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PRESENTING SPONSOR OF THE 2016 BUSINESS TIMES CORPORATE GOLF LEAGUE

BY JUSTINE MOSS

HIGHLY DRIVEN NATURE

Shanmugam, founder and CEO of Gayatri Restaurant, started the business back in 1996 and now has four restaurants in Singapore. Over the years, the brand has grown into a household name synonymous with excellent Indian cuisine. The 53-year-old father of four – two of his sons help out in the business – and grandfather of one has since expanded his business by opening an institutional catering arm called Catering Solutions as well as Cool Kitchen which produces speciality products such as sauces. Next month, the entrepreneur, who has a team strength of 280, will be expanding even further by opening a central kitchen in Johor Bahru which will cater to establishments both in Singapore and Malaysia. The 15-handicapper, who is a member of Orchid Country Club and Safra, took up golf in 2004 and the sport has provided him with a number of opportunities to meet people and create business openings. An avid golfer who plays twice a week, Shanmugam shares his passion and love for the game, his business, food and cars.



What are your favourite courses in Singapore?

I love the Garden course at Tanah Merah Country Club, the courses at Sentosa Golf Club and also the layout at Seletar Country Club.

Where do you like to play in the region?

I like to fly over to China and play golf there. The courses, upkeep and weather are fantastic and the caddies are good as well. I also enjoy playing in the Philippines – Anvaya Cove and Sun Valley Golf Club – as well as Thailand.

Who would be in your dream flight?

My favourite player is Tiger Woods, who unfortunately is not doing very well now. He executes difficult shots and it's amazing to watch him on television.

Also in my flight would be Azahara Munoz, who I played with when she came to Singapore. She's also tasted my food. And I'd like to include local player Mardan Mamat.

How useful is golf for you when it comes to business networking?

I participate in and support a lot of charity events. I meet many business people, I get to talk to them and I work with them.

What do you like most about participating in the BT Corporate Golf League?

The League has helped us a lot – our participation is not for winning but more that we meet people.

Recently I was playing with the SunMoon directors and managers and we were talking about business and they told me that apart from trading fruit they also do ginger, potatoes and garlic from China.

I was so interested that in fact now we are already doing business with them.

It's a good thing that we meet business people in the League and there's a lot of business we can explore and come up with.

This tournament is benefiting us in different ways and even with our branding. After tasting our food, a lot of people come to know our brand name.

What do you like most about this Audi which you are test driving?

I like the navigational tools, the hands-free instruction gadgets and the steering is light. It looks good, has smooth driving and is very comfortable and there's a lot of space to put your golf bags. I'm also looking at a nice beautiful cockpit!

What's important to you when it comes to cars (driving, purchase etc)?

I go more for comfort and of course I always look at the evaluation of the brand, the model and how good they are. The brand makes a difference.

What drives you when it comes to business? What's important to you?

When you love the business and when the business is doing good for you there's always the energy you have to wake up early in the morning and get to work. I always look forward every day to go to work and I don't have days-off. Yes, I play golf on Sundays but business is always my priority.

Every evening is happy hour for me and I like being with friends, having a couple of beers and then home for a good meal. My wife is a great cook. I know what cooking is all about but I don't cook, so when I taste the food in my restaurants I know what is not there, what is there too much of and the presentation.

I also look at pricing. I don't want my restaurants to be very expensive. They have to be moderately priced, however I don't compromise on quality. I want us to be a simple restaurant and friendly to clients, customers, and patrons. That's very important to me.

What drives you out on the golf course?

I would love to be a single handicapper but if you don't go to the range and train you'll never get there. As long as I shoot sub-90 I'm very happy. That would be a good round of golf and at the end of the day, even if you play badly and you collect some money, that's good enough for me!



Audi Q7 SPECIFICATIONS & FEATURES

Model Name: Audi Q7 2.0 TFSI quattro Tiptronic
Engine: 1984cc, in-line 4, turbocharged
Power: 252hp
Torque: 370Nm
Top speed: 233km/h
0-100km/h: 7.1s
Consumption: 6.6L/100km
Price: \$296,000 inclusive of COE

Features:

- Audi virtual cockpit
- Audi connect with Google Map navigation
- quattro all-wheel drive
- Powered folding third-row seats
- MMI touch

photos by Jonathan Choo, courtesy of Audi