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Samyati

Odysseys with a camera a backpack and tweezers

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The Team

Sumit Jha
Editor



Michael Swamy
Associate Editor



Deepa Natarajan
Content & Communications



Writers

Mugdha Sudhir
Food Researcher/Stylist



Dinesh Khanna
Travel Photographer



Jashan Sippy
Food Architect and Designer



Chef Bobby Geeta
Patron Fleur Restaurant
Leeds, UK



Vishnudeep Dixit
A Photographer and
budding cinematographer

Consultants

Pinky Chandan
Aparna Jha
Karen Martin

Contributors

Shambhavi
Tanya Joshi
Urvi Khanna

Published By



B-1, New Apsara Apartments, 259,
Bund Garden Road, Pune, India 411001.

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Sujalam Sufalam Sasya Shyamalam Mataram

Good water, good fruits, Dark green crops which indicate a good harvest



Vande Mataram is the national song of India, where the poet finds himself bowing to his motherland that has offered him so much. Clean water, good fruits, cool breeze, and dark and dense crops that bear grains, vegetables, pulses and other bounties like herbs, flowers, spices and more to nourish generations of her offspring.

It is indeed immensely satisfying to reap the abundant benefits of being fed by the food grown on this soil, as it is heartening to celebrate the foods grown in other geographies. My mind also wanders and takes a detour to connect with this earth, and to think about sustainability. Are we leaving enough for our future generations? Are our consumption patterns right, or do we need to change? This is not just about the food we consume, but also the materials in which the food is held and packed. Plastic, styrofoam, paper, glass.. Then there are a lot of 'What if-s' that arise. What if each of these were replaceable with something like earthen containers, for example, kulhads, that can go back to earth to make new ones. What if we could revert to food being served in bowls and plates made with leaves? What if fruits, vegetables and greens could be had just as they are without processing them?

I think sustainability is everyone's responsibility, and respecting food should be mandatory, and this can begin when food is showcased at its best, made alluring and desirable by lights, camera, and action, made the hero, and glorified to raise its demand. It is also the apt time to educate the future generations to eat light, fresh, healthy, and nudge them to buy and consume seasonal and local, yet make space for palates to develop to accept newer and myriad cultures, traditions, textures, concepts, flavours, colours, and aromas. These could be through traveling to places, or getting acquainted to exotic lands through a magazine like Samyati.

Kulhads, fruits, cuisines, breeze, sun, and a lot of fun. I'm super delighted to present this issue of Samyati, depicted through stunning images. Samyati is evolving and we knew it would, to bring in diverse elements under its umbrella - elements that have got to do with a backpack, a camera, and tweezers. 

Deepa

Deepa Natarajan

“The world is changed. I feel it in the water. I feel it in the earth. I smell it in the air. Much that once was is lost, for none now live who remember it.” JR Tolkein

Art is who we are and what we are; we are surrounded by it at all times. We may be born with an understanding of it or we may learn as we grow. Art often bridges the world together through the medium of culture and food is an important part of that.

It is interesting to note how art is dictated by our moods. It is often when we are lonely or down that we recreate the most beautiful impressions through art.

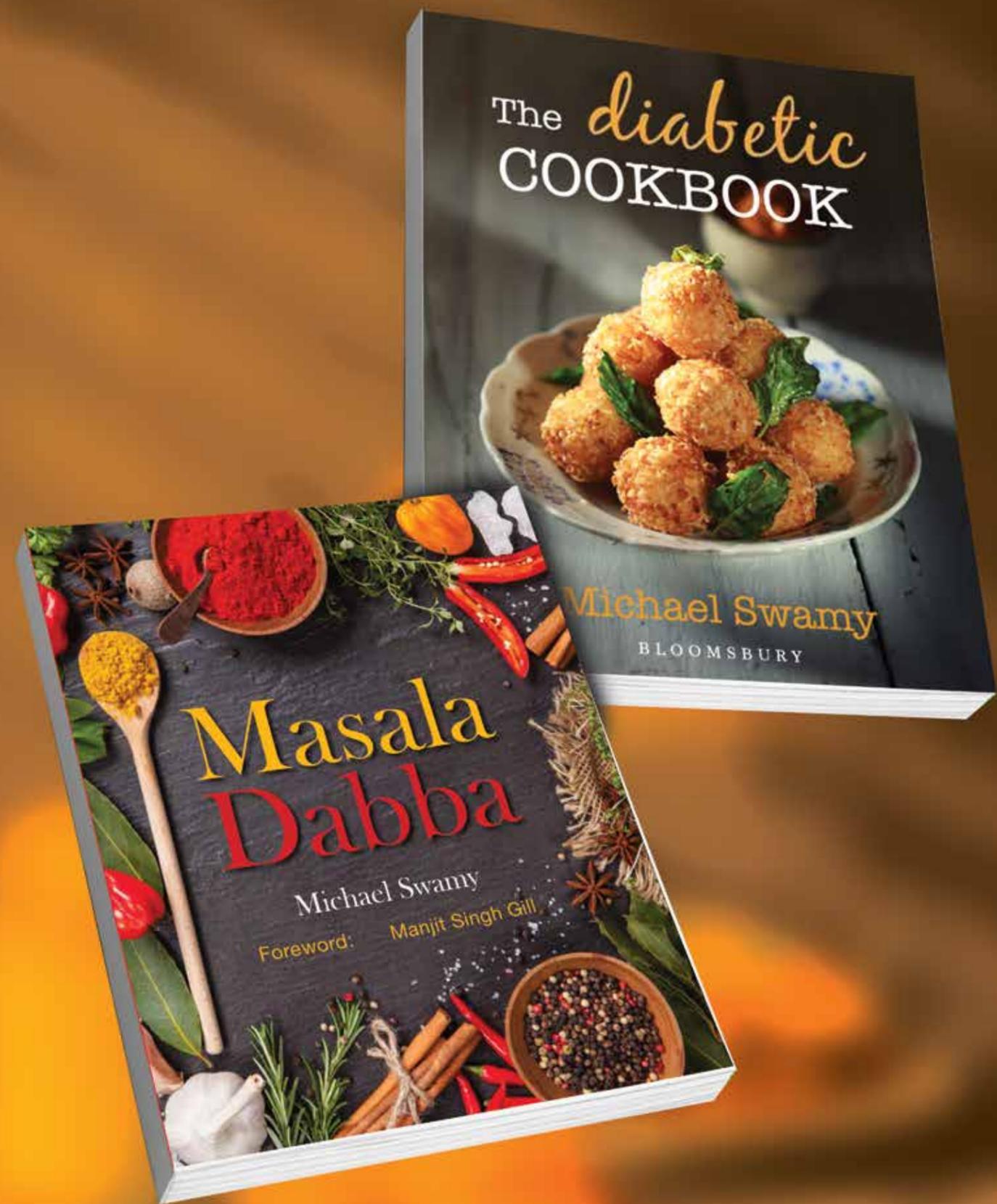
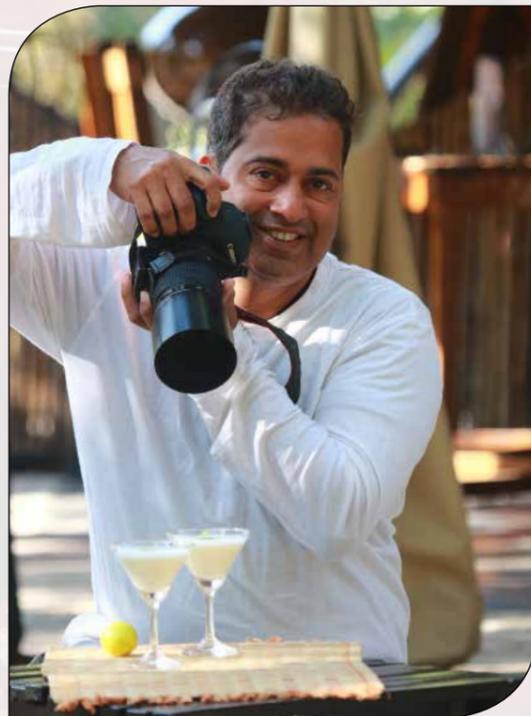
This edition is about art that centres around food. The world of food is constantly changing, keeping up with all that change is a world of researchers, stylists, artists, writers that document food and travel in different forms of media.

As one travels we see food from a different perspective which is often guided by who we are as people. As I reflect, I realise the purpose of travel is to discover and learn through food, and see how it can help bridge the gaps between people, cultures and time.

That said, we will also cover the roots of cuisine and organic farming in this edition, hope you enjoy reading this edition of Samyati.

Michael Swamy

Chef Michael Swamy



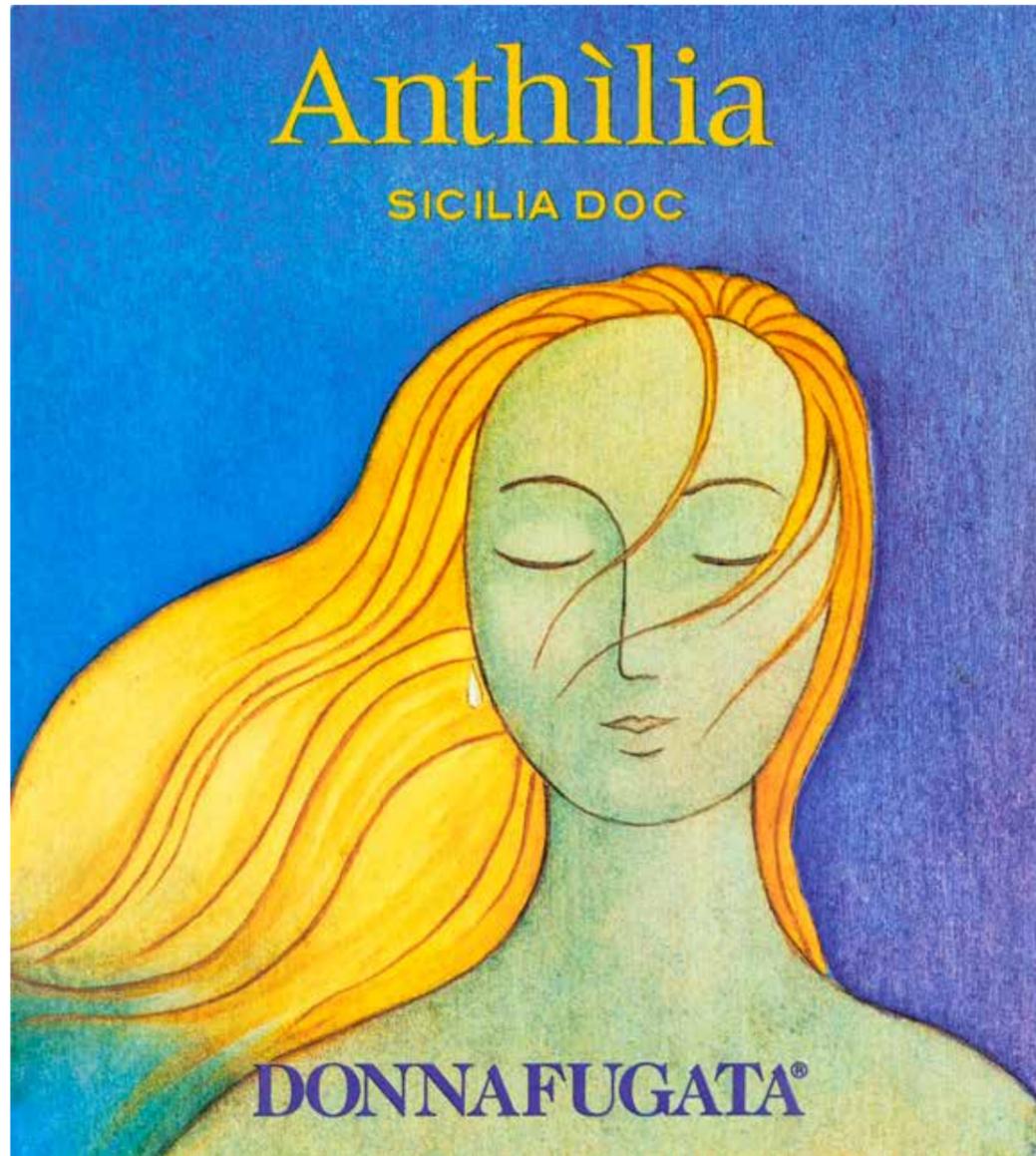
Available on Amazon and FlipKart

The Art Of Food

—Chef Michael Swamy explores

You get a kind of kick as you walk down old museums and see the energy in a painting. The long brushstrokes to the fine grain in the canvas makes your heart stir in ways you cannot explain. Art is but a capture of a fleeting moment in time. You can get lost in the craft of a painter. What magic do they hold in seeing and perceiving things? The earliest images of food are the ones on cave paintings and hidden walls. The shadows remain with you long after you have walked away.

There must be something about “a fondness for art that’s in one’s blood for this to work”. The tour of art galleries around the city and to some of the famous art galleries in the world with my mum, would always invariably end up at the café in the art gallery. As one ponders the great art galleries of the world to see that food

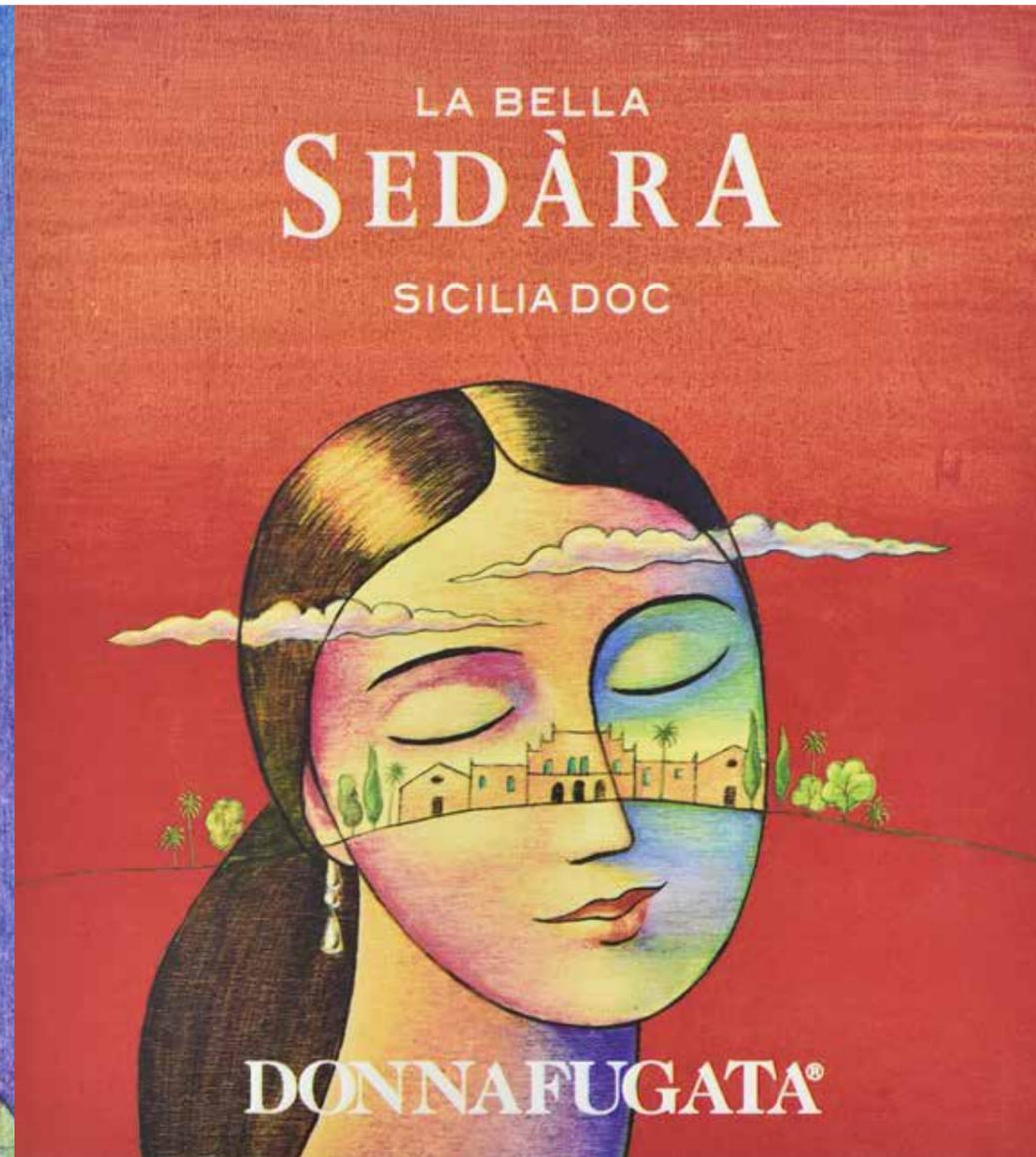


is a part of all the great artists' paintings. The play of light on the food to the depictions of glassware and crockery. It's magical what one can learn from the cave paintings and the fine line drawings of the early Egyptians and Mayans.

It's history on a plate, it's a movement of

longing and desire and a showcasing of a craft. The luscious paintings, the shadows and light of the artists brush on a piece of canvas. It depicted the foods that people ate and brought about a harsh reality of the times.

As one thumbs through the prints of various art books growing up one



saw place settings, and how food was arranged. The great culinary orgies of the Romans and the Greeks. The drinking games of Mesopotamia to the oyster loving fad of the 17th century in New York. Food was and is a thread that binds, gender, culture, religion, class and all

depicted through art. There are images of food eaten by the wealthy during times of a famine to the time of the great depression. Paintings of restaurants and people eating at tables, to the advertising on the billboards of a tavern.

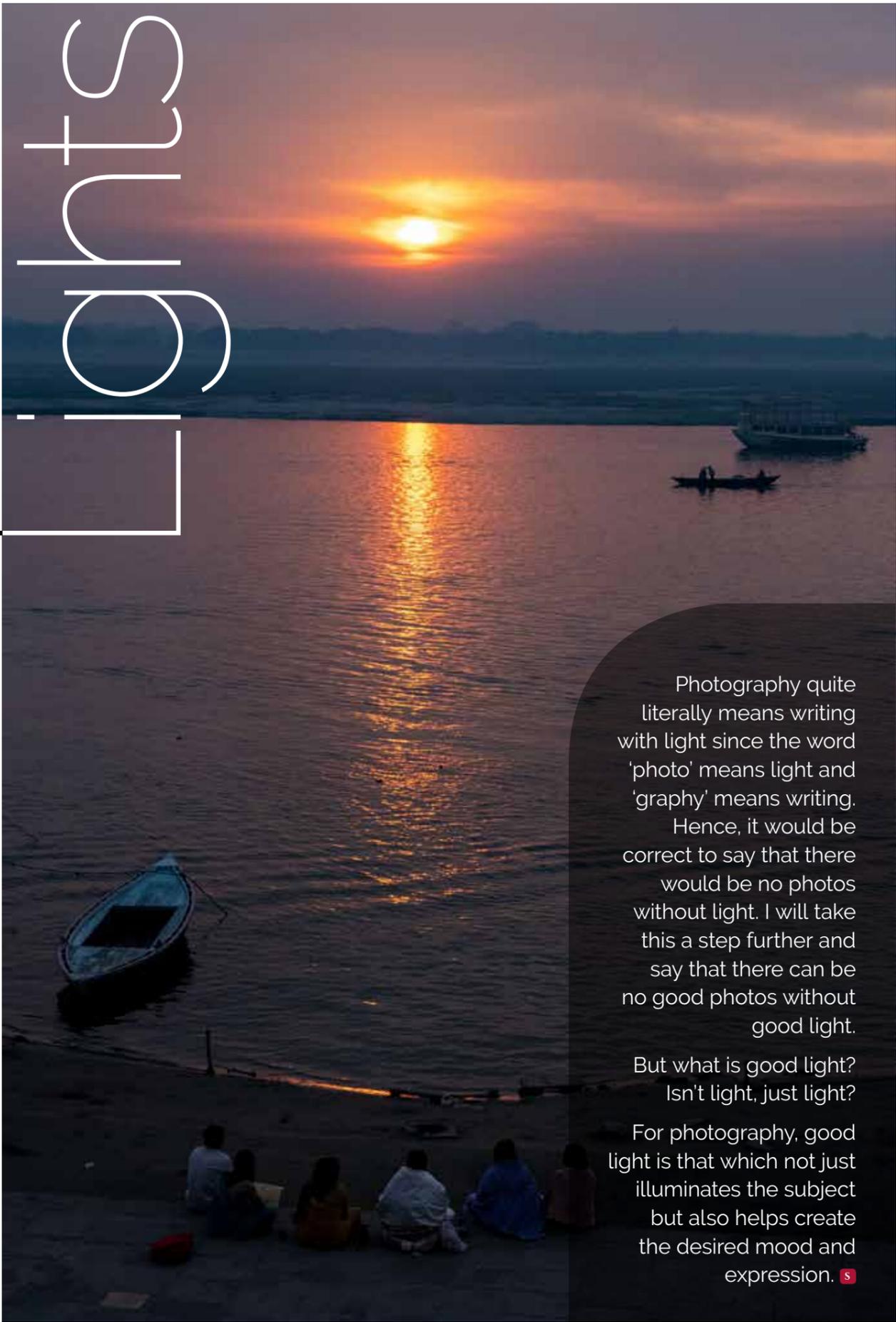
The art was made to attract, to tell a story and how to perceive the story. They were images to be remembered for a long time. The renaissance of art and the beautiful still life paintings of the Golden Dutch Age and the images of well dressed characters feasting on food laid out on silverware, the dewy creations of fruit and silky meats, and berries almost realistic in their own way. From Cezanne to Wayne Thiebaud you almost felt at home within all these paintings surrounding oneself in a form of adulation.

Whoever said fine dining is dead doesn't know the true meaning of fine dining. Fine dining is an art in itself. It is a journey to the plate and from there to the food. Growing up in a world of art is not easy for many. Some of us imbibe it, some of us may live in it but not recognise it. Art surrounds us in every form of nature to become instruments of our own desires. S

Lights Camera Action



lights



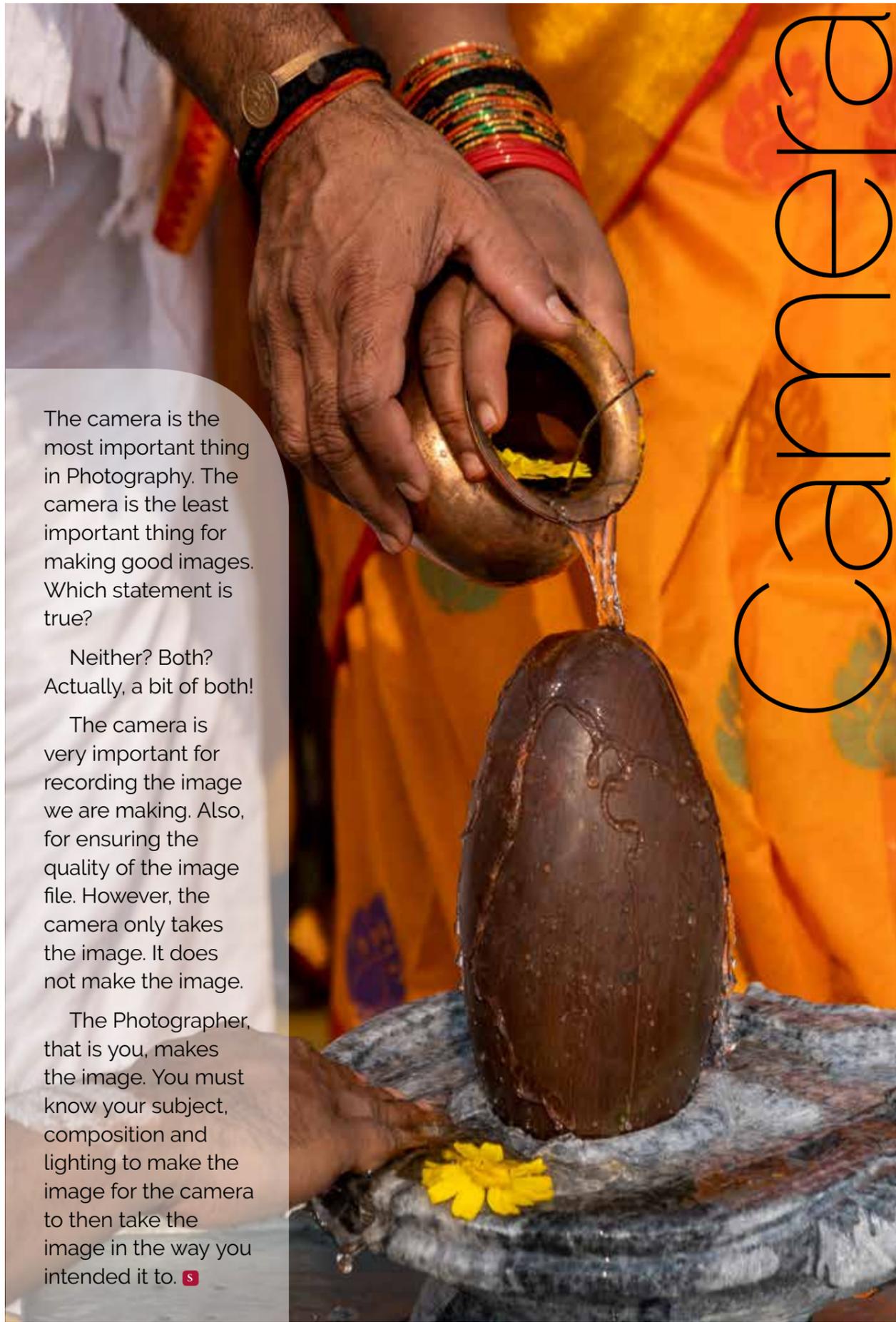
Photography quite literally means writing with light since the word 'photo' means light and 'graphy' means writing. Hence, it would be correct to say that there would be no photos without light. I will take this a step further and say that there can be no good photos without good light.

But what is good light?
Isn't light, just light?

For photography, good light is that which not just illuminates the subject but also helps create the desired mood and expression. **S**

—Dinesh Khanna

camera



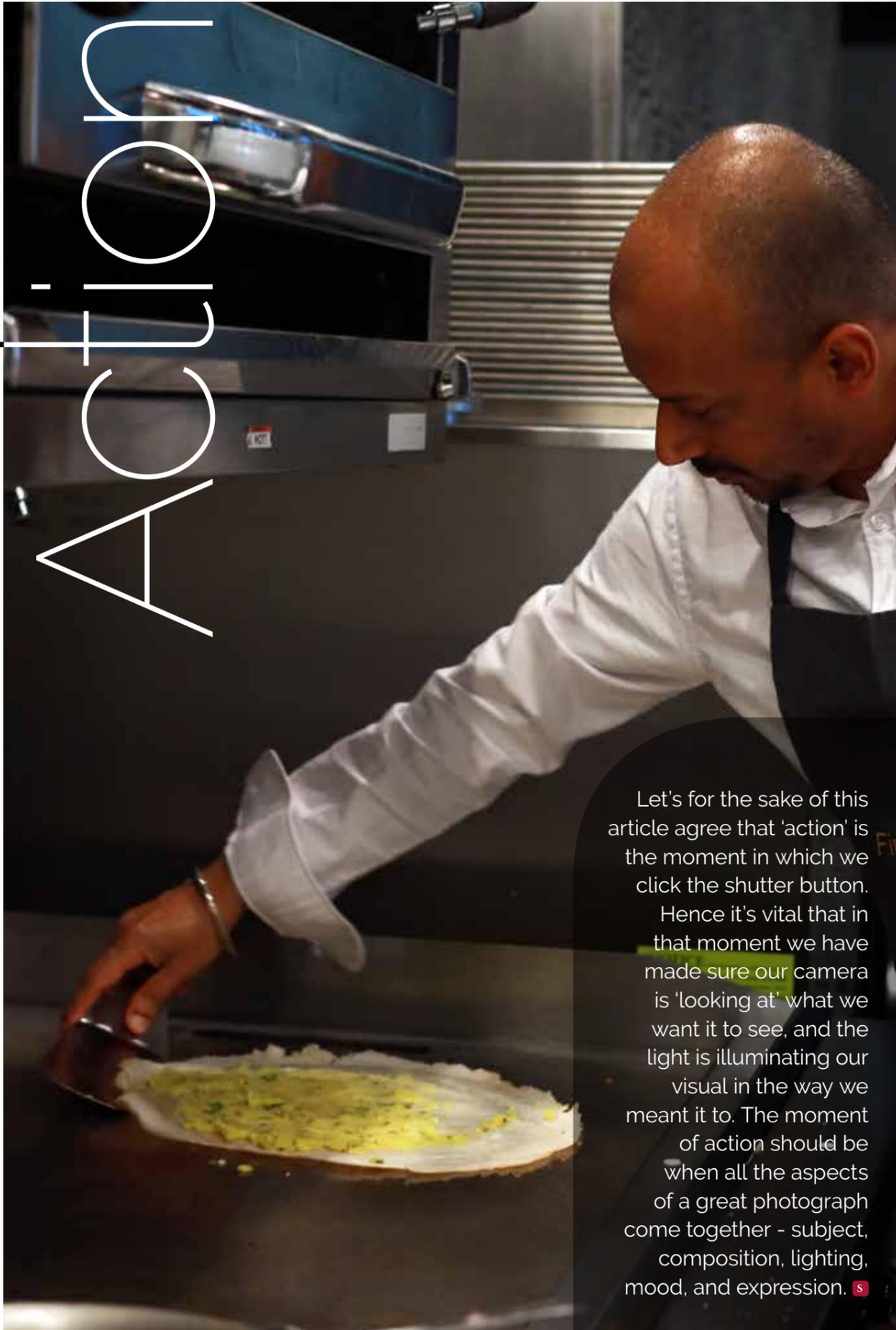
The camera is the most important thing in Photography. The camera is the least important thing for making good images. Which statement is true?

Neither? Both?
Actually, a bit of both!

The camera is very important for recording the image we are making. Also, for ensuring the quality of the image file. However, the camera only takes the image. It does not make the image.

The Photographer, that is you, makes the image. You must know your subject, composition and lighting to make the image for the camera to then take the image in the way you intended it to. **S**

—Dinesh Khanna



Let's for the sake of this article agree that 'action' is the moment in which we click the shutter button.

Hence it's vital that in that moment we have made sure our camera is 'looking at' what we want it to see, and the light is illuminating our visual in the way we meant it to. The moment of action should be when all the aspects of a great photograph come together - subject, composition, lighting, mood, and expression. 

—Dinesh Khanna

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While The Heart Emotes
From The Hands That
Write To Weave Your Stories*

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Deepa: +91 87797 98027 | ditatraining@gmail.com
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Ingredients

Core ingredients form the heart of the final recipe. They add to the nutritional value, flavour, texture, and taste. They bring in balance and harmony in the final dish. Core ingredients also reflect the culture of any place and speak of the geography, heritage, climate, and food habits and preferences. Exploring different ingredients and combining these intelligently can lead to exciting culinary discoveries.

Members from the Samyati Team delve deeper.



*Contributed by Laxmy Surendran
for Samyati's Blueberry Contest
on Instagram*

The photos are shot using
Sony Alpha A6300.

Canadian Blueberries

Dried or fresh blueberries are a favourite snack for me and also make for some wonderful purees, sauces and desserts. What is even better is that their antioxidants help fight cancer and help people with dementia, Alzheimer's cognitive diseases. Blueberries have a lot of flavonoids and fiber in them which greatly help insulin sensitivity. Their anti-inflammatory properties are even higher and they contain anthocyanins, a wholesome antioxidant that strengthens one's heart, and lowers blood fats [S](#)

These images were created playing with a lot of light and shadow. Playing with depth of field gives one a lot of scope with creativity.

Camera

EOS R
Lens 100 mm macro lens
Manfrotto Tripod





Canadian Cherries

We see cherries everywhere from cakes and ice creams to milkshakes and mousses. Canadian cherries have that intense dark look and are full of natural sweetness. Most of Canada's cherries come from the interiors of British Columbia, a beautiful region known for its wonderful scenery, Canadian cherries can be enjoyed from late June through early September, and are grown in the Okanagan and Kootenay valleys that are blessed with warm dry days and cool nights that give Canadian cherries their signature sweetness.

These cherries are loaded with powerful antioxidants with anti-inflammatory properties, and are also an excellent source of vitamin C, are high in fibre, low in fat (including saturated fat) and sodium, and are completely cholesterol-free.

Photographing them isn't that easy because they have smooth glossy skin. The auto focus can at times be a bit tricky when photographing dark smooth surfaces.

To get those sharp clean images when using natural light, it's best not to shoot handheld. Always use a tripod like a Benro or a Manfrotto with a triple head versus a ball head—a suggestion to amateurs and professionals alike.

These images were shot on a trestle table from Ikea, against a window using natural light diffused with butter paper and so it was back lit. Using a white reflector bounced light from the front onto the fruit to get that magical artistic Rembrandt lighting used for the cover image of the magazine. [S](#)

Camera

EOS R
Lens 100 mm macro lens
Manfrotto Tripod

Tomatoes

In India we all love chutneys with our food, especially tomato chutney, and we wait for those ripe red country tomatoes to come in from the villages during winter.

This fruit is great in salads and curries. One of the best moments is plucking one off a vine and biting into it on a hot summer day after an early morning shoot in the orchard.

Winter is the best time to shoot indeed, and the days are longer without a harsh sun to shoot in.

Shooting outdoors is not easy. You have the wind to factor in, the play of light and shadows to the harshness of the sun as it rises. I always find it easier to carry a small pair of scissors with me or a swiss army pocket knife to trim off dead leaves and stalks and move things about while I am shooting.

Capturing tomatoes in baskets to fill a frame full of tomatoes, the magic of the light bouncing off the smooth textures to shadows from the leaves all make for an artistic creation to happen. Shooting against the light can give an ethereal feel to it. It's hard shooting alone at times and without a bounce card even harder. So very often I wear a white shirt when shooting plants and fruits outdoors. The shirt acts as a natural bounce card and helps fill in the light when both hands are occupied with a tripod. **S**

Camera

EOS R
Lens 100 mm macro lens
Manfrotto Tripod



A Chef's Cut

CHEF BOBBY GEETA
The Pro Chef Middle East Awards - 2018
Master Chef UK - 2016
The only South Indian chef till date
UAE Best Indian Chef - 2019
International Chef Awards Nominee - 2019



The founder, and Head Chef, of Leeds City Centre restaurant 'Fleur' and a menu consultant to several restaurants internationally, his journey has been one of creating his own style and blend of flavours. Indian Chef Bobby Geeta is highly passionate, dedicated and committed in a profession he loves the most, and that's food.

With 16 years of hands-on managerial experience in high-end 5 star luxury hotel kitchens, he's an inspiration to Gen Z. He is the author of five cookbooks on the Fine Dining Indian Cuisine series, and the founder of finediningindian.com website on next generation Indian cuisine. He was the

Quarter Finalist in BBC's Master Chef UK Professionals, and now a consultant with some of Europe's Michelin starred culinary greats. Bobby Geetha is the semi-finalist in National Chef of the year United Kingdom, and he's won the Gold for Hospitality Chef Excellence award in 2018.

For him, art has always been a source of inspiration. For chefs, when it comes to food presentation and ingredients, the fine dining Indian concept takes this inspiration to the next level. The use of vibrant colours, diverse textures, and intricate designs in artistic creations are reflected in the way Indian chefs present their dishes. The marriage of art and food has led to the creation of new culinary experiences



that challenge traditional cuisine. Fine dining Indian restaurants today offer a new perspective on the country's diverse cuisine, bringing together art and gastronomy to create an unforgettable dining experience. From appetisers that resemble a work of art to desserts that look like they belong in a museum, this niche space has witnessed constant transformation. What he loves is the way Indian chefs are changing the way the world perceives and tastes food.

"For me, it is always so important that my restaurants keep evolving to stay relevant. This is why we work with restaurants, chefs and other food experts further afield to make sure that we're always at the top of the game. I think that the influence of other countries and cultures is a necessity to create great tasting food."

"I'm just so thrilled that I've been able to showcase some of what the Leeds restaurant scene has to offer, across the pond. I only hope that I've left nothing but a great impression of what we have to offer in our city and that it might encourage people further afield to take a trip to the incredible place I call home!" 



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"The surface of things gives enjoyment, their interiority gives life."

— Piet Mondrian

EAT MONDRIAN

Where Art meets Food

What ensues when guests are then given giant safety pins and are left to interpret what they should do with them, is quite an 'out of the box' concept. Just read on..

Food, just like art, is often used as a medium to bring communities together. Dutch artist Piet Mondrian was one of the leaders of the modern abstract movement in art. He was also a major advocate of the Dutch abstract art movement known as De Stijl

Jashan Sippy is a food systems designer, 3D food printing expert, and green-building certified architect, who specializes in the design of spaces for food. His dissertation titled 'Gastronomy & Architecture

('The Style'). He used primary colours, basic shapes and simple lines to create an easy-to-understand, 'universal' means of communication that crossed linguistic barriers in a post-war world. Mondrian wanted his art to bring the recovering populations together.

Multisensory Experiences' formed the basis of his unconventional current practice called Sugar and Space. Jashan is also the food and space correspondent for The Dutch Institute of Food & Design. Jashan and his team at Sugar and Space analysed and



interpreted Mondrian's art philosophy to extract powerful messages that could be conveyed through food. And, thus was born EAT Mondrian.

EAT Mondrian is an art inspired sit-down immersive eating experience that encourages deep reflection and personal interpretation. Guests make their way through five courses inspired by Dutch artist Piet Mondrian's work. Through food and guided discussion, guests are immersed into Mondrian's art and the era he lived in.

Sippy and his team deconstructed Mondrian's art philosophy into courses of a meal combining colour, composition and contrast – opening their creations for interpretation. To allow a more rounded experience, instrumental jazz plays at a low volume allowing people to share their thoughts about the experience and converse.



“**Guests are then given giant safety pins and are left to interpret what they should do with them.**”

Experimental diners are invited to focus on a piece of music being played, and to savour a sip of their wine. Mondrian was a fan of jazz music but also enjoyed Russolo's Art of Noises. Guests are then invited to have another sip of their drink to compare their notes on how sound impacts experience and flavour perceptions.

Piet Mondrian loved dancing to the Charleston, a popular swing dance routine from the 1920s. Halfway through their meal, guests are surprised by a special live dance routine – the event staff busts some moves for the guests. Occasionally, professional dancers are looped in.

Guests are then given giant safety pins and are left to interpret what they should do with them. This is the showstopper of the experience and encourages guests to wonder, think creatively and interact with each other. Served nothing but a safety pin just before dessert, guests look around to pop balloons filled with edible treats placed above their seats, and finally, dessert is served.

Each EAT Mondrian session is sure to stir lively conversation. Guests are given ample time in between courses to discuss and process their experience.

EAT Mondrian is a great alternative to a museum or gallery visit and brings art history, culture, and a bit of jazz to the dining table. **S**





SHAMBHAVI

Student,
Le Cordon Bleu School of Hospitality, India
G D Goenka University Gurugram

Rising Stars

As a child I was mesmerised by "The Great Food Truck Race" that aired on TLC channel. I often felt that someday I too would do something like what I had seen on TV. Later in high school, I pondered over what Ralph Waldo Emerson once said "Do not be too timid and squeamish about your actions. All life is an experiment."

Over the years, I have been able to travel and explore diverse geographies. I have experienced the hospitality of the people across our country, soaking in the cultural and culinary experiences that are the hallmark of each locale.

As far as I can recollect, I was driven towards identifying a career in an industry that would allow me proximity to food and people. A childlike fascination and my inclination towards food, together with my ability to connect with people across cultures led me towards pursuing a career in hospitality.

I am currently a final year student pursuing Bachelors in Hotel Management and Catering Technology (BHMCT) from Le Cordon Bleu (LCB), GD Goenka University, India. My years at LCB have shaped me into a local hospitality professional with a global outlook.

While I have been exploring a diverse range of subjects, learning skills essential for my growth, it has always remained imperative that I do not lose sight of issues plaguing the 21st century.

I was recently nominated as a panellist for a discussion on "Imagining a healthy future" held during the 10th Knowledge Summit, organised by the

Indian Culinary Forum in October 2022. I took this opportunity to put forth what I think is my generation's vision on how the hospitality industry is impacting the environment.

The dilemma for us as individuals and industry alike is to figure out how to respond to the 17 SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) that have been adopted by the UN. Post COP 22 and the Paris agreement, the conferment of industry status to the hospitality industry, it is incumbent that all hospitality professionals respond to this call and work towards the 2030 deadline.

As I embark on my professional journey, I am determined to explore how I could intertwine the UN call out to sustainable action with my dreams. Beyond just the need for hard work, my mother instilled in me many a virtue that have been as influential in my growth as a person and professional. I remain thankful to the people surrounding me and guiding me towards my personal goals. and I feel obligated to use my life experiences and learnings to the benefit of society and its underprivileged majority. **S**

“As far as I can recollect, I was driven towards identifying a career in an industry that would allow me proximity to food and people”



Chef's Tale



TANYA JOSHI

Chef at Fabrica by Sabyasachi Gorai



Journey

Food has always been the centre of attraction for me, be it a trip, a festival, or any get-together with the family. While I was pursuing Hotel Management from IHM Pusa, I did training in a few kitchens. I got rewarded as 'The Most Promising Chef' in 2020. I got through college placements and secured a place in multiple hotel brands. However, due to the 2020 lockdown, it went in vain. It was during the lockdown that I started learning the art of food photography. I also worked with Delhi Food Walks as their host for the regional food series in 2021. Post that, I found my mentor in Chef Saby Gorai and joined him full time. I spent some time down south to understand the food culture and history along with the Eastern part of the country. Recently, I also participated in Chef vs Fridge, season 3. My current obsession is travelling to different cities/towns and villages and exploring the culture, architecture and the foremost, food!

Philosophy

I belong to Uttarakhand, and was brought up in a household sustained to the idea of eating locally-grown produce. My father has been growing vegetables at home. This has highly influenced my philosophy of food. Food is an experience. It is the story put together by the creator. Food doesn't have to be fancy. It has to have a life, a meaning. Best of the food is still in our home kitchens because when you cook with love, as said 100 times before this, the result is pure magic. Who cares about the salt anymore? It's high time that we stop destroying 'Mother Nature', the food giver, for our selfish needs. We have to focus on sustainability more than anything else. We, as chefs, have the responsibility to initiate this change.

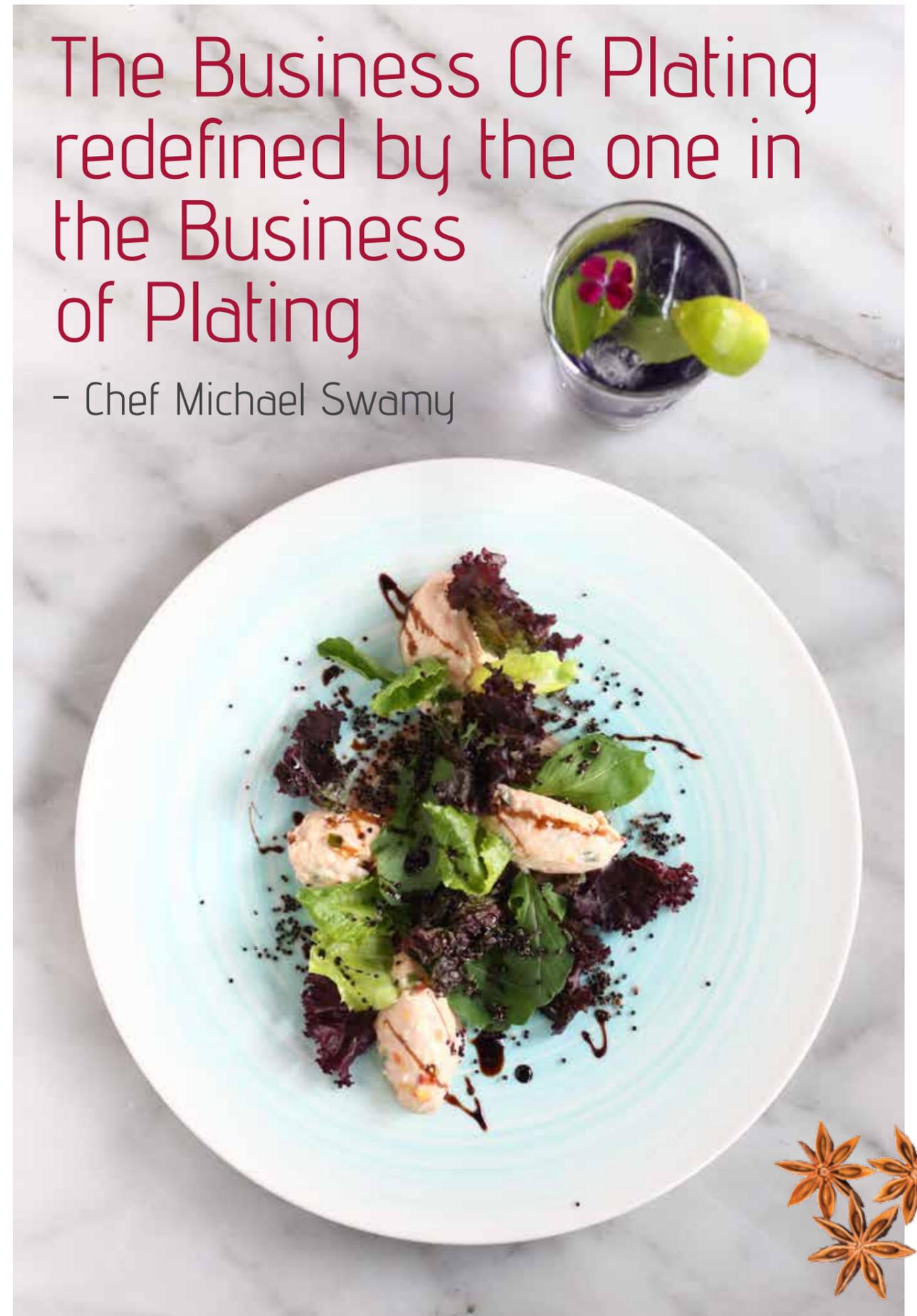


Food as art

Like any other art form, food is also an expression of an artist's emotions, in this case, the Chef. There is no right or wrong way to express, likewise, there are no rules to plating food. We all are fond of eating chaat in 'pattal'. The trick is eye for detail, and trying to achieve perfection with even the smallest things. When I plate food, I put all the effort to make the main element feel like the star. Every other component on the plate, is literally to complement it, and not take away its shine. Plating food is one thing, and making it look appetising, is another. For me nothing beats the sight of food put together by my mother, nothing!

The Business Of Plating redefined by the one in the Business of Plating

- Chef Michael Swamy



What is the most important rule of plating for a good shot??? GO FOR IT! Be

different, step out of your comfort zone and unlearn set rules... you will hesitate at first but you need to find your own style and that can only happen if you try to do something new from dish to dish. Varied themes and cuisines call for different styles of plating. Until you experiment you will never feel like you are completely ready. Here are a few basic things to keep in mind when attempting your early shots:

1 Play with colours, textures and shapes and try combining them to create amazing art on a plate. This doesn't mean you insert the whole rainbow in your shot. Monochromes also make for great images provided you closely observe the effects of light and shadow on different textures.

2 Keep the function of ingredients and flavour in mind when creating balance. Make sure every ingredient and element has a role to play. Don't add something just to fill up space. Having too many unnecessary ingredients can clutter a dish.

3 Plate food in odd numbers - particularly finger food. The mind somehow does not feel satiated with an even number. Observe this when you eat out next... dimsums



or pakoras always come in odd numbers.

4 Choose the right plate and the right sized plate. Don't try plating a main course in a side plate - even for a close-up shot. And different soups are served in different types of bowls. Make sure you read up on things. Sure, you can play around with crockery, but make sure you know the rules thoroughly before attempting to break away.

5 Choose a complementary plate colour. Even if your theme may be a splash of colours, make sure the colour of the plate does not clash with the colour of the food. Though white and black generally go with all foods, there are exceptions.

6 Plate with a clock in mind. Place the main hero of your shot at the 6 o' clock position, so it is most prominent in your shot. Let the least important element be farthest from the eye.

7 Use moist ingredients as your base. Sauces - whether thick or thin - will anyway drip to the bottom of the plate or bowl, but they will make the solid elements look messy. Added to that is the fact that they will mask the solid elements thus losing out on texture play. Building the solids on a sauce base will give you more control till you get a hang of how to create good drips **S**

The Gentleman Chef

—By Mike Fernandes

The story of the pond will keep recurring every now and then. Water seems to attract me everywhere I go. If you believe in the elements of fire, air, sky, earth and water, they all connect in intrinsic ways.

All journeys start with growing up and working to create your dream life. But the desire of searching for oneself comes to everyone at different stages in their life, making them go on yet another journey. I found mine in the jungles of Central India. You can find a bit of yourself in a crow, a tree, within a cacophony of noise or within silence.

The silence of the jungle is beautiful. You only have to immerse yourself within it to find out what it is saying to you. I first heard that silence up in the Himalayas. That time, the sound scared me and we left the hotel earlier

than expected. I cannot explain it but it was a lonely sound. Several trips again into the mountains and I accepted it and listened.

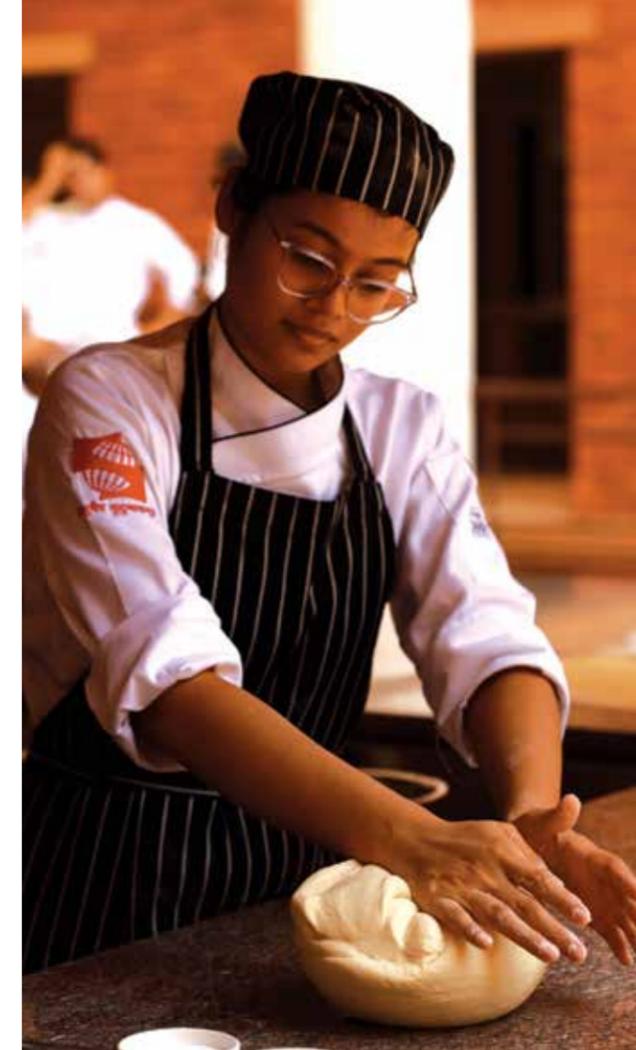
It's like listening to a jazz band playing on an old turntable. You listen to the music. Each musician supports the other. Each having his few moments of glory in a solo and each returning to the tune at hand. It's a symphony of sound that takes you into another realm, and unconsciously, I begin comparing the world around the pond to a kitchen.

I think back to the days of kitchen discipline one learnt under. It was like a family, the senior chefs headed the family and tried to parent the youngsters in the best way they knew – sometimes using a verbal thrashing to drive a point home. Senior chefs were so confused when leading teams that they never really taught the juniors. Leadership was taught by intimidation and fear, by yelling and humiliating, just like an overzealous perfectionist parent. Those days have changed.

Through gentle training and teamwork a silent kitchen is not that hard to achieve. Within the pond there are systems and rules and it's no different in the restaurant or kitchen. The rules are simple like every symbiotic relationship – a give and take. Just like at the pond, it's important to make sure everyone knows his role to play in the order of things. This breaks down the noise and confusion and brings about a calmer chef. You get rid of the religion and the politics and raise them well and you can achieve miracles... you can achieve a Gentleman Chef.

To create the Gentleman Chef persona, you have to treat the staff as such. Training and moulding them to be more than just chefs, making them proud of their uniform and giving them respect so that food of a high degree is delivered. Showing them how to take inspiration from someone else.

So taking a bit out of life's book at the pond, just as with any creature in the wild, a chef who is mindful of his environment, will only set out to create and discover. His home life, his aches, his pains, his worries, does not enter into the work space. All that remains is the here and now and the art and craft behind food. **S**



PORTUGAL

“Vá para fora, cá dentro” - take a staycation

The Diversity And Richness Of Portuguese Cuisine Brings Together Family And Friends says Claudia Matias, VisitPortugal Director in India

Portugal's cuisine is as rich and varied as its seven regions and contrasts. Each is unique and its richness comes either if cooked with one of the most distinctive features of Portuguese cuisine coming from the sea, or olive oil of prime quality which is part of every dish. Cod reigns the Portuguese cuisine, and according to Portuguese tradition we have a cod recipe for each day of the year.

The Mediterranean Diet, classified as World Heritage by UNESCO, is part of the identity of Portuguese gastronomy. Its core is made of plants, including vegetables, fruit, good quality bread

and largely unprocessed cereals, dried and fresh vegetables (beans, chickpeas, broad beans, etc.), dried fruits and nuts (walnuts, almonds, chestnuts, raisins, etc.), but also the quintessential olive oil as the main source of fat, and fish in lieu of red meat.

Grilled fish, always fresh like the seafood from the Atlantic coast, is recognized worldwide. 'Cataplana' or 'Caldeira' (rich fish soup) grilled sardines (seasonal, only during summer) 'Amêijoas à Bulhão Pato' simply clams, garlic, white wine and cilantro adding flavour to this dish that's a national favourite, named after the 19th-century Lisbon poet Bulhão Pato, all are excellent choices.

Traditional and simple home made



food can be 'Peixinhos da Horta', green beans fried in a tempura-like batter and seasoned with garlic powder, simple and tasty, along with rice or potatoes.

Each dish is matched to the right wine and Portuguese love sharing wine with family and friends during long and joyful meals. The whole country produces wine among hundreds of native grapes (more than 800) like Tinta Barroca, Rabigato, Touriga Nacional, Baga, Alvarinho, many of which directly descend from pre-historic vine plants that developed in the country and have endured thousands of years of human presence and climate changes. Wine pairs well with cheese, and Queijo da Serra (mountain cheese from Serra da Estrela) tops the bill. All the cheeses

from Centro de Portugal, Alentejo and the Azores are delicious.

The Portuguese sweets are divine and full of heritage. The dishes have been created by nuns in the olden times, while making their recipes of sugar, eggs and almond in the seclusion of their cloisters. One such popular delicacy is 'pastel de nata' (custard tart), which is a must. It is simply delicious with coffee.

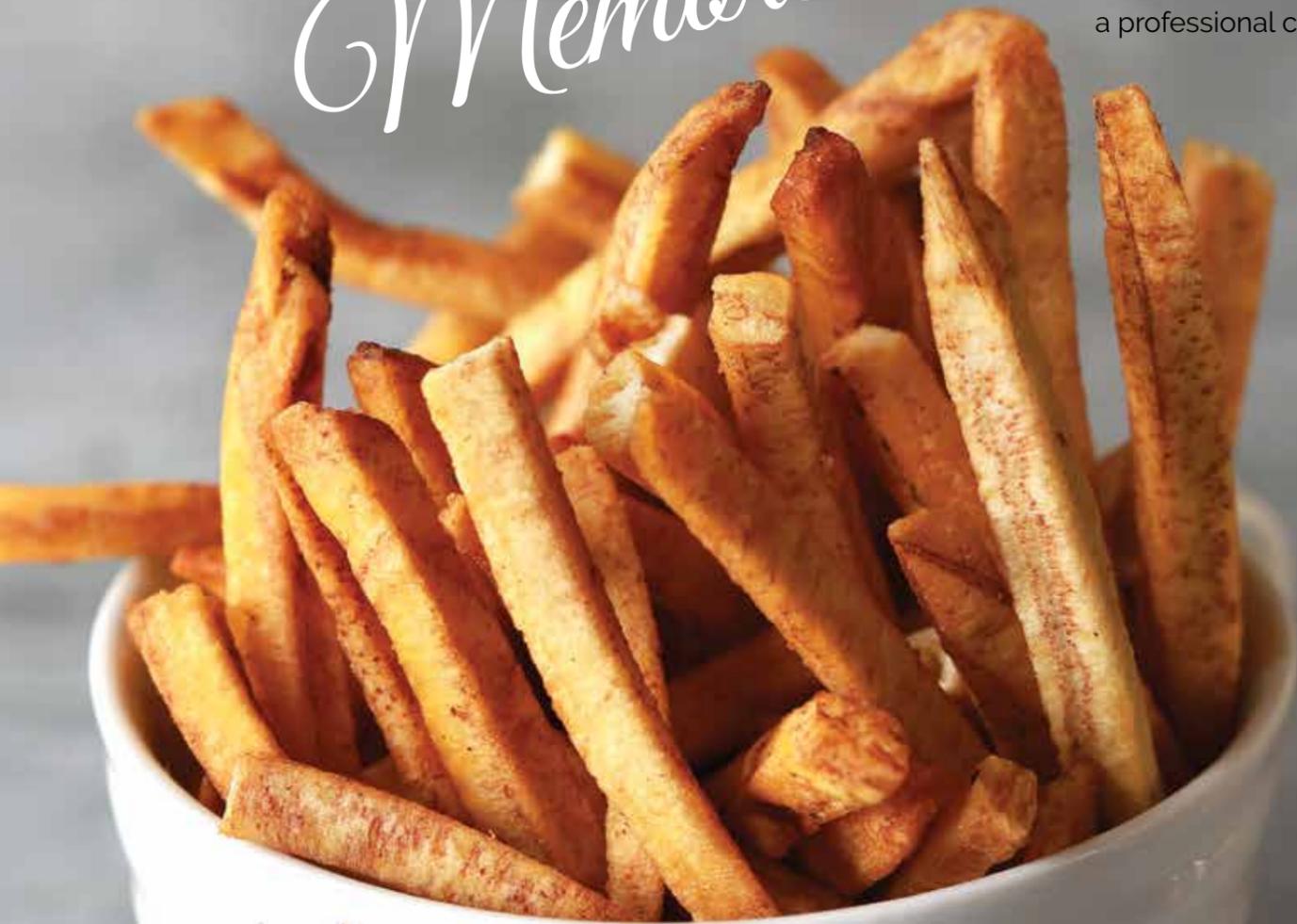
Gastronomy and wine are becoming increasingly relevant and have a cultural element contributing towards the economic development in the Portuguese territory as well as the assertion of Portugal's identity. From 2015 Portugal has more than doubled the number of star restaurants and restaurants with Michelin stars. Hence at the end of a meal, Portuguese enjoy a Port or Madeira, fortified wines that have been Portugal brand ambassadors for centuries. **S**

Chip and Dip Into Memories



BY URVI KHANNA

The consistently curious food media enthusiast and a professional chef



The beauty of the human experience is to be able to see the same things differently; the understanding and insight you are left with, can often surprise you.

Bangalore has meant many things for me before- pitstop to college, home to a friend or relative. Quite recently, it is now home. Over the last couple of years, I have thoroughly enjoyed living in different cities and exploring the food that satiates the locals- be it the kathi rolls of Kolkata; the vada pav & grilled sandwiches of Mumbai or the parathas and rajma chawal of Delhi, amongst many others. What piqued my interest on a casual walk along the busy roads of suburban Bengaluru was that, every kilometre or so there was a small shop with a mouth-wateringly colourful grid on display with the title 'Hot Chips' written. The variety on display with different shapes, colours, sizes of chips irrevocably generated an involuntary urge to binge-eat my way through the whole display.

I wanted to know more..

I interacted with peers, strangers, and many business owners from different parts of southern India to understand what Hot Chips meant to them and how the culture of snacking evolved in the last 2 decades.

There are more than 10 types of savoury snacks available with different vegetables, cereals & nuts such as rice, wheat, banana, tapioca, jackfruit, peanuts and sesame with variety of flavours like red chili masala, south Indian green masala dominant of green chilli and curry leaves, tomato masala etc. Hot Chips offers a different universe of flavour and diversity in snack; often found close to local alcohol stores, and hot chips

serve as a snack for the evening's glass.

These started out as a single kadhai on a portable LPG burner into which



a cook would deftly slice and fry potato, banana, tapioca etc.

There are several shops that are at least 20 years old, which makes the existence of hot chips relevant to multiple generations and forms part of the culture of snacking quite importantly. These were small stalls along the main roads of each locality where fresh banana and potato chips were hand cut & fried behind the display counters of these shops. Gradually, over 10 years, mechanised slicing began. Few shops still practice manual slicing. Most businesses operate through a satellite central facility where a 'master' skilfully makes all the products barring the potato chips. The most notable conversations were with a lady Jayanthi who ran her family business for over 2 decades and a gentleman Ganesh, a civil engineer turned businessman. His shop continues to make their potato and banana chips manually using a slicing tool. He began online delivery, aimed at improved distribution. It was interesting to note his insight on selling hot chips in multiple cities in different states. He mentioned that the offerings are mostly consistent across the borders, creating a connection across the region.

Hot chips are affordable, bold, fresh & local. They are more than just a snack - they resonate an emotion; one that transports people to a moment in their lives that was slow, peaceful, joyous or boisterous and energetic -intoxicated or childish. This reassures the culinary enthusiasts that mass produced fast food has a strong contender in these local snacks that evoke a strong sense of nostalgia and happy memories. Hot chips mean tippling snacks for some, while for some they are a childhood birthday party snack; for some-a snack for a social gathering and for some, an everyday tea-time snack.

The power of food is tremendous, it can impact an entire day which adds up to a strong influence in our lives. How a small jackfruit or cassava chip can enhance a dull evening or transport you to a memory of simpler times that warms your soul.

There are very few things that a human allows to impact them so deeply and Hot Chips certainly wields that power over our minds, hearts, and soul. **S**



CHARMING, BEWITCHING, AN UNPARALLELED ROMANTIC GETAWAY



Raffles Udaipur, nestled amidst the resplendent Aravalis and the tranquil Udai Sagar Lake, offers a romantic haven that envelops guests in a cocoon of love and serenity. Here, amidst the ethereal beauty of the island, guests can revel in bliss and bask in the divine essence of their surroundings.

As with all Raffles properties, the hotel embodies the spirit of its surroundings, exuding an opulent and intimate personality that sets the stage for an unparalleled romantic getaway. From celestial meals under the moon to visionary destination dining against the backdrop of the majestic hills, Raffles Udaipur offers breathtaking moments for couples to cherish.

The hotel boasts an array of dining options, each with its own unique tale to tell. While one transports guests to the illustrious pages of Indian history and allows them to sample the lost royal recipes

at Sawai Kitchen, an Indian specialty restaurant, the other whisks them away to the Long Bar, a modern yet classic bar experience where they can enjoy an upbeat evening and trend-setting cocktails.

The Raffles Spa offers a private escape, opening doors to emotional well-being through authentic treatments and personalised programmes. In the midst of getaway of a lifetime. Enter a state of utmost peace and relaxation with a therapeutic wellbeing treatment at the Raffles Spa. You and your loved one can discover a mind, body and soul connection, set on the most magnificent island of serenity at Raffles Udaipur.

Raffles Udaipur is a mystical oasis that promises an unforgettable romantic stay, steeped in richness and diversity. Amidst the ethereal beauty of the surroundings, guests can indulge in a symphony of experiences that evoke the very essence of love and serenity. **S**



Mugdha
Sudhir



A Sip of the Soil

found them in a dusty box in a corner of the old cupboard that hadn't been opened in years. The apartment that we had earlier used as a studio for our work had been rented out to college students with the condition that they leave the cupboard alone. I don't know what prompted us to go back and see what was still locked up there. But as soon as I opened the box, I was glad we did.

As I pulled away the top flap, I was transported to several places all at once. I didn't know which memory to revisit first. There must've been two dozen kulhads (earthen glasses) in that box, all collected over the course of our travels across India. Each one a different shape, size, colour, even texture.

I picked each one up, held its mouth to my nose and breathed deeply. Despite having washed them after every use, I could still distinctly smell whatever each kulhad had held the first time I found it..

My fingers traced the large pinkish orange kulhads.

Suddenly I could feel the April heat and

brightness of a small lane in Jaipur – an entire lane filled with lassi and chhaas sellers.

Sitting cross-legged on a stone platform with piles of kulhads in front of

them, they poured out sweet lassi or salty buttermilk from large earthen

urns kept beside them. Each person sold

their wares in a glass that differed slightly in design from the others. The chhaas my colleague and I had enjoyed had been slightly sour and flavoured with black salt. We had reached the spot at a different time the next day, only to be greeted by an empty lane. "They don't sit here all day. When they run out of the beverage, they go home", a snack vendor had told us when we enquired.

Next came squat cup-shaped pieces we had picked up on the highway enroute to Corbett National Park on a cold January morning. We had stopped for tea. But just as we were walking towards the dhaba, a small girl standing at a makeshift stall offered us lassi. Something about the way she asked had made us forego our craving for hot tea and despite the chill in the air, we settled for lassi. It was smooth and thick, and carried the distinct flavour of smoke from the wood fire over which the milk for the curd had been boiled. That smoky aroma somehow made us feel warm inside.

The tall rich brown kulhads that could hold almost a litre at once could only come from Amritsar. We had been treated to thick-as-a-custard lassi blended and topped with crumbled

khoya pedhas. We had been a bit wary of the sugar rush that would come on but were pleasantly surprised to see that the yoghurt hadn't been sweetened on account of the pedhas that were blended with it. I still remember skipping lunch, tea and dinner that day; waking up the next morning with immense pride at having finished the whole glassful at one go!

There was a pile of flat bowl-like kulhads too, all of them chipped and cracked. The memory made me laugh. We had smuggled these from a small home-stay kind of eatery outside

Ahmedabad in Gujarat. They were filled with curd. We had, as usual, been on a "budget" shoot and the photographer had been excited to see them because they were the perfect props for the shot he had in mind. So we had quietly wrapped them in a newspaper and smuggled them out, consoling our embarrassed selves that we had only "borrowed them" to create a good shot. That very evening, we had set up the shot on a rickety box under a banyan tree. It was my bad luck that I had tripped over something and fallen, upsetting the box, so everything crashed to the ground, chipping all the bowls. I had looked up expecting deep frowns but was met with a wide smile instead. "Great! These look even more rustic! Good job!!" The photographer had been right... the shot later made it to a magazine cover. We had brought back that pile simply as a souvenir of that day. The light beige kulhads that came with a sweet, salty, fizzy

shikanji were there too. I had completely forgotten about them!

There were even a few slightly misshapen ones, as if they had been made in a hurry. My team had enjoyed sugarcane juice from these when travelling to Agra. We had passed by a rice field and tried our hand at sowing rice, learning from the amused farmers who couldn't understand why a bunch of city people had alighted from their car, taken their shoes off, and marched through the soft squelchy mud and requested them to "please teach us how you sow the rice". That had been a hot October morning. After having spent almost an hour with the farmers, we were heading back to the car, when one of the men asked us if we liked sugarcane juice. When we had replied with an excited YES,

he told us exactly where to find his friend's cart. We had never before felt so grateful for

something to drink.

At last came a pile of tiny cups that had barely held a mouthful of tea or coffee or cool water. We had collected these from the tiny tea shops and water kiosks dotting almost every highway and village road in North India. And two dainty kulhads with a delicate shell border that had given me my very first taste of creamy 'caramelly' mishti doi in a tiny shop in Kolkata's Gariahaat.

Every time we had got our hands on a kulhad, we had carefully brought it back. Many times we had stopped at places and forced ourselves to drink something only to be able to bring back a kulhad – because the seller would refuse to sell us fresh empty pieces. Each of those kulhads, now dusty, had been part of innumerable food shoots. They had travelled from their place of origin to be featured in cookbooks, print ads and recipe videos. Countless times, they had been picked up and used by famous hands who only looked upon them as props that made a setting look organic. But to me, they held fond memories.

I hesitated for a moment, wondering if they too would join the small pile of old, chipped plates and bowls that had been photographed too much. Thankfully, I was allowed to put them in a better box to be taken to the new studio. **S**

THE QUEST, THE JOURNEY THEY CONTINUE



VISHNUDEEP DIXIT

A Photographer and budding cinematographer, based out of Madhya Pradesh and with a penchant for travel. A naturalist at Denwa Backwater Escape a part of (Pugdundee group)

Camera Gear

- Red Cinema Camera
- Arri Camera
- Canon 80D
- Varied Canon Lenses 10-18 mm | 18-135mm
- Tamron 150-600mm



IKAI ASAI

Ikai Asai is a table of inspiration created in collaboration with artisans and artists from India. Contemporary design interventions give each of our craft forms a modern narrative on your everyday essentials.

We work closely with chefs, both in India and globally to design and deliver high quality artisanal products that are specially designed to meet their needs through a unique material palette, focused on craft and artisanal products.

We Co-Create Products With Chefs To Build Experiential Product Lines That Are Specific To Their Restaurants And Dishes. Our Products Are Aesthetically Pleasing Handcrafted By The Deft Hands Of Our Artisan Families From Across India. We Are Always Open To Working With Boutique Restaurants.



**Level 17, Sunshine Tower, Senapati Bapat Marg,
Dadar West, Parel, Mumbai, Maharashtra 400013
Phone: 086938 6204**