

HAMMER

Food & Beverage

Dec-Jan 2024 • Volume XXI Number 2 ₹ 100

Business Review

Business magazine for food service & food retail professionals

Business

The Rising QSR Industry

Feature

Winter Menu Trends

Agri

The Fruit as Vegetable

Dairy

Growing Veganism

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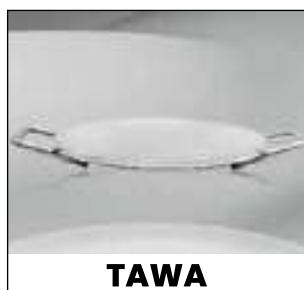
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for more
information



Innovation is one of the things that make cocktail an interesting and enticing drink. Cocktail is always something that is welcome. The popularity as well as the craving and desire for cocktails is never ending. Cover story looks at the cocktail scenario in India and preference of the consumers, the trends that are likely to occur in the future of cocktails.

Fast food has become the preferred delicacy for Indians. The concept was originated in the west to cater to people with shortage of time for satiating their hunger. The Quick Service Restaurant (QSR) industry in the country is expanding on a massive scale. Business story delves on the intricacies and essentials of opening a QSR.

Tomato is commonly treated in culinary terms as a vegetable, because tomatoes are more extensively used in savoury dishes, but botanically it is a fruit. Food section discusses the wide use of tomato in culinary and food processing industry,

Dairy is an integral part of Indian cuisine. For those who need to avoid dairy products it is a real challenge, since dairy products are the main source of protein in India. Veganism is increasingly being embraced and restaurants are introducing robust vegan-friendly eatables. Dairy section elaborates more on the subject.

Italian cuisine comes up with a challenge to the gourmet. The history of Italian cuisine is varied and rich as the stories of the Italians over the centuries. Italians always moved inland, as a part of historical development and developed a cuisine that reflected their ideas, imagery and tastes. Italian cuisine is fiery, without being hot. It is spicy, without being too heavy and it is not all that oily, despite its reliance on oil and dressings for most preparations. The Cuisine section discusses the evolution of Italian cuisine in India.

Other regular sections provide latest news, reports, and features on the foodservice industry.



Food & Beverage

Business Review

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IEG Asia Acquires Montgomery Asia F&B Events

IEG Asia Pte Ltd has recently acquired – Speciality Food & Drinks Asia, Speciality Coffee & Tea Asia and Food2Go – F&B Events from Montgomery Asia. This strategic move fortifies IEG Asia's commitment to contributing positively to the F&B landscape in Singapore and ASEAN markets.

Taking place from 26th to 28th June 2024 at the Sands Expo & Convention Centre, Singapore, these three event titles will co-locate alongside the highly-anticipated inaugural edition of SIGEP Asia, the International Trade Show of Artisan Gelato, Pastry, Bakery, Coffee & Tea, held in conjunction with the 5th Restaurant Asia, the International Restaurant, Kitchen and Culinary Equipment & Supplies Exhibition.

This amalgamation marks a pivotal moment in the F&B industry, as these consolidated events promise a highly-specialised trade event catering to the needs of the F&B sector – all under one roof – for industry titans and start-ups alike. The convergence offers a comprehensive showcase of the latest trends and innovations, and a dynamic platform for networking and collaboration through receptions, comprehensive conferences & seminars, engaging masterclasses, and demonstrations on the show floor.

Moreover, these events will be bolstered by an exclusive hosted buyers' programme (Buyer X), designed to facilitate meaningful interactions, partnerships, and business opportunities at an international level. Industry professionals, exhibitors and trade visitors can anticipate an immersive experience tailored to meet the evolving demands of the F&B landscape.

Christopher McCuin, Managing Director of Montgomery Asia said: "Since launching this event in 2017 our aim has been to deliver the very best of global gourmet, craft and speciality F&B products to the



Francesco Santa

Singapore and South East Asian markets. We are proud to have delivered exactly that. The Singapore F&B event space is extremely busy and we believe that the coming together of these events will help consolidate this exciting marketplace. We would like to thank all our partners, associations and clients for their long-standing support, many of whom have been with us since the very first edition".

Corrado Peraboni, CEO of IEG, commented on the recent acquisition saying, "This move marks another significant advancement for our Group

on the global front. Over the past few years, we have deepened our commitment to organizing B2B events in fields which we are notably strong, with a particular focus on the growing food & beverage sector. The events we hold in Singapore are strategically positioned within this key business hub in Asia, offering access to vital markets that are crucial for the growth of the food sector. This positioning greatly enhances the value of our IEG fairs, bolstered by the extensive network of companies and operators we have incorporated through this acquisition. These efforts align with our mission to become a global community catalyst, fostering collaborative and mutually beneficial relationships".

Francesco Santa, International Business Development Director at IEG announced "The synergy of these events under the IEG umbrella will undoubtedly set a new benchmark for boutique trade exhibitions, aligning perfectly with our mission to deliver an extraordinary experience for all our stakeholders. This strategic expansion is a clear reflection of our unflinching dedication to exceed the expectations of our exhibition partners and visitors. It's a step forward in our unwavering commitment to excellence in the F&B and hospitality industries".

"In less than a year since its inception on 1 March 2023, IEG Asia has grown its portfolio of events, especially in the F&B industry. I have every confidence that together, these events will set a new benchmark for boutique trade exhibitions in Singapore and ASEAN's F&B arena, and is in line with our dedication to curating an extraordinary experience for our stakeholders, exhibition partners and visitors", said Ilaria Cicero, Chief Executive Officer of IEG Asia.



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National Spice Conference 2023

The World Spice Organisation (WSO), a non-profit technical partner of the All-India Spices Exporters Forum (AISEF), has concluded 2nd Edition of the National Spices Conference 2023. The first day of the session was, dedicated to the theme "Food Safe Spices - The Way Forward to a Stable & Sustainable Income". The experts and industry leaders in the conference deliberated on crucial the issues surrounding the safety and

industry. Our strategies must reflector commitment to deliver safe and high quality Spices to consumers worldwide."

Additionally, Cherian Xavier, Chairman of the Business Committee for NSC 2023, said that, "The theme 'Food Safe Spices- the way forward to a stable and sustainable income' is not just a conference focus; It is a call to our industry to shape our future responsibly and sustainably."



sustainability of spices.

Ramkumar Menon, Chairman, World Spice Organisation extended a warm welcome to participants, emphasizing the importance of collective efforts in ensuring the safety and sustainability of the spice industry. He remarked, "Ensuring the safety of our spices is not only a responsibility but a commitment towards building a resilient and sustainable future for our farmers and consumers alike. Industry should also ensure that all stakeholders have access to a better and more sustainable income."

In his inaugural address, Dr. Homey Cherian, Director of the Directorate of Arecanut and Spice Development (DASD), Ministry of Agriculture sated that "Spices are an important driver of economic growth. Government policies are directed to strengthen this sector giving emphasis on sustainable growth and food safety."

Dr. A B Remashree, Director Research Spices Board, shared insights to promote safe spice cultivation. He stated, " "Food Safety is non- negotiable in the spice

The National Spice Conference 2023 promises to be a pivotal event, fostering collaboration and dialogue to ensure the safety and sustainability of the spice sector. The day two of the session presented more insights on the topics such as better input management and improving productivity, Innovative Processes and Market Trends and Innovative packaging of spices: Challenges and opportunities.

The National Spice Conference 2023 provides a forum for industry leaders, experts, and stakeholders to engage in discussions and implement strategies aimed at enhancing the spice sector as a whole. The event was attended by various FPOs and NGOs, collectively representing approximately 25,000 farmers associated with the National Sustainable Spice Programme (NSSP).

NSSP is a prominent initiative of the World Spice Organisation, which focuses on enhancing the production of food-safe and sustainable spices in India, while also facilitating market access for these sustainably produced goods.

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Unveiling the Splendeur of French Wine & Spirits in India

Business France, a government agency in-charge of fostering business relations of France worldwide, indicates that French exporters are turning their attention toward India. This shift aligns with the escalating demand among Indian consumers for

imported wines. Notably, Téo Khalil, F&B trade officer at Business France, highlighted the increasing interest and knowledge about oenology among Indian consumers.

“Year by year, French wine and

spirits exports to India are on the rise. In 2022, we observed a remarkable 23% increase in volumes and a substantial 100% rise in value for wines. The spirits segment demonstrated even more striking growth, soaring by 103% in volumes and an impressive 165% in value. These statistics underscore the recognition and appreciation of French alcoholic beverages among Indian consumers”, Téo emphasized.

Despite entry barriers such as high taxes, French exporters perceive the Indian market as holding substantial long-term potential due to its dynamic economy and the promising youth demographic. Moreover, the surge in consumption of premium alcohols in India presents a significant opportunity for French wines, spirits, and niche spirits like armagnac to gain better traction and awareness.

The burgeoning interest of French wineries for Indians also evident through the increasing participations in Tastin’France event. Pre Covid, around 7 participants were taking part, which increased to a record of 13 last year. This 2023 edition saw an impressive turnout of over 20 participants.

“India stands as a prospective key market for French exporters in the future. We anticipate continued growth and an increasing number of French companies supplying the market in the years ahead”, Téo anticipated.

Téo also underscored the robust friendship and partnerships between India and France. “This bond was evident in 2023 when Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the guest of honour for Bastille Day in France. It is set to be highlighted once more in January 2024 for Republic Day, as the Prime Minister has invited the President Emmanuel Macron to be the chief guest, affirming the enduring ties between the two nations.”.

8

Hammer Food & Beverage Business Review

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Lifetime Achievement Award

Mr. J.K. Khurana, Founding Chairman of Venus Industries, was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 18th Annual International Travel Awards 2023. Commemorating six decades of visionary leadership, he entrusted Venus Industries to the next generation, dedicating the award to his son Vicky (Praveen) Khurana and daughter-in-law Seema Khurana. Under Mr. Khurana's guidance, Venus became a global leader in hospitality cutlery, with a legacy of quality and innovation. The baton is now passed to Vicky and Seema, who aspire to elevate Venus Industries to new heights, ensuring continued excellence.



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VRO Hospitality Raises \$10 Million

VRO Hospitality, India's fast-growing F&B fine dining chain, announces the successful closure of a \$10 million bridge round in funding in a mix of Equity & Debt. This round was led by Axis Bank & Nikhil Kamath backed Gruhas, UC Inclusive, showcasing the confidence and support of leading investors.

Besides the lead investors, the others who participated in the bridge round were NB Ventures, Kunal Shah (Cred), Actress Mouni Roy to mention a few. This latest infusion of capital will fortify VRO Hospitality's mission to expand the brand across India and set new benchmarks in the fine dining ecosystem with unparalleled guest experiences. Expressing enthusiasm, Dawn Thomas, Co-Founder and CEO, VRO Hospitality, said, "We are thrilled to have the continued support and trust of our investors as we embark on this transformative journey. This funding round marks a pivotal moment for VRO Hospitality, empowering us to amplify our efforts in redefining the hospitality experience through innovation and unwavering commitment to excellence."

VRO Hospitality owns some upscale lounges and restaurants across Bengaluru, Mumbai, Goa, Kochi, Kolkata, Hyderabad, and Ooty. Some of their brands include Badmaash, Mirage, Plan B, Taki Taki, Los Cavos, Cafe Noir, One Night in Bangkok, Tycoons, Hangover & Nevermind. VRO is on an expansion drive nationally and internationally with brands such as Badmaash, Cafe Noir and Taki Taki being the pioneers in pitching the VRO flag in uncharted territories.



Dadar Catering College 70th Year of Foundation

Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology and Applied Nutrition Mumbai popularly known as Dadar catering college is entering in its 70th year of foundation. Dadar catering college is the first Institute to achieve this milestone in Asia. The year 2024 will be celebrated as the Platinum Jubilee Year of IHM Mumbai. To commence this platinum jubilee celebration a logo was launched on 22nd December 2023.

The platinum jubilee year logo was unveiled by Param Kannampilly, an alumnus of the class of 1974-75 of the Institute and the father of eco-sensitive hotels in India. The unveiling of this logo was celebrated in the presence of students, parents



and prominent alumni from India and abroad. Naming few: Dilraj Emmanuel Sequeira, works as ANZ under the department of Well Managed Program CCC – Retail governance & operational excellence, Sudheer Pai – F&B consultant at Pai & Associates, Core committee member and Treasure for WICA, Shubhamoy Banerjee – General Manager, the Orchid Hotel, Salil Phadnis – General Manager Sahara Star, President WICA, Ravi Wazir – Principal consultant/founder of RaviWazir.com (food retail & hospitality businesses consultancy), B P Sahani – President, Roswell Equational Trust, Sameer Sub – General Manager, The Leela Mumbai and others.

Platinum Jubilee function will be held on 17th February 2024 at NESCO exhibition center, Goregaon, Mumbai. Registration for this platinum jubilee function was already started.



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American Brew Crafts Forays into Kerala

American Brew Crafts Pvt Ltd (ABCL), a leading brewing company renowned for crafting exceptional brews, forays into Kerala with the introduction of Flying Monkey Ultra Strong Beer. This new variant is exclusively brewed for Kerala and promises to redefine the beer experience, offering a distinctive flavour and character to Kerala's discerning consumers.

Flying Monkey Ultra Strong Beer embodies a bold and robust character, catering to seasoned beer enthusiasts. With a rich body, smooth texture, and a unique flavour profile, this variant elevates the experience of strong beers. Crafted to perfection, Flying Monkey Ultra Strong Beer introduces a smoky touch, delivering an adventurous dimension to its taste profile, setting new standards for strong beers. The bright sleek packing for Flying Monkey Ultra Strong Beer with a monkey in the space-suit sitting in a 'Zen' mode resonates the brands essence to sit back, relax and have a great time.

Nagendra Tayi, Director and Chief Executive Officer, American Brew Crafts Pvt Ltd, expressed his excitement about the launch, stating, "We're thrilled to introduce Flying Monkey Ultra Strong Beer as we expand our operations to Kerala. Our dedication to brewing excellence and delivering quality brews motivates us to bring this exciting variant to beer enthusiasts. We have taken care to understand the preferences of the consumers in Kerala and especially prepared this brew to suit their taste and contribute to Kerala's vibrant beer culture. We have an experienced team of brew masters who carefully prepare and monitor the brews ensuring consistency of taste and flavours batch-after-batch so that beer connoisseurs enjoy our brews and have a great time."

Adding to this Mr. Satya Siva Athi, Director, American Brew Crafts Pvt Ltd, "At American Brew Crafts we ensure quality and consistency by producing beer in small batches at our state-of-the-art breweries equipped with the latest German machinery. Each batch undergoes meticulous research and is crafted using carefully selected premium malts and hops to ensure a remarkable flavor profile. We hope the latest addition to our portfolio, Flying Monkey Ultra Strong Beer will satiate the preferences of beer lovers in Kerala and will be widely accepted in the state."



Radico Khaitan Launches Pink Vodka

Radico Khaitan Limited has launched Magic Moments Remix Pink Vodka, strategically positioned to cater to the growing demand of coloured and flavoured beverage alcohol category. Positioned in the premium segment a cut above Magic Moments Remix flavours, it will be initially launched in UP and Assam, and expanded to PAN India over the next 2-3 quarters.

Magic Moments Vodka portfolio (which includes Magic Moments Remix series, Magic Moments Verve range of products, Magic Moments Dazzle and Magic Moments Vodka Cocktails), a flagship brand for Radico Khaitan, has consistently been positioned as a trusted and popular choice within India's premium vodka market through its range of innovative flavours.

Crafted with 100% natural flavours of black mulberry, elderflower and raspberry, the variant promises a nuanced taste experience, appealing to a broad consumer base. Available in three sizes (750 ml, 375 ml and 180 ml) Magic Moments Pink Vodka is designed to be a versatile choice for various occasions



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Celebrating New Season of Washington Apples

The Washington Apple Commission, in association with the U.S. Embassy's Office of Agricultural Affairs, marked the commencement of the new season and new beginning for Washington Apples in India. The celebratory event took place at The Leela Palace in New Delhi.



The guest of honour for the occasion was Clay Hamilton, Minister Counselor for Agriculture Affairs at the US Embassy in New Delhi along with Master chef Sanjeev Kapoor. Mark Stennes, the Chairman of the Washington Apple Board of Directors also made a special trip to India to participate in this exclusive trade event.

Todd Fryhover, President, Washington Apple Commission said, "India has been a very important market for Washington Apples. Supplies to India were greatly disturbed in 2019 due certain tariffs issues. We are glad that the issues have now been resolved. Washington Apple industry will once again be on equal footing with competitors in the Indian market with Indian government lifting the 20% retaliatory tariffs levied on US apple and other agricultural imports. India has been a top 3 markets for Washington apples and is now destined for further growth."

Speaking on the occasion Sumit Saran, In-Country Marketing Representative, Washington Apple Commission added, "We have seen tremendous demand for Washington Apples in India and these apples literally going out of market from 2019 not only impacted trade but also discerning Indian consumers felt the void. We are very happy that the difficult days are behind us and Indian consumers can now again enjoy the high quality and taste of Washington apples as in the past. The season for Washington Apple peaks when the season for Indian Apples end making good quality apples available to Indian consumers all year round," Saran added.

Washington apples are available across the country both with traditional and modern retailers.

Godrej Yummiez Makes Affordable Sausage Pack



In frozen ready-to-cook product category first move, Godrej Yummiez has launched protein-rich pack of two chicken sausage at a very affordable price of INR 30. The two sausages in this sachetised format offer a combined value of upto 7 grams of protein. This sachetisation of frozen foods like sausages, will democratize frozen foods by making them affordable and accessible for everyone. It is expected to increase consumption of frozen foods amongst masses not only in metropolitan areas but also in Tier II cities and towns.

The frozen foods category in India currently has a penetration rate of less than 5%, indicating ample room for expansion. To stimulate category growth and reach a wider audience in various cities and demographics, it is crucial to make these products more accessible by offering them at more affordable price points.

Commenting on the launch, Abhay Parnerkar, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Godrej Tyson Foods Limited, says, "As one of India's trusted frozen food brands, Godrej Yummiez has pioneered sachetisation in frozen foods making them accessible for everyone. Pricing has been a significant hurdle for consumers when it comes to adoption of frozen foods, and we have significantly lowered the range start buying price by 80% with INR 30 chicken sausage. This empowers individuals to purchase frozen foods based on their consumption preferences and moods without the hassle of storing or freezing in larger quantities."

Nakshatra – Sky Dining Restaurant

Fortune Ranjit Vihar, a member of ITC's hotel group, has introduced its latest F&B proposition, Nakshatra – a sky dining restaurant. Nakshatra's grand opening ceremony in Amritsar was duly graced with a delightful starry dimension by the presence of Gurpreet Ghuggi, the comedic luminary whose charisma and wit have captivated audience for years.

Speaking about the launch, Corporate Executive Chef Rajkamal Chopra of Fortune Hotels said, "At Fortune, we believe in the idea of constant evolution by pushing boundaries to improve our guest experiences. Nakshatra is not just another chapter in our journey but it truly embodies our spirit to do more, to do better. This is the first of many Nakshatras soon to open, each a celebration of diverse flavours and culinary adventures."

Adding to this, Chef Mahesh Kumar, Fortune Ranjit Vihar expressed, "It is a proud moment for us with the launch of Nakshatra. As the journey of this new sky-diner begins, we aim to create a sensory journey, where every bite is a celebration, in the midst of our unmatched hospitality."

Inspired by the exquisite evening sky, Nakshatra will offer an eclectic dining experience closer to the stars and an interactive kitchen. It features a well-curated, elaborate menu of barbecue specialties, the best of timeless Indian cuisine, and a healthy sprinkling of global flavours.

Nakshatra's ambiance is designed to provide a one-of-a-kind romantic setting for an unforgettable meal. The restaurant's popularity is set to soar with its Indian grill specialties paired with an exquisite selection of spirits, cocktails, and mocktails that are sure to leave patrons' taste buds in awe.



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First Shipment of Australian Avocados

Westfalia Fruit India has imported first commercial shipment of avocados from Australia into India. With the completion of trial shipments from Australia, the market access for Australian avocados to India was recently confirmed.

Westfalia Fruit is working closely with Delroy Orchards, one of the largest growers of avocados in Western Australia to bring Australian avocados into India. Western Australia fits well into the Indian avocado imports calendar with fruit availability between November to March, complementing African import programs from April to November.

Westfalia Fruit, which commenced commercial imports and distribution of avocados through the Indian subsidiary in 2022,has established itself as the market leader and is currently the largest importer of avocados in India. Westfalia Fruit also works closely with all major national retail chains and e-commerce companies across the country, in developing the awareness for avocados in India.

Zac Bard, Group Business Development Executive – Westfalia Fruit, said that “Westfalia Fruit has established itself as the market

leader in India working across origins including Tanzania, Peru, Chile, New Zealand and now Australia. Regarded as the Avoexperts, Westfalia Fruit works closely with growers across origins in offering consistently good quality fruit for the Indian market.”

“Westfalia Fruit has well established working relations with all major retailers and wholesalers across the country and Australian avocados will play a key part in offering year round availability to our customers. Sea shipments from Western Australia will play a key role in fulfilling the growing demand for avocados over the next 3 months” added Ajay TG, General Manager – Westfalia Fruit India.

With Hass avocados available all through the year, the demand for avocados will continue to grow and this also enables the hotels and restaurants to now confidently add avocados onto menus. Over the last few months, Indian chefs, restaurants, caterers and street food stalls have started giving avocado twist to their best selling Indian dishes introducing avocado dishes to a wide audience.



Classique Elements LLP Business Meet

Classique Elements LLP, in collaboration with B.S. International and Italian partners Venix, Orved, Prisma Foods, and Fimar, recently orchestrated their Annual Business Meet under the overarching theme of Collaborate, Connect & Culminate. The event unfolded at the Hotel Mirador in Mumbai over two enriching days, on the 11th & 12th January, 2024. The agenda included insightful presentations by the hosts, engaging product demonstrations by Chef Tarun Bhatia, lively sessions of fun and games led by the charismatic Emcee Melisha, and culminated in delightful Cocktails and Dinner.



Venix Convection and Combi Ovens, expressed his enthusiasm, stating, “We are delighted to have had the participation of Industry stalwarts at our Business Meet. Across the two days, we welcomed over 200 delegates, including Chefs, Kitchen Consultants & Planners, Key Account Customers, Equipment Distributors and Dealers. Notable representatives from WICA, HPMF, and FSCAI were also in attendance. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to each partner and guest who has been a part of our journey and graced the evenings.”;

The Taste Of Switzerland

The Taste Of Switzerland - Swiss Culinary Workshop of 2024 with renowned Swiss Chefs, will take place from 16th February to 17th February, 2024, organised by RIG Institute of Hospitality & Management, Greater Noida. The event, promising an extraordinary culinary journey into the world of Swiss and international cuisine, will see the representatives from the Swiss Tourism Board, Guests from Embassies, and Titlis Tourism at the event.

Students/Enthusiasts from Hospitality Management Institutes & IHM from all over India as well as chefs from reputed hotel brand are invited to participate.

Event Highlights:

Swiss Chefs: The esteemed chefs, flown in from Switzerland, will share their culinary expertise to enlighten and inspire.

2-Day Mega Culinary Workshop: A unique culinary journey, with each day dedicated to unraveling the secrets behind Switzerland's finest dishes.

Special Food Tasting: An exclusive menu prepared by the chefs, offering a gastronomic adventure like no other.

Certification: All participants will receive a certificate endorsed by Swiss Chefs & RIG Institute, opening doors to opportunities in the International Food Industry.

Global Culinary Insights: Explore the nuances of Swiss cuisine while gaining insights into international culinary trends.

Networking Opportunities: Connecting with fellow enthusiasts, professionals and culinary masters to foster valuable relationships.

The workshop fees is Rs. 3,500, which includes complimentary accommodation & meals on the campus for participants.



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Hard Rock Cafe Strikes a Chord

Hard Rock Cafe, the iconic venue which offers a combination of music, entertainment, memorabilia and authenticity is now back in Pune at Amanora Mall, Hadapsar. Situated on the ground floor East block, the cafe offers a vibrant blend of indoor and outdoor spaces. Hard Rock Cafe Pune is not just a restaurant; it's a living embodiment of rock 'n' roll spirit. With an indoor section reminiscent of rock history and an extensive outdoor area perfect for Pune's weather, the cafe offers a unique blend of nostalgia and contemporary vibes. The cafe's commitment to 'Love All Serve All' is reflected not only in its food but also in its community-focused approach.

It caters to a diverse consumer range from corporate professionals to families seeking a culinary experience. What sets the cafe apart is not just its delectable American cuisine but also the mesmerizing blend of great music that resonates within the walls. Enjoy the vibrant ambiance with options for both indoor and outdoor seating, providing a perfect setting for any occasion.

Furthermore, Hard Rock Cafe takes pride in being the cafe within the mall that hosts spectacular live music and events, creating an immersive and entertaining atmosphere. As an added touch, the establishment boasts the distinction of featuring a brand merchandise Rock Shop, making it a one-of-a-kind experience in the cafe. The cafe proudly showcases artifacts of legends like Eric Clapton, Bruce Springsteen, Madonna,



Aerosmith, U2, Stevie Nicks, Bon Jovi, Red Hot Chili Peppers, The Ramones, and Cher. From Eric Clapton's Gibson Les Paul to Stevie Nicks' black velvet jacket, each piece narrates a chapter in the history of their times.

"We are happy that Pune is now, once again, an official member of the Hard Rock family. We are ready to make a positive impact on the hospitality industry and brand standards, generating 90 employment positions. We bring the spirit and philosophy of the brand to a country rich in musical and food traditions by presenting a modern vision of a remarkable restaurant at a strategic location in Pune," said Tom Perez, Vice President of Franchise Operations, Hard Rock International.

Yi Jing- A Concept Dining Chinese Restaurant

Yi Jing, the latest addition to the dynamic fine-dining offerings at ITC Maratha, in Mumbai has officially opened its doors to immerse patrons in flavours inspired by the evolving trans-border cuisine of China. Helmed by the veteran Executive Chef Liang Xiao Qing; Yi Jing is the 4th outpost of Chinese concept dining curation by ITC Hotels; with a special focus on reimagined flavours from Sichuan and Hunan.

Situated on the lobby level; the restaurant spans over 4250 sq. ft. with split-level design, becoming a maximalist haven that seats 90 plus guests. The expansive dining space has four zones – Demonstration kitchens for 'Wok Hei', Dimsum & Hand Pulled Noodle bay at an elevation, arched bar and two private dining rooms. Envisioned to be a 'Celebration of Gourmet Theatrics', the brightness of red accents in the restaurant seen on wallpapers & chairs, is intercepted with repurposed jute pendant lamps adding to the elevated mood.

The extensive menu boasts of tantalizing crowd-favourite appetizers such as handcrafted swan-shaped Char Sui, Sake & Edamame dimsums, succulent steamed pork baos, Hunan style stir fried tofu, water chestnut and more, fit to appeal the flavour-cravings for all. In the truly must-have experiences, feast your eyes on freshly prepared Hand-Pulled Lamian Noodles, behold the 'Breath of Wok' in a skill honed over



decades, and look forward to exotic specials like the regal oven roasts featuring Beijing Roast Duck. Selection of Farm-fresh vegetarian mains, seafood, and free-range meats in tantalizing oriental sauces paired with umpteen options of staples. Fine presentation & taste amalgams of desserts will add to memorable hours of unhurried indulgence.

Commenting on the launch, Bhagwan Balani, General Manager, ITC Maratha, Mumbai stated, "We highly anticipated the launch of Yi Jing at ITC Maratha. We are confident that this modern reinterpretation of Chinese flavours presented through our signature dishes will not only elevate but revolutionize the dining experience for our cherished patrons in Mumbai. This is more than just a restaurant opening; it's a celebration of culinary artistry and a testament to our commitment to delivering exceptional dining experiences."

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Bageecha Opens its Doors

Novotel Mumbai Juhu Beach has reopened its cherished seasonal beachfront restaurant, Bageecha. Renowned for its quintessential Indian cuisine, Bageecha is set to transport guests on a culinary voyage, promising a delightful experience under the stars.

Draped in the soft glow of floating lights and caressed by the soothing sea breeze, Bageecha offers a tranquil ambiance, perfect for cherished family moments or romantic



evenings. Enlivening this atmospheric retreat, live gazal music serenades diners, adding an extra layer of enchantment to their dining experience.

Bageecha's extensive menu offers a diverse range of timeless Indian dishes with two set menus and a meticulously crafted à la carte menu that caters to both vegetarian and non-vegetarian preferences. Guests can indulge in a selection of tantalizing dishes, including Bhatti Ka Murgh, Galouti with ultaTawa Ki roti, Tulsi Paneer Tikka, Subz E khasSeekh, KhumaniKofta curry, Paneer Sahjahnai, Lal Maas, and Macchi Keri Keri, accompanied by an array of bread and rice options. To conclude this culinary journey, savor delightful desserts like Rose KulfiFalooda, BadamKaHalwa, AngooriRasmalai, and GulabJamun, among others.

Vishal Gupta, the General Manager of Novotel Mumbai Juhu Beach, expressed his excitement about Bageecha's reopening stating, "We're thrilled to welcome back our patrons to Bageecha, where they can relish the finest Indian cuisine in an enchanting ambiance. This season, we've elevated the dining experience, presenting an exquisite tapestry of Indian flavors. We invite guests to join us and savor this unparalleled culinary journey at Novotel Mumbai Juhu Beach."

APPOINTMENT

Chef Sajid Salim Patel

Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway has appointed Sajid Salim Patel as the Executive Chef. With over 14 years of extensive professional experience in the hospitality industry, Chef Sajid brings a wealth of culinary expertise and innovation to our esteemed property. Chef Sajid, a graduate with a Bachelor's degree in Hotel and Tourism Management Studies and a Post Graduate Diploma in Kitchen Management (OCLD), embarked on his illustrious career in 2008. He has since accumulated valuable experience working with renowned hotels such as Trident Bandra Kurla, Mumbai (The Oberoi Group), JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar, and Courtyard and Fairfield by Marriott Bengaluru Outer Ring Road.



Chef Akhil Multani

Chef Akhil Multani has joined the culinary team of Bellona Hospitality Services Limited. Highly talented Chef Multani has been in the hospitality industry since 2006, specializing in Lebanese and Italian. He was the former opening chef of the iconic restaurant Bayroute under Mirah Hospitality. In his new role, Chef Akhil Multani will be involved with certain Bellona Brands with the endeavor to constantly add value to the offerings. He will work closely with the culinary teams to create exciting and innovative dining experiences within the boundary conditions of the respective brands. Bellona Hospitality Sevices Ltd, with 27 outlet restaurant brands and growing, across Mumbai, Pune, Bangalore, and Ahmedabad.



Chef Carmine De Filippo

Chef Carmine officially joined The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences as Italian Master, bringing with him a remarkable career spanning over 30 years. With a catering background rooted in the heart of Milan, Chef Carmine De Filippo has nurtured his skills through diverse experiences at renowned establishments worldwide. Chef Carmine's journey has left an unforgettable mark, from his impressive time at the Westin Bangladesh and Malaysia to the prestigious Regency Hotel Kuwait and Kempinski Kenya & Djibouti. Most notably, he recently served as the Italian Master Chef for Kenya & Djibouti. Chef Carmine De Filippo's is a graduate of the esteemed C.A.P.A.C in Milan.



Chef Jerry Javier Bernasol

Jerry Javier Bernasol has been appointed as the Japanese Chef at Spectra, the award-winning restaurant of The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences. In this new role, Chef Jerry will infuse his extensive expertise in Japanese cuisine into the culinary repertoire of Spectra, bringing authentic and innovative Japanese flavors to the restaurant's already diverse menu. The Japanese Masterchef began his journey as a Kitchen Crew at Don Don Japanese food Manila, Philippines. Gaining extensive exposure, his career transitioned to esteemed establishments such as the Manila Diamond Hotel, ITC Sonar, and Hyatt Hotel Casino.



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Niro - Bangalore's Newest Spot

Satiating the ever-growing appetite for vibrant nightlife and memorable experiences, Niro, Bengaluru's newest rooftop bar, unveils an urban rooftop oasis atop the Country Inn and Suites Hotel alongside Nagavara Lake. Boasting a panoramic water view and impeccable service of mouth watering flavours and cocktails, this all-day bar is a much-needed addition to enjoy the city's famed weather within this urban landscape.

Niro takes shape from the vision of Lalith Kumar and under the auspices of Shilton Hospitality, renowned for their offerings pan-India such as Watson's, Fireflies resorts, Shilton Hotels and many more projects. Recognising the potential for a rooftop space that takes in the advantage of the calming lakeside atmosphere, Niro brings forth a high-end experience at inexpensive prices.

High-walled ceilings, an external sky deck, varied textures and skylights elevate the beauty of the chic and sleek interiors with sunset skies as the backdrop. From a casual



hangout spot in the day, it seamlessly transitions into an upbeat place at night to let loose your stress with some lively music in the background. A keen eye for detail in the custom-made interiors, signature chandeliers, a perched DJ corner and all evoke a sense of the good old days of Bangalore pubs and yet bring in a contemporary twist.

The food menu presents a delectable mix of deliciousness to choose from. The highlights include starters like Mushroom on Kori Roti and Kerala Pepper Beef that can be paired with dynamic cocktails churned from special ingredients, the food and drink scene at Niro caters to the melting pot of cultures in the IT hub.

Kyma Embarks On a New Journey

Kyma, at BKC Mumbai, a popular oasis for those seeking a taste of Mediterranean or the aromas of the Orient, has announced its expansion to Pune. Crafting an odyssey through a blend of Asian and Mediterranean flavours, Kyma stands as a symbol of refined dining, guided by the enduring support of our cherished patrons.

"As we commemorate two years of culinary excellence in Mumbai and embark on our journey to Pune, Kyma



has proven to be a beacon of success in the fine dining realm. This expansion is not just a milestone but a testament to our commitment to delivering unparalleled dining experiences." said Narayan Poojari, founder Shiv Sagar Group.

Kyma's mission has always been to provide a welcoming and enjoyable ambience where every detail, from the meticulously crafted interiors to the tantalizing food and artisanal cocktails, reflects the essence of indulgence. The richness of Asian and Mediterranean influences creates a culinary tapestry that caters to the discerning tastes of guests. The special crafted menu for Pune will be an amalgam of the Kyma Classics and an innovating selection curated just for the city.



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Maiz Mexican Kitchen Unveils its First Dine-in

Maiz Mexican Kitchen, inspired by the vibrant flavours of Mexican food, proudly announces the launch of its first outlet in Phoenix Mills, Lower Parel. Maiz as a delivery kitchen, has revolutionised Mumbai's culinary landscape with its commitment to fresh and authentic Californian Mexican food. Post its stupendous success as a cloud kitchen, Maiz is all set to embark on a new journey with its dine-in space in Mumbai.

Founded on the principles of quality ingredients, customizable offerings, and a passion for Mexican gastronomy, Maiz Mexican Kitchen brings the spirit of Mexican flavours to Mumbai. This marks a significant milestone for the brand, expanding its reach beyond online platforms to offer a delightful in-person experience. Launched in 2017, the brand aims to provide delicious, affordable, and fresh food with a recognisable taste that can be eaten everyday.

Veer Bhartiya, the founder, drew inspiration from frequented fast-service restaurants offering fresh, high-quality cuisine at reasonable prices. The idea of convenient access to exceptional meals from

renowned establishments across various cuisines deeply resonated with him. Recognizing the need for a superior dining experience, he identified a clear market vacuum for delivering high-quality meals at the speed and affordability associated with fast-food establishments.

He states, "Since our primary focus is on selling food through delivery and catering, we aimed to establish a retail outlet that serves as a showcase for our ethos. This space provides customers with a glimpse into the meticulous process of preparing our food and offers insights into why our offerings are so exceptionally flavourful. The retail outlet serves as an extension of our commitment to transparency and quality, allowing patrons to connect with our culinary philosophy in a tangible way."

Maiz offers diverse Mexican food options to satiate the hunger pangs of visitors. In addition to the dine-in, Maiz also operates in cloud kitchen format with its presence across 10 locations (Tardeo, Lower Parel, Bandra, BKC, Marol, Malad, Thane, Powai, Chembur, Andheri).



Culinary Wonderland Unveiled

The Nines, an avant-garde culinary haven in the heart of Juhu, the culinary masterpiece redefines the dining experience, inviting into a realm where the magic of the number 9 takes center stage, turning each moment into a symphony of wonder.

At the helm of The Nines, Suved Lohia, the visionary Managing Partner in collaboration with Brilliant Hospitality, brings a wealth of expertise and passion to the culinary landscape. His commitment to quality, finesse, and perfection resonates throughout The Nines, ensuring a dining experience that goes beyond the ordinary.

He excitedly states that "As the Managing Partner of The Nines, I am thrilled to unveil a culinary haven where passion meets innovation. The Nines isn't just a restaurant; it's a symphony of flavours, a celebration of global influences, and a contemporary masterpiece. We invite to embark on a journey where each dish tells a story, and every moment is infused with the magic of the number 9. It's more than dining; it's an experience crafted with love, and we can't wait to share this culinary adventure with you."

Boasting stunning interiors and spanning 14,000 sq. ft., The Nines stands as a sanctuary, seamlessly blending modern European bistro finesse with a contemporary twist. As you step into this fine-dining gem nestled in the upscale Juhu neighborhood, the carefully curated ambiance, adorned with the subtle enchantment of the number 9, transforms your visit into an unforgettable experience.

The art deco interiors showcases a seamless fusion of well-crafted design – the vibrant Green Room, where nature's beauty makes an entrance; the dreamlike Skylight Bar, bathing in natural

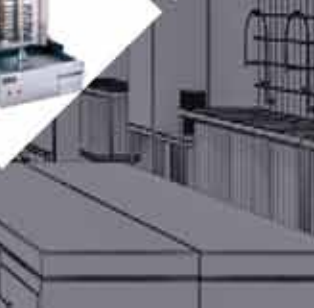


sunlight and moonlight for an elevated unwinding experience; the spacious Private Dining Room (PDR) with multiple entry points and a scenic balcony, encouraging leisurely interactions; and the grand Dome, exuding grandiosity with an extensive bar, DJ console, and VIP area. It's an invitation to explore the intersection of art, ambiance, and the captivating vibe that defines this unique dining haven.

The well crafted menu is a fusion of global influences, combining elements from Indian, Mediterranean, Asian, and Western cuisines to create a unique and exciting dining experience, ensuring that patrons indulge in a symphony of flavours and textures that redefine the ordinary. With the diverse palette of flavours, expertly crafted cocktails complement the culinary journey.



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Hyderabad Gets SOCIAL!

SOCIAL, neighbourhood café, has now opened its first outlet in Hyderabad, Telangana, at Raheja Mindspace IT Park, HITEC City. With Mindspace SOCIAL, Impresario’s 50th SOCIAL in India, the SOCIAL experience has now come to Hyderabad, along with its trademark food, culture, co-working and community activities, and a high-energy nightlife.

Standing at the confluence of a café and a bar, SOCIAL has managed to carve its space in the socio-cultural fabric of India. Mindspace SOCIAL is one such addition in SOCIAL’s national portfolio with the ability to create memorable experiences for the unique audience of Hyderabad. From a sprawling rock garden juxtaposing high-tech installations with lush green surroundings to an indoor conservatory transforming seamlessly

from a relaxed daytime hangout spot to a vibrant nighttime lounge, and a top floor redefining Hyderabad's party scene and live events experience – Mindspace SOCIAL is the epitome of a good time in the city.

Riyaaaz Amlani, Founder & Managing Director, Impresario Entertainment & Hospitality Pvt. Ltd., shared his excitement about the launch: "Hyderabad’s cultural legacy and technological prowess inspired us to create an experience that celebrates tradition, against the backdrop of a HITEC neighbourhood. The 50th outlet is a very



important milestone for us, and Mindspace SOCIAL pays tribute to the authentic spirit of Hyderabad, encapsulating its diversity, warmth, and creative energy. Mindspace SOCIAL embodies SOCIAL’s community driven vision, we are excited for Hyderabad to come and experience it."

Boasting an impressive capacity accommodating 2,500 individuals across three expansive floors, Mindspace SOCIAL is poised to emerge as the premier destination for a diverse audience. Extending a warm welcome to artists, professionals, and enthusiasts alike, this venue promises a captivating experience that embraces the essence of creativity and connections.

Mindspace SOCIAL presents an enticing menu that brings together its national bestsellers with a myriad of special dishes unique to Hyderabad. Guests can relish the flavours of iconic Hyderabadi cuisine, with local heroes such as Hyderabadass Breakfast Tray comprising a hearty combination of Daal Khichdi, keema and tamarind with a marag. Furthermore, the food menu at Mindspace SOCIAL features hyperlocal dishes such as the Apollo Fish, Gongora Chicken Tikka and the iconic Ulvacharu Chicken Biryani, among other local delicacies that are inspired by the rich culinary palette of Hyderabad.

Elevating Culinary Delights

The Gulmohar Bar & Curry House in Pune, co-founded by Harsh Agarwal, Umang Bhimrajka and Ronak Sahani, marks a gentle shift in the city's culinary scene, focusing on the familiar and comforting. Nestled in the heart of the city, this 6000 sq. ft. establishment aims to be a home away from home, blending traditional Indian cuisine with playful modern touches.

The Gulmohar is a place where the essence of familiar Indian flavours is maintained, yet gently interwoven with creative elements for a comforting and enjoyable dining experience.

The Gulmohar Bar & Curry House, reflecting the beauty of nature and Indian culture, is designed as an urban oasis. Its design, inspired by lush foliage, the terracotta facade on the



building acts as a natural cooling system to the building by cutting the harsh south sunlight, along with a palette of Indian stones and raw cement, creating a tranquil and earthy ambiance. This setting includes a cozy indoor area, a quaint cafe space and a small terrace for hosting various events, emphasizing its character as a hidden gem in Pune.

Chef Shailendra Kekade, the brains behind many award-winning

restaurants and bars, has designed the menu with familiar Indian flavours and global culinary practices. Chef Sheetal, now the head chef at The Gulmohar Bar & Curry House, has been a vital part of Harsh and Umang's culinary team for over four years. The menu at The Gulmohar offers an array of dishes that cater to diverse palates, including Chole Hommus, Sheesh Touk and the traditional Jodhpuri Gulabjamun ki kadhi. The cocktail menu puts a spin on classics, featuring inventive creations like the Masala Chai Sour, a twist on the whiskey sour with



homemade masala Chai syrup. The menu caters to diverse tastes and dining preferences, ensuring an enjoyable experience at any hour.

In the words of Chef Shailendra Kekade, "The Gulmohar is more than just a restaurant; it's a place where simplicity and unpretentiousness are at the core of our culinary philosophy. We offer a space where guests can enjoy great food and an excellent bar in a casual, home-like environment. Our menu includes traditional starters, kebabs, and biryanis, alongside an innovative Indian tapas section for those lighter eating moments."

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Unveiling The Swinton House

The Swinton House, a haven of opulence nestled in the vibrant city of Jaipur, opens its doors to connoisseurs of elevated taste and sophisticated leisure. Inspired by the grandeur of Victorian-era estates, this resplendent restaurant and bar blends European elegance with the rich cultural tapestry of Rajasthan. This launch marks the debut of a distinguished establishment that seamlessly blends heritage, modern cuisine, and unparalleled luxury for the discerning traveller in the Pink City.

The manifestation of a world-class experience, The Swinton House offers an opulent setting with modern interiors, an open courtyard, and a four-sided open bar. The Albion, the ground-zero restaurant, where international modern cuisine meets the diverse flavours of India



each a unique story in a glass. He takes pride in using locally sourced ingredients and global spirits and infusing his creations with a hint of Jaipur's charm. Trendsetting concoctions include Disco Jamun, Vetiver Coffee Highball and more.

Ecstatic about the launch, Sagar Nagpal & Mohit Gurnani, co-founders of The Swinton House said "The Swinton House sets itself apart with its commitment to curating bespoke experiences that elevate the



Situated amidst the picturesque landscapes of Jaipur, The Swinton House is a manifestation of a world-class culinary and cocktail experience. The interiors boast a modern touch, featuring an open courtyard and an inviting bar, adorned with Roman arches and glass panes. Patrons can indulge in the finest sundowners which turn into nights of revelry while savoring the chic ambiance and house special cocktails and canapes. As one enters the property, they are welcomed by a lush green canopy of exotic plants. The main entrance beckons with a four-sided open bar, adorned with waterfall marble tops lit by warm yellow bulbs and hanging glasses.

At the heart of The Swinton House is The Yard, the ground-zero restaurant where international modern cuisine harmoniously merges with the scrumptious flavours of the

decadence of Rajasthan. Divided into three distinct areas,

The cozy family room, replete with big chesterfield sofas and round tables against dark green accented walls, provides an intimate dining experience. As you venture further above, you enter The Albion, a space for after-hours replete with private areas, bold interiors and complimented a special Asian food menu. Curated by Chef Prince Beniwal, The Albion caters to diverse tastes.

The Swinton House brings well-traveled guests a diverse culinary offering that intertwines

modern world cuisine with the essence of India's diverse gastronomy. This blend has been meticulously perfected over the years, capturing the essence of traditional and contemporary tastes. Chef Prince Beniwal's passion for exploring and incorporating regional Indian flavours into global dishes has led to a menu that is both innovative and respectful of its roots; some signature dishes include Moroccan Chicken Kebabs, Cottage Cheese Mousse Nest with Pickled Kataifi, London Fog Run Tiramisu and more.

The bar at The Swinton House is an embodiment of innovation and tradition, taking guests on a journey across varied flavors and spirits. The menu has been crafted by the in-house mixologist Ankur who hails from Himachal Pradesh. The signature cocktails are a testament to Ankur's skills,

senses. The culinary offerings are a perfect amalgamation of familiar flavours and avant-garde techniques, creating a symphony of tastes that will tantalize discerning palates. Guests can expect a regal twist on world-renowned delicacies, promising a gastronomic adventure like none other. The meticulously restored colonial property serves as a canvas for the seamless fusion of heritage and modernity, offering a captivating backdrop for every visitor."

The Swinton House promises not just a dining experience but a journey into elevated culinary excellence. With its Victorian-inspired interiors, exquisite menu, and crafted cocktails, The Swinton House invites patrons to savour the finest in gastronomy and mixology, creating memories that linger beyond the dining table.



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Rapper Badshah in New Avatar



A culinary connoisseur at heart; Badshah, the rapper, entrepreneur, mentor and philanthropist is gearing up to mark his maiden innings in the hospitality industry with the launch of three brands- Sago Spice Symphony, Seville and Sidera in partnership with Babita Puri Gupta and Udayveer Gupta.

Located in the heart of Chandigarh; the upscale neighborhood of Sector-26, the aesthetically constructed spanking new venture is inspired by the principles of community, pluralism and identity and aspires to serve as a sumptuous indulgence for the city's epicureans.

Spaces

A 9,000 sq. ft. expanse is sculpted into three culinary masterpieces - an invitingly earthy indoor dining space presented in the form of an Indian fine dining restaurant 'Sago Spice Symphony', a basement Pan-Asian cocktail bar 'Sidera' and an atmospheric Continental Lebanese restaurant and lounge 'Seville'.

Sago - implying tapioca pearls, pays a sublime poetic ode to authentic Indian food from different corners of the country and exhibits a congenial vibe that makes it a diner's delight for the entire family with elements of earthy warm palettes, terracotta pottery, cream floral upholstery, glazed tiles, gold and marble accents coupled with natural stonework.

Seville - which draws inspiration from a Spanish city imbibes colonial designs, full of cultural richness, eclectic luxury and exuding sophistication. The venue embraces

a timeless-yet-chic style with an illuminated open-to-sky roof, rustic wooden chandeliers dangling from the tall ceiling, mosaic flooring and wooden carved wall murals accentuating the neutral colour palettes. The standout element of the venue is the elongated bar counter made of handcrafted ripple natural stone cladding.

Sidera - referencing the constellations and stars in Latin, is spruced up with luxe leather furnishing, electric statement LED lighting, textured walls highlighted with fluorescent abstract wall accents, dune-shaped arched ceiling with LUMOSX glow in the dark stars and a backlit marble and onyx bar, to cater to a lively and sensorial after-hours experience for young audiences.

Food

Promising chefs from various regions of India have been onboarded to helm the kitchen with an immersive menu that marries modernity with tradition and spans across Indian, Lebanese, Continental and Pan-Asian fare. The eclectic menu prides itself in the luxurious utilization of homemade sauces, freshly grounded spices and flavourful condiments.

Sago includes signature dishes such as 'Sona Murgh Kebab', 'Lagan Ka Murgh', 'Sago Dal Makhni', 'Chupa Rustam Beetroot Kebab' while chef recommendations at Sidera include 'Asparagus Philadelphia Roll', 'Stuffed Lotus Stem Fritters' and Seville comprises distinctive specialities like 'Chicken Krapow Bowl', 'Edamame Truffle Rice & Burnt Garlic

Sauce' and 'Wild Mushroom With Cream Cheese Dimsum'.

The music hitmaker enlists dishes such as 'Classic Mapo Tofu', 'Moroccan Chicken', 'Classic Yaki Udon Noodles', 'The Gourmet', 'Dal Khushk Awadhi', 'Multani Bhuna Paneer' and 'Bhutani Makai Palak' as his favorite top picks on the menu.

Drinks

The craft cocktail menu is a modern and experimental reincarnation of classic cocktails, and will include multi-dimensional concoctions. Sago signature blends include 'Grecian Glaze', 'Basil & Lychee Spritzer', 'Spicy Love' and 'Clarified New York Sour' while Seville enlists 'The Greek Door', 'Blue Sea', 'Santorin Secret', 'Mediterranean Mirage', 'Hellen', 'Ladybug', 'Forbidden Spiced Fruit' and 'Queen & Tonic' as its specialities. On the other hand, Sidera classics include 'Temple Run', 'Green Velvet', 'Flower Power', 'Paradise Found' and 'Roses In Bloom'.

Interestingly, the rapper has a drink named after him called 'Badshahi' which is a blend of milk, rose, gulkand, fresh cream, rim with edible gold flakes and also tops his favorites list.

Desserts

In addition, patrons can also look forward to sampling an intoxicating range of confections and delectable desserts such as Turkish Delight, Tiramisu, Hare matar ka halwa and Vanilla Cheesecake with seasonal strawberry compote which will make for a dazzling finish to a hearty meal.

Badshah states, "My love for gastronomy has been a long standing one and one of my biggest passions after music is food. I'm extremely excited to embark on this brand-new journey and spearhead it from a city that has given me so much and made me who I am today. The brand's vision is to indulge culinary aficionados seeking an out-of-the-ordinary gastronomical experience. Traditionally homegrown at its core, but globally experimentative in spirit, the offering is poised to be rich, deep and varied as we aim to blend tradition with modernity."



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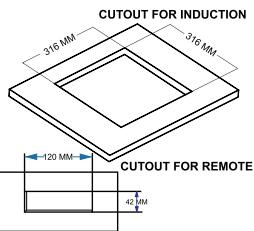
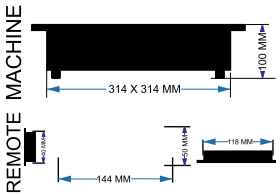
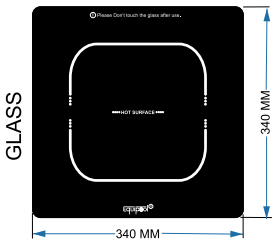
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Cargill Delivers Customised Food Solutions



Responding to Indian consumer preferences that prioritize health and wellness, and engaging sensory experiences, the Cargill Innovation Center (CIC) in India is leading the way with its insights-led innovation to co-create food solutions best suited for local tastes and preferences.

CIC works with food manufacturers, both large and small to medium, to innovate and enable new product development, across bakery, foodservice, dairy & beverage, specialized nutrition, snacks and confectionery categories. Following its first successful year of operations in India, CIC showcased some of the tailored solutions developed locally by combining Cargill's extensive global expertise in food solutions and deep market insights into unique consumer trends in India.

This state-of-the-art facility spans over 17,000 square feet and is equipped with advanced machinery, advanced analytical and sensory capabilities. It facilitates scientific research, innovation, end-to-end product development, and application, delivering value-added solutions to customers in the region. It houses a sensory lab which plays a pivotal role in ensuring an unparalleled experience of taste, colour, flavour, texture, and mouthfeel.

Embracing cutting-edge technology, the center also integrates Augmented Reality (AR) to conduct live-streaming practical demonstrations remotely to customers. This not only fosters engagement but also

promotes knowledge sharing, making the culinary innovation process transparent and accessible.

Cargill's proprietary TrendTracker2023 study on Global Food and Beverage Industry, highlights some of the trends that the company is working on with its customers -

"Healthy for me" - According to the study, consumers today are prioritizing health and seeking healthier choices and making deliberate decisions regarding their food and beverage choices, including:

Focus on immune boosting, digestive wellness, gut health and higher fibre content has grown significantly post pandemic

Alternate sources of protein being sought after as consumers are looking to cover their daily protein requirements through natural plant-based sources

Consumers are opting for healthier ingredients and prefer products with fewer, familiar and more natural ingredients. 82% of consumers in India read on-pack health claims while purchasing a product

Clean label products resonate with consumers and 9 in 10 consumers actively seek recognizable ingredients in the products they choose.

"Experience it" - Consumers are becoming more indulgent with their food choices and are looking to elevate sensorial experiences. They want to go beyond taste to engage all the senses like good texture, mouthfeel, crunchiness, creaminess, chewiness, crispiness and also looking for a healthy

twist to their snacks.

The Cargill study shows that 28% of Indians have increased consumption of indulgent snacks over the last 12 months, signaling a shift in snacking preferences and 39% of consumers prefer their snacks to be 'tasty but healthy,' emphasizing a growing need for snacks that offer indulgence with health benefits.

Subin Sivan, Marketing & Commercial Excellence Leader, Cargill's Food Solutions business in South Asia, said, "India is a vibrant consumer market offering immense growth potential for food and beverage manufacturers. With growing demand for products that are healthier and high on sensory experiences, our customers count on us for innovative solutions that create new experiences for their consumers. We leverage our global expertise, coupled with unique consumer insights and deep experience in the Indian market to build trends based, customized food solutions to deliver on the strategic priorities of our customers and strengthening our role as their partner of choice."

Kunal Yadav, B2B commercial leader, Cargill's Food Solutions business in South Asia, said, "We adopt a customer-driven approach and provide R&D support to create end-to-end food solutions and offerings for our customers. We recently helped resolve a viscosity problem using our value-added fat solutions for one of our largest bakery customers in India. Additionally, our offerings in pea protein are being used by our customers in powder beverages. Insights-based innovation continues to be a key enabler for us to help solve some of the key challenges our customers are facing."

Apart from being a center for food innovation, CIC has also been a catalyst for change, supporting capacity-building within the Indian food industry. Since its launch, the Center has empowered over 100 bakers mostly from small and medium enterprises, providing them with knowledge and necessary skill to thrive in a competitive market.

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A Drink That Always Regales ...



The popularity as well as the craving and desire for cocktails, as compared to other alcoholic drinks, globally, not merely in summer but throughout the year – including winter – is undiminishing. Temperatures do not matter. Cocktail is always something that is welcome. Whether you are in the freezing hills or enjoying the golden Goan sun cocktails are longed-for drinks by all. **Ashok Malkani** takes a look at the cocktail scenario in India – including preference of the consumers, the trends that are likely to occur in the New Year and also the future of cocktails.

When the weather outside is chillingly frightening there is no better way to warm oneself than with a festive winter cocktail. If you thought summer was the ideal season for cocktails, think again. Winter is the time for cocktails to shine. This winter drink your troubles away in style by sipping on a cocktail instead of rum, brandy or whisky!

Innovation is one of the things that make this an interesting and enticing drink. Sometime back, when a blizzard hit Northeastern United States famous chef from Spain, Chef José Andrés, made a cocktail with snow. He scooped up some snow, filled a martini glass with it, and topped it off with mezcal, sweet vermouth, and dried raspberry sugar and salt. And Voila - the snow cocktail was born!

Yes, cocktails are popular all through the year – even in winter! In fact, they are extremely popular during the winter.

Siddharth Saraf, Cofounder, Vaum Tonics says, "Cocktails remain a popular choice during the winter, particularly as people seek warming and comforting drinks. Seasonal flavours like cinnamon, nutmeg, and apple are often incorporated into cocktails to suit the winter palate, making them especially popular during year-end holiday gatherings and celebrations."

Pattabiraman, Director of Food & Beverage, Park Hyatt Chennai, states, "Cocktails are popular all year around. We have some heavy and warm cocktails for the winter and in summer you go for the lighter refreshing cocktails."

Madhusudan Kumar, F&B Manager, Grand Mercure Mysore, opines, "Cocktails maintain moderate popularity during Mysuru's winter in South India, with preferences shifting towards warm and spiced concoctions. Classics like Hot Toddy and festive-themed drinks gain traction, offering a cozy twist to traditional choices."

Manish Kumar, F&B Manager, Jaisalmer Marriott Resort & Spa disclosed, "Cocktails are quite popular during winter, especially rum and whiskey-based cocktails, as they help keep us warm and cozy."

Sangeeth J, Director - Food & Beverage, Holiday Inn Chennai OMR IT Expressway declares, "In Chennai, winter is not as pronounced as in other regions, leading to a constant demand for cocktails year-round. However, there is a slight uptick in cocktail consumption during winter, primarily because of the festive season and tourists who visit Chennai during these months."

Akshay Lokrey, Assistant Food & Beverage Manager, Sofitel Mumbai BKC too is of a similar view. He avers, "Cocktails experience heightened popularity during winter, thanks to the festive season, corporate gatherings, and social outings. The allure of winter-special cocktails is amplified by the ambiance of celebrations, pop-up events, and specially curated festive menus."

Kuber Bhat, Bartender, The Blue Bop Cafe,



Mumbai, reveals, "Cocktails remain popular in winter, with seasonal variations like hot toddies or spiced drinks being particularly enjoyed during colder months."

Winter winners

Like the Indian kitchens that boast of an array of ingredients that embrace local taste and tang the cocktail scene undergoes changes to meet all seasonal requirements. Winter brings in enticingly flavoured cocktails to quench your thirst for something new.

Akshay avers, "In India, winter witnesses a surge in the demand for Speakeasy Cocktails, Rum-based concoctions, Artisanal creations, and specially crafted Festive Cocktails. Additionally, there is a growing preference for warm selections to complement the seasonal vibe."

Manish maintains, "In India, Mai Tai, Old Fashioned, Apple Toddy, Egg Knock, and Cuba Libre are some of the most popular cocktails during winter."

Madhusudan disclosed, "In Mysuru and across India during winter, popular cocktails include the Hot Toddy, incorporating whiskey, honey, and spices. Additionally, warm spiced drinks like Mulled Wine and festive twists on classic cocktails are well-received."

Sangeeth states, "During winter, Indians often prefer warmer and spicier notes. Classic choices like Whiskey Sour and Old Fashioned gain popularity. Additionally, there's a rising trend of incorporating local warming spices and ingredients, such as cardamom and cinnamon."

Pattabiraman cites Hot Toddy with either rum or brandy and Old Fashioned as some of the favourites during winter

Siddharth disclosed, Some popular choices include:

- Masala Chai Toddy: A twist on the classic hot toddy with Indian chai spices.
- Whiskey Saffron: Incorporating the aromatic flavours of saffron.
- Spiced Rum Punch: Featuring Indian spices like cardamom and cinnamon.
- The Classic – Dark Rum and Coke

Kuber states, "Popular Winter cocktails often include warm and spiced options like the Hot Toddy, Mulled Wine, and variations of classic cocktails with a touch of Indian flavors."

Spiced up

Spicy cocktails have become regular feature on the menu, irrespective of the weather. Spicy flavoured cocktails have become a norm





Akshay Lokrey



Kuber Bhat



Madhusudan Kumar



Manish Kumar

globally. International Wine & Spirit Research (IWSR) has traced the growing appeal of chilli flavour to as far back as 2015. The spice cocktails like the spicier spirits, according to IWSR appeals to the millennials.

But did the trend of spiced cocktails start from 2015 and what is the preferred spice?

Kuber avers, "The trend of adding spice to cocktails has historical roots, with spices being used for centuries in various beverages. Spices, like cinnamon, nutmeg, or pepper, can enhance a cocktail's flavor profile, adding depth, warmth, and complexity. The use of spices in cocktails became more pronounced with the resurgence of craft cocktails and mixology in recent decades. Bartenders experiment with spices to create unique and memorable flavour experiences, contributing to the evolving landscape of modern cocktail culture."

Akshay affirms, "The trend of infusing cocktails with spices began with India's rich spice heritage. Spices, integrated into both international and national gins, play a crucial role in cocktails. They add a unique dimension, enhancing the basic taste profiles of spirits and providing a sensory adventure through elements of spice, spirit, sour, sweet, acidic, bitter, and umami."

Manish states, "The trend of adding spice to cocktails started from the very beginning, but it was only around the mid-2000s that the craftsmanship of spices in cocktails was truly appreciated. Adding spice to cocktails enhances their overall flavour, adds complexity, and provides a unique and memorable experience for the customers."

Madhusudan maintains, "The trend of adding spices to cocktails has been present for many years, but it gained significant traction during the modern craft cocktail movement, which emerged in the late 20th century and continued to evolve in the 21st century. Bartenders began experimenting with a wide range of spices to enhance the flavor profile of cocktails."

He continues, "Spices serve several purposes in cocktails. Some of them are:

Flavour Enhancement: Spices add complexity and depth to the taste of cocktails, creating a more nuanced and interesting drinking experience.

Aroma: Many spices contribute aromatic qualities to cocktails, influencing the overall sensory perception.

Balance: When used judiciously, spices can help balance the sweetness, acidity, and

bitterness of a drink, creating a harmonious flavour profile.

Seasonality: Bartenders often use seasonal spices to create cocktails that reflect the flavors associated with specific times of the year.

Innovation: The use of spices allows for creative and innovative cocktail recipes, showcasing the bartender's skill and inventiveness.

Common spices used in cocktails include cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, cloves, cardamom, and black pepper. These spices can be muddled, infused, or used as garnishes to impart their flavors to the drink."

Sangeeth says, "The trend of adding spice to cocktails has been gaining momentum over the past few years. Spices add a unique and complex flavour profile and warmth that's particularly appealing. They also offer a sense of novelty and local flavor to classic cocktails."

Siddharth declares, "The trend of adding spice to cocktails has been around for quite some time, gaining notable popularity with the craft cocktail movement. Spices can add complexity, heat, and depth to a drink, enhancing its flavour profile and providing a sensory experience. Spices are also often used to evoke particular seasons or regions, making a cocktail feel more tailored and special."

Emerging Trends

With rising trend in usage of spice would they prove popular in 2024 and further down the line? It may be mentioned that mixology is a beautiful art due to its evolving and ever-changing trend. Customisation and ability to add twist and create a signature cocktail adds to the mixologist's repute. What would be the trends during the New Year?

Akshay avers, "Spicy cocktails are poised for popularity. The selection of spices in cocktails is subjective, offering a personalized twist to the conventional sweet and sour flavour combination. Enthusiasts can explore a wide array of alcoholic beverages, spirits, and renowned cocktails like the Bloody Mary, Michelada, and Picante, each offering a delightful interplay of heat and flavor."

He adds, "A wave of experimentation is sweeping the cocktail world, with mixologists and bartenders crafting in-house Syrups, Infusions, and leaning towards pre-batched and clarified cocktails. The trend emphasizes a personalized touch, offering patrons natural and flavorful experiences."



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**Sangeeth J****Siddharth Saraf****Pattabiraman**

Madhusudan asserts, "The popularity of spicy cocktails is a growing trend, and there are several reasons behind it."

He affirms, "Some of the emerging trends in cocktails are:

Sustainability: Emphasis on eco-friendly practices, using local and seasonal ingredients, and minimizing waste in cocktail preparation.

Low-ABV and No-ABV Cocktails: Growing demand for lighter options, including cocktails with lower alcohol content or entirely alcohol-free.

Culinary Influence: Integration of culinary techniques and ingredients, with bartenders exploring flavours like smoked herbs, infusions, and unique spice blends.

Global Flavors: Experimentation with international ingredients and flavours, showcasing a diverse range of cultural influences in cocktail recipes.

Wellness Cocktails: Incorporation of health-focused ingredients, such as superfoods, herbal infusions, and functional ingredients, aligning with wellness trends.

Technology Integration: The use of technology in cocktail creation, including automated bartending systems, digital menus, and innovative gadgets.

Craft Ice: Attention to detail in ice production, with bars offering custom-shaped or artisanal ice cubes for enhanced drink experiences."

Manish disclosed, "Spicy cocktails are gaining popularity because they evoke a sense of adventure and attract customers who are seeking new and exciting flavour experiences. Spice stimulates the senses, providing a unique and memorable experience, and enhances the overall flavour of a cocktail, adding complexity and depth."

He predicts, "Trends for the future are Two-spirit cocktails and spicy drinks. Two-spirit cocktails feature two different spirits blended together to create a unique and complex flavour profile, while spicy cocktails, which use ingredients like jalapeño, add a fiery kick to classic cocktails like margaritas and Bloody Mary's."

Sangeeth avers, "Spicy cocktails will continue to grow in popularity. This is due to their unique flavour profiles that cater to the Indian palate, which often favours bold and spicy flavours. The emerging trends, I believe, would be, the use of local ingredients, sustainability (like zero-waste cocktails), health-conscious options like low-ABV or non-alcoholic cocktails, and

experiential drinking where the presentation and experience are as important as the drink itself."

Pattabiraman maintains, "Spiced cocktails are ever popular and in cocktails every drink has its own space and its time. There are periods when classics were almost forgotten and now they are back in the trend with a special place. The emerging trends of minimalistic, zero waste cocktails brings the chefs and mixologists together to use every part of an ingredient. Fat wash is another emerging trend where you get to add the savoury flavour and texture into the drink."

Siddharth too is of the opinion that spicy cocktails are likely to continue rising in popularity. He states, "This trend is driven by a growing consumer interest in more adventurous and diverse flavour profiles, as well as the enduring appeal of culinary fusions. Spicy cocktails offer a unique taste experience and often pair well with a wide range of foods, making them a favourite in food-centric social scenes. I believe the emerging trends during the New Year, among others, would be:

- Health-conscious drinks
- Sustainability
- Heritage and Artisanal spirits: Increasing use of traditional and locally made spirits.
- Technology."

Kuber declares, "The trend of spicy cocktails is likely to continue as they offer a balance of heat and flavour, providing a unique and memorable drinking experience. People are increasingly open to exploring diverse and adventurous flavour combinations, and the use of spices adds complexity and depth to cocktails. Additionally, the growing interest in global flavours and culinary influences in mixology contributes to the appeal of spicy cocktails."

He too believes the emerging trends would be:

- Low-ABV Cocktails
- Sustainability

Creative Garnishes: Unique and artistic garnishes to enhance the visual and aromatic aspects of cocktails.

Botanical Infusions: Experimentation with botanicals, herbs, and floral elements for complex and diverse flavour profiles.

Non-Alcoholic Alternatives

Culinary Influences: Incorporation of culinary techniques and flavors, blurring the lines between food and drink."

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Artisanal Cocktails

There has been a tremendous transition in the world of mixology. Today, guests want immersive experiences, cutting edge flavours and a hint of artistry in their cocktails; thus increasing the demand for craft cocktails or artisanal cocktails.

Let's take a deeper look in artisanal cocktails. What are artisanal cocktails? Why are they called so? Are they popular?

Akshay explains, "Artisanal Cocktails, also known as Craft or Contemporary Cocktails, embody the art of mixology, reflecting a bartender's personality, journey, and experience. These cocktails, distinguished by a personal touch, unique preparation methods, and years of expertise, enjoy popularity due to the individuality each bartender brings to their creation."

Sangeeth too has a similar explanation. He says, "Artisanal cocktails are handcrafted drinks where each element is made in-house or sourced from high-quality, often local, producers. They are called 'artisanal' due to the craftsmanship and attention to detail involved. These cocktails are popular for their uniqueness, freshness, and the story they tell through their ingredients and preparation."

Kuber declares, "Artisanal cocktails refer to handcrafted or carefully crafted cocktails made with a focus on high-quality, often locally sourced, and unique ingredients. These cocktails are crafted by skilled bartenders who pay attention to detail, using creative techniques to elevate the drinking experience. Like artisanal foods or crafts, they emphasize craftsmanship, skill, and a personal touch in

their creation. Bartenders may infuse their own syrups, use house-made bitters, or incorporate freshly pressed juices, showcasing a commitment to quality and originality. These cocktails have gained popularity in recent years as consumers seek more personalized and distinctive drinking experiences."

Pattabiraman states "Artisanal cocktails are hand crafted drinks made with high quality ingredients."

Siddharth says, "Usually these cocktails are made by skilled bartenders who employ traditional and innovative techniques"

Manish adds, "They are called artisanal cocktails because they are like a work of art and require skill and dedication to make. They are quite popular, as customers appreciate the craftsmanship and attention to detail that goes



into making them."

Madhusudan disclosed, "The term 'artisanal' is derived from the word 'artisan,' which denotes skilled craftsmanship. These cocktails are crafted with a focus on high-quality, often locally sourced, and unique ingredients. They are made with a level of craftsmanship and attention to detail that goes beyond the routine preparation of traditional drinks. Artisanal cocktails often involve creative combinations of premium spirits, fresh and seasonal ingredients, house-made syrups, and unique garnishes. Artisanal cocktails have gained popularity as they offer a more elevated and personalised drinking experience. Consumers are increasingly interested in exploring diverse flavour profiles, and artisanal cocktails cater to this demand by providing a unique and often innovative approach to mixology."

Future of Cocktails in India

The world of alcohol is ever evolving and trends reflect societal shifts and consumer preference. With the introduction of several craft spirits, more seasonal ingredient experimentation and an emphasis on sustainability, what would be the future of cocktails in India is a question that is niggling in the minds of the consumers.

Akshay asserts, "The cocktail culture in India is experiencing an unprecedented boom, poised to elevate to the next level. Notably, Indian bars consistently secure spots in Asia's best 50 and the world's best 50 bars over the past 5-6 years, indicative of a robust and promising future. There's a discernible interest in both classic and contemporary cocktails, solidifying the notion that cocktails are an integral part of India's evolving culinary landscape."

Pattabiraman declares, "Cocktails are no longer a drink that you have to get drunk. It is an experience and something that is great for a networking or a socialising purpose. The cocktails that you drink also send in a style statement of who you are."

Manish maintains, "The future of cocktails in India is bright, as younger generations like Gen Z are more interested in cocktails and appreciate the craftsmanship that goes into making them. The rise of mixology and the innovation of new cocktails daily are also contributing factors to the growth of cocktails in India."

Madhusudan informs, "The future of cocktails in India holds promising trends,



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including the continued rise of craft cocktails, increased experimentation with local and global flavours, and a growing demand for innovative, wellness-focused, and sustainable drink options. As the cocktail culture evolves, expect more fusion of traditional Indian ingredients with modern mixology techniques, contributing to a dynamic and diverse drinking experience."

Siddharth too is optimistic, he states, "The future of cocktails in India looks promising and vibrant. As the country's middle class expands

and international travel and media influence grow, there's increasing exposure to global trends, leading to a greater demand for diverse and sophisticated beverage options. The rich array of regional flavours and ingredients in India also provides a unique platform for innovative and localised cocktail creations."

Kuber predicts, "The future of cocktails in India is likely to involve a continued evolution of flavours, techniques, and experiences. As the beverage industry adapts to global trends, you can expect to see more creativity

in cocktail offerings, including innovative fusions of traditional Indian ingredients with modern mixology. The growth of craft cocktail bars, the popularity of locally inspired drinks, and an increasing appreciation for diverse flavour profiles are trends that may continue. Additionally, the exploration of sustainable practices, unique garnishes, and the integration of technology in cocktail preparation could play a role in shaping the future of cocktails in India. Keep an eye on local establishments and industry developments for the latest trends."

Cocktail Recipes

Classic Margarita

Ingredients:

Tequila	2 oz
Triple sec	1 oz
Fresh lime juice	1 oz

Ice
Salt (for rimming the glass)

Method

Rim the glass with salt by running a lime wedge around the edge and dipping it into salt.
In a shaker with ice, combine tequila, triple sec, and lime juice.
Shake well and strain the mixture into the prepared glass over ice.

Old Fashioned

Ingredients:

Bourbon or rye whiskey	2 oz
Sugar cube	1
Angostura bitters	2-3 dashes
Orange twist (for garnish)	

Ice

Method

Place the sugar cube in an old-fashioned glass and saturate it with bitters.
Muddle the sugar and bitters together.
Add a large ice cube and pour the whiskey over it.
Stir gently and garnish with an orange twist
Madhusudan Kumar, F&B Manager, Grand Mercure Mysore

Purple Cosmo

Ingredients

Gin	45 ml
Cointreau	15 ml
Elderflower syrup	10 ml
Lime juice	10 ml
Blueberry syrup	10 ml

Method

Shake all ingredients in a shaker and pour into a chilled Daiquiri glass.
Sangeeth J, Director - F&B, Holiday Inn Chennai OMR IT Expressway

Negroni

Ingredients

Gin	30 ml
Campari	30 ml
Manicino Sweet vermouth	30 ml

Method

Add the ingredients in a mixing glass with ice and stir it for 60 sec.
Pour the liquid in a rock glass and place a large ice cube.
Squeeze the orange peel over the drink to release the oil and drop the same in the drink.
You could do a pre batch cocktail in clay pot 24 hours prior to serving the drink which will be very mellow.
Pattabiraman, Director - F&B, Park Hyatt Chennai.

Spiced Masala Chai Spritz

Ingredients:

bourbon or Indian whisky	60 ml
chai masala syrup	10 ml
2 dashes of Angostura bitters, orange peel for garnish, Top off with Vaum™ Clear Ginger Ale.	

Method

Stir the whisky, chai masala syrup, and bitters with ice until well chilled.
Strain into a tall glass over ice cubes.
Twist the orange peel over the drink to release its oils and drop it in.
Pour Vaum™ clear ginger ale

Mango Fig Highball

Ingredients

Vodka,	60 ml
Salt	
Powdered Sugar	
Red Chilli Powder for the Rim,	
Top off with Vaum™ Mango Fig Botanical Water.	

Method

Rim a Tall Glass with the Salt, Sugar & Red Chilli Mixture.
Fill the glass with crushed ice. Pour the Vodka over it.

Top it off with Vaum Mango Fig botanical water. Can also garnish it with a lemon wedge.

Siddharth Saraf, Cofounder, Vaum Tonics

Espresso Martini

Ingredients

Vodka	1 1/2 oz
Coffee liqueur (e.g., Kahlúa)	1 oz
Freshly brewed espresso	1 oz
Simple syrup	1/2 oz
	(adjust to taste)

Ice cubes

Method

In a shaker, combine vodka, coffee liqueur, freshly brewed espresso, and simple syrup.
Add ice and shake vigorously.
Strain into a chilled martini glass.
Optionally, garnish with coffee beans on top.

Spiced Paloma

Ingredients

Tequila	2 oz
Fresh grapefruit juice	1 oz
fresh lime juice	1/2 oz
Agave syrup (adjust to taste)	1/2 oz
Chili powder or cayenne pepper	1 pinch of
Grapefruit soda (to top)	
Grapefruit slice (for garnish)	
Ice cubes	

Method

Rim the glass with chili powder or cayenne pepper for a spicy kick (optional).
In a shaker, combine tequila, grapefruit juice, lime juice, agave syrup, and a pinch of chili powder with ice.
Shake well and strain into a glass filled with ice.
Top with grapefruit soda.
Garnish with a grapefruit slice
Kuber Bhat, Bartender, The Blue Bop Cafe, Mumbai

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The Quick Service Restaurant (QSR) industry in the country, and also across the globe, is expanding on a massive scale. Indian youths are, today, keen to try new cuisines and are keen to explore culinary options from around the world. The younger generation is gravitating towards QSRs due to their economic prices, convenient take-out menus and multifarious dining options which satiate their cravings. QSRs that combine rich flavours and different culinary options are attracting not only the youngsters but people of all generations. According to the Food Service and Restaurant Business Report 2022–23, India's food service market is predicted to grow at a CAGR of 11.19% and reach \$ 79.65 billion by 2028. A Research and Markets report discloses that the Indian QSR market which was worth Rs. 171.90 billion in FY 2022 will grow at a CAGR of about 20.47% to reach Rs 431.27 billion by FY 2027. All these figures are sure to tempt an enterprising entrepreneur to venture into this field. **Ashok Malkani** delves on the intricacies and essentials of opening a QSR as well as the challenges that one may encounter.

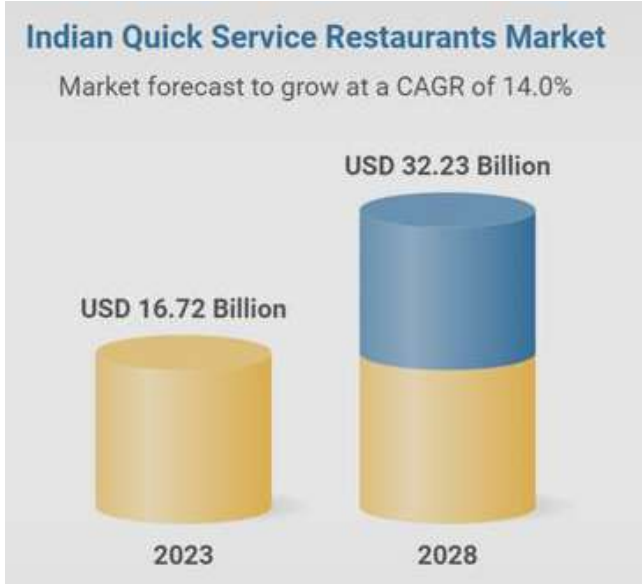
Burping on a burger has become a norm not only with the gen Z and millennials but with all age groups. If not the burger, they are drooling over a pizza or even momos. Yes, fast food has become the preferred delicacy for Indians. The fast food concept, it is believed, originated in the west to cater to people with shortage of time for satiating their hunger. However, if one looks at the Indian food industry's history, one finds that sweet shops selling snacks has existed at any given point in Indian history.

From ancient Indian history to the present day scenario the key of the Indian households, for serving guests who have come for a quick visit, has been to serve them with snacks like samosas, kachoris, Dhoklas, etc and sweets like gulab jamuns. This food, it is found, has been an integral part of Indian culture since long.

The fast food consumption, over the years, has been increasing and, in recent times, it has enlarged at a rapid rate due to the millennials' hectic lives and expansion of the working population,

globally. The result is: burgeoning growth of the QSR (quick service restaurant) industry. In India, it has evolved over the years. Today, the QSR industry in India does not merely cater to a person desiring a quick meal but it has become a dynamic sector catering to the diverse tastes and preferences of millions. From global giants to home grown favourites, QSR brands have become an integral part of the country's culinary landscape.

QSR industry in India has been growing at a rapid rate. According to Mordor



Courtesy: Research And Markets

Intelligence there has been a healthy Y-o-Y increase of 8.41% growth in the number of outlets from 2021 to 2022. It predicts that the Indian QSR industry would be valued at about \$ 25.46 in 2024 and is expected to reach USD 38.71 billion by 2029, growing at a CAGR of 8.74% during the forecast period (2024-2029).

According to a report from credit rating agency ICRA, the QSR sector is expected to grow by 20-25% in FY 2024. It has been witnessing a robust revenue expansion of about 30-35 per cent in year-on-year (YoY) terms estimated for FY2023, it added. ICRA states that the segment is also witnessing increasing penetration to Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities which is mostly driven by capital expenditure and rapid expansion. The growing disposable income of residents in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities is encouraging the QSR chains to focus on the emerging markets.

The Business Research Company predicts that the fast food and the quick service restaurant size is expected to see a strong growth in the next few years and grow from \$295.03 billion in 2023 to \$ 316.11billion in 2024 at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.1% and to at a compound annual growth rate of 6.9%

The Research and Markets predicts that QSR market in India, which was valued at Rs 171.80 billion in FY 2022, is expected to reach Rs. 431.27 Bn in FY 2027, expanding at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of ~20.47% during the FY 2022 - FY 2027 forecast period.

As per a report by ICRA the top five players in the domestic quick service restaurant (QSR) industry are likely to add around 2,300 stores between FY 2023-2025 with an estimated capital expenditure (capex) of about Rs 5,800 crore (excluding refurbishment) for this period, twice that of the levels seen during the pre-Covid era.

As per the ICRA report the domestic QSR industry witnessed a sharp recovery in ADS and revenues during FY 2023, supported by demand drivers like changing food consumption habits, favourable demographics, improving purchasing power, steady urbanisation, and new store

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additions.

Suprio Banerjee, Vice President and Sector Head–Corporate Ratings, ICRA Limited, states, “The capex spree in the QSR industry is likely to be driven by favourable demographics, steady urbanisation in India, growing per-capita GDP and significant headroom available in terms of QSR penetration, compared to a developed economy like the US. Increasing formalisation of the sector is expected to improve the penetration levels considerably.”

Starting a QSR Outlet

All this makes it enticing for enterprising entrepreneurs to venture into this business. But one has to take several aspects into consideration while investing in the venture.

The most important one is finance. Evaluating your finances is extremely important. If you’re in a financially secure enough position, you can fund your QSR on your own. If you can’t fund your QSR on your own, you can get venture capital from investors. The third option is to apply for a loan. For this, you will have to present your business plans and financial projections to the bank or credit union.

Some of the other aspects that need to be considered are:

Type of QSR: decide whether you want to start a window counter for only takeaways or have a fast food restaurant with a sitting arrangement. In the latter case you could make a full serviced restaurant or self-serviced one or assisted self-service. This all depends on one’s budget.

Location: Like in any F&B outlet, this is one of the most critical factors for determining the success or failure of the

outlet. It should ideally be in a densely populated area, keeping the targeted audience. The accessibility and visibility are also essential factors. Your product will also drive the decision for your location. You’ll likely target specific demographics depending on what types of food and drink you offer.

Licenses required: The 5 licenses essential for starting a QSR are: Food License from FSSAI, GST Registration, Police Eating House license, Local Municipal Corporation Health License, and Fire License. Fire licenses and the like can be acquired once you commence restaurant operations; however, it is recommended to have all the permits in place before opening the outlet.

12 licenses required to open a restaurant

It may be mentioned that food and drink establishments face some of the strictest health and sanitation regulations.

FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards

Authority of India) License not only authorizes you to run a restaurant but also gives confidence to your customers.

Staff needed: The team behind the counter and the kitchen is extremely significant for the popularity and success of a QSR. The chef is the most important person as he not only cooks the delicacies but also designs the menu and guides rest of the kitchen staff. In a takeaway kitchen, a minimum of 5-6 employees is required in the kitchen.

Kitchen equipment: The essential equipment would be kitchen fryers, griddle, Stove top/grill, refrigeration equipment, a commercial kitchen hood (for the safety of you and your kitchen staff), prep table (these are required for meal preparation before you cook your meals), commercial ovens, convection ovens, food processors, commercial meat slicers, commercial mixers, commercial dishwashing equipment, commercial sinks.

There would be other requirements too. The above are extremely essential ones.

Marketing strategy: This comprises of two types – online and offline. For online marketing you could make use of social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok, depending on the inclinations of your target audience. Customer reviews are also important. You could create account on sites like Google, My Business and Yelp and ask your consumers to leave a review.

The tried, tested and cheapest mode of offline marketing is: pamphlets. An excellent billboard could also act as an offline publicity gimmick. You could also partner with other local businesses for





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Role of technology: Today, Technological innovation has become the watchword in QSRs ranging from ordering and payment systems to kitchen equipment. QSRs have adopted digital ordering and payment systems. Today customers can place and pay for them through apps. This has helped QSRs in streamlining their operations and reducing manual labour.

Point of Sale (POS) and billing software plays a critical and integral part in the success of a QSR. Point Of Sale systems are undergoing some of today's most groundbreaking innovations in restaurant technology. This software is like an operating system for your entire restaurant. It can not only help manage your staff and inventory but also present data which can help you make insightful and important decisions for your business.

Staff uniform: To create a favourable image of the QSR it is necessary for all staff members to look presentable and be well dressed. It is thus necessary that you have uniforms for the staff.

Operations Management

Besides the necessities for opening a QSR one must also be aware of effective operation management of the fast food restaurant. To succeed in QSR business one must understand and have comprehension of three major operations namely, product standardization, front and back house co-ordination and the know-how of how to choose suppliers for inventory

Product Standardization can be achieved by trained staff and controlling of recipe units. An example of this is a burger. Its taste comes from the sauces and the premixes. Besides the patty, extras

like the fries make it attractive, enticing and delectable and tempting to order this fast food item every time he is hungry.

In a QSR, the entire staff works as one unit – from the person assembling to the person cashing the order. There is no differentiation between the front house or back house. They are all aware of the process.

As far as finalising suppliers is concerned one should judge him by his caliber to meet your goals.

Challenges

The Quick service restaurant industry or the fast food industry has continued to flourish but it faces numerous challenges too, which an entrepreneur planning to enter this segment must also contemplate on.

Some of these challenges could be:

Stiff competition: With several domestic and international players entering the QSR industry, it is becoming an extremely competitive market. Increasing popularity of food aggregators and delivery platforms too has made it easier for consumers to compare prices thus making the competition more acute and rigorous. Offering innovative and differentiated menu items, providing excellent customer service could help in tackling this issue.

Increasing costs: The increasing costs of raw materials and other supplies is a worrying factor. To ensure profitability, effective cost management strategies like optimizing procurement processes, reducing waste, optimizing menu pricing, improving operational efficiency et al have to be put in place.

Regulatory compliance: QSRs have to comply with regulations like labour laws, licensing norms and food safety and hygiene. They could invest in necessary resources to tackle these issues.

Labour: Today there is a labour shortage and it is difficult to attract and retain qualified and experienced staff. Shortage of labor could lead to overwork which could lead to discontent among the employees. One way of not overburdening the staff is by investing in training programmes which will help prevent employees leaving the organization. You could also try other options like offering them higher pay, flexible scheduling or opportunities for advancement.

Theft and fraud: Like in other regular F&B outlets, theft and fraud are regular occurrences in quick service restaurants. Stealing cash or inventory, phony refunds are occurrences which one has to be careful about. One way to combat theft and fraud is to implement strong security measures, such as surveillance cameras, audits and cash handling procedures.

Conclusion

The quick service restaurants are proving extremely popular in India; and the influence of western snacks like burger, rolls, pizzas and even other snacks like Momos, of Tibet and Nepal, are becoming favourites in India. There is thus ample opportunity for investing in the fast food industry. The tastes are varied so one has to gauge the preference of the clientele.

The demand for fast food is increasing from Indian snacks like samosas, and chaats to global cuisines. But this does not mean that your outlet would succeed per se. The competition too is increasing! So you have to be on your toes. There are several challenges which you have to face but, as the saying goes: Determination is the key to unlocking achievement.

Once you have decided to venture in this field there is nothing to prevent you from succeeding if you are determined! ■



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Winter Menu Trends

By Sharmila Chand

The current winter food trends are characterized by a blend of innovation, health consciousness, global influence, and environmental responsibility. They reflect a culinary world that is increasingly dynamic, diverse, and attuned to the needs and preferences of a global audience.

We talk to Culinary Heads and leading chefs to understand the key trends and their comfort food in winters.

Food Trends this Season

Chef Jerson Fernandes, Director of Culinary, Novotel Mumbai Juhu Beach

The current winter food trends reflect a diverse and innovative culinary landscape, catering to evolving consumer tastes and environmental concerns. These trends include:

Comfort Foods with a Twist: Traditional comfort dishes are being reinvented with unique and unexpected flavours. This trend sees classic recipes infused with new ingredients, offering a novel twist while maintaining the familiar warmth and heartiness

Plant-Based and Vegetarian Offerings: With a growing emphasis on health and sustainability, there's an increased demand for plant-based and vegetarian options. Winter menus are incorporating seasonal vegetables and plant proteins in creative and satisfying ways.

Winter Superfoods: Chefs and consumers are focusing on the nutritional benefits of winter superfoods like kale, Brussels sprouts, pomegranates, and citrus fruits. These ingredients not only offer health benefits but also add vibrant

flavours to winter dishes.

Global Flavours and Spices: There's a significant trend towards incorporating global flavours, particularly from Middle Eastern, Indian, and Southeast Asian cuisines. These cuisines are known for their rich spices and herbs, bringing warmth and depth to winter meals.

Hot Beverages with Unique Infusions: Moving beyond traditional hot chocolates and mulled wines, the trend is towards hot beverages with unique flavour infusions. These include herbal blends and exotic spice combinations, offering both comfort and a sensory exploration.

Sustainable and Local Ingredients: Sustainability continues to be a key focus, with chefs and consumers preferring locally sourced and seasonal ingredients. This approach supports local economies and reduces the environmental impact, all while ensuring the freshness and quality of the ingredients.

Creative Desserts: Winter desserts are becoming more inventive, integrating seasonal fruits, warm spices, and imaginative presentations. This trend reflects a growing desire for experiential



Chef Jerson Fernandes



Chef Pavan Kumar

dining, where desserts are not just about taste but also about visual appeal and creativity. These desserts often incorporate elements of surprise, combining textures and flavors in novel ways to delight the palate.

Chef Pavan Kumar, Group Executive Chef, Red and Miss Pinto

Root vegetables, including the earthy delights of beetroot, potatoes and carrots, take center stage alongside a medley of fresh pulses, greens, and delicate flowers like pumpkin leaves, mustard leaves, and pansies. The menu gains depth with the inclusion of squash, pumpkin, and fiddlehead ferns, harmoniously complemented by an assortment of fruits, berries, and stone fruits.

Poultry enthusiasts can relish the distinct flavours of duck and quail, while the rich and savoury notes of lamb cuts, such as shanks and trotters, shine during the winter season. Seafood lovers are treated to a feast featuring Himalayan trout, hammerhead, langoustines, mackerel, and mahi-mahi. Chefs artfully embrace simplicity in cooking, allowing the vibrant ingredients to eloquently express themselves on the plate.

Chef Swapnadeep Mukherjee, Executive Chef, The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa, Delhi

This winter, the trend is towards food cooked live served hot from vessel to plate. In this context, we have



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Chef Shaurya Veer Kapoor

received a lot of appreciation from guests for Nabe, the most popular and a classic winter food in Japan which we serve at Sakura as a specially curated Nabe menu to savour the Japanese cuisine beyond sushi and sashimi.

Chef Gopi Nandkumar, Executive Chef, Hyatt Regency, Pune

Locally sourced, seasonal ingredients will take the spotlight, allowing for a connection with the community and a reduced environmental impact. Comfort foods with a modern twist will also dominate menus, offering a nostalgic yet innovative dining experience.

Inspiration to Create New Dishes this Winter

Chef Pavan Kumar, Group Executive Chef, Red and Miss Pinto

The inspiration for crafting new winter dishes is a multi-faceted journey that begins with the breathtaking canvas of beautiful landscapes. Nature's rich and vibrant produce serves as a muse, guiding the creation of each plate with a palette of seasonal colours and textures. Street food, with its diverse flavours and local authenticity, becomes a wellspring of ideas, infusing a touch of urban culinary vibrancy.

The nostalgic aroma and taste of childhood favourites, reminiscent of the comforting meals prepared by mothers at home, evoke a sense of warmth and familiarity in every dish. Furthermore, a

stroll through morning markets offers a direct connection to the source, with the sights and sounds of fresh ingredients sparking innovative culinary concepts.

In essence, the creative process is a harmonious blend of nature's wonders, the allure of street cuisine, the nostalgia of home-cooked meals, and the dynamic energy of local markets, culminating in dishes that not only satisfy the palate but also tell a story of diverse inspirations.

Chef Shaurya Veer Kapoor, Executive Chef, Gola Sizzlers

Drawing inspiration from current market trends and diverse winter food preferences, we strive to craft dishes that align with varied culinary habits, ensuring a delightful and satisfying experience for all.

Chef Gopi Nandkumar, Executive Chef, Hyatt Regency, Pune

Nature plays a significant role, especially during winter. The crisp air, seasonal produce, and the visual appeal of winter landscapes guide my creativity. Additionally, I draw inspiration from global culinary traditions, exploring diverse flavours and techniques to bring a unique touch to my dishes.

Chef Swapnadeep Mukherjee, Executive Chef, The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa, Delhi

Reading latest journals from famous chefs, also try experimenting with cuisine keeping in mind the season's trend and create something innovative yet healthy and delicious for my guests who come up with an expectation of trying something new and unique each time they visit us.



Chef Gopi Nandkumar



Chef Aman Jaiswal

Favourite Winter Comfort Dish

Chef Shaurya Veer Kapoor - Executive Chef, Gola Sizzlers

My favourite winter dish, the Tandoori Broccoli as the dish not only offers a healthy option but also provides a perfect blend of flavours, making it an ideal choice for the winter season. On the non-vegetarian side, the grilled chicken sizzler is a winter indulgence with its freshly grilled succulent chicken. Served on a bed of butter garlic tossed seasonal veggies and accompanied by a peppercorn sauce, it creates a harmonious and satisfying culinary experience that captures the essence of winter warmth and deliciousness.

Chef Pavan Kumar, Group Executive Chef, Red and Miss Pinto

My favourite winter comfort dish is the humble lamb trotters soup, known as "paya shorba." This thin yet hearty soup is infused with natural gelatin, awakening the senses and providing a comforting warmth during cold weather. Its light and refreshing nature make it a perfect winter indulgence, offering both nourishment and a soothing sensation. The richness of the lamb trotters imparts a depth of flavour that, coupled with the therapeutic qualities of the broth, elevates this dish to a comforting winter classic, making it my preferred choice during the colder months.

Chef Jerson Fernandes, Director of Culinary, Novotel Mumbai Juhu Beach

My favourite winter comfort food is a hearty chicken stew, rich with garlic and brimming with nutritious winter vegetables like carrots, green peas, and spinach. This warm, flavorful dish is not only satisfying but also packed with vitamins, making it a perfect meal for chilly winter days. The combination of tender chicken, aromatic garlic, and fresh vegetables creates a comforting and delicious experience that epitomizes the essence of winter cuisine.

Chef Aman Jaiswal, Executive Chef at Essex Farms

My favourite winter dish is poached pears in red wine. I love something warm, sweet and include whole spices, which keeps you warm in the winters. Also there is a certain decadence in a wine infused dish that warms my heart.

Tips to Create Wholesome Winter Menu

Chef Shaurya Veer Kapoor - Executive Chef, Gola Sizzlers

Embrace Seasonal Produce



Chef Feroz Patel

Warm and Comforting Flavours - Opt for spices like cinnamon, nutmeg, peppercorns and cloves to add warmth to your dishes.

Balanced Nutritional Options - Create a well-rounded menu by including a mix of proteins, whole grains, and vegetables.

Chef Jerson Fernandes, Director of Culinary, Novotel Mumbai Juhu Beach

Diverse Preparation Techniques - Explore diverse cooking techniques to showcase the versatility of winter

ingredients. Roasting, braising, and grilling can enhance the natural flavours and textures of seasonal produce. Incorporate these techniques into both savoury and sweet dishes to create a well-rounded and appealing winter menu. Experimenting with different cooking methods adds variety and interest to the dining experience evolving hospitality industry.

Chef Feroz Patel, Executive Chef, Courtyard by Marriott, Pune Chakan

Integrate Seasonal Fresh Produce - Focus on featuring seasonal fruits and vegetables, with an emphasis on winter offerings such as carrots, sweet potatoes, beets, turnips, fenugreek leaves (methi), radishes (muli), and mustard greens (sarsoo).

Include Comforting Hot Beverages - Warm beverages can be a delightful addition to your winter menu. Offer a variety of hot drinks such as herbal teas, spiced coffees, and hot chocolates. Experiment with unique flavour combinations like cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves to create comforting drinks.



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The Fruit as Vegetable

There is some long-standing confusion regarding classifying tomato as a fruit or a vegetable. Tomato is commonly treated in culinary terms as a vegetable, but botanically it is a fruit. It develops from the ovary of the plant after fertilisation. The tomato fruit is a berry. It is the edible fruit of *Solanum lycopersicum*, which is the scientific name of the tomato plant. One can say that scientifically speaking tomato is a fruit, but in popular perception it is a vegetable because tomatoes are more extensively used in savoury dishes than in sweet dish preparations.

Tomato plants are vines and if supported, they grow generally up to 6ft or more above the ground. Tomatoes most commonly come in red and orange colours, but yellow and green coloured tomatoes are also abundant. Unripe tomatoes are often green in colour. Even pink and purple tomatoes are also found. There are around 7500 varieties of tomatoes found! Beefsteak tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, grape tomatoes, campari tomatoes, heirloom tomatoes, pear tomatoes are some among them.

The History

The genesis of the word tomato can be

traced to the Nahuatl word *tomati* which gave rise to the Spanish word *tomate*, from where the English word *tomato* was derived. According to Wikipedia, Nahuatl is a language or a group of languages of the Uto-Aztecan language family.

The origin of tomatoes can be attributed to Central and South America. It is believed that people in today's Mexico were the first to use tomato as a food item. The history of its usage can be dated back to the 6th century BC.

The Spanish colonisation of Americas led



Anand Singh Marwad

to the introduction of tomatoes in Europe, during the 16th century. The Spanish people also took tomatoes to the Philippines, and from there it spread to the South-east Asia and then to the entire Asia. It sounds strange that during their initial days in Europe, tomatoes were thought to be poisonous by Europeans. Though recipes made through the infusion of tomatoes can be delicious, its leaves are indeed poisonous. These days, tomatoes are widely consumed throughout the world. In fact, it is one of the most liked food products in the world.

Cultivation, Production and Storage

Though tomato plants can grow in most of the habitable climatic conditions, the ideal climate for the growth of tomatoes is the temperate climate. Tomato seeds can easily and quickly germinate between temperatures ranging from 68 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Tomatoes can be grown all over the year. Tomatoes require nutrient-rich, fast-draining loamy soil to attain impressive growth.

China is the top tomato producing country in the world, followed by India. United States of America takes the third position in our blue planet as far as tomato production goes.

As far as storage of tomatoes goes, ideally

they should be kept unwashed at room temperatures and shouldn't be exposed to direct sunlight. Refrigeration of tomatoes can negatively influence their flavour.

Wide Culinary Usage

Tomatoes can be eaten raw in salads and can also be used in several culinary applications. They are integral part of many cuisines, but especially of Mediterranean cuisine. Tomato ketchup and tomato sauce are extremely common condiments and are extensively used to add taste and flavour to myriad dishes. Tomatoes add vibrant colour to dishes, enhancing their visual appeal.

Tomato soup can set the mood for a great meal. Tomato juice is consumed as a beverage. Tomato is also used to make salsa or sandwiches. Peach-tomato salsa is a wonderful low calorie snack. Eating raw, fresh tomatoes is a common and simple way to enjoy their natural flavour.

In pizzas, and in pasta sauces, tomatoes are extensively used. Ketchup is a popular condiment made from tomatoes, vinegar, sugar, and various spices. It's commonly used as a topping for burgers, fries, and other dishes.

Tomato is used in several Indian dishes ranging from butter chicken to mutton curry to fish curry to matar paneer to dal tadka to rajma to vegetable curry...and many more.

Tomato is also used to prepare the cocktail named Bloody Mary. Roasted tomatoes with some seasonings can also be a tasty dish. Roasted cherry tomatoes on pasta or pizza can also make for a sumptuous evening.

According to Anand Singh Marwad, Asst. Professor and Pastry Chef, IHM-Aurangabad, "There are multiple reasons why tomatoes are important in culinary applications. Tomatoes contribute a rich and robust flavour to dishes. With their unique combination of sweetness and acidity tomato adds depth and complexity to a wide range of recipes. Tomatoes come in various forms, including fresh, canned, pureed, and dried. This versatility allows chefs to use them in different ways, depending on the dish. For example, fresh tomatoes work well in salads and salsas, while canned tomatoes are excellent for sauces and stews.

He further adds, "The natural acidity of tomatoes helps balance the flavours in dishes. This acidity can cut through richness, providing a refreshing and palate-cleansing element to recipes. Tomatoes contain

glutamate, the compound responsible for the umami flavour. Umami is often described as a savoury and satisfying taste, and tomatoes contribute to this in dishes. Depending on how they are prepared, tomatoes can add different textures to a dish. Tomatoes pair well with a wide range of ingredients, enhancing the overall harmony of a dish."

In summary, tomatoes are a fundamental ingredient in culinary preparations due to their unique flavour profile, versatility, and ability to enhance the overall taste, colour, and texture of a wide array of dishes.

But how to select the quality/variety of Tomato for varied uses in foodservice industry?

Selecting the right quality and variety of tomatoes is crucial in the foodservice industry to ensure the best flavour, texture, and appearance in various dishes. Here are some guidelines provided by Anand Singh Marwad for selecting tomatoes for different uses in the foodservice industry:

Freshness: Choose tomatoes that are firm, plump, and free of wrinkles or bruises. Look for vibrant, uniform colour.

Type of Tomato: Different types of tomatoes are suitable for various purposes. For example, Roma tomatoes are often preferred for sauces and canning due to their low moisture content, while beefsteak tomatoes are popular for slicing in sandwiches or burgers. Consider the acidity and sweetness levels of the tomatoes based on the desired flavour profile of the dish.

Texture: For salads and fresh applications, select tomatoes with a juicy and crisp texture. If tomatoes are intended for cooking, choose varieties with a balance of firmness and juiciness to withstand the cooking process without becoming overly mushy.

Size: The size of the tomato matters depending on the application.

Seasonality: Tomatoes are generally more flavourful and affordable when they are in season. Consider sourcing tomatoes locally and seasonally for the best quality and taste.

Colour: The colour of tomatoes varies based on the variety, but it should be consistent for a given type. Look for rich, vibrant colours that are typical for the specific tomato variety.

Ripeness: Choose tomatoes at different stages of ripeness based on your needs. Some dishes may benefit from fully ripe, flavourful tomatoes, while others may require

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slightly underripe tomatoes for better texture.

Local Sourcing: Whenever possible, consider sourcing tomatoes locally. Locally grown tomatoes are often fresher, more flavourful, and support the local economy.

Storage Conditions: Ensure that tomatoes are stored and transported under proper conditions. Excessive cold can affect the flavour and texture, while warmth can lead to overripening.

Quality Standards: If working with suppliers, establish quality standards and specifications for the tomatoes you need. Regularly communicate with suppliers to maintain consistency.

By paying attention to these factors, chefs and foodservice professionals can select tomatoes that are well-suited for their intended applications, ensuring the best possible outcome in terms of taste, appearance, and overall quality in the dishes they prepare

Processed Products

Tomatoes are processed into a variety of value-added products to meet the demands of convenience and ready-to-use/eat applications. These processed tomato products are widely used in the food industry and households for their versatility and time-saving qualities. According to Anand, “Some of the value-added products that are available in the market are:

Tomato Sauce: This is a smooth and thick sauce made from cooked and pureed tomatoes, often seasoned with herbs and spices. It's a versatile base for pasta dishes,

pizzas, and various other recipes.

Tomato Paste: Tomato paste is a concentrated form of tomatoes with a thick consistency. It's commonly used to add intense tomato flavour to sauces, stews, and soups.

Canned Tomatoes: Whole, diced, or crushed tomatoes are commonly canned for easy use in a variety of dishes, including stews, casseroles, and sauces.

Ketchup: A popular condiment made from tomatoes, vinegar, sugar, and spices. Ketchup is a staple on tables around the world and is used as a topping for burgers, hot dogs, and fries.

Tomato Juice: Tomato juice is a popular beverage on its own and is also used as a



base for cocktails like Bloody Mary.

Sun-Dried Tomatoes: These are tomatoes that have been dried in the sun or using other methods, resulting in a concentrated and chewy product.

Tomato Powder: Tomato powder is a dehydrated form of tomatoes that can be reconstituted with water. It's used in soups, stews, and sauces to add tomato flavour.

These processed tomato products provide convenience and a consistent flavour profile, making them popular choices in modern kitchens for quick and delicious meals.”

Health Benefits

Tomato is spruced with various health benefits. Tomatoes have more than impressive water content. The water content of tomatoes is more than 95 percent. Tomatoes also have low sugar content as compared to other edible fruits.

Tomatoes are rich in antioxidants, which has been associated with various health benefits. This adds a nutritional dimension to dishes that include tomatoes, says Anand

This fruit used as a vegetable is also good source of Vitamin A, C, K, and folate. Tomatoes are also a healthy source of potassium. The intake of tomatoes can contribute towards improvement of eyesight and reduction of blood pressure, and also can contribute towards alleviating skin problems and urinary tract infections.

Moreover, studies have shown that the lycopene present in tomatoes have lowered the incidence of macular degeneration and certain cancers. Tomatoes comprise a large number of antioxidants which can fight different forms of cancer. It is being seen that fresh tomatoes and tomato extracts can facilitate in lowering total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, and triglycerides. This can contribute towards heart health. Some studies have revealed that tomatoes can lower lipid levels. Therefore, the time is ripe for greater usage of tomatoes in our food services industry.

This suggested initiative is expected to garner impressive market dividends, in these growingly health conscious times. More innovative usage of tomatoes by creative Chefs and restaurateurs in India are the need of the hour. However, their steep prices in the Indian market in the present times do generate concern. ■



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Growing Veganism

In 1970 after the white revolution in India, dairy became the integral part of Indian cuisine. Indians consumes milk in various forms like milk, paneer, curd, buttermilk, butter, ghee, processed cheese, milk powder etc. For those who need to avoid dairy products, especially vegan or lactose intolerant people, these products are neither directly observable nor noticeable in the foods, making it a real challenge.

For majority of Indians Milk and other dairy products are the major source of calcium for vegetarians. Milk has vitamin D, calcium, vitamin B2, vitamin B12, potassium and phosphorus in it. It also has some vitamin A, vitamin B1, vitamin B6, zinc and magnesium. For vegetarians, milk is one major source of calcium.

But at the same time almost 60% of Indians are lactose intolerant. Lactose is a type of sugar found in milk. The inability to digest this sugar is called lactose intolerance. As a kid, one's body can break down lactose but as we grow up, most people lose their ability to break lactose. Experts believe because milk is a good source of protein, calcium and immunity-boosting minerals, one must definitely consume it if they are not lactose intolerant.

There has been an ongoing debate about dairy products and their consumption, which is why many people are turning vegan. Veganism encourages people to completely

give up consuming animal products. Not just this, it is even found that dairy products are harmful for many and thus should not be consumed. As more and more people are turning vegan, an increasing number of people are forgoing dairy products.

Talking about growth, adults don't need milk once they are adults. But consuming milk and other dairy products have been a part of our lives forever now and thus feels natural to us. But as a vegan the major problem is how to avoid all those dairy products that are found in so many vegetarian dishes.

Most people confuse Vegan to the Vegetarian way of eating. A Vegan would abstain from eating dairy products, eggs, meat, etc, but a Vegetarian may consume dairy products, including milk, curd, ghee and butter. In the west a vegetarian diet included eggs, milk and honey, but in India vegetarian implies people who only consume plant based products along with milk and honey products also. People who only prefer eggs and avoid

meat and meat products are often called Eggetarians.

As per the rules in India a vegan diet is not officially recognized by the law. A food packet that says 'Pure Vegetarian', or labelled with a green dot, it may still contain dairy or honey products. Hence, it is always recommended to read the ingredients on the back of packed foods before you buy. The majority of North Indian vegetarian cuisines contain dairy as oppose to south Indian vegetarian cuisine. Some dishes may not contain dairy in itself, but they are served with a cup of curd on the side. The majority of desserts/sweets in India do contain dairy. Tea and Coffee in India are always prepared with milk.

With the increase in disposable income, as the economy grows, there is larger consumption of meat and dairy products. But at the same time the more aware current generation exposed to social media is increasingly embracing veganism.

Ice cream, a major dessert, being a dairy

product, there was hardly any good vegan ice cream brands or vegan alternative in India. That is, until very recently, the big brands have started taking note and are slowly changing. Many major brands have introduced dairy free ice cream products.

Plant Based Products

Now India, like the rest of the world, is waking to the physical, ethical and economic benefits of plant-based, meat-and-dairy-free food. The picture is changing now and veganism is increasingly being embraced. To meet the growing demands, several restaurants and food companies introduced robust vegan-friendly eatables. When it comes to health, no diet has such a positive impact as a plant-based diet.

Health-conscious people worried about the meteoric rise in diseases caused by food and lifestyle choices are increasingly veering towards plant-based diets, encouraged by the science according to which a whole-food plant-based diet can reverse most diseases caused by dietary choices such as heart disease, diabetes and cholesterol.

When it comes to spreading awareness and bringing about change, social media plays an undeniable role.

The surge in videos showing cruelty inflicted on animals in the dairy and meat industries is one of the reasons behind the quick uptake of the vegan cause. There’s also a massive increase in young people talking more about issues like animal rights and sustainability and this has led to restaurants and retailers catering to this demand, offering more vegan options. There has been an exponential increase in fully vegan restaurants in cities like Mumbai, Pune, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Goa, and other establishments are increasingly labelling their food items “vegan” and “veganisable”, which means they can be altered to make them vegan.

The Concern

Parallel to this are concerns about how the protein needs of over a billion people are going to be met in a country where there isn’t enough land and water to afford inefficient forms of food production like meat and dairy. To put this into perspective, according to a study, 1,900 to 4,600 litres of virtual water (the total volume directly and indirectly employed to produce a commodity) are used per every litre of milk in India. This number becomes much more serious in light of the projection that 21 Indian cities are expected to run out of groundwater by 2020. An urgent sustainable protein revolution is needed in a country where meat and dairy consumption are projected to increase exponentially among a rapidly increasing population.

In Foodservice industry

However, not everything is rosy. With purchasing power increasing and children originally raised as vegetarians curious about meat, there are barriers India needs to tackle in order to become a vegan-friendly country. One of the most important is ensuring that veganism isn’t seen as an elite diet that only the rich can afford. While many restaurants and brands are jumping on the bandwagon to “cash in” on the movement, there are others focussed on accessibility and affordability.



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Creating a Win-Win Scenario for the EU and India

Janusz Wojciechowski, the Commissioner for Agriculture of the European Union (EU), led a business delegation consisting of over fifty EU leaders from the agri-food sector during his visit to India in the first week of December 2023. During his visit, he inaugurated the EU Pavilion at the two recognized exhibitions, SIAL and VINEXPO. The EU Pavilion featured a broad range of agri-food products from all over Europe and provided an immersive experience into the standards of quality, safety, authenticity, and sustainability of European food and drink. By visiting and participating in the exhibition, the EU hopes to increase its agricultural food and beverage exports to India, strengthening its position in the Indian market and promoting business-to-business meetings.

In a chat, Rajat Taneja faces down with EU Commissioner for Agriculture, Janusz Wojciechowski, to delve into the intricacies of his visit to India and the enormous potential it offers for the agri-food sector.

Your visit, accompanied by a robust EU business delegation, is generating quite a buzz. Could you share your vision behind this venture?

It's a pleasure to be here. Our aim is clear—to strengthen ties between the EU and India in the agri-food sector. The EU Pavilion at SIAL and VINEXPO will showcase the richness and diversity of European food and beverages, emphasizing our commitment to quality, safety, authenticity, and sustainability.

What challenges does the EU faces in strengthening its position in the Indian Market.

We know that India is very protective market. The wine international producers has been emphasising on a long pending issue of high import taxes, because of this barrier, there is a little commerce. And lowering the obstacles is a crucial step. I hope that we will finalise the free trade agreement that will improve the trade relations between the European Union and India.

You have initiated a discussion on the free trade agreement with the Indian government. Are you discussing that now with the Indian government?

Yes, during my scheduled talks with Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and Parshottam Rupala, we will have discussions on the free trade agreement as well as agricultural policies, the difficulties EU companies encounter in India gaining access to the Indian market, and possible areas of cooperation. The next round of negotiation is planned in coming February I hope that in 2024 we will achieve to sign



the agreement.

Improving our economic relations would be crucial given that there is a significant trade gap. There is a trade of 3.7 billion euros from India to the European Union and 1.4 billion euros from the European Union to the Indian market, which is advantageous for India. But, of course, we also need the Indian food. I personally like Indian food. One of my favorite restaurants in Brazil is a restaurant with Indian food. It's good. But this is the big space to extend our trade relations.

You would like to speak on the sustainability in the food business?

Yes. But for me, the very interesting question is the phenomenon of Indian agriculture. India has made significant progress in the previous ten years in particular, as seen by the 35% rise in agricultural production over this period. When looking at the global increase between 2010 and 2020, this is the highest.

The second issue is that India's

agricultural system is built on incredibly small farms. However, in Europe, there is often discussion over the belief that large-scale agriculture is the only productive sector capable of guaranteeing food security. However, India demonstrates that it is not required and that small farmers may still produce a great deal.

FAO data states that although farms smaller than two hectares managed 12% of the world's agricultural area, they produced 35% of the food produced. And the Indian instance comes first in this. And it's really, really interesting. And I am happy to have the opportunity to visit the Indian small farms and to see how they work.

The exhibitions are good platform to showcase. What specific outcomes do you anticipate from inaugurating the EU Pavilion?

The EU Pavilion is more than just a showcase; it's a culinary journey. We hope to not only promote EU agri-food products but also foster a deeper understanding of our standards and values. It's an opportunity for Indian consumers and businesses to experience the essence of European gastronomy firsthand.

How do you see this visit impacting the presence of EU agri-food products in the Indian market?

Our goal is to create lasting partnerships. Through these interactions, we aim to facilitate smoother market access for EU products, address challenges, and forge collaborations that benefit both sides. It's about creating a win-win scenario for the EU and India.

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Gracing Dining Service

Cutlery is an inseparable part of food service and going for a simple and sober set up is the best way of going about it, in sync with the existing trend.

Why there should be any rule? Asked many times about the no-need for cutleries set in a fine dining, yet we can’t ignore the fact it mesmerises and add a dimension or two to the dining atmosphere.

Aligned methodically, it charms. Cutlery business is a long history and ever since we understood that food is an art form, service ware (used for its service and feeding the mouths of gastronome) became an un-detachable affair in food business.

Good Cutlery

Fine dining has to go with well-furnished, good quality cutlery. The standard fork, spoon and knife, an array of cutlery items is set on the table as per the demands of the cuisine. Seafood forks, iced tea/parfait spoons, serving pieces, bouillon spoons, etc. add grace to a meal.

The cutlery should be classic in appeal,

finely crafted and with proper grading. Grading is the thickness of the metal, which is ideally more at the handle, tapering down to the edge. The finish is reflected in luster, smoothness and crisp pattern detail. The metal should ideally be a combination of 18 percent chrome and 10 percent nickel for the perfect steel quality.

But what is the quality standard for selecting good cutlery?

“Good quality cutlery is characterized by durable materials, precise

craftsmanship, and ergonomic design. It should maintain sharpness, resist corrosion, and provide a comfortable grip. Aesthetically pleasing, functional, and easy to maintain, high-quality cutlery enhances the dining experience and withstands the test of time.

Cutlery should have no sharp edges as that may cause difficulty for the diner. Cutlery should be smooth and the raw material used must be of 304 quality steel, which is approved internationally as food grade steel,” says Seema Khurana, Owner, Venus Industries at New Delhi.

Silver cutlery has a timeless appeal and silver plating is an exacting process in which the better manufacturers ensure that arrears of high stress receive extra silver-plating reinforcements.

Popular Choice

Inappropriate use of food service supplies can lead to damage and lose sheen with misuse. As a matter of fact, stainless steel is not completely ‘stain proof’. Although it is designed to be more resistant to marking or staining than other metals, but even then when they come in contact



Seema Khurana



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with certain substances they start reacting and leads to staining and pitting.

Seema points out that as far as choice goes stainless steel is the preferred one in fine dining segment for cutlery i.e. the spoon, fork and knife. Stainless steel is the most preferred material due to its corrosion resistance, durability, and ease of maintenance. Its non-reactive nature ensures food safety, while its strength allows for long-lasting edges. Additionally, stainless steel offers a sleek appearance, making it both practical and aesthetically pleasing.

One should go for plain designs and should not look for highly etched elaborations as that may cause difficulty in cleaning. When food particles get stuck in the etched cutleries, it enhances the discoloration process.

Seema further suggests the selection of cutlery should be as per the specific needs and budget of a restaurant, "Consider the restaurant's menu and style when selecting cutlery. For casual dining, durable and cost-effective stainless



steel sets are practical. Fine dining establishments may opt for higher-end materials like silver for an elegant touch. Assess budget constraints, prioritize essential pieces, and negotiate bulk pricing. Balance functionality, aesthetics, and cost to meet the restaurant specific needs and budget."

Maintenance

According to Seema, "For proper handling and maintenance of stainless steel cutlery, hand wash with mild soap, avoiding abrasive cleaners to prevent scratching. Dry promptly to prevent

water spots. Wooden-handled knives need gentle washing and immediate drying to prevent warping. Silver cutlery benefits from regular polishing to prevent tarnish. Follow care instructions specific to materials and finishes to maintain the longevity and appearance of your cutlery."

Ones should follow underlined steps to increase the lifespan of cutleries:

- Washing cutlery items as soon as possible after dining, so that salts and acids present in food are not able to damage the material.
- Drying cutlery immediately after cleaning to wash off any detergent traces on it.
- Washing cutlery items a few pieces at a time to minimize scratching.
- Soaking should be avoided. There are mineral salts in tap water, which are very corrosive in nature, and could damage the material.
- One should avoid the use of scourers or abrasive detergents as it might erode away silver plate, and leave tiny scratches all over stainless steel, leaving cutlery items dull instead of shining.



Criterion to Develop a Specific Cutlery Design and Finish

Gopi Gade, Head Capex Procurement, Fashion TV

Function

The design should cater to the intended use, with considerations for blade shape, handle ergonomics, and overall balance for optimal performance.

Material

The choice of material affects both aesthetics and performance. Factors like hardness, durability, and resistance to corrosion are essential considerations.

Comfort

Ergonomics play a crucial role. The handle design should be comfortable to hold, providing a secure grip to enhance user control and reduce fatigue.

Style and Aesthetics

The overall design, finish, and visual appeal contribute to the product's marketability. This includes factors like the shape of the blade, handle design, and any decorative elements.

Manufacturability

The design should be feasible for mass production, considering the limitations and capabilities of manufacturing processes.

Cost Considerations

Materials, complexity of design, and manufacturing processes impact the cost of production. Balancing quality and cost is vital for market competitiveness.

Maintenance

The finish should be resistant to corrosion and easy to clean, ensuring longevity and user convenience.

Brand Identity

The design should align with the brand's image and values, creating a cohesive product line.

Market Trends

Understanding current consumer preferences and trends helps in creating cutlery that resonates with the target audience.



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Future *of* Dining



In an era dominated by technology, cutting-edge innovations are often perceived as exclusive luxuries. The digital landscape is ever-evolving, leaving many on the side-lines, yearning to immerse themselves fully in the world of digitalisation.

In the contemporary restaurant landscape, establishments are confronted with pivotal challenges. Issues ranging from persistent backend challenges like staff turnover to front-end concerns such as maintaining consistent customer experiences and adhering to stringent post-pandemic hygiene standards are pressing. Addressing the prevalent issue of employee turnover demands innovative retention strategies.

Maintaining a seamless customer experience is crucial; even a single average interaction can significantly impact patron perception. In the wake of the post-pandemic era, stringent hygiene standards require unwavering attention. Managing operational costs, while delivering quality service, is a delicate balancing act.

Even with the industry's swift adaptation, the integration of these technologies presents formidable challenges for restaurants. This includes the need for substantial investment, extensive training, and overcoming potential resistance to change, highlighting a critical problem in the sector.

In response to these challenges, Alphadroid's entry into India's dynamic hospitality market emerges as a transformative solution. Their groundbreaking subscription-based 'Robot-as-a-Service' model introduces an innovative approach, providing accessible, high-end technology solutions. This not only addresses the financial constraints traditionally associated with such advancements but also offers a remedy to the persistent issues faced by the industry.

Extending beyond just the technology; Alphadroid signifies a fundamental shift toward accessibility and resilience. This forward-thinking strategy ensures that the industry remains at the forefront of innovation, leveraging technology to

elevate guest experiences and enhance operational efficiency in our ever-evolving landscape.

A Promising Solution

Alphadroid, a pioneering robotics service company, emerges as a promising solution. The company is founded by tech-entrepreneur Sanjeev Kumar, with a steadfast commitment to revolutionise hospitality sector. Alphadroid is reshaping the hotel & restaurant experience through a commitment to customer-centric innovation, ingeniously blending automation with a profound appreciation of the irreplaceable human touch.

Encouraging businesses to explore and adopt innovative solutions, Alphadroid's collaborative approach deeply considers each business' distinct needs. Service Robots bring a dual advantage for consumers, delivering an engaging and efficient dining experience, while also streamlining restaurant operations through a unique selling point of technology intervention.

Meeting Demand

Beyond automation, Alphadroid showcases expertise in Artificial Intelligence and augmented reality. The company's comprehensive portfolio operates through a flexible "Robot-as-a-Service" subscription model, catering to diverse needs. Supported by a dedicated team specialising in innovative solutions, the company actively shapes technology services to meet industry demands.

Within a year, Alphadroid has achieved remarkable success, attributed to robust market engagement, impactful product demonstrations, and strategic partnerships. With ambitious plans to deploy 250 service robots in the year 2024, the company aims to revolutionize operations across hotels, restaurants, QSRs, and premium spots.

The Service Partner

Alpha - the robot stands out as the ultimate service partner, automating repetitive tasks with unparalleled precision, consistently staying three steps ahead. From graciously welcoming guests, to serving refreshments and offering customised messaging and directions, Alpha - the robot ensures a seamless and delightful experience.

Its human-like interaction mode, paired with a user-friendly open tray designed to carry 40kgs ensures effortless placement and retrieval, contributing to the creation of exceptional Alpha moments. Introducing a 3D Interactive Avatar for personalised touch, it efficiently manages bookings, oversees check-ins and check-outs, and assists guests in navigating their surroundings.

With a strategic base in India, Alphadroid aligns with the country's surging demand for technological solutions for the hospitality industry. The company welcomes prospective clients for first hand experience to explore their Noida location guaranteeing comprehensive service coverage across India. Backed by a distributed team for swift assistance, the company reflects its dedication to delivering top-notch service across India. For those curious to know more, detailed information is available on their website and social media channels.

How does it work?

Using a "plug and play" based model the service robot is ready to use from the moment it is delivered to the customer. It provides end-to-end solutions with complete technology support, thus boosting operational efficiency and ensuring a seamless dining experience for all customers.

Recognised by restaurant owners as a source of innovation and revenue, these robots are at the forefront, promising an integrated and accessible future. Their introduction brings simplicity, affordability, and a profound impact on how we engage with dining, fundamentally reshaping the essence of the restaurant experience.

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Chef Ganesh Amkar, Executive Sous Chef, Courtyard by Marriott, Mumbai International Airport

Hailing from a rich background in culinary arts, Chef Ganesh Amkar, Executive Sous Chef at Courtyard by Marriott, Mumbai International Airport, brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the table. With an illustrious career spanning over a decade, the chef has honed his skills across renowned establishments, leaving an indelible mark on the gastronomic landscape.

The chef's culinary journey in the hospitality industry started at Grand Hyatt Mumbai in March 2010, where he embarked on a transformative expedition through various roles, steadily ascending the ranks. During this period, his culinary prowess evolved, and he became a stalwart in crafting exceptional dining experiences. The commitment to excellence and dedication to the craft manifested in diverse culinary offerings, earning the chef recognition as a culinary force within the Grand Hyatt Mumbai family.

A pivotal juncture in his career unfolded at Grand Hyatt Goa from November 2019 to December 2020, where the chef expanded his culinary horizons against the backdrop of the scenic coastal landscape. This stint not only broadened his expertise but also added a layer of innovation to his culinary repertoire.

From June 2021 to August 2023, the chef brought his culinary finesse to Club Jolie's by Aditya Birla, contributing to the establishment's reputation for culinary excellence. This experience marked a distinct chapter in his career, further refining his skills and enriching his culinary perspective.

Currently donning the chef's hat at Courtyard by Marriott in Mumbai near the International Airport, following his

passion for the culinary arts continues to shine. With a penchant for Asian cuisine, the chef's expertise lies in the intricate realms of Greek and Italian gastronomy. His creations are a harmonious fusion of traditional authenticity and contemporary innovation, creating memorable dining experiences for patrons. As he believes, "The chef's journey is not merely a career but a testament to their enduring passion for the artistry of food."

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

What is your philosophy of cooking?

As a chef, my philosophy will be of cooking centers around embracing a love for what you eat and embodying the essence of the cuisine to promote a long and healthy life.

What is your area of expertise?

My area of expertise, given my role in this esteemed establishment, lies in Italian and Greek Cuisine along with Comfort Food.

Had you not been a chef then what?

If not pursuing my passion as a chef, I would explore freelancing opportunities, leveraging my strong communication skills to connect with diverse audiences via my food stories.

What is your source of inspiration?

Drawing inspiration from my Uncle, whose lifelong commitment to integrity has left a lasting impression. Additionally, my previous Chef, Dennis, has been a source of inspiration due to his working style and unwavering dedication.

What has been the most rewarding moment in your career?

The most rewarding aspect of my career

is the fulfillment derived from achieving my life plans every two years – a reward in and of itself.

How has the journey been so far?

Reflecting on my journey so far, it has been nothing short of excellent, filled with growth and accomplishments.

What skills are necessary to be a good chef?

Essential skills for a successful chef include passion for learning, training in tough situations, creativity with risk, dedication in each task and the ability to multitask.

How do you de-stress yourself? What do you like to do in your ME time?

To de-stress, I engage in meditation and enjoy meaningful conversations with friends during my personal time.

Favorite Ingredient?

My favorite ingredient is lentils, given their versatility and ability to complement a wide range of dishes.

Fav Cuisine?

Asian cuisine holds a special place as my favorite, with its diverse and rich flavours.

Fav Spice?

Cumin/Jeera is my preferred spice due to its sharp, earthy aromatic qualities. Alternatively, I appreciate the complexity of black pepper.

Fav Equipment?

When it comes to equipment, the Combi Oven stands out as my favorite due to its versatility and ability to cater to a spectrum of cooking needs.

Fav restaurant/food joint, anywhere in the world?

My favourite culinary haven worldwide is Yauatcha. Specializing in Chinese dim sum, this teahouse presents an unparalleled dining experience. The allure of Yauatcha lies not only in its exquisite Asian cuisine but also in the meticulous craftsmanship of their dim sum and the ambiance that seamlessly blends modern elegance with traditional charm. The brand consistently brings innovation and authenticity to the table. The precision in flavours and the commitment to deliver an exceptional dining experience.

Your favourite Culinary Destination?

My favoured culinary destination is Amritsar, renowned for its Punjabi cuisine. The city's culinary landscape is a vibrant tapestry of rich, robust flavours, and the warmth of Punjabi hospitality adds an extra layer of delight to the dining experience.

The Best Compliment you have received?

The most cherished compliment in my culinary journey is the praise for maintaining a perpetually positive demeanor. This acknowledgment comes from our esteemed in-house guests, affirming that the joy reflected in my attitude transcends into the flavours of the dishes served.

What is your philosophy of work?

My work philosophy centers on the profound belief in oneself. Be confident to tackle challenges, innovate, and lead by example forms the core of my approach to culinary excellence.

Lessons learnt in the kitchen?

In the dynamic kitchen environment, the most profound lessons learned include the significance of adaptability, continuous learning, and the art of seamless teamwork. Every challenge and triumph has contributed to my growth, emphasizing the importance of resilience and teamwork.

Last meal on earth: What would you choose?

For my last meal on earth, I would choose Dal Khichdi. This humble home-cooked dish holds a special place in my heart, evoking the essence of simplicity and providing a comforting journey back to the fundamentals of life.

10 years from now?

Ten years from now, I envision myself contributing to the culinary landscape with innovative creations and possibly taking on a leadership role to inspire the next generation of chefs. Continued growth and a commitment to excellence are at the forefront of my aspirations.

What are your future plans?

I aspire to share my knowledge and passion for the culinary arts on a broader scale.

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

The best career advice for aspiring chefs is to cultivate a relentless passion for learning, stay open to diverse culinary influences, and embrace challenges as opportunities for growth. Consistency, humility, and a strong work ethic are the cornerstones of a successful culinary career.

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Italy has famous contributions like artworks by Leonadro da Vinci and Michelangelo among others, fashion and scenic beauty, old churches and Roman temples which can be enjoyed in that country. Though the fact is Italy is known for its art, ancient architecture, scenic locations, music, but above all its food & wine. Their culinary prowess has crossed borders of the country to find international acceptance.

Italian cuisine comes up with a challenge to the gourmet. The history of Italian cuisine is varied and rich as the stories of the Italians over the centuries. Italians always moved inland, as a part of historical development and developed a cuisine that reflected their ideas, imagery and tastes. Italian cuisine is fiery, without being hot. It is spicy, without being too heavy and it is not all that oily, despite its reliance on oil and dressings for most preparations.

The Evolution

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

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

Foods with longer shelf life for the traveling soldier meant appearance of breads and

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

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

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



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

Italians developed a beef, vegetable, and dairy diet in their homes, relying heavily on farm products the land provided. This fact of life also affected the seashore populace who, perhaps because of an abundance of fish, considered it to be less nutritious than beef. This erroneous perception has changed in recent times, and today the Italian diet relies heavily on the richness of the Mediterranean sea, which surrounds the entire peninsula.

The origin of Italian cooking at seashores, however, was well established a long time ago. From ancient times, the most prized



Vaibhav Bhargava

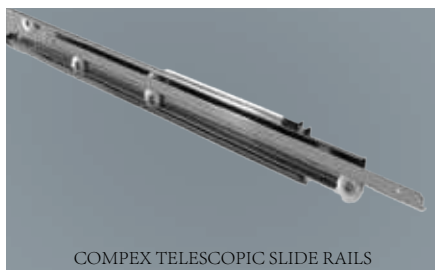
Mediterranean fish have been caught and generally roasted or grilled. The seashore's inhabitants developed a fish cookery tradition which found its expressions in the rich array of the fish stews (zuppe di pesce), the cooking of various types of fish with a few vegetables and one common condiment: olive oil. It is curious to observe that the recipe books from the 15th to 18th century totally ignore fish cookery. It is only in the writing of Vincenzo Agnoletti in 1814 that we find the first hint of "fish broths to pour over slices of bread".

Evolution of Italian Cuisine in India

The Italian cuisine has gained popularity in India because of increased exposure as number of Indians travelling abroad being exposed to different flavours and ingredients then wanting to recreate them at home. Greater awareness and desire for healthy eating is the next factor. Italian cuisine relies on whole grains, legumes, and the freshest of vegetables. Meat is consumed in very small quantities. There is very little use of cream, hardly anything is deep-fried, vegetables and meats are usually grilled, and everything is cooked or dressed with olive oil - which, as we all know, offers significant health benefits.

Additionally, it's simpler and quicker to cook up an Italian meal. Italian cuisine strives to retain as many properties of its ingredients as possible, resulting in faster cooking times and less fuss.

According to Vaibhav Bhargava, consultant chef, food stylist and entrepreneur, "Pizza and pastas have become the staple food served in restaurants and specially kids love pizzas, pastas have become one of the common favourite dishes amongst the adults. Italian food is a comfort food which one can



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enjoy any time of the days whether it's a salad Insalata or Risotto, Pastas or Pizzas, Bruschetta or Arancini, these all dishes have gained popularity in last few years."

He further adds, "Italian food philosophy celebrates the fresh ingredients, fresh cheeses, exotic eats which are paired with lip- smacking dishes. Italian cuisine gained popularity because of convenience, fast, economical and wide variety of vegetables and meats options which appeals to multiple segments in the market."

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

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

According to Chef Diwas Wadhera, Executive Chef, Eros Hotel Nehru Place, New Delhi, "It is one of the most preferred cuisines after Indian and Chinese, over years I have not only observed it growing but people adapting it in tier two and tier three cities as well. The cuisine has a great turmoil and is accepted by majority of population. It is their



Chef Diwas Wadhera

in-birthday parties, kitties, social gatherings and wedding as well. Hand tossed pizzas are talk of the town."

Vaibhav confirms, "Pizzas are the favourites for everyone and it's a comfort food and I think with so many chains of pizzerias running in the space, but still people keep opening new Pizzeria restaurants. Pizzas have also taken the gourmet space and new variants of pizzas are invented."

Chef Diwas believes that pizza is a dish which is exploited a lot as it has been offered with weird and various offers.

He adds, "We have pizza for all occasions and offerings, Pizza Indiana (Pizza with Indian flavour toppings), Pizza Mania (Pizza with overloaded toppings), Pizza Extravaganza (Less of Pizza but more Veggies), Pizza Prawn Balchao (One of the best Prawn Balchao dish from Goan cuisine combined and offered with pizza).

Food & Wine

It is not possible to put ones' finger on a particular region of the nation and mark it as the home of the authentic Italian cuisine.



Today Italian cuisine is quite Americanised in the US and has added on the flavours of the melting pot of the state. In India, Italian cuisine is still the preserve and flavour of a discriminating few. New restaurants have come up that offer the cuisine and rely on authentic recipes and often on expatriate or specially trained chefs to cook them up.

While the traditional Italian four-course meal is undeniably a must-experience, the more contemporary single-course approach is more practical on an everyday basis. In both styles, ingredients and techniques remain the same, so it's still a balanced meal - the difference lies in the amount of time required to serve and consume it.

Chef Vaibhav Opines, "Slowly we have also started knowing other dishes in India. Like in pastas, ravioli or tortellini or Gnocchi, because Chefs wanted to bring classics but modern dishes also for their customers. As the cuisine is focused on fresh ingredients, my opinion is to cook traditional dishes but present them in a new style. The most popular Italian dishes in India are Pizzas and Pastas, but lately cheese varieties and handmade pastas have gained popularity too like Raviolis or tortellini."

Italian wines are making an entry into the Indian restaurants with a new thrust. Though combining wine with food is an individual decision, there are some unstated and silent rules of the game.

The flavour of a food almost always reveals the quality of a wine and exalts it. In turn, the quality of a wine complements the pleasure of a food and spiritualises it. Combining a wine with a food in the most appropriate way is a matter of technique. The only way of determining the characteristics of a food and a wine to determine how well they complement one another is to carry out a series of sensory analyses through tasting and codify the results obtained. With Italian cuisine the right combination of food and wine attains a significance beyond words. There are only a few principles of harmony to be observed in matching the flavours of a food with those of a wine. They are:

Unity of sensory quality - In every combination, the qualitative rapport must always be respected. For example, a rustic and heavy cuisine requires a thirst-quenching wine of the same characteristic. A delicate specialty of haute cuisine, on the other hand, requires a refined wine.

Association - The effect sought is

completeness. For example, the structural components of a food can be complemented by the structural elements of a wine and its softness. A sweet-sour preparation, like duck in orange sauce or with cherries, can be matched only by a fortified wine.

Analogy - This is the reinforcement of a characteristic. For example, it is traditional to combine wines and foods of a given region. The combination emphasizes the typical characteristics of the cuisine, even if the result is not always well balanced. A complex dish should be matched by an aged wine, an elementary food with a young and fresh beverage.

Contrast - The effect is the attenuation or levelling out of differences. For example, the full flavour, tending toward the sweet, of a boiled gray mullet, can be matched by the fresh and lively flavour of Trebbiano. In addition to the combination of flavours, the matching of odours of wines and foods must be taken into consideration.

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

Gelato & Dessert Obsession

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

Sicilian Granitas are frozen dessert of flavoured crushed ice, similar to a sorbet and very popular in the native town of Catania and the rest of Italy too. Seasonal desserts that are popular around the world include Pandoro from Verona and Panettone of Milan around Christmas cake and the Coomba Pasquale or Italian Easter cake is eaten all over Italy on Easter day.

Each region has something identifiable to offer. Tiramisu and Cassata ice creams are no longer just appreciated or enjoyed in Italy – they are truly world cuisine, yet in Italy they taste a lot better. Fruit shaped marzipans and panna cotta are delightful year round delicacies that can be enjoyed after any



type of meal and that makes Italian cuisine acceptable and more appreciable.

Coffee

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

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

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

Improved Ingredient Availability

The easy availability of quality ingredients and products has resulted in popularity of Italian cuisine with Indian palate. Today the shelves of super markets and mega stores are stocked with gourmet ingredients like truffle mushrooms, porcini mushrooms, handmade pastas, vinegars, preserves, cured meats like Parma Ham etc. This has given us a chance to experiment with this cuisine and to produce better quality outcome, which in turn has resulted in huge popularity of this cuisine.

It depends on what you decide to cook. Ingredients are not a problem at all. While some of the more esoteric ingredients -

fresh truffles, farro, hazelnuts, some kinds of cheeses and olive oil, for example - are indeed hard to come by, by and large most Italian dishes can be replicated here without sacrificing authenticity. While some essential ingredients are expensive in India, they are by no means unavailable.

While fresh handmade pasta and sauces would be an edge over the dried pasta and bottled sauces but their easy availability makes home cooking much more easier. Good quality sauces like pesto, pomodoro, piccante are easily available in market. They are very easy to use and give great quality results when used right. Chefs are now using ingredients like pesto sauce, artichoke hearts, dry pasta, and mushrooms of Puccini range to great effect.

Chef Vaibhav says, "Authentic Italian food in Italy is difficult to find in India because the source of fresh ingredients locally in Italy is different than in India. Local ingredients here in India are different as there is a difference in soil, water, quality of farming while growing fresh ingredients. We can make authentic Italian by using the same techniques but ingredients can be a mix of imported goods and local fresh ingredients."

Seeing the evolution of enjoying pasta in Indian context is that currently people also enjoy pasta without cheese topping. Plenty of sauces do not use either garlic or onion and some use cheeses as also butter, and more Italian cheeses are now available apart from Parmigiano, Grana Padano and Mozzarella, like Pecorino, Provolone, Gorgonzola, Mascarpone, Ricotta, Bocconcini, Bel Paese, Asiago, Caciotta, Fontina, Scamorza etc. further list includes better availability of cured meats and fresh produce from the region rather than just processed stuff. ■

Gola Sizzlers Unveils New Outlet

By Sharmila Chand



Gola Sizzlers, a name synonymous with exceptional sizzlers and multi-cuisine culinary excellence since 1988, has launched its flagship outlet at Ambience Mall, Vasant Kunj. Strategically located in the vibrant heart of Delhi, the grand venture reinforces Gola Sizzlers' commitment to delivering unparalleled dining experiences.

Design Ethos

The elegant restaurant redefines the dining experience with the best of traditional hospitality, a palatable culinary journey, in an ambiance that reflects a well defined theme synergizing sheer luxury and comfort seamlessly. The sprawling space promises an extraordinary dining experience, boasting a seating capacity that can graciously accommodate over 200 guests.

The design ethos revolves around an airy and spacious layout, creating an inviting atmosphere for patrons to revel in their culinary journey. Embracing a boho-chic



Manik Kapoor & Rajat Kapoor

vibe, the decor is thoughtfully curated with eclectic elements, adding a touch of contemporary charm to the dining space. The attention to detail is evident in the incorporation of greenery strategically placed throughout the interior, infusing a sense of freshness and tranquillity.

Enticing Menu

At the heart of Gola Sizzlers' appeal is its diverse and enticing menu that showcases a fusion of flavours and culinary expertise. It maintains the restaurant's commitment

to sizzlers, offering an extensive range from chicken and prawns to lamb and an array of vegetarian options.

Beyond sizzlers, the menu showcases the brand's expertise in Chinese, Continental, Italian, and various global cuisines, ensuring a delightful culinary journey for every palate. Introducing an evolution in dining with "small plates," the contemporary twist on dining at the new outlet at Ambience Mall, Vasant Kunj, features a new-age approach to cuisine, combining health-conscious options with the exotic and delicious flavours of American cuisine. This innovation promises

a unique and enticing dining experience, setting the stage for a gastronomic journey like never before.

Among the standout dishes, the Veg Shashlik Sizzler takes center stage as the best-selling item, featuring a medley of grilled vegetables served on a sizzling platter.

The multi-cuisine menu also boasts of other signature delights such as Dahi Kebab and Tandoori

Chicken. The mocktails, including Basil Malt and Fruit Passionate, add a refreshing touch to the experience. Gola Sizzlers, inspired by current market trends and diverse winter preferences, presents standout dishes like the Tandoori Broccoli for vegetarians and the Grilled Chicken Sizzler for non-vegetarians.

These offerings epitomize a commitment to crafting flavourful and satisfying dishes, ensuring a delightful dining experience for patrons with varied culinary preferences at this winter haven in Vasant Kunj.

A Remarkable Journey

At the helm of Gola Sizzlers brand are the visionary founders, Manik Kapoor and Rajat Kapoor, who have created Gola Sizzlers as a popular chain of restaurants that epitomises fine dining. Their dedication to creating a vibrant ambiance and a diverse culinary palette has made Gola Sizzlers a favoured destination, not just for its delectable offerings but also for the overall dining experience.

They introduced the chain of Gola Sizzlers across Delhi 33 years ago. It is their painstaking hard labour and passion for their brand that Gola Sizzlers has achieved several milestones. The founders' vision extends beyond the traditional, aiming to provide patrons with a dynamic blend of global inspirations infused with authentic Indian flavours. Their strategic approach caters to a broad audience, appealing to the seasoned tastes of regular patrons while capturing the adventurous spirit of the younger generation. With expansion plans on the horizon, Gola Sizzlers is not just a restaurant; it's a culinary journey, a testament to the founders' commitment



Shaurya Veer Kapoor

to delivering excellence in every aspect of the dining experience.

The Chef

Shaurya Veer Kapoor, an alumnus of Culinary Institute of America, is the brain behind all new mouth-watering and flavoursome dishes at Gola Sizzlers. He is the third generation who has joined

this home venture and took the business forward with his brand-new ideas and his passion for food. From the age of 12, Shaurya Veer Kapoor, was raised amidst an array of sizzlers.

Young and curious Shaurya, with all the support from family in many ways, had always been eager to create, and curate new and unique dishes, beverages and desserts. Today, he is well-versed in the art of conjuring up a myriad of cuisines from all over the world: including Peruvian, French, American, Mediterranean, India, Italian and Asian.

He says, "Our menu is a culinary symphony, harmonizing sizzlers as the focal point. The vision behind it is to transcend traditional boundaries, infusing global inspirations with Indian authenticity. It caters to both seasoned tastes and the adventurous spirit of the younger audience, offering a dynamic blend that resonates universally. Blending contemporary flair with traditional richness, it caters to a diverse audience. The essence of our menu lies in a culinary narrative that redefines sizzlers." ■

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Steam Cleaning allows to easily clean, sanitise and deodorise a variety of surfaces and materials around the premises with less work and with no chemicals or detergents. One can clean those tough stains without exposing oneself and the environment to hazardous chemicals. No more using poison or toxic chemicals, for steam cleans and disinfects using only water and heat.

Steam and very high water temperature systems are likely to provide superior and economic cleaning. Through steam cleaning, dirt, grime and mould get blasted out from dirty areas due to extremely high temperature and pressure. Following the blast, dirt is sucked into a powerful vacuum, in a holding tank.

Steam cleaners can rapidly go over every surface in a kitchen, getting into even the tiny crevices or porous surfaces and swiftly lift and remove dirt, grease, grime, bacteria and more. Even caked on grease and food particles

can be gently but effectively lifted and removed from surfaces. Stoves, grills, range hoods, sinks, refrigerators, counters, ovens, prep areas, storage areas, pantries, slicers, scales, racks and more can all be cleaned with a powerful steam cleaner. This prevents the spread of disease in your commercial kitchen.

A professional portable steam cleaner can also be moved around to not only clean the kitchen but the bar or other areas of a restaurant; providing true cleaning

versatility. A steam cleaner is an incredibly useful investment for any commercial or restaurant kitchen because it can literally be used for floor to ceiling cleaning and disinfection.

How Machines Work?

Steam cleaning machines operate on the principle where the water in a boiler tank gets heated up and escapes in 'vapour' like fashion through the multi-powerful jets or hoses. Some expensive steam cleaning machines include quality stainless steel boilers, heavy wiring, more insulation; the heating unit mounted inside the boiler, more attachments and more safety features than the low-end ones.

Steam cleaner can be a very handy steam cleaning machine as well. It cleans virtually any area that one can think of: seals on the fridge or oven, the runners on patio doors. Some steam cleaners claim to be able to do odd jobs such as defrosting a fridge, as well.



Some of the new models feature special self-cleaning systems, which mean that if one invests in it he won't have to constantly worry about replacing calcium filters. Also, the newer models heat and reheat in record time, some as fast as within thirty seconds and they do come with different bar pressures that change the speed and efficiency of cleaning performance.

The typical steam cleaning machines' have the following accessories: window squeegee, bristle ring nozzle, refilling bottle or tank and curved detail nozzle. These features simply ensure that your steam cleaning could be satisfactory. The steam cleaning machine should also have a feature that can regulate water steam outflow as well as its temperatures. Despite what you may think, some low pressure steam cleaning machines perform better than the high pressure ones.

The steam cleaning machine is easy to maintain and clean and it is light enough to be carried (when you fill it with water) especially if you're planning to use it often. Steam cleaning machines should have



some features for special cleaning tasks and should have options on hose outlets for cleaning difficult areas.

Features of Steam Cleaning Technology

- Eliminates mops and buckets for more convenient cleaning.
- Cleans and sanitises without hazardous chemicals and toxic odours.
- Leaves no residue like chemical cleaners.
- Add tap water, switch on and you can begin cleaning in minutes.
- Surfaces dry in seconds. No soaked materials that can contribute to mold and allergen growth.
- Kills most bacteria, viruses, mildew

and allergens such as E.Coli, Salmonella and Dust Mites.

- Helps control allergens in carpet and bedding.
- Money saving as no cleaning chemical agents are used, but just plain tap water is used.
- Lifts off greasy grime and dried on dirt.

- Cleans soap scum and mildew off bathroom tile and shower doors.

Benefits of Steam Cleaning Technology

- Increased Hygiene
- Reduce the risk of contamination
- Reduce the risk of transmitting food-borne disease
- Lower customer complaints
- Better working conditions for staff
- Increased efficiency and longer equipment life
- Lower maintenance cost
- Reduced risk of fire
- Improved health and safety environment
- They have great likelihood of complying with food hygiene and kitchen safety regulation
- Lower risk of fines and prosecution ■

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Enhancing the Appeal

It is being widely believed that people eat with their eyes first. Unlike most popular notions, this actually may be true! We know for sure that if a dish is not appealing to eyes, in many cases it would not induce us to partake that dish. This makes food plating and presentation a crucial aspect of the food service industry, especially in this age of increasing numbers of discerning consumers in the industry.

Creative and thoughtful plating, undoubtedly, enhances the appeal of the food. Focusing on presentation also gives ample opportunity to Chefs to showcase their artistic side and play around with elements beyond the usual ingredients.

Food plating is simply an arrangement of food on a plate, while food presentation includes all elements of the dish, including plate design, food arrangement, food decoration, and table setting. Together, food plating and presentation form the visual aspect of a dish, creating an experience for the diners.

While there aren't any fixed rules or conventions when it comes to 'correct' plating, in fact there is no 'correct' plating

as such, there are several important concepts and ideas which the Chefs should ideally keep in mind while presenting their dishes for their guests.

They say colours, material and texture of tableware, edible flowers...in fact every single detail matters in making an impressive presentation of dishes. One needs to take into consideration the balance and texture of each ingredient and how it plays into the composition of the plate, in order to make a memorable presentation.

The Role of Food Presentation

In today's fast-paced world where people are having less and lesser time, pictures have become a popular mode of

communication. This means Chefs need to give guests something on plate which is not only delectable for their palates but is Instagram worthy as well. Food not only has to taste good but also has to look good. The artistry of presentation of food is not merely in the flavour or content but also in how it appeals to the eye.

A plate can drastically influence the way the food looks as it is like a canvas for the food you are about to present. Extrinsic visual properties of the dinnerware like colour, shape and finish greatly influence the diner's eating behaviour and experience. For mindful eating and enjoying food with all senses, it is thus essential that the food must be visually appealing and the visual

composition of food must reflect the quality of food presented.

Food presentation is a major part of chef's job. A well-plated dish not only appeals to the senses but also showcases the chef's skills and creativity. As a Chef, it is extremely important to put in equal effort in preparing as well as presenting a dish, as it expresses the vision of the outlet, the personality of the Chef as well as the creativity.

Tasteful food is a part of the entire dining experience and comprises 60 percent of the dining experience but the remaining 40 percent comprises of the ambience, mood, setting, design and feel of the experience. Harmony between what is on the plate and the experience surrounding the plate is important to create an innovative experience.

Food Plating Principles

While there are no hard and fast rule for plating but a creative and thoughtful plating enhances both the look and taste of your food. When thinking of presenting a dish, the foremost factor is the choice of ingredients of great quality and later the canvas or plate on which the dish needs to be plated. Thus first prepare the dish and then carefully look at all the colours in hand; here the colours would mean green as in sapphire, red as in vine cherry tomatoes, white as in celeriac mash and so on.

Few chefs however don't believe in using too many ingredients in the dish. They strongly believe that lesser the ingredients used in the dish the healthier it is. Like the Trilogy of Lamb, where three different joints of Spring Lamb are put together, marinated and cooked in different ways, on one plate, and garnished with edible flowers.

The use of locally available and seasonal ingredients facilitates to make an ordinary dish into an astonishing one. Keep the dishes simple yet they can be aesthetically appealing. Use of the ingredients in most precise manner greatly facilitates to make the plate more alluring to the eye.

Before preparing the dish it is essential to consider the kind of cuisine being served. Are you making a hearty steak dinner, or are you preparing a delicate side dish, or an appetizer. You can't start building your plate until all of your flavours are finalised; so it is wise to have your ingredients before you begin the actual plating process.

The basic elements of plating food remain common whether a soup, main course or a dessert is being plated. It revolves around choosing the right plate so that it does not overpower the food that is on it. The food needs to be carefully placed so that it radiates elegance and beauty. Take some time to prepare a framework as to how the final dish would appear. Try to sketch the dish as well to see if there are any doubts.

Always keep five basic elements in mind while plating. They are creating a framework, keeping it simple, balancing the dish, getting the right portion size, and highlighting the key ingredient. Using the plate as a canvas is the key towards mastering the art of plating. Use sauces, sprouts and other garnishes to frame the focal point.

There are ways to bring a plate to life. A plate should reflect the ideas put together to make it extraordinary. It should speak about itself. Using the fresh flowers, herbs and other ingredients

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and putting them together in a concept is what brings a plate to life.

While plating of food it should be kept in mind that hot food should be served hot and cold food should be served cold. This implies that if one puts a lot of time in plating a hot dish the chances are the guest would get a beautiful plate with cold food which would be a big miss.

The entire idea of food plating is striving to achieve a perfect balance in the dish to make it look appetising, visually appealing and creative. In reality, plating a dish is all about imbining different ingredients on the plate to create an appealing look and feel to the dish.

For the Occasion

Plating a dish creatively to suit the theme or occasion is extremely important to allow guests to connect the food to the theme & occasion. Thus plating really depends on the occasion too. How you would plate for Thanksgiving would be different than plating for a birthday celebration.

If you are preparing a kids' party, choose fun food presentations that will encourage them to eat. Kids prefer 'fun' designs rather than serious and traditional ones. If it is an anniversary dinner it will have an elegant presentation with hues of romance in it.

A well plated and visually appealing dish immediately arouses curiosity of the guests as it is an interesting experience for them to connect to the theme or mood of the occasion with different ingredients and arrangements of the dishes.

Choice of Colour

There is always a confusion on whether to serve the food in white plates or in coloured plates. Most chefs prefer white plates to present the food, since they believe white plate makes food's colours seem more vibrant. The common notion is that the food textures and colours stand out more when placed on a pure white plate, making the dish extremely visually appealing to diners.

Ideally the plate could be a simple white, flat chinaware or pastel coloured handmade pottery. This could be coupe plate/ flat plate/ deep coupe depending on what is being plated.

However, chefs are not averse to coloured plates either. It is always better to keep on experimenting with new plates in different colours in order to play with different trends. The shape of the plate also plays a vital role in bringing out the food right to make it more appealing.

Other Intricacies

Matching the portion size with plate size is another important aspect of food presentation. A plate that is too small for the food portion offers a messy and overcrowded look. On the other hand, a small portion on too large a plate will look sparse.

Texturally balanced portion sizes and carefully placed ingredients until the composition feels 'just right' is characteristic of chef's food plating. It is not just about asymmetry or symmetry but also a balance in flavour, texture, colour and space.

Of course, the natural instincts on plating also plays role in the presentation of the dishes. Following one's instinct while plating always works well for Chefs as perfect plating is subjective to an individual's idea and creativity.

If a request comes from a customer to quickly deliver a dish out of menu then it would be purely instincts. However, if a new menu is to be launched and it would be associates down the line who would be cooking the dish, then a framework has to be planned which would clearly outline time taken to prepare and plate the dish. Once you know the needs of your guest you would be able to justify what you put on plate for them.



Tips for Food Plating

Strive to present the perfect plate where there is perfect balance of size, colour, shape and texture.

Moist ingredients should be placed at the base as they tend to move during delivery if they aren't held down by other food items.

Odd numbers of food items make for better visual appeal. For example, food items like shrimp, scallops, or bite-sized appetisers look better when served in odd quantities.

Overcrowding the plate is a big NO. Never overcrowd your canvas, and keep it simple by focusing only on the essential ingredient/s.

Create a beautiful background for your plate by adding green vegetables or brightly coloured fruits as accent points.

Once you have plated your main ingredients, think of your squeeze bottle or spoon as a paintbrush, and your sauce as a medium. Then, use them to enhance your plate wherever suitable or feasible.

Choose edible garnishes and place them purposefully. ■

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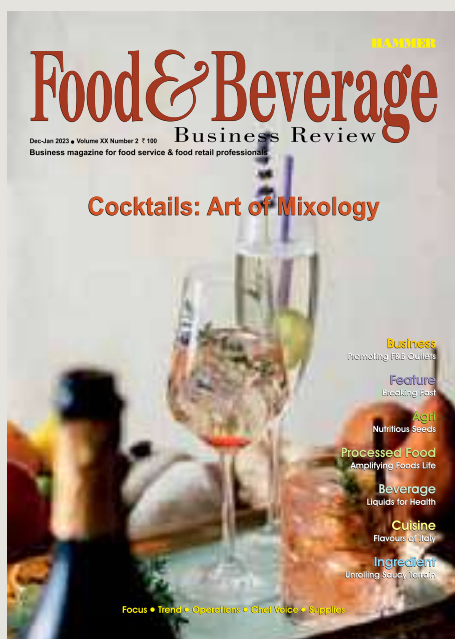
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Due to its sturdiness and resistant structure it is an everlasting product. The use of stainless steel and maximum quality components make it appropriate for a demanding, high-performance operation. It permits a perfect and effortless kneading and stretching of the dough.

It has an appealing design, a crossover between retro and vintage. It can be perfectly combined with any kitchen, countertop, or cupboard, and easy to store.

The product is available in several colours. It has high level of versatility because of its solid rollers. One can be able to select different alternatives of doughs and thicknesses. The rollers included 2 cutting options: 2.5 mm wide tagliatelle or 7.5 mm wide ribbons.

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Jerson Fernandes, Director of Culinary, Novotel Mumbai Juhu Beach



Chef Jerson Fernandes is the Director of Culinary at Novotel Mumbai Juhu Beach. He has spent over 14 years in the culinary industry. Chef Jerson Fernandes began his career at a young age, working in kitchens across India and abroad. He honed his skills in traditional Indian cuisine, as well as international dishes, which gave him a unique perspective on cooking. His passion for food and dedication to his craft quickly caught the attention of industry leaders, and he began to receive numerous accolades for his work. Grew from the ranks of a dishwasher to an Executive Chef in 10 years, where he currently serves as Director of Culinary. In this role, he oversees all aspects of food preparation and delivery for the hotel's six restaurants and bars. His primary focus is on creating innovative and delicious dishes that cater to a diverse range of tastes and preferences. In an exclusive interview with **Sharmila Chand**, he talks about his working philosophy and more.....

What do you enjoy most about being a Culinary Director?

As the Director of Culinary, what I enjoy most is the blend of creativity and leadership. I get to innovate with flavours, ingredients, and techniques, keeping cuisine exciting and evolving. Simultaneously, I love mentoring and guiding a team of passionate chefs, fostering an environment where culinary art thrives. This role allows me to influence dining experiences, ensuring guests not only enjoy their meals but also leave with memorable gastronomic stories. It's a fulfilling blend of artistry, management, and guest satisfaction.

What are your plans to introduce in your present role?

I plan to introduce a farm-to-table concept, emphasizing local, organic ingredients. I'll focus on menu innovation, integrating global flavours while respecting traditional techniques. Key initiatives include sustainability practices, reducing food waste, and enhancing dietary inclusivity with more vegan and gluten-free options. I also aim to foster a learning environment for the kitchen staff, encouraging creativity and skill development through workshops and guest chef collaborations, ensuring our culinary offerings remain dynamic, diverse, and aligned with current culinary trends.

How challenging is your position?

My role is quite challenging due to its multifaceted nature. It involves overseeing menu development, ensuring culinary quality,

managing kitchen staff, and staying abreast of food trends. Balancing creativity with operational efficiency is key. I also focus on ingredient sourcing, maintaining food safety standards, and aligning menus with customer preferences and dietary needs. The constant need to innovate while maintaining consistency and managing a diverse team adds to the complexity of this role.

What is the USP of your F&B outlets?

The USP of Novotel Mumbai Juhu Beach's F&B outlets lies in their diverse culinary experiences. 'Pêche Mignon', a French patisserie, offers exquisite pastries; 'Bageecha' provides a sea-facing Indian paradise with traditional flavours; 'Sampan' serves authentic Chinese cuisine, and 'The Square' offers versatile all-day dining. Each outlet is uniquely themed, ensuring a memorable gastronomic journey for guests, complemented by the hotel's scenic location and exceptional service.

What is your working philosophy?

I focus on creating diverse, inventive menus that respect local, seasonal ingredients, reducing our environmental impact. I believe in nurturing a kitchen environment where every team member feels valued and motivated to contribute ideas, fostering a culture of continuous learning and culinary excellence. Prioritizing guest experience, we strive to exceed expectations through exceptional flavours, presentation, and service, while maintaining operational efficiency and

upholding high ethical standards in sourcing and preparation.

How do you define yourself?

I am a passionate leader in the food industry, combining creativity with managerial skills to oversee kitchen operations, innovate menus, mentor chefs, and ensure exceptional culinary experiences. My role blends artistic culinary vision with practical business acumen, constantly aiming for gastronomic excellence.

How has your journey been in culinary field?

My journey in the culinary field has been a vibrant blend of creativity, learning, and passion. From mastering basic techniques to experimenting with exotic flavours, I've relished every challenge. The satisfaction of crafting delightful dishes and the joy of constant growth have made this journey truly fulfilling.

What has been your most rewarding moment at work?

My most rewarding moment was winning the Hotelier Awards, often called the Oscars of hospitality, in both 2021 and 2023, recognizing our team's excellence and dedication in the industry.

One piece of advice for upcoming chefs?

Strive for excellence in your endeavours, stay grounded, and value teamwork.





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