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## Double for ‘Bust – Meet the brains behind Indian street food and craft beer joint Bundobust

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Writer: XXX XXXX

Award-winning Bundobust, serving up Gujarati street food and the best craft beers, has finally made the journey over the Pennines, opening the doors of its Manchester site on 14th December. Although it sits unobtrusively in Piccadilly Gardens, those in the know are already flocking to this Gujarati-inspired gastronomic paradise and beer haven.

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The first Bundobust, in Leeds, has been racking up the awards since opening in July 2014. With a Michelin Guide mention under their belt (alongside a raft of other awards), owners Mayur Patel and Marko Husak's idea has struck gold. But their success didn't come from nowhere. A backdrop of expertise and hard work frames Bundobust's success, from both sides. We spoke to Marko and Mayur about LBB (Life-Before-Bundobust) and how they arrived at this new venture – a second Bundobust, its back to Manchester's thriving Northern Quarter.

### Living up to the family name

For those who don't know, Mayur comes from what could now be called a culinary dynasty. The Patel family own Prashad, based initially in Bradford and now in Drighlington. Prashad has been serving up vegetarian, Gujarati street food (and, of late, fine dining options) for over twenty years.

A phone call from Gordon Ramsay's Best Restaurant catapulted Prashad into stardom, as it earned the runner-up spot on the popular show. Whilst brother Bobby, Bobby's wife Minal, and their mother, Kaushy, steered Prashad through this, Mayur stayed behind the scenes, in the kitchen.

Prashad's legacy now splits in three directions – though as Mayur admits, "we're always in each other's kitchens, giving advice and helping out". Whilst Bobby and Minal now steer Prashad in Drighlington towards elevated fine dining, and Kaushy concentrates on recipes for her books, Mayur harks back to Prashad's early days and its community feel – "people would pop into the deli for one little thing," he remembers, "and stay, chatting with my mum, for 45 minutes." It is that sense of community and informality that Bundobust replicates.

Both Marko and Mayur are proud Bradfordians, who owe their initial successes to their community. When Marko brought Sparrow Bier Café to North Parade in May 2011, there was nothing else there, and Bradford had little to offer. "Only old pubs," Marko says. "No one was pushing great beer". He wanted to see great bar culture with variety and that community feel, nearer to home – so he set up Sparrow. Nowadays, there are seven bars on North Parade alone. The Bier Café has won countless awards, such as CAMRA's pub of the season and a place in the Guardian's Top 10 UK Craft Beer Bars feature.



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## Bundobust beginnings

Deciding that Prashad and Sparrow definitely had a crossover customer base, Marko and Mayur decided to collaborate. Initially they tried two pop-ups, one where Prashad served Gujarati snacks at Sparrow and one where Sparrow brought the beer for a more formal 6 course food and beer pairing at Prashad. "Both businesses were ready for a new venture," Marko says. The success of these pop-ups in Spring 2013 (and a handful of festival appearances across the year) helped them to refine the look, and the food, which would become Bundobust. "For the first time, we got how it would work," Mayur notes – "the okra fries, the compostable, disposable pots and cutlery, ordering at an open bar – we nailed the concept down." And so, Bundobust was born.

## Innovative Gujarati-inspired street food meets great beer

At Bundobust's new venue, the focus will still be on great, regional Indian culinary delicacies with innovative twists, complemented by the best in small brew beers from across the UK and beyond.

"People are more discerning now," Mayur notes. They want authenticity in their food, not the generic "Indian food" of takeaways a decade ago. The Indian subcontinent is a vast place of many cultures, religions, and languages, resulting in so many different regional specialities. Although family ties mean that "the foundation will always be Gujarati", Mayur enjoys innovation and modernisation, as well as drawing upon the knowledge of other chefs in the kitchen (current staff bring Nepalese, Bengali and Punjabi influences to the table).

Whilst the core beer offering remains the same, Manchester provides a great opportunity to showcase local breweries as Guests. Breweries like Cloudwater, recently rated top brewery in the UK, will sit alongside their core offering, featuring beers like house special Bombay Dazzler, an Indian witbier infused with cardamom, coriander and ginger (and brewed by Leeds favourites, Northern Monk).

## Stepping up to the challenge

The dilapidated building they found on Piccadilly Gardens intrigued them both. As in Leeds, Bundobust Manchester's frontage isn't showy. A double door from street level leads down to sheer space; a high-ceilinged basement flooded with natural light. "There was no gas, no electric" when they arrived, Mayur points out – "it was the potential, rather than its current state. We're both passionate about design. We'd have to make compromises if it was 'done' – if it's empty, there's space for your imagination". And the new space is certainly full of imagination, and thought. Drew Millward's art, gracing the walls, nods to its Manchester setting, whilst the utilitarian, chipboard look of the Leeds venue is mirrored here.

So, although Bundobust is new to Manchester, the recipe is tried and tested. Marko and Mayur's passion for what they do knows no bounds, as Mancunians will soon discover, if they haven't already.

