The Spice Lounge declared the Best from East Midlands in the Asian Restaurant & Takeaway Awards 2018

Wednesday 17 October, 2018

The inaugural Asian Restaurant and Takeaway Awards (ARTA)**,** the most prestigious celebration of South Asian cuisine in the UK, paid homage to the UK's finest curry houses and Chefs at the **InterContinental London – The O2** on the **30th September 2018.**

With 21 National Awards, ARTA revealed the best of the best curry houses from all over the UK.

ARTA 2018 welcomed a guest list consisting of the nation's most respected curry restaurateurs alongside MPs, dignitaries and celebrities as they collectively honoured the achievements of the culinary industry. In attendance were Leader of the Liberal Democrats Sir John Vincent Cable, television personality Lizzie Cundy, reality star Ben Jardine, Britain's Next Top Model contestant Victoria Clay, cricketer Monty Panesar, and TOWIE star Pascal Craymer.

The ceremony was hosted by television chef Ainsley Harriott & BBC news presenter Samantha Simmonds.

Interspersing the awards presentation was a curated world-class entertainment, including a performance by the evergreen Queen of Bollywood music, Alka Yagnik. The award charity Partner, Chance to Shine, was represented on the night by ambassador and former England cricketer, Devon Malcom.

ARTA journey started back in January with the Nomination Launch and The Spice Lounge competitively passed all stages with merit and scooped out the accolade of the Best from East Midlands. Surpassing each assessment criteria including customer nominations, social media reviews, food hygiene, taste and innovation The Spice Lounge was victorious as the reigning ARTA Best Restaurant from East Midlands.

"*The competition was hectic yet fun and winning it through from our region, I am totally speechless. It was a one-of-a-kind experience. This is to my team and customers*." The Spice Lounge owner, Salim Khan, upon being asked on ARTA's inaugural Grand Finale experience.

ARTA founder**, Mohammed Munim**, said at the event, "***I began this journey to combine my passion for cuisine, culture, and community. I saw the incredible talent spread across the UK within the Asian restaurant and takeaway industry."***

"It's important to remember what has been done, but also to respect the next generation. From the very beginning I wanted this to be a moment that was about promoting the immense importance and popularity of the South Asian catering industry. Moreover, I wanted it to be a way to connect to the whole community."

Speaking at Asian Restaurant and Takeaway Awards, Leader of the Liberal Democrats, **Sir Vince Cable** said, ***"The purpose of this evening is to celebrate the achievements of a very important industry. This is a four-billio- pound industry, which employs over a hundred thousand people, and makes a massive contribution to the British economy and to British society. But, it's also about saving the industry, not just celebrating it. I know that in recent years we've been losing on average two restaurants a week –the combination of pressures on the high street, on the industry are very great, and you're going to need maximum political support in order to pull through a crisis in the industry."***

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