

HAMMER

Food & Beverage

Dec-Jan 2021 • Volume XVIII Number 3 ₹ 100

Business Review

Business magazine for food service & food retail professionals

Food for Thought



Business

Whisky... A Spirit to Raise Your Spirits

Trend

Culinary Trends 2021!

Agri

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The year 2020 has gone now leaving memories not planned by anyone. Though the year left us disappointed, however every cloud has a silver lining. Everyone wants to forget their woes and look forward to a bright and cheery future. There is lot to learn for 2021, and more specifically, what we can learn from each other's experiences. Professionals are now looking for Innovative and challenging ideas that will take things to the next level. The pandemic had an ominous effect on the food & beverage industry. We at HAMMER are committed to provide our platform as a catalyst for change in the Food & Hospitality industry.

The subsequent unlock, which has started in a phased manner, has not eased the problems of the restaurant industry due to the SOPs that have to be followed by the restaurateurs. The cover story discusses on how the industry plans to tackle the after effects of the lockdown.

Whisky is compared to liquid sunshine whose pouring into a glass is like light music for whisky lovers. It's amazing taste and flavour and large number of varieties makes it one of the most popular drinks in the world. Business Story discusses the growing trend to pair whiskies with complementary food and its variations providing opportunities for concocting enticing and flavour some cocktails.

The Trend story take view of Chefs on how the focus has shifted on consuming healthy and wholesome food as it now the right time to once again harness those virtues and work towards health and wellness. In the Focus section F&B professionals talks about how they are upbeat and hopeful about regaining the confidence of their guests through planned strategies. Guests are now expecting an eating out experience in a restaurant to contribute to their cherished future memories. Operations story views how guests have become experimental and are looking out for innovative experiences in their eating out ventures.

Food & Beverage

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Ronise daluz, Unsplash

Cha Bar Opens New Outlet in Kolkata

Cha Bar, the first of its kind urban contemporary space that created a rage in Kolkata in the year 2000, turning tea from a dry page in history to a lifestyle drink, opens its second outlet at Allenby Road, Kolkata. Following the success of its flagship outlet in Park Street, Kolkata, the new Cha Bar offers an extensive range of teas and cultural preparations besides a wide range of delicacies.



Cha Bar at Allenby Road is spread across 900 sq. ft with its stylishly designed ambience. A classic combination of regal black and white with sleek interiors, make the new outlet look fresh and luxurious. Spaciously curated with a blend of modern architecture and heritage essences, Cha Bar is all set to take its customers on a deluxe gastronomic ride, making one spoilt for choice with an assortment of teas blended and prepared with precision after exhaustive research; served with personalized and informed service.

The new Cha Bar offers the signature Cha Bar menu including more than 150 varieties of tea ranging from Organic, Herbal, Bubble Teas, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Moroccan, Russian, Sri Lankan, South African and Thai Teas. The food menu brings the best of Kolkata and the world with the crowd-puller Fish and Chips, Fresh Salads, yummy Keema Samosas and a variety of cakes to lure in the sweet-lovers. As an introductory offer, customers will be given a complimentary cup of Cha Bar's famous Masala Cha with every order.

Today, Cha Bar has its multiple outlets in Bhubaneswar, Kolkata, Noida, Mumbai and New Delhi. To complement the collection of Teas, Cha Bar offers a wide selection of Ala Carte savories along with fresh wholesome salads, finger foods, classic English Tea Sandwiches and other bakery items.

Bikano Launches Multigrain Chips in Two Appetizing Flavours

Bikano has launched two variants of multigrain chips for health conscious food lovers and patrons. Fresh on the heels of coming out with a flurry of gift hampers for the recent Diwali dhamaka, India's most loved food company has kept the celebratory spirits 'high' with this launch.



Under the brand name Treatos – an apt moniker signifying giving oneself a great treat – Bikano has positioned the multigrain products, named Chatak Masala and Tangy Tomato, as a healthier alternative to the conventional potato chips. Bringing together the goodness of an assortment of grains including rice, wheat, corn and pulses, the brand aims to give the food lovers the sheer joy of savouring the crispiness and crunchiness in terms of taste of regular potato chips while also taking care of their nutritional requirements. In terms of pure taste, whereas Chatak Masala caters to the taste of those with a craving for the hot, spicy and the peppery, Tangy Tomato is a tomato-based sharp-flavoured mouth-watering offering for those with a palate for the piquant who often like their taste buds to be challenged and excited.

Mindful of the sensitivities of customers, at the same time, the products have been launched at fairly modest price points. Both the product variants have been launched at a convenient price point of Rs. 5 only.

"With more and more people increasingly becoming health conscious and wanting to opt for healthy and nutritious snacks, there has been a latent demand for healthy snack products which could be similar in taste and texture to the widely popular potato chips. We wanted to meet that demand by coming up with these two multigrain chips products. While Chatak Masala is a classic spicy savoury in a healthy form, Tangy Tomato again offers a nutritious alternative to traditional potato chips," explained Manish Agarwal, Director Bikano.

Robert Mondavi Dinner Hosted at Grand Hyatt

Christopher Franzen and Sudip Majumder hosted Robert Mondavi Dinner for elites at Grand Hyatt, a splendid evening attended by people who came out of their homes after a gap of nearly nine months. The weather made it a perfect situation for a 'sit down' dinner.

The evening started in the bar of Grand Hyatt with glasses clinking and Sparkling flowing. It was a representation of the new normal with people wearing masks and maintaining a safe distance while chatting and catching up-having met after such a long time. Later, the venue shifted to a Gala, specially set up at Celini for the Robert Mondavi Dinner wherein each guest was welcomed by the host.

The dinner was a four course dinner



involving exotic sumptuous menu paired with wines from Robert Mondavi. It started with Woodbridge Merlot served alongside appetizers, followed by Woodbridge Sauvignon Blanc paired with the soup. Main course was paired with Woodbridge Cabernet Sauvignon which was also the most sought after wine of the

evening. Finally, dessert was paired with Woodbridge Merlot.

Grand Hyatt's menu for the evening was out of the world and people thoroughly enjoyed the exotic wine and food pairings. Some of the prominent people who were present at the dinner were Sameer Malkani, Founder of FBAI, Pratiek Kishnani, Director of Radha Marketing, Fernec Jari, Consulate general of Hungary, Pallavi Naidu Kezia, Malcolm Mascarenhas as well as people from USDA and the US Consulate. There were several more important HHNI people who attended the sit down dinner. The event was jointly hosted by Robert Mondavi in association with Grand Hyatt and supported by Lake Forest wines and Radha Marketing.

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Kyndal Group Launches

Kyndal Group has introduced 'The Macallan Reflexion' and No.6, a part of The Macallan Masters Decanter Series in Delhi NCR, Haryana, Maharashtra, Punjab, and Chandigarh. The Reflexion embodies the foremost influence of first fill sherry seasoned oak casks and The Macallan No.6 delivers classic Macallan character in a celebration of richness and spice. Both the cask collection Reflexion and No. 6, characterized by the exceptional oak casks - sourced, crafted, toasted and seasoned under the watchful eye of the Master of Wood, are delivered to the demanding specifications of the Whisky Mastery Team. It is the oak that makes the greatest contribution to the quality, natural colour and distinctive aromas and flavours at the heart of this single malt whisky.

Kyndal Group has also introduced UK's favourite Whisky The Famous Grouse' in



India. The Famous Grouse will be available in select stores across Delhi, UP, Haryana, Maharashtra, Punjab, Goa, and Assam. The Famous Grouse brings together the finest ingredients creating a natural spirit before the passage of time imparts a wonderful flavour from

handcrafted casks. Every cask is nosed prior to blending ensuring highest quality and consistency with each batch along with an uncompromising dedication to the mastery of the blend, and a unique investment in wood quality.

Pushpanjali Banerji, Brand Director at Kyndal Group commented "We are proud to announce the availability of The Macallan's luxury collections- The Macallan Reflexion and No. 6 - Cask Whiskies in the market. A whisky connoisseur's delight- Reflexion brings together American and Spanish oak cask to achieve the perfect balance of flavours and the initial light citrus zest with new oak gives way to the succulent sweetness of lemon and orange. We are also proud and delighted to bring UK's favourite blend of the finest malts and exceptional grain whisky, The Famous Grouse, in India. We are hopeful that with our large distribution network, we'll be able to ensure the finest whisky experience available within a person's reach."



AFPPL Launches Zilli's

Anuha Food Products Pvt. Ltd (AFPPL), a Food Processing startup, recently launched an array of Ready-To-Cook products under its dehydrated gluten-free F&B brand Zilli's. The brand aims to cater to the rising demand for Ready-to-cook healthy fixes amidst the pandemic. With its recently launched Dehydrated Onion Flakes and Garlic Cloves, customers can now enjoy healthy yet hassle-free cooking during the festive holiday season. Zilli's also include other exciting range of processed foods such as Dehydrated Ginger, Red Onion powder, Tamarind, Kolkata Jhal Muri Masala, Fruit Rolls, etc. that can reduce cooking time and effort.

Speaking about the launch, Anubhav Bhatnagar, Founder & Director, AFPPL, said, "In India, onion and garlic are an indispensable part of cooking, however peeling and chopping can be time-consuming. Our new product range, i.e. Dehydrated Onion Flakes & Garlic Cloves will ensure to reduce the cooking time with no preservatives and no loss of nutrients. Following all the necessary food protocols and guidelines from FSSAI, our products has a shelf-life of 12-18 months from the date of manufacturing."



ORCO Launches Organic Condiments and Spices

ORCO aka Organic Condiments announces the launch of 32 new products, adding to their vast portfolio



of 100% natural, healthy and certified organic condiments and spices. The new products include Organic Black Pepper whole, Organic Green Cardamom whole, Organic Nutmeg, Organic Garlic Granule, Organic Onion Flakes, Organic Natural Sesame Seed, Organic Cinnamon Whole, Organic Black Mustard, Organic Raisins, Organic Ginger Powder, Organic Black Chia Seed, Organic Flax Seed, Organic Sunflower Seeds and many more.

On the launch Pragya Agarwal, co-founder, ORCO said, "The spices at ORCO are free of pesticides or any other hazardous chemicals; they are hand-ground on a hand mill (chakki) to retain their natural properties, taste, colour and aroma. The brand pursues the vision to offer certified organic and ready to eat handmade products by their all-women workforce worldwide and expand its collection even further with superfood FMCG products that are 100% clean and healthy. All the products at ORCO are lab tested and hold all major certifications."

The Sassy Spoon & House of Mandarin Awarded

The Sassy Spoon and House of Mandarin were honored with the Travel & Hospitality Award 2021 under the Food & Restaurant Awards programme. The Sassy Spoon, the trendy resto-bar, and House of Mandarin, the authentic oriental restaurant, were selected as top favourite restaurants amongst the 300+ nominations received for this year's awards. The restaurants received the award based on the aggregation of reviews from multiple third-party sources. The restaurants secured their win with their uniqueness, quality of services and facilities with exceptional levels of customer care across a number of categories.

Speaking on the achievement, an elated Rachel Goenka, CEO & Founder of The Chocolate Spoon Company said, "It is indeed an honour to win the Travel & Hospitality Award and especially in a year like 2020. The award celebrates the exceptional people at The Sassy Spoon & House of Mandarin who work tirelessly to make these brands the success that they are today. Customer delight will always continue to be at the heart of all our endeavours to offer unparalleled experiences."





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Milk Magic Enters Indian Consumer Market

Jayshri Gayatri Food Products (JGFP), one of the leading dairy product manufacturers in the Central India, has now forayed into the Indian domestic consumer market with its dairy products brand 'Milk Magic'. The company has a strong foothold in the B2B segment of the domestic as well as the export markets over the years.



Constantly delivering to the high-quality standards of the export markets and an overwhelming acceptance from the global consumers, JGFP saw a huge potential of penetrating in the Indian domestic consumer market with a wide product basket under its brand 'Milk Magic' in the states like Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Orissa and Telangana among others in the first phase.

The product range includes the fresh and frozen varieties of Paneer, which is one of their most popular product offerings, Butter - salted & unsalted varieties, Pure Ghee variety, assortment of Cheese, Khoya, and Indian sweets such as Gulab Jamun, Rasgulla, Rasmalai and Kaju Katli.

Kishan Modi, Managing Director, Jayshri Gayatri Food Products (JGFP), expressed, "The household demand for dairy products saw an exponential rise due to the pandemic led lockdown imposed in India. However, due to the supply chain interruptions many national brands were unable to fulfil this heightened consumer demand. We saw this as a huge opportunity to penetrate our dairy products range in the domestic market as the consumer was now open to try out local/regional brands that were easily accessible to them during this period."

"JGFP has been producing hygienic and high-quality dairy products acceptable in the overseas markets for over seven years. We were confident that the Indian consumers will like our products and as anticipated we started to get repeat orders," he further added.

Milk Magic will be subsequently launched in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala and later in phase 3, it will enter Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and North Eastern states as well. The company has robust plans to build its own distribution channel with hubs at each City followed by retailing outlets. The state-of-the-art dairy products manufacturing facility at Sehore - Madhya Pradesh, presently processes 4 lacs litres of milk per day to produce high-in-demand dairy products such as fresh and frozen varieties of Paneer (25 MT capacity), Butter (30 MT capacity), Whey Powder (15 MT capacity), Cheese variants (20 MT capacity) and Skimmed Milk Powder (30 MT capacity) on a daily basis. The company is setting up another new plant with modern dairy equipment for manufacturing of Salted Table Butter (2 MT Per Hour capacity), Mayonnaise (1 Ton Per Hour capacity), Table Margarine (1 Ton per Hour capacity), along with a Cold Storage with 800 BPD capacity.

Biryani by Kilo Opens in Pune

Biryani By Kilo, a Biryani and kebab chain, has launched its first dine-in outlet at Wakad in Pune, Maharashtra. This newly launched outlet is set to deliver authentic & delicious Biryani & Kebabs to Pune locals. Biryani By Kilo's newest outlet exudes an inviting, comforting and yet Royal Dine-in experience. The restaurant offers a wonderful vibe, outstanding service offering authentic Nizami cuisine including Fresh Handi Biryani, Kebabs, Kormas & lip-smacking desserts.



With the aim of becoming the extension of one's dining room, BBK also has four delivery restaurants in Pune at Kharadi, Baner, Wanowrie and Wakad for last one year. Its six delivery outlets in Mumbai and one dine-in outlet in Thane has all biryani lovers in the State, hooked. Biryani By Kilo has distinctly served Hyderabadi, Kolkata and Lucknowi dum-cooked biryani in the traditional way to more than 1 Million.

The premium food chain has 40+ outlets in Delhi NCR as well as Lucknow, Kanpur, Jaipur, Dehradun, Chandigarh, Mohali, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Bhopal, Indore, Mumbai, Pune, Bhubaneswar making it pan India most loved & premium Biryani & Kebab Delivery Chain.

Nutritive Cherries from Chile



The Chilean Cherry Committee of the Chilean Fruit Exporters' Association (ASOEX), alongside the Chilean Embassy in India and the office of the Chilean Trade Commission - ProChile, has launched the very first generic promotion campaign in India to introduce this delightful fruit - Cherry - to the discerning health-conscious Indian consumers.

To mark the mega launch, Mr. Juan Angulo M, Ambassador of Chile to India inaugurated a promotion campaign at Foodhall, Chanakyapuri. The retailer had set up an attractive display of Chilean Cherries and reported good sales.

Speaking on the occasion Ambassador Angulo remarked that, "The Chilean cherries are prized for their flavour and superior quality and the country is one of the largest exporters of cherries in the world. The fantastic taste of the juicy, sweet pulp of these cherries is loved by consumers across the world and I am delighted to see them in India."

Speaking on the India campaign for Chilean Cherries, Sumit Saran, In-Country Marketing Representative remarked, "We foresee immense potential of Chilean Cherries in India. Production of Cherry in Chile is 100% counter seasonal to Indian cherry production that happens in June/July. Chilean cherries will be in the market in December and January. It is a perfect time for a fruit like Cherries, as demand is high for Christmas, New Year and the festive period of Pongal, Valentine Day etc. Our campaign is called Cherry-sh Every Moment and we have chalked out an extensive retail strategy to take this delicious fruit to discerning Indian consumers across the country. These cherries will be available both with retail fruit sellers and e-commerce platforms," Saran added.

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Bakels India Opens New Baking Centre

Bakels India's newly opened Baking Centre at Mumbai is an innovative "experiential space" that will enable Craft, Artisanal, and Industrial Bakers to get the best out of a creative environment to develop & test new product concepts using a broad array of Bakels' world-class ingredients. Spread across 5000 sq.ft., it will also serve as the new headquarters for Bakels India. It joins the elite group, becoming only the 9th baking centre in Bakels worldwide.

A large office, a separate meeting space and a baking centre create a pleasant workspace. The meeting room which can accommodate a large group for meetings and presentations, also provides an excellent view of the adjacent baking centre. The baking centre is fully equipped to demonstrate all aspects of bakery products - bread, cake and confectionery. Customers can engage in live baking sessions with facilities for co-creating recipes jointly with Bakels' skilled team of hands-on chefs.

In addition, an R&D facility aids in testing and developing products.

According to Vikas Toshniwal, Country Head, "Bakels is a long-term visionary player and one of the most renowned in the bakery ingredients space for decades. The company has been widely successful globally when it comes to understanding customer's specific



Vikas Toshniwal



needs, in-depth customer engagement, product customizations by way of co-development of creative concepts, backed by thorough technical knowledge and application expertise. The Baking Centre is a fantastic platform that supports this cause that Bakels follows diligently, and with India being one of the highest potential markets for growth with untapped latent needs in bakery ingredients, Bakels has strategically invested in the new Baking Centre at Mumbai."

Grover Zampa Vineyards' New Launch

Grover Zampa Vineyards has launched the Grover Chêne Grande Reserve Chardonnay, a white wine which has been aged for 9 months in French oak barrels. This gives it a rich creamy texture with a toasty flavour and hints of vanilla. Made from premium Chardonnay grapes, this wine is the best expression of Indian terroir and an extension of our estate bottled Chêne Grande Reserve. Exhibiting the subtle and elegant aromas of nectarine, hazelnuts, vanilla, and crème brûlée, this delectable wine consists of concentrated flavours of apple, pear, and green plums.

Speaking on the new addition, Vivek Chandramohan, Chief Executive Officer said, "Chardonnay is a Noble Grape variety in white wines! It is complex and sophisticated with high ageing potential. With the help of our expert viticulture team, we have tested this variety and succeeded in producing grapes that were right to make high-quality reserve wines. We strongly believe that Indian market has a huge potential for Chardonnay. It is truly one of the most popular grape varieties in India and across the globe. Owing to its extremely delicate and challenging process to grow, very few wineries in India produce a Chardonnay however we have been successful to have achieved it with our experience and vision. We are sure our patrons will savour the distinctive flavours and unparalleled taste."

The Grover Chêne Grande Reserve Chardonnay pairs beautifully with light and delicate food such as steamed or grilled fish, lightly cooked crab, prawns, pasta and risotto with spring vegetables. The texture and smoothness of the wine also pairs well with cream enhanced soups, mildly spiced creamy Indian curries with spinach, potatoes, fish and poultry.

Slurrp Farm Rolls Out Cake Mixes

Slurrp Farm, kids' food brand, has introduced an exciting new product range of four cake mixes. Demonstrating their commitment to encourage healthy eating amongst kids and their loved ones, the new cake mix range is preservative free, maida free, with no artificial colors or refined sugar. Available in four variants, including Fudgy Chocolate Brownie, Chocolate, Coffee, and Vanilla, these cake mixes are easy to make, saving health conscious mums and home-bakers from the hassle of combining heaps of ingredients. To ensure guilt-free indulgence, these cake mixes are made using multi-grains such as Oats, Jowar and Amaranth, and come with a sachet of unrefined raw brown sugar as an optional sweetener.

According to Shauravi Malik & Meghana Narayan, Co-founders, Slurrp Farm, "The recent lockdown witnessed home baking as an emerging trend with families trying their hand at baking, however it continues to be a tedious process and growing health concerns hold us back from indulging in all things sweet. Taking inspiration from the scenario, Slurrp Farm took the leap, and decided to create a healthy yet tasty shift."





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Masterclass with Chef Saransh Goila and Olives from Spain

Olives from Spain participates at IHE Expo with a Live masterclass conducted by Saransh Goila to surprise his Chef colleagues with creative recipes using olives from Spain to create his version of Indian tapas. 'I love Olives from Spain' campaign took the opportunity to participate in the virtual show hosting a live Master class presented by its brand Ambassador Saransh Goila to show professionals from the hotel, catering and hospitality industries the potential that olives have, their incredible versatility, simplicity of use and the surprising touch olives give to any dish.

Saransh demonstrated 2 recipes inspired by the Spanish gastronomic concept of "Tapas" (eating in small portions), which has become a global trend in recent years.

The first recipe is a new version of the all time classic Kulcha, a Black Kulcha made by using a very creative element, black olive powder. Black olive powder is made by dehydrating black olives to pull the moisture out and blending them to a fine powder. It is a nutty, sweet, salted and bold taste in the mouth. Black olive powder is used as an olive salt, a condiment, a seasoning as well as a plating element in many European restaurants.

The second recipe is a mouthwatering Green Olive Thecha with Jerk Mutton Bruschetta, beautifully presented on Mini Thalipeeth made with bhajani atta. The thecha is made by mixing juicy green olives and pounded green chilly with roasted



'Black Olive Kulcha'

Recipe by Saransh Goila

- 400 gm Black Pitted Olives from Spain
- 400 gm Maida / Plain Flour
- 1 tsp Salt
- ½ tsp Baking Soda
- 1 tsp Baking Powder
- 80 gm Jalapenos
- 2 tbsp Olive Oil 40 gm Curd
- 20 ml Milk Preparation:

1. Place olives in a tray to dehydrate them in an oven at 60-70°C for about 4-5 hrs or in a dehydrator at 40°C for about a day.

2. Make a powder of the dried olives in a blender.

3. Knead a soft kulcha dough by mixing the maida, olive powder, curd, milk, baking powder & soda and salt.

4. Make sure that the dough looks grey or preferably black in color. Keep the dough aside for proofing.

5. After half an hour, portion out the dough into the required size of balls. Roll the balls flat and top them with sliced jalapenos, pressing them gently a bit like a Focaccia Bread.

6. Now bake them on a Pan, Tandoor or in an Oven at 180 degrees for about 15 min.

7. Apply Olive oil on top once cooked well.



peanut, giving a nice kick, consistency and texture to this recipe.

There are no boundaries to what one can create with olives stated Saransh. Olives are full of flavour and personality. A food that fits in a wide variety of recipes because it contains the five basic flavours.

'I love Olives from Spain' has been present in the Indian market since 2014 to inform the Indian consumers of the possibilities of olives. Spain is the world leader in table olive production and it exports olives to more than 120 countries. The main markets for Spanish olives are the USA, Italy, Germany and France. Since 2007, Olives from Spain has targeted other potential markets too.

India is identified as a country where consumption of olives is steadily increasing. To continue with this positive trend, this campaign is focused on presenting ideas for integrating olives into the Indian diet and highlighting their potential as a low-calorie, nutritive snack that can be adapted to different palates with many different possible marinades using Indian and Mediterranean spices.



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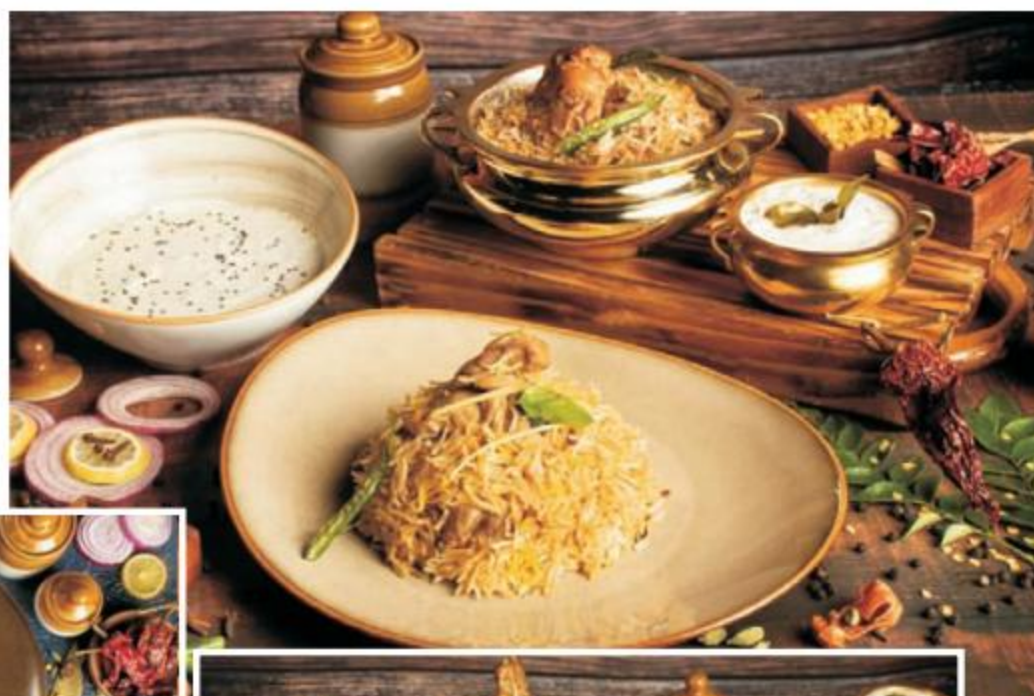
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ITC Hotels Launch The Biryani & Pulao Collection



'Ten Flavourful Favourites Now Available Pan India'

ITC Hotels' tradition of culinary excellence is reflected in its well-researched cuisine concepts that underline the brand's objective to showcase the best of Indian culinary offerings. Reinforcing this belief, ITC Hotels today announced the expansion of its cuisine offerings with the launch of 'Biryani & Pulao Collection'. United in its Diversity, Biryani and Pulao have permeated every region with their universal appeal. The Biryani & Pulao collection embodies the dining legacy and finest cuisine offerings from ITC Hotels.

Authentic recipes served at select banquets, these preparations have been a favourite of many for decades. Curated with great thought, the 'Biryani & Pulao Collection', brings forward ten gems from heritage kitchens of India. Fine aromas, distinct taste, textures and simplicity that takes you back to tradition. Carefully prepared and perfected over the years by renowned masterchefs of ITC Hotels, the 'Biryani & Pulao Collection' can now be savoured by all.

Anil Chadha, COO-ITC Hotels says, "The Biryani & Pulao Collection is a strong reminder of our culture. At ITC Hotels we make significant investment in cuisine research. The richness of India's ingredients, the back story of each preparation and the passion of our team to make this story be heard louder, encouraged us to create this collection and bring the aromas closer home. This collection covers biryani and pulao from all four regions-north, south, east and west. Crafted with the utmost care and hygiene to ensure your well-being and a safe dining experience, the 'Biryani and Pulao Collection by ITC Hotels' is an ode to the legendary dishes, crafted by the Master Chefs of ITC Hotels for diners to enjoy."

The new menu has been introduced at a price range of INR 625 to INR 825. Each Biryani (chicken, mutton or vegetarian) is an ideal meal for one with a choice of either Mirch Baingan kaSalan or any

one of the three raitas: Anarkheera Raita/ Onion Pachadi/ Sarson Raita. Complete your meal with one of India's most popular desserts, from the Dum Pukht kitchen, the signature "Shahed-E-Jaam", with our compliments. The menu comes with dietary indicators, enabling diners to pre-advise on allergy ingredients.

The Biryani & Pulao Collection is available on prominent food aggregator's platform, Zomato, Swiggy&EazyDiner. In addition, the collection can be ordered via the ITC F&B App and Takeaway option. All deliveries will be enabled via ITC Hotels' in-house car fleet with the 'SAFE Car Promise'. The special take-out counter at each ITC Hotel has also been enhanced with hand sanitizers and thermometers to corroborate the health parameters of local food delivery partners. ITC Hotels has also enabled 'no contact' deliveries on all pre-paid orders and has implemented stringent measures and protocols, including mandatory temperature checks for all Chefs and Food & Beverage associates as part of its safe 'WeAssure' programme.

A lot of thought has been put in the packaging after study of factors such as temperature, distance travelled, mode of transport, consumption techniques, re-heating norms and more. The food is packed in environment friendly corrugated paper boxes. Easy to have on the go or order in for a celebration or get together.

Enhanced focus on quality, standardisation of ingredients and production processes across ITC Hotels ensures a uniform culinary experience irrespective of the hotel location. ITC Hotels would commence The Biryani & Pulao Collection venture with 6 cities and 11 Hotels which include -ITC Sonar and ITC Royal Bengal (Kolkata), ITC Maurya (New Delhi), WelcomHotel Sheraton New Delhi, ITC Maratha (Mumbai), ITC Grand Central (Mumbai), ITC Kohenuur (Hyderabad), ITC Kakatiya (Hyderabad). ITC Gardenia (Bengaluru), ITC Windsor (Bengaluru), ITC Grand Chola (Chennai).

Realta Ventures Acquires London Bubble Co.

Realta Ventures has announced the acquisition of premium Waffle brand, London Bubble Co. The expansion coheres with the company's vision to make the waffle studio one of the best quick-service restaurants across India and drive the 'short-grub' culture among new-age diners. The strategic move is expected to revive the three-year old pioneer Waffle brand.

This acquisition also paves the way to expand and innovate across the length and breadths of the country as London Bubble Co. enters a strategic alliance with Café Coffee Day, a homegrown retail cafe chain. LBC's shop-in-shop business model with CCD will enable it to scale up its footprint in the country and is touted to be the largest partnership with presence across 150 outlets of CCD's café network. With an aim to provide the perfect 'Waffee' (Waffle & Coffee) moment, guests can enjoy the heavenly pairing of artisanal coffees with scrumptious and loaded waffles.

Launched in 2017, London Bubble Co. has become a staple for Waffle lovers across the country. Previously at 74 outlets spanning across 10 states, the brand will now boast of retail visibility across 24 cities. India's café culture has grown exponentially in the past decade and now it is ready to incorporate more in its repertoire. Waffles offer the perfect opportunity for India's work weary young population to socialize, celebrate, and foster friendships in a truly global manner. This partnership will also help popularize waffles as a dessert in India's tier 2 and tier 3 cities, creating a strong footprint for LBC in non-metro cities. With this wider network, LBC also aims at driving up continued scalability and accelerating its demand to achieve its assessed revenue projections in trailing months.

LBC will also have an all-new menu fostering guilt-free indulgence. With 'unforgettable' flavors forming the bedrock of its offerings, it will serve only oil-free waffles with increased focus on taste, freshness and flavor.

Commenting on the acquisition and the partnership with CCD, Mustakeen Sheikh, CEO and Promoter, Realta Hospitality said, "We are delighted to include London Bubble Co. under Realta Ventures' portfolio. We've entered into a distinctive position in an evolving market segment with strong prospects for growth. We are looking forward to taking an already established brand and

accelerating its pace by providing unmatched services and quality products at economically revised price points. Our partnership with Café Coffee Day is one such way to make inroads into new markets and bridge the gap between urban and non-urban population with pocket-friendly desserts that perfectly pair with coffee, all under the same roof. This opportunity presents a new wave of shared brand

experience while also expanding our customer reach."

Vinay A. Bhopatkar, CEO, Café Coffee Day said, "Thanks to the millennials and people exposed to global cuisines, there is a whole new culture around exploring food in India; CCD has been at the forefront on innovating on Food and launching new trends through its cafes. Waffles have emerged as the Instagram generation's one of the most loved dessert in recent times, indicating a tremendous shift in the urban Indian sweet palate. We are positive that this partnership will add another interesting inclusion to the CCD menu, giving our patrons more reasons to visit their favourite café. It is also a transformative experience for CCD in terms of scale in an on-trend industry. LBC's diverse offerings have forged a unique appeal and identity that will create a new dimension of dessert pairings for CCD and deliver immediate value to our customers."



Mustakeen Sheikh

With this acquisition, London bubble Co. promotes 'the new us' which includes a freshly curated menu, refer and earn policies, and other significant additions. From rich chocolates and bottled milkshakes to flavorful pre-packed ice-creams, the carefully curated new menu has launched exciting options for people to enjoy on-the-go. It has also kept in mind evolving health conscious lifestyles and introduced healthier waffles. New dairy-free milkshakes are also on offer for the new-age vegan and flexitarian consumer. Known for its variations, LBC is adding to their expansive range of bubble and pocket waffles, with new stick and dutch Stroopwafels on offer. These developments under 'the new us' concept have been rolled-out with the vision to make LBC an inextricable part of the country's waffle lexicon.



Food for Thought

The pandemic, which resulted in lockdown has had an ominous effect on the food & beverage industry. The subsequent unlock, which has started in a phased manner, has not eased the problems of the restaurant industry due to the SOPs that have to be followed by the restaurateurs. Getting the people, whose psyche, due to corona virus scare, refrains them from dining-out, back to the restaurants is only the tip of the iceberg. Reducing the seating capacity due to the social distancing enigma and maintenance of hygiene are some of the other major problems. According to a 2019 report of National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) the restaurant industry employs around 7.3 million people in the country. An adverse impact of the pandemic on this industry would have an effect on the country's economy. **Ashok Malkani** discusses on how the industry plans to tackle these problems and how long it will take for the industry to regain the pre-COVID status.

The organized Indian F&B industry was the largest single employer in the country with a workforce of over 7.3 million. The nationwide lockdown sent this industry in a downward spiral and there a possibility that nearly a quarter of the restaurants may stay shut permanently. India's \$50 billion restaurant industry is, according to National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI), likely to lose \$9 billion in 2020. Though the lockdown has eased off the industry has still not recovered from the effects of the pandemic. It is still facing several problems.

Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, Vice President, Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) speaking about the effect of pandemic on the industry says, "F&B businesses are finding it increasingly difficult to sustain and the consumer confidence has not yet returned. There is roughly eight months of hit in terms of depleting revenues, piling debts, exodus of labour, overheads including maintenance, utility bills, taxes, statutory fees and salaries, among other expenses. Today, the industry has opened but it is still operating at approximately half its potential owing to multiple issues. Today, the consumers are not entirely sure about eating out being safe. Additionally, hotel and restaurant establishments are required to operate in restricted capacities and have to take double precautions with safety and hygiene measures. Staff has yet to return and businesses need working capital which unfortunately, the Hospitality industry does not have access to.

Jaasjyot Surri, CEO & Co-Founder, SJL Hospitality and Foods Private Limited, declares, "The outbreak of the pandemic has brought about a groundbreaking alteration in what the world perceived as 'normal' for almost all the sectors and the F&B industry is no exception. While the F&B sector has managed to tide over the crisis, some of the initial challenges that the sector was compelled to face are food production difficulties, liquidity crunch, labour issues, the need for a more organized sector and improvised strategies for the sector to deal with the pandemic's ambiguity. Apart from these the post pandemic problems faced by F&B industry as a whole are mainly to ensure that the consumer feels safe to dine at the outlets, adapting to new technologies and consumer preferences and providing contact less food deliveries to name a few.

"It is no longer going to be survival of the fittest, instead it will be survival of the quickest. Hence there is a need for the



industry to be agile and acclimatize to the changing scenario."

Manish Kumar Pathak, Food & Beverage Manager, Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach, while speaking about the drop in demand, states, "There is a huge drop in banqueting specially from the corporate sector and MICE. The government's restrictions on the number of guests attending an event have further scaled down the revenue."

Kamlesh Salve, Executive chef, Hotel Mirador, Mumbai, asserts, "The industry is having immense operational difficulties. To maintain the social distancing regimen, authorities around the world have issued regulations that either prohibit dine-in guests or mandate limitations on the number of dine-in guests in the restaurant. If the corona virus outbreak persists for long, people will consume only essential items and avoid eating out. This will massively hit the number of foot falls in the eatery joints."

Uday Prakash, Food & Beverage Manager, Novotel Vijayawada Varun, laments, "The pandemic has had a visibly long-lasting effect on the F&B industry. Due to the lockdown, the foot fall has gone down which eventually led to a downfall in revenue leading to some staff members being laid off. This entire process has also indirectly affected our local vendors."

Sanket Thakur F&B Manager, The Resort Mumbai, affirms, "The lockdown has severely impacted the F&B services. Major food delivery giants such as Zomato and Swiggy have been functioning at just 10% of their total capacity. The National Restaurants Association of India (NRAI) has predicted an estimated loss of Rupees 80,000 crores for the F&B industry by the end of May 2020.

The association has also stated that over 7 million people who were dependent on the food & beverage industry have already lost their jobs."

Shutters Down

Though the government has eased lockdown restrictions the restaurant industry is still facing economic fallouts and many of them have still remained shut due to various reasons. Some of them have even downed the shutters forever! With the clients also being reticent to step out the restaurateurs have to adopt measures to attract them.

Kamlesh disclosed, "According to NRAI, 50% of the restaurants in India have shut down. The situation would worsen if the restaurants continue to be shut. I may mention that there are a very high proportion of fixed operating expenses in the restaurant industry and, as of now, there are only 5-6 restaurant chains that have cash reserves to sustain the impact of a lockdown if it extends more than a month. Currently, the industry is bracing itself for almost zero revenue in the immediate future and a drop of approximately 50 percent in the months thereafter. This is because restaurants work on about 15 percent EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization) margins."

Speaking about attracting customers he continued, "As it is said good health is good wealth."

Uday stated that the effect of the pandemic had been enormous. "Only 30% of the restaurants in Vijayawada have opened. Initially guests were reluctant to dine in the restaurants, but it is gradually picking up. As Novotel Vijayawada Varun is an ALL SAFE certified hotel, we follow strict



Kamlesh Salve



Uday Prakash



Manish Kumar Pathak



Jaasjyot Surri

hygiene practices and safety measures that help us gain customer confidence. Our way of following social distancing norms at our restaurants, and the sanitization processes, have been appreciated by many guests. This has also helped us in increasing footfalls."

Jaasjyot says, "It is still difficult to determine the exact number of F&B businesses that are shutting down. These are trying times and it appears that anywhere from 15-30% of outlets will see a shutdown, either permanently or for a long period such as a year or so."

Manish stated that Accor had certified Novotel Visakhapatnam as "ALL SAFE", which was the brand's latest comprehensive hygiene and sanitization program. He added, "We have introduced intensified hygiene and prevention measures to ensure guest and staff safety. On a daily basis, all these protocols are audited to ensure strict implementation of the same. With all these measures in place, we have been able to win the confidence of our guests and have slowly started to get our guests back in all our outlets."

Gurbaxish Singh, avers, "It is hard to identify the exact percentage of restaurants who have downed shutters permanently since there are several restaurants that have chosen to keep their shutters down and are undecided over their course of action. Then there are others that opened after the Government allowed restaurants to reopen but soon closed again due to one or several of the issues. However, just to give a ballpark indication, about 30 percent restaurants have shut shop permanently and we are regularly receiving updates about more such establishments that are on the verge of closing. This is bad not just for the restaurants but also for the millions of people employed directly and indirectly in the industry."

He continues, "The night curfew imposed by a few States in the country has only increased the troubles for restaurants. The FHRAI along with its regional Associations – HRAWI, SIHRA and HRANI – have been tirelessly representing the industry's issues to the Governments single-handedly since the lockdown came into effect. Our regional Associations made relentless efforts for getting the order withdrawn in Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka."

Speaking about ways to attract customers back he said that the industry was making all efforts to win back consumer confidence but it will take some time. "FHRAI's members have been advised to follow all the SOPs

as advised by the Government. There are quite a few establishments that have gone over and above the requirements to instill trust amongst their patrons by adopting contactless technologies wherever applicable. This is in addition to maintaining the required distancing norms within the premises. The Hospitality industry was the first to get acquainted with the safety protocols for COVID-19. Our hotels served doctors and other health workers during the worst phase of the pandemic, and we did a good job. The Hospitality industry also is a true Corona Warrior but unfortunately the Government does not acknowledge this as much as we had hoped."

Sanket declares, "As an industry, there are a very high proportion of fixed operating expenses; as a result, there is a risk, even in case of moderate revenue fluctuations. Currently, the industry is bracing itself for almost zero revenue in the immediate future and a drop of approximately 50 percent in the months thereafter."

"Attracting clients for Business property is a struggle as corporates will be following work from home policies till March. But when it comes to Resort properties, as per industry survey they all are doing good occupancy, as from March peoples are struggling in homes so the best gateways are the Resort Properties to relax."

Operating Under New Norms

There are several hurdles for the restaurateurs to overcome during the unlock period. Since the customers, who are scared of the spread of corona virus, are hesitant to visit the dine-in places, the restaurant owners have to assure that they maintain not only social distancing but also hygiene.

Jaasjyot states, "The basic difficulty faced by the restaurateurs and bar owners is to instill the confidence in guests that the hygiene measures and safety precautions are being followed. As per government norms, every guest entering the premises is asked to sanitize their hands using the sanitizer along with regular temperature checks being done for each and every person entering the premises."

"The restaurant kitchens are going through regular hygiene checks. The frequency of the fumigation in kitchens and deep cleaning of kitchens and restaurant premises has been increased as a preventive maintenance measure. In terms of raw materials, the kitchen ensures that the meats are stored and cooked at specific temperatures and undergo pre-checks at the store level as well



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as additional washing and cleaning before usage. Raw vegetables are cleaned and sanitized using the vegetable cleaners. These measures were carried out even during the pre-pandemic times but have gained more significance during COVID times and further checks have been installed in terms of fixing responsibility for these compliances. Social distancing is also strictly adhered to."

He continued, "The restaurants are emphasizing on the quality of service provided since fewer guests can be accommodated. The restaurants are also focusing on the takeaway and delivery of the products which earlier was more of add-on business. There is a definitive strain on the margins but the focus currently is on keeping the establishments afloat, along with happy guests and a satisfied team. Contactless dining eliminates a major component of the human interaction- the basic social fundamental of the restaurant experience and guests as well as restaurateurs are getting used to this new normal now."

Manish maintains, "In Accor we have implemented some of the most stringent hygiene standards and operational protocols especially in the kitchen and all F&B outlets to ensure guest and employee safety."

Sanket asserts, "Hygiene was always a part of kitchen schedules even before COVID. But post COVID there were many protocols which have been added into the usual way of working. We, at The Resort Mumbai, never used to keep disinfectant for cleaning purpose of the working area but nowadays it is compulsory."

He added, "After COVID guidelines have been introduced every restaurant is working with 33% of occupancy. Nowadays for each meal period we have started taking reservations as per time slot wise. There is no other option for catering more people in small designated area."

Gurbaxish Singh says, "The industry is taking all possible measures, to win back consumer confidence, but it is going to take some time. FHRAI's members have been advised to follow all the SOPs as advised by the Government. Some have gone beyond the requirements of the SOPs to instill trust amongst their patrons by adopting contactless technologies wherever applicable. This is in addition to maintaining the required distancing norms within the premises."

Kamlesh explains the methods being followed by the F&B outlet at Mirador Hotel Mumbai, for the safety of the customers, as follows :

- Mandating six feet or more of social

distance

- Having staff at the door enforce maximum-capacity rules
- Requiring customers to sanitize their hands upon entering
- Barring large groups from entering the restaurant
- Allowing only one person to enter for takeout at a time
- Having customers stay outside when waiting for a table
- Requiring reservation-only seating
- Usage of proper gloves to serve the customers.

As far as kitchen hygiene is concerned he says that pests are controlled by two means: Physical and chemical. "Physical means", he concedes, "is not 100% effective. Examples of physical control are: Electric Fly Killers, Rodent Traps, Sticky Fly Strips, Curtains, Bird Screens, Pheromone Traps."

He says, "Chemical control measures are much more effective than physical control methods. However, chemical substances pose possible risks to staff, so their use should be carefully controlled and monitored. Chemical substances also pose a risk to food contamination, so they should be used only under controlled and monitored conditions."

Uday states "Maintaining hygiene during the pandemic is essential for the safety of the diners. To ensure hygiene all staff members at Novotel Vijayawada

restaurants have to wear the PPE kit. Regular sanitization of tables and high touch points is one of the strict routines that we abide to after every use. All the groceries such as vegetables and fruits go through chlorination before we send them to our kitchen. We have a fumigation schedule in place which keeps the pests away.

"The guests understand the importance of social distancing and they extend their cooperation with us by patiently waiting in the waiting area until the tables get vacant and sanitized for them."

Universal Adverse Effect

Has the effect of the pandemic on stand-alone restaurants and the F&B outlets in hotels been different? It is believed that there is a universal adverse effect on the restaurants and bars irrespective of whether they are in the hotels or stand alone ones.

However, Uday says "F&B outlets in hotels are a bit better than standalone restaurants as we have in-house guests dining at the outlets."

Jaasjyot too is of a similar view. He says, "The F & B outlet at the hotels are affected but the intensity of the crisis could be less. Hotels have come up with different ideas to meet the ends. They have also started offering food delivery services and gift hampers as additional revenue streams."

Kamlesh speaks along the same lines but, he adds, "The F&B outlets in hotels have adopted some other methods to offset a portion of the losses suffered. Some of the tactics that restaurants in hotels have adopted are:

- Replacing buffets by TDH or A la carte services.
- Adopting mono portions for buffets
- Usage of disposable cutlery and crockery
- Some have introduced QR codes to read menus
- Ramping up delivery services"

Sanket reveals "The food and beverage industry has been hit particularly hard by this COVID-19 storm. Normal restaurant operations have screeched to a halt around the globe, and many businesses have been forced to pivot their offerings in a bid to survive. Only pizza shops and other similar eateries already equipped to deliver and fulfill carryout service have come out of this relatively unscathed. For the vast majority, however, it's been a total disaster. And, sadly, many restaurants have closed never to return."



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli



Sanket Thakur

Need for Govt. Aid?

With social distancing being one of the essential SOPs the restaurateurs are at a loss to know how to make ends meet. The industry is in the doldrums due to the heavy financial losses being incurred. According to a study conducted by NRAI the estimated loss for 2020 could be a staggering \$9 billion. Is the industry expecting some aid from the government?

Gurbaxish Singh, disclosed, "There is much that the Hospitality industry hopes from the Government and FHRAI has made several representations with the concerned Ministries. Throughout the lockdown, the Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) has taken into consideration the most serious concerns plaguing the industry from all of its regional Associations in the East, West, North and South. We have requested the Government to offer us a sector specific package for the industry's revival. The Government needs to offer us loan extensions like the ones offered under the Prime Minister's scheme for loans below Rs.25 crores for SMEs and MSMEs. The industry is in need of a one-time loan restructuring which is being denied at present merely because the industry doesn't qualify the pre-defined conditions for loan restructuring.

"The FHRAI has also requested that hospitality establishments be given a complete waiver of interest for the duration of lock down and moratorium period. There is a need for a concrete policy to support the hospitality industry which is the most affected sector due to the pandemic. As mentioned earlier, the industry needs working capital and should be supported by the Government through a soft loan. The loans should be given at a low rate of interest for the industry to stabilize and reach the pre-COVID levels. A favorable policy has to be drawn by the Government for the survival of the hospitality industry."

Sanket adds, "As a part of hospitality professionals, we want government to relax some Liquor license fees for hotels. Also, as a special year annually fees of liquor licenses if reduced it will be of huge support."

Uday believes that tax exemption and some relief in electricity bills would help the management to survive in this phase.

Manish too is of a similar view. He wants the government to grant tax relief till the restaurants' revenues stabilize.

Jaasjyot declares, "The Indian hospitality sector contributes to almost 9% of the country's GDP. There are



various recommendations and requests put forward through various trade associations at the State and Central level. As far as government measures benefitting the sector are concerned, we are hopeful of economic benefits and reliefs that will help generate employment opportunities. We further expect the Government to permit regular operating hours soon to help restart full-fledged operations and instill customer confidence in bringing back the economy to the pre-Covid level. We understand and appreciate the measures taken by the Government in maintaining a balance from time to time."

Back to Normal Life

The industry may be down but it is definitely not out. There is hope that the industry will bounce back. But how long will it take for the industry to return to pre-COVID days?

Kamlesh believes that it can take 1-2 years. He paints a bleak picture by stating, "Industry estimates suggests that one in every four restaurants in India may never open again, and NRAI estimates that over 22 lakh people employed within the industry will lose jobs as losses shoot as high as Rs. 1,00,000 Crores. The first and foremost challenge that restaurants will face after the COVID pandemic is around ways to manage the sea-change in consumer behaviour to the very idea of dining out. With the rise of the 'conscious consumer', restaurants maintaining the utmost hygiene and adopting digital menus & digital payment solutions would weather the slowdown better."

He adds, "The only silver lining to the corona virus pandemic for Indian F&B industry will be that, like demonetisation in 2017, it will force the adoption of digital innovation. Given that the restaurant

industry is an enshrined experience-led market, dining-out and restaurant-tech platforms are working hard to modify and improve restaurant-diner interactions to create an environment of convenience, trust and support."

Uday's cautious estimate is "If the new COVID strain (which has begun in the UK recently) won't have an effect in India, then we can expect to return to the pre-COVID period in the next 6 months."

Manish is also hesitant to estimate the time frame. He says, "I think till the time vaccine is not introduced and the travel restrictions are not eased down, it won't be possible for the restaurants to reach pre-COVID standards."

Jaasjyot states, "Restaurants would take time to return to the pre-COVID scenario. We are hopeful that pre-COVID level business volumes will be realized by the latter part of 2021. This highly depends on the availability of the vaccine and further guidelines issued by the governments world-over during these testing times that we are living in."

The food and beverages industry accounts for ~ 3% of India's GDP and is the single largest employer in the country, with more than 7.3 million work force. The nationwide lockdown set this industry on a downward spiral with some predictions suggesting that nearly a quarter of all restaurants may shut down by the end of 2020. India's US\$50 billion restaurant industry is set to lose an ~US\$9 billion in 2020 according to the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI).

To offset these challenges and regain profitability, the industry has been adapting and innovating since the lockdown was lifted. New service offerings and COVID hygiene protocols are emerging in the sector to gain customer confidence and lift revenues. ■



Whisky...

A Spirit to Raise Your Spirits

Whisky is a drink that is cherished by both men and women of all ages. It is a drink that is slowly sipped, with friends or alone. Whisky is compared to liquid sunshine whose pouring into a glass is like light music for whisky lovers. Its amazing taste and flavour and large number of varieties makes it one of the most popular drinks in the world. Whisky is also considered to be good for your health. It also makes you lose weight. **Ashok Malkani** takes a look at the variety of whiskies available and the countries manufacturing this nectar. Questions like what is the food that pairs well with this golden liquid and the cocktails that can be concocted from this liquor are also discussed.

To raise your spirits there is nothing as good as sipping the spirit of your choice. As Frank Sinatra remarked, "Alcohol may be man's worst enemy, but the Bible says love your enemy." And the most coveted spirit, according to majority of the people, is Whisky. It just whisks your worries away! And as they say one good thing leads to another so just one drink does not seem to be enough. Like Mark Twain said "Too much of anything is bad, but too much good whiskey is barely enough." It is said that Love makes the world go around. Whisky makes it go round twice as fast!

Whisky, according to experts, can only be called as whisky if it's been aged in oak, although the minimum length of time varies from country to country. Whisky is also spelt as whiskey. The extra "e" comes from Ireland and travelled to the U.S. in the 18th century with Irish immigrants. The Scots spell it as whisky. This is also the spelling for all whiskies except those that come from Ireland and the U.S.

The term whisky, or whiskey, comes from the Gaelic word "Uisge Beatha," meaning "Water of life". Phonetically the word sounds like "usky" which, eventually came to be pronounced as "whisky".

Whisky is not just a drink. It is much more. There are lots of reasons why people



love whisky. Some people love it for the warmth it brings to them. It takes the edge off a long day.

There are several health reasons too for drinking whisky. Dr Jim Swan, hailed as "the Einstein of whisky" had, while speaking at EuroMedLab conference in Glasgow in 2005, said there were great health benefits for people drinking single-malt whiskies. The reason for this is that it contains ellagic acid, an antioxidant, which could absorb rogue cancer cells in the body.

It can also reduce your chance of having a stroke. It is believed that if you have just one drink a day it may provide protection

against an ischemic stroke. A 1998 study has found that a big shot of whiskey can help protect against heart disease, and boost the body's defenses against disease by raising the body's level of antioxidants.

So tipplers are drinking that "water of life" with gusto. But which is the age group that prefers whisky to other alcoholic drinks and do ladies opt for whisky?

Arnav Das, Beverage Manager, The Leela Goa, says, "Generally whisky preference cannot be differentiated by age groups; but many times you might also hear that Single Malts are for more seasoned drinkers, basically for the older age group





Arnav Das



Rishi Mehra



Pawan Sharma

as they understand and know how to drink it and have the pockets to spend on it. I say so, because the average price range for a Single Malt is higher than other type of whiskies. Thus blended whiskies are targeted towards a younger age group, those who would rather have their whiskies with mixers. But mixers, I may mention affects the taste profile of the whisky."

Speaking about women drinkers, he states, "Women have been adventurous in liquor consumption. The stereotype of vodka and wine drinking doesn't apply any more. With hundreds of flavour compounds, oak ageing; whisky has now become a matter of taste and not gender. Today around 30% of whisky drinkers are women, which was only 15% in 1990s."

Pawan Sharma, Food & Beverage Manager, Hotel Mirador, Mumbai, asserts, "Agewise I would say that whisky is preferred by both, the elder as well as the youth. However, as far as ladies are concerned, they are less inclined to consume whisky. I would say that the reason for popularity of whisky, as compared to other spirits is due to various reasons like taste, range, varieties and price."

Rishi Mehra, Director Food and Beverage, The Leela Palace New Delhi, avers, "Whiskies and Single Malts are loved by all ages and has crossed the favoritism of being "Men's Only" drink. Tastes and characteristics of Whiskies and Single Malts are so vast that there is always a whisky for every type of person, starting from sweet whiskies till peaty and smoky malts, from a basic blended malts till Aged Malts, single barrels. The whisky makers have left no stone unturned to ensure that they meet the taste buds of everyone and for all seasons."

Types of Whisky

Different grains are used for making different varieties of the drink – like barley, malted barley, rye, malted rye, wheat and corn.

Several Whiskies are named after their countries of origin like Scotch, Irish, Bourbon (American), Japanese, Canadian, and of course, Indian. But which is a preferred whisky in India?

Arnav believes that the popularity of a brand of whisky depends on the spending capacity of a person. He says, "India, being a country of 1.3 billion and being the biggest market of whisky consumers there are different perspectives."

He adds, "7 out of 10 Top selling whisky brands in the world are Indian; Top 3 being Officers choice, McDowell's and Imperial Blue. But these are whiskies in the lower cost end, not something you would brag about or take to a party."

Speaking about premium whisky made in India he states, "India's entry into the premium Whisky market has also been well received both, in Indian and international market. The leaders in premium Indian whiskies are Amrut, Paul John and Rampur produced Indian Single Malts. In my personal experience, pride in Indian consumers and love of trying something new in our international consumers, has been the reason why Indian Single Malts are gaining popularity."

He continues, "With regards to preference, Scotch whiskies are highly preferred as they have been market leaders for a very long time. The preference moves with its legacy and trust; Scotch entered India in early 1900's and since then has been a star of high end parties and banquets and since then it has been a

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mark of class. India is currently consuming 48% of the whiskies made throughout the world."

Pawan is of a different opinion as far as preference of Indian whiskies is concerned. He states, "Indian whisky is not as popular as scotch in international brands, because Indian whiskies are new in the market and have yet to make a good impact. In India people prefer both Indian and Scotch whisky. It all depends on the budget."

He adds "The countries that produce maximum whisky are Scotland, Ireland, USA, Canada and Japan."

Rishi reveals "In India, Single Malts are asked by most of the guests. Japanese whiskies are the new craze. A lot of guests have started asking for Japanese whiskies, as their characteristics suit the Indian palate a lot. Previously India was not known for its liquor but with brands like Amrut and Paul John, India has made a mark in the Whisky Map of the World. These are one of the fine collections of the Indian Whiskies.

Whisky Producing Countries

According to Statista, the statistics portal for market data, revenue in whisky segment is projected to grow to \$ 21,010 m in 2021. Most of the revenue is expected to be generated from India.

So which are the whisky producing countries and is Indian whisky popular abroad? These are questions which need to be answered.

Arnav disclosed that the countries producing maximum whisky are:

- India-3400 million litres
- Scotland-700 million litres
- USA- 477 million litres.
- Japan -94.5 million litres.

Canada- 54.2 million liters.

He adds, "With regards to preference, Scotch whiskies are highly preferred as they have been market leaders for a very long time. The preference moves with its legacy and trust; Scotch entered India in early 1900's and since then has been a star of high end parties and banquets. It has, since then, been a mark of class. India is currently consuming 48% of world's whisky."

Rishi states "Scotland is known for producing the most variety of whiskies for over a century. USA, Canada, Japan, Ireland and, nowadays, India are also known for producing a wide range of whiskies.

"Single malts are most in demand. Japanese whiskies are the new craze. A lot of guests have started asking for Japanese whiskies.

He adds, "Previously India was not known for its liquor but with brands like Amrut and Paul John, which have received many accolades and have stood strong among the top single malts of Scotland, India has made a mark in the Whisky Map of the World."

Pawan lists Scotland, Ireland, U.S.A., Canada and Japan as the maximum whisky producing countries. Speaking about Indian whisky he says, "It is not as popular as Scotch, in international markets, because Indian whiskies are new in the market and yet to make a good impact. In India, Indian whiskies as well as scotch are popular, depending on the individual's budget."

He adds, "Indian Whiskies like Amrut, Amrut Fusion, Paul John (Brilliance, Edited, Bold) are most popular in other countries. Denmark, Canada and the U.K. consume

most Indian Whiskies because of its nature, grains and their climatic conditions."

Foods Pairing with Whisky

Some people find it hard to imagine any cuisine that pairs with whisky. They consider the idea of drinking whisky with food as outré. They are skeptical about the idea of enjoying whisky with a meal. This is in contrast to other alcoholic beverages such as wine, ale, and beer that have a dated history of being consumed with meals.

But there is a growing trend, now, to pair whiskies with complementary food. Everybody, today, has heard about pairing steaks and exotic cheeses in the West. But steak in India? Good heavens!

But don't worry. Indian regional cuisine too works beautifully. The diverse flavours of traditional Indian meals and the abundance of spices make it the perfect match with whisky.

Pawan asserts, "In India everything goes with whisky (kabab, salad, main course etc.). Internationally people prefer grilled steak nuts and cheese, grilled chicken and barbeque fish/chicken."

Rishi states, "There is enormous variation in whisky flavours. The whiskies can be paired with all cuisines. Indian spicy food can be paired with malts like Laphroaig, Lagavulin, Talisker or with more subtle ones like Glenlivet and Glenmorangie."

Arnav articulates, "Whisky and food pairing is a very tricky business, one where you would like to create a perfect harmony of flavours between the whisky and food.

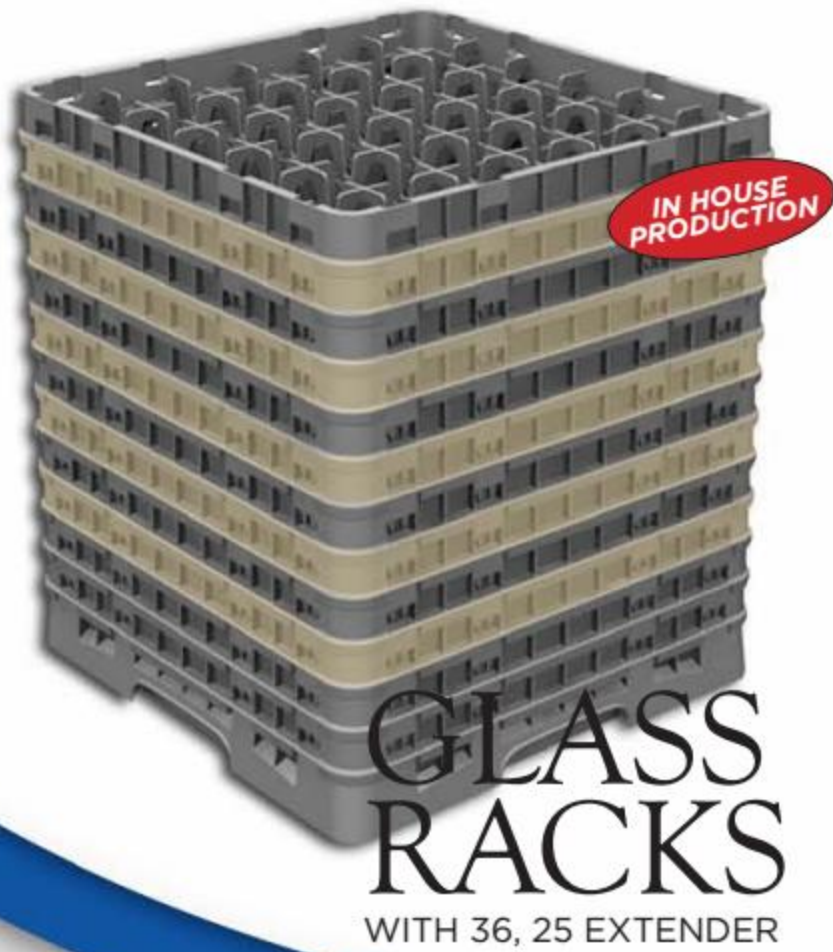
"Here is how you could pair them:

"Light fruity whiskies (Glenlough 12, Springbank 21, Glen Ord 25, Glenlivet 12 & 21 etc) could be paired with Light seafood and raw preparations like sushi, sashimi and tartare preparations. They also pair well with tropical fruit desserts.

"Medium Intensity whiskies (Aberlour 12, Glenfiddich 12 & 15, McCallan 12 & 18, Glenmorangie 10 etc) Pair with Game, lamb and sweeter and lighter pork preparations work really well. Root vegetables like beet, carrot, sweet potatoes and fruit cakes or dense desserts pair as well.

"Heavy and peaty whiskies (Lagavulin 16, Oban 14, Talisker 10, Laphroaig 10, Smokehead etc) pair with Shell fish pairs well with salinity of peaty whiskies. In meat it pairs well with aged meat, barbeque, roasted grilled and tandoor preparations. Works with highly flavorful cheese like blue cheese."





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Whisky Cocktails

When it comes to a bartender's cocktail cart it normally comprises of vodkas, tequilas and rums. These alcoholic drinks are the ones seeing the most cocktail action. The much loved bottles of Scotch, bourbon and Irish whisky are found to play the more subdued role of neat or on the rocks. Whisky comes in so many variations providing ample opportunities for concocting enticing and flavoursome cocktails. Why is the most popular brown spirit not in the reckoning for cocktails?

Arnav disclosed, "Whisky is used in making many classic and modern cocktails. Having whisky cocktails is kind of an acquired taste as it is made to balance the whisky style with other ingredients; whereas vodka is a neutral spirit and its taste is nearly unrecognizable in a cocktail."

He asserts, "Whisky is a very popular cocktail spirit and any cocktail menu is incomplete without whisky cocktails."

Speaking about the age group preferring whisky cocktails is concerned,



he states, "Popularity of whisky cocktails is not defined by age and gender its more about how much you have tried. Whisky cocktails are generally ordered by people who have been having them for many years or people who like whisky as a spirit."

Rishi revealed, "Whisky is used in making many classic and modern cocktails. Having whisky cocktails is kind of an acquired taste as it is made to balance the whisky style with other ingredients."

Pawan asserts that whisky cocktails are popular. He says, "There are several cocktails made from whisky, which are quite popular like sour whisky, Sazerac, Tom and Jerry, Manhattan etc."

As far as age group that prefers cocktails is concerned, he states, "I believe that cocktails, in general, are mostly preferred by the younger generation and ladies."

Whisky Cocktails

Boulevardier

Ingredients

Rye Whiskey- 45 ml
Sweet Vermouth- 30 ml
Campari- 30 ml
Garnish- Orange peel

Process

1. Pour all ingredients into a mixing glass with ice.
2. Stir it well. Serve in a coupe or cocktail glass.
3. Garnish with Orange peel



Manhattan

Ingredients

Rye Whiskey- 45 ml
Sweet Vermouth- 30 ml
Angostura Bitters- dash
Maraschino Cherry

Process

1. Pour all ingredients into a mixing glass with ice.
2. Stir it well. Serve in a coupe or cocktail glass.
3. Garnish with maraschino cherry.



Whisky Sour

Ingredients

Bourbon Whiskey- 90 ml
Angostura Bitters- dash
Lemon juice- 60 ml
Simple syrup - 30 ml
Egg white (occasional) - 15 ml
Garnish-Orange wheel

Process

1. Pour all ingredients in a shaker with ice, shake till chilled.
2. Pour in an old fashioned glass.
3. Garnish with orange peel.



Arnav Das, Beverage Manager, The Leela Goa

Old Fashioned

Ingredients

Bourbon or Rye Whisky- 1½ oz
Sugar cube- 1
Angostura bitters- 2 dashes
Plain water- few dashes

Process

1. Place sugar cube in old fashioned glass and saturate with bitters
2. Add a dash of plain water.
3. Muddle until dissolved
4. Fill the glass with ice cubes and add whiskey
5. Garnish with orange slice, and a cocktail cherry.
6. Serve in old fashioned glass



Mint Julep

Ingredients

Bourbon Whisky- 2 oz
Powdered sugar- 1 tsp.
Water- 2 tsp.
Mint leaves- 4

Process

In a highball glass gently muddle the mint, sugar and water

Fill the glass with cracked ice, add Bourbon and stir well until the glass is well frosted

Garnish with a mint sprig

Serve in High Glass



Carthusian Sazerac

Ingredients

Rye whiskey- 2 ½ oz
Green Chartreuse ¼ oz.
Syrup- ½ tsp.
Absinthe rinse

2 dashes lemon bitters

Lemon twist, for garnish

Process

1. Stir rye, Chartreuse, and syrup over ice in a cocktail mixing glass.
2. Add a splash of absinthe into a coupe glass, and swirl to coat the inside of the glass, then discard the absinthe.
3. Strain rye mixture into glass; top with bitters
4. Garnish with a lemon twist

Pawan Sharma, Food & Beverage Manager, Hotel Mirador



John Collins

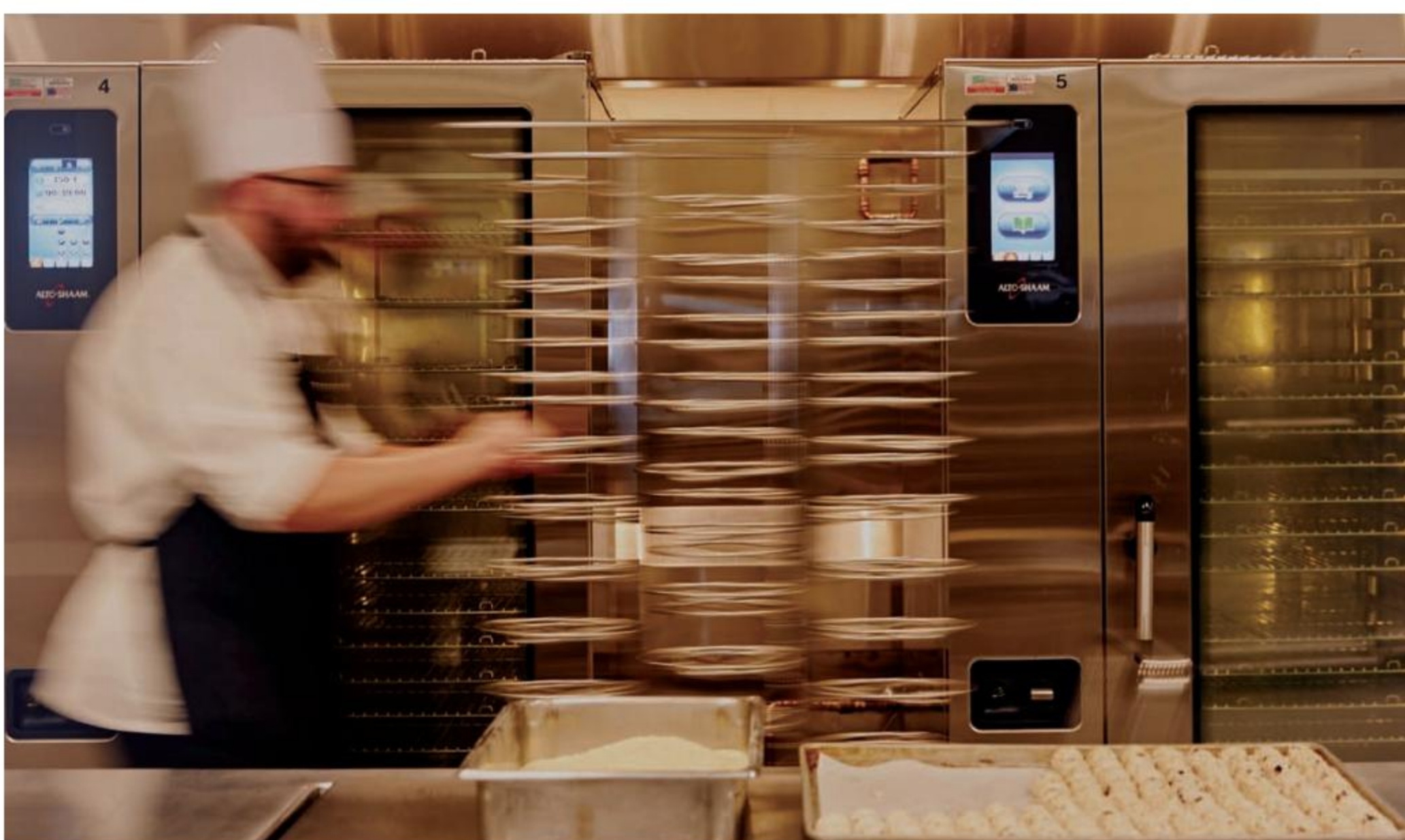
Ingredients

Bourbon whisky -1½ oz
lemon juice- 1 oz
Syrup- ½ oz
Soda- 2 oz

Process

1. Pour the bourbon, lemon juice, and syrup into a Collins glass filled with ice cubes. Stir thoroughly.
2. Top with club soda.
3. Garnish with a cherry and orange slice.





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Culinary Trends 2021!

By Sharmila Chand

The year 2020 brought dramatic changes in eating and living habits of people across the globe. Priorities have changed, as the focus has shifted on consuming healthy and wholesome food. Ancient medical virtues like Ayurveda, Yin & Yang and ancient Greek medicines, have all believed in the power of right food. Now is the right time to once again harness those virtues and work towards Health and Wellness. As we talk to Chefs and F&B professionals, we realize a common thread of thought towards predicting key food trends of 2021 – highlighting Healthy Organic Ingredients, Simple Recipes, Traditional Grains and In- Home Dining in Restaurant Style.

Key Food Trends in 2021

Megha Jhunjhunwala, Chef and Founder of Hearth & i

Consciously sourced ingredients

Going organic and natural with food ingredients is the need of the hour. Customers are continuously focusing on where their food items are being sourced from. Since there's a definite shift towards more & more plant-based eating since the last couple of years, patrons are consecutively supporting those brands who are very cautious while deciding on their menu options, waste exercise management, & packaging progresses.

Season driven menus

Changing the menu according to seasons will be a key trend – with fresh seasonal produce there are ample opportunities for enticing patrons with exceptional, varied menu choices.

Self sustainable eateries

The food quality is the most important

factor in determining customer satisfaction and behavioral intention. Self sustainable eateries will go a long way.

Intimate customised 'out of the box' offerings

Pandemic has led to a rise in intimate events and diners are looking forward to celebrate with 'out of the box' ideas.



"I have always believed food is prepared layer by layer, hence my newly launched brand, 'Parat' means Layer which is serving layers of Indian Flavours. I give my best every day at Parat, and wish to see Parat represent India one day on the global culinary map. My focus will be on the tribal recipes of India and evolving the recipes which are lost. I will put well-researched dishes in our new menu of 2021"

Chef Harangad Singh, Chef & Founder, Parat



"Blissful recipes will be a big trend in 2021, what we eat is what we reflect"

Chef Vineet Manocha, Vice President Culinary, Lite Bite Foods

Chef Vineet Manocha, Vice President Culinary, Lite Bite Foods

Healthy all the way

Health food is totally in. Immunity boosting foods are trending. The focus will be on choosing the ingredients carefully and eating well in the age of dieting. Wholesome nutritious food will be planned by us which is well balanced as per the principles of Ayurveda. Food also affects your mental health and in this age of pandemic anxiety, it's very important that we eat calming, nutritional food.

Heirloom and ancient ingredients

There will be a lot of experimentation on Heirloom varieties like ragi, barley, millets, teff and spelt. More and more focus will be on lost ingredients and lost recipes. Home chefs are bringing in a lot of traction on ancient recipes. It's not difficult in India to move back to sustainable heirloom ingredients as we just have to look back two generations. If I get stuck anywhere on sustainability, I just think what my Grandma would do in such situation. There is a lot of focus on reviving the old cooking methods, cookware, techniques and recipes. There is a growing appreciation for Pure Ghee and cold pressed seed oils which were used by our ancestors.

Rise of neighbourhood Foodpreneur

With growing awareness and campaigns about "Support Local Businesses", many

"2021 will teach the world the importance of Food for Good Health, Immunity & Sustainability like never before"
Altamsh Patel, Executive Chef | F&B Production, Oakwood Premier Prestige Bangalore

trained chefs will turn entrepreneurs, providing personalised, customized food solutions to limited customer base. This is also supported by the demand of "food with a story". Small menus, customized to needs, changing frequently to provide variety, local sustainability, daily subscription of meal kits, unpretentious dark kitchens etc. will get a further boost this year.

Upcycled food

We are all aware of the threat of food security and rising population. The severity of food wastage is catching up as a trend with the chefs. There will be a growing trend to reduce food wastage as much as possible and develop recipes which can make peels delicious. The trend does not just revolve around Blissful food from waste but also cocktails and beverages using food waste, peels and ingredients like apple pulp, orange peels etc.

Ajay Markan, Corporate Chef, Cygnett Hotels & Resorts

The pandemic has sure changed a lot of things for us. According to me, the top food trends in 2021 will be:

Local and Seasonal will be the Norm

Instead of imported, expensive ingredients and foods, chefs will opt for local ingredients and garden-fresh vegetables/fruits over exotic ones. Imported, frozen packaged foods will see a decline in sales. Regional cuisines will rise and people will start enjoying the host of flavors and cuisines that their region has to offer.



"Food Takeaway has emerged as a significant trend, more economical, convenient and time-efficient too"
Chef Amit Singh, Head Chef, Ophelia



"2020 has taught us a lot and one of the most important lessons has been to indulge in healthy habits. With that concept, the trend of 2021 will be to opt for healthier choices and fitter lifestyle. This can be done by choosing a farm to table menu where we have incorporated local ingredients to curate dishes and menus. In my opinion, it not only keeps the freshness, organic element intact but also makes one move towards a sustainable lifestyle. Also, we have seen a dip in the consumption of non-vegetarian items where people prefer environmentally friendly and healthy dishes. Thus we have noticed a natural switch to consumers eating more clean and healthy foods"

Janti Dugal, Food Director, Azure Hospitality

"Changing the menu according to seasons will be a key trend, it's definitely the time to redefine and refine our culinary offerings."

Megha Jhunjunwala, Chef and Founder of Hearth & i

Immunity Boosting Menus

People are more health and hygiene conscious than ever before. Whether eating at home, ordering in or venturing out for a snack. People are looking for foods that are healthy.

Delivery Services and Cloud Kitchens

What began with lockdowns/restrictions will continue way after it has been lifted and into 2021. While, being locked up and digital came with a host of challenges, on the flipside it also opened up lots of venues. People have come to understand and appreciate the convenience of ordering in. With options galore from a menu perspective, this aspect of F&B is burgeoning.

Sustainable Cooking

The pandemic has taught us one too many lessons. Adopting a waste-free outlook, conserving resources as well as reducing food wastage is priority.

Rise of Digital Menus

With social distancing being another norm, adoption of digital menus has caught up. Digital menus have infiltrated 50% of the market and are projected to grow 90% in 2021.

Chef Sagar Bajaj, Culinary Head, First Fiddle Restaurant

Immunity Booster Recipes

Recipes enriched with super foods. COVID-19 has affected our perceptions of health. Thus, nutritionally dense products and ingredients will be a rage.

Flexitarian Diet

It is all about adding new foods to your diet. People are moving more towards organically grown greens and plant based meals.

Local and Seasonal

Fusion foods from across countries, with a blend of local ingredients and taste. Local produce is far healthier, cheaper and safer considering the current times.

Back to Basics

Our focus will return on comfort and simplicity. Home style cooking, going back to our roots will be reflected in our culinary philosophy.

Avantika Sinha Bahl, Founder & F&B Head, KAMPAI

Unique Experiential Dining At Home

If the lockdown has taught people anything, it's the value of spending time at home with loved ones. While people were forced to be at home, a lot of them took to the kitchen and used the time to sharpen their cooking skills. Restaurants, hotels and cloud kitchens were forced to re-strategize and come up with unique and creative ways of providing experiential dining at home for people who were now finding it hard to step

"Homegrown and Healthy - Go Healthy & Go Local should be the Mantra of 2021"
Ajay Markan, Corporate Chef, Cygnett Hotels & Resorts



"Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food"
Chef Anas Qureshi, Brand Corporate Chef, MOLECULE

out. Customers now appreciate interesting experiences at home. Brands will need to continue innovating in this area.

Mindful & Healthier Eating

As people around the world are getting more conscious of their diet and their health, this trend will continue to grow in 2021. Cleaner and immunity boosting ingredients will play an important role. Mindful eating will be embraced.

Sustainable Cooking

Sustainability continues to remain an important issue in the industry. Waste free cooking, sustainable use of ingredients, proper disposals and so on will continue to grow in importance. There is a growth in plant based foods and veganism as well.

Reduced Human Interaction

There will be lesser human interaction due to safety. Buffets, sharing platters, etc may take a back seat. Pouring your own wine, serving your own food, maintaining distance between tables and so on may continue.

Chef Amit Singh, Head Chef Ophelia

Transparency Triumphs

To meet consumer demand it will be more important than ever for brands to up their transparency from clean label ingredient to ethical and responsible ingredient sourcing.

Tune with Immune

The pandemic has also taken the consumer trend of prioritizing immune health to the next level. This trend is fully expected to continue into 2021 with ongoing anxiety



"2021 will be the year of food from being Sensational to implying Sensible Eating as well"
Chef Sagar Bajaj, Culinary Head, First Fiddle Restaurants

stemming from the COVID-19 outbreak. In fact, three in five consumers shared that they are "increasingly looking for food and beverage products that support immune health."

Science and Nutrition

Technology is addressing demands for food & beverage with enhanced nutritional value, sustainability or ethical impact. I believe in progress in food and beverage through science. Food manufacturers need to leverage the expertise available in the industry to meet consumer expectations, especially when it comes to overcoming the challenges associated with creating great tasting healthy foods.

Consuming on Demand

One of the biggest changes seen in response to the pandemic is an increase in Omni-channel consumption. Consumers now have more access than ever to eat what they want, when and where they want it. Convenient meal solutions and restaurant-



"Staying Healthy, Eating Healthy and Mindful Eating is the Food Mantra for 2021"
Ashish Singh, Corporate Chef, Cafe Delhi Heights

Cafe Delhi Heights

branded products have brought dine-in tastes to home cooking.

Altamsh Patel, Executive Chef | F&B Production, Oakwood Premier Prestige Bangalore

South East Asian Cuisine

We will see many new Asian restaurants which will offer diners dishes from unexplored



"It is more important now than ever before to ensure hygiene in establishments."

You can no longer get away with sub standard service and hygiene levels, a much welcomed change"

Avantika Sinha Bahl, Founder and F&B Head, Kampai

regions of Asia.

Regional Indian Cuisine

Indian chefs are taking our regional cuisines forward to international level. Chefs will discover many forgotten recipes and use them in their menu.

Health Driven Concepts

Diners are very strict about dietary preferences while dining out, special meals like vegan, gluten free, diabetic, organic will be trending especially in top restaurants. Quality of ingredient will play an important role.

Sustainability

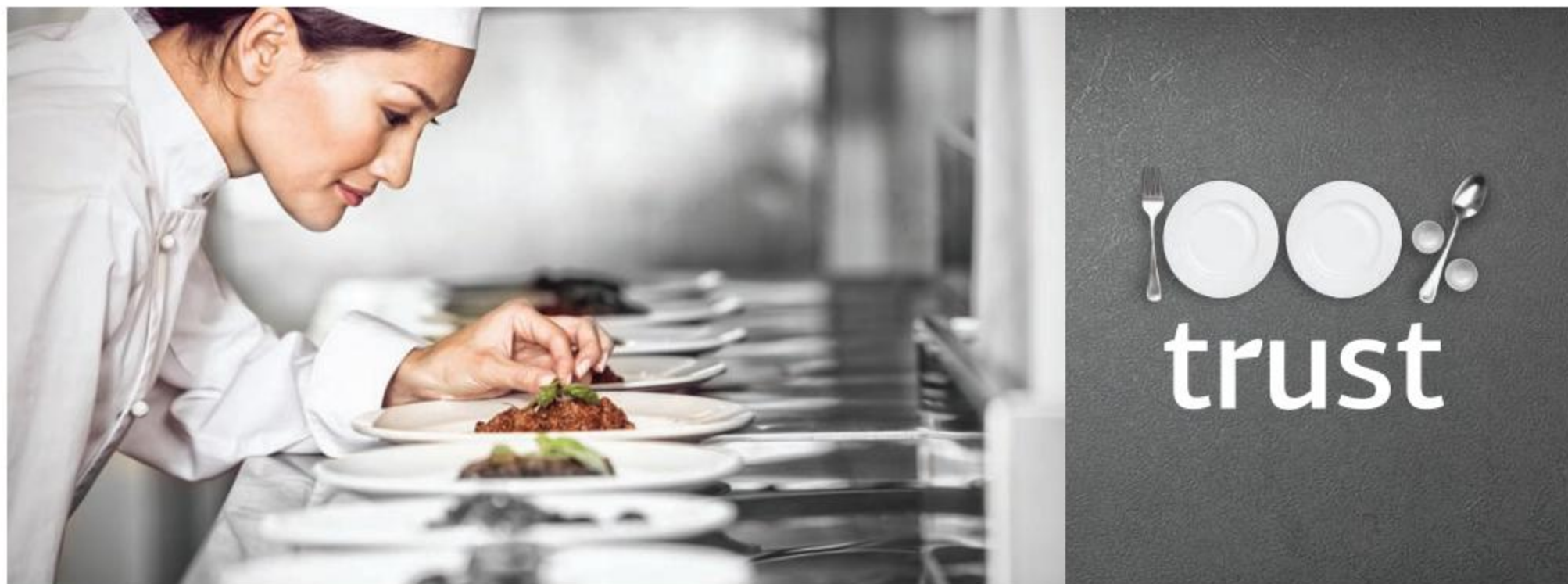
Sustainability in F&B will be very important; guests are likely to order food which is not only healthy but helps the environment by supporting local produce and also by giving importance to seasonal produce.

Chef Anas Qureshi, Brand Chef- Molecule

- A more proactive approach to nourishing the body and mind through wholesome foods.
- Comfort food will have a major part to play in 2021.
- Diners will relish nostalgic flavours, heritage cooking and simple non fussy preparations.
- Restaurant-style meals delivered at homes to provide restaurant like experience in customers' homes.

Ashish Singh, Corporate Chef, Cafe Delhi Heights

- Healthy and organic food options.
- Sustainable food items will be the trend to follow.
- Japanese cuisine will get popular and Bowl Meals will be relished.
- Healthy bakes will be the trend to look forward for.



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Coping Up The Impact of Pandemic Challenges

By Sharmila Chand

As with other industries, the food and beverage sector is making endeavours to bounce back in business. The impact of the pandemic has been a severe blow in a number of ways. Yet, the F&B professionals are upbeat and hopeful about regaining the confidence of their guests through planned strategies. We ask experts to share with us how they are gearing up to face the situation and adapted to the 'New Normal'.

Strategies & Processes In Place

Praveen Shetty, Executive Chef, Conrad Bengaluru

"As we were gearing up and redefining our safety assurance with our guests, our hygiene manager worked together to ensure every corner of the hotel, from lobby to guestrooms, to our back areas were hygienically well equipped and maintained.

Conrad brand always tries to aspire in every way, never just stay, stay inspired has always been experience. During the time when the lockdown phase was lifted and guests started visiting our restaurants and enjoying their staycations, to give them assurance on their very first step, with the global Hilton CleanStay programme already in place and with time and tested from our local traditional drink Kashayam infused with couple of immunity boosting ingredient were served as their welcome drink.

Conrad Bengaluru is accredited with ISO 22000 : 2018 certification where in preparation, cooking and serving food and beverages within the premises are in accordance with industries management standard procedure. And it is one of the few hotels to have this accreditation and to have an

in-house Lab to check each and every process since the pre-opening stage of our hotel. All food items were thoroughly washed. Fruits and vegetables (which are to be consumed raw) are being washed in 50 ppm chlorine and clean potable water before storage since the beginning of the hotel operations."

Sumit Sinha, Director of Food and Beverage, Crowne Plaza Today New Delhi Okhla

Heightened safety and cleanliness protocols:



"Health, immunity and safety are the buzzwords of the season and our Menu Planning is based on primarily these three aspects. Assuring our guests with right communication strategy with respect to enhanced cleanliness protocols and safety measures is the key to infuse confidence amongst our guests"

Sumit Sinha, Director of Food and Beverage, Crowne Plaza Today New Delhi Okhla

It is mandatory for all the team members to wear gloves, masks and face shields at all areas related to operations. We have included measures such as separate entrance and exit doors at the restaurants, availability of hand sanitizers, reimagined table set up, updated floor plans, disinfection of chairs & tables after every use and revamped reservations system. No collaterals are kept on the table as we have gone digital with our menus and payments. Crockery/Cutlery is only placed, once the guest gets seated.

To avoid cross contamination, restaurant and bar areas are roped off during non operational hours. We have clearly demarcated the roles and sections for servers and runners and defined primary routes for flow of food and guests to limit interaction between guests and colleagues.

For In Room Dining services, the server would not enter the room of the guests. The guests shall collect the food from the trolley at the entrance.

Assisted Buffet:

We have discontinued self service buffets at our restaurants. We are offering Assisted Buffet Service at our all day Dining restaurant Edesia for (Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner), weddings and other social events to minimise common touch points and enhance safety levels. With our servers standing behind the dish counters and unloading food on the plates of the guests, multiple contacts with the ladle is avoided. Floor markers have been placed across the buffet station to ensure adequate distancing. Infact, if we have curated special Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner On The Table menus for the guests to enjoy the variety of dishes with a

personalised touch.

Sumit Gulati, Managing Partner and Owner, Spice Market

- We did not fire a single employee and did not give them any pay cuts. We motivated them instead to put in more efforts and help us take our delivery brands to greater heights through consistency of food quality, feedback mechanisms and speed of delivery.
- We did not shut a single day this year including Diwali night and used the lockdown as an opportunity to make new customers.
- We introduced new products and services during lockdown such as WhatsApp Ordering for all our brands, introduced Asian and Pizza cuisines in our brand 'Call Chotu.'

Focus in Menu Planning

Praveen Shetty, Executive Chef, Conrad Bengaluru

"As wellness came back to reckoning, we were a step ahead to ensure a healthy way of lifestyle for our beloved guests, hence we incorporated special Aayush Ministry approved ingredient based menu. Our innovation did not stop, for the first time a Studio was launched with culinary fair where fresh food was cooked in front of the guest and served from the pan to the plate and this was named our very own 'Culinary Studio'.

We expanded our food and beverage to every corner of the city and delivered it the



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Praveen Shetty, Executive Chef, Conrad Bengaluru

way the guests wanted, this was when from 'take away' we came up with 'Do it yourself kits' as that was being preferred rather than stepping out of their safety zone.

Moving from one to the next, our teams kept innovating ways to keep our guests more excited and thrilled, during 4th to 16th Nov, this was a culinary fair of four states from Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, where in our Chefs show cased their culinary arts in form of dining option at our restaurants and which was themed as 'Battle of Chefs'.

Sumit Sinha, Director of Food and Beverage, Crowne Plaza Today New Delhi Okhla

Health, immunity and safety are the buzzwords of the season and our 'Menu Planning' is based on primarily these three aspects.

Health

Our food menu engineering is based on locally and seasonally produced items. This way we ensure that we use freshest and best quality ingredients for our recipes. Clean eating isn't just restricted to the ingredients we choose but also the cooking style we adopt. Focusing on healthy cooking methods such as slow cooking, baking, braising,

broiling, poaching, roasting helps food retain its nutrients and introduce very less toxins as compared to methods such as deep frying, microwaving or grilling (in certain cases).

Immunity

Crowne Plaza Today New Delhi Okhla has always focussed on immunity and health in our menu planning. Owing to that we had launched a Wellness Menu for our Health Club members last year. With immunity being the buzz word of the year, our all day dining restaurant Edesia has launched a full-fledged Immunity Booster menu. Our chefs went back to their grandmothers and brought back those kitchen secrets to curate the flavour of the season.

Few of our best selling dishes are- Ginger Idli, TCCB (Tomato, Carrot, Cinnamon & Beetroot Soup), Poached apple with couscous, Pesto Pasta with Pine nuts, Almond & Ginger Soup, Soya Milk with Almond Raisins and Saffron, Soya Smoothie with Papaya and many more. Each guest is welcomed with an immunity booster shot for welcome. We have also installed an all day Kadha station to wow the guests.

Safety

Sharing platters are a strict no in our menu engineering keeping in mind the safety concerns of the guests. We are focussing on individual portioned meals such as Indian Thalies, Bowl Meals as far as menu engineering is concerned.

Sumit Gulati, Managing Partner and Owner, Spice Market

"To keep everything fresh. Monthly updates to the menu as per seasonality and changing customer preferences."

Essential Tips To Bounce Back In Business

Praveen Shetty, Executive Chef, Conrad Bengaluru

"Hilton has always pioneered and advanced with technology and its hotel chains across the globe were the first to bring in 'digital check in facility' to the hospitality world. As most of our industry partners have implemented and focused on 'touchless' experience, we too made our menu visible through the guests devices by setting up QR code facility across all our restaurants.

At Conrad, the focus is always on showcasing our local culture and tradition. Be in a Strawberry tart sourced from Ooty, Or Cheeses from Kodaikanal, Hand crafted edible chocolate arts right from the Vidhan Soudha to Cubbon Park. It's a way

to promote the local culture traditions and promote locally sourced ingredients.

We firmly believe in using locally sourced ingredients at all our Food and Beverage destinations in our hotel. Mikusu being an Asian Restaurant where we source the finest seafood for sashimi from Japan. But all the vegetables right from pokchoy to mushrooms and greens are now being sourced locally from Ooty to Mysore.

'Tiamo', our pool side Mediterranean restaurant features healthy soups, salads and grills where it is sourced locally including the fresh seafood. Our breakfast at Caraway is completely focused toward the Local cuisine right from the Benne dosa, Thatteidli to freshly made Mangalore buns. Even our coffee is sourced from Coorg Kodugu peppercorn also known as Coorg. These Black peppers are used extensively in all our restaurants right from traditional Korrigassi to our Signature dishes in Mikusu. Apart from Black pepper, local ingredients would be many and we tweak our menus according to the season. Like the Avarekai beans in Bangalore during winters, we include it in our menus for stews, even as accompaniment for grills. Strawberry from Ooty also are a major inclusion in our dessert menu.

As the wedding segment was locally boosting up, and keeping the government guidelines in place. The magnificent 285 rooms and suites overlooking the magnificent Ulsoor Lake, renowned for the gourmet offerings it hosts 5 distinct dining venues, and one of the largest banquet spaces with venues spread across 27,000 sqft. complemented by a dedicated banquet porch for customized arrivals. The ease of doing business and flexibility offered by our team of experts has been key in the weddings space with all Hilton CleanStay and Hilton EventReady being in place."

Sumit Sinha, Director of Food and Beverage, Crowne Plaza Today New Delhi Okhla

Win the trust of the guests

Assuring your guests with right communication strategy with respect to enhanced cleanliness protocols and safety measures is the key to infuse confidence amongst your guests. This can be done through intelligently crafted messaging via press & social media, safety signage, E-posters etc.

Innovate with your offerings

Break the clutter and be creative with the staycation, work-cation dining experiences. Curate unique experiences with lucrative



Vijay

price point and flexible booking window to stand out of the crowd. For example, At Crowne Plaza Today New Delhi Okhla, we are offering Sajankoth, traditional seated dinner experience for the guests in the weddings to ensure safety as well as memorable experience. Our work from hotel concept also includes value added propositions such as food credit and gym access apart from regular wifi and tea/coffee servings.

Train your team members

Regular trainings and briefings of all team members is very crucial to keep them updated of the cleanliness protocols, service standards and also enables them to create a safe environment for each other as well as the guests.



"It breaks my heart to see chefs and restaurants suffering due to the pandemic. However one of the things I've always loved about being in the F&B industry, is how its one large family. Although we are technically competitors, it still means we can work to support each other. If you are having difficulties paying rent, the same goes for another restaurant and you can lease out space as a cloud kitchen for their delivery business"

Mariko Amekodomo, F&B Consultant and International Culinary Expert

Chef Vijay, Executive Chef, The Hideaway, Greater Noida

Ensure that we create confidence for our Clients and educate them on our Best Practices for Hygiene and Sanitisation both for Hotel / Resort Stays as well as Dining

Promoting Drive to Destinations where guests can travel in comfort and safety

Stay connected through this period with our Guests for assurance and confidence

Create Experiences for our Guests so that it is much more than just a Stay in our Hotels

Sumit Gulati, Managing Partner and Owner, Spice Market

- Quality and Consistency despite all adversities
- Improving Efficiency in business through technology and effective SOPs rather than cost cutting measures that may affect brand quality
- Observing micro trends in business to find opportunities for growth.

Mariko Amekodomo, F&B Consultant and International Culinary Expert

Offer Home delivery that provides an elevated restaurant experience at home. This includes innovative packaging and family style meal kits. I've seen Asian restaurants offering DIY hotpots that include a disposable aluminum pots and heating elements for making steaming pots of soups. I've seen Thali kits that include table size banana leaves for the authentic experience at home. In addition to giving your customers something new and different to try, it also makes their food more Instagram worthy, which just helps with virality and attracting new customers.

Customized drink kits (sans the alcohol) are becoming popular on many take out menus. Majority of customers enjoy a signature cocktail with their meal, but don't have all the ingredients at home. These cocktail kits allow the customer to try a signature drink at home. All they need to do is add their own liquor (or soda for a mocktail) and they have a high end beverage ready in seconds.

Investing in marketing and digital technologies. While it might seem difficult to spend money when business is slow, it's the only way people are going to know you are operational and see what you are offering. Make sure you are on 3rd party food delivery apps, you maintain good reviews and are optimized for high visibility. ■

White and Sweet Delight

By Jhuma Biswas

Lychee is a tropical tree, which is native to the Guangdong and Fujian provinces of southeastern China. Its height generally varies from 13m-28 m. The sweet fleshy fruit of the tall evergreen tree is also known as lychee. The fruit belongs to the soapberry family.

The outer protective layer or rind of lychee fruit is green when the fruit is immature, but it turns to pink red or red in colour when the fruit becomes ripe. The rind of lychee is roughly textured and covered with small protuberances. It is inedible, but inside the white flesh is edible, sweet and delicious. Further inside the white flesh is a dark brown seed, which is again inedible.

Cultivation and Production

There are references of lychee in China, which dates as far back as 2000 BC. During the 1st century AD, fresh lychees were a popular tribute item in the Han dynasty in China. However, the cultivation of lychee is documented since the 11th century only. Cultivation of lychee began in the southern China, Malaysia and Vietnam around 1060 AD. Lychee was introduced in the west during the mid 17th century. Lychee entered India during the 18th century, through Burma.

Tropical or sub-tropical climate is conducive to the growth of lychee. To be more specific, high summer heat, rainfall, and humidity are required for the growth of lychee. Well-drained, slightly acidic soils, rich in organic matter are ideal for the cultivation of this delicious fruit. The fruit's highly specific climatic requirements make its production not as abundant as say apple or banana. Few countries in the world produce lychee.

Today China is the highest producer of lychee in the world. India, Taiwan, Thailand, Madagascar and South Africa are the other major lychee producing countries in the



world. Presently, India is the second largest producer of lychee, and like in population, only China is ahead of us in this regard.

In India, among the states Bihar produces maximum lychee. West Bengal, Jharkhand, Assam and Chhattisgarh are other important lychee growing states in India. *Shahi*, *Elaichi*, China, Rose Scented, *Bedana* and *Bombai* are some of the major varieties of lychees grown in India.

Culinary Delights

Lychee has several culinary applications. Of course, it can be eaten raw after removing the inedible rind, but it can be used in fruit salads too. Lychee can be enjoyed in the form of a refreshing lychee juice or lychee shake or lychee smoothie. Lychee mango smoothie is a heavenly drink.

Lychee can be used to prepare delicious mocktails and an array of heady cocktails. Lychee lemonade can also be a wonderful beverage, if prepared well. All these beverages can be apt to give a sweet cool feel to the scorching Indian summers,



which would soon approach us. More and more restaurants in India should have these lychee-based beverages in their menu, which are likely to be liked by many. Lychee wine or wine made of lychee is a wonderful dessert wine.

Lychee can also be used to make simply ethereal lychee ice-cream. Lychee can also be used in pudding. That is not all. Lychee can be used to make out-of-the-world lychee cakes too. It is about time more bakeries use lychee in their cake recipes, which can give their cakes a novel appeal among the consumers. Lychee muffins can also be made.

The Health Edge

The health benefits of lychee are also many. Lychee is well endowed with Vitamin C, and Vitamin B-complex. Lychees also have fairly decent amounts of copper and potassium, both having potential health benefits. Potassium contributes to the heart health.

Lychee is rich in antioxidants. Antioxidants can protect us from free radicals and oxidative stress, and can keep arthritis away from our lifestyle if taken in sufficient quantities.

Lychee also has a fair quantity of flavonoids such as Epicatechin and Rutin, which may reduce the risk of cancer, diabetes and heart disease. Lychee is also spruced with fibre, which improves metabolism in the body. From animal studies one can get indication that lychee extract may help fight liver cancer. Lychee is believed to be of safeguard against asthma.

One can say that lychee with its varied culinary usage, delicious taste and impressive health benefits deserve more abundant presence in the recipes of India's restaurants and bakeries. It is about time our food service industry has more applications of lychee in its products and liquid concoctions, which has the potential to garner great consumer appreciation. ■

A Magician with Chef's Hat!

Chef Harangad Singh, Chef & Founder – Parat



Many people with a jaw-dropping bend towards any other field, for example bartending, in this case, tend to be lacking on the culinary side – not so with Chef Harangad Singh. Keen to explore his hidden passion, Chef Harangad after graduating in Hotel Management and working as a Commis for 3 years,

enrolled at the Taj's Culinary Management training program. Here, he learnt the basics of cooking as well as the different techniques involved in cooking. Today he is a young chef, cooking at the very high level. Passion for innovation is one ingredient that this dynamic chef brings in abundance and one that can truly be the most important aspect of his culinary career.

Recipient of several prestigious Awards, Chef Harangad specializes in Indian cuisine, and over the years he has been able to carve a niche for himself in classic, innovative and Nostalgic Indian food which focuses on freshness, the use of local ingredients and most importantly feeds the diner and not only impresses them with theory. His formative years at Taj Vivanta Bengaluru and Varq at the Taj Mahal Delhi and Tres Dubai working under perhaps some of the finest chefs helped groom his style and concept of the cuisine. Above all, he believes in honest-to-goodness taste. Chef Harangad has travelled extensively across the country to entrench himself in the various elements of regional Indian and Nostalgic cooking. Inspirations from diverse flavours of India, the bounty of Delhi markets and where his passion stemmed from aka his palate, all reflect in the previous restaurants that is Prankster and PraPra Prank at Biggie Hospitality where he was the Corporate Chef. 'Parat' is his first venture as an entrepreneur...naturally his best foot forward!

In an exclusive interview with [Sharmila Chand](#), he talks about his philosophy of cooking, area of expertise, his inspiration and more...

How do you define yourself?

I see myself as representing my country on global culinary map.

What is your philosophy of cooking?

My philosophy is to create a drug, once you will try then you will become an addict to my 'Parat' ('Layers') of flavours.

What is your area of expertise?

I have done my specialization in Middle Eastern and Awadhi cuisines. Currently I'm performing evolved Indian cuisine.

Had you not been doing this then what?

I would have been the sexiest bartender of this planet because my creative instincts come from bar!!

What is your source of inspiration?

Nature is my source of inspiration. Every living thing made by God inspires me as there is creativity in everything around me. Every creation of God tells me that creativity is limitless.

What has been the most rewarding moment in your career?

When I received the 'Big F - Best Young Chef 2019' special award by Chef Ranveer Brar.

How has the journey been so far? Any major challenges you faced?

I never use word 'Challenges' as I always see them as 'Possibilities'.

What skills are necessary to be a good chef?

Focus

What prepared you the most for your career?

The magic of flavours always keep me excited to create flavours touching all the senses.

Your Strength?

Acceptance is my strength

Your Weakness ?

My excitement is my weakness.

How do you de-stress yourself?

Spending time with my dogs makes me believe that yes God is always there and they calm me down.

If you had to describe yourself in one word?

Culinary Rockstar

How do you rate yourself as a Chef?

Let the food decide my ratings.

Fav Cuisine?

Indian

Fav Spice ?

Cumin

Fav Dish?

Dahi-Bhalla

Fav Equipment?

Ladle

Fav Restaurant/food joint?

ZUMA

Your Hot selling item?

Tawa Bhuna Chaap

The best compliment you have received?

A Magician with Chef's Hat!

Your philosophy of work?

To live and let live

Lessons learnt in the kitchen?

Happy Chef will always make a happy meal. Food is not just any business, every dish asks the Chef to put his heart into it. Believe me; dish will be incomplete without it.

Last meal on earth: What would you choose?

Baked Masala Chicken by my grandmother.

10 years from now?

I will crack a Michelin

What are your future plans?

To take 'Parat' on the global map, beyond borders at all international platforms

What is the position of Chefs today in India?

All the chefs are in a very happy space. This is my sarcasm!!!

What are the problems and challenges faced by Chefs?

Sourcing quality ingredients are still a challenge in this country.

What is the best career advice you have received?

Stick to the basics before you try something extraordinary.

What would you recommend to someone interested in working in your field?

Just be true to yourself.

Lastly, your Belief?

I believe in Honest-to-Goodness Taste.

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By Jhuma Biswas

In India's food service industry, theme restaurants have gained currency during the recent years. Like most trends, this trend too has its reasons hidden in business dynamics of our evolving society and economy. Over the last two decades, with increased disposable incomes and greater global exposure through Internet and frequent overseas travel, expectations from eating out has undergone considerable change for a certain segment of India's population, whose numbers are not that insignificant.

Nowadays a multitude of discerning consumers in urban India does not perceive restaurants simply as a place to have good or great food & beverage along with impeccable service.

Restaurants with Themes

Many guests in India's food service industry are now expecting an eating out experience in a restaurant or rather in any food service outlet to contribute to their cherished future memories. A section of them have also become experimental and are looking out for innovative experiences in their eating out ventures.

This writer thinks that in order to cater to this growing number of guests looking for innovative eating out experiences, several theme restaurants have sprung up in urban India during the last decade. And it is unlikely that the Covid-19 affected months would dent the appeal of theme restaurants in India's food service industry, in the long-run.

During the last decade-and-a-half, India's food service industry has seen the introduction of several restaurants and cafes with fascinating themes. We have seen toilet-theme café in Ahmedabad (Toilet Café), a pirate theme restaurant in Bengaluru (The Black Pearl), a restaurant where you dine in total darkness (Taste of Darkness) in Hyderabad, a jail theme restaurant chain named Kaidi Kitchen in Kolkata and many, many more. But many a time, it is being seen that though theme restaurants often come up with very creative themes, but they fall flat because of lazy execution of those themes.

Breaking Bad Characters

Just a few days earlier this writer happened to visit one such theme food service outlet. It is located in East Delhi, in the vicinity of



Karkarduma Metro Station, and it is named as Breakin' Brew. The theme restaurant is inspired by the hugely popular, critically acclaimed and globally renowned television series named Breaking Bad.

Drawings of many of Breaking Bad's important screen characters are part of the restaurant's ambience as are famous quotes from the series. For example, the facial image of the central character Walter White (played by Bryan Cranston in the series), along with a surreal image of smoke emanating from him holds considerable appeal.

The character Walter White is shown in the series as a Chemistry teacher, who turns into a drug producer and trader to secure his family's future after being diagnosed with terminal lung cancer. In the series, he uses his knowledge and talent in chemistry to create an intoxicant drug, which very quickly garners huge popularity.

Then just beneath the drawing of the character of Hector Salamanca, who is shown in the series as a wheel chair bound paralysed leader of a drug cartel who communicates through a bell bound to his wheel chair, there is a wheel chair with a bell attached to it. Then the image of another character named Gustavo Fring who leads a double life in the series (he masquerades as a restaurateur but is really a drug lord), is also shown with considerable creativity.

In Decor, Menu and Uniform

These subtle initiatives make Breakin' Brew a theme restaurant with a difference where the theme is not in your face but slowly seeps through you as you might enjoy a plate of Peri Peri Dimsum or a sumptuous PrimaVera Sauce Pasta with a cup of aromatic cappuccino coffee here. Dessert lovers must not forget to enjoy the Rum Tiramisu and Belgian Chocolate Waffle whenever they visit Breakin' Brew.

However, though the theme of the restaurant is not in your face, it is comprehensive in its character, unlike in many other theme restaurants which this writer has visited over the years. "For example, the coach and table designs in the outlet simulate the couches and table in the home of Walter White, who is the central character of the series," explained Harsh Gupta, the young aspiring filmmaker turned entrepreneur who has dared to start this venture in November, when the business climate was depressing to say the least. His family business is in Railways' catering.

Harsh also pointed out that the roof of the food service outlet simulates the roof of a makeshift chemistry lab. In the web series, Walter White began his notorious drug enterprise to change his family's fortunes in a makeshift chemistry lab. Chemistry lab happens to be an important setting in the narrative of the Breaking Bad series.

Names of some of the dishes served



Harsh Gupta

at the outlet are also inspired from the popular television series. They are Walter Jr's Breakfast, Mr. Waffle White, Tuco Tacos, Ehrmantraut Cheese Melt, Marie's Chilli Noodles, Hector's Fried Rice, Los Pollos Hermanos (a restaurant chain run by Gustavo Fring in the television series, as a front to his drug cartel).

The drinks menu came as we ordered some drinks. Harsh ordered Cranberry Mist and I went in for Mango Mint Ecstasy, which tasted sweet, sour and delightful. The drinks menu resembled Periodic Table; an essential feature required in the pursuit of chemistry on academic lines. The main food menu simulated a typical writing pad in a chemistry lab.



Again at Breakin' Brew, drinks other than tea and coffee (the outlet doesn't serve any alcoholic beverage but Harsh hopes to introduce beer in its drinks menu soon) are being served in glasses which resemble beakers in chemistry labs, and also in conical flasks, which too are abundantly used in chemistry labs.

"The yellow uniform of the servers and waiters show striking resemblance to Hazmat Suit or hazardous materials suit, which is usually worn by people working in those chemistry labs or industrial units which are dealing with hazardous chemicals or gases," explained Harsh further to substantiate his point.

Of course, their uniform also resembles PPE kit, and thus besides being in sync with the theme, it also could provide considerable protection to the staff.

Garnering Popularity

"Despite opening in the midst of the pandemic, and despite being brand new on the food service scene, we are already getting brisk footfalls," informed the young entrepreneur. However, whether those footfalls are because of the food and beverage or because of the theme cannot be clearly fathomed. May be both are playing their respective role.

"We are already getting 80-100 guests daily on an average on weekdays, and 200-220 guests on an average on weekends,



which is not bad for an outlet opened just in November, and that too in these depressing times," Harsh observed. At present the outlet with capacity to seat 70 guests is mandated by law to serve only 35 guests at maximum, at a time.

What is most interesting that not only upwardly mobile young people but even middle aged people from middle class do frequent the place, which covers Continental, Chinese and also Indian cuisine in its fairly wide culinary ambit.





For Perfect Gastronomic Delights, Two in One!

Mamagoto and Foxtrot

By Sharmila Chand

Experience the best of Mamagoto and Foxtrot, under one roof at Azure Hospitality's new restaurant which brings both brands together at CyberHub, Gurugram.

Adding new flavours to the culinary world, the two popular favourites of Delhi Diners, Foxtrot and Mamagoto, have come together to bring a one-of-a-kind restaurant to the city of Gurugram. The new restaurant offers a nouveau experience promising the best of dining options and eclectic cocktails under the same roof. Guests can indulge in sumptuous Asian delicacies at Mamagoto and also experience extraordinary cocktails at the Foxtrot backroom Bar.

The new place is not only a mix of brand identities and offerings but is rather a fusion that stems from aim to keep offering something unique to customers. Mamagoto's menu is a blend of inspiration from Asian streets and the Foxtrot food consists of local inspired dishes from across India along with some heady and picture worthy cocktails.

The new restaurant boasts a backroom

Foxtrot bar and Mamagoto as the front dining area, which will enable the patron to enjoy fusion pan-Asian food and indulge in unique cocktails at the same time.

The guests can enjoy a lavish spread of signature dishes, cocktails, and the chef's recommendations. The classic menu items are paired with innovative dishes that stand out. When it comes to beverages, Foxtrot is

known for serving some of the best-curated cocktails in the capital. 'Pop!', a cocktail that is made using vodka, popcorn and leaf tea, remains a popular choice. 'What-a-matcha' is an eclectic combination of whisky and matcha syrup and lastly, 'Smoke on the Water' is a brilliant smoked hickory wood whisky-based cocktail.

Speaking about the new restaurant, Rahul Khanna, CEO and founder of Azure, said, "The present pandemic has given us the time and opportunity to introspect, learn, and execute the strategies that add value to our offerings for our clients. With this in mind, we thought what better way to deliver value to customers, who have been a constant support in our respective journeys, than by offering them the best food and drinks under one roof with a relaxing yet fun ambience and an unparalleled vibe. The new place is not only a mix of our brand identities and offerings but is rather a fusion that stems from our aim to keep offering something unique to our customers."



Rahul Khanna

Design & Interiors

The restaurant retains the individual style of both Foxtrot and Mamagoto. The separate style and aesthetics allow flexibility with guests being able to choose their desired experience. The idea is to give choice and convenience to varied demographic yet retaining brand integrity. The outlet is divided neatly into two parts; Mamagoto, for food, in the front and Foxtrot as a backroom bar for a party, at the back.

Mamagoto continues its tribute to urban Asia graphic design of yesterday and modern. With customized manga posters, 1920s Shanghai inspirations and propaganda wallpaper Foxtrot is an eclectic mix of young cutting-edge graffiti, street art and lounge culture blended with mid-century furniture. These two cultures collided and merged into what is now an amalgamation of the hybrid youth-oriented Foxtrot and the urban Asia centric Mamagoto.

Signature Dishes

Non-Veg

Black Pepper Chicken Tikka: Here chicken tikka comes with a twist of black pepper, giving it a distinct taste. Its main flavor remains spicy, that comes from the black



"Foxtrot food comes is an amalgamation of Indian cuisine coupled with with few European influences. We are happy to keep price points pocket friendly to facilitate all kinds of clientele so indulge in delicious courses and specially concoted drinks"

Chef Agnibh, Chef at Foxtrot

pepper. It also gives a tinge of sweetness of its oyster sauce, served with mint chutney to complement the overall flavors.

Non-Veg Kulcha Platter: The stuffed kulchas at Foxtrot are the most popular dishes among the regulars. The non veg

stuffing includes chicken tikka, lamb galouti and bacon jam. First the stuffing is done and then finished it in the tandoor which gives it a beautiful earthy flavor. The kulchas are served with 4 dips including garlic chutney, fermented ketchup, burani raita and papad churma which we are all prepared in-house.

Mamagoto Goreng: This dish is inspired by the traditional Nasi Goreng and is cooked with sambal and peanut sauce. To make it tastier and more interesting, here is the catch - it is served with chicken satay skewers and a fried egg.

Old School Gyoza: These make for the most popular Asian street food in India. They are dumplings stuffed with veggies or chicken. It is pan fried very lightly and served with a spicy momo sauce that adds an extra, unique dimension to its flavors.

Java Grilled Fish/Tofu: Here, the protein is marinated in Indonesian sambal and wrapped in banana leaves before grilling it. To make it a wholesome meal, it is served with sticky rice.

Veg Dishes

Nippon Broccoli and Date Salad: It's a refreshing salad where broccoli is tossed in curried Japanese mayonnaise with dates and crushed peanuts to give it a crunchy



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"The essence of Mamagoto has always been delivering a fine dine Pan Asian experience in a relatable way. We take familiar flavours and mingle them with more refined nuances of Asian cuisine and incorporate the finest ingredients to ensure customer satisfaction"

Chef Ravi Saxena - Corporate Chef at Mamagoto



"The idea behind the mocktails and cocktails of Foxtrot and Mamagoto is to have fun and offer tasty drinks that can be enjoyed by all. We use some Asian flavors to complement the food, and thus our cocktails are unique to Foxtrot and Mamagoto. We had a lot of fun curating these cocktails! All of them are instagrammable, and besides celebrating classic cocktails, we take on our own twists on our drinks ensuring every one of them is a fresh new experience for the customer."

Gunjan Pal, Mixologist at Foxtrot and Mamagoto



and refreshing flavor.

Chiang Mai Train Station Noodles: It is the signature noodles cooked in the style of the famous Chiang Mai station with flavor notes of coconut milk and burnt onion & garlic. It is presented and served like a Khao Suey.

Thai White Curry Noodles: This dish has flat noodles that are cooked with a creamy coconut flavored white curry. It is topped with basil, brown onions and red chili flakes to add complementing flavors to the entire dish.

Soggy Thai Basil Fried Rice: It is a traditional Thai preparation of veggies or chicken with soya and mushrooms and is presented to guests with sticky or jasmine rice fried with basil.

Pindi Chana Tacos: This dish is the chef's take on soft tacos topped with his pindi chana recipe. Soft tortilla sheets are used with gongura pickle aioli to add that tangy touch to it.

Tandoori Malai Broccoli: Broccoli is cooked twice with tandoori malai, marinated and finally cooked in a tandoor. This gives the dish mostly charred flavor, adds a hint of Indian spices and also gives it a creamy texture from the marination. It is served with tomato kalonji chutney which is sweet and spicy, overall giving a good contrast to the creamy broccoli.

Signature Desserts

Here the desserts are eclectic that include three signature desserts:

Caramel Sponge Cake: A comfort delight, served warm with toffee sauce and a dollop of vanilla ice cream to add extra happiness and sweetness to diners' lives.

Mama's Banana Split: Crispy, crunchy and piping hot banana fritters meet a snowball sized chilled vanilla ice cream scoop to create sizzles of mouth-watering flavors in

your mouth. A cool combo of hot and cold dessert!

Nutty Baklava: Their take on the Turkish baklava with layers of filo sheets. It is topped with an overnight mixture of chopped nuts and spices that are baked together and finished. It is sweetened with rose petal syrup that adds an extra glaze to the dessert. It is served sizzling hot with a scoop of ice cream.

Chef Agnibh - Chef at Foxtrot

"Foxtrot food comes from the concept of Indian subculture along with few European influences. This includes mostly locally sourced indian food like street chaats, stuffed kulchas, tikkas with large plates such as biryanis and curries but with experimental twists and dining experience. The price point remains friendly to facilitate all kinds of clientele around the cities. As the concept throws in the culture of 'third place' we have also specialised in coffee and artisanal cocktails for the evenings. We tend to use readily available ingredients and compliment them together in contrast. The European influences like thin crust pizzas, tacos, lunch trays, Lebanese platters and power bowls are also served within the menu at all our branches."

To Conclude

The two restaurants have been built on similar core concepts and find common ground in their quest to make dining fun and a memorable experience. The inception of this upcoming culinary venture is an apt example of a one-of-a-kind range of food experiences.

Foxtrot and Mamagoto, CyberHub have come together to deliver value to customers by offering them the best food, drinks and ambience under one roof. ■



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Packaged Sweets is Revolutionizing Packaged Food Industry

By Manish Aggarwal, Director, Bikano

With packaged food industry as a whole evolving and maturing in the country in recent years, packaged sweets have come to register as an integral part of that process. In fact, the traditional popularity of sweets coupled with an increased consumer consciousness of hygiene and cleanliness has made sure that packaged sweets have acquired an extraordinary traction. Popularity of sweets offered in a hygienic package itself in a way is giving a fillip to the packaged food industry in the country. In other words, packaged sweets is revolutionizing the packaged food industry. With authorities increasingly clamping down and tightening norms around food labeling and general safety and hygiene, this is further serving the cause of packaged food industry.

The Emerging Packaged Food Landscape

Even before Covid-19 had 'bared its fangs,' the Indian packaged food sector had been on a positive trajectory. For instance, last year it was reported how packaged food industry had recorded an impressive over 14% growth for April to August period. However, what is particularly notable is that this growth had occurred despite the wider consumption slowdown. In more recent times, while western snacks have been a high growth category, RTE as emerged as a high potential category. In terms of sales, tier 1 and metro markets have been the bestperformers with rural and rest of urban areas contributing almost similarly. Therefore, with a permanently large middle class with increasingly hectic schedules and busy lifestyles, the room for ready-to-serve packaged food can never be enough for the Indian market and there will always be room for growth.

The Sheer Range of Sweets Available is a Hugely Motivating Factor

Representing both traditional and the modern, the Indian sweet market is characterized



by an extraordinary array of offerings. From traditional milk-based sweets and open mithais offered by unorganised and traditional sweet shops to sweets and confectionery products prepared by organised bakeries, to specialized milk-based products by dairy establishments to luxury mithai brands promoted by a new-age confectioners to organic sweets by modern food brands, the range of sweets products available in the country is simply mindboggling. Growing at a CAGR of over 12% for almost a decade, the confectionery market alone is estimated at \$1.5 billion. Another research estimates that confectionery and snack market is to grow by over 10% between 2020 and 2025. This huge array of items would definitely give a massive stimulus to the packaged food as well as the packaging industry in the country.

The Growing Packaging Industry Itself

At the same time, with increasing investment in food processing industries, rapid expansion of organized retail and rising exports market, the packaging industry itself has seen considerable gain. The need for improvement in shelf life, maintenance of the pace of production while upholding quality necessarily requires high standardized and quality packaging. With improvement in packaging methods and technologies such as the emergence of eco-friendly packaging such as biodegradable technologies, nanofabrication

technologies and the shift from rigid to flexible packaging, the packaging industry is undergoing considerable upgrading and change. It has been forecast that the Indian food and beverage packaging market is set to cross USD 122 billion by 2025 from about USD 26 billion in 2019 at a CAGR of nearly 30%.

Government Tightening Norms

With food regulatory authorities increasingly raising the bar for quality and hygiene for sweet products and even snack category, the packaged food industry would receive further boost. Only in February this year it was reported how local sweet shops had to mandatorily display 'best before date' and the date of manufacturing on non-packaged and loose sweets kept in a container or tray, a more stringent norm than the then existing labeling rules which required these details for pre-packaged/pre-packed sweets only. Such measures could only add to the push for packaged food industry. Significantly, prompted by sustainable environmental concerns, the government is also adopting policies to promote recyclable technologies for packaging.

Therefore, as Covid-19 has precipitated an all-out migration to packaged food away from open, loose and perceivably unhygienic food and snack culture, packaged sweets and confectionery category would impart the strongest push to the packaged food industry. Despite the recent societal and consumerist drive for healthy and nutritional snacking, the sweets and mithais would continue to form an indispensable part of the country's food culture which in turn would give a sustained thrust to the packaged food industry. Given that small packs of Rs 5/10 contribute to 70-80% of the sales in snacks category, this is encouraging. After all, guilty pleasures can be derived from small packs, since once can never really wish them away. ■



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