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Once again this weekend activists from Animal Rebellion have targeted hospitality businesses to promote their desire for a purely plant-based food system.

Manchester's Michelin-starred Mana restaurant and Nusr-Et steakhouse in the Park Tower Knightsbridge hotel were the latest targets, after Restaurant Gordon Ramsay was forced to close two weeks ago in the middle of a Saturday evening service.

A protester at that sit-in complained that the food costs were exorbitant and contrasted them with the terrible statistic that over two million people have used food banks in the past year. But this misses the point. The restaurants they are disrupting are buying the best ingredients, farmed responsibly and with the greatest respect for the land and animal. This costs money to do.

Why should operators who are funding this responsible farming be targeted while serving guests? They are the businesses that are promoting better husbandry and traditional, sustainable farming methods.

With the terrible disruption to business that the train strikes are presenting, hitting what would typically be one of the most profitable weeks of the year, all this action does it put jobs and livelihoods at risk.

People should absolutely be entitled to share their opinions on the food system. It is by no means perfect. But to use independent restaurants, whose aim is to create an

experience for guests that promotes respect for produce seems extremely misguided and threatens the viability of businesses who work hard to do the right thing.



**James Stagg**  
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FRONT COVER PICTURE: IRENE PIERA-PALLAS

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# Eat Out to Help Out: almost £70m claimed due to fraud or error

In the food and drink subsidy scheme of August 2020, almost 10% of the money given to businesses was claimed fraudulently or in error

By Emma Lake

Almost 10% of the money handed out by government during the Covid-19 Eat Out to Help Out scheme was claimed fraudulently or in error, MPs have been told.

HMRC chief executive Jim Harra told the Treasury Committee that the initiative recorded higher rates of fraud and error than the other two major support schemes launched during the pandemic to help furloughed and self-employed workers.

The Eat Out to Help Out scheme saw the government subsidise 50% of the price of food and drinks at participating hospitality venues in August 2020. The committee was told that £850m was paid out by government, about £70m of which is believed to have been claimed incorrectly.

Harra said that although a lot of protection was in place

to ensure only recognised businesses could claim, HMRC was reliant on “cafés and restaurants declaring the correct amount [of sales]”.

“I am aware of one case where a restaurant claimed to have a record month in sales as the same time as they were claiming to have furloughed all their staff.

“You’d be surprised at what people think we won’t join up.”

After HMRC made some early arrests, it received several “voluntary disclosures” from restaurants who said they had made a mistake in their claim, Harra said.

While the rate of error and fraud seen in relation to Eat Out to Help Out was higher than across the furlough and self-employment support schemes, the amount paid out was less due to the short period of time it was in operation. Across all three support schemes £4.5b is believed to have been paid out in error or due to fraud.

Harra said a team will con-



Rishi Sunak’s scheme as chancellor saw half price dining for guests

tinue to investigate such claims until at least April 2023 and it is estimated £1.1b will be recovered. Some 50,000 claims have been flagged for investigation.

Where errors are found in the

claiming of support Harra said if money is paid back promptly then no further action would be taken in most cases.

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## Hospitality Rising receives over 20,000 job applications

Recruitment campaign Hospitality Rising has received over 20,000 applications since it launched its jobs board at the end of October.

Over 83,000 people have viewed its job listings and its TikTok channel has had 4.3 million impressions, the campaign said.

Application figures have almost tripled over the space of a month, as 7,000 people applied for jobs through the site within two days of its launch.

Hospitality Rising founder Mark McCulloch tweeted that the campaign “broke the internet” last week when its site crashed due to a high volume of traffic from its YouTube adverts.

McCulloch told *The Caterer*: “We are completely blown away by the performance of our Hos-



The campaign’s site crashed last week due to a high volume of traffic

pitality Rising campaign and it gives us faith that we are attractive as an industry and that the creative and media targeting of under-30s is working.

“This is testament to the brains we have working on this, including creative from Forever Beta and media planning from Smithfield.

“Although to the industry we have lots of questions around [whether we] should we be doing TV, radio and print, you have to be where the target’s attention is, and that seems to be largely in YouTube, TikTok and Google AdWords.”

Hospitality Rising is aiming to raise £5m to launch a “government-sized” recruitment campaign with the backing of hospitality employers. It has so far raised around £850,000.

# Mana restaurant 'confused' over protest by Animal Rebellion

By Emma Lake

The chef-patron of Michelin-starred Manchester restaurant Mana has said he was "confused" by the targeting of his "highly sustainable restaurant" by Animal Rebellion protestors on Saturday evening (3 December).

Just after 7pm, 16 supporters of Animal Rebellion entered the venue in Manchester's Ancoats district and occupied tables reserved for customers. Police attended and arrested 14 people on suspicion of aggravated trespass, who have since been bailed pending further enquiries.

Chef Simon Martin said he and his team had tried to politely ask protesters to leave but that they had refused to engage.

He added: "While everyone is entitled to their opinions and beliefs, we are confused as to why the protestors chose to target a restaurant that prioritises sustainability and animal welfare, instead of a corporate fast-food chain Mana has always been a highly sustainable restaurant, sourcing hyper-local and sustainably produced vegetables from small businesses just like ourselves who abstain from GMOs, herbicides, and pesticides. Farms for livestock we use are personally visited by members of the team to ensure standards there meet our criteria

for supply, and seafood is strictly captured by hand or line.

"The cost of a meal at Mana is reflective of these production methods, which are lower yield and higher quality. It's ironic that the protesters who are campaigning for better food supply do not realise the cost attached to the quality, leading us to believe they do not fully understand their cause."

Martin went on to thank his guests and team members who continued service following a three-hour delay.

Superintendent Ian Jones of Greater Manchester Police (GMP) said: "GMP respects the right of people to protest peacefully and so will always, in the first instance, engage with organisers and demonstrators to facilitate this – as per national guidance.

"It is, however, our responsibility to prevent and investigate crime and keep people safe. In this case, and following engagement attempts, the most appropriate course of action was to make arrests."

On the same evening at 6pm, eight activists entered Nusr-Et restaurant in London. At both sites the activists held up 'mock menus' outlining the group's core demands, including a plant-based food system and mass rewilding.



Activists occupied tables reserved for customers and held mock menus

Three-Michelin-starred Restaurant Gordon Ramsay in London's Chelsea and the Catch at the Old Fish Market in Weymouth were the targets of similar disruption by Animal Rebellion protesters two weeks ago.

At the time a spokesperson for Restaurant Gordon Ramsay said: "Everyone is entitled to their opinions and beliefs. However, to force your way into a restaurant, disturbing hard-working staff

going about their jobs and ruining the evening of guests who have waited months for their reservations is incredibly inappropriate and deeply disrespectful."

Animal Rebellion has said it will continue to target high-end restaurants until the government "takes meaningful action on the climate and ecological emergencies".

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## BrewDog gives up ethical B Corp label

BrewDog has given up its status as an ethical B Corp company, less than two years after it joined the scheme.

The pub and brewer gained the certification, which recognises a company's social and environmental commitments, in February 2021.

BrewDog told *The Caterer* it had decided to "step aside" from the scheme "for the time being".

It said it had given up the label because the B Lab charity "had requested additional measures from BrewDog and

the BrewDog board decided that these were not something we could do at this time".

B Lab confirmed the decision but said it could not comment on companies that had left its "community". B Corp businesses are required to sign up to targets around carbon neutrality and pay, and have to reverify every three years.

Last year BrewDog was hit by claims of a toxic working culture after more than 100 former employees signed an open letter alleging there was

a "culture of fear" within the business. The company admitted it had made mistakes, while chief executive James Watt said he took personal responsibility for the situation.

The brand was also criticised for its decision to run an advertising campaign highlighting alleged human rights abuses around the FIFA World Cup while still screening the football games in its bars.

BrewDog, which prides itself on being carbon negative, said it was focused on its ethical

Blueprint profit share scheme.

"Though we remain committed to the values upheld by B Lab, we believe our business is currently best served by focusing on the Blueprint, as well as very specific sustainability targets related to our Lost Forest project and the continued ramp-up of our AD facility," the company said.

"The current crisis has taught us that we need to be laser-focused on those areas of our business that deliver the most real term value – that means the Blueprint and all that entails."

# Calls for stricter reporting around allergens after Pret A Manger deaths

By Sophie Witts

The family of a woman who died after eating a Pret A Manger sandwich have welcomed a coroner's report calling for stricter reporting around allergic reactions.

Celia Marsh, 42, died in 2017 after eating a super veg vegan wrap which was marked as 'dairy free' and 'vegan', but was contaminated with milk.

The yogurt dressing in the wrap was later found to contain traces of milk protein stemming from starch manufactured in a facility handling dairy products.

Coroner Maria Voisin made several recommendations in a prevention of future deaths report following Marsh's inquest. It suggested that hospitals should be required to report cases of near fatal or fatal anaphylactic reactions to local councils or health protection teams.

This could be similar to the mandatory reporting system that is currently used for other 'notifiable diseases', such as food poisoning, and could mean incidents are dealt with more quickly, the report said.

Voisin also raised concerns that the terms 'free-from' and 'vegan' could be potentially misleading to the public and called for a more robust sys-



RICHARD M LEE/SHUTTERSTOCK

There are concerns that food labelled as 'free from' does not guarantee that it is free of all allergens

tem to confirm the absence of certain allergens.

She suggested hospitality businesses, as well as the Food Standards Agency (FSA), clarify that foods labelled as 'free-from' certain allergens may not be safe for those with allergies to consume.

The report was sent to British hospitality representatives, and organisations including the FSA, the British Retail Consortium, the Food and Drink Federation and the Department of Health & Social Care.

Marsh's family welcomed the

report as the "next step in our fight to make the world a safe place for allergy sufferers like our beloved mum and wife".

They added: "Above all, we hope that the FSA, the UK Health Security Agency and the Department of Health & Social Care will now start working together to put in place a system for mandatory reporting of fatal and near fatal anaphylactic reactions to allow the public to be alerted of unsafe allergen products and provide an accurate record of such incidents."

Marsh's death followed that of

15-year-old Natasha Ednan-Laperouse, who died in 2016 after eating a Pret A Manger baguette containing sesame seeds bought from Heathrow Airport.

The tragedy sparked an overhaul of food labelling laws which now requires retailers to display full ingredient and allergen labelling on every food item made on the premises and pre-packed for direct sale.

Natasha's mother Tanya Ednan-Laperouse said the suggestions in Voisin's coroner's report could "save lives".

## Rise in restaurant owners lending to their own businesses

The amount that restaurant owners have been forced to lend to their own businesses to keep them afloat has risen 12% over the past year, a new study has shown.

Operators lent £424m to their companies in the last 12 months, up from £377m the previous year, according to figures from advisory firm Mazars.

Rising energy and food costs, soaring staff wages and falling restaurant sales have contributed to the spike in owners having to use their own funds to keep businesses trading.

Some restaurant own-



DAVID CALVERT/SHUTTERSTOCK

Some owners feel lending to their business is better than insolvency

ers reported that they had even remortgaged their own homes to raise funds for their businesses.

It comes after statistics from the Insolvency Service showed that there were 435 restaurant insolvencies in the last quarter,

up by 15% from 395 recorded in the previous three months.

Adam Harris, partner at Mazars, said: "Restaurant owners having to loan more and more of their own money to their businesses is a real cause for concern. To take difficult choices like this, these business owners must feel they have no other viable way forward.

"However, loaning personal funds to your own business is not the only one option to stave off insolvency. It's really important that business owners seek professional advice before making that kind of commitment."

# Rail strikes 'couldn't come at a worse time'

The industry is facing cancellations due to rail strikes that are scheduled for the lead up to Christmas and three days in early January

By Jungmin Seo

Hospitality operators have been hit hard by the train strikes scheduled in the run-up to Christmas, with some reporting that a fifth of their festive bookings have been cancelled.

Jamie Hazeel, co-founder of London bar group Little Door & Co, said the strikes "couldn't come at a worse time" for hospitality.

He added: "We don't believe that sufficient attention is being paid to the vast knock-on effects the strikes have for businesses like ours. We are losing significant revenue on our key trading period of the year – not to mention the difficulty of staffing the venues for those who can come."

The strikes are due to take place on 13-14 and 16-17 December and 3-4 and 6-7 January, which UKHospitality said was the industry's busiest part of the year.

Philip Inzani, founder of the 80-cover Polo 24 Hour bar near London's Liverpool Street Station, told *The Caterer* he had already lost 20% of his Christmas bookings during what should be his "most profitable month".

He said: "We're facing food inflation at 15% and in some cases quadrupled energy costs.



PIYADA JAMAREE/SHUTTERSTOCK

**The strikes will impact Christmas parties and festive bookings at hospitality venues across the UK**

With no real help from the government, there is a very dark light at the end of this short tunnel."

It comes after nine pub chief executives, who represent 30,000 team members between them, sent an open letter to RMT union leader Mick Lynch on 25 November calling for a "quick resolution" to the strikes.

Signatories included executives from Fuller's, Stonegate Group, Inception Group, Revolution Bars Group and City Pub Company.

In his response, Lynch called

on the hospitality industry to help lobby the government to resolve the dispute by writing to secretary of state for transport Mark Harper.

He claimed that the government would end up spending around £318m to "bail out" affected train companies by the end of the next round of strikes.

Lynch wrote: "We understand the impact that these rail strikes are having on your sector at this time of year, yet while you face disruption to your business at

this critical time, the private rail businesses we are in dispute with will not lose a penny."

On Sunday the RMT union rejected the latest offer from train operators, which included pay increases of 4% in 2022 and 2023.

Lynch said the offer was conditional on the closure of all ticket offices and a move to driver-only operated trains, which would lead to thousands of job losses.

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## Housekeeper admits £200,000 jewellery theft from Park Lane hotel

A housekeeper has admitted stealing nearly £200,000 worth of jewellery from a guest bedroom while working at the London Hilton on Park Lane.

Southwark Crown Court heard that 23-year-old Sabrina Rova also took a credit card, which was used to buy goods at the nearby Footlocker store on Oxford Street.

Prosecutor Alex Matthews said the housekeeper was part of an organised crime group who stole jewellery worth £187,000 from a guest in July this year.

He said the starting point for any jail sentence should be three years.

Rova, who appeared in court via video link from HMP Bronze-

field, sobbed and said "I'm sorry" after she admitted two charges of burglary and one charge of fraud.

Judge Nicholas Rimmer told Rova: "I know you are upset. You are not going to be sentenced today so I'm going to ask you to try and calm yourself down and listen to what is going on.

"The criminality entails that while working as a trusted employee for the Hilton hotel you helped yourself to £187,000 worth of jewellery from a guest's bedroom.

"There is a real prospect that you will receive a custodial sentence."

Rova was remanded in custody ahead of sentencing on 27 January 2023.



**The prosecutor said the housekeeper was part of a crime group**



## JAMES CLARKE TO TAKE OVER BACK TO THE FLOOR

Hilton London Bankside general manager James Clarke is to run Back to the Floor in 2024 with Exclusive Collection managing director Danny Pecorelli.

Clarke takes over the role from Philip Newman-Hall, who is hanging up his apron having overseen five successful Back to Floor events, where the hospitality industry's leading hoteliers don aprons and twirl corkscrews as they return to their roots as waiters and sommeliers to raise funds for Hospitality Action.

Last year's event raised £255,000 for the charity and Clarke and Pecorelli will be working towards beating the target in 2024.

## BARLETTA TO CLOSE AFTER BEING HIT BY SCAMMERS



Barletta restaurant in Margate, Kent, is to close on 9 December after losing £50,000 to scammers.

The restaurant, which opened in 2019 and is located in the Turner Contemporary art gallery, had thousands taken from its bank account several weeks ago but was told it could not be recovered.

A crowdfunding to help the team raised nearly £6,500, but co-owner Natalia Ribbe said all funds would now be refunded or donated to industry charity Hospitality Action.

Ribbe wrote on social media: "We are deeply saddened to share the news that Barletta will be closing its doors. The impact of fraudulent activity on our bank account, compounded by the increase in energy bills and cost of living crisis, has made it impossible

for us to carry on. This was not the outcome we were hoping for, but it is the one we must make."

## ROBBIE LORRAINE LEAVES BOYS HALL



Robbie Lorraine is to open the first permanent restaurant under his Only Food and Courses brand on the Strand in London on 8 December.

Lorraine left his head chef role at boutique hotel Boys Hall in Kent, which opened in September, last week.

The new restaurant will occupy the 26-cover dining room at the Cheshire Cheese pub and serve a take on 1980s and 1990s culinary trends, with dishes such as prawn cocktail, beef and onions, and millionaire's shortbread.

Lorraine first launched Only Food and Courses at London's Pop Brixton shipping container development two years ago.

The new restaurant is a collaboration with the Blighty Pub Company, which has taken over management of the pub.

## ROUX SCHOLAR HEADS TO THE FRENCH LAUNDRY



Jonathan Ferguson, winner of the 2022 Roux Scholarship, is to undertake the three-month stage included as part of his prize at Thomas Keller's three-Michelin-starred French Laundry restaurant in California.

Ferguson, who won the competition while junior sous chef at the Michelin-starred Glenturret Lalique restaurant in Crieff, said: "I came to the decision of the French Laundry quite quickly – it's one of



## BAXTERSTOREY TO TAKE OVER RESTAURANT OPENED BY KING CHARLES

BaxterStorey is to take over running the Royal Deeside restaurant Rothesay Rooms, which was first opened by King Charles in 2015.

The King, who was then Prince of Wales, established the restaurant as a pop-up inside Ballater's Old Royal Station and the Prince's Foundation refurbished the site.

It was part of the charity's efforts to attract tourism and build jobs in the village after it had been damaged by flooding and fire in 2015.

However, Gordon Neil, executive director of the Prince's Foundation, said the challenges presented by the pandemic had led the charitable organisation to reconsider its position.

The foundation will honour all bookings and continue to run the restaurant until 31 December.

Under BaxterStorey, staff will continue in their roles, but there will be a review of the food and drink offering and opening hours.

the first restaurants outside the UK I discovered it when I was younger, and the restaurant's cookbook was one of the first big name books I remember buying."

Ferguson will be the second Roux Scholar to undertake his stage at the French Laundry, following 2009 winner Hrishikesh Desai.

Michel Roux Jr, co-chairman of the Roux Scholarship, said: "Elegance and lightness of touch in the kitchen coupled with chef Keller's mentoring will definitely mean Jonnie will have the time of his career."

## HALF OF UK'S FREE-RANGE TURKEYS HIT BY BIRD FLU



Around half of the free-range turkeys produced for Christmas in

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the UK have died or been culled due to bird flu, MPs have been told.

Richard Griffiths, chief executive of the British Poultry Council, said that around 600,000 of the 1.3 million birds reared had been affected.

The UK has been hit by the worst bird flu outbreak in history this year and last month the government ordered all captive birds and poultry to be kept indoors.

Griffiths said that between 8.5 million and nine million turkeys were typically produced for Christmas in the UK and just over one million had been culled or died.

MPs were told the situation was likely to lead to a shortage of turkey supplies, although hospitality operators have been advised to offer alternative meats for Christmas this year.

### SEARCYS WINS CONTRACT WITH CHURCH HOUSE WESTMINSTER



Searcys has won a seven-year catering contract with event and conference venue Church House Westminster in London.

Church House is a Grade II-listed, multi-purpose site set across three floors, featuring 19 meeting and

conference spaces, including the Assembly Hall, which has capacity for 550 guests.

Searcys' offer will range from breakfast to afternoon tea and fine-dining experiences.

The contract caterer will also support Church House in its mission to become a net-zero building by 2030 by working with local suppliers, offering plant-based options and hosting sustainability training for staff on-site.

The terms of the deal were not disclosed.

### LITTLE CAESARS TARGETS UK EXPANSION



US restaurant chain Little Caesars Pizza is to open its first UK store in Derby in late December.

It will also launch two sites in London and another in Liverpool early next year.

The brand, which is reportedly the third-largest pizza chain in the world based on the net number of stores in 2021, has restaurants in 50 US states and 27 countries.

Little Caesars said the UK pizza industry was worth more than £2.5b and that it is aiming to grow its UK portfolio.

Jeremy Vitaro, chief development officer for Little Caesars, said: "We are seeking additional franchisees who are interested in entering into area developer agreements in London as well as other regions, including southern England, Scotland, and Ireland."

Little Caesars Pizza was founded by Mike and Marian Ilitch in Michigan in 1959.

### ALEX WEBB TO REMAIN AT INTERCONTINENTAL LONDON PARK LANE

Chef Alex Webb's pop-up at InterContinental London Park Lane is to remain as a permanent restaurant.

It is understood that the venture will be open throughout 2023.

The 2020 *MasterChef: The Professionals* winner held two



Alex Webb

residencies at the Mayfair hotel this year, the first from 3 May and the second from 6 October.

The 2023 re-launch will offer a new selection of seasonal dishes.

For the remainder of this year the pop-up will serve festive dishes such as chicken with cranberry, sage and pork stuffing with black pudding and shredded Brussels sprouts, and Christmas pudding.

### RED CUP CAFÉ CLOSES ITS DOORS



Henal and Reena Chotai

The Red Cup Café in Harrow has closed after seven years, blaming a rise in rent and energy bills.

Owners Henal and Reena Chotai wrote on Twitter that the decision was "soul destroying" and "devastating".

The team said they had been hit with a rental increase and a new energy contract for electricity would have added £15,000 to their bills from early next year.

Red Cup Café wrote on social media: "[We] have now been forced into this as we cannot raise prices to an unaffordable level just to cover these costs."

The Chotais are both ambassadors for industry charity Hospitality Action and have been outspoken champions of the sector.

Their post added: "And one last request please... support your local small, independent business as much as you can."

## Review of the reviews

London  
**Evening  
Standard**

At Tendril, a largely plant-based restaurant just off Regent Street, chef Rishim Sachdeva does something truly memorable and novel with [cauliflower]. Here, it is roasted to smoky, yielding succulence, surrounded by a creamy moat of delicately spiced coconut milk moilee, and set aboard a hidden sweet potato fritter that provides a face-flushing surge of chilli warmth.

An aubergine dish got things off to a mixed, mezze-ish start. It was a take on smoky baba ganoush, the eggplant cooked down to appealing, bonfire-scented mush and inlaid with pomegranate seeds, but accompanied by a papery half-moon of vegan puff pastry that brought little to the party. Blue corn tostada, spread with a politely spiced corn 'nduja and piled with diced winter squash and pepper salsa, was pleasant in a virtuous sort of way. Brussels sprout poriyal, a stir-fry of shaved veg, coconut and chilli, ordered as a bolt-on from the à la carte menu, felt similarly mild-mannered.

Tendril's take on plant-based eating is culturally eclectic (pulling with abandon from East Asia, the Mediterranean and Sachdeva's native India)



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and pleasingly non-absolutist. The whole point of its “mostly vegan” tag, seemingly, is that it allows the presence of a single cheese dish. And the more scintillating dishes – the glorious, sticky-sweet messiness of crispy beetroot croquette in a fluffy bao; the decidedly non-vegan baked Brie and truffled mascarpone on sourdough toast – tended to channel this spirit of freedom, indulgence and fatty sinfulness.

But, ultimately, I think your

feelings towards this place will depend on where you sit on the scale of modern flexitarianism. As someone who has always happily eaten meat and animal products, I am more likely to judge these plant-based dishes more harshly. But I only do so because, as his moments of brilliance prove, Sachdeva is a chef capable of winning the hearts, minds and stomachs of even diehard carnivores.

**Price: meal for two plus drinks, about £95**

**Jimi Famurewa finds moments of genius at Tendril in London's West End**

THE  TIMES

**Jessie Hewitson finds luxury next to a Cardiff multistorey car park at Parador 44**

Since 1928, paradors – buildings of historical character, former castles, manor houses or palaces, monasteries or convents – have formed a state-run network of hotels in Spain. Luxury is key to their concept and the rooms at Parador 44 are no exception. Much of the furnishing and decor has been sourced from markets and auctions in Spain – ornate tiles, majestic headboards, and shutters leading to the bathrooms (one with a his-and-hers shower).

It's right in the centre of town, close to the busy shopping thoroughfare of Westgate Street and right by the Principality Sta-

dium. This area is not where you might expect to find an upmarket boutique hotel, sandwiched between a multistorey car park and the main thoroughfare for weekend drinkers and stag and hen parties. But the location means that you can walk easily to many attractions.

Opened in 2017, [downstairs restaurant] Asador 44 is large, dark and buzzy, populated by young foodies. The menu focuses on charcoal-cooked meats and fish, and beef from former dairy cows who have been given a few extra years to chew the cud. Its most popular dishes are the smoked leek with vinaigrette starter and red prawn bisque croqueta with charcoal mayonnaise. If you're only there for the breakfasts, you won't be disappointed – the Spanish-style eggs baked in tomato with chorizo were among the best I have ever eaten.

**Score: 8/10. Price: B&B, from £175**

**YOU**  
MAGAZINE

**Lucy Coghlan explores Forter Castle in Kirkton of Glenisla**

The castle's impressive heritage [has been combined] with stylish contemporary flourishes to make for a one of a kind private rental.

Forter Castle is very much a cosy family home in the grandest of surroundings, with no modern convenience forgotten. Be sure to arrive first and claim the Laird Master room, the largest of the castle's seven bedrooms. Take a moment to recline in the freestanding roll-top tub and wonder how on earth they managed to get a super-king four-poster bed up the winding stone staircase.

Rich mahoganies, sumptuous fabrics and tasteful tartans add to the stately ambience

throughout. It's accented by the Pooley family's collection of heirlooms, knick-knacks and relics, which offer intrigue and a sense of personality which is so often lacking from these less than humble abodes. Depending on the type of break you have planned, the Forter Castle team are on hand with recommendations for caterers, or should you prefer a more hands-on approach, the castle has a fully equipped kitchen for those who would rather self-cater.

Special mention goes to the Great Hall. Light the impressive stone hearth and look skywards to admire the painted ceiling, which in itself, is a masterpiece of historical restoration. The labour of love took over six weeks to complete and depicts the traditional Scottish song 'The Bonnie House of Arlie'.

**Price: weekend breaks from £3,812 for the full castle on a self-catering basis (sleeps 16).**

## The Observer

Some dishes are as distinct as the cook's fingerprints. At Pascor on London's Kensington High Street, that dish is a mini loaf of challah, platted and plump, golden-glazed and sesame-sprinkled. It is served warm from the oven, alongside a dish of smoked tahini the colour of iron filings, and a scoop of whipped za'atar butter. When you tear into it, you are greeted by an ineffably light, white crumb, puffing sweet, steamy gusts of baked joy at you.

While there are meat options – charred lamb chops for example, or a curious-sounding “Egypt meets Vietnam” duck salad in a pomegranate and ginger dressing with dukka – it's the garden section of the menu which drags me in. We have a whole aubergine, roasted until it is falling apart and smelling deeply of bonfire, or perhaps a trip round the back of the school bike sheds in the good old days. It comes dressed with pickled tomatoes, pine nuts and more of that steel-grey smoked tahini sauce.

I am mildly concerned by the description of the salt-cured mackerel in another dish as “local”; the nearest body of water to here is either the Serpentine in Hyde Park or the Thames where it curves round



LATEEF PHOTOGRAPHY

at Putney. I don't think either of those will have provided. Still, wherever it came from, the cure has given it a dense texture, set off by the roasted beetroot and the sprinkle of fresh red chilli. It's a salty plateful, soothed by a dollop of labneh.

The dessert offering is short and designed for ease of service. We have a fat scoop of chocolate and tahini mousse on a biscuit crumb, drizzled with a little berry sauce, and a glazed coconut and almond financier,

which looks terribly elegant but has the comfortingly familiar crunch and chew of an old school macaroon. The only misstep, indeed of the whole meal, is the splodge of unsweetened ricotta that's alongside. It needs more than just a dribble of honey to get it moving.

Pascor is the Latin for to feast or devour, or so the internet tells me, because I never studied classics. It certainly describes what we did.

**Price: all dishes, £5.30-£18**

Jay Rayner says that “love abounds” at Pascor in Kensington, London

## THE SCOTSMAN

Rosalind Erskine gets into the Christmas spirit at **Scott's Malt Whisky Society** in Glasgow

With Christmas around the corner, the venue is festively dressed, with trees and fairy lights in among the caged shelves of green bottles of the society's whiskies.

The festive theme continued on the Sunday roast menu, which featured pigs in blankets sausage rolls and roast chicken with all the trimmings.

While waiting to order, we decided to try a couple of the cocktails – a Last Word herbaceous gin drink, £10, made with the society's own gin and chartreuse and a smooth, zesty barrel aged Old Fashioned, £10.

Because we were getting into

the festive spirit (pardon the pun), for starter we decided to share the pigs in blankets sausage rolls (£6), which were served piping hot. The sausage meat was delicate and succulent, and surrounded by slightly smoked bacon, and encased in golden, flaky pastry. The mini rolls came with a vibrant and deliciously tart cranberry ketchup, which added a bit of sweetness and bite to the starter.

For main course, I chose the wonderfully autumnal roasted wood pigeon (£15.50). Pieces of kidney-shaped roast wood pigeon nestled within mounds of creamy mashed potato that was cloud-like in its smoothness. This was topped with bottle green cavolo nero and a cream sauce.

We didn't have room for dessert, and instead sat back with a coffee each, which came with a Tunnock's teacake – a lovely addition.

## The Daily Telegraph

William Sitwell says **Scott's Richmond** is some way from the mothership

The place feels nothing like the actual Scott's but more a brand of Caring's Berkeley Square nightclub Annabel's, once a chic drawing room, now a vision of interior-design extravagance that's all padded wallpaper and furnishings so soft you could fall into them from a great height and fear no injury.

The Richmond menu is, of course, very familiar: the oysters, caviar, shellfish, raw things, lobster, fish and grilled meats. We cast a fly across this gurgling pool of promise and netted a fine and rich bowl of shellfish bisque and then a dish of mixed sashimi which arrived looking

like the headgear of a Byzantine potentate. A little bowl of chopped salmon sashimi with tomato was excellent, but in general the fish was over-chilled. The best sashimi should nudge towards room temperature, but this is what happens when great chefs aren't properly moderating their underlings at outposts of the mothership.

So similar errors of principle occurred with the Dover sole, off the bone, which was a little overcooked. Not an issue in our big, bad world, but a crime in these quarters. But the platter of fruits de mer was impeccable (the cockles, so often chewy, were the softest I've tasted), the veg sides were perfect, as was a gorgeously extravagant Paris-Brest for dessert: as confident, graceful and pleasing as the service.

Caring's of Richmond it might be, but Scott's it ain't.

**Price: lunch for two, £156.25. Score: 3 out of 5 stars**

## Openings

### Florattica

Rooftop bar Florattica has opened on the 11th floor of an East London high-rise, offering views across St Paul's Cathedral, Canary Wharf and the Thames.

The cocktail menu has been created by head mixologist Serena Carrino, who was previously at Nightjar.

Drinks can be paired to a range of small plates, such as native oysters with champagne, raspberry and white balsamic vinaigrette; salmon tartare with chilli mayonnaise; and goat cheese mousse with heritage baby beetroot and caramelized pecan.

Non-alcoholic cocktails, including Aphrodita made with three spirit livener, elderflower cordial and citrus, are also available.

Interiors feature ceilings decorated with floral installations inspired by the East London textile industry as well as patterns created by local 17th century French Huguenots.

**Opened** 2 December

**Typical drinks** Alma (Casamigos blanco, hibiscus amores espadin, ancho reyes, lavender syrup and citrus); Cynara (black garlic infused Tanqueray, Campari, Mancino Rosso and clarified artichoke juice)

**Address** Canopy by Hilton London City, 11-15 Minories, London, EC3N 1AX

**Website** floratticalondon.co.uk



### Extra openings



#### Antoinetta

The Vittoria Group is to open Italian restaurant Antoinetta in Edinburgh. The 140-cover dining venue will source ingredients locally or from small suppliers in Italy. Dishes will be served on hand painted plates from Amalfi.

**Opening** 3 December

**Typical dishes** Beef and nduja Mafaldine pasta; yolk pizza with cacio e pepe sauce, fior di latte and pancetta strips

**Address** 325-331 Leith Walk, Edinburgh, EH6 8SA

**Website** www.antoinettaedinburgh.co.uk



#### Hummingbird Bakery

Hummingbird Bakery has opened in London's St John's Wood, following its launch in Victoria last month. The 750 sq ft bakery serves celebration cakes, cupcakes, traditional American pies, cheesecakes, brownies and cookies.

**Opened** Late November

**Typical dishes** Christmas chocolate rainbow reindeer cake; peach crumble pie

**Address** 39 St Johns Wood High Street, NW8 7NJ

**Website** www.hummingbirdbakery.com



#### Roxy Lanes Edinburgh

Competitive gaming venue Roxy Lanes has opened in Edinburgh, marking Roxy Leisure's 13th site and its first in Scotland. Duck pin bowling, American pool, shuffleboard and basketball are available to play alongside a range of drinks, pizzas and hot dogs.

**Opened** 18 November

**Typical dishes** Nacho pizza; classic dog; Roxy fries

**Address** 26 Rose Street, Edinburgh, EH2 2QA

**Website** www.roxyballroom.co.uk



PHOTOS: DAVID CLEVELAND

Please email your new openings to [openings@thecaterer.com](mailto:openings@thecaterer.com)



## Hicce Hart

Chef Pip Lacey and business partner Gordy McIntyre have opened the Hicce Hart in London's Islington. The pub offers British classics and Sunday roasts. It can seat 52 in the open-plan kitchen and bar area and another 32 in the dining room upstairs.

**Opened** 21 November

**Typical dishes** Potato ricotta ravioli, watercress;

pork chop, remoulade, mustard leaf, hazelnuts

**Address** 58 Penton Street, London, N1 9PZ

**Website** [www.hicce.co.uk/hicce-hart](http://www.hicce.co.uk/hicce-hart)



## Lucky Club Camden

Lucky Club Camden has launched its Winter Rooftop Garden, which features a fire pit, festive foliage, fairy lights and wool blankets. A weekend brunch menu includes dishes such as huevos rancheros and loaded green nachos.

**Opened** 23 November

**Typical dishes** Hibiscus margarita; pigs in blankets tacos

**Address** The Horse Hospital, The Terrace, Chalk Farm Rd, Chalk Farm, London, NW1 8AH

**Website** [theluckyclub.com/camden/](http://theluckyclub.com/camden/)



## Salt & Chilli Oriental

Chef Jimmy Lee's Glasgow-based street-food concept Salt & Chilli Oriental has opened its third restaurant in the city. The 60-cover Cantonese restaurant and bar set over two floors features vintage Japanese art, decorative lanterns and dark brick surfaces.

**Opened** 23 November

**Typical dishes** Spicy chicken satay; tangy

Peking ribs; pulled aromatic duck

**Address** 67 Kilmarnock Road, Glasgow, G41 3YR

**Website** [www.salt-chilli.co.uk](http://www.salt-chilli.co.uk)



**1-3** Out of the Shadows, the first gala dinner hosted by the Burnt Chef Project, raised more than £32,000 for the not-for-profit social enterprise.

Almost 200 chefs, operators, manufacturers, suppliers and industry associates attended the dinner at the Vitality Stadium in Bournemouth on 17 November. The aim of the evening was to raise awareness and celebrate the work done by the project in eliminating the stigma around mental health.

**4-5** More than 100 chief executives and business leaders gave up their beds to spend the night sleeping outdoors at Lord's Cricket Ground for CEO Sleepout London, raising £130,000 for local charities that support people facing homelessness this winter.

Henrik Muehle, managing director of Flemings Mayfair, topped the fundraising leader board with more than £24,000 in donations. Others taking part included Martin Williams, CEO of Gaucho and M Restaurants, Andy Hornby, CEO of the Restaurant Group, Una O'Reilly, group chief of people at Caprice Holdings, Tony Sophocles, public affairs and media practitioner at UKHospitality, and Yishay Malkov, CEO of Various Eateries.

**6** More than 400 students attended the Institute of Hospitality's flagship student conference and careers fair, Passion4Hospitality.

Peter Avis gave the audience an overview of his career from his first hospitality job as a dishwasher to his current role as general manager. He said: "Every role in hospitality helps deliver the customer experience. When I was told that even as a dishwasher I made a difference, I was hooked. I wanted to strive to be a general manager and I strive now to help others feel the same way."

**7-8** Ruda Holiday Park in Croyde, north Devon, has created a 'rubbish Christmas tree' on Croyde beach, made from items collected by the Ruda beach team throughout the year to highlight the issue of marine waste. The tree is made from items including fishing nets and rope, tent poles and pegs, and plastic beach toys, and is more than 8ft tall.

Ruda Holiday Park is owned by Parkdean Resorts, which is committed to responsibly managing the beach to keep it clean for the community and visitors.

Holly Robertson, beach manager at Ruda Holiday Park, said: "Tackling marine litter is extremely important to us all, and we work hard to make sure the beach is clean and safe at all times. We decided to create this rubbish Christmas tree to highlight the ongoing issue of litter, to thank our guests and Croyde locals for all that they've done to help keep the beach beautiful in 2022, and of course to bring some festive cheer to the beach!"







**Neil Rankin**  
Chef-founder,  
Temper restaurants and  
Symplicity Burger

## It's crunch time

It's time to question the value of luxury, says  
**Neil Rankin**

## Inside track

**A** week ago I was in a shop on the beautiful island of Barbados, staring at a packet of \$16 Doritos and thinking too myself, “who in their right mind would buy these?”

Instead I spent my money on a packet of cigarettes that were far too strong for my part-time smoker status, and I quickly developed a rasping cough that would last for a good three weeks and annoy many, many people in the process.

I reflect on my decision not to buy the Doritos now with a modicum of uncertainty. Value can be a funny business. I remember the crash of 2009 very clearly because I was knee-deep in it. I owned a small chain of city sandwich bars, one of which was directly under the

conscientiousness in the size of the sandwiches and salads they made. The drop was enough to send us from profitable to loss-making in a matter of weeks. This, alongside our new store in Bishopsgate closing, which was above an office of 3,000 people, ended the business that year.

This cost of living crisis is different though. Back then there was no real price change in anything. Electricity bills, food bills and staff costs were all the same, and thanks to free movement of people, we had as many staff as we needed. Yet the drop in numbers meant that many businesses went under.

Talking to the industry I can see that the top line is still holding for now, but what happens when that gives in? What happens when ‘going out’ becomes

**“What will become important or essential to people will begin to dominate more than the things that give them pleasure”**

London Stock Exchange and another was next to Nobu in Mayfair. Up until a few weeks preceding that, business was predictable and in growth, but in the run-up to the banks’ epic balls up, everything changed. People still ate out and customer numbers weren’t too dissimilar, but spend was way down. Luxuries like coffee, or at least second cups of coffee, dropped off – I assume in favour of what was probably free in every office building – and portions dropped drastically.

It was interesting for us because we were a build-your-own concept with a weighing scale, so we could directly graph people’s fear and their

a casualty? Is it not just a tsunami waiting to happen? Is it not like we’re looking out to the water, and it’s receding at such a frightening rate that it’s just too much to accept right now? Is it not that Covid has made us less panicked by big change or are we just too stubborn to see the signs clearly enough yet?

I don’t mean to be a doom-monger but it’s kind of hard to see the world and find many positives right now. I guess my point is that what will become important or essential to people will begin to dominate more than the things that give them pleasure, because those things will be countered by guilt more and more.

We have to be prepared for that, and if you’re carrying a line of \$16 Doritos right now, maybe it’s time to move that stock on. Investment in people and hospitality in general is worth far more than the things you’re selling. Think about what people will need and find comfort in, rather than the things they do to impress others, because these things will quickly feel less impressive and a little gross to everyone.



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# Add a little extra to hospitality packages

People are looking to make the most of their time off, so it pays to think creatively about add-ons to your events, says *Sam Coates*

**D**ata has shown that despite the rising cost of living, consumers are still booking experiences. The loss of live events and limited travel during the pandemic have contributed to this surge in sales. People do not want to miss out and are seeking out memorable experiences – sports attendance is booming, concert tickets such as Glastonbury in 2023 are selling out in minutes and holidays are continuing to be booked.

According to research by travel association Abta, only one in three holidaymakers will cut back on holiday spending next year but they will more likely purchase all-inclusive and more affordable packages. Domestic tourism is also looking to increase for 2023 as the summers in the UK are getting warmer and families are opting for staycations in seaside locations, which are quickly becoming more tourist-savvy and attractive.

With the demand for immersive and entertaining experiences on the rise, businesses need to re-evaluate their offering with current purchasing trends that identify with their customers and prospects.

Hospitality events agency Keith Prowse conducted market research with those who had bought tickets to the Rothesay International tennis tournament in Eastbourne and via YouGov to find out exactly what tennis fans were looking for. The results from the one-to-one phone calls and surveys offered insights into what makes this grass court event, often considered as a ‘warm-up’ for the Wimbledon Grand Slam, attractive to both B2B and B2C audiences.

Based on the research, which indicated a higher-than-average interest from young adults through to families, we extended the hospitality range for 2023 to include half-day brunch or afternoon tea packages. It was important to listen to the consumer and take time to understand their wants and needs. Love Fifteen, a three-course menu, afternoon tea and private garden package, is already a popular concept at LTA’s Championships, held annually at London’s Queen’s Club. When we pitched imagery, dining style and price points to the research audiences, all were well received. It quickly became apparent that the tournament already has a well-established, tennis-enthused following, who were keen to top and tail their day’s experience, but not necessarily for the full day. Based on travelling time and preferences for an early start or late finish to their day, we introduced half-day experiences.

Tourism opportunities and the location



**“For business, hospitality experiences are considered the pinnacle of networking with clients, colleagues and other stakeholders”**

were also taken into consideration. The database and external research found the most popular reasons for visiting Eastbourne were the beach (40% of respondents) and a sporting event (39% of respondents). Research on the town’s attractions and hotels has also been factored into offering visitors the chance to maximise their experience while visiting Eastbourne. It also has easy access via train from Greater London, Ashford International and Gatwick Airport.

For business, hospitality experiences are considered the pinnacle of networking with clients, colleagues and other stakeholders.

At a recent customer advisory board hosted by Keith Prowse, one senior industry representative said that due to hybrid working and the challenges they face with corporate culture, they will focus on bringing internal and external teams together via corporate hospitality in the coming months.

Research conducted internally by Keith Prowse before the pandemic indicated that a quarter of business customers used hospitality as a means of networking. Moreover, 33% indicated that they use hospitality and sporting events as a way to build trust with clients and colleagues.

During a time when the cost of living rises, this is a great chance to boost morale and strengthen relationships as taking clients and employees to events is a great way to show gratitude and value for individuals and companies. Not only does this lead to further benefits such as encouraging collaboration and confidence, but it also puts you in a good position for those considering working with you. Who wouldn’t want to work for or with a company that treats people with unique experiences?

*Sam Coates is head of marketing at Keith Prowse*

# TOP MARKS FOR GRASS-FED LAMB

Traditional strengths of Welsh Lamb pasture-based production helps drive tasting quality

The latest results from the Welsh Lamb Meat Quality Project, a five-year programme of scientific analysis and consumer taste panel testing, has shown that PGI Welsh Lamb is hitting the mark in terms of both its nutritional content and its tenderness.

The EU- and Welsh Government-funded project aims to keep Welsh Lamb at the top of the worldwide game by investigating what on-farm and processing factors influence the eating quality of lamb.

The latest results show that Welsh Lamb fed on grass and brassicas has particularly high levels of beneficial Omega-3 nutrients. Animals reared on grass, and on roots and brassicas, produced meat which had levels of

124mg of Omega-3 per 100gm, compared to average concentrate-fed lamb of 89mg.

Meanwhile scientific analysis of tenderness, carried out using the industry-recognised 'shear-force' method using specialist equipment, showed that all Welsh Lamb compared well to industry benchmarks. But lamb produced during the height of the production season in Wales – represented in samples taken in August and November – yielded exceptionally tender meat.

Project leader Dr Eleri Thomas said: "Our project combines the views of nearly 2,000 consumers, measured during blind taste tests, with independent scientific analysis of samples of Welsh Lamb, to assess how we can ensure



that we continue to lead the world in product quality and consistency.

"These latest findings help add to the picture which is showing that a number of the traditional strengths of the Welsh sheep sector such as pasture-based production are helping to drive the quality of the end product."

As part of the meat eating quality panels carried out with consumers, nearly 15,000 meat samples were tasted across the UK, with the five-year project investigating any on-farm factors that could affect the tasting quality of Welsh Lamb. These include breed type; lamb gender; muscle cut; lamb finishing diet; daily liveweight gain and seasonality.

The detailed analysis of processing factors that could

affect the taste included the meat ageing period, the carcass hanging methods and the way the meat is packaged.

Results researching any potential impact of meat quality taste on the lambs' finishing diet and carcass ageing showed that more than 80% of the consumers rated the meat quality highly.

As the ageing period of the meat increased, the results showed a consistent and significant increase in all consumer score traits. Interestingly, the eating quality was affected by the meat cut, which showed the loin was preferred by the taster panels over topside.

Dr Eleri Thomas concluded: "We look forward to releasing more of the consumer findings over the next few months."



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

**HCC's Welsh Lamb Meat Quality project is one of three five-year projects in the Red Meat Development Programme funded by the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government.**



# Cosy up

Atmosphere is at the top of Beckford group's list when it comes to creating a pub. Its co-owners join *Caroline Baldwin* for a fireside chat to talk loyal staff, design and creating an empire

**"**If you are asked why you favour a particular public house, it would seem natural to put the beer first, but the thing that most appeals to me about the Moon Under Water is what people call its 'atmosphere,' goes the famous 1946 essay by George Orwell.

"Barmaids know[ing] most customers by name", "the pleasure of lunch" and "a good fire burning" are traits identified by Orwell, which are ticked off at Beckford's four coun-

try pubs with rooms dotted across the south-west, where co-owners Dan Brod, Charlie Luxton and Matt Greenlees chase that elusive, compelling atmosphere.

"We made a pub that we wanted to go to," says Brod, sinking into one of the reclaimed armchairs at the Bath Arms in Wiltshire, a fire crackling in the hearth next to him. "It's our modus operandi for everything we do. Because, otherwise, what's the point? It's bloody hard work."



For the three business partners, inspiration was drawn from their personal love for a pub, having all propped up the occasional bar, nursing a pint, from time to time. Luxton spent 10 years working alongside Soho House founder Nick Jones in operations and property before creating Beckford in 2009 at the height of the credit crunch with business partner Brod. He bought brand and marketing experience to the business after a spell in the film indus-



From left: Charlie Luxton, Dan Brod and Matt Greenlees at the Bath Arms



Panfried Brixham Plaice at the Beckford Arms

try in LA, a number of years in the tech start-up world and a short stint as a chef with the Conran group. Greenlees joined the business four years later. A hospitality man through and through, he moved from his native Australia to London after completing a hospitality business degree and worked at one of the capital's original 1990s gastropubs, the Engineer. He then took up posts at a number of Soho House establishments, including Electric House in Notting Hill and High Road House in Chiswick before running Babington House in Somerset for seven years.

Greenlees now oversees F&B across the group, while Luxton looks after the guest experience, design and detail. "The look and feel of the business is his primary hat," says Brod. "It is a really important part of why people come here. A lot of things come under that, from which toilet paper we use..."

"Glam it up, why don't you?" chips in Luxton, who had arrived for our interview brandishing an antique standard lamp, proudly proclaiming that he'd managed to change the fuse.

"But I think this is what we do well, we do the detail!" insists Brod. "That's why people have a good time, and that's why they come."

And Brod's role? "I Hoover up whatever's left," he laughs, which includes business strategy, marketing and people, using his varied experience to take a wider view of the business.

"He's the brains, we're the brawn," jokes Luxton, as his Labrador-Collie cross, Pepper, bounds through the door and jumps up beside him to sit in the warm glow of the fire.

Over the past 13 years, the trio have been quietly building the beginnings of a hospitality empire in the south-west, with a Bottle Shop in Bath about to be joined by a new restaurant headed by ex-Kitty Fisher's chef George Barsonas, well as a successful cosmetics products business (see panel).

"Before we set up our first pub – the Beckford Arms – there were plenty of pubs with nice food, drink and atmosphere, but upstairs

## Quick-fire design tips with Charlie Luxton,

### How do you design the Beckford properties?

"When it comes to our bar and restaurant spaces, comfort is the primary driver. We try to make the colours warming and easy, not clever and modern (we will never use purple or grey, for example), while seats are large and spacing is generous. Lighting is always muted – we avoid ceiling spotlights – and lampshades are a single colour, often dark red or green.

"The look is respectful of the history of the spaces, both in how they are used and how they are detailed. Brass as a material is historical, robust, warm and reflective, so we use it widely; plastic is harsh, modern and often brittle, so we avoid it."

### Where do you find your antique pieces?

"I am permanently on www.the-saleroom.com, which is where I buy a huge amount of furniture for the ground floor of the pubs – the chase for something good at a great price can sadly keep me scrolling for hours!

"I also have two particularly good local antique shops, Kingsettle Antiques and Dairy House Antiques, which I trawl through on a monthly basis for anything new, while Semley Auctioneers and Clarke's Auctioneers have monthly sales where I have found some wonderful, unique bits and pieces which add to the history of the pubs."

### What considerations do you keep in mind?

"Pubs have always been filled with the history of the building, the area and the local activities – the more local the better – so I make sure the pub spaces have character and tell people something about the pub they are in and the area they are visiting. It takes time to find these sorts of things, but this represents the owner's keenness to position the pub within the community. At the end of the day, a pub is only ever on loan and will no doubt will be about for another few hundreds of years in someone else's caring hands."

### Where do you get your inspiration from?

"As well as two designers who I have learnt a lot from – Ilse Crawford and Susie Atkinson – my daily inspiration comes from listening to guests and staying at well-designed hotels and pubs (and that does not mean expensive places). I also read *The World of Interiors* and *Elle Decoration*, as well as following designers and photographers on Instagram, including Jack Laver Brister (@tradchap), Patrick O'Donnell, Carlos Garcia, Jake Eastham and Boz Gagovski."

### What's your top tip?

"Quality will always win in the end. It may cost slightly more in the first place, but the investment is worth it. Anything guests touch needs to be quality, so spend extra on door handles, bedside lamps and tables."



The Great Arch at Fonhill, part of the Beckford Arms

**"We took that sort of Soho House sense of style and applied it to a pub"**

**Dan Brod**



The Bath Arms

◀ they had little bedrooms with pine furniture, which you didn't really care about because you were going to a wedding and you came back drunk and fell asleep," says Brod.

"But we took that sort of Soho House sense of style and applied it to a pub. Good-value rooms, done nicely, more of a hotel experience in a pub. And that is now an industry sector that didn't really exist back then. I would like to say it was by design, but it's just what we built—we made a pub that we wanted to go to."

### Pub hub

Expansion is front and centre of the group's business plan, with a lease on a boutique hotel in the Nadder Valley near Salisbury about to be signed ready for a speedy refurbishment and launch next year, while further pub sites and Bottle Shops are being looked at.

Brod says: "As we've expanded we're very conscious of not becoming a chain. We don't just want to copy this, plonk that there, paint

**"The turnover is absolutely minimal because we invest and look out for our staff"**

**Matt Greenlees**

the four walls with a bit of Farrow & Ball and find the same furniture, because it doesn't work like that. Pubs are a product of their locality, which means they must have locals and different foods from nearby suppliers. And, most importantly, the staff want to feel like they are doing something genuine."

"Pubs are the hub of the community," adds Greenlees. "Pubs are forever – all you have to do is keep the staff on top, keep the look and



feel perfect, serve a great plate of food and it'll be there for another 300 years."

"Unlike pubs, most restaurants have a shelf life," agrees Luxton. "A restaurant such as St John in London might be here for another 20 years, and there are a few other iconic restaurants that will remain, but many will not."

Brod points out that most of the Beckford pubs have been pubs for over 500 years. "And the difference isn't huge," says Luxton. "Maybe better food...?"

"We've got Wi-Fi now!" suggests Brod, to which Luxton acknowledges: "But you're serving a pint, which is no different."

"What hasn't changed is the hospitality," agrees Brod. "People come here they want food, shelter and something to drink."

### Adapt to survive

Over the centuries previous proprietors have battled through many challenges and 2022 has presented more than its fair share, including spiralling energy costs, which for one site have increased from £30,000 a year to £125,000.

Brod believes the current landscape is a huge threat to pubs up and down the country. "If you're a food cart or a restaurant you can shut for a certain amount of time or concentrate down into a few days and make it work. This is a much more complicated business. We have 160 staff at the moment, going up to 200 next year, so there's a lot of people who live around here to look after.

"Food costs are going up, as are staff costs, and we can't really put up our prices by much

## Bramley: from Beckford to the Dorchester

Bramley is a range of bath and body products inspired by the countryside using fair trade and sustainably-grown essential oils. The brand was founded by Chloë Luxton, who originally created the range for the group's first pub, the Beckford Arms. Since then, the company has grown tenfold and the products are now available online as well as being found in restaurants and hotel bathrooms all over the UK, supplying the likes of the Pig, Artist Residence, the Dorchester and Gleneagles.

Retail prices start at £16 for a 250ml product, while wholesale prices depend on quantities, but can be supplied to operators in refillable bottles (made from biopolymer or glass) to ensure cost efficiency and aid in the phasing out of single-use plastics.





The Talbot Inn

We know all our staff's names and we feel it," Brod says, noting how they want to open new operations, not to simply make money but to also give their employees a career path.

A thoughtfully written and hand-illustrated handbook is given to all new starters in their welcome pack, with humorous scenarios and details on how to serve customers. Staff perks include generous holiday, Christmas Day off, meals on shift and 50% off food, drinks, rooms and products. Greenlees says: "Our general manager has been with us for 10 years and we've had a waitress who's been with us for 18. The turnover is absolutely minimal because we invest and look out for our staff."

While the outlook may look bleak, the three can still take a moment and appreciate when things run smoothly. "In the pubs, there is a moment when you can just feel that everything is good," says Brod. "You can see the staff are happy, the guests are happy, and the kitchens are less screaming than normal. It's just like a jigsaw – everything falls into place. We're very conscious it's tough right now, but in this industry, you sort of start again every single day."

And, ultimately, it's the staff that are the most important part of creating that homely feeling any country pub wants to provide. No one in the industry knows what 2023 will bring, but if Beckford can keep hold of that all-important atmosphere, then Brod, Luxton and Greenlees hope their pubs will be standing for a few hundred years to come.



The Beckford Bottle Shop in Bath

– I wouldn't be happy paying £25 for a burger, for example," he says, adding that the business is no longer competing with other pubs, but with people staying at home and not going out.

Greenlees adds: "Six months ago, Dan said a burger will cost £20 by the end of the year, and I thought he'd lost his grip."

"It'll be that in Wetherspoons soon," says Brod. "We're pessimistic – anybody in hospitality with half a brain is pessimistic at the moment. We used to say we'll give every guest a good time and everything else will work out, but it's not as simple as that any more and there's no real answer."

Brod explains that they and their two investors – one being Nick Jones – prefer to focus on long-term sustainability rather than maximising revenue and profits. He admits it is unlikely, due to the current climate, that the business will make a profit this year, but the trio are determined to continue growing carefully and steadily, while looking after their guests, staff and suppliers to position the business to continue into less turbulent times.

Luxton believes the group's relatively small size means it can adapt quickly, taking moves such as simplifying menus to offer pub classics rather than à la carte options, and introducing more offal and less fillet steak. And with so many new projects coming down the line, it will be the diversification of the business that could help it weather the storm, such as the Bramley product arm, as well as their city centre sites in Bath.

"We're very nitty gritty, hands-on owners.

## A taste of the Beckford group

**Matt Greenlees shares his favourite dishes from the group's pubs and restaurants:**

**The Beckford Arms (opened 2009) Fonthill Gifford, Tisbury, Wiltshire SP3 6PX**  
Ricotta gnudi, smoked butternut squash purée, crispy chilli oil

**The Talbot Inn (2013) Mells, Somerset, BA11 3PN**  
Game suet pudding, mash, pickled red onion, gravy

**Lord Poulett Arms (2018) High Street, Hinton Saint George, Somerset TA17 8SE**  
West Country pheasant, drunken potatoes, celeriac purée, cep sauce

**The Beckford Bottle Shop (2018) 5-8 Saville Row, Bath BA1 2QP**  
Grilled Devonshire lobster, veal sweatbread

**The Bath Arms (2020) Horningsham, Wiltshire, BA12 7LY**  
Salted caramel tart, coffee gel, caramel popcorn, Cornish clotted cream

**Beckford Canteen (2022) 11 & 12 Bartlett Street, Bath BA1 2QZ**  
Veal cheek, Jerusalem artichoke, onion



George Barson at Beckford Canteen – monkfish, curry butter, cauliflower

# Canteen Crisis

In these challenging times it's important to make sure children get fed at school. *Katherine Price* looks into the calls for the government to increase provision and how caterers are coping with shortages

**T**he school catering sector has not been immune to the accumulating challenges facing the hospitality industry and it is having to adapt while its workforce witnesses the acute impact of the cost of living crisis on families' ability to feed their children.

There has been increasing lobbying for the expansion of free school meals provision, notably the Feed the Future campaign backed by the likes of Tom Kerridge, Jamie Oliver, LACA and Chefs in Schools, calling for all children of families on Universal Credit to be eligible for free school meals.

In England, children up to Year 2 in state schools receive a free meal each day (universal infant free school meals or UIFSM). For older children provision is means-tested (free school meals or FSM), and families must have a combined household income of £7,400 or less to be eligible, criteria which charity Child Poverty Action Group says excludes 800,000 school-age children in England who are living in poverty.

Both Scotland and Wales have committed to rolling out free meals to all primary school pupils, and some schools in Northern Ireland, where the threshold is £14,000, are reported to have been offering more pupils free meals in response to rises in the cost of living. But despite increased provision across the devolved nations, a hoped-for announcement in England in the chancellor's Autumn Statement was not forthcoming.

"We recognise this is a really difficult time for the economy," says Brad Pearce, managing director of Plymouth-based school food co-operative CATERed and national chair of LACA, which represents school food providers from local authorities, contract caterers and kitchen and school staff, to suppliers and man-

**"Hunger doesn't disappear at age 11"**

**Brad Pearce, CATERed**

ufacturers. He says that expanding provision to children of families in receipt of Universal Credit will "target the families most in need in primary schools, but importantly, also secondary school students".

"Hunger doesn't disappear at age 11," he adds.

In November, Feed the Future hosted an event in Westminster to highlight the benefits of free school meals, such as improved academic attainment and school attendance, to 150 attendees including politicians. During the event, chef Tom Kerridge served school lunches to some attendees, while others were given vouchers for cold packed lunches.

"I gave a little speech at the end of the day and told them all that the next time they have the opportunity to vote for free school meals, they should most definitely be voting for free school meals – and if they're not, they should take a long, hard look at themselves in the mirror," says Kerridge, whose restaurant group includes the two-Michelin-starred Hand & Flowers pub in Marlow, Buckinghamshire.

"That was met with deathly silence, so I'm fairly certain it hit home."

He adds: "This might be the only hot meal these kids have during that day. It might be the one opportunity for them to have something nutritious, balanced and filling. We already know that these children are from the



most vulnerable areas of society because their parents are already qualifying for Universal Credit. The fact that they have to go through a secondary process to see if they qualify for free school meals, I find absolutely ludicrous."

**'Deeply concerned and disappointed'**

Anna Taylor, executive director of the Food Foundation, which is co-ordinating the campaign, said the organisation was "deeply concerned and disappointed" at the lack of action in the Autumn Statement.

"Though benefits will be uprated in line with inflation from April 2023 and short-term payments will be made available next year for some households, many struggling households will miss out and families are facing a gruelling winter until then," she said.

"We've got to regroup and see what we think is achievable with this government," adds Cath Elliston, head of campaigns at the Jamie Oliver Group, a partner in the campaign coalition.





### The government's response

A Department for Education spokesperson said: "We understand the pressures many households are under, that is why we are supporting more children and young people than ever before."

"Over a third of pupils in England currently receive free school meals in education settings and we are investing up to £24m in our National School Breakfast Programme, which provides free breakfasts to children in schools in disadvantaged areas."

"In addition, eight million of the most vulnerable households will get at least £1,200 of cost of living support this year on top of benefit from the Energy Price Guarantee – meaning they will be eligible for support which exceeds the average rise in energy bills by hundreds of pounds."



LACA has a monthly call with the Department for Education and says funding levels are on the agenda "every time – as is the extension of eligibility". However, it doesn't help that the UK has seen five different secretaries of state for education in the last year.

"That team are understanding and can see what we're saying and the logic behind it [but] it's not their decision, it needs to go to the Treasury," says Pearce.

"I think this is one of the areas where there's a problem with joined-up government," suggests Henry Dimpleby, co-founder of restaurant chain Leon and charity Chefs in Schools, and author of both the National Food Strategy and the School Food Plan, for which he was awarded an MBE.

"Really it should not be in education, there should be a minister for children looking at this in the DWP [the Department for Work and Pensions]. It's not on the secretary of state's radar until Marcus Rashford is causing constituents to send them nasty emails."

PwC analysis earlier this year into the societal and economic benefits of increasing free school meal provision in England was clear that expansion presented a positive return on investment, with every £1 invested estimated to generate £1.71 in benefits. A separate study by the University of Essex's Institute for Social and Economic Research in 2020 found the policy also had a significant impact on child obesity rates.

"Everybody benefits – it's not just the kids who are getting the meals," says Kerridge. "If you are hungry, it's more likely to lead to disruptive classrooms. The more time the teacher can spend on teaching rather than work with a disruptive classroom, the better it is for every single child in that class."

### Cost inflation hitting school caterers

However, an expansion of provision is not going to solve the myriad of challenges

school caterers are facing. An October survey of school meal providers by LACA found that 91% of respondents were experiencing food shortages, with 76% having to change their menus as a result.

Since May, the survey reported food costs had risen by around 30%, with 28% of respondents using more processed foods, almost 35% considering moving away from British meat and 24% potentially having to reduce the cost and therefore quality of meat purchased. While 94% said they were still able to meet the mandatory school food standards, some were having to reduce portion sizes and offer less choice to cope, and over half (52.2%) expected the quality of school meals to continue getting worse over the coming weeks and months.

"Making any money from school meals is a challenge at the moment... It is a really difficult time," says Michael Hales, managing director of Juniper Ventures and winner of the 2022 Cateys Public Sector Caterer Award.

Formerly the London Borough of Newham's catering department, spun off in 2018 as a local authority trading company, Juniper delivers Newham Council's Eat For Free scheme to 75% of primary schools across the borough, with the council also funding free meals for

Key Stage 2 pupils.

Hales says the business's high level of uptake in its primary sector (85%) has so far protected it, reducing its unit cost, "otherwise we would be really, really struggling".

"We have not changed anything on the menu as yet. We've moved to different dishes, but we haven't changed any of our ingredients, and we haven't reduced our menu," he says. "I suppose 'yet' is the key word there – our hand might be forced if funding doesn't become available or prices don't settle."

Kingswood Catering, based in Corby, North Northamptonshire, operates across 85 schools in the area and has been particularly affected by shortages.





Nicole Pisani



Brad Pearce

“We’re having to be a lot more creative to cope with everything that’s being thrown at us. It won’t affect the quality of the food, but I think we’ll have to be pretty tight on things like portion control,” says partner Julie Belford. “We don’t have the same buying power of some of the bigger companies. I wonder if some smaller companies will be squeezed out of the market altogether.”

However, even the larger providers are experiencing difficulties. Lyn Winnard, managing director of education at Elior, says contract caterers are fighting a daily battle to not let inflation affect food standards or quantity, but this, alongside supply chain issues and a challenging labour market “are all taking their toll”.

“Food and wage inflation are far outstripping the increases offered by the government, so we, as an industry, are finding it a lot harder to make school catering services sustainable.

We have not reduced portion sizes and are working with clients and our supply chain to continue to meet the standards,” says Steve Hawkins, managing director of schools at Sodexo UK & Ireland. Although the catering giant hasn’t reduced portion sizes, in some cases it has been forced to reduce the amount of organic ingredients purchased.

In a paper sent earlier this year to then prime minister Boris Johnson and then to his short-lived successor Liz Truss, Bidfood group sales and marketing director Dr Andrew Kemp set out how the funding for free school meals was not increasing in line with inflation.

On the introduction of UIFSM in 2014, the funding provided by government was £2.30, which increased to £2.34 in 2020, and then £2.41 this year – an increase of less than 5%, while the Consumer Price Index (CPI) has increased by more than 20%

in the same period and food inflation by more than 12%.

As a result, LACA is calling on the government to increase funding for both UIFSM (£2.41) and FSM (£2.47) to address the cost of living crisis and for this to increase annually with inflation.

Kemp’s report recommends that, to match National Living Wage, Retail Price Index (RPI), CPI and food inflation, UIFSM would need to increase funding to between £2.92 and £3.01 per meal.

LACA is also calling for school meals funding to be ring fenced, as funds are issued to schools, who are not required to pass on the full amount to the caterer, and there has become an expectation that contract prices will be lower than the allowance, enabling schools to allocate some of that money elsewhere.

Belford strongly agrees that ring fencing would help caterers by ensuring they receive the full amount and levelling the playing field to ensure standards remain high.

“We have been in tender situations where

we’ve had to put in a much lower bid than £2.40 even to stand a chance,” she explains.

**Capacity and infrastructure**

The sector has also not been immune to recruitment challenges, with 74% of LACA members facing a lack of applicants.

“When we do get applicants, they often don’t turn up to interview or they find the job is quite difficult. It’s quite a high-paced job when you’re serving and a number of applicants end up quitting after a few weeks,” says Pearce.

Questions also remain around the ability of some schools to service increased provision due to a lack of infrastructure and funding.

“The funding is a joke,” says Fellows. “A lot of kitchens haven’t got the capacity or the equipment – the storage, the refrigeration, the cooking equipment or space – to deliver these extra meals.”

Sodexo says it supports an increase in means-tested free school meals eligibility, but Hawkins adds that this would need to be paired with investment in facilities and the official rate that school meals are charged to make the service sustainable. The result of all these challenges is a school meals system that is struggling to keep up with market pressures and would require urgent government attention to provide for any expanded provision.

“We are in a hell of a mess at the moment,” says Fellows. “In 50 years, I have not seen anything like this. And I don’t know how we’re going to get out of it... Sadly we think that standards are getting left behind because of the situation, and I’m really scared that the school meal service is in jeopardy and almost at risk of bankruptcy.”

Dimbleby is confident, however, that provision will eventually be expanded – it’s just a question of when: “It’s going to happen some time because it’s not sustainable. But it’s whether it will happen before there’s some kind of disaster, or afterwards,” he says.

“All around the country there are schools who are paying for children who aren’t eating well and giving them food. The willing is there – what they need is the funds.”

**How caterers are ensuring schoolchildren are being fed**

School food providers across the country are providing families with food parcels, breakfasts or after-school cookery clubs and summer activity programmes.

Elior funds free breakfasts across some regions with a trolley breakfast service and provides all its primary schools with fresh fruit at lunchtime in addition to the free fruit schools receive from the government.

Juniper is trialling a ‘playground market’, distributing surplus ingredients across nine of its schools in partnership with the Felix Project, providing parents with fruit and vegetables either for free or for whatever they can afford. Chefs in Schools co-founder and executive chef Nicole Pisani says one of the schools the charity works with has a similar partnership.

“I think that’s the future, where the school becomes the community hub where, regardless of what you’re earning, you can get uniforms, food and a hot meal. I personally don’t know a school or a school kitchen team who says ‘no’ to a hungry child, free school meal or not – they just feed them.”

Several caterers are investing in off-site production kitchens, including Sodexo and Kingswood Catering, which also has an education kitchen to offer cooking lessons to parents and children with an emphasis on basic ingredients to make cost-effective meals.

“Let’s re-educate people in cooking their own food and move away from all of the fast food that they’re buying, which is expensive and not that nutritious,” says partner Julie Belford.



Tom Kerridge

*Tilda*

# ALWAYS REIMAGINING RICE

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# Double take

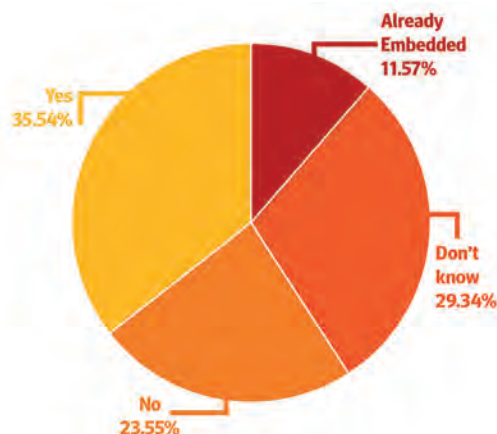
Virtual technology is gaining ground in hospitality, not only as a marketing tool but also to create event spaces and train staff remotely. *Glynn Davis* takes a look at the technology

Although virtual and AI (Artificial Intelligence) technology is used by only a modest amount of hospitality and leisure companies, this looks likely to change as it becomes recognised as a tool for much more than virtual tours to help with sales and marketing.

The *Caterer* has carried out research with spatial data specialist Matterport, which uses digital twin technology (where a virtual model is designed to accurately reflect a physical object) to digitally scan the interiors of properties and create 3D tours. Over 300 businesses were surveyed which concluded that 17% presently use 3D virtual tours, but 25% of businesses are interested in adopting the technology in the future, and 36% could also join them but are currently undecided.

Bill Linehan, global strategy at Matterport, says: “More and more companies are adopting digital twins across their businesses, but there is an identity crisis as to what are their best uses.” For the hospitality industry the obvious one is 3D virtual tours, but there are many others, such as training, evaluating spaces for corporate events, remotely inspecting buildings for potential construction work or even prospecting for acquisitions.

## Are you thinking to embed digitalisation as part of your long-term strategy?



**“We’re seeing wide adoption on cruise lines with 3D tours enabling people to navigate the whole space”**

**Bill Linehan, Matterport**

### Double act

The value of digital twins and 3D tours has been recognised by Lindner Hotels & Resorts, which owns, operates and franchises its boutique brands across 30 properties in seven European countries. It is determined to digitise its entire customer journey, beginning with showcasing its guest rooms and spaces online. For this it has worked with Matterport to digitally capture (by digital scanning) guest rooms, restaurants and bars, fitness areas, conference rooms and event spaces. These images will be rendered into immersive, 3D imagery as well as the associated spatial data.

Oliver Stotz, corporate director of marketing and distribution at Lindner Hotels, says: “The digital twins are very detailed and clear. Unlike with photographs, guests can interact with the digital replicas of the hotel. We can showcase our properties better than the big third-party booking sites. Those sites might include a lot of photos and general written information, but we want to provide potential guests with even richer details about our property that our guests find exciting. We want them to experience our hotels long before they set foot in one.”

Guests can virtually move through a digitally captured room and decide if an economy room has enough space or if they’d rather upgrade to a suite. “We want our guests to be confident that they’re booking the right room, and that can only be done if we provide detailed visual information upfront,” says Stotz.



The consumer engagement is a critical aspect of the technology and it helps generate three times the level of interaction that is typically achieved with standard photography, according to Linehan. He says: “It allows people to resolve concerns they have but which they are not voicing to the hotel or rental company, such as which room will grandma be staying in versus the grandchildren?”

This engagement is translating into extra bookings, according to the survey, which found 14% of businesses agreed strongly and 48% agreed that 3D virtual tours lead to more bookings. “Our clients are seeing three times more online consumer engagement, which translates into an increase of around 14% in terms of booking conversions,” adds Linehan.

Where such tours have particular value is for the booking of rooms where people would not necessarily have prior access, such as those on cruise liners. “We’re seeing wide adoption on cruise lines with 3D tours enabling people to navigate the whole space,” says Linehan.

This is recognised at Lindner Hotels, where the digital twins can showcase many amenities in addition to its guest rooms, meet-



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/GROUND PICTURE

screws up then they could lose their job,” he says. “Weddings are another event where 3D tours make sense. It’s the most important day of people’s lives and they don’t want to make a mistake by booking the wrong venue.”

Stotz says guest feedback on the business side of things, where booking assistants can show their senior managers an immersive view of meeting areas and event spaces, has been very positive. “We host a lot of conferences, so we created a mini-map within Matterport that can take potential clients straight to every space in the locations we want to show them. And we can virtually stage our event spaces to demonstrate various possible layouts,” he explains.

The next stage on from this involves using digital twins to enable event participants to collaborate in order to create realistic 3D floor plans from anywhere in the world at the same time. Planners can virtually move through the event room and determine what kind of seating will work best. Virtual furniture can be reconfigured and even the colours of the tablecloths can be changed. In the future, banquet employees from the hotel will be able to conduct live virtual walkthroughs with prospective event planners, caterers and florists to work out specific details.

**Remote control**

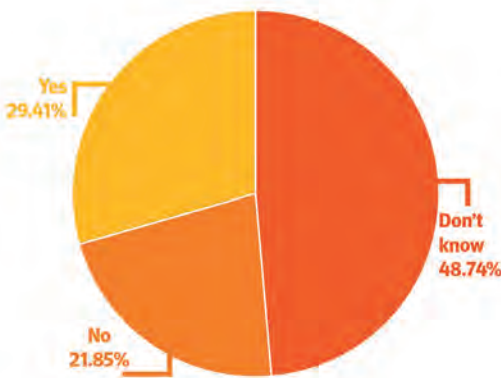
This business end of things is certainly an area where digital twins and their 3D creations are increasingly coming into play. For example, Linehan says hotel inspections can be done remotely to check brand standards are being maintained: “It’s more efficient for us to scan a property and for the hotel team to then check it remotely than for them to physically visit all these properties. In fact, a number of well-known quick-service restaurants, franchise businesses and hotels are adopting digital twins in their operating and marketing strategies.”

The other area that is proving popular is the use of digital twins for training purposes. This has been recognised by airline KLM where Chris Koomen, virtual reality engineer and specialist, says the technology has permanently changed the way the company trains its employees.

“We regularly use them for training across our global operations. Cleaning crews work more efficiently, flight attendants learn the layout of an aircraft ahead of time, and pilots reference digital twins during safety checks. With remote access to digital twins, trainees avoid disrupting the maintenance work of an aircraft, enabling our fleet to return to service faster. All of this adds up to performance efficiency,” explains Koomen.

For cleaning crews the efficiency gains came quickly and dramatically, he says: “We found out the cleaners had completed their work 15 minutes faster than normal, without having seen that aircraft’s layout before. And they didn’t make any mistakes. At first we thought it was a coincidence, but then we saw that every time we used the digital twins to familiarise crews in advance, they were an

**Do you think the metaverse can create new revenue opportunities for your business?**



cocktails at the Chumbo Pool Restaurant. Guests who want to get a massage can view both the Bahari Spa and the bamboo hut at the outdoor spa before they decide where to book.

It is not just about the high-end though, as Linehan believes there is also a place at the budget end of the market: “We’ll see rich media come into play with all types of bookings because consumers want it. It will never replace 2D, but we have to augment this. At the higher end we will see more experiential digital twins being used to show off the rooms as well as the entire public spaces, but with the budget-end properties they can show a basic ‘scan’, which helps to avoid the over-selling of a room.”

**Be prepared**

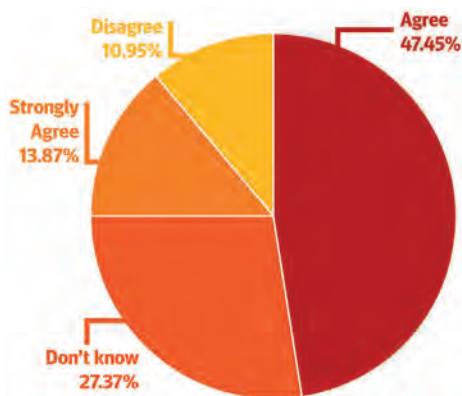
Chris Fung, co-founder of Lunch.co thinks the technology’s immediate use case will be in the luxury end of the market – cruises and private members’ clubs – as well as corporate events, where there are very high costs involved and high risks around booking an unsuitable venue.

“There is a risk factor because if a person

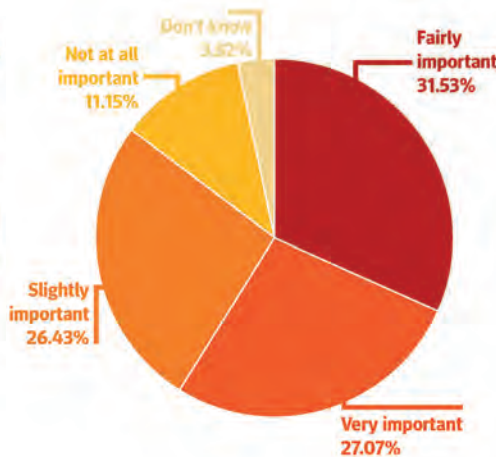
ing rooms and event spaces. For example, for the Lindner Golf Resort Portals Nous in Mallorca, guests can visualise a dinner at Niko’s Place or an evening of tapas and



**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: 3D virtual tours assist in increasing positive property ratings and reviews?**



**How important is it to your business to be up-to-date with new technology and innovation (e.g. 3D virtual tours, digital twins, metaverse)?**



businesses were sales and marketing (97%), development (45%), operations (34%), HR and training (31%), and brand compliance (28%).

Tom Cheesewright, applied futurist, believes it will be some time before the metaverse has a meaningful impact on the sector and that it will also not likely feature headsets and virtual reality. Instead, he describes it as a digital overlay on physical reality, so would more likely involve some form of smart glasses or similar technology. He views the technology as a current issue as he suggests there are “no good user interfaces for the metaverse yet”.

Despite the issues he foresees some interesting developments, such as restaurant fit-outs being potentially a mix of the real world and virtual creations. “Signage, menus and other things that change frequently could be virtual. If you know your regular customers, you could tailor the environment to them. And there could also be virtual waiters taking orders. It’s real crazy stuff,” he says.

Although Cheesewright acknowledges there are challenges facing food and beverage companies looking to embrace the metaverse, chiefly because it is expensive to create these new environments, he says there is big change ahead. “We’re a decade away from customers using their devices to rewrite reality,” he suggests.

Despite the uncertainty surrounding the metaverse, the survey found hospitality businesses were hopeful it will have a positive impact on operations. Only 22% believe the metaverse will not add any new revenue streams, while 29% believe the technology could be a real business driver.

Just under half of companies are still on the fence, unsure of how it could impact their businesses, but as with all emerging technology, it only takes a couple of trailblazers trialing a new digital solution for it to start truly making waves.

◀ average of 30% faster.”

Despite the upsides there remain some reservations over the adoption of 3D virtual technology, with the survey revealing the key obstacles referenced most by businesses were cost (59%), not enough skilled employees (33%), implementation (32%), system integration (28%), additional work (25%) and industry adoption (20%).

Linehan suggests the underlying obstacles fall into two main camps for hospitality companies. First, there is the capture of the images, which he says is in reality “easy and flexible”. It can be done by the companies themselves, using the relevant camera that can be hired, or the task can be undertaken through the Matterport ‘Capture Services Net-

work’. Secondly, there is the use of the scanned files, which Linehan says is “not complicated” and access to them is handled on a software-as-a-service basis.

There are also obstacles to hospitality businesses including the metaverse in their long-term strategies – partly because the technology is immature and the concept is still somewhat ill-defined. This is maybe why the survey found only 12% of businesses have already included it in their long-term strategies and 16% don’t know if it is in their plans.

More positively, there are a variety of business areas where the metaverse is forecast to play a part in the future – albeit with the focus skewed to sales and promotional activity. The survey found the key areas referenced most by

**Matterport**

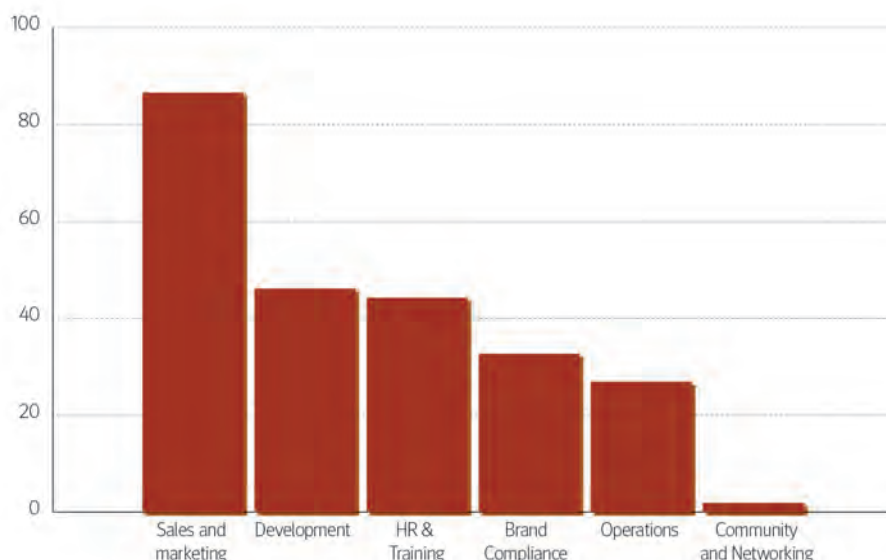
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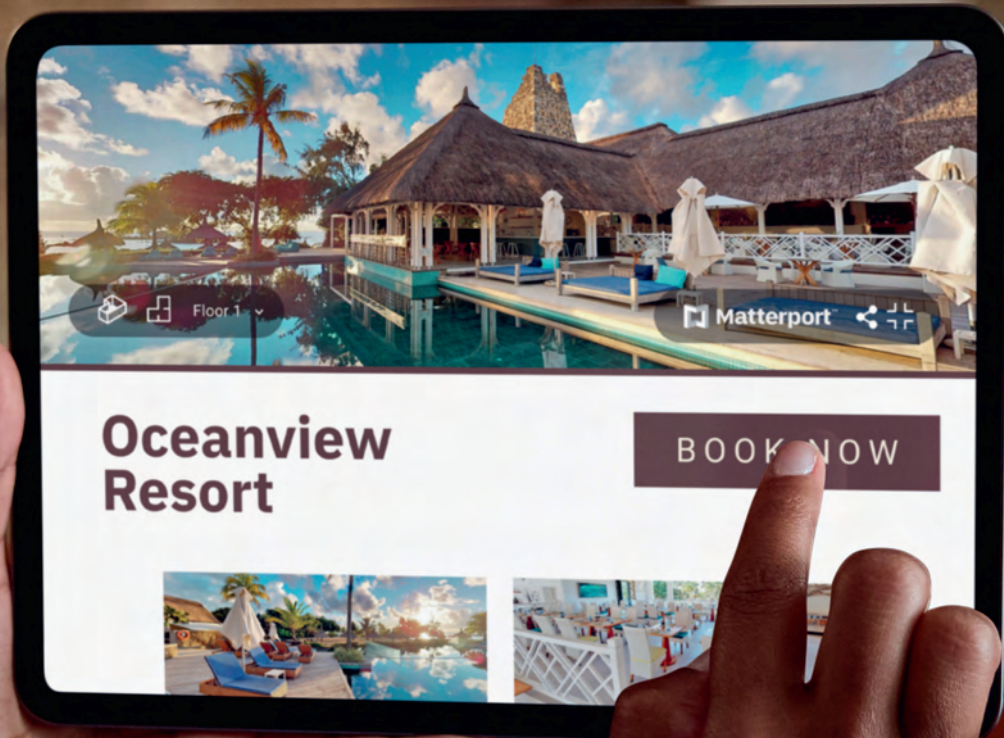
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**For what areas of your business do you think Metaverse can create new revenue opportunities?**





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SevenRooms

# Got it in one

It's now possible to get a 360-degree view of your guests with a single system to take care of room bookings, table reservations and even allergies. *Glynn Davis* looks at the technology

**B**ooking tools have been bolted onto many hospitality businesses over recent years, but as people have increasingly embraced digital interfaces there has been a desire for these basic tools to deliver greater functionality to customers and to be seamlessly integrated into businesses.

Henry Seddon, managing director of Access Hospitality, says an effective booking tool needs to be able to manage every step of the query and reservation process in order to simplify the customer journey and maximise efficiency for the business.

"It will handle booking queries, manage reservations, guest communications and table management as well as pre-orders, deposits and payments, and provide a full reporting schedule. Add in the post-visit follow-up as part of your customer relationship manage-

ment strategy and it is easy to see just how invaluable a tech solution can become for reservations," he explains.

To achieve maximum efficiency Seddon suggests a reservation solution should "fully integrate with other tech platforms to widen the scope of its performance". He adds: "By integrating with a pre-order solution, a digitised menu can be forwarded to share and complete guest orders, which is particularly useful for larger groups and when the venue is busy. It can then provide automatic kitchen and function sheets, and table place cards at the press of a button."

## Space saver

Gillian Graham, sales director of the hospitality business the Scotsman Group, is enjoying the broad capabilities of the Access Collins solution. "The technology capability also ena-

bles us to see and understand the true value of our sales team and our pre-booked numbers within the business. We can maximise the use of our spaces via the space optimiser button and enable the venue teams to see a floorplan screen as well as a diary page, which has transformed our business."

She adds: "On our previous system we were converting an average 20% of enquiries, but this rose to 40% after changing to Access Collins and we are now currently sitting around a 78% conversion rate. The technology has provided wider, embedded benefits and I'm delighted with the number of auto-confirmed bookings that are now coming through as these are confirmed quickly and simply, saving us hours of labour."

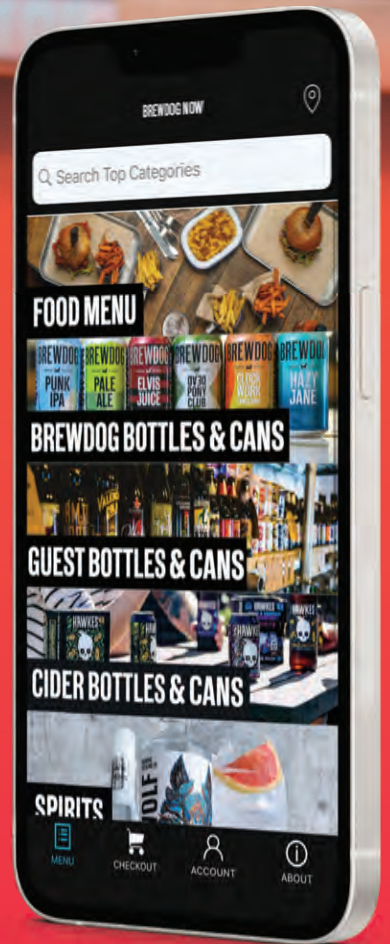
Nick Kokonas, founder and chief executive of Tock, works with UK restaurants including the Fat Duck and harbours some reservations about the way many booking solutions have simply bolted on added functionality.

"We have all the normal things such as table booking slots, but also many other things, including the ability to handle food to go orders and prix fix menus. To do this on platforms like Resy you would need [to link into] three systems with different windows open. It's not a good workflow or customer journey. It's often very clunky and there is a need to register all your info again on different screens," he says.

Improving the customer journey has certainly been the objective of Simon Bullingham, founder and chief executive of Journey Hospitality, who says the move by luxury hotels to build-out multiple revenue streams led him to create the equivalent of Shopify ►



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# Online ordering apps and websites

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◀ for hotels with seamless integration between the different bookable parts – encompassing rooms, spas, restaurants and retail sales.

“The hospitality industry is behind retail and needs to be more integrated. In hotels it’s about having a widget for all the different things but this means they are all then separate. We wanted to build an e-commerce platform where five or six transactions for the one stay would involve only a single email [for the confirmations],” he explains.

The company’s OneJourney solution involves a bespoke front-end built for each client that behind the scenes uses APIs to link the various booking tools together. Ross Grieve, managing director of Seaham Hall, says such a solution fitted with his strategy of building more of a direct business and moving away from relying on the myriad booking sites.

“The bookings of rooms, spa treatments and restaurant tables can now all be purchased in a single basket, whereas before it was all separate conversations with the customers,” he says, adding that behind the OneJourney-designed front end for Seaham Hall are links to third-party booking tools Opera for its rooms, PremierCore for its spa, and Resy for its restaurant.

This arrangement gives Seaham Hall real-time availability across each of these revenue streams as well as a richer, more visual experience for the customers, which Grieve says has boosted revenues with “considerable” growth at the spa and higher overall average basket sizes. According to Bullingham, properties that have used the solution typically enjoyed a 63% increase in booking value, 30% increase in multi-basket orders, and a 26% reduction in phone call volume, which has eased the burden on the reservations team.

**Digitising data**

What can also help boost these numbers is the mining of the data that can be potentially thrown off by booking tools. Kokonas points out that far too few operators are on top of the data within their businesses, which includes that derived from booking tools. “How many restaurants look at their revenues per hour? We’ve adapted this



**“Welding booking tools with a queuing system can help hospitality venues to fill in those gaps when they need to”**

**George Emkes, Dojo**

as sales-per-seat-hour. It’s a unique way to question your data. All restaurants know the average spend by the customer, but they don’t know how long that person was at the table.”

Using booking data from Tock overlaid with point of sale data enables restaurants to gain insights that can help them determine whether tables should be turned quicker or whether diners should be prompted to spend more while they are at their table.

This focus on data is also evident at SevenRooms, with the business suggesting that the greatest downfall of third-party booking tools is that they don’t enable restaurants to own and leverage their guest data. With many third-party marketplaces, guest data and insights rarely make it back to the restaurant, preventing it from being used in a meaningful way. In contrast, the SevenRooms model ensures that restaurants not only have total ownership of that data, but are empowered to use it to create deeper connections with diners in ways that will improve the restaurant experience and foster loyalty on a long-term basis.

The solution involves the use of Autotags, which support the building of customised guest profiles. These incorporate key information, such as allergens, average spend and booking history, providing operators with a 360-degree view of their diners that can help deliver customer-centric experiences.

Any aspect of an interaction with a diner – what they order, how much they spend, how frequently they dine in – can be collated and applied directly by operators to better deliver ▶

**Avoiding booking-related fraud in the hotel industry**

With the average losses to fraud measured at over £2b in the UK hotels sector, tackling the problem is critical in the current economic climate as history makes it clear that downturns and crises are the precursors to increased fraudulent conduct.

Brian Kinsella, senior regional fraud manager at global payments provider Elavon, says the problem is compounded by the shortage of staff that is leaving many inexperienced people within hotels at the mercy of fraudsters. He suggests all businesses need to be aware of three key criminal tactics.

Firstly, there is fraudulent pre-paid bookings with fraudsters often posing as wealthy individuals booking for a friend or as a fake

travel agent, using compromised credit card numbers, to make bookings at high-end hotels and paying in advance. These bookings are then sold on to unsuspecting travellers who pay directly to the fraudsters. This results in financial loss to the hotel when the genuine cardholder raises a chargeback, and potential reputational damage when the unwitting travellers arrive.

Secondly, there is hotel reservation fraud, which occurs when organised criminals make large bookings on a credit card followed by a cancellation and refund request to a different account. When the genuine owner of the card raises a chargeback, it will be indefensible, and the hotel faces a double financial loss.

Thirdly, hotels also need to be aware of unrelated services fraud, which happens when criminals order items not usually sold by a hotel when booking for a fake conference, business meeting or private event such as a wedding. Items might include bottles of whisky, high-value souvenirs or tablet computers. Having paid for the goods using compromised credit card numbers, the criminals arrange for delivery of the items or order a freight company to collect them from the hotel.

As criminals continue to target the industry, hotels must be proactive and stay on top of fraud developments in order to protect their customers, their reputations and also their bottom lines.

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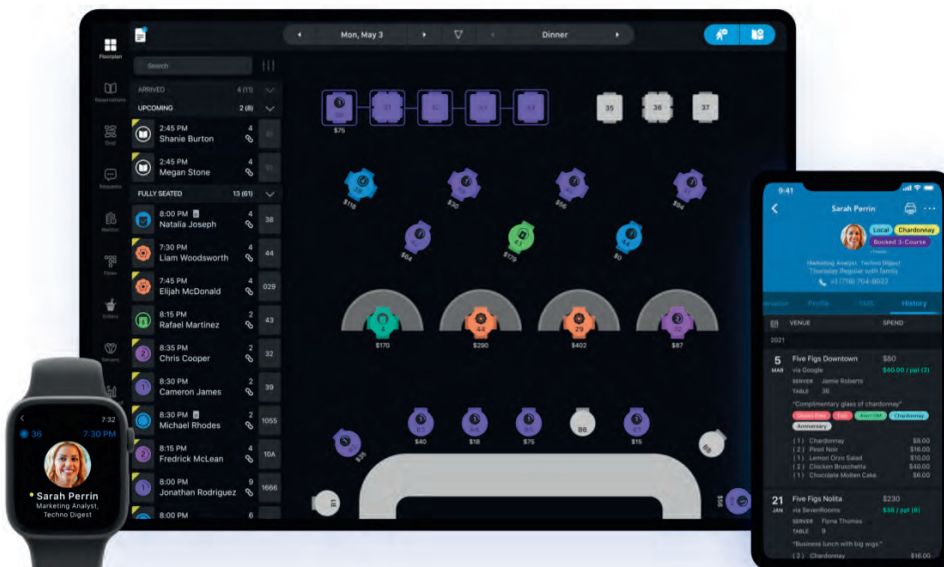


Always in front

Elavon

**“We wanted to build an e-commerce platform where five or six transactions for the one hotel stay would involve only a single email”**

**Simon Bullingham, Journey Hospitality**



SevenRooms platform

**Front of the queue**

As well as booking tools being able to serve up the most relevant restaurants for consumers at the time they'd like to book, the implementation of queuing systems brings an additional upside: “Providing customers with the much-wanted access to restaurants that may be fully booked, or not even offer bookings at all.”

As well as providing access to waitlists and queues, bookings can be further optimised by operators with multiple venues recommending sister restaurants when a particular venue is fully booked. SevenRooms works with London's Flat Iron Square, a 40,000 sq ft food, drink and entertainment hub. It was able to cross-sell bookings at its other venues on a single landing page, resulting in as many as 3,000 additional booking requests at sister venue St Felix Place in just one day. The company has also benefited

from prepayments on bookings, which helped boost Flat Iron Square's bottom line by more than £127,000 in just eight months.

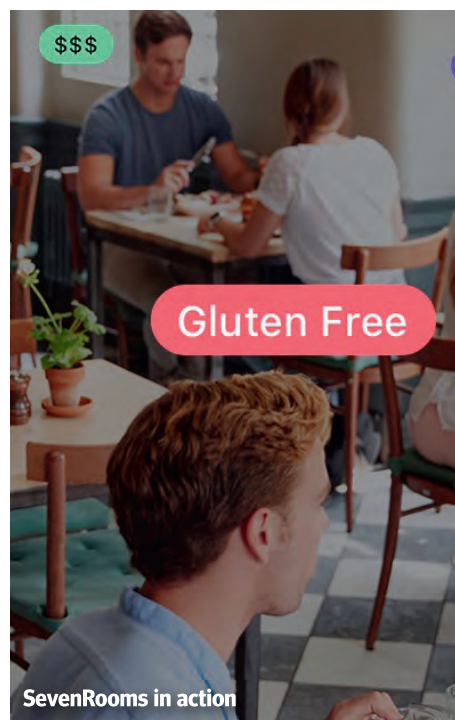
Pre-pay is also huge for Tock, according to Kokonas, who says the company has taken a billion dollars in pre-pay over the past year, which has helped with the headache of no-shows. “The biggest part of this is small deposits of £5 or £10 made with a single click. It's the fastest growing piece of Tock and with it the level of no-shows goes to only 3%. People have a little skin in the game and it reminds them to call to cancel or edit their booking. Even a tiny amount of money reminds people to cancel,” he explains.

This ability to leverage increasing functionality from the booking process suggests the experience for both customers and operators will continue to improve and highlights how technology plays an ever greater role in the industry.

exceptional experiences and drive that all-important customer retention. Even for walk-in only restaurants, there are benefits to be had. Having a crowded entrance area can be daunting for diners and staff alike, so virtual waitlists can take away this burden.

Diners can join the waitlist, view estimated wait times, view menus and message through two-way SMS. Plus, leveraging digital waitlists enables restaurants to capture valuable data on their customers that can be used to market to them in order to get them back into the restaurant.

George Emkes, product manager at Dojo, believes there is value to be had from incorporating queue management and waitlists into the booking tool armoury of restaurants. “Standalone booking tools have a reputation for creating dead time for tables and an inconsistent customer flow. Welding booking tools with a queuing system can help hospitality venues to fill in those gaps when they need to and also ensure better management of peak demand,” he says.



**Flexibility and accessibility at Opheem**

For Michelin-starred Indian restaurant Opheem in Birmingham, a booking system needed to deliver both flexibility and accessibility in order that the business could deliver the high levels of experience that customers expect at high-end venues.

Andrew Frost, director of operations at Opheem, says: “The booking system we used previously was static to a server. And bookings can change within five minutes, so you need to be able to adapt and see what's coming in while taking bookings on the fly.”

He found OpenTable gave the required flexibility. “It's very user friendly. I don't have to go into the back-end to make changes, which I previously did with the other system we used. It ends up being hard work. With OpenTable, I can open stuff up, move things around and even contact guests directly,” he explains.

The solution enables restaurants to confirm if a guest is attending, even if they don't necessarily want to be contacted over

the phone. “We still phone diners who have made a reservation, as we want to offer that personalised service, but giving guests the option to confirm their booking through OpenTable has definitely made life easier,” says Frost.

The other key benefit is accessibility to the booking solution: “I can make sure we've all got the app on our phones, meaning anyone in the team can have a quick look and see what they can expect for the evening. Everyone gets a heads-up, from dietary requirements to a special occasion.”

When it comes to fine dining, communication is key to providing excellent service, he says, adding that “getting a booking can be tricky, especially when we're really busy and the phone's going off the hook”. Having access to OpenTable, either directly on its website or app or through the Opheem website, allows the team to pick-up bookings and queries without being tied to a PC.



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# Reasons to be cheerful

## Foodservice Equipment Association Industry Conference 2022:

Wednesday 9th and Thursday 10th November, 2022 at Chesford Grange Hotel, Kenilworth

**FEA** Foodservice Equipment Association

### Information Involvement Influence



▶ **Nina Warhurst** – our conference facilitator, the business and political presenter on breakfast TV.



◀ **Bhavana Bharkhada** – head of policy and campaigns at Make UK, the Manufacturers' Association.

▼ **Tom Lock** – consulting director at ICF and senior expert for UK Government on energy-related products.



▲ **Richard Fordham** CFSP – co-founder of Ki-Tech Solutions.



◀ **Lorraine Copes** – founder of Be Inclusive Hospitality.

▶ **Dan Gillet** – specialist in big trends affecting shoppers at IGD.



▲ **Phil Shelley** – chair of the NHS Food Review 2020.

There's no getting away from the reality of the economy right now – and the FEA Conference speakers tackled the issues head on. After Paul Anderson welcomed delegates, Nina Warhurst warned that lack of optimism was likely to be a theme – and she called on Conference to look for reasons to be cheerful. Bhavana Bharkhada confirmed the sorry state of affairs: in one survey, 60% of manufacturers said energy prices threatened the very existence of their business. She called on policy makers to make a difference, as an example, in the area of staff recruitment. But, she insisted, government's key priority had to be to end a decade of stagnation.

“Consumer confidence is at its lowest level ever,” Dan Gillet said. Charles Wood agreed, adding that business resilience is also at an all time low, with no likelihood of energy prices coming down soon. However, on a positive note, there's been a huge increase in generating power from low-carbon sources, such as wind and solar. The dial has moved; government is more accepting of the need for low carbon than ever before, and is working more closely with industries like foodservice, looking to give access to finance and information.

Matt White said the latest public sector catering survey showed vacancies running at around 30% and food cost increases of 60%. Tragically, 15% had removed their hot meal service and another 28% were considering it. 52% of those surveyed thought things would get worse. The main positive was that 65% are still meeting food standards.

◀ **Left: Kelly Barrell** CFSP – FEA council member and business development manager at Marren Group. **Right: Alex Waring** CFSP – specialist in recruitment for the foodservice equipment sector.



◀ **Ian Machan** – managing director of the Advanced Services Group.



### Reasons to be cheerful – part 1: consumers still want to eat out

Consumers are planning to spend less, but they still want to eat out – only 2% said they planned to stop. So operators may need to adapt their offering, through lower prices, loyalty cards and the like.



### The Conference in numbers

- £4,000 – amount raised for Hospitality Action at the informal dinner
- 172 – delegates
- 125 – attendees at the Gala Dinner
- 11 – sponsors
- 15 – speakers
- 2 – speakers addressing Conference via zoom (Copès and Wood)



▶ Malcolm Harling, Peter Jarrett, Martin Keay, Phill Mills, David Riley, Iain Munro, Nick Oryino, Julie Barker and Steve Elliott – winners of the inaugural FEA Chair's Awards

### Equipment to help operators

The state of the industry panel (Gillet, White and Wood) suggested a variety of ways including:

- Labour saving technology
- Energy saving technology
- Faster production times
- Training and support
- Remote monitoring of equipment (connectivity) – to enhance maintenance

Ian Machan, Philip Shelley and Richard Fordham made up the connectivity panel. They talked about the lessons foodservice can learn from other industries, such as construction, to exploit the potential of connectivity to create a safer, more efficient workplace delivering a better product. Shelley pointed out that hospitals are under the cosh – everyone is working to the max. Connectivity could be a huge benefit, in the NHS and throughout the foodservice industry.



▶ Charles Wood – deputy director of policy at Energy UK.

▶ Paul Anderson – FEA chair and managing director of Meiko UK.

### Reasons to be cheerful – part 2: exploit technology to beat rising prices and improve productivity

Equipment suppliers have an unprecedented chance to make a real difference to operators – by delivering solutions to the key issues of rising costs, lower skill sets and lack of staff. All of these can be tackled by technology that is already on the market.

After lunch, conference focused on diversity as Addison, Barrell, Burnford, Copès and Waring discussed 'bridging the gap'. 75% of companies report a talent shortage – so the wider the recruitment pool, the better. While education is key, and we need to leave our biases at the door, inclusion is a journey and it's OK to make mistakes. It's easy to say 'it's going to take

time' – but why not start now? Flexible working conditions will help enormously, for example by supporting people with family commitments.

### Reasons to be cheerful – part 3: diversity = the staff shortages solution?

Diversity is here to stay. As well as celebrating it, operators can take advantage of it – because encouraging diversity and inclusiveness in recruitment gives access to more people. And more people means a greater pool of talent.

Warhurst pulled the strands of conference together, weaving in insights to the five PMs she has interviewed in a varied career. Through Brexit and Covid, hospitality took a pounding, and the way businesses adapted to

survive was hugely impressive. We can do it all again, she said, so keep smiling! ■



▶ John Whitehouse

▶ Joy Burnford – director of Encompass Equality.



▶ Holly Addison – partner at Leathwaite Executive Search and Leadership Talent Consulting.



## Equipment questions? Ask the experts at fea.org.uk

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MENUWATCH



# Speedboat Bar

In a pedal-to-the-metal Soho restaurant, Luke Farrell serves up Bangkok-esque flavours combining all of the chef's favourite dishes. *James Stagg* pays a visit

As the name suggests, Speedboat is fast-paced, noisy and great fun. The new restaurant from Luke Farrell, partnering with JKS, is a full throttle experience, focusing firmly on the food served in Bangkok's Chinatown. Where Plaza Khao Gaeng in Arcade impressed in its authentic fiery southern Thai flavours, Speedboat is arguably even more focused, given Farrell's familiarity with the two streets that make up the Thai capital's culinary melting pot.

Each dish on the menu comes from a shop-house restaurant in the area occupied by Thai Chinese traders on the Yaowarat and Charoen Krung roads. "You can actually do a tour of Chinatown at the restaurant," Farrell explains. "It was very important to me to pay homage and try to do the best we could with those dishes. All those restaurants do only one dish, but we've compiled them to develop our menu. When I see these dishes on a menu in London it makes me very happy."

The 86-cover restaurant is designed to resemble a shophouse with stainless steel tables, tiled walls and mounted fans downstairs, while what

**"When I see these dishes on a menu in London it makes me very happy"**

**Luke Farrell**

would traditionally be the living quarters upstairs is more vibrant, with soft furnishings, Thai-themed pictures, a pool table and speedboats hanging from the ceiling.

"A complete curveball was the upstairs clubhouse for the speedboat racers," Farrell adds. "We like the comparison of the high-octane thrills as well as the tiller being much like the wok handle. I'm interested in speedboat racing and we had the boat made in Thailand and shipped over."

The menu itself is split into snacks, salads, stir-fries, specials and curries, with three or four options for each. Dishes are predominantly cooked using Chinese techniques – speedy wok stir-frying – but with Thai ingredients, such as galangal, green pepper and various herbs, many of which are grown at Farrell's Ryewater Nursery in Dorset, situated within his father's butterfly conservation area.

From the snacks, sweetcorn fritters (£7), clam and mussels with a dipping sauce (£11), and chicken skins with zaep seasoning (£5) are a great foil for the three-litre beer towers that are a feature of many tables.





Pad Grapao Neua



Tom Yum Mama



Salads



Snakesblood negroni



Jelly bia



Margarita

“They go down pretty quickly and are an absolute winner,” says Farrell. “It’s also a good thing for the staff because they don’t have to keep topping people up with beers all the time.”

The most popular dish is the stir-fried minced beef with holy basil (£13.50), which is flash fried with pepper, chillies, fish sauce and oyster sauce. Those that have eaten Farrell’s Khua Kling Muu dry fried pork at Plaza Khao Gaeng might be braced for raging heat, but here with the Chinese influence it is tempered and sweetened by the holy basil.

From the specials diners are drawn towards the Tom Yum Mama noodles with squid, pork and prawns (£25). Served to share at the table in a chafing dish, the fragrant soup is thickened with egg yolk and served over instant noodles, as they do in the restaurant the dish originated from, Jeh O Chula in Bangkok, where it is a late night speciality.

Curries include crispy pork and black pepper (£13) as well as an unctuous beef tongue and tendon dish (£14), softened in the pressure cooker and cooked with red curry paste from Thailand and curry powder. It is mild

### From the menu

#### Snacks

- Pickled sour fruits with chilli salt **£6**
- Prawn ceviche with seafood dressing **£12**

#### Salad

- Pickled mustard greens and Chinese sausage **£11**
- Cashew nut, pork crackling and dried fish **£10**

#### Stir fry

- Noodles with chicken, lard and red roast pork sauce **£14**
- Bottle gourd with chilli and Thai basil **£12**

#### Specials

- Drunkard’s seafood and beef noodles **£21**
- Roasted poussin with soy bean, ginger and chilli sauce **£20**

#### Curry

- Ash melon and eggplant **£12**

and rich and, though not the most photogenic dish, is served with a colourful ajaad relish on the side, which includes chilli, cucumber, onions and vinegar.

There is only one choice of dessert and it’s a take on the pineapple pie (£8) that is served at molten temperatures from microwaves in 7-Elevens across the country. This is a more refined take, with a fried dough wrapped around apples cooked in rum, tamarind and palm sugar.

With a 13-strong brigade cooking a total of 21 dishes, led by head chef Christmas, Farrell says his main task is to keep the dishes firmly fixed on this small corner of Thai cookery. “Thais are incredibly hospitable and want to give people what they think is familiar,” Farrell says. “So to do something different and take the risk is a hard thing to do. It quickly can change to a neighbourhood Thai restaurant if you’re not serious about the ingredients and the correct Thai taste.”

It’s fair to say Farrell is absolutely serious.

**30 Rupert Street, London W1D 6DL**  
<https://speedboatbar.co.uk>



## Noma 2.0: Vegetable, Forest, Ocean

By René Redzepi, Mette Søberg and Junichi Takahashi

Artisan Publishers, £60

It's a decade since *Noma: Time and Place in Nordic Cuisine* was published, the book that helped put Copenhagen-based chef René Redzepi, his love for foraging and his fiercely locavore culinary philosophy on the map. Now, the appropriately titled sequel *Noma 2.0* tells the story of the restaurant's reinvention in 2018, when it relocated to an urban farm on the outskirts of the city.

Essays by Redzepi, Noma's gardener Piet Oudolf and Mette Søberg, head of research and development, are beautifully illustrated by Ditte Isager's stunning photography. Three chapters mirror the menus served each year in the restaurant: 'Vegetable', when Noma becomes a vegetarian restaurant in the spring and summer; 'Forest' in the autumn, when the menu is based around wild plants, mushrooms and game; and 'Ocean' in the winter, when Redzepi says "the soil is frozen and nothing grows", but "fish are fat and pristine, their bellies full of roe".

Whatever the season, the food is so intricate there's only enough space in the large-format, 356-page book for descriptions of the dishes. The 'Noma Gastronomique' appendix includes details of the ferments, garums and misos, but you need to scan a QR code to access the recipes for the likes of reindeer brain jelly (or maybe you'd prefer reindeer penis salad?) online.

This is not a book for the faint-hearted, with dishes such as duck brain tempura and duck heart tartare served in the cleaned and beeswax-lined skull and beak of the bird. His stag beetle dessert, fashioned from a leather made with blackened pears, blackberries and Japanese black garlic, is all too scarily reminiscent of a bush tucker trial.

Not everyone will have the time, resources or inclination to attempt to replicate Redzepi's extraordinary cuisine in their own kitchens, but it is nevertheless an essential purchase for any ambitious and creative chef who can't fail to be inspired by the book's bounty of surprising and unusual ideas.

By Andy Lynes

## Sika roast

Wild deer scraps and bones are deeply roasted and then simmered with kelp and black peppercorns to make a stock. The stock is reduced to a glaze. Mushroom-kelp broth and truffle juice are reduced to make a sauce and finished with brown butter and chopped black truffles.

The wild deer is grilled over hot charcoal while being brushed with the deer glaze, then carved into portions and served with the truffle sauce.

### Wild deer

Wild sika deer

### Deer stock

Wild sika deer scraps and bones

Black peppercorns

Kelp

### Deer glaze

Deer stock

Blueberry reduction (see below)

Yeast broth reduction (see below)

Smoked butter (see below)

### Truffle sauce

Reduced mushroom-kelp broth (below)

Truffle juice

Brown butter

Black truffle

White wine vinegar

White wine reduction

### To finish

Wild deer

Deer glaze

Salt

Toasted black peppercorns

Truffle sauce

### Blueberry reduction

1kg blueberries

Blend the blueberries in a Thermomix until well puréed. Freeze the mixture in 1 litre containers, leaving room in the containers for expansion in the freezer.

Once frozen, remove the solid bricks from their containers and place them in a cheesecloth-lined perforated gastro pan set over a deep gastro pan. Cover and let stand in the fridge for 2 to 3 days, until thawed. Transfer the liquid to 1 litre containers and place in a dehydrator set to 60°C. Reduce to a sugar content of 80°Bx as measured by a refractometer. Let cool, then vacuum seal and freeze.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
DITTE ISAGER

### Yeast broth reduction

400ml filtered water

60g peaso

20g roasted yeast

12g freeze-dried gooseberries

Blend all the ingredients with an immersion blender until thoroughly homogenised. Transfer the mixture to a 1 litre airtight container and freeze.

Remove the frozen brick of yeast broth from the container and hang it in the same way as the blueberry reduction. Weigh the strained liquid, transfer to a clean container, and place it in a dehydrator set to 60°C. Reduce to 8% of the liquid's initial weight (63°Bx as measured by a refractometer). Let cool, then vacuum seal and freeze.

### Smoked butter

5kg butter, cut into 2cm cubes

Set up an offset cold smoker. Fill a smoking coil with wood dust and



light the dust with a bit of white-hot charcoal. Place the butter in a perforated gastro pan and set the pan on one of the top racks of the smoker. Smoke the butter for 30 minutes, then check to make sure it smells rich and smoky; if so, remove from the smoker. Transfer the smoked butter to a clean airtight container and reserve in the fridge, or use to make smoked butter whey.

### Mushroom-kelp broth

#### Mushroom kelp

- 250g thick centre pieces of kelp
- 125g dried ceps
- 65g dried morels
- 35g dried black trumpet mushrooms
- 500g lacto cep water
- 25g freeze-dried lingonberries
- 125g muscovado sugar
- 5 litres filtered water

#### Master stock

- 250g thin outer pieces of kelp
- 125g dried ceps
- 65g dried morels

- 35g dried black trumpet mushrooms
- 500g lacto cep water
- 25g freeze-dried lingonberries
- 125g muscovado sugar
- 5 litres filtered water

Place the ingredients for the mushroom kelp and the master stock in separate rondeaus. Bring both pots to a boil, then cover and simmer on low heat overnight.

Strain the liquid in both pots. Remove the thick pieces of kelp and reserve. With a superbag, squeeze the solids from both pots. Combine the strained stocks and reserved kelp in a pot and cook very slowly for 36 hours, or until the kelp becomes just tender.

Remove from the heat and let cool, then transfer the broth and kelp to airtight containers. Reserve in the fridge.

*This is an edited extract, with recipes for peaso and lacto cep water omitted.*

## Revelations

Mehak Kansal, founder, Bindas Eatery, London



### What was your best subject at school?

Philosophy

### What was your first job?

As a sales assistant selling clothes

### What was your first job in catering?

Actually in my own restaurant!

### What do you normally have for breakfast?

I usually just have a flat white and maybe an oat bar. However, my ideal breakfast would be a smoked salmon bagel with cream cheese, fresh dill and capers



### What do you do to relax?

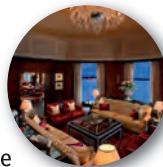
I ride my horse

### Which is your favourite restaurant?

A Wong in London

### What's your favourite hotel?

Leela Palace in Udaipur –the whole Leela chain is incredible



### What is your favourite drink?

A kumquat margarita made with mezcal

### What is your favourite food?

I love all Asian flavours but Indonesian, Thai, Chinese or Malaysian... OK, basically everything!

### Which ingredient do you hate the most?

Octopus and squid



### What flavour combinations do you detest?

Peanut butter and jam – I mean, why would you want to eat that?

### What do you always carry with you?

A medicine pouch and Kiehl's hand cream

### How would you describe your desk?

Immaculate, honestly my paperwork, files and pads are always organised

### Which person in catering have you most admired?

Nisha Katona



### Which person gave you the greatest inspiration?

I was my own inspiration. I was in a dark period of my life when I started this journey. Cooking used to be my therapy and it was a passion project turned career

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

I would take air conditioning – if the UK freak tropical weather has taught me anything, it is the value of air conditioning

### If you had not gone into catering, where do you think you would be now?

Buying and flipping property

### Describe your ultimate nightmare?

I do not want to say what it is as all I will be doing is putting it out there in the universe!

# Paul Anderson of Meiko UK appointed new chair of FEA

Paul Anderson, managing director of Meiko UK, has been appointed the new chair of the Foodservice Equipment Association (FEA). The members also endorsed his proposal that Emma Brookes, managing director of Quintex UK, be elected as vice chair.

Taking over from outgoing chair Stephen Hobbs, director of Grande Cuisine, Anderson outlined his aims and areas of focus over the next two years. With the hospitality industry dealing with ongoing staffing issues and rising costs, he stressed the importance of FEA's work and the support it provides its members and to foodservice operators.

He aims to help it continue to find new opportunities for the training and development it offers. A particular focus of this will be aimed at widening training opportunities for younger staff entering the industry.

Furthermore, with energy costs increasing and the importance of swift action to reduce carbon footprints, the ability of the FEA and its member's companies to help the industry make cost savings and improve its environmental impact through the use of better equipment will remain a vital part of its work.

Emma Brookes, vice chair, is also chair of the Association's Net Zero Carbon Forum. "Her passion for reducing carbon and focusing on finding better ways to save energy is infectious," said Anderson.

"Emma matches my wish to help all in implementing the needs of the circular economy and meeting the carbon reduction targets across the value chain, and she is undoubtedly the best person for the job."

Brookes is the first woman in FEA's history to hold the vice chair

position and will become chair herself after Paul's two-year tenure.

"It is imperative that all of us at FEA continue to raise awareness of the support that the FEA

offers," added Anderson. "We can help the industry with enhanced energy saving measures and advanced technology to reduce carbon emissions."



Paul Anderson, new chair of the FEA, with vice-chair Emma Brookes

# Consumers still hungry for new experiences amid cost of living crisis

Foodservice agency Omne has unveiled its Unchartered Waters report, which details opportunities for growth amid the cost of living crisis.

The study found that 62% of consumers are now more likely to try a new dish when eating out.

Omne also revealed several actions that hospitality operators can take to fit in with consumers' desire for new experiences.

### Quality is key

When consumers are offered a choice between a cheaper meal

that is greater value for money or a more expensive meal that is better quality, 65% opted for the latter.

Some 44% of consumers surveyed defined value for money as "something which is good quality", whereas only 13% defined it as "the cheaper option".

### Demonstrate ethical and sustainable thinking

Sustainability is climbing the agenda for modern consumers. The research showed that 79% of consumers agree or strongly agree that a venue's sustaina-

ble practices have become more important than a year ago.

Some 42% of the consumers surveyed would recommend sustainable venues to family and friends.

### A little goes a long way

Sixty-four per cent of consumers agreed that being able to try new food items enhanced their overall going out experience, and 91% described having new or different food choices as being "more important" to the overall eating experience compared to last year.

### Establishing innovative collaboration with suppliers

Fifty-three per cent of venues are considering working with fewer suppliers or rationalising their supply bases, according to the research. When asked how suppliers could help food and drink operators, 74% of respondents said this could be done through competitive pricing.

The full report explores how operators can grow more lucrative relationships with suppliers in the face of rising costs.

Anna Massey, strategy director at Omne, said: "These are challenging times for food and hospitality businesses. But, as this report shows, when the market changes, new opportunities for growth emerge and there is a clear opening for the businesses that focus on consumers' growing desire for 'new': new menu options, new experiences and a renewed approach to sustainability."

<https://content.omne.agency/unchartered-waters-download>



SHUTTERSTOCK/GULCIN RAGIBOGLU

## Diageo 'Think!' campaign returns for Christmas 2022

The drinks supplier's digital campaign advises the public on how to stop friends from drink driving across a series of short films

Drinks supplier Diageo has reignited its partnership with Think!, the government's official road safety initiative.

The digital campaign aims to call on people to stop friends from drinking alcohol if they're planning to drive. Assets are available via Diageo One for operators to use across their own social channels.

The campaign aims to tackle drink driving over the festive season. Only 53% of 17- to 30-year-old men claim that it is very risky to drive when over the legal alcohol limit compared to 80% for the general population and a further 70% (aged 17-30) believe it is unacceptable to drive when over the legal alcohol limit.

The campaign will run until 31 December and will appear on



Guinness and Captain Morgan social channels. It will include a series of short films that will be redistributed across social and digital platforms to remind young people that "a mate doesn't let a mate drink drive".

The campaign will also direct viewers to a landing page on the Think! website featuring 'Wrong Side of the Road', Diageo's virtual learning experience that allows individuals to have a conversation with a real drink driver to help understand the consequences of drink driving.

All resources will be available on www.DiageoOne.com, Diageo's online hub which provides hospitality operators with training, industry insights and social media resources.

## Williams donates fridge to local school's food bank

Williams Refrigeration has donated a Jade refrigerator cabinet to the food bank run by the Friends of Eastgate Academy.

The Eastgate Academy, a primary school in Williams' home town of King's Lynn, Norfolk, is a charitable committee chaired by teaching assistant Karen Mason, who runs a food bank aimed at helping those in need. Without access to refrigeration equipment, it had only been able to offer dry or tinned goods.

Tracey Dean, one of the members of the Friends of Eastgate Academy, reached out to Williams to ask if it would be able to help.

The HJ1 cabinet has an internal capacity of 620 litres and is designed to meet high standards of energy efficiency and temperature stability. It will enable the food bank to keep a range of fresh products and allow it to provide a greater variety of healthy food to those who rely on it.

"Everyone is feeling the pinch at the moment, and it's important to help those who are struggling," said Bawo Koroma,



The Williams Jade refrigerator cabinet will enable to food bank in Kings Lynn to keep fresh products

quality control manager for Williams.

"The work Eastgate Academy's

food bank does is vital in supporting families and people in need. Williams is proud of being

a King's Lynn company and will always support the local community where it can."

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Whether it's for sustainable or ethical reasons, or just a curiosity about a new trend, plant-based continues to be a booming industry. According to Bloomberg Intelligence the market could be valued \$162 billion globally by 2030. And this explosive growth is already translating into hospitality, from plant-based meals popping up on menus to hotels providing vegan toiletries for guests. From “bleeding” plant-based burgers, pea milk alternatives and fishless fish, to a leather alternative made from pineapple leaves, today there is a wealth of opportunity for businesses to veganise their offerings. But in a crowded industry, where should operators focus their efforts in 2023?

## **Topics covered include:**

What's hot in the world of plant-based

What trends are worth investing in?

How to market your plant-based product responsibly

How to integrate plant-based into fine dining

## **Speakers**



**Valentina Fois**  
founder, chef and  
marketing expert

LELE'S Plant Based Consultancy



**David Moore**  
restaurateur  
Pied à Terre



**Kirk Haworth**  
chef and co-founder  
Plates



**Chantelle Nicholson**  
Chef-owner  
Apricity Restaurant



**Sandy Browning**  
executive chef  
Ka Pao



**Liam Nelson**  
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# Best Use of Technology Award

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## THE SHORTLIST

Lake District  
Country Hotels

Rockliffe Hall

Seaham Hall

Zetter Hotel Group

## PAST WINNER

2021

Nobu Hotel London  
Portman Square

2019

Exclusive Collection



## 2022 WINNER

# Zetter Hotel Group

As one judge observed, hospitality is often accused of being behind other industries in terms of technology, but this year's winner has certainly taken that challenge head on.

Zetter Hotel Group has rehailed its entire technology stack, looking at each individual element powering its business in order to integrate, connect and automate its systems.

This year's winner hasn't rolled out QR codes front of house, developed a fancy app or invited guests into the metaverse – in fact, Zetter's technology re-platform will probably go unnoticed by most guests. But internally it has made a world of difference, reflecting on customer service, which – as a boutique luxury lifestyle group – is key for Zetter.

The project included implementing new property management systems, point of sale, customer relationship management (CRM) and revenue management systems, a website, booking engine, facilities management, HR management and accounting systems – all in the cloud and avoiding reliance on heavy and expensive capex costs. No small feat, as any operator will understand.

The real differences are in the efficiencies and costs of running the business, as well as giving the management team an ultra-high level of control and a wealth of data to allow them to make quick and well-informed decisions and keep the group competitive.

Additionally, by digitising and automating tasks such as till counts and shift balancing, front of house teams have been freed up to focus on the guest and deliver a better customer experience. This has been reflected in guest feedback, which has improved across the board, with overwhelmingly positive reviews via social media, online and in-house surveys.

Technologies have been put in place to improve sales capabilities, which for the first

“The amount of teamwork involved in a project of this size is impressive”

**Neil Braude**

five months after implementation in May 2021, the RGI improved in each property by a double-digit margin, which was critical to support cashflow and to attract guests back after the pandemic. Direct booking has increased from 34% pre-pandemic to now above 52%, while a focus on CRM segmentation provides Zetter with the ability to customise its service offering.

The focus on the “invisible” efficiencies has truly paid off for Zetter Group, and not only has it reduced operational and IT costs by around 10%, but it has also reduced its reliance on third-party online travel agents, while increasing top-line revenues.

At a time when costs are ever-tightening for hospitality, Zetter demonstrated an impressive use of technology to really get under the skin of the business and make revenue-driving changes that will impact the hotel group for years to come. This is something every business aspires to do, but as one judge pointed out, few can actually achieve.

## WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

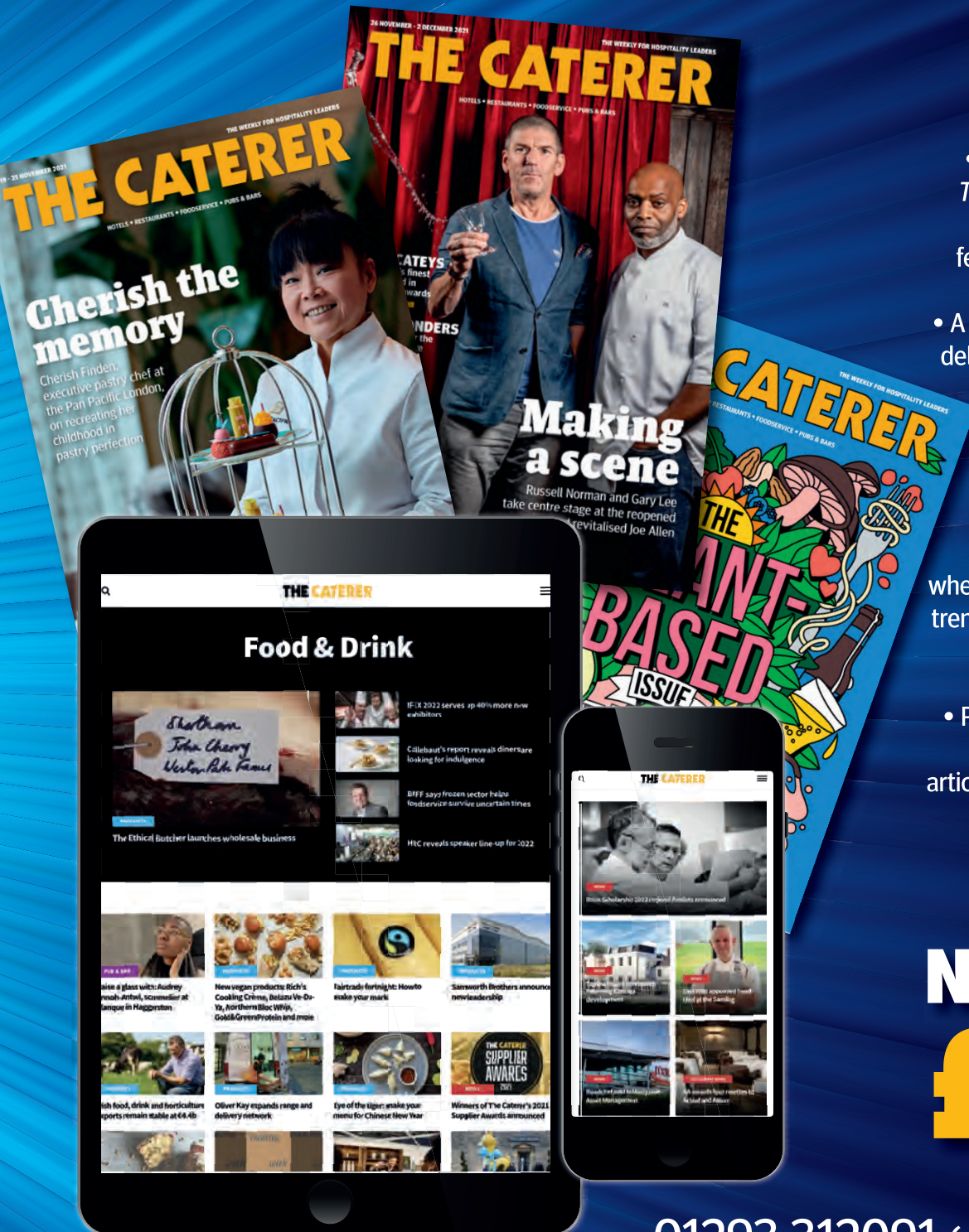
“The group looked at the full tech stack, decided it was not fit for purpose, and in one swoop changed it. The amount of teamwork involved in a project of this size is impressive and to have come out the other side is a massive achievement that will future-proof the business for years to come.”

**Neil Braude**



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# Concierge of the Year

## THE SHORTLIST

**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



## PAST WINNERS

2021

Sarah Gaskin, the  
Headland hotel,  
Cornwall

2019

Alan Noone,  
the Berkeley

2018

John Andrews, the  
Goring, London

2017

David Young, Brown's  
hotel, London

2016

Anton Coburn,  
Rockliffe Hall,  
Darlington

2015

Alixandra Mellor,  
Charlotte Street  
hotel, London

2014

Burak Ipekci, South  
Place hotel, London

## 2022 WINNER

### Mustafa El'Omari, the Montague on the Gardens

The judges described our winner as “a shining example of what a top concierge should be”. Mustafa El'Omari is head concierge of Red Carnation's 101-bedroom Montague on the Gardens hotel in London's Bloomsbury.

He oversees the concierge department, which looks after between 150 and 250 guests a day. The team's principal areas of activity include the handling of guests' luggage, booking car and valet services, securing theatre tickets, guided tours, personal shopping and restaurant reservations. However, their overarching aim is to ensure that everyone visiting the hotel receives a warm welcome, is cared for and leaves with a smile.

El'Omari speaks four languages – Arabic, French, Spanish and English – and has an ability to immediately build a rapport with guests, something that is apparent in the guest feedback received by the hotel. He is also known for going above and beyond for his guests.

Earlier this year the hotel was informed that a guest had fallen and injured their wrist and teeth on their way to the hotel. They arrived in some discomfort and El'Omari comforted them and took them to A&E, remaining with them as they received treatment, before escorting them back to the hotel. He went on to book and escort them to an appointment with a dentist the following day.

El'Omari strives to enhance every guest's stay, whether by putting theatre programmes in their room prior to a show, arranging for them to meet cast members backstage, organising in-room treats for birthdays and anniversaries or ensuring a complimentary drink is ready to greet guests who visit a restaurant he or the team have recommended.

El'Omari's team has a combined 58 years of service at the hotel, with the newest of the four Les Clefs D'or concierges having joined

“I feel Mustafa's hunger and desire to give the very best”

**Sarah Gaskin**

seven years ago. Together they research the latest openings and experiences the capital has to offer to ensure they pass on the best recommendations to their guests, while also developing relationships that will help gain access to some of the most coveted events.

His role as a team leader was particularly apparent during the pandemic, when his clear communication meant colleagues were kept updated and engaged. He has won a manager of the quarter award, the recipient of which is selected by peers across the hotel, an accolade that recognised not only his abilities in his own role but his willingness to step in across departments and offer assistance as needed. A focus on promoting internal revenue streams has also contributed towards record revenue, especially across food and beverage outlets.

El'Omari has also been integral to the hotel meeting its environmental targets by eliminating single-use plastics across his department and promoting eco-friendly transport options. He also helps the hotel support various charities, including the Friends of Russell Square, the Friday Club, Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital and the Single Homeless Project.

## WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

“Mustafa always goes above and beyond for his guests. His application actually makes me want to go and work with him! I feel Mustafa's hunger and desire to give the very best to his guests and colleagues.”

**Sarah Gaskin**





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# Conference and Banqueting Team of the Year

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## THE SHORTLIST

Hope Street hotel

Lainston House,  
part of the Exclusive  
Collection

The Langham London

Park Plaza Riverbank

Royal Lancaster  
London

## PAST WINNERS

2019

The Montague  
on the Gardens,  
London

2018

St Pancras  
Renaissance Hotel,  
London

2017

Principal York

2016

Park Plaza  
Westminster Bridge  
London

2015

Whittlebury Hall  
Towcester,  
Northamptonshire

2014

Lancaster London

2013

Hotel du Vin  
& Bistro  
Bristol

2012

The Connaught  
London

2011

Sofitel London  
Heathrow

2010

The Berkeley  
London



## 2022 WINNER

# Royal Lancaster London

Royal Lancaster London has been awarded the Hotel Catey due to its creativity, flexibility and willingness to go the extra mile.

The hotel has a wealth of on-site facilities, including 411 bedrooms, two award-winning restaurants, a car park and conferencing spaces that can cater for up to 2,000 covers.

Prior to the pandemic, Royal Lancaster London averaged 1,200 events per year. It made a speedy recovery before the onset of the Omicron variant, holding more than 500 events between July and December 2021, generating impressive numbers for Q4 of that year. This included the UEFA House partnership for Euro 2020, as well as a host of smaller conferences, charity galas, awards and association events.

The team is led by Gareth Bush, director of events since 2017, who has shown exceptional dedication to his staff. Despite the dearth of events during the pandemic, Bush used flexi-furlough and re-deployed workers across catering outlets, maintenance and hotel security to ensure the retention of 95% of the team, who share 250 years' experience between them.

His duty of care extends, of course, to the guests. The team hold multiple pre-event planning meetings in client offices to ensure guests receive the service they are expecting. A 'buddy system' pairs clients to a dedicated event manager, who handles the planning of subsequent events, which adds a personal touch to the relationship, while clients are also invited to immersive menu tastings in the hotel's Senses Room. The event planning team are also highly efficient with their responses to client queries, always endeavouring to respond within 24 hours.

Royal Lancaster London has adapted its events space to suit the changing demands of guests. For example, during the first lockdown, the hotel collaborated with 4Wall

"Pride, passion and positivity was evident throughout"

Jess Burrow

Entertainment to create a virtual reality studio in the Westbourne suite, which enabled the hotel to continue its corporate business. When restrictions eased, it was moved to the 19th floor in the newly created Studio 19, the first studio of its kind in a five-star hotel across Europe.

There are numerous anecdotes illustrating the venue's renowned willingness to go the extra mile. One such example is when a member of staff in the cloakroom, who had been a trained seamstress, sewed together a torn dress for a chief executive who was about to make a speech at an awards dinner. Similarly, when a female guest collapsed during an event and injured her forehead, the hotel's events guest safety supervisor administered first aid and stayed with the guest at the hospital for six hours. Dedicated staff who genuinely care for their guests make for a wonderful team at Royal Lancaster London, who have bounced back from the pandemic with flare and enthusiasm.

## WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

"The Royal Lancaster London had an exceptional application that provided solid evidence of demonstrating the highest standard of service, innovation and revenue growth. Pride, passion and positivity was evident throughout."

Jess Burrow

"This application gave so many examples of great teamwork. What a marvellous example Studio 19 is of thinking outside the box."

Sarah Gaskin





# CONGRATULATIONS

Food and Beverage Manager of the Year  
**Everett Chambers**  
The Montague on the Gardens



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# Food and Beverage Manager of the Year

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## THE SHORTLIST

**Everett Chambers**  
The Montague  
on the Gardens

**Andrew Di Sora**  
South Lodge

**Koula Michaelides**  
The Ritz London

**Varun Shetty**  
The Belfry Hotel  
& Resort

## PAST WINNERS

2021

Sharon McArthur

2019 Alex Cooper,  
Haymarket hotel

2018 Alice Bussi,  
Seren Collection

2017 Arjeta Arapi,  
the Montague on the  
Gardens

2016 Simon Seis, Park  
Plaza Westminster  
Bridge London

2015 Sarah Williams,  
Ham Yard Hotel

2014 Axelle Besson,  
Lancaster London

2013 Peter Bradley,  
The Montague on the  
Gardens

2012 Moses Solomon,  
Flemings Hotel,  
Mayfair London

2011 Amit Jaitly,  
Hilton Birmingham  
Metropole

2010 James Clarke,  
Grosvenor House

2009 Erick Kervaon,  
South Lodge Hotel

2008 Richard Ellison,  
Old Course Hotel, Golf  
Resort & Spa

2007 Paul Boyce,  
Malmaison and Hotel  
du Vin



## 2022 WINNER

### Everett Chambers, the Montague on the Gardens

Everett Chambers of the 101-bedroom Montague on the Gardens, which is part of the Red Carnation Hotel collection, has received Food and Beverage Manager of the Year for his commitment to his team and his guests.

Chambers is responsible for 33 staff, who oversee the £2.8m budget assigned to food and beverage. On average, he manages 450 covers a day across seven F&B outlets.

He is supported by the 12-strong F&B management team, who share 102 years of service to the hotel between them. He ensures each member is trained and developed to Red Carnation standards, and continues to mentor them throughout their career through appraisals for F&B personnel at three-month intervals, setting objectives and monitoring achievements.

Members of his team have gone on to receive an Acorn Award, the Wine & Spirit Education Trust Level 3, secure a place on the Möet Chandon Educational Tour, and raise £3,000 for Hospitality Action.

Chambers also works closely with the F&B heads of department and supervisors, the executive chef, and the Red Carnation PR and marketing department to ensure seamless operations.

His work with partners at Book-a-Table, Fork, Design My Night and Afternoontea.co.uk has increased the profile of the Montague's restaurants. He even managed to build a strong relationship with an investment bank that spends an average of £30,000 on the hotel for its corporate Christmas events and books 100 rooms a year.

Under his leadership, the seasonal F&B outlets have seen incredible growth. For example, London's original Ski Lodge, which is now in its 12th season, has experienced year-on-year revenue increases, with £290,000 in revenue post-pandemic. In fact, Chambers and his

“Everett has demonstrated success on so many levels”

Alex Cooper

team took to the streets to promote the pop-ups, including handing out flyers in ski-suits and Christmas jumpers in Shoreditch.

Meanwhile the Beach Bar, which is in its seventh year, saw a rise of 38% in revenue from £267,000 in 2019 to £396,000 in 2021, with some of those funds undoubtedly coming from the promotion by the team who pushed ‘beach bar on wheels’ into corporate offices such as Google and Amazon.

But it is not just about the finances. Chambers has also shown compassion towards others throughout his career, recognising the opportunity to bring something positive when the country faced the Omicron variant in 2021 by arranging £10,000-worth of food to be donated to the Single Homeless Project.

He has also supported the hotel's ambitions of achieving net zero emissions by 2050 by reducing food waste through the food monitoring system, Winnow, an initiative that has been championed and put together by Chambers himself. This should see the Montague reducing food waste by 50% without impacting guest experience. In the same vein, he has been proactive about sourcing alternatives to single-use plastics to eliminate unnecessary SUPs from the hotel by the end of the year.

## WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

“Everett has demonstrated success on so many levels. He has driven some exciting activations, which have also helped the business thrive financially.”

Alex Cooper





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the experience matters

Matthew Clark

# Front of House Manager of the Year

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## THE SHORTLIST

**Achraf Abdelhak**  
Supercity Aparthotels

**Megan Bourke**  
Belmond Le Manoir  
aux Quat'Saisons

**Sally Kinsella**  
Kimpton Clocktower  
Hotel

**Linda Smith**  
Moonfleet Manor

## PAST WINNERS

**2021** Rosie Wilkins

**2019** Alex Wilson,  
Brown's Hotel

**2018** Xiaomin (Min)  
Sun, Southampton  
Harbour Hotel & Spa

**2017** Sally  
Humphrey, the Grove,  
Hertfordshire

**2016** Laura Godman,  
Belmond Le Manoir  
aux Quat'Saisons

**2015** Lorena Somera,  
the Capital, London

**2014** Thoralf  
Kretzschmar,  
Lancaster London

**2013** Clarisse  
Abbey-Blackmore,  
Crowne Plaza London  
Docklands

**2012** Rachel Thomas,  
Danesfield House

**2011** Joanne Alder,  
Park Plaza Victoria,  
London

**2010** Ben Seager, the  
Chesterfield Mayfair

**2009** Ben Malpass,  
the Cavendish, London

**2008** Carly Taylor,  
Ston Easton Park

**2007** Felicity Wheeler,  
Four Seasons, London



## 2022 WINNER

# Linda Smith, Moonfleet Manor

Linda Smith has been awarded Front of House Manager of the Year in recognition of her passion and dedication to Moonfleet Manor hotel.

Smith is responsible for seven front of house employees across reception and the night team, and proved to the judges that she has a genuine willingness to further the success of the Weymouth hotel as a whole. As a head of department she is already accountable for guest experience, revenue, training and budgeting. She has a track record of going above and beyond her expansive remit, working towards greater cross-departmental collaboration, seamless operations and introducing a culture of stepping in herself to ensure the personal safety and wellbeing of her guests.

For example, when the child of a family staying at the hotel became unwell, Smith packed an overnight bag from their room, offered them a lift to the hospital, made them a snack, provided change for parking and a gift bag for the child on her return. They described Smith's conduct as "showing genuine care and compassion" and wrote a letter to the managing director to express their gratitude.

Even while the hotel is undergoing extensive refurbishment, which includes all bedrooms and public areas in the main Manor House, Smith has managed to maintain a hotel guest satisfaction score of 4.7 out of 5. She truly values team and guest feedback, which has empowered the day-to-day running of the hotel, something that her colleagues and seniors have picked up on.

Michelle Chilton, Smith's general manager, said: "Linda is someone who takes ownership of the hotel and wants all of our guests to have the most homely experience. Her level of commitment over the years and time dedicated to better Moonfleet has been invaluable, and we couldn't have done it without her. She man-

*"She truly deserves to be recognised as a leading light in our industry"*

**Thomas Agius Ferrante**

ages to always put the guest first, whilst ensuring her team are happy and looked after."

Smith, who has had over 20 years' experience in the industry, is particularly perceptive when it comes to training the next generation. She encourages team members to think creatively in their approach to dealing with challenges and has devised methods of rewarding team performance, such as hotel-based treats.

Her retention rates are especially impressive at a time when hospitality has been hit hard with staff shortages, as she has had zero staff turnover for several years. A recent employee survey revealed that 94% of her team know what is expected of them and that 82% have the chance to perform at their best every day.

She is also a frequent contributor to Moonfleet's wider strategy, having suggested and implemented third-party booking websites, a review of the hotel's banking procedures and developing a new seasonal package.

## WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

"Linda stood out in a highly competitive field. She places the guest experience at the heart of everything she does, and I suspect we shall hear a lot more about Linda in the coming years."

**Robert Richardson**

"The winner has it all! A true hospitality professional who has become a key member of her team. She truly deserves to be recognised as a leading light in our industry."

**Thomas Agius Ferrante**



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# Front of House Team of the Year

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## THE SHORTLIST

Christchurch Harbour  
Hotel & Spa

Fowey Hall

Kimpton Blythswood  
Square hotel

Belmond Le Manoir  
aux Quat'Saisons

The Ritz London

## PAST WINNERS

2021 Grove  
of Narberth,  
Pembrokeshire

2019 Bankside Hotel

2018 Soraia Lopez,  
Hotel Football

2017 The Milestone  
hotel, London

2016 Gleneagles  
hotel, Auchterarder,  
Perthshire

2015 Charlotte Street  
hotel, LondonHotel

2014 Macdonald  
Windsor Hotel

2013 Radisson Blu,  
Edinburgh

2012 Flemings Hotel,  
Mayfair London

2011 The Cavendish  
London

2010 Le Manoir aux  
Quat'Saisons

2009 Malmaison  
Hotel, Leeds

2008 Jurys Inn  
Manchester

2007 Rudding Park



## 2022 WINNER

# Fowey Hall

Delivering high standards of customer service in any hotel is about well-honed skills as well as understanding and anticipating guest needs. Teams must find creative ways to individualise service based on empathy and a genuine understanding of people.

The team at Fowey Hall have had to take on this challenge while welcoming guests who have arrived at what the hotel describes as a building site. They have had to overcome guests' first impressions, which have been tainted by builders, dumper trucks, scaffolding, noise and dirt. The fact that they have still managed to deliver on the business's brand promise speaks volumes for their adaptability, pride and purpose.

The Fowey Hall front of house team are the hub of the 36-bedroom hotel and the central focus for all guest communication, before, during and after their stay. They ensure that service standards are met, identify guest needs, respond to their concerns and ultimately seek to exceed all expectations.

During the construction phase at Fowey Hall, the team have called each guests personally to inform them and explain the extent of the building works being undertaken and what facilities are affected.

It hasn't been easy, particularly as times and dates have inevitably moved, meaning the team have constantly had to remain calm, professional and efficient when faced with the last-minute changes that can lead to difficult conversations with guests.

Despite these challenges, the front of house team have achieved a guest satisfaction score of 4.67 out of 5. In addition, the team works closely to upsell suitable products, driving incremental revenue at the business. To that end the front of house team manager introduced a commission-based upselling scheme,

“Managing to achieve excellent customer service while going through a major refurbishment is nothing short of remarkable”

**Thomas Agius Ferrante**

leading to an extra £8,000 of revenue within the first three months.

Like all other operators, Fowey Hall has experienced challenges with recruitment and retention. However, the front of house team has seen only a 9% labour turnover, with only one team member leaving to relocate to London and a front of house manager who left earlier this year to go to the Savoy.

During the busiest summer on record in Cornwall, and despite recruitment challenges at other hotels in the group, the front of house team at Fowey Hall supported other departments that were struggling in the hotel, often pitching in to ensure a smooth-running service at all times.

This team have been working together for a number of years and have built up a great working relationship. They clearly go above and beyond to look after one another inside and outside of work. As their nominator points out, they are a family of their own.

## WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

“Managing to achieve excellent customer service scores and upholding the ‘four pillars’ while going through a major refurbishment is nothing short of remarkable.”

**Thomas Agius Ferrante**



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# Hotel Chef of the Year (fewer than 250 covers)

Sponsored by Caterer.com

## THE SHORTLIST

**George Blogg**  
Gravetye Manor

**Will Holland**  
The Atlantic hotel

**Luke Matthews**  
Chewton Glen

## PAST WINNERS

**2021** Hrishikesh  
Desai, Gilpin, Cumbria

**2019** Lisa Goodwin-  
Allen, Northcote

**2018** Adam Smith,  
Coworth Park

**2017** André Garrett,  
Cliveden House,  
Taplow, Berkshire

**2016** Phil Carmichael,  
Berners Tavern at the  
London Edition

**2015** Matthew  
Tomkinson, the  
Montagu Arms hotel,  
Beaulieu, Hampshire

**2014** Steve Smith,  
Bohemia, St Helier,  
Jersey

**2013** Sam Moody,  
Bath Priory, Bath

**2012** Richard Allen,  
Grand Jersey Hotel  
and Spa

**2011** Adam  
Simmonds, Danesfield  
House Hotel and Spa,  
Marlow

**2010** Shay Cooper,  
the Bingham,  
Richmond

**2009** Kenny Atkinson,  
Seaham Hall Hotel and  
Serenity Spa

**2008** Simon Radley,  
the Chester Grosvenor  
and Spa

**2007** Hywel Jones,  
Lucknam Park



## 2022 WINNER

# George Blogg, Gravetye Manor

As executive head chef of Gravetye Manor, George Blogg has responsibility for all food offerings at the hotel and is an integral part of the senior head of department team.

He runs a 48 cover, Michelin-starred main restaurant, with a breakfast and all-day dining service as well as a standard restaurant service of up to 120 covers. This is achieved through the management team of 25 chefs and porters.

Blogg has recently celebrated eight years at Gravetye Manor, where he has developed the food offer to be one of the finest in the country. He has overseen the creation of the kitchen garden, which supplies over 60% of all the fruit and vegetables used at the hotel. This is done with care, attention and an eye on efficiency, too. For example, he has stopped growing micro cress and is instead putting efforts into growing outdoor perennials that flower and seed naturally. This provides more flavour intensity as well as a product that takes far less time to care for.

Meanwhile, Blogg has a firm hand on the business side and has turned his attention to average spend rather than number of diners. He has reduced dining covers from 65 per service to 48 and has still shown an increased revenue with much improved costs. He has also changed how the business records spend data in order to analyse it effectively, and has tweaked the order of service to show an increase in average spend.

Restaurant lunch guests are almost entirely made up of non-residents, demonstrating the appeal of the restaurant Blogg has worked so hard to develop, and menus change monthly to make the most of the constantly changing produce grown on-site. Non-resident dinner guests (an important KPI at the hotel) stand at 45%. With non-residents spending on average £30 more a head

“George has taken the culinary offering at Gravetye Manor to another level”

**Simon Young**

than those staying at the hotel, this growth has a significant impact.

In terms of his team, Blogg places great emphasis on mentoring chefs and encouraging them to develop. He mentored a chef de partie into the final of the Craft Guild of Chefs Graduate Awards, as well as guiding an NVQ level 3 apprentice to a distinction. He has also supported his head chef into the final of the Craft Guild of Chefs National Chef of the Year after a second place finish in 2021.

Staff retention rate is 80%, with the majority of those supported throughout the first lockdown still working in the kitchen. That impressive figure may be down to the four-day week Blogg introduced, with a 48-hour working contract as standard for all full-time employees. On top of that, his team is offered discounted gym memberships, coffee chats, late-night cinema trips and bowling competitions.

Blogg has also completed the first year of the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts Adopt a School programme at a local primary school, running three 1.5 hour classes to groups of children who were invited to the hotel for a tour and tasting. This is now set to be an annual event.

## WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

“George has taken the culinary offering at Gravetye Manor to another level. Not only has he retained both a Michelin star and four AA rosettes for a number of years, he also goes above and beyond with mentoring and training his team.”

**Simon Young**



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# Hotel Chef of the Year (more than 250 covers)

Sponsored by Bidfood

## THE SHORTLIST

**Adam Bateman**  
Grand Hotel  
Birmingham

**Dominic Teague**  
One Aldwych

## PAST WINNERS

**2021 Olivier Ruiz**, Park Plaza  
Westminster Bridge,  
London

**2019 Simon Attridge**,  
Gleneagles

**2018 Robert Bates**,  
the Belfry Hotel &  
Resort

**2017 Chris King**, the  
Langham London

**2016 Chris Wheeler**,  
Stoke Park Country  
Club, Spa & Hotel

**2015 Lewis Hamblet**,  
South Lodge

**2014 James Murphy**,  
Principal Hayley –  
Grand Central Hotel

**2013 Ryan Neill**, De  
Vere Cameron House  
on Loch Lomond

**2012 Nigel Boschetti**,  
JW Marriott  
Grosvenor House

**2011 Martyn Nail**,  
Claridge's

**2010 Steve Munkley**,  
Royal Garden hotel

**2009 Simon Young**,  
Jumeirah Carlton  
Tower Hotel

**2008 Anthony Marshall**, London  
Hilton  
on Park Lane

**2007 Henry Brosi**,  
The Dorchester



## 2022 WINNER

# Dominic Teague, One Aldwych

One Aldwych's executive chef Dominic Teague leads a team of 26 full-time chefs who deliver dining experiences throughout the 105-bedroom, five-AA-star hotel in London. This includes the hotel's Indigo restaurant, Downstairs at One Aldwych, and afternoon tea, banqueting and room service.

The hotel has long had a strong focus on sustainable sourcing and, as well as working hard with his suppliers to use the best of British produce, Teague has also created a gluten and dairy-free dining concept at Indigo. Not only is this creative – with a version of bread and butter that rivals the real thing – guests often don't realise anything is missing from their meal.

Teague has developed a new seasonal tasting menu series at Indigo that kicked off this autumn and celebrates local, seasonal produce. This will no doubt include dishes featuring the hotel's honey, which is generated through two beehives on the roof, alongside a herb garden also used by the kitchen team.

Teague oversees the delivery of 122,000 covers a year and manages all food costs and payroll and is responsible for recruitment, training, HR and development of all chefs. In fact, his influence extends beyond the kitchen to the front of house and reservations team, who are offered tastings on all new dishes to ensure they are trained to provide the best possible customer service.

This focus on training and nurturing has helped Teague achieve a low staff turnover of 8.7%. Meanwhile, he has restructured the hotel teams to eliminate double shifts and upskilled the team to be able to work both in Indigo and Downstairs at One. He has also created and recruited for two key roles – head chef and pastry chef – to elevate the creativity and assist in the management of the two

“Dominic demonstrates great leadership skills which shows in his low staff turnover”

**Simon Young**

kitchens. Teague has even filled operational gaps that would normally have been the responsibility of the front of house team, demonstrating his dedication to the wider business in the absence of a food and beverage manager and hotel manager during Covid.

When it comes to being creative, he has delighted guests, too. As well as a new afternoon tea to accompany the Indigo restaurant menu, Teague has relaunched the hotel's Charlie Afternoon Tea, which now operates 160 covers a day.

Adapting to changes in demand to drive down waste, Teague has also maintained payroll through sensible buying. He orders less more frequently, so rather than buying 50 lemons a week, he buys six per day. Menus have been adapted to increase variety too, allowing the team a regular outlet for their creativity.

He might have a great many covers to consider each day, but this is a chef that takes a granular approach to delivery, both for his guests and his team.

## WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

“Dominic demonstrates great leadership skills, which shows in his low staff turnover. He is a passionate chef who motivates his team through nurturing and training, while always looking at how he can bring something different to One Aldwych that is relevant and refreshing, such as the gluten- and dairy-free concept at Indigo.”

**Simon Young**





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# Hotel Restaurant Chef of the Year

Sponsored by Brakes

## THE SHORTLIST

### 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

## PAST WINNERS

### 2021

Jean-Philippe Blondet, Alain Ducasse at the Dorchester, London

### 2019

Calum Franklin, Holborn Dining Room, Rosewood London



## 2022 WINNER

### Chris Cleghorn, the Olive Tree restaurant, Bath

Chris Cleghorn is executive head chef at the 50-cover Olive Tree restaurant in Bath, part of the boutique Queensberry hotel. When he joined the kitchen in 2013 his ambition was to gain Bath's only Michelin star, and his drive saw the restaurant recognised with three AA rosettes in less than nine months. Due to Cleghorn's hard work, the coveted star followed in October 2018. As any chef knows, part of the challenge of a star is not just winning but maintaining the award, and Cleghorn has helped the venue keep its accolade for the past four years. He is scrupulous about working with the best producers in the south-west of England and carefully develops and refines the menu.

During the 2020 and 2021 coronavirus lockdowns a major fire destroyed the entire Olive Tree kitchen, and Cleghorn worked to help redesign the space to ensure it would benefit the team when it reopened.

He was promoted to executive head chef in January 2021 and his efforts helped the hotel break all financial records last year. This looks to be another bumper year, with revenue for the restaurant forecast to exceed £2m with an operating profit of £625,000.

The Olive Tree offers a nine-course evening tasting menu at £135 or six courses for £105, and guests can choose à la carte dishes from the tasting menus if they prefer. This approach has seen the average food spend in the restaurant rise by over 25% to a consistent £82 per head at dinner. At lunch, where Cleghorn has introduced a £70, four-course tasting menu, there has also been an increase in average spend to £55.

Staff retention is a big part of his work as executive head chef and he is determined to protect his team from burnout. This has seen the introduction of four-day work patterns for staff and

“[Chris has] shown creativity and innovation in the creation of new guest experiences”

**Sharon McArthur**

the restaurant becoming a Real Living Wage employer. The Olive Tree also closes for lunch and dinner for four weeks a year to give the team time to rest. Cleghorn's careful management has helped him balance overall payroll cost for the restaurant at 32% of turnover this year.

The chef has also acted as a mentor to the rising stars in his team. Jake Nicholls joined the restaurant as an apprentice in January 2018 and has been supported through his level 2 NVQ, with Cleghorn teaching him how to run every section of the kitchen and the management details behind running the restaurant. This led to Nicholls being promoted to head chef in July aged just 23.

Our judges said the low staff turnover at the restaurant and its financial achievements were a testament to Cleghorn's abilities as a leader in what has been a very tough year for hospitality, making him a worthy winner of this award.

## WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

“Coming back from Covid was difficult enough for most of us, but to add in a kitchen fire requires strength of character that Chris clearly possesses. Through it all, he has taken care of and developed his team and continuously shown creativity and innovation in the creation of new guest experiences. I particularly love his involvement with the colleges, schools and Bath Rugby Foundation.”

**Sharon McArthur**



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# Hotel Restaurant Manager of the Year

Sponsored by Bidfood

## THE SHORTLIST

### Eleanor Bristow

Adam Reid at the French, the Midland Manchester

### Antonino Forte

Galvin at Windows

### Paul Popescu

Radisson Hotel Group

## PAST WINNERS

**2021** Emma Lonie, the Balmoral, Edinburgh

**2019** Devid Isabella, the Goring

**2018** Leni Miras, the Colony Grill Room at the Beaumont

**2017** Luigi Cagnin, the Ritz London

**2016** Rebecca Galland, the Vineyard, Stockcross, Berkshire

**2015** Sarah Holden, the Pig near Bath

**2014** Davide Durante, the Bingham, Richmond

**2013** Andrew Sicklin, Galvin at Windows, London

**2012** Michele Caggianese, Jumeirah Carlton Tower London

**2011** Mark Bevan, the Chester Grosvenor

**2010** Diana Gailiunaite, Docklands Bar and Grill

**2009** Marc Whitley, River Bar and Restaurant, the Lowry

**2008** Loris Lucchini, the Chesterfield Mayfair

**2007** Nicolas Roulier, Seaham Hall Serenity Spa



## 2022 WINNER

### Eleanor Bristow, Adam Reid at the French, the Midland Manchester

The judges described Eleanor Bristow of Adam Reid at the French as an “all-round superstar” who has shown “true leadership in challenging times”.

She is a restaurant manager that takes the initiative and leads by example, expanding her role to encompass bookings and customer relations management as well as business management.

Working with chef patron Adam Reid, Bristow has developed a business model with a focus on lower covers and higher spend, allowing the business to operate with a smaller team with more training and development for less experienced employees.

In building her team Bristow worked to recognise their individual strengths and tailor their roles to allow them to shine and deliver the best experience for the guest. She has fully embraced the mantra that attitude and enthusiasm will allow a team to be built from the bottom up. This can be seen in the hiring of an 18-year-old chef de rang on the basis of personality and attitude. The chef is now managing his own section and wine flight as well as training new team members.

The restaurant’s assistant manager had very little experience when joining Adam Reid at the French, but is now assisting with managing the cellar and has taken charge of the wine service, thanks to Bristow’s guidance and support.

She has also developed a shorter, more accessible menu to attract guests mid-week, leading to an increase in bookings on Wednesdays and Thursdays and an uptick in mid-week sales of a staggering 87%.

The flexibility to introduce new initiatives to drive profitability can also be seen in Bristow’s management of the booking system and she will open extra bookings in busier periods when staffing allows to elongate a service.

“She is an amazing asset to the restaurant”

**Jean-Philippe Blondet**

She has also developed a bespoke procurement system for the restaurant outside of the Midland Manchester hotel where it resides, which allows the restaurant to be more agile in its own cost management and ordering.

Her commitment to the restaurant and team also saw her voluntarily establishing of Menubox by Adam Reid, a home delivery operation, during the pandemic, co-ordinating the delivery service and developing a website, artwork and branding.

Her team said she goes above and beyond for both colleagues and guests, who she ensures receive a world-class welcome. She is recognised as ‘the face’ of Adam Reid at the French and has helped the restaurant maintain four AA rosettes and a Michelin recommendation.

## WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

“The entry shouted out ‘all-round superstar!’ Fantastic performance for evolving the role that has an impact on every aspect of the business.”

**Leni Miras**

“Eleanor has shown true leadership in these challenging times, creating solutions to both the industry staffing shortage and increased costs.”

**Simon Girling**

“Eleanor seems to be a multi-tasking individual with a great understanding of the business and real passion for the industry. She is an amazing asset to the restaurant.”

**Jean-Philippe Blondet**





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# Hotel Restaurant Team of the Year

Sponsored by Davidson Asset Management

## THE SHORTLIST

The Gallivant

Kimpton Blythswood Square hotel

The Ritz London

## THE JUDGES

2021 The Bridge and the Vicarage, Flat Cap Hotels, Cheshire

2019 Glenapp Castle

2018 Holborn Dining Room

2017 Ham Yard, London

2016 The Balmoral, Edinburgh

2015 Charlotte Street Hotel, London

2014 Northcote, Langho, Lancashire

2013 The Montague on the Gardens, London

2012 The Dining Room at the Goring, London

2011 Chino Latino Restaurant, Park Plaza Riverbank, London

2010 Brasserie Max, Covent Garden Hotel, London

2009 Simon Girling, the Ritz London

2008 John Mackle, the Granary Beekeeper and Peterborough (Ferry Meadows) Premier Inn

2007 Chris Galvin, London Hilton on Park Lane



## 2022 WINNER

# The Ritz London

In one of the most beautiful dining rooms in the world, the Ritz London's restaurant team serve immaculately presented, classic dishes using the best of British produce, while showcasing dazzling traditional service skills.

Executive chef John Williams and head chef Spencer Metzger continue to build on the principles and beliefs of Auguste Escoffier, drawing inspiration from classic dishes and making them relevant to today's diner. Similarly, restaurant manager Luigi Cagnin and his team consistently showcase the very highest level of technical expertise and personalised service.

The team has maintained its high standards despite the industry's staffing crisis and the challenges presented by the pandemic and Brexit. This has been in no small part due to the successful retention of team members, with eight senior people having been with the team for more than 10 years and Cagnin for more than 15.

Team members receive weekly service skills and guéridon training as well as regular workshops in Champagne, spirits, wine, cocktails and cheese. Menu tastings are held and team members partake in competitor site visits and experiences to build their knowledge.

Alongside maintaining skill levels to continue the table-side demonstration of dishes, such as canard à la presse and crêpe Suzette, the team has collaborated to develop and improve, for example by transforming the breakfast operation to an entirely à la carte offering, involving a complete overhaul of the menu and order of service.

Cost increases have necessitated price rises but the team have striven to ensure guests continue to receive value for money through new experiences and menus, a focus on wine service, increased tableside interaction, the creation of tea trolley and an entertainment offering on Friday and Saturday evenings.

"It is obvious that they look after one another and that there is a real focus on the guest experience"

**Leni Miras**

Bespoke events have also given the team an opportunity to showcase their skills and entice new diners, with a BBC Big Band gala dinner celebrating Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee priced at £750 a head selling out within 12 hours. Their efforts have delivered financial rewards with revenue exceeding budgets and average spend increasing by £20 during lunch and £80 during dinner. The team has also increased its involvement with marketing, working with the Ritz London's director of communication to create social media content.

This success can be seen not only in the retention of the Ritz London's Michelin star and four AA rosettes, but in the multitude of awards its team members have been finalists in and in some cases won in the last 12 months. It can now add a Hotel Catey to its bulging trophy cabinet.

## WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

"The Ritz London's people really make the difference on a day-to-day basis. The recognitions of the past years are clearly showing the improvement in service they are looking for."

**Jean-Philippe Blondet**

"A restaurant that works like clockwork demands real teamwork. It is obvious that they look after one another and that there is a real focus on the guest experience. Well done!"

**Leni Miras**





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# Housekeeper of the Year

Sponsored by P&G Professional

## THE SHORTLIST

Nicoleta Loredana,  
Royal National hotel

Adriana Milea,  
The Ritz London

Gosia Oszkiel  
The Grand Brighton

Diane Payne,  
Rockliffe Hall

Lisa Williams, the  
Grand York

## PAST WINNERS

2021 KK Prabakaran,  
Dukes London

2019 Tzveta Ivanova,  
the Milestone Hotel &  
Residences, London

2018 Fernanda Telatin  
Lewis, the Goring,  
London

2017 Amelia  
Lawrence, the Grove,  
Chandler's Cross,  
Hertfordshire

2016 Jane Steel, Luton  
Hoo Hotel, Golf & Spa,  
Luton, Bedfordshire

2015 Margo van  
der Werf, Lancaster  
London

2014 Joanna Patek,  
Hilton London  
Heathrow Airport  
Terminal 5

2013 David Smith,  
Park Plaza London  
Riverbank, and Plaza  
on the River, London

2012 Lesley Skelt,  
Coworth Park, Ascot

2011 Jude Gallacher,  
Headland hotel,  
Newquay, Cornwall

2010 Barbara  
Sheridan, Thistle  
Marble Arch, London



## 2022 WINNER

# Lisa Williams, the Grand York

Our judges said the Housekeeper of the Year category was especially difficult to judge due to a large number of very high-quality entries, but Lisa Williams was recognised as someone who has “flown the flag” for the role for many years.

The Grand York is York’s only five-star hotel and features 207 bedrooms, a spa, gym, fine dining restaurant, cookery school, bar and seven meeting and event spaces for up to 150 guests. As executive housekeeper Williams is responsible for a team of 63, who oversee the cleanliness and the whole property. She has spent 32 years in the hospitality industry, 12 rising through the ranks and 20 in an executive housekeeper role, making her an expert at training and nurturing a successful team.

Williams is passionate about employee development and, since joining the Grand, three of her team have been promoted and she has also welcomed six different students on placement across 2021/22. Under her guidance there is now a monthly housekeeping lottery where two winners receive £500 each for their hard work and dedication. Williams also runs housekeeping appreciation weeks and offers the team gifts and treats to keep morale high, especially during stressful periods.

These initiatives, as well as offering staff flexi-hours and running monthly welfare chats, has meant Williams’ team at the hotel has remained fully staffed at a time many others in the industry were suffering recruitment issues.

To ensure the hotel stays up to five-star standards, she runs weekly refresher sessions with her team, who have all been given training in communication skills from Impact London.

The success of her management style has paid off in a flurry of five-star TripAdvisor reviews and an internal guest satisfaction survey, which showed the housekeeping team received scores of 91.51 while working through

“Lisa is a champion of best practice in mental health and wellbeing”

Liz Smith-Mills

the busiest months in the Grand’s history. It also helped the hotel win the 2022 Catey award for Hotel of the Year – Group.

As an important member of the UK Housekeepers Association (UKHA), Williams attends monthly meetings with other key housekeeping personnel across the country to discuss industry trends, struggles and successes. She is seen as a mentor and hosted the first UKHA post-Covid at the Grand.

The hotel said Williams had an ethos of “doing the right thing” and her community work has included helping people who have served prison sentences back into the workplace at the Grand. She is also a volunteer for the Menopause Focus Group and is in the process of becoming a member of Hospitality Action.

Our judges were highly impressed with her management style and said Williams was clearly a champion for mental wellbeing in the workplace.

## WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

“Recruitment and retention of staff in York is challenging, but Lisa has overcome this and works hard to retain a strong in-house team.”

Ian Hughes

“Lisa is a champion of best practice in mental health and wellbeing, and continues to promote and highlight housekeeping and hospitality as a wonderful career choice.”

Liz Smith-Mills



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# People Manager of the Year

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## THE SHORTLIST

**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

## PAST WINNERS

**2021** Caroline  
Harrison, Luxury  
Family Hotels

**2019** Anita Bower,  
Iconic Luxury Hotels

**2018** Lindsay  
Southward, Malmaison  
& Hotel du Vin Group

**2017** David Morison,  
Jumeirah Carlton  
Tower and Jumeirah  
Lowndes hotels,  
London

**2016** Tristan Knight,  
Rosewood London

**2015** Aideen  
Whelehan, Lancaster  
London

**2014** Mike Williams,  
De Vere Hotels &  
Village Urban Resorts

**2013** Julia Murrell,  
Belmond Le Manoir  
aux Quat'Saisons,  
Great Milton,  
Oxfordshire

**2012** Sarah Banner,  
the Cavendish London

**2011** Ros Young,  
ABode Hotels

**2010** Della Fanning,  
the Marylebone,  
London

**2009** Liz McGivern,  
Red Carnation Hotels

**2008** Sean Wheeler,  
Malmaison and Hotel  
du Vin

**2007** Helen Kalyan,  
Novotel London West



## 2022 WINNER

# James Goulding, PPHE Hotel Group

James Goulding's accomplishments are well-known in the world of HR and phrases such as "this is James's year," and "he's achieved an incredible amount," were banded around on the judging day. Goulding's remit includes 2,150 employees across 10 hotels under PPHE Hotel Group, including at Battersea Power Station under the art'otel brand, opening in 2023.

Goulding leads a team of 35 HR professionals in the UK and has rebuilt this team from one of nine in January 2021. Having foreseen the difficult labour market conditions after Covid and Brexit, he developed new strategies and reorganised his team to be able to meet these demands.

The journey began with a new approach to recruitment and the creation of a new recruitment team as the first point of contact with candidates. This was intended to improve the candidate experience and ensure that anyone not suitable for one job is considered for another. A focus on proactive searches and events mitigated a decline in average numbers of applications per vacancy, while also saving agency and advertising costs. Recruiters were created from hotel specialists, lending them credibility. Goulding then moved the recruitment team into a dedicated recruitment centre, enabling walk-ins and a job centre-style brokerage service. While managers still have a final say on who they hire, the recruiters are now averaging around 50 hires per month.

To support the centralised recruitment strategy and to avoid internal competition, rates of pay were standardised for all common job roles. Holiday entitlements were increased by two days per employee, and a retention bonus was also introduced for those who remained for 12 months. To improve the retention of new hires, the onboarding process was completely redesigned, with the term 'probation

"James epitomises hospitality in everything he does"

**Caroline Harrison**

period' replaced with 'onboarding' as part of an initiative to use more positive wording.

During the onboarding process, a centralised session was created for all London locations running twice a week with a third session on Saturdays to accommodate the growing numbers of students being recruited. The entire morning of the first day is spent with the line manager, who can personalise how the time is spent to suit the specific needs of the new team member. The introduction of a learning management system has also meant a classroom-based session can be about the company and culture, and compliance training has gone online. A survey is now completed at the end of the onboarding period, which has shown 93% employee satisfaction with the process. Retention at three months has improved by 20%.

In the space of 12 months, how PPHE finds, recruits, onboards, rewards, and trains its people has changed, all led by Goulding.

## WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

"This was an exceptional entry with James showing tremendous leadership alongside a highly impressive approach. His relentless dedication sets a benchmark, and his passion and commitment has had an impact at both corporate and operational level. James epitomises hospitality in everything he does."

**Caroline Harrison**



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# People Team of the Year

Sponsored by mum

## THE SHORTLIST

The Belfry  
Hotel & Resort

Dakota Hotels

The Hari

Belmond Le Manoir  
aux Quat'Saisons

Splendid  
Hospitality Group

## PAST WINNERS

2021

Red Carnation Hotels

2019

Aviator by Tag

2018

The Ned

2017

Firmdale Hotels

2016

The London Edition

2015

Red Carnation Hotel  
Collection

2014

Dorchester Collection

2013

Hilton London  
Heathrow Airport  
Terminal 5

2012

Dorchester Collection

2011

Royal Garden Hotel  
London

2010

Jumeirah Hotels

2009

The Berkeley, London

2008

The Dorchester,  
London



## 2022 WINNER

# Dakota Hotels

The people team at Dakota is responsible for the management of 550 Dakota employees across five hotels in Manchester, Leeds, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Motherwell. As well as the people working in each site, this also includes HR apprentices, regional heads, a head of engagement, learning and development and a human resources director.

All members of the department have worked within the company in various operational roles, so the people team has an in-depth knowledge of how the group works across all departments.

The hotel group has a history of low staff turnover, with the average length of service at 2.5 years. It is a keen advocate of professional development and encourages and supports more than 10% of its people to undertake apprenticeships or further education programmes.

The appointment of a head of engagement, learning and development in 2022 has meant that the focus is on the internal Dakota Academy. Training is delivered in various forms to best meet the needs of the individual, including internal workshops covering department-specific training and e-learning, as well as external training courses from the Wine & Spirit Educational Trust, Institution of Occupational Safety and Health [IOSH], and professional qualifications from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, Scottish Vocational Qualifications and apprenticeships. There is further internal career coaching in the shape of the Coaching Club, a programme that pairs individuals from different roles and locations together.

In addition to annual appraisals, the people team has created the Rising Star programme, which consists of a personal development programme and a 24-month training

“The team is clearly striving to inspire younger generations”

**Caroline Harrison**

plan. This scheme has seen 26 team members achieve new roles through a personalised focus on development.

In January 2022, Dakota launched its first formalised employee voice platform, Team Table Talks, which allows the team to have their say on all matters in the working environment, as well as plan team lunches and Christmas parties. This initiative has supported retention with average turnover now sitting at 4% group-wide.

In May 2022, an employee survey showed that 93% of Dakota employees rated the company as having a very good communication rate, 96% classed it as a very good or good workplace and 92% were highly likely or likely to recommend a friend to working at Dakota.

The people team at Dakota is also committed to charity and the community and works with Manchester-based ReachOut, a mentoring charity working with young people in disadvantaged communities, Walk for Wellbeing with Hospitality Action, and as part of the Living Wage City Region Action Group.

## WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

“The HR team at Dakota has demonstrated an outstanding approach to an inclusive and constantly evolving people culture. The team is clearly striving to inspire younger generations, whilst supporting communities and delivering a strong welfare strategy.”

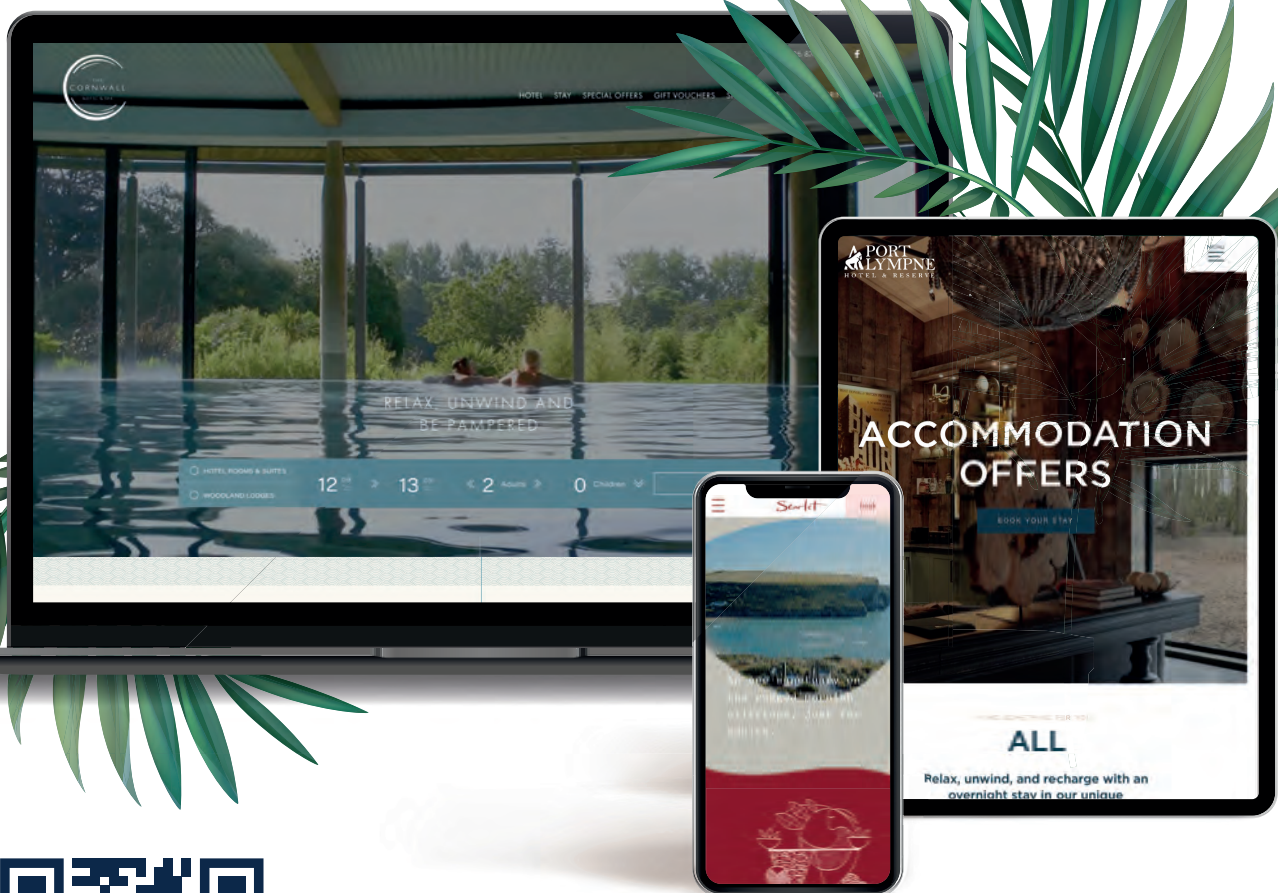
**Caroline Harrison**



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# Revenue Manager Award

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## THE SHORTLIST

Gretal Canda, the  
Royal Crescent Hotel  
& Spa

Sara Dufton, the  
Belfry Hotel & Resort

Teresa Kingston,  
Rockcliffe Hall Hotel

Bianca Peter, Waldorf  
Astoria Edinburgh –  
The Caledonian

## PAST WINNERS

2021

Jane Bateup, The  
Grand Brighton and  
Richmond Hill Hotels

2019

Karen Tyson, Rudding  
Park

2018

Amy Ayers, Holiday  
Inn Winchester

2017

Rachel Perry, Radisson  
Blu Edinburgh

2016

Olga Sommer, Ham  
Yard, London

2015

Catherine Bernard,  
director of revenue,  
Lancaster London

2014

Helle Norgaard  
Beattie, Revenue  
Manager UK, Hyatt  
Regency London - the  
Churchill



## 2022 WINNER

### Teresa Kingston, Rockcliffe Hall Hotel

From nurturing her team culture and re-evaluating price points, to rebuilding and re-designing the hotel's website, Teresa Kingston's commercial influence has been instrumental to delivering record-breaking revenue and EBITDA for Rockcliffe Hall.

Since July 2021 Kingston and her team have been instrumental in delivering all time revenue records for Rockcliffe Hall. This has been achieved by having the correct pricing, PR and marketing strategies in place and building a great team culture and continuously investing in her people.

Creating the right commercial culture is key to Kingston's success. She recognises talent and mentors key team members to be commercially aware, working closely, not just with her team of 14, but across the whole resort, empowering every member of the team and giving them the freedom to brighten someone's day with special touches and spontaneous gestures.

As the commercial director, Kingston also oversees the marketing team which historically was a separate department in a completely different office to sales. Kingston has now bought the teams physically together which helps the sales department understand how to reach new guests through social media practices, and for the marketing team to be aligned with sales targets. Alongside the marketing manager, Kingston took the lead on developing Rockcliffe Hall's new website, creating a fully immersive online booking experience for guests, which was fully mobile optimised and will soon integrate with the hotel's spa software to encourage treatment upsells at the time of booking. Judges commended Kingston taking on a project, which could easily have been a full-time role to oversee. Since launching the website in Decem-

“Her commercial influence is clear to see in the user-friendly website”

Jane Bateup

ber, the hotel has achieved 113.3% increase in revenue, as well as little digital nudges which have encouraged guests to choose mid-range rooms, rather than the entry-level rooms, which increases average room rate.

Re-evaluating the hotel's competitor set was another large project to undertake which led to her introducing a new room rate strategy to come in-line with other hotels in their market segment. She introduced seasonality, new BAR rates, re-evaluated room types and upgrade costs and introduced LOS restrictions over key dates while simplifying the available rates on sale.

Kingston also supports local charities, she has taken part in the local CEO sleepout twice to support local homeless charities, donated items to the local NHS and was fundamental in our 12 days of giving supporting local charities.

## WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

“Teresa has brought together a successful commercial team and has led them to the successes the hotel is achieving. She recognises talent and mentors key team members to be commercially aware, increasing revenues significantly in all areas of the hotel. Teresa played a key role in project managing the research, build and implementation of the hotel's website. Her commercial influence is clear to see in the user-friendly website that is tailored towards the guest experience whilst maximising on upselling all of the hotel's facilities and securing incremental revenues.”

Jane Bateup





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\*User research conducted in UK, Germany and France among office workers and restaurant visitors during April 2022.



# Spa Professional of the Year

Sponsored by Tork

## THE SHORTLIST

**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**

## PAST WINNERS

**2021 Amanda Hardy, Serenity Spa**

**2019 Sally Pedder, the Dorchester**

**2018 Lesley Bacon, Hand Picked Hotels**

**2017 Leon Trayling, Principal Hotels**

**2016 Cathy Ball, the Calcot Collection**

**2015 Lucy Mingo, Headland Hotel and Spa**

**2014 Kerry Hudson, Chewton Glen Hotel & Spa**

**2013 Anna Williams, Stoke Park Country Club, Spa and Hotel,**

**2012 Gemma Hulme, Cottons Hotel and Spa**

**2011 Liz Holmes, Rockliffe Hall**

**2010 Hannah Henley, Donnington Valley Hotel & Spa**

**2009 Kerry Hole, SPA SPC**

**2008 Nicola Williams, Birmingham Malmaison / Birmingham HDV**



## 2022 WINNER

### Finlay Anderson, IHG Hotels and Resorts

Judges struggled to choose from the extremely high standards from this year's Spa Professional of the Year nominations. The eventual winner is not only a great manager, but judges said they had a true understanding of the spa and wellness industry, as well as fresh, forward-thinking ideas to integrate new trends into the hotel's offering.

Finlay Anderson looks after seven leisure clubs and spas within the IHG managed estate including Kimpton Blythswood Square, Kimpton Charlotte Square and voco St David's Cardiff, which contribute £2m profit to the group annually. Across his portfolio, the spas are operating at a 40% profit margin, 2% ahead of the market average and 5% ahead of when he took over, demonstrating Anderson's sound commercial awareness. His business acumen led him to personally set up the IHG Spa and Leisure central reservations team in 2022 after carrying out an analysis of ways to improve guest booking experience and team productivity.

Over the last two years Anderson has also introduced new revenue streams by launching cutting-edge treatments such as developing CBD, sound therapy and biophilia, with the latter being non-therapist led treatments thus allowing increased revenue generation despite the challenging recruitment issues felt throughout the industry. Anderson is also incredibly passionate about the carbon footprint of the spas and leisure centres and spends time personally selecting sustainable and responsible products.

Judges greatly admired how down-to-earth this year's winner was, from making sure he spends time with his family and two-year-old collie Mac, to being hands-on with his management of the spas. He is also passionate about music and when the main restaurant at Blythswood needed a change of direction Fin-

**"He is ahead of the game"**

**Cathy Ball**

lay played a key part by helping re-imagine the music concept and has gone on to select the music style and hand pick the DJs who perform each week. He even often plays himself on a Saturday afternoon to help set the tone and entertain weekend guests.

Training and development is incredibly important to him. His drive for continuous improvement and succession planning has resulted in more than 20 of the current management and supervisory team members being promoted internally into their current roles thanks to the training and personal development plans that he conducted with them. He devotes time each day to spending with team members for on job training sessions or coaching role-playing scenarios. Colleagues praise his amazing drive and unphased approach which has created a wonderful culture of fun, professionalism and trust both with direct reports but also with product partners to provide training as and when required.

His passion for the field cannot be denied, and combined with his creativity, management skills and hands-on approach, he is a well-deserving winner of this year's award.

## WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

"Finlay stood out in this category as a manager who understands spa and wellness and is reshaping seven leisure clubs and spas to deliver a truly meaningful wellness experience. He is sharing his vision at industry events but is still happy to do the hands on stuff. He is ahead of the game."

**Cathy Ball**





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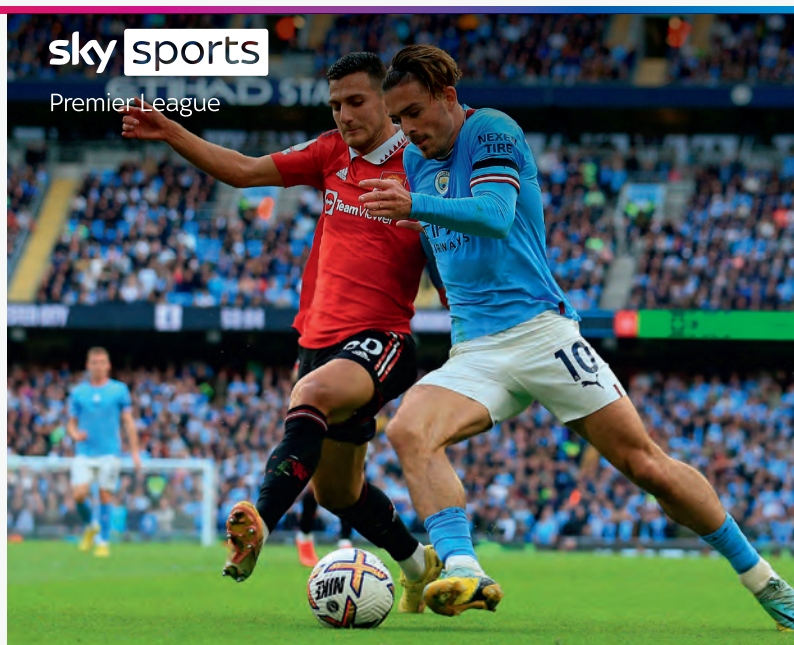
The Northman

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The White Lotus S2



**sky sports**

Premier League

\*Source: Dynata Hotel Guest Research May 2022. The Northman © 2022 by Focus Features LLC and Monarchy Enterprises S.a.r.l. The White Lotus S2 © Home Box Office, Inc. All rights reserved. HBO® and all related programs are the property of Home Box Office, Inc. Content and channel availability is dependent on your Sky agreement. Sky Select: 36 month minimum term applies. Installation and subscription costs apply. Compatible HD ready TV's required. Content and scheduling is correct at time of print 09.11.22 and is subject to change. Further terms apply.

# Sustainable Hotel of the Year

Sponsored by Sky

## THE SHORTLIST

Heckfield Place

Belmond Le Manoir  
aux Quat'Saisons

Room2 Chiswick

## PAST WINNERS

2021 Raithwaite  
Sandsend

2019 The Langham,  
London

2018 Jonathan Kaye,  
Cedar Manor Hotel

2017 The Oakley  
Court, Windsor

2016 Battlesteads,  
Wark on Tyne

2015 Hub by Premier  
Inn, London

2014 Red Carnation  
Hotels

2013 The Savoy,  
London

2012 Lancaster  
London

2011 Battlesteads,  
Wark on Tyne

2010 Langdale Hotel  
& Spa

2009 One Aldwych

2008 Bedruthan  
Steps Hotel

2007 Novotel  
London West



## 2022 WINNER

# Heckfield Place

This year the standard of entries for the sustainable hotel category was particularly high, but judges said Heckfield Place stood out for its unique efforts.

The luxury 45-bedroom Hampshire hotel occupies a building that was once a Georgian family home and employs 151 people across its 438-acre estate. The property dates back to the 1760s and, upon reopening in 2021, the hotel team was on a mission to ensure the business was sustainable for the next 250 years.

This 'war on waste' has seen surplus food taken from the hotel restaurants and served in the staff canteen, ultimately creating healthier meals for the team and reducing the amount that would have gone to landfill by 50%. Since June 2022 the hotel has used an ECO300 processor to dehydrate food waste and turn it into a protein-rich byproduct that can be used to enrich garden soil. Now, 100% of food waste is used as a soil additive or compost, a reduction of up to 700kg a week.

In the past year, Heckfield Place has begun converting all its surplus kitchen oil into bio-diesel on-site to be used in its vehicles and farm equipment. This has saved approximately 1,700 litres from going unused and being disposed of. All lighting has been switched to a central system that uses timers and motion, and 90% of the hotel bulbs are now LED, resulting in a 35% reduction in energy consumption per room per night year-on-year.

Over 70,000 litres of water a day are extracted from the hotel's bore hole and rooms have low-flow taps to ensure efficient usage by guests. Timers have been installed on the bathroom underfloor heating to reduce run-time by a third, which has saved the hotel over £14,000 per year, and thermostats have been installed on towel rails to reduce their electricity consumption by 50%, saving £27,508 per year.

"We applaud their housekeeping team for their creativity"

**Debra Patterson**

The on-site organic Home Farm and Market Garden have helped the hotel take a more holistic approach to food production. In January 2021, the Market Garden achieved biodynamic certification from the Biodynamic Association, which saw the completion of a three-year conversion to create a "closed loop" approach to farming.

In the past year alone, the team has planted around 4,400 metres of mixed native hedging to prevent soil being lost from the garden, but to also promote biodiversity, while 385 sq m of wildflowers have been planted in its fields.

Staff are also looking at ways to reuse items and the housekeeping team has used old linens to create shower caps, cot protectors and laundry bags, which has so far saved 40 sheets and nine duvets from going to landfill. The hotel is also looking at bringing in a resident glass blower to turn bottle waste into art.

## WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

"The winning entry was of an exceptionally high standard and has been long associated with sustainability. In the last three years, the business has taken this to another level, which sets it apart from the competition."

**Zoe Jenkins**

"We applaud their housekeeping team for their creativity and its unique initiative of turning old linen into shower caps – we would like to try this!"

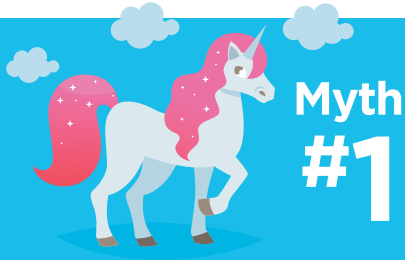
**Debra Patterson**





# 4 Myths that keep hospitality organizations stuck with limiting revenue management tools

Whether you're sick of your current revenue management system (RMS) or just casually considering other options, don't let these myths scare you away from switching to a more effective solution.



## Myth #1

### It's too costly to install a new revenue management system

While there are costs to adopting a more advanced RMS, there are also costs to sticking with the status quo.

If your current system causes you to miss out on gains because it can't produce accurate room-level pricing, then your business could miss out on higher, long-term profits.

## Myth #2

### Learning a new RMS will take too much time & effort for my thinly stretched team

Many teams experience a slight but short-lived decline in overall efficiency when switching to a new software solution.

But even with limited staff, onboarding a new RMS has never been *faster or easier* thanks to self-paced learning and automation.



## Myth #3

### It will take too long for a new RMS to make an impact

But a more advanced RMS can make an immediate difference.

It continuously adjusts, learns, and applies pricing models that maximize revenue without any oversight or programming.

Having learned from thousands of hotels and resorts, a holistic RMS constantly improves its forecasts as it goes along.

## Myth #4

### It's easier to stick with my current RMS

Are you really making your job easier if you're constantly reprogramming rules for your pricing tool?

In the long term, you take on extra work that you could avoid by using a true automated system.

Switching to an RMS that produces insights and makes price changes without prompting will save you time in the long run.



## Here's what's *not* a myth

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# Extra Mile Award

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## PAST WINNERS

**2021** John Angus,  
Switch Hospitality  
Management

**2019** Aaron Patterson,  
Hambleton Hall

**2018** Mandarin  
Oriental Hyde Park  
London

**2017** Edward Bracken,  
Crowne Plaza London  
Kensington

**2016** Crowne Plaza  
Leeds team

**2015** Chris Penn,  
Ace Hotel London  
Shoreditch

**2014** Sylla 'Amara'  
Ibrahima, Park Plaza  
County Hall London

**2013** David Mead-  
Male, Royal Crescent  
hotel, Bath

**2012** The Langstone  
Hotel and South  
Downs College,  
Hampshire

**2011** Veronica  
Kingham, Village hotel,  
Maidstone

**2010** Fiona Simm,  
Crowne Plaza  
Cambridge

**2009** Gary Gateley,  
Holiday Inn London  
Bloomsbury

**2008** Gloucester  
East (Barnwood)  
Premier Inn

**2007**  
Paula Middleton,  
Premier Inn



## 2022 WINNER

### Jonathan Raggett

The winner of this year's award has literally gone the extra mile. Jonathan Raggett has done it while taking on one of the greatest sporting challenges, pushing himself to the limit to complete the full Tour de France route in aid of Cure Leukaemia.

The Red Carnation managing director was one of 25 amateur cyclists who took on a challenge to raise £1m for Cure Leukaemia. They cycled the 21 stages, covering this year's grueling 3,500km one week ahead of the professional race. The charity bills it as the closest experience to a pro-cycling team that you will find.

Raggett smashed his fundraising efforts for this arduous task, personally raising £56,000 against a target of £30,000. All money raised has been invested into the national Trials Acceleration Programme, which runs clinical trials for pioneering treatments for leukaemia and will significantly increase the number of people given access to potentially life-saving treatments.

Raggett told *The Caterer* ahead of the challenge: "It's over 21 days and we will do exactly the same route as the pros. It's a huge challenge. I've done the Etape du Tour, which is one of the more difficult mountain stages, but it's one day. After doing that, I could hardly walk. Now I need to do that 21 times."

Raggett was inspired to take part by leukaemia survivor and former footballer Geoff Thomas, who will form part of the Cure Leukaemia team, as well as his own experience with blood cancer.

"When I was in my mid 20s I had a fiancé who got leukaemia," he said. "She had a bone marrow transplant but sadly passed. If she had contracted it now, modern-day medicine would have saved her, so I want to help contribute to furthering that research.

"Leukaemia is still out there, so if I can help

"Anything Jonathan applies himself to, he succeeds at"

**Danny Pecorelli**

some people in some way, it's a great thing to be able to do. I'm mentally strong but I'm an average cyclist. I know consultant chef Hayden Groves did it, but there's quite a gulf between our abilities. There will be a lot of blood, sweat and tears to complete it."

Needless to say, the tenacious hotelier completed the challenge, raising an outstanding amount of money in the process.

Exclusive Collection managing director Danny Pecorelli said of the achievement: "Anything Jonathan applies himself to, he succeeds at. If it's running a world-class hotel group with exceptional service and people at its heart or if it's the herculean task of raising an incredible amount of money for charity and taking on the Tour de France, he achieves it. All with an amazing sense of humour and humility."

Andrew Stembridge, executive director at Iconic Luxury Hotels, added: "Jonathan's is certainly no stranger to the saddle, having already cycled hundreds of miles alongside many industry peers, raising thousands of pounds for our most deserved industry charities.

"Cycling the Tour de France was, however, a challenge beyond the realms of any ordinary hotelier and the commitment he demonstrated is testament to Jonathan's strength of character and the exceptional lengths he is prepared to go to, to support incredible causes."





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# Outstanding Contribution Award

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## PAST WINNERS

2021

Peter Hancock

2019

Sean Wheeler

2018

Jonathan Slater,  
Oddfellows Hotels

2017

David Morgan-Hewitt,  
the Goring hotel

2016

Robin Sheppard,  
Bespoke Hotels

2015

Philip Newman Hall,  
Belmond Le Manoir  
aux Quat'Saisons

2014

Robin Hutson, Lime  
Wood Group and  
Home Grown Hotels

2013

Patrick Dempsey  
Whitbread Hotels &  
Restaurants

2012

Paul Gayler, The  
Lanesborough

2011

Gordon Campbell  
Gray, Campbell Gray  
Hotels

2010

Alan Parker, Whitbread

2009

Willy Bauer, AB Hotels

2008

John Williams, The Ritz  
London

2007

Grant Hearn,  
Travelodge



## 2022 WINNER

### Craig Bancroft, managing director, Northcote

Craig Bancroft took his first job as a kitchen porter at the Kensington Close hotel before joining the Trusthouse Forte management trainee scheme. He served as a chef at London's Grosvenor House hotel and the two Michelin-starred Plaza Athénée in Paris, followed by trainee roles at the five-star Browns and Westbury hotels in London.

After stints at London's Regent Palace Piccadilly and Strand Palace and Yorkshire's Beverley Arms hotel and with just six months training left to complete, Bancroft was lured to the (then) unimpressive Northcote Manor in December 1983 as general manager. One of his first moves was to bring Nigel Haworth on board as head chef in March 1984 with Haworth and Bancroft going on to purchase Northcote outright in 1989.

Following the change in senior management with Haworth relinquishing his role from chef-patron and joint managing director to ambassador in 2017, the property has continued to develop into a first-class country house hotel with a Michelin-starred restaurant. The hotel underwent a £7m redevelopment, and in 2019 became part of the Stafford Collection.

Bancroft's awards and accolades include *The Caterer's* Hotelier of the Year in 2016, and the Wine and Spirit Ambassador Award, in 2017. It is his range of skills and his expertise in wine and food that are the backbone of the hotel and his personality front of house that elevates the hugely successful Obsession event that is now in its 23rd year.

Obsession is Northcote's annual homage to the finest food and wine, established since 2001 as one of Europe's premier gastronomic events with guest chefs travelling in from all over the world.

Bancroft's role in proceedings involves a considerable share of the planning and organ-

"He is probably one of the kindest human beings you could meet"

Stuart Procter

ising, to being the 'front man' every night, and the face of the festival. The person who greets guests, hosts the evening and maintains an entertaining level of banter and conversation. But none of these demonstrate the extraordinary skills he possesses in his real area of expertise – fine wine. In 2023 he will be matching wines for 20 chefs holding 16 Michelin stars all serving Northcote's guests across 17 nights.

On a normal day, with his team of five sommeliers, Bancroft takes great pride in curating a wine list to complement executive head chef Lisa Goodwin-Allen's menu. The broad list currently includes 52 champagnes and sparkling wines and 500 bins of still wines from 20 different countries.

Bancroft and therefore Northcote is also involved with charities Springboard and Prince's Trust, which nurture young people into sustainable employment and works with Hospitality Action, who provide support and assistance to struggling members of the hospitality industry.

The recipient of *The Caterer's* Acorn Award in 1987, Bancroft personifies an outstanding contribution to the industry, his region and his team.

Stuart Procter, chief operating officer of the Stafford London, who was Bancroft's first ever apprentice in 1991, commented: "There is no other individual within our industry that deserves this award more than Craig. His dedication, passion and commitment is nothing short of exemplary and he is probably one of the kindest human beings you could meet."





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# Hotelier of the Year

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## PAST WINNERS

- 2021** Daniel Pedreschi, Park Plaza hotels
- 2019** Sally Beck, Royal Lancaster London
- 2018** David Taylor, InterContinental Hotels Group
- 2017** Sue Williams, Whatley Manor
- 2016** Craig Bancroft, Northcote
- 2015** Nick Jones, Soho House
- 2014** Danny Pecorelli, Exclusive Hotels
- 2013** Stuart Bowery, Grosvenor House
- 2012** Stuart Johnson, Brown's Hotel London
- 2011** Stephen Carter, De Vere Cameron House Hotel
- 2010** Andrew Stemberidge, Chewton Glen
- 2009** Jonathan Raggett, Red Carnation Hotels
- 2008** Andrew McKenzie, Vineyard at Stockcross
- 2007** Michael Gray, the Churchill
- 2006** Richard Ball, Calcot Manor
- 2005** John Stauss, Four Seasons, London
- 2004** Patrick Elsmie, Gleneagles
- 2003** Robin Hutson, Hotel du Vin
- 2002** Gordon Campbell Gray, One Aldwych
- 2001** Karen Earp, Four Seasons Canary Wharf
- 2000** Peter Crome, Chewton Glen



## 2022 WINNER

### Adrian Ellis

Adrian Ellis leaves no stone unturned in his mission to inspire school-leavers, college students and university graduates to make hotels their career of choice.

And he doesn't just think about the benefits to the Lowry – the five-AA-star, 165-bedroom hotel in Salford, Manchester, that he has run as general manager for seven years. His actions are very much geared towards helping the wider industry.

Since arriving in the north-west of England nearly eight years ago, from an exemplary 17-year career overseas, Adrian has not only overseen a total refurbishment of the Lowry but also established an extraordinary presence in the wider hotel community, both within Manchester and across the UK. That has always been with a view to supporting and growing the sector through a huge range of projects.

Alongside his recruitment initiatives he also spearheads programmes to promote the city, grow business levels, raise the profile of sustainability issues and run charity events.

A year after settling into his role at the Lowry, he took on the chairmanship of the Manchester Hoteliers' Association and set about giving it a clear direction with a focus on business growth, sustainability and recruitment.

One of the first steps he took to encourage more young people to choose hospitality as a career was to launch a mentorship scheme in conjunction with Manchester Metropolitan University. The scheme sees general managers from 15 hotels supporting 15 students every year with their dissertations and coursework and by dispensing career advice.

"The aim of the scheme is to inspire the students to stay in the industry, and I'm pleased to say that the number of alumni that have been retained in the industry is increasing," Ellis said. He also directly employs three university

*"The work he does in helping young people come into our industry is truly inspirational"*

graduates each summer to undertake an individually designed 18-month programme that leads to the offer of a first managerial position upon its completion.

Beyond the Manchester Hoteliers' Association he is chair of UKHospitality's northern group, a member of Hospitality Action's northern committee and Springboard's north-west board; sits on the executive board of Master Innholders and Hoteliers' Charter; and is a member of the International Strategy Committee for Manchester, which aims to drive trade, investment and the visitor economy for the city.

So it will be of no surprise to learn that Adrian was the unanimous choice of the judges when it came to awarding this year's Hotelier of the Year accolade.

He was praised by one judge as being "an unsung hero" who has done more to raise the profile of hospitality in the Midlands and the north of England than most others have achieved collectively across the rest of the country. "Adrian is not only winning the recruitment battle for himself, but also for so many other businesses."

Another said: "The work he does in helping young people come into our industry is truly inspirational, all while running a successful, internationally acclaimed hotel with his people at the heart of what he does."

Now, he has been recognised in his own right by being presented with the 2022 Hotelier of the Year award, the 39th individual to receive the prestigious accolade.





## The Caterer would like to thank the judges, who gave up their valuable time to participate in the judging process

**Arjeta Arapi**, Red Carnation Hotels

**Cathy Ball**, the Calcot Collection

**Richard Ball**, the Calcot Collection

**Craig Bancroft**, Northcote Manor

**Jane Bateup**, the Grand Brighton and Richmond Hill Hotels

**Sally Beck**, Lancaster London

**Mark Bevan**, Gemini Hospitality Group

**Jean-Philippe Blondet**, the Dorchester

**Anita Bower**, Chewton Glen Hotel & Spa

**Stuart Bowery**, JW Marriott Grosvenor House London

**Peter Bradley**, the Westin London City

**Neil Braude**, Imperial London Hotels

**Kadira Canavese**, Brown's hotel and Balmoral hotel

**Alex Cooper**, the Berkeley

**Dirk Crokaert**, the Montague on the Gardens

**Hrishikesh Desai**, Gilpin

**Thomas Ferrante**, Grove of Narberth

**Sarah Gaskin**, the Headland hotel

**Simon Girling**, the Ritz London

**Sarah Glanville**, Red Carnation Hotels

**Lewis Hamblet**, South Lodge

**Jo Harley**, Purple Cubed

**Caroline Harrison**, Luxury Family Hotels

**Kerry Hudson**, Iconic Luxury Hotels

**Ian Hughes**, Chatsworth House

**Tzveta Ivanova**, the Milestone Hotel & Residences

**Zoe Jenkins**, Coworth Park

**Amanda Jennings**, Serenity Spa, Seaham Hall

**Stuart Johnson**, Brown's Hotel, a Rocco Forte Hotel

**Erick Kervaon**, Agermer

**Chris King**, the Langham, London

**Nicki Kurran**, Nicki Kurran Spa Consultancy

**Amelia Lawrence**, the Grove

**Sharon McArthur**, the Athenaeum

**Andrew McKenzie**, the Vineyard

**Lucy Mingo**, St Michael's Hotel & Spa

**Leni Miras**, the Beaumont hotel

**Harry Murray**, HOSPA

**Rachael Park**, Rudding Park

**Debra Patterson**, the Savoy

**Danny Pecorelli**, Exclusive Collection

**Sally Pedder**, the Dorchester

**Daniel Pedreschi**, PPHE Hotel Group

**Jane Pendlebury**, HOSPA

**KK Prabakaran**, Dukes

**Jonathan Raggett**, Red Carnation Hotels

**Robert Richardson**, Institute of Hospitality

**Craig Roberston**, Park Plaza Westminster Bridge

**Jean Roberts**, UK Housekeepers Association

**Olivier Ruiz**, Park Plaza Westminster Bridge

**Julia Sibley**, Savoy Educational Trust

**Lesley Skelt**, Pan Pacific

**Liz Smith-Mills**, LSM Consulting

**Andrew Stenbridge**, Iconic Luxury Hotels

**David Taylor**, Lore Group

**Fernanda Telatin Lewis**, the Goring, London

**Anna Thomas**, Stoke Park Country Club, Spa and Hotel

**Leon Trayling**, Principal Hotels

**Karen Tyson**, Rudding Park

**Carl Weldon**, Hospitality Finance and Technology Professionals

**Chris Wheeler**, Stoke Park Country Club, Spa and Hotel

**Sarah Williams**, Firmdale Hotels

**Sue Williams**, Whatley Manor

**Alex Wilson**, the Goring

**Clare Wright**

**Simon Young**, Rosewood London

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