

DINING OUT

The Daily Star

A Special Supplement

October 15, 1997

Bangladeshi Chefs Are Good — Weiss

The catering business in Bangladesh has been growing significantly over the years. The people of this country go head over heels on any deliciously prepared food whether local or any international cuisine.

With the opening of many restaurants in Dhaka serving international cuisines, foreign chefs have started coming in. Walter Weiss is one of those foreigners who has come to Bangladesh to share his expertise with the local chefs. He is the Executive chef of The Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka.

Walter Weiss was interviewed by The Daily Star to know his feeling about the catering business in Bangladesh.

Daily Star (DS): When did you join the catering industry and what led you to take the decision?

Walter Weiss (WW): I went to the catering school at the age of fourteen and joined the industry in 1974. There were two guiding factors which made me join the catering industry. They are creativity and the opportunity to go around the world. By saying creativity, I mean developing new dishes within the best of my abilities and not going by recipes found in the books.

DS: Before coming to Bangladesh where were you working and how long have you been in this country?

WW: I was serving in the Pan Pacific Chain Hotel in Malaysia and I have completed one

year in Bangladesh.

DS: What do you think of the catering business in Bangladesh?

WW: I think the catering business in this country is developing but it needs to be more strong in terms of infrastructure support before it flourishes. When I came to Bangladesh, the first problem I encountered was the availability of vegetables throughout the year. All vegetables are seasonal and prices of the vegetables go very high during the off-seasons. So we have to calculate and plan six months in advance. When it comes to standard of chef, I have to say that your local chefs are good.

DS: What differences do you find in the future of the local catering business of Bangladesh compared to that of other countries?

WW: About the negative differences I would say, consistent supply of goods through-out the year, hygienic conditions in most restaurants and lengthy procedures in shipment of food. About advantages, I think people of this country have high motivation, hardly any labour turn-over and reasonably educated workforce.

DS: How promising do you think is the future of the local catering business in Bangladesh?

WW: I think the local catering business would be very promising, if there are improvements in few areas, when I came here, I visited a lot of posh restaurants in the Gulshan, Banani areas. I found that some of the restaurants also boast a lot of dishes in the menu card, but actually they don't have even half of it. My question is if you don't have those dishes, why include it in the menu just to make it look big.

The government should announce the hotel and catering business as an individual industry and assist it with other support industries such as strong tourism industry. The government can easily turn Cox's Bazar, Sunderbans and Sylhet into attractive tourist places by building resorts and other facilities of International Standard.

I was surprised to hear that Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel and Hotel Sheraton are the only two luxury hotels which have been present in the whole country for more than two decades. I'm sure that people must be feeling bored to go to these two hotels over and over again. More hotels should be built creating competition in the field thus contribute in ensuring quality food and service.

DS: What are the objectives of Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel in meeting the requirements of the food-lovers?

WW: The objectives are customer satisfaction, excellent hygiene conditions, reasonable priced food and serene atmosphere. I would like to inform the food-lovers that taking food in Sonargaon is less expensive than other posh restaurants of Dhaka. In our restaurants like Jharna, the lowest priced set meal is Tk. 395 while at Ciao, the lowest priced menu is Tk. 295. One should note that the meal comes with soup, salad and of course the main-course. And the price is inclusive of tax and service charges. While in some other restaurants, you would be ending in paying higher amount of money. So next time when you think of eating out, think twice.

DS: What is your favorite Bangladeshi cuisine?

WW: Infact I have quite a few. Tandoori Beef Bhuna, Fish Dopiaza, Khechuri are some of them. The desserts are tasty but very sweet.

DS: Do you have anything to say to the food lovers?

WW: Eat well, eat delicious food but always look out for healthy, balanced diet.

Delicacies of Restaurants in Dhaka

Chinese Cuisines

- Cathay — Snow Crisp Shrimp Szechwan Dry Beef
- Chang Pei — Tom Yan Nuea, King Prawn with Chilli
- Green Valley — Crispy Chinese Cabbage Dumplings.
- Hong Kong — Peking hot and sour soup, Chinese leaf
- Olive Garden — Fried Fish on Special iron boat, Roast Duck
- Panda Garden — King prawn Sichuan style, Hot & Sour soup
- Steamboat — Steamboat
- Sung Palace — Grilled King Prawn, Thai Soup with coconut milk

Korean and Japanese Cuisines

- Jharna Restaurant — Jharna Surf and Turf, Grilled Seabass, Sauteed Garlic lamb.
- (Hotel Sonargaon) New Arrang — Yaug Jang Pee, Shredded Beef with Leek, Cabbage Kimchi.
- Seoul Garden — Self grilled — cuttlefish and beef.
- Wakana — Pickled mackerel sushi, Steamed rice with beef and onions.
- Young Bin Kwan — Cooking at Table-take your pick.

Indonesian and Thai Cuisines

- Chilis — Tom Kah Kai, Grilled whole crab with lemon
- Kinara — Satay, Seaweed and beancurd soup
- La Luna — La Luna soup, Hot pot
- Lemon Grass — Kang Keng with oyster sauce, Steamed pomfret with pickled plum
- Swadee — Fish of the day
- Seafood centre — Consomme with shredded selly, Special seafood curry.
- Skyroom — Top hot prawn and vegetable, Fried Pomfret in Balinese sauce
- Thai House — Pad Pak Boong, Satay
- Xepiel — Steamed red snapper with chilli lime spices, Thai coconut soup.
- Gourmet Garden — Chicken Dry Red Chilli, Prawn Gerlic Sauce

Indian and Bengali Cuisines

- Sajna — Sajna Special Biryani, Nargisi Kofta, Mysore Masala Dosa
- Shahana (Hotel Purbani) — Fish curry, Chicken Rezala
- Shehnai — Fish Dopiaza, Dum Alu Kashmiri
- Tandoori — Mutton Kebab

Italian and Mexican Cuisines

- Don Giovanni's — Sizzler — Steaks, Grilled Squid.
- El Toro — Enchilada, Quesadilla, Burrito de blanca
- Spagetti Jazz — Biancanere Pizza, Tagliatelle
- Ciao — Panna proscutto fungi (pasta)
- (Hotel Sonargaon) Tiro Pasta, Pizza

Other International Cuisines

- Aangan — Gado Gado, Fillet Steak
- Bitlika (Hotel Sheraton) — Steak Sandwich, Buffet
- Faya Lobi — Mixed sizzling platter
- Karwan Sarai — Burgundy Snails, North Bengal lamb chops

(Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel)

- Kintuki — Ice-cream in a waffle cone
- Yeung Hung — Fried Gang Gong, Duck with Red Curry Coconut milk.
- Ninfas — Crab in yellow curry
- The Vintage Room — Rack of lamb resto style, Curried quail salad
- (Hotel Sheraton) White Castle — Luxury lobster, Cardon Bleu

Gourmet Garden — Specializes in Thai & Szu-Chuan Dishes

Promises to serve success on every plate

Dhaka city can now boast having a number of international class restaurants of various sizes. This has come right at a time when gourmets were craving for excellence in pleasure of eating out and availability of exotic gastronomic delights.

Gourmet Garden situated on Road No 27 at Dhanmondi's push location is a moderate sized restaurant specialising in Thai and Szu-Chuan cuisine. Since its inception, this restaurant is thriving on its management's prudence to "Translate Good Food and Good Service into Reality".

Emphasis is given on cleanliness, customer preferences and serving delicious dishes in an exclusive ambience. It is a restaurant where each and every guest is attended with ut-

most care and Bangladeshi hospitality.

Waiters here will confidently recommend any item from its selective A-La-Carte menu. They also offer a choice of lunch time menu with over a dozen pre-plated one person dishes at an incredible budget price. Each of these plates contain over 4 (four) different items.

Gourmet Garden's salad spread and soup bowls along with its Thai cuisine have earned reputation and confidence of its clients. Its selection of ever succulent Sea Fish delicacies, Crabs, Vegetables, Szu-Chuan variety, and home made noodles never fail to tantalize a gourmet's taste buds. The restaurant's ability to offer exclusive meeting and dining rooms for groups of up to 20 persons has made it unique in Dhanmondi area.

Amrit — the Kashmiri Boat House Restaurant

Since a decade class restaurants are thriving. Different cuisines are introduced services are up graded and styles are more sophisticated. So far people have liked it and they demand more out of this service oriented business.

Food is always a sensitive thing and taste always differs from person to person.

Exclusive restaurants are more than a restaurant. Its a part of its clients daily life, they plan with it, their dates, ceremonies, appointments, family occasions, business deals, personal meetings and so on. Keeping every thing in our mind 'Amrit' is opened in the midst of so many good restaurants. We have tried our best to keep it most hygienic, completely insect & dust free, well maintained sanitations and disease free employees.

The menu is carefully selected and mastered by expert chefs. All the items are made with proper partitions and ingredients. The professional hands will cater any sort of in house or out house parties. Even the restaurant is ready for delivery services if it is required. The wooden floored spacious dining room can accommodate comfortably 80/90 persons sit down lunch/dinner at a time. The family room is made with the thought of 'Shikara' the Kashmiri house boat where a family can entertain themselves very leisurely.



An inner view of Amrit

The total conception of design is materialised by master craftsmen which took years to complete.

What ever is done, and effort whatever is taken and the every

moment which is spent just to please you, dear reader this restaurant is for you, whoever you are with deep appreciation — for without you, we would not, could not exist.

Don Giovanni — A Taste Of Mouth Watering Italian Cuisine

The restaurant business in Bangladesh has been experiencing tremendous growth in the last few years. Now that, people has become liberal in their food habits and venture out to experience cuisine of different tastes, the number of restaurants offering international cuisines has gone up. Be it Japanese or Korean or Italian or even Mexican, one can find everything now in Dhaka at an affordable price.

Don Giovanni is one of those restaurants, where you can sample Italian cuisine despite being miles away from Italy. When I asked Mr. Shabbir Ahmed Chowdhury, the proud owner of Don Giovanni, about the objectives of the restaurant, he answered confidently, "For the last ten years, I have been involved with the restaurant business. My first restaurant Tandoori opened in 1987 and it was one of the handful posh restaurants present at that time. Due to my business occupations, I had to go to different countries and incidently my favourite cuisine was Italian. So in 1991, I decided to open up an Italian restaurant and bring mouth-watering spghettis, pastas to the people of Bangladesh."



A guest playing piano at Don Giovanni.

1991 in Don Giovanni was a mere 5-10 per cent but today the ratio of local and foreign customers stand at a 50-50 level, when asked to comment on the stunning increase of local people in the restaurants, Mr Shabbir explained, "Eating-out culture has developed in the urban areas and the middle class people who used to sit at home and now venturing out to try new things. Everyone would be surprised to know that, home-service is becoming very popu-

lar and even in small parties, people are ordering our food rather than going through all the trouble to make it." When asked to comment on the opening of restaurants in every corner of Dhaka, Mr Shabbir said, "It is good that healthy competition is churning up and more educated people are coming into the restaurant business. But I don't have any fear of competition, because I believe in the phrase, survival

Continued on page 9

Sizzling Saturday Bar B Que Nights at Dhaka Sheraton



Guests of Saturday Night Bar-B-Que at Hotel Sheraton.

Dhaka Sheraton Hotel has introduced Sizzling Bar-B-Que evenings every Saturday from first week of October 1997 at the Pool Top Patio.

To give the residents of Dhaka a true taste of American, Indian, Mediterranean, British, Chinese, Thai, Mexican and Arabian authentic cuisine alongwith Bar B Que dishes, Dhaka Sheraton Hotel is featuring the innovative evenings as part of its winter food and beverage promotion.

Since its introduction, the hotel has held Mediterranean and Indian Bar B Que evenings and both the nights have been well appreciated by diners. On Saturday the 18th of October the hotel will hold American and Bar B Que night during which such delicious items like Chicken and pasta, sweet corn

and bean, corned beef, BBQ griddle, tex-mex spare ribs, lemon marinated lamb chop, hamburger and burger buns, roast leg of veal, roast pork loin, seafood croquette, chilli beans, baked potato, mulligatawny stew etc. will be served.

To set the right ambience the picturesque Pool Top patio, overlooking the pool and the garden, is tastefully decorated with Bar B Que huts. The attendants are attired in uniforms depicting the theme of the night. Live background music helps to enhance the atmosphere of the evenings.

The price per person of this exotic Bar B Que night is Taka 750/- per person. Dhaka Sheraton is reputed for serving quality and delicious food promises an exciting and memorable Saturday evenings.

Sajna MOBILE RESTAURANT
IS NOW AT YOUR DOORSTEP

12-04, Bd. Bank Circle
Opp. Biman Off. Mujibul, Kavna Bazar
05-09, Gulshan-2
Samaraj Road, Dhanmondi
Vites

LUNCH BOX &
*DOSA *RAJ KACHURI *MIXED CHAT * PAPRI CHA
*CHOLA BATURA *DAHI VADA *EGG ROLL *CHICKEN ROLL
*BEEF ROLL *ICE CREAM

HOUSE # 10, SOUTH AVENUE, GULSHAN-1, DHAKA - 1212.
PHONE # 603507, 871684 FAX # 8802 - 888802

Enjoy BBQ Night

EVERY SATURDAY
Time : 7 p.m.
at the
Pool Top Patio

Experience our exotic BBQ evenings with different specialities from around the world. Each week we will feature authentic cuisine from different parts of the world

Tk. 750/- per person

For reservations
Tel: 861191/863391 Ext. 8539

Dhaka Sheraton HOTEL



SAJNA YOUR FAVOURITE RESTAURANT
The Finest Indian cuisine

WE SERVE EXQUISITE VEGETARIAN & NON-VEGETARIAN, TANDOORIES, CURRIES, BIRIYANIS, DOSAS, IDILIS, AND MANY MANY MORE!!

WE ALSO OFFER

- Business Lunch
- Party Facilities
- Special Lunch Box
- Outside Catering
- Take Away

RESERVATION ADVISED

BUSINESS HOURS

LUNCH 12 NOON-3 PM
DINNER 6:30 PM -10:30 PM

Sajna
An Exclusive Restaurant

House-10, South Avenue, Gulshan-1
Phone: 603507, 871684, Fax: 880-2-888802

Enjoy The Best In Taste