DESIGNS ON **HER PLATE**

London-based food stylist Rakhee Jain has been decorating the platters at some of the biggest parties and weddings in India and abroad. She works her creativity at extending the beautiful décor of an Indian wedding to the dining table too. After all, in the days of yore, the success of an Indian wedding was judged by its food.



Being an interior designer Rakhee Jain was always very interested in the aesthetic aspect of any event and being a complete foodie, she always looked for something new to taste. "But every time I attended a wedding I almost always came back home hungry because of the way the food was presented. I was fed up of the white platters being circulated with oil trickling away from the canapé trays. Then there were the unappealing chutney bowls with crusty rims. Due to these experiences, I eventually took the plunge," recalls Rakhee, a London-based food stylist who works her magic for events and parties for big industrialists and businessmen.

Rakhee noticed that even though food is one of the most important aspects of a wedding or party, nobody took responsibility of giving it a beautiful display or making it an extension of the décor. "It was given the least importance by the event designers and was left in the hands of the caterers, who obviously did not have the time or creativity to dish out the food in a tantalizing way," shrugs Rakhee.

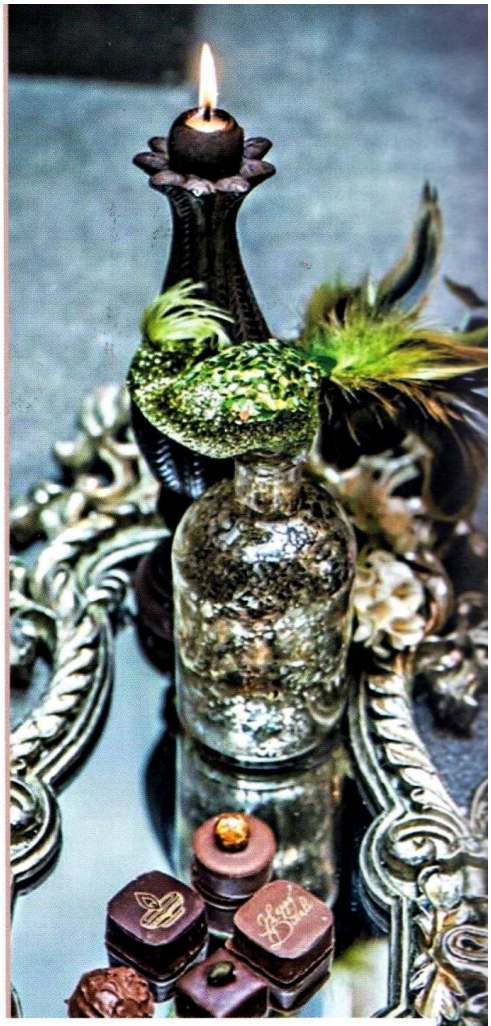
Assessing the gap in the market, the food stylist decided to bridge it with her design skills and passion for food. Thus she launched OTT about a year and a half back. "Initially it was extremely difficult to get clients to accept this aspect and pay for it, because it was introducing a new concept for an old need. On the other hand, we have had the experience of working very closely with the most celebrated wedding designers, planners and caterers from across the globe. A food stylist can help present the food in a way that not only is a feast for the taste buds but also for the eyes. We call it the See Food Diet!" explains Rakhee, adding, "A good food stylist not only presents the food well but also ensures it is served in the right dishes, with the right accompaniments and most importantly at the right temperature. Knowledge of food has to be blended in with style and design."

The best part of Rakhee's job has been working with the top wedding planners in India like fashion designers Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla, Sumant Jayakrishnan, Geeta Samuel, Vandana Mohan and chefs such as Ritu Dalmia and Manish Mehrotra. "The fanciest menu I have ever dressed up is at a French restaurant from Paris called Mirazur for the big fat Indian wedding in Puglia last year for Pramod Agarwal."

Rakhee's client list is pretty illustrious. She's designed the food for Kokilaben Ambani's 80th birthday at Anil Ambani's residence along with event designers Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla. Most of her clients are industrialists or bankers. But it remains her dream to style the food at any event hosted by Amitabh Bachchan.

Rakhee finds her biggest inspiration in celebrity chef Gaggan Anand from Kolkata who now runs the world's 10th Best restaurant Gaggan in Bangkok. "He's done things differently and that's the name of the game."

Text: Sharmi Ghosh Dastidar



"The fanciest menu I have ever dressed up is at a French restaurant from Paris called Mirazur for the big fat Indian wedding in Puglia last year for Pramod Agarwal." —Rakhee Jain

