



**KITCHEN  
KINGS &  
QUEENS**



*The Celebrity Chef Report*

# Featuring

## in order of appearance

|                                 |         |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| Chef Manjit S Gill .....        | Pg   3  |
| Chef Hemant Oberoi.....         | Pg   3  |
| Chef Imtiaz Qureshi.....        | Pg   4  |
| Chef Ananda Solomon .....       | Pg   4  |
| Chef Satish Arora .....         | Pg   5  |
| Chef Zeba Kohli .....           | Pg   6  |
| Chef Bakshish Dean .....        | Pg   6  |
| Chef Atul Kochhar .....         | Pg   7  |
| Chef Vineet Bhatia .....        | Pg   8  |
| Chef Kelvin Cheung .....        | Pg   8  |
| Chef Harpal Singh Sokh i.....   | Pg   9  |
| Chef Parminder Singh Bali ..... | Pg   10 |
| Chef Shipra Khanna .....        | Pg   11 |
| Chef Shazia Khan .....          | Pg   12 |
| Chef Chinu Vaze .....           | Pg   12 |
| Chef Ritu Dalmia .....          | Pg   13 |
| Chef Manisha Bhasin .....       | Pg   14 |
| Chef Amrita Raichand .....      | Pg   14 |
| Chef Sanjeev Kapoor .....       | Pg   15 |
| Chef Gaggan Anand .....         | Pg   19 |
| Chef Garima Arora .....         | Pg   20 |
| Chef Manish Mehrotra .....      | Pg   20 |
| Chef Kunal Kapur .....          | Pg   21 |
| Chef Saransh Goila .....        | Pg   21 |
| Chef Vicky Ratnani .....        | Pg   22 |
| Chef Ranveer Brar .....         | Pg   23 |
| Chef Vikas Khanna .....         | Pg   24 |



## About the author

**Dr Sandeep Goyal** is Managing Director at Rediffusion, Chief Mentor at Indian Institute of Human Brands, and co-owner and Chief Tasting Officer of FoodFood TV. He wore all three hats in writing this report.

Dr Goyal is also an author and columnist, and writes regularly for The Economic Times and Business Standard. This report is a compilation of select columns that appeared in these publications.

# Yesterday's superstars ~ Not yet fading away

CAN VETERAN CHEFS ATTRACT BRAND ENDORSEMENTS  
WITH THEIR IMMENSE STATURE?



Chef Manjit S Gill

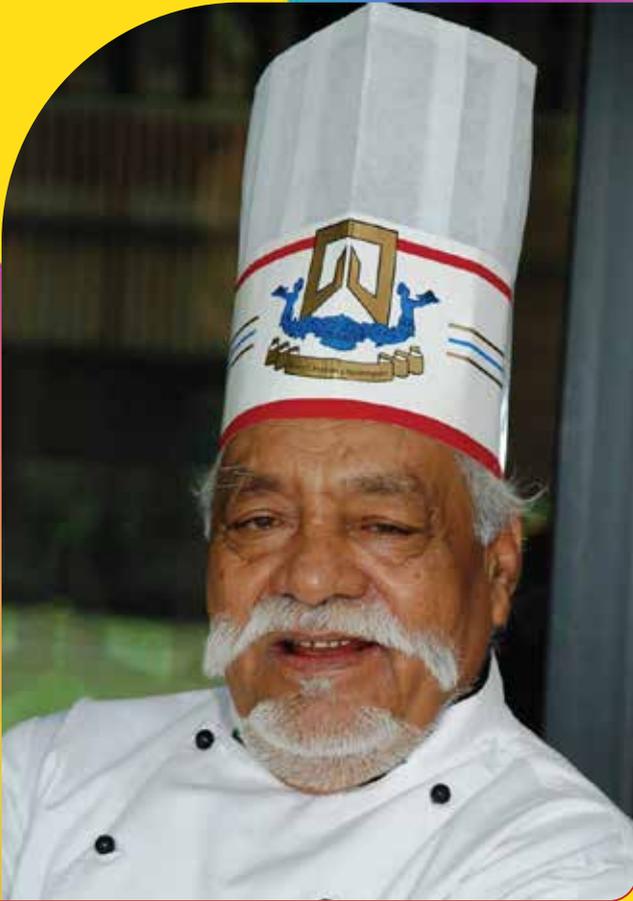
Chef Manjit S Gill is an old friend of mine. He was **Executive Chef** of the **Maurya Sheraton** when I used to handle the hotel's advertising in the mid-1980s. He was the guiding light behind restaurants like **Bukhara, Bali-Hi and Dum Pukht**. Gill is now largely retired – a **father figure** of the food business. But a doyen who can both inspire, and still innovate.

Chef Hemant Oberoi's knives, they say, have carved the evolution of the culinary industry in India. Whether it was Mediterranean cuisine at the award-winning **Souk**, Sichuan food at the iconic **Golden Dragon**, or the Japanese menu at the world-ranking **Wasabi**, the Chef broke boundaries and barriers in Indian gastronomy. At the legendary **Zodiac Grill** he took the fine-dining culture to unbeatable heights. Unfortunately, though, his own restaurant **Hemant Oberoi** in BKC Mumbai has been, at best, a lukewarm success.



Chef Hemant Oberoi

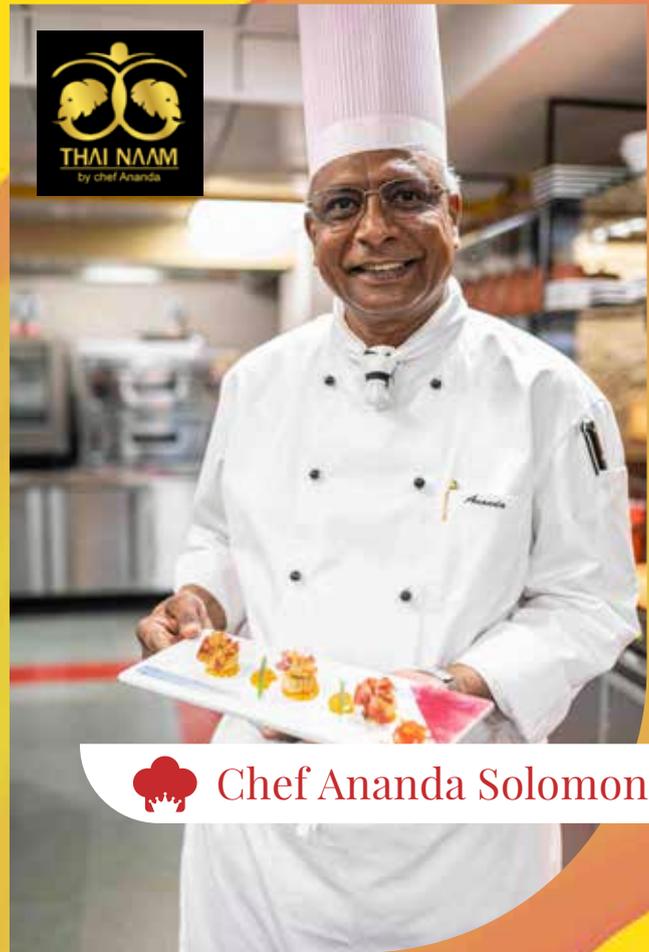




 Chef Imtiaz Qureshi

Ananda Solomon's **Thai Naam** at The Orb was a bit of a disappointment when I first ate there just before the Covid onslaught. The food was nowhere as good as his signature offerings at the **Thai Pavilion** over which he presided for nearly two decades. Chef Solomon also helped launch the **Konkan Café** – another wonderful restaurant at the **Taj President** many years ago. But for the chef, his second coming has not been easy.

I had the proud privilege of working with Chef Imtiaz Qureshi on the **launch of Dum Pukht** in the late 80s. When I first met him, his passport was kind of 6-inch thick – he had travelled all over the globe with **Indian Presidents & Prime Ministers** as part of their entourage when most of us had still not made their maiden trip abroad! The 91-year-old Qureshi is a **Padma Shri awardee** and is still active in the kitchen.

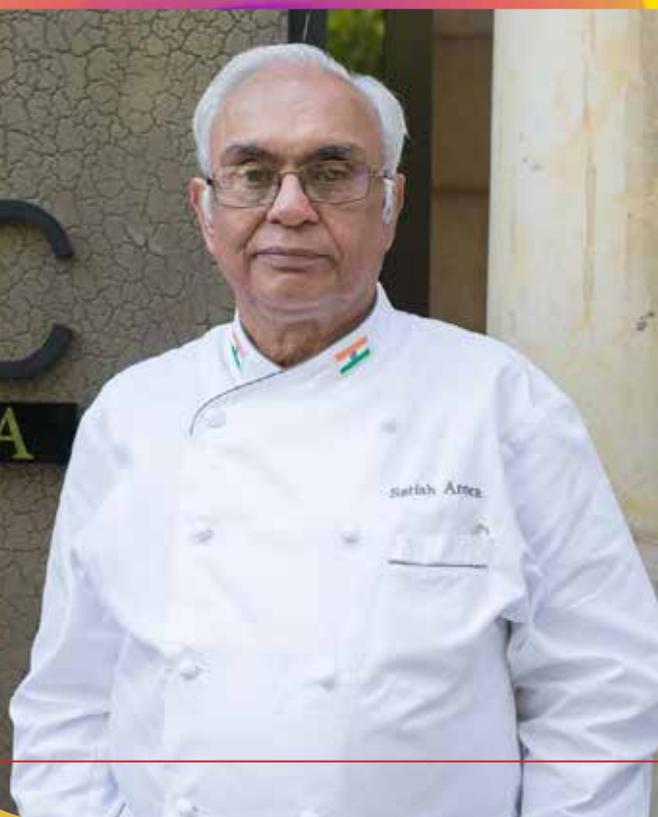


 Chef Ananda Solomon

Chef Satish Arora introduced the '**Chicken Tikka Sandwich**' at the **Shamiana** in the late 1970s, when other chefs were unwilling to think out-of-the-box. He also invented and popularized the '**spicy mutton burger**', another classic at the Shamiana, and now popular on the high tea menu at the **Sea Lounge** too.



**Chef Satish Arora**



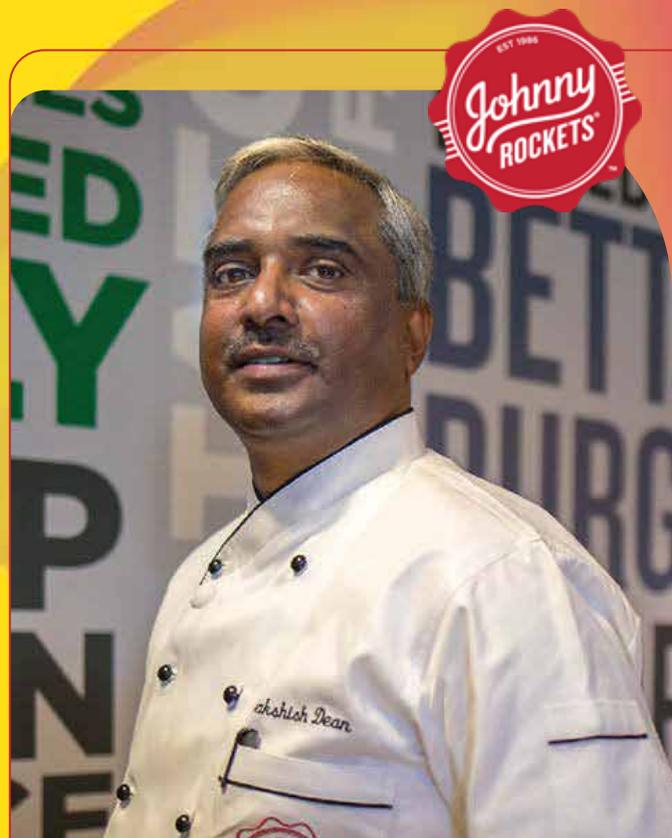
The '**Mongolian Barbeque**' in the open air Shamiana post-sunset became a huge hit with tourists and locals alike under his leadership in the 80s. He also introduced Mumbaiites to '**Smoky Dal**' at the **Tanjore**. The Camellia Punjabi protégé then brought **Sichuan food** to Mumbai with the launch of **Golden Dragon** at the **Taj Mumbai**. Satish is 76 years old now but as active and innovative even today.

Zeba Kohli has long been revered as the **Grand Old Dame of Chocolates** in India. For Zeba Kohli, her lessons in chocolate-making began at home. Her grandfather, **A. Fazelbhoy**, founded **Fantasie Fine Chocolates** in 1946, in Mumbai. And, once Kohli, a third-generation successor, took charge of the brand at a tender age of 18, Fantasie in no time became every chocolate lover's favourite. Fantasie's bestsellers include the original mint and cream fondant, homemade marzipans, cookies and dry fruit chocolates. Zeba is **queen of the desi chocolate domain** by far.



 **Chef Zeba Kohli**

Often called the **Molecular Magician**, Chef Bakshish Dean is the man behind the launch of **Johnny Rockets** in India. He is also the creator of **Cha Bar** and **Lite Bite** outlets. Earlier a corporate chef at the **Oberoi, Taj** and **The Park**, he is best known for **The Orient Express**, one of India's finest 'experience' restaurants. Dean is a keen experimenter but he still hasn't established his credentials as a top rung chef with a visible franchise of his own. In any case, as a senior (not in the veteran category yet) practicing chef, he still may pull out a big one in the years to come.



 **Chef Bakshish Dean**

# The Young Turks

THE STAR CHEFS INCHING THEIR WAY UP TO  
CELEBRITY STATUS



Chef Atul Kochhar



Chef Atul Kochhar was one of the first two Indian chefs to receive a **Michelin Star**, awarded in London in 2001 whilst at **Tamarind**. He opened his own restaurant **Benares**, which won him a second Michelin Star in 2007. Many other restaurants have followed. But the genius of Kochhar has been stained by controversy – his **anti-Islamic tweets** sent some years ago to Priyanka Chopra would not make him an easy choice for brands, now or later.





**Chef Vineet Bhatia**



Vineet Bhatia is a globally-renowned chef, mentioned often as the **face of progressive modern Indian cuisine**, having published cook-books, recorded multiple TV programs, opened several restaurants across the globe and also having the distinction of being the first Indian chef-patron to have **won a Michelin star**. That too twice – for his **Rasoi**. Vineet hit the headlines in 2018 when **he trekked up to the Everest Base Camp and set up a 'pop-up' restaurant** there. He has also cooked with the famous **Chef Alain Ducasse** on the **French Cruise liner Ponant's** famous trip to Antarctica. An adventurer, no less, Chef Vineet Bhatia should be a pre-eminent choice for brand endorsements for those looking beyond Chef Sanjeev Kapoor.

Chef Kelvin Cheung as the chef of the **Bastian** in Mumbai was the toast of Bollywood with **celebrity clients** like **Tiger Shroff** and **Ananya Panday**. Then he hit a raw patch with **arrest for fraud**. The matter was later amicably settled but brands would normally shy away even from past controversies when evaluating potential endorsers.



**Chef Kelvin Cheung**



Harpal Singh Sokhi is by far my favourite TV chef – his famous **'namak-shamak'** and his **Turban Tadka persona** is highly recalled by viewers across the country. Largely the creation of **FoodFood TV**, Sokhi today has created a large portfolio of restaurants: **Dhadoo**, **Twist of Tadka**, **Broaster Chicken**, **The Treasury**, **BB Jaan** and the soon-to-be-launched **BB Chick**. Sokhi has charm and affability. His ever-smiling persona should be a magnet for brands now that the Covid clouds are beginning to recede.

 Chef Harpal Singh Sokhi





Chef Parminder Singh Bali

Last, but not the least, on my list is Chef Parminder Singh Bali. More a teacher than a chef, some say. But a **guru for sure**. Part of the **Oberoi Center of Learning and Development**, Bali is a past winner of the **Oberoi Culinary Olympics**. A day with **Jamie Oliver**, 10 days with **Gordon Ramsay** in London and a trip to **Thomas Keller** at French Laundry in Napa Valley is how Bali keeps himself ahead of his peers. Bali has an interesting positioning as a food trainer. **For brands talking innovation, Bali should be a natural choice.**



# The Maharanis rivalling the Maharathis

THE LADY CHEFS WHO ARE MAKING WAVES ON THE CELEBRITY CHEF CIRCUIT

The **Shimla girl** who studied at St. Bede's, Chef Shipra Khanna is best known for being **H.O.T.** No, no, don't misunderstand. H.O.T. is **Shipra's first restaurant – House of Taste** – in Ahmedabad! She's also a tailor by choice – I say that because her **Delhi restaurant and bar** for some reason is called **Darzi!** I am not sure if the **good-looking and photogenic** Shipra has picked up any brand endorsements so far but given her pretty, pahari looks, I would place the **Masterchef Season 2 winner** on top of the list of future prospects.



**Chef Shipra Khanna**



With a little bit more of spunk on show, Shipra could be the **darling of brands**. The space for a lady chef as brand endorser is wide open.

Chef Shazia Khan came second to Shipra on **Masterchef Season 2**. But she seems to have lost momentum after that. The author of **What's on the Menu** and founder of **The Cooking Studio** and **The Studio Cafes** in Goa and Chennai is best known for her signature **Prawn Pickle**, **Prawn Balchao** and **Prawn Curry**. But Khan has a long way to go if she is to join the pantheon of top Indian chefs.



Chef Shazia Khan



Chef Chinu Vaze

Chinu Vaze's real name is Shilarna Vaze. The chef started her culinary journey from **Le Cordon Bleu** in Paris in 2004. Married to her **Swiss husband Christophe Perrin** (whom she met at culinary school), she embarked on her chef-ing career with a restaurant in Goa called **Gaia**. From Christophe's father's signature **morel sauce** to Chinu's **prawn khichdi**, their restaurant soon became a big hit in the sunshine state. This was probably because they brought an **Indo-Swiss twist** to everything they prepared. They served everything from Mexican, Maharashtrian and Japanese to Burmese and authentic French cuisine too. Shilarna has done her bit with TV shows like **Firangi Tadka**, **Style Chef** and **Sunny Side Up**, all on **FoodFood TV**. I have seen Chinu cook. She is magical when she's at it. **She has fluidity, and she has grace.** She is **Authentic** with a capital A. Her expertise kind of shines through. It is only a matter of time before brand opportunities open up for her.

I remember eating at **MezzaLuna**, Ritu Dalmia's first restaurant, in the mid-90s at **Delhi's Hauz Khas village**. The food was a bit clichéd and over-priced. Chef Dalmia has come a long way since then. The gastronomic experience at **Diva**, her **GK II** restaurant in Delhi, is much better – though I still think her menu is too pricey. The presenter of **Italian Khana**, Dalmia is a well-known **LGBT activist**. Dalmia is good on television. If she has to attract brand endorsements, she will need a dedicated talent manager to market her.



Chef Ritu Dalmia





## Chef Manisha Bhasin

Chef Manisha Bhasin is a **corporate chef** at ITC Hotels. A champion of 'sustainable gastronomy', Bhasin has served up banquets to many visiting Heads of State. She has come a long way from winning the **FHRAI Young Chef of the Year Award** way back in 2004. I sometimes wonder why the ITC Hotels do not use more of her in their own advertising. She is a pro par excellence. And would make a fabulous gourmet brand ambassador for the ITC eateries. **Hey, Mr. Nakul Anand, I hope you are listening!**

Now to Amrita Raichand. When she first started to host a show on **FoodFood TV (which I co-own)**, I told Chef Sanjeev Kapoor who runs the channel that she really didn't know how to chop, let alone cook. She was clumsy with both the knife while chopping, and the ladle when cooking. I think **Sanjeev counselled her** and helped her. She is far better on the screen today. **The clumsiness, at least, is largely gone.** The actor-turned-chef earned her spurs with **Whirlpool's Mummy ka Magic** advertising nearly two decades ago, and has earned good dividends over the years from that one single brand association.



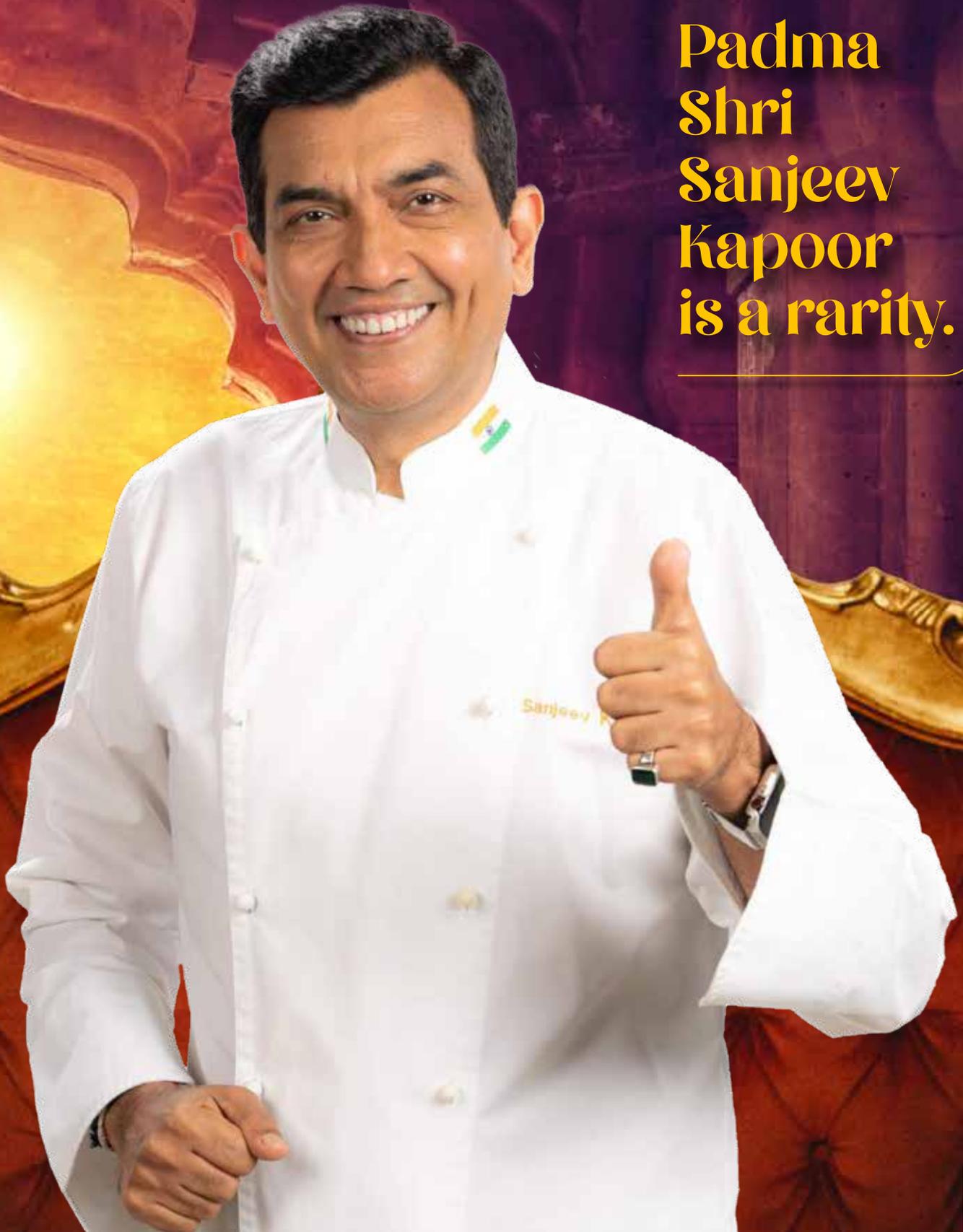
## Chef Amrita Raichand



# The Shahenshah of the Indian kitchen

IS CHEF SANJEEV KAPOOR UNDER-LEVERAGED  
ON BRAND ENDORSEMENTS?

**Padma  
Shri  
Sanjeev  
Kapoor  
is a rarity.**



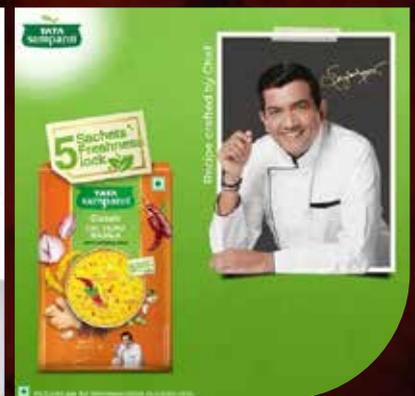
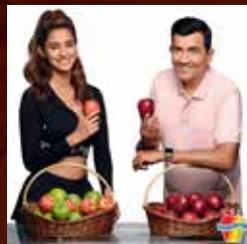
He's the chef with the longest running food show in Asia – **Khana Khazana** – which has reportedly garnered a cumulative viewership of well over 500 million. He has a **Guinness World Record** to his credit – created by cooking 918 kilograms of khichdi live at World Food India, back in 2017 in New Delhi. He has been bestowed a **National Award** for being the '**Best Chef of India**' by the Government of India for his popularity and contribution to Indian cuisine. He was ranked 31st in the Reader's Digest list of '100 of India's Most Trusted Persons' and 34th in the Forbes list of 'Top 100 Indian Celebrities'. And of course, Harvard Business School has devoted a case study to the chef. With so many achievements and accolades in the bag, no wonder no other Indian chef comes within kissing distance of 58-year-old Chef Kapoor.

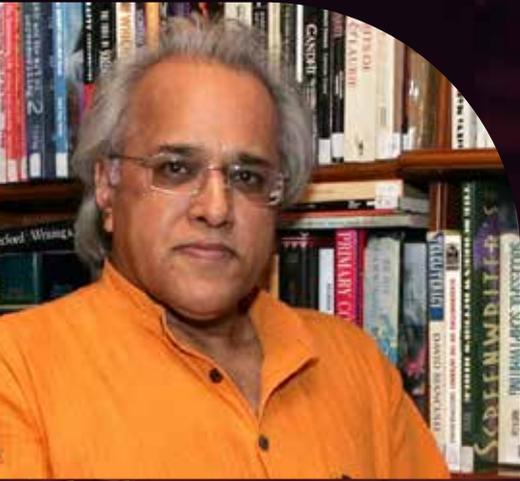


In 2018, the **Indian Institute of Human Brands (IIHB)** tried mounting a study on chefs as celebrities that India trusts. Sanjeev had an **unaided recall of 64%** and an **aided recall of 93%** in the pre-research pilot, with no other chef actually crossing the single digit threshold on 'spontaneous'. The others did inch ahead somewhat on 'aided' but the study had to be abandoned as the whole research was becoming literally a **one-horse race** with an unbelievable Sanjeev Kapoor bias.



So what makes this wizard of the kitchen so special? What is it that gets him featured alongside **Amitabh Bachchan** in **Daawat** basmati rice ads? And with **Anil Kapoor** in **Ariel**? And with **Disha Patani** for **Washington Apples**? And in the same frame as **Kriti Sanon** in **Wonderchef**? And in the company of **Akshay Kumar** and **Parineeti Chopra** for **Sugarfree**? Chef Sanjeev Kapoor individually endorses **Tata Sampann** dals, **Turmgel** lozenges, **Amazon Kitfresh**, **Nutralite**, **Dalda**, **Tata Sampann** spices, **Knorr** soups, **Desi Fresh** dahi & paneer (in the North American market) and he has two **ITC** brands, **Nimeasy** and **Nimwash**, too in his kitty. That he also endorses the **Symbiosis School of Culinary Arts** and the **International Young Chef Olympiad** is just a matter of detail after the impressive list.



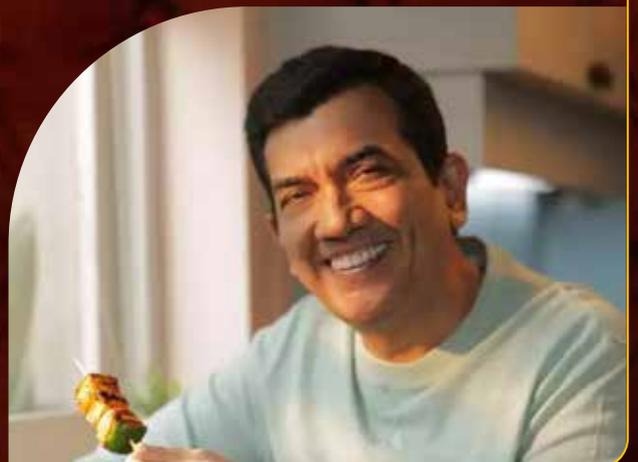


“He had a disarming boyish charm about him. He was also willing to learn. And that dimpled smile was always there even when he fumbled. So he appeared very natural, humble and affable.

- Kamlesh Pandey

To be fair, Chef Kapoor had an early advantage. When Zee TV's creative head Kamlesh Pandey decided to air India's first-ever cookery show on the channel in the early 1990s, the choice of the anchor-presenter fell on a debonair, young, ever-smiling chef who had just returned from New Zealand, and was now working at the Juhu Centaur. More senior practitioners who worked at 5-star hotel chains were either denied permission by their bosses to appear on a TV show, or just thought it was below their station in life to be cooking for the masses.

**Sanjeev Kapoor got the job.** And the rest, as they say, is history. “He had a disarming boyish charm about him,” remembers Pandey from the auditions. “He was also willing to learn. And that dimpled smile was always there even when he fumbled. So he appeared very natural, humble and affable.” **The boyish charm and the smile** are still Kapoor's strongest attributes, and the early fumbles are, of course, now replaced forever by dexterous authority and expertise as he rustles up one wonder after another. In any case, as Sanjeev cooked up **Sham Savera**, his maiden offering on Zee TV, after his by now-famous, **“Khana Khazana dekhne waalo ko Sanjeev Kapoor ka pyar bhara namaskar,”** a genuine star was born.



# Contenders to the throne

30 YEARS LATER, TODAY, IS CHEF SANJEEV KAPOOR THE ONLY CELEBRITY CHEF IN INDIA? NO, THE TRIBE HAS MULTIPLIED MANIFOLD.

The long list is headed by the Bangkok-based **Gaggan Anand** who started as a **trainee at the Taj Group**. He was the first chef of Indian descent to **intern with Ferrari Adria's research team** at the famous restaurant **elBulli** in **Catalonia, Spain**. Anand opened his '**progressive**' restaurant **Gaggan** in December 2010 in Bangkok. A restaurant that served Indian cuisine to a global palette, presented in the most exotic of visual presentations. The restaurant was placed **10th, 23rd, 7th and 4th** overall in the world in **The World's 50 Best Restaurants in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2019** respectively, and remained the only Indian restaurant to ever rank continually in the **Top 50**. Anand opened his own separate restaurant in Bangkok named '**Gaggan Anand**' on November 1, 2019, after he had an acrimonious tiff with his partners at the original Gaggan.

'Gaggan Anand' debuted on '**Asia's 50 Best Restaurants**' at **No.5**, which also earned the restaurant the **Highest New Entry Award 2021**. Gaggan Anand is a somewhat **quixotic culinary genius** who is as much a visual artist par excellence. Gaggan is well known and much respected amongst global gourmets but has hardly any recognition in mass India.



**Chef Gaggan Anand**



**Chef Garima Arora**

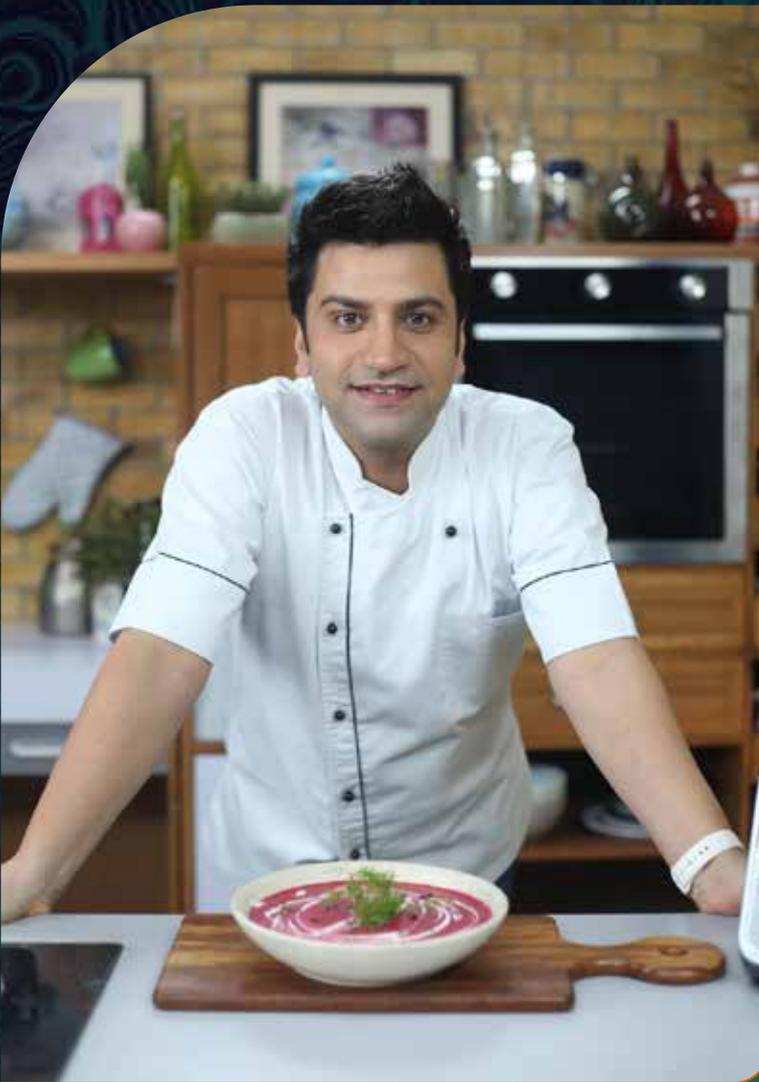


**Genius begets genius.** Gaggan Anand's protégé and understudy Garima Arora who was in February 2019, named **Asia's Best Female Chef** for the year by **World's 50 Best Restaurants** studied at Le Cordon Bleu in Paris and has worked with **Gaggan Anand, Gordon Ramsay and René Redzepi** of **Noma** in Copenhagen before opening her own restaurant, **Gaa, in Bangkok** in April 2017. Gaa is a three-storey restaurant that celebrates a modern tasting menu using **traditional Indian techniques**. Chef Garima Arora is growing day-by-day in international stature, but in her home country India, she is hardly known or recognized.

Chef Manish Mehrotra is best known for being the lord and master of the kitchens of **Indian Accent**, without doubt the best Indian restaurant for Indian food in India. Under Mehrotra's leadership, Indian Accent has been awarded the '**S. Pellegrino Best Restaurant in India**' award by **Asia's 50 Best Restaurants**. Mehrotra has also hosted **Foodistan**, a cooking show on **NDTV**. But his fame is still largely **restricted to rich gourmet clients** in the top echelons of India.



**Chef Manish Mehrotra**



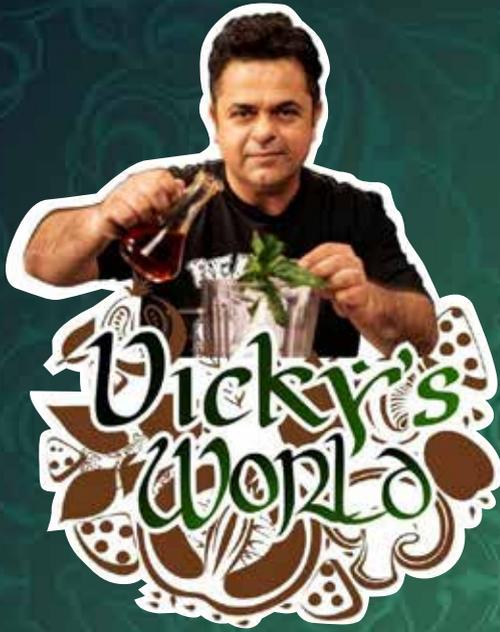
 **Chef Kunal Kapur**

Chef Kunal Kapur who was once called 'The Next Big Guy in Kebabs & Curries' has a Limca Book of Records entry for creating India's largest Chocolate Tower. Kapur who has been pretty visible on TV food shows endorses Tupperware, also IG International – the fresh fruit importer; he also endorses United Ways, an NGO from Delhi. Kunal is an upcoming star of the food scene with a long runway ahead.

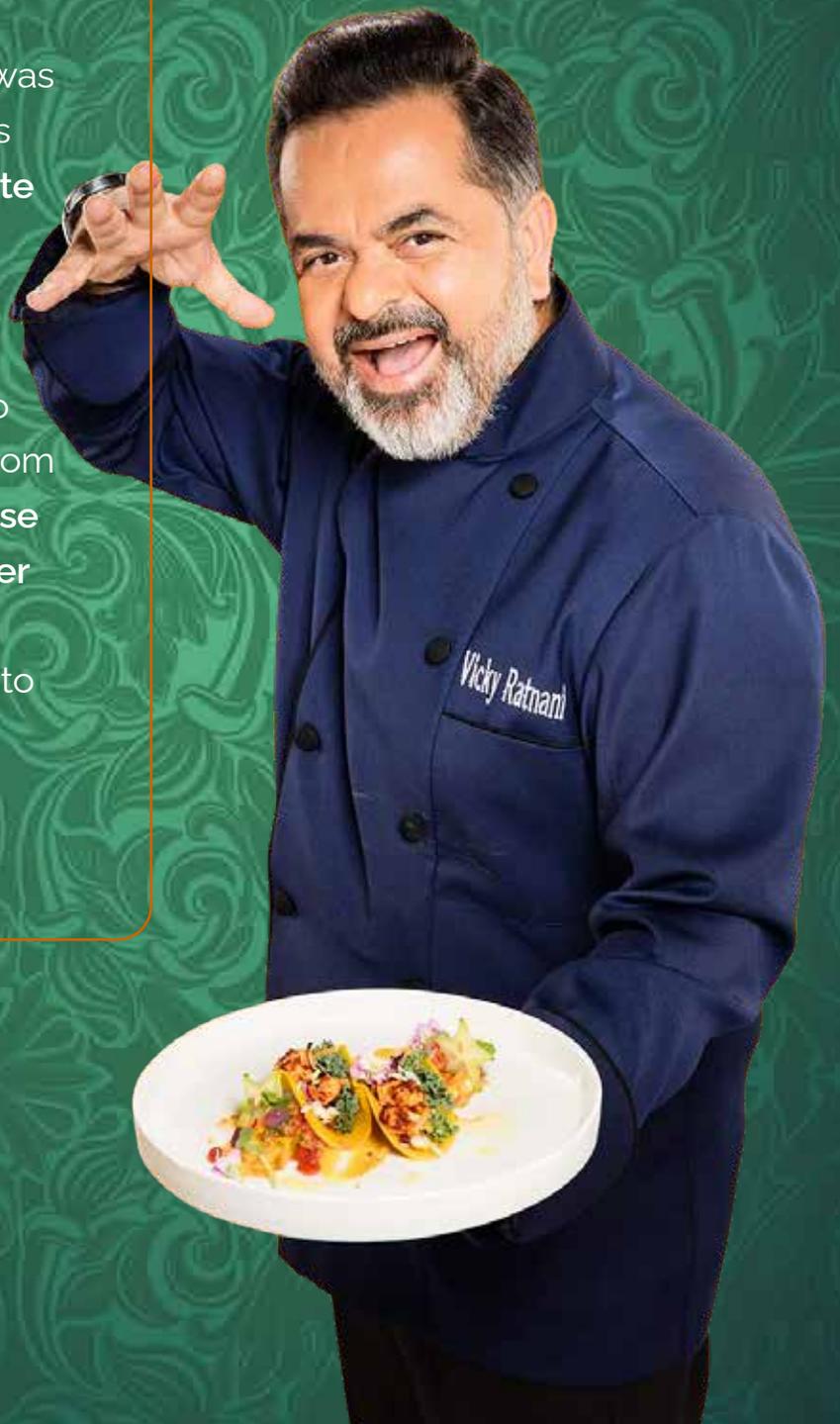
I really don't know what made Chef Saransh Goila more famous: his web series **The Spice Traveller** on his YouTube channel or winning the **FoodFood Maha Challenge**. Since I co-own **FoodFood TV**, my bias is obviously towards the latter but, to be honest, young Goila's growing popularity owes much to social media. His **Goila Butter Chicken restaurant** too has been immensely popular. But young Saransh is still work-in-progress.



 **Chef Saransh Goila**



Chef Vicky Ratnani is another A-leaguer. His show **Vickypedia** was reasonably successful and so was **Vicky Goes Veg**. Shows like **A Taste Down Under** (shot in Australia), **Vicky Goes Desi**, **Vicky Goes Foreign**, **Gourmet Central** and **Pressure Cooker** further added to his stature. His culinary outings, from **Aurus to Nido to The Korner House** contrast with doing stints at **Burger King** and **Pizza Express**. But his popularity perhaps is most owed to **Vicky The Gastronomer**, which has grossed **10M views** on Facebook.



**Chef Vicky Ratnani**

# In the forefront

IF SANJEEV KAPOOR IS THE AMITABH BACHCHAN OF THE INDIAN KITCHEN, WHO ARE ITS AKSHAY KUMAR AND RANVEER SINGH?



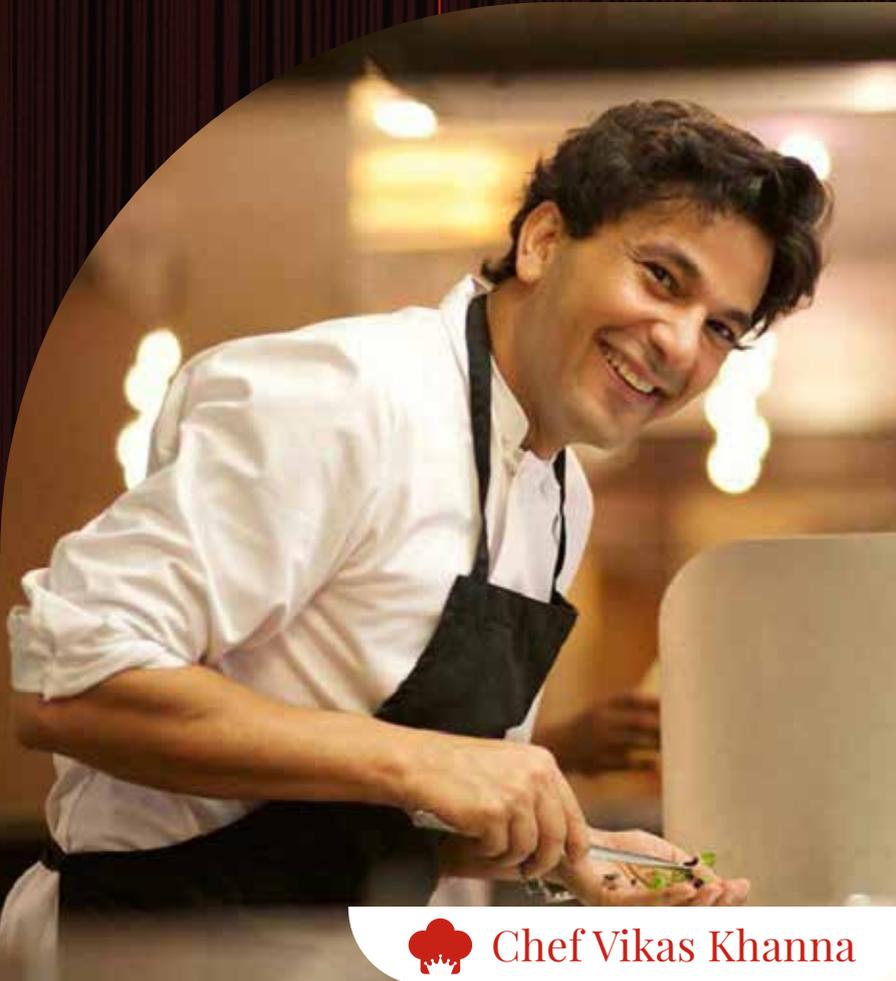
Some say **Sanjeev Kapoor** is the **Amitabh Bachchan** of the **Indian culinary universe**. In the same breath they add that what **Ranveer Singh** is to **Bollywood**, **Ranveer Brar** is to the world of food in India. He is the **'hottest' chef** on the food circuit in India today – both for his **good looks**, and his **creative cooking**. His television shows, **Breakfast Xpress**, **Snack Attack**, **Homemade**, **The Great Indian Rasoi**, **Health Bhi Taste Bhi**, **Ranveer's Cafe** and others, have made him a fairly visible and well-recognised face all over India. Credited with launching **Morisco** – a seafood restaurant, **il Camino** – an Italian restaurant, and **Fishtail** – a small open air barbeque eatery many years ago, followed by the immensely famous **Banq** in Boston and **English Vinglish** – a fusion bakery in Mumbai, Ranveer is known to be a dreamer and a doer. No wonder, Ranveer today endorses **Asahi Kasei**, **Swiggy**, **Kellogg's**, **Gujarat Tourism**, **Philips**, **Sungold**, **Go Cheese**, **Bertolli**, **Victronix**, **Gadre Marine**, and more on a growing list of brands that see Ranveer as the true inheritor to Chef Sanjeev Kapoor.



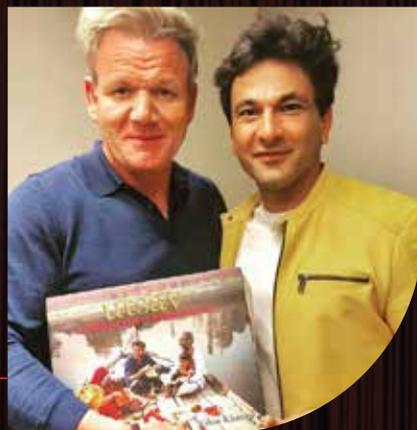
**Chef Ranveer Brar**

A year ago, Ranveer's social media report card showed **Instagram: 1.2M**, **Twitter: 1.7 M**, **Facebook: 2.8 M** and **YouTube: 2.55 M**. The numbers have only grown ever since.

Amritsar-born Vikas Khanna worked at **Salaam Bombay** and **The Café** at the Rubin Museum of Art in New York before he joined **Junoon** in Manhattan. And that is where he started to get famous, and noticed.



**Chef Vikas Khanna**



**Junoon**, under his charge, was awarded a **Michelin star** for six consecutive years, starting 2011. Khanna has been the host of **MasterChef India**, has been judge on **MasterChef Australia**, has hosted **Twist of Taste on Fox Life**, has featured on **Gordon Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares**, has appeared on **Hell's Kitchen, Throwdown! With Bobby Flay** and on the **Martha Stewart Show**. Chef Vikas Khanna's documentary series **Holy Kitchens**, which explores the bond between faith and food has been showcased at **Harvard, Princeton, Columbia** and **Oxford Universities**. His movies, **Kitchens of Gratitude** and **The Last Colour** have further embellished his creative credentials. **I have not eaten at Ellora**, his newly launched restaurant in Dubai.

But those who have, say that the food is just absolutely outstanding. Since Bollywood comparisons are easier to relate to, Vikas is the **Akshay Kumar of the food business**. No wonder, he has been the face of **Pepsico's Quaker Oats, Domino's pizza, Gadre Marine** and **Usha kitchen appliances** in India. In Abu Dhabi, he endorses **Agthia's Al Ain food range**, and **Grand Mills flour** in the UAE.

# Going beyond the kitchen

CAN INDIA'S CELEBRITY CHEFS MOVE FROM THE KITCHEN TO THE DRAWING ROOM?

**Do chefs make good endorsers?** My answer is an emphatic yes. **They are experts.** Most look and present well. **They have credibility.** In their target group, especially amongst luxe customers, **they have fame too.** Brands that are smart could find smart storylines and get chefs to narrate their stories with taste and style.

The moot question, after looking at the achievements and exploits of so many chefs is: are chefs mere niche endorsers with maximal appeal in food, kitchen implements and appliances or diet supplements? Chef Sanjeev Kapoor, of course, has **managed to break the stereotype by endorsing Ariel**, but there are hardly any exceptions beyond that almost isolated example. Given that as it may, isn't food in any case part of a large enough domain – with overlaps on luxury, lifestyle, travel, tourism, experiences, as also health, wellness and well-being. **So are Indian chefs underexploited?**





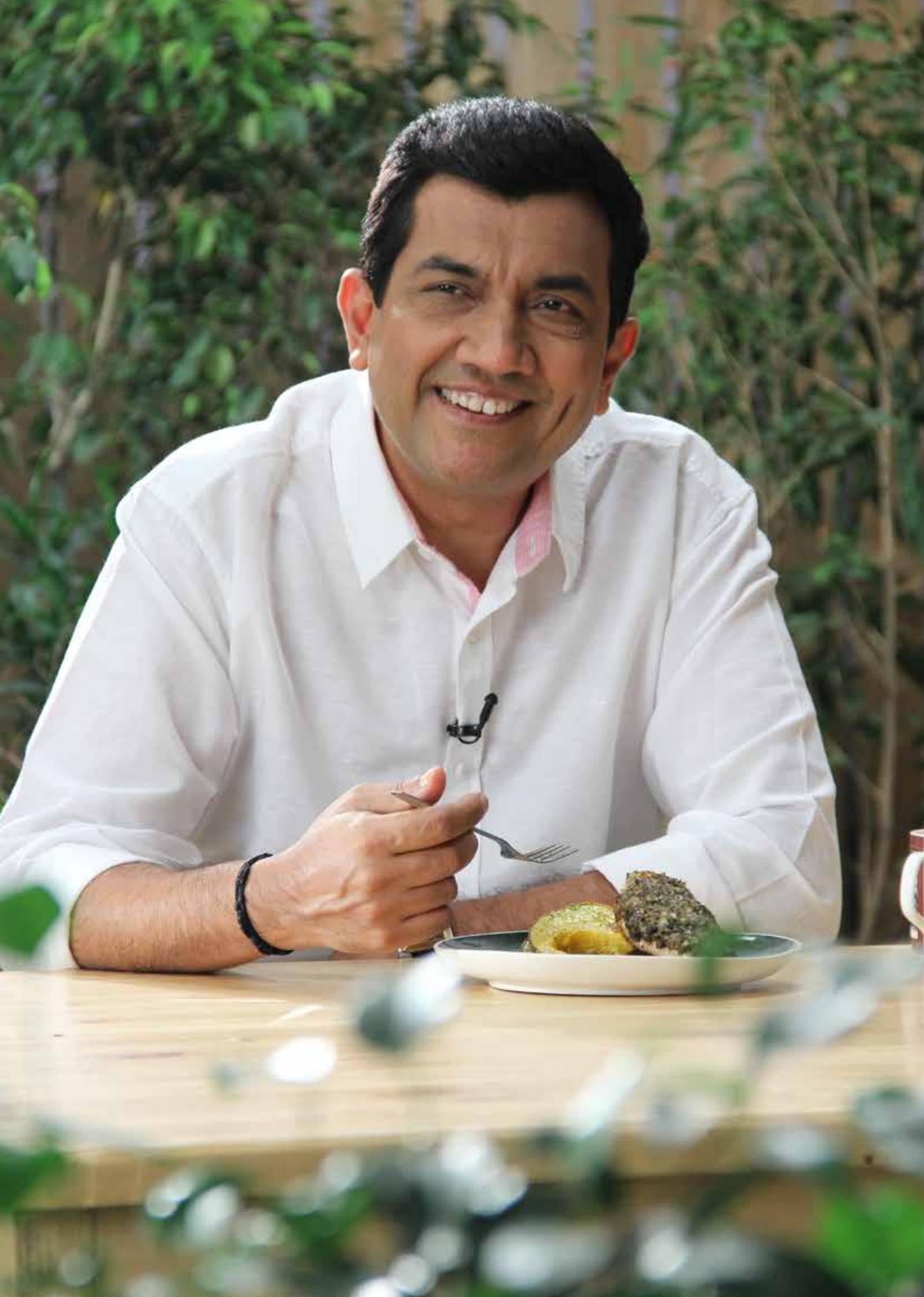
The problem lies perhaps in the fact that most have still not crossed the minimal threshold required to be called '**famous**', which really is the minimum requirement to be labelled a celebrity. Anything short of the threshold only passes muster by being described as an '**influencer**'. In all fairness, chefs are experts – with undeniably high credibility in their professions. So, they are surely ahead of the 'influencer' tag. But most of them still need to try harder for greater visibility.

## TIARA Research



Chef Sanjeev Kapoor is the only chef covered in the **TIARA Report of the Indian Institute of Human Brands**. Kapoor makes a **90-percentile on Trustworthy**. Which is very, very good. His scores on **High Quality, High Performance, Unique, Stylish, Trendy, Cool, Distinctive** and **Helpful** are above average. He scores fairly well on Innovative, Progressive, Charming, Friendly, Caring and Successful too. Brands tend to favour him because of his mass cut-through, his domain knowledge (hence, credibility), and consumer connect, especially with the eves. Methinks, with a better talent manager who could position his attributes and strengths better, **Chef Sanjeev Kapoor can have a much wider repertoire of brands going forward**. The point is that as leader of the pack if he takes a few leaps exponentially, the others – Ranveer, Vikas, Kunal, Saransh, and others – too could gain both in stature and salience.

# 90%



# India versus the world

CAN INDIAN CHEFS BE AS COLOURFUL, INTERESTING AND VIBRANT AS THEIR COUNTERPARTS ABROAD?



**Chef Guy Fieri**

If you flip on the **Food Network** at any given time, you have at least a **75% chance of seeing** one of the most famous (and recognizable) chefs in America, **Guy Fieri**. Known for his iconic highlighted hair, Oakley sunglasses, and bowling shirts, Fieri is maybe the most mainstream of famous chefs. Fieri is an **Emmy award-winning chef** who owns three California restaurants and also licenses out his name and infamous "**Flavortown**" catchphrase to restaurants across the country. His name carries unbelievable weight and credibility because of his two long-running TV Shows, **Diners, Drive-Ins, and Dives** and **Guy's Grocery Games**. He even hosted the non-cooking TV game show **Minute To Win It** for two seasons because of his charismatic personality. This is why he's not just one of the most famous chefs in the world, but maybe the most famous chef on TV. Now Fieri is colourful, to say the least.

He is also witty, humorous, charming and very, very outgoing. He has a distinct persona that would stand out even if he were not in a chef's kitchen attire. Indian chefs are good, they are pleasant, they are affable – but they are into cuisine, not showbiz. None of them has a 'designer' wardrobe and I am

sure none of them have spent time (and money) enhancing their hair, teeth or skin. None of them is known for embellishments like Fieri's Oakleys. Do Indian chefs need to develop, well, a 'personality' that has an X-factor? That is a moot question for sure. The skill focus is fine, but TV is also about engagement and entertainment.



 Chef Gordon Ramsay

In contrast, Chef Gordon Ramsay is a completely different kettle of fish. The eternally angry culinary critic Gordon Ramsay too is one of the most famous chefs on TV. He is known for the harsh words he shares with the people on his TV show Hell's Kitchen. The show has had such mainstream popularity and success that Ramsay has gone on to host several other shows including **Kitchen Nightmares**, **Master Chef** and **The F Word**. Although he's most known for his TV shows, Ramsay's skills as a **Michelin-starred cook** are how he became a famous chef in the first place. His most notable restaurant, **The Gordon Ramsay Restaurant**, in London, has been a **Michelin 3-starred restaurant** since 2001, and his restaurants have overall been **awarded 16 Michelin Stars** in total. As much as I have enjoyed seeing Gordon on TV, I have much more enjoyed eating a meal from his kitchen. For Ramsay, his sharp tongue is his "bestest" asset. In India, no chef even comes close. Once again: are Indian chefs too tepid, too tame, too boring – just great cooks, no more? The answer, for now, is an emphatic **'yes'**.

# The world's top celebrity chefs



1

## MARCO PIERRE WHITE

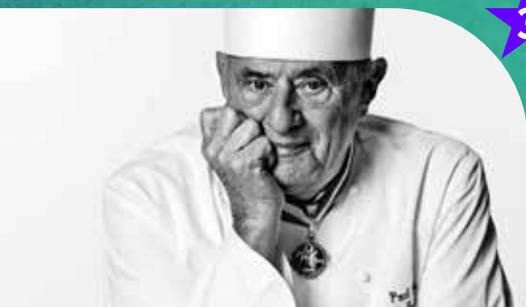
Believed to be the **first celebrity chef**, Chef White is also known as the godfather of contemporary cuisine. The youngest chef to be awarded **3 Michelin stars**, he continues to inspire and train the best chefs around the globe, after his retirement.



2

## ANTHONY BOURDAIN

This celebrity chef started out his career as a part-time dishwasher after dropping out of college. He maintained a **larger than life image** in the restaurant fraternity of New York City and rose to a celebrity chef status through his extremely popular television shows. He died in 2018.



3

## PAUL BOCUSE

Paul is a legend in France and in many parts of the world. A celebrity chef associated with **novel concepts in cooking and cuisines**, he died in 2018 at the age of 91. His students and followers are committed to taking his legacy forward.



4

## ALAIN DUCASSE

Another popular French chef, Alain has to his credit several successful **Michelin 3-star** restaurants. His elegance and style reflect in his restaurants and have raised his status to a globally renowned celebrity chef.



5

## JAMIE OLIVER

As far as celebrity TV chefs go, Jamie Oliver's face is instantly recognisable. He is known for his **successful TV shows that focus on organic food**, and is popular for his cookbooks.

Source: SOEG

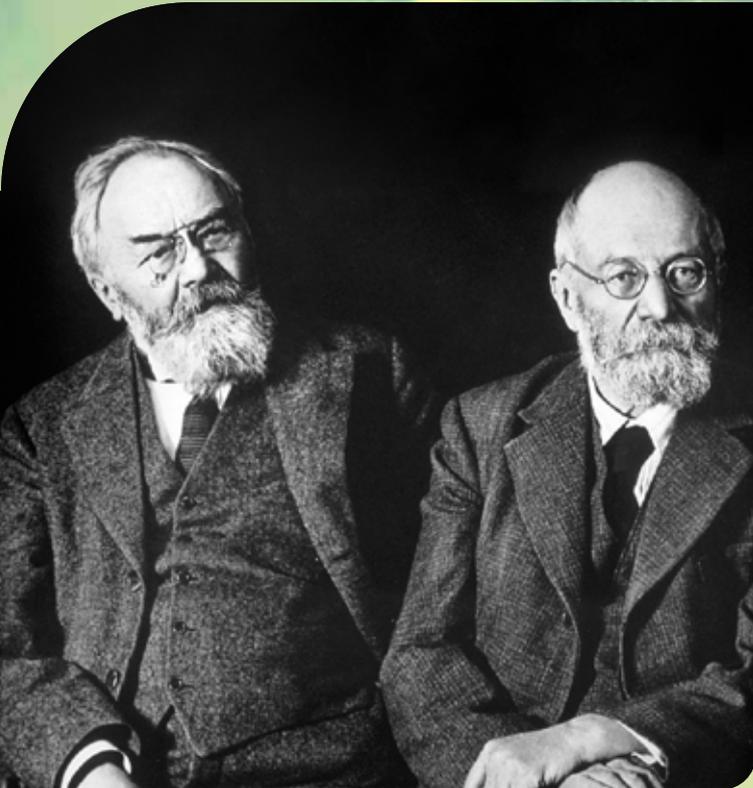
# The Michelin Magic: Star ratings that taste real good

LET'S EXAMINE HOW GASTRONOMIC EXCELLENCE IS UNDERSTOOD GLOBALLY BY LOOKING AT THE MICHELIN STAR RATING, THE TOP ACCOLADE IN THE FOOD BUSINESS



The image on the left shows what a Michelin star actually looks like. It is a bit strange to think that this little **squiggly clipart-esque star**, more like a flower than a real 'star', printed next to a restaurant's name in what looks like a simple, unassuming Microsoft Word table is worth more than any medal or award you could give to a chef anywhere in the world.





Michelin Brothers

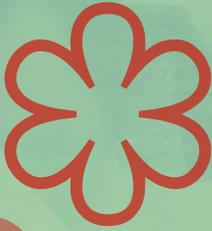


The story of the Michelin stars can be traced back to the beginning of the last century. France in **1900** had perhaps fewer than **3,000-4,000 cars** on its roads. **Brothers Édouard and André Michelin**, owners of a tyre manufacturing company that bore their family name, Michelin, decided to publish the **Michelin Guide** to boost the demand for cars, car usage and, by consequence, car tyres. The brothers printed nearly **35,000 copies** of this first, free edition of the Michelin Guide, which provided useful information to motorists, such as maps, tyre repair and replacement instructions, car mechanics listings, hotels, and petrol stations throughout France. In **1904**, a similar guide to Belgium was published. A guide to the British Isles first appeared in **1911**.

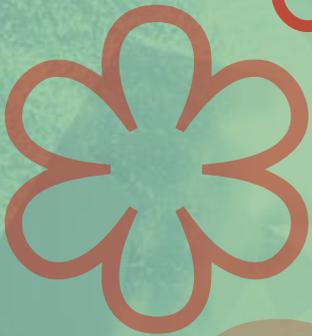
The guide was taken to other countries by the Michelin brothers, with editions appearing soon in Algeria and Tunisia; then the Alps and the Rhine (northern Italy, Switzerland, Bavaria, and the Netherlands); soon in Germany, Spain and Portugal; then, as said before, in 1911 in the British Isles and Ireland; in the same year in 'The Countries of the Sun' (Les Pays du Soleil - Northern Africa, Southern Italy and Corsica). In fact by **1909** the Michelin guide for France actually had its **first English-language version**.



The **First World War** saw the suspension of the publication of the guide. In **1922**, the Michelin brothers, based on the principle that '**man only truly respects what he pays for**' decided to start charging a price for the guide - **750 francs or USD 2.15** - a fairly stiff pay-out for those times. Several changes were made to the guide. Restaurants started to be listed by specific categories. Debuts of new hotels were announced. And the Michelin brothers barred the carrying of advertisements in the guide. Most importantly, the brothers employed a team of anonymous 'inspectors' to visit and review restaurants - and that really was the start of the Michelin restaurant guide as we understand it today.



In **1926**, the guide **began to award stars** for fine dining establishments. Initially, there was only a single star awarded. Then, in **1931**, the hierarchy of zero, one, two, and three stars was introduced. Finally, in **1936**, the criteria for the starred rankings were published:



## MICHELIN STAR



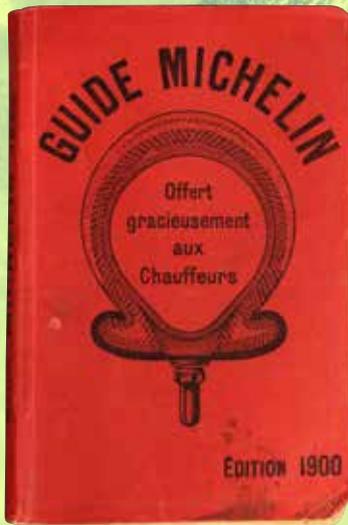
A very good restaurant  
in its category



Excellent cooking,  
worth a detour



Exceptional cuisine,  
worth a special journey



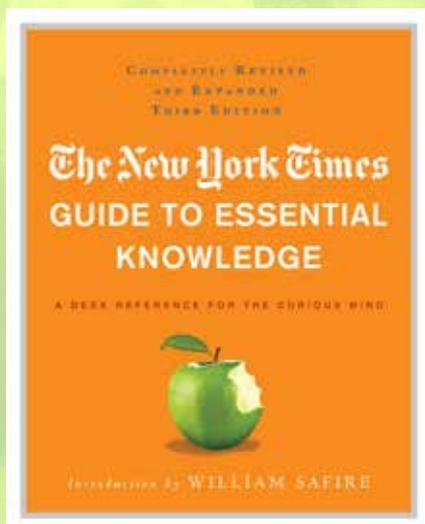
In **1931** the cover of the guide was changed from blue to red, and has remained so in all subsequent editions.



Today the Michelin star rating is almost like an Olympics games tally of medals. Global standing in cuisine and fine dining is almost singly decided by the number of Michelin stars that adorn restaurants in a country. There are other fine dining guides like the **Miele guide**, the **Zagat** and, of course, the famous **New York Times guide**, but Michelin remains by far the gold standard.



The Michelin Guide awards restaurants 0 to 3 stars basis anonymous reviews filed by their 'inspectors'. These inspectors focus on the quality, mastery of technique, personality and consistency of the food, in arriving at the reviews that are published and awarded the stars. The reviews do not take into account the interior décor, table setting, or service quality in awarding stars, though the guide shows forks and spoons which describe how fancy or casual a restaurant actually is. This, of course, is vastly different from the reviews put out by **Forbes** which not only look at **ambiance and décor**, but also, some say, at over **800 criteria** which include details like whether the restaurant offers solid or hollow ice cubes, freshly squeezed or canned orange juice, and valet parking or self-parking.



# Forbes



Michelin have always maintained that they rate the restaurants, not the chefs. It is for this reason that **Maxim's, the famous Paris restaurant, flaunted its stars** in the early part of the **20th century** purely as a fine dining destination without any of its chefs really becoming famous. Today, however, because restaurants become so closely identified with their chefs, it is becoming harder and harder to say who got the stars: the restaurant or the chef. When a famous chef leaves a restaurant, Michelin has been known to often take away its stars. And when great chefs moved to new restaurants, Michelin has a way of ensuring that their stars travel with them! So, today it is common to speak of '**Michelin-starred chefs**' though in theory, the stars continue to be given to the restaurants, not to the men who cook in them.

Since **1955**, the guide has also highlighted restaurants offering '**exceptionally good food at moderate prices**', a feature now called '**Bib Gourmand**'. These restaurants must offer menu items priced below a maximum determined by local economic standards. **Bib (Bibendum)** is the company's nickname for the Michelin Man, its corporate logo for over a century.

The Michelin Guide also awards **Rising Stars**, an indication that a restaurant has the potential to qualify for a star, or an additional star. This can considerably boost the standing of a restaurant in the business.





COMFORT AND QUALITY  
(RESTAURANT)



Quite comfortable



Comfortable



Very Comfortable



Top class Comfort



Luxury in the traditional style

All listed restaurants, regardless of their star - or Bib Gourmand - status, also receive a **'fork and spoon'** designation, as a subjective reflection of the overall comfort and quality of the restaurant. Rankings range from one to five: **One fork and spoon represents a 'comfortable restaurant'** and **five signifies a 'luxurious restaurant'**. Forks and spoons coloured red designate a restaurant that is considered **'pleasant'** as well.

Restaurants, independent of their other ratings in the Guide, can also receive a number of other symbols next to their listing.

- ◆ Coins indicate restaurants that serve a menu for a certain price or less, depending on the local monetary standard. In 2010 France, 2011 US and Japan Red Guides, the maximum permitted 'coin' prices were Euro 19, USD 25, and Yen 5000, respectively.
- ◆ Interesting view or Magnificent view, designated by a black or red symbol, are given to restaurants offering those features.
- ◆ Grapes, a sake set, or a cocktail glass indicate restaurants that offer, at the minimum, a **'somewhat interesting'** selection of wines, sake, or cocktails, respectively.



AFFORDABLE FOOD  
PRICE MENU



INTERESTING VIEW



NOTABLE WINE LIST



NOTABLE SAKE LIST

Pascal  
Rémy

The Michelin journey has not been without controversy. In 2004, **Pascal Rémy**, a Michelin inspector wrote a tell-all book, **L'Inspecteur se met à table**, which translated into English would perhaps mean, '**The Inspector Puts It All on the Table**' which was highly critical of his employers. Rémy felt that the Michelin Guide had started to become lax in its standards with much fewer inspectors actually going out to sample and rate restaurants than what Michelin claimed. He also accused Michelin of favouritism alleging that famous and influential chefs like Paul Bocuse and Alain Ducasse were literally 'untouchable' and subject to much lesser rigour in the rating compared to lesser-known chefs. He basically hinted that Michelin did not dare to undermine 3-star chefs or ever mess with them.

Michelin have also been often accused of having a French bias, so much so that some have gone to the extent of calling it a tool of Gallic cultural imperialism. In the same breath, Michelin has been heaped criticism in the past for giving out an undeserved number of stars in Japan which detractors said was designed to enable the parent tyre-selling company to market itself better in Japan!

A falling star (!) in the Michelin world is really bad news. Celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay reportedly cried when the Michelin Guide stripped the stars from his New York restaurant, calling the food 'erratic'. Ramsay explained that losing the stars was like 'losing a girlfriend'.

# The world's top restaurants



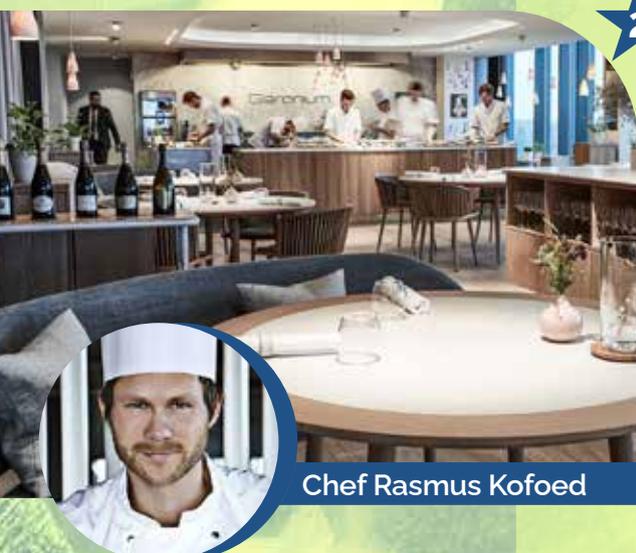
Founder René Redzepi

1

## NOMA

COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

One of the most coveted restaurants to be in the world, Noma is synonymous with creating new Nordic cuisine and inspiring renowned chefs across the world. Founded by **René Redzepi**, the **3-star Michelin** restaurant has been voted as the World's Best Restaurant multiple times.



Chef Rasmus Kofoed

2

## GERANIUM

COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

Also located in Denmark, Geranium offers Scandinavia's seasonal specialities prepared by the talented **Chef Rasmus Kofoed** who integrates ingredients like Jerusalem artichoke leaves, pickled walnut, squid, melted smoked lard, the essence of yeast and many more together.



Chef Victor Arguinzoniz

3

## ASADOR ETXEBARRI

ATXONDO, SPAIN

Asador Etxebarri is best known for serving their dishes flame-grilled. **Chef Victor Arguinzoniz** also designed the grills himself to facilitate capturing the intrinsic natural flavours of local produce, from house-made chorizo to the freshest prawns from Palamos. The restaurant also chooses its coal meticulously.

4

**CENTRAL**  
LIMA, PERU

**Chefs Virgilio Martínez and Pía León's** flagship restaurant, Central, aims at celebrating Peru's landscapes, history and traditions through their dishes. The restaurant offers an abundance of fresh and locally produced meat and vegetables such as scallops, squid and clams along with Sacred Valley's pork belly and goat's neck.



**Chefs Virgilio Martínez and Pía León**

5

**DISFRUTAR**  
BARCELONA, SPAIN

**Chefs Oriol Castro, Mateu Casañas and Eduard Xatruch** came together to establish the restaurant in 2014. Some of their famous dishes include Panchino stuffed with caviar and sour cream and multi-spherical pesto with tender pistachios and eel.



**Chefs Oriol Castro, Mateu Casañas and Eduard Xatruch**

*Source: Republic World*

# Michelin in India: Twinkle twinkle no star

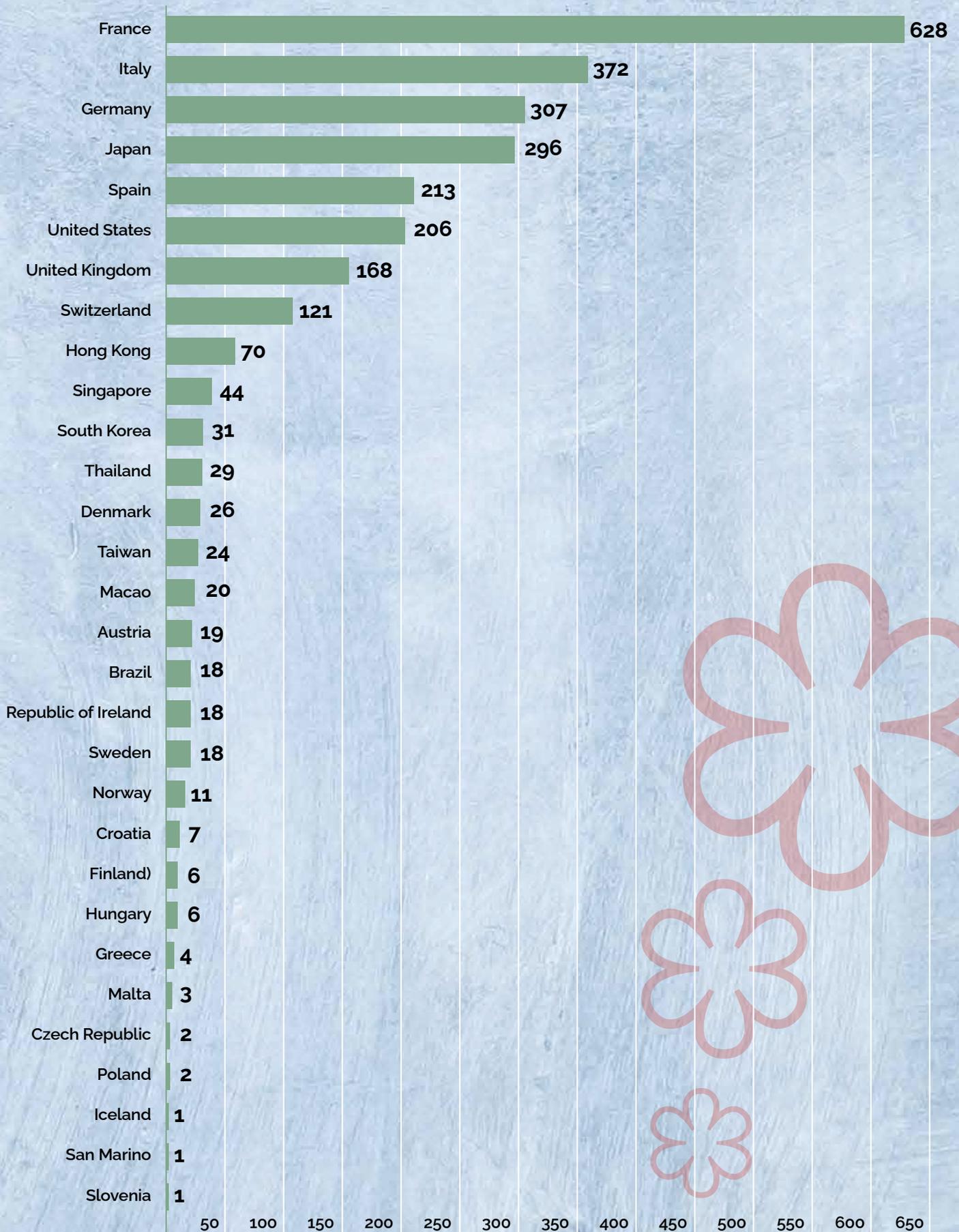
WHY INDIA DOES NOT FIGURE IN MICHELIN'S  
SCHEME OF THINGS

India still has to get on to the Michelin map of gastronomy.

It is a **bitter truth** that there is hardly any Indian restaurant of consequence in any of the world rankings. The world barometer of excellence in cuisine, the Michelin Guide, does not even have an Indian footprint and none of the restaurants it rates worldwide (across 25 countries) actually includes a restaurant serving Indian delicacies. Howsoever much we may think that the entire world now relishes Indian curry, and Britain dies for chicken-tikka-masala, Indian cuisine unfortunately does not really feature on the world gastronomic map.



# Countries with the most michelin stars



Source: nerdyfoodies.com

To answer the question as to why the Michelin Guide is not there in India, a simplistic answer is that the Michelin Guide is actually a brand extension for the Michelin tyre company. Michelin tyres have a **near-zero presence in India** and, therefore, the tyre company has no real reason to create and promote the Michelin restaurant guide in India. This argument, even if marginally true, is actually facetious, if not entirely frivolous. **The truth is much deeper.**



## A FRENCH BIAS

France tops the list of the **2017 edition** of the Michelin Guide with **616 restaurants** that have been awarded at least one Michelin star. Other top-ranked countries with decorated restaurants include Japan, Italy, Germany, UK, USA, Spain, Switzerland and Belgium. The 2017 Guide lists **274 restaurants** from the Nordic countries (Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland and debutant Iceland) – this includes one restaurant from the Faroe Islands, a remote and rugged island with sub-polar climatic conditions. The Michelin Guide is a global assessment of global tastes for the global consumer. **Somehow dal makhani and butter chicken do not fit into a global mode.** True, Michelin has tried to modify its Gallic mindset while rating restaurants in Japan and Hong Kong, but its orientation is still French-accented.



## AN ALIEN CUISINE

Indian cuisine has always depended on its **wide array of spices, deep flavours** and **complex recipes** for differentiation. The West finds it difficult to understand our food, and finds our food too severe on the palate. International Michelin inspectors **do not have either exposure or understanding or expertise** in rating Indian food.



## A CULINARY GAP

Indian restaurants have usually **not met with great success in Europe and North America**. Even when Chef Gaggan Anand opened his famed **Gaggan restaurant in Bangkok**, he went on record to say that he sought to 'refine' Indian food to the same fine dining level as other styles of cuisine such as French or Japanese. Which means there is a gap. Perhaps that is why Chef Anand, who earlier worked at the **three Michelin star** molecular gastronomy restaurant **elBulli in Spain**, incorporated similar innovations into his menu at Gaggan. His '**Green with Envy**' signature dish is a coriander foam served with green peppercorn chicken kebabs. The important part of the dish is the **foam, not the kebabs!** At Gaggan, techniques such as 'smoking' and 'spherification' are actively employed to tickle the palate and enhance the dining experience.

## LACK OF AN INVENTIVE APPROACH

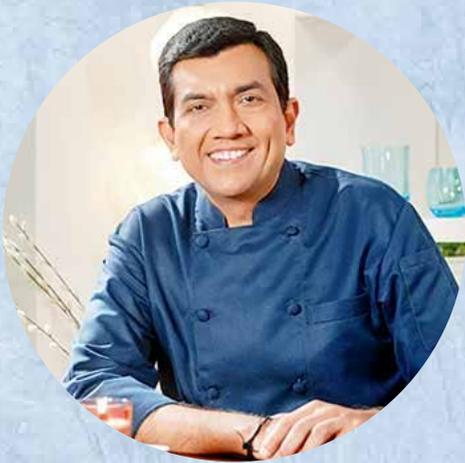


**Nobu**, arguably the most famous Japanese restaurant in the world, achieved fame due to the fusion of traditional Japanese cuisine with Peruvian ingredients, a brainchild of its **chef Nobuyuki 'Nobu' Matsuhisa**. Very few Indian restaurants have had enough of an 'inventive' approach to Indian food. A noticeable exception is the **Rohit Khattar-owned Indian Accent**, where **Chef Manish Mehrotra** has been able to charm clients not only in New Delhi but in London and New York too. Indian Accent's menu explores progressive ideas in Indian cuisine while maintaining traditional integrity. Chef Manish Mehrotra reinterprets nostalgic Indian dishes with an open-ness towards global techniques and influences.



## LOOK WEST

Nobu did not originate in Japan, but in the U.S. The likelihood that a globally-renowned Indian restaurant brand will emerge from London or New York is very high, since it is more likely to cater to the palate of a more global clientele. In fact, the process is already underway with Indian restaurants abroad such as Benares, Veerasamy and more being awarded Michelin stars. For now though, Indian restaurants and chefs have to wait for Michelin to look India's way.



## NAME AND FAME

Indian chefs are just not well-known enough globally. **Bar Chef Sanjeev Kapoor, none is really world-famous.** Chefs globally play a key role in evangelizing the cuisine of a country. **Chef Rene Redzepi** pioneered the 'fermented kitchen' at **Noma**, celebrated as the world's best restaurant from 2010 to 2014. His leadership in interpretation of Nordic cuisine in more global terms has helped Nordic countries have close to **300 Michelin starred restaurants** today.





## ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING

Another aspect that Indian fine-dining still has to cultivate to reach Michelin standards is 'attitude'. **Sukiyabashi Jiro**, hailed as the world's greatest sushi restaurant, is hidden in the least likely of places for a **three-Michelin star restaurant** – a metro station! Japanese **PM Shinzo Abe** took then US **President Barrack Obama** to dinner there. With only ten seats available, Sukiyabashi Jiro is surely exclusive! Owned and run by master sushi **chef Jiro Ono**, still active on site aged 90, the restaurant only serves its **Omakase Tasting Menu**, put together every morning depending on the fish available, and served as 20 individual pieces of sushi. Ono's unique preparation of sushi is deemed an art, and sets him apart from the rest of the world as the **world's best sushi chef**.



## FIGURING IT OUT

Indian restaurants like Dum Pukht, Bukhara and Dakshin do not really feature in even Top 50 rankings in Asia. **Wasabi by Morimoto** at the **Taj Mumbai** does clock a lowly rank 46. Which is really sad. It is not that these restaurants do not serve good food, it is just that they do not seem to have figured out the calibration system that governs the rankings system. Michelin would be much tougher.



Michelin for now seems a far horizon in India. It may yet be a few years before we can have the pleasure of a Michelin meal in Delhi or Mumbai. Till then, perhaps, the best option is dinner at one of the 9 restaurants that offer a Michelin Star experience in India because of their global lineage. Well, make the most of it...



**MEGU**  
The Leela Palace,  
New Delhi



**YAUATCHA**  
Delhi, Mumbai and  
Bangalore



**AKIRA BACK**  
JW Marriott, New Delhi



**LE CIRQUE**  
Delhi and Mumbai



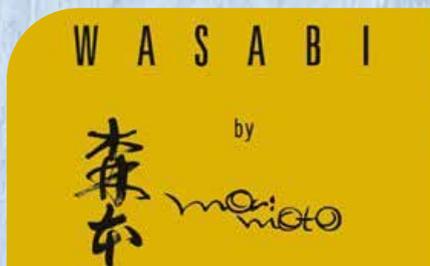
**KAI**  
Launching soon



**HAKKASAN**  
Mumbai



**ZIYA**  
Mumbai



**WASABI BY MORITOMO**  
The Taj Mahal Palace  
& Tower, Mumbai



**AROLA**  
JW Marriott, Mumbai





INDIAN INSTITUTE  
OF  
HUMAN BRANDS



## A REPORT BY



Rediffusion  
Consumer Lab

### redi#usion

#### **MUMBAI (Corporate)**

1801 Lotus Corporate Park, Goregaon East, Mumbai - 400063  
Ph: +91 22 49311000, +91 22 49312000

#### **KOLKATA**

10 Wood Street,  
Kankaria Estates,  
Elgin, Kolkata - 700016  
Ph: +91 33 44066262, +91 33 22871232

#### **BANGALORE**

22, Vaswani Ashton Woods,  
Bellandur Post,  
Bengaluru - 560103  
Ph: +91 98100 96634

#### **CHENNAI**

1st Floor, Prakash Building,  
14, Deivasigamani Road,  
Royapettah, Chennai - 600014  
Ph: +91 44 28113426, +91 44 28113427

#### **DELHI**

Mogae House,  
112, Udyog Vihar Phase IV,  
Gurgaon - 122015  
Ph: +012 42345598

