

HAMMER

Food & Beverage

Oct-Nov 2025 • Volume XXIII Number 1 ₹ 100

Business Review

Business magazine for food service & food retail professionals

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F&B Trends for the New Year

Transforming Global Kitchens with Innovation, Leadership and Passion

By Rajat Taneja

With over two decades of experience across world-renowned brands such as Marriott International, Hilton Hotels, Hyaat and Taj Group of Hotels, Chef Sunil Gangwal has established himself as a culinary innovator and strategic leader. His expertise spans pre-opening leadership, menu design and team development, crafting signature dining experiences that blend authenticity with global sophistication.

Now based in the United States, Chef Gangwal continues to redefine culinary excellence through his creative leadership, sustainability focus and ability to build world-class F&B programs from the ground up. His vision bridges traditional Indian artistry with modern international techniques, a hallmark of his globally respected career.

What is your approach when building a new culinary operation from scratch?

Every new project begins with clarity of vision. I start by understanding the brand philosophy and target audience, which shapes the entire culinary identity. From menu design to kitchen layout, every element must reflect creativity balanced with operational efficiency.

Building a strong team is equally vital. I emphasise training, ownership and purpose – ensuring each chef connects emotionally with the cuisine. My goal is to create an ecosystem that is efficient, consistent and capable of delivering excellence from the very first service.

How do you balance creativity with profitability?

True creativity lies in intelligent innovation. I encourage my team to see food cost not as a limitation but as a creative parameter. Smart sourcing, seasonal ingredients and waste reduction allow us to craft dishes that are exciting yet sustainable. Creativity attracts guests; profitability ensures longevity. The perfect balance between both defines a successful culinary operation.

The food industry changes quickly. How do you stay ahead?

I stay connected with global culinary movements through research, travel and collaborations. Understanding guest behavior is equally important – knowing what they value and how preferences evolve. I don't chase trends; I reinterpret them through my own philosophy, ensuring they align with



authenticity and brand character. Continuous learning and adaptability are essential to staying relevant.

What is your leadership style in high-pressure environments?

My leadership is rooted in clarity, empowerment and empathy. I lead by example, calm under pressure, focused on teamwork over hierarchy. Training and mentorship are central to my approach. A true leader doesn't just manage; he develops other leaders. When the team feels supported and inspired, pressure transforms into high performance.

What excites you most about your current role in the U.S. and your future plans?

The U.S. has given me a platform to present authentic Indian flavours to a global audience while learning from diverse culinary cultures. I'm excited about creating cross-cultural experiences that merge Indian craftsmanship with global techniques. Moving

forward, I aim to expand into consulting, brand collaborations with top Culinary Institutes of America and mentorship, shaping the next generation of chefs and redefining modern global dining.

What advice would you give to aspiring chefs?

Be passionate, patient and persistent. Master the basics before chasing trends. Respect every ingredient and every mentor. Great chefs think beyond recipes, they understand culture, balance and sustainability. Stay curious; a great chef is always a lifelong student and the most important Keep your basics always clear.

What has been the most rewarding moment in your career?

Seeing young chefs I've trained grow into successful professionals is deeply fulfilling. Equally rewarding is representing Indian cuisine internationally and witnessing guests embrace its depth and diversity. True success is measured not by titles but by the impact we leave on people and the culinary world.

Culinary Vision and Legacy

Chef Sunil Gangwal's journey embodies innovation, discipline and global perspective. His leadership continues to inspire emerging chefs and influence hospitality brands worldwide. Whether designing new dining concepts or mentoring future talent, Chef Gangwal stands as an ambassador of modern Indian gastronomy. His mission remains clear, to bridge tradition and innovation while shaping a sustainable, globally inspired culinary future.