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Executive chef Syed M. Yousuf prepares a blend of Indian and American cuisine at Red Chileez, located at 2503-D Forest Hills Road. Gray Whitley | Times

Red Chileez restaurant offers extensive menu

By Rochelle Moore
Times Staff Writer

A new Indian and American cuisine restaurant is now open in Wilson on Forest Hills Road.

Red Chileez Bar and Grill, at 2503 Forest Hills Road, opened March 12 in the shopping strip in front of Lowe's Home Improvement store. While much of the restaurant's menu lists Indian dishes, the food is a mix of Indian and Pakistani food. American dishes are also flavored with Indian spices.

"This is a fusion of Indian and American cuisine," said Samreen Nawaz, co-owner. "We have pasta, burgers and wraps to satisfy people who haven't had Indian food. We use Indian spices and sauces so there's a little kick of Indian spice. Then, we have our authentic dishes."

Red Chileez is open Monday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. The restaurant operates Friday through Sunday from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Lunch specials are offered on weekdays from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

The restaurant menu is vast with appetizers, salads, soups, pasta, burgers, wraps, traditional naan breads and dinner items. Several of the salad selec-

tions are a greek salad, chicken apricot salad and an Indian-flavored Red Chileez Kachumbar salad.

"Our main thing is to be healthy and to be good so people enjoy themselves," Nawaz said. "What we are making is fresh food. Nothing is frozen. It's just a fusion of delectable tastes."

Vegetarian dishes, chicken, seafood, goat and lamb are offered as well as Tandoor dinner specials. The vegetarian menu offers a selection of dinners with spinach, eggplant, lentils, okra or cauliflower. Chicken and lamb kabobs are popular with customers and portion sizes are generous.

"The prices are fairly decent," Nawaz said.

The restaurant also has a children's menu that offers chicken strips, macaroni and cheese and grilled cheese. Beer and wine are available as well as a variety of traditional sodas, iced tea, Indian sodas and a chilled yogurt drink. Desserts, including New York cheesecake, are available.

The owners decided to open the restaurant after looking for a new location in the region. Nawaz and her husband, Syed Yousuf, previously operated a restaurant in Cary. The Olive Green was open from 2007 through 2010.

Yousuf is the executive chef at Red Chileez and

has spent years catering and cooking in the Raleigh, Durham and Cary area.

"We are experienced restaurant owners," Nawaz said. "We're excited because this location is good."

The owners have a partner in the business, C.J. Thomas. They have no connection to the previous owners of Tandoori Nights, which opened a short while at the same location, Yousuf said.

In addition to building the business, Yousuf is interested in opportunities where he can cook in front of the public. In the summer, the owners are interested in adding an outside patio area on the side of the restaurant where Yousuf would grill kabobs. In the future, Yousuf is also interested in grilling kabobs in front of customers inside the restaurant.

A grand-opening celebration is being planned but no date has been set. The grand opening will offer visitors a chance to try food samples. Discount cards will also be available. The name of the restaurant — Red Chileez — was intentional.

"We wanted red and you can chill here and take it easy," Nawaz said.

Custom catering is available and the restaurant can be reached at 237-2445.

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