

7 - 13 OCTOBER 2022

THE WEEKLY FOR HOSPITALITY LEADERS

THE CATERER

HOTELS • RESTAURANTS • FOODSERVICE • PUBS & BARS

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Operators reveal their
recruitment plans

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FRONT COVER PHOTO: DAVID COTSWORTH

It being Black History Month, this week sees the start of a series of features we are publishing to celebrate black role models within our industry.

We kick off this celebration with our cover star, April Jackson, owner of Wood & Water in Brixton who is making strides in her efforts to "change the perception of Jamaican culture through hospitality". Guests won't find rice and peas on the menu, instead the restaurant serves goat croquettes and pan-seared duck breast with jerk glaze.

We also congratulate Ayo Adeyemi who earlier this week was revealed as the executive chef of West African restaurant Akoko, one of a number of black-owned restaurants which have opened in the last couple of years focusing on a wide-range of cuisines (more features coming later this month!).

Both Adam Bateman (p.21) and Audrey Annoh-Antwi (p.36) shine a spotlight on role models improving representation in the industry. Because as Annoh-Antwi says sometimes it's "seeing someone like yourself that assures you that not only is this space one for you, but one where you can excel".

We are all too aware at *The Caterer* that representation in this industry can be hard to find. But we are committed to celebrating it all year around, not just in October. We're by no means perfect, but we are trying and want to make a difference to be more inclusive. So this month take some time to look around your business and join us in sharing the successes, role models and inspirational stories from your diverse workforce to help make this industry a more inclusive environment for everyone.



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Michelin reveals new additions to 2023 guide

Sophie Witts

Michelin's latest monthly update has revealed a further seven new restaurants which will be included in its 2023 *Great Britain and Ireland Guide*.

The additions include Plaza Khao Gaeng, a Thai restaurant run on the mezzanine level of JKS Restaurants' Arcade Food Hall in London.

Also featured were the Seaclyff restaurant at the Sandy Cove hotel in Berrynarbor, Devon, and Little Hollows Pasta in Bristol, a small independent pasta bar which opened a year ago.

Arkle, which occupies the site formerly run by Simon Radley at the Chester Grosvenor hotel, also made the list. The restaurant briefly closed and lost its Michelin star following Radley's departure in 2021, but relaunched this year under chef Elliott Hill, a former finalist in National Chef of the Year.

The second London addition was Chantelle Nicholson's Apricity, a sustainability-focused restaurant which Michelin said



Chantelle Nicholson's Apricity was added to the Michelin guide

offered a "sanctuary of calm" close to Oxford Street.

York restaurant Rattle Owl is led by head chef Tom Heywood and sits within a 17th-century building, which took owner Clarrie O'Callaghan two years to renovate. Michelin praised the "boldly flavoured dishes" and "buzz" of the dining room.

The only new Scottish addition was 1610 in Dumfries, a restaurant housed within the Globe Inn, a historic pub which used to serve poet Robert Burns.

There were no new restaurants listed from Wales or the island of Ireland.

Since last summer, Michelin has been unveiling new additions to its listings every month. The restaurants appear as recommended on its website and apps highlighted with a 'new' symbol.

It will not be confirmed if any of the restaurants will also receive a star, Bib Gourmand or Green Star sustainability award until a ceremony next year.

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Des Gunewardena to leave D&D London after 16 years

Des Gunewardena, co-founder and chief executive of D&D London for the past 16 years, has left the restaurant group "to pursue other ventures".

David Loewi, co-founder, chief operating officer and deputy chairman of D&D during that time, has been appointed as interim chief executive of the business.

Loewi and Gunewardena founded D&D in 2006 from Conran Restaurants, where they worked together. Since then, the pair have expanded D&D's portfolio to 40 restaurants across the UK and internationally, including London's Le Pont de la Tour in Tower Bridge and Coq d'Argent in Bank.

The group also has restaurants in Manchester, Leeds and Bristol and is due to launch Orelle, an 88-cover modern French restaurant, in Birmingham on 14 October.

Gunewardena said: "I am very sad to be leaving D&D which I

love and have seen grow from its first restaurant opening over 30 years ago in its Conran days to the fabulous business it is today. Though I will now be focusing on existing and new ventures outside D&D I wish David and the management team every success for the future."

For the 15 months since April 2021, D&D's group revenues were £163m, with trading at 90% of pre-Covid levels. Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation were £17m.

Loewi added: "Our restaurants are trading well as the UK leisure and hospitality scene recovers with workers returning to offices and business travel coming back. This resilience has enabled our group to retain a strong cash position and financial headroom."

"However, we are also acutely aware of the challenging economic environment, particularly for our industry in the face

of inflation and skills shortages, and so remain pragmatic over the outlook for sector and continuously keep our operations and strategy under review.

"Des has been an important part of D&D London's success and history, and we wish him all the best for the future."

The move comes after Baton

Berisha, former managing director of D&D, was poached by rival restaurant company the Wolseley Hospitality Group earlier this year, just three months after he joined the business.

In April, *Sky News* reported that D&D London was exploring a possible sale of the business for £100m.



Des Gunewardena

Restaurants close to avoid 'outpricing' customers

Operators close rather than charge prices that reflect increased outgoings

By Sophie Witts

A growing number of restaurants are choosing to close rather than raise prices and risk losing customers.

Last month Gatehouse Steakhouse in Dolgellau, north-west Wales, announced it had shut its doors for good after its gas and electricity bills rose to £7,378 per month.

Owners John and Vita Dolan said the change would force them to charge over £30 for an 8oz rump steak and £25 for a burger, which the pair described as "totally unrealistic".

John wrote on Facebook: "It is just not realistic for a small independent business to thrive with such overheads...and 'surviving' is just treading water.

"[To] be tasked with increasing revenue by another £5,500 per month just to keep the lights on, makes this pretty pointless."

Chef Aktar Islam closed his Pulperia steakhouse in Birmingham on 30 September after warning it was impossible to operate at a high standard without "outpricing" customers.

Islam, who also owns the Michelin-starred Opheem in the city, launched Pulperia in 2020 and the restaurant is recommended in the *Michelin Guide Great Britain and Ireland 2022*.

He described the closure as "bittersweet", adding: "Consumer habits have changed, and



Recent closures include Aktar Islam's Pulperia steakhouse and Goddard & Gibbs at One Hundred Shoreditch

we feel we've come to the end of our journey. The team has been nothing short of amazing.

"We're going to monitor the next coming months and consider options regarding the location and introducing another concept."

Hypha, a vegan restaurant in Chester, also announced last week that it was temporarily shutting its doors due to soaring costs hitting the business.

Hypha launched in 2019 and won a Michelin Green Star for

'sustainable gastronomy' for its seasonal tasting menu in 2021.

The Hypha team said in a statement: "With soaring costs of outgoings for the business, our current model leaves us at a high price point for our guests. Unfortunately to continue to operate at the level of service and gastronomy that we desire; that price point would need to increase even further, something we do not want to engage in.

"With this, to preserve the integrity of what we hold dear,

we have decided to close our doors for the current time and re-evaluate how we can give the public the product we want at a more accessible price."

Seafood restaurant Goddard & Gibbs at the One Hundred Shoreditch hotel in London also closed on 30 September after just six months of trading. A spokesperson said the space would be used to host events in the run-up to Christmas.

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Red tape cut for thousands of redefined small businesses

More businesses are to be categorised as small, meaning thousands will be released from reporting requirements and other regulations, the government has announced.

Businesses with fewer than 50 employees were previously exempt from certain bureaucracy.

From 3 October, this will be widened to include those with fewer than 500 staff for all future and reviewed regulations.



Truss may extend the definition to firms with 1,000 employees

The government said the change would free an additional 40,000 businesses from "expensive and burdensome" paperwork.

It added that the move could save companies "thousands of pounds" and that the exemption would "be applied in a proportionate way to ensure workers' rights and other standards will be protected".

The change will apply from 3 October to all new regulations under development as well as

those under review, including retained EU laws.

The government also confirmed plans to consult on potentially extending the threshold to businesses with 1,000 employees.

Liz Truss' government is understood to be re-examining several policies with the aim of cutting red tape for business, including the requirement for large hospitality businesses to list calorie counts on menus, which was introduced in April.

In pictures: Claridge's launches first ever spa

By Jungmin Seo

Claridge's in London's Mayfair has launched its first ever spa, which spans 7,000 sq ft.

The spa is located three floors down in the basement and features a swimming pool, steam rooms, sauna and seven treatment rooms.

The hotel received planning permission to add seven storeys to its Mayfair site, including five in the basement, in December 2016.

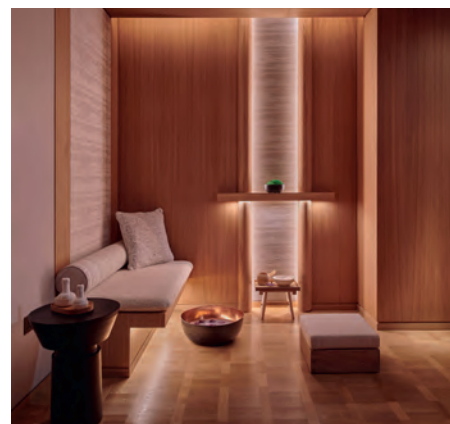
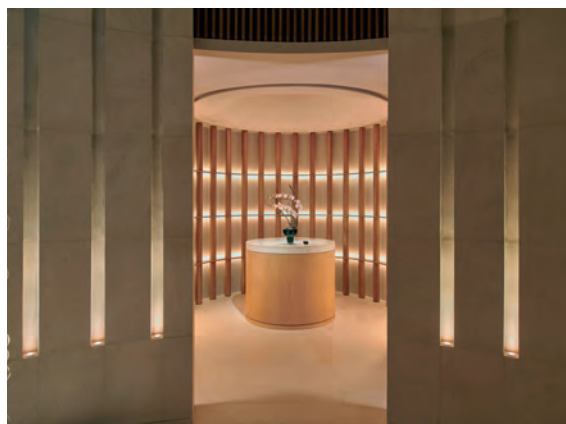
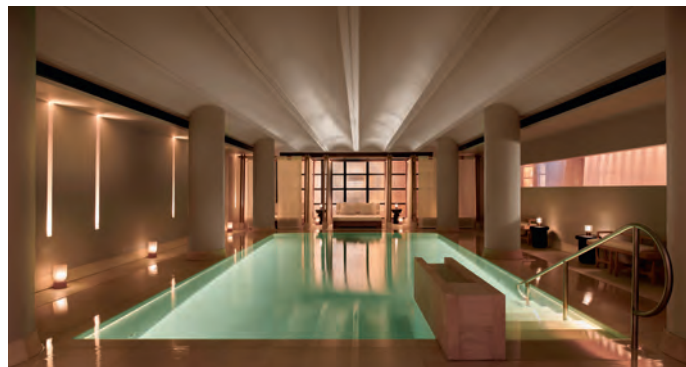
The spa was designed by interior architect Andre Fu, who took inspiration from traditional Japanese temples and Zen gardens in Kyoto.

Guests will be given kimonos and welcomed with a 'foot ceremony' upon entry.

Hair, beauty and wellness brands Josh Wood, Augustinus Bader and Facegym have collaborated with Claridge's to create a range of professional and exclusive treatments.

Guests will also have the chance to receive treatments from visiting experts such as nail artist Harriet Westmoreland and acupuncturist Ross J Barr.

Inge Theron, Maybourne Hotel Group's creative director of spa and wellness and founder of Facegym, said: "Claridge's has long been a temple of good living with a philosophy of enjoying life to the full, and so now, as well as pouring guests the perfect martini, we can also rejuvenate and restore with the perfect treatment, to strike that all important balance."



"Claridge's Spa is the very beginning of a new wellness journey for Maybourne Hotel Group."

The spa is open to hotel guests and non-guests from Monday to Sunday, 8am to 9pm. Treatments are 90 minutes and include access to the pool.

Maybourne Hotel Group owns and manages Claridge's, the Connaught, the Berkeley, the Maybourne Beverly Hills and the Maybourne Riviera.

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Event caterer Rocket sold to Restaurant Associates

Restaurant Associates, part of Compass Group, has acquired luxury event caterer Rocket.

Rocket was launched in 2000 by brother and sister team Michael Symonds and Caroline Hall and has catered to events for major fashion, automotive and financial services firms as well as charities and private clients.

It also runs luxury canapé delivery brand Pocket Rocket

and virtual cook-along business A Cook's Tour.

Restaurant Associates said the deal would allow it to access Rocket's central London production kitchen and give both companies the chance to "extend their reach" in the capital and nationwide.

Rocket will be given support with its supply chain and sustainability credentials and access to Compass' training

and apprenticeship schemes. Symonds and Hall will remain as managing directors of Rocket, while senior management and all 50 employees will continue in their roles.

Matt Thomas, managing director at Restaurant Associates UK, said: "We have long admired the work that Michael and Caroline have done and hold the Rocket brand in high regard. We look forward to sharing

best practices and developing new ways of working together. We are both highly respectful of each other's brands and are excited about the collaborative opportunities ahead."

Symonds added: "Our team have a passion for exceptional food, creativity and service, all values that we share with Restaurant Associates. The new partnership will be a formidable offer for the clients we are proud to serve."

Hotel Cateys 2022 shortlist revealed

The top members of the hotel industry are celebrated in the shortlist

The shortlist for the 2022 Hotel Cateys has been revealed, featuring the most successful hotel operators and their employees in the UK.

The awards, supported by headline sponsors Bidfood, remain the hotel industry's only truly independent benchmark of operational excellence, with entrants judged by their peers and industry experts.

Shortlists are not revealed for the Hotelier of the Year, sponsored by Casna Group, Outstanding Contribution, sponsored by Davidson Asset Management, or the Extra Mile award.

To buy tickets, visit hotelcateys.com and to enquire about sponsorship contact rob.adam@thecaterer.com



Hotel Cateys 2022 shortlist

Concierge of the Year

- Michael De Cozar, the Ritz London
- Adam Lazoryk, Mottram Hall Hotel, Golf & Health Spa
- Mustafa El Omari, the Montague on the Gardens
- Joe Rodrigues, Sofitel London St James

Conference and Banqueting Team of the Year

- Hope Street hotel
- Lainston House, part of the Exclusive Collection
- The Langham London
- Park Plaza Riverbank
- Royal Lancaster London

Food and Beverage Manager of the Year, sponsored by Britvic

- Everett Chambers, the Montague on the Gardens
- Andrew Di Sora, South Lodge
- Koula Michaelides, the Ritz London
- Varun Shetty, the Belfry Hotel & Resort

Front of House Manager of the Year

- Achraf Abdelhak, Supercity Aparthotels
- Megan Bourke, Belmond Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons
- Sally Kinsella, Kimpton Clocktower Hotel
- Linda Smith, Moonfleet Manor

Front of House Team of the Year

- Christchurch Harbour Hotel & Spa
- Fowey Hall
- Kimpton Blythswood Square hotel
- Belmond Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons
- The Ritz London

Hotel Chef of the Year (fewer than 250 covers)

- George Blogg, Gravetye Manor
- Will Holland, the Atlantic Hotel
- Luke Matthews, Chewton Glen

Hotel Chef of the Year (more than 250 covers), sponsored by Bidfood

- Adam Bateman, Grand Hotel Birmingham
- Dominic Teague, One Aldwych

Hotel Restaurant Chef of the Year

- Chris Cleghorn, The Olive Tree Restaurant, Bath
- Rob Mason, The Cottage in the Wood, Malvern
- Adam Reid, Adam Reid at the French, the Midland Manchester
- Mathew Sherry, the Balmoral, Edinburgh

Best Use of Technology Award

- Lake District Country Hotels
- Rockliffe Hall
- Seaham Hall
- Zetter Hotel Group

Hotel Restaurant Manager of the Year

- Eleanor Bristow, Adam Reid at the French, the Midland Manchester
- Antonino Forte, Galvin At Windows
- Paul Popescu, Radisson Hotel Group

Hotel Restaurant Team of the Year

- The Gallivant
- Kimpton Blythswood Square hotel
- The Ritz London

Housekeeper of the Year, sponsored by P&G Professional

- Nicoleta Loredana, Royal National hotel
- Adriana Milea, the Ritz London
- Gosia Oszekiel, the Grand Brighton
- Diane Payne, Rockliffe Hall
- Lisa Williams, the Grand York

People Manager of the Year, sponsored by Caterer.com

- Danielle Dasselaar, Waldorf Astoria Edinburgh – the Caledonian
- James Goulding, PPHE Hotel Group
- Sarah Powell, Belmond Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons
- Kirsten Price, the Belfry Hotel & Resort

People Team of the Year, sponsored by mum

- The Belfry Hotel & Resort
- Dakota Hotels
- The Hari
- Belmond Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons
- Splendid Hospitality Group

Revenue Manager of the Year

- Gretel Canda, the Royal Crescent Hotel & Spa
- Sara Dufton, the Belfry Hotel & Resort
- Teresa Kingston, Rockliffe Hall Hotel
- Bianca Peter, Waldorf Astoria Edinburgh – the Caledonian

Sustainable Hotel of the Year, sponsored by Sky

- Heckfield Place
- Belmond Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons
- Room2 Chiswick

Spa Professional of the Year

- Finlay Anderson, IHG Hotels and Resorts
- Julia Butt, Hand Picked Hotels
- Dee England, the Headland Hotel
- Robbie Leung, Pan Pacific London
- David Taylor, Leonardo Royal London City

The winners will be revealed at the Royal Lancaster London hotel on Monday 28 November



Iré Hassan-Odukale and Jeremy Chan

IKOYI RESTAURANT TO MOVE TO NEW SITE

The founders of acclaimed London restaurant Ikoyi have confirmed they are to move the venue to a new site in November.

Jeremy Chan and Iré Hassan-Odukale will relocate the restaurant to 180 the Strand after five years at the St James' Market development.

Since opening in 2017 Ikoyi has won two Michelin stars for its menu, which combines high-quality British produce and spices largely sourced from sub-Saharan west Africa.

The team's last service at St James' Market will run on 26 October and bookings for the new site will open from 15 October.

180 the Strand is described as a 'home to London's creative industries' and the building also houses an art gallery and a Soho House workspace.

PORTRAIT OF JEREMY KING TO BE SOLD AT AUCTION



A portrait of restaurateur Jeremy King by artist Lucian Freud, who was a regular at the Wolseley, will be coming to auction at Sotheby's on 15 October.

The 'Head of Jeremy King' etching on copper plate is the first artwork by Freud, the 20th-century figurative painter and grandson of Sigmund Freud, to be offered at auction.

It is being sold from King's own collection and is estimated to be valued at £250,000-£350,000.

Lucian ate almost every night at the Wolseley restaurant after King and Chris Corbin opened it in 2003. He invited King to sit for the etching, which is technically incomplete, from 2008 to 2011 and it became one of his final works.

Oliver Barker, Sotheby's chairman of Europe, said: "[This]

luminous copper plate, replete with the artist's meticulous scratches and chalk marks – laboured over for three years – is an artistic triumph in its own right, and marks the culmination of Freud's extraordinary seven-decade long career."

HOSPODEMO TO STAGE THIRD WESTMINSTER PROTEST

HospoDemo is to return to Westminster this month to protest the lack of government support for the industry.

The hospitality sector protest group is to hold a demonstration on 17 October at Parliament Square in London.

"It's clear that the government doesn't consider supporting hospitality a priority. It's time to make them realise this has to change, to stop thousands more businesses crumbling," the group wrote on Twitter.

HospoDemo was founded by marketing professional Rachel Harty in 2020 to urge the government to revise its policies relating to hospitality venues, both in terms of restrictions and industry support. The group organised two protests in 2020, which hundreds of hospitality professionals turned out to support.

ST JOHN TEAM TO OPEN NEW RESTAURANT



The team behind St John have announced their first major restaurant opening in over a decade.

Fergus Henderson and Trevor Gulliver are preparing to open a new St John located on London's Marylebone Lane on 18 October.

The wine-led site will be open all day, with coffees, bread, and pastries available in the morning and daily specials accompanying St John staples at lunch and dinner.

Dishes prepared by head chef Fintan Sharp will change daily, though the menu will feature regulars including onion soup, bone marrow toast and parsley salad; deep fried Welsh rarebit; and Middle White chop, chicory and sorrel.



The restaurant itself will be split into two, with upstairs reserved for walk ins and an open-plan dining room downstairs reminiscent of St John in Smithfield.

APRIL JACKSON TO OPEN SECOND POP BRIXTON BAR

London restaurateur April Jackson has revealed plans to open a second bar in Pop Brixton in October or November this year.

It follows the launch of her ABV rum cocktail bar at the shipping container development in 2021.



The new bar will focus on tequila and will be called Batanga. The former Miss Jamaica

FOR UP-TO-THE MINUTE DAILY NEWS FROM AROUND THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY GO TO
WWW.THECATERER.COM



NEW EXECUTIVE CHEF JOINS AKOKO

Ayo Adeyemi has been appointed as executive chef of West African restaurant Akoko in London's Fitzrovia.

He is taking over the role from Theo Clench, who joined Akoko in July 2021 and has left to open his own restaurant, Cylene.

Adeyemi has worked in Michelin-starred kitchens around the world, including Taj Campton Place restaurant in San Francisco and the Fat Duck in Bray.

He will lean into his West African heritage to create the new menu, which will include waina, a fermented rice snack served with Oscietra caviar. Jollof rice will be served with barbecue native blue lobster, with the claw poached and offered alongside pepper soup made using its shell.

The dessert menu will feature uda ice-cream and aridan, a fruit native to West Africa, in shiitake bofrot (a Ghanaian doughnut).

Prices start from £55 for lunch and £120 for dinner. Wine pairings start at £75.

Universe and contestant on BBC's *The Apprentice* said her future expansion plans would focus on bars rather than restaurants.

"Bar operations are far easier than kitchen operations. It's a lot more simplified, it's easier to staff, it's easier to manage," she said.

"Even when you have people eating out less, we have seen that people are still drinking out, so from a business perspective, I do think that it's a smarter move."

● Turn to page 28 for more

UKHOSPITALITY CALLS FOR TIGHTER CURBS ON AIRBNB



UKHospitality has urged the government to introduce a registration scheme for short-term accommodation providers to help "level the playing field" between hotels and sites such as Airbnb.

Currently, some sites can unfairly benefit from lack of regulation and reduced tax burdens, while many hospitality businesses face stricter rules, the trade body said in its response to a government review into the issue.

UKHospitality has argued that a registration scheme would ensure that all accommodation is safe for consumers. The government said it will publish its response to the findings shortly.

BOXPARK TO OPEN IN LIVERPOOL

Boxpark is to open in Liverpool in 2023, marking the first



development of its kind for shipping container group outside of London.

It has agreed a 15-year lease for Canning Hall, a 1980s warehouse building which will house 10 kitchen units and three internal bars. It will seat 400 people indoors and 200 people outside.

It will be the sixth overall opening for Boxpark, which was founded in London's Shoreditch in 2010 and has since expanded to Croydon and Wembley.

Boxpark secured investment from private equity firm LDC in 2021, which has been fuelling its national expansion plans.

ALYN WILLIAMS NAMED EXECUTIVE CHEF AT PARK ROW



Alyn Williams has joined DC Comics-themed restaurant Park Row in London as executive chef.

He will oversee the food at the "immersive" Soho experience,

which features bars and restaurants inspired by the publisher behind the Batman, Wonder Woman and Superman comics.

Williams will launch a new menu this month with dishes set to include rabbit, smoked chicken terrine, tarragon and confit rabbit samosa; and Cornish stone bass, crispy caviar and chive butter.

It is the first major appointment for the chef since he won £57,000 in damages for unfair dismissal from his role at the Westbury hotel in Mayfair in 2019.

Park Row opened on Soho's Brewer Street in 2021 in the site previously occupied by Marco Pierre White's Titanic restaurant.

UK'S FIRST 'STAFFLESS' RESTAURANT TO LAUNCH IN OXFORD

The UK's first 24-hour 'staffless' restaurant is to open in Oxford this winter, serving a range of Korean ramen.

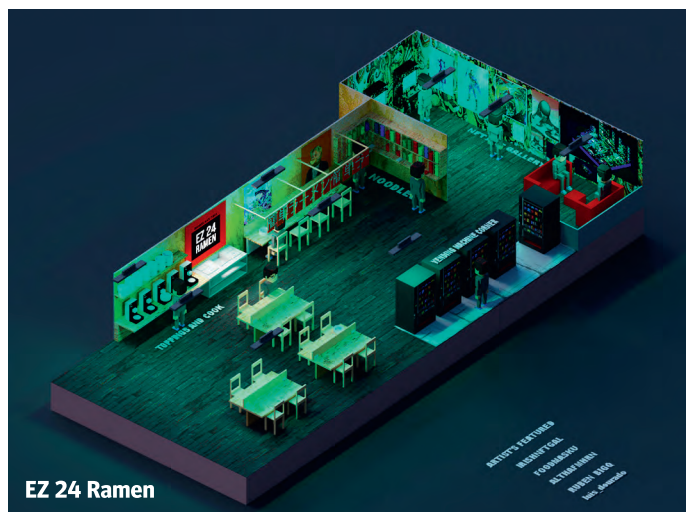
Customers at EZ 24 Ramen will pay a subscription to access the site, where they can use machines to cook their own noodles with a range of customisable toppings.

Users will be able to enter the building by scanning a QR code using an app.

Drinks, ice-creams and meal kits will also be sold in Korean and Japanese-style vending machines, and the store will feature arcade games, WiFi and plug sockets for laptops.

The store will be monitored by CCTV 24-hours a day with a team member occasionally visiting to restock the machines and clean the restaurant.

EZ Ramen intends to open its first store in Oxford and "quickly expand to other locations around the UK", before launching in America.



Laws of attraction

Companies are competing for fewer staff, and staff are looking for companies that take diversity, inclusion and consideration of the cost of living crisis into account. The latest Business Leaders Report by CGA and *The Caterer* looks at hospitality employers' recruitment plan for 2022

Staffing remains one of the most difficult challenges facing hospitality leaders. According to the Business Leaders Report, produced by *The Caterer* and powered by CGA, only 31% of leaders were confident in recruitment, training and retention over the next 12 months. Nearly a third (28%) were not confident, with a further 16% saying they were not at all confident in their recruitment, training and retention over the next year.

Nine in 10 leaders anticipated recruiting new staff this year, while 38% claimed they needed to hire to a greater extent than previously.

"None of these statistics are a surprise," said Karl Chessell, director, hospitality opera-

"We're seeing teams being worked harder than ever before"

Claire Philpott, Cartwheel Recruitment

tors and food, EMEA at CGA. "There's clearly a staff shortage and has been for a long time. And while there's been a lot of talk around energy and the government support needed in recent weeks, the staffing

issue hasn't gone away at all. Hospitality is impacted by so many things at the same time: staffing, energy, supply chain shortages and the impact cost of living is having on consumer confidence."

Chessell said while operators were facing many different problems, they are all interconnected. "Elsewhere in the report, we've discussed how quality of experience and value of experience is important for consumers right now, and quality is as much about food and drink as it is about people.

"Experience is everything from the presentation of the food, quality of the ingredients, surroundings of a hotel or restaurant and the service – and with how competitive the industry is right now, you need to get as many of those things as right as possible."

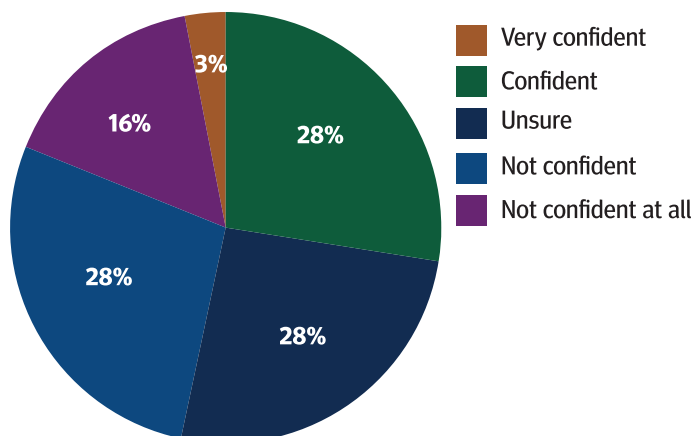
The challenge here is how to deliver that quality experience with a shortage of staff. "If you can't get the people it can dilute the experience, as well as reduce the opportunity to upsell added extras. The staffing crisis really shows how big of an issue this all is and finding the solution is hard for any one operator to solve. The industry needs to come together."

And the industry is collaborating, with organisations including Hospitality Action, Hospitality Rising, and Be Inclusive Hospitality to name only a few, which are all doing fantastic jobs to promote hospitality as a career of choice and

championing diversity in the workforce, as well as focusing on looking after staff and their mental wellbeing in hope of improving retention rates.

Claire Philpott, operators

How confident are you in recruiting, training and retaining your workforce over the next 12 months?



Just
31%
of leaders are confident in recruiting, training, and retention in the next 12 months



“Operators get it – their customer base is diverse and their workforce should be too”

Karl Chessell

director at Cartwheel Recruitment, stressed the importance of looking after your staff. “We’re seeing teams being worked harder than ever before,” she said, noting how the number one reason candidates were approaching recruiters to look for new positions was because they had become pressured or unhappy in their current role.

“We’re seeing a lot of hospitality businesses doing a lot more around the people agenda, with people directors and HR managers becoming more important than ever before. Because it’s not just about attracting staff, but about retaining them too.”

While Philpott has seen salaries go “off the scale” for some positions, she said it was not always possible to compete with financial packages. Instead, businesses should look at offering hybrid working, such as

working four days in seven and offering home working where possible. “Departments are having to be creative,” she said, pointing to one large pizza chain which is offering all staff free pizza at the end of their shift.

On a more positive note, 59% of business leaders in our survey have a plan for recruiting and training women into senior roles, while 58% were also planning to address diversity in their businesses.

This is reflected in what companies are currently requesting from recruiters. “There are positive strides towards making boards and senior teams more inclusive and diverse. It’s a big wish list people are looking for,” said Philpott, noting how businesses were approaching recruiters wanting a better inclusion of gender, race and age in their teams. “The message around diversity is really start-

ing to have an impact and there aren’t many businesses that don’t have it on their agenda.”

Chessell added: “Operators get it – their customer base is diverse and their workforce should be too.”

And if operators created a more inclusive workforce, along with a happier and flexible environment to work in, this should help ease some of the pressures on the overall staffing crisis by attracting more people into the industry.

9 in 10
leaders
anticipate
recruiting new
staff this year

The Hospitality Business Leaders Report

The Caterer’s Hospitality Business Leaders Report, powered by CGA, surveyed more than 500 top bosses from across the restaurant, hotel, foodservice and pub and bar sectors. They were quizzed on how confident they are about their markets, how their business is performing, what their priorities are for the year ahead, the trends they are experiencing, and what they think are the biggest challenges and opportunities for their businesses.

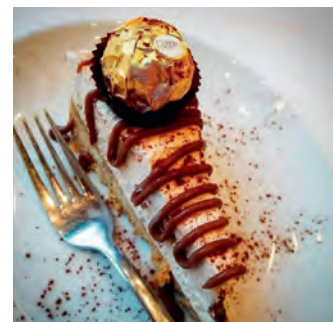
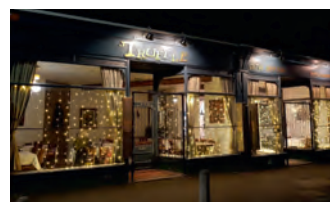
thecaterer.com/insight

Review of the reviews

THE TIMES

I mean, £18.95 for a two-course lunch, plus £4.95 for dessert, on a Saturday, in the centre of town? You can't say fairer than that. Especially when there's a nice straightforward menu of five starters and five mains and four puds. The choice for less than a £20 note each was: pea and mint soup; sauté mussels, white wine, garlic and herb sauce; Italian-style meatballs, sweet pepper sauce; leek and Welsh cheddar croquettes, garlic aioli; caprese salad with rocket and basil oil. Then: deep-fried haddock, handcut chips, peas; breast of chicken wrapped in prosciutto with a tomato and basil sauce and creamed potatoes; creamy miso mushroom rigatoni with pangrattato; Cajun pork loin steak with pineapple salsa; and rump steak, pepper sauce, handcut chips.

[The] moules marinière were fantastic: big and juicy and not too many of them (I hate a quantity of mussels that borders on the oppressive and tips you into duty eating), in a very light juice with lots of puffy white bread, and my meatballs (ordered with Sam in mind, as a reserve option should his sudden shellfish impulse turn out to be a hoax – as happens from time to time) were absolutely



WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/TRUFFLESWANSEA/PHOTOS

Giles Coren sits down to a fairly priced lunch with historic meatballs at Truffle in Swansea

historic: three of them, golf ball-sized, a mildly flavoured pork and beef blend, rich with the addition of Parmesan but lightened by bread in the mix, sweetened with the peppers and then a trickle of mozzarella melted on top. I'm not sure I've ever had a meatball starter before, but it rocked.

The very short wine list is priced beautifully for these times, with a 250ml glass of Pinot Grigio – that's a third of a bottle – coming in at £6.25.

But the even better news is that they encourage you to bring your own wine and pay a small corkage charge of... absolutely nothing! Which is just incredible, when you consider that one famous restaurant in London, a favourite of mine, recently told me that they'd need to see the wine before quoting a price (the fancier it was, the more they wanted), but that corkage started at £25 per bottle.

Score: cooking: 7; value: 9; service: 10; vibes: 10; score: 9

The INDEPENDENT

Sean Russell enjoys inventive cocktails at the 40 Elephants Bar in London

Themed bars aren't usually my thing, but this one strikes a good balance. If you are drawn to the "golden age" of the 1920s and pine for the Gatsby experience, you will love it.

The cocktails have a unique twist. The Negroni uses Sicilian blood orange, with a heart etched into the ice cube. Their answer to an Old Fashioned – a Black Diamond – is finished with a square of Lindt chocolate. Both are delicious.

When bartenders talk of "layers" to a drink, I don't usually taste what they mean. But with the Black Diamond, first I sense whiskey, then fruitiness, then

pomegranate. It's refreshing on a day of 30°C and worth the £15 I paid for it.

Our olives and crisps are constantly replenished and the attentive, friendly staff are always on hand for a recommendation. The head bartender, Daniel, asks us what we usually like to drink. When I tell him I usually go for something whiskey-based, he goes straight for the Black Diamond. When every new place is trying to reinvent The Cocktail, it's sometimes hard to know what you're ordering. His guidance was more than welcome and his recommendation spot on.

Perhaps we've peaked, as the main courses seem underwhelming. You might call it "pub food". Burgers, sandwiches and hotdogs seem somehow at odds with the theme and the inventiveness of the drinks menu. Were the main courses an afterthought?

The Guardian

Grace Dent finds the service far from stellar at the Bonny Comet in Low Fell, Gateshead

The menu is imaginative, indisputably global and utterly delicious-sounding. Still, on a Thursday lunchtime, without a huge number of customers, there was an exceedingly long wait to order.

The Bonny Comet is the kind of place, on paper, that I love and want to succeed. It's a perkily named, elegant-sounding bistro on a northern high street that will make you a French 75 cocktail at twilight or huevos rancheros for breakfast, and there's pineapple tarte tatin for pudding.

My palak tofu corn dish arrived. The rich, green, generously spiced and delicious

spinach and sweetcorn sauce contained, for £14, six small cubes of silken tofu. The kitchen had clearly run out of the advertised paratha, so they sent it with a thick slice of what looked like toasted Asda tiger bread. There are indeed tigers in north India, in the eastern Himalayan region, so perhaps this was the chef's idea.

It was one of those meals where one can send back whole plates of food almost untouched and no one enquires why. And one asks for the bill at the same time as placing a dessert order, as you can't face another long wait. Halley's comet appears around every 75 years, which is only slightly longer than I waited for food at the Bonny Comet. However, the tiger bread will keep me giggling a whole lifetime, so lunch was incredible value for money.

Price: from about £30 a head, plus drinks and service

THE SCOTSMAN

Hyndland Street in Glasgow's west end isn't short of a restaurant or two, but not many can claim to have been on the scene for over 30 years.

Pretty much every eatery on the street has changed name or hands over the years, except one. Businessman Marco Stevenson has bragging rights to the 'long standing' accolade with his popular pizza and fish and chip takeaway Pizza Magic. In 2017 Marco lodged plans to turn Pizza Magic into a restaurant by Marco by extending into the neighbouring shop – the former Tabak newsagent – that shut its doors earlier that year.

After a whirlwind of work, Nostrana opened in early September. Nostrana (meaning 'local' in Italian) serves freshly-made handcrafted pizza, pastas, mains, snacks and desserts from noon to evening in a relaxed setting. The menu has two types of pizza – Nostrana (made for sharing) and Neopolitan – and pizza by the slice along with fish and chips, sides, breads and desserts.

Most things are classic Italian, some with modern twists. I chose pasta – Penne Amatriciana (£9.50) to share along with an intriguing sounding Bee Sting pizza (£14). We also decided to



WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/PIZZANOSTRANA/PHOTOS



share burrata (£5) and focaccia with rosemary (£8).

I delved into the penne pasta, which was cooked perfectly al dente. Doused in a rich tomato sauce, this dish also had onions, pancetta and garlic, which gave a warming depth to the sauce while the pancetta added saltiness, if a bit chewy.

The pizza was a spicy number, with Soppressata sausage, red chillies, fresh basil, Fior di Latte cheese and dots of honey all sat on a Pomodoro sauce base.

But it was the focaccia that stood out for me. Served warm from the oven and sliced into triangles, the bread was studded with flakes of sea salt and peppered with fragrant fresh rosemary – a classic but done very well at Nostrana.

With a bill that came to just over £40 and comforting Italian food – the type of which you see at well-established venues – Marco has remained true to his word and his long-held dream of this restaurant.

Rosalind Erskine visits 30-year-old pizza restaurant **Nostrana** in Glasgow for a classic meal

YOU MAGAZINE

Tom Parker Bowles finds an immaculate lunch at a set price at **Hereford Road**, London

Good restaurants should never be cheap. I don't mean in terms of price. You can eat exceptionally well with change from a tenner, while some of the more pretentious and showy second-raters send out the sort of bills that make even the most robust of credit cards shatter with fear. No, good eating is all about value.

And much of that value is to be found on the lunch set menu, where prices are rather lower than à la carte, and you'll find a good deal at everywhere from Le Gavroche and J Sheekey to Bellamy's and Murano.

For me, though, it's at Her-



ford Road on the edges of Notting Hill, where you get the best bang for your buck. Because here, at £16.50 for two courses, or £19.50 for three, you can tuck into some serious modern British cooking.

Chef-proprietor Tom Pemberton is a modest genius, and his food is simple, seasonal and immaculately done. Dishes might include duck livers with green beans and tarragon, poted crab, a whole lemon sole, devilled kidney on toast, and rice pudding with jam. Consistently excellent, it's London's finest lunchtime deal.

The Observer

Jay Rayner slogs through dense potatoes and sludgy gravy at **Block Soho**, London

The meat dishes come with stodgy, strikingly uniform Yorkshires. God's own country might see this as cause for a defamation suit. There are dense, pallid roast potatoes the colour of disappointment, and "charred" batons of root vegetable that are undercooked and present little evidence of charring. This is unsurprising given the apparent lack of flames with which to char them.

Let's hear it, then, for the pleasing buttered cabbage. Let's also hear it for what they call "block gravy". It makes me wonder what sort of block was involved. It's thick and sludgy and bears a striking resem-

blance to something I once made from a packet at home, for shits and giggles.

The non-meat option of creamed chargrilled celeriac is under-seasoned. There is a miserly portion of beef carpaccio with bluntly shaved Parmesan, but disguised nicely by squiggles from a squeeze bottle of thick balsamic dressing. The best option is the English seafood cocktail of prawns and crayfish, as it should be at £17.

What drives me nuts is that significant amounts of money have been spent here on branding and sloganising; on creating the idea of a cool restaurant. But just saying stuff doesn't make it so, if you don't also invest in good ingredients and people able to prepare them adequately. Credit must go to the front-of-house staff who deliver this dreadfully disappointing, poor-value experience with charm and efficiency.

Openings

St John Marylebone

Fergus Henderson and Trevor Gulliver are to open their first restaurant in over a decade, St John Marylebone, in central London.

St John Marylebone will be an all-day, split-floor, wine-led establishment, featuring its own-label selection as well as a range of classic and new French wines.

Dishes have been devised by head chef Fintan Sharp, alongside Henderson and chef-director Jonathan Woolway.

The restaurant will be open from 8am to 11pm daily. The breakfast offering includes doughnuts, bread and pastries from St John's bakery in Bermondsey, while the lunch menu serves daily small plate specials, echoing the style of Smithfield, the first St John site.

Dinner will also change daily, while staying loyal to St John's ethos of nose-to-tail cooking.

Henderson and Gulliver designed the interior with Red Deer Architects. The whitewashed, monochrome walls are complimented by wooden tables, a curved zinc bar and a cast iron staircase.

Opening 18 October

Typical dishes Bone marrow toast and parsley salad; deep-fried Welsh rarebit; Middle White chop, chicory and sorrel

Address 98 Marylebone Lane, London W1U 2JE

Website www.stjohnrestaurant.com



Extra openings



Orelle

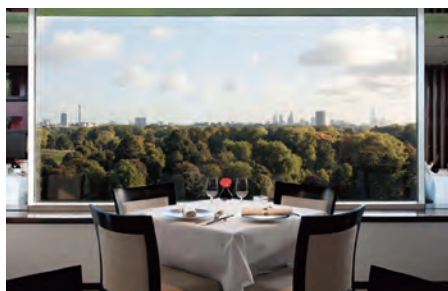
D&D London is to open Orelle in Birmingham, the group's first restaurant in the Midlands. The 3,767 sq ft venue is located on the 24th floor and executive chef Chris Emery will offer a modern French menu from 12pm-1am.

Opening 14 October

Typical dishes Blackberry cured 'truite'; 'porcelet' suckling pig; 'citrouille' tagliatelle; venison, grouse and chicken wellington 'en croute'

Address 103 Colmore Row, Birmingham B3 3AG

Website www.orelle.co.uk



Origin Kensington

The Goodwood Group's Royal Garden hotel has opened Origin Kensington restaurant in London. Executive chef John Serhal offers seasonal British cuisine with a view of Kensington Gardens.

Opened 27 September

Typical dishes Grilled Devon brill, caramelised Jerusalem artichoke purée, braised spinach, seared leek, lemon turmeric sauce

Address 2, 24 Kensington High Street, London W8 4PT

Website www.royalgardenhotel.co.uk



Bunsik

Korean corn dog restaurant Bunsik has opened its third site, in London's Camden, following launches in Chinatown and Charing Cross. A bubble tea and Korean street food menu will also be available alongside the corn dogs.

Opened 5 October

Typical dishes Potato mozzarella corn dog (mozzarella corn dog wrapped with potato cubes); chicken katsu and curry cupbap

Address 230 Camden High Street, London, NW1 8QS

Website www.bunsik.co.uk



Please email your new openings to openings@thecaterer.com



Restaurant Metamorphica

Chef-patron Steven Halligan has opened his family-run Restaurant Metamorphica in Rossendale. It offers a chef's counter dining experience to 12 guests as well as activities for students from local colleges.

Opened 1 September

Typical dishes Pollock, herb tea, parsley; pigeon, plum, rye; almond and meadowsweet mille feuille

Address 1 Charles Lane, Haslingden, Rossendale BB4 5EA

Website www.restaurantmetamorphica.co.uk



Shoryu Ramen

Japanese ramen restaurant Shoryu Ramen has opened its 11th restaurant, in London's Kensington. The site has 70 covers and features counter bars, an open kitchen and mini dining pods.

Opened Late September

Typical dishes Hakata tonkotsu ramen; soy-marinated chicken karaage 'Shoryu Bun'

Address 190 Kensington High Street, London W8 7RG

Website www.shoryuramen.com



Casa do Frango

Southern Portuguese diner Casa do Frango is to open its largest site to date in London's Soho. Marco Mendes' restaurant will feature a street-level terrace, a main dining room, a bar dubbed the Green Room and two private dining rooms.

Opening 14 October

Typical dishes Half a chicken brushed with Frango piri-iri; Iberico pork croquettes; bacalhau fritters; batatas fritas

Address 31-33 Heddon Street, London W1B 4BN

Website www.casadofrango.co.uk



1-2 The AA Hospitality awards were held at Grosvenor House in London on 26 September, hosted by TV presenter Gabby Logan. Twenty-six awards celebrated the best hotels and restaurants across the UK, with winners including Mark Birchall, chef-patron at Moor Hall in Aughton, Lancashire, winning the AA Chefs' Chef award, and the Pig Group taking home the award for AA Hotel Group of the Year.

3 St James Quarter, a 1.7million sq ft lifestyle district in the heart of Edinburgh, has been officially opened by Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal. She was joined by the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, councillor Robert Aldridge, where she unveiled the foundation stone for the city centre transformation. The £1b project, which includes 850,000 sq ft of retail and leisure space, will include W Hotel Edinburgh, a 75-bed Roomzzzz aparthotel and 152 residential apartments called New Eidynd.

4 The Bulgari Hotel London in Knightsbridge has launched a collaboration with multidisciplinary artist and designer Yinka Ilori. The hotel commissioned the London-based British-Nigerian artist and designer to reimagine the afternoon tea stand as a sculptural work of art in celebration of its 10th year in London. The launch of the Yinka Ilori X Bulgari Hotel London Afternoon Tea coincided with the opening of Ilori's first show at the Design Museum.

5-7 Hospitality and Culinary Arts students from South Eastern Regional College (SERC) were visited by chef Theo Randall, who travelled to the college's Bangor campus as part of the Taste Ards and North Down food festival.

Randall was the star attraction of the Council's Dine at the Dock, which kicked off the Portavogie Seafood Festival in the fish market and saw 60 diners enjoy a five-course tasting menu prepared by Randall with students from SERC's culinary courses. The meal was served by the college's front of house team of students.





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Drip feed

Trickle-down economics could be a long-term fix, but we need help now, says
David Moore

Inside track

It's great to have *Strictly Come Dancing* back. Some light relief and happiness is much-needed, but how is it that Dave Arch (the band leader) never seems to get older?

Age takes its toll on all of us and I was much saddened to hear of the passing of restaurateur Andrew Edmunds, a man who was not a follower of fashion, who delivered very fine food and an outstanding wine list. My wife and I took ourselves to his restaurant in Soho to toast him earlier this week and I can confirm all is well in the land of two-bottle lunches. Small joys to take where you can.

Happiness and joyfulness are things that are all too often marginalised, forgotten or ignored in the race for, well, in the race for what exactly? It seems the

not. But, from a personal point of view, I think it might. I know I am always broke – asset-rich and extremely cash-poor – and no matter how much I might earn I always seem to spend it. So, if the government want to give me more money, I could definitely help kick-start a boom. To start it, we need to feel confident about the future, to commit to capital projects and new ventures, both of which were on my horizon and both have been shelved.

The capital project, a new induction cook suite, is a huge disappointment not to action. I had investigated the options thoroughly, including a trip to France to visit the Athanor factory. But with the cost of utilities and the future uncertainty, I simply cannot justify the project. It is on the back burner for

“The nation voted for Brexit, but that doesn't mean it was the right decision. The majority of Conservatives voted for Liz Truss, but that doesn't mean it's the right decision”

holy grail is growth. What are your weekly/monthly like-for-like sales, your earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortisation, your underlying profitability? As a nation we chase gross domestic product, or GDP, with projections banded around, targets to hit, and news headlines when it looks like we won't. But there's no talk of wellbeing or happiness! Fewer people suffering from mental ill-health would be an amazing national target – how about a happiness tsar?

Right now, I'm still suffering recruitment issues. I can't find kitchen porters aside from agency staff. Right now, my utilities have gone up 100% and I won't be eligible for the commercial cap as my contract is before 1 April. Right now, I'm grappling with fantasy economics. Right now, like thousands of small businesses, I'm running, and the team are running (with the exception of the occasional lunch) but getting nowhere.

What is 'trickle-down' economics and, more importantly, will it work? Most people think

now, a stab in the back for sustainability and the planet.

Truss's policies and tax cuts are appreciated, but not really fair. An increase in the basic tax-free allowance would have given money to more people – the trickle would be smaller but wider. Unemployment remains at a historic low, which is amazing, but there are tens of thousands of jobs, not just across hospitality, but in care and the NHS, being advertised with no realistic possibility of filling those positions. Yet we spend masses of money housing asylum seekers. Let us have a moratorium and get them straight into the work system.

I fear we might be repeating the failures of the past. The nation voted for Brexit, but that doesn't mean it was the right decision. The majority of Conservatives voted for Liz Truss, but that doesn't mean it's the right decision. All I can say is, let's have a nice lunch and cross our fingers and toes. I think that has as much chance of working out for the nation and we will all be a little happier for it.



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From Rusty Lee to Paul Ainsworth, let's celebrate amazing Black chefs

Whether it's aspirational high-end cuisine or childhood memories, these Black chefs are a constant inspiration, says *Adam Bateman*

When was I asked to support *The Caterer* during Black History Month, I was naturally extremely proud but also a little apprehensive. To be asked to represent the Black community across hospitality and share my personal experiences and thoughts around Black History Month is a massive honour. This subject is discussed much more now, which is a hugely positive thing for our industry, and I am grateful to be part of that conversation.

As I started writing it was obvious to me that I wanted to celebrate and highlight other chefs of colour that have gone to achieve greatness and inspire many others in hospitality. I instantly think of names like Michael Caines MBE, Paul Ainsworth and, of course, chef Louis-Philippe Vigilant, who made history in 2014 at Loiseau des Ducs restaurant in Dijon, France, as the first Black man to earn a Michelin star for the restaurant.

His mantra, love what you do and do it with passion, give emotion and be courageous, is a constant prompt and reminder for me.

Caines and Ainsworth are also holders of a coveted Michelin star and their continued pursuit for greatness against a backdrop that could not have always been easy, inspires me to keep pushing. Both chefs have also gone on to achieve success outside of their kitchens, with Caines a patron of Families for Children, a voluntary adoption agency covering Cornwall, Devon and Dorset, and Ainsworth a regular on TV including *Great British Menu* and *Saturday Kitchen*.

I also thought about which Black chefs have paved the way for diversity and inclusion within kitchens and the wider industry. Who do I recall breaking down those sometimes painful barriers? Black chefs may not have been acclaimed and praised for the last 100 years of hospitality, but that certainly does not mean they have not paved the way and inspired a generation of young black chefs, including me.

My earliest inspiration as I was growing and developing my interest in being a chef was an absolute trailblazer, the vibrant Jamaican TV chef Rusty Lee. She had her place on television in our front room in Handsworth most evenings and I remember her doing everything with love, flair and passion and, of course, that infectious smile. Something



“Black chefs may not have been acclaimed and praised for the last 100 years of hospitality, but that certainly does not mean they have not paved the way”

that I try and instil in all my teams today “it’s just a bit of cooking, enjoy it”.

Kitchens have always been a tough place to work and I want to bring that same energy, passion and pride in our culture and its incredibly rich food that she showed to the world. It is not always the accolades and awards that inspire a generation – sometimes it is just a simple smile!

Adam Bateman is culinary director at the Grand Hotel Birmingham

Andreas Antona

The chef-owner of Simpsons restaurant in Birmingham looks back on 30 years of service and talks to *James Stagg* ahead of the 2023 Bocuse D'Or World Final

You opened Simpsons in 1993, so next year you'll celebrate its 30th birthday. How has the restaurant changed since then?

Dining out has changed a lot. It hadn't really become a way of life back then, it was for special occasions. But I'm a chef by trade and, having started cooking in 1976, I have seen huge changes in food, too. In those days we were governed by the classics and had several soups on the menu, along with loads of fish dishes and duck, veal and beef. The menus were massive. I had a very classical background and there are few bastions of that style of service now, with floor service, banqueting, fine dining and a grill room. They were great training grounds as you had the chance to cover everything.

How does that compare to what your restaurants offer now?

Even compared to 10 years ago it's different. We don't have à la carte any more at Simpsons, it's just tasting menus. We had to change our business during Covid and we found a different way that is more focused. I think it's to the detriment of the customer as there's less choice. Instead of doing multiple tasks we condense it. Having an à la carte fridge is like having a juggernaut full of mise en place – now we can improve quality by preparing everything daily.

You opened the Cross in Kenilworth eight years ago. What was the original plan with that site?

There were no Michelin stars in Warwickshire then. Back then [chef-director at the Cross] Adam Bennett had done one cycle of the Bocuse d'Or, having had six months off to pre-

pare, as I wanted to demonstrate that's what was required to succeed. After that, dining was moving away from formality and tablecloths, so we took on the Kenilworth pub. Adam got a star within a year, which wasn't quite the plan as we wanted to define our style first.

Both your restaurants hold Michelin stars. How tricky is it to maintain that standard for so long?

It was never an ambition to hold stars – I just wanted to make money. I opened at the end of the 1990s recession on a failed site, where there had been eight restaurants in 12 years. We then moved the restaurant to Birmingham and haven't looked back.

It's all about maintaining standards and you know when they slip. We're never stagnant in style, either. But I've been blessed that I've been able to work with Luke [Tipping, Simpsons chef-director] and Adam.

Some people are here as fixtures and for others we're a stepping stone. We want people to progress. I like to think many will go onto bigger and better things. Everyone has contributed to the success of Simpsons over the years.

How big is the business now in terms of turnover and employees?

Simpsons is around £2.5m turnover and the Cross a bit less, but I never worry about turnover. I remember it was Peter Allen, who is still our butcher, came to do the specs three days before Simpsons opened, and he said to me: "Remember one thing: full restaurants make money, empty ones don't." So I aim to get the restaurant full – and the balance right with our sums – and the rest takes care of itself. ►

"We need a winning mentality. We want to prove to the world that British cooking is up there with the very best"





Pavé of Irish Hereford beef, salt-baked celeriac, smoked Kervel onion, peppercorn

◀ Birmingham hosted the Commonwealth Games in the summer. What difference did that make to business and the city?

We had an exceptional week during the games. There was a different vibe in the city too. From a business perspective the legacy is what I'm looking for. Can the city and the people that brought us this opportunity build upon it? I believe that we can cement our place as an international destination. Whether we can bring investment in from abroad is another thing, but I think there's a workforce here that's ready for it.

Is it more difficult than ever to do business or has it always been this challenging?

There's a cliff and we're all standing on it waiting to fall. I hope we don't get a Japanese-type recession that turns into a depression as it could happen if we're not careful. For us it's staff and investment. Britain PLC is at a crossroads and I find it hard to understand any long-term vision post-Brexit.



“What goes on in Bocuse will turn up on tables a few years later”

Restaurants like ours are a barometer of the country. When the economy suffers our restaurants become empty. We need to be real about how we develop business. I still think we need to bring VAT down to closer to 5% on food, like the rest of Europe has. That would be such a boost. We'd be able to invest in our businesses and future businesses.

Having introduced the Antona at Home meal delivery service during the pandemic you have now launched Soko – an artisan pâtisserie business. How has the retail side of the business gone?

The pâtisserie business was borne out of boxes at lockdown as we had loads of stock ready for Mother's Day. We sold 200 portions in a week-end, but after a while it got out of hand. So I approached the Birmingham Botanical Gardens and moved our Antona at Home brands into their banqueting kitchen.

Since then we've moved to an industrial unit in Solihull and started working with *Bake Off: The Professionals* finalist Bharat Chandegra on a new brand called Soko. It's artisan chocolates and we're selling them to other restaurants. We're working with Fullers too, so it has real potential.

You've thrown yourself into the Bocuse d'Or and shining the spotlight on UK talent – including funding Adam Bennett when he competed. What drives that passion for the competition?

It's not about money. You need a vision to

create something with a legacy. Most teams around the world are sponsored by arms of the government, but we're not. We did launch the Bocuse academy in 2017, hoping that some MPs would think it was a great initiative to support.

We want to work with colleges and inspire the next generation of British chefs. It's about creativity, research and development. What goes on in Bocuse will turn up on tables a few years later.

You've built a strong team for next year's Bocuse d'Or final. Is it taken seriously enough here?

In Lyon it is shown on the big screen and across the country on live TV. You can go out to Norway and they all know about it. It's just here we're a bit apathetic. But we now have Simon Rogan as president and an academy including John Williams, Brian Turner and Adam Bennett. We are building up a team of people who understand the competition to support Ian Musgrave next year too.

Where would you like to see the Bocuse d'Or in terms of support?

To get us to where we want to go, the support from government would be a drop in the ocean. But they don't necessarily see us as an industry to invest in. They don't consider us the same sort of industry as science but we are about creativity and development.

I want to get to the stage where we have a documentary series on TV and for our team to be coached by someone who has already won it. We need a winning mentality. We want to prove to the world that British cooking is up there with the very best.

How are preparations going for next year?

We're ready but we don't know anything until we get the technical file. We might not have the funding of other nations but we will compete. It's all about inspiring the next generation.

Bocuse d'Or *diaries*

Bocuse d'Or UK Academy chairman Andreas Antona is ready for the World Finals. *James Stagg* catches up with him on the road to Lyon

The Bocuse d'Or UK Academy team are gearing up for the 2023 World Finals in Lyon in January, held every two years. Each month we'll hear from a different member of the team as they prepare to perform on the biggest stage in gastronomy.

In the first in our series of Bocuse d'Or diaries, we speak to chairman Andreas Antona about setting up the Bocuse d'Or UK Academy and its impact on the restaurant industry.

My involvement with Bocuse d'Or started when I became the chairman of the Midlands Association of Chefs in the mid-1980s. In 1987 it was the 40th anniversary of the twinning between Birmingham and Lyon, so we formed an alliance by going over there to do some cooking and in return hosting them, successfully twinning the Midlands Association of Chefs with Les Toques Blanches Lyonnaises.

Shortly after that the inaugural Bocuse d'Or competition launched and they invited Peter Griffiths and I to attend, with Brian Turner as a jury member. I have attended every competition, bar one, ever since, watching trends emerge and the industry evolve.

From 2005 onwards there was a revolution with the Scandinavian countries – they got on the podium, in 2009 won Gold and Silver and in 2011 won all three medals. Everyone's attention went to what the Scandinavian countries were doing. One of the things that impressed me was that they released the candidate for six months and paid him.

In 2011 Brian asked me to put forward a candidate and I chose Adam Bennett. So when Adam won the UK heats, I agreed to pay his wages for six months so he could prepare for the finals in Lyon in 2013. He achieved the best result the UK team has achieved so far and competed again in 2015.

I realised that we needed something more substantial behind the Bocuse d'Or team, so we formed the Bocuse d'Or UK Academy. I set up the Academy in the Houses of Parliament in 2017 with the hope of getting government sponsorship and approval, but by the time we

“We want to reshape what we do in our industry for all the right reasons: better lifestyle, better wages, better food, better experiences for our customers”



went through the next round of qualifications Covid hit and the academy went into hibernation. The UK team didn't compete in the 2021 finals, given the seriousness of Covid at the time, but we came back this year with a small amount of sponsorship, made it through the qualifying round, and are now at a stage where we're preparing for Lyon in January with a very strong competing team.

So why do we do this? We're here to inspire the next generation of British chefs. It's not about cooking posh food, it's about being at the forefront of technology, innovation, creativity, design and the intellectualism behind it all. It's having a story to tell, which is about our produce and how we cook it. The only time you get better at cooking is by buying better, by looking for better ingredients and using them to the best of your ability, with care, love and craftsmanship and that's the essence of Bocuse.

It's also to show kindness. We are hospitable, it's part of our industry, so to show that to the people that we work with and the people we want to inspire helps so much. Our

industry is exciting to work in and we look after our young people. We want to reshape what we do in our industry for all the right reasons: better lifestyle, better wages, better food, better experiences for our customers and that's what encompasses the whole essence of the Bocuse family worldwide.

What we learn on this journey every two years will be on menus tomorrow, the inspiration from this will be seen worldwide.



To find out more visit: bocusedor.co.uk

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...prevent sexual harassment in hospitality

Don't wait for a problem to arise: put procedures in place now to ensure people feel safe when they're at work, says *Eleanor Parkes*

While sexual harassment can happen in any workplace, the hospitality sector is particularly at risk of legal claims. Factors at play include employees' close interaction with customers and each other, alcohol being served, and workers' vulnerability in terms of immigration and employment status.

Over the years the hospitality industry has produced some horror story tribunal cases. In *Southern v Britannia Hotels Ltd* and another, a zero-hours waitress at a hotel was awarded damages of £19,500 after she was subjected to sexual harassment by her line manager over the course of eight months.

In the case of *Munchkins Restaurant Ltd and another v Karmazyn and others*, over several years four migrant worker waitresses were made to wear short skirts and subjected to talk of a sexual nature and explicit images by the restaurant's controlling shareholder. Each were awarded £15,000 for injury to feelings, plus an award of £1,000 for aggravated damages.

Guidance for workplaces

This year, the Equality And Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and UKHospitality published new guidance to help venues put appropriate measures in place to protect their workers. We have expanded on their checklist, which focuses on three main areas to consider:

Communicating and promoting a culture of zero tolerance towards sexual harassment

Employers should dismantle a workplace culture that sees sexual harassment and assault as a 'normal' part of the job, so that employees can feel comfortable that reports of harassment will be taken seriously. In *Munchkins*, the fact that an employee had put up with the conduct over a number of years did not invalidate the assertion that it was unwanted. Nor did the fact that in some instances the claimants had themselves initiated "banter" as a coping strategy.

Employers should ensure that managers deal with any complaints of harassment quickly, effectively and in a sensitive way. It should be made clear that the perpetrators of harassment will be sanctioned, and those who report it will be protected from victimisation.

Workers should also feel comfortable to report harassment perpetrated by clients, customers or suppliers, who in turn should also be made aware of the employer's zero-tolerance policy to harassment.

Changing and monitoring the work environment to make it as safe as possible

An employer should make it clear to its workers that it will not tolerate harassment in the workplace. This means employers need to



SHUTTERSTOCK/PRESSMASTER

"Employers can even appoint 'workplace champions', to monitor harassment issues and offer support to victims of harassment"

investigate the full extent of any potential problem as well as identify areas of risk – such as environments where alcohol is consumed by customers. For example, employers could ask managers to avoid having a single member of staff wait on a large group.

Employers should put effective reporting mechanisms in place and make employees aware of them. The provision of regular anti-harassment training for all employees and specific training for managers in how to deal with complaints of harassment can reduce claims. Employers can even appoint 'workplace champions', to monitor harassment issues and offer support to victims of harassment.

Putting policies and procedures in place so employers are prepared to deal with sexual harassment when it happens

Employers should make sure their policies provide adequate protection and the right to report sexual harassment to all workers. This might include having an effective anti-harass-

ment policy that clearly sets out what conduct is unacceptable, the employer's zero-tolerance approach to such conduct, how employees can report inappropriate conduct, the process that will be followed and the support available for victims of harassment and those who report it.

Clear guidance for managers should encourage rigorous investigation of any allegations. The tribunal highlighted the complete lack of rigor and integrity of the investigation in the *Southern* case, commenting that the employer did not appear to have the slightest interest in getting to grips with what had actually happened. Employers need to be careful about their responses to harassment complaints. In the *Munchkins* case, aggravated damages were awarded to reflect the "inappropriate and excessive" way in which the case had been conducted.

While very large awards are not the norm in cases where the claimant is a junior employee, employers should bear in mind that financial damages are uncapped in discrimination cases.

In the current climate post-#MeToo, where certain high-profile chefs and restaurateurs have been forced to step down following allegations from female colleagues, the reputational damage to employers embroiled in sexual harassment claims alone is reason enough to put preventative measures in place.

Eleanor Parkes is a solicitor in the employment team at Debenhams Ottaway
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Fresh start

Although April Jackson's Three Little Birds was doing well on paper, she has started again with Wood & Water to try and shake up the Jamaican food scene. *Katherine Price* reports

"Time will tell if it was brave or dumb," laughs April Jackson, talking about her decision to take her well-known, well-loved restaurant Three Little Birds and start again from scratch with a new name, new look and new concept during the pandemic.

Before opening her first restaurant, Jackson had no experience working in hospitality. A former Miss Jamaica Universe and contestant on series 11 of *The Apprentice*, the closest she came was running an event management company in Jamaica. But in 2015, she opened Three Little Birds in London.

After six years and despite having become a Brixton institution that she proudly describes straddling "a little bit of new and old Brixton", it was time to make a change.

"On paper Three Little Birds was doing really well," she explains, "[but] the mission was to really change the perception of Jamaican culture through hospitality, and I didn't feel like we were doing that anymore. You want people to understand the journey you're trying to take them on."

"We were too close to your Rum Kitchens and your Turtle Bays... we needed to create our own lane."

"We were too close to your Rum Kitchens and your Turtle Bays... we needed to create our own lane"

Fresh start

While many restaurants pivoted to takeaway over the last two years, for Jackson that wasn't an option. She references the development of Indian cuisine in the UK, which now has options ranging from casual takeaways to fine dining establishments and expresses the wish that Jamaican cuisine in the UK will achieve the same breadth of offering.

Instead, Jackson invested around £70,000 – approximately the same amount she had invested in setting up Three Little Birds in the first place – to strip the restaurant down and start again.

"It would be harder to explain the change to your customer if everything looked the same



Cauliflower, beetroot and tamarind



PHOTOS: DAVID COTSWORTH



Birds of Paradise

and we still had the same name,” she says.

And so, the restaurant was relaunched almost a year ago, in November 2021 as Wood & Water. The light woods, bamboo and mix-and-match cutlery have been replaced with a black bar, marble-style tables and dark greens with touches of gold – subtle and stylish nods to the colours of Jamaica’s flag.

The previously 45-cover restaurant has now been split into a 26-cover dining space and an 18-seat bar at the front, while the Jamaican tapas menu has been swapped for a modern British menu using local ingredients fused with Jamaican flavours (see panel). The only thing that has been retained is a rope feature on the ceiling, which Jackson and her father wove themselves.

As a result, the average spend per head has increased from £35-£40 to £55-£60. Jackson says the restaurant is selling more wine than it did in its previous incarnation, and the customer base has changed, although they have managed to hold on to what she estimates is about 20% of former customers. She says this change reflects the changing demographic of Brixton, with more customers from the creative arts and media sectors.

“We knew that was going to happen because [Brixton] is so different,” she says. “For better or for worse, some people are very anti-gentrification, some are very pro-gentrification – the fact is, it’s happening.”

Warm up

Three Little Birds hasn’t disappeared and now serves as the branding for the catering arm of the business, which Jackson says naturally lends itself to more casual fare – barbecue chicken, macaroni and cheese, and some of the staples from the Three Little Birds menu. The service style also hasn’t changed, which has often been praised in reviews for its warmth. ►

“Some people are very anti-gentrification, some are very pro-gentrification – the fact is, it’s happening”

◀ “For me, hospitality in this city, even at its most efficient, is still very much, ‘you’re the customer, I’m the waiter/waitress and there’s a huge separation between us’, which – coming from the Caribbean – can feel quite cold. [Jamaica’s] a very tactile country. I encourage people to be more personal than you would find elsewhere, and I do think that has differentiated us,” comments Jackson.

“My favourite author is Maya Angelou. She has a beautiful quote that says, ‘people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel’. That for me completely sums up what hospitality should be.”

This flatter hierarchy extends to her approach as an owner, which she says has earned her the respect of her team and makes her an attractive employer to potential recruits. The venue has also dropped from opening seven days a week including lunch, to five days a week and lunch only on weekends, to ensure the team have a better work-life balance. Despite this, the business hasn’t been immune to the impact of industry-wide staffing shortages, and Three Little Birds’ sister site in Clapham was forced to close last year due to a lack of staff.

Interestingly, Jackson’s restaurant doesn’t have a head chef, with the kitchen team made up of two chefs (“probably what you would call a chef de partie”) and a kitchen porter, while Jackson writes the menus herself. She says she often finds herself hiring loyalty over experience or accolades.

“There are obviously advantages and disadvantages. You don’t have to deal with egos,” she points out.

“The reality is that we are a true independent business. There isn’t a secret partner or investor with a pot of gold. The way that salaries are just out of this world right now, I couldn’t compete with most in terms of what a head chef would probably demand as a salary unfortunately, and I’m not about to run my business into the red for the sake of being able to announce that so-and-so is your head chef.”

Meanwhile, the restaurant is also being hit by rising costs, which will be factored into the new menu coming in for the colder months:



“The price of five litres of olive pomace oil has gone from £7.99 to £18.99. Obviously, everybody has to constantly review their pricing but you’re trying not to scare people at a time when people are considering their spend and perhaps not eating out as much,” says Jackson.

“You can’t pass all of the increases to your customer, you have to strike a balance where you’re not just digging yourself into a hole.”

Raise the bar

Despite her enthusiasm for the relaunched restaurant and having long spoken of hopes to expand the business to a small group of six or so sites, Jackson’s ambitions have shifted and tempered in 2022’s economic climate.

“I have zero interest in opening another restaurant, especially in the current state of how things are,” she explains. “However, knowing how I am, I’d never say never,” she quickly backtracks, laughing.

For the time being at least, she is focusing her attention on bars. She and her partner, operations manager Lee Tan, run a rum cock-





Banana pancakes with crispy bacon, caramelised banana and rum sauce. Below: goat cheese, beetroot and sweet potato



tail bar in Pop Brixton called ABV, and plan to open a second bar to join it at the end of October or early November, this time focusing on tequila.

“Bar operations are far easier than kitchen operations. It’s a lot more simplified, it’s easier to staff, it’s easier to manage. When you add in a kitchen it adds a whole different layer of complexity to the operation,” says Jackson.

“Even when you have people eating out less, we have seen that people are still drinking out, so from a business perspective, I do think that it’s a smarter move.”

The new bar will be called Batanga, after the

cocktail of the same name which is made with tequila, lime juice, and coke.

“Three Little Birds was never a summer business because we don’t have outdoor seating, so it’s been great to have ABV, we definitely capitalise on outdoor trade,” she adds.

Like ABV, Jackson intends to approach the new bar as if it were a bricks and mortar establishment, with the same attention to detail and high level of service.

But despite her shift in focus for the business, it’s clear that Jackson’s heart and soul has gone into Wood & Water, and she is incredibly passionate about telling her own story of Jamaican cuisine and hospitality.

“Forget the fact that we’re not making any money yet,” she says. “There is not a day that goes by that I don’t feel that, for personal growth and what I want to achieve, I’m very proud of what we do at Wood & Water.”

The land of wood and water

The original inhabitants of Jamaica are believed to be the Arawak, who came from South America 2,500 years ago and named the island Xaymaca, which meant ‘land of wood and water’ – hence the name of Jackson’s relaunched restaurant.

The location of the restaurant is of course historically significant too, with Brixton’s restaurant scene hugely influenced by Caribbean cuisine. Many Caribbean people travelled to the UK to take up jobs in sectors affected by Britain’s post-war labour shortage in the last century, particularly through the labour exchange on Brixton’s Coldharbour Lane.

Jackson writes the menus at Wood & Water herself, which change every three to four months, using British produce fused with Jamaican flavours.

“We don’t serve rice and peas anymore, which might be considered blasphemous

for some people,” she says – instead the restaurant’s signature dish is goat croquettes with plantain ketchup.

The roasted cauliflower with beetroot hummus and tamarind has been popular – although will come off the menu soon – while the colder months will see the return of last year’s pan-seared duck breast with jerk glaze, roasted sweet potato purée and rum-soaked plums.

In a review for the *Evening Standard*, David Ellis described the Jamaican influences at Wood & Water as “on the edges and in the spicing, in the bits that make a dish distinct: the scotch bonnet and ginger turning a sun lamp on pale king prawns; the three crisp goat-meat croquettes leaning on a mound of plantain ketchup; in jerk spices rattling both the roasted cauliflower and salted cod”.

Jamaica’s national dish, ackee and saltfish, is on both the dinner and brunch menus, and

Jackson acknowledges that the restaurant will “tick the box” of particularly significant dishes to Jamaican culture – but there won’t be any jerk chicken on the menu anytime soon.

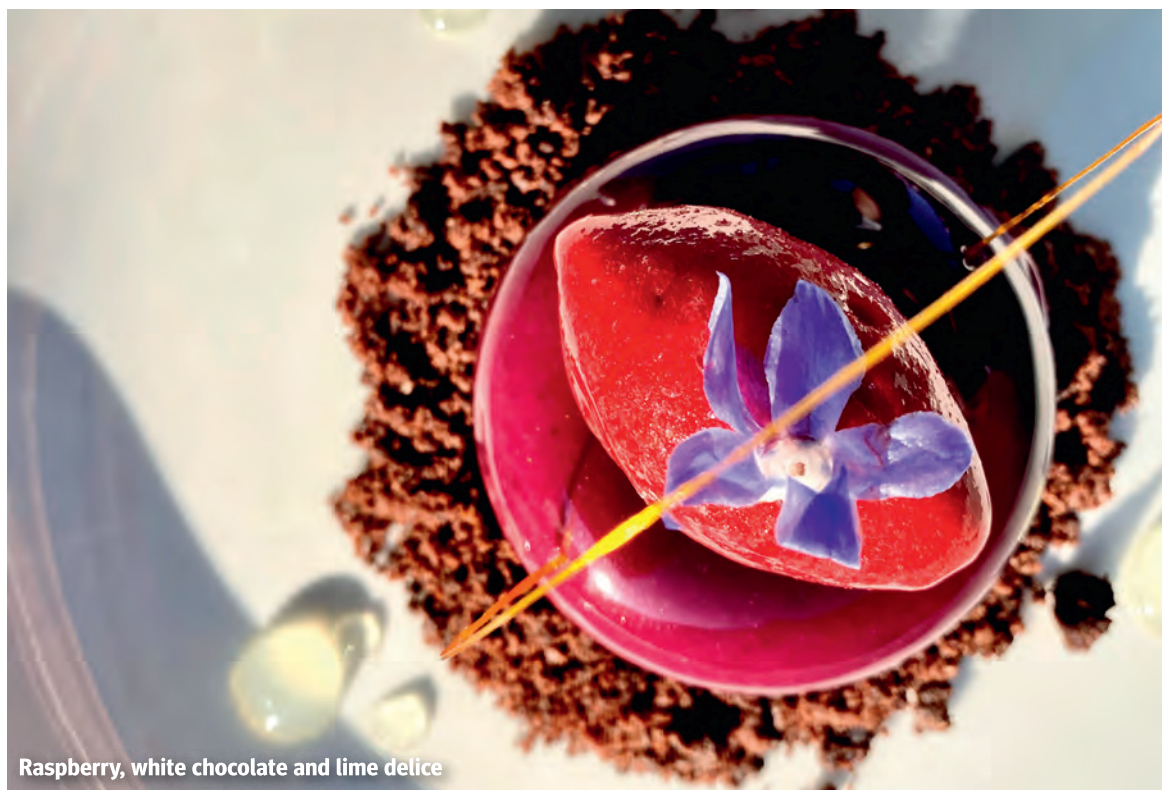
“The things that I love, I feel like those things are getting lost. We didn’t have any good jerk pork. The places that I usually go to, they weren’t delivering the way they used to, and I was a little bit heartbroken,” she explains.

One dish she will be introducing is fried fish with escovitch sauce (made with pickled carrots, onions and scotch bonnet), which she ate in Hellshire Beach. The dish has its roots in Spanish cuisine – Jamaica was under Spanish rule between 1509-1655.

“Every time I go home, I will have something and think, ‘how can I incorporate this not in a way that’s supposed to copy that experience?’ You should be able to feel the link without it being directly replicated,” she says.

All Menuwatches go forward to the judging of the Menu of the Year Catey

MENUWATCH



Raspberry, white chocolate and lime delicata

Farmyard

It may be in the centre of the city of Norwich, but Farmyard's spiritual home is in the countryside, with a menu tasting very much of its terroir. *Emma Lake* pays a visit

Farmyard is nestled in the Norwich Lanes. It's a historic area of the city but the restaurant's neon signage flags up a contemporary bistro, albeit with its roots firmly in the county's agricultural heritage.

Norfolk-born chef Andrew Jones, who founded the restaurant with wife Hannah, is using produce from the county's pastures and seas, "elevating it to be its best version of itself", through techniques learned during a career that has seen him work with chefs including Richard Corrigan and Claude Bosi.

He says: "I had worked in London and it's a bubble—everything comes in from all over the world: the chefs, the produce, the customers. None of it feels like it's grounded in anything, it's suspended in mid-air and, as exciting as that is, when I was trying to define the concept of what I wanted to do, I wanted it to be something that had real context.

"We want to showcase the suppliers and the region so that the restaurant exists in a time and space that's relevant to us as chefs, to our customers and to where we are in the country."

"It reads simply on the menu, but an awful lot goes into it"

Andrew Jones

Farmyard's stripped-back interiors belie the levels of service and technique on display, with Jones making a conscious effort to let what's on the plate do the talking. He says: "This is a bistro. There's no tablecloths or anything, but that's because we spend our time and effort on the techniques and on sourcing great wines, so the value is on the plate. We really hope people appreciate that."

Each dish on the à la carte menu is centred around a piece of Norfolk produce, be it meat, fish or vegetable. A dish of Norfolk sirloin (£28) is bred on a farm with its own butchery, cut and hung for 35-days to the restaurant's specifications. It is split down the middle to create almost a "double sirloin chop", which Jones says holds up really well when cooked over charcoal on the Bertha oven that takes centre stage in the kitchen.

Sat alongside the sirloin is a Roscoff onion cooked in dashi, the centre of which is puréed with soy, rice wine vinegar and mirin. Aztec broccoli comes from a tiny producer just down the road and sits alongside shiitake mush-



Coley, charred hispi, pickled cucumber, parsley



Farmyard chocolate bar, miso caramel, peanut, milk sorbet



Crispy pork belly, blackberry, fennel, sage



Lemon posset, raspberry, lemon balm



Apple frangipane, salted caramel, honeycomb



35-day aged sirloin, roscoff onion, shiitake, smoked bordelaise



Summer berry eclair, tonka cream, herbs and flowers



Andrew and Hannah Jones

rooms pickled in soy, rice wine vinegar and a bit of truffle oil. A Bordelaise sauce finished with the smoked fat trimmed from the sirloins is the final element added to the plate.

Jones says: "That sirloin dish really represents what we do. It can only be produced in this restaurant because of the relationships we have with our suppliers, the understanding we have of how that produce works and the techniques we use. It reads simply on the menu, but an awful lot goes into it."

Similarly, a pork belly starter (£12) uses pigs reared by a specialised producer and butcher, who prepares the meat to the chef's specifications. Once it arrives in the restaurant it's a five-day process to the plate, during which time the pork will be boiled and the skin scraped down before it is cured, air-dried and slow-cooked, with the final touch to crisp the skin. It's currently served with a blackberry ketchup, pickled blackberries, fennel pollen, sage emulsion and crispy sage leaves.

"It's absolutely seasonal right now," says Jones. "When I walk the dog in the morning, I

From the menu

Starters

- Smoked Gressingham duck, pomegranate, baby gem, coriander, dukkah **£11**
- Moroccan barbecue seabass, courgette flower, yogurt **£10**
- Heirloom tomatoes, tomato essence, basil, Norfolk White Lady snow **£8**

Main courses

- Coley, barbecue hispi, cucumber, lemon crumb, beurre blanc **£22**
- Jerk chicken, corn salsa, tenderstem broccoli, mango **£23**

Desserts

- Cointreau crème brûlée, chocolate, orange sorbet **£9**
- Caramelised white chocolate mousse, Chambord, raspberry feuillantine, raspberry sorbet **£9**

walk past the blackberry bushes and the last of the wild fennel and I pick the buds. It really is a dish very specific to now, very specific to here."

Since its conception in 2017 three items have remained on the menu: a snack of goats' cheese and olive bon bons (£4), which Jones describes as "simply delicious"; a 1kg cote de boeuf (£75) and the chocolate bar dessert (£10).

Jones says: "They've been on the menu every service since we opened and it's really important to me that they stay there because it grounds the menu in that concept and in that bistro idea. The chocolate bar has evolved. When we started it was really simple: it was a slab of ganache and we piped on miso caramel, dressed it with peanuts and put a scoop of milk sorbet on there and people loved it. Over lockdown we reworked it and it's now a more elegant version, but with the same flavours."

As Jones adds: "There's no reason to change something if it works and it's delicious."

23 St Benedicts Street, Norwich NR2 4PF
<https://farmyard.restaurant>



Motherland: A Jamaican Cookbook

By Melissa Thompson

Bloomsbury Publishing, £26

“Motherland is a recipe book, but more than that it is a history of the people, influences and ingredients that uniquely united to create the wonderful patchwork cuisine that is Jamaican food today,” writes Melissa Thompson in the introduction to her debut cookbook.

Patchwork seems the perfect description for a cuisine that has taken many different influences – from the island’s earliest known settlers, who farmed cassava, which remains one of Jamaica’s staple crops, to the Spanish colonialists, who introduced sugar cane to the Caribbean – and stitched them together to create something greater than the sum of its parts.

And while many would perhaps prefer to think of this ‘fusion’ cuisine apolitically, neither the history nor cuisine of Jamaica can be discussed without considering the effects of slavery. As Thompson explains, the food of Jamaica “is a beautiful product of this violent chapter in world history”.

A coconut and black-eyed pea soup recipe reveals that the peas originated in West Africa, brought to the Caribbean on slave ships in the 17th century. A recipe for fried fish features escovitch, a common way of serving fish in Jamaican cuisine that’s derived from the Spanish dish escabeche, featuring vinegar and vegetables. The technique was introduced to Jamaica by Spain’s Jewish settlers, who fled their homes during the Spanish Inquisition.

And then there is one of Jamaica’s most famous signature dishes, curry goat – goats were introduced by the Spanish, but the dish was created following “the introduction of indentured servants from India”.

Chapters are divided into Snacks, From the Waters, Ground Provisions, Yard Birds, Meat, Grits Grains & Hard Food, Something Sweet and Drinks & Preserves, with detailed history sections interspersed throughout. Through both the recipes and informative essays, Thompson relates the history of Jamaica and the wider Caribbean – a history that is inextricably linked to Britain’s. And, while it’s vital for us to educate ourselves, Thompson makes the process of learning a delicious one.

By Lauren Bowes

Ackee and saltfish

When I go to visit my parents and Dad makes this, I’m immediately transported to my childhood. The dish is so evocative for me. Still, to this day, my parents split the tasks: Dad on ackee and saltfish, Mum on plantain and dumpling duty.

Because canned ackee is so expensive, Dad would only use one can and that determined how much could be made. So instead I’d monitor Mum as she mixed the dumpling dough, willing her to make loads.

This is a dish I always eat with my hands, using torn bits of fried dumpling to scoop up mouthfuls. And I mop up every bit of sauce.

Ackee and saltfish encapsulates the essence of Jamaican food in its conjoining of ingredients from various sources to create something that, to me, is greater than the sum of its parts. Saltfish imported from North America, primarily Canada, was traded with Europe as part of the Triangular Trade. In the Caribbean, a poorer-quality version called ‘West India Cure’ or ‘Jamaica Cure’ – that would have been rejected by Europeans – was eaten. This featured heavily in enslaved people’s diets as a protein source. Ackee, in turn, is a fruit that was brought to Jamaica from West Africa on a slave ship in 1778.

The exact moment the two were paired has never been definitively pinpointed, to my knowledge. But perhaps, back when saltfish was not of the highest quality, other ingredients were added to dilute its taste.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY
PATRICIA NIVEN

Serves 4

225g saltfish, rinsed and soaked overnight

2 tbsp vegetable oil

½ onion, finely chopped

1 red pepper, sliced

2 garlic cloves, crushed

⅓–1 Scotch bonnet, deseeded and finely chopped, to taste

2 medium tomatoes, deseeded and chopped

2 spring onions

Chopped leaves from 3 thyme sprigs



150ml water
540g can of ackee, drained

Put the saltfish in a pan of water and bring it to the boil. Simmer until the fish is cooked through and soft; the time this takes will vary depending on the type of fish, so expect anything from 8 up to 20 minutes. Once cooked, drain. When it is cool, break the fish into smaller pieces, checking for bones and removing them as you go and removing the skin as well.

Pour the oil into a frying pan and

fry the onion, red pepper, garlic and Scotch bonnet over a medium heat until they soften, without letting them colour; 8-10 minutes.

Add the saltfish, cook for 5 minutes, then add the tomatoes, spring onions, thyme and measured water. Cook for a further 5-8 minutes until the tomatoes and spring onions soften. Gently stir in the ackee, being careful not to break the curds up. Warm through for 2-3 minutes.

Serve with seasoned callaloo and fried dumplings or other hard food.

Revelations

Scott Smith, head chef, the Oarsman, Marlow



What was your best subject at school?

I would say history was my best, I was fascinated by the history of Scotland and the World Wars. Still didn't pass my final exams though



What was your first job?

My first job was working in my step-mum's florist. I would clean out the buckets and cut the green for wreaths. It was a very busy wee shop

What do you normally have for breakfast?

Double espresso and a Berocca

What do you do to relax?

My days off quite usually revolve round when my football team are playing and I get quite emotionally invested, so to relax I go to work

Which is your favourite restaurant?

St John, hands down, everything about it is outstanding. It was my first stop after my daughter was born! What a day that was, having a child then having rarebit and a Guinness! Can't beat it



Which ingredient do you hate the most?

I generally dislike all foods that are considered 'fine foods' such as foie gras or caviar. Give me a pig's head any day of the week though

What do you always carry with you?

Darts, I always have my darts on me, you never know when you'll come across a dartboard. There is barely a feeling in the world worse than walking into a pub to see a dartboard but no darts. I don't wish that upon anybody



Cast away on a desert island, what luxury would you take?

Is there a dartboard on the island? If not, probably a dartboard. And the darts obviously, but as I said I pretty much always have them on me

Which person in catering have you most admired?

Fergus Henderson has always been a great influence of mine. His cooking is just so honest and quite frankly, genius

Tell us a secret...

I once ate 36 Greggs pastries in 24 hours

What irritates you most about the industry?

Tripadvisor

Raising the bar

Equal Measures has achieved a lot in its first two years. Founder Deano Moncrieffe talks to *Millie Milliken* about giving bar staff the chance to reach their full potential.

Tell us about what Equal Measures is and why you started it in 2020?

It was started to really raise awareness around diversity and inclusion in hospitality, with the main goal of making sure that any individual from a marginalised group is represented and feel like they have a place to fulfil their true potential.

From my own personal experiences, I came to understand that there is a glass ceiling in this industry and restrictions and barriers that aren't always obvious in positions like management-level jobs and customer-facing roles. It's not just race related – with the LGBTQ+ community you're not seeing enough people who are able to progress and have honest conversations, so when I had a chat with Hannah Lanfear [Moncrieffe's Equal Measures business partner], within one or two minutes we realised we shared the same ideas – it's the most important meeting I've had since Equal Measures started.

What can individuals applying to be a part of Equal Measures expect?

They can expect to be part of a community and join other people who have had similar experiences to them. Most of our students have said there is a strong connection between the cohorts, so they can expect to be given the opportunity to be able to grow and we will provide the resources for them to learn, whether they want a personal licence or WSET level 2 or 3.

We try to give them the tools so they have a better chance to succeed – level the playing

field. They can also be mentored by someone in the industry who we feel is suited to their journey. We ask everyone 'what is your goal?', 'where do you want to be in a year's time?' and we pair them with a mentor who we believe can be valuable.

How do your Equal Measures Community Days work?

Our first Community Day in March this year with Johnnie Walker was brilliant as we could get everyone together and see people bonding and connecting, talking about opportunities and stories. It was formatted as a highball cocktail competition and we wanted to give something back to the wider community, so they got ingredients from Brixton market for the cocktails and the prizes were vouchers to spend in Black-owned business in south London. The next one is this month and is going to be a food pairing experience hosted by Johnnie Walker with Adam Purnell [Shropshire Lad] who is a brilliant up-and-coming chef.

You've just done a cool project with Spotify – how did that come about?

The Spotify opportunity came through our partnership with the Drinks Trust charity. Spotify wanted to help us raise awareness around what we do so some of our key students were given the opportunity to make cocktails and present them at a big meeting for Spotify in Cannes.

It was a chance to get front and centre, giving people the chance to find out what we're doing. Those sorts of partnerships are really important because once you step out of the drinks industry, from a consumer point of view, they don't know the issues that exist within it.

Since you started Equal Measures how have you seen the industry become more diverse and inclusive?

We still don't have the answers to the problems. I feel like there has been progression but it is very slow and it will always take time, but there needs to be more people taking responsibility – I'm talking about larger companies, bigger corporations, bigger hotel groups. There is a long way to go.

“There needs to be more people taking responsibility”

What plans do you have for Equal Measures in 2023?

Next year we need to get out of London and be in other big cities in the UK. We want to do more Community Days outside of London and workshops so we can continue to grow – just spread the word of what we're doing.

Seasonal food and drink pairing Wild mushrooms + Lapin Rouillé

Made from hand-harvested Pinot Meunier grapes from the Massif de Saint-Thierry in Reims, Lapin Rouillé is the first female Black-owned Champagne to go on sale in the UK. Its first release (2021) comes with exotic fruits, red berries, spring flowers and a pinch of sea salt and works wonderfully with mushrooms that are in season in autumn.



Have your say

Equal Measures UK and the Mixing Class have launched the Drinks Industry Census 2022 to explore workers' lived experiences, and examine the ways that ethnicity, sexuality, gender, neurodivergence, class, background, and ability can help or hinder career progression. This research will provide insight into realities of inclusion within the drinks industry. Have your say here: <https://bit.ly/3dVG8hE>



Raise a glass with...



PHOTO: JOHN NEATE

Representation matters, says *Audrey Annoh-Antwi*, sommelier at Planque Restaurant, Haggerston, and ambassador for Be Inclusive Hospitality

This Black History Month I wanted to bring attention to two exceptional drinks industry professionals who are role models and mentors.

In this industry, representation really matters. Sometimes it is simply seeing someone like yourself in an industry where few people look like you, that assures you that not only is this space one for you, but one where you can excel and achieve great things.

These two are a small sample of people in the drinks industry that we should be championing every day. They demonstrate you can pave your own way and I raise my glass to them.

Magnavai (aka Mags) Janjo is a multi-hyphenated talent in the wine industry: importer, engaging wine educator and recipient of a Golden Vines scholarship to study the Master Of Wine. His wine-importing business MJ Wine Cellars was founded in 2019 with a focus on bringing eclectic wines from family-run wineries direct to consumers, wholesale, on trade and off trade. Coincidentally, 28% of MJ Wine Cellars listing is made by female winemakers and he is bringing the wines from Black-owned wineries to a broader audience. MJ Cellars is a trove.

The MJ Cellars portfolio is brimming with exceptional makers but a real standout are the wines from Aslina by Ntsiki Biyela. I had the pleasure of trying her wines and hearing her story at an event hosted by Sweet Spice Wines. She is

South Africa's first female wine maker with many accolades for her wines. A wine of particular note is the Bordeaux-style blend made from Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot, 'Umsasane'. Translated from Zulu it means 'the umbrella tree', which was the nickname for Ntsiki's grandmother, Aslina.

Ian Burrell is the world's only global rum ambassador. He is a guest judge, writer edu-tainer and created the world's first international rum festival in 2007, which continues to this day. He is also a co-founder of Equiano Rum, launched in 2020, the world's first premium African Caribbean rum with equity as one of its core principles. Five per cent of company profits and £2 from every bottle go towards freedom and equality projects annually. The brand is named after Olaudah Equiano, born in Nigeria in 1745, sold into slavery, eventually landing in the UK and saving enough money through trading rum on the side to buy his freedom.

Equiano has two rums, a light and a dark. The dark comes from two distilleries; Barbados' Four Square and Gray's in Mauritius. Its chocolate, berry and orange zest depths are a consequence of cask treatment. The Bajan rum mingles with American white oak and the Mauritian with French limousin oak and ex-Cognac. The two are then merged in ex-bourbon cask culminating in a silky, warming sip.

Cocktail of the week: Pedro's Elixir

Ikoyi, London

This cocktail uses a distilled spirit originating from the oil of the raffia palm tree, called Ògógóró, which is traditionally consumed across West and Central Africa.

100ml pineapple juice
30ml ginger juice
65g sugar
500ml Pedro's Ògógóró
36g pink peppercorns



To make a pineapple cordial, mix the pineapple and ginger juice. Add sugar and stir until it is dissolved.

Infuse Pedro's Ògógóró with pink peppercorns. We put Pedro's Ògógóró with peppercorns in a sealed vacuum pack bag and leave it in a water bath

for 45 minutes at 52.5°C.

To make the cocktail, mix 30ml pineapple cordial and 45ml of pink peppercorn Pedro's Ògógóró in a shaker filled with ice. Shake vigorously and pour into a cup with a few ice cubes.

Chewing the fat

Don't let fat and oil build up and cause costly clogs. *Angela Frewin* looks at the latest tips and kit to beat the grease

Foodservice operators seem to be floundering in the fight to manage the waste fats, oils and greases (FOG)—unavoidable by-products of commercial kitchens—that can create havoc for both operators and the wider community if allowed to build up in drains and public sewers.

In an explanatory paper on the food waste hierarchy, the Food Service Equipment Association (FEA) cites a recent study that found just 12% of the UK's estimated 427,000 foodservice establishments (FSEs) were using FOG management equipment and only 0.15% were following best practice guidance.

"As a result, FOG is washed down FSEs' sinks or drains on a daily basis – whether deliberately by pouring unwanted oil down drains or inadvertently during the process of cleaning used dishes, cutlery and kitchenware," it reports.

FOG is blamed for 70% of drain blockages and back-ups in commercial kitchens and 75% of sewer blockages. The latter cost water companies around £100m a year to clear so it is unsurprising that they and ministers are juggling the options of clearer guidance and

standards or firmer regulation to keep FOG out of the water system.

FOG-blocked kitchen drains are smelly and unhygienic and may result in downtime, costly repairs and business shutdown by environmental health offices. Caterers may also face unlimited fines, remedial costs or even imprisonment for FOG-related blockages and floods in public sewers that may impact local homes and businesses and pollute rivers and waterways.

"Fortunately, effective FOG management can actually allow waste that can be so damaging to society to do good for us all. If collected and processed, FOG can be reused as an energy source, creating biodiesel, biogas or electricity," observes Stephen Hobbs, chair of the FEA.

The favoured approach is to mechanically separate FOG at source so it can be converted to renewable energy using anaerobic digestion or biodiesel production. As a first step, it makes sense to reduce the volume of waste cooking oil – the Sustainable Restaurant Association suggests switching to cooking methods such as dry-, air- or shallow-frying, grilling, griddling, roasting or baking.

Suppliers

ACO Building Drainage
www.aco.co.uk/aco-building-drainage

FEA www.fea.org.uk

Filta Group www.filta.co.uk

Jestic Foodservice Solutions
www.jestic.co.uk

Mechline Developments
www.mechline.com/w
www.fogsmanagement.com

Sustainable Restaurant Association
<https://thesra.org/>

Synergy Grill Technology
<https://synergygrill.com>

Valentine and CuisinEquip
www.valentinefryers.com



“Effective FOG management can actually allow waste that can be so damaging to society to do good for us all”

Stephen Hobbs, FEA

Out of the frying pan

Synergy Grill neatly sidesteps what chairman and chief executive Justin Cadbury describes as the “notoriously tricky” and “daunting” task of dealing with FOG as its high-power, low-energy gas and electric grills simply atomise fats into carbon dust that can be vacuumed out at the end of service.

The grills use the vapour released from fat and oils to baste the food and lock in moisture, while the atomisation process harnesses the oils as a secondary heat source, “thus turning fat into free fuel”, adds Cadbury. The grease-free smoke additionally keeps kitchen flues twice as clean, halving the need for routine deep cleans and daily primary filter cleans.

Extending the lifespan of cooking oil also reduces overall FOG volumes while saving caterers money. “In recent months, the price of cooking oil has risen by as much as 150%. This increase has added significant costs to a business’s overheads, impacting margin and profit in the process,” notes Steve Elliott, sales director at Valentine and CuisinEquip.

Its range of German-made Vito portable oil filtration units can extend the usable life-



AS CLEAR AS DAY

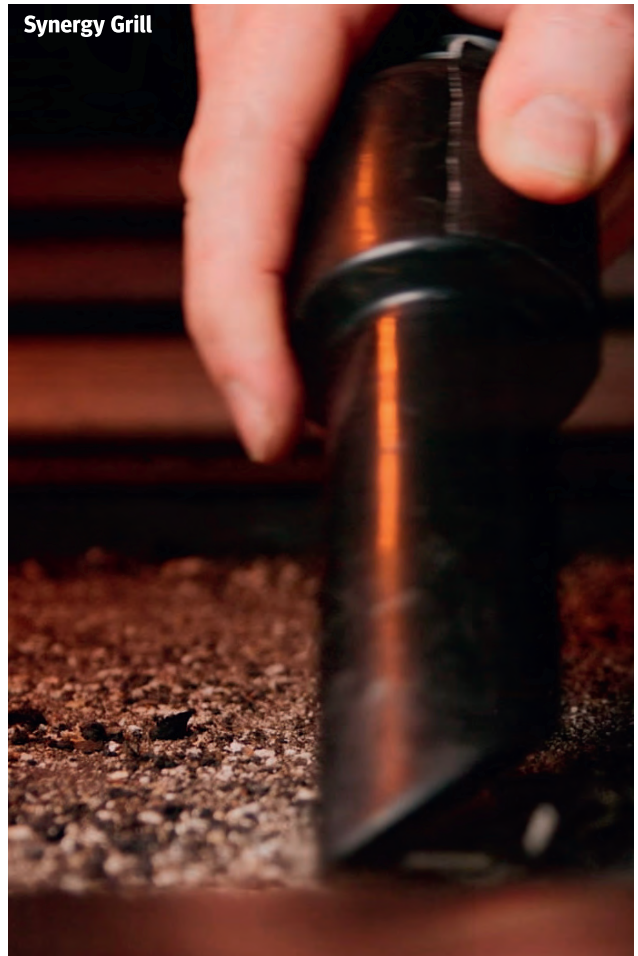
Portable oil filtration technology that reduces consumption and saves up to 50% of your oil costs. Vito can enhance safety and improve the quality of the food you serve.



Mechline BioCeptor



Synergy Grill



span of fryer oil by 50% while preserving “the optimal taste, colour and texture of fried foods”. Their finer filters (using pressure rather than gravity) remove more breading, batter, protein and carbon sediments up to two-thirds faster than other methods.

Safeguarding staff from hot oil, the unit drops into the deep fat fryer at full operating temperature where it runs on a self-timer for five minutes to microfilter oil contaminants. When cooled, the unit’s filter box and drip tray can go straight into the dishwasher.

Into the fryer

Each kitchen has unique FOG needs (based on operation, layout and size) that are best assessed by a professional site visit – and there can be few as challenging as the kitchen at Edwardian Hotel’s new 16-storey super-boutique, the Londoner in Leicester Square. The kitchen, which serves 1,500 meals a day, is six floors below ground level at the deepest underground point in London.

ACO Building Drainage specified a 4,000-litre capacity LipuJet P-RAP NS 15 grease separator that can process 15 litres of wastewater per second. The tricky

“FOG is washed down FSEs’ sinks or drains on a daily basis”

Food Service Equipment Association

location necessitated assembling the separator in sections on-site, shortening pipework and adding twin high-capacity disposal pumps, mounted in series, which pump the wastewater and separated FOG and food particles to ground level once a month when the separator needs emptying.

Jestic Foodservice solutions that remove FOG directly from cooking equipment, include Frontline’s plumbed-in pump station that transfers oil



Valentine Vito

Fog busters

Mechanical Separation at Source

The gold standard for FOG management, they typically use gravity to separate FOG (which floats to the surface) and food waste (which sinks to the bottom) from waste water to be captured or directed elsewhere

This includes:

- Passive under-sink grease traps
- Active under-sink grease recovery or removal units (GRUs)
- Larger grease separators (BS EN 1825) in above- or below-ground formats installed outside the kitchen

Chemical bioremediation or bacterial treatment

Wall-mounted, pumped or preactivated dosing uses bacteria, micro-organisms or enzymes in fluid, solid or powder form to break FOG down into an emulsion.

Because there is a risk that emulsions may re-solidify downstream, best practice sees biological dosing as a secondary or complementary treatment to removal at source and one that ideally should be applied to every waste pipe exiting the kitchen to capture any residual FOG.

Source: FEA Hospitality Food and Drink Waste Hierarchy Explanatory Paper



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Fog Brain

A survey of 500 foodservice managers and owners conducted last autumn by ACO Building Drainage unearthed high levels of misunderstanding about FOG management, with one in five pouring it down the sink or relying solely on biological dosing.

“While 90% understood that they were responsible for grease disposal, the number who are taking appropriate action is far less,” explained technical product manager Erik Mul. “The costs associated with installing and maintaining grease separators and traps are far less than potential lost earnings due to closure.”

More than half (56%) admitted to build-ups of grease in their kitchens, with 25% suffering from resultant bad odours. Nearly half (49%) needed their drains unblocked at least once a month before lockdown, putting them at risk of failing hygiene surveys, while one in eight faced closure over fatbergs.

Correct maintenance was patchy among operators with grease management systems – 39% were not servicing them at least once a month (reducing efficiency and risking failure) and only one in six carried out maintenance during lockdown.

from fryers or grills into a storage tank at the push of a button. Where plumbing is unfeasible, Frontline wheeled caddies can be rolled under equipment to drain the waste oil for storage and collection, while a filter machine caddy helps prolong the life of oil in fryers without built-in filtration.

A fully-automatic Grease Collection System is a new option on MKN FlexiCombi ovens that actively pumps out excess oils, fats and liquids into a separate container, leaving behind clean waste water that can be reused for cooking and cleaning the combi.

Mechline’s BioCeptor solution meets British Water’s gold standard in FOG treatment by combining both mechanical separation at

“The way FOG is created, managed and disposed of within the foodservice industry can help to protect all levels of society”

Stephen Hobbs, FEA

source and biological dosing. The FOG Intercept and Treatment (F.I.T) unit traps and retains the grease and fats while the linked GreasePak automatic dosing system uses a

multi-strain bio-fluid to degrade FOG into simple non-solidified molecules.

This teamwork delivers easy maintenance (Greasepak nearly halves the need to clean the grease trap) and less FOG waste to deal with, explains product and technical director Nick Falco: “In field trials, the presence of GreasePak dosing into the F.I.T unit (versus without) extended the length of time between collections from 28 days to 12 weeks therefore significantly reducing kitchen disruption, and the typical carbon footprint levels associated with FOGs transportation for traditional grease traps.”

FiltaFOG Cyclone, Filta Group’s next-generation grease recovery unit, is the world’s first to use hydrocyclones to help clear FOG from wastewater, achieving a concentration of just four parts per million against an industry standard of 25ppm.

Working with drainage systems, dishwashers, potwash areas, rotisserie and combi ovens and costing just three pence per day to run, the units store food debris in a removable basket while forcing FOG through a two-stage separation and recovery process into an oil collection cassette.

“Ultimately, the way FOG is created, managed and disposed of within the foodservice industry can help to protect all levels of society and the natural world from the risks posed by blockages and sewer flooding,” concludes Hobbs at the FEA. “Instead of causing costly problems in sewers and drains, collected FOG can help to reduce carbon emissions and support the nation’s journey towards net zero.”

Resources

ACO Building Drainage

Four grease management guides to help restaurant owners and kitchen managers manage FOG effectively
www.aco.co.uk/grease-management

FOGwise Foodservice – Fat, Oil and Grease Management Guide

This aims to be the definitive guide – due this month or next – to the challenges, current laws and standards relating to FOG, along with best practice equipment and approaches to keep it out of drains and public sewers. FOGwise is an alliance of organisations from the foodservice, catering equipment, water and environmental health sectors, including the FEA.

Grease Contractors Association Grease Management Equipment Guide

Overview of the specification, supply, installation and maintenance of grease management equipment and methods to reduce FOG in wastewater before it reaches the sewers, through both gravity and biological dosing methods.
bit.ly/3Sms1kh

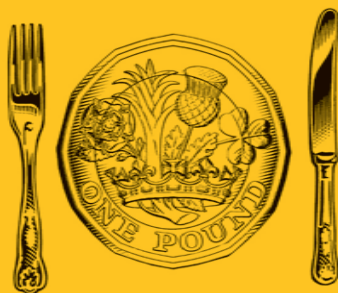
European FOG Summit 2022

Titanic Hotel, Stanley Dock, Liverpool, UK, October 18 and 19, 2022,
www.fogsummit.co.uk/post/bringing-water-and-hospitality-together
www.fogsummit.co.uk/

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New products



Lotus Bakeries and US bakery giant Cinnabon have announced a partnership to distribute three varieties of cinnamon rolls across 28 Cinnabon counters in the UK. The varieties include the Lotus Biscoff Bon (a Cinnabon roll topped with Lotus Biscoff sauce, Lotus Biscoff crumbs and a Lotus Biscoff biscuit), Lotus Biscoff MiniBon and Lotus Biscoff BonBites (four per pack).
Price Lotus Biscoff, £3.59, Lotus Biscoff Bon Bites, £3.39
www.lotusbakeries.com

The Moroccan Mari Base from Major provides a warm, aromatic flavour rich in a fusion of spices suitable for use at any stage of the cooking process, in both hot and cold dishes. Available in 1.25 litre pots, the Moroccan Mari Base is gluten- and nut-free, free of artificial additives, colours and preservatives, and suitable for vegetarians.
Price £25 for 1.25l
www.majorint.com

Made for Drinks has launched South African-inspired, beer-friendly biltong, made using 100% grass-fed Irish beef. The snack is made by an Eastern Cape producer who has relocated to Northern Ireland.
Price £2.95 for a 30g bag
www.madefordrink.com



KFF'S Purple Pineapple brand has created a range of more than 70 sandwich fillings, including fish, meat, vegetarian, plant-based and low-fat options. All the fillings are mixed by hand, giving the finished products a homemade appearance. Available in 1kg and 2.5kg containers.
Price From £10.50-£14 per kg
www.kff.co.uk





- Merrychef has revealed
- the conneX16 with a
- large 16-inch cavity in an
- 18-inch-wide footprint.
- The larger sibling in the
- conneX range comes fully
- connected, with a 7-inch
- high-definition screen and
- cook times 80% faster than
- traditional methods.
- [https://info.merrychef.com/](https://info.merrychef.com/connex)
- [connex](https://info.merrychef.com/connex)

Burton's Biscuit Co has
 launched a new artisan-style
 brand exclusively available
 to the foodservice channel,
 Burton & Browne. The range
 includes a florentine mini pack,
 a Speculoos mini cookies
 bag, and four shortbread
 dunking biscuits.
Price From 59p to £1.15
 per pack
www.burtonsfoodservice.co.uk



- Modular cooking system brand
- Livecookintable has launched
- a range of heat lamps and
- hot plates in a choice of four
- colours: black matt, white
- matt, copper metallic and
- gold-brass metallic. They
- can be matched to keep food
- warm on a buffet or used
- independently. The Hotplates
- Eco offer temperatures varying
- from +20°C to +90°C to keep
- individual portions or small
- dishes warm during service.
- **Prices** From £500
- www.signature-fse.com



What makes a good sommelier?

Somebody who has passion for food and wine, who is curious and keen to learn. Somebody who also is a team player and can inspire the rest of the team.

What are your favourite food and wine pairings?

Oysters and Muscadet Sèvre et Maine 'Monnières-Saint Fiacre', Vincent Caillé 2012.

What's your best wine find of the past 12 months?

Monteverte Le Pergole Torte 2010. It is a rarity nowadays.

What is the focus of your wine list at Trinity?

I oversee a vast wine list at Trinity, which is focused on Old World regions with particular attention to Burgundy and Bordeaux varieties. We work with a wide selection of classic appellations and hand-picked producers, as well as small independent winemakers, and organise monthly wine dinners and all new and existing suppliers and stock, including chef Adam Byatt's CCW (Chef Cellar Wine) range, a fine wine selection that Adam has invested in himself to enable Trinity to offer premium wines to guests at lower margins.

Which wine can't you do without on your list?

Domaine Roulot. Our guests are in love with this producer.

Sara Rossi

The head sommelier and wine buyer at Trinity in London on finding obscure producers and cultivating a premium list

What's your guiltiest wine pleasure?

Champagne. Always Champagne.

How do you develop your knowledge and skills?

I am always reading newspapers and websites (Jancis Robinson, *Drink Business* etc.), using social media, listening to podcasts and reading books. As well as meeting other people from the industry and attending wine tastings.

Who is your biggest inspiration and what did you learn from them?

First is my father Fabio Rossi, who is a head chef in Tuscany. He

passed down to me his passion for food, wine and hospitality. He also taught me to be humble and to strive for perfection.

The second is Raphael Rodriguez, who was my director at Fera at Claridge's. He introduced me to amazing producers, obscure grape varieties and the most important mantra – acidity is key – in a wine. He also taught me to think outside the box.

Which sommeliers do you admire?

Alessia Ferrarello, head sommelier at Restaurant Sat Bains.

Who would be on your ideal sommelier team?

I already have an amazing team, but if I can squeeze another one, it would be of course Alessia Ferrarello.

How has the role of the sommelier changed in the past three years?

Sommeliers now have much

more of a support role on the floor during service time. They are a key part of the front of house team and make a great contribution to the guest experience.

What advice would you give a front of house team member considering training to be a sommelier?

If you decide to be a sommelier, my advice is to work with a good head sommelier, who you can learn from and with a big wine list selection, so you get to taste many wines during your shifts. Without forgetting that there is also plenty of homework to do, such as studying, tasting and wine courses.

What new skills have you developed this year?

I have finished my WSET diploma, so I have expanded my knowledge on the theory, tasting and market trends.

What's your goal for 2022?

To win the Port competition and to have a solid preparation for the Masters of Wine entry exam in 2023.

Taittinger UK Sommelier of the Year 2023

The Taittinger UK Sommelier of the Year competition recognises the very finest talent in wine service. Organised by *The Caterer* and recognised by the Association de la Sommellerie Internationale, the competition is open to professional sommeliers and waiting staff working in the UK.

Candidates are judged on their wine and drink expertise as well as their ability to deal efficiently and knowledgeably with customers by demonstrating exemplary front of house skills. Entries for next year will be invited in January 2023.

www.uksommelieroftheyear.com



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Theatr Clwyd is the most prolific producing theatre in Wales, with over 200,000 people attending events at our base in Flintshire each year.

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Our capital project will play a major role in regional economic growth. Our design is delivered with Sterling Prize winners Haworth Tompkins.

Food and beverage will be at the heart of the reinvigorated facilities with an all-day customer base made up of over 140 core employees, 500 freelancers, health & wellbeing classes, conference and events, cinema and theatre audiences.

We are exploring interest from partners who share our excitement about what can be delivered ahead of any formal tender process. We will offer a tour of the current building and explain and show plans of new facilities including all catering areas.

Theatr Clwyd

Email mark@kendrickhobbs.co.uk to register for our open day on Tuesday 15th November.

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