

By Sagar Tamrakar



FOOD Brothers

**Manjit Joshi, Mani Shrestha,
Satyam Joshi and Srijan Shrestha**
proprietors
Chopstix Restaurant and Tangerine Bar Lounge

A restaurant in Patan Durbar Square run by Srijan was the favourite hangout of the foursome, but it was shut down due to renovations taking place in the Durbar Square area. The quartet, having completed their graduation, got bit by the entrepreneurial bug—after a series of meetings, they nailed the project: what else, a restaurant, and a strikingly different one at that! They knew that Patan lacked a chic restaurant-bar, and so Chopstix Restaurant and Tangerine Bar Lounge came up in Kumaripati three years ago—and by most accounts, the place is quite a big draw.

While pursuing his BCA in Bangalore, Manjit was fascinated by the ambience, service, staff and food of the Chinese restaurants there. In fact, one of his brothers ran the Chung Wah Restaurant in Bangalore, and used to share his know-how about the business with him. This led the quartet to have their chef trained in India in Indo-Chinese and Continental cuisines.

Talking about the initial days of the restaurant business and its present 'hit' status, Manjit says, "Back then, we were inexperienced and had to struggle a lot by being involved full time in the restaurant. Now we are adept at tackling crisis situations; we have a very innovative blueprint to help us run the restaurant." Mani quips, "Initially, when a problem cropped up like the breakdown of a generator, we used to concentrate so much trying to rectify that problem that we ended up neglecting other work, which now is not a problem at all. Probably, our competency has risen."

So what are the USPs of the restaurant? The collective answer:

cosy ambience, spacious seating arrangements, unique F&B, captivating interiors, jam sessions by musicians of different genres; and first-class service. Srijan explains, "Our ambience is fit for families, youngsters, and to host corporate parties. We keep upgrading or altering the restaurant setting; we actually paint it twice a year so that it always has a fresh look."

Except for the chef and sous-chef, all other employees that they hired were novices who had to be imparted basic training on the restaurant-bar culture. Mani says, "It's a matter of pride that we have been able to provide employment opportunities to fresh people in the hospitality business who'd otherwise be wandering about doing nothing at all. To create a balance of rapport among us and the staff, Satyam and I behave in a friendly manner, whereas our other two partners behave in an authoritative style." For motivating, and socialising with the staff, the owners often help them out with chores like serving and dish-washing. Satyam adds, "Hiring fresh people does create problems at times like when they behave unprofessionally with guests; but we apologise and ensure it does not happen again."

About partnership ventures, Manjit opens up, "At times, there are misunderstandings in a partnership business, but we've tackled the obstacles and confusion with trust and understanding, and we've become like blood brothers. We have divided our tasks—such as those of purchasing commodities, finance, marketing and publicity—among ourselves and have made it a point that we support each other significantly in our individual responsibilities." ■