

## Santa Cruz

## INDIAN RESTAURANT

**T**he young owner of a new Indian restaurant in Santa Cruz is convinced he has hit on the formula to help him succeed where others have failed in the past.

Dynamic 27-year-old Siddhartha Chandiramani runs the Rasoi restaurant in an unlikely part of the Tenerife capital, off the beaten track for visitors to the city centre. Set in the upper district of the city, theoretically it could prove a recipe for disaster but only if geared solely to the traditional fans of Indian food, namely, British tourists or resident ex-pats. And yet Siddhartha's tables are 80-85 per cent filled by locals, not foreigners, and around half are repeat customers.

"We have consciously tried to adapt things to Spanish palates" says the hyperactive manager-chef-PR man, all in one. "Elsewhere, it is all about making the hottest and spiciest dishes but our market focus means we have to tone things down for local tastes, a l -

his dream was also foreign (Japanese) but rarely if ever attracted such numbers.

The secret is not just what is on the plate. A different business approach by a young man who has hotel management studies in India, including attachment to the world famous Taj hotel group, under his belt and experience as a revenue manager for a hotel in south Tenerife, has led him to merge the country of his culinary offering (not his birthplace, which by a quirk of fate is the west African state of Liberia, where his parents ran an electrical goods store before the civil war broke out there) and his land of adoption.

Themed dining events, which are continuing over the festive season and at Carnaval, include a Bollywood Night featuring dancers

who, when I was there, were so proficient at their job that they had customers up to the age of 70 joining them on the improvised dance-floor well after midnight (see picture). Unlike the kitchen staff, the dancers are local but have taken to the elegant Bollywood gyrations and hand movements with such relish that they have changed the name of their dancing school to Madhuri Bollywood Dancers. Their classes draw not just teenage Tinerfeñas but a sizeable group of women from Santa Cruz's Indian community.

What was initially designed to be a one-off themed night looks as if it will become a permanent fixture on the calendar at the restaurant, which might have to think about charging the many passers-by who stop and



Diners get grooving to Bollywood

stare through the windows and door of the restaurant in Calle del Perdón, one of many whose name used to be that of an army general but was changed recently to

rid Santa Cruz of its Franco and food they will feel more comfortable with us and what we offer. That generates word of mouth advertising and we will reap the benefits" insists Siddhartha, who is often accompanied by his mother

often not getting home until 2.30am". They don't expect him to fail and judging by the growing popularity of the venture among the local office workers, lawyers and doctors who pop in for lunch, not to

# Bollywood 'merger' a success

A SUCCESS WHERE OTHERS HAVE FAILED IN THE PAST

□ By Karl McLaughlin

though taking care not to lose the authenticity of the dishes in the process". And it works: two recent nights in the Rasoi drew upwards of 100 diners who tucked into a set but varied menu extending across all the traditional favourites of Indian cuisine. Curiously, the establishment which closed its doors and gave Siddhartha the chance to realise



The staff mix reflects Siddhartha's merger approach

memories. "The dancing helps us connect with our customers. We explain what it is all about, which region each dance is from, as well as telling them, to start off with, what to expect from the set dinner menu" says Siddhartha, who cuts the ice ably by launching into his explanations in Spanish for all customers at the beginning of the evening. "There is an educational component to all this, along with - of course - the business side. If people know more about our culture

and father in the restaurant, although the parents take a back seat and their presence is very discreet, allowing their son and his Spanish waiting staff to get on with things.

Mum, however, cannot keep a tear from her eye from time to time as she watches things, openly confessing that turning up at the Rasoi is "like having grandchildren": "This is his baby. We helped out with the start-up a few months ago but it is his and he devotes all his time to bringing the baby up,

mention the busy evening periods, it looks as if it will beat the myth that the location is jinxed for anything but Spanish tapas bars or pizza huts. Initiatives like free air tickets to India, three of which were given out recently, will help, no doubt. Potential customers are warned that to earn such fringe benefits they have to play ball, like dressing up in traditional Indian gear during Carnaval if they want to eat there... or joining in the Bollywood dancing if called upon.

## Tenerife South

Granadilla/Arona

## Court chaos

**T**he Canarian government has admitted that something urgent needs to be done to resolve the chaos suffered by the courts in Granadilla and Arona.

The region's justice minister Carolina Déniz said during a recent visit that the current facilities are saturated and new courtrooms, judges and

prosecutors are required sooner rather than later to clear the backlog of cases in the system. Déniz acknowledged that the spiralling population growth in the south of Tenerife has brought unforeseen consequences in terms of crime and the corresponding need for legal provision to deal with it. An added factor has been the

relatively short stays of many judges and prosecutors in the area before being posted elsewhere. However, Déniz insisted that improvements were on the way and new technologies would be used to speed up notifications and the processing of cases.



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