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Food & Beverage

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Business Review

Business magazine for food service & food retail professionals

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Feature

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As Covid is visibly slowing down from past few weeks, the sentiments are now more positive. Restaurants and food service outlets have started opening and are getting good response from the guests who are now coming in decent numbers to dine out. The industry since last one year has undergone major changes. New trends and concepts have emerged that have changed the complete dynamics of the business. The industry is evolving for a better future creating new innovative ways to reach out to their esteemed customers.

Healthy, organic, local and hygienic are the buzz words at institutions, to help garner more guests. Restaurant in order to revive are trying to find economical ways to fasten the revenue growth with sustainable profits. The industry which is still in a state of flux is trying to find its lost ground after being through one of the worst pandemic the world has ever seen.

There is major shift from dine-in experiences to home delivery options. The food delivery companies, the aggregators and dark kitchens, have seen double digit growth in recent past. This has created a new vertical for restaurant business to identify unknown consumers. Even hotels and high end restaurants are offering a la-carte menu to the guests, for home delivery.

Food service establishments are doing their best to retain their loyal customers and adding new ones. Restaurants are ensuring stringent food safety norms to maintain high standards of hygiene to win over customer's confidence. Chefs are developing food menus offering healthy options. There is increase in demand for traditional Indian foods, as healthy choice.

Food & Beverage

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'Thai Pavilion' Awarded Certificate of Authenticity

'Thai Pavilion' is the country's first and unarguably best loved Thai restaurant brand. Thai Pavilion at President, Mumbai - IHCL SeleQtions and Taj City Centre, Gurugram has been recognized by the Thai Consulate for their authentic Thai food. The Thai



SELECT certification reinstates the brand's commitment to offer original Thai cuisine to its patrons.

A culinary landmark for gourmands, Thai Pavilion in Mumbai is adored across generations with its well-balanced, sophisticated flavours and an extensive menu, which has been on the Indian fine dining scene since the 1990's. With outposts at Taj City Centre, Gurugram and Vivanta Begumpet, Hyderabad, Thai Pavilion continues to be on must-do lists for connoisseurs.

Thai SELECT is a mark of certification awarded by the Ministry of Commerce, the Royal Thai Government to guarantee the authentic taste of Thai food products and Thai restaurants in Thailand and overseas. Through a meticulously defined and transparent assessment criteria, the Thai SELECT certification by the Department of International Trade Promotion certifies not only the food but also the hospitality and the ambience of the restaurant.

Nature's Basket Launches Plant-based Meat Category

As reported, the Indian meat alternative market is estimated to reach USD 47.57 million in value terms by the end of 2026. The industry is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 7.46% between 2021 and 2026. Considering these stats and the continuously developing consumer demands

favouring sustainable and eco-friendly products, Nature's Basket, part of RP-Sanjiv Goenka group, India's foremost retail destination for fine foods from around the world, has launched an entirely separate category of



Plant-Based Meat products. This new category caters to the changing lifestyle and growing needs of new-age consumers. Under this specific category, the brand has partnered with Blue Tribe Foods, India's leading plant-based meats brand.

With the introduction of the plant-based category, the brand aims to walk hand-in-hand with the consumers. This category will house all the brands in the plant-based meat space, both Indian and International, including Blue Tribe and Beyond Meat, which was recently launched through the import route in India. Since its launch, Blue Tribe's plant-based Chicken Nuggets and Chicken Keema have already become a hit among non-vegetarian food lovers aspiring to commit to a greener lifestyle without compromising the taste, texture, or quality of conventional meat products. As a result, Nature's Basket will soon be launching more plant-based products under this category.

Speaking on this occasion, Devendra Chawla, CEO, Nature's Basket and Spencer's Retail, said, "We firmly believe in adapting and evolving with the changing consumer landscape, and with the introduction of the plant-based meat product category we are doing exactly that. In the last few years, conscious consumerism has gradually picked pace. More and more products, brands, and new-age startups have started offering varieties with sustainability and eco-friendly factors as the center-stage."

He added, "Through the plant-based meat category at Nature's Basket, we plan to assist the rapidly changing lifestyle of consumers. We've partnered with Blue Tribe's plant-based products to do this effectively, and it is already garnering impressive traction in Nature's Basket stores in Mumbai, Delhi, Pune, Bangalore, and Kolkata. We will be adding a few more varieties under this category soon."

Speaking about the latest development, the Co-founder of Blue Tribe, Sandeep Singh, said, "We are thrilled to partner with Nature's Basket who shares our vision to offer an adequate alternative to consumers looking for ecologically sound food items instead of over-meat consumption. It is a known fact that over consumption of animal-based products is a major contributor to the deteriorating environment conditions. We, at Blue Tribe, don't expect people to completely leave meat consumption or eat only vegetables, but in fact choose equally tasty, nutritious and greener plant-based meat products like our Plant Based Chicken Nuggets and Plant Based Chicken Keema."

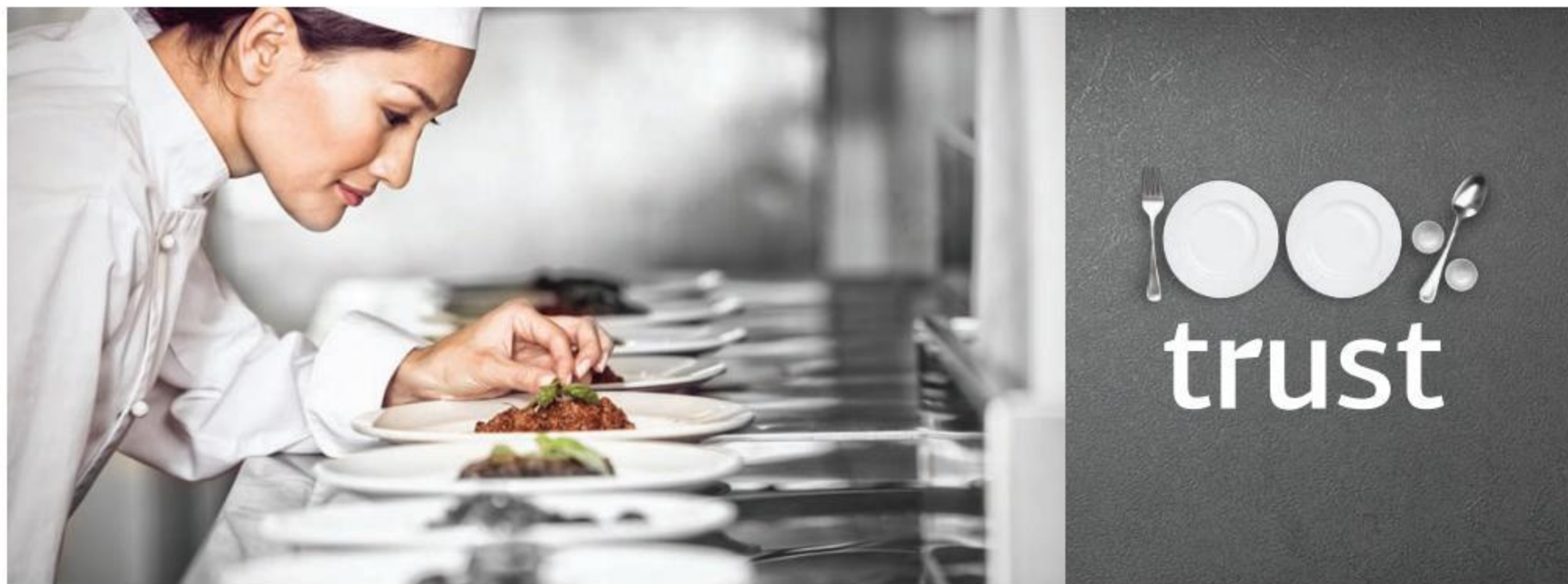


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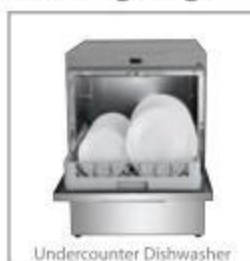
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APPOINTMENTS

Chef Karthik



Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel, has appointed Karthik as the new Executive Sous Chef. In his new position, Chef Karthik will direct daily culinary

operations at the hotel's signature restaurant LUSH and the quintessential lounge, the R Bar while overseeing food and beverage offerings for the in-room dining, corporate events, wedding functions and special occasions.

Having more than 18 years of rich experience in the hospitality industry across the globe, after completion of his culinary school, he further honed his skills by working at Taj Group of Hotels, India; Lotus Hotel, Dubai; Radisson Blu Carlson Group, Westin Le Meridien. Prior to joining Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel, he worked as a Gastronomic Chef at JW Marriott, Chandigarh.

Rafi Ansari



Courtyard by Marriott Bengaluru Hebbal, has appointed Rafi Ansari as the Food and Beverage Manager. Rafi has a formidable experience of over

14 years in the hospitality industry, starting his career in 2006 with JW Juhu as an F&B associate and there was no looking back after that. Prior to joining Courtyard by Marriott Bengaluru Hebbal, he performed his duties at Fairfield by Marriott, Lucknow as the Food and Beverage Manager.

As the Food & Beverage Manager at Courtyard by Marriott Bengaluru Hebbal, he will be responsible for heading and managing the Food and Beverage operations. And at the same time, maintaining high standards of guest satisfaction. He will closely work with the sales and marketing team to enhance brand visibility for the hotel's food and beverage department and drive revenue.

Svami Rolls Out Most Versatile Beverages

Svami, a trailblazing brand in the non-alcoholic beverage segment, has announced the launch of its most anticipated and most versatile beverages, Svami 2 Cal Cola, India's homegrown premium cola and Svami Salted Lemonade. Recognized for commendable innovations in the beverage industry since its inception, the brand has triumphantly established a name and has built credibility for itself in the industry. With the launch of two classic beverages and noteworthy category expansions, the brand has embarked on a journey to disrupt the Indian beverage market and become India's most diverse range of non-alcoholic beverages.



With the introduction of Svami 2 Cal Cola and Svami Salted Lemonade, the most versatile beverages, the brand is reinventing the classics by giving it a healthy and natural twist. Unlike many other variants of the same flavours available in the market, the 2 Cal Cola possesses zero sugar, while the Svami Salted Lemonade is made with natural lemons and contains low sugar, both are proudly made in India.

The Svami 2 Cal Cola is India's homegrown premium cola product, and the brand aims to cater to the conscious consumer and be in line with the changing consumer behaviour. Svami has surpassed all apprehensions and innovated a cola that is sugar-free and holds only 2 calories. Svami 2 Cal Cola tastes refreshingly splendid when consumed directly but also when mixed with alcohol, especially with dark spirits making it a very versatile beverage.. It is the perfect mixing ingredient to master drinks such as Cuba Libres, JDs, LIITs etc. A keto-friendly drink with zero synthetic/artificial flavours, it is the best option for guilt-free consumption. The Svami 2 Cal Cola is truly the new classic cola that is remarkably light yet tremendously high on taste.

Svami has reinvented another one of India's all-time favourite drinks, the sweet and salted fresh lime, with the launch of Svami Salted Lemonade, the most versatile mixer introduced ever! Give your drinks a nimbu twist and add some jazz to your regular Tequila, Gin, Vodka, Rum, Whiskey, Beer, or be brunch ready with Lemonade mimosas and cold brew coffee lemonade. Certainly the first of its kind, the Svami Salted Lemonade has a balanced sweet and sour taste with a hint of salt that appeals to the contemporary palate. The versatile Svami Salted lemonade isn't just the perfect go-to mixer but also a delightful drink in itself.

FHRAI-IHM gets Affiliated with NCHMCT, Noida

The FHRAI-Institute of Hospitality Management (FHRAI-IHM) has affiliated with the National Council of Hotel Management & Catering Technology (NCHMCT), Noida, an organisation of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.

NCHMCT, Noida presently has over seventy-five affiliated Central, State and private Hotel Management institutes in the country. FHRAI-IHM becomes the first private institution that is run by India's apex Hospitality Association – Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) to be affiliated with the NCHMCT. FHRAI-IHM will offer a 3-year B.Sc. in Hospitality and Hotel Administration, 18-month Diploma in Food Production, 18-month Diploma in Bakery and Confectionary and 18-month Diploma in Food & Beverages Service.

"India's only private Hospitality Institute that's run by the country's apex Hospitality Association is now also affiliated with NCHMCT, Noida an organisation of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. This development reinforces our commitment to offer students the best in Hospitality Management education," says Arun Kumar Singh, Director, FHRAI-IHM.



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FMCG Companies Took to Apps

The eruption of Covid-19 has left millions and millions of businesses scurrying for survival. Although somewhat less affected than some categories, the FMCG companies too did face headwinds for some time. And to counter these headwinds, technology has been the single most important intervention that they have employed during these trying times. And of the technologies, applications enabling direct route to consumer as well as other businesses in the value chain have been most prominent.

While placing their faith in these applications, FMCG companies have also recast their value chains weeding out unnecessary elements at various levels allowing themselves greater leverage vis-à-vis their vendor partners and establishing a more direct connect with their end-consumers. And among FMCG firms, food companies or those with prominent food product portfolios have been particularly noteworthy for taking the app route. A step ahead of general trade, modern trade or even traditional e-commerce channels, these apps have been the popular yet necessary go-to modes for these companies.

The Big B2C Advantage

How does B2C prove to be advantageous for FMCG companies? Until now, customer-relationship building and acquiring customer insights were largely the preserve of the retailer community. However, what B2C apps do is that they facilitate a direct and one-on-one company to consumer relationship with the former no more having to make efforts to establish bonding with a faceless consumer. On top of allowing deeper end-consumer insights for companies and brands, they can catalyze a more relevant and individualized product and service propositions by the brand to the consumer thus leading to a more enriching customer experience which in turn would drive increased customer acquisition, conversion and retention for the brand. And needless to say, the power balance between the brand and the retailer is further shifted in favour of the brand and away from the retailer.

B2B Applications not too far away

However, this taking to applications has not been limited to B2C channels. FMCG companies have also incorporated Apps in their business processes directly targeting retailers and kirana stores who offload their products and serve as last mile seller/supplier



By Manish Aggarwal

to end-consumers. Identifying and prioritizing retailers who delivered top volume businesses, the companies made sure that the retailers continued to place orders for their products, and even more efficiently using these applications than they did before.

In fact, during Covid, the earlier forecasts projecting contribution of around 10% digital channels in the total FMCG market in the next ten years in the country has been advanced to next three to four years now. And at the same time, cutting out or minimizing the role of distributors especially in terms of selection of retail outlets, the brands have reclaimed their power vis-à-vis the latter while effecting greater streamlining and consolidation of their distribution systems.

Proliferation of New Products

While pivoting to digital technologies, B2C and B2B apps, the FMCG companies have also realigned their product portfolios in a major way capitalizing on the shifting consumer preferences and behavior in the times of the pandemic. And as part of this realignment, there has been a proliferation of new and innovative products which have been introduced to the market in the last few months.

With health and hygiene being a predominant consumer focus, as many as 3,000 products in the health and hygiene category have been estimated to be launched in the September quarter alone last year. Earlier, in the April-September quarter, as many as 9,700 new products were launched by FMCG companies. Mindful of and in response to the country-wide lockdowns in place and customers being confined to their homes, 125 products were introduced in home cooking segment alone during March-August 2020 in categories including ketchups, jams, cheese and milk powders.

Exploring Alternative Channels of

Distribution

Even as D2C Apps gain traction, the FMCG companies are also exploring tie-ups with new-age delivery startups, food-tech service players, food aggregators, hyper local apps and courier firms to have their products delivered to the doorsteps of the end-consumer. In fact, some FMCG companies are also making product-specific tie ups with delivery platforms and micro delivery platforms.

Digitization not Limited to Distribution: Influencer Marketing gets a Boost

Rising uptake in Apps and the broader digitization has not only been confined to retail and distribution, but also advertising and marketing. And riding on the increasingly entrenched position of social media and its consumption, influencer marketing has become a big part of FMCG's digital marketing strategy in recent one year.

According to a report, globally, nearly a fifth (19%) of FMCG companies has raised their influencer spending significantly as compared to pre-covid-19 levels. And within India, during the festive season campaign alone, influencer marketing saw a 20% jump in campaigns. A digital marketing agency has estimated India's influencer market at \$75-150 million a year, as compared to the global market of \$1.75 billion, which is only set to get bigger in the coming months and years.

Other Technologies that could Aid the B2C Momentum

At the same time, apart from Apps, there are several related B2C technologies and platforms that could add teeth to the ongoing B2C drive. They could range from customer data platforms to data management platforms to marketing automation tools to business intelligence and data visualization tools to social listening tools, among others.

So, in coming future, there is no doubt that the B2C apps as part of an FMCG company's digitization programme will acquire a more permanent dimension. Notwithstanding a resurgence of Covid in certain states, now with vaccination underway and revival of consumer sentiment in urban India, FMCG businesses including food companies are set to see greater activity and growth.

The author is Director at Bikano, Bikanervala Foods Pvt. Ltd., a prominent figure in the Indian FMCG industry.

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Lavazza Globally Launches La Reserva De ¡Tierra! India



Lavazza, the Italian brand that is among the world's leading coffee roasters, has announced the launch of La Reserva de ¡Tierra! India, a unique premium blend of refined coffees fully sourced from Karnataka and crafted in India, for professional use in cafes, fine-dine restaurants and star hotels.

This variant is part of Lavazza's brand-new La Reserva de ¡Tierra! range - a collection of the finest and sustainable coffee blends carefully designed and crafted to offer professional baristas the unique taste experience of a coffee origin land while highlighting the Group's commitment to creating a sustainable coffee experience.

La Reserva de ¡Tierra! India is an espresso premium blend from the Malabar Coast of Karnataka and Kerala prepared with a slow, delicate and gentle roasting process containing the Indian specialty Monsooned Malabar coffee blend. Known for its soft and mellow characteristics with notes of cocoa, spices, liquorice and a winy aftertaste, the blend comes in a completely recyclable packaging and is 100% Rainforest Alliance certified. With a balanced body note, aroma and



taste, La Reserva de ¡Tierra! India will bring the best coffee experience there is in the HoReCa & food-service industries, narrating the story of sustainability with every cup.

Commenting on the launch of La Reserva de ¡Tierra! India, Jai Ganesh Ramnath, Managing Director, Lavazza India said, "La Reserva de ¡Tierra! reiterates Lavazza's commitment to our planet, our farmers and our customers. There is a story of sustainability behind every cup from this collection; ¡Tierra! Brasile and Colombia, two recently launched blends from this collection have been acclaimed globally for their unique blends. We take immense pride in launching La Reserva de ¡Tierra! India, a blend that has been 100% grown and procured in Karnataka and roasted in our Indian factory that is located in Sri City, Andhra Pradesh. We have had the opportunity to work in close quarters with farmers from Karnataka and to

be exporting ¡Tierra! India to the rest of the world is a true testament to this unique blend that truly belongs to the soil of India."

Lavazza ¡Tierra! is a social responsibility project that was started by Lavazza Foundation in 2002, aimed at improving living and environmental conditions of coffee-producing communities around

Monsooned Malabar

Centuries ago, coffee beans were being shipped to Europe and a wonderful accident occurred. The monsoon winds along the journey caused the coffee beans to swell, change colour and acquire an intensely mellow taste with no hint of acidity, making the coffee much fuller and softer; this won the hearts of coffee connoisseurs. Famously named after the monsoon winds of the Malabar Coast, Monsooned Malabar today is produced commercially where the coffee beans are stored in special warehouses where moist monsoon winds circulate. This process yellows the beans and reduces the acidity, imparting heavy syrupy flatness reminiscent of aged coffee.

the world while providing them with the brand's technical know-how to help their businesses grow.

La Reserva de ¡Tierra! India is available in 1 kilogram packs. All Tierra ranges, due to its ethics & sustainability features, reveals, reminds and refers to the strong commitment to CSR of Lavazza Group which is symbolized by Blend for Better, Groups' commitment to sustainability.

Salud Beverages Introduces G&T 2.0 Lavender

Salud Beverages has introduced G&T 2.0 Lavender which is infused with the lightly aromatic and gently floral vibes.

Subtle French Lavender is crafted with Indian Tonic and English Juniper to provide a bright, lively and refreshing drink that is quite distinctive and almost ethereal. A classy yet modern take on a drink that feels like an aromatherapy in a bottle. G&T 2.0 is India's first pour-and-go gin and tonic.



Bagrry's Launches Granola Range

Bagrry's, a pioneering brand in breakfast cereals and health foods that brought Oats, Muesli and Bran to India has launched the Superfood Granola in two exciting flavors for breakfast. The variants are Belgian Dark Chocolate & Almonds Granola and Exotic Fruits with Cranberries & Almonds Granola.

The Belgian Dark Chocolate & Almonds is an enhanced version of the double chocolate granola. With this, one gets a wholesome dose of fibre-rich oats, Californian almonds and protein packed quinoa. The granola gets a delicious inclusion with Belgian dark chocolate, whole wheat, and crunchy rice flakes. This granola is made with 5 great grains along with 40% fibre oats and is 100% vegan & plant-based.



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All About Indian Food



Food, in India, differs from region to region. Indian cuisine is extremely diverse. It is based not only on the climate of the region but also religious preferences and history; meaning who invaded that part of the country. If one travels even a distance of about 10kms in India, one is apt to hear several different languages being spoken. Indian food too is very diverse. Till some time ago, however, foods from different parts of the country were never as popular as those from North or South India. But today food from Bengal, Goa, Rajasthan, Awadh and other regions, is being consumed with great relish. Today, the variety of food offered in India is enormous making Indian cuisine one of the most varied gastronomic fares around the globe. **Ashok Malkani** delves on different aspects connected with regional cuisines. Tracing the history of Indian cuisine, he tries to gauge the most popular regional cuisines.



According to a cuisine trade study, Indian food is the fourth most popular in the world. There seems to be a concept that Indian cuisine is an amalgamation of cuisines from several countries. However, Ashish Kumar, Executive Chef, Crowne Plaza New Delhi Rohini avers, "Indian Cuisine is an amalgamation of many cultures and every culture has different food habits and, in today's India, several cuisines from different regions form a part of the Indian cuisine. India, as a nation, has always given space for other cultures to grow and infuse their cultures with eating habits. As history tells us that Mughals got us Tandoor (Spit charcoal fire oven), Persian brought us Biryani, Portugal has introduced Vinegar and Chilly. I may add that Ayurveda taught us to use herbs, while Buddhist followers spread the vegetarianism food. Silk route has influenced Chinese Cuisine."

Thus one can rightly say that Indian cuisine is definitely not a combination of foods from different countries. In fact, Indians, after going through a plethora of rounds of global cuisine are coming back to their cherished Indian cuisine. But celebrating of Indian cuisine involves

participation of several regions. This is mainly due to the fact that every region in India has its own specialty. It can be said that while the country's myriad cuisines are beautifully unique and individual, they are still a part of a whole: The Indian Cuisine.

Till a few years back, the only favourites from among the regional cuisines were Amritsari Kulchas, or Mutton Rogan Josh, from the North and Masala Dosa from

the South. Today, though there are South Indian and North Indian restaurants, the food served in most of them comprises of dishes from all across the country. Restaurants and chefs are now offering delectable dishes from Bengal, Andhra, Kashmir, Kerala, Goa, Bihar, Rajasthan, Awadh, Bhopal, Nagaland and more.

Restaurants today are being designed in a manner that brings a touch of Indian regional elements. This is evidenced by





famous restaurants at five-star hotels as well as standalone cafés, thanks to diners making regional cuisine the talk of the town.

Diversity of Indian Cuisine

Srinivas Venkatesan, Executive Chef at ITC Windsor, Bengaluru succinctly puts Indian food as “an amalgamation of centuries of traditions, cultures, religion and history leading to a diverse collection of cuisines that are both regional and unique.”

He adds, “If one were to traverse through the land, one would notice that with every 100 km, there is a cultural shift. Our cuisine is also heavily dependent on the local crops grown in the region, which creates all the culinary differences.

“The reason for this, I believe is because we have learnt to make the best use of what is locally available, which is why each region has its own popular dishes. Being a tropical country, the vegetables, spices and seeds grown vary with each season, adding to an exhaustive array of snacks and delicacies prepared.

“While every region has its own unique way of preparation, the key differentiator is the roots of the region. For example, dishes like SoppuSararu and KeeraiKootu are similar but the main difference is the use of locally available greens.

“At ITC Windsor, the F&B outlet, Dakshin, is a celebration of the rich diversity of South Indian Cuisine, offering the rare pleasures of authentic coastal and regional specialties. The cuisine here is the result of

research and trials, across the five states of India, by a team of chefs and culinary experts.”

Ashish Kumar, Executive Chef, Crowne Plaza New Delhi Rohini, declares, “Indian food, today, is not just about butter Chicken Masala or World famous Chicken Tikka. Regional specialty plays a very important and significant role in Indian Cuisine.”

He continues, “India itself is so versatile in terms of landscape and habitation that it has countless number of regional Cuisines and different ways of making the same dish in each region. The difference in the recipes comes with the availability and usage of local ingredients.”

It can be rightly said that traditional cuisines have a unique taste, interesting histories and authentic flavours passed down generations.

Trending of Regional Cuisines

Over the last decade there has been a significant rise in regional food restaurants. People are, today, acknowledging and celebrating the myriad cuisines of the country and broadening the definition of Indian food. This could be attributed to the inventive chefs and the passionate longing of diners for the flavours of their homes. The chefs are looking back to their roots and concocting dishes from their regions – maybe with a twist – to quench the thirst of diners for a new experience in dining.

Ashish Kumar, speaking about the growing trend for regional cuisine declares,

Indian food Recipe Mutton Rogan josh

Ingredients

Lamb pieces	500 gms
Ghee	2 tbsp
Refined oil	1 tbsp
Dhania powder	1tbsp
Deep fried onions	1 cup
Salt	to taste
Ginger cut into thin strips	2 tbsp
Curd	100 gms
Tomato (paste)	200 gms
Kashmiri Chilli Powder	2 tbsp
Whole red chilli	50 gms
Black Cardamom	2 gms
Green Cardamom	3 gms
Fennel Seeds Powder	2 tbsp
Big cardamom	1 tbsp
Clove	2 tbsp
Ginger powder	1 tbsp
Green Coriander	5 gms
Ginger (paste)	10 gms
Garlic(paste)	20 gms
Bay leaf	2 nos.

Method

Firstly make a paste of Fried Onion and curd, keep aside

Secondly take pan keep tomatoes, 1 tbs oil, salt, 1tsp kashmiri mirch to it, cook it at least 15 minutes, cool it at room temperature, and make a fine paste, keep aside.

Heat the oil in another pan put keep whole spices (both cardamom, Clove, bay leaf) to it.

After crackled spices, add mutton pieces to it, cook for a while after at least 10 minutes of cooking add 1tsp saunf powder and 1tsp saunth powder, 1tsp dhania powder to it cook for a while, and then add 1 tsp Kashmiri chilli powder to it cook for 10 seconds.

Add onion and curd paste to it, cook gravy on very slow flame till the oil comes on top, after that add tomato paste to it cook it well on slow flame

Add Mutton stock in the pot, cover it with lid, leave it for cooking at least 40 minutes on very slow flame

Check mutton tender nous, add ginger jolliness, chop coriander

Serve hot



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"If we dive into facts, regional cuisine restaurant has rapidly evolved in last decade, the reason being our taste buds, which pulls all of us back to our regional cuisine. People are now keen to taste food having local flavours and regional tastes. Most of the diners are choosing regional food over other world-inspired trends and cuisines. Chefs are playing a very vital role in transforming the local regional dishes in very innovative ways which attracts the customers and makes them yearn for the new offerings."

He continued, "People have started valuing the taste of our humble dishes, like Palakpatteki Chaat, Vada Pao, Batti Chokha. Even Samosa and more. Starting from home kitchens to street food stalls, these regional dishes have found a place in the menus of popular fine-dining restaurants. In today's time, every region is trending in its own space."

Srinivas adds, "With urbanization, people have started exploring different cultures and cuisines, and expanding their knowledge and palate for regional specialties. They are willing to experiment varied dishes from a culture that is different from theirs. One such example is the festival of Onam. Although primarily celebrated by the people of Kerala, the festival has gained significant popularity where even non-Keralites participate in the festival, and feast upon a grand Onam Sadhya, a traditional feast served on the occasion."

Is Regional Food Healthy?

However, the popularity of regional food often, with the rise in health consciousness, poses a question about wellness. People are worried about the effects that regional food, comprising of different spices, would have on their health.

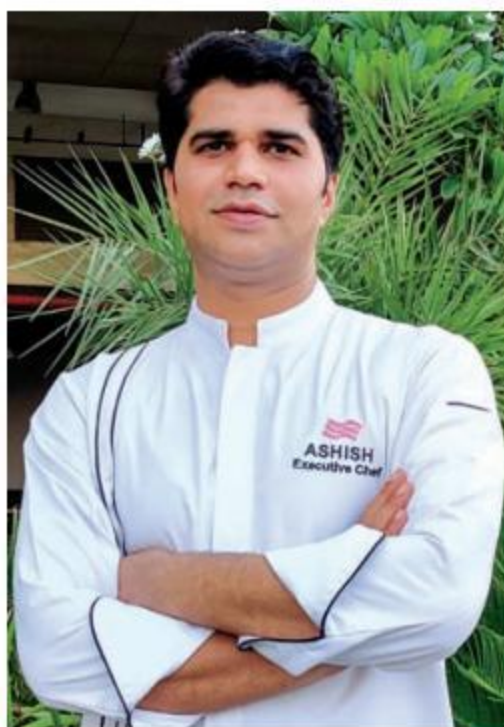
One can say that Indian food is not only known for its diversity but also for its wholesomeness. According to health specialists, a variety of foods and nutrients are needed for trillions of cells in the human body. Regional Indian cuisine has a variety of spices, each having its own health benefits.

Spices like cinnamon (dalchini), ajwain, cloves, star anise, black cardamom, tamarind seeds and coriander (dhania), turmeric, ginger, garlic, cardamom, and green chilies have medicinal and healing properties. No wonder Indian spices are gaining popularity globally. In recent times the demand for Indian spices has gone up

in the world markets. Today, whole Indian spices are not only becoming popular in spice markets but also in the kitchens of some of the fine-dine restaurants.

Besides the spices, the regional food also has a lot of grains like bajra, nachni, jowar, along with different rice grains. Most of the recipes also include refreshing array of vegetables and fruits cooked in different ways which help in retaining their freshness and nutrients.

Ashish states, "Regional cuisine is quite a healthy option considering many aspects. Every regional cuisine has been made keeping in mind the environment, weather and availability of food ingredients. In India, there is lots of variation in geographical nature. In some areas, rice is cultivated more, someplace wheat, someplace millet. So our ancestors have carefully chosen not only the grain, herbs, and spices, but also



Ashish Kumar



Srinivas Venkatesan

fruits, vegetables and even meat /seafood in a way that keeps the person in that region healthy. There are regional cuisines where the spice level is high, keeping in mind the weather and few places where the spice level is low."

Srinivas elaborates, "Most regional cuisines are dependent on the availability of local produce. This also prevents carbon footprint. For example, Ragi is a millet that is rich in Omega3 and fiber, and is widely grown in Karnataka. As a result, dishes like Ragi mudde, Ragi roti and Ragi idli are healthy and famous staples available in Karnataka. In fact, our guests, at ITC Windsor Bengaluru, regularly ask for and enjoy the Ragi dosa at our all day dining restaurant, Raj Pavilion.

Coconut is another versatile ingredient that is widely used in Kerala, which offers various health benefits, including healing the wounds in inner parts of our stomach. The fruit is used in the form of oil, paste, milk and whole as it is. At Dakshin, dishes like Appam and kai stew, which are made of coconut milk, are signature dishes.

Additionally, fermented foods like Idli, Dosa, Appam, Sannas are regionally from the coastal parts of Udupi, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, offering both healthy and nutritious breakfast options.

Supporting the Government of India's #VocalForLocal initiative, guests can enjoy some of the unique ingredients that are locally sourced at ITC Windsor. They are:

Ragi Flour sourced from closest districts such as Tumkur and Kolar- used in our Ragi Crusty Bread and Ragi Dosa as a breakfast special under our Forgotten Grains Initiative.

Non-centrifugal sugar or Jaggery Sugar from Mandya, is a type that is not spun and has nutritional molasses attached. This is used in our Crème Brulee.

Moringa leaves - locally sourced from our backyard, make a high nourishing preparation by the name Murgh Moringa - a unique feature in our Feel Good Menu.

Jackfruit known for its anti-bacterial & anti-fungal qualities finds its way into our menu in our signature Kathal Pulao. Sourced to us from Tumkur and Devanahalli.

Sorghum flour better known as Jowar, highly reputed to be rich in magnesium and anti-oxidants, vital for the gut is used in our Jowar Aamki Phirnee. This is sourced from artisanal farmers in the outskirts of the city- Vijayapura & Hasan.

Fresh raw turmeric, sworn by our

grandmother's in food, finds way into our Kacchi Haldi Tahri. It is sourced from the farmers of Doodabellapur.

Cherry Tomatoes, Baby carrots, Nasthurium, Dianthus, Pansies, Basil, Baby Spinach are some of the ingredients sourced from our organic partner "First Agro" from Talkadu.

Chicken in our kitchen is sourced from Peenya, Lamb from Bannur.

Indian Food History

Though Indian cuisine, comprising of the regional food, has gained popularity recently in urban areas and become the desired food of the elite over the last few years, it has a long history, going back to more than 10,000 years ago. It can be traced back to the 12th century, since there are texts, like the Sanskrit The Manasollasa, composed by the Chalukya king Someshvara III that details a variety of subjects, including foods of ancient India.

There are more elaborate medieval recipe tomes such as the hand-written manuscript of Nuskha-e-Shahjahani, going back to Mughal emperor Shah Jahan's kitchen. There are also books by Avadh's rakabdars and rajas, colonialists

and royalists. All this proves that regional cuisine has been with us since times immemorial.

As Ashish puts it succinctly, "India is a land that is enriched with culture and vast heritage. This is reflected in the diversity of food that has emerged throughout the country through the ages. It is safe to say that Indian Cuisine is by far the most diverse one in its taste and the use of varied ingredients."

"The history of Indian food ranges right back from the Harappa times. In this era, wheat, rice, millet, chickpeas and lentils formed the staple of the average diet. Several citrus and other fruits were used to add flavour. The popular use of cinnamon can also be dated back to these times. The grains were made into stews or soups in which cinnamon was used. Eventually, grain started being baked into flat breads which are today popularly known as chapattis or naan."

"The Hindu culture under the Mauryans, in 300 BC, drew away from the cycle of animal sacrifices. They took to the notions of vegetarianism. Thus, several of the key Hindu meals are cooked using regionally available fruits and vegetables;

along with an array of flavourful spices. The staple such as rice or millet was paired with a variety of lentils like masoor, moong, tuer, urad, etc. Thus, the 'dal' of our everyday meals became an important part of the culture. Other regions grew pulses like rajma, chana, lobiya, etc. that became delicacies of the north. The lentils form an important source of protein and flavour for any Indian meal.

"In the Gupta period, around 650 AD, vegetables, bread and milk were an integral part of the diet. This is where satvic food became popular to gravitate towards an ideal healthy diet. It consisted of whole grains, fruits and dairy products. Some bent more towards a rajasic diet which incorporated the use of onion, garlic, eggplants, mustard oil and sweet puddings made of rice. Thus, the concept of a balanced diet that would include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes and soy, nuts, seeds, dairy products complemented with some sweets, was adopted."

Indian food, today, is appreciated all over the world. One finds Indian restaurants in almost all nations. Thus, one can say that the popularity of the different Indian dishes is set to rise!



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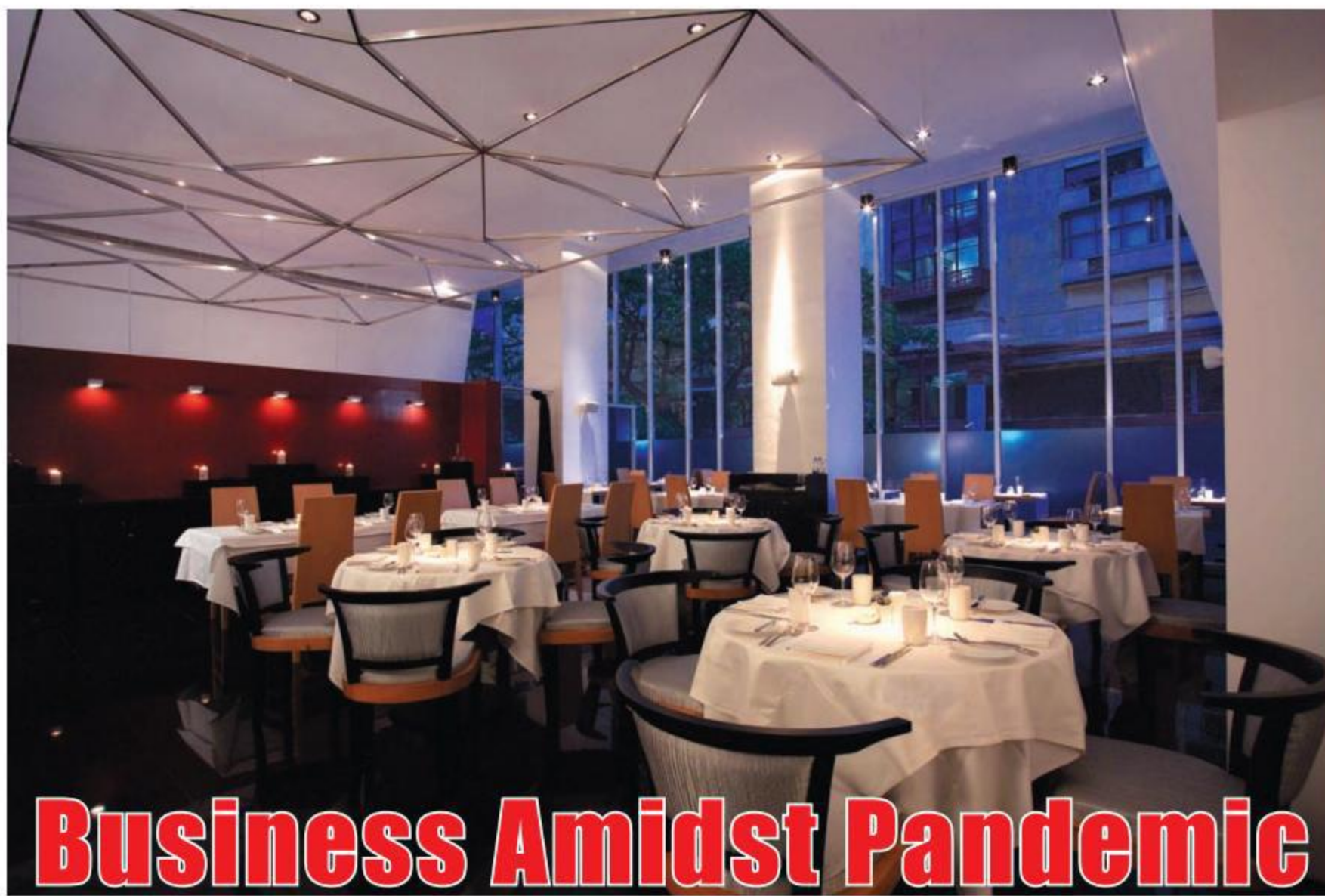
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Business Amidst Pandemic

The indiscriminate nature of the pandemic has impacted the health and quality of life of people, affecting the food & beverage industry adversely. Food & Beverage outlets were shut down for over a year. Though the restaurants are slowly opening their gates to diners, they not only have to follow the SOPs set by the authorities but also adopt to the changing attitude of the people as far as requirements for food are concerned. Healthy food has become a prerequisite. The restaurateurs have not only to ensure healthy food and drink but also ensure fast and hygienic delivery of food. **Ashok Malkani** examines how the restaurants are catering to the different needs of their customers.

The world came to a halt over a year ago. The effect that the pandemic had on the hospitality industry is difficult to narrate. The adverse effect on the Food & Beverage industry was immense. With the easing of restrictions the F&B outlets are opening up but they have to adopt to the new needs of the diners who are now more keen on healthy food, prepared in a hygienic manner. The eating habits of the diners have changed. They have become more conscious about their health and are choosing food which is beneficial for their wellbeing. The International Food Information Council's annual Food & Health Survey has found

that people still trust the safety of the food system and are turning more to plant protein for health. Restaurants have thus to ensure that they cater to these needs of the diners.

So how are the restaurants fulfilling the desire for healthy foods of their diners?

Rafi Ansari, Food & Beverage Manager, Courtyard By Marriott Bengaluru Hebbal, says "Taking into account the current challenges the pandemic has thrown at us, the F&B team has curated an "Eat well" menu targeted at guests looking for healthy options. The menu includes an array of "Super Foods" such as Kale, Swiss chard, Collard greens, Turnip greens,

Spinach, Berries, Edamame Beans, Nuts and Seeds, Kefir, Salmon, Olive oil, Avocado & Sweet potato."

Rachel Goenka, CEO & Founder of The Chocolate Spoon Company Pvt. Ltd. reveals "With the ongoing pandemic we have observed a shift in consumer's mindset and ordering patterns. While the demand for healthy and nutritious food has increased, people continue to demand food that also has a level of comfort. At our outlet, The Sassy Spoon, we have seen a surge in demand for salads at both the outposts in Mumbai, at Nariman Point as well as Powai. Since people have missed dining out we have seen a lot of our customers coming

back and asking for their favourite dishes which they've missed."

Sougata Halder, Executive Chef, Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park, states, "During this pandemic, consumers have become more conscious of what they eat - they look for protein & vitamin rich dishes. Keeping this in mind we have introduced 2 new items to our menu -

A grilled chicken - that is free range and antibiotic free

A stir-fried quinoa with tofu

"Quinoa is gluten-free, high in protein and one of the few plant foods that contain sufficient amounts of all nine essential amino acids. Quinoa is high in iron, manganese, phosphorus, magnesium and zinc, plus it contains high levels of calcium, potassium and selenium. Overall, quinoa has three to four times more nutrients than brown rice."

Amit Kumar Patra, Sous chef (Pastry & Bakery), Novotel Vijayawada Varun, avers, "Looking at the current situation, we have introduced immune boosters in every menu at every restaurant in the hotel. We have also added dishes pertaining to high protein diets. Following are few more of the healthy elements that have been introduced:

Keeping the current pandemic situation in view and to meet the guest dietary meal



requirements, we have started offering the cage free eggs in our morning breakfast which is more nutritive and richer in organic proteins.

We have added more meat-based soups and soya as base for the starters, which is known for its high protein,

We have made it a practice of having the millets-based dishes as part of our buffet offering,

To make it simpler and more transparent

we have a display signage stating and promoting our guests to feel free to customize the food as per your preferences and palatability.

Organic Food

Immunity against coronavirus has become most essential for diners. What they eat has thus become the most important thing for them. Several new initiatives such as Eat Right and Smart Food have enhanced

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demand for healthier and nutritious foods. There is thus a preference for organic food. And the F&B outlets are making efforts to fulfil this need for the diners.

Rafi states, "Organic & Sustainable foods" being the new trend among today's youth as well as elderly, our establishment, Marriott Bengaluru Hebbal, has taken the initiative to source Organic vegetables from local farms.

"Including organic ingredients in the meal is a practice many have already started implementing. As guests are more health conscious today, they choose organic produce to be part of their diet. Even at our hotel, we have such a menu that provides our guests with numerous plant based diet options. The customers in the age group of 35-55 years mostly prefer it."

Sougata says, "New age travelers, primarily millennials, in the age bracket of 25 - 40 years are very particular about what they eat & the source of ingredients. At Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park, we are sourcing all our vegetables from local farmers, thereby helping the local farming community. We have a compost making facility at our hotel where we convert all our vegetable peels & leftovers to compost, give the same compost back to the local farmer for use, thereby completing the cycle."

Rachel reveals, "The most popular age group that has had a shift in diet preference is between 35 to 45. While both our Sassy Spoon outlets continue to offer vegetarian dishes, we also have vegan options like tomato, olive & parmesan soup, raw papaya and raw mango salad, teriyaki glazed tofu, brown rice paella and more. The F&B industry overall has also seen interesting inclusions and additions in the past 18 months with multiple variants of plant-based ready to eat food being introduced like Jackfruit Meat, Soybean Meat, and more.

Amit disclosed, "Currently we have seen a vast increase in the demand for organic and plant-based food. The preference for organic food has increased immensely because of the pandemic. The hotel, Novotel Vijayawada Varun, also has food suppliers who directly supply organic food materials from the farms freshly. All the guests tend to eat healthy and fresh organic food as their first preference. In general, we have noticed that the awareness and demand for this type of diet is more among the millennials than the rest of the people.

Maintaining Hygiene

While organic food is one aspect of satisfying the health needs, hygiene is another important facet. Technology and Transparency, both these elements, help in ensuring and assuring the customers about the hygiene.

Rachel declares, "As far as technology is concerned, The National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) has partnered with DotPe, a platform that allows customers to scan a QR code that can give access to the menu of a restaurant. Guests can also place their order directly with limited interaction with the servers. This limits the need for surface contact with physical menus. The platform also offers digital payment solutions for guests. This allows the restaurants to have the ownership of the customer data as well as keep the transaction costs low which in return benefits the restaurants. Most importantly, this does not compromise on the customer experience and is streamlined as this solution does not require customers to download or open an app.

"On the transparency aspect, I may add that we continue to communicate with our existing as well as potential customers by posting about our safety standards via our social media platforms. As a must have,

while serving the customers during dine-in we continue to maintain a social distance and have switched from physical menus to digital menus. Customers can now directly place their orders while they are at the restaurant which ensures minimum contact with the servers."

Sougata states "We have introduced V-Serve, a contactless digital menu for our guests, where they can browse from the menu on their handheld device and can also place their order in-app without having to come in contact with any hotel talent. This has been implemented at our restaurant, bar and in-room dining as well.

"On the transparency front, I would like to add that the F&B industry as a whole is moving towards disposable, pre-packed cutlery. The overall objective is to try and minimize on various possible touch-points. Tables are not set as it was before - as soon a guest is allocated a table, pre-packed cutlery & other table elements are set up in front of the guest. Digital menus, digital payments and socially distanced seating are top of the priority list at any outlet."

Rafi states, "Effective plant sanitation is perhaps the most important building block of a facility's food safety net. While sanitation objectives haven't changed, our understanding of risk and hazard points has grown significantly over the years. New technologies have emerged to clean and sanitize faster and more effectively while minimizing cost, complication, downtime and risk to food, plant personnel and the environment. For e.g. Douglas Cyclone vegetable washers as they operate wash, rinse & sanitize vegetables in a single go.

"Since transparency creates trust between guests and the hotel, the company has taken certain initiatives. Marriott has rolled out a multi-pronged platform to elevate its cleanliness standards and hospitality norms and behaviours to meet the new health and safety challenges presented by the current pandemic environment. Our Marriott commitment to clean standards focuses on even the smallest aspects like sanitizing menus, single serve condiments, sanitizing tables/chairs etc. Any and every guest can go online and read these extensive steps taken by the company and how each aspect is being looked at."

Amit reveals, "At Novotel Vijayawada Varun, we have few latest technologies that have been introduced:

Hybrid Meetings: Accor is helping Meeting planners face the complexity



Rachel Goenka



Rafi Ansari

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"We have emphasized more on the packed food service in food grade disposable containers, to avoid the cross-contamination. All the food materials that we receive are first washed thoroughly and then rested for 24hrs, which eliminates all contamination possibilities. All safety guidelines are followed in the kitchen at every stage.

"We also believe that seeing is believing. From the moment the guest enters the hotel premises till the time they leave, all safety and hygiene practices are maintained. Safety norms like social distancing and wearing a mask along with other norms as given by ICMR and State Government are also implemented and strictly followed.

"We also have ALL SAFE based hygiene practices implemented in place as given by BVQI - staff wearing the PPEs in all the departments, Covid safety awareness posters in all key touch point areas, the process of mandatory sanitization at all entry points. The main objective of these exercises is to give the confidence to our customers on the hygiene practices we follow."

Beverage Preference

Besides the food, even the beverage preference seeing a change. People are now jumping on to the health and immunity bandwagon. According to the Innova Consumer Survey 2020, six out of 10 global consumers are increasingly looking for products that support their immune health.

Sougat states, "We have seen that drinks that are refreshing & fortified with Vitamin C are on the rise. Guest preferences now vary from plant based smoothies to green tea with lemon and honey. Guests prefer

fresh fruit juices without any additional sugar to aerated or canned beverages, even in their cocktails

Rafi adds, "During lockdown staying in became the new going out, and the Japanese buzzword 'On-nomi' (translated to 'drinking alone') perfectly encapsulated the concept of those virtual happy hours we were all participating in. During this time, many restaurants and bars diversified to create cocktail delivery services and ready-to-drink bottled cocktails, in a bid to help us enjoy our favourite tipples at home. As well as this, people weren't just buying pre-made cocktails, they were investing in semi-professional cocktail kits and upping their barware game to become at-home mixologists. Not only that, pre-made cocktails and canned wine have evolved and improved considerably. We're now seeing all types of delicious, botanical flavours using high-quality and sought-after ingredients in the ready to drink beverages."



Amit Kumar Patra



Sougata Halder

Amit lists the changes in beverage consumption as follows:

Guest have shown more interest towards immune boosters and healthy drinks which help them stay stronger and healthier,

Preferences on hot beverages have increased than the cold beverages,

Now the trend is more inclining towards herbal, ayurvedic and spices based hot beverages which helps them in increasing the immunity,

Even for the social gatherings people had changed their preferences from cold welcome drinks to hot welcome drinks. We consider it as a very remarkable change.

Rachel, however, has a different view. She says, "We haven't observed any changes in preference of drinks. Customers are enjoying being out after so long and are indulging in our signature cocktails like our very berry khatta.

Assuring Safety of Diners

While maintaining hygiene and assuring the guests about the health aspect of the food served at the outlet, it is also necessary to follow the SOPs for their safety. Most of the F&B outlets, it is observed are following certain norms to ensure safety of the guests.

Saugat claims, "Marriott International's Commitment to Clean is a constant effort to keep the premise clean, safe and hygienic. With the pandemic changing the hospitality landscape, it became all the more relevant to further step up the safety protocols and implement necessary measures to ensure all round safety of both, guests and staff. Health and safety protocols were something that were always followed, even prior to the pandemic and only needed a few additional tweaks and add-ons to be in-line with the latest government norms."

Rachel iterates, "While we, at Sassy Spoon, continue to maintain strict hygiene standards, to compliment the same we have created strict protocols such as:

Regular temperature checks of our team members and guests is mandatory

Gloves, masks and face shields worn by all team members at all times

Sanitisation of tables & washrooms after every use

Sanitisers provided for our team members & guests

Thoroughly sanitised kitchen, dining area and cutlery

Limited & well trained staff within the premises

Spaced out tables and seating at 50% capacity only

Digital menus & payment methods

Maintain strict social distancing across all outposts"

Amit says, "As an ALL SAFE labeled property, we, at Novotel Vijayawada Varun, have all our safety & Hygiene protocol norms in place as guided by the BVQI& ALL SAFE brand guidelines to name a few:

We have all the covid-19 protocol-based awareness posters placed across the property right from the entrance till they leave the property.

Sanitization counter right at the entrance of the restaurants with display signages describing the hand sanitization process.

Maintaining the social distancing at all our outlets, be it at the buffets, dining or at the lounge

We have a QR code scanner for the menu options and for the billings process too

Periodic sanitization of the restaurant seating after every meal period

Staff wearing proper PPE (Personal protective Equipment's) this will ensure there won't be any kind of potential pathogen transmission from one to another

Coming to the culinary operation in the kitchen, we have minimized the chefs working on the stations with stipulated working hours in different shifts, serving the food at the right temperatures, sanitization of all the perishable as per the FSSAI guidelines and similar.

Rafi states "The hotel uses chemical sanitizer solutions at proper concentration and temperature per label instructions.

"All sanitizer solutions in buckets, spray bottles, chemical sanitizing dishwashing machines, and dispensing systems in each area must be tested to assure proper levels. Hotel must ensure associate hygiene standards practices are mandated and managed as an integral component of food safety."

Online Delivery

Even though restrictions on F&B outlets are comparatively lower than it was a few months ago many consumers still prefer to stay indoors and are ordering food from eating joints who are maintaining hygiene in their delivery system. There are various steps that these outlets are taking to assure their customers about the food safety.

Rafi discloses, "At Courtyard By Marriott Bengaluru Hebbal, the packaging we source



is biodegradable; in our own way, we are giving back to nature. At the same time, the food packed for home deliveries are given utmost priority where delivery vehicles undergo periodic sanitization ensuring delivery is hygienic & safe. Use of PPE kits by associates throughout the cycle to maintain the highest level of hygiene is also practiced. Preparation areas undergo periodic clinical grade sanitization as per 'Marriott International Commitment to Clean' guidelines."

Amit asserts, "Though lately diners have started visiting the F&B outlets we have seen an increase in online services due to the pandemic. During this course of time, online delivery services have posed as the main and only source of revenue generation for the restaurants. As a result, the hotels have evolved a lot and they have come up with many innovative ideas to deliver food online with safety protocols in place. We, at Novotel Vijayawada Varun, have adopted all the stringent safety practices and designed a menu with healthy options which can be stored at normal temperature for longer periods of time. We are using the biodegradable containers which can hold the food temperature for a good time. All our packings are done individually and with food graded materials. All packaging is done by a special team who are trained to pack and deliver food with all safety protocols.

"Apart from this, the general safety protocols like always wearing a mask and social distancing is strictly implemented at every level. The delivery is done by well trained staff and the hotel has set up a separate delivery kiosk out of the hotel

premises. Keeping safety and hygiene in mind every online delivery is to be picked up only from the kiosk."

Rachel states, "To begin with, at all of our restaurants as well as cloud kitchens, we continue to wear masks, face shields, gloves, and hair nets at all times. As an additional precaution, we also sanitise and clean the goods we receive such as vegetables, poultry, seafood etc and thoroughly sanitise the kitchen area. We monitor and record the staff's temperatures when they report for and get off duty from the restaurant kitchens. To add on, we also take temperatures of delivery personnel from aggregators and do not hand over food to that particular rider in case their temperatures are elevated. Our preference however is to use our own delivery riders whenever possible."

Saugat iterates, "At Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park, we have taken stringent steps to ensure the safety of both, our guests and our employees by following Marriott International's Commitment to Clean Program. Besides the many detailed guidelines in this program, we have also ensured that our entire team at the hotel has been vaccinated. Our people are temperature checked on arrival and we encourage our guests to opt for direct delivery as we use our own hotel cars that have been thoroughly sanitized before every use. Approved chemicals are constantly in use at high touch-points and workstations every 2 hours. Payments and deliveries are all contactless as well."

Yes, the restaurateurs have to follow certain standard if they want the outlet to succeed in the new normal. ■

Hygiene and Food Safety Stringent Measures in the aftermath of COVID-19!

By Sharmila Chand

As the hospitality, food and beverage industry gears up to revive its business in the aftermath of COVID-19, there are Stringent Food and Safety Measures which have been laid out to be followed by Front and Back of House teams. The sentiment is clear and loud – it is most crucial to pay prime attention to Hygiene and Food Safety concern so as to ensure wellbeing of not just the guests but the workers and hosts as well.

We spoke with industry experts to know what steps they are taking to create healthy spaces for food processing and dining.

Cleanliness & Sanitization

"The hotel passionately adheres to Accor's ALLSAFE label – a rigid and strict cleanliness label created in association with Bureau Veritas, the world leader in Testing, Inspection and Certification in arenas of safety and hygiene. We also abide by the ISO22000 norms and regulations. High touch areas in the kitchen are disinfected frequently with a hospital-grade disinfectant. The teammates also are given easy access to disinfectant wipes and sanitisers and are encouraged to sanitise their workstations at least 3 times during the shift," tells Chef Suvaranjan Banerjee, Executive Chef - Grand Mercure Bengaluru – Gopalan Mall. He adds, "We train our team thoroughly about safety and hygiene protocols. Refreshers and assessments are also carried out in regular intervals. Visual cues in the form of signages and posters are also used as reminders for the process."

"At Westin Goa, the team makes sure critical food contact materials like chopping boards, graters, storage containers etc are immersed in chlorine solution at every



"All food packages are unboxed and sanitized from outside using chlorine and then maintained in the food store inventory"

Ravish Mishra, Executive Chef, The Westin Goa



"Full time Covid Ambassador- Dedicated personnel for making sure every table is disinfected after use and to remind guests to wear their masks and maintain social distancing"

Arun Prasanna, Head of Operations, at Byg Brewski Brewing Co, Bangalore

shift for at least 10-15mins and air dried," points out Ravish Mishra, Executive Chef, The Westin Goa, "Besides daily deep cleaning of operational kitchens using detergent scrubbing, steam pressure jets and sanitizing, all food handlers are extensively trained and audited daily for safe food practices. All kitchen processes are strictly undertaken with proper food safety gear like face mask, vinyl gloves, hand sanitizer etc. All food packages are unboxed and sanitized from outside using chlorine and then maintained in the food store inventory."

Personal Hygiene

Personal Hygiene is most crucial and the first check point. One must ensure uniform is clean which includes a clean apron, coat, hairnet, masks and gloves. Also more than one uniform should be purchased for each person so that the uniform is cleaned regularly. Every team member must also ensure that their hair and facial hair is well covered at all times when cooking and preparing food.

The task isn't easy for standalone restaurants too as they have to instill confidence in their customers for a safe dining experience. "Our precautions and SOPs start from the Personal Hygiene of our team members," says Hitesh Tulsani, Head of Sales and Operations at Bangalore based Raahi Neo Kitchen and Bar. "In this regard, we ensure hands are thoroughly washed with soap and hot water after touching food and before performing the next job function. Always dry hands with a clean towel. It is important to change into work clothes and we make sure uniforms are light-coloured so that stains are immediately visible."

Likewise, Anirudh Kheny and Chethan Hegde, Partners - Suzy Q by 1522,



"We have adopted technology such as automatic sanitiser dispensers so at any given point in time, everyone is required to take care of their personal hygiene and sanitise regularly. All staff's temperatures are recorded before entering the premises using an automated body temperature scanner. Any temperature that is high is immediately notified to the managers through an app, so they can take action accordingly"
Anirudh Kheny and Chethan Hegde,
Partners - Suzy Q by 1522, Bangalore

Bangalore point out, "All our staff members have been vaccinated and mandatorily have to wear a badge at all times, stating that they have received the vaccine. Apart from this, all our staff wear masks and gloves at all times."

Contactless Dining

Contactless dining is the need of the hour. Hotels & Restaurants have realized how crucial it is to have thorough digitalization process in place to reduce the contact between the guests and the staff. The team should be trained on how to communicate the action plan to guests, to make sure everyone is aligned towards the purpose.

Says Arun Prasanna, Head of Operations, at Byg Brewski Brewing Co, Bangalore, "We are very particular about Contactless Dining. With most Contactless Dining options, the customers place orders on their phones and it goes to the Point-of-Sale terminal and has to be further punched in by the staff so that they are relayed to the kitchen. Our version of contactless Dining is wholly integrated into our POS and Kitchen systems. Every order placed on the phone goes directly to our kitchen without need for intermediate action. Besides ensuring that we are in complete adherence to Contactless Dining norms, the full stack integration completely eliminates the need for any kind of manual intervention in the order flow process."

A New Paradigm in Food Service

Conventional ways of serving guests and laying the food has taken a new turn. Buffets have been replaced by pre-plated combos and ala carte offers. This entails



"We train our team thoroughly about safety and hygiene protocols. Refreshers and assessments are also carried out in regular intervals. Visual cues in the form of signages and posters are also used as reminders for the process"

Suvaranjan Banerjee, Executive Chef - Grand Mercure Bengaluru - Gopalan Mall

its own challenges as the team has to ensure the order is delivered on time complying with specific demands and safety measures.

"In buffets we have kept very limited food displays adopting a live model and the food on display is refreshed every 30 minutes. No contact menus are adopted and online payment methods are encouraged throughout our restaurants reducing the chances of a contact," tells Chef Suvaranjan Banerjee. "In all our service areas, tables are sanitized periodically and kept at a minimum distance of 5 feet apart to reflect social distancing. QR coded digital menus are available for all our restaurants and in-room dining. Buffets are eliminated and replaced with freshly prepared high quality pre-plated dishes. Gloves are changed periodically and sanitized every 15 minutes and masks every three hours as per recommended guidelines. All beverage cans and wine bottles are wiped with sanitized wipes before serving to guests," informs Chef Ravish Mishra.

The Road Ahead

To conclude, while SOPs are well in place, one has to wait and watch how well they are followed to ensure there is proper alignment between implementation and execution. Regular strict supervision is a must for all the measures taken to avoid any messing up and alarming situations. ■

Quick Check List at a Glance!

Hitesh Tulsani, Head of Sales and Operations, Raahi Neo Kitchen and Bar - Bengaluru

Proper ventilation in dining areas is a must.

Limit seating capacity to allow for Social Distancing.

Prioritize outdoor seating as much as possible.

Ask customers to wait in their cars or away from the establishment while waiting to be seated.

Discourage crowded waiting areas by using phone app, text technology, or signs to alert guests when their table is ready.

Avoid using "buzzers" or other shared objects.

Arun Prasanna, Head of Operations, Byg Brewski Brewing Co, Bangalore
Disinfection Protocols

Disinfection of every table as soon as guests leave

Daily disinfection of staff cafeteria and staff accommodation

Disinfection of all produce at the receiving areas to ensure all germs are destroyed at source.

Further cleaning of the produce at commissary kitchens and the products are distributed to respective kitchens.

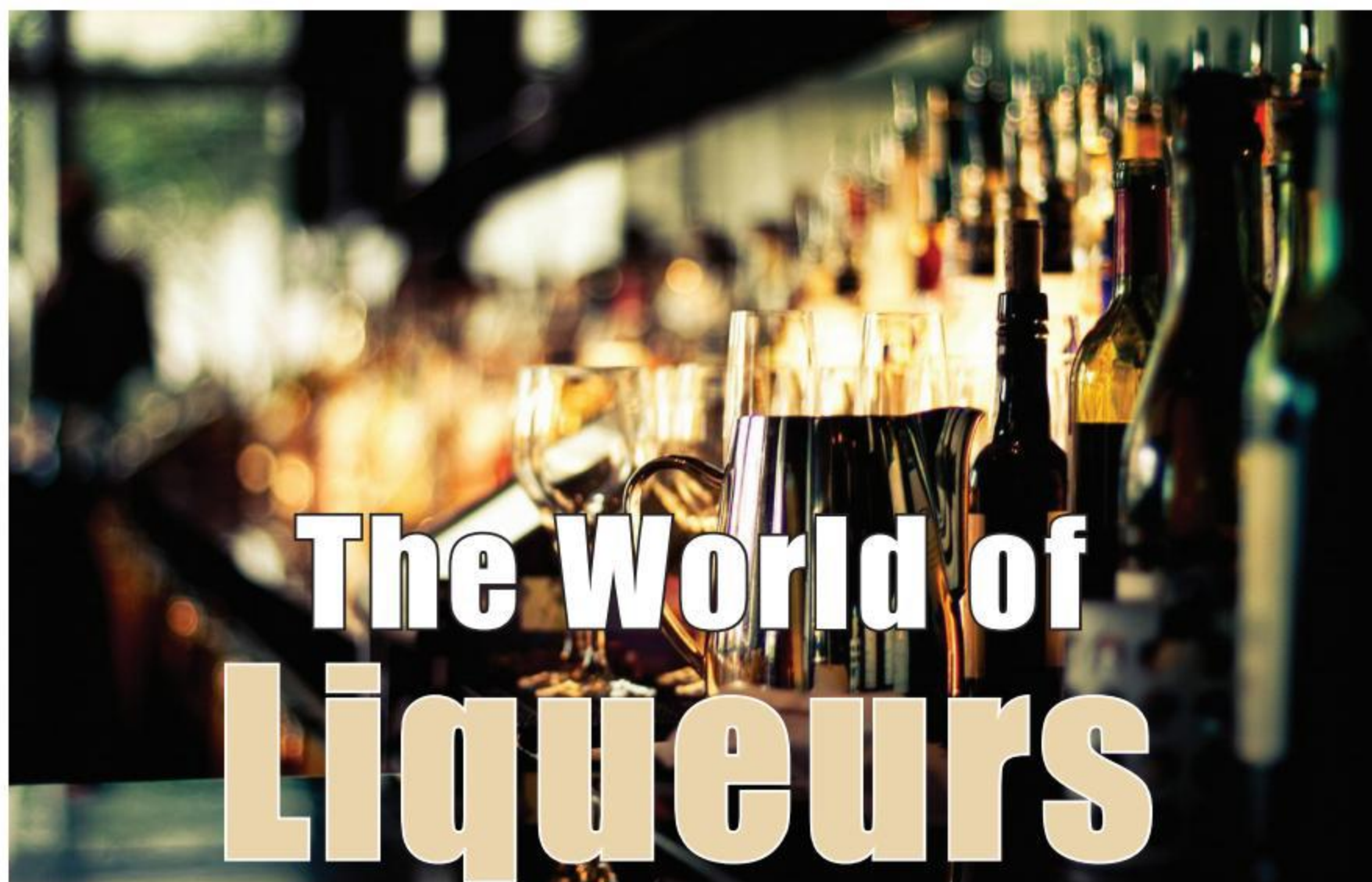
Temperature Screening Protocols

Monitoring staff temperature every day when they get to work.

Temperature screening of guests during entry at the concierge desk

Temperature screening of vendors when they enter the premises on supply runs.





A fine dinner, with its different courses, often comes to an end with the offer of a cup of coffee, tea, a glass of brandy, or a glass of liqueur. However, nothing can surpass the satisfaction of a post-prandial alcoholic drink that a glass of fine liqueur provides. But to make a wise selection of liqueur, after a satisfying meal, one needs to understand the basic technicalities involved in the production of this delightful drink, and also the suitable ways of enjoying it.

The importance of liqueurs also lies in the fact that they make valuable additions to any cocktail of choice, by providing aromas and finesse to a cocktail. They blend instantly with the neutral flavoured spirits like vodka, but some liqueurs also manage to complement alcoholic drinks

that come with identifiable aromas of their own, such as whiskies or dark rums.

A Few Technicalities

The word liqueur originates from the Latin word 'liquifacere' which simply means 'to dissolve'; a reference to the dissolving of ingredients in the spirit. A liqueur is almost always a sweet alcoholic drink, flavoured with fruits, herbs, flowers, spices, seeds, and sometimes even with creams. However, this list is hardly exhaustive as there are additional possibilities of flavourings. Some of the well known liqueurs like Benedictine, and Absinthe have been derived from some of the well-known herbal medicines.

Today liqueurs, in addition to being consumed at the end of a meal, form a great additive to cocktails. Fancy liqueurs

may be served with ice, mixed with coffee or other mixers, or as a simple dessert enhancer. They may also be used for cooking.

Categories of Liqueurs

Strict categorisation of liqueurs is not as simple as it might seem! They are commonly categorised on the basis of the presence of distinguishing flavours of chocolate, coffee, cream, crème, fruits, berries, flowers, herbals, nuts, whisky, and a few other flavours.

Over the ages, some brands of liqueurs have become more popular than others, but once you get hooked and charmed by the world of liqueurs it is easy to be totally engrossed in different styles, options and ingredients.

Some liqueurs may even infuse certain woods, and others may be distilled from aromatic or flavouring agents. Alcohol content in liqueurs is also not a regulated feature and it could range anywhere from 15 percent to 30 percent, although in some cases alcohol content in liqueurs could be as high as 55 percent.

Healthy Liqueurs

Yes, there is a good health angle too to these delicious delights. Some work as aperitifs and most of them are good digestives. Others can be classified as desires of the moment, but they too, like the dairy cream based liqueurs, provide a good lining to the stomach.

Anise liqueurs have an additional property which is eye catching and interesting; the transparent liqueurs turn cloudy when any water is added to them. It is surely a good after dinner digestive, either on its own, or when mixed with something else.

Limoncello, the Italian liqueur made of lemons, is served as after dinner digestive in small chilled ceramic glasses. Made from lemon rinds limoncello has been a favourite drink even among some of the well known celebrities of the world. It can here be mentioned that in a song recorded in 2007, Avril Lavigne sang, "I will drink as much limoncello as I can. And I'll do it again and again..."

Cream V/s Crème

A cream liqueur includes dairy cream along with other ingredients. Baileys Irish Cream and Saint Brendan's use Irish whiskey while Heather Cream contains scotch whiskey. Maple Cream from Canada uses maple syrup and cream while Cruzan Rum uses rum, cream and other ingredients. Amarula has distillate of fermented marula fruit and Dooley's uses toffee and vodka, while Voyant Chai Cream uses black tea, spices and cream.

A crème liqueur on the other hand has no dairy cream. Crème in them refers to the consistency. Crème de menthe has mint; crème de cacao contains chocolate, and crème de cassis has black currants.

Liqueur Cocktails

It is not easy to compile a list of liqueur cocktails. But plenty of them can be found in the beverage menus of various



restaurants and hotels. However, one particular mix of equal quantity of Baileys and Cointreau with a couple of ice cubes is simply delicious. One should try Cointreau with Amarula and another African cream liqueur. However, Carolans from Ireland produced better results with Irish Mist!

Cooking with Liqueurs

Liqueurs may be added to food items,

ranging from starters to main dishes, and definitely to your desserts. One basic principle to remember while cooking with liqueur is - if it is not good enough to be drunk, it is definitely not good for cooking. When you add a splash of the original alcohol to the finished dish just before serving, it reinforces the flavour. Another important thing to remember is that as compared to other products, alcohol freezes at lower temperature. Therefore excessive use of liqueur in frozen desserts is not advisable.

Although experimenting is a great option, one can easily use Amaretto for almond, Frangelico for hazelnut, Kahlua for chocolate and Grand Marnier for orange. Also, Amaretto, Baileys, Cherry Brandy, Amarula are suitable for puddings and desserts.

Liqueurs that are often used in the preparations of main course dishes and desserts are Cointreau, Drambuie (with red meat), and Grand Marnier (with red meat and poultry). The easiest way to use liqueur in a dessert is to pour some amount of the liqueur over plain vanilla ice cream, thereby immediately making it a visual and culinary treat.

Stocking & Shelf Life

All cream based liqueurs need to be stored in your refrigerator and checked periodically. As with any other alcohol, liqueurs too lose their aromas over a period of time. Ideally, six to eight months is considered the maximum period for which the liqueurs can be kept, after they are opened. But some liqueurs like the Irish Mist could happily take as long as a year of shelf life.

Liqueurs are best stored in a cool dark place, away from direct sunlight or harsh bulb displays. When stored, some liqueurs that are heavy on sugar content get a film of dried sugar around the cap, but that is no indication that the liqueur has lost its potency. This can be easily remedied by wiping the inside of the cap and the bottle opening after use, before stocking it away.

The Right Choice of Glasses

A cocktail mixed with liqueur would ordinarily be served in a Martini or Tom Collins glass, or maybe even in a Margarita glass. Old style fancy crystal cut wine glasses are also suitable for serving liqueurs, especially as most wine



drinkers nowadays prefer the Riedel style bigger glasses to get the wine aromas.

Many people prefer the coloured lead crystal saucer style glasses to sip their favourite liqueurs. Although they are a tad expensive, such glasses do make an impact on the guest. Blown glasses with stem, such as the ones produced by Nachtmann, available in India, are beautiful to hold and admire.

Small short glasses are best for liqueurs like Drambuie, Benedictine, Amaretto and many other herbal as well as nut flavoured liqueurs. However, if there is a mix of two liqueurs, and ice is added to it, then of course a regular glass that tapers dramatically but is still short is good for the mixing of the ingredients.

Some Forgotten Brands

Sometimes brands and styles become outdated or just fall out of favour from the lists of bartenders. One such golden oldie, which has very fond memory, is definitely Southern Comfort. At a Tapas Bar in Madrid there will be a moment you don't want a beer, or wine, not even whiskey on its own. Get a bottle of Southern Comfort, served cold without ice, which does not need any dilution of the liqueur. The glass in which it was to be served was interesting too – like a whiskey glass but only half as high. One should nurse two of these drinks with rounds of tapas.

Brands get forgotten because bartenders find them difficult to mix with other alcohol or make blazingly different cocktails. Moreover, people also want to be constantly challenged with different tastes, and they often look for new mixes. But every bar needs to stock Southern Comfort.

Liqueurs that Never Say Die

Times constantly change, and what is fashionable today may easily become outdated tomorrow. The bartenders also play a big role in popularising a particular brand or taste of liqueur. But certain liqueurs never go out of fashion. Surprisingly, it is due to their full flavour that they remain favoured as cocktail ingredient, on their own, or for cooking, or for pouring over desserts. One would happily use Grand Marnier, Cointreau, Amaretto, Tia Maria, or for that matter Chambord, whenever the need be.

While Baileys is still quite relevant, Amarula is gaining popularity as an



important liqueur. Amarula uses the wine made from the local South African fruit Marula, and therefore it suits people who want a lighter version without added whisky. Certain liqueurs like crème liqueurs, which do not have cream but are heavier and sweeter in taste, are very relevant as they lend colours to certain cocktail base.

Trial & Error in Mixology

Professional bartenders have the advantage that they can visualise and know in advance what proportion of mix will work for what end result. Individuals have to try options to mix and match, and if they do make mistakes, it is better to learn from the mistakes and proceed on. It is important to keep an eye on the proportions and the end alcohol content of any cocktail – be it with liqueurs or any other drink.

Mixology is not rocket science, and unless the error is extremely bizarre there would be somebody who will find it perfect. Flavours belong to families and need to be mixed well to get the best out of them – as they say a sum total of many things are always greater than the individual items.

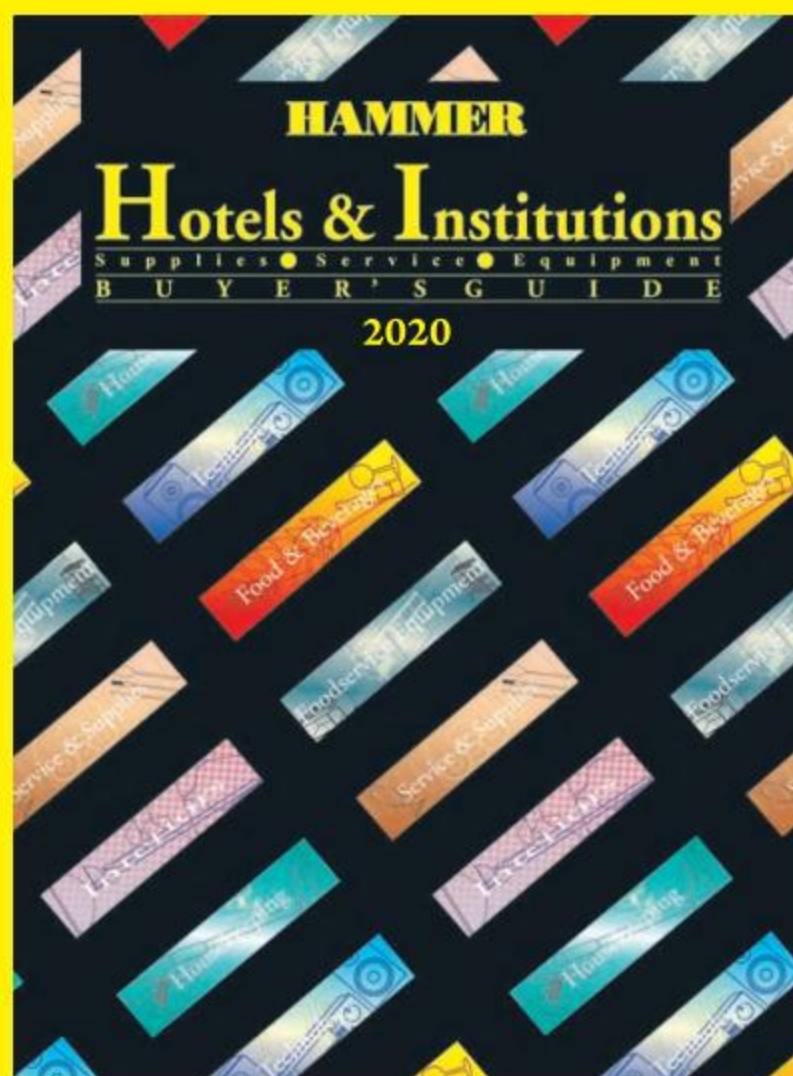
Personal Findings

There will always be brands an individual has not come across, let alone tried. These are often local produce with focus on what is in abundance in that region. While a liqueur like limoncello might become internationally recognised and favoured, there would always be lesser known local offering, sometimes with short shelf life, such as walnut liqueur in Italy or pistachio liqueur in the USA.

One such locally made liqueur marked 'Produce of Finland', is made of cloudberry – a berry found only in the Arctic region. While most enjoyed liqueurs of cranberry, loganberry, and even of blueberries, this is a unique flavour. It is almost delicate on the nose, extremely fresh on the palate and not overly sweet either. This berry is also used to make jams, marmalades and other sweets locally. While many bartenders may not be using it, as the flavour is delicate and extremely individualistic, but on a trial basis one could use it with vodka and some other fresh juice to make some very summer friendly cocktails. ■

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Italian Cuisine in India

As the culinary perspective of the internationally traveled Indian widens, so does their ability to appreciate the complexity of International popular cuisines. We now perceive the Chinese cuisine beyond sweet and sour dishes and have come to appreciate that Italian cuisine is far more complex than pasta, pizza and there are cheese options beyond the Mozzarella and Parmesan.

New standalone restaurants have been contributing to the increasing popularity of Italian dishes and most of them thrive on their authenticity rather than 'Indian-ising' the dishes with spices and condiments that are alien to the Italians. A far more focused effort is also made by five star hotel properties' F&B outlets through their Italian speciality restaurants where they bring visiting chefs, including Michelin star chefs who sometimes conduct even 'cooking classes' for invitees and members of exclusive clubs.

The focused promotions successfully showcase regional cuisine of regions of Italy and during the period of promotion a pairing with Italian wines is also done as part of a tasting menu at a fixed price. This not only increases awareness about diversity of regions within Italy but also allows people to attempt the dishes at home or bring ingredients from that region on their subsequent visits to Italy.

History of Italian Cuisine

Food of Italy has evolved through cultural exchanges and education about health

benefits contributing to the rise of concept of Mediterranean Diet. Excavation sites have revealed even food habits of the Stone Age and these included pigs, goats, nuts like almonds, and fruits like apples, quince, grapes etc. Way back, 7000 BC they also had fava beans, barley, acorns, faro, spelt, chestnuts, honey – and all of them are still part of Italian cuisine.

The Roman diet until 300 AD included wild fowl of different families, their eggs, cured meats and smoked spicy pork sausages, salted and pickled seafood and fermented fish sauce. Spices from the East were adding flavour and other seasonings included parsley, basil, oregano, dill, mint and thyme. Wild vegetables and mushrooms were gathered and some were harvested. Wild trees were also cultivated and gourds were prepared in diverse ways – stuffed, fried, boiled or otherwise cooked. Citrus fruits made an appearance and grapes appeared – adding the other staple, the wine.



Foods with longer shelf life for the traveling soldier meant appearance of breads and biscuits and an early form of Polenta with diverse grains was experienced. After the 5th century the elaborate Roman feast at dining tables were experienced. Pasta stuffing, layering noodles, pies with diverse fillings gave diverse textures and options. Wine was used in recipes and sauces were tinted with saffron, fruits and other herbs. Arab settlers brought eggplants to Sicily and use of almond milk or rosewater.

During the Renaissance food continued to evolve. Elaborate presentations became popular, roasted animals and birds were made to look as lifelike as possible (feathers were artfully re-arranged on cooked birds). Then appeared corn, tomatoes, peppers, vanilla and a new bird – Turkey! Tomatoes entered the Italian kitchen in sauces and soups, to be stuffed, roasted and baked in diverse options.

Recorded recipes and cookbooks define Italian food in 1773. 'The Gallant Cook', by Cincenzo includes recipes from North and South Italy. Francesco Leonardi was the chef to queen Catherine II and wrote a 6 volume encyclopedia. There were self publications by Pellegrino Artusi and capture the essence of Italian cooking permitting changes for cook's creativity.

Yes, Italy has other famous contributions like artworks by Leonadro da Vinci and Michelangelo among others, fashion and scenic beauty, old churches and Roman temples which can be enjoyed in that country

but their culinary prowess has crossed borders of the country to find international acceptance.

Even the comparative poverty of the Southern Italy made contribution to culinary development with rise of spaghetti, dry pasta and the ubiquitous pizza that used the leftovers. As a country Italy unified only around 1861 and this meant that many distinct traditions and customs remained unchanged and unpolluted. Some regional dishes have become national and changed slightly thus appearing in different variations. Cheeses, wines and Olive Oils have Denominazione di origine Controllata (DOC) which are regulated appellation laws leading to regional features remaining intact.

Gelato & Dessert Obsession

A visit to Italy would be incomplete without consumption of Gelato or the Italian ice cream. From family owned small gelaterias to large outlets have countless versions and it is a popular item to be consumed by locals and tourists while in Italy – irrespective of the season.

presence with the traditional belief of 'wine of any region pair best with foods of that region' means that appreciation for pairings and availability has led to larger acceptance base. There is a lot of focus on local grape varieties and it leads to international acceptance.

Coffee, more specifically espresso has become an important identifiable worldwide phenomenon. It is a delightful wake-me-up on any given morning and yet equally a tone down after a well enjoyed four or six course Italian meal with wines. Served in smaller than usual cups it is almost black and has a strong taste; it is best enjoyed without sugar over several sips rather than one gulp.

For those who are unable to enjoy its strength there is the famous Italian Cappuccino – with a top of foam often beautifully decorated in cocoa powder patterns by a creative Barista (your coffee server).

Caffé Macchiato is stronger than Café Latte and a Latte Macchiato is the lightest, often drunk by young children as well. While instant coffee has its merits and ease of use to sell it around the world the pull of true

Our cuisine involves a lot of preparation time and is very complex in terms of flavours and techniques. People just don't have the time anymore, especially in homes where both spouses hold down full-time jobs. Italian cuisine, on the other hand, strives to retain as many properties of its ingredients as possible, resulting in faster cooking times and less fuss.

Availability of Ingredients

There is absolutely no doubt that easy availability of quality Italian ingredients and products have resulted in popularity of Italian cuisine with Indian palate. Today the shelves of super markets and mega stores are stocked with gourmet ingredients like truffle mushrooms, porcini mushrooms, handmade pastas, vinegars, preserves, cured meats like Parma Ham etc. This has given us a chance to experiment with this cuisine and to produce better quality outcome, which in turn has resulted in huge popularity of this cuisine.

While fresh handmade pasta and sauces would be an edge over the dried pasta and



Sicilian Granitas are frozen dessert of flavoured crushed ice, similar to a sorbet and very popular in the native town of Catania and the rest of Italy too. Seasonal desserts that are popular around the world include Pandoro from Verona and Panettone of Milan around Christmas cake and the Coomba Pasquale or Italian Easter cake is eaten all over Italy on Easter day. Each region has something identifiable to offer. Tiramisu and Cassata ice creams are no longer just appreciated or enjoyed in Italy – they are truly world cuisine, yet in Italy they taste a lot better. Fruit shaped marzipans and panna cotta are delightful year round delicacies that can be enjoyed after any type of meal and that makes Italian cuisine acceptable and more appreciable. One cannot give that honour to either Indian or Chinese desserts.

Coffee & Wine Promotion

Italian wines export is huge and this worldwide

Italian coffee has made Italians and their cuisine a worldwide accepted fact.

Popular Indian Acceptance

Greater awareness and desire for healthy eating is the major factor in the growth of Italian cuisine in India. Although Indian cuisine in its most traditional form is very balanced, we don't prepare it that way anymore. We tend to use refined rice and flour, deep-fry our meat and vegetables, and make liberal use of cream and ghee. Italian cuisine, by contrast, relies on whole grains, legumes, and the freshest of vegetables. Meat is consumed in very small quantities. There is very little use of cream, hardly anything is deep-fried, vegetables and meats are usually grilled, and everything is cooked or dressed with olive oil – which, as we all know, offers significant health benefits.

Additionally, it's simpler and quicker to cook up an Italian meal than an Indian meal.

bottled sauces but their easy availability makes home cooking much more easier. Good quality sauces like pesto, pomodoro, piccante are easily available in market. They are very easy to use and give great quality results when used right.

Seeing the evolution of enjoying pasta in Indian context is that currently people also enjoy pasta without cheese topping. Plenty of sauces do not use either garlic or onion and some use cheeses as also butter, and many chefs rattle on about what to use with mushroom, wild game, seafood, meat sauces etc. Chefs like the fact that more Italian cheeses are now available apart from Parmigiano, Grana Padano and Mozzarella (like Pecorino, Provolone, Gorgonzola, Mascarpone, Ricotta, Bocconcini, Bel Paese, Asiago, Caciotta, Fontina, Scamorza etc) the wish list includes better availability of cured meats and fresh produce from the region rather than just processed stuff. ■

A Multi-Faceted Skilled Leader!

Gaurav Kumar Mathur, Executive Chef, Welcomhotel Dwarka

A highly accomplished chef with strengths in diverse Indian Cuisines, Chef Gaurav Mathur, Executive Chef Welcomhotel Dwarka, has excelled in executive, mentoring and training roles at ITC Hotels, Select Group of Hotels, Radisson Hotels in India as well as at Asha's at Dubai, UAE.

Chef Gaurav has held several responsible positions like Custodian for Indian food at ITC Hotel, The Sonar, Kolkata; Head of the largest banqueting and conventions Space and Resources of ITC Hotels, at ITC Hotel, The Grand Chola, Chennai; Leader of the team of ITC chefs for two consecutive years at Davos, Switzerland for the World Economic Forum and more. He is a Six Sigma Green Belt certified chef. He also holds expertise in Good Hygiene Practices, Food Safety and HACCP.

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



How do you define yourself?

A responsible chef, having positive outlook for any situation in life. I believe in carrying my duties to the best of my abilities.

What is your philosophy of cooking?

My philosophy is to work on protocols-led cuisines prepared with quality ingredients.

What is your area of expertise?

My strengths are in the management of cuisines. Apart from that customer-centric responsibilities, efficiently managing and motivating my team, pushing them to be creative, skilled, and updated with laid down protocols.

Had you not been doing this, then what?

I am following my childhood dream. My family has been very creative in the kitchen

and my father has been a hotelier all his life hence I had an inclination towards food and was fascinated by the profession since a very young age.

What is your source of inspiration?

I am highly motivated by the creative & experimental food connoisseurs from the industry. All through my journey all my seniors and executive chefs have played a very important role in pushing me to work beyond my abilities.

What has been the most rewarding moment in your career?

The most rewarding moments of my career were my leadership in Davos, Switzerland, in 2011 and 2012 and handling large-high-quality banquets at the ITC Grand Chola at Chennai.

How has the journey been so far?

So far, the career journey has been full of achievements, contentment and a high degree of appreciation from guests.

What skills are necessary to be a good chef?

The skills necessary to be a good chef relate to the guest and management of food production, such as:

Guest-centric interactive skills, to ensure that they receive the total value of their money and more

To guide fellow professionals in an empathy-led manner and keep them on a path of positive action

Hands-on culinary skills

Ensuring that the requisites of the economics of food production and generic cost management

Professional kitchen management

Skills of culinary research and the development of new products

How do you de-stress yourself?

My day starts with a long jog in the open. It helps me to analyze the situation from a positive perspective. Cooking gives me tranquility and joy of seeing guests eating happily.

How do you rate yourself as a chef?

I rate myself as a good Chef who meets the demands placed on me by the management, guests, personnel and the generic market.

Favourite cuisine?

I am an Indian Chef. I am proud of the diversity of regional Indian cuisines and I believe that our cuisine has been acknowledged and loved globally. Indian cuisine has a tradition and story associated which makes it culturally rich and diverse.

Favourite spice?

All Indian spices are my favourite. I use several spices and spice blends for specific requirements.

What is your favourite restaurant?

My favourite restaurants are Bukhara and Dum Pukht – because they have maintained their high standards and consistency in terms of food and service over more than four decades.

Your favourite diner?

I believe in welcoming all the guests

with the same warmth and excitement. In my view, it is very crucial to create a bond with the guests and understand the preferences

Your Hot selling item?

Biryani from our Kebabs and Kurries outlet

Artisan Pasta served at the Pavilion

The Best Compliment you have received?

The best compliments that I have received were from top management of ITC Hotels for the quality of food and arrangements thereof at "Indian Adda" - the ITC Hotels camp at Davos, Switzerland - years 2011 and 2012.

Your work philosophy?

My work philosophy is tireless and endless striving.

Lessons learnt in the kitchen?

Food production and its trends have evolved over the years. To continue to be successful, chefs must keep themselves updated with the changing market trends. I keep reading about the food trends to evolve and learn something new every day.

Last meal on Earth: What would you choose?

My last meal on Earth would be simple meal cooked at home, something like dal, roti with bhindi.

10 years from now?

By nature, I am a "giver". I plan to evolve into professional academics along with being a professional chef. To be an effective "giver", I need to educate and train myself continuously.

What are your future plans?

I will remain a Chef for my entire life. On that journey, I intend to keep learning and going forward.

For me future is uncertain, I choose to conquer the present, however I love what I do and want to excel further in the same field.

What is the best career advice you have received?

The best career advice that I have received is to keep learning and keep skilling myself.



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Warrior Safe Shields introduced Sippline™, a one of its kind World's revolutionary oral hygiene tool, that redefines hygienic drinking experience out of a glass. Sippline™, a drinking shield is a medical standard sterilized attachment designed to sit on the rim of a glass mug or a cup while drinking to avoid its direct contact with the mouth. It has been designed with care with a lot of detailing put in. Material and finish have been chosen to closely resemble the feel and texture of an glass/ cup. Designed for multiple uses, it is made of food-grade material, is heat resistant and dishwasher friendly. The finish was carefully arrived at to



replicate the feel of a glass or a cup and fits perfectly on most glasses and cups but has been tested for perfection on Water Goblet, Tom Collins, Old Fashioned, VIVA 48, Pilsner, White Wine, Centro High Ball, Beer Mug. Sippline™ come in multiple colours, allowing distinct differentiation for each family member. Packaged in medical-grade-no-touch after sterilization "until you open"- sealed pouches are bacteria free. One of the objectives of offering Sippline™ is to help the users improve their hygiene and avoid cross-contamination from using glassware in a public place. Sippline™ is now available for purchase online on Amazon. At retail Sippline™ comes in a pocket-friendly dimension of 8 x 4 cm semi-circle weighing less than 5 grams at a pocket-friendly price.



Chef's Choice

Knife is said to be 'life' of a chef. In fact, holding on to a good quality of knife is as important as for any user in the kitchen. In this very segment the most exclusive branded knife of India, which has been closely associated with star hotels and catering units is Remington Steel. Over the years the company has won an essential place in the commercial kitchens of India. The knives are made from tough, carbon stainless steel that ensures greater edge retention. These knives are heat treated and tempered in an inert atmosphere.



Remington knives are appreciated due to its sharp, long lasting edges, user-friendly shapes and sizes and wide range that it offers. The wide range includes French Cook's Knives, Paring Knives, Steak Knives, Vegetable Knives, Carving Knives, Slicing Knives, and many more. Remington Knives are fully forged to shape from high tough, Carbon Stainless Steel that ensures greater edge retention. Remington Knives are heat treated and tempered in an inert atmosphere. Edges of Remington Knives are ten times sharper and longer than the conventional knives. They are known for their full-length tang for perfect balance and for easier and less tiring cutting.

Quality of Remington Knives is at par or above as compared to imported knives. They are precisely handcrafted and finished with each blade honed to an exact perfection and lasting experience.

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Giffard Syrups

Originated in France, Giffard is one of the leading names in fruits and plants syrups. Émile Giffard was a dispensing chemist living in Angers. Blessed with an inquisitive mind and a gourmet taste, he invented Menthe-Pastille, followed by lemonade & orangeade. Five generations later, the family business still bears the GIFFARD name and is providing the best of the products worldwide. A favourite amongst Chefs, culinary experts, mixologists, professional bartenders and pastry chefs, Giffard is known to provide an astonishing variety of flavours to choose from. They offer a very large range of pure sugar, highly flavoured and



colourful syrups which have been pasteurized to ensure perfect preservation. They use the sugar which comes from French sugar beets which are transformed into naturally white sugar. Made from 25% of concentrated fruits juices and selected plants extracts or spices, these syrups have a three-year shelf life. The versatility of their innovative flavours is their speciality. They can be used to make simple drinks topped with water or flavoured hot beverages, cocktails etc. A trusted name in the industry, Euro Foods is proud to introduce them to the Indian culinary scene.

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Core team at ASC carries expertise of Hospitality industry and Information Technology. The company started with a goal of most versatile and parameterized IT solution to meet IT requirements of different kind of properties, operational processes and all level of users. During its journey of last 23 years, ASC customized it's solution to various client-requirements and delivered regulatory compliances in time.

HotSoft has been rigorously tested in live environments and beta-test sites, and hence has attained full stability. Designed with Strong software architectural principles and standard industry processes, Hotsoft easily become a lifeline of day-to-day operations.

With their product development team, ASC constantly evolve to meet newer technology and business requirements. With regular Customer Feedback and continuous efforts ASC ensures their philosophy of Living Software. Customer Service is first priority at ASC and 24X7 support aims issue-resolution and zero loss of business. Parametric adoption of client-side operations helps ASC to achieve quicker time-to-market.

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A Mentor Seeking Work Satisfaction for His Team!

Madhav Kasturia, Founder and CEO ZFW Hospitality



Madhav Kasturia is the Founder and CEO of ZFW, a Hyperlocal-Fulfilment Platform. ZFW Hospitality was started as a takeout store - 'Beijing Street' in 2015. In 2020, ZFW launched its first set of 8 Cloud Kitchens in the 'KIK' Format. Today, ZFW is running 80+ Internet Restaurants across 35+ Cloud Kitchens in Delhi.

Through multiple pivots over the last six years, ZFW Hospitality's portfolio has grown to include both B2C & B2B services and has been successful in positioning it as India's fastest growing expansion Platform.

Madhav did his graduation from Delhi University, alongside scaling (growing the business) his delivery kitchens. He was in college when he decided to venture in the cloud kitchen space. A start-up and tech enthusiast, Madhav loves understanding customer behaviour across the web and mobile. His specialties include GTM Strategy, scaling up a venture from scratch, understanding and interpreting online customer behaviour, launching new product lines, and forging mutually beneficial alliances across networks. He also believes in giving back to the start-up community and is a mentor at multiple start-ups. In an exclusive interview with Sharmila Chand, he talks about his brand and more...

What is your work philosophy?

My philosophy at work is getting things done fast- while constantly learning & never giving up! I like to empower my team, get them to brainstorm, & challenge me with their ideas.

Aristotle's famous quote, "Pleasure in the job puts perfection in work," has also resonated with me since day one.

How do you define yourself?

Driven & detail-oriented individual, who believes in creating value & happiness for others around.

Tell us about your work model and how you work with 300+ cloud-based restaurants?

ZFW helps F&B & D2C brands expand delivery in new geographies using its network of tech-enabled dark stores. We help solve pain points for brands unable to scale up due to limitation of capital & bandwidth. We partner with existing cloud kitchen facilities & optimize their idle capacity through a revenue-sharing model.

How is the company faring revenue-wise?

We've been growing 20% MOM & expect to increase that in the next 6 months. The business grew significantly

during the pandemic as brands were quick to shift focus from offline to online channels, hence augmenting the need for dark stores & hyper local fulfilment. So, we were instrumental in helping brands get closer to old & new customers across geographies.

How other brands can be benefited by collaborating with ZFW Hospitality?

F&B & D2C brands can expand to multiple geographies with Zero Capex, Zero Rentals, Zero Salaries, & Zero Utilities. It's a pay-as-you-go model. They can continue to focus on their product & delighting customers while leaving the rest to us.

What are your business expansion plans?

Currently we have the presence in NCR, Mumbai, Pune, & we are planning to launch operations in South India shortly.

In your opinion, what is the future of the cloud kitchen platform business?

The cloud kitchen market is huge! There are 3+ million underutilized facilities & 10,000 (& increasing) consumer brands that are looking to scale operations across geographies but face unending challenges such as high CapEx, fixed costs, operational inefficiencies, lack of access to technology,

& thin profit margins. This is where we aim to step in & empower using our sustainable asset-light model & technology at the core, where stakeholders also help enable each other's strengths to optimize resources & grow.

What tips would you like to give to budding entrepreneurs who want to enter this industry?

My advice to all budding entrepreneurs that wish to build for the F&B, Cloud Kitchen, & D2C markets:

You MUST spend ample time on the ground with stakeholders to understand their processes, challenges, & motivations.

Expect a lot of initial resistance regarding changing conventional practices or concepts- get comfortable with being uncomfortable.

Start with a niche & then go omni-channel. In a large consumer market like India, it's difficult to grow sustainably through just one channel. Eventually, you have to be present where your customers are: which is both offline & online.

Hire lean, follow a lean approach, & don't be afraid to pivot.

Keep your feet on the ground & focus on building.

Don't worry about the noise in the start-up ecosystem.



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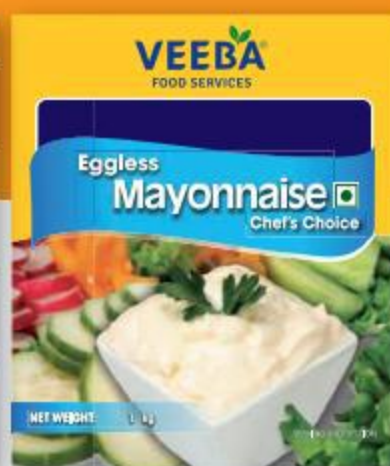
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