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THE GRAND DRAGON LADAKH INTRODUCES RYU OKA – A THOUGHTFULLY CURATED PAN-ASIAN DINING EXPERIENCE IN THE HIMALAYAS

The Grand Dragon Ladakh announces the opening of RYU OKA, its new Pan-Asian restaurant that brings together the culinary and cultural narratives of Asia within the dramatic landscape of Ladakh. Inspired by the spirit of the Silk Route and the region's long history of trade, exchange, and movement, RYU OKA presents a dining experience rooted in authenticity, craftsmanship, and a strong sense of place.

Translating to "Dragon Hill," RYU OKA extends the identity of The Grand Dragon Ladakh into a new culinary chapter – one that is immersive, layered, and quietly exploratory. From the outset, the vision was to create a speciality restaurant that could exist meaningfully within Ladakh while offering something distinct from the conventional dining experiences associated with the region.

"The idea for RYU OKA evolved through an exploration of Silk Route history at Leh's Central Asian Museum, where the movement of cultures and cuisines across borders became the conceptual foundation for the restaurant. Rather than creating a fusion concept, the intention was to celebrate the individuality of Asian cuisines while allowing Ladakh's landscape and rhythm to subtly shape the

"BEYOND THE CUISINE, RYU OKA'S DESIGN LANGUAGE BLENDS LADAKHI HERITAGE WITH JAPANESE SENSIBILITY. CENTRAL TO THE INTERIORS IS THE PHILOSOPHY OF WABI-SABI – THE APPRECIATION OF IMPERFECTION, TEXTURE, AND HANDCRAFTED BEAUTY. EVERY ELEMENT WITHIN THE SPACE HAS BEEN DESIGNED TO FEEL TACTILE, WARM, AND CONNECTED TO THE SURROUNDING TERRAIN."

experience," says Anjum Qadir, the creative force behind RYU OKA and a member of the Abdu family behind The Grand Dragon Ladakh. He further adds: "While Ladakhi cuisine has naturally absorbed influences over centuries through trade and travel, it has always retained its own simplicity and identity. We did not want to dilute either Ladakhi or Asian cuisines through unnecessary fusion. Instead, the idea was to create a thoughtful Pan-Asian experience that complements Ladakh rather than competes with it." The menu reflects this philosophy through a refined and carefully edited selection of dishes inspired by firsthand experiences across Japan, Korea, Thailand, China, Bali



PROMOTIONAL FEATURE



and other parts of Asia. Designed specifically for Ladakh's high-altitude environment, the cuisine focuses on balance and comfort rather than excess. "Each dish draws from personal experiences across Asia – not trends, but places, flavours, and techniques that have been experienced directly," adds Anjum. "At the same time, we were conscious of Ladakh's altitude and environment. Dining here needs to feel comfortable, not overwhelming." Subtle references to the region appear through seasonal local ingredients such as apricot, barley, sea buckthorn, and buckwheat, incorporated with restraint as quiet points of connection to the landscape. Signature dishes include the Mongol Wrapped Tofu layered with local collard greens, the wholesome RYU OKA Clay Pot, and the Truffle Fried Rice that combines familiarity with refinement. Beyond the cuisine, RYU OKA's design language blends Ladakhi heritage with Japanese sensibility. Central to the interiors is the philosophy of Wabi-Sabi – the appreciation of imperfection, texture, and handcrafted beauty. Every element within the space has been designed to feel tactile, warm, and connected to the surrounding terrain. A deeply personal narrative runs through the interiors. The restaurant's central artwork, painted by noted artist Gulam Mustafa – Ladakh's first modern artist and Anjum's father – is inspired by an aerial photograph captured across the Ladakhi mountain ranges. Traditional woodwork motifs from centuries-old monasteries and palaces in Nubra have been revived alongside Japanese-inspired detailing, while handcrafted rock textures throughout the restaurant were created using impressions taken directly from the surrounding mountains. Built largely using recycled wood sourced from old structures and furniture, the restaurant also reflects a conscious approach towards sustainability and resourcefulness. The team behind RYU OKA has similarly been nurtured from within The Grand Dragon Ladakh, with a strong emphasis on developing local talent and long-term culinary capability in the region. With RYU OKA, The Grand Dragon Ladakh introduces a new dimension to dining in Ladakh – one that expands culinary possibilities while remaining deeply connected to the land, its history, and its rhythms. The result is an experience that is immersive, transporative, and designed to be revisited.

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