

April 17, 2016

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Art talk over a cuppa



• Inside Ahavaa which offers a meeting place as well as a creative space. Photos: M. Vedhan and Special Arrangement



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Multi-faced Kavya Anna Abraham has wheeled her various interests into a café set in an old bungalow, writes LIFFY THOMAS

“No photographs of me, please!” pleads Kavya Anna Abraham, after having reluctantly posed for the camera against a green backdrop at Ahavaa Cafe.

I promise the photos will remain unused.

Later, Kavya explains to me through a series of text messages that she has always been particular about her photos not appearing in the media.

As a child of an enterprising and famous father — Reji Abraham of Aban Group — Kavya must have had great difficulty staying out of the public gaze.

Now, when this 23-year-old owns a 55-year-old bungalow on New Avadi Road which she has converted into a café, boutique, meeting place and a space for creative art, she has reasons to seek the limelight. But, as usual, she chooses to stay out of it.

The launch of Ahavaa marks a new beginning not just for Kavya, but the entire family. With this, they are venturing into the fast food and beverage business.

This enterprise will give Kavya (who is holding a fulltime job at Aban Offshore) an opportunity to cut her entrepreneurial tooth. It's a new challenge, but she is not flying blind into it.

“For all of us at home, it is a totally new business. But, I have learnt so much in the last one-and-a-half years putting up the entire place,” says Kavya, who began to nurture the idea of starting a café during her Class X holidays.

A visit to café at Fort Kochi sparked an interest in it.

After school, she went to **Stella Maris College** for her BCom degree, and then to National Law School for her post-graduation, but the idea stayed intact.

The family bungalow from where Ahavaa now functions, was bought around 10 years ago and a tenant was occupying it all these years.

Zeroing in on a chef and a consultant was difficult and it took her close to six months to find both. Next, she employed underprivileged people as service staff. She first trained them in spoken English.

“There has to be some satisfaction and joy you should derive from employing people,” she says, explaining her recruitment decision.

Kavya calls Ahavaa — Hebrew word for unconditional love — her “first baby” and she says that in this enterprise, her two interests – food and creative art – have converged.

She is a trained Bharatanatyam dancer. “I want people to feel at home, relax and enjoy,” she says, taking us through the two-storey house which is replete with old-world charm. The oxidised flooring, a cupboard and old switchboard transport a visitor to a different era.

Kavya's mother Deepa Abraham has done the interior designing for the place. About her father, she says, has encouraged her to take risk.

She has many more interesting plans lined up for Ahavaa. They plan to start reflexology centre and an organic shop on the premises.

Ahavaa is on New Avadi Road, opposite Lifeline Hospitals. Phone: 70920 40556