

My food heaven

From an ice-cream parlour to a cheese café, six self-confessed foodies reveal the local eateries that get their taste buds going

Words Stephanie Clarkson **Photographs** Andrew Montgomery

THE CURRY-LOVER'S PARADISE

TARA SMITH is hair stylist to celebrities, including Demi Moore and Anna Friel. Tara lives between LA, London and the Midlands. When in Leicester, she heads straight for her local Indian restaurant, The Tiffin.

ARE YOU A BIG CURRY FAN?

I grew up in Leicester, where there's a large Indian population, which means there are lots of great Indian restaurants. My parents discovered The Tiffin when I was a teenager. I've been going there for 20 years.

CAN YOU ROCK UP AND SAY, 'MY USUAL, PLEASE'?

For years, I was a chicken tikka massala girl – it would practically be on the table before I'd sat down. But, last time, I tried a king-prawn dish and a couple of vegetable dishes with chickpeas and aubergines. They'll always find me a table, even if they haven't seen me for six months.

CAN YOU GET A GOOD CURRY IN LOS ANGELES?

I'm sure you can, but I haven't found one. As soon as I land at Heathrow, I'm usually thinking, 'Ooh... curry.' Often, I head straight to Leicester, Mum meets me from the train and we'll go to The Tiffin. I think it's the best Indian restaurant for the exceptional food and extraordinary service.

WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT THE SERVICE?

They're friendly and will make recommendations, without being pushy. Once, when I told a waiter

I wanted to go to Kerala, he wrote me a huge list of all the best places to visit.

SOME INDIAN RESTAURANTS ARE A BIT CHINTZY – HOW DOES THIS RATE?

The décor is the same as it was 20 years ago and looks a bit tired, but I'd hate them to do a makeover. I like traditional-style Indian restaurants.

HAVE YOU EVER ORDERED ANYTHING TOO SPICY TO EAT?

The great thing is they'll tailor dishes to your taste, so you can ask for something to be made milder.

Visit the-tiffin.co.uk

● Tara Smith's eco-friendly hair-care range launches nationwide in Tesco this summer



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR RIGHT: Tara at The Tiffin; the exterior; traditional-style Indian restaurant décor; tasty curry accompaniments