

Ray's promises to bring us New York-style pizza but we wonder if it is all that



RITIKA JAIN

American Pie

MANGAL DALAL

THE New York yellow pages list 34 restaurants incorporating the name 'Ray's Pizza'; 40 if you count the Rays that sacrilegiously forgot an apostrophe. It is therefore fitting that Rashmi and Hemant Mehta have used the name Ray's since they aim to serve authentic New York style pizza by the slice in this city, which has an abundance of former New York residents.

Their menu, however, only offers four options by the slice. New York-style pizza, in essence, has a thin but not crisp base and has wide, foldable slices. It isn't heavy on the tomato sauce and tends to be a bit greasy. The Mehtas aren't new to serving this city such pizza either—their previous venture was 15 years back when they opened Pizzeria Uno, which is now Pizzeria at

Churchgate.

This venture is smaller and perhaps cuter since it is tucked away behind Nature's Basket on Hill Road. We say perhaps because the inside section, with its white-washed walls is charming but the outside section directly looks into the adjoining supermarket's wine section. This is ironic, given that Ray's doesn't yet have a wine licence—if only looks could drink. The menu dives straight into the pizzas and we followed suit with a Jamaican Jerk chicken; Jamaican jerk spice is famously hot, but in this case we had to hunt for any flavour from the chicken. The prosciutto ham was far better, with the rocket leaves complementing the sliver of meat well. Ray's special, essentially a pepperoni pizza, had meat with charred edges which could have been avoided if the

pepperoni were added after the baking had begun. Mumbai Masala was doubly disappointing as it was nowhere as flavourful as Pizzeria's Bombay Masala and we felt the Mehtas should have refrained from re-introducing a pizza that is done (better) elsewhere.

The ham and pineapple was relatively flawless, with juicy pineapple pieces that were thankfully not too sweet. We enjoyed the New York dog's succulent sausage and lovely sautéed onions, but the bun was awkwardly wide enough to hold two sausages. One of the best dishes we had was the delightful apple pie, with a crunchy upper crust. Overall, though, we couldn't help

but be reminded of a less greasy version of Pizzeria. What was worse than Pizzeria was the service, which we hope is a teething problem. Our waiter simply forgot one pizza, wasn't aware of which pizza he was serving and seemed overwhelmed by the concept of a half-and-half pizza.

Ray's pizza does the job but isn't outstanding and we are certain will have loyal local patrons like Pizzeria does. We just aren't sure if it is worth a long journey to either this pizzeria or any in New York.

Ray's Café & Pizzeria, 133 Hill Road, Gazebo House, Bandra (W). Average meal for two: Rs 800. Telephone: 022 2645 1414