

Local Food Innovators: Rajshahi Indian Restaurant



Boasting over **48,500** Instagram followers and **10,000** Facebook followers, **Rajshahi Indian Restaurant** is the Gosford venue putting the Central Coast on the map.

With fans coming from near and far, and **even overseas** to taste their famous butter chicken and naan, this **viral foodie destination** is well worth the hype.

We caught up with Director and social media superstar, **Arti Sham**, to hear all about how she turned a **humble family restaurant** into a beacon of light during the peak of the pandemic.



You've become a bit of a social media sensation. What is it that's made so many people fans of Rajshahi Indian Restaurant?

We love to make people laugh with our memes.

We serve a dish called butter chicken, which we have abbreviated to “butt chicken” in reference to a scene from the show Family Guy. This has become our signature and most of our memes are about “butt chicken”.

We have gone viral on Twitter, Reddit, Instagram and Facebook for our memes, and we have customers come from all over Australia and the world. I get to meet them and have a chat, which I really enjoy.

We also like to play a joke on the Americans as we used to be based in Wyoming and there is a state in America called Wyoming!

That's amazing! What would your customers say is the best thing about you?

Our customers would say we are down-to-earth, community-minded and no-nonsense people. Our social media fans also like to call me “Queen”.



A fitting title! And how are you implementing innovation into the Central Coast hospitality scene?

We enjoy collaborating and promoting small businesses. We also try and help the community by making food donations, giving people jobs at the restaurant who need them, and supporting victims of domestic violence.

As I said, we are very much a community-focused restaurant.

That's really generous of you. Do you have any local suppliers that you work with to make your famous "butt chicken"?

Yes, we have had relationships with our suppliers for the last 30+ years!

Wow, that is a long time. After such a turbulent couple of years, what has been the biggest challenge for Rajshahi's?

COVID-19 has been the biggest challenge for us. From transitioning from dine in to takeaway, deliveries, staffing issues, and even mental health issues within the community.

The pandemic certainly had a domino effect. What creative solutions did you come up with to combat these struggles?

We started meme-ing to keep the morale of the community high and support local businesses during the pandemic. We also engaged in community work to help those that are struggling.



And boost morale you did! What type of support would further help to grow your business post-pandemic?

Publicity and customer referrals.

As a bit of a trendsetter yourself, where do you want to see the Central Coast food scene heading in the next few years?

I would love to see a Newtown vibe on the Central Coast, with a heavier food scene, a more diverse culture and different ethnic foods. I think this would really boost tourism.

We couldn't agree more. Anything else to add?

My father, Radhaya Sham, founded Rajshahi Indian Restaurant. I am carrying his legacy into the future, transitioning the business into a different era.



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