 per glass; \$46 per bottle). It's the first Indian wine I've tried, and the **Grove Vineyard Art Collection Sauvignon**

**Blanc 2010** from the Nandi Hills is eminently quaffable – especially at that price. Top tip: The other house wine, a cab shiraz from the same estate, is better value because, if you're lucky, they pour twice as much into the red wine glasses. There's a small selection of reasonably priced international wines, beers and whiskies, including a couple of single malts.

Don't miss the delicious **papdi chaat** starter (\$6). This popular North Indian street food comprises crispy round wafers topped with chickpeas, crispy sev and a sweetish yoghurt, mint and tamarind sauce. Also delightful is our **dum chicken bryani** (\$11), a large dish of the stuff baked under a lid of dough to keep the fragrance of succulent thigh-meat and whole-spices in.

Featuring mainly chicken with some fish and spicy minced lamb kebab, the **tandoori platter** (\$38, serves 3) is rather average. And though I'm a big fan of cauliflower, I didn't much like the peculiar sweetness of the **khatti meethi gobi** (\$8.50). Our **kadhaj jhinga**

(\$15) featured fresh, just-done prawns and, being a tad bland, might appeal more to those who don't like chilli. Piping hot naans include a wonderfully garlicky variety (\$3) and a Kashmiri one (\$6.50) stuffed with vaguely Christmassy dried fruit.

East met West in the **moong dal halwa** (\$9), a healthy-ish lentil-based confection served with a scoop of (less-healthy) Ben & Jerry's vanilla ice cream. I could have lingered over a snifter of that Indian single malt; but I settled for a cup of sweet, spicy **chai**.

A destination spot it's not, but Zaffron is a welcome, family-friendly addition to the East Coast foodie wonderland.

**You'll love it if:** you're in the area and looking for fresh, fun Indian fare, or somewhere that won't break the bank  
**Must-try dish:** *papdi chaat*; *dum chicken bryani*

**You'll hate it if:** you're in the mood for an intimate, low-lit dinner

Verne Maree 

