

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE



Incredible

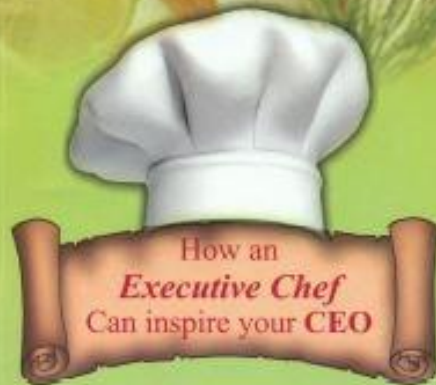
for chefs...by chefs

CHEF

VOL 01 | ISSUE 06 | MARCH 2015 | PAGES 60



An *In-flight*
Dining Experience



2nd Chef Summit
FLASHBACK



INTERVIEW

▶ **Chef Rajeev Janveja**
Corporate Chef,
Lemon Tree Hotels



▶ **Chef Ishika Konar**
Executive Sous Chef,
The LaLiT - New Delhi



Temptuous For Vegetarians!

Hospitality
BIZ

Taste... Check... Wins Hearts



BY CHEF RAJEEV JANVEJA,
Corporate Chef,
The Lemon Tree Hotel Company

My mantra... "Taste, taste, taste... Check, check, check."

In today's rapidly changing environment marked by fluctuating economies and better wakefulness about food, it's an uphill task for any chef to deliver to everyone's fancies and preferences. Today, the market in India has become so very experimental and exudes such good understanding of different cuisines and modern fares that it becomes difficult to assimilate the varied food preferences of guests.

The palate desires fluctuate from a much disorganized imbalance of healthy food v/s farm-fresh to organic v/s vegan to fast food and so on. Creating a likable and truly satisfying cuisine to meet the varied fancies of all is thus a challenge that truly inspires me. While teamwork, passion and dedication makes a Chef, every step of my life has been a growth phase where I have assimilated the different leanings and needs of my guests and adapted them in my food.

For the food lovers, while exotic and delectable cuisines steal the show, for previous travelling out of their hometowns it's their choice of comfort food, bursting with flavors and full of love that delights them. Add to it a dash of home cooked tadka and their mothers feel to it, and hearts are won. My challenge begins right

there as I aim to serve not a guest but my family, that's what my mother's learnings were.

I have clients from all walks of life with different desires. The deliverables are thus too many. I am proud that as a team leader I have been able



to transfer this down to my team across India and now they too believe in my vision and do what it takes to bring their culinary passion to life. But with diverse views, smattering constraints, very stringent hygiene guidelines and thin profits, it is also essential to hold on to a checklist of factors apart for one's pa-

“

To me being a Chef is thus, all about finding a way to tingle those tiny taste buds and bring a smile on people's faces through simple healthy food innovations where each guest feels his dish was made to order.

”

sion for cooking. These crossing factors are necessary to make the food magic happen on a daily basis:

- Quality cooking skills and techniques
- Recipe development
- Plating
- Menu Development
- Vendor relationship

And the most important being understanding the customer needs.

I have also noted that while complex gastronomic foods are a fetish with a few, it's the need for simple foods accentuated by natural flavors and fresh ingredients that more travelers seek. Simpler the food more complex is its cooking and to deliver what a traveler looks for needs constant innovation and skilled expertise. Vegan food has also created awareness round the globe making it more challenging to deliver their comfort food.

Comfort food is thus what people look for today no matter where they go. Simple things like a Bhel Puri, Bisibela Bhath, Kachori and Choliya are some trends that never fade away no matter what. Food preferences today finally boil down to the very basics that one was served by his mother during childhood days. Those memories just don't seem to fade away. A chef's intervention is thus desired when one has to recreate these very old classics with more nutrition value, flavors and finesse.

For a Chef, precision is the key, giving the dish



“

I have also noted that while complex gastronomic foods are a fetish with a few, it's the need for simple foods accentuated by natural flavors and fresh ingredients that more travelers seek.

”

a culinary twist with the basic elements remaining untouched in terms of flavors, textures, color and the authenticity of taste is where the challenge is. It's thus all about recreating the wow-factor of a simple popular dish keeping its natural essence and flavors intact but accentuating it by adding the feel good factor in the form of low calorific value and a fistful of healthy vitamins and minerals.

To sum up, while the world is rapidly changing, simplicity of food still tugs at our hearts and teases our palate. So when guests take their first bite and drift in bliss, I feel I have made my mark. To me being a Chef is thus, all about finding a way to tingle those tiny taste buds and bring a smile on people's faces through simple healthy food innovations where each guest feels his dish was made to order.