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VOLUME EIGHT • ISSUE FIVE

Trade Journal for the Hotel, Restaurant and Catering Industry

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GODS OF GOOD FOOD

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QSR

Chili's American Grill & Bar is counting on its fresh American and Mexican cuisine to move ahead in India



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Consumer needs are changing along with the various parameters that go beyond the demographic profile. While the annual average spending of middle class households in India's Tier-I cities has increased by over 35 per cent on fast food restaurants in the last two years, those in Tier-II & III cities are also spending much higher on fast food restaurants. Today, more than 65 per cent of the Indian population is aged less than 30 years and exposed to international brands.

One sector that has managed to reap the dividends of this teeming demographic bulge is the foodservice industry, particularly in the QSR segment. There is an increase in the demand for QSRs, pubs and cafes as people are seeking convenience in varied formats. At the same time, the trend amongst diners to opt for cuisines that mirror their lifestyle is fast catching up. Preference for ingredients like truffles, artichokes, asparagus, Australian lamb, Norwegian salmon, black bean sauce, microgreens, organic food, etc., have found their way to Indian F&B counters. The blending of cuisines, like Italian with Thai, is another evolved customer choice and even casual dining players are offering Chinese, authentic Italian, fine French, American, Lebanese cuisine, etc., which were once considered specialty and fine-dining dishes.

To keep up with the trends, the restaurant industry is pulling out all the stops to make food more innovative and interesting. Customers are being wooed with "street food" options served in a hygienic setting and good ambience. All of this is par for the course but to keep pace with the growing demand and drive growth, the industry will have to look beyond the metros and Tier I cities to a number of Tier II and III cities, which may offer better growth prospects for players across sectors.



Amitabh Taneja

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Fabelle creates 72 kg chocolate bar to commemorate 72nd Independence Day



As India celebrated its 72nd Independence Day, Fabelle Exquisite Chocolates commemorated the occasion with a first-of-its-kind 72 kg chocolate bar made from a unique mix of 72 ingredients. The brand crafted a larger-than-life bar in each of the six metros where it is currently available. These bars were displayed in chocolate boutiques at select ITC Luxury Hotels in Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Chennai and Bengaluru. The exquisite milk chocolate bar was handcrafted by Fabelle Master Chocolatiers using rich milk chocolate blended with unique ingredients like nuts, dried fruits, cookies, seeds, jellies, biscuits and more. The brand undertook months of research to finalise on the 72 ingredients and multiple tasting trials were conducted. To make the occasion sweeter, the brand decided to partner with Make-A-Wish Foundation, a non-profit organization which works towards supporting deserving children to lead a richer life by fulfilling their wishes, by way of guest contributions and donations.



Amrita Raichand wins Most Stylish Chef at the Food Food Awards 2018

Eminent chef Amrita Raichand won BBlunt Most Stylish Chef of the Year at Food Food Awards 2018. She is best known for her cookery show Mummy ka Magic, which is one of the longest running shows on FoodFood. She also operates a popular YouTube channel. The celebrity chef was felicitated by Sujit Patel, VP and Head Corporate Communications at Godrej Industries, and received recognition for her contribution to culinary arts by India's most celebrated chef and Padma Shri Awardee Mr. Sanjeev Kapoor.

Wine sommelier Magandeeep Singh conducts masterclass

Luxury brand for crystal wine ware Lucaris in association with India's first French-qualified wine sommelier Magandeeep Singh conducted an insightful masterclass for experts from different hospitality institutes and industries at The Pullman, Delhi. The morning began with Magandeeep giving an insight on the different kinds of glasses from Lucaris' Desire Collection and how wine when served in different types of glasses, in regard to their shapes, enhances the taste and texture of the delicacy. Speaking of the glasses, Magandeeep Singh said, "Wine tasting is always a journey. By changing the glasses we use, we not only change the route but sometimes even the destination. The most important thing that one looks for in glassware is that it should be durable, transparent and affordable."



Glocal Junction wins The Best Gastro Pub of the Year Award

Nurturing a firm belief in the philosophy of being global in its approach yet local at heart, Glocal Junction, with its inviting ambience and warm décor takes you on an exploratory journey to some of the most delectable culinary wonders from around the world. The highly popular bar and eatery has been awarded The Best Gastro Pub of the Year 2018 by Indian Restaurant Awards- West Edition. The award recognizes Glocal Junction for providing customers with a singularly unique experience created with innovative food & drinks, ambience and customer centric service. Its unique cuisine, elaborate bar menu, well-manicured interiors and captivating bar and dining space are some of the main reasons for it being nominated for the award. The gastro pub has already received overwhelming appreciation from guests in all three cities of operation, namely Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bangalore.





FSSAI launches Food Innovators Network at the TiE Food Summit

With the objective of preparing Indian F&B startups to take their brand to a global stage, TiE Delhi-NCR hosted the Food & Food Services Summit 2018 in association with food brand Sattviko. Announced at the event, FSSAI's Food Innovators Network (FINE) will engage innovators to address key challenges on food safety and nutrition. Ms. Madhavi Das, CMSO, FSSAI, said "We are glad to have TiE Delhi-NCR as our partner in bringing together start up entrepreneurs to transform the country's food safety and nutrition landscape." The summit also witnessed active participation from foodpreneurs, restaurateurs, investors and startups who discussed the available domestic and global opportunities in the sector.



Drinq - IIS Bartender Academy felicitates its first batch

Drinq Barmen and Academy by Flaming Trio and IL&FS Skills have joined hands to launch Drinq – IIS Bartender Academy, an institution which provides training on the fundamentals of bartending and service, with modules on product knowledge and the art of creating great drinks. Under this partnership, the first batch of bartenders were certified and felicitated on 25th September, 2018. The successful graduates of this program have been trained on the national occupation standards designed by the Tourism & Hospitality Skill Council. A majority of these students, who belong to marginalized sections of society, have been placed at leading hotels, pubs and cruise ships across several countries.



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Food Entrepreneurs Unite

The Food Entrepreneurs Association (FEA) is a network of restaurateurs, chefs, home-bakers, chocolatiers, standalone tea lounges and bars, caterers, food suppliers, farmers, grocers, consultants, hoteliers and food writers that encourages the exchange of information and problem solving initiatives within the close-knit group of experts. With a total of over 400 members, it has organized a number of events and industry-based programs to address common issues faced by the fraternity. The organization recently celebrated its first anniversary.



L-R: Anil Mulchandani, Narendra Somani, Darshan Raval, RJ Ekta, Dilip Thakkar, Jaikishan Jadwani, Rohit Khanna

MEMBER GROUPINGS AND FOCUS AREAS AT FEA

Restaurant Owners:

Dialogue on policies, laws, taxes and call for action.

Managers and Purchasing Heads:

Business concerns and informational exchange relating to vendors, service providers, ingredients, kitchenware and food safety.

Chefs and Home-bakers:

Discussions around recipes, industry trends, reviews and culinary techniques.

Farmers and Grocers:

Facilitation of B2B connections between institutes, event organizers and suppliers.

Hoteliers:

Interaction between accommodation providers on F&B functions at clubs, resorts, heritage hotels and wildlife camps.



The food service industry encompasses a host of functions and employs a vast section of society including women, unskilled and semi-skilled workers, hawkers and the educated unemployed. Even though the industry operates on such a large scale, it is seldom given much voice when it comes to developmental planning and policy making. This is because of the fragmentation between players and the segmented existence of different levels of businesses catering to different audiences. Realizing the need for a singular representative voice, food critic Anil Mulchandani along with restaurateurs Darshan Rawal, Rohit Khanna and Dilip Thakkar, came up with an association dedicated to keeping members abreast with new developments in the sector.

Conceptualized in Ahmedabad, the network has expanded to include industry captains from across the country and works together to support innovative business initiatives. Information about procurement, staffing, governmental regulations and consumer needs is regularly exchanged at meetings and conferences. Many such interactions have been facilitated by the FEA wherein stakeholders have extended invitations to government officials for mutually beneficial dialogue on GST, FSSAI, etc. The FEA functions on an inclusive working principle and does not follow an authoritarian leadership model in order to eliminate prejudicial competition among members. It is, therefore, administered and not controlled. The group is connected via social media and networking apps to aid instant connect and feedback.

Some industry concerns addressed by the FEA include a shift to the GST regime, shortage of human resources, ineffective training programs, and adaptation of technological inventory management and delivery ordering. The organization has also focused on the limited knowledge on gourmet items like cheese and coffee, awareness around regional cuisines, alternative green packaging, inclusion of healthy edible oils and food security. The intensive inter-member communication has aided procurement of quality appliances and products, development of workshop modules for food entrepreneurs and increased advocacy of issues faced by the restaurant fraternity. Having successfully completed one year as an informal group, the FEA is now in the process of officially registering as an association for food entrepreneurs. •

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Merrill J. Fernando,
Founder of Dilmah



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Chef Sahil Wadhwa



The Cosmetics of Edible Charcoal

Charcoal has been used in various avenues of food and medicine for centuries. Its characteristic properties set it apart and the unusual kitchen item also aids digestion. The use of charcoal in the preparation of baked products is a recent trend which has made itself at home in both high-end and home kitchens as it lends a gothic appeal to food. Being tasteless, charcoal doesn't distort the palate of the food but adds to its aesthetic value by giving it a rich, black colour. The additive has been well-received by people around the world and has come to signify experimental food. For bakers, it presents various opportunities to incorporate the ingredient in different dishes to give baked goods an inky undertone.

— by Chef Sahil Wadhwa



From bread to ice-creams, charcoal has been used in popular creations extensively and people still find innovative ways to experiment with it. Want some black macarons without adding the synthetic dye? Charcoal to the rescue!

Experts have written whole books, blogs and made videos on how to use charcoal while baking. However, there remains a lot more to be explored. While the debate around the healthful benefits of including charcoal in food still rages with apprehensions about how it may even be harmful, it seems like this trend is here to stay. There is no denying that a charcoal bread sandwich beats a regular sandwich based on looks and visual appeal. We also can't refute the fact that a charcoal cake is the perfect birthday gift for your goth-loving friend and that it succeeds in adding another dimension of appreciation of black to their life.

The type of charcoal used in bakeries is vastly different from the charcoal which is used regularly in barbeques, grills, etc. The biggest difference is that it is almost always used in powdered form. In fact, there is not a lot of variety when it comes to different types of charcoal used in baking, with three varieties dominating the market. These include activated, bamboo and vegetable charcoal with activated charcoal being the most popular. It has often been praised as a healthy addition to any food item due to its apparent detoxifying properties and is also known to be used for filtering water. Some even believe that it can cancel out the fattening properties of certain foods. Guilt-free waffles, anyone?

Activated charcoal is easily available at any health store. Its healthful properties are due to its incredibly porous nature. At a microscopic level, activated charcoal is very porous due to being treated by high levels of heat. This makes it absorbent, which, in turn, means that it is able to attract other materials. The additive thus brings negatively charged ions to its surface, lending it a detoxifying property. More often than not, activated charcoal is made from bone char, peat, petroleum coke etc.

beautiful, dark look to the baked item. No matter what recipe it is used in, the end result is bound to make anyone sit up and take notice. Recently, the popular fast food chain Burger King started to use bamboo charcoal in their cheese. The variant is prepared the same way wood charcoal is- by heating bamboo sticks (which are at least five years old, or older) in ovens with high temperatures of 800-1200 degree Celsius. Bamboo charcoal is oftentimes preferred over activated charcoal as it is more environmental friendly.

DIFFERENT VARIETIES USED IN KITCHENS

- Activated charcoal
- Bamboo charcoal
- Vegetable charcoal



Lastly, vegetable charcoal is also a form of charcoal which is added to baked foods. Even ancient Egyptians used to swear by the medicinal properties of vegetable charcoal. It is usually prepared by heating different types of wood such as birch or poplar, and coconut shells at high temperatures. The eccentric preparation has received an almost cult-like following, with its most popular use being in the mixing of colored drinks. The charcoal not only gives them a different personality but also promises to eliminate unfavorable toxins. The vegetable variant is also customarily used in the preparation of breads and focaccia dough. It is also used to prepare crackers which can then be topped with different types of vegetables, meats, sauces, caviar, seafood etc. to create sumptuous appetizers.

Breads, muffins, quiches, waffles and many more baked goods do well with a dash of the strong, statement-making black colour.

The intense black shade which one gets with the use of activated charcoal is tough to crack. Not only is it purely photogenic, one also avoids the use of synthetic dyes to color food. Using the unique ingredient at your next house-party, you can dazzle your guests with some black liquorice cupcakes. When they ask whether these contain food dyes or an insane amount of dark chocolate, you can introduce mystique by denying both. The recipe remains the same, with just the addition of activated charcoal (in a measured amount) to add the distinctive color.

There is a British dish known as charcoal biscuits which has been around for long enough to become traditional. There are other Western countries, such as France, that have a history of using activated charcoal in cooking.

Alternatively, bamboo charcoal is used in Asian dishes. It is added as an ingredient in cakes, cookies, and bread recipes. Some swear by its ability to make baked goods last longer than their shelf life. Predominantly, it is used to add a

There is no denying that the use of charcoal in food merely offers it an aesthetic appeal and contributes no distinct taste to the overall palate of a dish. However, it is often said that one eats with the eyes first and food pigmented with a luscious black hue is seldom not attractive. Black pies, muffins, quiches, waffles and many more baked goods do well with a dash of the strong, statement-making color. Give wings to your imagination and introduce this tempting shade to your food by getting creative in how you infuse the additive. Who would not want to take a bite of a sandwich made out of black and white bread? Undoubtedly, adding a sprinkle of charcoal to your baked products is bound to make them even more insta-worthy! While the usual chocolate pastry has its own pull, black toast with vibrant toppings is way more striking to the eye. •

Chef Sahil Wadhwa, Director, Wadhwa Bakers, is a gifted pastry chef based in Lucknow. At a young age of 30 years, he loves to experiment with food and advocates for open imaginations in the kitchen.



Delivery 2.0

According to a 2016 McKinsey report, the global food delivery market stands at €83 bn, or 1% of the total food market and 4% of food sold through restaurants and fast-food chains. Growth rates vary depending on the maturity of the respective markets. For the GCC market PwC estimates the online food ordering business to reach €195 m by 2020.

The food delivery market has undergone a global transformation, driven by advanced technology options and increased smartphone usage. The Middle East has a strong culture of food ordering, thereby providing a fertile ground for new players. How do major market players in the GCC region experience the business and what are pros and cons from the restaurant operators' point of view? Bettina Quabius reports.

Strong culture of home delivery

In the region's general retail culture, home delivery is very popular, from small independent corner shops and eateries to casual dining restaurants and QSR chains. KPMG's 2016 UAE Food and Beverage report finds that three out of four survey respondents order take away or have food delivered at least once a week. This can be attributed to several factors such as the region's hot summers that prevent people from going out, the issue of mobility when high traffic in the big cities motivates them to order, or religious and social aspects as is the case in Saudi Arabia, where particularly female consumers find it more appealing to be in the comfort of their own home environment rather than being restricted in an outside place. Though the use of technology is picking up – smartphone penetration in the UAE and Saudi Arabia is among the highest in the world – still by far most common is the traditional model of ordering via phone directly at the restaurant, describing the location to the driver and paying cash when receiving the food on the door.

Among the first food online platforms to enter the GCC region was Foodonlick, launched in the UAE in 2010 by the Turkish online portal Yemeksepeti as its third market after Turkey and Russia. The company belonged to the first generation of food delivery services, so-called aggregators, that focus on taking orders from customers and routing them to restaurants, which handle the delivery themselves. Another pioneer, and today one of the most popular platforms of this category, is Kuwait-based

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▲ At the moment, Azadea Group offers delivery for two of the nine international F&B brands in their portfolio, namely PAUL and Kosebasi. Pulp Juice Bars are to follow soon.

Talabat, acquired in 2015 by Rocket Internet for a stunning €150 m. Other operators include 24h or Eateasily, both based in Dubai. Two years ago, Deliveroo entered the GCC market and introduced a new type of delivery service with its own fleet of drivers and technology infrastructure. In September 2016, UberEATS launched in Dubai, expanding its offer to the restaurant business.

Providing comfort

“The approach of the delivery market in the GCC differs from other parts of the world,” believes Mert Askin, President Food & Beverage of the Azadea Group. “Both, the process from the moment the order is placed until it is delivered as well as the offering is still developing and getting more sophisticated.” The needs of the customers, however, are not too different from anywhere else: “Providing comfort to and an efficient and easy way for them to get the orders delivered fast and accurate, with a minimal interaction is what operators are striving for,” Askin says. The Azadea Group operates nine international F&B brands, including PAUL, Eataly, Kosebasi, Butcher Shop & Grill, and manages a total of 114 restaurants in Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, KSA, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the UAE. The company offers delivery for PAUL, Kosebasi and soon Pulp Juice Bars. For selected stores they deliver with their own bikes but in most cases Azadea partners with Deliveroo, Talabat, UberEATS and several local providers, depending on the location.

“Online platforms can be compared to shopping malls,” Askin says: “Being in a good shopping mall gives you access to the mall’s footfall that drives customers to our stores. The same is applicable to the online platform. Additionally, running a delivery fleet, from a logistics point of view, is not the core of our restaurant operations, outsourcing this job to a third party brings efficiency in costs of fleet and operations at our scale.”

Additional income and visibility

Despite generally high commissions Azadea’s overall experience with the different providers is good, with each platform offering something

different when it comes to communication with customers, support on social media, e-mailers and other communication tools. The company currently considers sales from delivery as an additional income that is projected to increase and to become a main income stream in the next years. Parallel to this, Askin expects the still high costs to be decreasing as soon as more platforms penetrate the market and competition rises.

Tom Arnel, co-founder and Managing Director at Bull & Roo, the Dubai-based company behind some of the most successful and exciting newcomers



UBEREATS: FACTS & FIGURES

Headquarters: San Francisco, USA

Established: 2015

Year of market entry in the Middle East: September 2016 in Dubai

Countries of activity: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, France, Hong Kong, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Poland, Russia, Singapore, Spain, South Africa, Sweden, Taiwan, Thailand, The Netherlands, UAE, UK, USA

No. of partner restaurants: 30,000 worldwide; 700 in Dubai

Opening hours: Sun-Wed: 8.30 am-11 pm; Thu: 8.30 am-1 am; Fri + Sat: 11 am-1 am. Ramadan hours: daily 11 am-2 am

on the city’s café and restaurant scene, takes a similar view on working with a third-party delivery provider: “The online platforms allow us to target new customers and raise our online presence allowing for greater visibility. Delivery is particularly great for our outlets located in the business district such as The Sum Of Us and Muchachas Mexican Cantina.” Revenue from delivery provides additional income and situations where dine-in guests have long wait times due to delivery couriers being prioritized over them do not occur. Arnel traces this back to the fact that people in Dubai are generally very accepting and understandable of the delivery phenomenon. He states: “Instead what we see is that customers are impressed when they see delivery orders, especially on mass, from a place as it shows high demand for the food.”

Bull & Roo partners with Deliveroo for all six of its outlets, each of them offering an adapted menu and packaging tailored for delivery purposes. Given the overall popularity of delivery embedded in the culture of Dubai, the company believes this is a growing segment to exploit and invest in. Arnel

DELIVERY



DELIVEROO: FACTS & FIGURES

Headquarters: London, UK

Established: February 2013

Year of market entry:
November 2015 in Dubai

Countries of activity: Australia, Belgium, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Ireland, The Netherlands, Singapore, Spain, UAE, UK

No. of partner restaurants:
20,000 worldwide; 1,100 in the UAE

No. of employees: more than 1,100 worldwide and over 30,000 riders; 70 in Dubai and 480 riders

Opening hours: from noon to 11 pm daily; extended operating hours during Ramadan

adds: "However, our focus and what we pride ourselves on continues to be delivering an overall premium dining experience including excellent customer service, intricately-designed interiors as well as freshly-made dishes."

Interestingly, the newest member of the Bull & Roo portfolio, Thai street food concept Uncle Jheff, had been launched for only 2 days at a fashion event in 2016 and been planned to continue as a virtual restaurant solely for delivery. But after receiving a lot of positive feedback the Bull & Roo team decided to turn Uncle Jheff into a pop-up concept, as Arnel explains: "What we saw with Uncle Jheff was it was a destination that people travelled for and if we had solely gone down the delivery route, we would have missed this opportunity to deliver a unique brand experience. The natural direction was to keep moving forward with Uncle Jheff as a pop-up concept and after our second highly successful Uncle Jheff pop-up inside Brunswick Sports Club, this decision was reaffirmed. Uncle Jheff is all about Thai street food, refreshing drinks and evenings that turn into nights with good friends, vibes and music."

For online delivery platform Deliveroo the Middle East business has been very positive since entering the market in late 2015. As of today, the company partners with 1,100 premium restaurants in the UAE – many of them with no (online) delivery service of their own – and has 480 riders on its books. "It has been a very positive experience," Anis Harb, General Manager at Deliveroo GCC, says. "We have averaged 30% in month-on-month growth and expanded to Abu Dhabi since first launching in Dubai in November 2015. Many elements contribute to our success in the UAE – from the positive user experience with our user-friendly app to keeping delivery times to 32 minutes or less, to having the best restaurant partners in the region."

Deliveroo also prides itself on the strength of its tech, algorithms, customer service, and general operational standards. In order to ensure that the food is delivered at the optimum temperature and quality Deliveroo operates in a hyper-local fashion delivering from 'best-loved' restaurants within 2.5 to 3 kilometers of where the customers are located. Harb observes: "We are seeing a huge shift towards ordering via apps and online. Customers love the selection, our user-friendly app, and that they can track the order from the restaurant to their door."

Delivery-only kitchens

Corporate customers are addressed by a programme called Deliveroo for Business, which works in the same way as the core business but includes additional features such as giving businesses full control over employee allowance spending, assigning project codes which is particularly interesting for agencies with multiple clients, or providing companies with the ability to reward early and late workers across the business by time & location locks.

With commissions between 20 and 30% charged by the online platforms, costs for the restaurants are obviously on the high side. Yet outsourcing the complete process of ordering, payment and delivery enables them to use their excess kitchen capacity to generate an increase of up to 30% in revenue without their own fleet of drivers and technology infrastructure and is therefore seen as a major asset to their business.

In April this year, Deliveroo announced the launch of Deliveroo Editions, a network of small, delivery-only kitchens that gives restaurants the opportunity to reach new audiences without needing to set up a new location. Motored by technology, Deliveroo uses its data to identify

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Damien Drap Tom Arnel Anis Harb Mert Askin

THE DELIVERY MARKET IN THE GCC REGION

"More than a trend, we think what we are witnessing is really a social shift in the way we consume food, as people are constantly on the lookout for faster services, and are becoming more demanding in terms of choice, value and the availability of healthier meal options. Given how fast the trend is growing in the region, we see it actually leading the charge in defining the future of food."

Damien Drap, General Manager at UberEATS Dubai

"I would say Dubai's delivery market is similar to many other cosmopolitan and densely-

populated cities that tend to have buildings with small kitchens hence making delivery a popular option. The one noticeable difference is that we see more deliveries during the hotter periods of the year and for a longer period of time. Overall, I would say delivery is definitely a hot trend in Dubai."

Tom Arnel, co-founder and Managing Director at Bull & Roo

"Food delivery is very successful in the UAE; people lead particularly busy lives and therefore don't have time to cook their favourite food. We are happy to provide them

with a convenient and reliable service to make their lives easier."

Anis Harb, General Manager at Deliveroo GCC

"The main drivers of success are the efficiency and ease of the process, i.e. item selection, order customization, payment, order confirmation, receiving, along with the quality of the product received such as taste, temperature and packaging. Consistency is key while after sales feedback is an added-value."

Mert Askin, President Food & Beverage of the Azadea Group



customer demand and predict which restaurants are likely to succeed in different areas before providing them with the necessary infrastructure such as bespoke kitchens, a fleet of riders, and local marketing support to get their businesses started. Restaurants can hereby launch, expand and test new innovations with delivery-only offerings. The first Deliveroo Edition in the region will launch in the UAE later in 2017, with one of the first restaurant partners being Pinza, a locally grown concept that has become known as the master of the wholesome, hand-kneaded pizza.

Strength of technology

Allowing restaurants to focus on what they do best, in other words creating and preparing great food and experiences by removing the hassle of finding customers and managing logistics is also what UberEATS offers its partnering restaurants. Beyond this, the company provides partners with support to improve their menu and operations, feature them in marketing campaigns and give them access to analytics that they can leverage to make more informed business decisions. Damien Drap, General Manager at UberEATS Dubai, enthusiastically comments: "Imagine if we can tell restaurant partners that a particular menu item is trending in their neighbourhood and that it would be a good idea for them to start making it. Or if we told them that there's a big sport game taking place and certain foods will be more popular that night, this will be a game changer."

Since its launch in Dubai less than one year ago UberEATS has performed beyond expectations and now has over 700 restaurant partners in the city. The experience of already operating a successful rides business in Dubai is certainly a big advantage and made the city the natural place to launch the food delivery venture. "Uber has been delivering people around cities for years, we know how cities work. We also have the best technology that enables users to order food as quickly and seamlessly as booking a ride," says Drap and continues: "There is definitely a huge potential for growth in a market like the UAE, which has one of

the highest numbers of food and beverage outlets per capita in the world."

Tools like the 'Restaurant Manager Dashboard' give UberEATS' restaurant partners insight to their daily business activity, operational performance, customer satisfaction rating, and feedback on an item level, and enable the parties to improve menus and operations. The UberEATS app provides customers search functions beyond the different cuisines on offer; one is able to sort by popularity, delivery time, to select a price range and indicate dietary restrictions like 'vegetarian', 'vegan', and 'gluten-free'.

"Technology is really the key for us, and will be our biggest strength going forward," Drap says. "First, because we bring reliability to our customers, restaurants and delivery partners. Second, because we are committed to provide the best user experience possible, whether you are a vegan or a pizza lover, we will work on personalizing your food ordering experience like never before. And finally, our operational excellence and optimised service and support will continue to be an enormous focus to make every experience reliable, efficient and effortless."

But the UberEATS team also met challenges when trying to ensure best end-to-end experiences in the complex urban environment of Dubai. To counter these obstacles, they are implementing creative solutions, such as the recently launched 'drop-off options' feature. It allows users to choose whether they want their food dropped off at the front door, the building front desk, directly curbside etc. Future efforts to master the city could be further developing mapping and GPS guidance, or improving pickups in malls with runners.

For the future, UberEATS plans to grow into more cities across the Middle East. Drap says: "It's clear to us that there is a massive opportunity in terms of large cities of several millions of inhabitants, high number of F&B outlets, a strong culture of ordering-in, an occasional lack of robust delivery options, and a great customer appetite for various cuisines." •

GCC: ONLINE DELIVERY PLATFORMS*

www.24h.ae UAE

www.deliveroo.ae UAE

www.eateasily.com UAE

www.foodonlick.com HQ: UAE; Lebanon, Oman, Qatar

www.hellofood.sa KSA

www.hungerstation.com KSA, Bahrain

www.otlob.com Egypt

www.talabat.com HQ: Kuwait; Bahrain, KSA, Oman, Qatar

www.ubereats.com UAE

www.zomato.com HQ: India; Lebanon, Qatar, UAE

*Selection

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CHICKEN	165	3.57	1.01	85	31.02
SHEEP/ LAMB	290	21.12	9.080	93	23.27



100g Servings' comparison

Source: USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference



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Chef Carl Rebello, Head Chef & Co-Owner at Howra Burger, Mumbai, speaks to FoodService India about the expectations and challenges that chefs face today in a world where food preferences are constantly evolving.

“Chefs should be able to take constructive criticism.”



Chef Carl Rebello



Was your entry into the culinary profession by choice or accident? Who were the people that inspired you to take up this career?

I came into this profession because of my love for food. I loved to eat at new restaurants and try new dishes and cuisines. To this day, I am still amazed at how much good food can lift a person's spirit. Food not only fuels our body but our mind and soul as well.

There are a few people who have helped inspire and shape my career. But none more so than my mother, who always encouraged me to cook and helped guide me to better understand flavor profiles. Also, I will always be indebted to the faculty at IHM Mumbai, my alma mater. The teachers there taught me what it takes to be a professional.

Who are the chefs you regard as your mentors?

Sanjeev Kapoor is one chef I hold in high regard. He was my first glimpse into this beautiful culinary world that I am a part of today. As a kid, watching his cookery show on television always inspired me. Chef Vernon Coelho, Chef Jaeson Cardoz and Chef Aaron D'souza at IHM Mumbai guided me and explained to me the science and art behind cooking and baking. They have helped me become the chef I am today.

How do you feel at this point in your career?

I am very happy with my career and life. I am proud of what I have achieved and am truly grateful to God for what he has bestowed upon me personally and professionally. However, I am not going to sit back and be complacent. I am always striving to better myself and the food I serve.

What are you currently engaged in and what have been your latest achievements?

I am the Co-Owner and Head Chef of Howra Burger, with three outlets in Mumbai. Howra Burger started off as a small, simple place serving good quality food with a unique twist, which I

brought to bear from my experience of having lived in three countries and being exposed to different cuisines. My signature dishes and burgers have been featured in prestigious newspaper publications such as the Mumbai Mirror and The Mid Day. Besides, we are the only restaurant in India to be featured by The Insider, a hugely popular social network channel that showcases unique dishes from all over the world.

How do you approach food and its preparation?

I break down the components of every dish and how they work together to create something magical. I then go on to check the availability and acceptability of the ingredients used.

Which particular cuisines or dishes do you focus on and how have you seen their evolution over the years?

My current focus is on burgers. The evolution of burgers in India and, most particularly, in Mumbai has been amazing. Howra Burger has been contributing to this evolution since its inception in 2014. The number of burger restaurants has grown immensely in recent years. In 2014, when we opened, there were just about 4-5 burger restaurants in the city whereas now there are about 25 plus. Burger lovers can rejoice as now they can get a really good burger made from different types of meat to burgers in different sizes, including massive sized ones.

As a chef and restaurateur, how do you motivate your co-workers and kitchen staff to strive ever higher for quality standards?

I encourage my staff to express their creativity and always be open to try out new things. I keep urging them to try out dishes at other restaurants to understand the thought process behind the creation of those dishes. For my restaurant, I keep in mind the current trends along with their feasibility before I implement any new ideas.



What are the hallmarks of a top professional chef?

A top professional chef has to be passionate about his work, be a great leader, be supportive, be quick on his feet and, most importantly, be able to take constructive criticism.

What are the challenges in being a chef today?

The challenge is about keeping up with the latest trends and cooking methods, and being in step with the constantly evolving palates of the people.

Are there enough good quality, trained and qualified chefs to meet the emerging demands of foodservice industry?

India has an abundance of great chefs with technical skills and creativity. If you take a look at the new restaurants popping up all over the country and the dishes they serve, it is remarkable to see how far we have come. Not only in terms of the different types of ingredients used but also in the intricacy showcased on the plate.

How do you think food trends will change going ahead?

People have become very health conscious and are more aware of the nutritional value of what they consume. The trend is moving towards more organic and healthy food. •

What do you do to update your skills and keep abreast of technology and other changes?

The beauty of today's world is that all the information is available easily and you don't have to rely on a single source. The Internet, in particular, is a treasure trove of knowledge and learning. You just need to know what to search for and you can have all the information you need at your fingertips.

How would you articulate the role of a modern day chef?

A chef today is not only someone who cooks but also innovates, motivates and helps to make sure that his patrons always have a memorable experience when they dine.

People have become very health conscious and they are more aware of the nutritional value of what they consume. The trend is moving towards more organic and healthy food.



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Harnessing the tandoor for quirky tikka menus



Culinary Journey: Passed out from Rizvi College of Hotel Management in 2005 and started working for Intercontinental The Grand (The Lalit) in Mumbai. Worked at hotels and brands like Sahara Star, Marriott, Hyatt, Oakwood and Intercontinental, Marine Drive.

Specialty Cuisine: Indian and Tandoor. Has also received training in Continental and Oriental cuisines.

Industry Inspirations: Chef Johern Kern, Chef Salil Fadnis, Chef Javed and Chef Satish Reddy. Believes in the distinguishing characteristics of a successful chef such as individual uniforms, skills, culinary art and the knowledge of food. Hailing from Bengal, he has infused his love for strong taste profiles and varied flavour combinations into his food.

Signature Recipes: Murgh amicha tikka, paneer jalapeno tikka and murgh jaituni tikka. Believes in authentic and fusion recipes, and likes to mix and match ingredients.

A Sunday Brunch With Family: BBQ, fish, chicken, dal and aloo bhaja. Typical home-made food in Bengali style with Rosogula for dessert.

Hobbies Outside The Kitchen: Singing and listening to gazals by Jagjit Singh.

Alternate Career Choice: Chartered accountant.



PERSONAL INSIGHTS ON

Culinary Forums: They play a major role in the development and training of a chef. Chefs are provided recognition among their peers in the industry and organizations give a stage for chefs to showcase their innovation and creativity. Forums can help in bringing up young chefs and initiating them in the industry.

Foodservice Innovation: People are changing as they travel and sample food in different countries. They know global cuisines and what they comprise. Therefore, you can't fool a guest. Bringing in new innovations according to your guest's preferences is always good but you should be transparent in your creations. As technology and advanced machinery makes work easy for the chef, he/she can focus on innovation and creating unique preparations.

Evolution of Dining Spaces: Fine dining in India has changed drastically as we can only imagine the old style of dining now. Food has also reached a level of perfection and innovation right from molecular gastronomy to fusion food. People like to try new food and they are eager. New launches in the market have a considerable consumer base to impress.

“ When a painter paints a picture, we can only see it. When a chef creates a dish, we can see, smell, taste and feel it. That is what makes us artists. ”

– Chef Amit Chakraborti
Executive Chef,
Goldfinch Mumbai

Involving diners in the making of end products

“ Chefs are now creating new dishes and educating the customers about the thought process behind the creation of recipes. Telling the story behind each recipe is a great way to keep the audience engaged. ”

– Chef Pavan Chennam
Executive Chef,
Conrad Pune



Culinary Journey: Has been associated with brands like Hilton and Marriott, and has worked alongside some industry legends that have shaped him as a chef by giving him immense confidence. Constant learning is his forte and he continues to remain a student even after 14 years in the industry.

Specialty Cuisine: Has always been an apprentice of regional Indian cuisine. Hailing from Andhra Pradesh, the chef has taken inspiration from Andhra food.

Industry Inspirations: Chef Imtiaz Qureshi, Chef Manjeet Gill, and Chef Madhu Krishnan. During his time at Marriott, he worked with Chef Girish

Krishnan who taught him the nuances of how to run operations in a large kitchen and how to handle pressures that come along with the trade.

Signature Recipes: Recently, as a part of Conrad Pune's 'Seven-gredients' festival, he created an innovative dish by the name of Pun-Ya-Paise by drawing inspiration from the French classic soup Bouillabaisse. The dish consists of a quintessential Dal Amti, a staple in Maharashtrian cuisine. He deconstructed the dish by separating all the core ingredients of the dish like coconut and jelly, replaced aged tamarind with young tamarind, and tirelessly separated the dal from the water to infuse it with curry leaf oil. He also used maltodextrin to solidify fats. The dish is presented in such a way that when all the elements are brought together and combined on the table, it evolves into a very beautiful and subtle Amti.

Go-to Ingredients: Is a big fan of tamarind as it not only enriches the dish but also acts as a preservative.

A Sunday Brunch With Family: Biryani and salan on a lazy afternoon with some beer to wash it down.

Hobbies Outside The Kitchen: Diving into a good book or television series.

Alternate Career Choice: Captain America [superhero] in chef whites.



PERSONAL INSIGHTS ON

Culinary Forums: Chef forums and chef-oriented organizations are on the rise in our country and have the potential in terms of having a stronger presence in the industry. They can help influence suppliers and guests, and guarantee better product quality to help streamline young promising talent that the industry largely needs now.

Use of Technology in the Kitchen: Technology has become a necessity to keep up with today's world. It plays a key role in our lives and provides accuracy at work and in day-to-day tasks but caution must be taken to ensure that it doesn't become the guiding light. It's eventually the chef's instinct and proficiency that will define the final preparation.

Evolution of Dining Spaces: The dining scene is constantly evolving. A new concept called 'fun dining' is gaining popularity. It is the amalgamation of fine and casual dining. Chefs are now creating new dishes and educating the customers about the thought process behind the creation of recipes. Telling the story behind each recipe is a great way to keep the audience engaged. The concept of chef-driven restaurants will continue to be the shining beacon in the near future. These days you may also find restaurants named after chefs instead of fancy declarations.

Exploring Indian food trails for international flavours



Specialty Cuisine: Mediterranean. The chef takes inspiration from a number of concepts. Authentic world cuisines and regional Indian foods are revamped to make newer offerings. He follows the Farm to Fork concept wherein he uses fresh organic vegetables and locally sourced seasonal ingredients.

Industry Inspirations: Chef Hemant Oberoi, Chef Ananda Solomon, Chef Amit Chowdhry, Chef Sujan Mukherjee, Chef Rene Redzepi, Chef Peter Gilmore, Chef Heston Blumenthal, Chef Gary Mehigan and Chef Mark Long.

Signature Recipes: Italian black rice with patty pan, confit vine tomatoes and herbed goat cheese, sous vide lamb rack with anchovy butter, hasselback potatoes, beetroot splash and asparagus, and dijjaj m'qualli braised whole chicken with pickled lemon, saffron and giblets.

Go-to Ingredients: Saffron for its flavor and essence, yellow chilli for its spice, citrus rind for its bitter taste and honey for its sweetness. Healthier

ingredients like avocados, fresh organic vegetables, and grains like quinoa, jowar, bajra and red millets are gaining more importance in the food industry and helping us develop Farm to Fork menus.

A Sunday Brunch With Family: Maharashtrian pandhara rassa, which is a white chicken curry made with coconut milk, chilli, cashew juice and whole spices. It is a typical ancient recipe from the chef's native home and is served with rice bhakri and steamed rice.



“Dishes from the north and south poles of the global food industry are aligning with our newfound interest in plant proteins, gut health, and seasonal cooking. The increase in communal and comfort food is also in high demand.”

– Chef Prasad Metrani
Executive Chef,
Fairmont Jaipur

Hobbies Outside The Kitchen: Travelling to different regions of India and exploring the food from these destinations. Enjoys visiting small towns in India to find unique flavours. Also enjoys listening to music, watching movies and real-life shows.

Alternate Career Choice: IT professional or dental surgeon.

PERSONAL INSIGHTS ON

Chef Forums: They create and maintain bonds of friendship and foster professional cooperation. Cuisines, recipes and technical know-how are easily taught and dispersed. These organizations also enable improvement in professional standards within the industry through effective training and recruitment. The exchange of ideas is promoted and culinary art along with related studies is encouraged.

Foodservice Innovation: Innovation in food service technology offers differentiation and leadership in strategic terms. A majority of food service businesses do not have research and development laboratories. Novel food service processes can evolve as a result of the adoption of technological breakthroughs in high-tech

fields of the economy. This justifies investments in expensive research and highlights the importance of technical competencies for a food service professional.

Evolution of Dining Spaces: The food service industry in India is one of the most vibrant service industries. The concept of gastro pubs and comfort food has been on the roll for quite a few years. Mass appeal lies in the affordability of the venue. It must be affordable by a vast section of the population, encompassing all age groups. With very few limitations on the variety of dishes, these pubs meet the needs of all sorts of diverse demands, be it variations in cuisines or liquor. Health bars, pop-up restaurants and breakfast bars are also some popular concepts.



Molecular chemicals to create edgier dishes

“The most exciting feature of being a chef is constantly proving yourself in challenging environments. You become a multitasker and team player, and are able to handle criticism. Chefs are no longer invisible and the concept of dining revolves around them.”

– Chef Kshitiz Shekhar
Executive Chef,
Marine Plaza Mumbai

Culinary Journey: Started with ITC Group of Hotels as an Executive Trainee and gained exposure to fine dining and banqueting. After a four year association with ITC, moved to the USA at Sheraton Hotels and Resorts. After working as Sous Chef and learning a new cuisine, the chef came back to India and handled some of the busiest foodservice restaurants and pioneered innovations at multiple F&B outlets.

Specialty Cuisine: Continental and Indian. After being exposed to Indian cuisine, the chef took inspiration from unique cooking styles. French cuisine has also had an impact on his take on cooking. Having worked in the USA, simple American cuisine changed his outlook on the construction of modern dishes.

Industry Inspirations: Chef Alain Ducasse, Chef Imitiaz Qureshi, Chef Bobby Flay, Chef Madhu Krishnan and Chef Salil Fadnis.

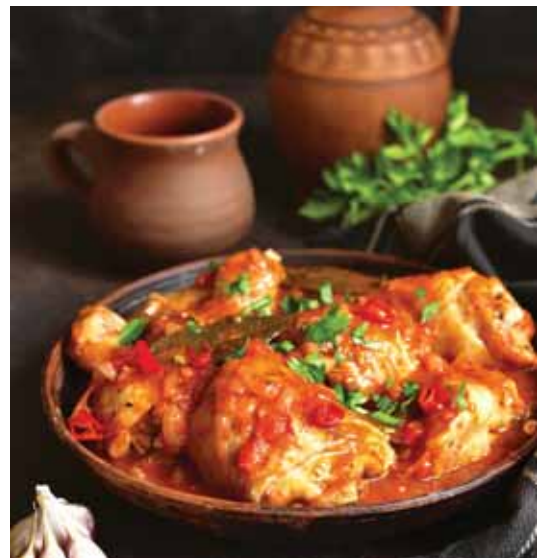
Signature Recipes: Hickory smoked duck with dark cherry and kokum foam, honey mustard Australian lamb chop, lotus stem with sriracha, Chilean sea bass with pommery mustard sauce, and ambada with palak ki shami.

Go-to Ingredients: Garlic is a central ingredient for almost all cuisines around the world. Whether its meat, fish, vegetables, sauces or soups, all dishes can be flavoured by the presence of garlic. Adding garlic can enhance the food profile to a different level. While developing a menu, he often uses molecular chemicals and fresh, local ingredients.

A Sunday Brunch With Family: Chicken ramen.

Hobbies Outside The Kitchen: Spending time with family, listening to music to bust stress and playing outdoor games with his kids.

Alternate Career Choice: Engineer.



PERSONAL INSIGHTS ON

Culinary Forums: The biggest role of a forum is to bring all the chefs under one roof. The sharing of knowledge is important for self-growth and development. Various training programs are conducted as per industry demands. Chefs are exposed to new ingredients and become well-versed with current trends. These forums should work at a grass root level as students pursuing culinary courses need better direction.

Foodservice Innovation: Innovations in equipment design and layout, packaging and service techniques are of a defensive or reactive nature. Innovation includes faster and better preparation methods, improved temperature control, even heating, energy and labour savings, less waste, better sanitation, faster service and flexibility. The use of modern gadgets and upgraded cooking styles enhances the food. Sous vide cooking is the latest trend which improves a dish's flavour profile. The use of smoking gun, molecular chemicals, dehydrator, thermo whip siphon, etc. gives an edge to the dish.

Evolution of Dining Spaces: Casual dining will grow in comparison to fine dining as getting a return on investment is easier in that format. Food trucks, QSRs and cloud kitchens will also grow in the coming days.



Nomadic Ayurveda-inspired recipes



Culinary Journey: First job was in the potwash, cleaning utensils and dishes as a utility boy in the kitchen of a restaurant in Nagpur. The chance of growing from the bare basics, has helped the chef maintain humility and composure even today. Moved on to Tuli International as a kitchen helper. Went on to Mumbai and worked with brands like Oberoi, The Hyatt, Marriott, Accor and IHG spanning 22 years of cumulative kitchen experience.

Specialty Cuisine: Trendy Indian, traditional Indian

and nomadic Indian. Indian food is a very complex space, ranging from authentic Indian and rural Indian to being differentiated state-wise, culturally unique, Ayurveda-inspired, westernized, modern Indian, trendy Indian and fused Indian. The chef dives into all these spheres of Indian cuisine which constitutes a universe of food within itself. Has a personal passion for Ayurveda-inspired Indian food, through which folks suffering from ailments of various types are benefited.

Industry Inspirations: Chef Narayan Singh Dewara, Chef Joy Bhattacharya and Chef Rene Redzepi.

Signature Recipes: Chironji mahuwa murabba, palong bhaja with silken yogurt, jangli jalebi toffee, shakarkandi santra bruschetta, etc.

Go-to Ingredients: Loves working with ingredients that are found only in the deep rainforests of India. These highly uncommon ingredients are a treat for the taste buds and the base for his nomadic recipes. Focuses on bringing out and enhancing the taste of the actual ingredient rather than masking it with too much masala. Another innovative idea he follows is to rustle up healthy food menus with salubrious elements.

A Sunday Brunch With Family: Khichdi, the best comfort food in India.

Hobbies Outside The Kitchen: Scavenging the jungles of India for unique ingredients and seeking various hidden cultures. Often visits nomadic India and lives with the local tribes to learn about their life, culture and most importantly, their food and cooking style.

Alternate Career Choice: Officer in the Armed Forces.

“ In my formative years as a budding chef, I came to realize that the Indian raso has lost the nuances of original recipes and naturopathy-driven food that actually has ultimate healing properties. ”

– Chef Bhairav Singh Rajput
Master Chef- Indian Cuisine, Intercontinental Marine Drive, Mumbai

PERSONAL INSIGHTS ON

Foodservice Innovation: There are by and large three discrete aspects that constitute food service innovation. First is a heart that is in love with food followed by having a mature mind and, lastly, an in-depth knowledge of ingredients. Technological advancements help us derive the finesse of the final product. Not only that, advanced technology facilitates better storage, and the health and nutritional aspects of the ingredients. It also provides better control over portioning and standardization.

Evolution of Dining Spaces: As times change, the original concept of fine dining is slowly but surely getting more informal by the day. An age where time is of utmost importance, fine dining turns out to be a bit of a liability which is why the 17 course meal experience has now

boiled down to three or four courses at the most. In fact, the world is moving to more convenience-based options rather than luxury. Smart and casual dining is the need of the hour, with well-presented food and apt portions to maintain the sanctity of the experience and respect a consumer's time, all at one go.

There are a lot of budding entrepreneurs who enter this industry with minuscule knowledge and try to create concepts based on their whims and fancies. I believe that new concepts without enough body to justify a guest experience are upending the existing conventions. What needs to be done is that such entrepreneurs should team up with knowledgeable chefs who can actually shape the offerings and hence, the concept.

Micro-cuisines and advancing the Food-for-Good philosophy

Culinary Journey: After graduating from IHM Chennai, he did his advanced chef training at the ITC Maurya Sheraton, New Delhi. Worked at Dum Pukht, Bukhara and also headed the kitchen at Dakshin in Chennai. Moved to London in 1999, joined Tamarind as Sous Chef in 2001. Was made Executive Chef within a year and also became the youngest Indian chef to earn a Michelin Star in 2002, retaining the star for 13 years.

Specialty Cuisine: Indian. Has taken inspiration from Japanese, Spanish and Italian cuisines as they use the freshest of local produce and very few ingredients to create incredible flavours. Looks up to the skills, discipline and dedication of Japanese chefs.

Industry Inspirations: Chef P.K Thimmaya, Chef Manjit Singh Gill, Chef Imtiaz Qureshi, Chef Madan Lal Jaiswal, Chef Praveen Anand and Chef Nisar Waris.

Signature Recipes: Tandoori khumb, OMYA chaat, edamame seekh, malabar pepper chicken, kasundhi prawns, spice crusted sea bream, tandoori lamb chops and Kashmiri nalli.



Go-to ingredients: Spice flavours like green chilli, black peppercorn and ginger. His recipe ideas have mostly been developed around transforming authentic regional dishes into a form of delicious artistry. Adds components and textures that complement and beautify, without taking away the authenticity of the flavour profile.

A Sunday Brunch With Family: Biryani or chilli chicken with vegetable fried rice.

Hobbies Outside The Kitchen: Tennis, gardening, photography and travel.

Alternate Career Choice: Architect.

“The authenticity of flavours in my creations is a very important facet of my cooking. With the many modern touches and presentation elements I add into my creations, retaining a strong flavour profile is absolutely sacred to me.”

– Chef Alfred Prasad
Michelin-starred Chef
and Food Consultant



PERSONAL INSIGHTS ON

Culinary Forums: Huge believer in industry forums as they offer an opportunity for collective impact. A great platform to discuss policies, procedures, work ethics, health and safety practices, to support women in hospitality, and to address issues due to change in laws, etc. They make a difference by encouraging internships and opportunities for young people. The chef is passionate about 'Food-for-Good' philosophy and is associated with charities that fight food poverty and food waste. Culinary forums have helped create a more significant impact in these areas.

Foodservice Innovation: Constant innovation is what sets you apart. The industry continues to make huge strides in this aspect. Whether it is developments in food science and nutrition, techniques gained from the food manufacturing sector or inspiration taken from art and architecture, technological advancements in related fields have influenced food service and hospitality. Technology also plays a role in our understanding of all the aspects that influence a dining experience, be it the lighting, soundscape, the shape or size of a plate, the weight of our cutlery, the colours we associate with certain tastes or gastrophysics.

Evolution of Dining Spaces: New concepts are catering to a new age Instagram-diner whose tick boxes and parameters are different from a traditional diner. There is a massive white space for modern Indian concepts. Many of these concepts also showcase micro-cuisines which will hold strong for the future. The health aspect of eating out is also popular now.

Enhancing fusion food with home-made accompaniments



Culinary Journey: Worked with Indian and international brands such as ITC and Le Meridien. Was awarded a bronze medal in the international culinary contest organized by the Indian Culinary Federation. Has been a part of TV shows on BBC India and ETV and has also worked at multiple food festivals.

Specialty Cuisine: Has had experience with Mediterranean, Mexican, Arabic, Italian and

European cuisines while working outside India. Combining these taste profiles, the chef curates a unique fusion menu.

Industry Inspirations: Chef Manjeet Singh Gill, Chef Richard Gramham, Chef Vinod Kaul and Chef Devender Kumar.

Signature Recipes: Barley salad with chicken and beans for starters. For the main course, herb crusted sole fillet with basil infused garlic sauce. Mediterranean and Arabic are his preferred cuisines and he likes to serve in casual dining spaces. Plays around with innovative dishes and healthy ingredients.

Go-to Ingredients: Mexican paprika and homemade dips such as mustard sauce, and quick Mediterranean and Arabic mix dips. Incorporates skewer dishes with healthy greens and freshly made sauces.

A Sunday Brunch With Family: Mustard grilled chicken with fresh greens and garlic bread.

Hobbies Outside The Kitchen: Watching movies and taking long drives.

Alternate Career Choice: Pilot.

“ I have created the perfect palates, which excel in taste and presentation. Working as a chef needs a lot of creativity and you have to look at things from a new angle to continuously polish your skills. ”

– Chef Rajesh Raina
Head F&B Operations,
Raise The Bar,
Clarens Hotel



PERSONAL INSIGHTS ON

Culinary Forums: Culinary forums and chef-oriented organizations serve as a good platform for chefs from all parts of the world to meet each other and share their ideas. These platforms also help chefs in staying updated with the latest trends and innovations. Culinary organizations also engage in motivating chefs from time to time by organizing food contests and culinary competitions at national and international levels. These competitions give a great opportunity to young chefs and new talent to come up and contribute to the industry.

Use of Technology In The Kitchen: Technology has played a significant role in the industry. Right from advanced kitchen equipment to digital media, the food industry and culinary arts have reached their all time high. The food culture of various countries is being shared on a single platform and the global platter has become even more delectable.

Evolution of Dining Spaces: The smart, casual dining concept will work very well in India, especially with healthy food options included. The new social trend has motivated people to explore food outside their homes and cherish lively moments with sumptuous food.

Technique-driven cooking and architectural choices stand out

Culinary Journey: Has worked for more than 15 years in the hospitality industry now and has been associated with brands like Hyatt, Olive Bar and Kitchen, Zuma (Abu Dhabi), Noma (Denmark), ITC Hotels, etc.

Specialty Cuisine: Pan Asian and modern Indian. Believes that a style of cooking is characterized by distinctive ingredients, techniques and dishes. Religious food laws, and regional customs and ingredients also play a role in determining a culinary style. Fusion food is not bound by these stereotypes.

“Cooking is an intricate process of measuring ingredients and making the dish into a masterpiece. Being able to visualize the final product, the chef must recognize the missing elements to better curate a dish.”

– Chef Vaibhav Bhargava
Corporate Chef,
Yuvi Hospitality



Industry Inspirations: Chef Thomas Keller, Julia Child, Chef Marcela Hazan and Chef Manjit Gill.

Signature Recipes: Cold Japanese salmon pizza, miso black cod, choley bhatura tacos and laal maas ravioli.

Go-to Ingredients: Yuzu, wasabi, sichuan pepper, bhoot jholokia chillies and cilantro.

A Sunday Brunch With Family: Pizzas, burgers, tomato paneer, breads and quinoa salads with an assortment of sauces and fresh juices.

Hobbies Outside The Kitchen: Travelling and working out at the gym. Loves to read and play with his son.

Alternate Career Choice: Traveller, explorer and storyteller.

PERSONAL INSIGHTS ON

Foodservice Innovation: Innovation means re-engineering menus to better target today's new consumer segments, re-engineering promotions and marketing to engage those consumers, and re-engineering restaurant operations to further reduce complexity. Menu development has to be done to make the consumer experience more wholesome and transparent. Restaurateurs should embrace dietary guidelines and include local, fresh elements. The customer should customize and update F&B offerings according to popular demand. Use digital technologies to engage with consumers and run your business better. Many customers pre-visit your restaurant by checking out your menus online, while others follow up on their dining experiences with a review on social media. Innovative restaurants have their digital strategies in order and leverage social media opportunities.

Evolution of Dining Spaces: The development in fine dining has evolved during the last few years. There has been a huge shift in fine dining to more nuanced iterations, such as relaxed fine dining, or modern fine dining. Some of the traditional trappings have gone away in favour of more modern architectural choices such as stone, metal, pottery dishes, etc. We witness more complex and technique-driven cooking with an increased focus on using the whole ingredient or even unconventional ingredients at play on menus. The idea of local and seasonal has jumped to beverage programs, especially in the showcasing of small, artisanal producers of wine and spirits.

The spaces that define fine dining have changed, gotten smaller, or have crept up in unexpected locations, such as obscure neighbourhoods or venues. The teams that cook in the kitchen are smaller and leaner. There is an increased presence of temporary or pop-up spaces, as well as an emergence of private dining clubs and guest chef collaborations that are producing some very high-end meals. Restaurants will continue to play increasingly important roles in people's culinary and social lives, albeit in less formal surroundings.

Integrating **healthful vegetables** into French cuisine



Culinary Journey: Spent 10 years cooking in Paris and has worked for multiple formats such as small bistros, large brasseries and five-star hotels. Is well-acquainted with all levels and styles of French cooking from rustic to gastronomic dishes.

Specialty Cuisine: French. His philosophy surrounding food draws upon each and every one of his experiences. No culinary style is superior to another as they each play an integral role as part of the mosaic that is French cuisine.

Industry Inspirations: Has been a part of Alain Ducasse's brigade for the longest time. First, at Plaza Athénée 18 years ago and later, with Jean-Francois Piege, a former sous chef. A lot of these chefs are present in his cooking style in a rustic manner entwined with finesse.

Signature Recipes: Agneau Confit Pendant 7

Heures (7 Hour Confit Lamb). It's a dish that is equally appealing at a friendly neighborhood bistro as it is at the center of a family Sunday lunch. The chef has attempted to revisit this classic and give it a gastronomic twist by demonstrating the pairing of sweet and savory. By contrasting the wine-infused red onion jam, glazed turnips, parsnip and celeriac with the rich, herb-scented meat, a beautiful marriage of flavors is created.



Go-to Ingredients: Loves playing with vegetables as there is always a different way to approach them. Some selections on the menu include rhubarb, sun chokes, celeriac, parsnip, chestnut, locally grown capers and turnips.

A Sunday Brunch With Family: Tasteful salad or barbecue with good quality meat and whole vegetables.

Hobbies Outside The Kitchen: Sports like basketball and volleyball.

“With the Internet, anyone can find recipes and pairing ideas for any product, and it has become easy to invent yourself as a chef. However, the more your customers are exposed to techniques, the more likely it is that they will appreciate your efforts and the quality of ingredients when they see it.”

– Chef Alexis Gielbaum
Chef De Cuisine and Co-Owner, Slink and Bardot



PERSONAL INSIGHTS ON

Use of Technology In The Kitchen: Technology has given us a revolution in terms of exposure. Information is the key word in global cuisines nowadays. If you are talking about modern technologies like molecular cuisine, it, like all preparation styles, can be intelligent if used and executed carefully. It can bring a sublime texture to a dish. However, it can also be off balance and deconstruct a dish too much.

Evolution of Dining Spaces: Having worked in India for

only four years, it would be pretentious to analyse the Indian market. However, during these four years, the market has noticeably evolved to include a host of new concepts that were foreign to Indian consumers before. There has been a phenomenal number of openings per year! People in India are looking for casual foodspaces to avoid all the protocol and heavy atmosphere that comes with fine dining. Customers now prefer to go for comfortable ambience and good quality.



Joy Singh



Casual Food Spaces with Foreign Concepts

Global themes and concepts are increasingly finding their way into the Indian foodservice industry, which has been witnessing a spike in the entry of international cuisines, innovative foodservice ideas, new dining formats, distinctive food experiences and chef-curated menus. FoodService India spoke to restaurateur Joy Singh about how Indian audiences have reacted to the introduction of Intercontinental flavours at his outlets in NCR and Mumbai.

Tell us about your entrepreneurial journey in the food service business and how it has progressed over the years.

We opened our first outlet called Tarami in 2012 and it was a Kashmiri themed fine dining outlet. Within a month, we started Raasta in close vicinity. Due to some unforeseen circumstances, we had to shut Tarami down but Raasta, as a concept, has progressed since then. Today we have three outlets of Raasta in Delhi-NCR and Mumbai. In addition to these, we introduced Yeti-The Himalayan Kitchen and opened a bakery called ElPosto. The food industry has changed a lot in the last five years and people in this country have suddenly started going out to eat by way of exploring cuisines and new concepts. That is the trend that led us to believe that a Caribbean lounge or an uncommon Himalayan cuisine would sustain in the Indian market. We now have an annual turnover of Rs. 30 crore approx. and a total of over 280 employees.

List your F&B outlets and their dining formats.

Raasta has three outlets and functions as a Caribbean themed bar lounge. Yeti has a single outlet in the casual dining format and offers a purely Himalayan cuisine. ElPosto is a bakery and savory cafe cum take-away joint with two outlets.

Tell us about some innovative F&B ideas that have proved to be the most popular.

I don't think we have done anything ordinary or regular at our outlets. To start a Caribbean bar in India was a first-of-its-kind concept. Raasta, as a reggae-themed food space was also unique. My team and I have always been passionate about music and wanted to centre our conceptualization around providing people new, musical experiences. We have always wanted to make our customers feel comfortable regardless of how they are dressed or where they are from. In terms of F&B ideas, we were the first ones to introduce drinks in a bong, a glass vessel traditionally used for smoking. We also have a patent pending on that idea. This method of serving drinks became really popular and a lot of bars picked up on it. The entire Caribbean menu was a huge hit as it is



YETI, THE HIMALAYAN KITCHEN

The concept-based restaurant gives customers an opportunity to sample taste profiles from Tibet, Nepal, Jammu & Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Upper Uttarakhand. The interiors are inspired by the Namche Bazaar in Nepal and have brick walls, prayer wheels and Tibetan prayer flags. Popular dishes include Tibetan sausages, thingmo, honey pork, thukpa, sha datchi and momos. Rs. 1,300 for two people (approx.).



somewhat similar to the Indian palate with dishes featuring pulses and rice, and biryani (Jambalya in Caribbean). The grill/tandoor section was also received really well. All these foreign ideas proved to be likable as they seemed so different yet similar in the eyes of Indian customers.

What is your strategy for addressing quality control concerns and supply chain issues that most restaurateurs face?

For quality control, there's a procedure that we follow wherein we have an in-house team doing quality and quantity checks. An outsourced team does the same and at the end of every week and both these reports are matched. The most basic and efficient way of conducting quality control is making SOPs of every dish on our menu, and asking chefs and bar managers to duplicate these and follow them as holy Bibles.

How do you manage to run and operate so many brands in different formats at the same time?

Honestly, it's the love for the service industry that is making me do this, but the one thing that is required is efficient delegation of work and providing the right kind of training to the staff or employees. These parameters help managing different formats at the same time. A proper company structure is very important for things to remain in order and that's what we follow.



RAASTA, THE CARIBBEAN LOUNGE

The outlet has a happy, laid back and peaceful Rastafarian atmosphere. The funky bar lounge pays tribute to reggae legends Jimi Hendrix and Bob Marley. The decor revolves around quirky display items, old-fashioned furniture and art hung on the walls. Popular offerings include cocktails, mezze, jerk chicken wings, onion rings and wood fired pizza. Rs. 2,000 for two people (approx.).

The entire Caribbean menu was a huge hit as it is somewhat similar to the Indian palate with dishes featuring pulses and rice, and biryani (Jambalya in Caribbean).



EL POSTO, THE SPECIALIST BAKERY

The simple yet classy outlet functions as a bakery serving delicious desserts, shakes and a selection of savoury treats as well. There is a small cafe as well as options for take-away available. It is well-lit with an all-vegetarian menu and the Italian dishes are delectable. Some popular items on the menu include cheese poppers, stuffed mushrooms, lasagna, red velvet shake, tiramisu, cheesecake and banoffee pie. Rs. 700 for two people (approx.).



Efficient delegation of work and providing the right kind of training to the staff or employees is essential while operating in multiple formats.

How would you describe the unique selling points of your restaurants?

The one word that can describe our restaurants is the vibe of the place. We focus on spreading happiness and nurturing a positive atmosphere for our customers. The more comfortable one feels, the more relaxed they are while settling into a natural home-like environment. We provide the best music, good quality food and beverages along with great service and always deliver consistently.

Which is the most lucrative and profitable format?

Food, if controlled well, is the most profitable business to be in and is also long lasting with progressive rewards. Alcohol is a standard offering everywhere and one needs to incorporate this into unique cocktails to render the bar menu more suitable to a niche audience. Consistency is the key to attracting loyal customers and the food we serve leads the market in terms of taste and execution across all our formats.

What strategies do you adopt when it comes to menu development and material sourcing?

Material sourcing is easy in places like Delhi and Mumbai where we currently operate. Once we go to remote towns, we will learn more about sourcing problems. For menu development, we have a couple of experts on board to take various factors into account while conducting research on popular seasonal flavours and additions to the menu. A restaurateur also needs to have a keen

mind while taking dishes off the menu. One needs to understand why the dish isn't being ordered that much and make appropriate improvisations accordingly.

What themes and trends do you notice across various dining formats and what ideas are more likely to be successful?

Any outlet or brand having structured, proper processes and consistency in place is likely to succeed immaterial of the format being followed.

Today, the trend is more to do with the presentation of the end product and that is why food gastronomy is popular. I personally believe that if the food is tasty, well made and looks decent, it is bound to be ordered a lot. I may be a little old fashioned when it comes to this because in the age of social media, presentation is often given supreme priority. These are bubbles that will burst sooner or later as nothing can replace the innate quality of a dish.

What are your plans and targets for the future?

I plan to take Raasta, Yeti and ElPosto to every city possible while serving the same kind of quality everywhere. I also want to add a few more brands to my portfolio. I aim to execute uniformly across geographies and my restaurants will not be rated differently by different populations. I'm okay with a 7/10 provided all my outlets have a 7/10 rating. I believe in consistency and that is my primary target. •

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Ashish Saxena



Global leader in Casual Dining

Chili's American Grill & Bar is the leading American casual dining chain with over 1,600 restaurants in 33 countries worldwide, including Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Egypt, Kuwait, Russia, UAE, Germany, India, Japan, Singapore and South Korea, amongst others. Ashish Saxena, (Executive Director & CEO - TexMex Cuisine India Pvt. Ltd., master franchise of Chili's American Grill & Bar South and West), shares his thoughts on the chain's operations and future plans.

Please explain the positioning of Tex Mex Cuisine's brands in the India market, their USP and special features.

We own and operate the global leader in casual dining – Chili's American Grill & Bar in South and West India. Chili's is known for fresh American and Mexican cuisine served in a fun and casual ambience. You get great food, great margaritas...and more life happens here.

Globally, which are the main markets for the brand and what is the total number of outlets?

Chili's American Grill & Bar is the leading American casual dining restaurant chain with over 1,600 restaurants in 33 countries worldwide, including Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Egypt, Kuwait, Russia, the UAE, Germany, India, Japan, Singapore and South Korea, amongst others. What started in 1975 in Dallas, Texas, with 11 southwestern-inspired dishes and trademark beverages now serves some of the best appetizers, soups and chili, salads, burgers, sandwiches, quesadillas, chicken and seafood entrees, fajitas, ribs, steaks and desserts available in India. The brand has a Pan India proliferation and Mumbai, Pune, Hyderabad, Chennai and Bangalore are the cities that constitute the southern and western markets for Chili's in the country. TexMex Cuisine is the company that owns the developmental rights for South and West India and owns and operates 14 Chili's currently.



CHILI'S INDIA JOURNEY

The journey for Chili's in India started in 2009 with the setting up of the first Chili's in the heart of Powai in Mumbai. The brand got off to a great start and received great love and appreciation from the residents of Powai. Nine years later, it still is a crowd favourite and one of the best performing restaurants in the region.

The brand was launched by Om Pizza and Eats – a company owned by Jawad Group of Bahrain. The group owned and operated Chili's and several other brands in F&B and fashion retail in Bahrain. They also owned rights of Papa John's Pizza in India. In 2009, TVS Shriram Growth Fund (TSGF) – India's largest rupee denominated Private Equity fund invested in the company. Over the course of the next three years, Om Pizza opened five Chili's and several Papa John's outlets. TSGF funded the bulk of the expansion and gradually acquired a majority stake in the business.

In 2012, constrained with availability of capital, the Fund was faced with the dilemma of balancing further investments to keep growing the two brands. The pizza chain required over 100 to 150 restaurants to reach a decent scale and margins. With Chili's, each restaurant was capable of being profitable on its own. So in 2013, TSGF sold off their interest in Papa John's and divested Chili's business under TexMex Cuisine.

TexMex Cuisine started with five operational Chili's restaurants. However, the brand was in a tough situation – there was little investment done in building the brand, the menu lacked key core products, the flavour profiles needed to be adapted to suit the Indian palate and the restaurant upkeep and maintenance had taken a hit due to the lack of management focus and capital crunch. The first task post setting up the company was to set up a team that would transform the business and set it up for growth in the coming years. This is when TSGF appointed Ashish Saxena as the CEO, Nishant Dholakia as the Business Head and several other key management positions. The mandate to the team was clear – prove that the brand can be successful and profitable and then invest in growth.

How did you hit upon the idea of bringing the brand to India? What was the thinking, did there exist a market gap for this kind of offering?

Chili's is a highly successful brand not only in the US but in many other parts of the world. The cuisine has a wide appeal and its focus on food quality is impeccable. We felt the need for a strong American & Mexican cuisine in the Indian market as no other chain had made an impact. Today, we have grown to be the largest casual dining chain with 25 restaurants across India!

What is it that a customer visiting your brand outlets can expect in terms of a complete meal solution? What is your value-for-money proposition for diners?

We offer fresh and great quality food served in a fun and casual ambience. Also, we have a very high focus on food safety and compliance to all

rules and regulations – this means our guests can be assured of being served safe food in a fire compliant and safe restaurant.

How much of Indianisation or localisation are you doing for the Indian market?

Being an American brand, Chili's had very few vegetarian dishes on its menu. We recognized the need to have a strong vegetarian offering and developed many options for India. Our core flavours of southwest America still remains the same even for these vegetarian dishes. As Chili's is a global brand, guests expected a similar menu as they would get in a Chili's anywhere in the world. With this philosophy in mind, the menu was revamped. Key and core menu products like the legendary 'baby back pork ribs', bacon, steaks and other products were introduced on the new menu. The flavours were matched with the taste profile in the US – this was achieved by importing key ingredients. The team was trained to unlearn and learn the original way using the process laid down by the brand. Keeping in view the demands of the local market, a new section of all vegetarian dishes was introduced on the menu – while remaining true to the southwestern flavours of the brand.



Chili's is a highly successful brand not only in the US but in many other parts of the world. The cuisine has a wide appeal and its focus on food quality is impeccable. We felt the need for a strong American & Mexican cuisine in the Indian market as no other chain had made an impact.





CHILI'S: QUICK LOOK

Name of the brand and parent company:	Chili's American Grill & Bar (TexMex Cuisine India Pvt. Ltd.)
Format of the restaurant:	Casual Dining Restaurant with Bar
Cities where the brand is in operation:	8 cities in India (Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Kolkatta, Chennai, Hyderabad, Pune, Chandigarh)
Total number of outlets currently:	25
Total retail area under operation:	Roughly 75,000-100,000 sq. ft.
Total number of employees:	1,000
Average size of outlet and seating capacity:	Roughly 3,000-4,000 sq. ft., 100-200 covers
Sales per month/year:	Confidential
Main offerings:	American and Mexican Cuisine
Price range:	Rs. 700-800 per person

What is your business model in India and how have you gone about pricing the products?

We work backwards and with the focus on generating a fixed return from our investment in the restaurants. So, keeping in mind the food costs, rent, operating costs of the restaurant, and our expected return, we are able to fix prices that will generate the return. Also, we keep in mind the pricing of other restaurants, but given our American sized portion sizes, the prices are not usually comparable.

Which customer segments are you targeting in India?

Our core customer segments are families, corporates, and youth. Chili's is a unique brand focusing on the family and kids segment. We are very popular with kids of all ages



Tell us about your current store count and the markets you are looking to expand into. What is your revenue target and what are your plans and projections for the future?

Chili's in India has 25 restaurants across 8 cities and we own and operate 15 of these in South and West India across 5 cities. We plan to build another 20 Chili's in the next 4-5 years with an investment of around Rs. 75-100 crore.

What do you feel are the challenges of opening a new QSR brand in India.

The QSR space is highly competitive and requires deep pockets to be able to scale up and become profitable. There is a lot of upfront investment required in building the brand and the back-end infrastructure to support the number of outlets. The availability of quality real estate and talent are the two key challenges facing the restaurant industry.

Can you offer us examples of some innovative F&B ideas that you have implemented or plan to take?

We are constantly innovating and launch a new limited time menu every quarter. House of Ribs, Art of the Burger, Chef Cuts, Flavors of Chili's

are some instances of key innovations we have launched in the past couple of years. Also, we organized an Eating Championship for the first time ever where the winner can win free meals at Chili's for 3 months!

Please describe how and in what forms you are deploying technology to make your business more efficient and customer friendly?

We are one of the few restaurant companies to have an end-to-end ERP and integrated POS solution. This has helped us reduce wastages and track our food costs more efficiently. On the consumer side, we have a mobile app, website and a loyalty program that works seamlessly for dine-in and delivery orders. Moreover, we are using our member database to run highly customer centric promotions that generate a lot of repeat business for us.



In terms of your investment and expansion plans, what are your short-term and long-term goals?

We plan to build another 20 Chili's in the next 4-5 years with an investment of around Rs. 75-100 cr.

What are the new trends that will gain currency for your restaurant format going ahead? How do you see your format growing in the future and what is the way ahead?

We will continue to focus on innovations and on offering new, fresh and healthy options for our guests. We have introduced a whole new set of vegetarian dishes, which has been received very well.

What is your marketing and sales strategy and which are the tools that you are using to promote the brand?

Digital and social media is a key marketing tool today. So, needless to say that we leverage it to a great extent. In addition, we also use traditional media like radio and newspapers. But what works best for us is to have a direct connect with our guests and to do local marketing campaigns near our restaurants. Our loyalty program allows us to run direct marketing campaigns to our members, which have been very effective. •

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- OS Supports - Android 7.0 / Windows 10 IoT / Windows Embedded 8.1 Ind / Win 7
- Optional 2D QR Barcode Scanner, MSR, NFC & Optional Customer Facing 2nd Display
- 3" Detachable Printer with Auto Cutter, 200mm/sec(max), Inbuilt WiFi / Bluetooth 4.0
- Dimension 6"(W) * 8"(D) * 12"(H) inch / Weight 5.8 (N.W. In Kg)



Going Beyond Your Staple Chai

Radhika Batra Shah is a celebrated tea sommelier and owner of organic tea brand Radhikas Fine Teas & Whatnots. She was recently invited to launch her signature line of handcrafted teas by the Kempinski Hotel Muscat, Oman, at their tea boutique. Her brand offers organic, plantation-fresh whole leaf teas and elevates the Indian tea palate to include characteristic variants like Darjeeling white oolong and black leaf barmagot. In a conversation with FoodService India, Batra outlines her professional philosophy of the art of serving tea.



What inspired you to take up a career in tea pairing and blending?

Tea was an innate part of my childhood. My father, being in Merchant Navy, came back home with the choicest of teas from around the world and the global etiquette around it. I discovered white green oolong and many more phenomenal flavors. My mother used to brew the best slow cooked tea blended with her kitchen herbs each day. Some of my family's most important decisions in life have been made over a cup of tea. I grew into my liking for the beverage and it seemed like the most perfect thing to happen to me. I was always sure of starting my own business in the segment. You could call it a well-built opportunity combined with my passion to serve the best tea leaf. Although it was a slow segment back in 2006, I started off with a humble tea boutique which showcased the entire tea journey and encompassed elements like tea ware and accompanying savories. I collaborated with the best tea gardens in and outside India and have slowly built a strong value chain. I now sell teas from India, China, Sri Lanka, Turkey and Thailand.

What is it about being a tea sommelier that gives you the greatest professional satisfaction? What do you enjoy most in this line of work?

I have been on this journey for 12 years now and each year has been unique and pivotal in getting tea closer to the audience. Year 2006 saw the opening of the first organic tea boutique and it was also when I pioneered the art of my tea ceremonies. That time has been followed by a series of innovative and interesting launches by me. I believe that my teas resonate with human emotion and that every cup has a unique benefit. I don't sell my teas as just teas but as full recipes that embrace salutary goodness. In 2016, I classified over 50 teas into specific sets such as romance, healing and connoisseur. These collections have been curated with the belief that each tea comes with a singular purpose that may be related to nurturing wellness, brewing hope,





Radhika Batra Shah

nourishing joy and paying homage to tea lovers. I enjoy passing on this sense of purpose to my consumers and it gives me immense satisfaction when my efforts are recognized within one sip by a happy customer.

Who have been your career mentors and what do you attribute your professional success to?

I seek inspiration in daily life and find motivation to keep going with the ordinary flow of life. Business isn't an easy ride and I have seen failure in the early days. For me, my mentors are those who make my journey unforgettable and substantial. My parents still harbour their undying optimism and age has never stopped them from living their dreams. My husband possesses genuine passion and has the gift of intelligent marketing skills. My daughter has brought me closer to my creative skills and has taught me a lot with her positive interpretation of everything around her.

Do you have a certain philosophy when it comes to the preparation of your exquisite teas? What is your approach to tea pairing and blending and how do you look at its business potential in the foodservice business?

I do have a working philosophy and all my blends are predicated on a simple premise. Each tea

leaf has a purpose and is crafted to provide a certain benefit to the end consumer. For example, mukhwai chai, a blend of organic rose, fennel, mint and Darjeeling leaf, aids digestion. Organic turmeric and liquorice blended with Assam leaf is a detox chai. Butterfly blue pea from Thailand has an anti-aging benefit and also infuses vibrant color into the offerings at a table.

In the food service business, tea is looked at as a simple concept and as a small part of the in the larger picture. However, when we talk of tea blending and pairing, the base concept is much more than that! I see immense business potential here and I have been harnessing just that for 12 years now. Tea constitutes tisanes (herbal infusions) and no-leaf brews made only with flowers, fruits and herbs. It can be blended into mocktails and cocktails at gastro pubs, bars and youth-friendly places. Tea ceremonies can also be curated and they tell important stories and make for great events. Tea can be infused into food to provide an exceptional culinary angle. Tea can also work standalone in the form of tea bars that go beyond alcohol at derbies, fashion shows, art exhibits and theatre. There is a tea for each part of the day and this idea can work well at mini bars in hotel rooms, and at conferences and lounges.

What are your tea flavors and combinations?

My tea menu runs on a collection of 55 teas so far. Each collection or series is well thought out, researched and goes through a number of tastings to determine what a particular leaf can do for you.

Our collections are curated with the belief that each tea comes with a singular purpose that may be related to nurturing wellness, brewing hope, nourishing joy and paying homage to tea lovers.



The healing range is about health and wellness in a cup. Some flavours include lemon grass, vanilla, bael, genmaicha rice, etc. The connoisseur collection is meant as an ode to tea lovers and consists of variants like white leaf, oolong leaf, mukhwai, kashmiri kahwa and longing green leaf. The romance series evokes love in each brew and has rose, ginger, chamomile, chrysanthemum, etc.

What have been your most successful innovations in the fine world of teas?

Blends like mukhwai and turmeric. I source herbs from Greece and blend them in Assam leaf to



I assist hotels looking to create a tea menu, pair tea with food, work on food recipes, train F&B teams in menu development and design a tea house concept.

provide unique gastronomical benefits and come up with sage, rosemary and oregano teas. The sourcing of teas from different parts of the world is a personal journey I undertake on tea trails. I bring back teas like Thailand's butterfly blue pea and mulberry, Turkey's fruity flavours and China's blooming buds. I work towards helping the customer realize that there is a tea for different parts of the day and that these have their own special benefits to offer.

What are the challenges to becoming a successful tea sommelier?

The art of tea brewing, living among plantations and toiling like pluckers and tasters are concepts not easily learnt. These initiatives are self-driven as we don't have sommelier schools and basic awareness around these areas. After my MBA, I worked in the corporate world for five years with big brands under retail and advertising. I gave all that up for the love of tea and learnt on the job, taking trails to unknown gardens, spending time at plantations, and meeting blenders in Turkey and tea masters in Japan. I also keep myself up to date via international institutes. I reckon if there is a drive to achieve your dreams, no obstacle is big enough. For me, selling more tea and upping retail numbers is not as vital as improving my products and enriching the tea story. A challenge in India are the tea brands that mushroom in the market without knowledge of the beverage and mislead customers with big words and copied ranges. At the end of the day, a good organic and heartfelt brand survives.

What did it take to establish your reputation and identity in this trade?

It took me endless tea ceremonies with customized stories. For example, launching Michelin starrer Yautacha in the media was an effort curated around explaining each leaf and, sampling and pairing their famous dimsums with

tea. Educating the audience is crucial as most consumers don't have knowledge beyond your basic green tea and consume teas that probably don't even suit them. Hence, tea ceremonies centre around education in a fun, interactive session. My teas have become a name to reckon with and their biggest USP is being plantation-fresh, 100% organic and single-origin. We can make money off selling conventional teas in fancy packaging but we choose not to do that. We get audited by esteemed bodies like the IMO and USDA. This has also led to international recognition and the process of setting up retail tea houses with leading hotel chains.

Which new trends and developments would you like to highlight in this line of trade?

Tisane is an upcoming concept and follows from the popularity of decaf teas. It is great for caffeine-free choices and infusion into a number of food recipes. Corporates, hotels, spas and clubs are witnessing a revolution as Indian tea gardens learn to churn out delicious teas in varied flavours in place of the usual sugary versions. Cold brews and iced teas also lead in terms of consumption as people look to wean off unhealthy cold beverages.

Going ahead, what are your plans and goals?

We are very excited about our international launch. I don't just curate and sell teas as tea service constitutes a major portion of my business. Besides tea events, I also undertake turnkey projects that involve building tea stories from scratch. For example, I assist hotels looking to create a tea menu, pair tea with food, work on food recipes, train F&B teams in menu development and design a tea house concept. I'm hoping to reach countries that value the leaf for its organic qualities. My teas continue to sell in the domestic market and I'm looking to expand to newer geographies that have a demand for quality. •

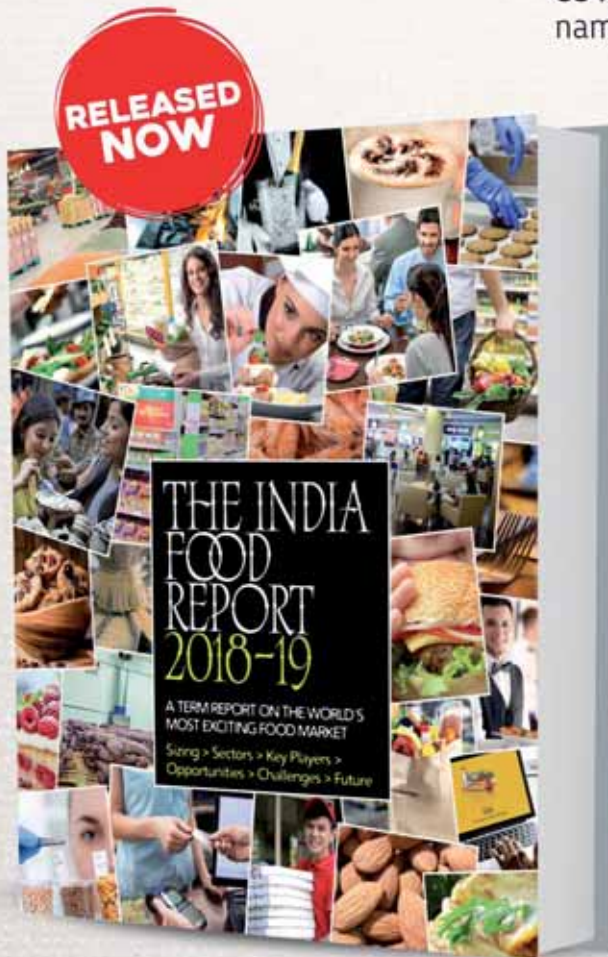
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Sizing > Sectors > Key Players > Opportunities > Challenges > Future

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Self-ordering kiosks were introduced in France from 2007 on, today they are available in all 1,300 restaurants in the country.



“The journey began basically with the introduction of wireless internet access in our restaurants from 2005 onwards,” Pénichon remembers. At that time, though, no-one was talking as yet of a digital strategy. The task, using Wifi-technology – with which the general public was then relatively unfamiliar – was rather to satisfy the growing expectations of a clientele which had grown up with the internet or was increasingly used to spending time ‘online.’ In those days people still went online while on the move or in a restaurant by using a laptop, for mobile surfing only became popular from about 2007, when iPhones and other smartphones were launched. McDonald’s recognised the future potential of this technology early on: “We knew,” says Pénichon, “that we should either go the whole hog – free of charge and without limits – or we shouldn’t do it at all.” The service concept was well to the fore, but so was the aim not to miss the technological connection – at a time when, for a growing number of consumers, free Wifi in restaurants was a major criterion when distinguishing between competitors in the catering sector.

The second major step followed in 2007: the introduction of digital kiosks, at which the guest himself orders the products he or she wants, paying by credit card. Nor was this innovation created in the first instance from any formulated and postulated strategy within the company; it was initially merely a solution to a problem. “In France, because of people’s eating habits, we have extremely high amounts of business at midday and in the evenings,” explains Pénichon. “So the main idea behind the kiosks was to create additional ordering capacity for these times.” In creating the kiosks, they not only struck the right note among the guests, but at exactly the right moment, too. “The kiosks had already been tested in almost identical form in the USA in 2002 and had been a failure. When it comes to innovations, there is one decisive factor: the market and the consumers must be ready for them.”

In France the timing was right: today there are kiosks in all the restaurants in the country, of which there more than 1,300; they generate about a quarter of all sales; and the average bill is

In Tune with the Digital Age

As a world leader in catering, McDonald’s has a quite particular obligation to keep up with technological progress, if it is to be seen as a modern business. In this respect the French market was and is the European-wide pioneer. Jean-Noël Pénichon, in charge of realising McDonald’s digital strategy in France and southern Europe, explains the major stages of innovation which the business has undergone over the last few years and the challenges which the future is still to bring.



higher than for orders at the counter. "Our guests recognise the advantages which the kiosks bring them," Pénichon sums up. "It optimises the period of time between the order and the delivery of the product, and it creates a new relationship between our crew and our customers, because our crew has more time to advise the customers. We also find that they explore our product range much more thoroughly, take a longer time thinking about it, and finally give willingly into the temptation to order a dessert or a coffee."

Since 2012 the pure order and payment facility has been supplemented with further services, including the option to have your food brought to your seat. The biggest challenge in providing this service: the member of staff has to find the guest in the restaurant. "That is working very well in France in 2015," says Pénichon, "and about 80% of all kiosk users in those restaurants offering table service – of which there are about 500 – make use of this option." To minimise sources of error, work is currently underway on an interactive solution, which requires even less input on the part of the guest.

Likewise on the agenda: a way to pay for all those who want to order at a kiosk but who don't have a credit card. "In future they will have a special till, at which they can pay for their meal in cash, quickly and simply," declares Pénichon. Around 60% of guests still pay their bills in the restaurant with notes and coins.

The latest tool, in use in France since 2013: online ordering, now available in 94% of the restaurants. You can order via your computer or the McDonald's mobile-phone app: the user stores a profile with his credit-card details, makes

his selection, and can collect his meal at the restaurant. He will need to wait a few minutes there, in the interests of quality: "We only begin to prepare the food once the guest has 'checked in' at the restaurant, in other words, when he has scanned a QR code or registered at the kiosk," Pénichon explains. In this way you can be sure that the products are fresh and hot, even if the guest is late – the solution for one of the biggest problems when ordering and collecting online: the food won't be standing around for long if the customer doesn't make it at the agreed time, nor are any costs incurred for ingredients if, for some reason, he doesn't turn up at all. "Nor will his credit card be charged, as a sign of goodwill," the head of digital services emphasises.

Online ordering is also possible at drive-in counters: for this purpose, a third 'line' is being set up at more and more outlets, at which the customer in a car needs only to show his identity and is then allocated to a particular parking place. There he waits until a member of staff brings him his meal at the car window. "Our inspiration for this service came from the major French retailers," says Pénichon. "They have been offering a similar service very successfully for some years now; consumers are familiar with it."

What are the major challenges in launching digital innovations? "There are two sorts," answers Pénichon. "On the one hand it requires an enormous culture shift within the organisation. You've got to take everyone with you – the franchisees as much as the managers."

On the other hand, he continues, you need to identify exactly what the guests expect and what they are prepared to accept – the kiosks being a good example. "We see, however, that a relaxed approach to digital services has arrived at the very heart of French society – it has long been not just experiment-happy youngsters who use these services, but the whole range of McDonald's guests." So the company prefers to test new ideas in those stores which address a particularly average slice of French customers.

"Up to now we have been very fortunate with our digital services at McDonald's France," is how Pénichon sums it up. "Guest satisfaction is demonstrably higher and, thanks to the use of IT, workflows are being simplified. It's a win-win situation for us and for our customers." •

More and more French McDonald's restaurants with drive-through offer a third 'line' for those customers who ordered their food online in advance.



Jean-Noël Pénichon

STAGES IN DIGITALISATION

- 2005-2007 Launch of free and unlimited Wifi use in all restaurants
- 2007/2008 First European market to test self-service kiosks
- 2010-2012 Installation of self-service kiosks in all French restaurants; payment by credit card
- From 2012 New services, such as table service (in 500 restaurants)
- 2013-14 Launch of online order and payment facilities via PC and smartphone



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India's Half Full Glass of Wine

by Nimisha Gautam

The wine industry in India has witnessed an upward progression in terms of both sales and popularity (between 10 to 15% per year). This growth has been fostered by factors such as the country's growing affluence and increase in travel abroad that has invariably exposed Indians to the international wine scene. Of this growth, Grover Zampa Vineyards' hold a significant share as the second largest winery in India. CEO Vivek Chandramohan spoke to FoodService India about wine's prominence in pop culture, new grape varieties and wine-making styles.

Tell us about the latest trend in wine consumption in India.

Most recently, there has been a visible spike in growth of super premium wines in India – those priced at around Rs. 2000 and above, as people trade up. According to our statistics, this category has grown by 45% in the last year which is great news for us as we focus mainly on premium wines and have two wines that fit in this category. Chêne Grande Reserve is priced at around Rs. 1900 and Insignia, our single-vineyard wine, which is priced at Rs. 6000 for a magnum, is only available for sale at our vineyards or to select private customers.

Which segment of the wine industry is clocking the fastest growth? How do Indian wines fare in front of imported ones?

Grover Zampa has seen a tremendous growth in super premium and premium wines as people trade up within the category. This is a trend consistent with other alcohol categories where, for example in whisky, single malts have been seeing much higher growth than their cheaper blended counterparts. The volume of premium wine in India currently stands at around 25 million bottles according to IWSR data (2015-2016), with Indian wine making up 75% of this volume although imported wines are also gaining popularity. Within this category, red wine dominates and makes up over 60% of the volume sold.

How far is the wine industry able to lure Millennials and Gen Zers to their fold away from beer and other beverages?

Unlike other alcohol categories, wine is bought equally by men and women, perhaps as a result of the widely held belief that wine is a healthier and more sophisticated option over other beverages. Contrary to popular belief, the 25-34 age group is picking up wine as frequently as other age groups – again perhaps the result of wine's prominence in popular culture.





Vivek Chandramohan

As of now, premium wine is seeing good growth rates of around 10%, the highest growth of any alcohol category, but there are huge opportunities to increase this even further by exposing a youthful emerging middle class to wine and its many benefits.

Among beverages, the beer category has been on a roll inspired by exciting new concepts like craft beer and experimental beer. Are there any new developments and innovative products in the wine category that can help it garner new consumer bases?

Wineries are trying to appeal to the young mostly through their premium wine portfolio, which is fruit-forward and not aged. Great quality wines are more palatable without any orthodox food pairing. Also, Sangria is gaining popularity and wineries are riding on this trend. Our Sante range is the perfect wine to be enjoyed alone and is a great mix for Sangria as well. Some other wineries have also conducted wine-based research and technological development but Grover Zampa is focused on selling premium wines while still targeting an evolved youth in terms of their taste profile.

Which are the top and lagging markets in India for wine consumption and where do future opportunities for growth lie?

In Mumbai and Delhi, we are seeing some trading up in terms of purchase of wines in the super premium category. Interestingly, value and economy wines in these regions are also seeing

very high growth. This is not the case in Bangalore where super premium isn't growing as fast.

Sparkling wine is also seeing positive growth at around 15% in the domestic wine market as more people adopt the custom of drinking sparkling wine or champagne as an aperitif at celebration events. East markets are lagging compared to West, North and South but are still growing. We also expect growth in Tier 2 cities.

In more developed wine markets around the world, e.g. France, we are seeing organic wine taking off. This may be something that will take off in India in the future. We also believe that in a decade or so, wine will achieve a much higher share of the premium beverage alcohol category. Right now, premium spirits like whisky are hugely dominant.

Tell us about your innovations in the wine category. What you are doing to push the boundaries in terms of creating wine-making styles and off beat offerings for the consumer?

We have fortified our capacities and we will continue to innovate and introduce new wines tailored to suit the Indian palate. Also, we have plans to invest in new land to build a state-of-the-art winery in Bangalore. We have also expanded our international footprint by venturing into newer markets and are exploring newer opportunities. For starters, the recent investment by Grover Zampa's stakeholders at Chateau d'Etroyes is a matter of great pride for us. We are the first Indian winery to have claimed stake at a French winery, situated in the very heart of France – Burgundy. Our unison aims to bring together the best of both the regions, by combining Burgundy's traditions of wine-making with India's fresh wine-making approach and unique terroir. With this alliance, we hope to help Indian wine aficionados discover the elegance and sophistication of burgundies while allowing the transfer of knowledge between the nations for their mutual benefit. Furthermore, owing to the quality of our wines and our incessant efforts to create unparalleled experiences, we are now associated with Alain Ducasse au Plaza Athénée, a Michelin 3-star restaurant in Paris

There are opportunities to conduct wine festivals where the guest count could be in thousands. Such festivals provide platforms for consumers to directly sample wines and build preferences around depth of flavour and sweetness.

KEY REGIONS

Wine Production: Nandi Hills (Karnataka) and Nashik Region (Maharashtra).

Wine Consumption: Karnataka, Maharashtra, Delhi, Goa, Haryana and Kerala. Internationally, France, Japan, the UK and the USA.





Wineries are trying to appeal to the young mostly through their premium wine portfolio, which is fruit-forward and not aged. Great quality wines are more palatable without any orthodox food pairing.

along with many other Michelin star restaurants around the world. We will also be launching a very special barrel-fermented and aged sparkling wine shortly.

Which are your reserve, gourmet and handcrafted wines?

With the ever evolving consumer landscape and changing spending habits, we strongly believe there is a huge scope in the premium segment. Other than Insignia and Vijay Amritraj Reserve, we have Chene and Auriga, a variant we launched late last year, which is a wine specially curated for celebratory moments. It is the only variant with edible gold flakes available in India.

Do you think Indian wine makers need to push the pedal on wine marketing because wine awareness in India remains very low?

Indian wines have grown on an average of around 15% year-on-year in the last ten years. Although the base still remains small, we can expect double digit growth for many years to come. Efforts are also being undertaken to increase consumer awareness through various wine-centred programs and workshops in cities. Additionally, there are also opportunities to participate in wine festivals where the guest count could be in thousands even in Tier 2 cities. These festivals provide platforms for consumers to directly sample wines and build preferences around depth of flavour and sweetness.

There has also been an increased focus on wine tourism, which is facilitated by the close proximity of wineries next to Mumbai (Nashik) and Bangalore (Nandi Hills). New product launches are tailor made to cater to evolving consumer tastes and preferences with new grape variants. Lastly, there has been increased communication on the many nuances of wine as a beverage such as its health benefits, comparatively lower alcohol content along with the general perception of wine being a drink for the sophisticated and cultured.

What can wine producers do to make wine retailing a more engaging routine for consumers?

With growing consumption of wines, retailers can help even further grow the category and create a win-win situation for both parties. Wineries can help retail staff by training and educating them so that they can help consumers in making more informed decisions on wine based on their preferences. Retailers can create a separate section for wines which can help the category get attention and shopper focus from non-wine drinkers as well. Retailers and wineries can work jointly to make supply chains leaner and provide proper storage of wines at retail outlets so that consumers get wine as it should taste.

What are the hurdles to the growth and expansion of the wine category in India?

Excise policies are a state function and it may be futile for us to fight against those policies. With that being said, we need cohesive representation by a united front to be able to appeal to individual state governments to allow some relaxation or to index us as a different category, which could allow for minimal taxation. Also, while some policies like the highway ban impacted wine the most, a call for evaluation impact before blind implementation is needed.

There are many opportunities that still remain untapped. "The Trinity" – Karnataka, Maharashtra and Delhi that contribute to 70% of the industry still have 'not so detrimental' wine policies. With dynamic changes in socioeconomic demographics, these three markets still present us with significant growth. Also, many emerging and Tier II markets have shown strong growth trends for us consistently over the years and we plan to continue building on them. •



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Think Green When Buying

Green Purchasing, also known as Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP), is important and not just because we'd need the resources of five earths to sustain us if everyone in the world consumed like the developed world (the US, Australia, and Canada in particular). It's important because purchasers – be they government agencies, corporates, or institutions – yield great influence over the future of the planet with every buying decision they make, and because every purchase has a hidden cost on the environment.



The reason that green procurement is so complex is that there's no single rule-of-thumb that you can apply to every situation. Therefore, this section will offer advice on how to go green on a category-by-category basis before offering some general tips.

IT

Buy computers, peripherals, copiers, and related electronics that are energy efficient as it often costs more to power a computer over its useful life-cycle than it costs to buy one free of hazardous materials. Even today, too many pieces of electronic equipment that contain hazardous materials end up in landfills and taint local water supplies. Efficient electronics are highly recyclable and designed to be easily disassembled, recycled and returnable to the manufacturer under an end-of-life program. The manufacturer then sees that the component is refurbished or recycled fully.

Office Supplies

Buy paper and cardboard that is high in recycled content as this saves trees, and makes tree-huggers very happy. Buy office supplies that are free of hazardous materials because your stapler doesn't need to contain toxic chemicals! Purchase materials of high quality with a long life span because it's not a cheap solution to have to buy a new one every month. Prefer ones made primarily of recyclable materials as everything we make wears out eventually. Buy animal-friendly materials like pleather, which is just as good, and a better choice when the alternative is a furniture manufacturer that buys leather from a supplier that kills the cow just for its skin (and leaves the corpse to rot).

Buildings and Maintenance

Buy cleaning supplies that are non-toxic, bio-based and available in concentrated forms as this reduces packaging requirements and the transportation-component of the carbon footprint. When it comes to lighting, take advantage of natural lighting since almost everyone likes a sunroof. Use fluorescent lights as they're energy efficient and last longer. Install motion sensors and timers to ensure lighting, heating, and cooling levels are reduced. When possible, these functions are eliminated when the



Priya Malhotra

AGM – Resourcing & Planning, CS Direkt Group of Companies & General Secretary, HPMF North

room / building is devoid of humans. When it comes to heating and cooling, take advantage of geothermal installations such as a green roof as this can drastically reduce your cooling bill in the summer. Redistribute generated-heat in the winter because, if you have a data center, the heat produced by your server farm might be enough to heat your whole building (and definitely enough to heat your water year round). Implement a Cool Biz policy and install programmable thermostats that only turn on the heat when the temperature drops below 17C (63F) in the winter and only turn on the cooling when the temperature rises above 25C (77F) in the summer. Use easily repairable systems as these have longer life spans. Factor noise pollution into your decisions.

Transportation

When it comes to transportation, do as much as you can. Although the impact of a company’s total carbon footprint varies from company to company, transportation can account for upto 75% of a company’s carbon footprint in extreme cases. Use ground transportation whenever possible and hybrid or electric vehicles. Use as little packaging for goods as possible and insist that it be 100% recyclable. Optimize total transportation distances and seriously consider using strategic sourcing or network design optimization technology. Improve vehicle efficiency.

Food

Look for food that is chemical and pesticide-free. Buy local produce during harvest season. Buy from countries or a neighbouring State besides other continents. Look carefully at the total carbon footprint from initial production through to final consumption. Look for alternative sources of the nutritional components you need and consider concentrates when buying liquids as this reduces packaging requirements and minimizes the transportation component of the product’s total carbon footprint. Buy in usable or salable quantities (to reduce spoilage) and insist on minimal packaging that is 100% recyclable.

Energy

When it comes to energy, use renewable resources as your primary power source. Look at battery back-up

technologies to reduce dependence on diesel, natural gas, and other environmentally harmful methods of back-up power generation. Use clean coal or natural gas as back-up power sources if you must, and never oil as we need to conserve liquid fuel for transportation needs! Always choose the most energy efficient technology out of your economical set of options. Minimize noise pollution (from generation and distribution) and make sure everything is properly insulated and shielded to avoid electromagnetic pollution.

Manufacturing

Don’t use toxic chemicals or hazardous materials and install water conservation technologies. Use reuse and recycle designs for minimal packaging requirements. Control and contain odours and never overproduce. Install the best designs for scrap and waste minimization.



Some General Tips

Go for energy efficiency. Be hazardous-material-free. Employ water conservation technologies and use energy efficient cement. Select individual durable natural-fibre carpet and look for refurbished equipment. Use software systems like BEES to help you make the best decisions. BEES (Building for Environmental and Economic Sustainability) software uses life-cycle data to help buyers compare and rate the environmental and economic performance of building materials based on their relative impacts with respect to considerations that include global warming, indoor air quality, resource depletion, and solid waste.

Buy less and maximise reuse and recycle practices. Minimize waste. Go lean with your inventory as excess inventory requires storage, which has an environmental impact ,and can spoil or become obsolete, which results in waste. The mantra of conservation is reduce, reuse, recycle. Believe it or not, there is a lot you can do with respect to reduction if you try. Before replacing a piece of equipment, see if you have a piece of equipment somewhere else that would work or if multiple pieces of equipment are required at the same time. See if there’s a way to buy less and redistribute what you already have to meet your organization’s need.

TEN STEPS TO GREEN PROCUREMENT

- Commit to being green
- Identify and categorize your needs
- Develop green specifications and standards
- Establish green selection criteria and their impact on award decisions
- Focus on identifying products and services which are green
- Always use a life-cycle costing approach
- Include green performance clauses in every contract
- Communicate and inform
- Use green technology
- Make and design easy policy.



HPMF's 8th Anniversary Celebrations, Convention and Awards 2018

Conceived in 2010, HPMF today is a global organization with over 2,100 members from the hospitality purchasing fraternity. Training and development of procurement professionals, industry product standardization, volume discounts, improved professionalism in the purchasing process, development of potential vendors and green initiatives are some of the key elements of HPMF. The organization will be celebrating its 8th Anniversary along with the Convention and Awards from 25th to 27th October, 2018 at The Gateway Hotel Ganges, Varanasi.



“ Panel discussions will feature HPMF members, IAS officers, officials from the tourism ministry, FSSAI and FICCI, and chairpersons from environmental forums. ”

– Nitin Shankar Nagrale
Founder and General Secretary -HPMF

HPMF will host its 2018 annual convention event at Varanasi, India. Varanasi, once known as Benares or Banaras and Kashi, is a historical city in northern India. The city is sacred to Hindus and Jains and also one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world, with settlements dating back to the 11th century BC. The delegates will explore the life along the holy Ganges River, experience the oldest and by far one of the most fascinating destinations in the world. They will have the opportunity to visit the narrow, hundred-year-old lanes and alleys of the town and also the dozens of ancient ghats that line the Ganges River.

The three-day event at The Gateway Hotel Ganges will welcome delegates from across the country and encompass cultural visits to temples, forts and ghats at Varanasi along with classical folk performances by renowned artists, and local arts and crafts demonstrations. The convention will feature a number of presentations and panel discussions by industry leaders on issues such as stress management, e-procurement, organic farming, digitalization of trade and the latest methods of procurement. The

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CONVENTION

Intensive Presentations: Delegates will mingle with some of the brightest minds of the industry and discover trends in hospitality procurement, buyer preferences and path-breaking innovations from market leaders.

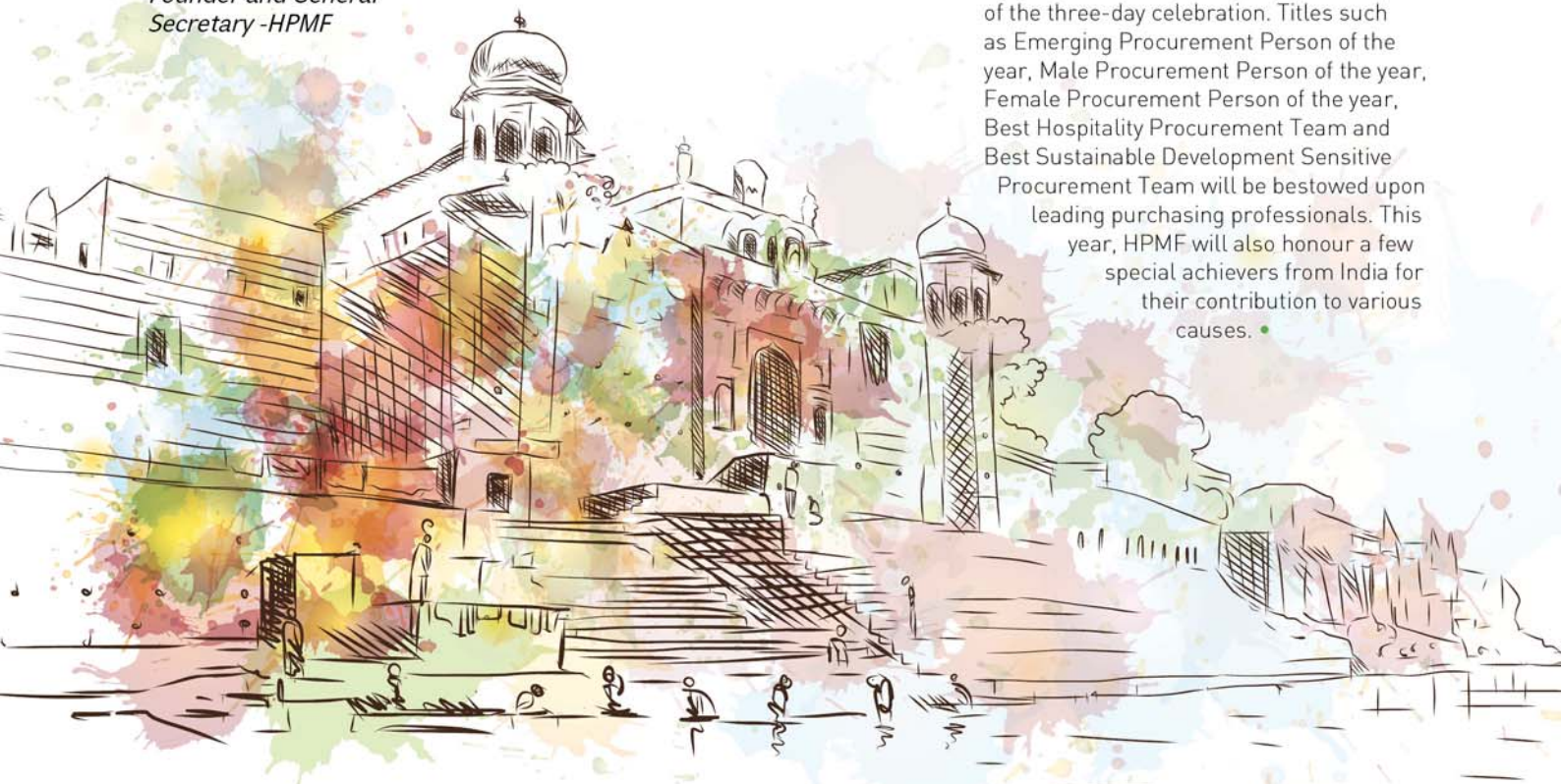
Diverse Delegate Mix: The convention will host delegates from the regions of Dubai, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, the UAE and India along with a team of top suppliers from India.

Awards & Performances: A glittering evening will see exceptional artistic performances being recognized on an industry platform followed by the HPMF Procurement Excellence Awards 2018.

Cultural Visits: Delegates will have the chance to visit temples and forts, and attend aartis at famous ghats along the Ganges riverbank. The event will also serve various local culinary delights and feature demonstrations of crafts such as saree making, kushti and carpet weaving.

convention will also hold B2B meetings with 30 of India's top suppliers.

The annual HPMF Procurement Excellence Awards will also be held as part of the three-day celebration. Titles such as Emerging Procurement Person of the year, Male Procurement Person of the year, Female Procurement Person of the year, Best Hospitality Procurement Team and Best Sustainable Development Sensitive Procurement Team will be bestowed upon leading purchasing professionals. This year, HPMF will also honour a few special achievers from India for their contribution to various causes.



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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NEXT THREE ISSUES

NOV-DEC 2018 CATERING INDUSTRY: The catering industry has been consistently growing in recent years. We look into the growth of corporate and institutional catering in India over the last few years, how this segment is shaping up, what are the opportunities, and how financially viable are these opportunities.

JAN-FEB 2019 KITCHEN EQUIPMENT: How is the commercial kitchen equipment segment evolving in India? We take a look at the market and growth potential of the important categories in this sector and what the different companies are doing to meet the emerging requirements of the industry.

MAR-APR 2019 RESTAURANT MARKETING: The competition among restaurants is fierce, and they need to pull no punches when it comes to marketing ideas and strategies. So it makes sense to tap into digital technology, invest in mobile payment solutions, POS, and other systems to stay ahead of the game.

TRADE JOURNAL FOR THE HOTEL, RESTAURANT AND CATERING INDUSTRY



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Our restaurant is heavily inspired by the San Francisco style of food, which is increasingly ingredient-based and makes use of locally grown, healthful produce.

– Gauri Devidayal

Please take us through your journey. Tell us about your restaurants and its expansion plans.

I was born and brought up in Mumbai and went to a university in London where I studied law. I then qualified as a chartered accountant and after about nine years, returned to Mumbai where I met my husband Jay Yousuf.

He was an IT professional but was keen on doing something different and so decided to open a restaurant. Having spent the last 15 years in San Francisco, USA, it was natural for him to want to bring a similar kind of food experience to Mumbai. After a lot of hunting, we found the space which now houses The Table and it took 14 months of architectural changes to get the space ready for business by January 2011.

Once the restaurant was settled, we spent a lot of time trying to figure out where to open the next space. Three years later, we took over my father's old factory warehouse in Byculla. The location wasn't conducive to opening a restaurant, so instead, we planned a state-of-the-art kitchen spanning 2500 sq. ft. Magazine St. Kitchen opened in June 2016 and functions as a culinary event space, which can host cooking workshops, be a platform for guest chef experiences, act as incubators for upcoming restaurants, and even organize movie shoots.

Around the same time, we launched our bakery business – Mag St. Bread Co. – with the intent of supplying fresh, handmade bakery products made using local ingredients to cafes and restaurants around the city. We were already preparing and baking all our breads in-house, and again, there seemed to be a gap in the market in terms of good quality breads.

Recently, we have also started our outdoor catering arm, Dining Table.



Listed in GQ's list of the 50 Most Influential Young Indians, she has been at the forefront of the Farm to Fork initiative. A full time, hands-on restaurateur, **Gauri Devidayal, Partner, Food Matters India Pvt. Ltd.,** talks about her food service establishment The Table and the thought process behind its unique concept.

In your restaurant The Table you offer ingredient-driven cuisines. How did you come up with the idea?

Our restaurant is heavily inspired by the San Francisco style of food, which is increasingly ingredient focused. In California, the range of superior quality ingredients is unparalleled. Therefore, there were challenges in setting up a supply chain in Mumbai. We managed to do the best with what was available between locally sourced products and some imported ingredients.

You were instrumental in introducing the 'Farm to Fork' concept in Mumbai. What were the difficulties that you faced and how have they evolved over the years?

As mentioned earlier, our style of food is heavily ingredient driven. Developing our farm to be able to produce ingredients from plantation of seed to harvesting was a natural extension. Fortunately, we had the space to do this even though we had to invest a lot in making the land chemical-free and viable for growing great produce. Five years on, we are using more than 20 types of ingredients at The Table Farm and even supplying to other restaurants in the city!

How do you keep yourself ahead in this competitive time?

It's difficult to keep up with everything going on in the industry, with new restaurants opening every week. I don't really think of myself as trying to stay ahead. We just focus on ensuring we stay true to our vision, and on maintaining the consistency and quality of the dining experience at our establishments. It's important to be aware of what's happening within the industry as one must learn from someone else's successes and mistakes. You can't run a business by second guessing what's happening around you all the time.

What are your major learnings as a restaurateur?

This is probably the only industry where you get instant feedback on whether someone likes your service offering or not. The fact is, people will always have opinions, and you will never be able to please everyone all the time. There will always be diners who don't like the food or think it's not value-for-money. As a restaurateur, it was hard for me to not take any criticism personally but I've learnt to listen and act on where there is room for improvement. The important thing is to have faith in a concept you believe in, focus on it, and keep improvising based on relevant feedback.

What do you do to unwind yourself? How do you keep a balance between your personal and professional life?

Watch Netflix and travel! I love binge watching TV shows when I have the free time and, at times, we take off to our weekend home in Alibaug. My husband, my daughter and I love traveling at any opportunity we get. It's definitely hard maintaining a balance between professional and personal life because being a restaurateur is a 24/7 business. To add to that, my husband and I work together. So we really have to make a conscious effort to not bring too much work onto the dining table at home.

How have you been involved with NRAI? What more can be done through the association to strengthen the restaurant sector?

We've been a member of NRAI ever since the restaurant opened. The organization is doing a fantastic job of keeping members updated on issues affecting the industry, and also lobbying hard on behalf of its members on matters that affect them.

One tip you would like to offer to youngsters aspiring to enter the restaurant business?

Do it for the right reasons. It may seem like a glamorous and out-of-the-world profession but that should be the last reason for getting into this industry. Be prepared to work the hardest you ever have in your life!

FSSAI to review progress on de-listing of non-licensed restaurants in October

In July this year, FSSAI had directed food delivery platforms Swiggy and Zomato to de-list non-licensed establishments after getting consumer complaints of sub-standard food being served through e-commerce platforms. "We had given time till end of September (to these platforms). We will review, in the first week of October, the progress made on de-listing of non-licensed restaurants and catering firms," said Food Safety & Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) CEO Pawan Kumar Agarwal on the sidelines of the Retail India Summit and Expo. Agarwal also challenged the retailers to find a way to continue achieving growth along with sustainable consumption. He said that the food safety eco-system is being developed and retailers need to build a culture of self compliance.

NRAI hosts 36th Annual General Meeting

The National Restaurant Association of India held its 36th Annual General Meeting (AGM) at Shangri-La's Eros Hotel in Delhi. President Rahul Singh, chairing the meeting, shared updates on the breakthroughs the body has made, issues it has been pursuing and engagement over the past 12 months with authorities across cities. Some topics addressed included FSSAI's Food Safety Supervisor Training Program and Safe & Nutritious Food Program, the easing of licensing norms by Ministry of Commerce & Industry, meetings with Ministry of Finance regarding GST and interactions with Ministry of Consumer Affairs on service charges, food wastage and portion control.



Singh also noted the following NRAI achievements which brought relief to the entire restaurant fraternity: inclusion of delivery bikes under non-transport category; the Supreme Court's decision on Legal Metrology Act, 2009, stating MRP would not apply to packaged commodities served in restaurants; use of wood charcoal for tandoors permitted by the DPCC in Delhi NCR; Delhi High Court's decision to dismiss the notification on hike in minimum wage.



Reflecting on the exponential growth that the restaurant industry is undergoing, Singh said, "NRAI wants to work with the government and authorities as a cohesive unit to promote the restaurant industry. We have been successful in many endeavors but there's a long way to go. With the government's support, I am hopeful that we will resolve the pending issues."

Rahul Singh,
President NRAI
addressing the members.

When we decided to dedicate a space for a luxury coffee shop, we wanted to create a formal environment with ample sunlight and neutral colours.

– Sandeep Anand Goyle

He truly embodies the great qualities of a hotelier. His enthusiasm and organizational abilities have contributed to the growth of Essex Farms in the hospitality sector. A young and dynamic entrepreneur, **Sandeep Anand Goyle, Director, Essex Farms (P) Ltd.**, talks about his journey.



Tell us about your establishment and its conception.

Essex Farms was incorporated in 1943 and has been continuously involved in food related businesses. My family entered into the hospitality and restaurant business in 1986. Essex Complex is a landmark property known by at least four generations of Delhites because of its location in the heart of South Delhi.

The journey has been quite historic and the fourth generation of the Goyle family is actively involved in the business, bringing in new concepts and cuisines part of the palate of today's generation.

You opened Essex Farms, a thriving complex comprising of restaurants, a bowling arcade, a banquet hall etc., when it was a fairly new concept back in the day. How did you come up with the idea?

Essex Farms was started by my grandfather, late Mr. R.N. Goyle, and has carried on at the same location. South Delhi is a central hub for food experiences. Benefiting from the location and existing at one of Delhi's busiest junctions, we have been closely studying the requirements of the market and making facilities like parking and security available.

It all started with a multi-cuisine restaurant back in 1986. We have slowly diversified by adding party rooms for small gatherings and later, converting them into a luxury banquet hall for up to 600 guests. In 1998, we had the opportunity to launch Delhi's first entertainment outlet that combined food and games for all age groups. In 2015, we relaunched the same outlet by a new name and added real-time sports viewing to combine nightlife with entertainment along with gourmet food.

Your restaurant Café Tesu offering artisanal coffee and delicious food, is quite popular. What sets it apart from the others?

Essex has always been popular for casual and formal coffee meetings. When we decided to dedicate a space for a luxury coffee shop, we wanted to create a formal environment offering the same amenities as a coffee shop at any five star

hotel. We wanted the ambience to be relaxing with ample sunlight and neutral colors.

What sets us apart is that we give a lot of importance to the ingredients used in producing our coffee or dishes. Our coffee roasters based in Goa handpick the best of beans sourced from various plantations in India. Guests can select from up to 14 different varieties of freshly ground coffee beans.

What are your major learnings as a restaurateur?

We have kept our core values intact and maintain standards in service, quality and customer satisfaction. The key is to keep things simple so that whenever we launch a new outlet, it caters to all age groups and brings in unique concepts.

What do you do to unwind and to keep a work-life balance?

I was a keen cricketer in my school and college days. I have represented Delhi State and the cricket team at Hindu College, Delhi University. I have had the privilege of playing matches in domestic circuits along with international cricketers representing the country in the late 1980s. Therefore, watching or playing cricket is a way to unwind besides listening to old Hindi music and spending time with family.

How have you been involved with NRAI? What can be done to further benefit the restaurant industry?

I have been associated with NRAI since 2002. I have had the privilege of being the Honorary Secretary for two terms and working with stalwarts like Samir Kuckreja, Sunil Malhotra and Vikram Bakshi. The NRAI has given me a lot of occasions to interact with the government and raise points on various issues troubling the restaurant fraternity. We need to jointly put across our concerns to the central/local government and police departments in order to do business more efficiently and with ease.

One piece of advice you would like to offer to budding entrepreneurs eager to make a mark in this industry.

Be focused, provide quality services and maintain high standards with observable consistency.

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