

INSIDE LOOK at Lake Terrace



*In conversation
with
Fahad Bin Faruk Rafi*

What inspired you to become a restaurateur? Where did it all begin?

My family has been involved with the food business for as long as I can remember. Everything starts back in 2000, when my father was associated with Saltz. Then later on, he established Spitfire & Amazon club and many other establishments. So you see, the inspiration from my family was always there and I grew up watching how my family used to run these restaurant businesses with flair and passion. Then of course my friends, especially my friend Bonny, Shuvo Bhai and Tanjil were huge inspiration and motivators in me jumping into this business. They are also the Co-Owners of Lake Terrace including me. I think we inspired each other to start something new. We wanted to create some new venture where we could work together to establish something with full of quality and character. So, Lake Terrace was established and we have continued to keep this place as one of the best roof-top restaurant in Dhaka City.



What challenges did you face initially?

I think I always find it very exciting to take on new ventures and the challenges that come along with it. When we first started out Lake Terrace, the first one year was very tough. Because back in the day, almost



10 years ago, the concept of Fine Dining, atop a roof wasn't something very known to the public. Another thing was that, Digital Marketing and Social Media Platforms were not that developed and strong as now. So, it was difficult for us to find an efficient way of marketing our product. Nevertheless, throughout the years, the people of Bangladesh has become considerably trendy and that helped us in acquiring customers who were travelling outside their comfort zone to try something new.

One of my biggest advantage was the procuring of items that were required for our menu. The items we sell here almost similar to those that are served on our family restaurant. So, I was familiar with the supply chain of these materials long before I even started Lake Terrace.

Lake Terrace has one of the best menu along with an amazing rooftop view in Dhaka city. How did you manage to stay on top of your game despite so much competition?



From the beginning, we were lucky to have gotten such a beautiful spot at the heart of Uttara, overlooking the lake itself. Thanks to one of my friends, we were able to acquire this spot, which is one of the biggest element of our success. Overall the plus point for us has been the kind of food that we've been serving here in Uttara, because it's quite a niche market when it comes down to rooftop restaurants and we have not faced any notable competition here throughout the years.

If you focus on food, price and service and you have a good base of loyal customers, you can always do well, no matter what hardships you face. One of our key points of success is our Loyal Customer Base. They always come back to our restaurant through thick and thin. Another key factor right now is that a lot of



people have grown tired from staying indoors too much during the lockdown. As a result, more people are coming into the restaurant to get the feel of the open environment. So overall, small things combined together has helped us in sustaining so well over the years.

What are the steps you have taken for your restaurants to adopt to the new normal?

We suffered initially I must say. We had to keep the restaurant closed for several months. When we reopened, we faced a lot of new challenges. For now, we are maintaining all the rules set out by the government. Wearing masks, gloves and maintaining social distancing. Our employees are wearing these materials at all times and we have service for people to sanitize their hands as well. Customers are not allowed to enter without a mask as well. We are always maintaining cleanliness and deep cleaning has been severely ramped up to keep everyone safe.



We have seen a lot of people trying their hands in different cuisine during the lockdown. Any advice for the aspiring Chefs/home cooks of Dhaka?

I think this has been one of the most promising side of the lockdown. People are thoroughly using the digital resources they have within their vicinity to help improve their own personal skills. Their taking full advantage of the power of Social Media to learn and also earn a little bit by showing of their culinary skills. Those who started but still not getting success, they should have patience, take their time and work hard. Success will come. Those who are struggling to take the decision, whether to jump into this scene or not, I would recommend them to not waste any more time and take the opportunity that is easily available.



We know you are not someone to stay quiet for long. Any other exciting news coming anytime soon?

I'm involved in other businesses as well. My main line of work is Real Estate, but I dabble my hands in the automobile industry as well. Before this pandemic, the plan was different. My plan was to expand Lake Terrace in the beginning of this year. But, plans have changed and I have started work on a new project that is related to the automobile industry. After the pandemic situation settles down, I'll start the plans to take Lake Terrace to even greater heights.

*The interview was taken by Foysal Mahmud Niloy.
Photo: Prabir Das*