

for the Outstanding Woman in Business and was shortlisted for the Asian Women of Achievement Award, Entrepreneur of the Year 2006.



**■ NAMITA PANJABI**

Namita Panjabi is a leading authority on Indian food and has contributed to the recognition of real Indian food as a cuisine in Britain.

She and her husband own Masala World, the acclaimed restaurant company, with Chutney Mary, Veeraswamy, Michelin starred Amaya London's top gourmet Indian restaurants and the buzzing and vibrant five Masala Zones.

Namita's pioneering work in London started from the launch of Chutney Mary in 1990, the trail blazing gourmet restaurant, when Indian food was regarded as a cheap nosh you had after a few pints in a pub. It was through continuous dialogue with the somewhat sceptical British media and, of course product speaking for itself on the plate, that the mindset changed and Indian restaurants now sit comfortably with French and Italian in the minds of fashionable people eating out in London.

Namita has been ranked amongst the top 10 most highly thought of Indians in Britain, in a poll conducted by Channel 4 Television.

She had a successful previous career in merchandising which was preceded by a career in banking where she was India's first woman merchant banker with an economics degree from Cambridge.



**■ LOPA PATEL**

What started out as a simple idea to share curry recipes online via Redhotcurry.com has quickly turned into a successful venture for media entrepreneur Lopa Patel. In a typical homespun style, a group of 30-something year old Indian girl friends were sitting around a table late one night, lamenting the loss of home cooking skills.

One, a professional caterer, suggested swapping recipes and Patel then had the unenviable task of putting that idea into practice, online.

Seven years later, the website Redhotcurry.com has mushroomed into a diaspora lifestyle website appealing to NRIs the world over with its masala mix of news, views, money, business, entertainment, food and drink, health, style, sports and travel.

"Lopa is unique in that she has built a community platform that crosses the divide between Asians and non-Asians. Redhotcurry.com is intelligently written and appeals to a broad spectrum of the British community. Patel has won many accolades for her venture - she has been honoured with awards including 'Asian Woman of the Year' in Media in 2005 and an Asian Jewel Award in the same year.



**■ NIPUN GUPTA**

Nipun is a corporate, M&A partner at Bird & Bird and is Head of the India Group. Bird & Bird is an international, full service law firm with 15 offices globally. She is an English qualified lawyer and was a partner at White & Case where she was recognised

as being, "a driving force behind the India practice", Chambers Global 2005/6. Nipun was earlier Global Head of Legal at Ispat International (now rebranded Arcelor Mittal), which is now the world's largest steel manufacturing group.

Nipun was named in the "Hot 100" lawyers in the UK, 2001 and received the 2001 International Professional Award EFBWO. She received the prestigious Law Day award from the Indian Prime Minister recognising outstanding contributions in the field of law and to acknowledge her as a 'role model for women lawyers in India and abroad' in 2006.

Nipun is on the strategic committee of the Green Oorja alongside BP, IIT, CBC and Tata Group. This initiative is a multi-country collaborative effort of governments; industry and academia to the promote development of alternative/clean energy technologies and energy conservation techniques in India.

Nipun also sits on the The Bank of England, Asian Business Panel.



**■ GAURI ADVANI**

Gauri was admitted to practice as an Advocate in India in 1988. She acted as Special Assistant to the Leader of Opposition in the Indian Parliament and then worked for J.B Dadachanji & Co, one of the oldest and well regarded law firms in North India. She then went on to complete a post-graduate Fellowship at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, University of London in 1995.

In 1996 Gauri made a life changing decision to move to the UK to train and become a solicitor for England and Wales, qualifying as a Solicitor in 1998.

Before joining Eversheds, Gauri, was Head of Strategic Planning for Denton Wilde Sapte's India Group. She then went on to become the Head of the firm's India Group in 2003. This was the first time that an Asian woman ever held this position at a City law firm and was widely acclaimed by clients and peers alike for her diligence and hard work in the legal profession.

Today Gauri is Head of India Group at Eversheds LLP, one of the largest full service law firms in the world. Gauri was shortlisted in the 'Professional of the Year' category at the AWA 2008 awards.



**■ SHASHI GOSSAIN**

Shashi's Pharmaclinix is the UK's first 'one stop health and beauty clinic' that offers a combination of pharmaceuticals and on-site health & beauty products. As a cosmetic scientist, Shashi spent five years developing a range of skincare products under the Pharmaclinix brand that are specifically designed for Asian skin types. She has written

several books, including the best selling beauty book, "The Ultimate Anti-Ageing Handbook", In May 2004, she became the first Indian woman to open a specialised Mercedes garage, MercsOnly, offering cut-price servicing and repairs. Shashi Gossain's 'future of pharmacy' idea won her the Enterprise Award for her visionary new approach to the pharmaceutical industry in the Pharmacy Business Awards 2005 and in 2006 Shashi was shortlisted for the AWA awards in the Entrepreneur of the Year category. Shashi is a Member of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain and of The Society of Cosmetic Scientists.