



3 METROPLUS MADURAI
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AGE OF THE
EATEN PER
DS PER PERSON



MEGA MENU

THE LARGEST ITEM ON ANY
MENU IN THE WORLD IS THE
ROAST CAMEL

GOODFOOD

A chicken gelato?

Dindigul's legendary biriyani makers dive into the ice cream business with an armful of spices

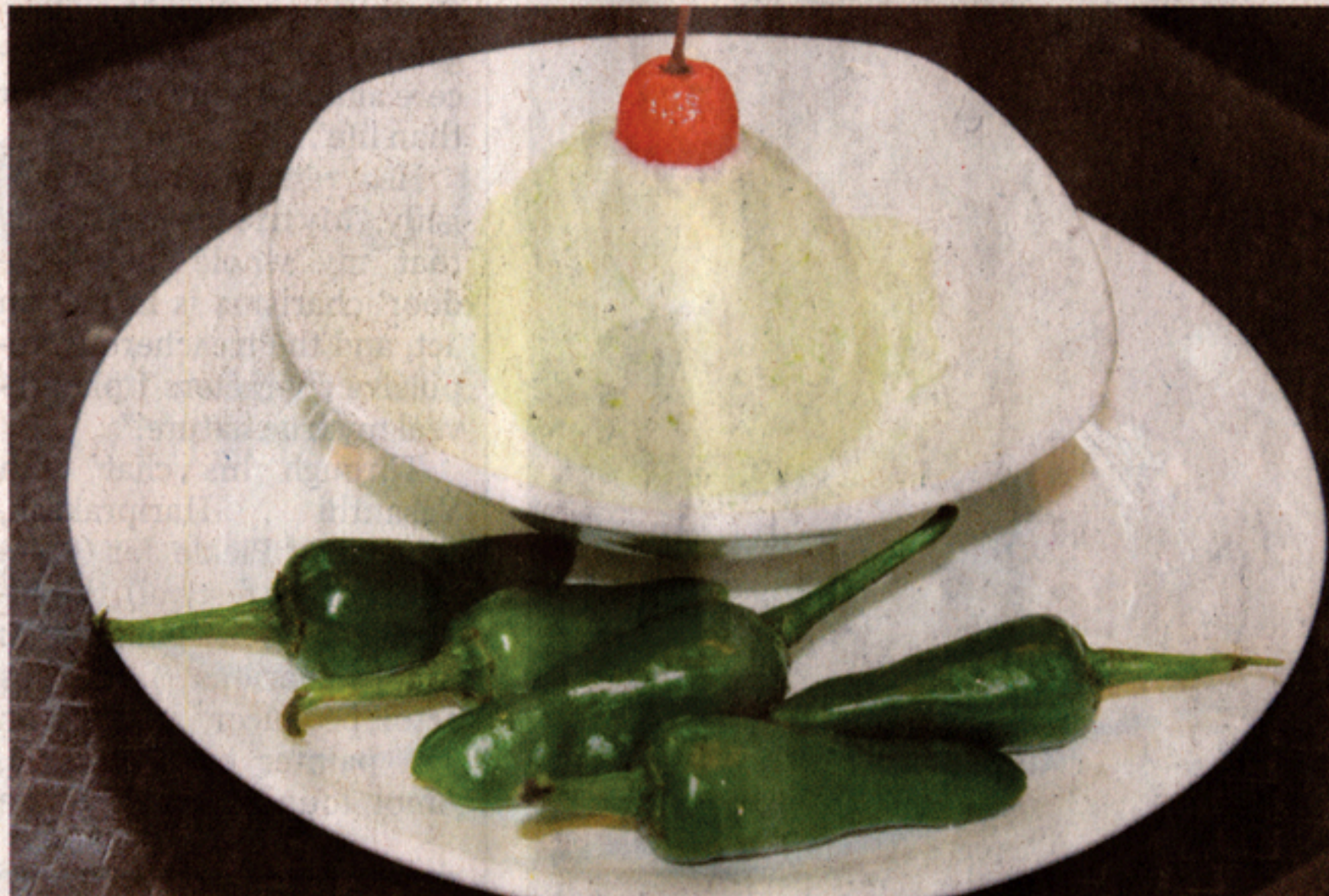
T. SARAVANAN

Ponram Square, on the national highway in Dindigul, is usually wrapped in the deliciously spicy scent of freshly cooked biriyani.

Now, there's a breath of fresh vanilla scented air as well, as the legendary biriyani makers launch a new venture: Ponram Ice Cream Square.

The bustling ice-cream counter offers a variety of natural flavours, loaded with the goodness of fresh fruits and served in a waffle bowl. Although the list includes all the regular suspects from vanilla to fig and honey, this is not a run-of-the-mill ice cream parlour. In a bid to do things differently, first of all they concentrate on local ingredients, like bananas and jackfruit grown in the Sirumalai range and Kodai hills. Also, they serve chicken ice cream. Yes. You read that right.

"Fat and air determine the quality of the ice-cream," says in R. Prabakaran, managing director of Ponram



SPICY DESSERTS (Clockwise from left top) An ice cream with green chillies, ginger, coffee bean, garlic. Managing Director R. Prabakaran (left) and Director R. Nagendrapoopathy of Ponram Square. PHOTOS: T. SARAVANAN



To avoid dependence on outside sources for the main ingredient, Ponram planned to introduce flavours made from real fruits that are locally sourced

Biriyani, explaining how they create a base for good ice cream. "When it comes to fat, milk plays an important role, and our ice-cream is 90 per cent milk; that is the reason behind the taste and texture of our product." He adds, "our advantage is that we are surrounded by hilly regions: Sirumalai in the east and Kodai hills in the west. The Sirumalai range is rich with jack fruit and is known for its bananas. We buy directly

from farmers. Since we are dependent on real fruits, which are seasonal, our flavours also differ from season to season," says R. Nagendrapoopathy, director.

To ensure good-quality milk, they have also started their own dairy farm. "The milk available outside is standardised and the fat content is questionable, which makes the end product neither tasty nor healthy. We bought cows so the milk we

get from our farm is rich in fat," says Prabakaran.

It all started when they decided to introduce ice-cream and imported two Italian ice cream machines. "We found that most of the ice-creams available in the local market were synthetic with artificial flavours," says Nagendrapoopathy.

"You can make ice-cream with any food you eat. Fruits, spices and even meat," says Prabakaran.

Hence the chicken icecream made with minced meat that is boiled in milk and then blended with butter, before it is put into the machine to be turned into a creamy, and surprisingly tasty, ice cream. Can't imagine it yet? Prabakaran says he got the idea from a plate of grilled chicken, served with mayonnaise.

The parlour also serves up scoops of cecream made with ginger, garlic and fresh, loc-

ally plucked, green chillies.

Explaining how the spicy icecreams are made, Prabakaran says "With flavours like ginger, garlic, pepper and vegetables, you have to saute the ingredient, then put it into the machine for best results."

Why end your delicious biriyani lunch with boring vanilla, when you can prolong it with a scoop of creamy chicken gelato. Only in Dindigul...