

Luckily for Rohini, her training at McKinsey really helped. "McKinsey prepared me so well," she recalls. "The solid training that I got at the firm really gave me the confidence. I think McKinsey gave me tremendous advantage as an entrepreneur," she adds. But she had her own share of obstacles to face. "I was pregnant with my first child when I was due to open my first Vermillion at Chicago. Six weeks before the launch, which was slated on December 20, after I had fixed the menu and everything, my Executive Chef got another offer and decided to leave. I was eight months pregnant at that time with no chef and an opening just a few weeks away! Fortunately, I got Maneet at that time and she handled everything fabulously," she says with a sigh of relief. The baby arrived two weeks before the launch. But none the less, Vermillion opened on time.

Within six months, it became one of the city's most fashionable addresses, serving exquisite Latin-Indian food. Recently, Rohini opened her second outlet at Manhattan which flaunted the starry investor line-up. Dey's ability to assemble so many high-profile investors is all the more impressive, considering the overall lack of financing available for generally hazardous food ventures. Her flourishing Chicago outlet that opened its doors five years ago was backed, among others, by McKinsey's former head Rajat Gupta. Says Rohini, "Rajat Gupta has really supported us through out as an investor, a patron and a mentor. With an investor like him you already have the credibility," she says.

Meanwhile, managing a family with two small children and being a jet setting restaurateur at the same time can be daunting. Her husband, Sajal Kohli, a top shot at McKinsey chips in to ease Rohini's burden. "We take turns. I ensure that when Sajal is travelling, I am not. Besides, weekends are sacrosanct. I go out with the kids and try out dimsums or *dosa* at Devon or may be try out Ethiopian food. We go out on vacations too," she says.

Returning to the work front, Rohini says she's planning to be here for the long haul. But the realist that she

is, adds, "But ask me again in two years, I might be eating my words, or my lease." One hopes that the lady with the will power never has to do that. <<

and scheduled regular menu tasting before locating Chef Maneet Chauhan, a Culinary Institute of America graduate." She is a girl from Ranchi who has worked with the Oberois and the Taj before she was spotted by Dey. Together, the two developed the menu by introducing traditional Indian spices and cooking methods to the dishes of South America, from ceviche to gazpacho. But setting up her own business was not the same as working for a big set up like McKinsey. "At McKinsey, you had an infrastructure to back you but this was a very different ball game. And believe me; handling an eatery can be daunting. There are 30 different inventories, suppliers, contractors, PR and marketing to be managed. It was a big challenge," she admits.

"I was eight months pregnant at that time with no chef and an opening just a few weeks away!"