



Abdul Karim

Mahdi Lounge
Rye TN31 7AN



When Mr Abdul Karim first came to England from Bangladesh with his parents in 1977 at the age of 12, he had no restaurant experience. But two years later, the part-time job he took changed the course of his life and the lives of many. The Darbar restaurant in Bayswater, London is where Karim first encountered the life he would later devote to his servant. In fact, he loved the job so much that he wanted to work full-time in Darbar after earning his GCSE degree in 1980. There he began a journey that took him to many restaurants, including Wimbledon Tandoori, and since cooking was his passion, he continued to hone his skills as a restaurant manager, waiter, and kitchen worker.

Mr Karim kept dreaming of having his own restaurant, but knew that running a place entirely on his own at this stage would be too great a challenge and risk. So, with a sensible move, in 1986, he and his business partners opened Kent Tandoori (later renamed Baadshah) in Tenterden, Kent. The restaurant was a massive success and business was good. He spent most of his time in the kitchen, honing his skills as a chef, making traditional Indian and Bangladeshi dishes the likes of which were completely new in Kent.

As time went on, his family grew and his restaurant did very well. In 2002 he opened his own restaurant Mahdi Spice (named after his third son) in Rye, East Sussex. The location was a bold and risky move, as it was just a hundred feet away from The Gandhi, an established curry house that has been operating there for fifteen years. And soon another curry house appeared nearby on the main street. But that didn't deter Mr. Karim. Faced with the challenge of establishing himself in a new neighbourhood, he tirelessly sought perfection, covering every aspect of the business himself to make sure his personal touch was felt. Mahdi Spice soon established itself as the best curry house in Rye, winning many awards in its first year, including the prestigious British Curry Awards. Soon everyone swore by the quality of his South Asian cuisine and his unmatched customer service. Mr Karim is a customer service superstar who always goes the extra mile to meet customer needs. His mission is to ensure that everyone who walks through his restaurant doors leaves satisfied and

wants to come back. And they do! That is why his success is so evident.

Mahdi Spice was going better and stronger than ever when his sons entered the business. Jakaria is a successful business graduate. His second son Mahee studied computer science. Mahdi is a young, talented business student who is doing well at the University of Canterbury. All three have the qualities of distinguished entrepreneurs, with their own individual touch. Having learned so much from a young age from working closely with their father, each of them has learned the finer tricks of the craft from hard work, both in front of the house and in the innards of the spice festival that is the sultry kitchen Mr Karim has poured his passion into his business and into the three sons who will take it on.

Despite his burgeoning success, Mr. Karim remains rooted in his culture and traditions. He has been helping people in his hometown since founding Dighal Bak United Development UK in 2010 and is currently the VP of the organisation. In 2016 he founded and serves on the board of the Greater London Nabiganj Welfare Association. The association is dedicated to improving the lives of the Bangladeshi community in its hometown, which suffers from severe seasonal floods and catastrophic monsoons. Mr Karim is deeply involved in education and youth issues, and has been closely involved in the Zukta Rajya Nabiganj Education Trust since 2006. He has been involved in founding both the Bangladesh Caterers Association and the British Bangladesh Caterers Association, and has been an executive member of both organisations since 2012.

Now that his three sons are gradually taking on serious responsibilities in the business, he hopes he can start planning for his retirement. With a warm and sincere smile, whether he welcomes the familiar face of a regular Rye or a newcomer, a tourist or a lone diner to the weekly curry evening, Mr. Karim represents a generous South Asian host. By taking over a four-decade-old restaurant and transforming it into an upscale eatery called the Mahdi Lounge, Mr. Karim has shown that engaging in competition is a clear sign of change to come.