



THE THINKING CHEF

Michelin star chef and author Vikas Khanna is out with a new book and like his other ones, it breaks new ground. By Bindu Gopal Rao

A CELEBRITY WHO IS America's best known Indian chef, Vikas Khanna is certainly the poster boy for Indian food abroad. With his disarming good looks, he is a charmer who can sweep anyone off his feet and yes he can definitely have you eat off his plate, courtesy his charming smile and unbelievable humility. In Bengaluru's Crowne Plaza for the launch of his book *Shaken & Stirred*, a collection of

exotic mocktails, timeless classics and exciting modern recipes, he spoke about his new book, the kind of food he eats and his kitchen philosophy.

Tell us about your new book.

The idea for *Shaken & Stirred* came from my observation that when Indians go out to eat only the men order liquor and I felt this was not right as women only had the choice to order soda or *nimbu pani*. So we started creating drinks in the kitchen as opposed to making them in the bar. We have so many sauces we use in the kitchen so we put them together and came up with a whole lot of drinks. We make drinks ready in the kitchen and give it to the bar to execute. Also the book showcases several ingredients like rhubarb that indicates the onset of spring in Europe and America. And I wanted to show people in India that this is what will come here soon and they need to be aware.

What is the kind of research that you do while writing?

It really depends on each project. A book becomes difficult when you cannot think of a substitute for an ingredient. For me it is always important to tell people what they can use as an alternative ingredient as what we have in one place may not be available elsewhere. I want people to actually cook the dish and there should be usability for what I write.

Today with the explosion of blogs there is so much information overload - what is your take on this?

Is there an overload in Bollywood? Yes. So the best will survive and I always say anything is a test of time and not people. Time does not accept what is not real. If it is real it will never fade away and become deeper and deeper - likewise with food.

What kind of food do you like to eat?

I am not a very good eater. Especially