

Taking a bite out of Bangladesh

By Rachelle Stewart

CHRISTOPHER Palma has always had a passion for food, with the dream of one day having his own restaurant.

Three months ago that dream became a reality when Palma decided to throw in his job at ANZ bank and open Nobanno – a restaurant specialising in traditional Bengali food.

“I had been wanting to open a restaurant for about the last nine years, and I came to New Zealand from Bangladesh and noticed there really wasn’t anywhere here offering Bengali food. It was always a dream to be able to offer that,” he said.

Palma, 37, has lived in Christchurch for the past two and a half years. Before that lived in Wellington and Auckland, where he did his degree in marketing and human resources.

“I came to Christchurch with the bank and decided I liked it here – the people are friendly and it is a good place to open a new business. I can see myself being here for a long time,” he said.

Palma’s role of being the direc-

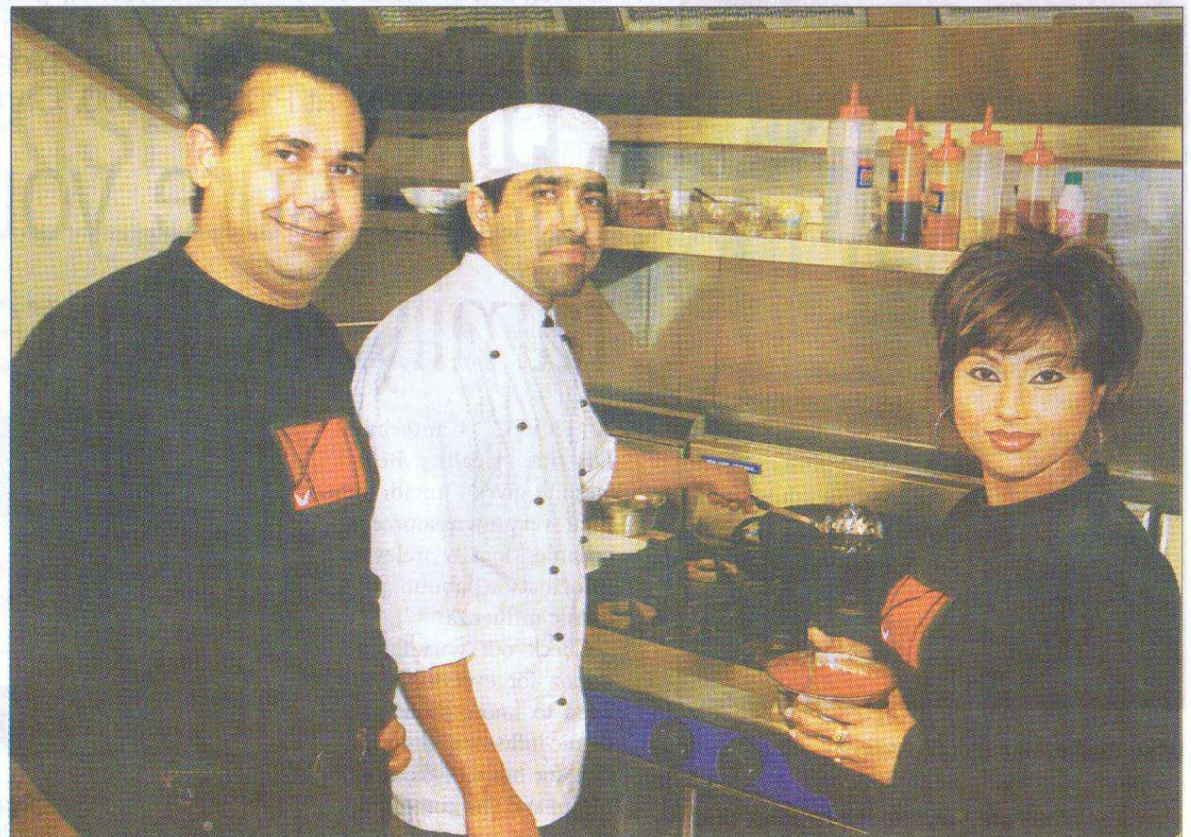
tor of Nobanno involves everything from helping to create new, innovative dishes, customer service and research as well as managing the overall running of the restaurant.

“I love the cooking part, that is the main reason why I wanted to do this – and my mother, who still lives in Bangladesh, gave me a lot of advice about that side of it,” Palma said.

Palma uses all natural ingredients for the dishes at Nobanno and every sauce is made from fresh vegetables, herbs and aromatic spices. “Everything is fresh. That is our main focus, to offer fresh and healthy food. I was getting the vegetables delivered but I noticed that sometimes they weren’t so fresh, so now I do all the shopping and get the ones I want, and we don’t use a lot of cream in our dishes either,” he said.

Nobanno is a licensed restaurant and can cater for up to 100 patrons. Palma said he aims to be able to offer a wide variety of New Zealand beers and wine.

“We have some beers from India, but while we are trying to bring in our own culture, we are also very respectful to the New Zealand



Best of Bangladesh: Christopher Palma checks on what’s cooking with head chef Nasir Khan and maitre d’ Reshmi Roy.

culture and want to cater to that taste,” he said.

Palma also said the restaurant offers suitable meals for children, and no dish is over \$20.

“We have already got many regular customers and have had many people from out of town ask when we will have a restaurant in their city,” he said.

Palma hopes to one day expand the business and have a Nobanno restaurant in Queenstown, Wellington, Auckland and Melbourne.