



## 11 OUTLETS IN FOUR YEARS

# Clarity of concept drives Karigari's success

Running a successful restaurant is not an easy task. What makes a good restaurant? Is it the food, the service, the ambience or the experience? It is a combination of all these factors, along with a few others, that delights customers and keeps them coming back. At BW Businessworld, we like to hear from food entrepreneurs about what makes their offering unique. We got in touch with **Yogesh Sharma**, Managing Director, and Chef **Harpal Singh Sokhi**, chefprenuer and mentor at Karigari, to understand how they are making Karigari a success **By Jyotsna Sharma**

**K**arigari has opened 11 outlets in four years. All of these have achieved break-even, and according to Sharma, this is strong validation of their operating model and unit economics. They plan to open 25 outlets over the next three years across Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Pune, Hyderabad and key Tier-2 cities.

### The formula for success

As per Sharma, the key aspects of focus in creating a successful restaurant are clarity of concept and purpose. He says the food, the storytelling, the design, and even the pricing should all point in one clear direction. "At Karigari, we didn't set out to be just another North Indian restaurant; we set out to celebrate India's culinary heritage and the hands behind it. When your concept is clear, decisions become easier, and the brand becomes memorable." He believes that focus on quality

and consistency is essential, as customers might visit initially for the idea, but over time, they return for consistency. "Scaling to 11 outlets was possible only because systems were built early, ensuring that the experience remains the same whether you are dining at one location or another. And of course, investing in your people and culture is key. Restaurants are powered by people. Investing in your chefs, service staff, and managers, training them, respecting their craft, and giving them a sense of ownership creates a culture that guests can feel."

For Chef Sokhi, conceptualising the menu and innovating with new items and ingredients is a continuous process. "As a chef, I see it as my responsibility to revive forgotten recipes and reinterpret them in a gourmet format, serve them with dignity, while also honouring the *karigars* behind these culinary traditions in our menu." He is closely involved with the training of the chefs across their outlets



**Chef Harpal Singh Sokhi**

since he believes food is both about technique and respect for the craft. "While we have structured systems and senior teams in place across outlets, I ensure that the philosophy behind every dish is clearly passed on."

We asked them what it costs on average to set up a restaurant in Delhi, and which aspects should be the primary focus areas when starting, Sharma says, on average, setting up and sustaining a good, decently sized Indian restaurant in Delhi requires an investment of approximately Rs 4 crore, while factoring in real estate, interiors, kitchen infrastructure, licenses, and adequate working capital to run the business for the first year. "If I had to prioritise one area of investment, it



I felt an overwhelming sense of pride, which wasn't just about serving good food; it was about representing India on a plate. Knowing that I was helping shape their first impression of our cuisine and our culture reminded me why I do what I do. As a chef, there is no greater honour than introducing the soul of your country to the world."

### Looking ahead

The biggest challenge, according to Sharma, when setting up the outlets has been securing the right locations. "Finding spaces that align with the brand's scale and storytelling-led experience, while managing high rentals in premium markets, requires careful evaluation and long-term planning. Balancing visibility, accessibility, and financial viability remains one of the most critical and demanding aspects of expansion", he says.

"Looking ahead, our expansion strategy is structured and phased. In 2026-27, we plan to strengthen our presence across key Indian cities such as Chandigarh, Gurgaon, Jaipur, Mumbai, Pune, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Kolkata, along with select high-potential markets in North India. Beyond domestic growth, we are also preparing to take Karigari global, with London, Dubai, and Singapore as priority international markets," says Sharma. **BW**

[jjyotsna@businessworld.in](mailto:jjyotsna@businessworld.in)



would be core operations, specifically food quality and people. Investing in high-grade inputs, recipe standardisation, and chef capability building." He believes marketing might drive first-time trials, but repeat footfall is driven by consistent product delivery. Further, proper training frameworks, SOP-led kitchens, and quality control

systems ensure minimal variance across outlets, protect brand integrity at scale, and ultimately create a sustainable, high-retention restaurant business.

### What makes the brand attractive to investors?

Says Sharma, "The distinct menu philosophy, immersive dine-in experience, and

proven scalability across Karigari are what make the brand attractive to investors. In under four years, we have successfully built and operated 11 large-format outlets, all of which are operationally stable. This combination of strong brand recall, consistent footfalls, and disciplined growth makes the brand attractive to investors who are looking for both creative differentiation and commercial sustainability."

For Chef Sokhi, one of the proudest moments along the journey was when a couple from London, on their first trip to India, experienced their first Indian meal at Karigari in Connaught Place and appreciated the food so much that they decided to visit again. "In that moment,