

(0:02)(Introduction) Talha: Thank you so much for taking the time to talk with us today, can you guys start with introducing yourselves?

(0:07) Farah: I'm Farah, Farah Azhar, and that's my husband

Azhar: Azhar Mehmood

(0:10) Talha: Nice to meet you. Can you talk about your background? Where are you guys from originally?

(0:16) Azhar: We are from Karachi, Pakistan

(0:22)(Restaurants) Talha: Can you tell us when this restaurant opened?

(0:24) Azhar: It was, like, four and a half months ago, like

Farah: May, end of May

(0:30) Talha: End of May, ok. And, this is not your first restaurant, correct?

Azhar: No

(0:34) Talha: Can you talk about your previous restaurants?

(0:35) Azhar: Yeah, we opened the first one in '94 December, Mughal's, maybe you can see some pictures here.

(0:42) Farah: Mmhmm, Mughal's restaurant

(0:43) Azhar: It's still there, by Singleton and Jimmy Carter. And this is, I think, our 11th or 12th.

(0:55) Talha: Oh, mashallah. I also noticed you had the Silver Spoon up there, me and my parents used to go there a lot, when I was around 5 years old.

Farah and Azhar (laughing): Yeah

(1:01)(Inspiration) Talha: So can you tell us what inspired you to open ur restaurants, in general, what inspired you to enter the restaurant business?

Azhar: Well-

(1:12) Farah: The first time, right?

Talha: Mmhmm

(1:13) Azhar: Yeah, go ahead. Actually, I have the answer but she can probably - we have 4 kids, and we don't want to put them on the babysitter. So that was the only business we can our kids with us.

(1:27) Talha: Ah, ok

(1:28) Farah: We wanted to keep them in the community and all that.

(1:30) Azhar: If we opened like a gas station, we could not take there, right? So that was one of the reasons. Other thing is, our background is from Delhi, India. So our food is, people like the food.

Talha: Yeah.

(1:43) Azhar: And they inspired us that, why don't you open a restaurant?

(1:49) Farah: And there was no Pakistani restaurant.

(1:51) Azhar: No Pakistani restaurant.

(1:52) Talha: And this was in '94, right?

(1:54) Azhar: '94, December '94 yes.

(1:57)(Location) Talha: So how did location impact your business, generally Silver Spoon, Moghul's is around the Jimmy carter area. So why did you guys choose this specific location to open your restaurants?

(2:06) Azhar: Because basically all the subcontinent community was living around here; Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and all of those.

(2:18) Farah: And especially that time Jimmy Carter was the only one area, nothing was after Jimmy Carter.

(2:25)(Barriers) Talha: Can you talk about some of the initial barriers coming here. What were some of the additional hindrances you had: immigration, language, setting up a business?

(2:36) Azhar: Well languages of course because English is not our language of course. We are qualified, she is IR (internal relations), and I did Master in History, but that does not mean we can speak American language. American language is a different language, different accents, we read English in books but we never used in the Bazaar or streets.

(3:04) Farha: Definitely was a little different, but not that bad.

(3:06) Azhar: It was different yeah, a little hard to understand but now it is ok.

(3:12)(Dil Bahar) Talha: So can you tell us who are your specific target customers with this store?

(3:17) Azhar: Anybdoy but mostly Pakistani, Indians, Bangladeshis.

(3:23) Talha: Can you describe the differences between this restaurant and your previous restaurants?

(3:28) Azhar: Yeah, this is the smallest one, we had the bigger ones before. Actually, honestly speaking because of our age we do not want to do the big businesses, it's a lot of work. So this is kind of a sitting place to meet some friends , and you probably note the time, 5-10. We don't open during the daytime

(3:57) Farha: This is basically our retirement life, permanent.

(4:04) Talha: Alright, so obviously this restaurant opened within the pandemic, correct? Can you describe the differences between business before and after quarantine happened?

(4:14) Azhar: Well before there was no pandemic of course, so pandemics hurt here in last two years. So thank god we opened after almost over the pandemic, it's still here, the pandemic.

(4:32) Farha: No but we have to do some precautions still, but it does not hurt anything.

(4:37) Azhar: We had or we have a banquet hall still which is hurt.

(4:46) Talha: Where's the banquet hall?

(4:47)Farha: It's in Sandy Springs.

(4:51)(Evolving) Talha: Can you describe how have you guys changed, or evolved being restaurant owners over the years as the industry changes? Do you guys change your business strategies, the cuisine that you guys have, any dishes, what would you guys say has changed over the years?

(5:11) Farha: not really, definitely we have had to do some fusion items. But basically people wanted to eat the authentic food, so especially for us we like to keep food the authentic way.

(5:24) Azhar: basically our dishes are the same all over, it's the way you cook and the timing of the food you cooked. It's different spices, well the spices are the same too but which you are using more or less .

(5:43) Farha: definitely we have to keep choices: medium, mild.

(5:47) Azhar: Northern Indian style or Southern Indian style.

(5:56)(Ingredients and spices) Talha: Can you guys describe where you source the ingredients from?

(6:01) Farha: In previous, local grocery stores, it's all from Atlanta. We do purchase some fresh vegetables, some locally grown in Atlanta, and definitely Indian spices from our local suppliers.

(6:16) Azhar: But very rarely one or two items are not available here so we call people from India.

(6:23) Talha: Like what, can you give us some examples of that?

(6:27) Azhar: yeah like the common spices are all available here , but some liike a pinch of our family recipe people don't know, so some spice we call people from India for.

(6:49) Farha: For example, you're specially making some desserts like Falhuda. It's too hard to find in the states so we either have to make ourselves or we have to import it.

(7:02) Talha: So you guys make that here?

(7:05) Azhar: Yes, we make everything here.

(7:07)(Menu) Talha: Can you describe your menu, what are your most popular dishes in this specific restaurant?

(7:12) Azhar: Well first of all this is like a snack shop, it's not a full fledged restaurant.

(7:17) Farha: It's like a cafe.

(7:20) Azhar: We have snakes like sandwiches, chaat, and appetizers .

(7:25) Farha: Famous kabobs from Karachi

(7:31) Azhar: Chicken club sandwich which is very famous, kachori, these are not available everywhere. We have special milk bottles.

(7:44) Farha: Some drinks, some desserts that you will rarely find here

(7:52)(Stereotypes) Talha: Are there any stereotypes about South Asian desi food that you would like to put an end to?

(7:57) Farha: For example?

(8:00) Talha: Like from growing up here, our food is smelly it sticks in your clothes , the food is way too spicy , the ingredients, there's not health upkeep in the restaurants.

(8:14) Azhar: yeah, we don't use hard spices.

(8:17) Farha: I mean that's the main difference here.

(8:20) Azhar: Like you see, Chinese and Thai food the communities look similar but food is different. These are like the little differences between South Indian and North Indian.

(8:34) Farha: To answer your question, yes there is a few things likewe can cut down some spices that have a very strong aroma or smell. You don't have to use that and can definitely do without it.

(8:43) Azhar: Like in the South of India, most use coconut, we don't use that.

(8:51)(Timings) Talha: And can you guys tell us what is the most busiest time of the year for you guys, like around any specific festivals; Eid, Diwali?

(9:00) Azhar: Yeah, I would say like 8-10,11.

(9:04) Farha: Basically weekends.

(9:05) Azhar: Because our people work until 8 o'clock then they come by and eat here, so we open until midnight.

(9:16) Farha: And especially it's a late night business because we have desserts; Kulfi, Falhuda, Tea, coffee.

(9:24)(Hegimony of Indian food) Talha: And to finish off, as you guys have been in the restaurant business around 30-40 years can you guys describe what we've seen as overall in the majority of restaurants we've been to whether they be Nepali, Afghani, majority of restaurants offer North Indian/ Pakistani style foods. Could you guys tell us why you think that is?

(9:50) Azhar: Because the community first of all, and the second thing is it is the most healthiest foods I think so, because we cook over 500 degrees there is no chance of bacteria left.

(10:05) Farha: What he's saying is why every restaurant has similar items, it's because it is all the same it all belongs to India.

(10:14) Azhar: We are different countries now but basically food is all Indian.

(10:20)(End) Talha: Well alright thank you guys so much for taking the time to talk with us .