Reinventing Afternoon Tea
London's luxury hotels introduce new twists to a time-honoured British tradition

Yossi Eliyahoo
The Entourage Group founder shares his approach to creating successful restaurant brands

Vong Kitchen
Cédric Vongerichten steps out from his father's shadow to bring French-American cuisine to Alila Jakarta
“There are no rules, and those are the rules.”
— Jim Henson
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Through her collection of elegant objects and tableware, Stefanie Hering has reshaped the use of porcelain for the modern world.
“There is a big sustainability benefit from eating insects which should resonate with hoteliers, restaurateurs and the entire hospitality industry.”

Andy Holcroft, Head Chef at Grub Kitchen
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The global F&B industry was on tenterhooks last month as The World’s 50 Best Restaurants was announced at a ceremony in Bilbao. Amongst the new entries, re-entries and high climbers, Massimo Bottura’s Osteria Francescana in Modena, Italy, made a return to the top spot, while former title-holder Eleven Madison Park – from chef-restaurateur duo Daniel Humm and Will Guidara – slipped to number four. Of those affiliated to a hotel, Mikla – atop The Marmara Pera in Istanbul – was an unexpected addition at #44, while the highly-rated Alain Ducasse au Plaza Athénée and Dinner by Heston Blumenthal at Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park ranked 21st and 45th respectively.

While hotel-based restaurants may have failed to make the top ten – by comparison five of the world’s 10 best bars are in hotels – it seems the industry has the edge when it comes to delectable desserts. As part of the awards programme, it was Cédric Grole of Dorchester Collection’s Le Meurice in Paris, who won the coveted title of World’s Best Pastry Chef, thanks to his impressive edible sculptures, fruit and spice combinations and, of course, his signature Rubik’s Cake.

In the past, independent bakers and boutique chocolatiers such as Dominique Ansel and Pierre Hermé have topped the list; that the accolade has this year been bestowed on a hotel patissier reflects the focus such establishments place on what was once perceived as a after-thought. After all, when faced with choosing a restaurant to dine out at, it’s the starters, mains and specials that we look to first to whet the appetite. Restaurants are generally valued on their lemon sole rather than their lemon drizzle, steak tartare as opposed to tarte aux pommes. Pastry chefs are often overlooked in favour of their ‘regular’ counterparts cooking up the plat du jour.

Yet at the luxury end of the hotel market, establishments pride themselves on their dessert offer, and dedicated pastry chefs are the norm. Furthermore, the success of TV shows such as The Great British Bake Off has undoubtedly seen sweet treats step into the limelight.

In this issue of Supper, we’ve indulged in London’s finest afternoon teas to witness how the capital’s luxury hotels are creating inventive new concepts in a bid to reinvent the British pastime. The colour and attention to detail of The Berkeley’s fashion-focused Prêt-à-Portea afternoon service is truly exquisite; and Rosewood London’s tribute to celebrated French sculptor Auguste Rodin – created by Studio Appétit’s Ido Garini and Executive Pastry Chef Mark Perkins – breaks new ground in terms of visual impact.

While timeless classics such as the humble scone will never fall out of favour, afternoon teas, and desserts in general, are becoming ever more creative, limited only by a pastry chef’s imagination.

If hotel restaurants are to compete, hoteliers must find ways in which to attract the diners that their standalone counterparts lose out on, and the coffee-and-cake and growing afternoon tea crowd seems a good place to start. That way, operators really can have their cake and eat it.

Catherine Martin | Managing Editor
The oldest Wine House in Champagne: Aÿ 1584
Famous for their outstanding diversity of pattern, Scottish design duo Timorous Beasites present their third collection with Brintons, Craigend. Named Craigend for not only the road name of the Glasgow Timorous Beasites studio and birth place of the collection, but also inspired by the Old Gaelic word Creag meaning rock.

The collection is inspired by textures and surfaces found on the ground including sand dunes, stone moss and aerial views of landscapes, all reimagined in Brintons special blend of 80% wool and 20% nylon. With Craigend, Timorous Beasites have called upon their fascination with the often brutal beauty of the natural world as well as taking aesthetic inspiration from different crafting methods including paint, ink and fabric.

Suitable for a wide variety of hospitality applications including hotels, casinos, cruise ships and airports, each Timorous Beasites Craigend Collection by Brintons design can be customised and is woven to order in a full range of specifications. Whatever direction is chosen, Brintons' highly skilled design team will help to adapt the concept to ensure it matches the creative brief perfectly while complying with all the practical requirements.

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Although tales of inadvertently chowing down on eight spiders a year in our sleep may be greatly exaggerated, a study by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United States suggested that there were nonetheless some 2 billion of us engaging in entomophagy worldwide in 2015 — that is, the human consumption of insects as food.

This is nothing new; it is thought that insects formed a vital role in man’s early diet before he learned to hunt, and with over 1,900 known edible species there is hardly a lack of menu choice. Rich in protein, iron, healthy fats and calcium, six- and eight-legged-snacks have sustained cultures from Africa and Asia to South America, with the rest of the world in something of a minority when it comes to the practice.

Renowned chefs including Alex Atala of Sao Paulo’s DOM and René Redzepi of Noma fame have both used fire ants to enhance their creations with distinctive texture and spice, though despite this – and the centuries of established practice – most western cultures still find entomophagy difficult to swallow. Could the communal space of a hotel restaurant offer an effective inroad?

“People are often looking to try something different when they go away on a break – be it a new activity, a new area to explore or a new dish to try,” explains Andy Holcroft, Head Chef at Grub Kitchen, an innovative pop-up insect cuisine concept rolled out within Celtic Manor Resort in south Wales as part of Insect Week 2018. “In that respect, a hotel is an ideal environment to give them that opportunity to taste something completely different.”

Along with Dr. Sarah Benyon, Holcroft was the subject of BBC documentary The Bug Grub Couple, and through Grub Kitchen seeks to offer guests an introduction to insect cuisine by way of gourmet takes including dark chocolate terrine with cricket ice cream, toasted mealworm crêpes and a black ant goat’s cheese croquette.

Perhaps somewhat easier to stomach when presented as part of a gourmet meal as opposed to the traditional skewer or finger-food delivery systems, Grub Kitchen seeks to dispel the gross-out reputation that entomophagy has accumulated over the years. However, with more and more guests seeking out highly specific vegan, organic or closed-loop offers, we may yet see the practice more widely accepted, as new research comes to light and more concepts in the vein of Grub Kitchen push the boundaries within established locations, luxury or otherwise.

The aforementioned study also predicts a global rise in entomophagists in the coming years, one that will likely coincide with moves towards more sustainable modes of food production and consumption in which insect cuisine, and its abundance of options, health perks and wide availability could prove a key contributor.

“There is a big sustainability benefit from eating insects which should resonate with hoteliers, restaurateurs and the entire hospitality industry,” Holcroft concludes. “It is widely estimated that there will be between 9-10 billion of us humans by the year 2050. How will we as a race produce enough edible protein?”
Many hotels suffer from a blindspot when it comes to food waste. There’s no better illustration of this than the breakfast buffet; more often than not, those mounds of sausages and bacon left over at the end of each morning’s service are destined only for the bin, along with so many soft pieces of fruit and stale bread rolls.

It doesn’t have to be this way though, as an eye-opening new report demonstrates. Research carried out on behalf of Champions 12.3, a global coalition of top executives from the public and private sectors chaired by Tesco CEO Dave Lewis, has found that hotels can make big savings by minimising food waste created by inefficient preparation and storage practices, as well as scraps and leftovers thrown away by staff.

The report, The Business Case for Reducing Food Loss and Waste: Hotels, evaluated the costs of implementing change and the resulting benefits experienced by 42 hotels across 15 countries, including a mix of luxury, mid-range and budget accommodations. Each hotel introduced a food waste-reduction programme covering areas like buying smart scales, training staff on new food handling and storage procedures, and redesigning menus. Around 90% invested less than US$20,000 over a three-year period, or below 1% of average annual food sales.

The results speak for themselves; for every $1 that hotels invested in programmes to reduce kitchen waste, they saved an average of $7 in operating costs. One participant managed to save an astonishing $28 per dollar spent. In the main, the financial benefits stemmed from reducing the amount of food purchased, increasing revenues by using ingredients previously discarded as scraps, and lowering landfill costs. More than 70% of hotels recouped their investment within the first year alone, rising to 95% within two years.

One of the properties involved was Sofitel Bangkok Sukhumvit, a five-star hotel with 365 guestrooms and multiple dining options. It brought in smart scales to enable staff to track kitchen waste, tighter controls over the amount of each buffet item on offer, flexible ordering arrangements with suppliers, and a daily chef’s meeting focused on reducing scraps and leftovers. In so doing, the hotel achieved a 50% reduction in food waste by value in just 15 weeks, saving an estimated $60,000 per year.

“Sofitel Bangkok Sukhumvit has prioritised reducing food waste as an important part of our sustainability efforts,” says Lionel Formento, the hotel’s Director of Food & Beverage. “From engaging management to our chefs and suppliers, implementing a food waste reduction programme has helped us stay innovative and a leader.”

The report recommends steps that owners and managers can take to tackle food waste. These are to measure the amount of food being wasted to know where to prioritise efforts, engage staff, rethink the buffet, reduce overproduction, and repurpose excess food. “This report clearly shows that reducing waste in hotels isn’t just the right thing to do; it also makes good business sense,” concludes Lewis. “So even if the moral imperative doesn’t move us, the business case for reducing food waste should persuade every CEO.”
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Propelled by a generational focus on healthy dishes, bowl-based concepts are sweeping the nation, and even made an appearance on the royal wedding menu. Some are putting the success down to the sensory stimuli that impact our perception of flavour, while others argue that the versatility of such dishes has proved alluring to the time-sensitive traveller. And then there’s the influence of social dining, and the desire for Instagram gold.

Hailing from Asia in the form of technicoloured bowls of fruit, grains and yoghurts, the movement quickly grew to incorporate hot dishes such as Hawaii-born poké, and be it for breakfast, lunch or dinner – several venues began plating up their entire menus in concave form. Singapore, for instance, boasts five poké-centric concepts in its central business district including Japanese-inspired eatery Ninja Bowl, while in Dubai, superfood café Pineapple Express has rolled out its concept at mixed-use development Jumeirah Lake Towers through a grab-and-go service.

Finding its way into hotels through the MICE market, bowlfood is being served as a larger alternative to canapés, allowing industry professionals to stand and mingle as they eat. The trend has not gone unnoticed by designers and manufacturers, with tableware suppliers such as Tafelstern, Royal Doulton and Revol launching palm-sized bowl collections to reflect the movement.

According to Baum + Whiteman, the New York consulting firm that publishes an annual report on up-and-coming F&B trends, the concept is showing no sign of slowing down. From office workers to professional chefs, the notion of decorous dishes is becoming more mainstream. What’s more, the raft of recent bowlfood cookbooks and rising retail sales suggest that it is heading into home kitchens too.

So what’s driving the gastronomic growth? The notion of sensory stimuli has been somewhat overlooked, though the influence of colour and texture on taste has been widely documented, as has the importance of the materials and the types of utensils on offer. Rimless bowls, for instance, are said to encourage consumers to eat less as a result of portion perception, and there is no question that their aesthetic appeals to a growing number of today’s diners, who are seemingly unable to begin a meal without first taking a photograph and sharing it online.

Aside from sensory stimuli and social evolution, consumer desires for informality have arguably married bowlfood with fast-casual dining, acting as a catalyst for emerging concepts such as poké. Though the fish-based cuisine crossed the North Pacific as early as the 1970s, only in the past five years has it become a mainstay in the US at venues like Backyard Bowls and EdiBOL in Los Angeles, before more recently establishing itself in London in the form of Ahi Poké, Hippy Fish and build-your-own outlet Island Poké.

As the concave cult grows and evolves, bowlfood proponents will have to look for new ways to stand out simply to avoid falling out of favour. However one thing remains certain – be it a bowl, plate or wooden board: these days, it’s not so much about what you eat, but how you eat it.
“Look at all our brands and none of them are alike. They have their own identity. Nothing on the menu is the same, the plates aren’t the same, the wine list is different. I don’t want people to have the same experience if they go to all of our properties.”

Yossi Eliyahoo, founder and co-owner of The Entourage Group
I am sat on the outdoor terrace of Izakaya – which opened in the grounds of Ibiza’s most cosmopolitan hotel, Sir Joan, in 2017 – waiting for Yossi Eliyahoo, founder of The Entourage Group and brains behind the Asian-inspired restaurant. When he arrives, he’s clad in a baseball cap and sunglasses, totally at ease with the island’s soaring temperatures – unsurprising given that he spent last summer here overseeing the venue’s opening. “Last summer in Ibiza is very blurry for me,” he admits once he’s sunk into a seat, a faint Israeli lilt detectable in his tone. It’s comforting to know that even a man as composed as Eliyahoo can’t escape the infamously epicurean clutches of the White Isle but, nevertheless, you sense he’s seldom flustered; it takes more than a muggy day to ruffle his feathers.

Born and raised in Tel Aviv, Eliyahoo grew up in a house that he describes as a hive of activity. Even as a wide-eyed kid, he recalls that “there were always lots of pots of food cooking”, and although he says his family didn’t play a direct role in the forging of his hospitality career, perhaps this is what sowed the initial seeds. Because by the age of 13, he was already balancing school life with working in a restaurant, and once he stepped foot over that high-energy threshold, he never looked back. “It was very natural for me to get a job in restaurants as a teenager,” he muses. “I’m a sociable person so I was excited to go and meet older people and to learn from them. I worked five nights a week when I was at school.” By the tender age of 16, he was already running his first kitchen. “I liked the buzz; I liked the action,” he laughs. “Eventually it just took over my life.”

Eliyahoo went on to found what is widely considered to be one of the most successful high-end hospitality companies in Europe. Along the way, he has racked up a string of achievements including opening a handful of
The Butcher Nine Streets in Amsterdam

Izakaya Ibiza
restaurants in Tel Aviv and launching concept restaurant Chino Latino across several cities in the UK, but arguably it’s with The Entourage Group that he’s really secured a reputation for unrivalled chutzpah when it comes to taking calculated risks. Then again, when you’ve worked your way up every rung of the ladder, perhaps it’s less a case of gambling and more about spotting opportunities. “In any business, you need to know everything,” he explains. “By learning every aspect of what I do, it gives me more tools to succeed. I’ve been there and done it myself so I know exactly what I’m asking my team and I know what to expect.”

There’s very little margin for error – Eliyahoo expects as close to perfection as possible, both from himself and others. It’s an unrelenting attitude that becomes more understandable when you consider that The Entourage Group now has multiple projects and venues across five cities to shelter beneath its sprawling umbrella.

“Why would we build a wall in front of the kitchen where all these beautiful, skilled people are working? It makes no sense.”

The Entourage Group comprises six distinct brands: Momo, the group’s trailblazing Asian restaurant; Izakaya, an Asian-fusion specialist; The Butcher, a high-end burger bar; The Duchess, a Michelin-starred fine-dining destination; Mr Porter, a swankier take on a traditional steakhouse; and Mad Fox, an underground New York-inspired club. Each originated in Amsterdam, though some have since been wheeled out across Europe, and all are credited with instigating a dramatic shift in the Dutch capital’s dining scene. Momo, housed within the refurbished Park Hotel, was the group’s inaugural outing. “That restaurant really changed Amsterdam,” Eliyahoo contemplates thoughtfully. “People didn’t know how to take it, but it was still successful from day one. Within a year we were working on the next projects – we developed many things in parallel.”

What made Momo such a shock to the already sophisticated Dutch system? Probably Eliyahoo’s bold, brazen approach to dining. Gone were stuffy rooms, closed kitchens and stagnant bars, and in their place came stripped-back spaces, exposed kitchens and 360-degree bars designed specifically to encourage maximum social interaction. “The 360-degree bar is in our DNA,” he explains. “We want everything to be open – see and be seen. It’s sexier and much more fun that way.” And he’s right, of course, such an instinctive approach to socialising has its merits – it’s far easier to strike up a conversation with a stranger when you’re not faced with a wall of bottles. Consequently, the 360-degree bar is a feature of many of The Entourage Group’s locations, each serving as the focal point around which the real action swirls.

This isn’t the only groundbreaking feature; Eliyahoo has stringent rules when it comes to design, and he’s militant in ensuring that every aspect of his vision is brought assiduously to life. “We expose everything if we can,” he says. “Why would we build a wall in front of the kitchen where all these beautiful, skilled people are working? It makes no sense. And let’s put people in the same room together, that stops everyone wondering what’s going on in the next room.”

These tried-and-tested concepts may not sound particularly revolutionary now – we’ve all experienced the hustle they create when in full flow – but a decade ago they shook up a stagnant Amsterdam landscape, and since then have become the benchmark for others to follow. It’s proof of the merits of Eliyahoo’s calculated risks. “When you go out it should be to dress up, to eat food you don’t cook at home, and to hear music you don’t have at home,” he declares matter of factly. “These days you can order pretty much anything to your sofa, but if you’re going on a night out you put the effort in. We want people to walk out with a good feeling, and that way we make sure they’ve plenty of reasons to come back.”

And people do keep coming back, time and time again. In the decade since Momo launched at Park Hotel, branches of Izakaya have opened in Amsterdam, Hamburg, Ibiza and Munich, outlets of The Butcher have followed in Amsterdam, Berlin and Ibiza, and the launches of The Duchess and Mr Porter (both within W Amsterdam) and Mad Fox have been wildly successful. Eliyahoo put weight behind a clearly defined formula, trusted his instincts and ran with it – for him, there was never any room for doubt. Nevertheless, many visionaries benefit from being able to bounce ideas off those with complementary skillsets; for Eliyahoo, this important role falls to business partner Liran Wizman who – besides heading up the Europe Hotels Private Collection and having a range of stylish hotels to his name such as W Amsterdam, Park Hotel and the Sir Hotels brand – also sourced the all-important locations for their flourishing partnership. “Liran comes to me with an idea as a restaurateur and his partner, and I decide if it’s something we can make work together,” he explains. “We’ve worked together for a long time – if I don’t see it, he doesn’t question it. He’s very good at what he does, and I have the same vision with restaurants.”

Indeed, delve beneath Eliyahoo’s cool exterior and it’s as though all the characters he’s conjured up as the face of The Entourage Group brands have been running about his head for years, ready to pop onto the page fully formed. “Most of the time, I sit with a piece of blank paper in front of me,” he explains. “And then I start to describe who and what the concept is. So with Momo, for example, I knew I wanted it to be an Asian restaurant but I wanted it to be different, more fresh. So I came up with Momo, which comes from Momoko, a Japanese ladies’ name that means blossom or peach. I used the name as a starting point and its meaning is reflected in both the restaurant’s elegant design and the menu.”

He follows this process for each new culinary adventure, emphatic that having an established character in mind plays a pivotal role in the design process, which in turn affects every element of the experience. “A lot of people design places without thinking about the concept,” he says. “People don’t realise that every little detail matters.”

But Eliyahoo does, and so he chuckles when I ask if he’d ever consider a project in which the space had already been designed. “No, no, absolutely not,” he says with a definitive shake of the head. “How are you going to
design the kitchen if you don’t know what you’re going to cook? You need to know the menu before you build the kitchen. Then you have to think about the tables, the glassware, the cutlery. Everything goes hand in hand, everything has a reason.” There’s no doubt that this certainty of spirit comes from experience, but there seems more to it than that. Elyahoo’s assuredness appears intricately woven into his being – he exudes a remarkable level of perceptiveness not bestowed on most other restaurateurs. “People think a bar is a bar, a chair is a chair, a kitchen is a kitchen – it’s not,” he continues. “I’m 45 now and I’ve been working in the industry since I was 13, I’ve learnt a lot in that time.”

You needn’t look far to find the fruits of this experience – it’s visible in the minutiae of each of his restaurants, and in the brands themselves as a whole. Big characters they may be, but each is wonderfully diverse and very much sings to its own tune. “Look at all our brands and none of them are alike,” he emphasises. “They have their own identity. Nothing on the menu is the same, the plates aren’t the same, the wine list is different. I don’t want people to have the same experience if they go to all of our properties. Absolutely everything should be distinctive.”

You need only compare the sumptuous decadence of The Duchess with the tongue-in-cheek brazenness of The Butcher for evidence that each of his carefully created characters do in fact offer very different experiences for diners.

So with multiple brands already alive and kicking, and their future prosperity looking as assured as their spirited personalities, what’s next for The Entourage Group? “I learnt in life never to look too far ahead, so I take things step by step,” he says, before reeling off a list of plans that most people would need a lifetime to complete. “I’m working on Barcelona with Liran, which will open next year. And then Milan,” he explains. “We’ve worked out the layout and that’s the most crucial step, but it was already a great opportunity, venue and location.” We’ll be seeing far more of The Butcher too. “We plan to have 80 sites of The Butcher in the next five years,” he says earnestly. “This is one of our brands that we can easily duplicate without compromising on quality.” And there’s another character in the works as well, this time of Italian heritage. “We’ve got a pizza concept called Tony Loco launching in Amsterdam in a few months’ time,” he smiles. “Huge 50cm-long pizzas with big, thin slices.”

Whatever Elyahoo decides to throw his energies into next, one thing’s for certain – he’ll keep plotting his own path, refusing to kowtow to the pressures of passing trends. “I’m happy to invest in chic, modern places, but trends come and go,” he ponders. “I want to build things that have a strong base; things that stand the test of time and will still be relevant ten years from now.” Judging by his track record so far, he looks well on course to do just that.

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Alessandro Palazzi, Head Barman at Dukes London, reflects on his remarkable career and reveals the secrets behind making a martini worthy of James Bond himself.

Words: Richard Frost • Photography: Courtesy of Dukes London

What Ian Fleming did when he created James Bond was to establish a character that breaks all the rules," says Alessandro Palazzi, Head Barman at Dukes London, of 007’s penchant for vodka martinis. "In those days, martinis would be stirred, never shaken. And they would only be made of gin – vodka was unheard of. Bond breaks the rules with the Vesper Martini, you would never mix gin and vodka together."

We’re in the bar at Dukes London in the exclusive St. James’s district and Palazzi is demonstrating how to make his most famous cocktail, the Dukes Vesper, which draws inspiration from the Vesper dry martini recipe laid down by the fictional secret agent in Fleming’s first Bond novel Casino Royale. Bond’s version features Gordon’s Gin, vodka and Kina Lillet shaken together and served with a slice of lemon peel; Palazzi’s version contains No. 3 London Dry Gin, Potocki Vodka, Sacred English Amber Vermouth, Angostura bitters and a slice of orange zest. There’s a story behind each one of Palazzi’s choices – No. 3 London Dry Gin because it’s longer and drier than Gordon’s with a higher alcohol content; the Polish vodka references Krystyna Skarbek, the Polish-born WWII agent who was reputedly the model for Bond girl Vesper Lynd; and the vermouth, developed by Palazzi himself in collaboration with London-based Sacred, because Fleming was English.

The Dukes Vesper is one of no fewer than 12 martinis on the menu here (more are available on request) and all are inspired by Fleming in one way or another – Le Chiffre, Odd Job ‘1676’, Kissy Suzuki and so on. "I’ve created this menu like Fleming wrote his books, the cocktails all have a reason," says Palazzi, whose quietly spoken delivery gets noticeably more animated when discussing the bar’s links with its most famous customer. The Fleming connection runs deep here and Dukes Bar is even believed to be the inspiration behind 007’s iconic ‘shaken, not stirred’ catchphrase, making it a perfect fit for Palazzi, who loves reading books by and about the colourful intelligence officer-turned-author. "Fleming used to come here like a lot of powerful people in the 30s, 40s and after the war," he explains. "We’ve always been very popular with writers and, because Bond made the martini very popular, I created this menu in Fleming’s honour."

There’s a whole lot more to Palazzi than just being a walking encyclopaedia of Fleming facts however. We’re speaking to the personable 60-year-old fresh from being
throughout is his conviction that every hotel bar lives or dies by and Valentino. An impressive list to be sure, though one constant Van Morrison and Liam Gallagher (“the first time I served him, I Manager back in 2007. He’s served everyone from Boy George, Eastern Hotel and now Dukes London, where he joined as Bar hotels – The Milestone Hotel, Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park, Great his spiritual home, Palazzi has worked for several more five-star and honed his cocktail-making skills, then in 1979 he moved to 1975 he got on a plane for the first time and went to London. Despite not speaking any English, Palazzi soon found work as a kitchen porter in an unremarkable hotel in west London, and 1979, he moved to the bar when a confrontational customer rubbed him up the wrong way and the straight-talking teenager answered back rather than biting his tongue. “Nobody wanted to tend the bar because the tips were in the restaurant,” he recalls. “But what I liked in my first encounter with the bar was how people will talk to you differently than in the restaurant, there’s more human contact.”

A stint at catering school up the coast in Senigallia followed, where Palazzi learnt to mix classic cocktails like the Negroni and Brandy Alexander that he still makes to this day, before in October 1975 he got on a plane for the first time and went to London. Despite not speaking any English, Palazzi soon found work as a kitchen porter in an unremarkable hotel in west London, and quickly worked his way up the ladder. In 1976, he was employed by The Fairmile in Cobham when it was part of Trusthouse Forte and honed his cocktail-making skills, then in 1979 he moved to The Excelsior Hotel Heathrow where he rose to become Head Bartender for the first time.

A short hop across the Channel took him to the French capital, where Palazzi learnt to mix classic cocktails like the Negroni and Brandy Alexander that he still makes to this day, before in October 1975 he got on a plane for the first time and went to London. Despite not speaking any English, Palazzi soon found work as a kitchen porter in an unremarkable hotel in west London, and quickly worked his way up the ladder. In 1976, he was employed by The Fairmile in Cobham when it was part of Trusthouse Forte and honed his cocktail-making skills, then in 1979 he moved to The Milestone Hotel, Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park, Great Eastern Hotel and now Dukes London, where he joined as Bar Manager back in 2007. He’s served everyone from Boy George, Van Morrison and Liam Gallagher (“the first time I served him, I couldn’t understand a word he was saying”) to Lagerfeld, Versace and Valentino. An impressive list to be sure, though one constant throughout is his conviction that every hotel bar lives or dies by the relationships it builds with customers.

“Even when you’re lucky enough to work in a place like Dukes Bar, 30% is the drink and 70% is the atmosphere you create,” he says. “The atmosphere is very, very important.” To improve the atmosphere when he took over at Dukes Bar, he made a point of relaxing the dress code so that customers would no longer be turned away if they arrived without a tie, a jacket or immaculately polished shoes. He also ended the practice of asking customers to leave if the bar finds itself short of space at peak times – nowadays guests can keep their tables for as long as they want, regardless of who subsequently arrives.

Another key feature of the atmosphere during our visit is the sense of camaraderie shared by the all-Italian bar team. Staff members joke around with one another – sometimes they recreate classic BBC sitcom Fawlty Towers with Palazzi playing an exasperated Basil Fawlty and others assuming the role of the hapless Manuel, at other times they excitedly race each other to the storeroom. Guests are let in on the joke too; at one point, Palazzi pretends to knee one of his staff members in the stomach while pompously telling guests, “don’t worry, I’m training him”, to widespread laughter. All of this is a world away from the staid atmosphere of luxury hotel bars in days gone by – Palazzi notes that most of his conversations with customers revolve around drinks, women, rugby or his beloved Liverpool FC – and guests are encouraged to make themselves at home.

“Here, people don’t come to show off,” he explains. “They come for the drink and they come for the atmosphere, but we don’t have anything flashy.” In this respect, Dukes Bar reflects the character of its leader. Palazzi is always well turned-out – out of course, with a freshly ironed white shirt and black tie under his trademark white jacket, but behind the smart exterior there’s a real sense of down-to-earth friendliness in his demeanour. “When I go around the world, people ask me, ‘how do you become a bartender?’” he explains. “I say it’s like a cocktail, you need three ingredients. You have to be diplomatic, acrobatic and charismatic.” All three qualities are manifested by the man himself at Dukes Bar, where we watch Palazzi’s calm manner settle down guests who are threatening to get too boisterous, cater to unusual cocktail requests without the bat of an eyelid, and still find time to chat to regulars as if he doesn’t have a care in the world.

Surely part of Palazzi’s appeal to guests is that he’s so obviously on their side, with a free-spirited attitude, a rogueish glint in his eye and a propensity for going off-script that marks him out as someone who believes that delivering the best guest experience in the bar is all that matters. “I don’t want to become food and beverage or restaurant manager, I’m a bartender and I will be a bartender until I die,” he says, with characteristic honesty. “The team I’ve brought here all share the same passion.”

Palazzi can walk the walk as well as talk the walk; indeed, he is a member of both The Gin Guild and Scotch whisky society Keepers of the Quaich. “These are my two loves, gin and whisky,” he declares grandly, before quickly adding “obviously the wife and children also” with a sheepish grin. He regularly hosts martini-making masterclasses and travels across the US, Japan and Europe to share his passion for mixology, and has spent a lot of time in the Middle East recently training the team at Dukes Dubai on Palm Jumeirah – Dukes Collection’s second hotel,
which opened in December 2016. “Dubai is completely different to London,” he says. “People like a long drink, the cocktail is not so established there.” Those bars that do venture into mixing their own cocktails out in the UAE frequently make the mistake of putting eight or nine ingredients into their drinks, he adds with obvious annoyance, rather than letting the strength of each component shine. “We’re lucky as bartenders to have such wonderful ingredients now.”

It’s a point that Palazzi is keen to press home at every opportunity when it comes to making the most popular cocktail at Dukes London, the martini. Dukes Bar is “all about the martinis” as the back of the menu proudly proclaims (although guests can also order other cocktails, spirits, wines and beers) and on a busy night it can sell as many as 350 martinis. All are made in front of guests from the drinks trolley and there is plenty of theatre involved, with for example Palazzi making a point of wetting the floor with vermouth at the start of each order to entertain guests – “it’s all part of the experience”. He also tells each customer the story behind how he came up with the cocktail while making it, rather than simply spelling everything out on the menu. “My philosophy is that if you want to read, go to a library,” he says. “I hate those menus that go into immense detail on every drink, who cares? We can just talk about it instead.”

Guests are also welcome to take photos of the spectacle, and the hotel’s social media account is full of photos of Palazzi, with a martini lapel pin taking pride of place on his jacket, smiling next to one of his creations. For Palazzi, the martini is “the best drink in the world”, and using quality ingredients and keeping the temperature as low as possible are the secrets to making a good one. He is proud of the fact that Dukes Bar only works with the very best producers – “we’re a free bar, we don’t belong to any drinks company” – while creating his own vermouth has given him a unique insight into the contribution it makes to the overall flavour. He also insists upon using organic lemons from the Amalfi coast in his native Italy, despite the price tag.

Each martini costs £20.50 but Palazzi has no time for those who say it’s too expensive, arguing that it’s relatively cheap when you take into account the fact that many contain five shots of alcohol. Besides, the finished cocktail is something that customers are encouraged to sit and savour rather than rush to finish. “With a martini, you take your time. I normally say to people, ‘take 15 or 20 minutes at least’. This is why we don’t do a double sitting anymore.”

As another guest puts in an order for fresh martinis – Dukes Bar operates a limit of two martinis per person to minimise the risk of any rowdiness – we prepare to make our exit, but not before a firm handshake and some final parting words from the in-demand Italian. “It’s not just me here at Dukes, it’s the whole team and there are no prima donnas,” he says. “Or rather the drink is the prima donna, not us.”
Perrier-Jouët, the alluring champagne

Since its foundation in 1811, the champagne house Perrier-Jouët has crafted elegant, floral wines of rare finesse with a Chardonnay hallmark. The elegance of the cuvées echoes that of the Art Nouveau anemones adorning the Perrier-Jouët Belle Epoque bottle and offers moments of pure delight and beauty. www.perrier-jouet.com

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Matt Worswick talks about winning over diners and Michelin inspectors since succeeding Michael Wignall as Head Chef of The Latymer at Pennyhill Park, part of Exclusive Hotels and Venues.

Words: Richard Frost • Photography: Courtesy of Exclusive Hotels and Venues (unless otherwise stated)
By the time he was 19, Worswick had already made the switch to fine dining, landing a job in the kitchen of the St. Martin’s on the Isle hotel in the Isles of Scilly, 28 miles off the British mainland. “It was a culture shock to be honest with you, but it was also really nice because you could just concentrate on work,” he confesses. “We did six days a week, it was hard work but I suppose that’s where you learn your craft.” He spent more than three years there under Head Chef Kenny Atkinson, starting as Commis Chef and working his way up to Sous Chef. “My first season was when Kenny started and the following year we got a Michelin star, which was great. Kenny was a good teacher and he really looked after us.”

At the age of 23, Worswick joined the Michelin-starred country-house hotel Gravetye Manor in West Sussex as Sous Chef, gaining valuable experience of working within a large team. The following year, he switched to double-Michelin-starred standalone restaurant Le Champignon Sauvage in Gloucestershire and quickly rose to become Sous Chef under revered Chef-Patron David Everitt-Matthias, who became a mentor to the ambitious young Liverpudlian. “That really opened my eyes, it was like a finishing school,” he recalls. “The ethos and the way David worked was different to anything else I’d ever seen before. A lot of emphasis on foraged ingredients, cheaper cuts and making something really special. It’s one of the best moves I’ve ever made.”

He was just 26 when an opportunity came along that was too good to ignore: the chance to be Head Chef, and run a Michelin-starred kitchen no less. But his time at luxury hotel Glenapp Castle in southwest Scotland, a location that Worswick neatly summarises as “the middle of nowhere”, was far from plain sailing. “We only had three chefs if we were fully staffed, and we weren’t fully staffed that often,” he jokes. “It was hard work but we maintained the Michelin star. Looking back, would I say that I was ready to be Head Chef then? No, I wasn’t. But sometimes you’ve got to bite the bullet.”

If anything, the experience merely served to highlight areas that he still needed to work on. “When you’re a Sous Chef, you’re a cook,” he ponders. “But when you’re a Head Chef, you need to manage people. It’s not just about putting food on the plate, that’s the easy part. You’ve got to balance the books, you’ve got to liaise with suppliers, you’ve got to be polite even when you’re stressed out.”

Worswick left Glenapp Castle after less than a year – “where it was didn’t suit what me and my wife needed at the time” – and he returned home to Merseyside, with the 27-year-old securing the position of Executive Head Chef at Thornton Hall Hotel in the Wirral. Here he was tasked with overseeing all of the hotel’s F&B, including the fine-dining restaurant, brasserie and banqueting. “Managing 24 chefs and three kitchens, it was pretty full on,” he reflects. “If Glenapp Castle was a big lesson, Thornton Hall was all about scaling up. Another thing I learnt is that it’s harder to manage a team of three if someone’s phoned in sick and there’s only two of you left, whereas if you’ve got a bigger team you’ve got more freedom to delegate.” He stayed there for 18 months until, at the age of 28, the challenge of putting his stamp on The Latymer proved irresistible.

One of the most striking features of Worswick’s career is how he’s gravitated time after time towards hotel restaurants. What is it about this particular environment that appeals? “Infrastructure,” he says without hesitation. “Here at The Latymer, for example, we’re not expected to be a cash cow for the hotel. If we were an independent restaurant, we wouldn’t be able to put on most of the ingredients because we would have hard margins to hit and we’d have to think more about the bottom line. We’ve got a robust team here – ten in the kitchen and ten front of house – and we get support from the hotel to do the best food that we can.”

To this end, Worswick just focuses on The Latymer rather than having to spread himself across the entire hotel; he’s not required to work on Pennyhill Park’s other F&B offerings: The Brasserie, Ascot Bar, spa restaurant Themis, or conference and banqueting. This leaves the chef able to concentrate on building up The Latymer’s credentials as a true destination restaurant. “It’s very rare to find a hotel in which you can just do the restaurant and they’ll let you get on with it,” he notes with obvious relish.

On the taster menu, refined dishes such as a Colchester oyster starter with cured sea trout and a wonderfully refreshing sorrel granite (showcasing sorrel grown in the kitchen garden) immediately show the chef’s capabilities. It’s followed by a beautifully presented salt-baked celeriac topped with lovage and generous shavings of umami-rich Australian truffle – the latter ingredient perhaps somewhat surprising for a restaurant ostensibly serving up modern European cuisine, but then Worswick isn’t the sort of chef to be bound by convention. “I don’t like to be pigeonholed on style because then we can use what we want,” he explains. “I get my truffles from Australia, for example, but I think they’re the best product in the world. I try to keep it...
local where I can but only if the quality warrants it, I’m not going to say, ‘here’s your dish, it’s local but it’s crap’.”

Desserts are anything but disappointing, with a memorably zingy passion-fruit cream accompanied by coconut ice cream, mango gel and crunchy meringues; and a surprisingly rich chocolate délice offset by a tangy yoghurt sorbet atop a milk crumble. “The chocolate délice has been on since day one,” he says proudly. “I think that’s one of the most sophisticated dishes I’ve ever produced, it’s so well-rounded.”

Worswick’s confident demeanour gives the impression of someone who feels completely at home in his surroundings. Pennyhill Park is part of Exclusive Hotels and Venues, a family-owned group of four country-house hotels that also comprises Lainston House in Hampshire, South Lodge in West Sussex and The Manor House in Wiltshire. Lainston House hosts the Season cookery school in which attendees are taught culinary skills by chefs from across the group and beyond, while The Manor House also boasts a Michelin-starred restaurant (The Bybrook). All of which serves to back up Exclusive’s bold declaration that “food is the heartbeat of our hotels and venues”.

“Exclusive are very food-led and that’s why the group’s got such a great reputation,” affirms Worswick. Interestingly, the chef revealed that when he was originally in talks with management about taking over The Latymer, there was no mention of winning Michelin stars or any other accolades for that matter; what they discussed instead was the chef’s desire to cook to the very best of his abilities. “The management are just as big foodies as me. They give us all the tools for everybody to reach our full potential and you can’t put a price on that.”

Those tools include supporting Worswick in revamping The Latymer in January 2017. In came bolder colours across the 45-cover main dining area (there’s also an eight-cover chef’s table accessed through the kitchen) along with new carpets, seating and lighting. Post-makeover, the restaurant remains fairly traditional in style – it’s situated within one of the oldest parts of the original house after all in a space dominated by dark-wood panels, beams and latticed windows – but the venue also nods to more contemporary design trends with bright turquoise and floral patterns across the carpet, chairs and banquettes. “The restaurant still needed to be fairly classical but we’ve made it a bit more vibrant than before, more funky to reflect what we’re doing,” he explains. “You can’t lose sight of the fact that we’re a fine-dining restaurant within a country-house hotel. I think the refurbishment’s worked well.”

Another sign of the group’s commitment to F&B is the Exclusive Chef’s Academy, a wide-ranging career development programme for its commis chefs. Members of the voluntary two-year programme get to work in Exclusive’s fine-dining restaurants such as The Latymer but they also visit suppliers and undertake classroom-based learning sessions, giving them a mix of practical and academic skills that stand
them in good stead for the future. Worswick is a huge fan and you can really hear the passion in his voice when discussing it; he loves the programme’s emphasis on providing on-the-job training, which he feels is sorely lacking in some catering colleges where graduates can emerge lacking any experience in professional kitchens. “It’s sad to see people come out of college and be told, ‘forget everything you’ve been taught, this is how it’s done’,” he says.

His only regret is that something like the Exclusive Chef’s Academy wasn’t around when he started out. “For me, on-the-job training is the way forward. If we’re ever going to get ourselves out of the hole that we’re in as an industry, I think more exposure to real-life kitchens on a day-to-day basis is essential.” This hole, as Worswick sees it, involves restaurants suffering from chronic understaffing as a result of new recruits being put off by the sector’s reputation for overbearing chefs, low pay and long hours. “It’s really refreshing to work for somewhere that’s doing something about the problem, rather than just moaning.”

The prospects for Exclusive’s commis chefs look bright then, but what does the future hold for Worswick himself? The Liverpudlian is no stranger to life in front of the camera – he was a semi-finalist on the UK version of MasterChef: The Professionals in 2010, won the North West heat of Great British Menu in 2015 and lost out to Adam Reid in the same heat a year later – and readily admits that he loved “going on TV and representing the industry”, even if each programme required an enormous amount of preparation beforehand. There are no further TV appearances in the pipeline, but he doesn’t rule anything out. “If the offer comes, it’s the right time within the business and I’m able to do it, then sure,” he reveals. “It’s a great piece of PR and you can’t turn it down, you’d be crazy.”

For now though, his focus is very much on the food and putting into practice the lessons learnt from all those top kitchens on his CV. “I’ve moved about during my career, but just so that I can fulfil my potential,” he says. “The thing that’s really struck me with Exclusive is the support that you’re given to be the best that you can be. There’s no target pointing me towards one or two stars, it’s not like that. I’m just trying to get better all the time.” Like many young chefs, Worswick’s had a nomadic existence for much of his 20s but, here at The Latymer, he’s finally found a place that can help him realise that potential. “These are the best years of my life,” he reflects. “And honestly, I’m the luckiest guy in the world to know that now.”

Photography: © Adrian Franklin
High-quality glassware combining traditional Japanese craftsmanship with cutting-edge design
“This isn’t a formal sit-up-straight-and-be-quiet-style restaurant – it’s theatrical, social and dramatic.”

Jeffrey Beers on the design concept behind Gordon Ramsay Hell’s Kitchen in Las Vegas
Sintoho
Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait, Kuwait City

Sintoho elevates the street foods of Singapore, Tokyo and Hong Kong – which together give the restaurant its name – into the realm of fine dining by creating a modern-day temple of Asian cuisine. The new venture is part of the recently opened Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait, conceived by Gensler and designed by Yabu Pushelberg, that sits within the eastern tower of the 140,000m² Burj Alshaya complex in Kuwait City.

Occupying a prime 21st storey penthouse location, Sintoho boasts a main open dining area with 12-metre ceilings and expansive views of the city and the Persian Gulf beyond. A Kokaistudios team led by co-founders Filippo Gabbiani and Andrea Destefanis designed the restaurant around the idea of celebrating Asian cuisine’s diversity and creating opportunities for guests to experience its sights, smells and tastes up close. There are two teppanyaki tables, a robata grill, a sushi bar, a dim sum counter and even a tea wall fronted by an elaborate carved-wood tea station. The soft lighting comes courtesy of a series of waterdrop glass pendants from DH Liberty Lux in London.

Meanwhile, the private dining rooms are an ode to Chinese embroidery and showcase bespoke chairs and walls featuring hand-printed linen fabric, albeit with a nod to Gabbiani’s hometown of Venice through the use of elegant Fortuny silk pendant lamps and eye-catching red Murano glass inlays.

Kokaistudios has now transformed the complete top floor of Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait into two signature restaurants; Sintoho sits alongside Dai Forni, a venue that draws inspiration from Italy and specifically the island of Sicily. Dai Forni includes three hand-hammered copper wood-burning ovens produced in Australia, which are used daily to make fresh pizzas and breads, as well as chandeliers and seats that take cues from traditional Sicilian woven baskets. The two restaurants are linked by shared common areas including an extensive terrace, which gives guests a spectacular vantage point from which to follow the city’s rapid development.

www.fourseasons.com
Chill
by Nude Design Team
Henshin, a three-level restaurant and rooftop bar designed by Silverfox Studios, has opened atop The Westin Jakarta, Indonesia’s tallest building. Serving up quality Nikkei cuisine – a dynamic fusion of Peruvian and Japanese culinary traditions – Henshin’s aesthetic draws inspiration from both cultures.

The peaks of Machu Picchu influenced the solid granite slabs forming the lower level bar and wall treatments, whilst the top floor’s ceiling and carpets feature patterns reminiscent of traditional Okinawa kimono dresses. Characterised by open show kitchens and interactive sushi bars, both setting and menu seek to create a sense of drama and narrative.

Henshin offers expansive views of Jakarta, with Silverfox altering the interior architecture to capitalise on the panorama. “We realigned the structural design, adjusted floor slabs and created volumes that increase ceiling height,” explains Patrick Waring, Partner at Silverfox. “This allowed us to incorporate a triple-volume staircase that cantilevers out to the curtain wall maximising the view.”

The use of black finishes throughout continues this theme, disappearing at night and allowing the view to take centrestage, whilst a seductive arrival tunnel downstairs further plays into the experience. Meanwhile, Henshin’s visual identity is centred on imagery and ideas drawn from the menu, with a series of intricate graphic crustaceans, octopi and seaweed gracing ephemera – at once complementing the detailed interiors with equally considered illustrations, and contrasting the sleekly envisioned scheme with moments of playfulness.

“The whole restaurant focuses on the fact that it is floating in the clouds in a negative moody space, addressing amazing night-time scenery,” adds Susan Heng, Partner at Silverfox. “Interior details including the blue faceted mirrored ceilings and Japanese bingata fabric panels emphasise this. To go for an evening in Henshin is to be taken up and away from Jakarta, which plays the role of spectator.”

www.henshinjakarta.com
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It’s long been known that where a drink’s consumed can shape how much a customer enjoys it, but a new immersive cocktail experience really takes this idea and runs with it. Out Of The Blue has been created by Blue Bar at The Berkeley in partnership with spirits producer Bacardi to help guests better appreciate different flavour notes by experiencing them in a unique multisensory environment.

Customers who have bought the Out Of The Blue experience are taken from the bar into a secret space with just four chairs and a table, and given a quartet of taster-sized cocktails created by the Blue Bar team featuring Bombay Sapphire Gin, Grey Goose Vodka, Bacardi Ocho Rum and Aberfeldy Single Malt Whisky. Drinks are served in opaque black vessels and accompanied by visuals presented on the 360-degree display screens that surround participants, along with corresponding sound effects and smells. The key characteristics of a tropical cocktail may be evoked by mouthwatering pineapple aromas, for example, while a smokier offering is brought to life through the unmistakably earthy smell of fresh peat.

Out Of The Blue is the result of a collaboration between shared virtual reality company Igloo Vision, sensory reality specialist Sensiks and producer Armoury. Its aim is to create “a space in which we try to enhance perception of flavour through simultaneously stimulating your senses while exposing you to carefully created content and context all around you”, according to The Berkeley’s Director of Food & Beverage Daniel Baernreuther. “It very much challenges perceptions on how your surroundings and the context of where you have that drink changes the way the drink tastes.”

The innovative project adds to an impressive F&B offering at The Berkeley, which is owned by Maybourne Hotel Group. The hotel is also home to Collins Room and Marcus Wareing’s double-Michelin-starred flagship Marcus, both of which have undergone revamps in recent years with the help of London-based studio Robert Angell Design International.

www.the-berkeley.co.uk
a perfect cocktail...the perfect glass
Paying homage to traditional Bahamian cuisine and the island’s surrounding ocean, Fish by Michelin-starred chef José Andrés at The Cove Atlantis, Paradise Island serves responsibly sourced seafood that highlights sustainable fishing practices – donating a portion of its proceeds to the resort’s non-profit Blue Project Foundation.

Celebrated for his humanitarian efforts as much as for his culinary abilities, Andrés’ menu includes signature dishes such as fried local lionfish – a species that has been severely damaging to coral reefs – as well as local favourite Hog Snapper, grilled over Josper ovens and garnished with a crisp endive salad, marcona almonds and radishes.

“Anyone who knows me knows how much I love the ocean – whether it’s enjoying the freshest delicacies of the local waters or going diving,” Andrés comments. “Fish tells the story of this beautiful, mysterious thing we call the sea through food – and my team and I are very excited to create this new experience at The Cove, as well as supporting sustainable fishing practices and the protection of the Bahamian coral reefs.”

Designed by Catalan studio Capella Garcia, the restaurant’s seating area is fronted by a cylindrical hanging light comprising hundreds of white and gold ceramic fish, while its bar features a glowing backdrop that gives the impression of a giant blue wave. In the dining room, photographic murals by Bahaman-based artist Elena Kalis and a hand-constructed koi fish sculpture from Spanish designers Inocuo The Sign and LZF Lab further complement a rich palette of teal, pearl and azure hues.

Audrey Oswell, President and Managing Director of Atlantis, Paradise Island, notes: “The inclusion of José Andrés’ craftsmanship at The Cove provides an impactful opportunity to showcase the elements of The Bahamas. We are incredibly proud that we have been able to create locally infused, ocean-linked dining experiences in partnership with Chef Andrés, who is an advocate for the protection and preservation of our country’s natural resources.”

[www.atlantisbahamas.com](http://www.atlantisbahamas.com)
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Park Hyatt Dubai has overhauled an existing dining space to create Brasserie du Park, offering Normandy-esque cuisine in a relaxed atmosphere. The signature restaurant, one of five concepts within the hotel’s new F&B destination The Promenade, is inspired by the French seaside resort of Deauville and provides picturesque views over Dubai Creek.

Upon entering, the eye is drawn to a spectacular brass chandelier featuring delicate blown-glass spheres, while shelves filled with beautiful vases separate the large open areas, and 3D-patterned timber flooring gives the room a graphic quality. A three-dimensional wall feature that took centre stage in the restaurant’s previous guise as Traiteur has been retained, albeit repainted and lifted with brass detailing. The venue also makes liberal use of classic nautical colours such as deep blue and white to help generate a strong sense of place.

Guests can choose to sit in upholstered armchairs, brasserie-style chairs or lush velvet and leather banquettes, while wall-mounted mirrors help include those with their backs to the main space, and large French doors open onto a sizeable terrace set up for al fresco dining. Diners can take their pick from an extensive menu presided over by Executive Chef Daniele Gialluisi, which offers a crowd-pleasing range of seafood and meat options alongside French classics, salads, pasta dishes, cheeses and charcuterie. The restaurant also sells alcoholic drinks in the form of wine, cider and beer, all sourced from France.

Brasserie du Park’s concept and strategy was created by Meraki & Modus while design firm LW managed the interior scheme. “We were honoured to redesign such an icon of the Dubai restaurant scene,” says Pia Lakshmi Sen, Associate at LW. “The new look is aligned with the sophisticated crowd that dines there and had to work for both daytime and evening.” Meraki & Modus and LW have also collaborated on two other projects at The Promenade – New England-inspired restaurant Noepe and elegant cocktail bar Seventy Seventy.

www.brasserie-du-park.thepromenadedxb.com

IN A BITE Covers: 125 (inside) and 92 (outside) • Owner: Al Wasl • Operator: Park Hyatt • Concept and Strategy: Meraki & Modus • Interior Design: LW • Kitchen Consultant: TSCC • Fit-out Contractor: Aati Contracts • Lighting Consultant: Acoulite • Executive Chef: Daniele Gialluisi
Although Hell’s Kitchen remains one of the most visible parts of celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay’s expansive portfolio, it may come as a surprise that until now the long-running TV series has not lent its name to an actual restaurant. Many know the name and format, but few – save for those lucky enough to be audience members at the converted Los Angeles warehouse wherein the show is filmed – had experienced Hell’s Kitchen without the veneer of show-business and scripted reality.

Landing as the latest F&B addition to Las Vegas’ landmark Caesar’s Palace, Gordon Ramsay Hell’s Kitchen looks to remedy this, opening up the experience to diners with its first physical location. Designed by Jeffrey Beers and led by Executive Chef Jennifer Murphy and Head Chef Michelle Tribble – the latter the winner of the show’s 17th series – this new kid on the strip draws inspiration from both its TV origins and the indulgence synonymous with its setting. Channelling the thrill of the cook through a more intimate lens than guests may expect from a Vegas main feature, the project might well be adorned by the name of one of the world’s most famous chefs, but works hard to build its own distinct character.

“Gordon Ramsay Hell’s Kitchen restaurant is the world’s first eatery inspired by a hit television show, and brings a new destination restaurant to the famous Las Vegas Strip,” says Louie Maione, General Manager. “As is the case with all his restaurant offerings, Chef Ramsay plays an active and pivotal role in the development of the project from concept to opening and beyond.”

Far from Ramsay’s Vegas debut – his eponymous brand already boasts four restaurants within the city limits spanning speciality burgers, steaks, fish and chips and pub grill meals – Hell’s Kitchen nonetheless lands as the destination option. Diners are welcomed by a six-foot-tall installation of the Hell’s Kitchen logo, complete with flaming trident, then ushered in by a digital version of Ramsay himself, which appears on...
a screen by the front desk, utters a stern welcome, folds his arms, and turns his back to lead you in.

Divided into a large central space with views of the open kitchen and a channel of more intimate tables around the edge, Beers’ design affords both the bustle that guests might expect of a celebrity chef’s establishment as well as a moment of respite from the chaos of the strip. Subtly incorporating motifs from the show, the interior features details like small trident prongs attached to the linear lighting fixtures, and accents of the ice blue and fire red that the show’s contestants wear across the marble bar.

“We were given quite a bit of creative freedom when designing the space, and it’s unusual in that it’s a freestanding building right on the strip,” Beers explains. “As such we were free to celebrate Gordon and Hell’s Kitchen. We imagined a warm environment, and designed the open-plan kitchen to be a theatre for the restaurant. There’s residential timelessness to it.”

With Beers’ design subtly referencing Hell’s Kitchen’s televisual roots, it makes sense that so too does the menu. Fans will recognise beef wellington served with a pool of red-wine demi-glace, glazed root vegetables and potato purée, whilst eggs in purgatory is given a heated desert kick with spicy tomato sauce and Valbreso feta cheese on a base of sourdough toast. The Hell’s Kitchen Burger makes an appearance too, as a lunch-only special, bringing together an all-American patty with the continental tang of Fresno pepper jam. Meanwhile, the ever-popular, contestant-besting scallops, plated here with English pea purée, braised bacon lardons and pickled fennel, offer a tangy appetiser.

“It’s designed to be an experiential and immersive restaurant,” Maione continues. “So to enhance the dining experience, and tie in further to the show, several of the most successful signature TV menu items and recipes are found on the restaurant’s menu.” Whilst longstanding fans will find comfort in these Hell’s Kitchen mainstays, it is a series of new additions, and the fleshing out of familiar concepts into a full menu, where the restaurant steps out from its namesake’s shadow.

This begins at the bar with a collection of speciality cocktails. Notes From Gordon, marrying Plymouth Dry Gin with green tea, lemongrass, peach and lemon, is served – as the name suggests – with a literal note from Gordon, offering either motivation or trademark criticism. There is a strong and forceful introductory note, but sweet flavours deep down.
Meet Your Maker – combining Maker’s Mark bourbon, Domaine de Canton, mint, apple, strawberry and cinnamon – takes a similar approach, with the initial kick mellowing out to leave fruitier tones intact down the line. Fear & Loathing, meanwhile, pays tribute to the seduction of Vegas lore with a mixture of El Silencio mezcal, Luxardo, cold-pressed blood orange juice, pineapple and lemon.

Meanwhile, an expansive seafood selection – featuring a shellfish tower alongside half-shell oysters and tuna tartar – as well as a choice of dry-aged filet mignon or tomahawk steaks provide the classic flavours, and a starter of fabled wagyu beef meatballs channels Sin City’s notorious penchant for indulgence.

Served in modernist bespoke glasses from Libbey’s Master Reserve, the bar menu creates a new facet of the Hell’s Kitchen concept for guests and fans alike to explore.

Structurally untethered from Caesar’s Palace – the hotel and restaurant share a plot of land but few of the former’s ultra-luxe calling cards save for the Arezzo brushed gold cutlery and BauscherHepp stoneware plates – Hell’s Kitchen nevertheless sits on a prime, strip-facing location, and uses this position to further set itself apart from a swathe of Vegas in-hotel F&B venues that if truth be told can often blur into one.

“As the first Gordon Ramsay Hell’s Kitchen restaurant, it is blazing its own trail,” MAione notes. “It’s Chef Ramsay’s second restaurant at Caesars Palace, joining Gordon Ramsay Pub & Grill, and both perfectly align with Caesars’ great culinary traditions.”

Themed, but far from a slave to its roots, Hell’s Kitchen brings yet another landmark brand to the epicentre of landmark brands, but works to subtly translate its origins into something infinitely more accessible. “I hope that guests feel like they’ve been a part of something,” Beers concludes thoughtfully. “This isn’t a formal sit-up-straight-and-be-quiet-style restaurant – it’s theatrical, social and dramatic.”

www.caesars.com
lot of hotel restaurants are too formal,” says Michel Roux Jr. “This is luxurious informality in one of the most beautiful dining rooms in London.” Here inside the new-look Roux at The Landau, the TV chef has overseen a revamp of The Langham’s elegant restaurant focused on creating “a more convivial atmosphere” in line with the city’s broader shift towards offering high-end cuisine without the traditional trappings of fine dining.

The influence of restaurants like Pollen Street Social, The Clove Club and Barrafina, all renowned for their welcoming atmosphere as much as their Michelin-starred menus, is evident at every turn. That this famed culinary dynasty – Roux at The Landau is actually a partnership between Roux Jr and his father Albert Roux, who are best known for running temples of haute gastronomy such as Le Gavroche and The Waterside Inn – is also now going down the informal route speaks volumes.

It’s an interesting move and one that was clear to everyone involved from the outset when interior designers David Collins
Cornish crab salad with brown crab crackers
Studio was tasked with “creating a slightly more relaxed and informal dining space”, according to Design Director Lewis Taylor. “The brief was to add another dimension that would bring about an evolution of the dining concept and celebrate the provenance and quality of the ingredients.”

The most striking element of the redesign is the move to replace some of the formal table seating with a new curved counter that anchors the dining room space, creating a clear focal point for guests upon entering the restaurant. “The front of the bar is elegantly layered with materials, being clad with a pale blue leather, which is set within a dark timber frame and finished with stud detailing and a crackle glaze surface,” says Taylor. “Flanking each end of the bar is a showcase of British produce, including charcuterie and a display of cheeses, shellfish and champagne.” It’s surrounded by stools upholstered in lilac leather, which offer a more casual seating option at the bar, and illuminated by low-level aged brass lighting that complements the décor.

Guests can choose to take a range of starters or light meals at this counter rather than sitting at one of the many smart tables dotted around the dining space. Roux Jr has already eaten at the counter himself and firmly believes that it brings a “personal touch” to the restaurant, as well as being “a great way to show off the amazing produce, provide interaction with the chefs, and attract solo diners and those who haven’t made a booking”.

Roux at The Landau’s cuisine has also undergone something of a makeover – Head Chef Nicolas Pasquier has worked closely with the Roux family to develop a menu that’s marginally smaller than previously, but one that simultaneously adds more snacks and lighter dishes suited to both counter and table settings. “The menu is now much more flexible,” explains Pasquier. “If you simply want a choice of snacks or some great cheese with a glass of wine that’s absolutely fine, but if you want a full five-course tasting menu with paired wines that option is of course available.”

There’s now a greater emphasis on provenance and seasonality too, all while retaining the restaurant’s concept of serving contemporary European cuisine inspired by classical French technique with a clean and uncluttered presentation. Intricate dishes such as braised turbot with Chateau-Chalon sauce and native lobster ravioli sit easily alongside Pasquier’s two favourites from the new menu, Cornish crab salad with brown crab crackers, and San Daniele prosciutto with grissini and Kalamata olives. “I think I like them best because they exemplify our new ingredient-led approach,” he says. “They are simply presented, but creative and just delicious.”
Fittingly, provenance plays an equally important role in Roux at The Landau’s enhanced cheese and wine offering. A new custom-made cheese cabinet has been introduced to showcase products from artisanal British and French suppliers and diners are encouraged to browse what’s on display with a member of the team, while the vastly extended wine lists spans a remarkable 525 bottles from around the world. Moreover, the sommeliers can offer every single wine by the glass thanks to the restaurant’s use of the Coravin Wine System.

The beautiful new tables are another aspect of the revamp that really catch the eye. David Collins Studio has brought in custom-designed oak tables with leather and bronze details that mirror the timber of the counter; they’re no longer covered by tablecloths either, creating a more informal feel. Last but not least, front-of-house staff have been given new uniforms that, in Roux Jr’s words, are both “smart and casual” to reflect his belief that happy staff are better at serving customers.

The project represents a homecoming of sorts for London-headquartered interior architecture practice David Collins Studio, which designed the original space for Roux at The Landau ten years ago. The fact that the team previously worked on the same restaurant is very helpful from a design perspective, Taylor admits. “It is easier as we of course know the space and client very well and the team have an excellent understanding of the original design, layout and materials. All very useful when you want to evolve a space and refer back to the original design, yet bring something new.”

Already, the switch towards “luxurious informality” appears to be paying dividends for the restaurant, with The Langham, Roux Jr and Pasquier each expressing delight at the end result. As Pasquier puts it: “This new space offers a social experience, one that can be explored and shared with your fellow guests. The atmosphere is vibrant and diners and staff alike seem really happy.”

www.rouxatthelandau.com
Found within the Golden Triangle, Sudirman Central Business District (SCBD) cements its reputation as Jakarta’s liveliest corporate and entertainment hub with the opening of Alila’s second property in the city this autumn. Situated next to the Indonesia Stock Exchange, the contemporary tower has been designed by Bangkok-based IAW Company as a vibrant urban retreat featuring hip accommodation, creative meeting spaces and internationally renowned lifestyle experiences. From Hakkasan Group comes the first South-East Asian outposts of Hakkasan and Sake no Hana restaurants as well as nightclub Omnia. But leading the charge – having commenced operations earlier than the rest of the upscale development – is the first Indonesian restaurant by the Vongerichten family.

Culinary legend Jean-Georges needs no introduction in the world of hotel F&B. Jakarta, though, affords an opportunity for son Cédric to step out of his father’s shadow at the helm of this new Asian venture. “Sure, it’s my baby,” he affirms. “I showed my father some initial plans during the development of Vong Kitchen but, when it came to our opening, I think he was pleasantly surprised at the level of detail in terms of décor and cuisine.”

Born in Bangkok, the younger Vongerichten graduated from the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) having gained experience as a training chef in prestigious hotel kitchens in London and Hong Kong, as well as with Ferran Adrià in Barcelona. Stints at several Jean-Georges restaurants have followed, leading to his position as Chef de Cuisine at New York’s Perry St, where he has cemented his reputation for refined fare concerned with seasonality and informed by a blend of French, American and Asian influences.

While the initial concept for Vong Kitchen was to deliver modern French–American cuisine in Jakarta, albeit showcasing fresh and local ingredients, Vongerichten acknowledges that adaptation for the local palate has been key. “By visiting food markets and understanding more about the availability of ingredients, we’ve been able to respond with flexibility to guest feedback,” he explains. “So
increasing spice and heat levels for some dishes or decreasing sodium in others. Freshness and seasonality are always major considerations but you also need to factor in the tropical climate here, and what the body craves in hot weather."

Indonesia is a country in whose culture Vongerichten has become immersed. There are regular trips to the nation’s picturesque islands with his Indonesian wife Ochi – another passionate foodie and CIA graduate – and their two sons. Meanwhile, the New York-based family have over the years welcomed many friends from Indonesia to Perry St, noting with interest their receptiveness to the restaurant’s food, design and concept. "The younger generation are well-travelled and schooled in America, the UK and Australia," says Vongerichten. "As a result, their palate becomes used to different cuisines. Many of our visitors have commented on the viability of a restaurant such as Perry St in Jakarta, a city where people go out to eat a lot as part of the nightlife scene. For us, the prospect of bringing a project with a downtown New York City vibe to the Indonesian capital became more and more exciting. Then we met our partners and, let’s just say, the launch of Vong Kitchen felt like the right timing."

Those partners include the Indonesian owner of several Alila properties, whose local operational expertise has proven invaluable to the Vong Kitchen team in the run-up to opening and day-to-day operations. "It’s a great partnership," says the chef. "The way they run hotels is very special so the prospect of collaborating on this prime location in Jakarta really appealed. At the same time, I think Alila was keen to work with a team who are very focused on food."

As a chef who nurtures his team members, Vongerichten has been able to draft in General Manager Benjamin Keens, Head Mixologist Ali M. Hasan Priash, and Chef de Cuisine Luisa Caicedo from New York to help realise his vision for Vong Kitchen. Service on a buzzing Saturday night is slick and considered, with stylish dishes coming thick and fast from an expansive semi-open kitchen, behind which a small army of chefs are labouring under Caicedo’s direction to fulfil more than 200 covers. Signatures range from chilled watermelon, creamy burrata and rice cracker crusted tuna appetisers to the famed black truffle and three cheese pizza, the latter a side dish that takes a humble staple and turns it into something delectable. Tiger prawns à la plancha in green curry deliver a nuanced layering of heat while the entrée menu is bolstered by melt-in-the-mouth braised beef short ribs and organic fried chicken with hot sauce. Flavours, textures and techniques are used intelligently to liven up classics with pleasing flair and surprising twists. Caicedo then produces picture perfection on a plate with a duo of desserts, a delicate mango panna cotta and a weightless chocolate pudding, topped with a flourish of candied violets.

Vongerichten and Caicedo both speak of the abundance of fruit and vegetables in Jakarta, the quality of chicken in Indonesia, and the purveyors of fine seafood they are working with in Bali. Beef, however, has proven more of a challenge, requiring sourcing from further afield.
in Australia, a situation that Vongerichten would like to see improve because “Indonesians are naturally big meat-eaters.” Vong Kitchen is taking its next step towards all-day dining with the imminent launch of weekend brunch — expected to be a crowd-pleaser among locals and tourists alike — while the chef is intent on introducing a breakfast menu in the near future, catering to the bustling business district and Alila SCBD hotel guests.

The restaurant’s design, an integral aspect of the New York experience, is by Rockwell Group and benefits from large circular tables, leather banquette seating, oversized lighting features and an inviting terrace, visible from street level. The aesthetic is warm, masculine and refined, summoning up the ambience of a sophisticated Soho or West Village eatery. While the sightlines, ambient lighting and open-plan nature of the sociable dining room have ensured that Vong Kitchen is already a place in which to be seen, the team have had to put extra effort into the bar area, strategically positioned at the front of the restaurant. “One thing we noticed when eating in Jakarta restaurants was that the bar was often empty with people preferring the comfort of traditional tables, especially located outside,” observes Vongerichten. “So here we’ve had to prove that a bar can be a cosy space in which to spend time and mingle.” The interactivity and theatre of New York-style bartending has helped. Leading the brigade of mixologists, Priash heads regularly to local markets for ingredients such as punchy citrus, refreshing cucumber and heady spices to infuse into his cocktails, shifting the focus to a different spirit every couple of months. Gin is currently riding high with Opihr, Tanqueray No. Ten and Bloom in favour.

For Vongerichten, the goal now is to establish Vong Kitchen with consistency and longevity in mind. Alongside his father, the chef is also geared up for the launch of their second venue at Alila SCBD, the 24-hour Le Burger. Back in New York, there are plans to open an independent Indonesian restaurant with his wife to showcase the lesser-known cuisine there. “I hope our concept will encourage other chefs from around the world to consider Jakarta as somewhere with the potential to become a real foodie destination,” Vongerichten concludes. “It’s about opening up a vision, offering different cuisines, and getting the critics excited about Indonesia.”

www.vongkitchen.com

IN A BITE  Covers: 220  •  Owner: PT Kharisma Jawara Abadi  •  Operator: Alila Hotels & Resorts  •  Architecture: IAW  •  Interior Design: Rockwell Group  •  Executive Chef: Cédric Vongerichten  •  Chef de Cuisine: Luisa Caicedo  •  Head Bartender: Ali M. Hasan Priash  •  Tableware: Kevala Ceramics  •  Glassware: Schott Zwiesel  •  Cutlery: Studio William
Germany is something of a hotbed for haute cuisine with the nation this year racking up more Michelin stars than ever before. While established names such as Jan Hartwig and Thomas Bühner continue to make waves, “a highly motivated generation of young chefs” – in the words of Michelin’s International Director Michael Ellis – are credited with making German gastronomy amongst the best in the world.

Validating such a point is Swiss-born chef Cornelius Speinle, who at the tender age of 28 won a Michelin star for his restaurant Dreizehn Sinne im Huuswurz. After training under Roger Werlé and working at various starred establishments including Les Quatre Saisons at the Pullman in Basel and Heston Blumenthal’s The Fat Duck in Bray, Speinle ventured out on his own, opening a small eatery in the Swiss village of Schlättingen. He earned his first Michelin star within a year and in 2015 was named ‘Discovery of the Year’ (in German-speaking Switzerland) by Gault Millau.

But running his own establishment took its toll, and having been headhunted by Klaus-Michael Kühe – who was in the final stages of developing his second hotel – Speinle took the difficult decision to close, and move to Hamburg to take up residence at what promised to be a new culinary landmark for the city. “At Dreizehn Sinne I was able to give free rein to my creativity and develop my own distinctive style,” he explains. “But at the same time, when you’re running your own business, there are so many other tasks that require your attention, leaving you with less energy for cooking. I wanted to be able to concentrate 100% on my true passion, and the possibility of being part of an establishment like The Fontenay right from the start, as Head Chef of the gourmet restaurant, is a unique opportunity.”

Located on the banks of Lake Aster, a leisurely stroll from the city centre, The Fontenay has been designed by architectural practice Störmer Murphy & Partners to create a harmony between urban nature and a cosmopolitan lifestyle. The newbuild hotel’s amorphous form evolved from three intertwining circles, which together house 130 guestrooms, two restaurants, three bars, a spa and a rooftop swimming pool. On the ground floor, a library lounge, soaring atrium bar, and parkside restaurant make up the public spaces, while a destination bar with wraparound outdoor terrace sits up on the sixth floor.

Perched above, beneath a hyperboloid canopy roof, is Lakeside – The Fontenay’s culinary highlight. It is here that Speinle and his 14-strong team serve up a contemporary fine-dining experience with a bold and innovative twist. “My modern cooking style combines international influences with uncompromising product quality, which come together in light-hearted and creative artisan perfection for maximum intensity of flavour,” he explains. “It is a very elaborate cuisine, in which I apply innovative techniques that draw on my curiosity as a chef, without abandoning my traditional roots.”

The restaurant is accessed via a spiral staircase from the bar, the ascent gradually revealing a light, airy space with panoramic views of the lake and city through a curved glass façade. A wall made up of 56 mirrors of varying shapes and sizes, designed to tesselate with one another, further reflects the natural daylight across the semi-circular dining room. Interiors, by Aukett + Heese, are a departure from the modern classic scheme seen elsewhere in the hotel, taking on a puristic, ethereal quality with shades of white and grey in the carpets, soft furnishings and Poltrona Frau dining chairs.

With just 40 covers and a private dining room seating up to ten, a
The operator could easily have shoehorned in a few more tables, but would inevitably have lost the spacious feel – a luxury rarely experienced in a city hotspot. Place settings are minimalistic, and larger tables come with their own dedicated serving station, fully stocked with cutlery from Robbe & Berking and glassware for every occasion – all neatly concealed in a bespoke cabinet.

The design scheme is intentionally pared back, with very little in the way of ornamentation or unnecessary trimmings, allowing the kitchen’s creations to take centre stage.

The à la carte menu features signature elements of Speinle’s multisensory approach at Dreizehn Sinne with each dish listed on the menu as a collection of its key ingredients, upholding a focus on quality produce. There’s also a five- or eight-course tasting menu, featuring Miyazaki wagyu – regarded as the highest-quality beef in Japan – served with eggplant, gai lan and a tart ponzu sauce. A selection of amuse bouches is a feast for the eyes and the taste buds, meanwhile, with Speinle looking to the surrounding parklands for plating inspiration. A bite-size fish and chips with pea purée, for example, is served on a stone slab; the tomato consommé with parmesan spots appears like a ladybird crawling across a bed of pebbles; and flora and plantlife make regular appearances throughout.

Other highlights include the Fjord prawns, innovatively prepared as tartare topped with caviar and melt-in-the-mouth oyster pearls, and the Norway lobster paired with jalapeno foam for a heady combination of flavours. Many of the dishes are plated on Hering Berlin’s perforated porcelain from the Cielo collection, further adding to the visual appeal.

Each course has its own wine pairing too, expertly selected by Head Sommelier Stefanie Hehn, previously of Christian Jürgens’ Restaurant Überfahrt at Althoff Seehotel Überfahrt. Responsible for the wine programme across The Fontenay’s F&B outlets, Hehn has secured an impressive range of vintages for the wine list; as a result, there’s a 1920s Madeira or a Château Margaux 1986 available by the glass.

The Fontenay undoubtedly has high hopes for its Head Chef, and Speinle has already impressed with his multisensory dishes. “I consider Cornelius Speinle to be one of the top talents on the European culinary scene; his cooking is creative, innovative and light, big on expression and rich in contrasts,” says the hotel’s Managing Director Thies Sponholz. “The style of his cuisine is modern and cosmopolitan, without losing sight of traditional roots – which reflects precisely the philosophy of The Fontenay.”

www.thefontenay.de
The series POWER is characterized by its expressive and puristic shape. The glasses give also small amounts of wine their maximum breathing surface, and thereby evolve the highest wine enjoyment. Therefore this series received two renowned design awards. The range comprises three stem glasses and two wine tumblers, and is the latest series of the German glass producer Stölzle Lausitz.
A deluge of crime, drugs and crumbling façades once left Angelenos fleeing Downtown Los Angeles at sundown. But beginning in the late 1990s, flashy newcomers including the Staples Center and the Frank Gehry-designed Walt Disney Concert Hall as well as pioneers like hit-maker Cedd Moses of 213 Nightlife Group have helped transform this one-time ghost town into a thriving urban community. Historic architectural marvels from Union Station to the Renaissance-style Bradbury Building now seamlessly coexist with gleaming condominiums, the rejuvenated 1917 Grand Central Market and The Broad, a bastion of contemporary art.

Dubbed DTLA, encompassing such different areas as the Historic Core, Arts District and Chinatown, Downtown Los Angeles now booms with restaurants, bars and hotels. The Standard, which opened in the old Superior Oil headquarters in 2002, boldly took a chance on an up-and-coming part of the city, and numerous other upscale properties have since followed suit. The past year alone has seen the Downtown debut of InterContinental, with its 73rd-floor bar offering panoramic views, as well as the second outpost of New

**Breva**

Hotel Figueroa, Los Angeles

Words: Alia Akkam • Photography: Courtesy of Hotel Figueroa

Photography: © Wonho Lee
York hotspot NoMad, this time situated in a bank from the 1920s. The dramatic revamp of Hotel Figueroa, in the shadow of the LA Live entertainment complex, is the latest ambitious regeneration project to turn heads in the city.

Now under the ownership of GreenOak Real Estate and Urban Lifestyle Hotel Group, the 14-storey building dates back to 1926 when it was a hostelry for female travellers. After years as a kitschy Moroccan-themed playground, the property has been restored to its splendid Spanish Colonial roots by Santa Monica design agency Studio Collective. This ambience is captured throughout the new hotel’s F&B outlets Breva, Bar Figueroa, Veranda, Rick’s and Bar Alta. Th spaces are masterminded by local chef Casey Lane (in partnership with New York-based hospitality group Apicci) of the Tasting Kitchen in Venice, Viale del Romani at the Kimpton La Peer in West Hollywood and Casa Apicci in New York – as well as bar guru Dushan Zaric of Employees Only fame.

Breva is the heartbeat of Hotel Figueroa. Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, the relaxed brasserie is an ode to the Basque Country, illuminating French and Spanish cuisine whilst celebrating California’s bounty of fresh ingredients. “I love the Basque region and when we were looking at old photos of the hotel, its food felt like a natural fit to me,” Lane recalls of Breva’s origins. He then succeeded in persuading the hotel’s owners to back his vision, telling them: “If you’re into it, I’m into this style of cooking. It’s what I believe in and enjoy eating.”

Helmed by Chef de Cuisine and long-time Lane protégé Josh Herlihy, Breva’s kitchen begins the day by cranking out bowls of faro and huckleberry oatmeal as part of an appealing breakfast menu, before switching to dishes such as Moorish spiced carrots with hazelnuts and tangerines, roasted cauliflower chops accompanied by walnuts and caper salad, and 40–day dry-aged top round steaks with green garlic butter from LA butcher shop Huntington Meats.

Originally, Breva aimed for a more polished-dining room feel “but once we saw the layout and how people were going to move in it, it organically became more casual – just like San Sebastián,” Lane explains. “I wanted it to feel like Blue Ribbon and Raoul’s in downtown New York, not pretentious fine dining. There is nothing else like that to service the creative crowd here late at night.”

Breva also shines because of Studio Collective’s subtle design approach; Principal Adam Goldstein points out that “it’s a relatively small space for a three-meal–a-day restaurant,” so to maximise it Breva purposely spills out into the lobby’s animated Bar Figueroa. “It’s a centrepiece for guests, a dialogue between the restaurant and the lobby,” he adds. Designed to engage patrons, the curvilinear bar is crafted from hot rolled steel, walnut, antique brass and leather. At any given time, the bar is packed with guests and locals snacking on, say, grilled oysters while drinking a Sweet Pea Fix (Spring 44 Gin, Yuste ‘La Kika’ Manzanilla Sherry, Green Chartreuse, lime, sugar snap peas
and mint) or one of Zaric’s signature Gintonico concoctions starring botanicals flash-infused with dry ice. The two-storey bottle display, set against a peekaboo glass box showcasing a staircase, adds a further sense of visual enticement.

“I like to evolve as a craftsman and the Figueroa concepts were something I always wanted to develop,” says Zaric. “I’m interested in an overall gastronomic experience. How can we use cocktails to improve the atmosphere so that you can’t pinpoint what you like. I don’t think just having good cocktails is a reason to come back to a bar anymore.”

Breva, with its white-oak floor and banquettes, is a lighter and brighter juxtaposition to the bar. “We wanted this space to be airier, with the same attention to detail but with different finishes,” says Goldstein. “It has this nice double-height ceiling that makes the space seem larger.” The overall impression is amplified by a large custom mirror fashioned from hand-carved walnut and faceted glass, as well as sidewalk seating that strengthens the connection between indoor and outdoor environments across the hotel.

At the rear of Hotel Figueroa is Veranda, overlooking the hotel’s coffin-shaped pool. The lush garden setting complements a menu of straightforward, satisfying drinks, including the horseradish-infused Aylesbury Duck Vodka Bloody Mary already familiar to Employees Only fans, and flatbreads incorporating zucchini, lemon, basil and burrata.

“The gazebo and wood-fired burning oven bring a European culinary element to the outdoors,” says Lane, reinforcing the synergy between California and the Basque Country.

Meanwhile, Rick’s – a bi-level bar with an alfresco white-plastered fireplace and custom black wrought-iron stools – instills a “pool-house vibe” as Goldstein describes it. Its breezy pops of turquoise and black-and-white flooring elicit a fitting backdrop to Zaric’s tropical libations, dreamed up in tandem with Beverage Director Michael Lay, like the Media Vuelta with tequila, Campari, fresh lime and Thai chili.

By contrast, Zaric considers the swanky, reservations-only Bar Alta akin to a philharmonic orchestra because its menu is “completely classic,” with cocktails served in vintage glassware. Just like Hotel Figueroa itself, Bar Alta’s intimate table and roving drink carts exemplify an alluring mix of old and new.

www.brevadtla.com

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**IN A BITE**  Owner: GreenOak Real Estate and Urban Lifestyle Hotel Group • Interior Design: Studio Collective • Architecture: Rockefeller Partners Architects • Executive Chef: Casey Lane • Chef de Cuisine: Josh Herlihy • Head Bartender: Dushan Zaric • Beverage Director: Michael Lay
Connecting the once independent cities of Buda and Pest across the dazzling River Danube is the Széchenyi Chain Bridge, a striking symbol of the capital. And only a stone’s throw away, next to another landmark in St. Stephen’s Basilica, lies an innovative music-themed hotel – Hotel Aria Budapest. Harmonic clues lead the guest through the keyboard-shaped lobby all the way up to the High Note SkyBar, which boasts breathtaking views over the city.

Opened in 2015 after its namesake in Prague, the 49-key boutique hotel is a true gem in the Library Hotel Collection portfolio, which also includes the likes of Hotel Giraffe in New York and Hotel X in Toronto. Although the Aria Hotel Budapest has been operational for a few years, the culinary direction and management was recently taken over by the renowned Gerbeaud brand, paving the way for the development of a new rooftop concept. Gerbeaud, named after the celebrated Swiss confectionery family, also operates the 160-year-old Gerbeaud Café and the double-Michelin-starred Onyx Restaurant.

The idea driving High Note SkyBar is to give Budapest, which still shows some traces of a Soviet hangover, a gastronomic nudge by putting mixology first, or ‘cocktail fine-dining’ as the team refers to.

**High Note SkyBar**
Aria Hotel Budapest

*Words: Heleri Rande • Photography: Courtesy of Aria Hotel Budapest*
Admittedly, if you were asked to name somewhere in the world that is leading on food and drink innovation, Budapest might not be the first place that springs to mind. But the group’s vision to create a harmonious ensemble between chef, pastry chef and bartender, with the latter as the lead singer, is testament to the creativity and culinary boundary-pushing that’s now taking place here. The boldness of this particular project is clearly shown by the fact that Borbála Anger, the Head Mixologist who spearheaded the concept, was only 21 when she was hired. The reins have since been handed over to two other members of her team – Péter Gózon and Richárd Mihály.

“The emphasis and spotlight is on the cocktails, and all the dishes and desserts are tuned to complement them. Our goal is to create a symbiosis – a visually outstanding, cutting-edge quality based on sophisticated synergy,” remarks Executive Chef Gergely Kövér, whose résumé includes stints in Relais & Châteaux properties in both Spain and the UK, as well as many acclaimed kitchens in Ireland and the Netherlands. Having previously run the group’s highly successful Émile restaurant on the Buda side of town, Kövér was offered a degree of freedom in building the entire F&B team at Aria, which he admits had its challenges. “Food is actually a small part of what I do. But still, you have to be interesting and change all the time, otherwise you just disappear.”

The ambitious chef is all about using native ingredients with techniques learnt from his travels. “I pay a visit to the local market every single week to get the best and freshest vegetables and fruits I can,” he says. “I don’t really want to create a signature dish. I rather believe in constant development.” The menu therefore changes frequently, with the team of four working together on a daily basis to challenge and learn from one another. “I constantly search the internet for new ideas and look for the latest trends. I am the one who’s bombarding Péter, Richárd and Gergely with ideas and project proposals,” adds Pastry Chef Zsuzsanna Szabó.

Since the opening of High Note SkyBar, which started
with a cocktail menu reaching back to the classics, the concept has grown and evolved. The winter season inspired the team to create Taste the Forest, a nod to Hungarian wildlife and edible plants. The spring and summer menu, meanwhile, features cocktails such as Ginmaicha – gin stirred with matcha and roasted brown rice – and Garden of Secrets – chamomile-infused Martini Ambrato with elderflower liqueur and egg white. All of this creativity seems to go down well with the thirsty guests queuing up to get a glimpse of the views from the vast terrace.

To complement the various spirit flavours, there’s a bar menu that draws inspiration from street food with servings of soy-glazed chicken wings, pulled-pork steamed buns and duck-stuffed gyoza, leaving just enough room for cheesecake with wild fruits and mango mousse with coriander. “The menu is like a system, it has to be connected and reflect our collaboration. Hence we need to help each other and leverage the fact that we all think differently,” explains Kövér, who as a young boy was fascinated by computers and programs. Indeed, it’s clear from Kövér’s meticulous approach towards his craft that technology and systematic thinking are there right at the very core. He even goes so far as to dream that all products should eventually be made in-house, including the tacos.

SkyBar is by no means the limit for this creative ensemble. Future plans to build a show kitchen on the ground floor for the hotel’s main restaurant and offer banqueting services for the residences to be built next door will see the team take on a new set of concepts and challenges in the ever-growing food scene of Hungary’s capital. As Gerbeaud gets ready to give full control of the F&B operation to Kövér and his colleagues in the near future, there’s no doubt that the property will be in solid culinary hands.

www.highnoteskybar.hu
As a brand for sophisticated table culture, TAFELSTERN’s strengths lie in its constant endeavour to create products of perfect shape and decoration. Developing diverse stylistic collections, TAFELSTERN is a problem-solver and consultant for the hotel and restaurant business.
“The success of this restaurant shows me that we need to bring more vegan dishes on the menu.”

Dario Mazzoli, F&B Manager at W London, on the impact of chef Ravinder Bhogal’s vegan pop-up at the hotel
Oddfellows Chester’s new Head Chef Elliot Hill has introduced a fresh-is-best ethos at the 18-key boutique’s restaurant, with a range of dishes inspired by the seasons and contemporary British cuisine. Hill — previously an executive chef in London and part of the opening team at Hotel Gotham in Manchester — trained in Russia, an experience that inspired him to focus on the individual merits of every ingredient and advocate a no-waste philosophy within the kitchen. Hill believes in serving “food that fills you up without making you feel lethargic” and showcasing ingredients which “give you that fresh feel after dining”, an approach exemplified by this starter in which crisp Jersey Royal potatoes are lifted by a zingy smoked lemon emulsion. Red chicory and raw asparagus add some welcome texture and colour to the dish, served on a striking mottled blue plate for maximum visual impact.

Diners can choose to eat in the botanically-themed main restaurant, or alternatively opt for the wood-panelled lounge bar or light-filled secret garden outside. Oddfellows Chester, located within a Grade II*—listed Georgian townhouse in the city centre, is the sister hotel to Oddfellows on the Park near Manchester — the UK’s only Design Hotels member outside London.

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Park Plaza London Riverbank has bolstered its MICE offering with the launch of Brain Food, a £15-per-head menu designed to improve focus and productivity by stimulating the brain synapses of delegates. Whereas many hotels offer basic confectionery and patisseries as part of the day rate, Brain Food adopts more of a healthy-eating approach with the use of ingredients such as avocado, cucumber, coconut water and flaxseed.

One of the items on offer is a refreshing shot featuring goji berries — a good source of Vitamins C and B12, iron and antioxidants — and Manuka honey from New Zealand, which has high concentrations of amino acids, B vitamins and calcium. The glass also contains Greek yoghurt and mango coulis topped with a slice of kiwi fruit.

The menu’s introduction follows Park Plaza London Riverbank’s recent multimillion-pound refurbishment scheme, which has enabled the 498-key hotel to comfortably accommodate everything from small meetings to residential conferences for up to 650 delegates.

“We have worked hard to create a package that not only sets us apart in the market, but more importantly provides an extra element to the hotel’s meetings, events and conferences offering that is both exciting and useful for delegates that use the facilities,” says Rob Flinter, General Manager at Park Plaza London Riverbank. “Our refurbishment last year really helped set us apart and now our Brain Food menu adds to the appeal of choosing the hotel for business requirements.”

www.parkplaza.co.uk
Without doubt, 2018 has been a breakthrough year for veganism. Global campaign Veganuary, which encourages members of the public to go vegan for January, has done much to champion the cause with 168,500 people signing up in 2018, smashing last year’s record when 59,500 participants joined in. Younger demographics are particularly drawn to the idea, with the highest number of signups from 25-34-year-olds, followed closely by 18-24-year-olds.

There has also been a sea-change in how the movement is perceived; where once vegans were marginalised or ridiculed, now they are welcomed into the mainstream. Today, 43% of UK adults say that they respect vegans for their stance and 24% actively admire them for it, according to a survey commissioned by The Vegan Society.

It’s unsurprising that big money is flooding into the sector, seeking to capitalise on this re-energised movement with attractive demographics and hip reputation. A perfect case in point is By Chloe, the ten-strong fast-casual vegan restaurant...
chain founded in New York in 2015, which has just secured investment worth a reported US$31 million from a consortium led by Bain Capital Double Impact to help it double in size to 20 locations across North America, Europe and the Middle East over the next two years.

Turning attention to hotels, however, it soon becomes apparent that this sector is by no means awash with properties catering exclusively to vegans – with the notable exception of a few trailblazers such as La Vimea in northern Italy near the Austrian border. Founders Franziska and Benjamin Posch, who are themselves vegan, initially ran the 40-key hotel on a part-vegetarian, part-vegan basis before deciding to turn it into the first purely vegan hotel in Italy in 2016.

Naturally, that means all of the food and drink is vegan – dining options at the onsite restaurant are built around the likes of soup, lentils and barley – but it’s a philosophy that also extends to the rest of the hotel. Furnishings are made from materials such as wood and cotton rather than animal products like leather, silk or down, bedding and towels are cleaned with cruelty-free washing powder, and even recruitment revolves around attracting vegan staff or those with a passion for veganism.

But the owners freely admit that La Vimea’s unique selling point, being purely vegan, is also the biggest challenge operationally. “It is relatively easy to do on a B&B level even if that is a lot of work as well, but on a higher level with all the amenities of a four-star hotel in the case of La Vimea, there is really a lot to consider,” they say. “You have to do a lot of research to find the right materials and make sure that they are strictly vegan.”

All of this effort doesn’t go unnoticed by visitors, with the founders estimating that a remarkable 97% of its clientele comes specifically because La Vimea is a vegan resort. “For vegans in general, it is not always easy to travel because in a lot of places they can only eat side dishes,” they explain. “That dulls the holiday feeling.” This contrasts starkly with the overwhelmingly positive feedback that they receive from guests who come to stay at the property – something that has even inspired them to expand by creating a new purely vegan resort, I Pini, built around a historic villa with its own farm in Tuscany. Opening this year, I Pini has 11 guestrooms and a restaurant as well as a strong grow-your-own ethos manifested in the biodynamic vineyard, olive farm and numerous vegetable plots.
I Pini in Tuscany

Pearls of Wisdom cocktail at Perception Bar

086

Vegan afternoon tea at Radisson Collection, Royal Mile Edinburgh
It’s not an approach that can be easily replicated though. “We think one can only offer a 100% completely vegan service if that is strongly associated with one’s personal values and beliefs,” they state. “What we do notice is that the amount of vegan–friendly hotels is growing. That is, regular hotels that offer a vegan option for guests beside meat and fish dishes for other guests.” But they warn that places advertising themselves as vegan–friendly, as opposed to purely vegan, frequently get it wrong and antagonise vegan guests by, for example, fitting out hotels with leather chairs.

Another noteworthy development is Stanford Inn by the Sea in California, about three hours’ drive north of San Francisco. Owners Jeff and Joan Stanford converted an existing motel into a place dedicated to sustainable living at the start of the 1980s and today it lays claim to being the only vegan resort in the US. The site is also home to the newly expanded Mendocino Center for Living Well, which aims to improve the physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing of guests through activities such as cooking classes, gardening courses, mushroom foraging and nature tours.

Its fine–dining restaurant, Ravens, vows to “provide a healthy organic cuisine which rivals the fare in the finest Northern California restaurants” and many vegetables and herbs used in the kitchen, including lettuces, cabbages and radishes, originate from its own organic farm, Big River Nurseries. Signature dish sea palm strudel sits alongside the likes of tamales, ravioli and Thai red curry, and the Stanfords have even published a vegan cookbook, Dinning at The Ravens: Over 150 Nourishing Vegan Recipes from the Stanford Inn by the Sea. Again, the vegan ethos is rooted in personal conviction – “This issues from our family’s personal choice to not harm animals when it is not necessary to survive”, explains Jeff Stanford.

Tucked away in Germany’s famously fertile Mosel Valley, meanwhile, is Hotel Nicolay 1881, which converted to a vegan model in 2016 on its 135th anniversary. Vegan chef Johannes Nicolay has prepared a varied plant–based menu for its onsite restaurant, Die Weinstube, that includes dishes such as tomato consommé, fried shiitake mushrooms and kohlrabi carpaccio along with a host of cakes and ice creams.

Like many of its peers locally, Hotel Nicolay 1881 takes full advantage of its location in one of Germany’s main wine–producing regions. The 36–room property, which is nestled beneath picturesque rolling vineyards, encourages guests to pick from a range of vegan wines and also organises vegan tastings in certified organic vineyards. Larger hotel groups are starting to follow suit, not least luxury lifestyle brand W Hotels, now part of Marriott International. The Perception at the 192–key W London Leicester Square has recently introduced a pop–up restaurant concept, W Dining Series, in which external chefs are brought in to develop a menu that is then served to guests for around three months only. The second chef in the series, Ravinder Bhogal of the restaurant Jikoni in London’s Marylebone, has developed an all–vegan dinner menu featuring cauliflower popcorn, Thai basil tempura, black vinegar and chilli dip; caramel braised tofu, confit garlic rice, and smacked chilli cucumbers; and saffron, mango and passion fruit cheesecake.

“Before we spoke to Ravinder we really wanted to go vegan because it’s the biggest food trend at the moment, it’s huge,” says Dario Mazzoli, F&B Manager at W London. “We identified there are a few vegan cafes around in the area but not really an upmarket place or something with a bit more fun to it. Ravinder’s not a vegan chef but she said, ’look I’ve got a really crazy idea, I want to go vegan’, so that really clicked with us.” Interestingly, The Perception has also launched a new cocktail menu, complementing Bhogal’s food with creations that deliberately steer clear of non–vegan ingredients such as egg white, gelatine and honey.

According to Mazzoli, the all–vegan dinner menu has received a “really strong customer response” and given him plenty of food for thought. “We always offer some vegan dishes, but the success of this restaurant shows me that we need to bring more vegan dishes on the menu. It’s a big trend and people actually look for vegan food a lot more than they used to.” Another property dabbling with veganism is Radisson Collection, Royal Mile Edinburgh in the heart of the city centre near the iconic castle. Executive Head Chef Andy McQueen has cleverly partnered with local healthy living café Pumpkin Brown to design a completely vegan afternoon tea, which can be ordered instead of its more traditional version.

The vegan afternoon tea features an appealing array of sandwiches, quiches, scones with jam and clotted cream, blueberry and lemon cheesecake, chocolate tarts, rocky road tray bakes and juice shots. Not only is it vegan, it’s also organic, dairy–free, gluten–free and refined sugar–free.

“Be it for animal welfare, health or environmental reasons, veganism is of rapidly growing importance to our guests,” says McQueen. “We wanted to ensure we could meet that demand with an offering that does not compromise on flavour, it therefore made sense for us to partner with Pumpkin Brown who have a wealth of experience in this area.”

Overall, it seems that the vegan hotel market is likely to remain something of a niche for the foreseeable future; the current dearth of specialist resorts around the world speaks volumes. Independents that have taken the plunge know all too well how much time and money it takes to source supplies that aren’t derived from animal products, both on the restaurant and hotel side, and it undoubtedly helps if those in charge live by the same philosophy as the guests they want to attract.

However, larger hotel groups are beginning to wake up to the spending power of this fast–emerging demographic by ramping up their vegan food–and–drink offering. This is already being seen in restaurants and bars and but there’s no reason why it couldn’t be translated into other areas such as mini–bars, room service and the MICE market relatively quickly.

This shift makes perfect sense when you think about it – after all, a vegan diet is for life, not just for Veganuary. ●
Afternoon tea is a time-honoured British tradition, but many of London’s luxury hotels are introducing new twists to stand out in an increasingly crowded market.

Words: Heleri Rande
The eyes of the world have been fixed on the UK this year as another spectacular royal wedding put the British way of life centre stage. The day before the much-anticipated ceremony, the Queen invited the bride-to-be and her mother for afternoon tea – a quintessentially British pastime that has long been a major source of revenue for luxury hotels across the capital.

A traditional afternoon tea generally comprises a selection of dainty sandwiches, scones and cakes presented on a three-tier cake stand, accompanied by a generous pot of freshly brewed tea served in delicate china teacups and saucers. But this tried-and-tested format is now undergoing a rethink at many establishments, which are really pushing the boundaries with their elaborate and creative concepts.

Brown’s Hotel in Mayfair, part of Rocco Forte Hotels, has been serving the Tea-Tox Healthy Afternoon Tea in its English Tea Room for some time already, but with new Head Pastry Chef Vincent Josse at the helm, the flavours, techniques and ingredients are constantly evolving. For a traditional French pastry chef, the task is not an easy one. “There is a limit to what you can do, I need to produce something that looks like butter, tastes like sugar and has the consistency of a sponge. It is all anti-French pastry training,” he says. But this is where the challenge of innovating comes into play and, together with his team, Josse is always experimenting and testing out new ideas. “The health-conscious movement is not a fad, it will stay and as a luxury hotel we need to curate something good for everybody,” he says. With bites such as hummus, rocket and avocado on a beetroot crêpe and matcha raspberry cheesecake on the menu, the Tea-Tox concept is obviously tailor-made for this growing demographic.

Corinthia has gone wholeheartedly down the traditional afternoon tea route meanwhile, by making considerable changes to its Crystal Moon Lounge experience. The team, headed by Managing Director Thomas Kochs, has brought in an antique Champagne trolley, a Steinway piano and a tea sommelier to enhance the overall concept. Furthermore, specially commissioned, handpainted bone china by London-based designer Richard Brandon adds to the immersive experience.

“It touches all your senses, and instills a feeling of luxury when sitting under the magnificent Baccarat chandelier,” remarks the hotel’s Director of Communications Alice Jonsdottir. While the tea is being brewed and strained at the tea island, an elegant cake and patisserie trolley rolls around showcasing the work of Head Pastry Chef Lois Carbonnet. Rhubarb and strawberry tartlets, Irish coffee éclairs and lemon and rose drizzle cake are just some of the classic combinations on display to tempt guests.

The Rodin Afternoon Tea at Rosewood London, a tribute to celebrated French sculptor Auguste Rodin, raises the bar further still in terms of visual impact. In partnership with the British Museum’s exhibition Rodin and the Art of Ancient Greece, Studio Appétit’s Ido Garini and Executive Pastry Chef Mark Perkins have created an outstanding multisensory concept. “This is luxury with a modern twist,” explains Garini. “It was a conscious choice to create a more fine-dining experience. We have used vitrines as opposed to tiered cake stands for presentation and instead of an overwhelming feast all brought to the table at once we have opted for separate courses.” Garini has even created bespoke china in tandem with William Edwards that takes its cue from the geometric architecture of the hotel itself. The sweet finale with three exquisite Rodin-inspired delicacies – the Kiss, the Thinker and the Age of Bronze – certainly leave the visitor hungry for more, which is just as well because the pair have already started work on their next collaboration.

Fashion-conscious tea lovers have been flocking to The Berkeley for years – its Prêt-à-Portea afternoon tea concept has famously brought the likes of Manolo Blahnik and Jimmy Choo to Collins Room. For its latest season, Head Pastry Chef Mourad Khiat has drawn inspiration from Dolce & Gabbana, Miu Miu and Tom Ford among others to display sweets reminiscent of the catwalk astutely organised on bespoke Wedgwood fine bone china. “We start with 15 items with all team members contributing to the discussion and taste, and then we end up with nine based on the feedback. We zoom into details, it’s not just about getting the colours right,” explains Khiat. Interestingly, no scones are served; miniature savouries are brought to the table in addition to the sandwiches instead.
By contrast, at Sanderson in London’s West End, the concept draws inspiration from the Mad Hatter’s tea party memorably portrayed in Lewis Carroll’s novel Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland. For the new season, Head Chef Barry Tonks and team have collaborated with Laurent-Perrier Cuvée Rosé to celebrate the bubbly’s 50th anniversary; during the collaboration, £1 from every bill is donated to charity mothers2mothers. The playful Mad Hatters Afternoon Tea includes items such as the Pink Floquet Cake, a strawberry flamingo with a white chocolate Laurent-Perrier Cuvée Rosé croquet truffle. With just a few months on the job, Chef Barry is nevertheless determined to make further improvements to the already whimsical tea journey. “I want to bring more fun into it,” he comments. “It should be a bit madder.

We should have a sweets trolley to engage the guests and make it an interactive experience.”

In fact, a number of companies that supply the top hotels are busy developing new products to meet the demands of the booming afternoon tea market. Robert Welch’s Drift Tea Collection, for example, is characterised by fluid wave forms and polished-mirror finishes, echoing the elegance of mid-century silverware. Its centrepiece is a beautiful cake stand featuring removable and interchangeable trays and a sinuous frame specially designed for ease of lifting, turning and carrying. Meanwhile, Villeroy & Boch’s Artesano Tea Crockery collection includes classic crockery made from fine white porcelain and a rustic platter expertly fashioned from acacia wood. And Zieher’s Textura series comprises a variety of platters and trays that can be arranged into multiple layouts and levels; when used alongside the company’s rechargeable LED lights, the visual impact of an afternoon tea display is elevated to a whole new level.

Whether it’s a traditional version filled with pomp and grandeur, a truly inventive option or an indulgent Champagne-infused experience, London is full of innovative afternoon teas. With such intense competition in the marketplace, luxury hotels and their pastry chefs across the capital know only too well that standing still isn’t an option. These days, every guest expects and demands an afternoon tea fit for a queen.

“This is luxury with a modern twist. We have used vitrines as opposed to tiered cake stands for presentation and instead of an overwhelming feast all brought to the table at once we have opted for separate courses.”

Ido Garini, Studio Appétit
Creating Hospitality

La Scala Patina

Authentic table chic
“Just like with wine and beer, there are different sake for different occasions and different serving temperatures.”

Johnnie Stroud, co-owner of Saké Nomi
The Perception at W London has launched an all-new cocktail menu that playfully engages with the bar’s latest concept ‘W in Bloom’, a floral-inspired makeover that introduces a colourful vertical garden installation offering pick-your-own herbs and spices. Guests buy a cocktail as normal, then bartenders encourage them to customise the drink to their heart’s content by adding the likes of rosemary, coriander, sage or even chilli peppers. The hotel has also printed how-to cards outlining serving suggestions.

One of The Perception’s most vibrant creations is Purple Rain, which combines Bombay Sapphire gin, lychee liqueur, violette liqueur, violette pearls, elderflower, cranberry and lemon. It’s served in a martini glass with a sweet and visually striking sugar coating. “The Purple Rain has been really popular,” says Dario Mazzoli, F&B Manager at W London. “I think it’s sold so well because a lot of people came for W in Bloom and this cocktail is floral and really responded to the concept.”

The cocktail menu has been developed in-house by the team at The Perception, led by Head Bartender Ulises Guerrero Galvez. Other notable concoctions include Prince Harry, which features Jägermeister, ginger paste, lime and ginger beer, and Solero, comprising Belvedere Vodka, passion fruit liqueur, passion fruit, cream and vanilla.

“We brief our bartenders and they work on cocktails for three months,” explains Mazzoli. “They probably create around 50 cocktails and then they keep narrowing them down until we’re left with the 20 or so best ones.”

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A celebration of the treasures of nature, Nektar takes guests on a journey inside the humble beehive. Le Bar Botaniste’s signature cocktail combines Martell Premier Assemblage Cognac, mead, honey, red propolis and fresh pollen, all served in a spectacular glass- and tin-sculpted bee. It takes pride of place within Head Barman Clément Emery’s new menu of 20 unique cocktails, the fruit of nine months’ intensive research. The avant-garde mixologist has taken inspiration from world travel and the changing seasons to develop a distinct botanical identity for each drink, reflecting the hotel’s fascinating origins. The property was built in 1896 by famous botanist and explorer Prince Roland Bonaparte, grandnephew of Napoleon Bonaparte, to house what was then the world’s largest private herbarium.

Nektar aside, Emery’s imagination continues to run riot across the rest of the cocktail menu. Cyrus transports guests to the Silk Road with its mix of Polish rye vodka, Iranian black lemon powder and Lillet Grand Réserve; Xerik represents the arid Mexican desert through the use of Del Maguey Vida Mezcal, Bulleit Bourbon, beetroot, Malabar white pepper and tarragon; and Nautilus dives 20,000 leagues under the sea with a drink comprising Beluga Noble Vodka, Oxley Gin, Noilly Prat, mertensia maritima and dill.

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Sake Joins the Party

Sake is frequently misunderstood but it can work well with both cocktails and food — and international sales are on the rise.

Words: Holly Motion

Sake might suffer from something of a bad image in its native market, but the western world’s insatiable appetite for sushi, umami and all things eastern has resulted in bartenders and sommeliers discovering a new favourite plaything. While a lot has been said about Japanese whisky in recent years — and rightly so — few shout about the significant international demand for sake. Sales are up and global interest in the drink, which is often referred to as rice wine, is at an all-time high.

Sake’s history and exotic reputation are undoubtedly part of its appeal overseas, but misconceptions about the drink are rife. “When it comes to sake, the first thing to learn is that vagueness rules, exceptions abound and I will be contradicted,” admits sake educator John Gauntner, widely regarded as the world’s leading non-Japanese sake expert. “Sake is closer to beer than anything and people are wrong to call it a rice wine. Generally, you do not cellar, collect or age it.”

Attempting to approach the drink from a wine background will almost certainly cause confusion and you’d be very unwise to try and pigeonhole it by terroir, water or the “myth of minerality”, says Antony Moss, Strategic Planning Director at the Wine & Spirit Education Trust (WSET) and Sake Samurai. “There are quite a few misconceptions surrounding sake. The idea sake only really belongs with Japanese food
is very limited. Personally, I think it can be consumed with a wide range of foods.”

Famed London restaurant Roka serves Japanese robatayaki cuisine but Head Sommelier and Wine Buyer Laura Blanchett notes that sake can be enjoyed in a variety of environments, and is as much at home as an aperitif as it is matching a full dining experience. “Sake is amazing with western food,” she says. “The flavour profile provides an unprecedented harmony with a variety of dishes – particularly those of Italy.”

Spreading this message is of the utmost importance to Johnnie Stroud, co-owner of Seattle’s pioneering store-cum-bar Saké Nomi. “I think food pairing is very important with sake, especially if it is to continue to grow in popularity outside Japan,” he says. “One of our missions at Saké Nomi is to encourage people to pair Japanese sake with non-Japanese and non-Asian food. If you treat sake like a different kind of wine, the possibilities for food pairing are tremendously dynamic.”

Roka stocks upwards of 25 brands across its venues and is always on the lookout for new and exciting products to add to its offer. “In Roka, nama-zake (which is unpasteurised and seasonal) is very exciting with a variety of dishes,” Blanchett explains. “While a light ginjo works beautifully with sushi and sashimi, a richer junmai style works with our robata dishes.”

Sales in the UK are mainly concentrated in larger cities and especially London but Daniel Davies, Head Sommelier of Gloucestershire hotel and spa Whatley Manor, says he doesn’t think it’ll be long before the trend fully catches on further afield. His establishment already stocks a selection from brands Akashi Tai, Senkin Kimoto and Emoji Kijoshu.

Food and cocktails are fuelling the demand, says Davies. “I find that the rare umami tones can complement many dishes, especially high-acidity dishes like our turbot with yuzukosho, which I sometimes pair with Senkin Shuzō Kimoto 50 Daiginjō Sake. I think this works because the fullness of flavour goes well against the dish and the stone fruits accentuate the fruit in the dish, while not accentuating the acidity further.”

But how widespread is the availability of sake in hotels around the world? The truth is that uptake varies widely, with Blanchett reporting that many London venues are now exploring it as an offering (Nobu Hotel Shoreditch, for example, runs sake tastings) whereas it remains hard to find in say Seattle. Having said that, any hotel bar worth its salt will feature sake in a cocktail or two, which can result in consumers thinking it’s a spirit. “With sake cocktails being a newer concept, it’s hard to gauge whether this will lead to misconceptions or create greater awareness of the category,” Blanchett adds. Her personal favourites? A margarita twist made with yuzu sake, or a spritzer made with liqueur umeshu. By contrast, Whatley Manor’s Davies says a Voyager Vodka Martini is his top tipple. “I make it with Chase Potato Vodka, Mancino Bianco Vermouth, Akashi Tai Daiginjo Sake and Lapostolle Pisco.”

For those that haven’t yet been introduced to sake through cocktails or thimble-sized measures, anyone in the know will most likely advise them to approach it like a white wine. Depending on the style, that is. “I want people to consume it like a glass of wine,” WSET’s Moss says. “As a long, refreshing drink rather than a thimble.”

Traditionally, sake was consumed in tiny quantities due to the strong service culture in its native Japan. The ever-attentive host was constantly on hand to replenish the guest’s drink. “I think in the west we are very different,” Moss adds. “And we should drink it like a white wine.” Chilled, of course.

Another big misconception is that sake should be served hot from a kettle. “Just like with wine and beer, there are different sake for different occasions and different serving temperatures,” says Saké Nomi’s Stroud. “Sake is a lot more complex than most people give it credit for.”

A perfect example of this complexity is the sparkling sake category, which is gaining in popularity and has a tremendous amount of consumer appeal as bars search for alternative sparklers post-prosecco. “Aged and sparkling sake get a lot of interest,” Moss notes. “Sommeliers see aged as something that will pair well with a lot of foods on their menus.”

When Moss launched the WSET sake course, he says it was hard to judge the demand. Today, the courses are exceeding their targets. The diverse mix of students they attract range from wine professionals and writers to sommeliers and enthusiasts – some even make the trip over from Japan.

Whether it’s aged, sparkling or otherwise, the international interest in sake is clearly there already. And in a manner reminiscent of the rapid rise of sushi, it seems likely that western demand for this emblematic drink from the Far East will only grow further, even if the myths that have long surrounded sake continue to endure. ●
Winning Over Connoisseurs Down Under

Several top-end Australian hotels are encouraging guests to pay closer attention to local wines rather than always defaulting to Old World favourites.

Words: Nina Caplan

It’s one of wine’s many peculiarities that, while connoisseurs these days talk of nothing but the special concept of place known as terroir, the terroir they mean is almost always Bordeaux or Burgundy. Even in Australia, those in search of a high-end gastronomic experience see no contradiction in visiting a hotel in a vine-producing region and drinking nothing but wine from 10,000 miles away.

That is their right, after all, and top Australian hotels do their best to accommodate it. In the case of the Royal Mail Hotel (RMH) in Dunkeld, three hours' drive from Melbourne, that may be because the owner is precisely that sort of guest. “When Allan dines here, he generally drinks either Bordeaux or Burgundy” says Food & Beverage Manager Peter Dillon of Allan Myers, the prominent lawyer and academic who owns the hotel. The hotel’s cellar is the result of Myers’ 30 years of wine collecting and is reputedly the largest private collection of the two great French regions in the southern hemisphere. The longevity of Myers’ collecting habit means that prices, particularly on older vintages and rarer wines, compare extremely well with those on offer today.

From this perspective, a hotel like RMH has something very special to offer. Over the last few years, it has made that clearer, not least by giving tours of the cellar – a building across the road with an unexciting exterior that belies the 26,500 bottles inside. It also provides tastings and makes
The dining room at Brae
Photography: © Colin Page
Royal Mail Hotel’s wine cellar
Photography: © Emily Weaving

Hardy’s Verandah Restaurant at Mount Lofty Hotel
good use of Coravin, that clever contraption for serving tiny amounts of wine without exposing the remaining contents to the air. Thanks to Coravin, the hotel’s new restaurant Wickens – which opened in October 2017 – serves around 60 wines by the glass.

Even competitors without the RMH’s access to allocations of Domaine de la Romanée-Conti or magnums of 1996 Chateau d’Yquem can offer thirsty traditionalists an impressive choice of Old World wines; still, the wine list presents the top–end Australian hotelier with something of a dilemma. Australia is 12 times the size of France, yet people with a delicate understanding of the differences between Right and Left Bank Bordeaux, or the soil variations in Gevrey-Chambertin, talk about Australian wine as if the country were one place oenologically – presuming they talk about Australian wine at all.

This is both a pity and a lost opportunity. The RMH, for instance, is just 90 minutes’ drive from Mount Langi Ghiran, which makes superb Shiraz, and from Best’s Great Western, which has some of the world’s oldest surviving vines. Best’s Foudre Ferment Riesling, made with wild yeasts, is extraordinary. I know this because it was offered to me as part of a dinner paired with fine wines at Wickens; I had just visited Mount Langi Ghiran for a superb tasting, but that Riesling was so good that next day I drove the 90-minute journey back to buy some. This, it seems to me, is exactly what a hotel selling itself on having a great wine list should be achieving.

The RMH gives diners a choice of wine matches with Wickens’ tasting menu: European–only, Australian–only, or a mix of the two. It’s a genuine dilemma. “If you go for European–only, you’ll get something French that’s really impressive,” says Dillon. “Maybe a Second Growth Bordeaux or a Grand Cru Burgundy, and either way something with a bit of age.” Tempting, although it seems slightly dissonant to drink nothing but European wine with food that’s entirely locally grown. Executive Chef Robin Wickens, who is originally from the UK, claims to have Australia’s largest working restaurant kitchen garden (there are actually two of them, with greenhouses), and to use only his own produce in the fine-dining venue. Wine of course is made to travel but the wonderful gallery–style cellar in the restaurant, which allows guests to walk through a corridor of fine wines from all over the world, is a hint that the thirsty traveller should avoid getting stuck in one familiar place.

Other top–end Australian hotels are finding different ways to strike that crucial balance between offering wines that the whole world wants and highlighting great local wines that connoisseurs may not yet realise they need to know. At Brae, Dan Hunter’s superb restaurant–with–rooms 90 minutes’ drive south of Melbourne, the emphasis is also on locally grown and nurtured food.

Hunter, who cut his teeth at Mugaritz, the Basque restaurant widely considered among the world’s best, and then put Dunkeld on the map as Head Chef of the RMH before Wickens, is intent on doing things his own way. “The business model and organisational structure that we have here is that of a family business committed to the detail of pure hospitality,” he says. “It’s driven by the enjoyment of providing happiness and pleasure.” When asked why he left Mugaritz, he explains that he feels more connected to his cooking in Australia. “Also, in terms of hospitality and what we offer at Brae from a service perspective, I always favour Australians’ ability to treat people as equals, not look down on guests and not feel the need to be subservient either. I think the egalitarian approach we have to hospitality is unique.”

Hunter’s version of egalitarianism shouldn’t be confused with open access; Brae has 50 covers and there are only six rooms, each a marvel of design and attention to detail, with bathtub views of rolling fields and a record player and vinyl selection to soundtrack your stay. Dishes on the ten–course menu are predominantly home–grown – warrigal greens, Brae farm honey, bread that’s home–milled as well as home–baked – but there’s clear evidence of an apprenticeship in European culinary traditions, and Hunter is trying to find that balance with the wines too. A grower Champagne by Frederic Savart can be followed by a red gum and honey sour ale made on the premises, while a pinot noir by Nick Farr, one of Australia’s best winemakers, can precede a Côtedaux du Layon from the Loire. A clever innovation in the guestrooms is a minobar that contains a full selection of wines, mostly (but not entirely) Australian, including a rare half–bottle of Mornington Peninsula pinot noir from Aussie legend William Downie billed as ‘a true reflection of its location’ – surely more logical in a top–end country restaurant than Champagne or Chablis, however good.

Across the border in South Australia, Mount Lofty Hotel in the Adelaide Hills is taking this attempt to offer a sense of place to its logical conclusion: guests staying in the venerable building with spectacular views can drink sparkling wine from chardonnay grapes grown just out front. It’s called Sequoia, and it’s excellent. Owner David Horbelt is very clear that the aim is to create “the only six–star high–end tourist facility on the mainland in South Australia”, and he’s midway through a major refurbishment of the hotel, which was built as a country residence in 1852, and the addition of several villas on the premises. He understands that the wine list is part of that project. “The cellar runs the entire length of the historic building, so is very large,” he explains. “We excavated solid rock to an extra 1.5 metres to enable it to function as a properly guest–accessible space.”

The extensive wine list is egalitarian in the Dan Hunter sense of the word: an impressive riesling selection, for instance, is divided into ‘What We Do Round Here’ (South Australia’s much–lauded rieslings from the Eden and Clare Valleys); ‘The Competition’ (the rest of Australia); and finally ‘Achtung!’ (rieslings from top German producers such as Egon Müller and JJ Prüm). Horbelt doesn’t stop at the wine list either. For AUS$2,499 (US$1,830) per couple, guests can take a helicopter flight over the Adelaide Hills followed by a chauffeur–driven tour of the region’s finest wineries and a private dinner matched with those wines – the price also includes suite accommodation and breakfast.

These three fine–dining hotels are each finding different ways to offer guests that most precious asset of all: choice. Visitors can ignore Australian wines in favour of tried–and–tested European greats, sample a few, or truly plunge into a wine experience available nowhere else in the world. This range of possibilities really is, as Hunter might say, egalitarian.
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Diving into Hampton Water
Gérard Bertrand

Rock star Jon Bon Jovi and his son Jesse Bongiovi have teamed up with former rugby player-turned-winemaker Gérard Bertrand to launch a premium rosé, Diving into Hampton Water, emblematic of the relaxed lifestyles in both the Hamptons in New York State and southern France.

Bon Jovi and his son first came up with the idea of creating a rosé during their time together in the Hamptons, and the pair subsequently approached Bertrand to help realise their dream. The product’s unusual name derives from the fact that the Bongiovis refer to rosé among themselves as Hampton Water.

The tipple uses grenache, cinsault and mourvèdre grapes from the finest terroirs in the Languedoc region, which are blended to create a fresh and lively dry rosé with a fruity character and distinctive minerality. Best served cold, it makes an ideal accompaniment to seafood, salads and finger foods.

“Creating this wine with Gérard was just as creative as collaborating with another songwriter; Gérard uses his talents and wine knowledge just like a gifted musician,” says Bon Jovi. “And working with my son on this has been an amazing experience.”

www.hamptonwaterwine.com
Absolut Elyx
The Absolut Company

Ideally suited to serving either on the rocks or in martinis, Elyx is a luxury expression of Absolut Vodka produced from the finest winter wheat grown on a single estate in the south of Sweden. This means that every batch of the premium vodka is fully traceable from the planting of the seed onwards.

Distillation takes place in a vintage copper column dating back to 1921, under the watchful eye of Master Distiller Krister Asplund and his team. Asplund has crafted a memorable spirit with unique character by refining and perfecting every part of the process used to create Absolut Vodka in a relentless pursuit of excellence.

On the nose, Absolut Elyx presents bready aromas with notes of white chocolate and light cereal. On the palate, it displays a full-bodied and silky mouthfeel with waves of rich macadamia nuts and creamed cereal accompanied by white chocolate and buttery overtones, before finishing with a rounded mellow spiciness.

The Absolut Company, which is headquartered in Stockholm, is also behind the Our/Vodka, Kahlúa and Malibu brands. It has been part of French drinks giant Pernod Ricard since 2008.

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Celebris Extra Brut 2007 Vintage
Champagne Gosset

A beautifully complex and structured cuvée, the 2007 vintage is the latest addition to Champagne Gosset's Celebris Extra Brut collection. Made from 57% chardonnay and 43% pinot noir grapes the blend has a dosage of just 3 grams per litre to maintain a balance between freshness, fruit and vinosity without masking the wine's personality and colour.

The 2007 vintage is pale yellow in colour with a continuous fine mousse. On the nose, it offers smoky and hazelnut notes that give way to minty, even slightly spicy, overtones upon warming slightly in the glass. Tasting reveals a crispness carried through to the middle palate with notes of brioche, before the delightful sharpness of chardonnay reappears on the finish with a hint of pink grapefruit.

Served at the recommended temperature of 10°C, this high-quality champagne enlivens the palate as an aperitif, but also pairs well with subtly spicy dishes and sweet and savoury combinations. “Good vintage years ending in a ‘7 have been few and far between since 1947,” says Cellar Master Odilon de Varine. “Celebris 2007 benefits from ten years’ ageing in the cellar, giving the vintage a fair maturity and fine balance.”

www.champagne-gosset.com

Distilled
Joel Harrison and Neil Ridley

Distilled does an admirable job of condensing the world of craft spirits into a highly readable book, now available in a paperback edition by Octopus Publishing Group imprint Mitchell Beazley. Its authors, Joel Harrison and Neil Ridley, are behind the World's Best Spirits website and regularly pen magazine articles, judge the World Whisky Awards and the International Wine & Spirit Competition, and make guest appearances on TV.

The guide starts with a brief introduction covering the history of spirit production, the distillation process and sampling techniques before devoting the bulk of its pages to sections on gin, vodka, tequila, absinthe, rum, whisky and brandy. There are summaries of the key ingredients, main countries of production and top-selling brands globally – all beautifully illustrated with high-quality photography. Particularly useful are the “Meet the Maverick” profiles of key industry players and “10 to try” lists of the most interesting craft spirits.

Distilled is written for a general audience, but despite its brevity is still packed with more than enough insight to appeal to those working in the sector. Think of it as an expertly distilled guide to craft spirits.

www.octopusbooks.co.uk
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WWW.BARCONVENT.COM

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**Key events in the global hotel F&B calendar**

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Bar Convent Berlin expands into a three-day event for the first time in October, with 14,000 delegates gathering at Station Berlin and the neighbouring Kühlhaus. A packed programme of talks, tastings and masterclasses curated by new Director of Education Angus Winchester will be divided into special themed days; the first focuses on bar operators, while the second concentrates on bartenders and the third looks at distributors and wholesalers.

In excess of 400 exhibitors are expected to take part including Brown-Forman, Campari and Schweppes. There will be a particular focus on Italy, the 2018 show’s official partner country, centred on a pavilion featuring the likes of F&G, Leardini, Fred Jerbis, Albergian and Eurofood.

The trade fair will also welcome back Brew Berlin, recognising the role that beer plays in bars, and Coffee Convent Berlin, which does the same for coffee. In addition, networking platform BCB Matchmaking returns to help exhibitors and visitors arrange relevant business meetings.

www.barconvent.com

The Hotel Show
16–18 September 2018
Dubai

The 19th edition of The Hotel Show Dubai aims to attract more than 50,000 hospitality professionals to the Dubai World Trade Centre in September, with approximately 96% of visitors expected to be key decision-makers, purchasers or buyers within their organisations.

Over 600 exhibitors will showcase products and services across sectors including interiors, lighting and design, with participants split into seven areas. In the operating equipment, horeca and foodservice sector, stands will display buffetware, glassware, flatware, chinaware and tableware. Key brands exhibiting at the 2018 show include Kraft Procurement, Helometals, Frilich, Victorinox and Enterprise Greece.

Another important aspect of the show is the Middle East Hospitality Leadership Forum, which debuted in 2017 with contributions from Issam Kassim, CEO of the Dubai Corporation of Tourism and Commerce Marketing, and Conor Lawler from Atlantis on The Palm. There will also be competitions, installations and workshops to engage and inspire delegates.

www.thehotelshow.com

www.barconvent.com
To The Table Asia  
9–11 October 2018  
Kuala Lumpur

To The Table Asia has announced the programme for its 2018 edition, taking place at Grand Hyatt Kuala Lumpur in October. Puccini Group’s Chief Creative Officer and Partner Rob Polacek will explore restaurant design trends in Asia Pacific, while a panel discussion on redefining luxury dining in the region will hear from Rainer Zinggrebe, Vice President Culinary, Luxury Brands, Marriott International; Daniel Welk, Vice President Operations, Luxury, Asia Pacific, Hilton Worldwide; and Karen Hay, founder and Creative Director, In-Dulge.

There will also be a look at China’s restaurant industry and the needs of the Chinese diner with Cory Winter, Vice President Food & Beverage, China at AccorHotels; and writer, photographer, food critic and consultant Rachel Gouk. Supper’s Consulting Editor Heleri Rande will chair the seminars.

In addition, there will be time for one-to-one business meetings, pre-arranged to ensure relevance, whilst a host of coffee breaks, lunches, dinners and cocktail functions will give delegates the chance to network more informally.

www.tothetableasia.com

EquipHotel  
11–15 November 2018  
Paris

EquipHotel returns to the Paris Expo Porte de Versailles exhibition centre in November 2018 with a new, streamlined layout. Five hubs spanning catering, design, service, wellbeing and technology are planned for the event, which is expected to welcome more than 105,000 professionals and 1,600 exhibitors.

A strengthened catering hub will showcase innovative foodservice products and services at L’Espace T by Transgourmet and offer tastings, demonstrations and masterclasses at the Wine & Spirits Centre; exhibitors include Bernardaud, Cup & Cino, Cafés Richard, Lavazza France, EuroCave, Bragard and Castalie. The new design hub, meanwhile, will incorporate the Casa de Luz restaurant created by atmospherist Sandrine Alouf and interior designer Thierry Virvaire, and the Signature Space Bar by Alnoor and Eric Lentulo of Etendart Studio.

Studio18 promises to be another draw for hospitality professionals. A 3,000m² pop-up hotel showcasing the hotel experience of tomorrow, it incorporates a gourmet restaurant designed by Marc Hertrich and Nicolas Adnet of Studio MHNA.

www.equiphotel.com
The latest conference in the To The Table series took place in Budapest in April, providing delegates with plenty of food for thought as well as invaluable deal-making opportunities. Just like the Hungarian capital itself, which brings together Buda and Pest on either side of the Danube, the event successfully bridged the gap between buyers and suppliers in the restaurant, bar and banqueting industry across Europe. Three days of programming included prearranged one-to-one meetings, keynotes and panel sessions, with delegates addressing hot topics in the hospitality industry and networking over cocktails, local dishes and the pride of the host country, Hungarian wine.

With a total headcount of 120 participants, the European edition of To The Table welcomed an impressive number of newcomers – 70% of buyers and 55% of suppliers. To name just a few, there were Chef Works International for uniforms, Craster for food presentation and banqueting equipment, Figgjo for chinaware, Garnier Thiebaut for table linen, as well as Corinthia Hotels, Mandarin Oriental, Nordic Hotels & Resorts and Rosewood. Located inside the historic Corinthia Hotel Budapest – thought to be the inspiration behind Wes Anderson’s Grand Budapest Hotel – the event was the ideal setting for a high calibre of industry leaders to view innovative products from a variety of suppliers, swap business cards and strike deals.

The seminar program was chaired by Supper’s Consulting Editor Heleri Rande, who oversaw and moderated three sessions ranging from innovative and engaging design and redefining luxury to navigating the arbitrary world of restaurant ratings and lists. Erik Nissen Johansen, founder and Creative Director of Gothenburg-based Stylt Trampoli, inspired the audience in his early-morning session by bringing the kind of energy and passion to the stage that many in the industry strive to achieve. “You cannot shoot a movie without a script, this is what our process at Stylt is all about,” he remarked. The projects he showcased, like the Lego restaurant at Billund in Denmark and Downtown Camper by Scandic in Stockholm, were perfect examples of how storytelling can engage customers and also make a huge difference to the bottom line.

In the afternoon session, four industry names – Guy Helksch from Pure Grey, Jacque Riley from Kimpton, Jason Holley from Universal Design Studio and Tim Mutton from Blacksheep – debated the definition of luxury in the current marketplace and how design adapts to that constantly changing notion. Words like ‘experience’, ‘narrative’, ‘flexibility’ and ‘behaviour’ cropped up again and again, suggesting that the lines between different spaces are becoming increasingly blurred.

The final seminar brought together three very different personalities – Eszter Palágyi, a Hungarian chef who holds a Michelin star; Argot Murelius, a food journalist and Editor of 12Forward by White Guide; and Michael Butler, Director of F&B for EMEA at Hyatt International. The debate centred around the issue of arbitrary restaurant ratings and how the trio viewed the existence of a plethora of best-of lists. What quickly became clear is that from a hotel brand perspective, the accolades and high ratings drive guest check averages and demand, while from a chef’s viewpoint the stress and pressure such distinctions bring often outweigh the benefits.

For the audience, it was also interesting to learn what happens behind the scenes of such prestigious culinary awards as The World’s 50 Best Restaurants and the Michelin Guide. The overall response from the room was mixed when the topic of TripAdvisor was brought up though, with some defending it and others remaining more sceptical of its integrity.

In addition to the meetings and sessions, the programme included a tour of New York Café at Boscolo Hotel, where delegates were transported back in time to the Italian Renaissance era with impressive Venetian lamps and gold-plated pillars. Furthermore, the lunch breaks and evening receptions, one of which was held at the exquisite Four Seasons Gresham Place, gave more than enough time for guests to relax and catch up with old and new acquaintances in a truly hospitable atmosphere.

To The Table Europe will return again next year; the event is scheduled to run at Le Méridien Monaco from 9–11 April 2019.

www.tothetableeurope.com
Approximately 82,000 attendees from more than 100 countries descended on Singapore in April for the 40th anniversary edition of Food & Hotel Asia (FHA), making it the largest event to-date. With activities spread across two venues – Singapore Expo and Suntec Singapore – the 2018 instalment played host to 3,500 exhibitors and 71 international pavilions.

Feature areas included the Halal Connexion, which enabled trade buyers to browse halal products and learn more about the certification process, and the Gelato Zone featuring the ingredients, supplies and equipment needed to make different types of gelato. Meanwhile, Restaurant 3.0 showcased new concepts for enhancing front-of-house and back-of-house processes through technology. There was also a successful conference series spanning four themes – Hotels & Resorts, Food Manufacturing, Food Services and Central Kitchen. Over 350 delegates and speakers discussed topics such as 3D food printing, ready meals from vending machines, plant-based meat, automation, robotics, technology and the future of hospitality experiences.

Another important strand of FHA2018 was the lively competition programme. The FHA Culinary Challenge (FCC) attracted entries from across Asia and beyond, with an impressive array of top chefs putting their skills in the kitchen to the test through a series of intense cook-offs. There was also fierce competition in the Asian Gelato Cup, Asian Pastry Cup, C3 (Chocolate Chef Competition), Barista Super Duo Challenge, and Latte Art Showdown.

FHA will return in 2020 as two distinct but related shows at Singapore Expo – FHA-HoReCa will take place in early March with FHA-Food & Beverage following a few weeks later. “The food and hospitality industry in Asia Pacific is expected to continue its rapid growth trajectory and FHA has long been the business platform driving the industry,” says Rodolphe Lameyse, Project Director, Food & Hospitality, UBM. “In order to address the fast-paced changes and support the industry as it continues to grow, we believe that the expansion is not only timely but a crucial one, enabling us to both better anticipate and deliver the desired results for the food and hospitality industry through two dedicated shows.”

www.foodhotelasia.com
The 99th annual National Restaurant Association (NRA) Show welcomed more than 65,000 attendees from across the US and overseas to Chicago’s McCormick Place in May. This year’s instalment spanned 715,000 ft² – making it the largest show ever – and marked the launch of the Restaurant Revenue Growth Conference, which explored ways to engage new guests, increase spend and drive visit frequency. Business leaders Billy Beane of Oakland Athletics, Scott Svenson of MOD Pizza and Jon Taffer of Taffer Media headlined the conference; Beane revealed how he brought about transformational change through the application of data insight, while Svenson explained the role that a people-first corporate culture has played in supporting the pizza restaurant chain’s rapid growth, and Taffer encouraged delegates to put lessons learned into practice immediately.

One of the show’s highlights came courtesy of the 66th US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who hailed the importance of technology and innovation while calling on listeners to play their part in realising human potential. Meanwhile, futurist Daniel Burrus explored the future of restaurants with contributions from John Miller, CEO, Cali Group; John Ha, CEO, Bear Robotics; and Sarah Lockyer, Senior Vice President of Content, Winsight Media. Panellists agreed that facial recognition, robotics and autonomous delivery vehicles are set to shake up the industry, but warned that restaurateurs should not eliminate the human touch.

This year’s event once again featured curated areas and pavilions across the show floor. The American Food Fair showcased products for export, BAR focused on developments in the beverage industry, and Tech Pavilion demonstrated products and processes to improve business efficiency.

“This year’s National Restaurant Association Show represented a dynamic portrayal of today’s foodservice industry,” says NRA Show 2018 Convention Chairman Dickie Brennan. “Exhibitors showcased innovative products and services aimed at solving the challenges facing operators today. With Fortune 500 exhibitors and those as small as a four-person start-up all delivering critical solutions, the excitement was palpable throughout all four days.”

www.show.restaurant.org
The Hotel Show Dubai, the most prestigious hospitality event in the Middle East is returning for its nineteenth edition this September for the most important date in the calendar, where the entire industry meets to do business.

If you are an Owner, General Manager, Head of Procurement, Executive Housekeeper, F&B Manager, Chef, Designer or Architect, The Hotel Show Dubai is where you will discover everything needed to build, develop and maintain a hotel or restaurant in one of the world’s most active markets for hospitality development.

By joining over 30,000 visitors between 16-18 September 2018, you will explore the latest trends and unearth the very latest products across Interiors, Lighting & Design, Technology & Security, Operating Equipment, Bathroom & Sanitary Ware and HORECA. With more than 600 international and regional brands to choose from the possibilities are endless.

Furthermore, back by popular demand is The Middle East Hospitality Leadership Forum, which will bring together more than 50 industry leaders to discuss latest developments, and The Middle East Housekeepers League of Champions, the only challenge of its kind for the housekeeping division in the world.

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— JOIN YOUR PEERS —
“For us, craftsmanship and technology go hand-in-hand.”

Martin McDonagh, Chairman of Heritage Collection, on continuing the legacy of British manufacturing while keeping with the times
When George Richards Elkington patented the first commercial process of electroplating in the mid-19th century, Birmingham was instantly put on the map as the city of production for silverware. Some two centuries later, Heritage Collection continues to champion that legacy.

Hailing from Small Heath – a small community on the outskirts of the city – the family-owned business started life as Heritage Silverware in 1976, initially offering repairs on silver-plated items before investing in rapid prototyping and the skills of craftsmen who could replicate Elkington’s methods.

Following the rise of stainless steel in the 1980s – which saw larger companies in Germany profit through mass production – Heritage called on its solder-laden craftsmen, promoting the bespoke services that had driven its early success in silverware. Likewise, testing times for the British china industry – caused in no small part by the outsourcing of manufacturing to the Far East – meant that the pioneering firm spent much of the 1990s helping to keep ceramic production afloat in the UK using technological equipment that was scarce to many potteries.

“For us, craftsmanship and technology go hand-in-hand,” explains Martin McDonagh, Chairman of Heritage Collection. “We’ve embraced it almost ever since we started, and see it as an opportunity to help our skilled workforce. We invested £1 million on CNC machinery over two decades ago, for instance, and are now replacing it with advanced models as part of our manufacturing developments.”

As a specialist in the bespoke manufacture of afternoon tea sets, the company has supplied to the likes of Brown’s Hotel, Dorchester Collection and The Ritz for a large part of its history, the latter calling on the company’s services whilst revamping its Palm Court Tearoom. More recently, the business has expanded.

Cultural Heritage

Forty years after its inception, Heritage Collection is continuing the legacy of British manufacturing, blending traditional craftsmanship with new technologies.
its focus to include fine china, and explored opportunities in stoneware and glassware – rebranding as Heritage Collection in the process. The production of more contemporary lines has resulted in collaborations with Nobu Shoreditch, Firmdale Hotels and The Ned – to which it supplied around 33,000 pieces of silverware across nine restaurants.

“We are of course known for our afternoon tea service, but today our clients are looking for much more,” McDonagh continues. “Looking at projects like The Ned, we are making products for every area of operation – from the bar to banqueting and even guestrooms. And that’s why we currently produce over 17,000 different items.”

Working with high-profile chefs such as Pierre Koffmann, Adam Reid and John Williams has also created overseas opportunities, catalysing ventures into Europe and Asia with Mandarin Oriental and Raffles brands, and proving instrumental in the brand’s inclusion at The English House in Singapore, a restaurant–hotel concept by Marco-Pierre White. McDonagh highlights the importance of building relationships with such culinary figures, noting that English chef and restaurateur Glynn Purnell pays regular visits to the factory in search of new designs.

Responding to the desire of chefs to accentuate dishes through irregular shapes and textures, Heritage has launched a number of new collections including Strata, a stoneware range that infuses origins of handmade ceramic craftsmanship; Ore Glaze, with its weathered design; and Magma, a series of organic plates and dishes featuring natural surfaces, a blackened glaze and a molten structure that reflects volcanic elements.

“When we started in fine china and stoneware some 12 years ago, it was unheard of for the larger manufacturers to take on projects for bespoke designs of only 50 or 100 covers,” McDonagh notes. “That’s why we design new products almost every week, and that has led to heavy reinvestment for the past 20 years – without the cost of our specialist tooling.”

Heritage Collection is not opposed to mass production, but its flexible manufacturing approach is key to providing maximum creative freedom for clients. With no minimum quantities required, hoteliers and restaurateurs – who are encouraged to visit the company’s factory showrooms as part of the design process – are able to draw up adaptations on stock models, or request small volumes to commemorate occasions.

Keeping the ethos in the family, son and daughter Anthony and Nathalie were brought into the fold after studying design. They are acutely aware that the company’s significant outlay on advanced manufacturing equipment over the decades has laid the groundwork for it to continue meeting the demands of a rapidly changing industry. “Without our manufacturing capabilities, it would be impossible to design, prototype and produce to the timescale of our clients,” comments Nathalie, Creative Director.

Taking the lead from his father, meanwhile, Sales & Production Director Anthony McDonagh believes that immediacy is not always the answer to building brand awareness and value. He is convinced that making a strong commitment to retaining the craftsmanship for which Birmingham has long been known will continue to provide Heritage Collection with a key point of differentiation in years to come. “We use traditional skills whilst embracing innovation and new technologies within our design process. That way, our clients can achieve the highest level of creativity and freedom,” he says. “The hospitality industry is driven by innovation and creating unique experiences, but with sustainability becoming more important than ever, the potential for a rebalancing in the demand for quality over price is inevitable.”

With one eye on the future, Heritage Collection is embarking upon a multimillion investment into a larger site in Birmingham, where it will be able to further develop its already impressive manufacturing capabilities. Amongst the proposed plans are a new factory and warehouse as well as a 5,000ft² design centre and showroom. The hope is that this ambitious scheme will enable clients to discuss creative opportunities and experiment with new materials more easily than before, opening up exciting new opportunities for the business. And though the challenges of balancing craftsmanship and technology will no doubt continue, the company has proven down the years that it can fashion a happy medium between the two – even in the most testing of times.

“The development of new materials and technologies mean the future is exciting, as we have always embraced innovation,” Nathalie concludes. “The biggest obstacle we face, however, is finding younger generations who are willing to devote their time to mastering a craft. The support system that once thrived in manufacturing has dwindled, and our hope is that influential figures begin to value, encourage and support the growth of the industry and other creatives.”

www.heritagesilverware.com
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or contact Justin Wall: justin@tothetableforums.com
The Textura buffet cuboids from Zieher consist of thin polyethylene filaments that are fused together to afford a flexible yet stable structure, and feature a rechargeable LED light – which fits into the cutouts on the bottom side of the displays. Available in two sizes, the buffet platters and trays can be stacked to create varying presentation levels, and are crafted from non-slip material that is both washable and recyclable.
Stella Vogue
Villeroy & Boch

Stella Vogue tableware from Villeroy & Boch is produced in bone porcelain and features discreet highlights in matte gold – lending elegance to the contemporary décor at JW Marriott Parq Vancouver. Taking inspiration from the classic white Modern Grace and Stella collections, the new collection comprises delicate round shapes and affords stylish presentation at large banquets or in smaller contexts such as afternoon tea or café gourmand.

www.villeroy-boch.co.uk

Mosaic
Dudson

Echoing the craftsmanship of mosaic tableware, Dudson’s Mosaic collection features reactive glazes that produce a variance in effect and colour. Comprising a selection of plates and bowls, the series is available in five colours, including subtle shades of grey and taupe that complement the brand’s Evo and Harvest Linen models, as well as bolder tones of blue, coral and green that lift minimal white tableware by adding splashes of colour.

www.dudson.com

Table Mat Curve
Lind DNA

Handcrafted in Denmark, the Table Mat Curve from Lind DNA encompasses an organic shape that provides both decoration and practicality. Made from 80% recycled leather and 20% natural rubber, the series is customisable in shape, size and finish, meaning it can be tailored to suit various aesthetics. The unique combination of leather and rubber also ensures that the product is highly durable, as well as being easy to maintain in high flow environments.

www.linddna.com

Jade
Aerts NV

Inspired by the Jadeite gem, the Jade series from Chic Tableware uses a combination of design and materials to create a distinct character. Crafted from highly durable porcelain, the collection blends classic forms with modern shapes, and alternates radiant sage green shades with more contemporary white tones. Comprising round bowls and plates in several sizes, Jade embodies Chic’s ethos to play with unique designs in various materials, colours and shapes.

www.aertsnv.eu

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www.aertsnv.eu
Kingham

Robert Welch

Named after Kingham, a picturesque village in the Cotswolds Hills, the latest cutlery range from Robert Welch is a modern incarnation of a traditional design, and exhibits an elegant profile in 18/10 stainless steel. Balanced and comfortable in the hand, the generous head of the fork makes for a relaxed dining style, while the knives are forged from hardened stainless steel to create the finest of cutting edges.

www.robertwelch.com
Atlantic
John Jenkins

Developed in collaboration with bar and mixology professionals, the latest additions to John Jenkins’ Atlantic collection include a half martini glass, a coupe Antoinette and a small coupette. Blending 1920s glassware design with a contemporary aesthetic, the Atlantic family has grown to comprise 80 specialist glasses, jugs, carafes, mixers, bitters bottles and stirrers, providing mixologists with a selection of tools to create classic cocktails and bespoke martinis.

www.johnjenkins.co.uk
Power
Stölzle Lausitz

The latest addition to the Stölzle Lausitz's Power series is a selection of matte white and matte black tumblers, which feature metallic tones of gold, silver and bronze on the inside of each glass to create contrasting accents. The new collection from the Lusatia-based glassmakers also features particularly broad and flat bowls, which even when filled with a small volume, allow for maximum contact with the air and thereby enable aromas to develop.

www.stoelzle-lausitz.com

Ocean
Hering Berlin

Designed by by Hering Berlin founder Stefanie Hering, and crafted from matte bisque porcelain, the Ocean series depicts delicate silhouettes of various sea creatures, and is finished with a cobalt pattern in shades of ultramarine. The result of a playful experimentation with the material, finely polished models including the entrée plate feature an artistic aesthetic while also being highly functional in high-flow kitchens and hotel restaurants.

www.heringberlin.com

Faema E71
Gruppo Cimbali

The Faema E71 coffee machine from Gruppo Cimbali features a new hydraulic circuit with GTi infusion control system that guarantees thermal stability, as well as the option to set different temperatures for every group head. The E71 also offers the choice of working manually or using a digital system with integrated touchscreen display, and comprises ergonomic solutions such as a cold touch steam wand and a soft touch filter holder.

www.gruppcimbali.com

Silkline
Toyo Sasaki

Combining traditional Japanese craftsmanship with cutting-edge design, Silkline from Toyo Sasaki is made up of a Collins, rocks and tumbler-style glass, and uses platinum Hard Strong tempered glass across its surface to achieve maximum durability. With an elegant and light-in-the-hand design, the vessel features a thin and smooth top as well as increased clarity and brightness, and is intended for use across a variety of contemporary dining scenes.

www.toyo.sasaki.co.jp
The Gio collection from Wedgwood is crafted from highly durable white Bone China, and features a distinctive intaglio texture crafted for modern dining environments. Taking into account research on plate size, assortment variety and food service areas, Gio encompasses serve ware suitable for contemporary platters, while its geometric designs and embossed patterns ensure it can also cater for traditional dining and afternoon tea.

www.wedgwood.co.uk
Celebrating ten years of collaboration, Timorous Beasties’ Craigend collection for Brintons takes its name from Craigend Place – home of the Glasgow-based studio and the birthplace of its designs – as well as the Gaelic word Creag, which translates to rock. Reimagined in Brintons’ signature 80/20 blend, the series features nine designs and is inspired by textures and surfaces found underfoot, reflecting the Scottish duo’s fascination with the often brutal beauty of the natural world.

www.brintons.net
Bar Culture  
LSA International  

Designed by Monika Lubkowska-Jonas, Bar Culture from LSA International features refined, mouth-blown barware and accessories. Defined by fine rims, weighty bases and contemporary shapes, each item in the new collection demonstrates the original design and craftsmanship for which the London-based brand is known. Within the 14-piece series, a balloon and brandy glass are complemented with an ice bucket, a serving bowl and ashtray.

www.lsa-international.com

Envisio  
Bonna  

Fusing forward-thinking technology and traditional design processes, Envisio is the newest family of products from Turkish tableware manufacturer Bonna. Created for high-flow dining environments to help chefs deliver vibrant food presentations, the porcelain collection has been designed to give optimum balance between durability and lightness, and brings a new identity and authenticity to the table through a customisable design offer.

www.bonna.com.tr

Eatery  
Tafelstern  

The Eatery series by Tafelstern comprises bowls in an expansive selection of shades, shapes and patterns, including Gaïwan and Ramen models that provide alternatives to classic profiles. Featuring a minimal design, the coupe plates, pourers and bowls create fine contrasts with slender platters. Crafted from fine Noble China, all Eatery pieces can be combined with the brand’s Delight series, while bright and vibrant colourways are also offered for variant styles.

www.tafelstern.com

Divine Colour  
WMF  

The Divine Colour water glasses from WMF Professional are available in four modern tones – smoky blue, smoky grey, amber and olive – and feature top-down colour gradients that exude an elegant aesthetic. Developed in collaboration with design and wine experts, the series includes glassware for red and white wines, champagne and sherry, while the shape of the glasses also coordinates with WMF’s original 12-piece Divine collection.

www.wmf.com
Characterised by a slanted profile and produced using one-piece construction with laser treatment to the rims, Rona’s Edge collection features lightweight, angular and defined glasses with tapered bowls and long slender stems that accentuate a contemporary style. Crafted from barium crystalline, the Slovakian glassmaker’s latest range comprises a champagne flute, Burgundy and Bordeaux models, and a carafe that allows wine to properly oxidise.

www.rona.sk
Serenissimi
Vidivi

The Serenissimi collection from Vidivi is defined by its transparency, shine and strength, and has been engraved with four hand-cut rhomboid designs - Argyle, Diamond, Flower and Tartan. Manufactured at the Vetrie Riunite factories in Verona, the Italian glassware is made up of a quadrant of tumblers and decanters, and embodies a vintage style that is ideal when serving liqueurs, whisky or cocktails.

www.vetridellevenezie.com
Chill
Nude

Constituting a wine and whisky carafe with a matching tumbler and bowl set, the Chill collection from Nude is made from fine crystal and features an elegantly smooth profile. Glass elements sit atop a base of high-quality marble, creating a sense of weight and authority. The marble base is designed to be coupled with its glass after being in the freezer, chilling the container to keep its contents cold, fresh and undiluted.

www.nudeglass.com
Chef Service
Frenchefs

Working to bring a diverse portfolio of chefs from Europe, USA, Brazil and Asia to tailored hospitality events and new restaurant openings, Frenchefs negotiates culinary packages based on specific cuisines and budgets. The company also curates menus, adapting its programme to meet the needs of individual clients – which have included luxury hotel brands such as St. Regis, Rosewood, Mandarin Oriental, Sofitel and InterContinental Hotels & Resorts.

www.frenchefs.com

Shadow Box
Kalisher

Designed and manufactured by Kalisher’s studio artists – who provide art creation, curation and manufacturing services to the likes of Hilton, Renaissance and Hyatt – the Shadow Box plays with naturally occurring light and shadows in guestrooms and public spaces. Featuring a printed CNC-routed matboard that adds texture and dimension in a versatile fashion, the interactive artwork brings a unique perspective to the design of hotel spaces.

www.kalisher.com

Frame
Huls Gallery

Launched at San Sebastian Gastronomika and designed by Arita Plus, a group of manufacturers from Arit – the birthplace of Japanese porcelain – the Frame collection is the latest line of tableware to be showcased by Singaporean distributor Huls Gallery. The series offers bespoke customisation that enables restaurateurs to express their individual vision, and is crafted from material that is durable, dishwasher-safe, and designed without metallic embellishment.

www.huls.com.sg

Artisan
Tiger

Comprising square and round casting chafers, Tiger’s new Artisan collection offers the comfort of home while being served by professionals. Made from ceramic-coated stainless steel and tempered glass, the 4.5-litre-capacity chafers are available in square or round models, and feature an inductive bottom and range of handle finishes from residential-style wooden tones to minimal black. An intuitive parked position further enhances convenience in buffet environments.

www.tigerhotel.co.kr
Fluted
Richard Brendon

Drawing inspiration from the decadent cocktail culture of the 1920s, the Fluted crystal collection was born from a partnership with Gleneagles, and is perfectly suited to the hotel’s American Bar – designed by David Collins Studio. Mouth-blown in Bohemia, the series takes its name from the fluted cuts that run the length of each piece and, like the cocktail glasses of the Art Deco era, comprises light and proportioned stemware as well as weighty tumblers.

www.richardbrendon.com
PETITS FOURS
12-Sided Cafetiere
Elia

Inspired by postmodern aesthetics, the 12-Sided Cafetiere from Elia is a contemporary take on the classic cafetiere, and incorporates a double filter inside its plunger that releases the natural flavours of coffee or leaf teas. Available in three-, six- or eight-cup sizes, the series is crafted from 18/10 stainless steel and features a mirror-polished finish, while its double wall insulation ensures beverages remain hot throughout service.

www.elia.co.uk

Cross Back Apron
Oliver Harvey

Combining British craftsmanship with contemporary styling, Oliver Harvey’s Cross Back Apron features antique brass adjustable neck holsters, a towel loop and large front pockets. Handcrafted in 100% cotton at the company’s factory in Manchester, and designed to cope with the rigours of restaurant environments, the front-of-house aprons are customisable in base and tie – with colour options of black, indigo, navy and slate grey.

www.oliverharvey.co.uk

Induction
WNK

WNK’s Induction chafing dish is compatible with the induction cooker, and can be operated with an electric heater or burner holder on a stackable stand. Its stable and durable hinge design allows the removable lid to be placed into different stationary positions, while a water return system is built into the edge of the system to prevent dripping. The series also includes porcelain and stainless steel inserts, which range in capacity to cater for the size of each chafing dish.

www.good-way.com

Mulberry
Studio William

Taking cues from carving knife and fork sets, Studio William has reintroduced its Mulberry Meat Blade, along with a new Two-Prong Meat Fork manufactured in 18/10 stainless steel. The Meat Blade has been hardened to 56-58 HRC and features a 35-degree cutting angle without serration, ensuring it cuts through meat with little tearing to retain maximum juice and flavour. Thanks to a hollow handle, the steak knife also affords comfort and balance.

www.studiowilliam.com

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On the Road

Design-led installation brings mac ‘n’ cheese to Milan.

From Route 66 to the Pacific Coast Highway, Americans love a good road trip. And no road trip would be complete without regular stops for hamburgers, fries and shakes in the countless diners dotted along the way.

Not everyone can take a month off to embark upon cross-country odysseys in a rusty Cadillac, however, so step forward architecture and design firm Rockwell Group, which has thoughtfully condensed the archetypal all-American experience into one handy pop-up.

Forming part of Milan Design Week 2018, The Diner formed an eye-catching installation in one of the cavernous vaults under Milano Centrale train station. The innovative concept by Rockwell Group founder David Rockwell and his team involved taking guests on an experiential road trip through landmarks of American diner culture by immersing them in four distinct environments. The entrance, inspired by the Airstream travel trailer, served up fresh coffee and pies, before visitors made their way onto an East Coast-style luncheonette featuring milkshakes and other classic diner fare. The road trip then progressed to a space paying tribute to midwest diners with a branded version of grilled cheese sandwiches, and concluded with a laid-back West Coast lounge.

We loved The Diner’s stylish decor and carb-tastic treats during our time at the world’s largest design fair – so much so, in fact, that on the flight home we had to loosen the belt another notch or two.
HOSPITALITY BY DESIGN
SINCE 1955

The Drift Collection is a luxurious and dramatic addition to the Robert Welch tabletop offering.

For more information or samples contact us
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