



Shamsul Islam Shelim

Viceroy of Windsor
Windsor SL4 3BP



Shamsul Islam Shelim began working in the restaurant industry in 1980, as a part time waiter in Beaconsfield while enrolled at College doing Business Studies. He moved to Henley in 1982 to support a new family restaurant and enrolled in High Wycombe College to study Engineering. By his third year, he realised that he was more interested in his work than his studies and he wanted a challenge. This led him to working more hours at the restaurant. Eventually, he opened Carterton Tandoori in 1985 where he would get his first taste in management. His early years saw huge success. Business was booming.

Then he moved to Windsor and opened the Viceroy of Windsor, in 1987. The first restaurant was very small. They would have regular queues out of the door and around the block. Needing extra space, they relocated down the road in 1994 and have been there ever since.

Since then, he has opened numerous other restaurants across the country but he spend most of his time in Windsor, as he has also been the local Councillor for the local area for over 5 years.

His favourite part of his business is being an integral part of the community. Restaurants are the hearts of towns, where local people get together, to catch up with old friends, for business meetings, date nights, and most importantly great food. He takes great pride in being at the core of this community.

In all his years, he has never been afraid to experiment and try new things, but there must always be balance. "Keeping ingredients fresh and recipes simple is the key to good food. Overcomplicating dishes for the sake of wanting to be different can sometimes be more of a hindrance than a smart move," he says.

From the waiters to the chefs, his staff are his family, "For an effective and motivated workforce, you must respect them as individuals and in turn they will respect you."

They have increased their online presence in the last few years. They have redesigned their website using modern tools for an accessible and engaging website, and have also embraced social media. In particular they have targeted Google Reviews and TripAdvisor where they interact with their customers and generate feedback in areas they want to improve. It hasn't been a surprise that using these methods have directly translated to a large increase in online bookings and orders.

They also implemented the EPOS system for takeaways increasing the overall efficiency of the restaurant by managing the amount of orders going into the kitchen. The internet is increasingly important for attracting a new generation of customers, but Shamsul still prefers word-of-mouth for recommendations. "As part of the community, their customers treat my restaurant like their own and as a result they will speak highly of you and recommend your restaurant to other locals and tourists."

There are many challenges and difficulties in the restaurant industry. "The biggest sacrifices, I believe we make, is having our work take over our lives," says Shamsul. "Working long hours and weekends takes away from your social life and the time you do have free is when everyone else is working. This can be the same with family; you do not get to see your partner or children as often as you like and the free time you do have is spent doing the day-to-day necessities of life," he adds.

He has been in the industry for almost forty years now and his personal key to success comes down to hard work and dedication. He has been an honest businessman, worked hard to serve his community, both here at the restaurant, and as councillor for his borough, listening to the concerns of the people and how to improve his community. He has taken this further by being greatly involved in local charities and tackling the homeless issue.

In terms of the restaurant industry, he has always done his part to create a community for all of us working in the industry, trying to unify our goals and discover solutions to tackle the many problems our industry is facing. By involving himself in so many different avenues has given his life a purpose, and that is what carries him from day to day. Working in the industry, he had the opportunity to be President of the BBCA, and he has left it in very good hands.

"Lastly," he remarks delightfully, "I should emphasise the utmost importance of family. Without the support of my family, my wife, my brothers and uncle, as well as my children, I would not have been as successful."

"I would like to retire before too long to spend more time with my family, and hopefully pass on the business to the children and grandchildren one day."

"Looking back, I am pleased at the rapid improvement our industry has seen over the decades, and hope that this evolution will continue with future generations."