

THE SANDWICH FACTORY / CHAPATI MAN



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FROM FIELD TO FOOD-TO-GO

HAVING CONQUERED THE MUSIC FESTIVAL SCENE, CHAPATI MAN HAS FORMED A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH THE SANDWICH FACTORY TO BRING ITS TASTY WRAPS TO THE RETAIL MARKET

If you've been to a music festival in the past six years you'll probably be familiar with the Chapati Man brand. After all, it's hard to miss a colourful food stall with an Indian elephant painted on the front.

Now the tasty Indian wraps are making a welcome return to supermarket shelves with a new Morrisons deal. Three flavours of wrap – chicken tikka masala, chicken saag and vegetable samosa – were launched into 80 stores in February of this year, as part of a push into the retail market helped by a partnership with food

manufacturer The Sandwich Factory.

The idea for Chapati Man came about when Chris Rai and his wife Andrea spotted a gap in the market for a good quality Indian caterer at music festivals. "We realised times were changing and festival goers wanted something more authentic and better quality than just burgers and chips," says Chris Rai. "We wanted to give them a tasty, healthy option. The festival organisers understood this too and saw Chapati Man as a breath of fresh air.

Although there were caterers offering curry, we were the first to

offer it in a wrap."

It proved a winning formula and in their first year of trading, they were voted number one caterer at Glastonbury by VirtualFestivals.com. But what also helped make the brand stand out was the striking stall design: a purpose-built trailer in bright colours with a giant Indian elephant on the front. "At the time, festival caterers had cream and green

units. If you look round now, the trailers are all brightly coloured and quirky," says Chris.

Having built up a strong reputation on the festival circuit, Chris and Andrea started exploring the options of getting the concept onto retailers' shelves and won a national supply deal with Morrisons back in 2009. Over two years of trading, Chapati Man built up a

loyal retail customer base, which only ended when a new food-to-go strategy at the supermarket resulted in the removal of branded goods.

Chapati Man's return to supermarket shelves follows meetings with several major multiples and the company sees the new Morrisons deal as a springboard into other large retailers, convenience stores and other food-to-go sectors.

The difference is that today the company is enjoying support from The Sandwich Factory: a company with extensive experience of large scale manufacture, distribution and promotion. "Before, we were responsible for everything, from packaging to chilled distribution. Now we've licensed the brand to The Sandwich Factory, that takes away the pressure and we have the marketing push of a bigger company behind us," says Chris Rai.

For The Sandwich Factory, which is part of the Cranswick Food Group – a multi-million pound organisation and one of the most successful chilled food businesses in the UK – the key is building a strategic partnership that benefits all involved.

"It's all about the partnership," says Michael Price, the Marketing

Controller for The Sandwich Factory and Cranswick Foodservice Division. "Chris and Andrea have put in an awful lot of hard work and effort over many years, getting their brand out there. We liked the brand and what it stood for, but we also wanted to see how we could develop it. We spent a good two years determining where there were opportunities and gaps, and coming up with ideas to develop the brand, packaging and products."

The majority of companies that The Sandwich Factory works with are own-label products like Chapati Man and the business has worked closely over the years with licenced brands. "Food manufacturing is a tough business but we're proud to be supported by the rest of the group: a very successful organisation, which gives us the scale that makes us a long-term proposition," says Michael Price.

Over the past 18 months, the team has been developing a new range of wrap flavours and looking at other products, such as Indian snacks, chutneys and dips, chapatis and wrap kits.

"The aim is to get more product



out there," says Chris Rai. "The wraps are our hero product. We're also looking at the ambient side – Chapati Man cooking sauces, naan bread, rice. Although there are a lot of Indian brands out there, they are quite traditional and we've put a new, quirky, trendy spin on things. There is a gap for a fresh, new Indian brand to come through and we've certainly got the history."

While the positive emails have already started to come in from Morrisons' customers, the colourful Chapati Man stall will still be seen at festivals this year, including Glastonbury.

"Chris and Andrea want Chapati Man to become a household name," says Michael Price, "and we really want to help them get there."

THE SANDWICH FACTORY
CARLYON ROAD INDUSTRIAL
ESTATE, ATHERSTONE,
WARWICKSHIRE CV9 1LQ
TEL: 01827 719100
FAX: 01827 719101
WWW.TSFL.CO.UK

CHAPATI MAN
TEL: 07956 591716
EMAIL: INFO@CHAPATIMAN.CO.UK
WWW.CHAPATIMAN.CO.UK

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