

## Career profile

Name: Alun Sperring

Job title: Chef and Proprietor



### A taste of excellence



Alun Sperring travelled the world honing his culinary skills and was the first chef of English descent to be crowned a *Curry King* of Britain. He is currently Chef and Proprietor of The Chilli Pickle in Brighton, which won Most innovative restaurant at the 2010 British Curry Awards.

#### **What do you enjoy the most about your job?**

I love the creative side.

#### **How did you begin your career in hospitality?**

I studied catering at Brighton College and my first job was for Moevenpick (a hotel chain) in Switzerland.

#### **What's your best career moment?**

Winning Most Innovative restaurant at the 2010 British Curry Awards was pretty special.

#### **If you could travel back in time would you choose a different career?**

No. I would just have been a bit more money savvy instead of living like there was no tomorrow.

#### **What would your dream job be?**

What I'm doing but with a bit more time out to enjoy with my family. This no doubt will come in time as I am still in the early days of owning a business.

#### **Who is your idol?**

When starting out I'd say the Roux brothers and I think it's important to have strong role models of excellence to look up to, but as I gained confidence in my style as a chef and individual, like many chefs, I found my own direction, which I believe is equally important.

#### **What's your favourite food**

Of course Indian, but no specific dish - it's always changing.

#### **What's the weirdest thing you have ever eaten?**

Duck tongues, chicken feet.

**What did you want to do when you were in school?**

Join the Navy (like my grandad) and be a chef.

**Tell us an interesting fact about yourself**

I've worked in 8 countries and 4 continents

**Do you have any unusual hobbies or talents?**

All my hobbies revolve around food and wine.

**What's the secret to success?**

Passion, determination, some natural ability and don't be afraid to be different.

**What advice would you give to other people who want to work in hospitality?**

Be prepared to work hard. Try to get work in the best places from the outset, as they will help you to progress so much further. Also, don't expect a quick trip to the top - you need to take time to learn in order to grow as a chef in ability and character.

You can travel the world with a job like this. I have travelled to Austria, Switzerland, India, Bermuda, USA, Germany, United Arab Emirates and on the famous cruise ship QE2

**How does the immigration cap affect you and the Asian and Oriental cuisine industry?**

The immigration cap can potentially make it more difficult for Asian hospitality businesses. The current wage expectations are rising regardless of experience due to the knowledge that employers can no longer bring in chefs from Asia (apart from the highest level management). Also a higher percentage of chefs are moving around much quicker to employers that will offer better perks, which is making stability harder.

I believe it's good to have a balance between recruits from India who bring an authentic knowledge of their cuisine undiluted by a British experience as well as employing locally and also training young chefs and taking on apprentices.

If chefs can be recruited from India and Asia on their ability alone to fill a specialist chef role within a brigade then it will once again make it easier to build strong teams and businesses within the Asian hospitality sector.

**Further information**

For further information on career opportunities in hospitality visit [www.hospitalityguild.co.uk](http://www.hospitalityguild.co.uk)