

Natick Mall to host new Indian eatery

By Bob Tremblay | June 2, 2006

Mall shoppers looking for something different in their food court comestibles have a new reason to smack their lips.

Gourmet India, a Burlington-based chain of Indian restaurants, is setting up shop in the Natick Mall. Its first MetroWest eatery is scheduled to open on July 1. The restaurant serves authentic gourmet Indian food at reasonable prices. "For between \$6 and \$7.50 you get a meal that includes an appetizer, entrée and rice," said Gourmet India's owner Yogi Sood. "And everything is fresh. ... Although we are in a casual dining, fast-food environment, we have not compromised on quality. The ingredients we use are absolutely top-notch. We believe strongly in quality and customer service."

Sood's goal is to offer the same quality cuisine found at formal dining Indian restaurants.

Sood says he chose the Natick Mall for this location of his fifth restaurant because of its soon-to-be-enhanced setting. "It's one of the oldest malls," he said, "but at the same time, with (the expansion project), it's going to be one of the nicest malls." He notes the addition of such upscale stores as Neiman Marcus and Nordstrom boosts the mall's upscale quotient.

Sood says the Natick Mall location also gives the chain a presence in the MetroWest and closer to Worcester. "All of our locations previously have been more toward Boston," he said. "We had not covered this area."

Sood opened the first Gourmet India in the food court at the Burlington Mall in 1995. He had noticed a lack of high-quality Indian cuisine delivered in a casual setting. The quick casual concept had worked for other ethnic cuisines. Why not Indian?

After Burlington, Gourmet India opened restaurants in Boston, Brookline and Providence, RI. This fall, the chain is scheduled to open restaurants in the South Shore Mall in Braintree and the Square One Mall in Saugus. It also operates a catering business for New England hotels.

Last year, Gourmet India generated \$3.5 million in sales.

The menu features meat and vegetable entrees. While most of the cuisine has north Indian roots, on the weekends south Indian fare such as dosas is served, according to Sood.