

interview

Why 'fusion' could energise the chutneys fixture



A multicultural nation demands a smarter approach to the pickles & chutney's market, says Curry Cuisine co-founder Paresh Tejura

By MICK WHITWORTH

Retailers could never complain about lack of choice in pickles & chutneys – there are enough brands out there to fill a small shop. But have buyers grown so familiar with chutneys that they've stopped looking for new ways to sell them?

Paresh Tejura, co-founder of Yorkshire-based Curry Cuisine, says changes in Britain's cultural and ethnic make-up are creating scope for a new approach to the "very traditional" pickles & chutneys market. But while producers like Mr Vikki's and Hawkhead Relish, both based in Cumbria, are tapping regional Asian cuisines to create new, subtly spiced sauces and pickles, he reckons most delis still think of Indian pickles only as hot accompaniments to fiery curries.

This means they're missing out on sales both to young foodies from ethnic communities, who like adding their own cultural twist to British food, and to other Brits keen to explore the subtleties of Asian, Middle Eastern or Afro-Caribbean cuisine.

"Some delis are so focused on traditional recipes they're not thinking about the way demographics have changed," he told *FFD*.

"There are almost two distinct camps: people doing really hot, kick-you-in-the-pants pickles, or people doing traditional British-style chutney. As the market evolves and grows there needs to be a shift towards more fusion-style products. And those could appeal to the younger generation who think pickles & chutneys are for grannies."

For example, says Tejura, his own Kickin' Coriander dressing can be mixed with mayonnaise or yoghurt and used in a deli-counter coleslaw, garnished with fresh coriander leaves. And a spicy fruit jam, such as Hawkhead Relish's strawberry & black pepper, can be paired with strong cheddar or spiced meats such as chorizo to create a sweet/hot flavour combination that straddles more cuisines than the standard cheese & ham samie.

Curry Cuisine was set up by Tejura and his wife Pretti, who runs 'curry clubs' and courses for both amateur and professional cooks at venues ranging from the three-AA-rosette Swinton Park castle hotel near Ripon to Halifax deli-café Deli-cious.

They began producing chutneys and dry spice mixes to sell on the back of their courses, and now make more than two dozen recipes in a 1,200 sq ft food unit in Dewsbury, using largely local ingredients. "I obviously can't buy mangos and limes locally," says Paresh Tejura, who previously ran food factories for major manufacturers, "but within two years I expect to be sourcing 80% of my ingredients within 20-30 miles."

Tejura has been working with Yorkshire speciality cheese distributor Crier & Stott to develop food-matching ideas using Curry Cuisine products. They have found that its spiced strawberry chutney, which has the smoky flavour of black cardamom, can be paired successfully with brie, camembert or white Stilton, while rhubarb & mango pickle works well with strong cheddars or Swaledale Blue.

Tejura even sees potential to persuade more British Asians to eat cheese by creating and marketing the right chutney recipes. "How often do you see a cheeseboard in a good Indian restaurant? If they could order it with a slightly spicier accompaniment then a new market opens up for the cheese guys too."

The population is changing, he says, but it's a fact that is sometimes forgotten by busy shop owners. "If small retailers are all vying for the same mainstream market then they're missing an opportunity."

www.currycuisine.co.uk

suppliers

Olives Et Al looks for delis with 'attitude'

Dorset-based Olives Et Al has launched a Deli of the Year competition alongside its annual Purple Love Week promotion, and says it's looking for shops that have the right 'deli attitude' – whether or not they have the word 'delicatessen' above the door.

Managing director Giles Henschel said the winner might be "a farm shop with an amazing deli counter, a village store with a lively deli atmosphere, or a corner shop that prides itself on its deli range".

Run by Olives Et Al with participation from other fine food suppliers, Purple Love Week is promoted as a national food tasting event, designed to get shoppers supporting their local independents.

A number of producers are running money-off and free product promotions to help delis stage free tastings during the week, which this year runs from February 13-21.

The search for Olives Et Al's Deli of the Year will continue until June, during which time delis can put themselves forward and encourage customers to nominate them too. A panel of judges will then shortlist and visit the finalists.

There will be regional awards, but the overall winner will be invited to Spain to join the olive harvest, learn more about olives from experts on the ground and bottle their own 'first pressing' olive oil.

Henschel said: "This is not about the best looking or the smartest deli or farm shop – it's about a real sense of pride in giving customers an experience, one which they will want to repeat, and above all a feeling that the food has been chosen by someone who understands food and has a great attitude to it."

www.olivesetal.co.uk

payment card security

RCS package helps stores fight credit card fraud

EPOS specialist Retail Computer Solutions (RCS) has launched a secure credit card payment package that it says will help larger stores comply with new anti-fraud rules set by the credit and debit card industry.

Retailers have been told by the Payment Card Industry Security Council that they must comply with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) to protect sensitive cardholder data, including card numbers and other personal information. PCI compliance ensures the retailer is taking steps to protect personal data from fraudulent use.

James Gillam of RCS told *FFD* that while the PCI DSS is not a legal requirement, loss of sensitive data through failing to comply could leave retailers facing "significant penalties" from payment brands such as VISA and MasterCard. The new RCS

package was "one of the UK's first true secure credit card payment solutions", he said, removing the need to store a card's security information on the retailer's network.

It involves installing a special chip-and-PIN terminal linked to the RCS EPOS & Stock Control system. Costs start at around £19.50 per month per terminal.

The steps retailers must take under PCI DSS depend on the number of card transactions they process annually. Streamline, which provides discounted card handling services for Guild of Fine Food members, said smaller operators should not be affected since data is captured at the bank rather than by the store.

A useful guide to the PCI DSS can be found on Streamline's website.

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