

## REVIEWS

## ONE DOLLAR CURRY

(FRANCE-U.K.-INDIA)

A Silhouette Films Intl. Production in association with Zee Network, France 2 Cinema, Tessalit Prods. Produced by Vijay Singh.

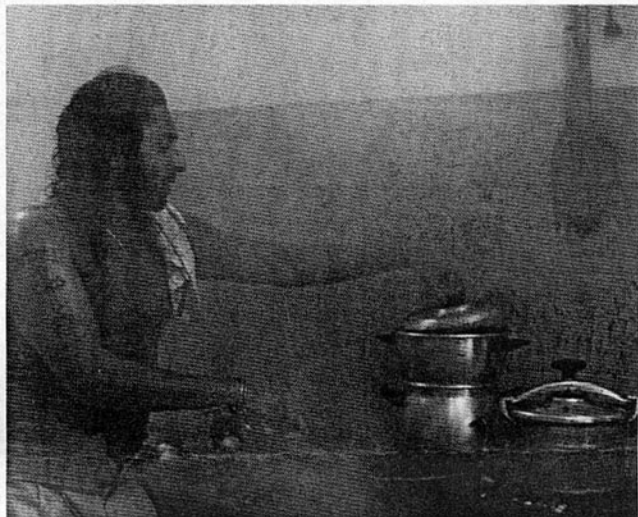
Directed, written, edited by Vijay Singh. Camera (color), Benoit Chamaillard; music, Zakir Hussain, Taufiq Qureshi; production designer, Jean-Marc Tran Tan Ba; costume designer, Cedric Grenapin; sound (DTS stereo), Philippe Blanche. **Reviewed at Cannes Film Festival (market), May 14, 2004. Running time: 92 MIN.**

Nishan ..... Vikram Chatwal  
 Nathalie ..... Gabriella Wright  
 Yamini ..... Smriti Mishra  
 Fixer ..... Trevor Stephens  
 (English dialogue)

By DEBORAH YOUNG

**N**either Bollywood nor Euro art film, nevertheless "One Dollar Curry" carves a neat niche for itself as an entertaining comedy about how enterprising Indian immigrant Ni-shan hoodwinks posh Parisians into honoring him as one of the great chefs of India, when he can barely cook. This feel-good tale has several laugh-out-loud moments and slips its lesson of global tolerance into a palatable form that auds can easily digest. It's a small but tasty tidbit that should appeal to **offbeat distribs.**

Paris-based author and director Vijay Singh takes a different tack from his debut feature "Jaya Ganga," a lyrical trip down the Ganges, which ran nearly a year in a Paris arthouse. Here the direction



**CAN'T STAND THE HEAT:** Vikram Chatwal makes his screen debut in "One Dollar Curry," which screens in the market.

is comedy, with a pinch of song and dance thrown in. Nishan (Vikram Chatwal), a young Sikh forbidden to marry his Hindu girlfriend Yamini (Smriti Mishra), turns up in France penniless and illegal. He's immediately befriended by a streetwise Jamaican, Fixer (Trevor Stephens), and his street-walker g.f., who help Nishan open a dreadful \$1 curry stand. Chased by the police, he is next aided by beautiful wannabe journalist Nathalie (Gabriella Wright), who gets him a gig cooking for her yuppie friends and TV producer. He moves into her spare room and soon into her bed.

Nishan would like to be honorable

and honest but survival leaves no room for such luxuries. Stealing the name and family lineage of a famous chef, he passes himself off as someone he isn't, but no one seems to notice he cooks abominably as long as he looks the part. When Yamini pays him a surprise visit, he finds two girls on his hands as well as a make-it-or-break-it dinner to bluff his way through.

Chatwal and Wright, both making their screen debuts, contribute to film's light, chipper tone. Mishra, a classic Kathak dancer who starred in "Jaya Ganga," performs the brief song-and-dance numbers. Tech credits are basic.