

BUKHARA



THE MARKET

Step onto the deep green Udaipur marble floors of any Bukhara restaurant around South Africa and feel the opulence of a classical India far removed from the shocking pink fabrics and incense sticks of Bollywood.

Bukhara has set a new standard in Indian cuisine in South Africa, taking the eating culture from the corner curry house concept to an upmarket and modern interpretation through superior design, ambience and product.

Bukhara began delighting palates in Church Street, Cape Town and continued building on its successful formula at the Grand West Casino in Cape Town, then in Stellenbosch and Johannesburg, next to the grand and elegant Michelangelo Hotel.

The Bukhara formula for success is simple: Carefully choose an exquisite location; prepare a range of the freshest, most flavoursome Indian food in an elegant environment; and ensure consistency of standards throughout the chain. Each restaurant has the same basic décor: Burnt chilli walls, bespoke chairs and tables designed especially for Bukhara and made in Rajasthan. All this is offset by Hahndi lamps that cast a circular glow on the ceilings and help to create a rich and elegant feel in every restaurant.

The same design and décor has been carried through in each venue, creating maximum

recognition and comfort for regular customers who eat at the various locations. Bukhara has created a style that is clearly defined, making each separate restaurant an extension of the brand with a look and feel that is unmistakable.

Over the last ten years, Bukhara has educated the South African palate by introducing new styles of cooking and also by importing new previously unavailable varieties of spices. The open kitchens were a first for Indian restaurants in South Africa, showcasing the cooking styles as well as creating a more interactive and theatrical experience for diners.

Highly energetic and motivated members of staff create a buzz as they cook and deliver hundreds of meals every day on demand. Bukhara's payoff line, "Arguably the finest Indian cuisine on planet earth", reveals the company's commitment to consistently delivering a top quality product without compromise.

The clientele ranges from the rich and famous - government ministers, CEOs of large companies and movie stars - to those who want to escape into an evening of culinary delights and a genteel atmosphere. Bukhara caters for vegetarians, as well as those not too fond of hot foods. Many of its dishes are gently spiced for maximum taste rather than the spicy heat South Africans usually associate with Indian cuisine. Bukhara also prides itself on award winning wine list along with enormous selection of whiskies and brandies to provide top notch service to their discerning customers.

Bukhara's customer base is largely upmarket. While the brand sees itself as "small but strong", its appeal lies in the uncompromising consistency of its food. It is the food itself that has a high recognition factor, and chefs are rotated between the various branches to ensure that each chef delivers the precise product every other branch is serving.

To access a wider market the company produces frozen gourmet meals and cook-in sauces which retail through supermarket chains. The company also has a catering division, specialising in the setting up of an entire kitchen with ovens and chefs for banquets and occasions.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Bukhara is privately owned and operated by Dr Sabi Sabharwal. In its ten years of business - starting with the company's flagship restaurant in Church Street in Cape Town's central business district (CBD) - it now operates five restaurants and a central kitchen. The company's staff compliment increased from 35 members in 1995 to 300 in 2005.

Bukhara has been named most popular Indian Restaurant in South Africa by food critics for some years, and has also received many fine dining awards.

The company's training and development programmes have allowed skills to be transferred from top Indian chefs to the local workforce.

HISTORY

In 1995 Dr Sabi Sabharwal, a theoretical particle physicist married South African Elana and relocated to Cape Town. It was there that he saw a need - and a vast opportunity - for a high quality restaurant serving Indian cuisine.

The original Bukhara opened in the Cape Town CBD and was the first restaurant in South Africa to specialise in tandoori, Indian barbeque. The restaurant began to be frequented by parliamentarians, and word of its excellence spread throughout Cape Town and up to Johannesburg. It also began to be seen as a place to take high-profile customers and business associates.

In 1999, Bukhara's central kitchen opened specifically for the procurement of top quality produce, training, development of recipes and the standardisation of product. Research began into the area of retail products to broaden the company's market and satisfy consumer demand.

The year 2000 saw the opening of Bukhara at Sun International's Grand West Casino and Entertainment World. Given the venue, this particular restaurant differs marginally from the others in its opulence. While the food, the Udaipur floors and Rajasthan furnishings are identical to the other branches, there is a three metre by four metre antique Indian doorway, as well as a marble fountain at the entrance setting it apart from the other locations.





In 2001, Bukhara opened another branch on the famous Stellenbosch wine route. This was followed by the most recent branch at the entrance to the Michelangelo Hotel in Sandton's Nelson Mandela Square.

2005 saw the company launch its new brand of restaurants in Cape Town. Specialising in Asian Tapas, Haiku is set to answer a call for the same consistency and quality the company is famous for, but this time with an Asian touch.

THE PRODUCT

Bukhara specialises in various methods of Indian cooking, all with a slant to north Indian origins. These include:

- Singri - where marinated meats are cooked on twisting skewers over an open charcoal grill
- Tawa - meats and vegetables are seared on a heavy flat top grill over high heat to retain succulence and texture
- Tandoori - using special charcoal fired clay ovens, skewers of meat and vegetables are inserted and rotated to achieve optimal tenderness and flavour

Bukhara also offers the famous Dum style of cooking, a slow and gentle process creating the maximum infusion of flavours in sealed pots, as well as a specialised variety of curries that satisfy almost every palate time and again.

Also on offer from the company are the gourmet frozen meals and cook-in sauces

available at various supermarkets, and Bukhara's catering division that specialises in setting up an entire kitchen with ovens and chefs for banquets and occasions.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Research and development for new products for the Indian cuisine arena is ongoing, with frequent trips to India to investigate new possibilities for the South African market.

The company's first new brand restaurant, Haiku, opened in August 2005, specialising in Asian tapas.

Food safety programmes and training modules developed by Bukhara's head office are implemented and constantly upgraded to ensure the highest quality food, service and dining experience. Stringent safety measures are being implemented to ensure a world class cold chain and to become one of the first HACCP certified restaurants

The company is presently searching for suitable venues overseas in order to expand the brand into new markets.

PROMOTION

While Bukhara's biggest marketing success is word of mouth from satisfied clients, the company does advertise on an ad hoc basis. Full page advertisements in carefully chosen media are used. These include the South African Airways in-flight magazine Sawubona, as well as other airlines' in-flight magazines. A mouth watering website may

be found at www.bukhara.com

BRAND VALUES

The values most closely associated with the Bukhara brand are:

- Consistency
- Quality
- Consumer recognition
- Innovation
- Service

Bukhara promises its clientele a consistently good dining experience, generating a trust factor among clients who choose to return to the same venue over and over, as well as those who will visit the various Bukhara restaurants on their travels.

Diners are assured of the same exceptional standards in every venue, with the food tasting exactly the same across the country. Top class Indian chefs undergo at least four months of training at Bukhara during induction, in order for every chef to guarantee customer satisfaction.

At Bukhara, it's all about the experience. From the furnishings to the food, diners are made to feel as if they are guests in a Haveli – a house of nobility.



THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT BUKHARA

- Bukhara's roots are from a restaurant called Tandoor, which opened in New Delhi in the sixties and was owned by Dr Sabharwal's family. Tandoor Group were the pioneers and innovators of modern tandoori recipes, influencing this style of cooking world wide. Tandoor was hailed as the top Indian restaurant in India by Craig Claiborne, the famous New York Times food critic.
- When the first five star hotels opened in New Delhi in the eighties, most of them, including the Hyatt, Oberoi and Sheraton had their Indian restaurants opened by Head Chefs from the Tandoor Group. Bukhara Cape Town was also set up by some of the original Tandoor Group chefs