

foodService

VOLUME EIGHT • ISSUE SIX

www.indiaretailing.com

Trade Journal for the Hotel, Restaurant and Catering Industry

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2018 • ₹100 India Edition

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www.indiaretailing.com

November-December 2018 • PAGES 60

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India's foodservice market was estimated at Rs. 3,40,052 crore (USD 50.75 bn) last year. The market is growing at a CAGR of 10 per cent and is expected to be Rs. 4,97,870 crore (USD 74.32 bn) in 2021. The organized share of the market is 34.5 per cent and is growing at 15 per cent. In recent times, the industry has seen a steady shift – from the unorganized to organized segment owing to the implementation of GST and the aspiration on the part of players to upgrade ambience, infrastructure, services and technology.

The quality of food remains the most critical factor for determining the growth and success of restaurants, on the consumer side. This key driver is followed by 'location' and 'pricing'. The quality of food has a lasting impact and it helps build the recall factor in the mind of customers. On the other hand, convenience of visit and choice of outlet is largely determined by a restaurant's location, while pricing influences the perception of affordability and related consumption behavior. The expected pricing also represents the level of desired service by the consumer. Today, as consumers are showing a serious preference for healthy food, organic food has emerged as a rising trend, and is seen as more important than pricing and cuisine preference, especially in urban areas.

When it comes to the preferred strategy for growth on part of foodservice players, pan-India and/ or regional expansion are being seen as the primary strategy for growth by stakeholders. To action retail expansion, players are driven by the expectation of funding from private equity firms or the availability of internal accruals or promoter fund and/or bank loans. To increase bill value or to attract new customers, FS players are also resorting to adding new cuisines or expanding menus, which once again underscores the importance of food as a key element to the success and growth of restaurants.



Amitabh Taneja

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Printed & published by S P Taneja on behalf of Images Multimedia Pvt. Ltd. Printed at: Modest Print Pack (P) Ltd., C-52, DDA Sheds, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase 1, New Delhi – 110020 and published by S P Taneja from S-21 Okhla Industrial Area Phase 2, New Delhi – 110020
Editor: Amitabh Taneja

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FoodService Europe & Middle East is the parent publication of FoodService published by Deutscher Fachverlag GmbH, Mainzer Landstrasse 251, 60326 Frankfurt am Main, Germany.

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Comfort food is on the trendy list Chef Ashish Singh, corporate chef at Cafe Delhi Heights and Nueva, Delhi, speaks to FoodService India about comfort food and his skills as a chef that sets him apart.



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To make a bartender's life easy and for better organisation of ingredients in the bars, SPEEDX has come up with effortless and accessible designs that offer both ergonomics as well as functional spaces for modern age bars.



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Twist in the traditional

Creativity and innovation are a part of the culinary industry but brands like Imly, Too Indian and Duty Free – a part of Viva Hospitality group – are restaurants with different concepts and with a hint of global and millennial lifestyle in mind. FoodService India spoke to Varun Puri about his restaurant brands and their unique themes.

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HPMF Crowning Event Concludes on a Crescendo

Kicking things up several memorable notches this year, the Hospitality Purchasing Managers Forum (HPMF), a trade association of hotel procurement managers, recently concluded its eighth Annual Convention and Awards in the historic city of Varanasi. As in the past, the mega convention struck me as a fantastic capstone to the organizational resilience and innovation as well as the big-picture thinking project that HPMF has become today.

by Sanjay Kumar

Eight years ago, the Forum started with just three core members. But HPMF has spread its wings to include 2,100 plus members today and is now fast expanding its footprint globally. "What started off as an idea with only a few dedicated professionals has today snowballed into an organization of 2,100 plus members across the world who are united in their efforts to improve the procurement profession and the hospitality and allied industries. As a non-profit organization, HPMF aims to provide a common platform for buyers and vendors from the hospitality industry. Training and development of procurement professionals, consolidated procurement, industry product standardization, volume discounts, improved professionalism in the purchasing process, development of potential vendors, green initiatives and corporate social responsibilities are

some of the key areas that HPMF is working for," says **Mohan Deshpande, Chairman, HPMF**.

Thanks to the indefatigable spirit of the HPMF managing committee led by the boundary-pushing spirit of its star **Nitin Shankar Nagrale, Founder and General Secretary, HPMF**, the Forum has made impressive strides over the years and has gone as far as to launch International chapters in the Middle East and Sri Lanka recently. "I have identified five imperatives for collective action – sustainable development, prevention, building a more secure world by well informed procurement professionals, supporting individuals by training and development and empowering the world's women and young people to become more responsible. I am determined to bring all relevant partners together and strengthen HPMF to advance its agenda. As part of this initiative, we are revamping



and forming an extremely talented, experienced and knowledgeable Advisory Board comprising experts from India's procurement fraternity and from the hospitality and allied industries. They will be part of the new HPMF and will help in achieving the dreams that we envisioned a few years ago," says Nagrale.

The Forum's leadership has been pressing the organizational gas pedal hard ever since its inception. The doggedness has helped HPMF earn a glowing reputation and made it into the pre-eminent business and networking platform for procurement professionals in the industry. The annual conventions of HPMF have become much sought after calendar dates in the almanac of the procurement and hospitality industry. Known to put up hugely successful and fascinating shows, HPMF pulls out all stops to put up a glittering event worthy of their large fraternity. The annual convention last year at Jodhpur was the talk of the country, with over 250 members and over 30 suppliers, media persons and other members of the corporate world gracing the occasion. The show was absolutely top drawer, leading to speculation that this year the convention would be even more spectacular!

And true to their form, HPMF has outperformed each time, in spades. Without even making an attempt to flush you with all the hard statistics of this year's convention in Varanasi – the gathering saw more than 400 hospitality veterans and purchasing managers from Mumbai, Hyderabad, Pune, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, New Delhi, Chennai, Goa, Guwahati, Jaipur, Indore, Nagpur, Vadodara, Bhubaneswar, Puri and other parts of the country and abroad – it was three pulsating days spent over insightful debates, discussions, meetings and fun.

Rarely, have I come across such a lavish banquet of an event – gargantuan in size and scope and boldly ambitious and adventurous in design, conception and execution and with a generous camaraderie and folksy essence at its heart. The three-day anniversary celebrations featured an exciting tableau of conferences, B2B meetings, cultural activities, music, song and dance renditions by noted artists, enactment of the city's famous Ramleela played out in the traditional style, sightseeing trips and tours of important landmarks of Kashi, arts and crafts shows besides loads of fun, feasting, repast and refectation that allowed the delegates to savor and soak in the cultural, spiritual and gastronomic essence of a city that traces its roots to the mists of time and 5,000 years of civilization.

DAY ONE

As delegates trooped in on the morning of Day One, they were greeted by a gigantic fire hose of enthusiasm from the HPMF welcoming committee members led by the ever effervescent and radio-active Nitin Shankar Nagrale. It was a reception that fused tradition, warmth and gaiety in equal

measure against the backdrop of a live performance by a troupe posing as ash smeared sadhus chanting to the chorus of 'Har Har Mahadev'. The sight reminded you of Varanasi's rich religious legacy, its sainted traditions and heritage, and of its presiding deity lord Shiva. Immediately after the reception, delegates were also given a 'Har Har Mahadev' emblazoned orange colored kurta and angavastram to wear. In a subliminal way, it amped up our collective devotional fervor before taking off for a luncheon trip to the legendary foodie haunt 'Baati Chokha' known for serving the 'taste of Benares' through local delicacies presented in traditional Indian style and ambience.

In keeping with the ebullience of the arriving delegates, the evening was dedicated to a pleasurable cruise down the banks of the Ganges on bajras (large boats). The water trip offered a frontline view of all the storied ghats and of the magnificent Ganga Aarti at the Dashashwamedh ghat. The aarti is a soul lifting spectacle shimmied up in divinity and performed in an elaborately choreographed ceremony. It has turned into a landmark attraction watched by thousands of devotees and tourists very evening. A group of young saints dressed up in silky saffron and white robes conduct this ceremony. Each pandit or saint takes up a specific spot on the ghat and begins the ritual by offering flowers to the river. Oil lamps designed like snake hoods are waved in a synced motion. Conch shells are blown and yak tail fans and peacock feather fans are also waved during the ceremony. The priests end the ceremony by pouring a bowl of water





▲ Chef Nagraj Bhat

Unusual flavor pairings are the new cool

Chef Nagraj Bhat, Head Chef at London Taxi, a gastropub in Mumbai, speaks to FoodService India about new food technologies, transportation of aromatic food, and unusual flavor pairings.

Take us through your culinary journey so far, the major milestones accomplished along the way and how they have shaped and influenced your career?

I did my hotel management from IHM Mumbai. Thereafter, I shifted to London and worked at a Three Michelin star restaurant, The Waterside Inn. This was where I have learned the basics of nouvelle French cuisines, the importance of using good ingredients and understanding and practicing modern cooking techniques. Then, I moved to Clivden House and practised different cooking techniques. Some of the techniques that I learned were: using modernistic future cooking with equipment/ appliances to create unusual textures; extracting flavors to amplify tastes; creating new sensory experiences and recreating childhood food experiences. After coming back to India, I was heading a modern European restaurant in Pune and within six months of its opening, I was awarded the 'Chef Of The Year' by *The Times Food Guide*. Working with some of the best chefs in the world has brought a lot of discipline, self belief and confidence in my cooking. Awards, accolades and appreciation brings recognition, which keeps you motivated to do better.

What is the one thing that is going to change the way food will be promoted in future?

When I was in London, we were working on a technology that involved transportation of aromatic food molecules. Transportation of aroma is one of the craziest and most innovative way to promote food and it changes the experience of watching food related videos.

This innovation can open doors to a lot of new ideas in the field of gastronomy. I would love to use a technology where we could smell dishes while watching the video.

Does India have enough good quality, trained and qualified chefs to meet the new emerging demands in Foodservice industry?

I do believe Indian cuisine someday can be a driving force in the culinary industry. If we stick to our roots and use native products and ingredients instead of importing expensive ingredients from abroad. Indian chefs are innovative and, at the same time, are in the habit of just replicating current trends. Magnus Nilsson is a chef who is practising this approach. He has used techniques to make use of locally grown ingredients in cooking and is working towards helping local farmers and preserving the biodiversity. We have a very strong food culture that needs to be preserved and I am confident that Indian chefs will definitely play a vital role in it.

Tell us about the cuisines that you love most and what do you find fascinating about them?

I am fond of Indian cuisine and especially South Indian as I am from South India. I am also a fan of Indian street food and Asian food. The best part about these cuisines is that the flavors are very

bold and clean without being too heavy on your palate. Their cooking and prep time are minimal and the food is loaded with a punch in it.

How do you see the potential of Indian regional cuisines and which ones do you think have a great future?

Indian cuisine is vast and is deeply influenced by the history and geography of our nation. There are variety of recipes and different methods for making a single dish. The taste profile and style of cooking changes every 100 km. I believe all the regional cuisines have a great future provided it's understood and executed properly. I would love to see a restaurant serving authentic North Eastern food. I think it's one of the least explored cuisines by chefs.

Can you offer us examples of some innovative F&B ideas that you have implemented in the past year and/or have plans to implement?

I have done extensive research on unusual flavor pairings. Some of the interesting dishes that I have created and are appealing to consumers are white chocolate and wasabi parfait, a porcini coffee, burnt garlic cheesecake and dark chocolate caramelized cauliflower soup. We have just limited flavors to play with but what gives a uniqueness to a dish are the unusual fusion of flavors that has not been explored by people. It's an all together different experience for a guest when they try a wasabi in dessert or dark chocolate in soup. I would love to explore more possibilities with Indian ingredients.

What can one expect from the food scene in the country going ahead?

Indian cuisine is most diversified and cultured and it is due to a lot of factors. One of which includes the invasion of the country by rulers belonging from different ethnicities, religions and countries. This has made Indian food universal and flexible. We have lots of chefs coming from all around the world adding their culture, experience, ingredients and techniques to Indian dishes. Nowadays, Indian chefs are also not afraid of using these new ingredients and techniques in our cuisine. It makes food more fascinating and interesting both for chefs and guests. People around the world have started to realize that Indian food is not all spicy, greasy and heavy but more than that. Thanks to chefs like Vineet Bhatia, Vikas Khanna and others, people have started appreciating Indian food. In the future, cooking food will involve using new techniques, innovative presentation style, better ingredients and a more refined approach. I hope that chefs are fearless in their approach and flexible in their methods of cooking, so we can explore a lot and are not rigid in approach.

How do you envisage the evolving role of chefs in a changing food scenario?

Today, chefs cannot be just behind a stove cooking and serving food. They have to portray multiple



roles – entrepreneur, marketing person and a media friendly person. The visibility of a chef in media is as important as are his cooking skills. They should be able to balance all these roles carefully. In the current scenario, there is a sea of opportunities for chefs. It could be heading a restaurant, owning a restaurant or a group of restaurant, or being a celebrity chef on television, or collaborating with the food R&D institutes and coming up with new ideas. The possibilities are endless.

What are your observations about the evolution and developments in fine dining, smart/casual dining and QSRs in India?

Due to a lot of food shows and Instagram, people are aware of the current trends in market these days. This has helped restaurants to evolve in India at a rapid pace. The restaurant owners want to keep up with the current trends and are not shying from experimenting with their cooking style and using different ingredients. Even small eateries are trying to be more creative and innovative in their style of making dishes and serving them because a lot of their consumers are young millennials. This has helped chefs to be more creative, dramatic and innovative when they cook and present the food. Today's generation wants more of an experience rather than just eating; they want good ambience, food and drinks.

What new developments and trends would you like to highlight regarding your professional line of business?

I would like to see chefs and farmers collaborating

People around the world have started to realize that Indian food is not all spicy, greasy and heavy but it is more than that. Thanks to chefs like Vineet Bhatia and Vikas Khanna, people have started appreciating Indian food.

Catering Services:

The unsung hero... Now going places!

Catering, by definition, is the business of providing food service at a remote site or a site such as an office, factory, hotel, hospital, pub, aircraft, cruise ship, park, filming site or studio, entertainment site, or event venue – essentially any offsite venue.

by KS Narayanan

Long after the wedding is over, the one thing that people tend to remember is the food that was served at the wedding. The range, the taste, the quality and, of course, the service! Behind the scenes, a tireless set of specialists slog day in and day out to ensure everything goes to perfection. Many a hiccups are faced – but unknown to the guests and even the client – gets solved and the final outcome is presented in an impeccable manner. This is how the Catering sector works in the background tirelessly and delivers event after event, day in and day out.

Catering, by definition, is the business of providing food service at a remote site or a site such as a office, factory, hotel, hospital, pub, aircraft, cruise ship, park, filming site or studio, entertainment site, or event venue – essentially any offsite venue. Being an offsite service, catering brings with it its own challenges of transporting and setting up all equipment and materials and obtaining licenses to comply with food safety laws. A massive hub & spoke arrangement of manpower & material is essential to be planned and executed seamlessly.

Typically, worldwide, the Foodservice Industry, which includes Restaurants, Cafeterias and Catering, constitutes about 50% of the total foods industry. These numbers are estimates as there has been no organised survey done to get a clearer picture of the size of the Industry, the number of players and so on. The Indian catering industry is a combination of a handful of International players (mainly in Corporate catering), Regional and Local players. But very clearly, one is noticing several changes that are taking place and the Catering Industry has evolved remarkably to deliver as per the evolving requirements of the customers in a very professional manner, delivering top quality service.

While there exists a Federation of All India Caterers, as well as a few State/ City level Catering

same. Overall, we can see five mega trends driving changes in the Foods segment:

- Increasing awareness of health and healthy foods, although each customer has different preferences and priorities.
- Going back to our roots with street side food, Grandma's recipes and local food coming back on the menu.
- Invasion of International cuisines, flavors and dishes such as Thai, Mexican, Vietnamese, Peruvian over and above the ubiquitous Chinese & Italian.
- Instagrammable food, making every occasion of eating an experience and thus presenting food in a manner that captures all the senses and is visually appealing.
- Lastly, the customisable meal – more personalised for every individual's taste and preferences, leading to the setting up of multiple live food counters in the form of dosa counters, pasta stations, chaat stalls, etc.

These mega trends are impacting what's on offer by the catering industry, be it in the offices or for events. The demands of the consumer are multiplying and becoming increasingly complex. This is quite challenging as the catering service strives to meet these new demands in predominantly offsite locations where all facilities have to be created at a short notice and in a safe manner.

One is noticing several changes that are taking place and the Catering Industry has evolved remarkably to deliver as per the evolving requirements of the customers in a very professional manner, delivering top quality service.



Associations, these organisations do not appear to be very active, thus leading us to conclude that there is some scope to improve the organisation in this sector and spearhead policies and initiatives with the government.

The same forces that impact the overall Foods category drive the changes in this industry sub segment as well, as the end consumer is still the





Cooking for the 5 senses

Catering has now become an important factor for the success of any social event. It is no more limited to weddings and birthday parties. Apart from social gatherings and festive occasions, formal events, seminars, conferences, business or retirement luncheons, graduation parties, trade shows, and other government and business-related events are increasingly using professional catering services today.

by Premjit Mohapatra

“There is no love sincerer than the love for food.” These words by George Bernard Shaw carry an aura of profundity and truth. As Indians, we may be divided over religions, cultures, languages, and people, but we remain united over our love for food. Food is a healthy catalyst for uniting people; and thanks to the communicative integration today when cultures and cuisines are crossing borders effortlessly, people living anywhere in the country are bonding over their shared love for food. And over time, people are finding newer ways of rewarding their taste buds with exquisite food. Food, while being a necessity, also plays a focal role in social gatherings with special importance accorded to considerations of palate diversity, hygiene, and presentation. This fact alone has helped create a huge market for the catering industry and brought into sharp focus the potential of the industry.

Largely dominated by unorganised players, many of whom run their business from the comfort of their homes and small establishments, the catering industry in India has undergone a sea change in recent times. From a traditional ‘Halwai’ business, catering has come a long way in India. Earlier, the catering business was a kind of legacy and people took it not by choice. But now, an organised approach is visible and large caterers are setting benchmarks in this sector. A sense of pride and professionalism is apparent in this profession, thanks to the way the business is being carried out now.

Over the years, the industry has witnessed several shifting trends – from providing just basic amenities to state-of-the-art technological offerings, local to global cuisines, rooms to suites, etc. “Long back in 1972 when the ODC Industry was in its infancy, my father Sunil Tipnis had started hiring catering college students to serve at events. Realising the need for the introduction of new standards in hygiene, we were one of the first caterers to use gloves for our service staff. Breaking new grounds, we also started using LED back-lit sign boards for food counter signages, and soon the entire industry followed it. The industry has definitely come a long way from the days when we had started. There is a heightened awareness of food and various cuisines. People want to explore world cuisine and are willing to go beyond the pasta station and conventional Chinese preparations,” says **Nikhil Tipnis of Nikhil Caterers**, a Mumbai-based caterer and event planner with a 46-year-experience of the catering industry.



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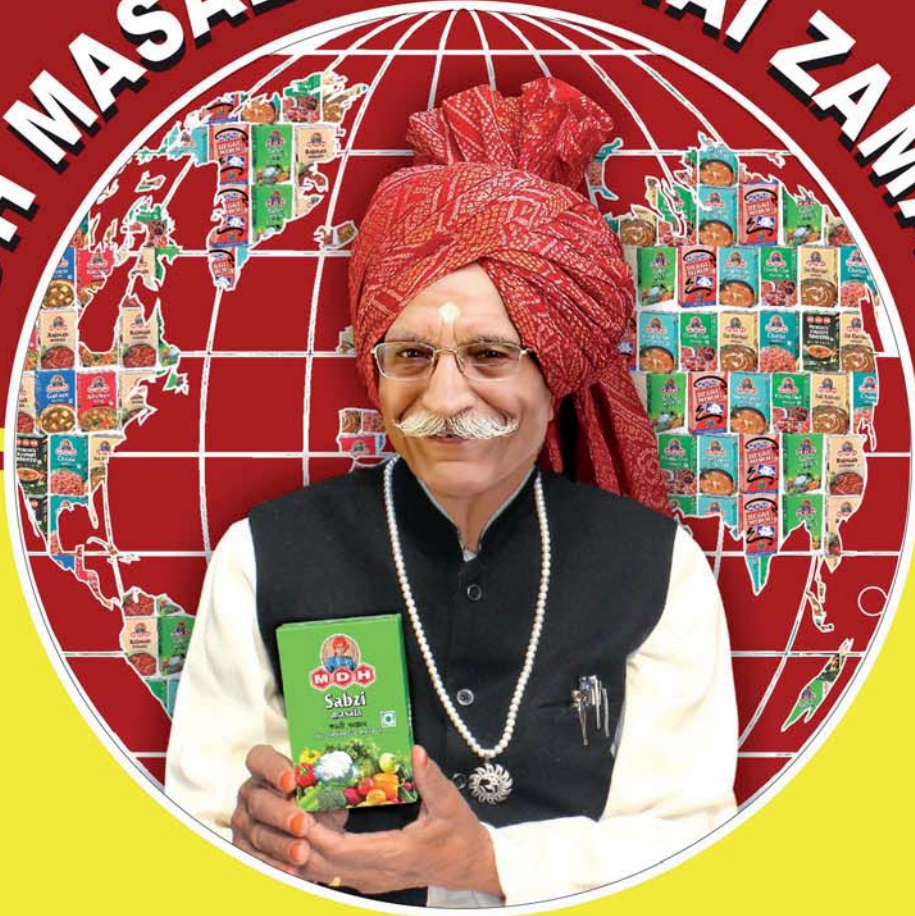
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