

CurryLife

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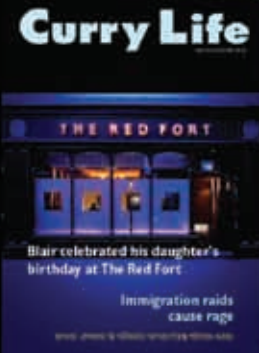
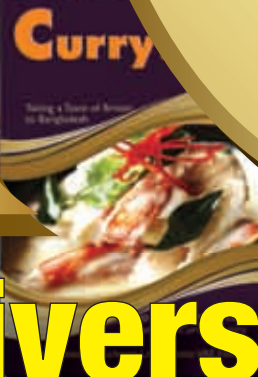
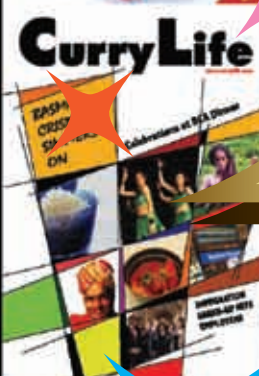
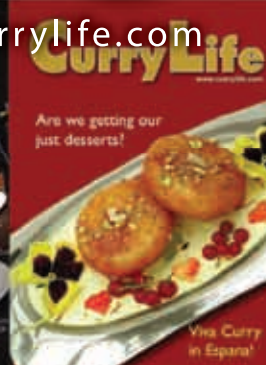
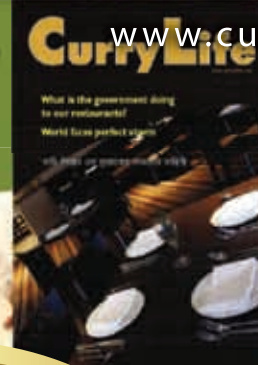
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Anniversary Issue

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Curry Life is a bi-monthly, bi-lingual magazine, widely regarded as the authoritative voice of the approximately 10,000 Indian and Bangladeshi restaurants, take-away and allied industries all over Britain. Curry Life is distributed free to Indian and Bangladeshi restaurateurs in Britain, several European countries and in North America. It can also be obtained by subscription £15 a year (UK) and £30 elsewhere. Postage and packing is included.

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Curry Life Magazine Celebrates 10th Anniversary

We made it! For ten years Curry Life has been promoting and reporting on the trials and tribulations of the curry industry. Through the hardest days of the recession, we have profiled its movers and shakers, raised the reputations of chefs, reviewed restaurants and restaurateurs, given advice on subjects like finance, products and marketing and added our campaigning voice to lobby government on issues affecting the livelihood of Indian restaurants and takeaways all over the country.

It has been a roller coaster ten years in an

ever evolving business, but we have enjoyed every minute. Our tenth anniversary celebration at Park Plaza Riverbank Hotel with our Michelin starred speakers, Atul Kochhar, Dominic Chapman and Mo Gherras, promises to be a fitting and relevant celebration of our tenth anniversary. We hope the day will inspire Bangladeshi and Indian chefs to raise standards and achieve even more in the already incredibly successful Indian restaurant industry. Above all, thank you to all our readers, advertisers and sponsors for their loyal support over the last ten years.



Latest food scandal hits curry industry

First it was horsemeat being used in low cost readymade meals in place of beef, then it was cheap cuts of beef substituted for lamb in takeaways, now we hear an Indian takeaway has allegedly been found to contain dog or cat meat.

We say 'allegedly' because although the food analysts were able to categorically say the offending meat was not beef, lamb, chicken, goat, horse, pig or even human, for some reason they were unable to rule out the possibility of it being cat or dog.

Why not? We're no experts, but surely dog and cat meat is no harder to identify than those already mentioned?

The find was disclosed in a BBC 3 documentary called The Horsemeat Banquet which carried out a special investigation into the content of takeaway meals. True to form, the Daily Mirror was quick to jump on the bandwagon with the damning headlines: 'Dog or cat in our curry'. A nutritionist reported the discovery as "absolutely terrifying", adding rather hysterically, "If it isn't any of the meats we know – well what is it?" What indeed? We are still waiting to find out. The offending takeaway has not been named in any report but in the meantime, the whole curry industry has been dragged into disrepute along with it.

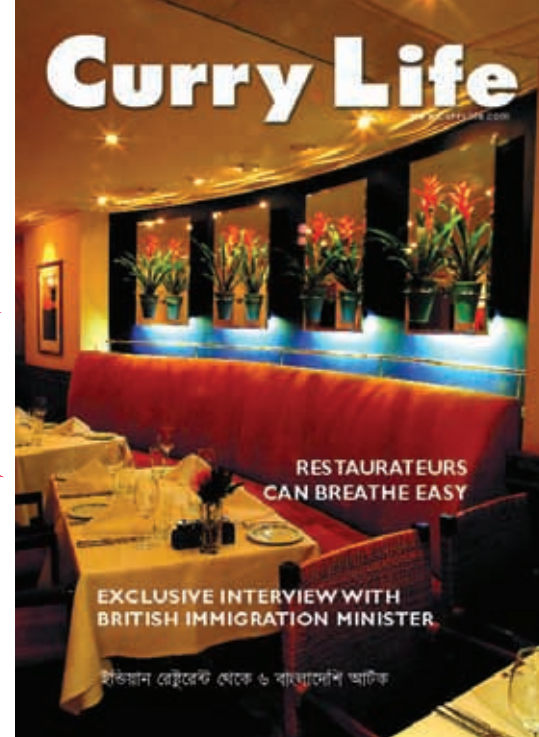
The Bangladeshi Caterers Association

immediately called for further tests, tougher punishments and better enforcement in the food industry. They also asked the media "not to sensationalise reporting just to sell newspapers at the expense of the curry sector." They pointed out that the story has caused serious damage to the curry industry at a time when it is already under severe economic pressure." Whilst totally condemning the fact that a takeaway should sell anything other than what the dish is supposed to be, the BCA suggested that naming the unidentified meat source as cat or dog was "highly irresponsible and misleading." Curry Life totally supports the BCA's stance. Usually suppliers of Indian food are more cautious than most where meat is concerned for religious and cultural reasons. If the meat has not been identified, why jump to the conclusion that it is dog or cat? Why does the media report unsubstantiated allegations as if they were facts? Why hasn't the BBC reported the takeaway to the Food Standards Agency so they can conduct their own tests and, if necessary, remove the business license of the establishment concerned? In the meantime in a market that is still reeling from scandals over horsemeat, 99% of respectable and honourable Indian takeaways and restaurants are left bearing the consequences of negative publicity.



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Curry Life and Taste of Britain Curry Festival Celebrates 10 Years of Success

Over the years, in our aim to create a better business environment for the restaurant industry we have spearheaded campaigns, commenting on issues that include the immigration cap, staff shortages, VAT and raids by UK Border Authorities.



Ten years ago Curry Life Magazine was launched in March, 2003. The magazine was the brainchild of Syed Belal Ahmed and Syed Nahas Pasha – two Bangladeshi-born brothers who were committed to raising the profile of the British curry industry. Belal and Pasha are both well known in the Bangladeshi community. Pasha serves as the Chief Editor of Curry Life and Weekly Janomot, the oldest Bengali language newspaper in the UK. Belal is a respected businessman with over 25 years of experience working in media, marketing publishing in the government and private sector. What started out as a humble newsletter developed into a fifty page glossy magazine, widely distributed and

read all over the world. With a reputation for fine reporting and writing, Curry Life is now the voice for over 12,000 Bangladeshi/Indian restaurants in Britain and the only independent magazine in the field. We support the curry industry, providing news, profiling restaurants, people and products, but Curry Life is also vocal on issues affecting the sector. Over the years, in our aim to create a better business environment for the restaurant industry we have spearheaded campaigns, commenting on issues that include the immigration cap, staff shortages, VAT and raids by UK Border Authorities. But our main raison d'être is to promote the talents of the unsung



2006 - Festival Poster in India

heroes of the kitchen and true champions of British curry – the chefs.

Curry Life has helped hundreds of chefs to enhance their careers, showcase their talents and develop the leadership and confidence necessary to perform on a global stage. From 2002, Belal and Pasha has been involved organising the first of many highly successful British curry festivals overseas. They took a team of top curry chefs from the UK to international locations to recreate the success story of British curry cuisine. Since then, Curry Life has hosted festivals in South East Asian countries such as Bangladesh and India, Europe and the Middle East. We even took chefs to Slovenia where curry is virtually unknown – and left diners wanting more.

In 2009 we held our first Curry Life Chef Awards evening in London, an event which has grown to become a landmark event on the culinary calendar. By 2012 our Curry Life Chef Awards and Dinner was attracting hundreds of guests including high profile VIPs with 21 separate awards made to chefs and influencers in the industry.

But Curry Life Magazine provides practical help and advice too. In 2010, the Curry Life Chefs Club (CLCC) was launched in response to a growing frustration amongst curry chefs for a lack of serious platforms for peer-to-peer dialogue about the latest ideas, trends and challenges in the increasingly complex industry. Since then, we have hosted popular Congresses to bring together a wealth of culinary talent from around the country. In areas of business and product development, we have organised World Curry Expo and Trade Exhibitions at home and abroad.

Now, to mark our tenth anniversary, on 21st April 2013 Curry Life is holding an Exclusive Workshop and Celebration Dinner at The Thames Suite, Park Plaza Riverbank London Hotel.



2002 - Deputy High Commissioner Robert Gibson at the opening of 1st British Fusion Food Festival at Dhaka Sheraton.



2005 - Tourism Minister Mir Nasir Uddin opening the British Fusion Food Festival at Dhaka Sheraton.



2006 - Tourism Minister Mirza Fakhru Islam opening the British Fusion Food Festival at Dhaka Sheraton.



2008 - Home Affairs Select Committee Chair Mr Keith Vaz MP launching the Food Festival at Dhaka Sheraton.



2009 - Former MEP Robert Evans and British High Commissioner opening food festival in Dhaka



2010 - British Deputy High Commissioner at the Taste of Britain Curry Festival in Kolkata



2010 - Tourism Minister G M Quader opening the food festival in Dhaka



2007 - Festival UK launch at the Red Fort

We believe this event is unprecedented in the history of Indian restaurants in the UK. Curry chefs, restaurant owners and managers will have the unique opportunity to meet and learn from two Michelin starred chefs who are at the pinnacle of their success: Atul Kochhar, whose renowned Benares Restaurant in Berkley Square in London has reinvented Indian cuisine, and Dominic Chapman of The Royal Oak Paley Street in Berkshire who has won a host of awards for his "stratospheric skill" in the culinary world.

Also at the event is Mo Gherras, an expert front-of-house manager who has experience of managing many Michelin starred restaurants and will be giving hints on how to achieve five-star service.

Our speakers will be sharing their stories, expertise and tips. They have also promised advice on how to achieve that elusive Michelin star for the Indian restaurant sector. Curry Life has long deplored the lack of Indian restaurants holding this ultimate award. We believe there are many Bangladeshi and Indian chefs out there with the aspiration and talent to get to the top of their game.

There will be networking for the chefs and restaurant owners, workshops and discussion with photo opportunities and press releases to use for marketing purpose. And at the end of the afternoon, guests will be able to enjoy a special Celebration Dinner provided by Madhu's in honour of Curry Life's tenth anniversary.

It has been a long journey from Brick Lane, especially in hard and uncertain economic times. The only reason why we are still here when other publications have failed is because of the loyal support of our readership, advertisers and sponsors.

Curry Life has been a labour of love. And even though Chicken Tikka Masala is still firmly established as the UK's favourite food and Indian restaurants are predominant in every town and city of the UK, here at Curry Life, we intend to make sure the incredible evolution of the curry restaurant industry continues. Here's to the next 10 years of Curry Life Magazine!

Curry Life would like to thank all the advertisers and sponsors who have been with us from the beginning especially Ellwoods, Bangla Beer, Cobra, Kingfisher, Seamark, Pepsi, Jaguar and many more.



2011 - Communities and Local Government Minister Eric Pickle MP, Frank Dobson MP and High Commissioner Dr Saidur Rahman Khan with chefs at Curry Life Chef Awards



2005 - Fusion chefs and festival organiser met President Iazuddin of Bangladesh



2010 - Festival organiser and chefs met President Zillur Rahman



2010 - Taste of Britain Curry Festival in Kolkata, India



2012 - Curry Life Chef Congress at Wakefield, Yorkshire



2011 - Curry Life Chef Congress at London



2007 - British Fusion Food Festival at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel



2009 - Immigration Seminar



2010 - Curry Life Networking at Stockholm, Sweden



Oblix restaurant and bar to open in The Shard



The creator and founder of Zuma and Roka restaurants, Rainer Becker is opening Oblix restaurant and bar on the 32nd floor of The Shard in early May 2013.

Ten years ago, Rainer Becker brought his modern Japanese cuisine, based on the informal izakaya style of dining to London. Also famous for introducing the Robata Grill to Europe, Becker's restaurants have grown into a global success story with locations from South East Asia to the US.

Oblix sees Rainer move away from the Japanese cuisine and culture to offer a dual dining experience; a bar and restaurant with live entertainment from 9pm onwards. The menu has been inspired by Becker's time in the US and the New York grill is the backdrop with dishes delivered in the Becker style signature of upscale, sophisticated urban dining. In addition to the a la carte lunch and dinner, the bar and lounge will

showcase an abundant selection of appetisers at lunchtime for guests to choose from in the style of a New York delicatessen. Weekends will offer a brunch menu, accompanied by live music.

Heading up the kitchen servicing the 100-seat restaurant, is chef Fabien Beaufour. Beaufour started working in a professional kitchen at the age of 14 in his native Grenoble, France and has worked in some of the most acclaimed restaurants in the world, including Eleven Madison Park and The French Laundry.

As for the interior, Rainer teamed up with the architect Claudio Silvestrin, the talent behind the Armani Store in Sloane Street to create a space that "frames and delivers" the view to guests whilst creating a sleek dining style and low key sophistication. Warm earth tones and decisive geometric forms offer an environment of permanence and timeless luxury.

Menu prices rise 6% reveals survey

Restaurants and pubs have raised their menu prices by 6% in the past six months as they seek to pass on increasing food costs to customers and off-set the expense of running special offers such as meal deals and voucher discounts.

A report from the Horizons food service consultancy that tracks menu changes across 116 chain hotels, pubs, restaurants and quick service outlets, has revealed that in the past six months, average dish prices have seen the biggest rise of any six month period since the survey launched in 2006.

The average cost of a starter is now £5.59 (up 5.6% in the past six months), a main course is now £10.62 (up 7%) and a dessert averages at £4.20 (up 4.2%).



These rises are significantly above RPI inflation of 2.7% (January 2013).

The survey also shows an increased awareness of marketing twists in the description of dishes to make them stand out on the menu. What was once listed as 'apple pie' is now a 'Cox's apple pie' and nachos are now described as 'home fried nachos'.

Food provenance statements such as 'local sourcing', 'free range', 'homemade' and other quality assurances have become more common with a growth in the number of British dishes listed including Eton mess and Gloucester Old Spot sausage and mash (Slug & Lettuce). The survey was undertaken before the recent horsemeat scandal so provenance and reassurance terms are expected to increase even more over the next six months. Other trends noted include the continued increase of meals for sharing, taster platters or combo desserts, and the growing influence of Mexican food with less mainstream dishes now on offer including duck tostada and huevos rancheros.



SPLENDIDLY INDIAN,
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New Products Featured at IFE



The International Food & Drink Event (IFE) took place at London's ExCel from 17-20 March when over 1,100 food and drink suppliers, distributors and manufacturers from around the world were present. The Curry Life team was out in force to check out the hundreds of new products being showcased there. Here, we take a look at some of the latest news and products to hit the market.

Gurkha Fine Foods

When a young Nepali man leaves home to join the British Gurkhas, one thing his mother will almost certainly pack into his kit bag is a container of what is known in the British Army as HillBoy. This fiery condiment, made from dry roasted chillies, garlic and ginger and sunflower oil is quite unique to Nepal and is used to add heat and flavour to the classic Nepali meal of dhal bhat. Emma Ford discovered this remarkable ingredient and much more when her husband Chris served two tours with the Gurkhas.

Emma and Chris, together with Gurkha wives and chefs developed a range of products that enable cooks to create authentic Nepali meals quickly and simply. From fragrant curry sauces and rich achar (chutneys and pickles) to signature Hillboy, the products are made using the best and freshest ingredients without preservatives and additives.

The Hillboy range comes in original Chilli Hillboy, Garlic Hillboy and Lime Hillboy and can be stirred into mild curries to add fire and flavour. The Garlic variety gives a sweet richness which offsets the heat, as in the Garlic variety, or Lime Hillboy refreshes the palate with a citrus tang.

With two gold medals under their belts at the Taste of the West Awards, Gurkha Fine Foods are now growing steadily in popularity but have not forgotten their roots back in Nepal. From the very start, Gurkha Fine Foods has donated part of its profits to the Gurkha Welfare Trust and currently 6p for every jar sold helps maintain school buildings in rural Nepal.

Products are available from a wide range of local delis and farmshops. For further information visit:

www.gurkhafinefoods.co.uk/stockists/south-west



Patak's savoury snacks

GFT Retail has teamed up with AB World Foods to distribute under licence a range of savoury snacking products under their Patak's brand. The tie up allows the brand to become more widely available in snacking sectors.

The new Patak's products include premium Indian snacks, such as Bombay Mixes and Jumbo Peanuts flavoured with classic Indian spice mixes of Jalfrezi, Tikka and Korma.

Oriental snacks will also be distributed by GFT and AB World Foods under the Blue Dragon brand.

For further information contact: simon@gftretail.tv



Mangajo

If you're looking for a refreshing, healthy, yet great tasting cold drink to serve in your restaurant, check out Mangajo chilled green tea drinks. Low in calories, packed with antioxidants and made with only natural ingredients – these lovely little bottles look attractive and are convenient for serving.

Founder Alex Hannon had the idea for the company while travelling in Japan when he was inspired by the smooth skin and youthfulness of native octogenarians. From there, she set out to uncover their secrets for looking and feeling healthy.

The range of flavours includes Pomegranate and Green Tea, Lemon and Green Tea, Goji berry and Green Tea, Acai berry and Green Tea and Refreshing Redbush and Grape. The latest trend is the Brazilian Acaiberry which is one of the richest known sources of fruit antioxidants and the sweet Himalayan Goji-berry which is loaded with beta-carotene.

Mangajo drinks come in fully recyclable, handy 250ml bottles, 330ml PET bottles and 750ml bottles available from various supermarkets, a growing number of hotels, cafes and Sushi bars.

For further information contact: alex@manjajo.co.uk

Vitamix

Blender specialist Vitamix was a key attraction at IFE when the Craft Guild of Chefs at the Skillery, demonstrated their Vita-Prep 3 product. As part of their demos, Chefs Steve Walpole, Damian Wawrzyński, Lee Maycock and Stephen Scuffell each showcased the versatile blender which can both chop delicate ingredients and blend tough purees.

Vitamix has been designing and manufacturing quality engineered high performance blenders and food mixers for more than 70 years. Built for outstanding durability, versatility and performance, Vitamix products are first choice of foodservice operators, professional chefs, restaurateurs and bartenders worldwide.

The blender has a powerful 3 peak output horsepower motor offering maximum reliability during peak hours of operation with advanced cooking fan and variable speed control that creates every blend according to your culinary precision.

For more information visit: www.jestic.co.uk



Good heavens!

Good heavens! Launched its range of gourmet eating and drinking yoghurts in 2011. Since then, driven by consumer demand for indulgent, yet healthy products, the classic Mediterranean/Middle Eastern tradition of yoghurt with a contemporary twist has increased its sales nationwide. The 250ml drinking yogurt range comprises of seven non-organic and four organic flavours with real fruit containing over 25 per cent of an adult's calcium RDA. They include flavours of Refreshing Apple and Pear and innovative variants Fine Sicilian Lemon and Poppy. In 2011 the firm extended this range with a Salted Caramel variety and introduced a smaller format – the Mini – a 125ml bottle perfect for the on-the-go market. These delicious probiotic drinks come in five flavours and contain less than 100 calories. Good heavens also produce a range of eating yoghurts and compote pots.



RRPs: 250ml Good heavens!/Good morning! Drinking yogurts £1.49/£1.59. 125ml Good heavens!/Good morning drinking yogurts 89p/99p. Good heavens! yogurt and compote pots £1.29/£2.99.

Best in Exeter and Teignbridge

Mohammed Syed Walid has been crowned Exeter and Teignbridge Curry Chef of the Year.

The chef from Real India, South Street, Exeter proved to be hot competition in the contest held at Exeter College's @34 Restaurant.

Runner up was Rajender Singh Hatwel of the Dana Pani Indian Cuisine in Sidwell Street, Exeter and in third place was Izzadur Rahman of Saffron, Newton Abbott.

The competition was organised by Exeter City Council and Teignbridge District

Council's Environmental Health teams to promote food hygiene.

Mohammed was one of ten curry chefs who took part. Chefs were given 90 minutes to produce a main, side and rice dish under the scrutiny of a distinguished panel of judges. The dishes were then judged on criteria of aroma, texture, taste and appearance.

Councillor Kevin Lake, Teignbridge District Council's Executive Spokesperson for Environmental Services said: "I am a trained chef myself and was very impressed by the standard of entries which, alongside their hygienic working practices, left me with the impression that they are all a real credit to their restaurants."



Oli Khan serves up a Curry Master Class

A former Curry Life Award winning chef Oli Khan who has appeared on TV shows including Saturday Live, delivered a culinary master class at Cambridge Regional College to celebrate National Apprenticeship Week.

The week celebrates the skills and talents of apprentices across the country and aims to inspire others to join the scheme and gain experience and expertise in various fields.

Oli spent a day delivering courses and lectures to catering students at the college. As pupils mastered the techniques of making dishes like Spicy Fish Chom Chom - tilapia fillet covered in bread crumbs with red hot salsa, Handi Bengal Murgh Achari with vegetable basmati rice and prawn curry, they learned that, contrary to the common perception, Indian food can be healthy and quick and easy to make.

At the end of the day, Oli jointly presented level 3 certificates to the students before heading off to Jimmy's Night Shelter in Cambridge to cook a big meal for local homeless people.



One third of curry houses north of the border substitute cheap beef for lamb



Scottish curry houses substituting cheap beef for lamb should be named and shamed, says top restaurateur
Foyso Choudhury MBE

Leading restaurateur, Foyso Choudhury MBE who is president of the Guild of Bangladeshi Restaurateurs, Scotland (GBR), has stated that curry restaurants found to be substituting beef for lamb should be named and shamed.

The comments were made after a leaked document showed that more than 30% of curries tested by the Food Standards Agency in Scotland contained cheap beef passed off as lamb.

Following the leak, bacteriologist Sir Hugh Pennington who is Emeritus Professor of Bacteriology at Aberdeen University spoke out saying that the scandal was potentially greater than that of the use of horsemeat as the practice was wide spread and had been going on for years.

The test which was carried out by the Scottish Food Enforcement Liaison Committee (a part of the FSA) over a period of 18 months, found that Bhuna and Korma dishes described as lamb contained beef instead in 46 out of 129 restaurants. In 33 restaurants there was no lamb in dishes at all, while the remaining 13 combined both meats. The reason for the substitution was put down to high cost of lamb which now costs up to £9 per kilo whilst cheap beef costs only £5.

Sir Hugh Pennington said: "There has been intelligence about it for a number of years, so there's nothing new about it. Quite a large amount of testing has been documented which showed the scale of the problem. It's a bit like the horsemeat issue – it's fraud. Rather than two traders in Europe defrauding people, this is local and on a grander scale."

He went on to say that the substitution was not a danger to customers as long as the beef was obtained from a reputable

source and had been cooked properly. However it raised questions, not just about fraud but other issues: "How good are their practices in the kitchen, if they're defrauding customers? How safe are they in other aspects?" he said.

Foyso Choudhury MBE who is president of the Guild of Bangladeshi Restaurateurs, Scotland (GBR), told Curry Life, that the substitution was totally unacceptable. "As a restaurant owner myself I absolutely condemn anyone who is misleading the customer and bringing the curry industry down. Every business relies on people's honesty and you have to be 100% sure that you are giving customers what they have ordered," he said.

But Mr Choudhury said the curry industry could be seen as an "easy target" and evidence should be released. "I have no sympathy for these businesses whatsoever but I also condemn the authorities behind the report for not revealing the names of those involved," he said. "As president of the GBR my members have challenged the government to name and shame those responsible. As we have seen in the horsemeat scandal, in every industry you get a small group of 'cowboys' but that doesn't mean that everyone is the same. These few restaurants are bringing the whole Scottish curry industry into disrepute and should be exposed."

The FSA report stated that a significant minority of food business operators appeared to be "intentionally misdescribing food", contravening the Food Safety Act and the Food Labelling Regulations: "These results confirm that the misdescription of lamb-based meals among Indian and similar style catering premises is an ongoing issue."

Bengali food takes on the UK and Singapore



Oh! Calcutta

A celebration of Calcutta's cuisine

The UK is famous for its adoption of tandoori chicken but Anjan Chatterjee, the owner of some of the most famous restaurants in the world believes that Bengali cuisine should feature more on the global menu.

"Bengali cuisine has all the ingredients to charm gastronomes across the globe. That's why I am opening Oh Calcutta restaurants in Central London and Singapore," Chatterjee told the Times of India.

Oh Calcutta is already well established in India the Bengal capitals of Kolkata and

Dhaka, where it delivers high quality Bengal food, its chefs regularly featuring in lists of top 20 or top 50 restaurants.

Chatterjee is the founder of the Speciality Restaurant Group which is the largest food operator in Asia with 96 restaurants and confectionaries across 26 cities including Mainland China and Flame and Grill.

Earlier this year, he was pressurised into closing down the flagship brand of the Speciality Group, Mainland China restaurant in Beijing after the Chinese government opposed the use of the

brand. However, the company now wants to open in Singapore and Central London with seven or eight Mainland China restaurants planned for the Gulf. Chatterjee's restaurant brand Flame and Grill is also in for a facelift, rebranded as Global Grill reflecting its transition from Indian cuisine to a more international flavour. The group has also had considerable success with deli Mezzuna in Pune, a breakfast to dinner casual restaurant serving Mediterranean cuisine which appeals to younger clientele and is now also to be launched in Kolkata.



Tom Cruise visits Curry House - the movie

Car chases, explosions and action packed adventure are the usual accoutrements of a Tom Cruise film but the latest movie featuring the Mission Impossible actor offers none of that. Instead the action is based in Hertfordshire and describes the star's recent visit to St Albans curry house, Veer Dhara.

Mr Cruise and his family went to the restaurant whilst filming for All You Need Is Kill at a location nearby. Restaurant manager, Darshit Hora described how the star's bodyguards came in first to check out the joint before ushering Mr Cruise in with some members of his family.

Apparently Mr Cruise feasted on lobster and chicken tikka masala before trying to pay the £220 bill with an American Express card which the restaurant did not accept. After an offering, unsuccessfully, to

pay in dollars, the Mission Impossible star had a whip round and managed to muster up enough UK cash, thereby avoiding having to do the washing up.

The sensational events inspired a new film about his visit which was entered into the inaugural St Albans short-film festival set up to showcase the county's historic links with filmmaking. The area was home to the Pinewood and Elstree studios, film pioneer Arthur Melbourne was born in St Albans and director, Stanley Kubrick lived nearby.

The critics have yet to decide whether the new movie lives up to the same standards set by Kubrick or indeed, Mr Cruise. Festival director Leoni Kibbey told the BBC news: "Everyone in the film is wearing a Tom Cruise mask. It's very funny."

Doctor hallucinates whilst eating the world's hottest curry

Recipe for The Widower Curry

- 20 infinity Naga chillies (about 4million Scovilles)
- 1 small tsp of pure Naga extract (6 million Scovilles)
- 5 Scotch Bonnets
- 8 finger chillies
- 3 tsp extra hot chilli powder
- Bindi spice mix
- Chopped onions
- Tbsp salt

Dr Rothwell receiving certificate from chef Mohammed Karim after eating Widower Curry

Diners who attempted to eat the infamous Widower Curry at Bindi restaurant in Grantham, were left sweating, shaking and vomiting according to its managing director Muhammed Karim.

Containing a scorching hot 20 Naga Infinity Chillis which rank 6m units on the Scoville Scale, the curry was tackled by 300 customers, all of whom had to admit defeat. Even the chefs had to don goggles and masks in its preparation.

Now Consultant Radiologist Ian Rothwell, 55, has become the first person ever to finish the dish, although he paid the price with streaming eyes and hallucinations.

the scale," he explained. "This curry got hotter and hotter as I went on. It took me about an hour to eat it."

The doctor was offered a glass of milk to help him with the heat but wisely plumped for a glass of Cobra beer instead. "I had to take a short break and go for a walk as I felt really sweaty," he confessed, "The owner said I was hallucinating but I think it was just the endorphins from the chilli."

Having cooled down Dr Rothwell returned to polish off the rest of the meal and was presented with a special certificate on behalf of the restaurant.

Challengers have to sign a disclaimer



Dr Rothwell decided to attempt the red hot challenge after hearing that his daughter's boyfriend's friend was unable to complete it.

"I like hot curries and have at least one every week, but this one was off

before eating "The Widower" saying that they understand the risks involved. "Most people only manage about seven mouthfuls before they give up," said Mr Karim. "We even had to ring for an ambulance once."



What are the effects of eating hot chillies?

Restaurants staging a hot curry challenge are well advised to add a disclaimer for contenders to sign as over consumption of chillies is not without risks. In 2008 a 33-year-old chef died after eating a hot chilli sauce made with chillies grown in his father's allotment. More recently two contenders for the so called "Kismot

Killer" at an Edinburgh restaurant ended up in hospital after suffering severe stomach pains.

More common side effects to eating too many chillies can include burning mouth, streaming eyes, pain along alimentary canal, shaking, vomiting and panting.

But the press is not all bad. There is a very good reason for why so many people enjoy a hot curry such as the Vindaloo and Phaal. As the body defends itself against the heat of the hot chilli it releases endorphins which give the diner a natural "high" or sense of euphoria.

Other positive effects of chilli consumption include relieving a blocked nose, thinning nasal mucus and clearing sinuses. The heat can also dilate the airways of the lungs reducing asthma and wheezing. The plants are an excellent source of Vitamins and minerals,

containing seven times more vitamin C than orange.

Capsaicin, the chemical found in the white membrane of chillies that gives them their heat, is used in topical creams to relieve arthritis and shingles. Capsaicin can also act as a natural anaesthetic which can numb pain without affecting movement or mental abilities.

What's more, a recent study of diabetic and overweight people showed that chillies can help significantly control insulin levels. After eating a meal with chillies, insulin levels were found to reduce by 60%.

Chillies improve heart health, boost circulation, thin blood and help protect against strokes. They're also a powerful aid to dieting as they destroy cholesterol and burn off calories. We need to eat more chillies!

What was Oldham's first Indian restaurant?

A group of residents has appealed for help during research for a lottery funded book charting the history of Asian businesses in Oldham.

The book is called Cotton, Curry and Commerce and its author would like to find out which was Oldham's first Indian restaurant and when did it open.

So far there are several hot favourites for the title of first Curry House: the Moti Mahal, the Light of Bengal in Union Street and the Noor Jahan in Featherstall road, all of which were established in the 1970s.

However a record in Oldham Council's Local Studies and Archives points would

indicate that the Dil-Khush at 25 Manchester Street was set up even earlier, having been granted planning permission in 1961. A council rate book shows that in 1963 the restaurant was being run by A Gapoor and M Hussain.

"Asian restaurants have become mainstays of eating out today," said author of the book, Ed Stacey. "Given the importance of Indian restaurants I was surprised that there is no record of when the first Indian restaurant was set up in Oldham.

"Oldham has a good claim to be the birthplace of fish and chips in 1860 which is recorded by the blue plaque on Levers



Fish and Chip shop in Oldham town centre and I think the first Indian restaurant deserves similar recognition.

"The name Dil-Khush is Urdu which translates as Happy Heart. If anyone can tell me which is Oldham's first curry house it would make my heart very happy!"

If you can help please contact Roger Ivens, Local Studies Officer 0161 0161 770 4654 roger.iven@oldham.gov.uk or Ed Stacey, 01457 872360 edstacey@outsidemanagement.co.uk

BCA condemns sensationalist reporting and calls for tougher food safety controls



BCA Secretary General, MA Mumin

The Bangladeshi Caterers Association (BCA) has called for further tests, tougher punishments and better enforcement in response to an article published by the Daily Mirror, 'Dog or cat in our curry'. The organisation which represents 12,000 British-Bangladeshi restaurants, has also asked the media not to "sensationalise reporting just to sell newspapers at the expense of the curry sector which contributes almost £4 billion to the UK economy."

According to the BCA, the story in The Mirror has caused "serious damage to the curry industry at a time when it is already under severe economic pressure". It follows findings from a BBC documentary, 'The Horsemeat Banquet', where, as part of a special investigation, Indian lamb curry bought from an unnamed Indian takeaway was found to contain no lamb or even goat, chicken, beef or pork. The Mirror suggests that the meat found in the dish was cat or dog meat.

The BCA says that, as the meat source

was not confirmed, to suggest this was cat or dog was "highly irresponsible and misleading". They contend that though it was totally unacceptable for a takeaway to sell anything other than what a dish is supposed to be; reporting in this way "simply damages the thousands of BCA members who work tirelessly to maintain high standards and service to its customers." "If an eatery is selling meat other than what they are supposed to, we need to identify whether it is a problem with the individual eatery or a problem with the supplier and then make judgements accordingly and proportionately," the press release continues.

BCA President Pasha Khandaker said: "We set the highest standards within our industry, and we call upon the Food Standards Agency to work with us to ensure both restaurants and suppliers are meeting food safety and hygiene requirements. We want to see tougher punishments for anyone involved in breaking food safety laws. We also need improvements in enforcement. The BCA will also conduct its own independent research and inquiry amongst our members following on from the BBC programme, as we take this issue extremely seriously."

BCA Secretary General, MA Mumin added: "We have already been shocked as a nation by the horsemeat scandal. The BCA wants to introduce a safe list of suppliers that comply with strict standards. We are going to explore the possibility of implementing new quality assurance tests for the meat we purchase from our suppliers."



Coeliac UK launches Gluten-Free Chef of the Year competition



The quest is on to find Coeliac UK's Gluten-Free Chef of the Year. The competition, which was launched at Wessex Salon Culinaire on 4 April, asks entrants to showcase their skills at a live final, making gluten-free foods such as breads or pasta. Exciting prizes include a week long stage with accommodation working under Michelin-starred chefs Andrew Fairlie with and Matt Gillan. The competition is being run in

association with the Institute of Hospitality and the Craft Guild of Chefs and the judging is to be headed by celebrity chef and Coeliac UK's Food Ambassador Phil Vickery. Professional cooks and catering students have to design a three course gluten-free meal for two people. Entrants' menus must include at least two courses which include a gluten free element such as pasta, pastry, bread or batter which must be made from scratch on the day of the live cook-off by the three finalists in each group. The live cook-off will take place at the Unilever Food Solutions Culinary Business Development Centre, Leatherhead in November 2013. Another category for Up and Coming Gluten-Free chef of the Year is for those who are in training and under 23. Entrants for both awards will be

shortlisted from written submissions based on criteria found on the Coeliac UK website (see below). Coeliac disease is an autoimmune disease caused by intolerance to gluten. Damage to the gut lining occurs when gluten is eaten; there is no cure or medication for the condition and the only treatment is a strict gluten-free diet for life. Without this, the disease can lead to other conditions including malnutrition, small bowel cancer or osteoporosis. One in 100 people in the UK have coeliac disease representing a potential £100 million market among those diagnosed with the condition. The disease is also common in southern Asia, the Middle East, North Africa and South America. For more information see www.coeliac.org.uk/chefoftheyear

Lamb Passanda has bow wow factor



A meaty ingredient in a curry takeaway has baffled experts who tested it as part of a special investigation in the wake of the horsemeat scandal.

The curry which was bought at random from an unidentified Indian takeaway was described as lamb passanda on the menu but DNA tests discovered that dish contained anything but. Subsequent tests also ruled out beef, chicken, pork, goat, horse - or (disturbingly), even human flesh.

Food specialists have now suggested that the mystery ingredient could be dog or cat.

The pet rifying discovery was revealed in the BBC 3 documentary, The Horsemeat Banquet. As part of the investigation, fast food dishes were bought from kebab houses, burger bars and Indian and Chinese takeaways in London. All were sent for analysis when the unsavoury results were revealed.

A nutritionist Surinder Phull told the Sun: "It's absolutely terrifying because if it isn't any of the meats we know - well

what is it?"

"Where has it come from? Where was it slaughtered? Was it hygienic? Was it covered in bacteria?"

This was not the only grisly find made by programme makers. Other shocking results included a beef burger with no beef apart from blood and heart and a black bean sauce dish made from chicken blood and chicken scraps. The only fast food to come up smelling of roses (or lamb), was a doner kebab - a dish more usually renowned for its pure dodginess.

The documentary follows the discovery of horsemeat in readymade meals which led to supermarkets pulling leading brands from their shelves. To date, more than 5,000 tests have been carried out by the Food Standards Agency which discovered horsemeat in meals prepared for schools, care homes and day centres.

The scandal has led to a major loss of public confidence in the food industry with a slump in sales of beef and readymade meals.



The famous British Curry Festival is organised by CURRY LIFE MAGAZINE and has made stars of chefs for over a decade. We have taken British curry from London to Ljubljana, Manchester to Madrid and Kent to Kolkata.

If you are a Curry Chef who would like to learn more about your craft and showcase your skills to international and national acclaim, this may be the festival for you.

Contact now for our next festival in India.

For further information please phone 020 7247 2525 or 07956 439 458.
Email: info@currylife.com

Government help for employers on Class 1 NI Contributions

The big news for employers from the 2013 budget is a new Employment Allowance of £2,000 per year for all businesses and charities to offset against the cost of employer's class 1 NI contributions.

This should provide a real reduction in the cost of employing workers by all types of businesses – not just new employees taken on by new businesses. The new employment allowance will reduce employers NICs paid after 5 April 2014.

The main rates and thresholds for NI contributions for 2013\14 are:

- Lower Earnings Limit (LEL) for Class 1 NICs - £109/week
- Employer's class 1 above £148/week not contracted out - 13.8%
- Employee's class 1 not contracted out from £149 to £797/week - 12%
- Employee's additional class 1 above £797/week - 2%

- Self-employed small earnings exemption - £5,725 per annum
- Self-employed class 4 from £7,755 to £41,450 per annum - 9%
- Self-employed class 4 additional rate above £41,450 per annum - 2%
- Self-employed class 2 - £2.70 per week
- Voluntary contributions class 3 - £13.55 per week

Corporation Tax Rates

The corporation tax rates for small and large companies will be aligned at 20% from April 2015. This will remove the need for the associated companies rule and the marginal rate of corporation tax will disappear.

The small companies rate is already at 20% and the main rate will be 23% for the year beginning 1 April 2013, 21% for the year beginning 1 April 2014 and then 20% for the year beginning 1 April 2015.

Vote for Britain's Favourite Sandwich



Sandwiches are part of busy day-to-day life and a well established staple of the British diet.

Everyone has a favourite sandwich, whether it's a chicken with lettuce between slices of wholemeal bread or something a little more exotic. Now the British Sandwich Association is inviting

the British public to nominate their favourite sandwich. In return they will be entered into a draw with a chance to win a brand new iPad or one of 100 free lunches. "We know that sandwich shops sell more chicken sandwiches than any other variety, but is this an accurate reflection of British tastes?" asks Jim Winship, Director of the British Sandwich Association. "Sandwiches sold in sandwich shops only account for about a quarter of all the sandwiches we consume in the UK."

"Our survey aims to establish once and for all which sandwich is top of the fillings with consumers and we will announce the result of the survey in time for British Sandwich Week in May (12-18)".

Who knows? After the success of Chicken Tikka Masala and with the growth in popularity of Indian street food, maybe the roti, dosa or samosa could be hot contenders to overtake the sandwich as the Brits' favourite snack. To have your say, visit www.lovesarnies.com and cast your vote – all those voting will automatically be entered into the draw.

Restaurant for sale

Fine dine 60 seater Indian restaurant for sale in Royal Windsor. For further information ring 07453 971852





Can Indian restaurants survive the immigration cap?

Vasant Maru is the owner of an authentic Indian restaurant serving traditional Indian food. He has been running successful businesses for over thirty years and holds a Tier 2 Certificate of Sponsorship. This has always enabled him to bring in experienced Indian chefs from overseas. However, since the government introduced immigration controls Mr Maru has been struggling to find a satisfactory solution to problems of staffing.

The rules limit chefs who come over to the UK to be limited to the top 5% in their profession commanding a salary of over £28,000 – a sum which many restaurateurs don't even pay themselves. "I am finding it impossible to recruit qualified chefs and although I have advertised continually in this country, we do not seem to be able to attract suitable candidates," says Mr Maru. "I would like to know if any other restaurant owners are having the same problem as these new restrictions are threatening the viability of my business."

Many employers in Indian and Oriental restaurants up and down the country will identify with Mr Maru's situation. The government's restrictions on immigration in 2011 sent shockwaves through the industry. After

their implementation, there was a huge outcry from the ethnic restaurateurs who were unable to provide the specialised cuisine the UK has come to love because of a lack of expert staff. With one in four chefs' vacancies remaining unfilled, there was concern that the new rules would prevent the growth of the industry.

Two years later it seems these fears have been realised; not only has there been no growth, there have also been widespread closures within the Indian restaurant sector: Research collated by the Hospitality Guild showed that overall number of Asian & Oriental restaurants operating in the UK (excluding those in the South East), declined by 16 per cent between 2009 and 2012. Every region experienced a notable drop in restaurant numbers, ranging from 22 per cent in London to ten per cent in Wales. The only exception was in the South East, the area with the highest concentration of Indian restaurants, where the number of outlets specialising in Asian food increased by 22 per cent.

Allam Shah Ullah of Cutler's Spice in Sheffield, is one of the second generation restaurateurs who are feeling the repercussions of the government's tough

immigration policy. His parents came over as early migrants invited by the British government after the Second World War to help rebuild the economy. Now, Allam says that Britain has forgotten what immigration has done for the country: "The government is strangling the Indian restaurant trade by not allowing us to get staff from Asia," he told Curry Life. "When the work force was non-existent, the government was begging for people to come and work here, but now it feels like the government has turned its back on the people who helped restore Britain and it's like a kick in the face to people like my parents and grandparents."

"Since opening my restaurant in 2011 it's been really stressful to find decent staff. The workers I have found just aren't reliable, they just don't want to work and some of them can't even do the job properly but still demand high wages. Immigrant workers take a pride in their work, they always want to please the owners and work much harder. What the government doesn't understand is that the average Indian restaurant is targeted towards your working class family, charging around £10-£14 per head to make the food affordable for the British public. We can't charge the top whack of £35-£40 like top end restaurants so we can't pay over £29,000 for kitchen staff – some restaurateurs don't even earn that themselves!"

The president of the Bangladeshi Caterers' Association, Pasha Khandkar who, himself, is struggling to find staff for his chain of restaurants, describes the current situation as "chronic": "This is one of the most important problems facing curry restaurants now because the industry is also suffering from the economic situation," he told Curry Life. If you ring any Bangladeshi restaurant they will tell you that staff shortages are very severe. Why? There are two reasons: Firstly there is no supply line – the new generation doesn't want to become involved because

Westminster Kingsway College and the University of West London, Leeds City College, University College Birmingham and Trafford College.

The scheme involves four days work with a registered employer in an Asian kitchen and one day at college. It was set up in consultation with organisations such as the Bangladeshi Caterers Association and the Federation of Bangladeshi Caterers UK with the backing of restaurants like Cafe Spice Namaste and the Cinnamon Club. Cyrus Todiwale OBE of Cafe Spice Namaste who has taken on two apprentices believes that training is key to the success of the industry: "Apprenticeships should never have gone out of fashion as they are the most essential route to developing a career path for any individual," he said.

But other restaurateurs are less than impressed and the take up for Asian and Oriental Apprenticeships has been painfully slow. In 2012 Curry Life reported on the struggle to find enough young people to take up places on the pre-employment training scheme – by September only half of the places had been filled. And even the larger operators were complaining; towards the end of last year MW Eat, formerly known as Masala World said it was abandoning plans to expand business in the UK because the immigration rules made it impossible to find suitably qualified staff. Ranjit Mathrani, who has masterminded some of Britain's best known restaurants like Veeraswamy and Amaya, said his company could not use the curry college chefs because the training doesn't distinguish between the restaurants who serve specific regional



Britain has forgotten what immigration has done for the country
- Chef Allam Ullah



The rules state that with a student visa the holder has a ten hours work permit but restaurateurs say when they give students part time jobs they are then told that the guy is not eligible because his college doesn't exist. It should not be the restaurateur's responsibility to check whether a college is fake or not - this is a nightmare for employers.

Foysol Choudhury



of lack of career prospects and unsocial hours. Curry restaurants have not been recognised as an industry and there is a lack of training because no curry colleges have been set up by government. Secondly, there is the immigration cap which means we cannot bring chefs over from the subcontinent; before, we were able to employ students, now all that has changed."

Last August, responding to pressure from the Asian catering industry, the coalition government introduced the much heralded Apprenticeships in Asian and Oriental cuisine with Indian and Bangladeshi cooking programmes. Courses were rolled out by the Hospitality Guild working in partnership with People 1st in five Centres of Excellence in London -

dishes and those serving indigenous UK curry dishes which don't always reflect authentic Indian cooking. "If we can't get the chefs we have no other option but to look abroad," he says.

Pasha Khandkar believes the apprenticeships will help but says that more needs to be done in the short term: "An apprenticeship is an apprenticeship," he said. "It takes time to become a chef or a cook and we need staff now because of the gap in the labour market. We have to run the industry until the apprentices are trained."

For the past three or four years, the BCA has been trying to raise funds to set up a London School of Curry with no financial help from government. "The problem is that this £4bn curry industry has never

been recognised as a mainstream industry by the government even though they are more than happy to receive the huge tax revenues generated by the curry restaurants," says Mr Khandkar.

Foyso Choudhury MBE, a restaurateur and chairman of the Edinburgh & Lothian Regional Equality Council and Bangladesh Samity, Edinburgh, says that in Scotland where there are no 'curry colleges', restaurateurs are struggling to find staff. "There should definitely be a separate immigration policy for Scotland," he told Curry Life. "Scotland desperately needs more people. There is a big shortage of labour in curry restaurants and the government's policy of stopping restaurateurs from bringing in professionals from Bangladesh and Pakistan is killing the industry.

"There is absolutely nothing at all here to encourage young people to join curry restaurants - how do you qualify as a professional chef in Asian cuisine if there is no training or recognised qualification available?"

According to Mr Choudhury, employers have been put in an impossible situation: "I wouldn't support anyone employing illegal staff. But the whole immigration policy and visa system needs looking at," continues Mr Choudhury, "The rules state that with a student visa the holder has a ten hours work permit but restaurateurs say when they give students part time jobs they are then told that the guy is not eligible because his college doesn't exist. It should not be the restaurateur's responsibility to check whether a college is fake or not - this is a nightmare for employers.

"The immigration policy has got to be looked at by all leaders and politicians because the system is wrong. It is creating barriers and is not helping business at all."

In England there have been some success stories. In Bradford, the International Food Academy at Bradford College trains youngsters in Asian and International cuisine with qualifications ranging from Apprenticeships to Degree programmes. Sponsored by restaurants Prashad, Lahore, Mumtaz and Aagrah there were concerns that the courses may not provide the authentic food some restaurateurs want to create in the UK. Now the college is working in partnership with local restaurants so that students can get hands-on experience in their sponsors' kitchen.

Recently the government carried out an enquiry into the future of apprenticeships in England. Headed by entrepreneur Doug Richard, the report which received employer submissions from all over the economy including catering and hospitality, has come up with ten recommendations which, if put in to effect may help the plight of Asian restaurants. These include a request for government funding to support vocational training other than apprenticeships so that existing staff can be helped to enhance their skills. The viability of off-site learning is also questioned, given the flexible hours operated by the catering industry where the practicalities of a member of staff not being available for work because of college commitments raises difficulties for smaller businesses.

Other organisations are also trying to provide help and solutions. The UKSP website provides reliable information and advice to employers, training advisors and career seekers and contains a search directory for registered employers and motivated individuals looking



'An apprenticeship is an apprenticeship'

- Pasha Khandaker (BCA President)

for a career in Asian restaurants. The Hospitality Guild's Act NOW! an apprenticeship campaign which aims to help 20,000 into apprenticeships in the hospitality industry, suggests five steps to encourage employers to act take on apprentices that include delivering apprenticeships through innovative methods such as forming or joining a group. They say this will give smaller and larger employers the possibility to share some of the responsibility in training and development and the flexibility to source training they would not be able to offer alone.

Until such proposals come into force or programmes and campaigns gather steam, employers like Mr Maru, whose businesses are not within easy access of a designated Centre of Excellence, are left struggling to fill the gap created by the immigration cap. Restaurateur and businessman, Iqbal Wahhab OBE, who founded the award winning Cinnamon Club and ROAST believes this is something we have to live with: "We just have to work hard building the skills and the talent of the people we have," he says. "There are too many people out of work here to justify bringing people from overseas."

For Allam Shah Ullah however, the only solution lies in the ballot box: "The government has tried to set up curry colleges but failed miserably," he says, "For us to meet the demands of the high wages the government is asking for, they should lower the VAT on the restaurant industry and should also lower their taxes. But restaurateurs can also fight back by not voting for the government party that will not listen to us. There are 12,000 Indian restaurants - if they employ a minimum of four voters that's a total of 48,000 votes - it's a lot of votes but we all have to stick together."

For further information see:

apprenticeship@hospitalityguild.co.uk or

<http://www.uksp.co.uk/>



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They came they cooked they conquered!



Photograph by Iztok Dimc



They may sound as if they've stepped out of a Spaghetti Western but the 'Magnificent Seven' who took Slovenia by storm at the recent Taste of Britain festival were no gun slinging cowboys – they were an elite posse of chefs – and they were armed with curry powder.

Mohammed Azad from Cafe Saffron in Shrewsbury, Shah Ansar Ali from Bengal Paradise, Suhel Ahmed from Aroma Spice in Hampstead, Syeduz Zaman Kamran from India Lounge in Wigan, Juber Ahmed from Fetcham Tandoori in Surrey, Allam Shah Ullah from Cutlers Spice in Sheffield, and Kaysar Ahmed from Zeera Restaurant in Potters Bar, were selected from hundreds of chefs to showcase the best of British Indian

cuisine in Europe.

They were then jetted over to sub zero temperatures in Slovenia, accompanied by some of the restaurant owners, Cllr Jehangir Haque of Fetcham Tandoori, Fahim Bakht of Aroma Spice (Hampstead) and Mahbub Alam of Zeera Restaurant in Potters Bar.

And, despite having to contend with some of the heaviest snowfalls Slovenia's capital city of Ljubljana had seen for years, diners not only thronged to the festival to sample the chefs' curry dishes ... they kept coming back for more.

But there was not only food on offer; visitors were also able to experience a unique programme of events ranging from spectacular banquets to traditional Indian classical dancing and cookery



demonstrations which took place throughout the week.

The Taste of Britain Curry Festival was organised by Curry Life, the British Embassy Ljubljana UK Trade and Investment and Hotel Park with the aim of promoting the curry industry, chefs and restaurants in Slovenia and Central Europe.

The launch took place on 21 February with a two-day trade exhibition at the prestigious Cankarjev Dom. Industry icons such as Eurofoods, Kingfisher Beer Europe, East End Foods Plc and The Authentic Food Company were able to

showcase their wares and meet key wholesalers, restaurateurs and distributors. Delegates attending from ten European countries including Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Serbia and Croatia, had a unique opportunity to forge links and explore possibilities for future trade and development.

The day of networking was followed by an exclusive Evening Reception hosted by HE the British Ambassador in Slovenia, Andrew Page, when invited guests could mingle in a more relaxed atmosphere before sampling a

“Now, two thirds of people in Britain who go out for a meal go for a curry”



Delegates attending from ten European countries including Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Serbia and Croatia, had a unique opportunity to forge links and explore possibilities for future trade and development.

wonderful banquet of more than 50 fusion dishes prepared by the seven master chefs.

Speaking at the Press Launch led by Festival Organisers Syed Belal Ahmed and Syed Nahas Pasha, the British Ambassador HE Andrew Page and Urša Malovrh, Manager of Hotel Park, Mr Ahmed recognised that the festival had been only possible with the support of the Ambassador and his team and the owners and staff of Hotel Park.

He said he had fallen in love with Ljubljana after the festival in 2012 when the team was given such a warm welcome: “Last year’s event had such an impressive response from the city and beyond I think people realised what they were missing out on,” he said. “There is huge potential for ethnic food in

Slovenia and I hope this event will initiate more curry houses over here.”

HE Andrew Page also remarked how the success of last year’s festival inspired him and his team to work with Central European network countries to bring buyers from further afield. “There is a lot of potential for British companies to get a foothold in these untapped markets,” he said. He reminded the audience that 60 years ago when the recipe for Coronation Chicken was created to celebrate Queen Elizabeth’s accession to the throne, curry was almost unknown. “Now, two thirds of people in Britain who go out for a meal go for a curry,” he said.

Urša Malovrh manager of Hotel Park commented on how pleased Hotel Park was to host the Taste of Britain Curry

They came, they cooked and they conquered



Proud chefs holding certificate with British Ambassador Mr Andrew Page (centre)



British Ambassador Mr Andrew Page



Classical Indian dancing



Hotel Park F & B manager Igor



Caterers Fahim Bakht and Chef Suhel Ahmed



Caterers Mahbulul Alam and his Chef Kaysar Ahmed



Caterers Cllr Jehangir Haque and his Chef Juber Ahmed

They came, they cooked and they conquered

The chefs also took part in various cookery demonstrations including one for teachers and pupils of the British school. Having created something of a media sensation, they were feted by local and national press and TV.



Asiri Foods from Midland



Nina from Pasco of Wigan



NATCO Foods



Roger Wuhra of Eastend Foods



Urša Malovrh, Manager of Hotel Park and Syed Nahas Pasha, Curry Life



British embassy officials from various central European countries.

They came, they cooked and they conquered



Festival once more: "We were amazed at how popular and successful the festival was last year – people came from all over the country and even from other countries, to try a taste of curry," she said.

Currying Favour at Hotel Park

The festival relocated to Hotel Park until 27 February where diners were able to sample a buffets and a la carte dinners cooked by the Magnificent Seven. Dishes included signature dishes of Naga Chicken Balti, Spicy beef cutlet, Dal Gosht and Allo Chop, not forgetting the British favourites of Chicken Tikka Masala and Balti. Many VIP guests attended such as the Indian Ambassador in Ljubljana and his family who commented on the variety and quality of cuisine on offer.

The chefs also took part in various cookery demonstrations including one for teachers and pupils of the British school. Having created something of a media sensation, they were feted by local and national press and TV.

But it wasn't all hard work – the intrepid seven also had a chance to grab a quick sightseeing tour of Zagreb in Croatia and Venice in Italy as well as taking in some of the local attractions in the beautiful capital city itself and, of course, shopping.

At the end of the festival it was apparent that Slovenians had taken the chefs to their hearts. But did they think Indian food was something that could become more popular in the country?

"Yes, I like spicy food and this curry is special," said Marko, a visitor from Ljubljana. "At the moment there are only two Indian restaurants in Ljubljana and I would really like to see more opening up. We like to try different foods and it would be good if we could try a selection of everything."

"We've tried green or red Thai curries before but we have never experienced food this hot – but it's really good!" added his companion.

"I have eaten curry before in the UK and I loved it," commented Bojan who had stopped off at the hotel on his way to Maribor; "So to find it here in Ljubljana was a big surprise. For me, anything that may help bring curry to Slovenia should be encouraged and embraced."

Jana Verk, Head of UK Trade and Investment at the British Embassy who played a key role in organising the events said she was absolutely delighted as to how the festival had gone: "All the hard work has paid off. The chefs have performed magnificently and it has been a pleasure to work with such a friendly and enthusiastic team," she said. "I hope that events such as this will help to bring more ethnic food to Slovenia."

"It was great to showcase our cuisine to such appreciative customers," said Allam Shah Ullah, chef of Sheffield's Cutlers Spice. "We've received a fantastic reception and we're all extremely proud to have been selected to represent Bangladeshi and Indian food in Europe. Who knows? Maybe soon curry will be as popular in Slovenia as it is in the UK."



Curry Life editor with directors of Hotel Park.



Urša Malovrh,



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From Slovenia to Croatia and back - in a day



Opatija

It's not that Slovenia isn't a beautiful country in its own right – it most certainly is. With snow capped mountains, romantic lakes, vibrant cities, cathedral like caves, beautiful countryside and stunning coastline it is a microcosm of perfection. But when you're in Slovenia you border so many other countries – Hungary, Italy, Austria and Croatia – that you feel you just have to take a look, even if it's only a quick one.

That was why when the seven chefs at the recent Taste of Britain Curry Festival had a two day reprieve from their toils we decided to hit the road for a one-day excursion to Croatia and its capital city of Zagreb.

Zagreb is mere two and a half hour journey from Slovenia's capital of Ljubljana. We awoke to find there had been two feet of snow fall overnight. Funnily enough, snow in Slovenia is very different from snow in the UK and doesn't cause any disruption whatsoever, let alone complete mayhem. Roads out of Ljubljana were clear and pothole free. Driving along an empty, stress free motorway through white expanses past pretty Alpine villages and fairytale forests, we arrived at the Croatian check point at around two thirty and duly waved in turn in a friendly fashion at slightly puzzled border guards who scrutinized our passports. Croatia isn't in the EU as yet (although it is set to enter on 1st

July 2013) and it was some time before we were speeding towards our destination once more.

The outskirts of Zagreb are markedly different from those of comparatively well heeled Ljubljana. Croatia's capital city appeared more sombre and Eastern European in atmosphere, slightly reminiscent of cold war films with high rise residential flats and men in macs. There wasn't a MacDonalds or western food outlet in sight or even a recognisable brand name (which, of course, is a very good thing).

Although the city dates back to the Middle Ages, modern Zagreb has been developed on gridlines. After travelling down one of them for some time, we eventually found somewhere to park. Operating the parking meter was another challenge however that needed combined brain and leg power before we triumphantly managed to procure our ticket. In the meantime chef Azad's very comprehensive selection of snacks kept us happy. A continuous procession of trams sped towards the city centre which for some inexplicable reason we decided to ignore – but at least we were able to wander past open air markets and marvel at the lush and unusual vegetables on the way.

Zagreb is built on two hills: secular Gradec, known as the Upper Town and the church-owned Katol which is dominated by the neo-Gothic cathedral with its two soaring steeples and Renaissance walls. The two areas, which were formerly at loggerheads, were separated by the Medveščak creek which still runs underneath the settlements. The city is also famous for being the place where the fountain pen was invented – and for ties.

We wandered past the shortest funicular in the world which transports you up to the Upper Town in 54 seconds, into Ban Jelačić Square the central focus of modern Zagreb with its statues, fountains, Baroque buildings and churches. The square is an atmospheric mix of small town with echoes of past grandeur and opulence, untouched by modern development. The most



coffeehouses with outdoor terraces.

Restaurants serve gastronomic specialties including Strukli, baked sweet or salty, and Zagreb steak – a piece of fried veal filled with cheese and ham. Dolac, near the cathedral, is known as the 'belly of Zagreb,' an area for good food and seasonal produce with numerous eateries offering regional cuisine. Being accompanied by master chefs known for their haute cuisine, we



popular meeting point in the city is under the clock, best avoided every day at noon when a cannon is fired from the Lotrščak tower, above the centre. The tradition dates back to 1242 when the Tatar king Bela granted a charter which proclaimed Gradec as a free, royal city after being sheltered by its inhabitants.

The square leads to the Green Horseshoe –with cultural buildings, palaces and colleges and a series of green open spaces. But there's also a lot of blue in Zagreb. Blue is found on the coats of arms, on the trams buses and funicular and especially the shirts of the Croatian football team.

As we soaked in the surroundings, the city began to grow on us and infect us with its relaxed and leisurely atmosphere. We began to wish we had more time to take in the many promenades with panoramic views, visit the many squares or while away the time in a coffeehouse, for the city has a very strong cafe culture and streets and squares are lined with

dined in ... er ... MacDonalds – yes, there was one after all but it took some finding!

Back to the car (by tram this time) we headed home by way of Opatija on the Croatian coast (short detour of three and a half hours, one of which was because our navigator was on the phone and missed the turning). Here, we entered a different Croatia, touristy, upmarket and elegant. Elegance and class oozed from hotels and buildings and a perfect semicircular bay framed the azure sea (or probably azure but it was so dark by then we couldn't see). All agreed it was definitely worth a return visit with a bit more time to spare. But Slovenia and tomorrow's preparation for the festival was on our minds (or some of our minds), so, sadly, we said goodbye to Croatia for another day.

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Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina unveils Diamond Jubilee sculpture

The Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and government ministers joined the British High Commissioner Robert W Gibson to unveil a sculpture celebrating Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee and 60 years as Head of Commonwealth.

The unique occasion took place at the Dhaka residence of the British High Commissioner, who described the work as a "tribute to Her Majesty the Queen's role as the mother figure of the Commonwealth."

"As Bangladesh prepares to mark 42 years of independence we are proud that the UK was the first European country to recognise Bangladesh," he continued. "The success of our relationship is founded on a long-standing and deep bond which stretches across – and beyond – these four decades. We are proud of our people-to-people links that lie at the very heart of this relationship: Britain is now home to nearly half a million British nationals of Bangladeshi origin or heritage and we are proud of the contribution they make to Britain and its way of life. And we are proud that the contribution that Her Majesty has made to the Commonwealth is so strong and so valued that the Honourable Prime Minister should have agreed to grace this special ceremony."

The Prime Minister said the sculpture would remain as a reminding symbol of the love and respect that Queen Elizabeth



II had earned through the sixty years of her "benevolent" reign as Monarch of Great Britain and as Head of the Commonwealth nations.

The artist Hamiduzzaman Khan, who created the sculpture, explained how he used simplified images to convey his ideas. "I titled the sculpture 'Mother' because the subject of the Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee brought into my mind how my mother used to sit in front of me," he said.

The sculpture was sponsored by Standard Chartered Bank, one of the longest standing and largest British companies in Bangladesh.

NRB Commercial Bank Inaugurated

A new bank started its journey in Bangladesh with an aim to attract more investment and remittances from Non-Resident Bangladeshis (NRBs). Bangladesh Finance Minister, Mr AMA Muhith inaugurated the NRB Commercial Bank Ltd at a ceremony at Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka.

With its foray into the country's banking system, the bank becomes the first one of its kind in the private sector and has been set up by 53 NRBs from eight countries. Muhith said he hopes the bank would not run after profits only, rather it would work for the development of the country and the economy. "So, sometimes it will have to invest in projects that might not bring higher returns." Bangladesh Bank Governor Atiur Rahman said the bank got its licence through due diligence and on the basis of its strong financial foundation. He said the bank has only got licence to open its headquarters. The central bank will continue to weigh its capacity before giving it the final licence, Rahman added. The governor also said more new banks have become necessary for the country, as its economy has been growing tremendously for a decade, its exports and imports have gone up and remittance flow and foreign currency reserves have reached new milestones. "If we have more banks on sound financial footing, they will be able to finance big projects on their own," the governor said. Farasat Ali, chairman of the bank, said: "The bank will not only target higher dividends for its shareholders, it will also bring remittances through official channels."



Bangladesh Bank Governor Atiur Rahman, Finance Minister, AMA Muhith and NRB Bank Chairman Farasat Ali

"We will help the NRBs get loans on easy conditions so they can set up businesses in the country. We will also help them buy government bonds," he said.

The bank has been formed with Tk 10 billion in the form of authorised capital while the paid-up capital is Tk 4.446 billion. The number of sponsors is 53 NRBs, according to the bank's business plan which was submitted to the central bank earlier.

The NRBCB has planned to set up 20 branches across the country within two years of operation while 10 representative office or exchange houses will be established across the world, the business plan said. The representative offices or exchange houses or branches will be set up in North America, European Union (EU), Middle Eastern Countries and South East Asia. He is hopeful about setting up 20 branches within the stipulate timeframe. The bank is also planning to provide loans to the wage earners against their deposits for purchasing air ticket and visa process fee and other cost relating to overseas employment.



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Guchhi and prawn skewers

Serves 2

Ingredients

- 270 grams 8-10 Prawns (3pcs)
- 10 grams Ginger, garlic paste
- 15 ml Lemon juice
- 10 grams Salt
- 60 grams Diced (1.5" square) bell pepper (red)
- 20 grams Diced Yellow pepper
- 20 grams Diced Green pepper
- 5 grams Diced onion (1.5" square)
- 5 grams Diced tomato (1.5" square)
- 3 grams Black pepper (crushed)
- 10 ml Yellow chilli powder
- 20 ml Red chilli powder

- Stuffed morels (see tandoori guchhi recipe)
- Star anise powder
- Oil
- Malt vinegar

Method

Marinate the prawns in half of the yellow chilli powder, lemon juice, salt, ginger, garlic paste and half of the red chilli powder.

Marinate the bell pepper, onion, tomatoes in crushed black pepper, red chilli powder, yellow chilli powder, star anise powder, malt vinegar, salt and oil. Take a skewer as shown in the photo and put the bell pepper, onion, tomato and a piece of stuffed morels, again put the bell pepper, onion, tomato and then a piece of prawn and finish with the bell pepper, onion and tomato. Cook on a griddle till the prawns are well cooked. Present as shown or just on a plate.

Serve hot

NB: For stuffed morels see the tandoori guchhi recipe



Chef Vikram Ganpule

Hyatt Regency Hotel, Kolkata, India

Chef Vikram Ganpule's foray into the culinary arts began with his three year Diploma in Hotel Management from IHM Pusa in New Delhi. But his real passion for gourmet evolved when he spent two years working as Kitchen Executive in a training programme organised by Welcomgroup Management Institute, Gurgaon.

As each dedicated chef must earn his merit through experience, Chef Ganpule delved into creating the fine dining experience with his four and a half year stint at ITC. He further honed his skills in his one and a half years in Saudi Arabia, followed by his time serving as pre-opening resource with Leela Bangalore.

Chef Ganpule has been with Hyatt for over ten years, having served as Executive Sous Chef at Hyatt Regency Mumbai and several other properties before taking up the position of Executive Chef at Hyatt Regency Kolkata.



Tandoori Guchhi

Serves 2

Ingredients

- 20 Large, dry Morels
- 15ml Khoya – reduced milk
- 30 gram Paneer – cottage cheese
- 50ml Cream
- 10ml Natural yoghurt
- ¼ gram Saffron
- 2 gram Shahi jeera or black cumin seeds
- 5 gram Chopped ginger
- 3 gram Chopped green chilli
- 3 gram Sauni or fennel powder
- 10 gram Coriander (chopped)
- 30 gram Processed cheese (grated)
- 30 gram Corn flour
- 10 gram Pine nuts – chopped into small chunk
- Salt to taste

Method

Soak the morels in water for one hour. Take them out of the water and wash at least three or four times. Squeeze to remove excess water. Cut the stem of the morels. Make a filling with the khoya paneer, saunf powder, shahi jera, coriander, chilli and ginger, pine nuts, half of the processed cheese and salt. Rub the remaining processed cheese with your palms till smooth, add yoghurt – rub again. Now add cream and saffron to make a marinade. Do not rub too much after cream has been added – refrigerate.

Add salt and shahi jeera to corn flour and make a thin batter (should leave a mild trace on the back of the spoon) by adding the required quantity of water. Dip the stuffed morels in the cornflour batter and deep fry in hot oil (180 degrees Celsius) till the batter is crisp.

Coat the fried morels with the cheese marinade.

Cook the morels in a tandoor and serve with mint Chutney (if you do not have a tandoor or charcoal grill, morels may be fried as well)

How to increase sales of non alcoholic drinks



In these days of tougher drink driving laws, government taxes on alcohol and health awareness, revitalising your non alcoholic drinks menu could be one way to increase profits. All too often restaurants concentrate all their resources on their range of food and alcohol yet offer an uninspiring range of soft drinks, fruit juices, soda waters, tea and coffee. A recent survey by Douwe Egberts discovered that the quality of coffee for hotel breakfasts was more important to guests than food. So leaving your diners with a wow factor at the end of a meal rather than a sludgy cup of stewed filter coffee or tea could be one way to make sure they keep coming back for more.

Sherberts

Indian restaurateurs can draw on a range of traditional drinks that are not only delicious, they also add to the authenticity of the dining experience. Beverages known as Sherberts - non alcoholic Jal Jeera, Thandai Lassi, Chhanch or Nimbu Paani are popular in restaurants in India and also serve as an aid to digestion. India and Bangladesh are famed for iconic tea gardens in Darjeeling, Sylhet and Assam whose teas have a special aroma and flavour. In North India especially, Ginger tea and Masala Chai, a sweet and milky tea spiced with cardamom and cinnamon are a common form of beverage.

Lassi is a traditional chilled beverage originally from Punjab, made with yogurt or buttermilk and an assortment of flavourings. It's an ideal accompaniment to spicy food and in some versions is used as an ayurvedic medicine. Lassi helps moderate the heat of chillies and yogurt aids digestion as well as being cooling and refreshing.

Blend the drink with fruit to make Mango lassi or for savoury lassi add ingredients such as garlic, roasted cumin or vegetables. The drinks can also be flavoured with sugar, rosewater, strawberry or other fruits. To serve in a truly tropical fashion, sprinkle with ground macadamia nuts, almonds and garnish with orchids or mint sprigs.

Cocktails and Mocktails

Non alcoholic versions can be made of most of the classic cocktails such as Pina Colada and Bloody Mary. Cash in on the current health trend for de-tox cocktails full of super fruits such as blueberries and redcurrants with a dash of spiced berry cordial and lime. Swap vodka for ginger ale and you can make a non alcoholic Screwdriver that looks like the real thing. Whilst the mark up isn't going to be as great as for alcoholic drinks, it is still there.

Think about balancing the flavours of cocktails and matching it with food. Cocktails that are too sugary might be too sickly for many diners whereas flavoured sparkling water cocktails can be used in the same way as wine throughout the meal. Savoury cocktails are increasingly popular – try experimenting with different tastes and flavours to find something different.

Presentation is key and using the type of glassware that enhance different drinks such as Hi Balls which need more garnish or martini glasses for smaller cocktails. Use twists of orange rind,

maraschino cherries, lemon spirals swizzle sticks and umbrellas and frost the glass rim with either salt or sugar. It could be worth your while to train your staff to mix the drinks professionally so they can dazzle your diners with their skills. Short courses are available for Shaker BarSchools or Revolution offer a 90-minute Masterclass in cocktail making.

Coffee and tea

Speciality teas are seeing a five per cent growth year on year and restaurateurs are responding by upping their offering. As with wine and speciality beers, people are becoming more and



more discerning when it comes to hot beverages but it seems the majority believe restaurants are not doing a good job when it comes to serving tea. Aside from serving tea at the right temperature in a pot, single estate varieties of tea from Darjeeling, Assam or Taiwan will generate more interest than your bog standard PG tips. Green tea, renowned for its healthful attributes is always popular, as is Himalayan Oolong. Or you could be one of the first to offer Roispresso, a mix of granulated and powdered red rooibos tea to which is added superfoods such as ginseng, goji berries and mint.

Coffee drinkers are also increasingly refined and educated about what is available and a barista type coffee is now expected. Medium and dark roasts, single origin filter coffee or in-house blends are the preference. If you do decide to offer more varieties of coffee make sure your menu gives the country of origin for each and that your staff are informed about choices available. You may want to use the services of distributors like Cafe Direct who can offer advice on marketing, machines and training for consistency and flavour. Customers know more than you think; don't take your tea and coffee sales for granted.





Keep customers happy with traceable chicken

From Edwina Currie's outburst over salmonella infected eggs to the recent horsemeat scandal, revelations about the safety and provenance of meat have created huge public interest in the food supply chain. One result is that restaurants can now charge a premium by using and marketing traceable ingredients. Here, we take a look at the operation of one local producer based in East Yorkshire where chickens are reared from 'farm to fork' ...

Asian restaurateurs may not have heard of T. Soanes & Son but they may well be acquainted with their products. Fifty per cent of Halal chickens reared by the East Yorkshire based poultry producer go out to wholesalers and manufacturers who supply Indian restaurants and takeaways all over the country. Suppliers include Ellwoods, one of the UK's major food wholesalers, with deliveries also made by Soanes themselves as far as Stroud, London, Newcastle, Manchester, Birmingham and Peterborough, and soon, Scotland. As Managing Director, Nigel Upson says: "Soanes chickens may be reared in the Yorkshire Wolds but they are enjoyed all over the country."

Suffolk-born Nigel has 30 years' experience in poultry working for food processing companies such as Birds Eye and 2 Sisters. After moving to Yorkshire in 1983, he recently jumped at the opportunity to work for local company Soanes and help develop the business. As well as being a well known employer in the area with 66 people working in its factory and farms, Soanes is also a family run concern with a "warm, community feel."

The business was established just after the Second World War and has been steered through changing markets by three generations of the Soanes family. From starting off as a general farm with poultry, pigs and cattle with deliveries made in wicker baskets, a major development took place 20 years ago when Soanes went from being an agricultural based producer to a food processor. At that time, Nigel tells us, the business was processing around 20,000 chickens a week. Today, that figure is closer to 90,000 with plans to expand beyond 100,000 during 2013 using BRC Accreditation as the spring board for further growth in 2014.

With a background of traditional values, Soanes has always had a commitment to the welfare of its poultry. All chickens are reared to industry standard on eight farming operations within a radius of about 20 miles from the main site at Middleton-on-the-Wolds. Four of the farms belong to the Soanes family and four are run by dedicated contract growers. Although there some chickens are free range, most of the poultry is grown in barns with straw and wood shaving bedding and fed on a chicken ration of soya and wheat grown on local soil and manufactured by local mills.

"If the chicken is happy you know you've got an efficient operation," explains Nigel. "We ensure that the chickens are cared for by our professional time served stockmen and we employ an Animal Welfare Officer who monitors standards of husbandry. The chickens are fed a nutritious diet and have access to clean water at all times. The barns are stocked to ensure the birds have plenty of room to run around and be fit and healthy. When it's time for market our dedicated catching team starts work at 2am to ensure delivery of "one day fresh" produce to factories, local markets, butchers, restaurants, farm shops and takeaways."

T. Soanes are about to apply for the Assured Chicken Production accreditation which will allow them to market using the Red Tractor logo. This British standard gives assurance of a secure supply chain and high levels of animal welfare and husbandry.

Surprisingly for a company based in an area without a large migrant population, Nigel tells us that the Asian market for Soanes' products has always been very strong: "Even when Clive Soanes, the founder's son, was a young lad he was dealing with Asian gentlemen in Bradford who used to come over and slaughter the chicken themselves," explains Nigel. "The Halal element came in response to customer demand. We now employ Muslim slaughter men and customers bring their own person to authenticate the slaughter process to make sure it meets the requirements of the Koran."

In 2007, the EEC introduced maximum stocking densities and stricter legislation relating to poultry growing to prevent overcrowding. "Everyone is now governed by same law but whether it's applied in same extent is a different matter," says Nigel, "I would say that Britain supplies to the "nth" degree. I've been to chicken operations in Holland, France, Germany, Hungary and Poland all over Europe and while it's fair to say that when legislation was introduced certain Eastern European countries weren't same standard, I would say now that operations are generally up to scratch, apply the same standards and, of course, are often British owned."

The changes have, nevertheless, proved a challenge for many British farmers struggling to compete with imports from abroad where standards of welfare may be lower. Nigel welcomes the move of supermarkets like Tesco's to buy everything British wherever possible.

"The last five years have been difficult for the chicken industry in general driven by recession and changes in exchange rates," says Nigel. "The ongoing issue is the cost of feed price – soya and grain



Nigel Upson

are the two main constituents of chicken feed. With a growing population in China, India and Indonesia the population has almost doubled and the planet is struggling to keep up with demand. Since 2008 the cost of chicken feed has doubled – the feed is 70% of the cost of the chicken that goes out of the door, but for 20 years, the price of chicken has gone down in real terms every single year. Chicken is the cheapest form of protein there is.

"As a small regional producer, we can't achieve the same cost parameters that the big operators like the Dutch and Brazilians can achieve. But the quality of our poultry should show through – our meat is a better texture, flavour than a fast grown product our USP is our Grade 'A' quality, provenance and the fact that we have a secure supply chain."

The USP for the restaurateur is in being able to name the supplier of their food on the menu. Meat from a local and trusted provider offers the ultimate in quality assurance and traceability. It also offers the opportunity to charge a premium price - because customers today want to know where their chicken comes from (and the answer is not an egg!).

T. Soanes & Son also supply other selected products to offer a range of fresh and frozen poultry, meats and complimentary products. For further info please visit: www.soanespoultry.co.uk Tel 01377 217 243 or email sales@soanespoultry.co.uk



UKBA arrests across UK



A series of raids on restaurants and other premises by the UK Border Agency have resulted in arrests of illegal workers across the country.

Weymouth

On 11 March two Bangladeshi workers were arrested following a raid on a Weymouth restaurant. Acting on a tip off, officers went to Balti House, Commercial Road when checks revealed that a 24-year-old kitchen worker was a failed asylum seeker. A second kitchen worker aged 46 was found to have overstayed his visa.

Campbeltown

Eight illegal workers of Bangladeshi origin were found at a Campbeltown restaurant, also in March, when officers and police visited the Bangladesh Tandoori on Bolgam Street. Seven were taken into UK Border Agency detention while arrangements are made to remove them from the UK. One man's case is still outstanding. Two Pakistani men were found to be working illegally at the Prestonpans takeaway Natural Spice.

Oxford

In Oxford, two restaurants face fines for employing illegal workers following raids. Officers visited Malikas Restaurant on Cowley Road

where two Bangladeshi men were working in breach of visa conditions.

Bournemouth and Poole

In raids in Bournemouth, Poole and Ferndown on 14 March, officers arrested four waiters in Cinnamon, Ferndown. On the same evening a Nepalese man working in the kitchen of Gurkha in Bournemouth was found to have overstayed his visa.

Accrington

Three immigration offenders were caught at Accrington businesses in early April. One Pakistani man was found in Premier Shop on Union Road whose visa had expired whilst in Cinnamon Spice on Whalley Road, checks revealed two Bangladeshi men working illegally. One had not left the UK when his visa expired while the other had entered the UK illegally.

Leatherhead

Indian restaurant, Lal Akash, on Leatherhead High Street was found to be employing five illegal workers. Four Bangladeshi men aged between 23 and 52 were arrested for overstaying their visas. They were detained prior to being removed from the UK. A fifth Bangladeshi man who had an outstanding case with

the Home Office was escorted from the premises as he also had no right to work.

West Yorkshire

A raid at a residential address in Dewsbury revealed six Pakistani men working in the UK illegally having overstayed their visas. Three were placed in an immigration detention centre pending removal from the country whilst a further three have been placed on immigration bail.

Raides like this are carried out across the UK every day. Phil Reay of the UK Border Agency said: "We are creating a hostile environment for illegal immigrants and offenders should know that there is no hiding place."

Businesses now face penalties of up to £10,000 for each illegal worker. To avoid a fine, the employers must provide evidence that the correct right-to-work checks were carried out.

Employers unsure of steps they need to take to avoid employing illegal workers can visit the UKBA website or can call the Employers Helpline on 0300 123 4699. Anyone with any information about immigration crime can contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 anonymously.

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Iconic Interiors

In the first part of our series featuring the interiors of iconic Indian restaurants, we take a look inside The Red Fort, Amin Ali's elegant restaurant in the heart of London's Soho. Ever since it was founded in 1982, The Red Fort has attracted politicians, state dignitaries, entrepreneurs and celebrities alike, all eager to sample Master Chef Azadur Rahman's Mughal Court cuisine.

If you think your restaurant's interior is beautiful enough to feature on these pages, please send us at least 5-6 hi res pictures with brief info about the restaurant. The editor will select any restaurants suitable for publication.
info@currylife.com



New immigration rules benefitting businesses and students come into force

On Saturday April 6 new immigration rules benefitting students, universities and businesses come into force. The changes will provide additional flexibility for employers and enable top international students to pursue their careers in the UK.

To provide consistency and policy stability for employers that want to bring in skilled workers from abroad, the government will maintain current limits for Tier 1 exceptional talent and graduate entrepreneur and Tier 2 skilled worker routes.

The Tier 2 limit will be held at 20,700 for the remainder of this parliament. Skilled staff who have previously worked in the UK and are paid more than £152,100 will no longer have to wait 12 months before taking up a

new post.

The new rules regarding students state that international MBA graduates from British universities and other higher education establishment will be able to stay in the UK for up to a year after graduating as part of the expanded graduate entrepreneur scheme. Up to 1000 will be able to stay to develop their own business idea or work in a startup – after which they can apply to stay in the UK as a skilled worker or entrepreneur.

These changes expand existing options for international students to stay and work after their studies. There is no limit on the number who can obtain a Tier 2 visa to stay and work, providing they can get a graduate level job paying around £20,300 or more.

Suspected sham wedding ends in arrest



A 25-year-old Bangladeshi man has been arrested just moments before he was due to get married in a suspected sham wedding in Oxford.

His bride-to-be, who was a Polish

woman of 24, was questioned by officers but later released.

A sham marriage or civil partnership typically occurs when a non-European national marries someone from the European Economic Area in order to gain residency, the right to work and claim benefits in the UK.

Officers from the Home Office Immigration Enforcement Team attended the Oxford Register Office on Tidmarsh Lane, having received information that the proposed wedding might not be genuine. The man who had overstayed his visa and was in the country illegally was detained and now faces removal from the UK.

Superintendent Registrar Assistant Director Paul Smith, head of the Home Office's Thames Valley Immigration Enforcement team, said: 'Across the Thames Valley we are working closely with registrars and the police to clamp down on sham weddings and civil partnerships.

"This operation is another example of the success that we are having, and more like this are planned in the future. Those who would attempt to abuse the marriage system to get round our immigration laws should know that we will investigate and, if necessary, intervene and arrest those involved.'

Food sales in managed pubs outperform eating out market



A new report from Horizons shows that the managed pub market is successfully luring customers away from other restaurants and eating out establishments and growing its share of the foodservice sector.

Managed pubs now hold 22% share of the UK's popular eating out market and Horizons expects this to grow to 26% by 2016. The growth is attributed to the sector's ability to broaden its offer, keep its prices low and adopt effective marketing campaigns to boost sales. Breakfast has become a growing revenue stream accounting for 6% of all managed pub meals. Sales

of midday meals – both weekdays and weekends – have also increased substantially growing in value from £885 million in 2006 to almost £1.5bn in 2012.

Having multiple income streams not only allows pub operators to adjust their business model by shifting between lower and higher margin lines, but also provides operational flexibility to cope with changes in demand prompted by external factors such as sporting events.

The managed pub restaurant sector consists of almost 17,000 pubs and has combined food and associated beverage sales worth £4.8 billion in 2012. Leading operators include Mitchells & Butlers and JD Wetherspoon.

Curry Life's Guide to unusual spices and flavourings

Spices have been used in human consumption since as far back as 50,000 BC. From 2000BC a powerful spice trade developed to transport the commodities between Africa, Asia and Europe until by the Middle Ages spices were in demand as a rare and expensive product. Today, all kinds of spices are widely available in shops and supermarkets and we are all familiar with those commonly used in Indian cooking such as cumin, cinnamon, paprika, black pepper and coriander. However there are many others that are less well known. Here, we take a look at some of the more unusual spices and their unique properties...





Roasted Cumin



Cumin is native to the eastern Mediterranean and Central Asia. The regular seeds have a strong, spicy-sweet flavour which can be changed by roasting to a full-bodied, nutty flavour to complement Indian, Mid-Eastern, Mexican and Malaysian cooking. They are widely added to South Asian

savoury meat, vegetable and dhal dishes. Heat a skillet over a medium high heat, add two tablespoons of cumin seeds and cook until dark (about 1/1/2 minutes), shaking constantly.

Sumac



Native to Iran, sumac is a berry of a bush that grows wild and is used in different kinds of Middle Eastern food. Berries are harvested and left in the sun to dry. Sumac has a tart flavour and can act as a substitute for lemon. In Greece it is used as a rub for grilled meats and as flavouring on meats in

stews and pita wraps. It is also used in rice and vegetable dishes. Try sprinkling liberally over fish, rice and kebabs or use in marinades and dressings mixed with yoghurt, chilli, coriander and cumin.

Black Sesame



Commonly used in Indian and Southeast Asian cuisines, the black sesame seeds have a slightly stronger flavour than the white variety. They are also a good source of calcium; one gram of seeds contains approximately 85mg calcium. With a similar flavour to white sesame they can be sprinkled over rice or on breads. In Manipur, India

they are used in the preparation of Singju, a type of salad prepared with ginger, chilli and vegetables.

Black Cumin



The prophet Mohammed reportedly said that the seeds of the black cumin plant could cure anything but death itself. Rarely known outside India, black cumin is part of the buttercup family and is known for its healing and medicinal powers. Often confused with Nigella seeds, black cumin has a nutty and earthy aroma and is thinner and

finer than the regular cumin seed. Used in northern Indian Mughlai cuisine, the black cumin works well in biryani, yoghurts, chutneys and garam masala.

Grains of Paradise



A common ingredient in the food of West and North Africa, this unusual spice can be used as a substitute for black pepper. Try cracking the grains and pressing into meats or grind onto vegetables.

Black Cardamom



Also known as Bada Elachi (Big cardamom in Hindi), black cardamom is from the ginger family but is defined by its pungent aroma. The flavours are stronger and, unlike its green cousin, cannot be used in sweet dishes. The seed pods are larger and coarser and have a smoky character from the

traditional method of drying over fires. They are commonly used in savoury dhal, biryani or rice dishes.

Nigella seed



Nigella sativa is used to top naan bread or in kormas, dhals and braised lamb. They can be mixed in equal parts with cumin, fennel, mustard and fenugreek using whole spices to make the Indian spice blend called Panch Phoran used to add flavour to lentil and vegetarian dishes. The seeds have a pungent bitter

taste with a hint of oregano. Try frying them in oil to release flavours and use the oil to make curries and pilaffs.

Carom Seed or Ajowain



This tiny seed similar to thyme has a stalk attached. Aromatic and bitter Carom is popular in Indian dhals or potatoes and is always cooked as its raw flavour is very overpowering. The seeds are an aid to digestion and are often used in lentil dishes for their anti flatulent effect.

Lime Leaves



Also known as kieffer lime and limau purut, this type of lime is native to Laos, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand and is commonly used in Southeast Asian cuisine. Kaffir lime adds a refreshing taste to Thai soups and curries. Grind the leaf to use in curry blends or use whole in soups and stir fries.



Pepsi Sponsors ICC Champions Trophy

The Pepsi brand has a long association with, and support for cricket on the sub continent. This summer sees Pepsi sponsoring the world cricket event – the ICC Champions Trophy, in addition to their sponsorship of the season's Premier League (IPL).

Cricket fans have a real passion for the ICC Champions Trophy which allows spectators to see the world's top 50-over cricketers playing live. Taking place in June, only the top eight teams on merit compete for the trophy at matches in London (The Oval), Birmingham and Cardiff.

As the only global 50-over event in 2013 and the last ICC Champions Trophy event (to be replaced with a test series), the ICC Champions Trophy marks the start of the build up over to the ICC Cricket World Cup 2015 in Australia and New Zealand.

Unfortunately Bangladesh did not qualify but coveted matches for cricket fans include India v Pakistan and England v Australia.

To run alongside this Summer's festival of cricket with the ICC Champions Trophy and Ashes Test series between England and Australia, Pepsi is offering restaurants a free Bangladesh Cricket supporters' shirt when they buy 20 cases of Pepsi bottles (300ml glass or 1.5L PET) from a participating wholesaler during May, June and July.

Restaurants will need to send a copy of their Pepsi invoices to Curry Life offices, verifying that 20 cases of Pepsi have been purchased, in order to receive the Bangladesh cricket shirt.

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- Eastern Beers/Glamorgan Beer (South Wales)



Free Bangladesh Cricket supporters shirt for restaurateurs who buy Pepsi

ICC CHAMPIONS TROPHY ENGLAND AND WALES 2013

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2nd Semi Final Thurs 20 June – Cardiff

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