

# Posh spice

## FACT FILE

AGE 33

HOME Keurbooms

CHILDHOOD

DREAM

To be a nursery school teacher

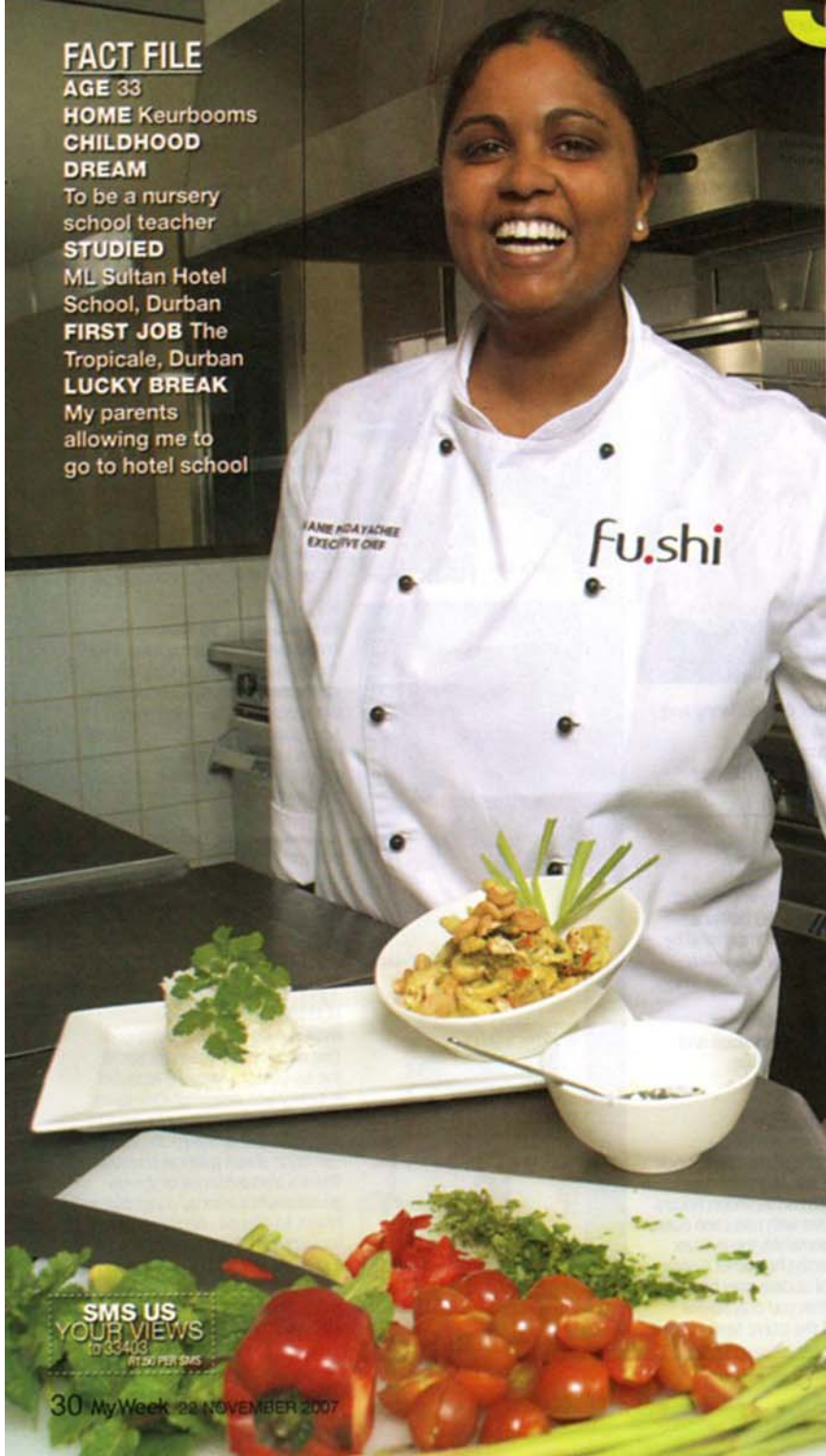
STUDIED

ML Sultan Hotel School, Durban

FIRST JOB The Tropicale, Durban

LUCKY BREAK

My parents allowing me to go to hotel school



Vanie Padayachee has put Plett on the culinary map with her unique Asian fusion food. She chats to Liesl Hattingh about fu.shi.

**What makes fu.shi unique?** We're the only restaurant on the Garden Route offering real Asian fusion cuisine. We have a Nepalese chef who helps me get the curry sauces just right, and our sushi chefs are from mainland China. Before we opened, I visited Singapore to sample the fare at top restaurants.

**How do you come up with a dish like Wasabi Crème Brûlée?** Margot Janse from Le Quartier Français in Franschhoek taught me to cook from within and to use what I know. In my case, that's spices. I also like to take a classic dish and add my own twist to it. It's all about being confident. The Wasabi Crème Brûlée raises eyebrows, but the wasabi is so subtle you can't help going "Wow!"

**Why the poetic names for your dishes?**

The general manager of fu.shi and I spent an evening tossing around ideas. We were inspired by the menu at the famous My Humble House in Singapore and wanted to create our own version. In no time it was all there – from Driftwood on a Wave to Gambolling through Fields of Green and Kissing Behind the Mountain.

**How did you end up on the Garden**

**Route?** While I was working at Grande Provence in Franschhoek, Noelle Bolton and Ara Manuelian, the owners of the Upper Deck Lifestyle Piazza, tasted my food. A few months later they offered me the position of executive chef at fu.shi. They gave me complete creative freedom right from the start.

**You even got involved in the building**

**process.** Yes, the walls had just gone up when I arrived. The architects were amazing, but had no knowledge of kitchen operations, so they had to redo the plans a few times! Now we have good flow, which is important in an Asian restaurant.

**How has fu.shi been received?** We've had a warm welcome. People travel more these days, so their taste in food has become more adventurous.

**Is fu.shi part of a bigger plan for**

**Plett?** Absolutely. From the start, the Upper Deck development, including the restaurant, was aimed at shaking off Plett's image as a seaside village.

>> fu.shi at Upper Deck Lifestyle Piazza  
044 533 6497/89

PHOTO: CREATIVE DESIGN

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