

# The Asian invasion

Entrepreneurs from the Indian subcontinent have found sensational success around the world – but will the opposite ever be true?



The new range of rice from Veetee should increase their share of the convenience market

Other major Indian achievers in food and drink include Moni Varma, the founder of Veetee rice, who is worth £45 million. The company exports rice to around fifty countries from its five factories around the world.

The company has now launched the Veetee Dine-In rice product in Europe, which uses a unique aseptic packaging process to combine high quality rice with the convenience of microwave cookery. They have invested over £20 million in developing the new product range and obtaining a patent on the technology.

major names in manufacture and retail.

## Looking out

In terms of culinary exports, the Indian subcontinent is certainly one of the most successful in the world. Indian food has been a huge favourite around the globe for decades, so much so that there are now more Indian restaurants in London than there are in Delhi and Bombay put together.

It's certainly true that the Indian subcontinent has contributed a great deal to the world of food and drink. Indeed, *Success* magazine in the UK reported that Asian entrepreneurs – using the British description of "Asian" as generally referring to the subcontinent – in the food and drink industry have a collective fortune of £828 million, an increase of £118 million from last year.

Each year, *Success* magazine compiles its rich list of the most successful Asians in the food and drink industry. Top of the list in 2007 is Sir Mohammed Anwar Pervez OBE, who since arriving from Pakistan in the fifties has made his company Bestway one of the biggest cash and carry enterprises in the UK. It owns fifty warehouses with a combined sales area of over five million square feet and employs over 4500 people – with Sir Mohammed's fortune estimated at £250 million.

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Also investing

large sums

into

promotion

are Balti

Wines, who

are

spending a

six figure

sum in

promoting

its range of

fine wines

to the

restaurant

trade. The

wines have

already been

introduced

to the North

West of

England,

where a

million

bottles have

been sold

since

launch,

and the

aim is

now to

target

Asian

restaurants

across

the UK

with

direct

mail and

launch

a

national

award

scheme.

Ashraf

Sharif,

Managing

Director

of the

company,

says, "It

is now

time to

invest

money

into

raising

the

profile

of the

wines

to the

restaurant

trade

further

afield,

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also

creating

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York Delhi Company enjoying much success based on the masala recipe perfected by Uppal's mother.

Magic Masala is the company's flagship product, and the aim of the organisation is to only offer lines that remain true to the company's ethos of combining age-old Indian recipes with style and quality.

The aim for most companies from the Indian subcontinent, it seems, is to replicate the success of such items as Cobra Beer, which is now an established brand in numerous countries since it was launched by Bangalore-born entrepreneur Karan Bilimoria. Cobra is a company that has managed to grow and increase professionalism while still maintaining a distinctive presence – its sponsorship of the Good Curry Guide and Good Curry Awards, for example, ensure it remains true to its Asian roots.

The massive contribution that the Indian subcontinent has made to dining across the world cannot be underestimated. In addition to some fine food, the entrepreneurship demonstrated by Asian manufacturers and retailers have created many jobs and brought a substantial amount of money into the global economy. The question now is whether any companies trying to make an impact in India can have the same effect.