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WELCOME



SO WE FIND OURSELVES, ONCE AGAIN, CAREERING TOWARDS CHRISTMAS, WHICH IS TRADITIONALLY A TIME TO SIT BACK, RELAX AND REFLECT. AND, ALTHOUGH THE ENDURINGLY POPULAR MIND MALFUNCTION KNOWN AS 'NOSTALGIA' WOULD HAVE YOU BELIEVE THAT 'THINGS THAT HAPPENED LONGER AGO ARE BETTER', I'M GOING TO STICK MY NECK OUT HERE AND SAY THAT 2021 WAS QUITE THE IMPROVEMENT ON 2020.

This is not an opinion born purely from personal experience (I mean, I actually left the country for a bit recently!), but also from reading CGA's latest research. Its latest Contract Caterer Tracker found that sales figures for July to September 2021 were up by an impressive 52% on the same period the year before. It does go on to quantify this success – you can read more in the Foodservice forum on page 28 – but I hope that this offers some cause for optimism as we head into another apparently uncertain festive period.

That just leaves me to wish you all a very merry Christmas. My colleagues and I will be doing our utmost to spread that message as far and wide as possible over the coming month. But if we don't manage to catch you out and about, we will see you back here in the new year. Have a great break!

H Norman

HENRY NORMAN
EDITOR



*I would like to
wish you all
a very merry
Christmas*

NEW

CHEF'S SPECIALS



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PUBLISHED BY:

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Rochester ME3 8PZ
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www.h2opublishing.co.uk

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PRINTED BY:

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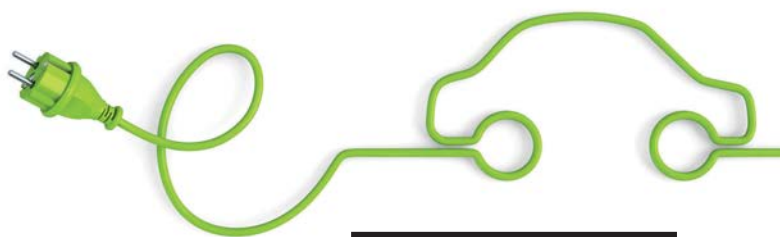
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COMPASS ADOPTS ELECTRIC VEHICLE POLICY

Compass Group UK and Ireland has adopted a 100% electric policy for all new fleet cars, with over 500 employees having been given the opportunity to order one by the end of the year. The move follows the organisation's commitment to reaching climate net zero by 2030, which saw it publish Our Climate Promise and Roadmap to Net Zero.

All employees entitled to company cars will be offered the opportunity to switch over to electric vehicles by May 2024 at the latest, a new policy that impacts around 900 people. Compass has also taken an active role in improving access to charging points by funding installations at colleagues' homes and installing points in UK offices in Birmingham and Chertsey. The rollout of electric vehicles has started with those who have high mileage and the longest leases, so that the implementation has the biggest impact on emissions immediately.

Ian Cranna, future food offer and new channels director for



COMPASS AIMS TO BE CLIMATE NET ZERO BY 2030

Compass Group UK and Ireland, said: "COP26 has again brought into focus the necessity of taking action to reduce and reverse climate change, and we are proud that our market-leading net zero commitment and Roadmap to Net Zero outline how we will make our contribution to this effort. Our move to 100% electric fleet vehicles is an important milestone towards achieving our goals in partnership with clients, suppliers and employees."

This is an important milestone towards achieving our goals

ANAND TO SPICE UP SOMERSET HOUSE

Renowned chef Dipna Anand has announced the launch of her newest restaurant in Somerset House, joining the contemporary art centre's vibrant food scene. A collaboration with Restaurant Associates, it is a celebration of her years of experience of cooking authentic Indian food that have won her industry awards and accolades, as well as her own show, Dip In Kitchen.

Heroing the authentic Punjabi and South Indian cuisine that Dipna is known for, the new restaurant will bring signature dishes, a new brunch menu and beautiful Thalys to diners, amidst the stunning interiors of Somerset House overlooking the River Thames. Guests visiting the restaurant can expect to enjoy some of Dipna's signature dishes, including Samosa Chaat Blast, Dehli Makhani Chicken and Dynamite Wings.

Anand said: "I am super-excited to be opening my new restaurant in the heart of London at Somerset House. My ongoing relationship with Restaurant Associates continues to strengthen and has given me this incredible opportunity to bring my expertise to this iconic venue in the centre of London. I look forward to welcoming you and sharing

my love for Indian cuisine in this exquisite location."

Matt Thomas, managing director of Restaurant Associates and Rapport, added: "We have had the privilege of working with Dipna Anand for a number of years now; she has helped us to train our chefs and inspire our customers' food choices. We believe that her authentic cooking, brilliant flavour combinations and energetic delivery will assist us in driving traction, footfall and excitement into this beautiful space."



RESTAURANT ASSOCIATES IS ALSO INVOLVED

LEXINGTON LAUNCHES DELIVERY SERVICE

As organisations adapt their schedules and premises to the new normal, Lexington has expanded to provide deliveries to businesses across London. Extending access to the caterer's nutritionally balanced menus to meetings and events, LexUnboxed enables businesses to keep clients and staff sustained and well nourished – whether they're internal, external or virtual.

The new service delivers to businesses across London. Those located within two miles of Lexington's city kitchen can also order on Just Eat for Business. Safely packed, and available individually or for groups of six or more,

it provides premium catering for meetings and events throughout the day.

Fabricio Aguilar, marketing manager for Lexington, said: "As London adapts to the post-pandemic landscape, we're seeing more and more organisations scaling down premises. As a result, more meetings are being held off-site, or in less traditional locations.

"Added to this, businesses now tend to have a highly mobile workforce with a growing emphasis on health and wellbeing. Therefore, it's important that when staff and clients get together, the food reflects this, while at the same time catering for diverse dietary needs."

BARTLETT MITCHELL HOSTS INSPIRING MEN AWARDS

Bartlett Mitchell launched its new Inspiring Men Awards to coincide with the recent International Men's Day. They aim to recognise individuals who excelled during a particularly challenging time when the industry was negatively impacted by Covid-19 and Brexit.

Open to all men across the business, team members were asked to nominate the colleagues they felt had been inspirational and were making a positive impact. There were over 50 nominations, resulting in 24 winners.

Among the winners was talent and team manager Murray Soper, who was nominated by a record 11 colleagues for his kindness, integrity, efficiency, patience and ability to motivate and inspire others. Executive chef Matt Petit was also nominated for "the joy he expresses in creating something delicious with his team", as well as his passionate approach that inspires others to trust in their skills and not be afraid to experiment.

Wendy Bartlett, founder of Bartlett Mitchell, said: "It was truly heartwarming to read through the nominations. You often don't get to hear the influence people are having on their colleagues and we learned



a lot more about what some of our people are doing that often goes unnoticed and uncelebrated.

"It has been a challenging two years and the catering industry, in particular, has really struggled with problems imposed by Covid and Brexit. There are, however, many truly remarkable individuals who have managed to remain positive and not allow the gloom to affect their attitude or approach to life."

We learned a lot more about what some of our people are doing

CH&CO NAMES ITS TOP BARISTA



CH&CO has crowned Julia Mello as its 2021 Barista of the Year. The talented head barista, who works at University College London, showcased her first-class technical skills, knowledge and creativity at the recent CH&CO Barista of the Year final.

The competition celebrates coffee and the skilled baristas across the company's diverse catering and hospitality business. It also gives teams the opportunity to develop their craft, share ideas and learnings, and continue to experiment and push boundaries.

In front of expert judges, the eight finalists competed in two challenges – blind brewing

and a latte art battle. The panel of expert judges included the 2018 World Barista Champion Agnieszka Rojewska, Ashley Dawes from Union Hand-Roasted, Dan Harvey from La Marzocco and Ivan Fumagalli from The Roasting Party. The runners up were Charlie Needler, a barista working at Yorkshire Building Society, and Dorija Glasovac, head barista at Overends Kitchen at the Airfield Estate, Dublin.

Allister Richards, COO of CH&CO, said: "The standard was incredibly high and it was a close call, so huge congratulations must go to Julia, our worthy winner. She will now tour the country, visiting our regional coffee partners throughout the UK and Ireland and inspiring her barista colleagues across the business, as we continue to develop our teams and grow our coffee specialism and offer for clients and customers to enjoy."

BAXTERSTOREY LAUNCHES CHARITABLE FESTIVE SANDWICH RANGE

BaxterStorey recently launched a new range of festive sandwiches, with some of the proceeds going to the Beyond Food Foundation (BFF). Developed as part of the company's Society range, 10% of the sales generated from the Festive Turkey and Cheeseboard Bloomer lines will be donated to the charity.

The BFF provides training and support to vulnerable people who have been impacted by homelessness, poor mental health and addiction. The charity enables people to transition back into society, offering practical and theory-based programmes that help them back into work. The proceeds from the sandwiches will go to the BFF's Travel Hardship Fund, which pays travel costs for people on the charity's wide-ranging programmes.

BaxterStorey's Society range puts social purpose at the heart of its offer. All businesses and suppliers working with Society commit to offering some element of social value.

Simon Boyle, founder and CEO of the BFF, said: "Beyond Food has partnered with Society because it's a fantastic opportunity to scale our programmes using a brand that has some real credibility. Getting people to purchase a cup of coffee, a sandwich or a piece of cake, knowing it's going to make a real difference to people's lives, is exactly where we all should be."

Greg Bramwell, head of food and marketing for BaxterStorey, added: "It has been a real combined team effort to launch our first ever festive range and we're incredibly excited that, through food, we can support such an incredible charity. Simon and team work so hard to support the local community through their apprenticeship programme and we hope the money we raise can support the apprentices."





TWEET ALL ABOUT IT

CATHERINE MCKINNELL

@CatMcKinnell

It's vital the Govt listens to one of the biggest employers in the country. Hospitality is vital to our communities & supports thousands of jobs. We need a dedicated Hospitality Minister if we are to rebuild as we come out of #COVID19 @UKHofficial @seatat_thetable

HOSPITALITY ACTION

@HospAction

What an amazing evening! Thank you so much Rob Walton MBE and @nthdegreeglobal for supporting @HospAction and the people of our wonderful industry. Thanks to the generosity of the guests, we raised an incredible £28.6k. #RAGalaDinner @UKHofficial

ARENA EVENTS

@Arenanetworking

Breaking News: CH&CO's Tim Jones, Bill Toner and Allister Richards to headline Arena Christmas Event.

VEGAN CHAT ROOM

@VeganChatRoom

Men's meat-heavy diets cause 40% more climate emissions than women's, study finds
#WorldVeganMonth
#ClimateCrisis #VeganHour

BUDGET OFFERS SOME HELP FOR HOSPITALITY

Ahead of the recent budget, there had been plenty of calls for a helping hand for hospitality. However, what Rishi Sunak dished up appeared to offer aid for the industry, while falling short of the level of reform some were hoping for.

The headline move was a shake-up of business rates. In a move that the chancellor claimed represented a tax cut worth almost £1.7bn, eligible businesses in the hospitality, leisure and retail sectors can claim a discount of 50% up to a maximum of £110,000. Also, from 2023, companies will be able to undertake property improvements and not have to pay any extra business rates for a year.

Kate Nicholls, chief executive of UKHospitality, said: "We have been lobbying hard for significant reform of the outdated business rates system and therefore very much welcome the chancellor's move to extend the 50% business rates relief for the hospitality and leisure sector for the next financial year. The devil will be in the detail, though, so we look forward to learning to what extent it will benefit businesses."

There was also big news regarding alcohol provision, with taxes on draft beer and cider and sparkling wine to be cut. In further good news, increases in duty on spirits, wines, cider and beer were also cancelled.

Stronger drinks will face a rise from 2023, however, under a new system that imposes higher duties for higher percentages. Sunak claimed the move to be "the most radical simplification of alcohol duties for over 140 years".

Nicholls reacted: "The chancellor's announcements simplifying – and in many cases reducing – alcohol duties, are great news for pubs, bars and restaurants, and will benefit all. The chancellor has shown real innovation and creativity in reforming an archaic system of duty, which we applaud."

She added: "Positive as these announcements are, hospitality remains incredibly fragile, facing myriad critical issues. Rising utility bills, wage bills and food and drink prices have resulted in 13% inflationary costs that businesses are having to absorb at the same time as they navigate severe supply chain issues and chronic staff shortages. Given this toxic cocktail, it is imperative the government go further to support businesses in our sector."

"The most effective way to achieve this would be to maintain the current lower 12.5% of VAT for the sector. The chancellor has been bold and radical with alcohol duty – we urge him to adopt the same approach when implementing root and branch reform of business rates, to ensure industries share the burden equally."

Hospitality remains incredibly fragile



Promoted

WIN A BESPOKE CARBON ACTION PLAN FROM BRITA!

Recent research conducted by Brita Professional has revealed that almost half of hospitality businesses are unsure how to calculate their carbon footprint. To help operators reach their sustainability targets faster and more efficiently, the leading global water-filtration brand has partnered with Zero Carbon Forum to offer you the chance to win an innovative Carbon Action Plan for your business.

The resulting bespoke plan will be designed to give your business the clarity and guidance you need to pursue your sustainability goals with purpose, whether you're just getting started on your journey to net zero or are already on your way.

Visit www.britacompetition.co.uk to enter now!

ORANG UTAN COFFEE WINS AT SUPPLY CHAIN EXCELLENCE AWARDS

After winning the prestigious Innovation Award at the Lunch! and Casual Dining show earlier this year for its To Go premium automated retail, the most customisable coffee to go machine on the market, UCC has repeated its success with the Orang Utan coffee brand. It snatched the top prize of Team of the Year at the recent Supply Chain Excellence Awards in Food and Drink.

Part of the global Ueshima Coffee Company, UCC Coffee UK and Ireland has, for many years, created and managed coffee experiences for the most dynamic businesses in foodservice, hospitality and retail. With in-house market-leading insight and a global network, its total coffee solution is tailored around the customers' needs and goals, working in partnership to ensure their

coffee offers grow faster and outperforms the market.

Working with the Farmer Connect platform, UCC Coffee with Orang Utan Coffee is the UK's first blockchain coffee brand, helping to protect farming communities, rainforests and orangutan populations in Indonesia. This technology is designed to fight unwanted changes at their source and champion a fair living wage.

Blockchain is a type of database that records transactions in separate, unchangeable, time-stamped, cryptograph-coded unique 'blocks' linked to each other in a permanent 'chain' to provide accessible, understandable and validated data that is uploaded at every stage of the Orang Utan Coffee journey. This starts in the highlands of Sumatra until the coffee finally reaches the UK.

NISBETS LIVE TO LAND IN SPRING

Nisbets has announced its first ever exhibition which will take place in spring 2022. Bringing together the best brands and latest innovations the catering equipment industry has to offer, Nisbets Live will debut in spring 2022 at the National Catering Equipment Centre (NCEC) in Bristol on 9th and 10th March.

For the first time ever, Nisbets Live 2022 will welcome over 60 suppliers, showcasing the latest innovations in catering equipment, interior design and tabletop solutions, giving visitors access to keynote talks from industry leaders, and special show offers and competitions. In collaboration with Hale Events, Nisbets will also provide a range of incredible food and drink products from everyone from big brands to innovative start-ups, with a focus on the best of the South West.

"Nisbets is delighted to announce its first ever catering equipment and food exhibition at the NCEC – a fantastic facility, unrivalled in its position to provide an all-inclusive service for those

in the catering, food and hospitality sectors," said Robin White, regional managing director of Nisbets Plc. "Nisbets Live is a truly exciting opportunity to gather the industry's leading suppliers in catering equipment alongside some of the best artisan food and drink producers in the South West, all under one roof."



THEY INCLUDE A 1.6KG POUCH OF THORNTONS HOT CHOCOLATE POWDER

CLAIM YOUR FREE THORNTONS WINTER RESCUE KIT

Ferrero Foodservice is helping caterers and operators tap into the growing hot chocolate market by giving away 250 Winter Rescue Kits. They include a 1.6kg pouch of Thorntons Hot Chocolate powder, as well as eye-catching table talkers to promote your cocoa offering to your customers.

Hot chocolate servings have grown by 2.5% over the last two years. With this increased demand, Thorntons Luxury Hot Chocolate Powder enables operators to bring a taste of luxury to their offering with its convenient and profitable format.

Zareen Deboo, foodservice channel operations manager for Ferrero UK and Ireland, said: "We're committed to supporting businesses and helping them make the most of this key hot chocolate season. Our Winter Rescue Kits have everything you need to give your profits a boost this winter and beyond, and to help you serve up a signature hot chocolate backed with over 100 years of Thorntons' quality reassurance."

The kits are available from www.ferrerofoodservice.com/uk.



DRIVING FOR CHANGE

WHAT IS DRIVING FOR CHANGE?

Driving for Change (DFC) is the ground-breaking new initiative from Change Please. We have converted two London's iconic double decker buses into state-of-the-art mobile support units that will provide vital services to people experiencing homelessness.

We are taking services directly to those in need on London's Streets:

- Therapy assessment and support from our team of Support Workers
- Oral Health Promotion and dentistry through our partnership with Community Dental Services CIC and Colgate
- GP, Medicine Access through our partnership with East London Foundation NHS Trust
- Opening bank accounts and support through HSBC and their no fixed abode service
- Financial and digital skills training through our partnership with Mastercard and Good Things Foundation
- Access to hairdressing, showers and laundry washing

Why driving for Change?

We have seen from our work and working with partners that there is a vital need to deliver these services to our fellow citizens who happen to find themselves on the streets:

- 46% of rough sleepers have physical health needs
- 50% of rough sleepers have said they need support to improve their mental wellbeing
- 60% of rough sleepers have experienced dental pain with 15% of people self-extracting teeth
- 7 of 10 homeless people accessing their services have struggled to open a bank account without photo ID or an address

How you can help

Covid-19 has massively affected everyone throughout society, especially those experiencing homelessness. We couldn't stand still as so many of our fellow citizens face such hardship and barriers to improving their lives.

We have received amazing support from our partners in developing and launching the Project and now need your support to keep

the project going and help some of our most vulnerable and marginalised people:

Just £10 a month will contribute to giving people haircuts and showers and other vital services.

"We are thrilled to take this next step in tackling the homelessness crisis in England and the new project in October will help us reach those in need throughout the capital. At Change Please we believe in sustainable approaches to ending homelessness, and Driving for Change will give the most vulnerable people the opportunity to access crucial services which can guide and support them in changing their lives long-term. We hope to take the project nationwide and then internationally to achieve maximum impact; discussions around Paris and Los Angeles have already begun." Cemal Ezel, CEO & Founder of Change Please. ☺

Donate now. Scan here to donate online or text BUS to 70580 to donate £5.



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WHEN IT'S A CHANGE PLEASE COFFEE.**

Every award- winning cup we brew – and every cup you buy – helps change someone's life for the better. 100% of our profits, goes into giving people experiencing homelessness, a living wage job, housing, training, onwards opportunities – and a fresh shot at a life. And it's all made possible by your support.

We'll drink to that.

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Education Award
Executive Chef of the Year
Healthcare Catering Award
Innovation Award
Lifetime Achievement Award
Marketing Award
People Development Award
Rising Star Award
Sports, Leisure and Event Catering Award
Senior Executive of the Year
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ROBOCHEF AT A CONTRACT CATERER NEAR YOU

ROBOTS HAVE MOVED FROM THE REALMS OF SCI-FI AND ARE HARD AT WORK IN AT LEAST TWO UK-BASED CONTRACT CATERING OPERATIONS, AS JANE RENTON DISCOVERS

Robots may not yet be coming for your job but they are currently proving to be useful co-workers, as the contract catering sector mobilises for the long march back to something hopefully approaching full working in a landscape where labour and skill shortages are endemic. And robots, of course, won't gossip in the corridors, or demand endless cups of tea or a pay rise.

They are already deployed in healthcare, where machines are not yet humanoid, but nevertheless possess unnervingly smiley faces as they deliver supplies to nurses and support staff. Robots have been used for a number of years in operating theatres, providing a clinical precision that is unmatched by humans. The much-hyped fourth industrial revolution is increasingly being driven by artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics, as well as the interconnectivity of software and hardware devices.

The contract catering sector hasn't exactly been idle on that front either. As many operators will testify, the industry has relied on technology to improve payment systems, customer ordering, and data gathering and analytics. Smart technology is already part of high-tech ovens,

dishwashers and other kitchen preparation gadgets and food processors.

But now two caterers are taking things further. Mount Charles is extending and honing its own version of unmanned retail stores on more remote catering sites, as well as a more sophisticated take on micro-markets, with elements of robotic technology being included. The other is Atalian Servest, which is already deploying a ground-breaking robotic system devised by London start-up Karakuri, maker of the world's first automated canteen, to supply customers with personalised made-to-order healthy convenience meals.

The system created by Karakuri is believed to be the most advanced of its type in the world, and for the past three months it has been in active service with Atalian Servest on behalf of its client Ocado – one of Karakuri's main investors – at its head office canteen in Hatfield. The DK-One, or Semblr, as the robot is known on site, involves robotic arms that essentially plate up to 17 different ingredients that can be ordered in combination through an app to make up any customer's desired order. They are based on dishes designed and prepared by real people – Atalian Servest's chefs – but allow for a degree of customisation that simply wouldn't be possible in most restaurant settings, let alone a bustling workplace one.

Various proteins, which could include chicken, beef, pork or tofu, along with a selection of vegetables, toppings and condiments are all loaded into specific dispensers within the robot and will be held at exactly the right temperatures. When an order comes through via the app, one of Semblr's robotic arms will place a bowl under the right dispenser and the customer arrives at their allotted time slot to pick up their meal. But it is

*I'm not sure the world
was ready for this
a few years back*



Across the sea in Northern Ireland, Mount Charles has embraced new technology as a means of meeting current and post-pandemic challenges. Clients are struggling in some cases to re-open their catering services owing to reduced footfall. And while Mount Charles believes it is lucky to have relatively few job vacancies currently, it is acutely aware of its industry's labour and skill shortages. "It's no secret that there was, and will continue to be, a huge skill shortage across the industry for quite some time," says Gavin Annon, sales and marketing director for Mount Charles.

While Annon maintains that foodservice will continue to remain "a people business", his company has instituted a series of unmanned retail corner stores, where customers can purchase cold drinks, hot beverages and light snacks through a self-pay system, similar to that now used by most supermarkets. The idea, though not new and introduced by Compass on some of its sites several years back, is ideal for remote or multiple sites where a full catering operation would be economically unviable. However, the technology has progressed considerably during the Covid period.

"I'm not sure the world was ready for this a few years back," opines Annon. "It was seen then as a way of replacing people and a step too far for a contract catering environment. But the world has changed very quickly with the need for social distancing."

As Annon observes, it is now a very good way of running a 24/7 operation on an otherwise uneconomic catering site. Demand for this unattended retail/micro service, which in some sense is a more sophisticated version of traditional vending, has exploded.

But Mount Charles is not solely relying on this add-on service, it is implementing and refining an even more sophisticated variant and one that is arousing strong interest in professional services, such as law firms, where lawyers often find themselves working late into the night and in need of proper sustenance. Again, it involves a more high-tech 'vending' solution, but one capable of offering hot and cold meals prepared on site by Mount Charles' chefs and held at exactly the right temperature to meet all health and safety, as well as taste, requirements. The machine takes payment for the goods selected before the doors open for release and the purchaser simply removes the dish to heat it up on-site with equipment that does not necessarily involve microwaves.

This hybrid model offers some of the same elements as the unmanned retail corner shop, but also, Annon believes, a far more bespoke service to customers than the move to a central production unit (CPU) model that is being deployed by some of its larger competitors. "We're not talking about regenerated meals delivered to various sites, but meals tailored to local requirements and made on site by our chef managers," maintains Annon. "That is so much better than delivering in meals from a CPU for 40 or so different locations. Our approach gives us a competitive edge."

This ultra-sophisticated machine will allow night-time staff to

Our approach gives us a competitive edge

not just the ability to handle increasingly complex diets that makes this innovation so interesting. The fact is that it also offers the potential to reduce food waste, tackle labour shortages and cut a swathe through peak time service.

"It doesn't matter how many staff you put on, getting through the lunchtime queues can be stressful," says Chris Ince, chef director of Atalian Servest. "We aim to eventually serve up to a 120 bowls an hour."

The new robot server, which entered into service in September, has already generated what Ince describes as "great feedback". It has not only delighted gym aficionados, obsessed by nutritional and calorie intake precision, but others who are simply fascinated by the machine's futuristic ingenuity. Many have adopted healthier dietary habits as a result. It has also been a boon to those with food allergies, as the robot links directly to Atalian Servest's own food supply chain, giving complete visibility on ingredients and potential allergens, eliminating human risk.

There is also the issue of portion size. Semblr never gets its measurements or weights wrong, unlike the warm-hearted human server who likes to ladle out larger helpings as profit margins diminish. And the data the machine generates makes forecasting demand so much easier.



MOUNT CHARLES HAS ACCELERATED ITS MICRO MARKETS DUE TO THE PANDEMIC

It's about pinpointing areas of development where robots can be of assistance to us

experience the same high level of quality that they would experience during the daytime manned operation. This alternative service is now also on display at the company's head office in Belfast and is already attracting considerable interest from existing and potential clients.

Interestingly, however, Annon does not envisage robotics and AI replacing human jobs any time soon, nor does he regard that as a desirable outcome. Such technology remains a useful adjunct to service during a time of great uncertainty, when caterers need to display an inordinate level of flexibility and agility to meet constantly changing levels of demand. "I think robotics is still very much in its infancy, and it's probably still relatively limited in what it can actually deliver," he says. "The idea of replacing people in the kitchen is yet to come."

Back at Atalian Servest in Hatfield, Ince sees things somewhat differently and, having been a major participant in the rollout of Semblr, he now sees the technology advancing rapidly. But he too doesn't believe that robots will necessarily put people out of work, though they are likely to take on the more boring, repetitive tasks. "In my view, it's not really a case of, 'Okay, we've got labour shortages, therefore we need more robots'. It's about pinpointing areas of development where robots can be of assistance to us."

Evidently, Semblr could potentially lead to fewer serving staff, though Ince stresses that front-of-house employees are still in evidence, as they are needed to move food from the kitchen and into the robot's various dispensers. He is also confident that robotics will create many new jobs. As Ince points out, there have been many revolutionary technology developments over the past decades that have revolutionised many jobs in food preparation, none of which have actually put people out of work. "The sector has just kept on growing and the human resources freed up just moved elsewhere within the industry, potentially to more creative



ATALIAN SERVEST'S MACHINE SUPPLIES HEALTHY MEALS

jobs," he says. "That's where we are at the moment."

Ince's company is about to enter phase two of the three-month experiment at Ocado's head office. Semblr has generated invaluable detail about customer preferences and buying patterns, so amendments and new dishes will be added. But this is not the end. Robots are poised to move into the kitchen in hospitals, as well as quick-service restaurant establishments where speed of delivery is of the essence. "There is lots of potential for robots to help in kitchen environments and there are lots of things we are working on," says Amelia Jones, Karakuri's food development director, who worked closely with Ince during the first three months of Semblr's probation.

What both companies – Atalian Servest and Mount Charles – express is a strong desire to use technology and robotics in a way that enhances, not replaces, human performance. Both Ince and Annon independently stressed that contract catering, like the rest of hospitality, must remain a people business if it is to be successful. **CT**

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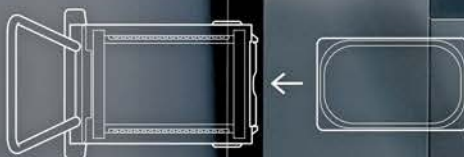
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ADAM COLLISON

STREATFOOD
20 awards 21

StrEATfood Awards

ADAM COLLISON, HEAD CHEF FOR SODEXO, TELLS US ABOUT HIS RECENT WIN IN THE QUORN MEAT-FREE ROUND

Why did you enter the StrEATfood Awards?

I entered the awards as I have always enjoyed competing, both at site and national level. I also loved the concept of creating an entire vegan street food dish. I had never entered a street food competition before and I really enjoyed the experience.

What was your winning dish? How did you come up with it?

I created the dish 'Quedgeree' based on the fact that I always cook too much rice at home and therefore thought this would be a great way to use it up by making a vegan brunch dish with a soft-boiled vegan 'egg'dam. I find texture and flavours essential when creating a vegan dish and using Quorn was the ideal product as it provides the right taste and texture. The vegan rice-based dish was my take on kedgeree, a popular brunch choice.

Why did you choose to do a vegan dish?

We have seen a massive increase in the popularity of vegan food across our sites, especially over the past two years. We are getting more requests for vegan dishes and people expect more variety and choices when they ask for a vegan menu.

The winning dish is available on our pop-up stand on-site and we've received some great feedback



COLLISON'S SIGNATURE DISH




This vegan rice-based dish was my take on kedgeree

However, I did spend quite a lot of time perfecting the vegan egg, which I think might have edged it for me on the day as it really did look like an egg.

Would you recommend that other chefs enter the competition?

I would definitely recommend the competition to other chefs in the industry, it's a great experience. Having a change from your day-to-day role and testing your creative skills against other chefs in the business was fantastic.

It was also great to see what is on offer in other parts of the business. I have made some great supplier contacts and met some new chef friends just from the day at the StrEAT-food Awards.

It's not just about winning, the experience you get of cooking in front of a crowd and talking about the food you are preparing to the judges while in a competition setting is a great way to build confidence, and this helps you develop in other parts of your daily job. I will be looking out for next year's StrEATfood Awards and I look forward to supporting younger members of my team to compete as well. 

about it. More people are moving towards a flexitarian diet and they don't seem to mind eating a vegan option a few times a week, especially at lunchtime when people are after a dish that is lighter, tasty and a healthier option.

Did you expect to win?

Not really, as this was my first time competing in a street food event and I was up against some past winners and chefs who work for street food companies every day. I especially never expected to win the vegan competition, which was a bit of a shock.

The winning dish is available on our pop-up stand on-site and we've received some great feedback



APPOINTMENTS

EUREST PROMOTES JOINT MDS

Eurest has promoted two of its most senior business directors to joint managing directors. Paul Williams and Nick Haynes, who have both worked for Compass for nearly 10 years, take up the positions, effective immediately, and are now responsible for the business's strategic growth and direction. They will manage team performance, win new business and build relationships with existing clients to ensure contract renewals.

Although the pair will work closely together on Eurest's business strategy and be aligned on company-wide themes such as sustainability, they are managing different sides of the business. Williams now oversees Eurest's large, multi-site clients, including brands such as Amazon, Porsche, Virgin Media, British Airways, IBM and Heathrow Airport. Haynes, meanwhile, is managing the company's single-site clients, which cover the length and breadth of the UK and include Bombardier, The Royal Mint, Halfords and Scottish Power.

Haynes said: "Although we were previously in similar director roles, Paul and I have a different knowledge base, experience and client set. The single-site clients I represent are smaller in size but far more numerous, whereas Paul's multi-site clients are fewer but more complex. It means we bring unique skills, which we can utilise to comprehensively serve the various parts of the business."

Williams added: "Nick and I have worked together for a long time and there is great synergy between us. This will be a great partnership to further the aims of the company."



KNOWLES SUCCEEDS HARTE AT HOLROYD HOWE

Holroyd Howe has named Lucy Knowles as its new managing director. Starting the position in the new year, she succeeds Ronan Harte who was recently appointed as chief executive of BaxterStorey, which is also part of Westbury Street Holdings (WSH).

Knowles joins Holroyd Howe with 20 years' experience in the hospitality industry and is looking forward to building on the existing success of the business. For six years, she held the role of group marketing director at SSP, where she led an agenda of brand, concept and menu innovation.

Alastair Storey, chairman of WSH, said: "I am delighted to welcome Lucy into the business. She brings with her a wealth of experience and a passion for food and nutrition."

Knowles added: "Food development has been an important part of my career to date. I am very excited to work with the Holroyd Howe team to deliver continued innovation and creativity for the pupils we serve in independent schools."



CLARK JOINS CH&CO TO DELIVER CSR STRATEGY

CH&CO has appointed a sustainability business partner to deliver its bold corporate social responsibility strategy across the whole group and support the sustainability aspirations of its clients. Clare Clark is responsible for upholding and driving forward the caterer's sustainability commitments.

Clark said: "I'm joining CH&CO at an incredibly exciting time. Sustainability is already a strong part of the business's culture and it's fantastic to see that, despite the many challenges the industry faces, there's a real desire from the teams to push boundaries to make a tangible sustainability contribution and difference."



RIBAUDO IN AT BLUE APPLE

Blue Apple recently unveiled Chris Ribaudo as its newly appointed culinary director. He comes with a broad range of experience, having worked in the industry for over 20 years. Ribaudo will be responsible for nurturing new and existing talent, developing the chefs academy, sourcing new artisan suppliers and ensuring that the caterer's standards are maintained, for customers and clients alike.

Ribaudo said: "I am thrilled to join such a dynamic business at this point of change and growth in our industry. I am looking forward to working with our culinary, operations and sales teams to continue the success of Blue Apple."





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DESERT ISLAND DISHES



DESERT ISLAND CHRISTMAS

OUR ANNUAL FESTIVE-THEMED SPECIAL, AS YOU TELL US HOW YOU WILL BE CELEBRATING

LEE TAYLOR

CHEF MANAGER, ACADEMY BY ATALIAN SERVEST

Our Christmas menu is a surprise only to be revealed on the day. My wife, my daughter and I all take a course each and get creative in the kitchen. It's a fantastic tradition.

We've had waffles, bacon, maple syrup, poached eggs and hollandaise sauce for breakfast before, which is a throwback to my army days. Some years we've had slow barbequed beef for main or smoked salmon with Brussels sprouts and poached eggs.

Usually, my daughter makes the dessert, but I've claimed that this year. I have an inventive new recipe up my sleeve that includes a very savoury ingredient. Of course, no Christmas is complete without Welsh whisky.

ANGUS BRYDON

DIVISIONAL MANAGING DIRECTOR, BARTLETT MITCHELL

We actually have a slightly left-field tradition in our household that started a few years ago when our food delivery didn't turn up on Christmas Eve. It basically involves ordering crispy duck and pancakes from our local Chinese restaurant, while we prepare for the following day.

Christmas Day morning is all about the children and their presents, and once the excitement has settled down then the food begins. We have mixed it up over the years between eating out and cooking at home. I prefer cooking the feast at home. We usually

We've had slow barbequed beef for main

have the traditional roast turkey and all the usual suspects to accompany the bird. After lunch the usual dog walk, followed by cheese and other food we probably don't need and a glass or two, or three, of something.

GERALDO BARROS,

CATERING MANAGER, BAXTERSTOREY

Christmas has always been about family – a loud and loving one – and a big table with enough food to feed an army. In Portugal, where I am from, the main celebration takes place on Christmas Eve, with salted cod, boiled potatoes and cabbage being the main feature.

Desserts are inspired by ancient recipes passed between generations, with everyone adding their little twist and claiming them to be 'the best you ever had'. Port wine is also a must-have!

Since we came to the UK, a bit of indulgence has been added in the shape of a brandy-doused, flaming, boozy Christmas pudding – while you video call family back home!

CHRIS RIBAUDO

CHEF DIRECTOR, BLUE APPLE

Veg prep starts on Christmas Eve. On Christmas morning, we like to start with smoked salmon,

poached eggs and smashed avocado on sourdough for the vegan family members – served with the obligatory bucks fizz and or a snowball!

I brine the turkey on Christmas Eve. It is stuffed and tucked away into the Kamado Joe, which I light at about 10am and set to cook low and slow for about five hours. The 75-day dry aged forerib of beef goes into the water bath for four hours. I put a pumpkin, bean and seed roast in the oven, along with rapeseed oil roasties, sprouts and stem broccoli, roasted roots, cauli cheese, naughty pigs in blankets and Yorkshire puddings. I let the turkey rest when it's cooked, before I gather all the bits together and give the beef a sear on the barbeque.

At 4pm, everyone mucks in and we sit down, carve up and crack open a bottle of Amarone and let the festivities begin. Of course, we find time to swap presents, share stories of the year we have all experienced and eat Christmas pudding, cheese and a cheeky port. Have a merry Christmas and a prosperous 2022!

ERICA HINES

ASSISTANT DEVELOPMENT CHEF, FOODITUDE

So, my Christmas morning starts with my daughter Nylah coming into my room screaming 'it's Christmas!' I'll put on the Christmas music, pop open a bottle of bubbly and start cooking the traditional Caribbean breakfast I've grown up with, which is ackee and saltfish, fried plantain, boiled green banana, fried dumplings and buttered hard bread.



CHRISTMAS AT SEARCYS

Managing director Paul Jackson tells us how Searcys will be celebrating

It's the most wonderful time of the year, and at Searcys we are ready to start celebrating! With landmark venues across the capital and beyond, we have been hard at work to bring moments of indulgence and sparkle.

At our event venues, there are a variety of packages on offer, from an alpine-themed escape at the historic HAC in the City to a 1920s party at our latest addition to the venue collection, 116 Pall Mall. We have also introduced some more inventive menu items, such as a Brussels sprout menu for our private dining rooms as we are seeing a real renaissance in private dining for companies and friends.

On the restaurant side, we have introduced dining experiences such as a new festive afternoon tea at 116 Pall Mall and fun cocktails at St Pancras Brasserie and Champagne Bar. 'Together is a wonderful place to be' is the theme for our celebrations at the Gherkin in partnership with Moët and Chandon – with a gold sky-high theme running through the Helix Restaurant and Iris Bar at the top of the skyscraper.

Alongside this, Searcys has recently launched a new gifting range, including new tea sets, flute glasses and bottles of champagne, all on our online gift store at searcys.co.uk.

Christmas is also about giving back, which is why we will be supporting Hotel School and Beyond Food, two hospitality charities that aim to help those most at risk of homelessness gain employment, with a voluntary donation added to every bill. We expect this Christmas to be one to remember!

We always order crispy duck and pancakes from our local Chinese restaurant

Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without that salt fish smell in the morning!

After breakfast it's presents time, followed with a large glass of ice-cold Guinness punch. After presents, Nylah will play with all her new gifts while I get the dinner on turkey, rice and peas, mac and cheese, roast potatoes, stuffing, sprouts, coleslaw, salad and all the condiments.

Christmas just isn't Christmas without board games in my house. Uno, Frustration, ludo, and snakes and ladders will all be out!

EMMA LIDGITT
DEVELOPMENT CHEF, ISS UK

Christmas Day at mine is always traditional, plus a couple of quirks. Living in Yorkshire, we have to have Yorkie puds with our turkey, along with all the trimmings! Lunch is washed down with my signature dairy-free Baileys espresso martini cocktails.

Boxing Day is where it gets interesting. I host a Spanish feasting table get-together for family and friends. Think tapas dishes piled with seafood and a centrepiece of fideua, a paella made with pasta instead of rice. I learned the recipe from a Spanish friend and cooked it up one year – due to popular demand, it's been on the menu ever since!

GAVIN ANNON
SALES AND MARKETING DIRECTOR, MOUNT CHARLES

The greatest day of the year has arrived – in my eyes anyway – and food is always still top of the list. Once the excitement of opening Santa's presents has calmed down, we tuck into our annual Christmas morning cooked breakfast. We try to not have it too late in the morning to save space for the main event! Thankfully, our kids make sure we're up early.

Traditional Christmas dinner is served up mid-afternoon, including turkey, ham, homemade stuffing and all the trimmings including Brussels sprouts. By night-time we've only space for turkey sandwiches... and strawberry pavlova.

BEN DUTSON
FOOD INNOVATION DIRECTOR, SODEXO LIVE!

With two young kids, our Christmas traditions have changed to being all about them, which is lovely. We have an open house at Christmas and the village carol service is our annual tradition, always followed by a visit to the pub.

On the big day itself, you'll find us tucking into a traditional big roast – a crown of Norfolk turkey, rib of beef, 47 roast potatoes and my secret gravy recipe. This is all washed down with a glass of Ridgeview, a fantastic sustainable English sparkling from my hometown at the foot of the South Downs, or Perrier Jouet Belle Epoque if we're feeling posh. ☺

GEORGIA WHEATLEY

NESTLÉ PROFESSIONAL TOQUE D'OR APPRENTICE WINNER

WHAT DO YOU CURRENTLY DO?

I've just started working with the team at the Wilderness. It's a small team – around 12 of us – but it's really cooperative. In some fine dining establishments, you see a divide between front and back of house, but we're like a family, we stick together. They've been so nice and welcoming – especially Alex Claridge. I've never met a chef who is so understanding, caring and humble. He really drives the team forwards. It's awesome.

WHY DO YOU WANT TO WORK IN FOODSERVICE?

I wanted to study catering when I was at school, but because I was 'academically-sound', I was expected to study French or history. There was a big debate, because I didn't want to study these subjects. Eventually, the school gave in and let me do GCSE catering.

I went for an open day at University College Birmingham [UCB] and loved the place. I originally signed up for professional cookery, but after doing the Young Waiters Academy, I fell in love with front of house and changed course.

I've been lucky, falling into the right place at the right time, especially getting the job at Simpsons when I was 16. Being confident, I like talking to people, getting to know their stories.

HOW DID YOU COME TO ENTER THE COMPETITION?

I'm friends with my UCB lecturer, Christine Alberto, and she told me there were openings at Toque d'Or. I hadn't gone back to work, but was also not fully furloughed, so I had time to give it a go.

I've done competitions before and been really nervous, thinking, 'I don't come from a Michelin background' and bottling it because I thought I wasn't good enough. With Toque d'Or, I thought, I'm going to be myself. If they don't like it, that's fine.

WHAT DID YOU HAVE TO DO WHEN ENTERING?

We had to do a sustainability exam and film a video on why we wanted to



GEORGIA WHEATLEY

The hardest part was not being able to tell anybody I'd won!

do Toque d'Or. It was good to get back into the swing of things after being stuck at home on lockdown.

Next, I had to make a jasmine tea craft drink that was sustainable, low sugar and non-alcoholic. I drove my partner mad, because I became obsessive, asking local farm shops for advice, making endless mind-maps, and testing different flavoured syrups to go with the drink.

HOW DID IT FEEL WHEN YOU FOUND OUT YOU HAD WON?

I nearly cried because it was a weight off my shoulders. I didn't need to do it to prove a point – I knew I'd already found my place in hospitality and loved it. It was more of a case of 'can I do it?' The hardest part was not being able to tell anybody I'd won until it was officially announced!

HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR CAREER DEVELOPING? WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST AMBITION?

I'd love to become a manager one day. I'm studying at university as I plan to go into teaching. And my secondary school teacher, Sarah Fellows, has asked me to go back to assist in her lessons in catering.

I remember how much of a battle it was for me to do catering. So, I'd like to make it better for the students there. And to be a role model, showing what you can achieve if you work hard and put in the hours.

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Some of the things that need to be considered:

- ▶ What food and drink services do customers want as they return to the work and leisure?
- ▶ How do customers want to access those services?
- ▶ Is your current tender process effective, is there a better way?
- ▶ Are you making the most of new technology?
- ▶ What are the facilities and asset implications of changing demand?
- ▶ Do you need change cleaning regimes and processes?
- ▶ Are you taking services to the customer rather than serving everything from fixed outlets?
- ▶ Can you flex your service model to scale up or down to meet changes in demand?
- ▶ Can you meet the increasing demands of FM and Hospitality regulations?
- ▶ How do you keep pace with customer expectations as things continue to change?



OOZING CLASS

FOUNDER CHARLIE PHILLIPS TELLS HENRY NORMAN ABOUT HIS EXCITING EXPANSION PLANS FOR HIS MORTY AND BOB'S BUSINESS



It was Tom Kerridge who actually said, 'Just do it'

He may run one of London's most successful sandwich specialists, but Charlie has certainly paid his dues. A chef by trade, he started working his way up from the pots to sous while, he remembers, all his friends went to university.

"Randomly, I then started working in food TV, making cookery shows as a food expert on set. A particular show that I worked on with Tom Kerridge came to an end and I thought, 'I have to do my own thing now'.

"I'd done some catering and private chef work and really enjoyed working for myself, so I decided to concentrate on my own business in food. It was Tom Kerridge who actually said, 'Just do it'. Thanks, Tom!"

Businesses are, of course, increasingly putting ethics before profits, but Charlie proudly tells me that sustainability has always been central at Morty and Bob's. "We focus a lot on waste at M&B, or lack of. We keep our waste very low. Next to zero. On top of that, it's all about produce and keeping things local or from the UK."

For example, Charlie tells me that all of his meat is supplied by HG Walter, who concentrate on small farms and low impact. The bar menu, meanwhile, is made from London Beers only and liquor made in the UK, with the exception of European wines. "This is to reduce beverage miles and to celebrate the amazing makers in London," explains Charlie.

Despite this, however, somewhat unsurprisingly, the business's best-seller contains neither meat nor alcohol. "Straight up grilled cheese, closely followed by our mushroom and truffle," reveals Charlie. And is there a typical type of clientele that is attracted to this offer? "Nope. We get all types who love Morty and Bob's for that. It's a place for anyone to come and have something delicious at any time of day."

Things did take a slight knock, though, during the pandemic and the resulting lockdown, which Charlie describes as being "pretty scary for us at first". "It wasn't great when Bojo told hospitality to stay open, but the customers to stay away," he elaborates. "It was particularly nerve-racking, but we closed up shop, stuck everyone on furlough and got through it. Sales have been great since we reopened, though, so hopefully things are on the up for the industry."

And these figures have received a further boost from a recent tie-up with Butlers Wharf Chop House. Throughout November, Morty and Bob's has been partnering with the London Bridge-based British restaurant to offer toasties alongside a curated selection of craft beers from Meantime Brewing.

Elevating the toastie to gourmet levels, the banner toastie, The Wagyu One, showcases a melt-in-the-mouth Highland wagyu pastrami with smoked applewood cheese in a truffle yuzu grape mustard sauce. Costing £15, it has been available at both Morty and Bob's and Butlers Wharf Chop House for four weeks only.

"Myself and head chef Behzad Gotla worked closely on creating a

“No rules... although stale bread really helps keep shape. The heat will refresh it, but it will be more crispy if it's made with bread a couple of days old.”

Charlie Phillips is telling me the secret of a good toasted sandwich – and he certainly knows how to make a crust from this foodie favourite. Charlie is the founder of the sandwich specialist Morty and Bob's, which at the time of writing enjoys an impressive 4/5 rating on TripAdvisor with reviews such as "the sandwiches were to die for".

Created originally as a tribute to his grandfathers, the business began life as a simple street food stall on Maltby Street Market and Netil Market, both of which are in London. "We sold out most weekends and then took the concept to music festivals as a street food trader," recalls Charlie. "We had a few regular spots over a few years, which was a lot of fun and a lot of hard work."

Seeking a more stable lifestyle, Charlie decided to concentrate on bricks and mortar sites in the capital and expand beyond his grilled cheese roots into brunch cafés, coffee and so on. "Two storeys up and at the back of an office building we opened our first site overlooking the train tracks in London Fields," says Charlie. "Morty and Bob's café was born, followed by Morty and Bob's all-day dining in Coal Drops Yard and a restaurant kiosk in Westfield."



THE WAGYU ONE

Put yourself in the customers' shoes on a daily basis

perfect toastie using great elements from each business. It's a delicious wagyu pastrami, smoked applewood Cheddar and pickles toasted in brioche with plenty of butter and an unreal truffle yuzu mayo. We love the focus on quality that Butlers Wharf and Behzad have, so it seemed like a no-brainer for us to collaborate and create this special."

Despite this success, Charlie clearly isn't complacent as, when I conclude our chat by asking him about his plans for the future, he reveals

that Morty and Bob's will be expanding. "We have a couple of secrets happening at the moment, which will all be revealed soon, but essentially we want to continue to grow our all-day dining group into a handful of sites. They will focus on quality, freshness and a casual vibe for all people at all times of day."

So, what advice can Charlie give on how to go from opening a simple street food stall, to being on the verge of running his own casual chain? "Put yourself in the customers' shoes on a daily basis," he says. "That's the only way to realise your rights and wrongs."

"Also, and I can't stress this enough, always hire people who are much better than you!" ☞

How was 2021 for your business?

**DEAN
KENNETT**
MANAGING
DIRECTOR,
FOODITUDE.



From a personal perspective, I entered 2021 not with hope but, to be honest, totally depressed and deflated. The lockdown over Christmas was hard, restricted me and meant that, like many others, I didn't get to see my family or do what I'd normally do at that time of year.

New year should bring hope, but I was in a dark place. It didn't help when I got constant photo reminders on my phone that showed pictures of a distant time and place, that resembled a good movie you wish you were in, but never got the part.

When re-entering work and, as brand holder, MD and founder, you must find the clown face for the sake of your team and the few clients you have left – to show you are ready, poised and game hungry to get back to work. You leave behind your own personal thoughts, doubts and, without realising it, use your day job to support and crutch any inabilities you may be feeling personally.

I can't speak for others in the business and industry catering world, but if there was ever a sector that was left out and to fend on their own, it was ours. Yes, we might work in a corporate world, with large sums of money being landed on deals, but at the heart of it all are people trying to steer through the curveballs being sent at them, and at speed. One wrong move, one bad

decision could mean the endgame for many.

But it's not all bad. Small openings show up, new challenges bring results and suddenly you start to see a way out. Holding tight to the table and not losing sight that you are there in the first place is the golden rule of staying in business. 'Never, never, never, never, give up' by Winston Churchill, ringing in my ears.

The door of optimism opened for me when we started the task of mobilising Fooditude in Ireland. A new venture, something different and what awaits?

Our team stepped off the flight into the Dublin sunshine and it felt for a short time like we had flown away from what was and entered an almost holiday experience. Don't get me wrong, two hard weeks of graft lay ahead, but we quite quickly got to start looking ahead and understanding something new and fresh.

We rode bikes on the weekend, had a few pints of the black stuff and got to know new team members and the wider business community in Ireland. It will remain, for me, a most treasured time. When we arrived back, I suddenly looked at what we had just left behind and started applying this energy to my London team. Shook the blankets type of thing and remade the bed.

Months have skipped past and we are now looking up at the Everest of work that awaits us. We have been given time, through what has been a strange year, to change, adapt and rationalise all that went before, when we were just too busy to do anything about our errors.

So now, as a team, we feel more confident, at ease with what we know and can do, and – dare I say it – be the best at. There's a lot to do in 2022!

We are now looking up at the Everest of work that awaits us

BACK ON TRACK?

CGA's latest research found that contract caterers' third-quarter sales are up year-on-year – but that they still significantly lag behind pre-Covid levels

The latest edition of CGA's Contract Caterer Tracker shows that sales from July to September 2021 were up by 52% on the same three months in 2020. This was a period when many venues served by caterers were under substantial restrictions.

However, the Tracker also indicates a 36% drop in third-quarter sales from the same period in 2019, when businesses were trading as normal. It shows contract caterers continue to suffer from the effects of national lockdowns and the drop in footfall in workplaces and sectors like leisure and live events. On a month-by-month basis, there were signs of some improvement between sales in July (down 38% on 2019) and September 2021 (down 29%).

Karl Chessell, CGA's director – hospitality operators and food, EMEA, said: "These figures show the scale of the Covid after-shocks that contract caterers are dealing with. While it's pleasing to see a revival in sales since last summer, this is from very low comparatives, and the 36% shortfall from 2019 is a more realistic measure of the challenges faced by contract caterers.

"Demand will build in due course, but with many people continuing to work from home or cautious about returning to crowded spaces, and supply, recruitment and cost issues mounting, the sector will be under pressure for some time to come."

The Tracker aggregates sales from leading operators to provide reports with year-on-year analysis. It offers businesses a benchmarking tool to measure performance across various metrics and market groupings.

*Demand will build
in due course*

PROMOTED CONTENT



The Creed Foodservice Team

THE EVOLUTION OF CREED FOODSERVICE

We're a family-founded business, with the family members still very much at the heart of the company. Although we keep our values at the core of how we operate, which is why so many of our customers choose to work with us, we have evolved and grown significantly over the years to have thousands of customers across the UK.

We've worked with contract caterers and hospitality providers for five decades, across B&I, Education, Destination and Leisure. We understand the unique challenges the sector faces, from ensuring product innovation, allergen management and complex cost management.

Did you know...

- We've grown from a two-person start-up to a 300+ strong team
- We have a 99.3% industry leading service level
- We deliver across all of the UK, from our three depots, servicing 3,500+ customers
- We're working with Climate Partner on our journey to Net Zero
- Our dedicated, specialist divisions include: Creed Family Butchers, Creed Fresh Produce, Food Innovation and Insights
- We won the 2021 FWD Foodservice Wholesaler Gold Medal

We can help you grow.

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LENNY CARR-ROBERTS Chef Patron



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SEAN HALEY CHAIRMAN, SODEXO UK AND IRELAND




Sodexo UK and Ireland has had a strong year and some significant successes, despite trading still being below pre-pandemic levels. We have seen a steady flow of contract wins, particularly in areas hit hardest by lockdown, such as schools and our sports and leisure business, Sodexo Live! We won prestigious new business with Oundle School and extended our contract in the newly-refurbished Hampden Park, the home of Scottish football.

We were genuinely delighted this summer to help the government with test events and opening back up the experiences that we know people love – Royal Ascot, Henley Royal Regatta and the Chelsea Flower Show. We were also proud to continue supporting the government's ongoing response to Covid-19 and are now the largest provider of test centres in the UK. We also operate the only network of assisted testers in England and Scotland, providing tests for those who have mobility and disability issues, and at events such as the G7 and COP26.

Our financial results are one indicator of our businesses' health, but our social impact is just as significant. And we've made great progress on our social impact pledges.

What stands out for me is how we have reduced food waste significantly using WasteWatch powered by Leanpath. This programme is now at 229 client sites and has prevented over 280 tonnes of food waste – more than 500,000 meals. Sodexo UK and Ireland has also set an ambitious and comprehensive roadmap to net zero by 2045. We've committed to being carbon neutral in our direct operations by 2025 and to reduce carbon emissions by 55% by 2030 across all three scopes, which has been validated by the Science Based Target initiative.

However, our approach is about using our scale and position to make business decisions that help not only our people, but the communities in which we operate. We've now gifted more than £1m of our apprenticeship levy and are one of the first companies to capture and analyse employee demographics as recommended by the Social Mobility Commission and Purpose Coalition. This year, we became the first hospitality and facilities management company to publish ethnicity pay gap data.

All this is thanks to the hard work, commitment and professionalism of our people, and the support of our valued clients, suppliers and partners. We know it has been a challenging time for them too. We start our new financial year focused on how we will continue to adapt and grow our business while ensuring we are leading the way to improve quality of life for society and our planet. Everyone at Sodexo is committed to this journey. 

*We have seen a steady
flow of contract wins*



Rob Owen, Executive Business Development Chef

HOW WE'VE SUPPORTED OUR CUSTOMERS **POST-PANDEMIC**

The foodservice sector has been hit hard during the pandemic and is still facing various challenges including a lack of drivers, concerns around potential future food shortages and orders unable to be fulfilled by many companies.

We worked hard to not only plan ahead to ensure our customers didn't, and don't, bear the brunt of the challenging environment that we're all facing. As well as this, we've kept momentum in driving forward innovation and insights, helping our customers to be prepared for the months ahead as well as the here and now.

We're proud to say:

- We planned ahead and enhanced our driver numbers
- Over 600 deliveries have been made each day, 6 days a week
- We're continuing to proactively work with our customers to advise on menu rationalisation, stock holding, and ensure health & wellbeing is kept in mind with regards to the food provision
- Our dedicated insights team forecast new trends and products, to ensure our customers are delivering and considering the right catering and hospitality for customers of today and tomorrow
- We have a real passion for food and catering solutions, and our development chefs, category managers and wider team are able to support with menu planning, quality, budget control, allergen management, as well as providing many more tips for delivering industry leading hospitality

We can help you grow.

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INDUSTRY EXPERT: SPORTS AND LEISURE



Sports report

JON DAVIES, MANAGING DIRECTOR
OF LEVY UK AND IRELAND, UPDATES
US ON A BUSY TIME FOR THE SPORTS
AND LEISURE SECTOR

As caterers rebuild following the pandemic, they must not ignore the fundamental ethical principles around planetary health, environmental welfare and sustainability that have driven – and will continue to drive – their operational success. Nowhere was this message clearer than at the United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP26, at the SEC Centre in Glasgow this past month.

Following the numerous discussions surrounding sustainability conducted at the conference, it is evident that paving the way for planet-friendly choices will continue to set the agenda moving forward. The conference's food strategy, which we devised and implemented through SEC Food, a partnership with Glasgow SEC, set a clear example as to how to promote sustainability while also providing a diverse and delicious menu.

Sales of vegetarian and plant-based dishes took centre stage, accounting for 60% of retail sales from a total of over 125,000 menu items sold during COP26. This was largely achieved by serving local produce, with 80% of the food being from Scotland and a further 15% from within the UK.

The majority of suppliers were based within 100 miles of Glasgow, allowing for partnerships with quality brands such as Edinburgh's Mara Seaweed, Stoats and Barra Berries, all of which helped us deliver a low-carbon menu. In order to help attendees understand the menu's carbon footprint and make an informed choice, Levy partnered with Norwegian start-up and

*COP26's food
strategy set a
clear example as
to how to promote
sustainability*


environmental consultants Klimato, to calculate and share the carbon footprint of each dish via an eco-label.

As we all take steps to protect our planet, our sustainable food strategy and plant-forward approach, exemplified at COP26, will shape menus of the future. The conference, and the impact it has had on the national conversation around sustainable food, will be used as a catalyst

for change to drive our Levy climate promise to be net zero by 2027.

While, of course, Covid-19 has brought significant challenges to the hospitality industry, it has also provided us with an opportunity to take another look at how we can lead by example, drive new initiatives in the delivery of our services, and to be the change we want to see in the broader hospitality industry. We need to recognise our role in promoting more sustainable food choices to guests. We have a responsibility to do more for the planet, but with the industry now rebuilding post-Covid, there is a real danger that venues will abandon their sustainability goals in favour of profits, when they should in fact be recommitting to them.

As the industry's market leader, Levy will continue to champion a range of issues. These will include consolidating menus around a greater proportion of local produce and plant-forward meals, reducing food waste, and trying to drive up food safety and welfare standards by using our supply chain.

As a food business, our intent is clear: we must lead the way in doing more to reduce our carbon impact. The food industry must take a longer-term view of where it would like to be – for the sake of our guests and our planet, now and in the future. 

Peas on Earth

PLANT-BASED DINING HAS REALLY RISEN TO PROMINENCE IN RECENT YEARS – AND ONE OF THE MAIN REASONS HAS BEEN CONSUMERS PRIORITISING THE PLANET

You only have to look at the incredible increase in participation in the upcoming annual Veganuary event (see page 45) to see that meat-free menus are becoming bigger business than ever. Indeed, 2021 was the largest one ever, with the ethical organisation revealing that over half a million people in more than 200 countries and territories took part.

"The Vegan Society states that in 2019, the UK meat alternative market was valued at £354.3m and is expected to hit £541.2m by 2025, growing at an incredible rate," says Dr Tracey Jones, director of food business for Compassion in World Farming (see page 46). "In terms of revenue, this accounts for nearly 30% of the total European meat alternative market.

"Again, according to The Vegan Society, in 2018 16% of all new food products launched were vegan, doubling from 8% in 2015."

PLANT-BASED POPULARITY

New Statista research also highlights the increasing interest from UK consumers in reducing meat consumption, which has seen a sharp rise in consumers becoming flexitarians, vegans and vegetarians. "The popularity of these dietary choices has now reached a level where only 66% of UK consumers now describe their diet as 'not following any nutrition rules'," explains Lynn Little, head of food for Nestlé Professional UK and Ireland. "This, coupled with the fact that the number of Brits adopting a

vegan diet in 2020 skyrocketed by 40%, shows that the demand for plant-based dishes is growing at pace.

"Reducing meat consumption continues to be particularly popular with younger people. Some 45% of meat-eaters aged 25 to 34 have cut down their meat consumption in recent months."

And all of this activity has only been exaggerated by a certain recent worldwide event. "The Covid pandemic seems to have accelerated the interest in plant-based dining," says Gordon Lauder, MD of Central Foods. "A survey by The Vegan Society earlier this year found that 20% of people had reduced the amount of meat they were eating over the previous 12 months, while 12% had minimised their egg and dairy intake, which means that a quarter of all British people have cut back on some form of animal product since the first lockdown.

"The National Food Strategy recently reported that daily meat consumption in the UK has fallen by 17% in the last decade. But it recommends that meat consumption falls by 30% in the next 20 years to reduce the environmental impact of our diets."

The meat-free pioneer Quorn is launching a campaign to help its customers make the most of the aforementioned Veganuary 2022 by encouraging chefs and caterers to Swap It for the month. "Quorn is passionate about providing tasty meat-free alternatives that are better for you and better for the planet, and we are always thinking of ways to help our customers



CENTRAL FOODS MENU SERVE MEDITERRANEAN VEG TART

Reducing meat consumption continues to be particularly popular with younger people

benefit from the growing interest in vegan and vegetarian diets, so Veganuary is a key period," says Phil Thornborrow, foodservice director for Quorn Foods.

"We have big ambitions to help reduce the impact of our diets on the planet and our health. Mycoprotein, the super-protein at the heart of all Quorn products, plays a big role in helping us achieve this."

PLANT PRODUCTS

Of course, getting your plant-based offering right all starts with authentic ingredients. To help make it even easier for chefs to serve up delicious rice every time, Tilda has launched its new Steamed Rice range into foodservice.

"The convenient pouches offer quick and hygienic solutions to all kitchens, are all vegetarian and are inspired by the latest food trends

NEW LOOK



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MAPLE FROM CANADA MAPLE SYRUP PIES



TILDA THAI PINEAPPLE FRIED RICE



TILDA COCONUT AND GINGER JASMINE RICE

and chefs' favourites," says Annette Coggins, head of foodservice for Tilda UK. "The range includes the champagne grain, light and fluffy Tilda Pure Basmati Rice; nutty and wholesome Wholegrain Basmati, which is packed with fibre for extra nutrition; spicy Peri Peri Basmati, which combines bird's eye chili with smoky paprika; and fragrant Coconut Basmati Rice, which boasts long, slender grains infused with fresh coconut."

Similarly, Lucky Boat's variety of noodles make a great base for a selection of dishes, including stir fries, soups and even salads. Pleasingly, only the best grade ingredients are used in the making of the noodles, the entire range is suitable for vegans and vegetarians, and they are also egg-free.

Lucky Boat Noodles have been trialled and tested by a leading contract caterer, established in the foodservice industry for over 60 years. One of the company's chefs who tested Lucky Boat No. 1 Thick and Lucky Boat Wholewheat noodles expressed his appreciation of the range after creating two dishes using them. They were noodle suzette, a modern take on the classic crêpe suzette, and noodles sail to Italy, a combination of vegetables and noodles, bound with cavolo nero pesto.

Another much-used staple, all Mission Tortillas and Tortilla Chips are suitable for vegan and vegetarian diets, providing operators and chefs with a diverse and flexible foundation for the creation of tasty plant-based



LUCKY BOAT NOODLES

Covid seems to have accelerated the interest in plant-based dining

menus. With an in-depth range of Plain, Bar-Marked and Flavoured Tortillas available in a variety of sizes and formats, from frozen and long-life ambient products to low-salt and low-fat options, there's a product to suit any recipe or meal adaptation.

"Options such as Beetroot and Chia and Spinach Wheat Flour Tortillas enable chefs to enhance dishes with additional flavours and vibrant colours, alongside the more traditional plain tortillas," says Kim Hartley, executive business development chef for Mission Foods. "Besides a versatile range of products that can be packed full of tasty fillings, including the growing number of meat alternatives derived from vegetable proteins, we can share in-depth knowledge and advice to help chefs innovate their menu offer."

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CREATIVE FOODS HARVEST FARMS PLANT BASED SOUTHERN FRIED GOUJONS WITH CAESAR SALAD

A FRESH APPROACH

As with all kinds of foods, taste has to be paramount, as Jason Coyle, founder of Invisible Chef, explains: "When developing a product, the starting point shouldn't be that a product is vegan; the starting point needs to be a product that tastes good. This is the approach that we take when it comes to our vegetarian and vegan options.

"Vegan food that doesn't taste good is damaging as food waste and is clearly another contributing factor to the issues around climate change. In addition, an issue with a lot of vegan food is that it is often full of processed ingredients.

"We specifically use clean label, cupboard, natural ingredients in our Invisible Chef Pulled Oat Burrito. For us, vegan products, as well as tasting delicious, should be good for you and have the nutritional balance that we all require – containing good levels of protein and fibre."

Some vegetables actually lend themselves to being natural meat alternatives and have been around for some time on menus. "You can use Portobello mushrooms instead of a beef burger or for breakfast sandwiches as a replacement for sausages or bacon," says a spokesperson for CaterCloud.

"A common trend among meat alternatives is to name the product after its meat counterpart. For instance, 'chicken-free nuggets' could be named 'vegetable nuggets,' removing all connotations of the meat element. For many people converting to meat-free, these products preserve the flavour memories of meat while producing something that meets either health or ethical demand."

Since its recent arrival on the plant-based ingredients scene, PlantNation has rapidly established itself as one of the biggest advances in plant-powered eating. Thanks to the introduction of its breakthrough HPC Technology, it's now possible to produce a vegan 'cheese' that ticks all of the boxes expected from its dairy equivalent.

The product can be used in everything from pizzas to pasta, from paninis to baked potatoes, from subs and sandwiches to toasties and tacos. In fact, PlantNation's all-round credentials so impressed the judges at the prestigious International Cheese and Dairy Awards that it picked up the coveted trophy for Best Free-From, plus two more Golds, a Silver and two Bronzes.

When it comes to vegan sauces, Creative Foods' Oasis Vegan Mayo is

SODEXO AND SQUEAKY BEAN

Squeaky Bean, the chef's plant-based sidekick, is now available to foodservice operators for the first time. Brakes will stock three product lines: Squeaky Bean Crispy Duck, Salt Beef Style Pieces and Italian Deli Ham Style Slices.

Sodexo is already using Squeaky Bean in dishes such as faux duck hoisin wrap and flexitarian no salt beef mac 'n' cheese. The caterer also has plans to launch the MooBan, a meat-free take on a salt beef reuben sandwich for Veganuary.

David Mulcahy, food innovation and sustainability director for Sodexo, says: "As the demand for plant-based options within Sodexo grows, it's important to work with trusted producers and suppliers in this category. We are delighted to launch a range of dishes using Squeaky Bean plant-based products, which meet the demands of our customers while offering an excellent choice of delicious alternatives to meat proteins."



CENTRAL FOODS MENU SERVE CAJUN SPICED SWEET POTATO ROULADE

The starting point needs to be a product that tastes good

also award-winning and looks, and tastes, just like the real thing, says marketing manager Lorraine Cumming. "This means vegans can enjoy a mayo dip with their fries, or as a sauce for their vegan burger, safe in the knowledge that it is vegan as well as lactose- and gluten-free.

"It allows our foodservice customers to add a simple twist by mixing it with on-trend ingredients to create vegan starters, side dishes, sandwich fillings or mayonnaise-based dips such as black olive, smashed avocado, sundried tomato or pesto. And for those operators who want to tap into the continuing consumer demand for hot and spicy sauces, what could be better than

a vegan Mississippi muddy mayonnaise, made by mixing Oasis Vegan Mayo with a splash of Tabasco Pepper Sauce?"

Vadasz

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MAPLE FROM CANADA CHOCOLATE, AVOCADO AND MAPLE TART

SOMETHING SWEET?

When it comes to desserts, maple syrup is the perfect source of natural sweetness for caterers to use in a range of vegan dishes. "The growing importance of provenance and healthy eating has meant more people are seeking natural sugars for their sweet treats," says David Colcombe, chef ambassador for Maple from Canada UK. "For many, the sweetener needs to be vegan-suitable too.

"Pure Canadian maple syrup is 100% natural, and naturally vegan, with nothing added or removed. It provides a wonderful rich flavour to elevate any recipe, whether it's sweet or savoury.

"The richer dark, robust taste maple syrup can add a subtle sweetness to vegan desserts and bakes to add richness or to enhance fruity flavours. Very dark syrup, with its strong taste, will add depth to the colour and aroma of breads and cakes, and act as a flavour enhancer in chocolate or glazes."

The fact is that many consumers who have other dietary requirements or preferences also prefer their products to be vegan. For instance, in a recent study, Bells of Lazonby found that almost half of all those who purchase gluten-free cakes also like them to be vegan. "Therefore, we would suggest purchasing a range of products that tick the vegan, vegetarian and gluten-free box to increase sales by broadening the appeal," says a spokesperson for Bells of Lazonby.

*The move to
eat more plant-
based foods
needs to happen
faster*



RATIONAL'S iVARIO AND AN iCOMBI PRO



RATIONAL RECIPES

To help foodservice operators come up with tasty, satisfying vegan menu options, Rational UK has put together a selection of recipes that are available to download for free via the company's ConnectedCooking app. They are designed for use with Rational's iCombi Pro combi steamer and iVario multifunctional cooking system, and make it easy to add great tasting vegan dishes to the menu.

"The demand for vegan food was always going to grow," says Ross Crook, regional development chef for Rational UK. "However, the pandemic has given it an even bigger push, by focusing people's minds on issues such as healthy diets and the environment – and vegan food ticks both boxes."

Initially Rational has put together seven vegan recipes, which have been hand-picked by the company's expert chefs. Collectively they showcase just how varied a vegan menu can be – from vegan fish and chips (centred around banana blossom rather than fish!) to Japanese soufflé pancakes. There are also tempting desserts, such as baked apple crumble and raspberry doughnuts.

To get the recipes, simply download Rational's ConnectedCooking app (it is available free in the App Store or on Google Play) and search for the recipe you're after.

The unfortunate truth is that this kind of action can't come quickly enough, according to Jones of Compassion in World Farming, who concludes: "While change is afoot, as more consumers embrace veganism, vegetarianism, flexitarianism and the latest, climatarianism – where people are concerned about sustainability and climate positive meats and meals – the move to eat more plant-based foods and end intensive factory farming needs to happen faster. This will help to combat the global climate, nature and health emergency that we are currently witnessing." 🌱

CONTACTS

Bells of Lazonby www.bellsflazonby.co.uk
CaterCloud www.catercloud.com
Central Foods www.centralfoods.co.uk
Compassion in World Farming www.ciwf.org.uk
Creative Foods www.creativefoods.co.uk
Invisible Chef www.invisiblechefsnacks.com
Lucky Boat www.luckyboatnoodles.co.uk
Maple from Canada www.maplefromcanada.co.uk
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www.nestleprofessional.co.uk
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Quorn www.quornfoodservice.co.uk
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Squeaky Bean www.winterbothamdarby.com
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Conscious catering

RYAN HOLMES, CULINARY DIRECTOR FOR EUREST, TELLS US ABOUT THE CATERER'S PLAN TO MAKE 40% OF ITS PROTEINS PLANT-BASED BY 2030



What is driving the recent growth in plant-based dining?

People are becoming more aware of carbon emissions and the other environmental impacts of our food, from biodiversity loss to water use. Animal agriculture accounts for 18% of all greenhouse gas emissions, which is more than all transportation and is responsible for 20% to 33% of all freshwater consumption in the world today.

Those are some sobering statistics. Eating a plant-based diet is one of the easiest and most important changes a person can make to mitigate the environmental impacts of their lifestyle. Researchers at the University of Oxford found that cutting out meat and dairy products could reduce an individual's carbon footprint by 73%.

The environment is very much on people's radar now and so is health. People are realising that they can also become healthier if they choose a well-balanced plant-based diet that is high in fibre, protein and essential vitamins and minerals. The fact is that hardly any of us in the UK get our daily recommended 30g of fibre! Choosing plant-based dishes is a win-win situation for people and planet.

How is this market likely to evolve in the future?

We're likely to see a greater focus on food's environmental impacts. We've seen how popular ingredients like avocados and almonds can make headlines for having negative environmental impacts, and more people are choosing to go plant-based for the planet. The Veganuary 2021 survey found that 21% of respondents had gone vegan for the environment, versus 12% of respondents in 2019.

What's really important is that we take our customers and clients on the journey with us


At Eurest, we're currently running eco-labelling trials with the Livestock Environment and People project at the University of Oxford. We've teamed up with researchers to find out whether eco-labels help people to make more environmentally-aware choices when they're deciding what to eat. Dishes are labelled A-E to highlight which meals have a lower or higher environmental impact based on greenhouse gas emissions, water scarcity, water pollution and biodiversity loss. This is an important direction of travel for our industry.

What one tip would you offer on getting your vegan and vegetarian offer right?

Our menus are becoming more plant-forward, with a target of having 40% of our proteins plant-based by 2030 as part of our roadmap to net zero. Some 45% of our 2022 menu will be made up of completely plant-based recipes, with an additional 10% meeting the plant-forward brief.

What's really important is that we take our customers and clients on the journey with us, rather than asking them to change their diets overnight. That's where behavioural science comes in, with the concept of behavioural

nudging. If we give people really enticing plant-based options that they know are good for them, because our nutritional criteria around protein and fibre are clear, then we're making it easy for them to make a more environmentally-friendly choice.

It's all about communicating the benefits for the environment and the individual, and then using really tasty, enticing food to nudge people toward those choices. 

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VEGAN AND VEGETARIAN



Veganuary

ESSENTIAL INFO

What? Veganuary

Where? Worldwide

When? 1st – 31st January

More info: www.veganuary.com

2021 CAMPAIGN STATS

85% of participants said they intended to either stay vegan or reduce animal products in their diet by at least 50%

93% of those participants who aren't committing to stay vegan are likely to try vegan again

50% of participants said they saw health improvements after just 31 days

1,500 international media stories featured Veganuary during the campaign

£1.2bn is the worth of the UK plant-based food category, according to Kantar

THE ORGANISERS ARE DETERMINED TO MAKE 2022 THE BIGGEST EVENT YET!

Veganuary is a non-profit organisation that encourages people worldwide to try going vegan for January and beyond. During the 2021 campaign, over 500,000 people took its pledge to try a vegan diet, while more than 825 new compliant products and menu options were launched.

Throughout the year, Veganuary generally encourages and supports people and businesses alike to move to a plant-based diet. The aim is to protect the environment, prevent animal suffering and improving people's health.

More specifically, do you want to make your business or workplace healthier and happier while helping the planet? Then the Veganuary Workplace Challenge could be for you!

Taking part is fairly simple. Your staff have to challenge themselves to eat a purely plant-based diet for one month, with an enticing pay-off. Vegan diets have proven health benefits, including increased energy levels (which is good for productivity!), lower cholesterol levels, decreased blood pressure, and supporting a healthy body weight.


The organisers of Veganuary say that it's the most environmentally-friendly diet too. It has been calculated that one person eating a vegan

diet for a month will save 32,995 gallons of water, 904 square feet of forest, and 601 kilograms of carbon dioxide emissions (better than giving up a car for a month).

Whether you're an employer who wants to demonstrate your commitment to sustainability, or a Veganuary participant who doesn't want to go it alone, the organiser's website has all the resources you need to set up a Veganuary Workplace Challenge.

Everyone who takes part in Veganuary, at whatever level, receives daily e-mails that offer meal ideas, recipes and lots of information to remind them of the importance of what we eat. By registering, they are joining a worldwide community of individuals who are all exploring veganism together as a means of improving their own health, protecting animals, or reducing their impact on the planet.

It is a positive community that offers support, advice and friendship. If you have signed up already, it is suggested that you encourage family, friends and colleagues to join you. Remember, it's free to take part and everyone is welcome.

Millions of people from all over the world have taken part since 2014 – but the organisers say they are ultimately aiming for a fully vegan world! 

During the 2021 campaign, over 500,000 people took its pledge to try a vegan diet

Compassion in action

DR TRACEY JONES, GLOBAL DIRECTOR OF FOOD BUSINESS FOR COMPASSION IN WORLD FARMING, EXPLAINS THE PERILS THAT LAY AHEAD FOR THE PLANET

Why is this issue coming to such prominence now?

Today's consumers want to know more about the provenance of their food: where it has come from, how it reached their plate and, increasingly, the effect food production is having on animal welfare, climate change and the environmental crisis we are currently witnessing. Diets are changing to reflect these concerns as more people adopt flexitarian, climatarian, vegetarian or vegan diets. According to a survey carried out by YouGov on behalf of Deloitte on consumer behaviours in March 2021, one third of UK consumers have reduced their meat and/or animal products consumption in the past 12 months.

What can caterers do to help?

Food businesses need to take a more flexitarian approach to their offering – and not just during Veganuary – by reducing portion sizes of meat or serving meat less often; by introducing more vegetables, nuts, and pulses onto the menu, as well as other meat alternatives; and clearly explaining their thinking to their customers. This would encourage more non-vegans or vegetarians to try eating veg-an for more than just the month of January.

Vast and growing scientific evidence calls for a significant reduction in the overall production and consumption of animal protein by 70%; and a transformation in the way in which we produce our food, towards a more resilient, regenerative and sustainable food system that restores biodiversity and protects animals.

Food businesses can make the most of this opportunity by playing their part in the whole transformation of the way we eat, and by introducing a larger variety of plant-based alternatives to their menus, using fresh fruit and vegetables and legumes. This will help to drive down the consumption of animal-sourced foods that are having an increasing impact on the planet.

The range and quality of branded vegan food available in 2021/22 is truly revolutionary compared to even five years ago. Plant-based alternatives whose texture and taste mimic meat have been grabbing headlines

and are vital if we are to persuade dedicated meat eaters to reduce their meat consumption and accept other meat-free options. Beyond Meat, which is already being used by KFC and McDonald's, Nestlé's Awesome Burger and Burger King's Impossible Burger are just a few, with others, no doubt, in the pipeline.

In December 2020, at Singapore's 1880 Club, another breakthrough took place when San Francisco-based business Eat Just served the first cultured chicken to paying guests. This chicken required neither killing an animal, tearing down a forest nor a drop of antibiotics.

Cultured meat uses a fraction of the land and emits far fewer greenhouse gases – especially when it's produced using renewable energy. A


benchmark study has also shown cultured meat to be 98% lower in land use and 80% to 95% lower in greenhouse gas emissions compared to conventionally produced meat products.

What does the future hold?

The world rears and slaughters over 80bn farmed animals for food every year, with approximately two-thirds of them being raised on industrial farms, causing huge impacts on animal welfare, climate change and biodiversity loss. Things must change.

We need to adapt our food choices so that we can move away from industrial farming with its associated food miles and impact on animal welfare

and the planet. Chefs within the food industry have an important role to play in making this happen. Many outlets already serve outstanding, top-quality food, but by creating more dishes with fresh fruit and veg, and the many new meat alternatives available, consumers will appreciate it is possible to eat tasty food that's healthy and sustainable without vast and unnecessary quantities of meat or dairy.

Transforming our food system is essential if we are to create a liveable future for coming generations. Research clearly demonstrates that a global reduction in meat and dairy consumption is vital for our health and for the health of the planet. 

*Chefs within
the food
industry have
an important
role to play*

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Try this indulgent vegan maple nut roast wreath created by Maple from Canada UK for a flavourful, festive main. 🍁



MAPLE NUT ROAST WREATH

6-8 portions

Prep time: 20 Cooking time: 40

INGREDIENTS

2 large onions, roughly chopped

2 tbsp olive oil

4 cloves garlic, minced

1 small butternut squash, peeled and cut into small cubes

100g mushrooms finely chopped

2 big handfuls of kale

300g hazelnuts

4 tbsp pine nuts

4 tbsp sunflower oil

180g chestnuts, chopped

2 tbsp tamari or soy sauce

2 tbsp vegan Worcester sauce

1 tbsp whole grain mustard

1 tsp sea salt

Zest of 1 lemon

Salt and pepper, to season

1 tbsp maple syrup (preferably dark syrup for its robust taste)

2 tbsp fresh thyme, chopped

Fresh sprigs of herbs and cranberries for decoration

METHOD

1. Pre-heat your oven to 180°. Heat the olive oil in a medium pan, add the onion and fry gently on a low heat for around 10 minutes until soft and browning. Add the garlic and fry for a further minute.
2. Next add the squash and mushrooms and fry for 10 minutes until soft. Stir in the kale and turn off the heat when wilted.
3. Meanwhile, toast the hazelnuts, sunflower seeds and pine nuts in a dry pan until slightly golden. Add to a food processor and pulse until coarsely chopped. Add them to the pan along with the remaining ingredients and stir to combine.
4. Transfer the mix to a medium greased Bundt tin, if you have one, a silicone tin will make it easier to remove the nut roast. Press the mix down firmly into the tin.
5. Bake for 40 minutes until browned. Allow to cool then carefully flip onto a plate.
6. Top with fresh herbs and cranberries and serve warm.

For more inspirational vegan and non-vegan recipes, delicious Christmas food ideas or our Always in Season podcast with chef James Golding, visit www.maplefromcanada.co.uk





CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN DERBYSHIRE



NATIONAL SCHOOL MEALS WEEK

THIS ANNUAL EVENT MAY HAVE BEEN CURBED BY COVID ONCE AGAIN, BUT IT WAS STILL REGARDED AS HAVING BEEN A HUGE SUCCESS

National School Meals Week (NSMW) 2021, which was organised by LACA – The School Food People and ran from 8th to 12th November, has been seen as being a great success by many in the industry. Following a difficult 18 months, LACA was determined to provide a campaign that would inspire the imagination of all involved, be flexible enough for those who wished to get involved and, of course, be a platform for positive school food news.

Sadly, many school caterers are not back to service as usual and continue to find the situation difficult with staffing issues, supply problems and ongoing school Covid restrictions. However, NSMW has been a popular event in schools for more than 30 years, and this year wasn't to be any different.

It was brilliant to see so many people getting involved

New for 2021, LACA introduced The School Tucker Trial, coinciding with the time of year when the popular TV programme I'm A Celebrity... Get Me Out Of Here is launched. The campaign was designed to remind all stakeholders that school lunches are nutritious, to be enjoyed and that lunchtimes are fun. In addition,

LACA was keen to enable members to promote some of the other great messages they wanted to communicate around menus, food quality, nutritional content and reduced carbon footprint to the widest audience possible.

The Week was launched with a video message from the chair of LACA, Jacquie Blake. She said: "It was brilliant to see so many people getting involved in National School Meals Week 2021. We were delighted with the support LACA received throughout the Week, from catering providers and the front-line teams, through to food suppliers and MPs.

"The School Tucker Trial saw more children getting back to eating hot school lunches, which is important for recovery from the pandemic, as we know that for some children it is their only hot meal of the day. Throughout the Week, children enjoyed more

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plant-based dishes, as well as locally sourced produce, which not only has a positive impact on health but on the environment too. The Week was a huge success, thank you to everyone who supported us."

Many schools, academies, catering organisations, suppliers and supporters of the education catering industry got involved during the Week. These included the Soil Association, ProVeg UK, Sugarwise, Love British Food, and many more.

Important conversations took place during the week, as MPs and councillors across the country took part by showing their support to catering providers in their constituencies, be it on social media or in person. Sharon Hodgson MP, a great ambassador for the service, rallied the call for support from her ministerial colleagues, resulting in school visits from numerous MPs, some taking the opportunity to help out in the kitchen.

Of course, it is important that MPs know just how good today's school food really is and the benefits for those children who have a nutritious, two-course lunch in the middle of the school day to their health and well-being. There are more MP and VIP visits planned in schools post-NSMW, so if you want to invite your local MP and need any help, contact admin@laca.co.uk.

During NSMW, the aforementioned School Tuck-in Trial was used in many different ways by school caterers. These ranged from new menu launches to tasting sessions; providing the chance to try new and innovative dishes to looking at ingredients in an educational setting; and generally to engage with pupils to try new dishes. It was great to see many major foodservice companies working in secondary schools to launch new food products and concepts, to encourage students to step outside their comfort zone and try new dishes, including vegan and plant-based products.

As part of the Week there were five themed events, each focusing on an important part of the school food message, enabling operators to select whichever theme day they felt would work best for them. Some chose one or two, others ran the full Week's activities.

Mix It Up Monday and Plant-Based Power Thursday saw children from across the country eating an array of meat-free products, as caterers were encouraged to replace meals with plant-based dishes in order to make a positive impact on the environment. Children expressed how good they tasted and said they were likely to choose plant-based food more often. ProVeg UK supported the event and provided hints and tips on how to make such menu items appealing to pupils. Social media was awash with brightly coloured, mouth-watering vegetarian and vegan dishes.

A popular midweek special is Roast Dinner Day, and once again we saw menus filled with British and local produce. Thousands of kilos of potatoes were washed, peeled, roasted and enjoyed. Schools from



across the UK showcased their talents and the event was supported by organisations such as the National Farmers' Union, the Soil Association and many British food suppliers.

The School Food Challenge and Food for Fuel days highlighted the importance of school food to aid learning and development and, in many schools, was used as a way of teaching students where their meals come from. The creativity shown by school caterers was amazing.

With some restrictions still being in place, the event was not able to get on the road again this year, so a virtual tour of the UK took place. It showcased some of the very best school meals that caterers have to offer. The tour 'visited' Devon, where recipes were provided by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, before moving on to Hampshire where Kraft Heinz equipped older students with meal ideas for when they go off to college and university. It then went up

to North Yorkshire, where suppliers set up stands to encourage pupils to trial unusual ingredients.

Although NSMW is over, it's not too late to have fun and use the free resources. You can still get involved by visiting www.nsmw.org.uk and supporting the event on Twitter @NSMW and Facebook @nationalschoolmealsweek. You can follow all the news and events that took place and see the gallery too.

LACA continues to provide resources long after NSMW has ended. These are not just specific NSMW resources, but there are other promotional ideas for a number of popular events in the calendar too. LACA knows that running regular events increases uptake and also adds value to the lunchtime service. Visit the above website for more information. Resources are available in English and Welsh.

The organisers would like to say thanks to everyone who supported NSMW. Details about 2022's event will be available in the new year.

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DESSERTS



CENTRAL FOODS MENU SERVE CHOC & CHERRY DESSERT SLICES

HAPPY ENDINGS

DESPITE THE INCREASED FOCUS ON HEALTH, DESSERT IS STILL VERY MUCH ON THE TABLE FOR CONSUMERS

Desserts are hugely popular in the UK out of home sector, with almost £836.54m having been spent in the 52-week period ending on 2nd December 2020, according to Statista. In fact, this area has consistently built year-on-year, with growth of over £205m in the 10 years to 2010. Frozen desserts, in particular, are experiencing a hike, with the Europe frozen desserts market projected by Mordor Intelligence to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 4.7% during the forecast period 2020 to 2025.

Cakes and cake bars have also experienced significant gains. According to Mintel's figures, this market grew by 4.5% in 2019, with value sales reaching an impressive £2.372m. This success looks set to continue, as it is predicted that the market will have bounced back post-Covid to a value of £2.36m by 2024.

Despite the health trend, consumers are still looking for a regular sugar hit and, according to research from YouGov, 39% of Brits eat a sweet treat every day. Cake remains the top choice, with the average Brit eating three slices of cake a week.

"Considering how challenging the last few years have been for our industry, these figures just prove the market's ability to not only be resilient, but also to adapt, innovate and continue to thrive moving

The desire for a sweet treat to round off a meal remains high

forward," says Rebecca Dunning, trade marketing manager for La Lorraine Bakery Group, which includes the Panesco and La Lorraine brands.

CONSUMER TRENDS

With consumers craving more variety when it comes

to sweet treats, innovations in this sector have evolved with a diverse range of new products entering the market that appeal to a wide demographic. "The desire for a sweet treat to round off a meal remains high amongst consumers," says Anna Sentance, gourmet marketing manager for Callebaut UK and Ireland. "After the main course, dessert is the most popular course consumers ordered out of home, with two in five consumers purchasing a dessert, cake or pastry when eating out.

"What's more, 40% of consumers who eat out every day will buy a dessert, cake or pastry. The trend towards creating more unique desserts has become prominent among caterers in recent years."

Given how much people have been through since the Covid-19 outbreak, and the restrictions that have been put on the British public, consumers are relishing their free time socialising outside of the home and want to indulge in an affordable way. Whether it's simply a morning coffee with a slice of tart or a warming bowl of sticky toffee pudding and custard after a meal, they want to make an experience of every

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POPULAR PRODUCTS

Foodhub says consumers' appetite for sweet things is gaining so much pace that desserts overtook traditional takeaway favourites like pizza and kebabs over the summer, with ice cream being the most popular dessert among Brits, followed by doughnuts, cake, milkshakes and crepes. "Doughnuts, in particular, are a key player in the desserts market, with 90% of sweet bakery customers saying they are open to buying one," says Dunning. "It's also worth noting that around 24% of consumers buy cakes, cake bars and sweet baked goods as a form of dessert."

Ideal as a snack with a morning coffee, as a lighter after-dinner option on their own, or elevated to a decadent dessert, served with a scoop of ice cream, doughnuts are an ideal sweet treat that can help to bolster profits. These fried sweet dough balls have evolved way beyond a simple jam filling, with variants ranging from Belgian chocolate brownie and pecan to salted caramel and popcorn.

There is a wide range on the market to suit everyone's taste, and classic favourites have been elevated to become more premium options, such as strawberry jam ones coated with real white chocolate and strawberry pieces. "Caterers can look to increase sales by promoting the idea of doughnuts that explore creative flavours and that are made with high quality ingredients as a 'fun' dessert occasion," points out Dunning.

Dessert and ice cream parlours have seen a resurgence

CBD, or cannabidiol, is becoming a popular addition to many food and drink items. Although derived from cannabis, CBD won't get customers high. In fact, there is a lot of circumstantial evidence to support the efficacy of CBD for health conditions.

"Public opinion is ahead of the game, and young consumers in particular have taken to CBD with enthusiasm," says Alex Tofalos, director of CBD One. "It is exceptionally safe to take and has become a fashionable and desirable daily supplement for many people who find it a helpful contribution to their health and welfare."

Due to increased interest in CBD, infused desserts, drinks and smoothies are likely to become more commonplace in 2022. Caterers that want to be at the culinary cutting edge are using CBD to bring something different to the table, creating a talking point amongst customers with the addition of CBD-fortified desserts on their menus.

SEASONAL FLUCTUATIONS

Certain products will remain popular all year through, but to avoid menu fatigue it's important that operators add seasonal flair to dessert menus to retain consumers' interest. By offering value for money and quality products, contract caterers will be able to profit from this lucrative segment.

Ultimately, whether it's spring, summer, autumn or winter, ensuring that dessert menus have consistently good options for everyone will guarantee sales. "Dessert and ice cream parlours have seen a resurgence over the last few years as consumers look for new ways to indulge and socialise," points out Dunning. "Therefore, the demand is there, but it's more about how caterers can create opportunities at certain times of the year. Offering seasonal menus, for instance, is a good way of not only getting customers through your doors at specific times throughout the year, but also creating fantastic sales opportunities."

In spring time, caterers can make the most of vibrantly coloured fresh fruit, whether that's piled on top of cheesecake or made into a compote to top off a creamy panacotta. The colder months, meanwhile, are the ideal time to make the most of spices and winter berries to make muffins and crumbles truly seasonal. Caterers can add a seasonal spin to any of their customers' regular favourites by adding toppings, sauces and inclusions that are synonymous with particular times of year.

There will be no shortage of new product development when it comes to seasonal desserts. Therefore,

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GUILTY PLEASURE

New data from the NPD Group shows that since the beginning of the Covid-19 outbreak, UK consumers have spent more than £8.2bn on treating occasions, accounting for 26% of all spending in the 12 months to February 2021, compared to 18% a year earlier. When motivated by the need for a treat, average spend-per-person is 10% higher than average.

"We might be on the road to recovery, fingers crossed, but you can still take advantage of your customers' need for treats – and add extra profit to your bottom line by offering tempting sweet treats to your menu," says Gordon Lauder, MD of Central Foods. "Although people are looking to eat more healthily, they are also still fond of treating themselves – even more so in these uncertain times – so offering a half or smaller portion of dessert is a great way to encourage a purchase."

Although desserts are generally regarded as being unhealthy, consumers don't want to feel like they are missing out when dining out. In fact, some 70% of dessert eaters believe a dessert can be both healthy and indulgent, so it's important to strike the perfect balance to create an indulgent experience, minus the guilt.

Easing people's conscience with bite-sized desserts is the perfect way to make the most of health-conscious customers. Whether operators offer smaller versions of regular desserts or a selection of petit fours with coffee, it's important to include everyone in the delights of desserts when eating out.

Aesthetic appeal is hugely important to consumers, so it's important to offer healthy options that are not only good for you, but look fantastic too. By tapping into trends such as hacha powder, contract caterers can have the best of both worlds. Hacha can be used in traditional desserts to add a touch of plant-based goodness with a pretty green hue.

"Hacha is hemp in a powder form that can be added by the spoonful to recipes to create CBD bakes and desserts," explains Tofalos. "It can also be added to shakes or made into a tea."

"CBD is one of the breakthrough products of the health and wellness trend which is very current now. Already established as a food supplement that can help to maintain a healthy lifestyle, the benefits of CBD are being enjoyed by increasing numbers of people, with many of our customers being young consumers." These types of products allow all bakers, chefs and foodservice operators the opportunity to deliver this increasingly popular supplement in innovative ways.

INCLUSIVE MENU

Increasing numbers of consumers are now following free-from diets, whether that's for lifestyle, medical or ethical reasons. This means caterers



LA LORRAINE PANESCO BELGIAN BROWNIE

Desserts don't have to be sugar-filled treats

need to think about a broader range of needs when it comes to desserts.

"Caterers should look to create inclusive dessert options that can be enjoyed by many," says Sentence. "Callebaut recently identified the six core evolving macro trends, offering caterers insight on which foods and ingredients cater best to the current demands of consumers and how to effectively incorporate those into their chocolate creations into 2022. One of the most prominent of the six macro flavour trends is Healthy green: plant-based and fresh tastes."

According to the Callebaut Dessert Report, CGA, 2020, more than 3% of consumers in Great Britain identify as vegan. As a result of this growing demographic, there has been a trend towards creating more unique baked goods throughout 2021, with plant-based options being a major focus for new

product development that is expected to continue to grow into next year.

When it comes to eating out, it's the members of the party with special dietary requirements who decide where to go. The beauty of offering vegan desserts is that they can be enjoyed by anybody, so it's well worth having one or two plant-based sweets on offer.

"Cakes and desserts are not immune to the wider trends that are impacting the food sector, from free-from and vegan to healthier eating, and it is certainly the case that people are more aware than ever before of what they are eating," says Scott Oakes, commercial manager for Baker Street, part of St. Pierre Groupe. "Desserts don't have to be sugar-filled treats."

"Take fruit for example, the perfect way to create a healthier dessert option. We all know the need for five portions of fruit and veg per day to ensure a healthy, balanced diet. A fruit tart or flan is a visually appealing, colourful and engaging way to provide one of the daily quota, yet is still cost- and time-effective for the caterer."

An easy way to ensure consistent quality, and reduce the risk of cross-contamination and waste is to use frozen pre-prepared desserts. Not only will they enable caterers to offer a broader range of desserts, but they will help

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CBD ONE HATCHA

them deal with unexpected demand too.

"Pre-cut desserts, available in a range of delicious flavours, are extremely versatile," says Lauder. "Each portion can be served as they come or sliced into halves – 50% fewer calories but 100% of the flavour! Or how about cutting each slice into four smaller portions to serve as part of a selection of mini desserts, for a buffet or function or simply as a mini treat with a hot drink?"

INCREASING REVENUE

Desserts can really help to boost contract caterers' profits, so it's vital that outlets create the perfect menu. In addition to tasting and looking great, consumers want to know more about the provenance of ingredients and outlets' sustainability credentials. "Ensure products are adhering to all of these factors, as well as offering contrasting textures, on-trend ingredients and, above all, pure indulgence," says Dunning. "Focusing on creating high quality desserts made with premium ingredients can really improve sales, as well as footfall."

It's all about creating the ultimate experience – something that consumers aren't likely to eat or make at home. Whether it's offering desserts made using lesser known ingredients to pique curiosity or creating theatre with dramatic presentation, consumers will pay to be inspired.

"Dessert orders are often driven by impulse – we all know that people eat with their eyes – so display the most visually attractive desserts and treats in a chiller cabinet or on tent cards or posters and share




LA LORRAINE'S DONUT WORRY BE HAPPY

*Dessert orders
are often driven
by impulse*

appealing images on your social media channels," advises Lauder. "That way, while making their menu choices, customers can be tempted to save room for dessert, knowing a delicious treat is still to come."

The contract catering landscape has changed considerably over the last 18 months or so and has seen consumer eating patterns shift significantly. As catering outlets adapt to this change and diversify their offerings, both consumers and caterers are realising the benefits of this shift.

With all that people have gone through since the pandemic began, one thing is certain: people want to treat themselves and dessert is the affordable way to indulge. Outlets with a good range of premium quality desserts stand to benefit from consumers' continued interest in affordable indulgence. 

CONTACTS

Baker Street www.lovebakerstreet.com

Callebaut www.fortheloveofchoc.com

CBD One www.cbd-one.co.uk/lcf

Central Foods www.centralfoods.co.uk

La Lorraine www.lalorraine.com/gb-en/professional



LEMON AND HAZELNUT CHICKPEA BLONDIES

This tasty recipe, which comes courtesy of Callebaut, is suitable for vegan and gluten-free diets

INGREDIENTS

250g Callebaut 811 Dark Chocolate Callets

200g Oat flour

90g Ground almond

7g Baking powder

2g Sea salt

Zest of one lemon

220g Brown sugar

100g Callebaut Hazelnut Praline

200g Cooked chickpeas

10g Vanilla paste

100ml Oat milk

30ml Lemon juice

METHOD

1. Mix together the oat flour, ground almond, baking powder, sea salt and lemon zest and set aside

2. Blitz the sugar, hazelnut praline, cooked chickpeas, vanilla paste, oat milk and lemon juice together in a food processor until smooth and creamy

3. Pour the liquid ingredients over the dry ingredients and combine

4. Stir through 150g of chocolate callets, pour into a 20cm frame and bake for 20 minutes at 180°C

5. Once cooled, using the remaining 100g of chocolate, temper and spread a thin layer over the top of the blondie and then cut into 5cm x 5cm squares



REFRIGERATION

CHILLED OUT

REFRIGERATION EQUIPMENT WORKING AT OPTIMUM EFFICIENCY IS THE KEY TO SAFE SERVICE

Foodservice outlets come in all shapes and sizes. Therefore, it's important that operators not only choose refrigeration equipment that suits their current needs, but has the potential to grow as their businesses evolve too.

SMALL SOLUTIONS

There are various refrigeration solutions for pop-up kiosks or outlets with smaller footprints, such as slimline units that provide all the same features as standard-sized units, but with a reduced depth. "A common constraint for many caterers is the available space in the kitchen, and an increasing number of operators are now looking to purchase space-saving units," says Roz Scourfield, national sales manager for Hoshizaki. "However, for many operators, the prospect of sourcing a compact unit that also has the capacity to withstand vigorous food and beverage demands can seem an impossible task."

Innovation within the sector has seen manufacturers develop refrigeration solutions that suit

the needs of a variety of venue sizes. Available in a range of heights and widths, slimline refrigerators enable foodservice operators to create bespoke refrigeration set-ups that provide a better operational flow in the kitchen.

Refrigeration equipment has become more environmentally-friendly in terms of the refrigerant gases used over the years. They are also now more energy-efficient than their predecessors, reducing their carbon footprint and costing less to run.

"Operators looking to buy new refrigeration should be looking for models that use green refrigerant gases with low ozone depletion potential and global warming potential," says Stephen Hobbs, chair of the Foodservice Equipment Association (FEA). "This will become easier as more manufacturers are phasing out 'greenhouse' fluorinated gases [F-gas] in line with European Fluorinated Gases Regulations. By 2030, the European supply of F-gas will be 21% of 2015 levels."

Following the advent of the Ecodesign and Energy Labelling Directives covering refrigeration in July 2016, manufacturers have invested in new

technologies to meet the Minimum Energy Performance Standards. "This resulted in a significant shift, with more models achieving a higher energy efficiency rating," explains Hobbs. "It meant that the catering market's average energy index dropped from 63% to 59% over the 12 months to September 2017."

"The smaller the figure, the more energy-efficient the 'average' model is. This trend continues today, with ever more products achieving higher energy efficiency ratings."

Energy labels provide consumers with clear information on energy performance to enable them to make informed decisions when purchasing refrigeration equipment. In addition to the suppliers' name or trademark, the label must contain information regarding the product's energy efficiency (rated A+++ to G); annual electricity consumption in kWh; chilled storage capacity; frozen storage capacity; and the climate class (3, 4 or 5).

"As some of the few appliances used 24 hours a day, seven days a week, operators must prioritise sustainable equipment technologies if they wish to minimise their energy spend at the same time as reduce the demand they have on the environment," says Scourfield.

CLIMATE CONTROL

When looking at the energy labels on equipment,

Operators must prioritise sustainable equipment technologies



MAINTENANCE IS RECOMMENDED

it's important to consider the unit's climate class as this refers to the temperature and relative humidity (RH) range it can operate in. Matching the class to the conditions that the refrigerator will be in when situated in the kitchen will ensure that Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point responsibilities are met. For example, a climate class 3 fridge is designed to operate in ambient temperatures up to 25°C and 60% relative humidity, as opposed to a climate class 5 model which can deal with temperatures up to 40°C and 40% RH.

"One class of fridge won't operate as efficiently in a climate it's not rated for, which can reduce its efficiency and working life, and could even mean that the food stored in it isn't preserved correctly or safely," explains Hobbs. "Fridges rated for higher climate classes will have more insulation, as well as larger condensers and more powerful compressors to help them maintain the correct internal temperatures.

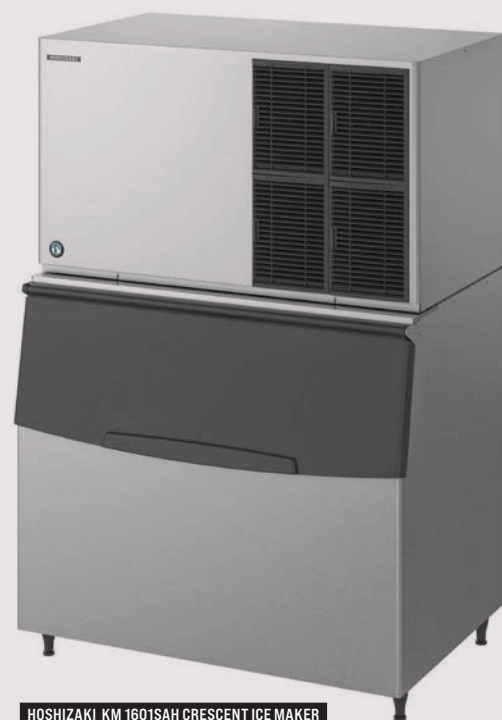
"Commercial kitchens are often hot and humid,

so making sure you have something that can cope with the temperature in the location it will be used in is vital. Equipment in busy kitchens should be at least climate class 4, which has a maximum ambient temperature of 30°C with 55% humidity."

With environmental concerns at an all-time high, and the government keen to reduce the UK's carbon footprint, it's vital that catering outlets opt for refrigeration equipment featuring natural hydrocarbon refrigerant gasses. Not only are these gases highly efficient, but they also have almost no negative impact on the environment. Their thermodynamic properties are so superior that they help reduce energy consumption, too.

"Energy-saving features, like intelligent control systems, minimise energy consumption," points out Malcolm Harling, sales and marketing director for Williams Refrigeration. "Thicker insulation, self-closing doors and smarter internal air-flow designs will also help with energy efficiency."

With health and hygiene concerns being heightened due to the ongoing pandemic, there has been increased emphasis on hand sanitation and this has proved a major focus of new product development. "A key factor here is reducing touchpoints," says Harling. "We have been developing products to address these issues,



HOSHIZAKI KM 1601SAH CRESCENT ICE MAKER

most recently our foot-operated door opener for coldrooms. As well as improving hygiene, by allowing staff to enter coldrooms without touching the door, the foot-operated opener makes life easier, since they don't have to juggle with what they are carrying to get in."

Equipment in busy kitchens should be at least climate class 4



MAINTAINING HYGIENE IS ESSENTIAL

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

Whatever piece of refrigeration equipment operators buy, protecting that investment with a regular cleaning and maintenance regime is the key to longevity. Preventative maintenance also saves money and reduces the likelihood of breakdowns or downtime too.


"Maintaining refrigeration equipment correctly will keep it running optimally, and help to ensure food and beverages are kept at their best condition," says Hobbs. "Consult the manufacturer of your equipment for their advice on best practice for preventative maintenance and base your maintenance schedule on their suggestions."

Regular cleaning inside and out is particularly important for refrigeration equipment, but be careful not to use abrasive cleaning products that can cause damage to stainless steel, making it more susceptible to corrosion. Door gaskets should be regularly checked and cleaned with warm soapy water and a soft cloth. However, it's vital that gaskets are completely dry before being closed to reduce the likelihood of mould or mildew accumulating.

"Proper ventilation is a key consideration for deciding the placement of refrigeration equipment," says Harling. "If poorly ventilated, the condensing unit will have to work harder to maintain working temperature, which can increase energy consumption while having a detrimental effect on the lifespan of components."

In addition to ensuring that vents aren't covered on refrigeration equipment, it's important to clean condensers quarterly. To do this properly,

the unit must be turned off before cleaning the fins gently with a soft brush and vacuuming.

As refrigeration equipment works continuously, investing in the best for your budget is vital. By talking to suppliers about outlets' current and future needs, and properly cleaning and maintaining refrigeration equipment, operators will maximise efficiency and protect their investment. 



GRAM COMPACT K210

CONTACTS

FRA www.fea.org.uk

Hoshizaki www.hoshizaki-europe.com

Williams www.williams-refrigeration.co.uk

TOP TIPS

Source features that are designed to make maintenance and repair easier – "Look for front-accessible components that don't require the unit to be moved out for engineers to access vital systems," suggests Hobbs.

Think ahead – "Check up on the after-sales service and the availability of spare parts," says Harling. "Servicing refrigeration before busy times, such as summer or Christmas, allows it to operate at maximum capacity when it is most needed, as well as helping to improve energy efficiency and reducing running costs."

Be prepared – "As with any commercial catering appliance, it is always advisable to have a planned preventative maintenance contract in place," says Scourfield.

"However, it's not just the engineer that can help to prevent downtime and maximise efficiency, but the caterer too. In fact, by regularly maintaining a few simple housekeeping steps such as cleaning filters and evaporators, caterers can further encourage machine longevity."



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NEW PRODUCTS



VEGAN BURGER BUNS

Lantmännen Unibake's Americana brand is introducing three new premium products to its line-up of gourmet vegan burger buns. The new Americana Grill Marked Vegan Brioche Style Bun is the first of its kind. This glazed and grill-marked burger bun is the ideal vegan alternative, with all the flavour and texture of a soft buttery brioche.

The Americana Glazed Craft Bun, meanwhile, features a higher domed-shaped bun with a premium glazed top to give the perfect 'instagrammable' finish to any burger. Last but not least, the Americana Linseed Bun is glazed and topped with golden linseed for a distinctive and wholesome finish.

Sam Winsor, brand manager for Americana, comments: "Flavour is a key driver to ordering a burger, so alternative options to suit specific diets and preferences should not compromise on taste or quality. Our new range of vegan gourmet burger buns delivers the same premium look and eating experience as the rest of our gourmet buns."

www.americana.co.uk



AGAINST THE GRAIN

La Lorraine Bakery Group is giving caterers an opportunity to drive sales of speciality breads with the launch of Durum Grain Breads. The new line offers a brand-new range of unique artisanal breads that provides quality, freshness, flavour and character.

Tapping into health and premiumisation, the new range of breads is made with 100% durum grain – an ancient hard wheat also called semolina. Each product is given 48 hours to develop its rich taste, resulting in a delicious, nutty and buttery flavour with a melt-in-your-mouth crumb and golden crust.

Available in roll, baguette or loaf formats, these products are made using only natural ingredients and they are extremely versatile and flexible. Served hot or cold, they are suitable across the menu – from breakfast rolls to lunchtime sandwiches.

www.llbg.com/en-en

LAMB WESTON SUPPORTS CHEFS

Lamb Weston is now officially a corporate partner of the Master Chefs of Great Britain. The not-for-profit organisation's principal goals are to support the best young chefs and to champion great British food and drinks producers, growers and manufacturers.

Andrea Deutschmanek, Lamb Weston's international marketing lead – Northern Europe, said: "From farm to fry, Lamb Weston, just like the Master Chefs of Great Britain, is driven and bound by a shared goal. Each of us is dedicated to working hard, behind the scenes, day after day, night after night, to ensure our fries meet their standards of excellence."

www.lambweston.eu/uk



NET RESULTS

In its new environment and social governance commitment, Filta has set out plans to achieve net zero operational impact by 2035 via a series of targets and measures. These include reducing operational emissions through direct fuel use by 50% by 2030 and using 100% renewable electricity by 2025.

Filta's CEO, Jason Sayers, said: "Since starting 25 years ago, the focus of the business has been to help our customers operate more sustainably. We have since expanded our environmental services capabilities, and our latest statistics have measured in detail the significant reductions in waste and emissions linked to us and our customers."

www.filta.co.uk/esg

CHRISTMAS CAMPAIGN

Coca-Cola has launched a seasonal campaign that it says spotlights and celebrates the real magic of community and togetherness. The multi-faceted activity carries at its heart a simple message of festive joy and inclusion, reminding us that real magic happens in the moments of connection we share with others.

Real Magic at Christmas is anchored by a new short film that is supported by a series of activities across various channels, including influencer partnerships, consumer-led activations and charity initiatives. The film shows a boy whose imagination and efforts gather a community's goodwill at Christmas. It first aired on 1st December.

www.cocacolaep.com



WHAT'S NEW FOR '22?

BIDFOOD'S NEW REPORT PREDICTS THE FOOD AND DRINK TRENDS THAT IT SAYS ARE SET TO DOMINATE 2022 AND BEYOND

Bidfood has revealed what it thinks the hottest dining and social trends set to shape the industry as we enter into a very different world in 2022 will be. Through exploring the impact of the pandemic and consumers' ever-changing habits, the company's latest report is designed to help operators navigate the changing market, adapt their menus and delve deep into the latest flavours and cuisines dominating the industry. The new trends that Bidfood says will be dominating the food and drink scene in the coming year and beyond are:

The wow factor: The main reasons people are going out for food and drink are all social or celebratory. This trend is all about how people are treating themselves and what it takes to make occasions that little bit more special – from decadent desserts, to experiential-style dining and activities.

The Greta effect: A focus on sustainability is continuing to grow – in fact, three out of four people now actively try to lead an environmentally-friendly lifestyle, as well as consumers' continued desire for more ethical consumption.

Health is wealth: The health trend continues to rise in popularity, but not in the ways previously talked about. Seven out of 10 adults are proactively trying to lead a healthier lifestyle in new, unique ways, while eight out of 10 are consciously looking for menus with healthy

options when eating out. As 'healthy' food is subjective, operators need to look at all aspects, from the classic less sugar or calories, to those one in three who are looking to reduce alcohol.

Celebrating British: Consumers are more eager than ever to support the British economy, which is not surprising given the impact of the pandemic and Brexit. Some 56% of UK adults are actually making decisions on where to eat out based on the venue's policy of sourcing British products and 86% are choosing British

*Consumers
are looking for
something a bit
special on menus*

cuisine more often than they did in 2019.

Flavours less travelled: The ongoing travel restrictions drove many of us to seek adventure through different means, like food. This has resulted in consumers becoming more experimental with their choices. In fact, six in 10 people are now opting for venues that offer new and interesting cuisines, meaning it's the perfect time for operators to tap into those 'off the beaten track' cuisines that are gaining traction:

Peruvian – with a vibrant mix of exotic flavours built from Japanese, Spanish and Arabic influences.


Scandinavian – well-loved for its simplicity and fresh ingredients, focusing on ancient cooking methods such as preserving, smoking, pickling and salting.

Burmese – the most niche of the trends, boasting unique tastes with familiar formats such as noodles and curries.

Pacific Rim – this highlights key dishes associated with health, such as fresh poke bowls.

Filipino – these cuisines are the perfect combination of sweet, sour and salty flavours, appealing to all variety of consumer palates.

Catherine Hinchcliff, head of corporate marketing and insight for Bidfood, said: "We're excited to see that the food and drink trends surfacing are all about adventure and experience, giving chefs lots of scope for creativity. Unsurprisingly, consumers are looking for something a bit special on menus to look forward to, balanced against a clear desire to live a healthier and more sustainable lifestyle.

"For our 2022 trends, we've worked with CGA to run our own exclusive research, which not only surveys consumers, but also draws from the opinions of food influencers, as well as a futurist. This means that we can help customers look further ahead and futureproof their menus." 

To read the full report, go to www.bidfood.co.uk/2022trends



Labels and legislation

KATE NICHOLLS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF UKHOSPITALITY, IS PUSHING FOR A DELAY TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW CALORIE LABELLING LAWS

At the time of writing, the new omicron variant of Covid-19 has thrown December trading even further into doubt. What the next few weeks and months hold, at this point, remains to be seen. What is more certain, however, is that April 2022 will see calorie labelling legislation introduced in England.

We continue to remind the government that the timing of these mandatory requirements couldn't be much worse, with thousands of hospitality businesses still battling to survive and facing the ongoing challenges of labour shortages and ever-rising costs. Yet, as things stand, mandatory labelling is set to hit us just as we see a return to a 20% VAT rate, unless the government listens to our case and keeps the lower 12.5% rate permanently.

Let's not forget, also, that as recently as October, many hospitality businesses had to ensure compliance with new allergen labelling requirements on pre-packed for direct sale food, the so-called Natasha's Law. These are some of the reasons why UKHospitality is calling for calorie labelling legislation to be delayed, and we raised our concerns cogently and unreservedly back in June, in response to a Department of

Our key aim is to secure that all-important delay to this legislation

Health and Social Care (DHSC) call for views, as well as back in 2020.

The new labelling guidance applies to any 'large business' – those with more than 250 employees – where food or drink is prepared 'for immediate consumption by the person who buys it'. And the 'large businesses' required to do all this include not just restaurants, cafés, takeaways, bakeries and caterers, but also supermarkets, entertainment venues (for example, cinemas), hotels and workplaces where large catering companies provide food and drink. Online sales are also covered, including those by third-party

takeaway platforms. Irrespective of size, these will be required to display calorie information on food and drink items sold by businesses in scope of the policy.

That means unpackaged items (for example, restaurant meals), food pre-packed for direct sale (such as a café sandwich made and packaged on-site), or items packaged at the customer's request (say, a bakery hot sausage roll) will all fall into scope. Sides and toppings (but not condiments) on menus will also require calorie labels.

There are, however, some exemptions. It won't include businesses with fewer than 250 employees; educational institutions for pupils aged 18 and under; workplace canteens where food and drink are provided in-house solely for employees; health and social care settings where food is provided solely for patients or residents; drinks that are more than 1.2% alcohol by volume; and loose fruit and vegetables.

As we all work to achieve compliance between now and next April, we're here to help. We have information on our website for members, which is always up to date with the latest guidance, and we'll continue to work towards getting clarification on technical questions posed by operators to create member guidance. We're doing this through meetings and continuing dialogue with DHSC officials.

Our key aim, though, is to secure that all-important delay to the introduction of this legislation. By postponing calorie labelling, the government would give thousands of businesses vital extra time in which to recover fully from the devastating impact of Covid-19. Introduce it next April as planned, and the legislation could just be the extra burden that means some will never recover. ☹️



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