National Curry Week: Community Cohesion Is The Key

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The 13th Curry Capital of Britain and 18th National Curry Week (12th - 18th October) was launched at Indian Summer restaurant in Brighton & Hove today (11th March), runners up in last year's exciting event won by Bradford.

There is a natural thread running through this as the first winner was London West, the location where Dean Mohamed opened the first UK Indian restaurant in 1809 and where we are today, the city where he was appointed as George IV's shampooing surgeon and later died at a ripe old age with the affectionate nickname 'Dr Brighton'.

Curry has come a long way since those days with nearly half the population enjoying curry on a regular basis each year in Britain. According to marketing researchers Mintel £27.7 million is spent annually on poppadoms alone and Indian food is the market leader in UK.

Curry Capital of Britain is not about curry restaurants alone. If so, London would win each year based on sheer numbers with Manchester, Birmingham and Bradford as regional contenders. Instead the event is about something more. Last year Bradford won the title yet again and impressed the judges to the extent that the "Bradford Model" will be used to show all councils exactly what the judges are looking for.

*It isn't just excellent, popular restaurants - although they are important

*It isn't just the number of restaurant nominated - although that is important

*It isn't just the amount of money raised for charity - although that is important

*It isn't just the enthusiasm of the council - although that is important

"What we are looking for," commented Peter Grove, President of The Federation of Specialist Restaurants and organiser of the event, "can be summed up in one brief phrase - 'community cohesion through curry'. " As Plutarch, the first century Greek historian, once said, "A guest comes to share not only meat, wine, and dessert, but conversation, fun, and the amiability that leads to friendship."

Last year the Bradford bid saw the four representative restaurants working together to promote the bid and raise money for charity - the council working with the restaurants - schools involved - local hotels, the Mayor and companies involved and an overall demonstration of pride in the community through the enjoyment of Britain's national dish. It saw fun, innovation, local pride and culinary excellence - the total package.

"In these days of economic restrictions we do not expect councils to have to spend large sums of money on their bid," said Grove. "A glitzy, professional bid is great but then again so is a basic but innovative and heartfelt one."

Voting for team restaurants for Curry Capital of Britain 2015 will open on 1st April on vote@fedrest.com. The public can vote direct or via their council or restaurant.

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