HAMMER

Food & Beverage

Business Review

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Business magazine for food service & food retail professionals

Business
Food Service Industry: Tackling the Pandemic

Feature
Chefs for Profitable Outlets

Agri
Pickling the Indian Fruits

Wine
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Foodservice industry is looking for innovative ways to stay agile and survive as the pandemic is slowing down. Thinking to increase restaurant sales is definitely a big question, and restaurants have been coming up with novel ideas to market their business. This is the best time to try out new marketing strategies.

The industry is now in the age of delivery services and pickup. It isn't easy to try and change the core of the operation, but the new ways of operations and home orders have forced restaurants to do so quickly. Restaurants have started pooling their resources with third party delivery platforms.

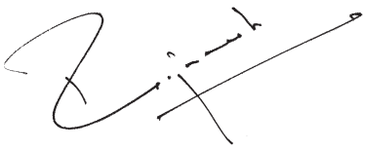
Menu optimisation has become important today as most of the orders are home delivered. The food presentation, texture, and taste do not remain the same compared to the food served freshly in dine-in facilities. Thus, there arises the need to make the menu more compact and customer-friendly.

Restaurants are looking for ideas and inspiration to develop innovative strategies. The hotels have started opening standalone retail shops to sell their hotel products, like bakery items, cooked meals and offering outdoor catering services. Few are offering at-home chef services along with hosting online cooking classes.

But with limited resources and also being uncertain of the future, operators are trying to modernise their operations to cope with post-pandemic challenges. The current scenario will impose some hard decisions on operators about investments, activities, and employment. This will require strong leadership, driven by courage and empathy, and guided by the right data and vision.

It is critical to manage finances over both the short and longer-term, especially in the midst of a global crisis like corona virus. Cutting costs today may help short-term survival, but should not be done at the expense of thriving in the longer-term.

At this crucial juncture, the food service industry along with their partners & vendors need to stand together and continue their collaboration in the support of the industry.



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Indian Culinary Forum 18th Annual Chef Awards

To recognize and honor the chefs and their exemplary contribution to the Hospitality industry, the Indian Culinary Forum (ICF), in their bid to commemorate the International Chefs Day, hosted the 18th edition of Annual Chef Awards alongside the 9th edition of Knowledge Summit, at The Park Hotel, Connaught Place, New Delhi.

The best chefs in 16 different categories were bestowed with awards in the presence of Chief Guest, K B Kachru, Chairman Emeritus, and Principal Advisor, Radisson Hotel Group, South Asia among other top-notch names from the culinary fraternity. Keeping the Covid-related SOPs and guidelines in mind, the series of events had been planned and organized to ensure a safe and protected environment against corona virus fears.

The Annual Chef Awards returned with its 18th edition and continued their tradition of providing the chefs a platform where they could exhibit their culinary, preparation, and presentation skills and get rewarded. To further adorn the event, ICF conducted the 9th edition of its Knowledge Summit. The Knowledge Summit provides a platform for discussing and deliberating the issues concerning the Industry, planning how to put Indian cuisine on the global culinary map, and chalking out the way forward for the Food and Beverage Industry.

The summit, which was phased over three sessions, was themed "A Healthy Planet for Future Generation: A step towards sustainability".

The inaugural session was done by Surjit Dhillon and Chefs - Davinder Kumar, Manish Mehrotra, and Rajeev Janveja on the topic, "Innovative Gastronomic Trends Post Pandemic Survival Strategies".

The second session was on "Sustainability through Consumption: A New Mantra" by Chefs - Saby, Akshay Malhotra, Ankit Gaurav, and Prakarshi Pulkit moderated by Chef Vineet Manocha.

The third and the last session of the day was on the topic "Culinary Skills Building: Knowledge, Skills and Attitude" with Varendra S. Dutta, Amit Wadhera, Aditya Jaimini, Ashish Bhasin, and moderated by Rajiv Gulshan.

Speaking about the events, Chef Davinder Kumar, President Indian Culinary Forum, said, "We have been organizing the Annual Chef Awards since the last 18 years as part of the celebrations of the International Chefs Day. The prime objective of the Chef Awards is to provide the chefs with a platform where they can exhibit their culinary, preparation, and presentation skills and get rewarded for the same, in our bid to encourage them to match the International standards. The event would also serve as a medium to bring the best out of the upcoming chefs while also maximizing the potential of the existing ones for their growth in the sector".

Preceding the Chef Awards, three-day-long event of culinary competitions were organised at the Indian Culinary Institute, Noida wherein, over 100 odd chefs, coming from starred hotels and high-end stand-alone restaurants, competed in 10 different categories amongst themselves in their bid to take home the coveted Best Chef awards. The Jury comprised renowned chefs under the chairmanship of a WACS-certified chef. Noted Chef, Chef Umesh Mattoo presided as the Chairperson of the jury in this year's competitions, while Chef Sireesh Saxena served as the organizing secretary. The Chef Awards also honoured the industry veterans in six other sought-after categories and the winners were selected by a panel of an esteemed jury.

The following are the winners of the 18th Annual Chef Awards:

Top 6 Jury Awards

Lifetime Achievement Award:
Chef Sireesh Saxena

Golden Hat:
Chef Rajeev Janveja

Silver Hat:
Chef Mahendra Khairiya

Academic Silver Hat:
Chef Varinder Rana

Pastry Chef of the Year:
NQ

Lady Chef of the Year:
NQ

Awards through Culinary Competition

Master Chef of the Year:
Chef Lukesh Bajaj, Radisson Blu, Paschim Vihar

Master Chef Kebabs:
Chef Ganesh Chandra Papnai, Country Inn & Suites, Sahibabad

Master Chef Indian Pattissarie
Chef Nitin Bisht, Radisson Blu, Paschim Vihar

Master Chef Indian Sweets:
Chef Sukanta Pal, Lemon Tree Premiere, Delhi Airport

Master Chef International Cuisine:
Chef Vineet Khanna, Le Meridien, New Delhi

Master Chef North Indian Cuisine:
Chef Hasan Ali, Country Inn & Suites, Sahibabad

Master Chef Oriental Cuisine Award:
Chef Sonu Kunwar, Radisson Blu, Delhi Airport

Master Chef Baker Award:
Chef Vinod Kumar, Devyani International Limited

Master Chef South East & West
Chef Ignatius Hansdak, Radisson Blu, Delhi Airport

Student Chef of the Year Female
Ms. Gunjan Sanghal, ICI, Noida

Student Chef of the Year Male
Mr. Abhigyan Roy Burman, Vedatya, Gurugram

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TASTE THE FUTURE

COLOGNE, 09-13 OCTOBER 2021

International, inspiring and above all personal - that was the 36th edition of Anuga which was staged during 09-13 Oct, 2021 in Cologne. With over 70,000 visitors from 169 countries and more than 4,600 exhibitors from 98 nations, the leading global trade fair for food and beverages once again demonstrated that trade fairs of these dimensions are possible again.

"We are delighted with this result. It underlines the global significance of Anuga and the trust that is placed in us as a trade fair organisation. Furthermore, it also shows that Germany as a trade fair location continues to hold a leading and attractive position in terms of the global competition," explained Gerald Böse, President and Chief Executive Officer of Koelnmesse.

"Also the hybrid approach worked very well and proved very popular. In the scope of Anuga@home, we were able to offer above all those people, who were not able to travel to the trade fair, a good opportunity to inform themselves about specialised themes and engage in intensive networking," Böse added.

Anuga also set a benchmark in terms of its level of internationality in these post-Corona times: 97 percent of the exhibitors came from abroad. At 76 percent, the degree of internationality of the visitors remained at a constant level (2019: 75 percent). "People from 169 nations - that is a strong signal and shows at the same time how much the international food industry needs trade fairs to do business again. Our exhibitors, who reported about outstanding customer dialogues and the high quality of the trade visitors, also recognised this fact. The discussions with the buyers also confirmed how highly they estimate the time for intense, personal dialogues with their customers. Anuga 2021 simply made the international world of food personal again. And this euphoria and spirit of optimism was noticeable all over the trade fair," emphasised Oliver Frese, Chief Operating Officer of Koelnmesse GmbH.

Top buyers on board

Above all the quality and preparation of the buyers as well as the serious interest in generating business again convinced the exhibitors. Countless buyers with high decision-making competence from the trade and food service, including the relevant top buyers of important chain stores attended the trade fair in Cologne. An initial evaluation of the visitor survey shows that over 70 percent of the respondents use Anuga to groom existing and build up new business relationships.

Hybrid in future

As a hybrid event, Anuga also offered a digital platform for the exhibitors, visitors and media representatives: Anuga @home. In addition to intensive networking, above all the digitally streamed event and congress programme comprising of a variety of lectures, discussions and presentations by renowned trade experts and companies of the food industry met with great interest. In total, 353 formats with more than 6,380 broadcasting minutes were streamed over the three days of the trade fair. Particularly the live streams of the two conferences, the Newtrition X and the New Food Conference, were very popular. The presentations and the networking offers of Anuga @home will also be available on-demand after the trade fair.

Transformation course set to be pursued resolutely

The spirit of optimism was also tangible in the themes of this year's trade fair and in those of the digital event, Anuga @home. Under the key theme, "Transform" exhibitors from all over the world showed that the international food industry is taking further steps towards more sustainable and more efficient global food system. Especially the significant rise in the number of plant-based or purely vegetable products, alternative protein products as well as new products with a health-oriented additional benefit confirm these developments. But the manufacturers are also betting on sustainable production, animal welfare and climate protection in the classic section of milk and dairy, fish and meat products.

The next Anuga will take place from 07-11 Oct, 2023.

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HOSTMilano and TUTTOFOOD

HostMilano and TUTTOFOOD, which ended at fieramilano in Rho, in conjunction with MEAT-TECH, exceeded all expectations. Between the two events, more than 150 thousand trade visitors came to visit the show in person.

The gamble of going back to meeting in person proved to be a winner, comments Luca Palermo, CEO and General Manager of Fiera Milano. There was a great desire to do business live, as shown by the meetings of the more than 150 thousand visitors with more than 2,700 companies.

Together with the new agreements signed by Fiera Milano, this liveliness reinforces the supply chain approach that the Italian agri-food and hospitality ecosystem needs to present itself abroad in an organic way.

Crowded aisles and lively exchanges at the stands consolidate fieramilano's growing role as a European exhibition hub and global driver for Italian companies of all sizes. A continuous and organic strategy, as demonstrated by the constant increase in international buyers, also in collaboration with ICE Agency.

In terms of agreements, the new partnership with Filiera Italia and Coldiretti will promote 'Made in Italy' agri-food products around the world in innovative ways, with the aim of doubling the value of exports.

The recent agreement with Informa Market, on the other hand, one of the world leaders in the trade fair sector with over 450 events in its portfolio, will bring the companies taking part in Fiera Milano events to even more strategic foreign areas. Among the first events, is the participation of Italian companies in the next editions of FHA HoReCA, an event dedicated to food and hotel organised by Informa in Singapore.

"The collaboration between Fiera Milano and Informa Markets starts from the Food & Hospitality sectors, where we are international leaders, and then continue in other sectors. We are certain that this alliance can represent a further opportunity for internationalisation to be offered to companies participating in trade fairs. Our ambition remains unchanged: we want to strengthen ourselves as a European hub capable of hosting congresses and events with a global reach. This is why we are increasingly focused on activating partnerships with major international players", states Palermo.

With this edition, HostMilano and TUTTOFOOD have confirmed themselves as platforms not only for business, but also for presenting data and research, sharing knowledge, international competitions and discovering new trends: hundreds of events are scheduled.

International Hospitality Sales Professionals Forum

IHSPF – International Hospitality Sales Professionals Forum was formed in April 2020 for the benefits of sales fraternity. Sales Professional's from the HORECA & The Food Service Equipment segments from across the globe are part of this forum.

Effective Networking opportunities coupled with development opportunities will benefit both sales individuals and their organizations through this unique platform.

IHSPF is expanding and will be helping its members with mentoring, knowledge sharing, skill enhancement& networking for all round growth and development.

IHSPF members are from across various cities in India besides many other countries like, Malaysia, Qatar, USA, Dubai, China, UAE, Australia & Thailand etc. There are more than 200 members on this unique sales forum.

During the last one year various online events were organized with Kitchen Design Consultants, International Hotels Chains, Human Development speakers, Purchase Managers and, distinguished successful business stalwarts of our Industry who helped this industry where it had reached today. This forum had also tried to help some with Financial Aids, Food Donations and helping some Charitable Hospitals and NGO's.

Recently IHSPF conducted two physical networking events for its members at Mumbai and Delhi. In these events members were able to know each other and develop

a special bond of togetherness. These events were also attended by members from other cities and countries virtually.

Members recognized diversified strengths of its members. They made plans for future events, trainings and participate at various National & International events, seminars & exhibitions etc. It was also decided to induct Institutional Membership to Business owners and their organizations.

Members were really over joyed to know that IHSPF is now a registered forum and a legal entity. IHSPF has been registered as section 8 non-profit company.

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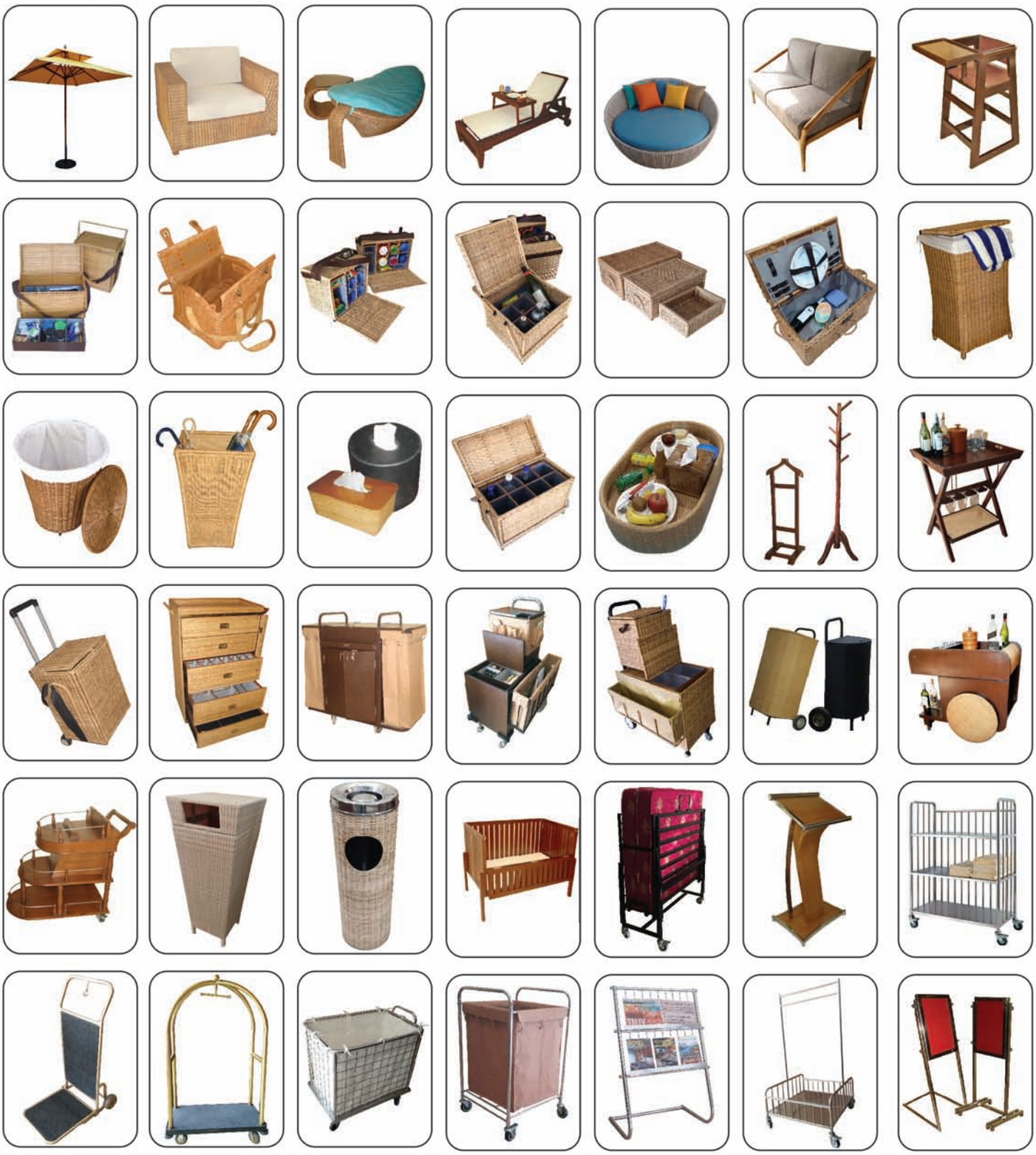

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2021 Chandiwala Hospitality Ensemble

Hotel Management is all about passion, innovation and dexterity in the world of hospitality. Chandiwala Hospitality Ensemble provides the perfect platform for the students to showcase their skills and push the envelope while participating in this awe-inspiring event. Through this ensemble, participants across many catering colleges got a unique chance to discover their calling and compete against the best in the industry.

The 20th Virtual Chandiwala Hospitality Ensemble was scheduled on 23rd November, 2021, in an online mode. It virtually unlocked potential of hotel management students, through a series of events, comprising of culinary and non-culinary competitions.

One of the major highlight of CHE, 2021 was Sustainable Indian Diet- For a Healthy Future 2021. It was a research oriented competition where the contestant need to send a researched article highlighting the eating habits, health benefits, sustainable steps, recommendations to specific target groups .

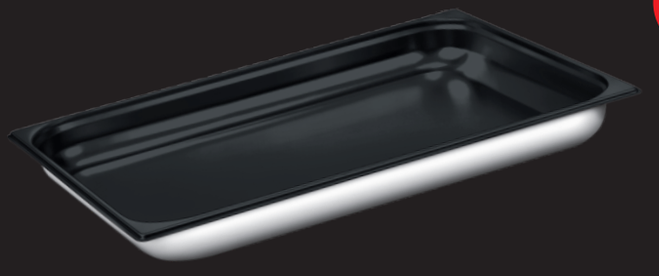
This Challenge tested the knowledge and culinary skills of budding student chefs of various Hotel Management colleges and professional chefs Pan India through virtual mode due to unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic.

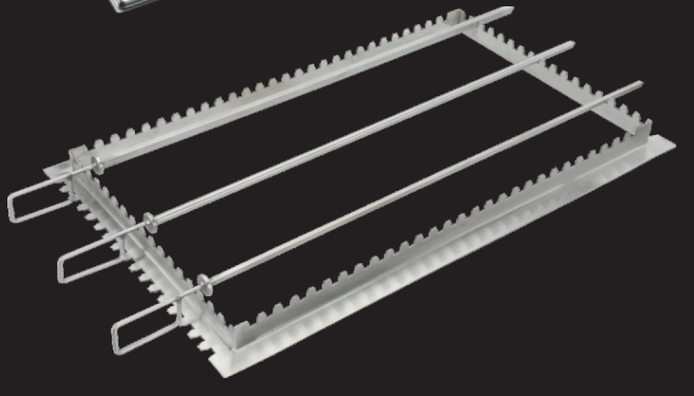
They also had contests like Healthy Millet Recipe Contest 2021 and "Dress The Cake" Challenge 2021. These contests were about showing skills through cooking and that we can still do things that we enjoy, and at the same time ensure that we keep communicating with one another through digital platforms.

The short videos shared by the participants judged by panel of eminent judges who specifically looked at the recipes, technique, passion, knowledge of the product, and plating skills, to determine the finalists and the ultimate winner. All the winners and participants will received a printed certificate confirming their participation in the 20th 'Virtual' Chandiwala Hospitality Ensemble- 2021

Thus, the Chandiwala Hospitality Ensemble aimed to provide an opportunity to the aspiring Hotel Management Professionals by giving them a platform to demonstrate their talents hitherto unearthed previously.

Some of the other major competitions of the event were - Chandiwala Future Chef Contest 2021, Hospitality Brain Twister 2021, Barwizard Bar Challenge 2021, "Dress The Cake" Challenge, 2021 Chandiwala Towel Origami Competition & Oxford Hospitality Brain Twister 2021.





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IHE 2021

The first 'physical' show for the food and hospitality sectors, IHE2021, concluded September 27, at the India Exposition Mart in Greater Noida (Uttar Pradesh) with an impressive number of exhibitors and visitors, all testifying to the fact that India is no longer in the mood for virtual events.

The 160 exhibitors represented all industry-relevant verticals, from food ingredients and new-generation beverages to kitchen equipment, furniture and furnishings, and tableware. The north-eastern states were well-represented in the B2B show, giving them an opportunity to showcase a variety of products, from bamboo furniture to organic ginger and turmeric, to kiwi wine from Arunachal Pradesh.

The visitors included members of the Purchasing Professionals Forum-India (PPFI) and Hospitality Purchasing Managers Forum (HPMF), the leading ladies of WICCI, chef-members of the Indian Culinary Forum (ICF), founders of the Professional Housekeepers Association (PHA), and other hospitality industry decision-makers.

Reflecting on the four-day show, Rakesh Kumar, Chairman, India Exposition Mart Limited (IEML), said: "The response to IHE2021 has surpassed our expectations. With it, we were able to demonstrate to the world that the leaders of the country's exhibitions and conferences sector, such as IEML, are ready to present physical shows. This was just the beginning. Our calendar is already filling up for 2022 and 2023."

Raghav Sachdeva, Managing Director, HAKS, a leading manufacturer of kitchen equipment, thanked IHE for taking the initiative to organise a physical show – the first one of this scale in two years. "We are really pleased with the quality of the show and the visitors with whom we got to interact. I give it a thumbs up," he said.

Echoing similar sentiments, Dimple Grover, Interior Designer, HSAA Design Studio, "It has been a very nice experience for us, enabling us to get in touch with new clients and understanding their needs. It was a great exposure for us and our brand." Akash Chowhan, Vice-President, Xsoni Systems, added: "It is the first time that we are participating in IHE and I must say that the response has been quite good, despite the pandemic."

Offering a perspective from the hospitality industry, PPFI Founder and Director (Procurement), Le Meridien New Delhi, Amarjit Singh expressed his happiness at the response he got for the PPFI B2B meet on September 25. "We wanted to add

value to the show by enabling the exhibitors to interact with the procurement heads of leading hotels and restaurant chains," he said. "It was also an opportunity for our members to learn more about the new products entering the market. It was a win-win experience for both the exhibitors and the PPFI members."

Since its inception in 2018, IHE has been known for its concurrent programme. IHE2021 was no exception. The highlight of the programme was the Conclave, which saw animated conversations involving industry leaders such as Rajeev Menon of Marriott Hotels, Rattan Keswani (Lemon Tree Hotel Company), Samir MC (Fortune Park Hotels) and Anurag Katriar (Past President, National Restaurant Association of India); top educators and recruiters such as Kamal Kant Pant (IHM-Pusa) and Dr. Swarup Sinha (ITC Hotel Management Institute); the renowned chefs, Chef Manjit Gill (Indian Federation of Culinary Associations), and Chef Davinder Kumar (President, Indian Culinary Forum, and Vice-President, F&B, Le Meridien New Delhi); and housekeeping decision-makers such as Dr. Madhu Chandhok and Ms. Meenu Tongatta.

Also seen speaking at the Conclave were the HPMF Founder, Dr. Nitin Nagrale, noted mixologists Yangdup Lama and Vaibhav Singh, top caterers Sanjay Khullar (Seasons Catering) and Varun Tuli (Food Inc. and Noshi), young restaurateur Amit Bagga of Daryaganj, and DLF's F&B Head, Udit Kukreja.

The other major components of the Concurrent Programme included:

IHE2021 Excellence Awards, which went to 72 highly talented hospitality professionals from places as diverse as Pahalgam in Jammu & Kashmir to Amritsar, to Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Goa, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Coimbatore.

IHE2021 Masterclass Series, which saw nine top chefs and one acclaimed mixologist sharing their wisdom with students of five hotel management schools that had partnered with the show. The chefs were Davinder Kumar (Indian Culinary Forum), Manisha Bhasin (ITC Hotels), Manish Mehrotra (Indian Accent Restaurants), Avijit Ghosh (Callebaut and Smoor), Sanjay Thakur (World Chefs), Sabyasachi Gorai (Young Chefs Association of India), NeerajTyagi (Pullman and Novotel Hotels), Nishant Choubey (Seinan Group) and Nand Lal (Himachal Pradesh Tourism). Ankur Chawla (ScopeBev) was the mixologist.

ICF Young Chefs Culinary Challenge, a vibrant event that saw more than 170 students from hotel management colleges participate in five categories of competitions.

EVENTS' CALENDER

World Hospitality Expo
01-05 February 2022
Virtual Expo
www.worldhospitalityexpo.com

Aahar 2022
08-12 March 2022
Pragati Maidan, New Delhi
www.aaharinternationalfair.com

India International Hospitality Expo
03-06 August 2022
India Exposition Mart, Greater Noida
www.iheexpo.com

FHA Food & Beverage
05-08 September 2022
Singapore Expo, Singapore
www.fhafnb.com

International Spice Conference (ISC)

International Spice Conference (ISC), one of the largest knowledge dissemination and unifying platform for the global spice fraternity, is holding its sixth edition at Grand Hyatt Bolgatty Kochi in Hybrid mode from 2-4 March 2022. Five successful editions of the conference have had positive impacts on the industry and its stakeholders. Participation has gone up by 50% from the first edition in 2016 to the last edition in 2019, with 850 delegates representing 50 nations, 60 exhibitors and 50 speakers. ISC as a global event today enjoys a worldwide participation from the 'Who is who' of the spice and allied industries.

Theme of the Conference is "The new Normal & Beyond". International Spice Conference 2022 will attempt to address the impact of COVID-19 on the spice industry. The conference shall discuss the effect of the pandemic on the global economy and its repercussions on trade and food security and dwell on major issues in this regard.

The ISC 2022 has been planned with adequate time for networking by keeping the forenoon exclusively for delegates' interactions. The Business sessions have also been hosted on a virtual platform to enable delegates attending them virtually. ISC have also facilitated for all the delegates to network with each other regardless of their mode of attendance as all are reachable through the networking platform during the event period.We also have a physical and virtual Exhibition along with the Conference.

Chef Sandeep Panwar

The Westin Sohna Resort and Spa, has appointed Sandeep Panwar, as the new Executive Chef. With over two decades of rich and diverse culinary experience under his belt, Chef Panwar brings a wealth of knowledge and a passion for excellence to his new appointment.

Chef Panwar has experience of working with leading properties such as The Taj Mahal New Delhi, Le Méridien New Delhi, The Lodhi, The Oberoi Cecil Shimla etc. His last assignment was at Holiday Inn New Delhi International Airport as Executive Chef for over 5 years.

Chef Panwar, a native of Dehradun, is an alumnus of the GIHM, Dehradun.

HyFun Foods Launches HoReCa Products

HyFun Foods has announced the expansion of its product portfolio with the launch of frozen pizzas which has four variants- Classic Margherita, Veggie Paradise, Garden Fresh and Tandoori Paneer, for the QSR segment of HoReCa. The 100% vegetarian range offers Pizza's in four exotic flavours that will fit in every QSR's menu. Apart from the Pizza range, the company also offers' Super Crispy Fries,' that stays crispy for 5x longer time as compared to regular French Fries.

Commenting of the launch, Kamlesh Karamchandani, Director - Sales & Marketing, HyFun Foods, "Over the years, people's mindset towards consumption of frozen snacks is undergoing a change. QSR owners have started considering frozen snacks to save on time and effort to make tasty dishes. We are eyeing a growth of 40% from this segment in the coming year looking at the increased demand. They are realizing the noteworthy advantages that frozen foods offer likebeing healthy, as they are processed and frozen within hours of being picked, multipurpose usage, consistency in taste, availability and even decreased overhead costs. Banking on this opportunity we thought of curating special products that cater to the taste of the Indian customers. This is a favourable time for us to invest in expansion and development of innovative products that appeal to our growing Indian consumer base and the export markets."

IPC India Celebrates its Silver Jubilee

IPC India marked its silver jubilee at a gala event held at Lalit Faridabad. Leading personalities from Indian cleaning industry graced the occasion. The families of the employees were in full attendance, celebrating simultaneously at all the 15 IPC branches across India, and cutting cake at the same time. The families were presented with a planted sapling as a token of IPC commitment to environment and sustainability.

Tony Chazhoor in his presidential address commended the IPC team. Speaking on the uniqueness of the company, Chazhoor talked about last twenty-five years, and IPC's standing in the Indian market today, a testimony to the team's courage, skill and consistent hard work. A special note of thanks was given to the company's customers, who Chazhoor said were the very purpose of them being in business. The event went live to Tennant (Minneapolis) USA and IPC (Portogruaro) Italy. A new brochure of Tennant Co. and its premium products, which will be an addition to the IPC portfolio from now on, unveiled at the occasion.

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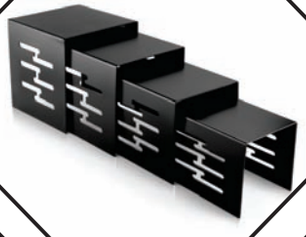

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Padma Shri for Rajni Bector

Rajni Bector, founder and chairman emeritus, Mrs Bector's Food Specialties Ltd. & Cremica Food Industries Ltd., has been conferred with the prestigious Padma Shri award by the Government of India for her contribution to trade and industry.

The award was presented by President Ram Nath Kovind for her significant contribution to the growth of trade and industry, at Rashtrapati Bhawan. The Padma Shri is amongst one of the highest civilian honours of the country. On receiving the award she said, "I feel blessed and express my gratitude to the government for recognising my services. I am completely honoured and want to dedicate this award to my family, children, and staff and all those who have worked an extra mile to make this possible. This is a very proud moment for me and for all at Bectors". A humble start from a home kitchen, the company became leading biscuits and bread manufacturer. The company's brands, Mrs. Bector, Cremica and English Oven are amongst the most popular and well recognized brands in India. The company also achieved major success in condiment business, exceptionally in Ketchup & Mayonnaise vertical. They also have wide range of products like gravies, syrups, sauces, chips, etc.

Qmin Launches its Store in Delhi

Qmin, the culinary and food delivery platform from Indian Hotels Company (IHCL), today launched its lifestyle gourmet store Qmin Shop at The Connaught – IHCL SeleQtions, New Delhi. On this occasion, the brand also announced its expansion with 15 new outlets, 10 of which will open in Bengaluru by the end of November 2021. In addition, it will add five new outlets including QminShops and Qmin - On The Move –its food trucks and soon to launch mobile pods.

Speaking about this development, Puneet Chhatwal, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, IHCL, said, "This is in line with IHCL's strategy of leveraging the strength of its Food & Beverage portfolio and expanding its hospitality ecosystem. Qmin has been revolutionizing the culinary space with its distinctive branded offerings across multiple market segments and price points. The addition of these new Qmin offerings will extend the brand's reach."

Since its launch in 2020, Qmin has rapidly expanded to 19 cities, delivering comfort food as well as signature favourites from IHCL restaurants. The brand is available on its proprietary Qmin app, catering to the consumer demand for online food delivery. It broadened its scope to include the Qmin Shop, offering a variety of gourmet products, and a café. Qmin - On The Move caters to the need of on-the-go meals. Keeping up with evolving market needs, Qmin will continue to scale in the months ahead.

The Biryani House Launches 'Biryani Roll'

The Biryani house, India's fastest upcoming delivery outlet platform which serves India's largest variety of delicious dum biryanis apart from melting in mouth kebabs & curries, launches its Biryani Roll for the first time ever in Mughlai cuisine which is a complete meal on the go.

The Roll is a fusion of Indian food ingredients and Western ingredients like jalapeno pepper, mozarella cheese and beloved Dum Biryani and comes in a price range of Rs. 150/-. With over 1 year of R&D done by the TBH team, the Biryani has come into a roll with a desired crispness outside and melting in mouth Biryani inside.

The demand for something good to eat which should be served in a quick time has made us step in the QSR model i.e., bringing Mughlai into the QSR model. The Biryani Roll is a complete meal on the go which brings biryani in the fast-food sector and it will cater to the majority of the customers who want healthy food in the quickest possible time." said Sarvesh Chaubey, Chairman – The Biryani House.

"In my 20 years of experience, I have never seen such a combo product. I have worked in many countries in the food industry but this product which we developed with our team is a perfect Indian roll which completes a meal."added Vivek Bhuinjkar, Executive Chef – The Biryani House.

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HOTREMAI 38th Annual General Meeting

38th Annual General Body Meeting of The Hotel & Restaurant Equipment Manufacturers Association of India (HOTREMAI) was held on August 20, 2021 at The Taj Connaught, C.P., New Delhi. Anil Malhotra-President (CEO-Hospitality Sales & Marketing Company) welcomed the Past Presidents, Presented EC, and Members of General Body. In his words last two years went by in front of us without really bringing in much in terms work / gains for most of us in the Hospitality Sector. We had perhaps not seen something like this in our lifetime. Hopefully we all have left that behind and praying to God only that the 3rd wave will not come and we can again get back to work and business as before. The President requested the participants at the AGM to observe a One Minute Silence as a mark of respect for the respected colleagues of the Hospitality Fraternity that we had lost during the Covid-19 pandemic or otherwise. The congregation prayed for:

Mr. M S Grover (VP-West, HOTREMAI)
Mr. Anil Bhandari (Ex MD of ITDC)
Mr. Rajiv Madan (ITC group)
Mr. D K Berry (ITDC and Taj group)
Mr. Rahul Berry (Taj group)
Mr. Sunil Malik (Taj group)
Mr. Ankur Bhatia (Bird group)
Mr. Rajindera Kumar (Ambassador Hotel)
Mr. V K Makkar (FHSAI)
Chef Soundararajan (Gen. Secy. IFCA)
Chef Anand Saraswat (Taj group)

He then thanked the members of General Body for their support and mentioned about two major events happened in 2019 and the association enjoying the support of the members and other people from the industry. HOTREMAI gathered 19 General Managers along with its members in huge numbers. An Interactive session organized at Hotel Imperial was a grand success. He mentioned his gratitude to all EC Members, The Past Presidents and not the least the senior Members who always been guided him to accomplish his work and responsibilities smoothly.

The Secretary, Nitin Kumar (MD, Rans Technocrats) presented and tabled the report for the year 2019-2020, with audited financials emphasizing the team-work and how we need to take matters forward in the subsequent years. He wished members of HOTREMAI to reach new heights in the coming times.

"Second Meals" by Chef Davinder Kumar

Chef Davinder Kumar has authored his latest book "Second Meals" and celebrating 50 years of his culinary excellence, professional journey. The book "Second Meals": Art of Cooking through food scraps, published by Shubhi Publications was released on 28th October, 2021. The book has 150 innovative

recipes comprising salads, soups, smoothies, detox drinks, main course etc. prepared using food scraps.

The art of cooking with scraps is a way and style that encourages cooking and eating every part of vegetables & fruits. It is a key to maximise nutrients & minimize food scraps.

The book is an attempt to guide both professional and home chefs to approach ingredients with respect so that wastage is reduced and he feels such mindfulness on the part of people will help fight hunger in the world.

"Scraps are unavoidable products derived during food preparation. Theses scraps, from peel to root – seeds, stems, stalks, etc, are often thrown. They are full of nutrients. I thought why not to work on this subject. The recipes in the Second Meals promote mindful thinking besides being environmentally friendly, provide innovative options to use food scraps", said, popularly known as, Chef DK.

Chef Davinder Kumar has been in this profession for more than five decades. He was the sole Indian representative in the International Cooking Festival held in Tokyo, Japan, in 1983 and was awarded a medal for his presentation of Indian cuisine. Presently Chef Kumar is Vice President – F&B (Production) at Le Meridien, New Delhi and he is the President of Indian Culinary Forum (ICF).

The occasion also celebrated his 50 years long stint in the hospitality industry.

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Food Service Consultants Association (FSCAI) Launched

Hospitality industry has been going through tough times, and the food service sector in particular had been badly affected. Realising the need of collaboration to survive and thrive, the Food Service Consultants Association of India was launched, at a ceremony held at the International Hospitality Expo, Greater Noida, on the 24th September.

Speaking on the occasion, Rajesh Chowdhury, the founder of the Association said, "This Association is an idea whose time has come. Consultants spread across the country are now looking at the multiple benefits of having a common platform, and have readily come forward not only to be a part of the Association, but have pledged their support for purposeful exchange of knowledge, which, in the times to come, will surely uplift the overall standards of the industry much higher". Rajesh was earlier associated with leading brands such as Cambro and T&S Brass and Bronze. He quit his job to devote his full time attention to the cause of the Association.

Stalwarts and leading Food Service Consultants including Avinash Garg, Naresh Shahani, Sanjeev Deshmukh, and several others have participated in the event. Hari Dadoo, the Chairman of the International Hospitality Expo, extended his best wishes and support to the Association; while Chef Manjeet Singh Gill, joined the luminaries in unveiling the logo, to formally launch the Association.

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Dineout Launches New 'Reviews & Rating' Feature

India's dining out and restaurant tech platform, Dineout has unveiled a revamped reviews & rating section that will allow food connoisseurs to share their dining-out experiences on the Dineout app. This feature aims to help diners get genuine restaurant recommendations from thousands of verified reviews available on the platform, and book a table at the restaurant they find the most appealing.

Dineout observed a surge in the number of customers on its platform & app, who are constantly looking for recommendations, reviews, ambience, food and much more at a restaurant. The new 'Reviews & rating' feature on Dineout will offer users the option to add photos and reviews at any of its 50,000+ partner restaurants across the country.

With relevant sub-parameters such as Food, Ambience, Hygiene, Verified Reviews etc, now every diner can make informed gastronomical choices for themselves & their loved ones. Additionally, they can also share reviews they found useful while making dining out plans, or follow the Reviewer Profiles of their fellow foodies on Dineout. This would go a long way in creating the most memorable dining out experiences for millions of patrons around the country.

Expressing his enthusiasm, Ankit Mehrotra, Co-founder & CEO - Dineout said, "At Dineout, we have a huge community of diners who constantly visit our platform for genuine recommendations, hence we believe that hundreds of thousands of 'reviews & ratings' available on the platform will help diners make an informed decision for their dining out needs and will also help our partner restaurants to improve their offerings."

MONIN India Launches Flagship 'Experience Studio' in Delhi

Georges MONIN SAS (MONIN) has announced the launch of its first exclusive 'Experience Studio' in India. The flagship facility spread across 3,500-square-foot is being inaugurated in The Dhan Mill, New Delhi. As part of its 'Make in India' commitment, the Company also has plans to open many such centers across the country.

The Experience Studio, also known as the 'House of Innovation' at MONIN, showcases experimentation with flavours and applications. Known the world over, MONIN prides itself with over 100 studios across the world, with each studio catering to every need of the local market in terms of flavours and applications.

Commenting on the Studio's opening, "We are eager to expand in India," said Germain Araud, Managing Director, MONIN India Pvt. Ltd. "Once we have a well-established Studio, we do have plans to open more studios in other major cities across India. The Studio will act as a catalyst to exchange creative ideas and discover new applications catering to the Indian palette and bring together stakeholders of the beverage industry."

This new development comes after MONIN opened its wholly owned subsidiary in Hyderabad as MONIN India Pvt. Ltd. With a 40-acre manufacturing site, the company also has an exclusive in-house R&D centre in Hyderabad that researches on the Indian palette. The R&D centre will develop new flavours and product categories, adding to MONIN's existing range of popular flavours. With more than a hundred partners across its distribution network, MONIN is now looking at strengthening its presence in the country. The company also has a 30 plus member 'sales and beverage innovation' team of hospitality professionals who work with clients across India to help them develop creative beverage and culinary solutions.

MONIN comes with more than a century of artisanal beverage know-how, and helps Hotels, Restaurants, Cafes, and Bars devise unique menus and applications. Entry to the Experience Studio will be by invite-only, giving the clients a more holistic experience. The company plans to conduct several innovative, industry-related programs at the Studio. Visitors will have a chance to savour several beverage innovations, and partners can showcase their talent through personalized menu curation sessions. The Studio will be a hub of learning and help clients with technical knowledge about the products, techniques of beverage presentation as well as suitable food pairings. Partners can also learn about the art of creating the best quality drinks while maintaining costs using high quality MONIN products. The clients will be a mix of F&B professionals and students, bartenders, baristas, and mixologists, among many others.

"We plan to conduct master classes and new educational modules at the Studio," said Rohit Singhavajhala, Marketing Manager, MONIN India Pvt. Ltd. "India has a very vibrant F&B industry with taste palettes changing every 100 kilometres. The Studio will be a testing centre where unique applications are launched- from the hot coffee in the morning to the frozen yogurts and dessert. The opening of this Studio is just the beginning of our ambitious plans."

MONIN is globally renowned as the brand of choice for hospitality professionals (Bartenders and Baristas). It takes pride in its best practices, such as responsible sourcing, natural ingredients, no artificial flavouring or colouring in the majority of its portfolio, and the use of pure cane sugar for its syrups, making the Brand a trusted partner for the industry for generations.

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Leader and a go getter!

Amrut Mehta, Director, Little Italy Group of Hotels

Amrut Mehta, Director is the second generation family member to join the Little Italy Group taking from his father Raj Mehta who founded the company in 1989. He trained Amrut over the years in various positions in the company since the age of 16 to give him hands on experience and a deep dive into the company's operations across different departments to help him get a pragmatic view to be able to take leadership positions in the future.

Amrut is an Alumni of London school of economics and Emirates academy of hospitality management Dubai. With years of experience working with top hotel and restaurant chains around the world such as Marriott and Jumeirah, Amrut has developed a right balance of experience and skills to lead Little Italy.

Amrut specializes in Operational excellence, Marketing strategy, Company strategy, R&D and conceptualization of new menus and brands. Amrut leads a new era for Little Italy group of restaurants and wishes to expand the brand across international markets and diversify their existing portfolio of brands to be a leader in the food industry.

In an exclusive interview with **Sharmila Chand**, he talks about the future plans, his work philosophy and more…

What are the USP of your Restaurant Brand?

Little Italy group of restaurants has been synonymous with good food, great service and outstanding hospitality for three decades now. Our USP lies in being an all 'Vegetarian' brand, a passionately run family business, Customer oriented brand, pioneers of Italian food in India and serving great quality food across all brands.

What are the key challenges you faced in launching a new brand?

Over the years Little Italy has expanded to more and more cities across India sharing the love of Italian food with Indians all over the country and introducing them to Italian food culture through our brand. When opening a new restaurant, the biggest challenge is to find the right location and the right local partner / Franchisee which is a key driver of success. We believe it is very important to find a right franchise partner who is in sync with our vision and is also actively involved in implementing the company culture and brand guidelines in their restaurant. We believe our franchisees should become not only successful restaurateurs in their local community but also promoters and brand ambassadors for the brand in that city.

Launching new brands has been much more challenging, as opposed to only expanding the flagship brand- Little Italy. It required reinventing many aspects within our restaurants and changing our approach to the business in someways and creating a new formula for success. New brands are always a fun challenge and one that motivates us to do better and thinking out of the box resulted only in reaching the newer heights. Over the years many brands have been added to the portfolio to complement existing offerings and to fill in gaps in the market where great opportunities are identified.

For example, Akss is Modern Indian brand we launched in 2018, which was really challenging due to the fact that it's a highly competitive category and Indian cuisine is so sacred and loved by Indians and if we did not do justice to it, it would have been a massive setback for us. However new brands helped us change the perception of customers to Little Italy not only as a brand which does only Italian food but also doing other cuisines and innovative concepts with the same brand value. They knew us for and most importantly target a different demographic and expand our customer base.

We spent almost a year on research and development into launching the new brand. It was an interesting and very important process that helped everyone in the company, grow, evolve and most importantly make our customers and franchisees happy. This Launch helped us in getting the confidence to launch other newer brands such as Piazza, Acasa, Senoritas and Tutto Bene.

What helped you the most in launching your brand?

The purpose was our motivation behind launching our new brands is the most important driving factor and it's what keeps us going. Little Italy started out as a journey of discovering Italian food and introducing it to Indians which then became the purpose to share the love of Italian food to cities around India. It's the passion of creating amazing dining experience for the consumers by telling the story of Italy.

When launching a new brand, the belief in the concept and vision is what defines a brand, it helps us have a deeper purpose and connection with consumers apart from just being a business. For example, we Launched Acasa in the pandemic which is the gourmet grocery line. Acasa started out as DIY kits in March 2020 to offer a solution to customers, when customers weren't comfortable with dining out, unknown people handling their food and they wanted to find a safer way to prepare their favorite food at home with the same tastes and flavors. The response was so great that people even asked us to launch more products variants and wanted more accessibility to wide range of products. This gave us the confidence and drive to

venture in the FMCG category by Launching Acasa as a brand with our complete range, which are now available Online Pan India and in most prominent supermarkets nationwide.

The vision is to make Acasa a household name and a staple in your household pantry when someone wants to cook Italian food. This circles back to the vision or purpose which is a huge driving factor and shapes a brands journey and strategy. With Acasa the purpose was to give people easy access to gourmet products in the pandemic helping them recreate their favorite restaurant dishes at home and make cooking an enjoyable and easy process.

Now the next step is to make Italian food products a staple in Indian households and promote the culture of cooking gourmet dishes at home by giving people the right tools, products and knowledge of how to do it.

What are the major issues you believe need special attention?

It's an industry that is highly reliant on people, and it's a very tedious job which requires daily monitoring, training and quality checks, as consistency is key, and at the end of the day you can't automate everything.

The legacy of Little Italy is built on consistency and that's what sets it apart from other restaurant for the past three decades. Driven by our passion and motivated by smiles around the restaurant we aim for perfection and creating amazing dining experiences and everlasting memories for customers with our brands.

How according to you the food (cuisine) trend has changed over a period of time?

It's amazing how the food culture has evolved over the last 30 years in India. Globalization has really helped bring the world closer and given many people the opportunity to travel to places they could not imagine before and helped people from all over the world to come to India as well.

This has helped the food culture in India evolve, introduced it to new cuisines, specialty food, more room for innovation and even highlighted local regional cuisines which earlier were not commonly available.

The food industry in India today boasts of most international cuisines from around the world and a great diversity of options for the Indian consumer. It's a fascinating time for chefs, restaurateurs and foodies as it creates an ecosystem which is changing, growing and provides endless opportunities both for the consumers and businesses.

What ensured the image building of your brand?

Fortunately, with a legacy spanning three decades the key drivers of success and goodwill for the brand are consistency, trust and a customer first approach. Little Italy is known for good food, great service and providing an excellent experience to customers consistently which naturally keeps a positive brand image for consumers.

Guests are confident coming to Little Italy knowing what they can expect, at the same time the brand philosophy of giving each guest personalized treatment, going the extra mile and creating wow experiences for them helps in creating a strong customer loyalty. These are the hallmarks of the company and are imbibed in the company culture from the inception by our Founder Mr. Raj Mehta who drives the same to all our core team, franchisees and employees.

We believe that a strong company culture and character to a brand is extremely important in forming a positive brand image for consumers.

What inspired you to launch this brand?

We launched Little Italy to share our love for Italian food with Indians, a journey which has brought us much happiness success and motivation to do more. This motivation drives us to find new ways to serve our people and create outstanding dining experiences for them.

What is your work philosophy?

At Little Italy the company philosophy is very simple, which is a people first approach this goes beyond the customers to the company employees and suppliers. The aim is to try to create a healthy ecosystem, one with interdependence and trust to keep all stakeholders happy, from sourcing the best quality of exotic food from the farms of Italy from trusted suppliers to creating the best working conditions for the internal team to be able to deliver the best experience to the customers.

What you enjoy the most about being in this business?

Although this business has long hours and is highly dynamic nature of the job, it's also one of the most rewarding jobs in terms of appreciation from customers, social status and also its ever-evolving nature keeps you going and growing. It's an industry you need to be really passionate about to be successful and if you have that then sky is the limit. There is no better feeling in the world than being in your restaurant daily seeing the smiling customers enjoy your food and service day in day out and being able to serve your local community.

What do you dislike the most?

Some people feel it's a dead end job or not something that requires a lot of skill but that's not the case. It's a very tough industry to be in and even harder industry to be successful in.

If you could change one thing about your position or business, what would it be?

The hours and work life balance in the work culture in India could be better and similar to other industries. I believe that would create more people to be interested to work in this industry which would be great for the ecosystem and the future.

What kind of pressures have you encountered at work?

The past 2 years have been very stressful for this industry. Everyone has been through a tough time and it's been incredibly challenging, All the restaurants that are still operating today and have been through the pandemic are operating only because of their sheer determination and team work which has helped them sustain this tough period. But I believe it is going to be worth it and there is light at the end of the tunnel, surely in sight now and we will see a boom in the business in the coming years and everyone who managed to stay afloat is going to be rewarded.

What are your future plans to expand your brand?

Little Italy Group is looking to grow all the new brands they launched and look to making themselves a household name. We are really excited to be able to bring new unique experiences to our customers through our new brands. We are also focusing on international growth and entering the UK and USA market which is very exciting as well.

Anything else you would like to say about your brand?

Little Italy Group is not the biggest of most well-known brands in the country but driven by a team of dedicated individuals and a vision to be much more than what we are today, surely one day we will be.

RUMblings of Revolution

Rum, a drink that was given as ration to sailors in the earlier days, was known as the Devil's drink as it warmed you up, trickling down your throat. The concept that rum was a drink of pirates and the navy, has played against the thee popularity of the spirit. Because of India's history with the British, the country made a darker, navy style rum, which was consumed during the winter. This was in contrast to other countries – from Barbados to Philippines and Mexico – where it was imbibed in hot climate. It was up to international rum brands to elevate the experience of the spirit. Today, bartenders and mixologists are of the opinion that rum is not only proving popular with the customers – ladies as well as gents – but is also becoming popular for blending cocktails. Ashok Malkani examines several aspects about the popularity of this tipple with the customers as a drink as well as in concocting enjoyable and appealing cocktails.

When one speaks of alcoholic drink, the tipple that comes to the minds of most people is Whisky. And for cocktails, vodka or gin are often believed to be the best choices! However a drink that has been popular over centuries is Rum. Originated in the West Indies, rums are first mentioned in records from Barbados in about 1650.

Rum has become one of the most popular drinks all over the globe. Washington-based bar legend, Todd Thrasher, who has created a molasses-based rum that would be low on sugar but fragrant with cardamom, lemongrass, spearmint, lemon verbena and more, describes rum and the cocktails that he serves as "Vacation in a glass." He avers, "The rum category as a whole benefits from the feeling of escapism. And after a year of this pandemic, just about everyone needs a vacation, or at least a good cocktail." And most bartenders are of the view that rum is the most flexible and food friendly spirit. Bar managers and mixologists across cities in India are predicting the dawn of rum, signalling the end of gin's days in hipster glory.

The popularity of rum in India has continued down the ages. Most Indians remember their first cocktail, during their college days, comprising of rum and coke.

Ms. Pushpanjali Banerji, Brand Director, Kyndal Group, says, "Rum has been cherished in India for a long time. It is a staple in a household bar collection as it caters to every mood. Traditionally, rum's popularity can be credited to the military and CSD canteens. Rum has a variety of distinguishing characteristics, and that is why it ranges from dark to light, sweet to spicy, overproof, aged and more. Rum can be enjoyed as a light drink or with more body and depth, making

it suitable for all occasions. Rum lovers are spoiled for choice when it comes to rum cocktails. According to the scale, rum is roughly one-sixth of whisky's size, around half the size of brandy, and six times the scale of vodka. 2020 witnessed a drop in the annual consumption of rum. However, there were some notable exceptions like the Bootz Dark Jamaica Rum from Kyndal*. The Bootz Dark Jamaica rum observed a growth of 58% in 2020-21. (*Figures as per IWSR 2020)"

When, in the olden days, a young lad ordered rum and Coke it was it was just: "Old Monk and Coke or Pepsi". All that's changing now with a slew of homegrown rums such as Maka Zai and Segrado Aldeia launched in Goa this year.

According to Shatbhi Basu, a bar and beverage consultant and founder of the STIR bartending academy, there was space for good and affordable Indian brewed rums. She says, "Most Indians are only familiar with the navy rums that the British preferred for a long time. Now could be the right time for rum to play a bigger role. Don't be surprised if you find several more coming your way."

Pirates' Drink?

Speaking about rum being the preferred navy drink of the British, it may be mentioned that it has been considered as a 'Sailors' Drink'. If you were a sailor for the British Royal Navy, drinking on the job was the norm. Known as the "daily tot", this rum ration was distributed to all seafaring men. The Caribbean waters were once the focal point for pirate activity; it was in the Caribbean that they would attack and loot naval and merchant vessels, taking the crew hostage and removing valuables for sale in ports across the waters. Many pirates would start out their careers as naval sailors, or crewmen aboard merchant vessels, but would turn to piracy either as a result of discharge from such services, or because of the attractively lenient and democratic (yes, really) life to be found amongst buccaneers. Pirates were better paid and less restricted.

Pirates, who sailed the seas for long durations were widely known, in contemporary sources, to drink just about anything they could get their hands on, but rum was undoubtedly their favourite tonic for long voyages. Whether the spirit was gained by force, coin, or stealth the drunken escapades it fuelled are now the stuff of legend.

Pushpanjali believes that rum was

preferred by sailors because of its pasteurising qualities. She explained, "Pasteurisation or preservation of food was not in practice, centuries ago. Sailors risked health concerns and even died because of the low shelf life of their food. Additionally, the water around was not always drinkable due to stagnation. The sailors started adding distilled or fermented beverages to the water to make it a drinkable liquid called grog, rum being one of them. Rum also served medicinal purposes and helped eliminate stress. These factors, along with the affordability of rum, made it popular among sailors and pirates. Rum was easier to make as sugarcane was a plentiful resource, and rum was cheaper to transport. Soon the sea voyagers started consuming rum in industrial quantities. This is why rum is associated with sailors

or pirates. Rum was also a staple in the provisions of the English Navy. Rum, for the most part, is produced in the Caribbean, North and South American countries. These locations form an additional connection to the pirates."

A Spirit to Boost the Spirit

Rum, considered to be a man's drink, is now gaining popularity among the female gender. In fact, women have also entered the field of producing this tipple. Kasturi Banerjee, who worked in financial services for 14 years, began her journey in the alcoholic beverage industry in 2019 by embarking upon a 6-month bartending course and an internship at Koko, the Asian themed gastro bar in Mumbai's Lower Parel. Tasting myriad spirits and learning about storied brands led her to delve deeper into these spirits' production. The bug of creating her own brand was now very firmly planted. And this year she came up with her brand Maka Zai.

The love for rum has thus also broadened to females.

Pushpanjali declares, "Rum was previously associated with masculine energy like the Indian army personnel stationed in colder regions, etc. However, over time rum has become a favoured drink by both genders. It is popular with both men and women. As more women venture into alcohol and explore their palettes and preferences, they appreciate the flavour and options rum has to offer. Premiumization of the category and subsequent new and quality offerings are attracting new, younger consumers and up-trading from existing consumers."

Variety of Rums

The popularity of rums has grown to such an extent that today there are a number of varieties. Rum is produced in more than 80 countries, using many divergent methods, with copious variations of fermentation, different types of distillation, myriad blending styles and a plethora of aging techniques.

Pushpanjali disclosed, "A few key types of rum include white rum, gold rum, dark rum, Demerara rum, spiced rum, and Naval/Overproof rum. Each of these rums is distinct from the other and appeals to different people.

The White rum is clear and lighter-bodied and is aged very briefly. The Gold rum is more complex as it is aged in oak barrels and is suitable for cocktails. The

Dark rum is aged for a longer period, has a fuller flavour profile, and is ideal for enjoying by itself. Demerara rum is made from cane grown in Guyana and has a rich and dark flavour profile. The Spiced rum is flavoured with spices that usually up the impression of spice often received from ageing it in barrels. Any rum that has a higher alcohol content falls under the Naval/Overproof category.

Jamaica Rums are full-bodied rums with richness and complexity. The Bootz Dark Jamaica Rum has a distinctively flavourful & aromatic style as it is blended with authentic Jamaica rum spirit. Preference is objective but white rum and dark rum seem to be most favoured. White rum is a good cocktail ingredient and is versatile whereas, dark rum is a drink for people who prefer to savour their rum. Also, well-aged rums such as the Bootz Dark Jamaica Rum deserve to be sipped neat due to their richness and complexity."

There are also several spiced rums used in cocktails. Spiced rum can be made from any type of rum. The rum is infused with various botanicals to add aromatic and flavourful spicy notes. Spiced rums are generally infused with spices such as ginger, vanilla, cinnamon, clove, or various tree barks. The rums can range from very dry to moderately sweet, although spiced rums generally tend to be sweeter than their unspiced counterparts.

With all of those rich flavours already present in the rum, it's easy to find a mixer that works. Some of the best mixers, according to mixologists and bartenders, are:

Coke
Cold Brew
Ginger Beer
Apple Cider
Pineapple Juice
Tonic Water
Energy Drink like Red Bull
Fizzy Orange like Fanta

Rum as Cocktail Drink

Mixability is one of rum's many strong points. Its popularity among cocktail connoisseurs can be attributed to its deeper flavour notes and versatility for mixes. Some mixologists believe rum's pocket-friendly pricing is a huge draw. While others highlight bar regulars in India are partial to mildly sweet cocktails. Rum, a spirit extracted from sugar cane, is inherently sweet.

Pushpanjali states, "Rum is a versatile cocktail ingredient that helps create cocktails for every season and occasion. Rum is light compared to pure spirits, and mixologists prefer it for its ability to mix with innovative flavours and ingredients. One can pair rum with fruity flavours and fresh ingredients to create summer cocktails and richer, denser flavours to create a cocktail for colder months.

A cocktail rookie can also feel safe choosing rum cocktails as they are likely to provide dynamic flavours beyond the alcohol. Rum forms the base of some of the most popular and well-loved cocktails like a mojito, daiquiri, pina colada, mai tai, Cuba libre, and more. Even though white rums are widely used for creating cocktails, the universally loved Cuba Libre (Rum & Coca-Cola) consists of a complex dark rum. The Bootz Dark Jamaica rum can be a splendid base for a classic Cuba Libre."

Popularity of Rum Cocktails

While Vodka and Gin were considered to be the best options for cocktails, recently rum is gaining popularity.

Pushpanjali however asserts that rum has been popular as a cocktail base for a long time. She avers, "Rum cocktails have been popular with people for decades. One of the major reasons for the popularity is the variety of rum cocktails available. There is a rum cocktail for every occasion, season, taste, and preference. Several of these cocktails have been upgraded to include new flavours and ingredients.

Rum also inspires more innovative cocktails; hence, the variety of rum cocktails is never-ending. Anyone over the legal drinking age can enjoy a good rum cocktail. The versatility of rum allows different age groups to curate drinks to their liking and relish them based on the occasion. Over the years, innovative rum cocktails have pleased many rum lovers. However, Cuba Libre has stood its ground as the universal favourite for different age groups over the legal drinking age. The Cuba Libre can be enhanced by using The Bootz Dark Jamaica rum as its base." ■

Pushpanjali Banerji

Recipes of Rum Cocktails

Daiquiri

Ingredients:
60 ml of Bootz Dark Jamaica rum
10 ml simple syrup
15 ml oz freshly squeezed lime juice

Instructions:
Mix and shake all three ingredients over ice, then serve in a coup glass.

Pina Colada

Ingredients:
1 cup pineapple (frozen)
60 ml cream of coconut
60 ml Bootz Dark Jamaica rum

Instructions:
Blitz all the ingredients in a blender on high until they become creamy and frosty. Serve in a tall glass.

Cuba Libre

Ingredients:
30 ml Bootz Dark Jamaica Rum
90 ml Coca-Cola
Lime wedges for garnish

Instructions:
In a glass, add Bootz Dark Jamaica Rum and Coca-Cola, then garnish with lime wedges. Squeeze lime juice and add ice if desired.

Curricane

Ingredients:
45ml Boots Dark Jamaica Rum
15ml Lime juice
Curry leaves 4-5 (muddled)
10 ml Cinnamon syrup
Top with soda and a touch of Sprite

Instructions:
In a shaker, add rum, muddled curry leaves, lime juice, cinnamon syrup with ice. Shake until combined well. Pour it into a glass and top it up with soda and a touch of Sprite.

Pushpanjali Banerji,
Brand Director, Kyndal Group

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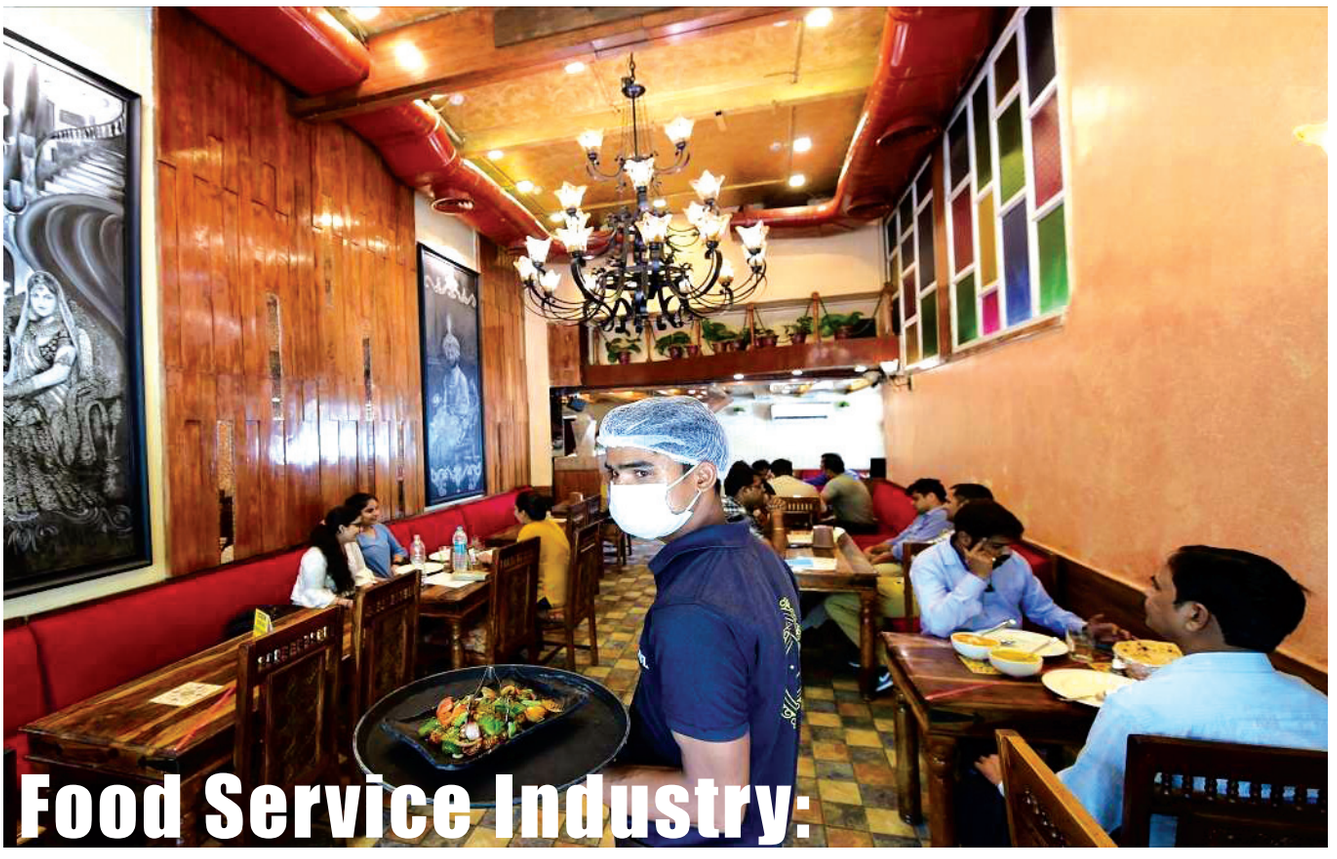


Food Service Industry:

Tackling the Pandemic

Food Service Industry, India's third-largest service industry, which was almost wiped out during the initial phase of the pandemic is now set to make a comeback. During 2020 a large number of restaurants had to down shutters due to COVID-19. However during the third quarter of 2021 a large number of them are back in business and as the country and the States relax restrictions on the capacity and timings the food service outlets are adopting all SOPs to ensure that customers feel comfortable visiting these places under the new normal. The people too, with relaxations, are now in a mood to socialize and willing to trust their favourite restaurants. Ashok Malkani finds that the industry is now set to regain its past glory – and more!

Restaurant entrepreneurship is a challenging business as this industry must continuously evolve to meet the consumers' ever-changing tastes and preferences. The National Restaurant Association of India's 'Indian Food Services Report 2019' states that the F&B sector experienced a tremendous growth over the last 3 years. However, over the last one-and-a-half years, the Restaurateurs, due to corona virus and the subsequent lockdowns, have been severely impacted. Since many restaurants had to pivot on an online-only model for survival many of them closed down. A report published by the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) on October 25, 2021 showed that the Indian food services industry declined by 53% during the FY 2021 (Apr. 2020 to March 2021).

The report said that the industry was estimated to be worth Rs. 2 lakh crore in FY 2021, down from Rs 4.23 lakh crore in FY 2019. Revenues of restaurants took a beating due to the pandemic. According to the report, the average revenues of restaurant after the first lockdown, was down by 46% as compared to pre-pandemic levels.

The restaurant entrepreneurs face significant uncertainties in consumer demand as they avoid public places and are increasingly concerned about hygiene and safety. According to the rating agency CRISIL, the restaurant industry is witnessing a 50-70 per cent decline in revenues in this fiscal year because of the disruptions caused by the pandemic. The dine-in restaurants are now dependent on

home deliveries, and takeaway orders.

According to a report released by Zomato, the food delivery company, only 9-29 per cent of the restaurants in the metropolitan regions reopened after the authorities eased the restrictions in 2020.

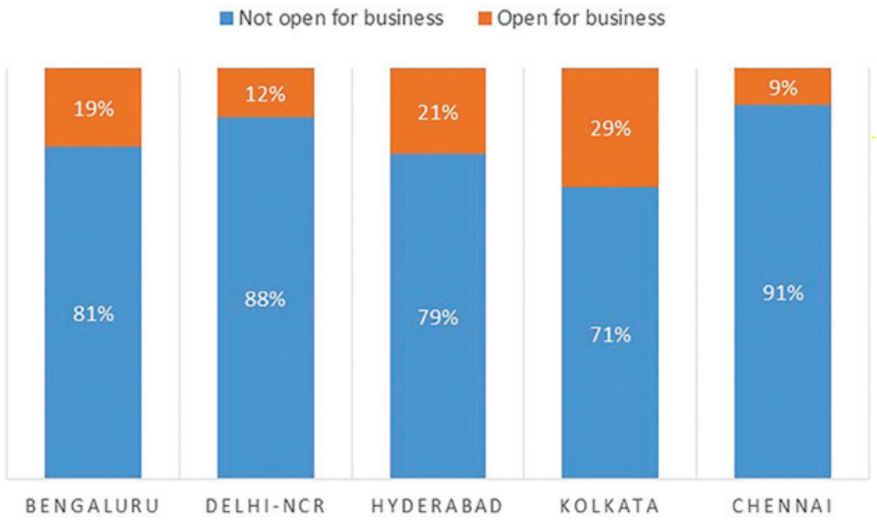
However, Revenues Post Lockdown 2, have seen a growth of 33% compared to Lockdown 1. The industry was expected to recover this fiscal year to 85% of pre-COVID estimates.

Many of the restaurateurs have now come up with cloud kitchens to reduce the losses due to low footfall in the dine-in restaurants. These cloud kitchens are listed with the popular food delivery apps in India such as Zomato, Swiggy etc.

There is further good news for the industry, in Maharashtra. After easing of curbs by the Maharashtra government, which has permitted pubs, bars and lounges to remain open till 10 p.m., several of them which had continued staying shut after the second Covid-19 wave have now opened up.

However, Sherry Bhatia, President, Hotel & Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI), while wholeheartedly welcoming the move to extend the timing of restaurants says, "In cities like Mumbai evenings begin late. Closing time of 10 pm, though forced upon by prevailing circumstances, was impractical for both restaurants as well as diners." He wanted the timing to be extended to 1 a.m. He stated, "While we have to be on our guard and maintain health protocols to ensure that Covid does not rear its ugly head again in Maharashtra, it is also important that normalcy return from a business point of view. Life v/s livelihood is a delicate balance. With about 50 lakh individuals in Maharashtra directly and indirectly depending on the hospitality industry for their livelihoods, it is imperative that guidelines are eased."

He added, "The present timings for restaurants from 7am to 10pm do not complement this business. This is only adding to the losses caused due to the two lockdowns. We recommend that the Government allows hotel and restaurants to revert to the pre-pandemic timings through the week. This will not only benefit restaurants but it also will promote staggered venturing out of the public. Other



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than this, we also request the Government to be considerate and provide hotels and restaurants relaxation on the condition that the staff be fully vaccinated for resuming operations. We request that the Government allows hotels and restaurants to undertake the pending vaccinations if any, in a gradual manner. We are sure that these positive measures would immensely benefit the people of Maharashtra to come out of the huge economic turmoil caused by the COVID-19 pandemic."

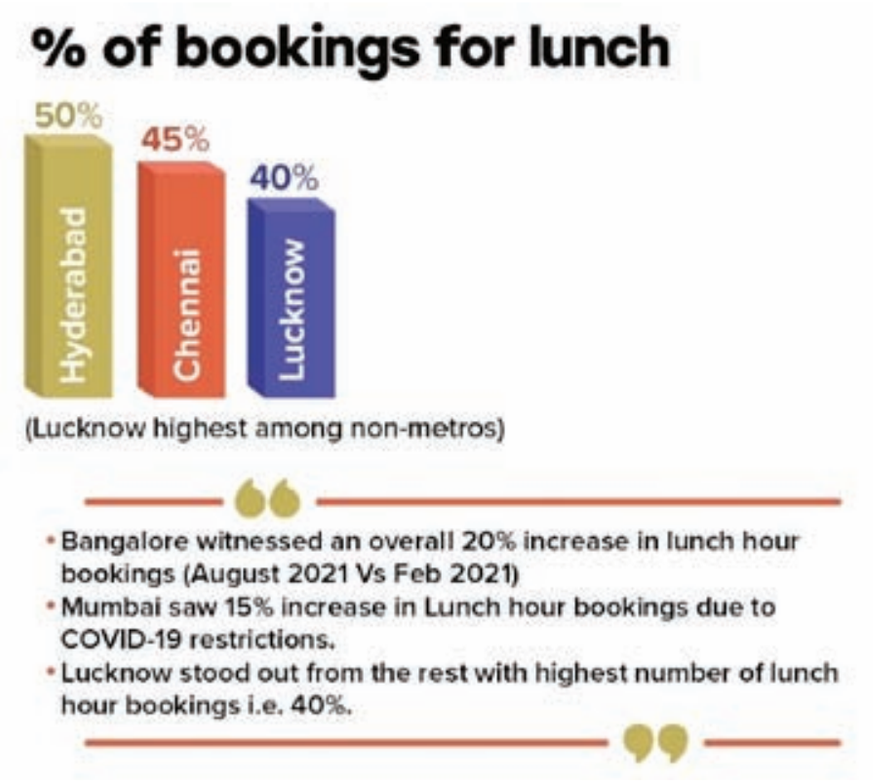
Incidentally, as far as timings are concerned, besides Mumbai, Delhi too has reasons to rejoice. The Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), in an order on August 23, lifted the restrictions on timings of restaurants, bars, allowing them to operate for their full business hours. However, restaurants are still allowed to take in only 50% of their capacity.

Welcoming the move, Kabir Suri, vice-president, National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI), said, "Restoring full working hours spells big relief for the food and beverages industry. The restricted timings affected the dinner service. We had to take the last order at 9pm, which meant guests had to hurry up with their dinner and leave the premises. We lost a major window for business. Now, things will be more relaxed and we can also space out guests in two slots."

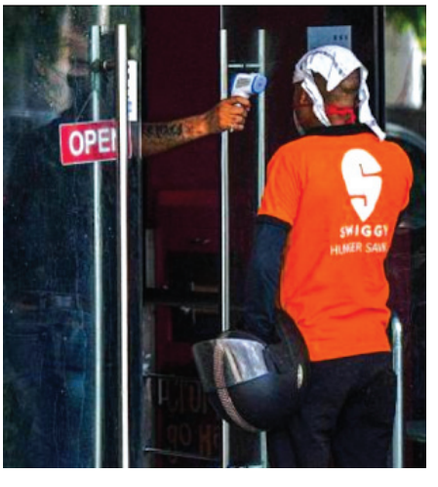
Issues to be Tackled

But irrespective of the closing hours, the pandemic has made it necessary for the industry to introduce innovations and think out of the box. The restaurateurs have to tackle several issues to succeed in the new normal. The diners are now finicky about the cleanliness issue. Their expectations have never been higher. According to an Ecolab post-COVID-19 vaccine consumer research, 95 per cent of consumers want to see as much or more cleaning and sanitation practices than were being observed before COVID-19. According to Measure Protocol analysis, 86 per cent of consumers say that visible evidence of cleanliness is most important to feeling safe. Thus dining out places have to observe a higher scale of cleanliness than the pre-Covid-19 period.

Contactless Service: Besides this, the restaurateurs will have to pay attention to reduction of human contact. While human contact cannot be completely eliminated in the restaurant business, the entrepreneurs have to make efforts to reduce human contact. It may be mentioned that COVID-19 can spread through various infected surfaces.



Digital technology can help restaurateurs to reduce human contact in their service delivery. Physical contact can be avoided at several points like making online reservations. Contact can also be avoided by allowing pre-ordering through an app, which reduces the customers' waiting time while at the restaurant. Entrepreneurs can also install contactless tracking devices in their restaurants that allow contactless thermal scanning. Some restaurants have taken the initiative of replacing physical menus with digital menus. Restaurateurs could adopt this method or go a step further and introduce QR coded menus or allow the customers to view the menus on their smartphones enabling them to place an order without touching the physical menu.



Digital Payments: Another important aspect that needs to be followed by the industry is of accepting payments through digital and online platforms. Digital payment volumes are also receiving a boost through the Government. Several fintech companies have entered the field offering various digital solutions to enable various industries to accept digital payments. The current pandemic scenario has made it imperative that industry makes digital payments as the preferred mode of payment to minimize human contact.

Menu Engineering: The diners are now more conscious about the health aspect. COVID-19 has increased the awareness among the customers to boost immunity. They have become more conscious about the nutritional content of their food. The restaurant entrepreneurs have thus to develop new food options like healthy food bowls and immunity boosting food options.

Health has become an important aspect for not only the food sector but also for the beverage industry. Beverage giant, Coca Cola states that there has been a demand for beverages with zero-sugar and reduced sugar formulations in the South-East region which has become more pronounced after the COVID-19 hit. This, it has disclosed, has prompted the company to launch new formulated recipes

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New Developments

Though the industry suffered a great deal during the past 1½ years, it retained its never-say-die spirit and the result is that the industry is slowly and steadily coming on an even keel. The worst seems to be over and, with the advent of the vaccine drive from January 16, or the flattening of the curve, the customer sentiment also seems to be coming back. Several restaurants, pubs and bars have started re-opening and food lovers have started returning to their favourite restaurants.

With the new work-from-home scenario many young jobbers have moved to their hometowns making Tier-II towns the upcoming favourites for many enterprising entrepreneurs to open new outlets and for the existing ones to improve their business by upping their safety and food standards.

The latest report by India's largest restaurant tech platform, Dineout, shows that cities like Delhi, Kolkata and Hyderabad have witnessed the maximum recovery among metros. Among smaller cities, Jaipur and Ludhiana have shown maximum recovery and are currently operating at nearly 2.5X of February 2021 levels.

The average order value, or average transaction value (ATV), at restaurants in July-August increased by as much as 20 percent since February, with smaller cities like Agra (24%), Indore (29%) & Ludhiana (35%) registering the biggest surge in restaurant order value - pointing at a much-needed release of the pent-up demand for good food and socialising with friends and family. Agra and Ludhiana registered the largest average orders of Rs 2,509 and Rs 2,766 respectively.

Expressing enthusiasm in welcoming diners to their favorite Dineout partner restaurants in town, Ankit Mehrotra, co-founder & CEO of Dineout said, "Most food-lovers across the country have been sitting on the fence for over a year and a half about going back to their favorite restaurants in town. It's understandable why millions are now thronging to their favorite eating joints as the COVID-19 health advisory is lifted, and that they can finally step out, and into their favorite restaurants and not be forced to have their meals on their couch."

He added, "At Dineout, we are confident that the premier sanitation and hygiene-related measures such as fully vaccinated staff and socially distanced seating will reassure diners as we brace to take on this new normal."

As per food aggregators, restaurants are now running to 100 per cent capacity and business is back to around 70 per cent of pre-COVID levels.

Anurag Katriar, past president of NRAI, is optimistic about the future. He states, "Enough has been spoken about the crisis in the past one year and it is time to look ahead and explore opportunities. We may need to redesign our offerings and retool our business models, but it is absolutely incumbent upon us to move beyond the pandemic-induced status quo and regain our lost vibrancy."

Kabir Suri, president of NRAI believes that several issues need to be tackled for the restaurant industry to recover fully. He stated, "There was a cost to survival. Many of us have taken additional debt or infused equity into business to survive. These additional burdens need structural changes on the policy front to support the survival and revival of the industry.

He added, "The government can fix a major pain in one stroke if they extend the GST input credit to the food service businesses in the country. While different States, city administrations, etc. are reacting differently to the Covid situation, with different kinds of restrictions in terms of operational timings, capacities, etc. the GST input credit can relieve the pain of the operators pan-India.

Riyaaz Amlani, CEO and MD of Impressario Entertainment & Hospitality Pvt. Ltd. and ex-president of NRAI stressed on the importance of strong business model for restaurants o make the business more sustainable.

Global Outlook

The early stages of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic led to an 80% reduction in the global F&B open rates. Restaurants, bars, cafes and eateries were forced to turn customers away. Food delivery became popular all over the globe.

The percentage of internet users aged 16 to 64 which ordered food delivery in different countries, was:

Germany – 29%
Italy – 35%
France – 27%
UK – 46%

The shutdown of conventional means to acquire food and beverages created a need for more consumer tech. This opened the door to long-term innovative alternatives even after the crisis. Mobile-first tech has already shaken up multiple other industries.

Research commissioned by European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT) has found that over 50% young Europeans surveyed counted calories.

The Thai Ministry of Industry (MOI) has reported that the local food industry had performed impressively in the first seven months of 2021.

Conclusion

There is little doubt that COVID-19 has delivered a massive blow not only to the restaurateurs in India but to the entire global F&B industry. There has, however been a recovery over the past several months. The question is what will prove to be a Covid patch up and what innovations would be there to stay?

There is little doubt that people will want to get out of the house again and dine out along with family and friends. However, when it comes to satisfying the need for food, customers now have a range of options. People now don't have to rely on traditional restaurants for prepared meals. Ghost kitchens have now become popular. According to Euromonitor ghost kitchens could create a 1 trillion dollar global opportunity by 2030.

There could be no denying the fact that the demand for delivery is here to stay.

The demand for delivery is not a new phenomenon. But the thing that changed it in 2020 is that now everyone is aware of its convenience and several people prefer this to going out to dine-ins. And this is one of the things that is not going to change soon!

Take out, delivery, subscriptions and meal kits are other avenues that have been prominent in the food service industry globally. These are becoming popular in all segments like QSR, fast-casual and FSR. If 2020 has taught anything to the industry it is that if you want to thrive you have to diversify. So while pre-Covid 19 tech investments went to software, devices, and other tools meant to power the front of house, in 2021, we will see that balance shift to making the back of the house safer, more efficient and more automated. There would also be other changes like smaller menus and digital marketing. ■

Chefs for Profitable Outlets

Today the role of a chef has toddled much ahead of stirring and blending out palatable cuisine. He, at present, carries more responsibility than ever before and is the key player in making the food outlets profitable. In the present context he is offering more innovative solutions in the form of new products & concepts to his over conscious clients. FBR attempts an insight in chef's changing multi-functional role.

Apart from fostering teamwork in the kitchen, today the role of a chef has been utterly revised. Today the convolution of the chef's rank has amplified to include the responsibility towards management, customer relations, menu planning, and most prominently, the training and motivation of the production/ service team. The conventional role of the chef has changed dramatically over the years, and now a chef's duties are consistently being "refocused."

Changing Times

The widening of the scope of the chef's duties has ensued owing to the brisk changes in food and beverage industry, avant-garde approach and techniques making route into the kitchen, gripping progressive chefs and their workforce to declassify strategies, acknowledge and get a feel for shifting times.

No longer locked in the stereotypical roles of high-strung, pot-stirring pariahs, chefs are finding their numbers mounting and roles intensifying as food companies deal with mounting competitive pressure to accelerate and improve new product offerings.

In restaurants, the traditional bastion of chef-centered culinary activity, the role of the chef is expanding to embrace new tools and technologies to improve consistency, product quality, productivity and hygiene, specifically in today's context.

He has to develop a fresh menu, scheduling expertise and has to cultivate a slick flow of merchandise and supplies in the kitchen. He has to also try to improve cost consciousness and profit orientation in the company.

The bottom line is – the today's chef is technologically sound, and performs the role of a purchase manager, cost controller and of course a team leader with elan. He is, so to say, a 'jack of all trades'.

A Team Leader

Incentives and inspiration are what every staff member is looking for and to rise higher in the performance rating in the working team, a chef has to put on the mantle of an inspiring leader.

The chefs are supposed to illustrate a fitting incentive programme outlining explicit objectives and pre-requisites to come up to a level to receive accolades and awards.

A well-motivated team is the fundamental forte of an organisation and keeping the hold of worthy staff members is vital for sustaining the excellence the company has acquired after a long time of quality service, as inferior quality service will not only lead to a major exodus of customers but also will damage the name of the company.

Hence, chefs are supposed to have inspiring skills, tolerance and brazenness to hold together the performing team.

In order to enhance staff performance importance should be on well-defined training and quality upgrading programmes.

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and maintain a very high level of sophistication today. The appearance of the kitchen has also undergone a noticeable revolution.

If we look at the new advents in the culinary world, we will find that chefs are preparing and presenting down to earth menus with very authentic flavours and are revolutionising the way they work. They are watching the bottom lines very carefully. These chefs are using a high degree of automation and creating a homogenization of skills and presentation.

Today's chefs are the rulers of the kitchens. They are the deciding factors as to how to set up and design a kitchen for a broad-spectrum of activities. Long-established designs and current favourites are workstation-oriented designs which are found to be very efficient and are within many hotels of repute. Since hotels have the infrastructure already in place unlike standalones who have to spend much monetary investment on high rentals for amalgamating the required infrastructure.

Every kitchen needs a different layout. It is necessary to identify the kind of establishment or theme the kitchen has to be designed for. The working hours of the kitchen, in terms of its operational time, the kind of machinery required and the manpower also need to be determined.

Chefs have to advise the architects and consultants as to what they are looking for and which way they feel comfortable while operating in the kitchens. Chefs have to inform about the dimensions and magnitude of every kitchen. They decide as to what equipment has to be installed in the kitchen. They advise about the necessity of the proper drainage system and proper material suited for the interiors as per requirements envisaged by them.

Equipment Controller

Chefs are the important link in the supply management chain. Keeping utility maximisation and cost advantage in mind, the chefs are ordering for optimum quality equipment.

The intelligent chef has redefined the kitchen equipment needs too. Under their able management, quality kitchens are being developed with proper planning and equipment.

The chefs are now the decision makers in buying equipment as they and their team are the actual users who know best what they need. Managements have realized this and the power has been bestowed on them.

Though condition and performance are vital

Although conditions and performance are vital indicators, price is an imperative factor to any chef when buying a new range. However, the essential aspect for consideration is not the purchase price, but the lifetime price because that gives a far greater insight into the true value of a purchase.

Service costs, breakdown costs, energy costs, loss of profit through downtime, spare parts replacement and duration of equipment till it is clearly worn out are what make up the lifetime cost of any catering equipment. Chefs must think not only of cost-saving when buying, but also what pays more in the end.

Cost Controller

With the growing competition in the hotel industry, today everyone wants to control the cost to the fullest extent.

Today's chefs are trained to produce the best quality results with the smallest cost. They are trying their best to understand the prevailing environment, market trends, financial aspects, operational control and how costs and sales impact profitability in the hotel industry.

These chefs are performing their best in cost control, which is influencing the establishment growth as well as making their career best as the cost controller too.

Coping up with Growing Technologies

Technology plays a central role in smooth working of kitchens as well as of the general operation of the industry. With the mounting speed of the technology, the chefs are modernizing and keep themselves updated in the terms of technologies in foodservice industry.

The technologically sound chefs are today receiving the information on their fingertips to reach a higher-level of customer satisfaction, which leads to a superior business.

Working on the specialised application software packages and Internet-based technologies, the chefs are today optimizing their kitchen management.

High Quality Service

It is essential for chefs to understand the basic science of food, have knowledge of metals, seasons and an insight into the health conditions of men as per their age. If he does not know the reactions of metals with food, effects of different ingredients and is not vigilant about hygiene and cleanliness, how will he serve good food?

With the advent of the interactive kitchens, quality control and kitchen hygiene have become more important. Twenty years ago, everyone wanted the kitchen to be behind the scenes and invisible, but the scene is different now, thanks to guests who want to see the preparation process in real time. Such operations are highly demanding.

Today the chefs are moving out from the long-established roles confined to the kitchen area. A modern chef has to be a judicious communicator and very social in his approach as he has to supervise an excellent team in the kitchen. ■

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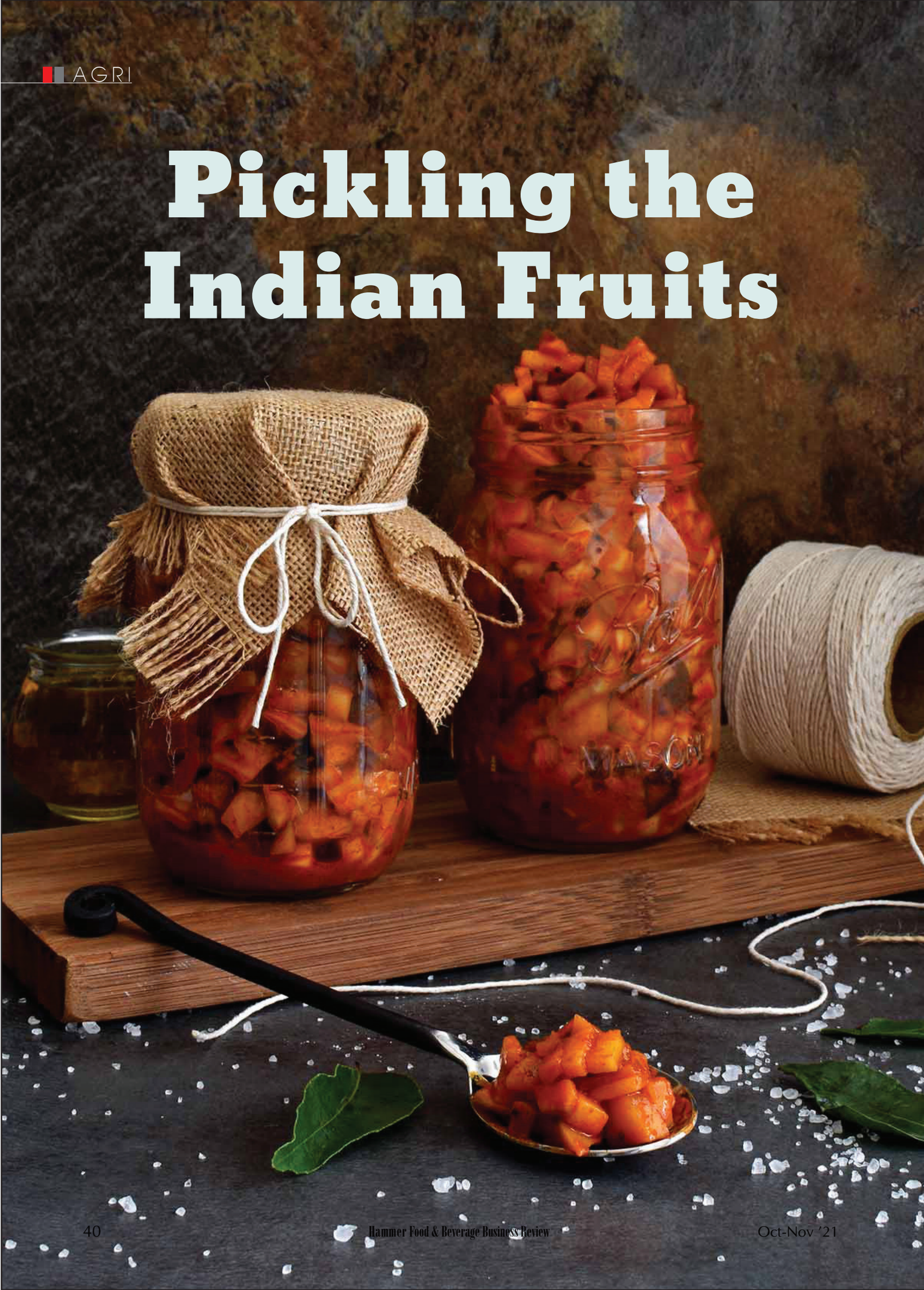
Pickling the Indian Fruits



The raw vegetables and fruits have immense nutritional value. When they are pickled they are appetite enhancing and stimulate the secretion of digestive juices thus fostering proper digestion.

The word "pickle" is derived from the Dutch word "pekel" which means 'preserved in brine'. In western countries pickles refers to preserved meats, fish and vegetables using brine or vinegar as the preservative. However, in India, it is a food supplement usually of spiced raw fruit or vegetables used to enhance the taste of a meal.

Assorted Indian Pickles

Indian Pickles are as diverse as the country itself, with each state and community having their own special recipes descended from generation to generation. The specialty of an area depends largely on the abundance of the fruit or vegetable grown in that area. The most common variety of course is the 'mango pickle' followed by lime, chilies etc. as they grow more or less all over the country.

Almost all vegetables and raw fruits can be pickled. Pickling is the best way to ensure the preservation of vegetables and fruits that are over abundant in their harvest season and unavailable for the rest of the year. Usually, no chemical preservatives or artificial food colours are used in pickles and preservation is maintained by the use of common salt, spices and tempered vegetable oil which makes the pickle a healthier food than other preserves such as jams and jellies.

Some pickles like the whole lemon pickle of Nepal have medicinal properties and are effective against indigestion as well as anorexia. The spices used in the pickle like mustard seed, chilli powder, black pepper, fenugreek, asafoetida and many more are mostly appetite enhancing and stimulate the secretion of digestive juices thereby aiding digestion. The raw vegetables and fruits have good nutritional value most of which is preserved in the pickle. Sometimes meat, fish and poultry is also preserved in the form of pickle using spices, salt and oil, however, not much of the non-vegetarian variety of pickles are produced commercially in India.

Indian Market

The commercial production of pickle started in India almost seven to eight decades ago when the homely pickle crept out of the kitchen to small cottage industries where the local women would gather to cut the seasonal fruit, grind and mix the spices and oil. But then the scope of commercial success was limited due to poor packaging facilities and standardized procedures.

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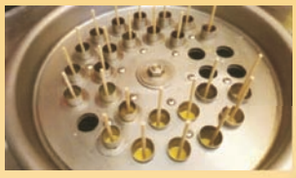

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Also, there were no laws to maintain hygiene and nutritional standards. It was only after the development of packaging materials and procedures, which could retain the flavours and quality of the pickles, that pickles could successfully be manufactured on a large scale. Ease of transportation and storage was also an important factor. Special packaging materials slowly developed keeping all these factors in mind.

The Transition

Now, India has large-scale manufacturing of pickles. The required fruit and vegetables are procured in bulk during the season. For example, the raw mango season lasts for a short four to six weeks when it has to be picked from the orchards, brought to the factories, sorted, washed, cut, brined and stored for consumption all through the year.

Modern factories now use automatic machines for washing, cutting of the raw fruit and vegetables, grinding of spices, mixing all the ingredients, packing into containers and making the product market ready. High hygiene standards have to be maintained and label designs have to be approved by the authority to comply with the law. The oil-based pickle also has clearly defined norms regarding the quality of oil used and the amount of oil that should stand over the pickle. This is to ensure the right preservation of the pickle.

Almost 80% of the pickle manufactured in India is in the cottage and small-scale sector since traditional methods of manufacture do not require any sophisticated machinery. Here, the process is almost entirely manual the knife being the most important tool. However in a modern large capacity factory the process may be mechanized since quality standards have to be maintained. The normal industrial process includes:

a. The raw fruits and vegetables are weighed on a platform balance and stored in large bins.

b. Pre-treatment such as removal of stems, tips from chilies, mangoes is carried on.

c. The raw fruits, vegetables are then sorted on a conveyor belt and the defective pieces removed.

d. Washing machines are then used to wash the raw produce where it is soaked, spray washed and then rinsed in chlorinated water.

e. These are then stored in perforated bins for drying or may be blow dried on conveyors.

f. If peeling is required, a mechanical peeler is used befitting the product. E.g. an abrasive peeler is used for carrots, a brush peeler for ginger etc.

g. Various types of cutting machinery is needed to cut the different vegetables and fruits because of the variety of size and shape. Some of these are product specific like mango cutter, lime cutter or chilly cutter. There are also multipurpose cutting machines that are more versatile.

h. A pulverizer is used to grind the spices.

i. The pickles are mixed in a slow speed mixer.

j. The pickles are then left in large drums to mature.

k. The filling of pickle in commercial containers is carried out by different kinds of fillers such as the vacuum filler, piston filler or auger filler, jar fillers or form, fill seal machines for sachet packing.

l. The oil topping is usually done with a pippeting machine.

m. Automatic labeling, bar coding, batch coding, strapping machines are used to make the product ready for the market.

Pickle making is an ancient skill that is now honed to perfection using modern technology. Manufacturers armed with closely guarded grandmothers recipes use scientific systems and processes to produce standardized pickles sold all over the world, relished by all.

Packaging

The packaging for pickle is also special since only food grade plastic materials having good barrier properties can be used. Since pickles are used by almost all cross sections of society as well as all establishments, institutions dealing with food, there are a wide variety of packs that are used ranging from 20 kg plastic drums to small single time use portion packs of 15 g made of thermo formed plastic material used by the traveler. The intermediate 5 kg, 2kg and 1 kg packs are usually for institutional sale and the 400 g bottle for the busy lady of the house who has no more the time for going through the elaborate procedure of pickle making and wants to taste the wide variety now available in the market.

Quality Control

Pickle manufacturing in all large factories is subjected to quality checks and laboratory analysis like any other food product. Quality standards are set keeping in mind all the legal requirements and have to be strictly adhered to. Salt, acidity, pH need to be analyzed for each batch by standard analytical methods. Physical tests like colour, flavour, texture are also very important. ■

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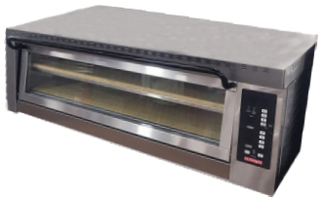

Stone Hearth Ovens

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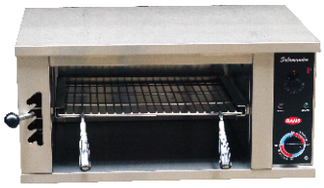

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Millennials and Wines

The Changing Palates and Preferences, Trends seen among Them

By Vaniitha Jaiin

India was never a wine drinking destination. It was during the 1980s when the wine industry and wine drinkers were seen gradually evolving here. The consumption of wine in India is still at a nascent stage. However, several data from the past have strongly indicated the potential it holds.

According to the report titled 'India Wine Market Overview (2018-2023)', the Indian Wine market saw an excellent growth with a CAGR of around 25% from the year 2011-12 to 2016-17', which clearly signifies how this premium beverage is gradually becoming a part of the Indian lifestyle.

Gone are the days when wine was considered the choice of drink of the elderly. We are familiar with the fact that cocktails, spirits and beers especially the recently introduced craft beers are the go-to beverage for many young people. However, over the years, millennials have gradually developed a palate for wines and contribute to a major share for the sales now.

Preferences

Wines have so much to offer. Different styles and fermentation methods, range of varietals, flavours, origin, use of sustainably grown rare grapes, handcrafted small batches of wine, are all criteria that millennials look for, in their bottle of wine.

The Gen Y world is all about trying new varieties, experimenting with flavours, preferring eco-friendly methods, opting for smart drinking, organic and handmade products and wines is just the beverage that ticks all these boxes.

Palates

It is seen that millennials today are curious to know about the art & science behind the wine they drink. As much as they like to explore the new world wine regions, they appreciate the old world wines. Hence, wines from the countries like the USA, Australia, Chile, including India are all made in fresh and youthful styles to cater to a market who loves to try out things differently.

Women still make up for the larger share of the wine buying decision maker when it comes to shopping. However, we are also seeing the men moving towards this trend. They are making the efforts to learn everything they need to know about wines to be able to shop with the know-how. Consumers today are opening up to seeking more information and that seems promising.

Talking about the choice of taste, Indians love Red wines but the weather here is actually equipped for appreciating Rosé. Since the revolution of wine is picking up well in India, I hope to see the rising popularity of Rosé amongst the millennials.

Trends

With Gen Y joining the group of wine connoisseurs, we are seeing various changes happening in the space. The following trends seem to have been changing the landscape of the market:

RTD: Young people like to keep things flexible. They mostly prefer Ready-to-

Drink options, carrying their drinks with ease rather than drinking cautiously with glassware. With this, we have seen the industry revolutionizing and coming with easy ways to carry and drink like Canned wines and even wines coming in tetra packs. The trend is likely to pick up in the coming years.

Labels: The millennials today like to be informed drinkers. From its place of origin, terrain, type of grapes used to the ideal storage temperature and what it is best paired with, they are curious to get familiar with what they are going to taste. Hence, they expect the labels to serve them as much information as possible. Keeping this in mind, the wine making companies have slowly deviated from the old wine world processes and working on their labels to meet the needs of the new generation.

Understand the Beverage: The millennials have an inquisitive approach to things. They have a quest to understand the beverage they are drinking, the various varietals they can try, exploring wines to pair with different cuisines especially here in India where we have countless options of food and flavours to choose from.

Moving on from the notion of 'having wines just for fun' to appreciating the story behind its origin and making, understanding the art of creating flavours and pairing, the youth today are well informed, responsible drinkers. The current generation understands wines, know the nuances of this beverage and believe people should not be hesitant to try different wines to figure out what suits them, the food they eat so they can enjoy it in their own way without getting caught in archaic rules of drinking wine.

People in India are still getting familiar with the taste of wines. Setting up new trends in the market, I believe millennials have the potential to take this market to the next level.

The author is Wine & Spirits Specialist and the Founder of The Perfect Pour

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The Cuisine of Old Delhi

Old Delhi, previously known as Shahjahanabad, a world in itself, as visualized by the greatest builder of the Mughal empire Emperor Shahjahan, is thriving place that has acquired much of what has percolated down the centuries from its origin.

From the emperors and the commoners of medieval times, to the urban elite to the slum poor of Delhi, there is one thing that unites them-'Food'. The variety found out here is, mind – boggling. The food of old Delhi can be basically divided into two; the food of the Hindus and the food of the Muslims.

The food of the Hindus has been influenced by, one the traditional food of the old Hindu families of the area the Bania's (or Kayastha's) and the second influence is that of the Punjabis after partition. Another influence is that of the Jain food. The food of the traditional Hindu families is rarely available outside the four walls of the Hindu homes. This food is basically vegetarian, but nowadays, in most cases, that is not so.

Recently Chandni Chowk has been given a facelift. Now one just cannot drive through this area. This has been done to revive the old glory of the area and inviting old lovers who stopped visiting due to heavy traffic and highly polluted environment.

Punjabi Sways

The Punjabi influence can be seen mainly in the area of Chandni Chowk where the Punjabis have a Gurudwara by the name Sheesh Ganj Gurudwara. Not only this area alone, because of its popularity this cuisine has now spread throughout Old Delhi. And why only Punjabi food; from early in the morning to late in the evening universally popular dishes like Masala Dosa, Uttapams and Chowmein, which were never a part of Old Delhi cuisine, are now readily available in every nook and corner, especially in the areas of Chandni Chowk and Fatehpuri (near Old Delhi railway station).

The Punjabis brought with them, layered parathas, griddled breads with stuffings from grated radish to pomegranate seeds; sarson da saag which is to be eaten with makki di roti and washed down with enormous glasses of buttermilk; black eyed beans (lobia) and red kidney beans (*rajmah*) and the *dhaba* which serves cheap and delicious food and the universal favorite – *Chana bhatura*.

Glimpses of Bania's Food

The Jain and Kayastha's influence can be seen in the area behind Chandni Chowk 'the very famous parathe wali gali. The speciality of Jain's food is that no onion or garlic is used. The food of the *parathe wali gali* deserves special mention. This *gali* had twenty-four shops during its very famous days. Most of these shops were set up in the late 1880's. But only three remain today. Even these three, in spite of doing good business, some say will not last also. The food remains the same that was served a century ago. There are several varieties of *parathas*, which include, *Paneer ka paratha*, *dal ka paratha*, *mooli ka paratha*, *aloo ka paratha*, *papad ka paratha* and mixed vegetable *paratha*. These *parathas* are fried in *asli desi ghee*. These *parathas* are accompanied with two vegetable dishes, *sitaphal ki subzi* and *kaddu ki subzi*, a carrot radish pickle and a sweet and sour banana tamarind *chutney.*

Custom of Appetizers

Old Delhi food cannot be complete without appetizers. One can see the *konchas wallas*/vendors posted themselves in busy centres of Old Delhi with a portable charcoal stove topped with cast –iron griddle, selling aloo *tikki*, *gol guppas*, *papdi chaat* and various other chaats like *dahi bhalla*, *dahi gujiya*, *dahi batata vada* or *dahi gulgule.*

Drink appetizers like *jaljeera*, *thandai, kanj*i, and *aam pana* are very popular. Various *shorbas* like shorba-e-anar, *dahi shorba* and *yakhni shorba* have a large clientele. Old Delhi has a rich tradition of selling *araks*, which have a therapeutic value.

The Muslim influence can be seen mainly in the dominant areas of the Muslims. This food has been influenced by two cuisines, initially by the Mughal cuisine and Kashmiri cuisine. The royal chefs of Mughals were all trained in central Asia, Persia and Afghanistan. Many of the Mughal dishes like *kormas* and *biryanis, pilafs* from Persia, *samosas* from central Asia are very popular today. The *rogan josh* and the *rizala*, which come from the area of Kashmir, are now an integral part of Old Delhi cuisine.

Tasteful Annals

The exquisite nature and the richness of this cuisine, has it's roots in the medieval times, when the daily meal of the kings

and the emperors used to be a grand affair. Hence the chefs were required to excel in their respective fields. There is a very famous restaurant near Jama Masjid, by the name Karim's. Karim was the chef for the last Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar. Karim is the one who is supposed to have started this restaurant and the tradition is still alive today.

Another influence is the bringing of the tandoor by the Hindu refugees from Pakistan, after partition. This was the main reason for popularizing the tandoori dishes, which was consumed.

Alluring Feast

Breakfast items are varied which are available during morning hours only. *Daulat ki chaat*, which is only prepared during early hours and served in *kasoras* and prepared from milk that is cooked in large *kadais*. The frothy textured milk is served as *daulat ki chaat*. Who can resist hot *bedhvis* with *hing wale aloo* popular in *dariba*. The famous large sized sweet *jalebis* at *dariba* are extremely filling. Small sized *puris* called *nagodis* are famous and served with *hulwa* filling. Nahari at Ballimaran, which is very popular with non-vegetarians where *trottiers* are cooked overnight and it is eaten with *sheermal*.

No meal is complete without rich desi ghee sweets like *sohan hulwa* or *habshi hulwa* from Chandni Chowk. *Kulfi falooda* from Fatehpuri or Bengali sweets.

Chuskis made from ice as similar to sorbets. These are grated ice given different shapes and then sweetened with concentrated sherbets of different essence and colours, which are poured on it.

Most of the dishes have survived despite food taste changing. However there is a renewed interest to revive the Old Delhi food specially served on the streets and cater in a five star hotel.

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'A Bold Creator and a Curious Learner'

Suvaranjan Banerjee, Executive Chef, Grand Mercure Bengaluru Gopalan Mall

Suvaranjan Banerjee is the Executive Chef of Grand Mercure Bengaluru at Gopalan Mall, the newest address in Bangalore by Accor. In his current role, he leads the operations of the 212 key hotels with multiple banqueting options. A seasoned hotelier with more than 18 years of experience, Chef Banerjee began his culinary journey in 2003 after graduating from the Institute of Hotel Management (IHM) in Kolkata. He started his career with Park hotels as a management trainee in the Park Bengaluru. He later moved on to The IHCL as a Senior Sous Chef in Taj Bengaluru. Chef Suvaranjan has spearheaded culinary operations for many premium hotels in the city including Zuri, Alila, Crowne Plaza and The Lalit. He joined Accor in 2019, as the Executive Chef of Grand Mercure Bengaluru at Gopalan Mall.

In an exclusive interview with **Sharmila Chand**, he talks about his work philosophy, his future plans and more...

How do you define yourself?

What defines me as a person is being a father. Being a father brings me great joy but it goes beyond that. Being a father is about nurturing, just as I do for my team of young culinarians. It is about putting your heart and soul into what you do, just as I do every moment.

What is your philosophy of cooking?

The Key to being a good chef is to be consistently passionate. You need to put your heart into every dish that you make, every day. I also believe in keeping this simple and letting the ingredients speak for themselves. I try to work with fresh, consciously sourced ingredients as much as possible.

What is your area of expertise?

Even though as a preparation to my leadership role I have worked in many areas of production, my area of expertise is Italian and Mediterranean cuisines. Both regions celebrate the goodness of fresh ingredients, which has drawn me towards them.

Had you not been doing this then what?

If not a chef I would have definitely pursued medical sciences. Becoming a doctor and healing people was something that I had thought about a lot us a kid. As I grew up and found my calling in the culinary arts, I knew there was no turning back.

What is your source of inspiration?

My biggest source of inspiration is my mother, who has been a wonderful cook herself, it is her passion that got me attached to cooking. I still remember the first lesson she gave me in cooking. She used to always tell that cooking is not about following a recipe, it's about doing it with love. Over the years I have many great mentors starting with my first boss Chef Abhijit Saha and Chef Ramasamy Selvaraju whose lessons have made me strong administratively. My General Manager Sachin Maheshwary, has been a great mentor to me during the opening of the hotel. With his own career being rooted from an F&B background, he always has great insights to guide me through the operations.

What has been the most rewarding moment in your career?

During the pandemic, we have had the opportunity to serve many people in need. We have prepared and served balanced meals to health care, construction site laborers, slum dwellers and frontline warriors. Amidst the second wave, the team and I were able to launch an initiative to provide healthy balanced meals to quarantined individuals at a subsidized price.

How has the journey been so far?

Spearheading the culinary team of Grand Mercure Bengaluru at Gopalan Mall, was definitely the most memorable period of my career so far. Being actively involved in setting up the culinary culture makes you more bonded with the team. My journey overall has been very rewarding, I have learned from great culinary mentors and have nurtured many budding chefs. Every step along the way there has been wonderful learning that has helped me evolve into the person that I am today

What skills are necessary to be a good chef?

Being a chef is a job of passion. It is the dedication and love that we put on to plates that truly distinguishes our dishes. No matter how difficult things may get you need to be able to put your heart into every dish you make. One also needs an open mind to learn and curiosity to question everything and learn from it.

How do you de-stress yourself?

I love spending time nurturing the plants in the hotel's kitchen garden. The backyard Project, an initiative that we set up in line with the Sustainability programme of the hotels, has been ever since its inception an ideal space for a quick break for me.

Your Favourite Ingredient?

Salt. I feel that salt is one of the most underappreciated ingredients ever. It plays a vital role in elevating the flavours and

aroma of the dish, making it more appealing. Salt can be used as cooking techniques in the form salt slabs used for grilling and salt bakes. There also different kinds of salt that we can work with to create unique textures and flavours.

Fav Cuisine?

Over the years my affinity to simple home cooked meals have only increased. The joy that a simple fish curry and steamed rice could bring to you is simply overwhelming. While dining out I like trying out Asian cuisines, mostly oriental.

Fav Spice?

The spice mix, 'Paanch Phoron' is something that I hold very close to my heart. Growing up in a Bengali household, this blend of Fenugreek seed, nigella seed, cumin seed, black mustard seed and fennel seed has been a quintessential element to most of the dishes I grew up. When I started cooking the mix was again in the forefront featuring in most of creations.

Fav Equipment?

A sharp pocket knife has always been my companion in the kitchen and quite easily my favourite tool too. I always carry it around with and it comes quite handy if I need to get some urgent work done.

Fav Restaurant / Food Joint?

When I first came to Bangalore a friend of mine took me to Shivaji military hotel for a quintessential Bangalore experience. From then to now I must have visited the place a hundred times from then to now and I how their consistency of flavours over the period amazes me. The very aroma that greets you right at the doorstep can bring back many dear memories. It is crowded on most days, so much so that you might have to wait a while for a table, the service is simple unadorned, but the flavours that comes to you makes up for all of it. Places like Shivaji military hotel goes on to prove that when you have great food nothing else really matters.

Your Fav Diner ?

The kind of guest I would like to feed would the curious and unbiased one. Most diners have preset biases towards food, how certain dishes are supposed to look like or taste like. These biases in most scenarios affect the perception of the dish. An unbiased will keep such biases and interpret the dish with an open mind.

You favourite Culinary Destination?

I am more of "Culinary Journey" person. Avid lovers of road trips, my family and I go on long drives as many times as we can. A key highlight of these journeys is exploring the highway cuisine and finding great gems in the most unexpected places. The highways of Tamil Nadu is an all time favourite with many wonderful roadside dhaba-style stopovers.

The Best Compliment you have received?

There is nothing seeing the smile on the guests' face after they take the first bite. For me there is no complement that can come close to seeing that content expression.

What is Your philosophy of work?

My philosophy is simple - work hard and work passionately. No matter how difficult the situation never put up a plate in haste. Never compromise on your trade.

Lessons learnt in the kitchen?

Every day in the kitchen is a new learning. My biggest learning was that no matter how high you have climbed there would still be a lot for the new day to teach you. You need to be open to all sources of knowledge and when you are, you learn from your team, your mentors, you learn from your guests and even from your ingredients. Another key lesson in kitchen has been the importance of focus, with every dish you only get one chance and you have to get it right.

10 years from now?

I see myself holding a strong position in the F&B space. The dream is to also launch a philanthropic initiative to nurture underprivileged talents in the world of culinary.

What are your future plans?

The plan for the near future is to grow and evolve while nurturing my team.

What is the best career advice you would like to give to youngsters aspiring to be chefs?

My biggest advice will be to be curious. Question everything you see. Understand spices interact with each other, understand how flavours are developed in different techniques of cooking. Ask yourselves a thousand questions and research until you get the answers. These pearls of wisdom can help you understand any dish at a much deeper level and aid you greatly in innovation.

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Methodical and Motivating Leader

Atul Sunder, General Manager, Suzy Q by 1522, Bengaluru

Armed with a degree in Hotel Management from Mumbai, Atul Sunder holds wide experience in working with well known F&B brands like Olive group, 1Q1 Kitchen & Bar, and more. This journey has led to him being the General Manager of Suzy Q by 1522. He strives to ensure authenticity and quality in every dish that he recreates. He also knows his wines, is an avid mixologist and is constantly on the lookout for different ingredients and infusions, experimenting with them to create exceptional cocktails. He closely manages all aspects of the team and operations to ensure smooth and efficient functionality. He believes that being systematic and planning in detail in advance is the way to achieve long lasting success. A cricket enthusiast, he loves to travel in his free time.

In an exclusive interview with **Sharmila Chand**, he talks about the USP of his brand and more …

What you enjoy the most being heading the Food & Beverage team?

I personally enjoy interaction with different interesting people I get to meet on a daily basis. It's a very hands-on role that requires one to be prepared for anything, which keeps you on your feet constantly.

What kind of challenges you face in your job?

Well challenges are only opportunities to learn and improve. For example-

- Hiring the right manpower, Efficient Training and Retention of employees.
- Accuracy in Financial & Inventory Management.
- Business Marketing and Customer Engagement.
- Awareness of F&B Trends and to build unique and exciting brands.
- Consistent and healthy relationship with various vendors.

If you could change one thing about your job, what would it be?

Personally, I'm more of an operation and production oriented person rather than handling paperwork and extensive technological processes. So if I could reduce anything significantly, it would be this.

What kind of pressures have you encountered at work?

I believe in remaining calm throughout any situation, hence I wouldn't say that there are any major pressures that I encounter.

What tips or insights you provide to strengthen your team?

My belief is that as a manager, one must hear everyone out and take all suggestions. This in turn makes them feel more responsible for their own role and motivates them because they know their opinions are taken seriously. This also makes each segment of the team function more effectively, individually and as a group.

Finally, how is your experience at the present job?

It has been an amazing journey. There are always ups and downs, but the overall experience has been a positive one. My directors Chethan Hegde and Anirudh Kheny are so invested in the brands themselves, along with their massive support, it is an amazing work environment. What excites me most is the scale of operations and functionality that we maintain. There is also so much more lined up ahead and that gives me a lot of inspiration to keep growing and building more fun and quirky brands across the country.

What is the USP of your brand?

Suzy Q is a brand with a whole lot of personality and sass. Suzy Q has an extensive menu that offers a unique and relaxed way to enjoy comfort food. A playful and enjoyable environment in which the ambience and the food, combined with a stellar cocktail program, produce an exceptional experience with unique segments such as Indian Cocktails. Even the cutlery, crockery, bill folders and tissue boxes are distinctively custom made and crafted to suit the brand. All of the above points sets it apart from the usual and makes it unlike any other.

What is your working philosophy?

To relentlessly grow in experience in a disciplined way and inspire others to do the same. Also to be organised and well planned in detail to foresee future issues and constraints.

What is your take on how best to cope with challenges of the present pandemic times?

Post pandemic, now that people are stepping out again, we need to be at the top of our game and ensure that all safety measures are in place. It is critical that we make our guests feel comfortable and ensure that they have a good experience. They should also feel that they are getting their value for money with regard to their food, drinks and overall experience.

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