

Words Claire Bosi
Camera courtesy of Camellia Panjabi

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CAMELLIA PANJABI

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HISTORY UNTIL YOU COME TO A POINT
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TO 2025. REGIONAL INDIAN CUISINE,
BOTH FINE DINING AND CASUAL, NOW
SITS AMONGST THE VERY BEST OF UK
RESTAURANTS.

There are two 2 Michelin starred restaurants, Opheem and Gymkhana - and several one Michelin stars, plus casual eateries such as Dishoom. Two of those one Michelin stars - Amaya and Veeraswamy - founded by a lady who pioneered a new approach to Indian cuisine. It could be said that without the ambition, drive and perseverance of Camellia Panjabi in the 1980's and 90's the modern Indian restaurant scene as it is today, might never have happened...

"Retirement? That's too boring. Why would I ever want to do that?!"

Her energy is infectious, her attention is everywhere and there is no stopping Camellia Panjabi. We are sitting in the one Michelin starred Amaya Restaurant and about to get down to an afternoon of conversation. My first impression is that this is a lady who, after many decades, still thrives with a passion for hospitality. She could have retired, years ago, but that idea fills her with horror, "I won't retire until I have to physically retire. And after that I will just write some more."

Camellia Panjabi and her sister, Namita were born in Mumbai, India. "My parents waited for a boy," laughs Camellia. "But that didn't happen. So, my father put all his efforts into making sure me and my sister studied hard. The two of us would have to fend for ourselves out there in the world. We went from learning dance and





swimming as most girls did - to learning riding, public speaking and standing tall, things boys were usually taught.

"Our father was a senior corporate person in Bombay and also a real gourmet. My mother was a doctor. We grew up in a family which was very well fed. During that time, you either ate at home, in a private club or found street food. There wasn't a culture of restaurants.

"My parents came from the British India generation, but, at home, our food was not influenced by the outside. They moved in a very social world where Anglo-Indian food had become part of the natural repertoire, that's just the way it was. At the clubs, the menus were decided by a whole group of people, including the English and the non-English. Our childhood was very much Anglo-Indian, but we did have some special Indian dishes when we ate at home."

Their father's wish was that his daughters should leave India and study at Cambridge University, "he said that his daughters should study economics - but they should not go to a hard city atmosphere" says Camellia. "They must go somewhere there's a river and is very beautiful. So, we were both sent to Kerala to sit Cambridge entrance examinations in India."

Entrance examinations passed and an offer to Cambridge followed. Camellia arrived at university to study as the only Indian woman on campus, supported with a Tata Trust scholarship "India was still very traditional back then, not really sending many women out into education, let alone to another country. Living and studying in Cambridge was very different, but also a lot of fun."

Armed with a degree in Economics from Cambridge, Camellia began exploring the

opportunities she thought the degree would offer her, "but it was still very difficult to get a job in London. I was an Indian woman, and the positions just were not available for me. However, I did get a call from Unilever to come and take a test. I passed. And was called to sit a second test."

Impressed by her aptitude and analytical thinking, Unilever broke the mould of regular recruitment candidature and considered Camellia for management service. At the time, this was a pretty revolutionary decision, "Through the test, I was chosen to work in the Chairman's Coordination Office. We were a team of five who prepared monthly notes for the board meeting. We collected information from all over the world and then coordinated it. I was a bit of a misnomer, 'how has this young student ended up in this role' was asked a lot. And the boss would say, 'I see something in her...'

Camellia was tasked, by her boss, with writing an essay on what Unilever should do to expand its food business in Europe, "I went down into the archives of Unilever and found a lot of material which nobody else had ever really studied. Lots of food magazines had been archived there. I spent six days going through everything and I wrote a paper. It came as a bit of a shock, because my boss then decided to present my findings at a board meeting. Unilever had been pretty out of touch with what was going on with food scenes across Europe."

When her father passed away, Camellia decided it was time to return to India. Unilever were keen to keep her and promised her a job would be waiting for her at Hindustan Unilever, "When I went for the Hindustan Unilever interview, they didn't have a single woman executive in the country. 'Since you are all men,' I asked them, 'where do you see me in your company 20 years from now?' They said, 'we think you might be the head of the market research division' I told them I thought that's where I should start, not end."

Unimpressed by the lack of opportunity and career advancement, Camellia turned down the job. Unilever did send someone to try and convince her to change her mind. But when Camellia makes her mind up - there's no going back.

"As I had got a Tata scholarship to come and study in England, I went to Tata and said, 'thank you very much for the scholarship. Now, what about possibility of working for Tata?'

Their response was 'we don't employ women in management.' But I persevered and joined Tata as the first woman in a management position! Tata's portfolio includes several sectors, from healthcare to the environment. I insisted on working in the food sector, but also had responsibility for cosmetics.

"Nobody in the company had ever visited all the 12 sales offices in the company. I insisted that if I had to be in charge of two products, I had to visit all the twelve stations in India to understand where any local problems were. In those few years I went all over the country and since there were no restaurants, you just ate on the street or in some cafe. It was wonderful. I never knew that India had such interesting food. My mother refused to allow us to eat street food as children, because, as a doctor, she was worried about typhoid or cholera. But now, I was experiencing all kinds of wonderful flavours and dishes.

"When I saw street food...something happened in my life."

The Tata Group owned the Taj Mahal Palace in Mumbai, yet the building had fallen into some kind of disarray. It had been made into dormitories for soldiers during the two World Wars, and become the headquarters for the military. By the mid 1960s the hotel had not had its kitchen renovated for over 70 years. As the Tata Group were not hoteliers, they contacted Intercontinental and asked if they would form a partnership with them to bring the hotel back to some kind of glory?

"The Intercontinental insisted on two things. To hire a marketing person immediately and have an interior design coordinator. They would do the rest. The Tata Group said they had this 'girl who insists on running around the country, speaking to people. We'll transfer her.' So, I was very happily transferred to do the marketing of the hotel."

"The Tata Group said I must understand that the Taj Mahal was a guest house run for the sake of the city and for the VIP visitors and heads of state that the Tata Group has to welcome."

"We never want to expand," they said to Camellia "We get that absolutely straight from the beginning. We're just going to renovate this hotel."





For those of you who have met Camellia, you will understand when I say, there's a mischievous twinkle in her eyes when she recollects that moment.

Camellia was now set the task of globally marketing the Taj Mahal to international travel agents and editors. "So I went around the world in 40 days, visited all the major cities of the world, carrying a little bag with pictures.

"I found it very difficult to get an appointment because India was nowhere on the list of luxury destinations. So, to get through the doors, I started dressing up in beautiful traditional costume, buying a flower from the florist and putting it in my hair before walking in. A big red bindi on the centre of my forehead and bright red lipstick. Then they would let me in, as some kind of novelty or curiosity. The door person would let me in, the receptionist would get the boss and the boss would give me ten minutes of his time. But often the feedback would be 'We believe your city is full of slums. There's prohibition. You don't allow the sale of alcohol in the restaurants. India is full of malaria and tuberculosis and your transport is very bad and your electricity goes off from time to time. So why would we send anyone?' It was a hard sell," Camellia laughs.

By the time Camellia had reached Germany, she was getting slightly frantic, "I realised that people wanted beach resorts. There was no incentive to come to Mumbai, unless it was in transit to go and see some Maharaja's palace. It was clear that Europeans wouldn't come, unless we could offer some kind of beach resort.

I came back with this message. The company said they were not expanding the hotel business. I said 'in that case, let's sit with 300 empty rooms!' The company then allowed me to explore further.

"We approached the Maharajahs, some who were very happy to hand over their palaces. They said, 'we've got all these courtiers working for generations. We have to support them and we cannot support them. So please take them over and retain the staff'

"The beach resort, to cut a very long story short. I had to convince my chairman. He said, in India nobody goes to the beach, they escape the sun. They don't want to become dark. I said, but you know, in the whole world, every continent has somewhere with a coastline which is famous for its beach holiday, and I thought Goa was the right place. With the Portuguese influence there was no question of prohibition. The food was fabulous and the beaches incredible."

The whole while Camellia was trying to persuade the board of the merits of having a sister location, she was also attempting to make the Taj Mahal Palace viable, "we could not get enough room business into the hotel. We had to bring in revenue elsewhere. We opened five or six restaurants, I said let's make money from people eating.

"The people of Bombay were used to going and eating very cheaply in clubs. There was no culture of dining in hotels. We had so many different kinds of cuisine. Yet still nobody came.

I said to the chefs, 'the food you are doing is all wrong.' They said, 'if you're so clever, madam, why don't you tell us what food to do?'

"I knew nothing about food. But I happened to go on a sales trip to Hong Kong in 1971. I experienced a cuisine we had never really seen before. I invited the chefs to come to Bombay to do our Chinese food. Sichuan food was unknown, but the Indians love spicy. We brought this cuisine to the Taj and it was a complete bomb. People went crazy, suddenly there was a new respect that hotel food could be interesting. And food authenticity works.

"We had this empty lounge, a vast room with chandeliers. I said to the hotel chefs, 'since you can't produce anything interesting, why don't we just bring that street food here. People can dine without fear of typhoid and cholera.' For the first time, Indian street food entered the heavenly five-star hotel arena.

"The street food rocked. I mean we had a hundred people; every seat was taken. And we did it slowly. We brought the Masala Dosa (a south Indian breakfast) onto the terrace, to compliment the usual breakfast offerings, with dosas and parathas and puri.

"My interest in food grew as a result of the challenge of how to make revenue for a hotel - when you couldn't get the rooms full."

Not satisfied with just changing and challenging the food concepts of the Taj, Camellia also set about proving to her bosses that an Indian wedding could also take place in a hotel, "It was considered unholy. You had to go to the temple or you had to go somewhere where you could dig a fire in the ground. The bosses said, 'how can we have fire on the first floor of a hotel with carpet?' We developed a copper fire pit which could sit on a carpet, filled with earth. I had to make a movie proving we could do a glamorous wedding. My sister acted as the bride, the front of house manager was the bridegroom and we hired the best Bollywood cameraman in the country. We ran the films in theatres for months. Now the destination Indian wedding has become big business. It started with that."

With the success of the concepts and revenue coming in, the company, who firmly told Camellia they did not want to expand, did just that. The hotel business grew to 30 hotels. And not just in India.

"India had reached a very strict exchange control. If I was going on a foreign trip, the government of India would only allow me to take \$100 a day. They were short of foreign exchange and they were discouraging everybody taking it out of the country.

"I told my boss, I go to London, 40% of the business is English. I'm not able to invite a travel agent for a cup of coffee. I can't be barging into offices all the time and not inviting people out. Why don't we open an Indian restaurant in London so I can entertain my clients?"

BOMBAY BRASSERIE

Opening a restaurant in London to entertain clients was not a bad idea, the boss said. Camellia arrived in London in 1982, "with some finance guy and a property guy."

"They showed me various sites. I said no, everything is half up, half down. I wanted a full ground floor room. There was no such space. The only vacant room that we could find on one level, which seated 100 people, was the empty room attached to the Bailey's Hotel, which had been earmarked for a casino, but hadn't yet got the licence.

"I said, that's the one I want. These two chaps phoned the boss and said, 'you know, she's impossible. She won't accept any normal restaurant site and she insists on the room next to the hotel. And the owner says if we want the room, we must buy the hotel!'

Camellia got the room. "We could not buy the hotel ourselves. We found two rich Indians with some money to spend. We said, you buy the hotel, we run it. And they said fine. The Tata Group bought the Bailey's Hotel so that I could have Bombay Brasserie." Under foreign exchange rules at the time, the group were not permitted to do any investment, "the entire 100% of the cost of the restaurant we borrowed from the bank. And the bank manager said to me, 'we have never done a 100% loan without equity. You just make that successful or you and I are both in jail by the Indian government for having broken the law!'

The next hurdle to overcome was the name, "My chairman, Mr. Tata, was half French. He said I could not call it a Brasserie. But there was Langan's Brasserie, which was my favorite restaurant, and I want to base it the same - a large room, easy food, great atmosphere. Mr.



Tata said, 'you will not call it Bombay Brasserie.' I said either I run the place and take responsibility, or he should take over. We called it Bombay Brasserie."

Trusting the guidance of an astrologer when making important decisions, Camellia had kept an astrologer on the payroll in the Taj Mahal Hotel, "It was very important to them. Every time we were commissioning a new machine or a new hotel or a new suite, we used to call the astrologer and ask which day should we have an important meeting.

"Bombay Brasserie was ready around June so I asked the astrologer what would be the right day to open. He said, 'oh, I'm sorry, but there's no date until December. You can open before; but you won't succeed. But if you open on the day I'm telling you, it will be very successful. I then had to tell my boss we couldn't open for another 6 months."

Those six months saw Camellia begin to expand her networking. Meeting food editors, journalists and those who would today, be called influencers. Seeking out a new PR company was also something that had to be

done - the former PR having been 'discharged' after they, too, reported the name of the restaurant to be disastrous.

Bombay Brasserie opened on 10th December 1982. It was among the first to introduce authentic regional Indian cuisine to an international audience, moving beyond the typical curry house model that had dominated the British Indian food scene. The restaurant's menu was groundbreaking, featuring dishes from across India, including Goan seafood, Hyderabadi biryanis, and rich Mughlai curries. Its emphasis on high-quality ingredients, traditional cooking techniques, and elegant presentation set a new standard for Indian dining in the UK.

Business levels were okay, then the Fay Maschler effect happened. "Fay came for a meal, there were only around 30 people dining. She gave a fabulous review and the next day the manager phoned me and said we were in trouble. Business had leapt so fast after Fay's review that we were running out of chicken! To cut a long story short, Bombay Brasserie took off, in a most unbelievable way. Film stars, musicians, politicians - everybody wanted a table."



CHUTNEY MARY

All the while Camellia was revolutionising the Indian luxury hotel scene, and mostly refusing to take no for an answer, her sister Namita was forging ahead with her own career.

"Namita was a merchant banker, she was actually the first female merchant banker in India. After she passed her Economics Degree at Cambridge, she worked for five years in the Chairmans office at The Midland Bank. Then she returned to India and worked as a merchant banker. An American company opened in Bombay called Associated Merchandising Corporation and contacted her. They are the largest buying house in the world, owned by 40 department stores including Harrods, Saks Fifth Avenue, Bloomingdale's and Bullock's. Forty

stores around the world own this company and they set up buying offices in every city in the world. Namita became fashion merchandising manager in Bombay for the Associated Merchandising Corporation."

In 1986, Namita relocated back to London and married an old university friend of Camellia's, Ranjit Mathrani. She founded a business designing Indian jewellery for department stores.

"Ranjit's best friend was a chap called Neville Abraham. Neville was a wine enthusiast to start, then ran restaurant groups including Wheelers, Maxims and Cafe Fish. One day, we had a dinner party at home and invited 50 people. We served food cooked from our home kitchen. Neville had grown up in Bombay, he remembered Indian food, as the Anglo-Indian food we had all experienced growing up.

"Neville suggested to Namita that she and I ran a restaurant together. He said the two sisters on their own individually are powerhouses - imagine the two together working on projects. There's no chance for anybody to say no or for anything to not work!

Founded by Namita Panjabi, Camelia Panjabi, and Ranjit Mathrani under the MW Eat group, Chutney Mary opened in 1990, "Namita - when she takes on something, she goes to great depth and great style. That's the way she is. She designed some of the tableware, the glassware, the lamp shades. So many elements that she is still very much involved in today."

First opened on King's Road, Chelsea, Chutney Mary set a new standard by showcasing India's vast culinary diversity. Instead of offering a generic North Indian menu, Chutney Mary introduced regional delicacies from across India, including dishes from Goa, Kerala, Lucknow, and Hyderabad. Its name, a playful reference to Indian chutneys, reflected its philosophy of blending tradition with innovation. The first Indian restaurant to pair food with wine, to bring mixology into the Indian food space and to bring street food into a restaurant space - Chutney Mary broke barriers and formed new opportunities for Indian cuisine, marking out a new territory within the UK dining scene and paving the way for other restaurants to follow.

In 2015, Chutney Mary relocated to a prime location in St. James's, further elevating its status. The new space an elegant, contemporary setting that enhances the fine-dining experience. Recognition came, with the Michelin guide, Time Out and Square meal all honouring the restaurant, and its founders, with awards.

This year sees 35 years of Chutney Mary. Throughout those years, many London restaurants have come and gone, yet Chutney Mary thrives. I ask Camellia why she thinks the restaurant has enjoyed such longevity? "Authenticity, hard work, great and loyal people who have stayed with us for years and a lot of love."



VEERASWAMY

Veeraswamy, established in 1926, is London's oldest Indian restaurant and one of the most prestigious Indian dining establishments in the UK. Located in the heart of London's West End, Veeraswamy has played a significant role in shaping the perception of Indian cuisine in Britain. Over the decades, it has evolved from a colonial-era restaurant to a modern fine-dining destination, blending heritage with innovation.

Founded by Edward Palmer, a British entrepreneur of Anglo-Indian descent, Veeraswamy was originally intended to serve authentic Indian food to British aristocrats, Indian royalty, and visiting dignitaries. It quickly gained a reputation for its opulent décor and high-quality cuisine, becoming a favourite among politicians, celebrities, and royalty.

In 1996, the restaurant was taken over by the MW Eat group, led by Namita Panjabi, Camelia

Panjabi, and Ranjit Mathrani. Under their leadership, Veeraswamy underwent a transformation, refining its menu to highlight authentic dishes from different regions of India, including the Mughal, Punjabi, and South Indian culinary traditions. The restaurant's commitment to excellence earned it a Michelin star in 2016, solidifying its status as a premier Indian dining destination.

"I was in India when I heard that Veeraswamy was up for sale, so I phoned Ranjit and said he should buy it. That was when, with two sites, I gave up my other job and concentrated on our two restaurants. I had done 37 years with the Taj by then. Veeraswamy had fallen into some disrepair, so Ranjit cleaned up the whole kitchen, then we had a major refurbishment. Next year Veeraswamy celebrates 10 consecutive years as an Indian restaurant with a Michelin star."





AMAYA

Another of the restaurants in the MW Eats group to hold a Michelin star – Amaya.

Located in the Halkin Arcade in the Belgravia district, Amaya was established by the group in 2004. Amaya introduced a contemporary concept centered around live-fire cooking, focusing on tandoor, sigri (charcoal grill), and tawa (griddle) techniques. This modern approach set it apart from traditional Indian restaurants and earned it widespread acclaim.

Amaya combines elegant interiors with an open kitchen, allowing guests to witness the artistry behind the cooking. The restaurant offers a refined, tapas-style dining experience, where

small, beautifully presented dishes highlight bold flavours and fresh ingredients. Signature dishes include tandoori lamb chops, spiced soft-shell crab, and delicate paneer tikka, cooked to perfection over an open flame.

Shortly after its opening, in 2006, Amaya received a Michelin star, a recognition it has maintained ever since. The restaurant's success has influenced a new wave of contemporary Indian restaurants worldwide.

Amaya's cooking is precise and refined. The flavours are bold but balanced. Almost everything is marinated with carefully blended Indian spices. People often talk about Indian cuisine as if it's a single entity, whereas it's

actually a mix of diverse regional flavours. Amaya embraces this variety but presents it in a sleek, modern way, ensuring that the aromas and spices are enticing rather than overwhelming.

What really makes Amaya stand out is its grilling technique. The chefs expertly use the sigri (charcoal grill), tawa (large griddle), and tandoor (clay oven) to bring out the natural flavours of ingredients.

Amaya isn't about strictly traditional Indian recipes; instead, it offers a modern, reimagined take that keeps things exciting while staying true enough to its roots to satisfy purists. A naan filled with black truffle? Absolute game changer...

MASALA ZONE

Masala Zone was launched in 2001 with a view to revolutionise casual Indian dining in the UK and introduce the concept of authentic Indian street food into a stylish, yet affordable, setting. Since its launch Masala Zone has expanded to multiple locations across London

What sets Masala Zone apart is its focus on regional Indian home-style cooking and street food. Instead of the standard curry-house menu, the restaurant serves an exciting variety of dishes inspired by India's famous street vendors, dhabas (roadside eateries), and traditional family kitchens. The menu includes chaats (savoury snacks), thalis (platter-style meals), and a selection of regional curries that



showcase flavours from across India. Their thali meals, featuring a mix of small dishes, allow diners to experience multiple flavours in one sitting, making them a signature offering of the restaurant.

The décor at Masala Zone is equally captivating, with each location designed to reflect India's cultural richness. Some branches feature striking Rajasthani puppets hanging from the ceiling, while others have murals and artwork inspired by Indian folklore, creating an immersive dining experience.

Beyond its food and ambiance, Masala Zone has gained a reputation for maintaining high-quality ingredients and authentic cooking techniques. It offers a balance between tradition and modernity, appealing to both Indian food enthusiasts and newcomers looking for a more approachable introduction to Indian cuisine.

By combining bold flavours, vibrant presentation, and a welcoming atmosphere, Masala Zone has played a key role in making authentic Indian street food accessible to a wider audience in London.



ON INDIAN STREET FOOD

"We were forbidden from eating street food as kids", Camellia reminds me. "Back then, at the poverty level, if you had no capital and you have no training and you have no assets, the easiest way to make a living was through street food. Perhaps there was one dish which your wife makes extremely well at home. Without a sign board, without a telephone, and mostly without a fridge – you could sell food from the street. It was always by word of mouth. The variety around different areas, the taste and creativity meant that every vendor was unique."

"The only way we could tell each other is to say, 'have you been to that footpath opposite that building? There is this new guy, he is selling fried potatoes. You have to go and try them.' Nothing was perfect, but it was all authentic, simple and tasty. When I go back to Mumbai, for every dish I go to a different place. Two mouthfuls and then you go somewhere else. It depends on your mood of the day. Street food doesn't have to be a meal, you can graze your way around."

ON INDIAN HOSPITALITY

"In our holy texts, it says, you have to respect your guru, your parents, your teacher, and any guests who come your way. The general

attitude is that if I have the chance to treat a visitor or a guest, I must do so with a big heart. If my friend who is visiting me says I've got two friends staying with me, you have to say bring everyone together because you can never refuse hospitality."

"Hospitality is your duty. If you look back, this was written thousands of years ago. When guests arrived at your house, there was no telephone or text or letter, they always arrived unannounced. Even if it was your relative or a friend, or somebody who had been recommended to stop by because there were no hotels available. Whoever came to your door, you had to feed, you had to house, that was part of your religious duty."

"Serving somebody is spiritual. It's something that God expects you to do. So, you have to be happy to serve. Even among the very rich, the billionaires, if there is a wedding and there is, let's say, a party for 100 people, the waiters won't serve you, the host, the hostess and the family will actually come and serve you. It is your duty. If you've got a guest, it's your duty to serve."

"That's why, if you go to an Indian party, it's always a buffet. Because anybody might bring

somebody. You cannot ration the food, you cannot plan that just because you have invited 12, you must cater for 12. You must cater for 24 because somebody may want to eat more than one and somebody may bring somebody along."

"In the temples, they say you can't go to God empty handed. So, you take a flower, you take a coconut, you take something. In return, God never sends you back empty handed."

"Whenever you go to a temple, they will give you something to carry back. Whatever the people who are coming in have given, they distribute, plus they cook and serve. Some temples have become famous for this, attracting over 200,000 visitors a day. The volunteers of the temple will sit down on the floor. They will put a banana leaf in front of you, and they will give you a full meal. Twenty-four hours a day hours of the day. Free. Anybody can come. Any religion. Anyone can come."

"The Indian concept of hospitality is open house, abundance, and service. Those beliefs carry on into our professional lives too. That is why, in India, formal training in hospitality is a privilege and an honour."



ON PUTTING CHILLI IN PAUL BOCUSE'S TRUFFLE SOUP

Camellia has travelled the world during her career, making friends and networking along the way while also looking for inspiration. One of those moments could have landed her in hot water.

"I was at Paul Bocuse's restaurant. We ordered his famous truffle soup. I took out some green chillies from my bag, took a knife, made a hole in the pastry and put my chilli in. I thought the addition of chilli to the truffle would make a very interesting soup."

"My head was down as I was trying to secretly cut the chilli. I looked up, and saw Paul Bocuse looking at me. I thought he had come in great anger because the waiter had told him that

I was adding chilli to his soup. But then he smiled. So, I said, 'Mr. Bocuse, if you agree to come to India and spend some days with us, do a dinner of your cuisine – then you can spend some time in my kitchens and learn Indian cuisine'. He said, 'I don't know about learning, but I'll come.' And he did."

ON WRITING

Having sold more than two million copies, Camellia's book – *The Great Curries of India* – explores the depth and variety of Indian curries, showcasing authentic recipes from different regions of India. The book features more than 100 recipes, each with historical context and insights into the spices and techniques used. It was one of the first books to highlight regional Indian cuisine rather than presenting Indian food as a single, uniform style. The book has

been translated into multiple languages and entered into reprint on several occasions.

While this is her most famous book, Camellia has also contributed to the culinary world through restaurant menus, food writing, and research into India's regional cuisines. Her expertise has played a major role in bringing authentic Indian flavours to an international audience.

A second book is in the works. Launching later this year, the follow-on book focusses on vegetables. "I love writing, I am involved in the whole process. I test the recipes and do all the research. The new book launches on August 28th and is being presented at the London Book Fair. From there, we'll see how many other countries wish to see the book and how many languages we may need to have it translated to." 