

foodService

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Looking into the future of foodservice

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Editor in Chief: **Amitabh Taneja**
 Editorial Director: **R S Roy**
 Publisher: **S P Taneja**
 Chief Operating Officer: **Bhavesh H Pitroda**

Editorial

Editor in charge: **Sanjay Kumar**
 Correspondent: **Nibedita Roy**

Conference Content: **Nakul Jain, Mohua Roy**

Contributing Editors: **Zainab S Kazi, Namita Bhagat**

Creatives

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 Dy. Art Director: **Deepak Verma**
 Sr. Layout Designer: **Naresh Kumar**
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Production

General Manager: **Manish Kadam**
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General Manager - Administration: **Rajeev Mehandru**

Subscription

Asst. Manager-Subscriptions: **Kiran Rawat**

ADVERTISING

Business Head

Rakesh Gambhir, Convenor, India Food Forum
 E: rakeshgambhir@imagesgroup.in | M: +91 9910001375

Lokesh Arora, Vice President

E: lokesharora@imagesgroup.in | M: +91 9999033612

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FOR ADVERTISING QUERIES, PLEASE WRITE TO salesfood@imagesgroup.in

CONSUMER CONNECT

Anil Nagar, Vice President

E: anilnagar@imagesgroup.in | M: +91 9811333099

Membership Team:	Vineet Jain	R. P. Singh	Priti Kapil
	Sarika Gautam	Priyanka Sagar	Chandrabhushan

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Registered Office: S-21, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase II, New Delhi 110020, India
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Mumbai: 1st Floor, Panchal Iron Works, Plot No. 111 / 3,
 Marol Co-Operative Industrial Estate, Marol, Andheri (East). Mumbai - 400059.
 T: +91-22-28508070 / 71 | F: +91-22-28508072

Kolkata: 30-B, Anil Roy Road, Ground Floor, Kolkata - 700 029
 T: +91-33-40080480 | F: +91-33-40080440

Bengaluru: 523, 7th Cross, 10th Main (Jeevanbhima Nagar Main Road), H.A.L. 3rd Stage,
 Bengaluru - 560075
 T: +91-80-41255172, 41750595/96 | F: +91-80-41255182

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In recent years, we have seen the emergence of new food trends transforming foodservice and shaking up consumers' expectations everywhere. Trends might be difficult to spot early on. But sooner than later, businesses glom on to the new currents sweeping in. They identify and understand those forces because it is in the nature of businesses to keep in step with the evolving consumer demand. Nimble businesses are quick to adapt and capitalise on the trends lest the forces of change shift the ground beneath their feet.

Today, we are seeing many new trends knocking on the doors of foodservice business. With health and environmental concerns becoming more widespread, locally sourced vegetable and fruits have become a norm and many chefs and restaurateurs are taking to it with a new-found passion. While on the one hand, it's more cost and time effective for restaurants to develop their own produce, on the other plucking and using fresh produce in the dishes gives guests a whole new dining experience, which is more engaging.

If fusion was the fad until a few years ago, the concept of progressive cuisine is now fast taking hold. Using modern culinary techniques, latest technologies and cutting-edge styles of presentation, progressive cuisine aims to showcase foods from around the world in a contemporary manner for an increasing number of new-age diners looking for out-of-the-box concepts and something that breaks the monotony of home dining. New international cuisines such as Vietnamese, Cambodian, Mexican and Lebanese are already witnessing a surge in popularity and the trend is likely to continue and gather pace in the years to come. Also, with diners becoming more adventurous and ready to experiment in order to find newer and finer flavours, use of many international ingredients in Indian dishes and many Indian spices / ingredients in international favourites are pushing the traditional culinary boundaries further.

There are quite a few other trends in the making, which will push foodservice into charting new waters and taking on many novel dimensions. I am sure that going ahead, the foodservice industry will become a hotbed for product innovation by tapping into consumers' desires for new experiences, personalisation, and health.

Amitabh Taneja

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Phone: +49 69 759501; fax: +49 69 75951510 | **Editor-in-Chief:** Gretel Weiss (gretel.weiss@dfv.de)
Division Manager: Christiane Pretz (christiane.pretz@dfv.de)

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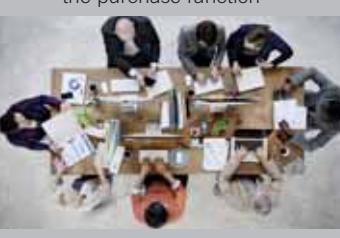
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The rise of home cooks is the next big thing on the food front

Chef Kunal Kapur was lucky to find the right mentors in the initial years of his career. He seized the opportunity with both hands, working his fingers to the bone and absorbing knowledge and learning like a sponge. The hard grind paid off but the much celebrated chef that he is today hasn't taken his fingers off the pulse of his creative and demanding profession. "The biggest challenge is to keep yourself updated with what is new and happening. And not just update, the challenge also lies in adapting to the change itself. Each year is marked by a certain trend and by the time you catch on to it, another one comes up. But travelling and sharing experiences with young budding chefs helps in understanding trends in depth and allows you to stay ahead of the curve," says Kapur.

In an exclusive interaction with FoodService India, Kapur talks about the evolving role of chefs amidst the churn and change in food business, the biggest influencers of food culture today and what he foresees as the next big thing that will disrupt the F&B universe



Please take us through your culinary journey so far. Which have been the major milestones accomplished along the way and how have they shaped and influenced your career?

I stepped into a professional kitchen with my first job with Taj Group of Hotels at a young age of 19 years. I was passionate about cooking, which was quite unheard of in a young boy in the 90s. I must admit that kitchen is not an easy career option as it demands a lot of commitment and personal time. Learning was not easy as people didn't open up. And as a trainee one would just get pushed around. But that pushing around during the initial six months taught me something, which is that "You have to prove your worth every time you step into a kitchen" or else you are a waste.

I consider myself very fortunate to have been trained and shaped by some of the best hands in the industry like chef Arvind Saraswat, chef Nita Nagraj, and chef Rajeev Janveja.

Life was not easy in the beginning and I was not a natural with cooking. But the relentless hard work and time spent on cooking gave me the confidence, and opportunities started to open up for me.

My first posting as a Sr. Chef-de-Partie was with Taj Holiday Village, Goa, where I learnt the art of cooking seafood with chef Urbano Rego. He is a master of Goan food and an excellent chef who was always open to sharing what he knew. I admit that in my first job, I made the maximum mistakes. But I never gave up and learnt from my failures.

My next stop was the Radisson Hotel in Noida where I was the chef at the Indian restaurant

'Made in India'. Together with chef Arif, under the guidance of chef Arun Tyagi, I learnt about fine Indian cuisine, which till date have been the most power-packed two years of my career. Made in India gave my career the much needed push – my first ever Best Restaurant Award.

After gaining a good experience of running a restaurant in hotels, it was time to move into another very challenging zone at that time – starting a stand-alone restaurant. I opened my first Indian restaurant all by myself in Kuwait by the name of Taal. Taal taught me how to run a restaurant as a business and not just as a kitchen head. By the time I bid goodbye to Taal, it was one of the best Indian restaurants in Kuwait.



Chef Kunal Kapur

Then, I came to Delhi to join Claridges Group as their corporate chef for Dhaba restaurants. We won the best Indian restaurant award the same year. We worked on the new concept for Dhaba expansion but it never saw the light of day. I moved my focus and took on a more challenging role with The Leela Hotels, Gurgaon.

Gurgaon at that time was still coming up and a 500+ room hotel was an uphill task to open and establish. My start here was with the Indian restaurant Diya, which won four 'best restaurant' awards in a row, right from the first year. It was because of the success of this restaurant that I had the opportunity to host Masterchef India and Junior Masterchef India. In the last year of the season, I won 'National Media Network Award' for hosting Masterchef India and Indian Television Academy Award for the Best Host/ Anchor for Junior Masterchef India. After this, I worked with chef Gordon Ramsey on the semi-finale of Masterchef America.

Post the Season 4 of the hit series, I debuted with my first travel show – Foodie Comes to America – which aired in the USA. A year later, I shot for its second season as well. 'My Yellow Table' was my first recipe show and soon it was one of the most successful food shows on NDTV Good Times. Within three months of the first season, we went ahead and completed the second season

I consider myself very fortunate to have been trained and shaped by some of the best hands in the industry like chef Arvind Saraswat, chef Nita Nagraj, and chef Rajeev Janveja

“TANDOOR has taken Indian cuisine to the world”



Tandoori food lovers can be found everywhere today. But not many of them know about how the cuisine evolved and the pioneers whose efforts have made tandoori cuisine an international favourite. FoodService India spoke to two such exemplars – one known for popularising and evolving tandoori cuisine and the other for creating the perfect appurtenance that has enabled the cuisine to thrive and become globally popular.

Meet Anil Khurana, Corporate Indian Chef, Asian Hotels (North) Limited , which owns Hyatt Regency Delhi, and Munnilal who is arguably the first person to bring commercial tandoor set-ups in the Indian hospitality sphere and to the world.

While chef Khurana relates his journey in propagating the cuisine, Munnilal talks about his labour of love in improving and refining the way tandoors are crafted.

Tell us about the importance of tandoori cuisine in the context of Indian food?

Anil Khurana: If you think about Indian food, there is no two-way about the fact that tandoori cuisine rules on the table. It has become a real winning facet for Indian kitchens. Tandoori cuisine has always been high on priority for food enthusiasts. From tikkas to seekh kebabs to breads, the char-grilled flavour of sumptuous food cooked in a tandoor is truly divine.

The concept of tandoor was evolved by Munnilal Tandoors. What role did Munnilal played in the Indian hospitality industry to popularise tandoori food?

A.K: If anyone is to be recommended for tandoors, it has to be from the house of ‘Munnilal Tandoors’. Three decades ago, when different tandoors were available in the market, only Munnilal knew what was required to ensure good tandoori cooking. If not for him, we would not have gotten good tandoors to dish out good tandoori recipes. I remember him orchestrating every unit to perfection so that chefs would not have to worry at all. He used to deliver tandoor set-up post applying all the masala that is required to make it absolutely ready to be used in a kitchen. Other competitors would not have given us that kind of knowledge-driven service. We, chefs, would otherwise take time and effort to apply masala inside to ensure that the tandoor is ready for cooking. With nearly 51 years of experience in designing and manufacturing tandoors, he consistently understood and delivered perfect service addressing the competitive nature of the restaurant business.





You have worked closely with Munnilal Tandoors throughout your career span. Tell us about the way Munnilal would approach work and his association with you?

A.K: In India, the concept of tandoors was first started in 1965 when Munnilal introduced it commercially. But the story of tandoor is quite interesting and goes back to the year 1948, when the teenager Munnilal used to tag along with his grandfather and watch him make various types of clay pots. 'Gulabi' was a type of pot that reminded one of his customers that it was similar to tandoors that he had seen in Afghanistan. Thus started the process of using Gulabi, with a little modification, as the first tandoor in India. But the concept was commercially introduced by Munnilal. After starting and owning many ventures, he finally established Munnilal Tandoors Pvt. Ltd. in 2009. Ever since, the company has emerged as the undoubted leader in tandoor manufacturing the world over.

When did you get the opportunity to meet him?

A.K: It is strange but true that my career ran parallel to the progress of Munnilal Tandoors. I started my career in 1981 as an apprentice in Bukhara restaurant at the ITC Maurya Sheraton hotel back then, now the ITC Maurya - The Luxury Collection, New Delhi. I saw Munnilal setting up tandoors way back during my initial days at the Bukhara restaurant. Due to the heavy load factor of the restaurant, every six months tandoors would be changed and he would be called to do the needful act of setting up fresh tandoors. He always displayed his work dedication. Despite his age, one could easily notice the twinkle in his eyes when someone talked about tandoors. Even today, he takes a special interest to go to his manufacturing unit in Delhi to make tandoors himself, apart from overseeing the production of tandoors, which is really inspiring. It feels good to recall that we have worked together for many international ventures in the past.



Tell us about your international assignments on your career path. How do you recall your experiences to set up Indian restaurants in different countries?

A.K: In 1986, I went to New York to set up a Bukhara restaurant. Known for kebabs and delightful tandoori food, the management of the restaurant had to call Munnilal to set up the tandoors. It used to be a long process back then – applying for his visa, taking him to the base location and getting the tandoors exported to a foreign land. But his experienced hands would set up the tandoors in the kitchen the way that nobody else could.

I remember that during that tenure in the US, I had to go with a team to Chicago for a similar reason, and Munnilal accompanied us. Before that, there was another incident when we decided to use a cement tandoor from a different manufacturer in the US in order to save the hassles of getting a tandoor built in India and getting it imported. But within two months, we realised that it was not giving the desired results to promote tandoori food. We experienced that the quality of the product was not at par with that of what we got using Munnilal Tandoors. So, very early in my career, just like tandoori food, tandoors kept me pretty busy. I figured out the importance of tandoor and its role in the Indian cuisine. The lessons learned played a critical role in shaping my journey in the culinary world.

Post gaining experience in New York, I came back to India in 1990. But the following year, Sheraton hotel in Bangkok was waiting for me as my next career step. I stayed in Bangkok for six years, and even there my team had to call Munnilal to set up the tandoors. I got the opportunity to set up restaurants in many cities. But in most cases, I did not struggle to arrange the tandoor section, as I always relied on Munnilal to take care of that part. He worked with his heart, which allowed chefs like me to achieve greater creative results, thanks to those great tandoors by Munnilal.

*L to R
Munni Lal and
Anil Khurana*





Sana Chopra

**“We plan to open
100
restaurants
in the next 5-7 years”**

Carl's Jr. is among the more recent entrants among foreign QSR brands to India. The American fast food brand is known globally for its chargrilled burgers and for its focus on bringing healthier food to your table. It is the same ethos of healthy dining, innovation and setting a lifestyle trend to eat fast food in a healthier way that Carl's Jr. aims to promote in India.

FoodService India speaks to Sana Chopra, Executive Director, Carl's Jr. India, about the novelty quotient that the American chain has to offer to Indian fast food lovers and its game plan for increasing its footprint in the country. “We have an aspirational target demographic comprising young and hungry guys and girls between the ages of 18 and 40,” she says, adding that the chain will focus on providing guests a superstar service with great ambience, music, access to unlimited refills, among other things.

Please describe the positioning of Carl's Jr. in the Indian QSR market, what is its USP and the special features of its burgers and other fares compared to those available at other QSR chains?

Carl's Jr. is a premium quick service restaurant when it comes to products, service or ambience. As a brand, Carl's Jr. and our sister brand Hardee's are known to serve its guests premium products made from a variety of fresh and healthy ingredients, which lead the industry in taste, quality and innovation. In India too, Carl's Jr. offers its guests a range of products. Some are designed to meet the Indian palate, some are our signature flavours, while others are completely new and interesting flavours that are not even present in any of the other Carl's Jr. or Hardee's markets. Globally, we are known for our chargrilled burgers and our main focus is on bringing healthier food to your table.

We are especially known for our chargrilled burgers. Chargrilling or Charbroiling is a process in which our burgers are grilled over an open flame for a unique and distinctive taste, allowing them to cook in their own juices without using oils. This ensures that the patties and fillets are more juicy and definitely healthy! The focus on quality and healthier food is the same even with our other products.

How did you hit upon the idea of bringing this brand to India, and where did you see the market gap for your kind of offering?

When my father and I were looking to bring a food & beverage brand through CybizCorp into India, we looked at several different food & beverage chains. We travelled to different Headquarters across the globe, met their company figureheads, learnt about the different brands, visited their kitchens, etc. At the end of all the research, the Carl's Jr./Hardee's brand just stood out to us, and

in so many different ways. The focus on premium quality ingredients and food, the strong quality assurance team, the brand mottos, ethos and, of course, the quirky advertising, etc., everything touched a chord. Carl's Jr. is a pioneer in the burger industry with its many 'firsts'. For instance, it is the first burger chain to have real ice-cream milkshakes, serves Jalapeño burgers or low-carb lettuce wrap burgers. We loved how Carl's Jr. was innovative and continuously striving to make the dining experience a healthy one.

What is it that a customer visiting a Carl's Jr. restaurant can expect in terms of a complete breakfast or meal solution? What is your value-for-money proposition for diners?

We are known globally for serving big, juicy and bold burgers made from premium and fresh quality ingredients. When a guest walks into Carl's Jr. they can choose to customise their meal to their liking. We provide combo meals, which cover the classic burger, fries and different types of soda combination. We also provide combo options for crispy chicken legs/wings and beer. Besides customising your product mix, we allow our guests to double or triple their patties, swap to our honey wheat or lettuce-wrapped buns, choose an iced tea or coffee with their meal.

As our USP suggests, most of our products are chargrilled and our crispy section is freshly hand-breaded, even our milkshakes are made from real ice cream and fries are natural cut, and our beverage bar for sodas, coffee and iced tea is completely refillable. These changes in serving style allow a guest to experience our fresher, healthier and more premium products. This, along with the various customisations, provides our guests a great experience, and a value-for-money experience.

As a brand, Carl's Jr. and our sister brand Hardee's are known to serve its guests premium products made from a variety of fresh and healthy ingredients, which lead the industry in taste, quality and innovation





Competency assessment and a quantitative model of the purchase function

A purchase professional in the hospitality industry has to perform different types of buying roles depending on the status of the hotel (pre or under construction / fully functional) and his / her level in the organisation structure. A look at the skills and competencies that purchase professionals need to have to carry out effective role execution

— Arvind Dang

The different types of purchase of items and services in a hospitality function can be categorised under five areas as below:

- Pre-construction: steel, cement, raw materials
- Packages/Capex: civil structure, MEP, equipment for kitchen, laundry, gym, IT, FFE
- Finishing: hotel interior items, software
- F&B/consumables: all raw materials, food/drinks
- Miscellaneous: non project, admin, HR, marketing

For buying the above items and services, the competencies and requirements can be broadly classified under four heads as below:

- Functional competencies
- Leadership competencies
- ERP/IT competencies
- Legal competencies

Key processes in purchase function

For rendering efficient and effective purchase-related services for the P2P (purchase to payment) cycle, purchase professionals need to be familiar with all the key processes in purchase function in the hospitality sector. The 15 key purchase related processes are:

- Vendor/consultant/service provider selection process
- Purchase requisition process
- Commercial comparison/evaluation process
- Technical comparison/evaluation process
- Negotiation process
- Purchase order /service order /contracts/ work orders/agreements making process
- Material/service receiving process
- Quality checking/assurance process for items/ services
- Vendor invoice verification process
- Vendor payment process
- Material dispatch/issue process
- Inventory control process
- Masters maintenance process (ERP environments)
- Statutory conformances/taxation process
- Vendor appraisal process

In order to efficiently perform these key processes for purchase of any of the five kinds of items or services discussed earlier, the functional competencies need to be assessed. Each competency can be marked on a 10-point scale (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest)



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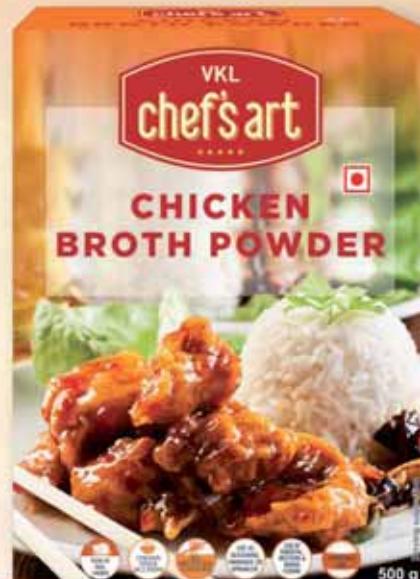
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