

# PRESTIGE

THE MAGAZINE FOR VENUE & EVENT MANAGERS

SUMMER 2014

## BEING THE BEST

TRIATHLETE JONATHAN BROWNLEE HAS HIS SIGHTS SET HIGHER THAN EVER

## A VERY ROYAL AFFAIR

COLLECTING IS CHILD'S PLAY AT ART ANTIQUES LONDON



## CHELSEA IN BLOOM

A GLIMPSE BEHIND THE SCENES OF THIS YEAR'S RHS CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW



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ASCOT RACECOURSE, BURGHLEY HORSE TRIALS, VOLVO WORLD MATCH PLAY AND HMS BELFAST

WELCOME

# WELCOME

Summer is in full swing with Sodexo Prestige very much in the spotlight.

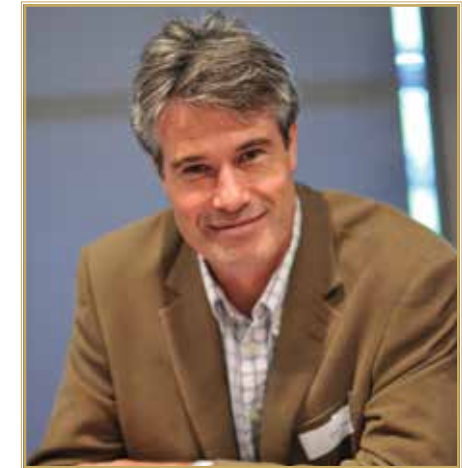
Our Sodexo Prestige events team for RHS Chelsea Flower Show was covered in *BBC's Countdown to Chelsea*, a series of programmes looking ahead to the Royal Horticultural Society Chelsea Flower Show with exclusive coverage of all the pre-show preparations.

This year we delivered the hottest ticket in town on 10 June in Kensington Gardens. Hundreds of distinguished guests visited the Art Antiques London fair to enjoy a Party in the Park, a fundraising event co-chaired by HRH Princess Eugenie of York for the charity Children in Crisis.

Our Events Executive Chef Ben Dutson was named among the Acorn Awards winners as one of the country's best culinary talents under the age of 30 and recently won the prestigious Craft Guild of Chefs Banqueting & Event Chef Award.

Also, Stefan Butler, Executive Chef at Headingley Carnegie Stadium, was picked by Waitrose to take part in its Cricket Cook Off competition. Stefan's dish will be featured on a recipe card available to shoppers in West Yorkshire Waitrose branches. Please visit [waitrose.com/cricket](http://waitrose.com/cricket) and vote for Stefan's recipe.

Finally, four of our stadia venues - Newcastle United's St. James' Park, Brighton & Hove Albion's American Express Community Stadium, Everton's Goodison Park and Hampden Park - won a combined ten awards at the Stadium Events and



Hospitality Awards. This is real recognition of our market-leading proposition and talented team. We have a lot to celebrate.

It's an exciting time for Sodexo Prestige with our continued success and the launch of our new premium service offer, Prestige Venues & Events. Thank you for your support and continued interest in Sodexo Prestige, Sodexo's sports, leisure and travel division. I hope to see you at one of our events over the summer.

**Chris John**  
Managing Director  
Sodexo Prestige Sports, Leisure & Travel  
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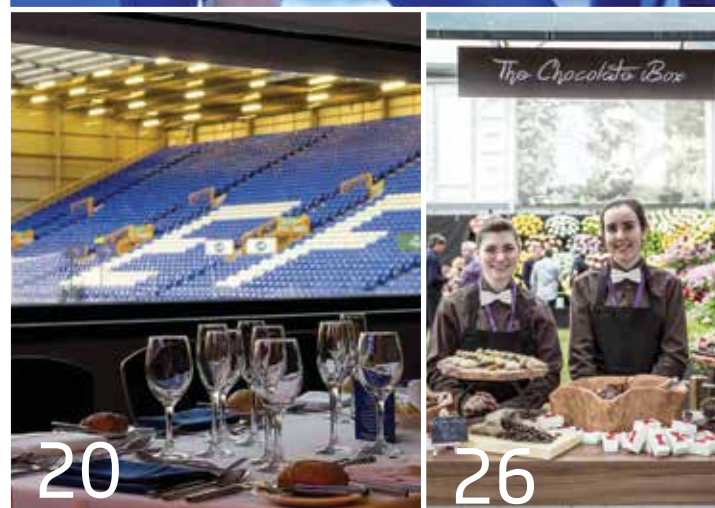
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## PRESTIGE

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# PUSHING THE LIMIT

JONATHAN BROWNLEE AND HIS ELDER BROTHER ALISTAIR HAVE CERTAINLY BEEN MAKING HEADLINES WITH THEIR TROPHY-WINNING TRIATHLONS. AS THIS YEAR'S COMMONWEALTH GAMES AND THE 2016 OLYMPICS APPROACH, JONATHAN TALKS TRAVELLING, TRAINING AND WHY YORKSHIRE IS HIS FAVOURITE PLACE ON EARTH

At only twenty-four, Yorkshire native Jonathan Brownlee is unquestionably one of the world's top triathletes. Not only can he boast finishing every race between July 2010 and May 2014 on the podium (a total of 42 triathlons), but he is also the proud owner of a bronze medal from the London 2012 Olympics, as well as a string of accolades from a series of ITU Triathlon World Championships.

Tackling gruelling courses right across the globe which combine challenging sections of swimming, running and cycling, the two brothers have undeniably taken the sporting world by storm – although Jonathan is quick to point out that much of the credit goes to their parents and, being what he terms a 'very proud Yorkshireman', to the rugged Northern landscapes on which he and his brother were raised.

'Mum used to swim and Dad was a runner, so I think the most important thing that my parents taught us was a love of the outdoors,' he explains. 'Every weekend they would take us out somewhere and that really has been the basis of why we are so consistent with our training – we enjoy riding and running around North Leeds



*Yorkshire is the best place in the world as far as I'm concerned, and the varied terrain has given us a huge advantage over others of a similar age.*



*Jonathan pipping his brother Alistair to claim victory in the World Triathlon Series in Hamburg 2013*

and the surrounding countryside. We've got a cottage in Coverdale so weekends up there were about being outside and exploring....and Alistair getting us lost. Yorkshire is the best place in the world as far as I'm concerned, and the varied terrain has given us a huge advantage over others of a similar age. When we were young, our training was about exploring different routes, and places to ride to, different cafés to stop at, and there's still an element of that today.'

But it's not just good genes and natural ability which have given Jonathan his edge. He and his brother also train mercilessly, with a routine that sees them spend around thirty-five hours a week swimming, cycling and running with their squad up in Leeds, as well as constantly making sure they're stocked up on calories and getting a good balance of nutrients from fruit, vegetables and lean meats. 'It's full on,' he admits 'but that's what I need to do to be one of the best in the world.'

'It makes it hard to do too much socialising in the evening because I'm up early in the morning for swimming,' he says 'but my mate started up a five-a-side team locally, the Bramhope Deers, and I'm officially

their manager so on a Wednesday night I try and get down and pass on a bit of knowledge.' He grins as he adds 'They are not going to appreciate me saying that.'

Luckily his schedule doesn't always stop Jonathan getting to watch his favourite team, the Leeds Rhinos, in action at West Yorkshire's Headingley Stadium. 'I love going to watch the Rhinos at Headingley when I can,' he says. 'The atmosphere is brilliant. I've been lucky enough to meet a few of the players and so I know how much it means to them having the crowd behind them. Rugby League is a tough sport and a great sport to watch.'

With so much to do, he doesn't often get much time to explore the incredible international locations to which his sport frequently takes him (he's already been to Abu Dhabi, Auckland, Cape Town and Yokohama this season). Nevertheless, several of the global sporting venues at which he's competed seem to have made a lasting impression all of their own. 'The race in Madrid, sadly no longer on the circuit, was always one of my favourites,'

he says. 'It was a real true test of a triathlon course with a tight swim course, decent hill on the bike leg and a fast run; but my all-time favourite sporting venue has to be Hyde Park during the 2012 Olympics. The support we received was mind blowing. I unfortunately received a 15 second penalty for getting on my bike two inches early in the transition area and the only place I could talk to Alistair about when I should take it [penalties must be taken on the run but competitors can choose on which of the four laps to take it] was on the bridge crossing the Serpentine because that was the only place there weren't any spectators. Everywhere else they were four or five deep and the noise was just incredible so we couldn't hear each other. I'll never forget it.'

*The noise was just incredible so we couldn't hear each other. I'll never forget it.'*

It's a demanding schedule and a full-time job, but it's evident in everything Jonathan says that he considers every moment of it worthwhile. 'To be selected to represent your country is a massive honour,' he says. 'It's something that I acknowledged in our book; *SWIM, BIKE, RUN: Our triathlon story*



[currently out in paperback], that Alistair coming home with his first ever GB kit – tracksuit, vest and shorts – made a massive impression on me and I thought firstly, this is achievable if my brother can do it, and secondly, this is what I want to achieve. It's been a goal from a very young age and it's a brilliant feeling.'

Having spent the first part of the season competing around the world ('I've probably done a bit too much travelling,' he admits 'but that's what you have to do to race the ITU circuit and be in with a chance of being World

Champion'), Jonathan is now gearing up for this year's Commonwealth Games in Glasgow – and, after that, the 2016 Olympics in Rio. He's looking forward to the thrill of a new experience at the Commonwealth Games (there was no triathlon in the 2010 Delhi event) but when it comes to the Olympics there are no two ways about it; he wants gold.

'It'll be tough because the gold and silver medallists from London will still be racing, and there are a couple of others coming through who fancy their chances. But that's what I want to win, no question.'

It's a lot of pressure at such a young age, but Jonathan is obviously as driven as he is talented, and remains unfazed and methodical. 'Some of the best advice I've been given is "do your best," he says. 'In most sports, you can't control what the opposition are going to do, so if you can go to sleep at night whether you have won or not and say that you have done your best, then that's all you can do.' Clearly this advice has already served him well and, with two of the biggest championships of his career on the horizon – who knows? It might just be enough to finally get him that Olympic gold.■





# BEING ALLERGEN AWARE

SODEXO IS IN AN INDUSTRY-LEADING POSITION GEARING UP TOWARDS 13 DECEMBER WHEN STRICT NEW REGULATIONS ON ALLERGEN LABELLING COME INTO FORCE

New food labelling regulations will have a massive impact on foodservice businesses but Sodexo is in a strong position to implement them.

The new Food Information for Consumers Regulation (FIR) will, from 13 December, require all businesses in the food industry to inform consumers of 14 key allergens within the food and drinks they serve and sell, both packaged and non packaged items.

Food operators will need to be able to tell any consumer at any time which of their dishes contain the 14 allergens (see box to the right).

This means, for example, if a chef decides to tweak a recipe for, say, spaghetti bolognese, and adds Worcestershire sauce, the rest of the team will need to know as Worcestershire sauce contains fish, which is an allergen.

For a business delivering about one million meals daily and operating in 2,300 locations, the new regulations present a major task. Sodexo uses ingredients and pre-prepared food involving tens

of thousands of different product lines sourced from a variety of suppliers.

“We have to make sure that we can advise our consumers about any of the 14 allergens that are contained within our dishes”, said Sodexo’s head of nutrition and dietetics, Wan Mak. “It is a major task for everybody in foodservice who is cooking from scratch.”

However, Sodexo does have a head start in the task because, since 2009, it has been collecting nutritional data about products from suppliers as an early signatory to the FSA’s calorie labelling initiative. And, while collecting data about nutritional content, Sodexo has also been harvesting data about any allergens contained in those products.

This information is captured within Sodexo’s company-wide recipe management system – it’s vital this is kept up to date to ensure accurate allergen information. Therefore, assuming recipes are followed to the letter, calorific content as well as any allergens that might be in the dishes or products can be accurately advised to customers. Sodexo



Gluten free cupcakes at Salon Culinaire, a competition for top chefs.

also has procedures that notify them of any changes suppliers make to food formulation that may affect the allergen content of its meals. In addition to capturing this data, allergen specific training is rolled out to all staff – crucial in coaching food-handlers of what the food allergies are, their legal obligations and how to cater for customers with these needs. Wan Mak adds, “The key change is that staff are not allowed to say that they don’t know (what allergens are contained in dishes) and that they are aware of what the 14 allergens are.”

As part of its commitment to embrace the changes, Sodexo has also been named headline sponsor of the new Freefrom Eating Out Awards, designed to raise awareness of the opportunities offered



Wan Mak, Sodexo's Head of Nutrition and Dietetics.

to foodservice providers by the growing numbers of those either needing, or choosing, to eat 'Freefrom'. The awards are being launched to coincide with the build up to the introduction of FIR. Entries began at the end of May with presentations to the winners taking place on 19 November at the FoodMatters Live Event at ExCel, London.

The new awards will celebrate not only imaginative and exciting gluten, dairy and egg free menu offerings, but good allergen awareness, both in the kitchen and front of house.

Wan said: “We are delighted to be sponsoring these awards and we hope that it will raise awareness of the importance of providing information for people with allergies.”

Antony Worrall Thompson, patron of the awards, said: “The success of retail Freefrom products illustrates how important Freefrom options are. The Freefrom Awards are an exciting opportunity for this section of consumers. They will set a bar and encourage the pursuit of excellence across the industry.” As well as its support for the awards,

Sodexo has supported research conducted by Coeliac UK about minimising cross-contamination, and at its annual Salon Culinaire competition held every autumn there was a 'gluten-free' category, the standards of which continue to be exceptional according to Wan.

She adds: “We already have training in place with modules around allergens linking in with our operators’ food safety manual and we’ve produced posters which can be used onsite to educate both employees and customers.

“We have developed some sound processes and procedures across the business which see buyers liaise closely with the dietitians to ensure any new products are tracked and allergen information reviewed.

“We are encouraging our chefs to create dishes that are free from allergens, with our training for employees really pushing the message that communication needs to be very tight to ensure everyone understands the impact of any small changes while maintaining a creative approach to cater for those with food allergies.” ■



## MORE ABOUT FREEFROM

Freefrom food - food free of gluten, wheat, dairy, soya, nuts and other allergens - has become seriously big business in the retail sector with the market set to grow to over half a billion pounds in the next three years. The rapidly growing number of those who either need or choose to eat 'Freefrom' have long complained that, while good Freefrom food is now relatively easy to find in the retail sector, eating out 'Freefrom' remains difficult and frustrating. This is partly due to the lack of choice but mainly because so few people in the food service industry understand about food allergies and coeliac disease.

Michelle Berriedale-Johnson, founder of the Freefrom Awards.

## LIST OF ALLERGENS

- cereals containing gluten
- peanuts (also called groundnuts)
- nuts, such as almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, Brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios and macadamia nuts
- fish
- shellfish
- molluscs
- sesame seeds
- eggs
- milk
- soya
- celery and celeriac
- lupins
- mustard
- sulphur dioxide and sulphites at levels above 10mg/kg or 10mg/litre expressed as SO2







# COLLECTING IS CHILDSPLAY: ART ANTIQUES LONDON

A CELEBRATION OF VICTORIAN CHILDHOOD WAS AT THE HEART OF A ROYAL GALA CHARITY EVENING BUT IT WAS A 21ST CENTURY PRINCESS WHO STOLE THE SHOW AT ART ANTIQUES LONDON

It was billed as a Party in the Park and Sodexo Prestige ensured guests supporting the charity Children in Crisis had a night to remember.

The hottest ticket in town on 10 June saw hundreds of distinguished guests visit the Art Antiques London fair to enjoy a Champagne and canapés reception, which was followed by a five-course dinner for upwards of 240 guests.

The venue was a temporary, purpose-built pavilion in Kensington Gardens, opposite the Royal Albert Hall and alongside the imposing Albert Memorial.

HRH Princess Eugenie of York, who co-chaired the organisation of the fund-raising event, was there alongside her mother, Sarah, Duchess of York, who founded Children in Crisis in 1993.

In a message on the charity's website, Eugenie said: "The night promises to be one of intrigue and excitement, taking you on a journey back in time to remember your childhood."

For event manager James Stallabrass and executive chef Ben Dutson, it was a new and fun challenge to match the food served with the evening's theme.

So, while talented young performers enchanted with song and dance routines, including renditions from *Oliver!* and *Les Misérables*, watching guests enjoyed Victorianaesque canapés in the style of mini 99 cones and an assortment of handmade Scotch eggs.

The selection included truffled goats' cheese, Coronation chicken mousse, hot smoked salmon and smoked duck parfait

all in savoury cones such as spinach pesto. And the 'chocolate flake'? It was actually pumpernickel.

Ben explained: "The ice cream cone was an obvious link to childhood but we wanted to do things which weren't quite what they seemed.

"We have served goats' cheese cones in the past so we followed the same idea through with other flavours for this fabulous evening."

Eugenie herself had joined the Children in Crisis management team at a pre-event food tasting and the attractive theme James and Ben created was a huge success, pleasing the royal crowd.

Gala co-ordinator Laura Brett couldn't speak highly enough of Sodexo Prestige's



Sarah, Duchess of York, addresses the guests



contribution. "They are amazing," she said. "The tasting was the best tasting I've ever had - and I've had many. The detail that went into the menu was exceptional."

Children in Crisis director of fundraising, Jessica Dallyn, added: "We worked with Princess Eugenie to pass the ideas on to the Sodexo Prestige team for what you might call a posh nursery tea.



"The canapés were just ingeniously pulled together," she said. "I loved the creativity of those.

"I loved the way they approached our suggestions. They even went to town in building a special trug to put the crudités in."

"I loved the drama of the starter; the main course and vegetarian option were delicious; and the pudding was just so colourful, fun and brilliant and really engaged with the childhood feeling we tried to create."

Jessica was also very grateful to Sodexo Prestige for donating an 'at home catered dinner party for eight' as a prize in the auction. This included a five course meal designed around our Parade Ring Restaurant menu during Royal Ascot 2014, prepared by none other than award winning chef Steve Golding.

On the evening itself, while Princess Eugenie in white and her mother in black took centre stage, the lenses of the national newspaper photographers also captured someone else with royal connections. The *London Evening Standard* reported that Cressida Bonas, the former girlfriend of Prince Harry was also in attendance.



Assorted handmade Scotch eggs



Tomato and lemon thyme consommé served in teacups

In the last few hours before the guests arrived, there was the expected hive of activity behind the scenes to ensure everything was just as it should be.

With the late afternoon sun reflecting off the nearby gold statue of Queen Victoria's beloved husband Albert, the waiting and bar staff were detailed to arrange all the chairs around the 23 round tables clad in pink, green and blue cloths.

Each table bore the name of popular childhood games or toy including: Stilts, Marbles, Jacks, Rag Dolls, Diablo, Quoits and Hula Hoop and the glassware, specially sourced by James, reflected the historic theme.

Vintage crockery from Classic Crockery, of Sunbury, added a much-appreciated authentic touch. A tomato and lemon thyme consommé was served in their teacups as part of the 'late breakfast' starter.

"Sometimes a client would resist mismatched crockery but because it is quaint it works in this situation," Ben Dutson pointed out. With 30 minutes to 'doors opening', and needing to arrange service from two different ends of the pavilion, James took one group of waiters and waitresses to be briefed and





Jelly and ice-cream, summer berries style



colleague Tim Furnival the other.

Staff were informed there would be royalty amongst the evening's distinguished guests and for those responsible for pouring the Champagne they were reminded to take great care of the expensive vintage glassware. Twenty minutes before reception the corks were being popped on the Champagne and in the food prep area chefs were piping in the savoury fillings for the canapé cones.

Helping with one of the Champagne stations was events director Alex Beaumont, who said: "We are very excited to be doing a new event. It's good to work in central London and The Haughton's are brilliant clients to work with."

"Ben Dutson has had a chance to express his culinary skills within the menus. We were asked to put some fun into it and we've done that with the late breakfast and fun things like the jelly and ice cream".

"Working in this splendid pavilion demonstrates that we are quite comfortable operating pop-up restaurants. We have lots of experience in running fine dining pop-up restaurant at events like the Chelsea Flower Show and The Open Championship but the restaurant at Art Antiques London will run for longer at 10 days."

"With set-up of our bar services at Live on the Waterfront in Liverpool starting at the same time and running over the weekend it has been an extremely busy time for our team. Royal Ascot also begins on the Tuesday which overlaps with Art Antiques for a few days. We are very fortunate that we have such a strong team with vast experience to cover multiple events on a scale like this."

Ben Dutson added: "It doesn't faze us and

it's very on trend. There are lots of pop-up restaurants in and around London at the moment. A lot of chefs are doing it. It's a good idea."

*It doesn't faze us and it's very on trend. There are lots of pop-up restaurants in and around London at the moment. A lot of chefs are doing it. It's a good idea.*

The 1851 Restaurant where the gala evening was staged opened to the public each day between noon and 4pm for fine dining on a par with the capital's top restaurants.

Traditional afternoon teas were served between 4pm and 5.30pm. Some evening banquets were also laid on for specific societies, for example a Collectors' Dinner for collectors, curators and dealers.

Sodexo Prestige was also operating an 1851 Café serving Aspretto coffee, pastries and sandwiches to the public. The seating area had a lovely view over the park and included an outdoor terrace area to enjoy the summer days in style.

James Stallabrass added: "It's been fun to bring it all together and good to have a bit of a free rein to express ourselves." ■



**CHARITY FOCUS**

Children in Crisis ([www.childrenincrisis.org](http://www.childrenincrisis.org)) was established by the Duchess of York in 1993 to give children in some of the world's poorest countries the education they need to help transform their lives.

Its mission declares: "Where resources are few, where education is needed to heal the nation, and where it is too remote for others, our aim is to support children to read, write, think, pursue their life goals and contribute positively to their communities."





# CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS

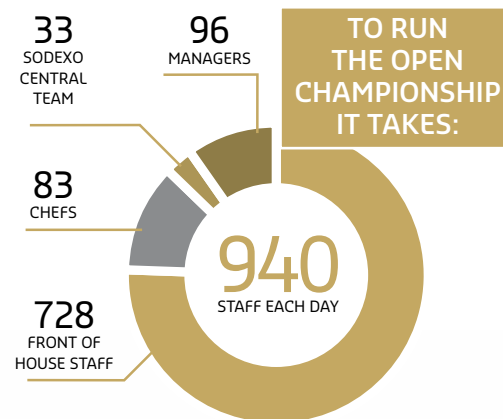
GREAT BRITISH EVENTS TAKE A LOT OF WORK. WE GO BEHIND THE SCENES TO FIND OUT HOW



## THE OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP: ROYAL LIVERPOOL



The Chefs and Logistics Team start work at 4am on Championship days to make sure all food and drink is on site before the Open tees off at 6.15am



We expect

# 200,000

spectators to visit Royal Liverpool for this year's Open Championship



## HENLEY ROYAL REGATTA

We need to transport all the food and supplies by boat to Temple Island including 12 staff. The journey is from Fawley Meadows at the finish of the Regatta course, which is a precise journey of 1 mile, 550 yards.

Construction of the Regatta course and tentage begins in April, and is not dismantled until the middle of August.

Temple Island is owned by the Regatta on a

# 999

year lease, for which they pay two eggs a year in rent.



## RHS CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW: GALA PREVIEW EVENING

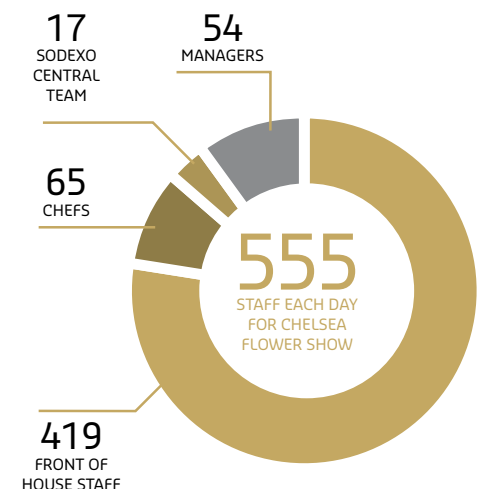


10 DAYS to set up Chelsea with 45 staff

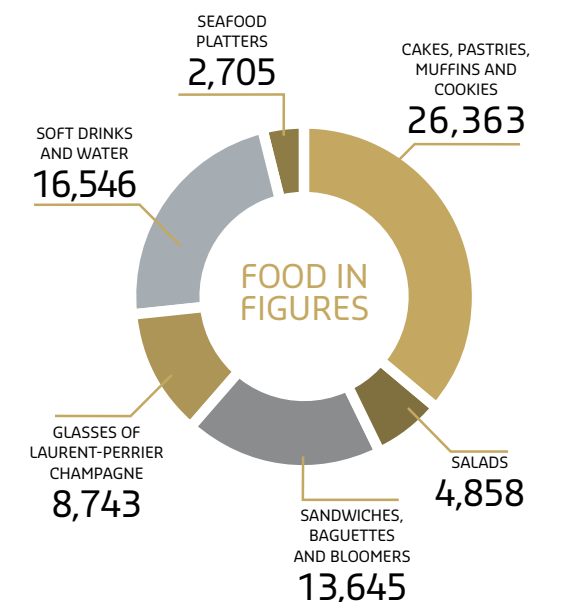


## RHS CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW: SHOW WEEK

### TO RUN A SHOW WEEK IT TAKES...



### FOOD AND DRINK IS PLENTIFUL AT CHELSEA





# EAT THE SEASON: SUMMER

IF VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE, EVENTS EXECUTIVE CHEF **BEN DUTSON** IS TO BE ENVIED FOR THE FOOD DELIGHTS HE IS WORKING WITH FOR THREE HUGE BUT MASSIVELY DIFFERENT EVENTS THIS SUMMER SEASON

The 175th anniversary of Henley Royal Regatta has given Ben the chance to devise food choices which are 'quintessentially British' to give a respectful nod towards the sort of fare they would have been enjoying when the event began in Victorian times.

There's also been a Victorian theme to take into account at Art Antiques London, a new event for Sodexo Prestige, where a Royal Gala evening requiring some novelty food items gave Ben lots of creative fun.

Meanwhile The Open Championship, this year taking place on the links at Royal Liverpool, Hoylake has given Ben the opportunity to source shellfish from the nearby coast and come up with a new twist on an old favourite – the burger. But let's start on the banks of the River

Thames in leafy Oxfordshire. One of the highlights of the summer sporting calendar and social season, the world's most famous regatta attracts thousands of visitors over five days to watch more than 200 international standard rowing races, some featuring recently-decorated Olympians. Alongside the rowing, spectators can take in the ambience of the facilities within the enclosures and Sodexo Prestige, as the official hospitality provider, offers a range of exclusive hospitality packages from the picturesque banks of Fawley Meadows

*Ben's career highlight so far was running the Prestige Pavilion at the London 2012 Olympic Games – the official fine dining hospitality venue*

or the stunning private oasis of Temple Island from which 40 guests can enjoy elevated views of the start.

Ben said: "I like Henley a lot because the clientele are friendly and keen to have fun on the river. We provide different levels of hospitality, from relatively simple buffets up to high-end restaurants.

"We've created a real treat for this special celebratory year; a dessert based around Pimm's featuring summer berries, Pimm's creme sorbet and cucumber gel. It's all about the tastes of summer.

"Our menus will also include lots of baby vegetables, like carrots and turnips, and a lot of early summer asparagus, which we've

sourced from Oxfordshire. Our overriding theme this year is 'quintessentially British' and there will be a lot of focus on strawberries, for example."

Ben continued: "One of the main challenges is getting people, food and equipment across the river to Temple Island, a mile and a half downstream of Henley, on a rickety old rowing boat.

"The chef has to stay there all day long until the boat comes back so he has to be very organised; there's no going back for something he might have forgotten! It's worth it though, because it is on one of the most beautiful reaches of the River Thames."

From Oxfordshire Ben and his team head to the north-west and the return to the Royal Liverpool Golf Club, also known as Hoylake, of The Open Championship. The Open was last at the second-oldest seaside golf course in England in 2006 and while many spectators will be curious to see if Tiger Woods can repeat his winning performance of that year, Sodexo Prestige will be tickling tastebuds at the heart of the action in fine dining restaurants and public catering outlets.

In a tented village close to the 16th hole, Sodexo Prestige will be operating different hospitality styles in the Premier Suites, The

Gallery Restaurant, The 1860 Club and The Champion's Club.

"We're going to be offering locally caught shellfish, making use of Scouse honey and featuring meat from Cumbrian charcuterie experts Woodall's in a starter," said Ben.

"Our speciality is going to be The Open Burger. It's a premium event and we've created a premium burger that will be made fresh on site.

"There's not going to be any of these factory production line style burgers stacking up in



chutes: we're delivering a gourmet burger from grill to bun in 10 seconds. We're sure people won't mind paying a little bit more for a quality product."

As *Prestige* magazine went to press, the curtain was coming down on Art Antiques London where Sodexo Prestige provided fine dining experiences for visiting collectors and the general public as well as at a charity Royal Gala evening to raise funds for Children in Crisis.

The gala evening had a Victorian theme and gave Ben the opportunity for creativity in





the kitchen, with canapés in the style of mini 99 cones which were actually truffled goats' cheese, Coronation chicken mousse, hot smoked salmon and smoked duck parfait.

To round it off there was a jelly and ice cream dessert which was actually packed with summer berries, elderflower jelly, lemon verbena ice cream and wild strawberry sorbet, garnished with 'tastes of the fairground' – popping candy, freeze dried strawberries, marshmallows, strawberry swirl and candy floss.

All of this activity came fresh on the heels of Ben getting married in early May to fiancée Alina, but a honeymoon was put on hold because of the programme of events he was embarking on throughout May, June and July.

Ben's career highlight so far was running the Prestige Pavilion at the London 2012 Olympic Games – the official hospitality venue.

"We did a 24-hour shift at the opening ceremony where we served eight courses for 3,000 covers across six restaurants," he recalled. "That was pretty intense."

Ben joined Sodexo Prestige in 2008 as a sous chef on the River Thames cruise vessels Bateaux London and after just nine months was promoted to head chef.

In 2010 he was promoted internally to be head chef of Sodexo's major events

business, and three years later became executive chef of the entire events business.

Ben began his culinary career after leaving school in Haywards Heath, West Sussex, as an apprentice chef/demi chef at Stanhill Court Hotel, a Michelin starred, 3 AA rosette country house hotel near Gatwick Airport.

He moved on to become chef de partie/sous chef at The Swan Inn, Chiddingfold, a fine dining country pub/restaurant and after a two-year stint there became sous chef at The Castle, Outwood, in Surrey, running a 100-covers-

a-day kitchen. More recently Ben has continued to add to his accolades, being named among the Acorn Award winners for 2014 as one of the country's best culinary talents under the age of 30, while also winning the prestigious Craft Guild of Chefs Banqueting & Event Chef Award.

When he's not working, Ben is a keen football fan and enjoys cycling and swimming. His favourite food? "I love Jersey Royals, but they're only in season for such a short time. British seafood is fantastic, particularly in Cornwall. A shellfish platter fresh from the coastal waters...washed down with a nice glass of Sauvignon." ■

EAT THE SEASON

# CURED TO PERFECTION

IN HIS PURSUIT OF QUINTESSENTIALLY ENGLISH FOOD, EXECUTIVE CHEF BEN DUTSON HAS TURNED TO ONE OF THE BEST PRODUCERS OF BRITISH CHARCUTERIE, WOODALL'S

Woodall's range is truly authentic British charcuterie using British pork, British recipes and British curing and drying skills.

For eight generations the Woodall family has been innovating using traditional methods. It all began in 1828 at the family-run butchers in the Lake District.

From her village shop in Waberthwaite, Hannah Woodall used her farmhouse butchery and curing skills to offer a range

of products for villagers to enjoy. The meat she produced would sustain local families through the long winter months.

At the beginning of the winter the hams, sausages and bacon would be cooked from fresh and eaten.

Through the winter the meat would dry out where it was hung in the farmhouses and would be dried and ready to eat by the end of the season. The air drying process produced products that we now more closely associate with meats

from the continent – salamis and air-dried hams.

"Producing charcuterie is often thought of as a continental tradition" says Master Curer, Colin Woodall, himself an eighth generation Woodall, who has maintained the family's traditional recipes and curing skills. "However in Britain, this method of preserving meat was widespread until the 1900s. That it became less popular is due, to the Industrial Revolution and rapid urbanisation, which resulted in the loss of many traditional, rural culinary skills, that we now, as a nation, are trying to revive".

Today, Woodall's products represent the very best in British charcuterie: carefully selected and butchered cuts of British meat. "Woodall's is not a take on continental charcuterie" continues Colin "It is truly British, born of a distinguished heritage that is as rich in producing cured meats, with their own distinctive styles and flavour profiles, as exists elsewhere in Europe.

"All our air-dried hams and salamis are signature products, which reflect our family heritage; almost two centuries of working to produce the finest British charcuterie. Our hams are salted by hand with each ham leg being massaged before it is cut, and then eventually hung for at least six months to achieve perfection." ■





# FUELLING THE FANS

WHETHER YOU'RE A RUGBY BUFF, A FOOTBALL FAN OR A CRICKET ADDICT, YOU'LL KNOW THAT SCREAMING SUPPORT FROM THE STANDS WORKS UP QUITE AN APPETITE. SO JUST HOW DO THE MAJOR STADIA MAKE SURE THEIR CROWDS AREN'T RUNNING ON EMPTY?

Sporting rivalry has been in existence as long as games have been played, regardless of whether they involve a bat or a ball, a racquet or a stick.

That fierce support for a particular team pitches fans against each other but it doesn't matter how intense that sense of competition is, there's one area where fans are all in agreement – watching a game of sport is hungry and thirsty work.

Food at sporting events has a long history often stretching back to the first recorded days of the beautiful game. Bovril, the staple of football matches, has been served at grounds around the UK since 1909 and still remains as popular today – as much for its ability to keep your hands warm on a freezing day as for its qualities as a savoury drink.

It's the same with that perennial favourite, the pie. Although nobody can pinpoint

exactly when they first went on sale, they've been feeding football fans for at least a century.

It's not just in this country that sport and food go hand in hand. While the British might like a pie and a pint, in Brazil “sanduche de calabresa” – pepperoni sandwiches – are the order of the day, while in Spain no game is complete without a handful of sunflower seeds.

In Germany bratwurst, washed down with a pint of beer, is what sporting fans like to tuck into; while in Italy you'll be offered “pizza de cancha” – pitch pizza – which comes without cheese.

Despite the obvious cultural differences, the fact remains that food and sport are

perfect team mates and for those who don't have to worry about running around a pitch for 90 minutes or so, it's the perfect opportunity to indulge in some great food.

Sodexo Prestige has a long relationship with sporting venues and works with some of the best in the country and while it's safe to say the company upholds the finest traditions when it comes to sporting venue food, there's also a wider choice and a more sophisticated offering for those who want to take it.

It is, of course, important to take notice of what the fans want – which is why at Newcastle United a pie tasting team, including a group of supporters, was put

*It doesn't matter how intense that sense of competition is, there's one area where fans are all in agreement – watching a game of sport is hungry and thirsty work*



Clockwise: Piglet's pork and chorizo pies as served at the AMEX Community Stadium, Brighton, The award winning 'Magpie' at St James Park, Tiny toad in't hole as served at John Smith's Stadium, Huddersfield

together to decide which offering would bear the important title of the “Magpie” – a nod towards the team's nickname and which was voted the North East Pie of the Year in a BBC radio tasting and vote.

The results keep them happy on the terraces while inside the venue there are options available for those who want to enjoy the game – but in warmer and more comfortable surroundings.

With the transformation of football matches since those dark days of the 80s and 90s when games often experienced unsavoury incidents, the rise in sports venues being

used for corporate hospitality has grown because of the change in the experience.

At Newcastle United, which also doubles as one of the largest conference and events facilities in the North East, stadium food has developed over the years to cater for the needs and demands of a discerning client base.

It's a similar story in Yorkshire where Sodexo Prestige operates at two major venues; The John Smith's Stadium (home







American Express Community Stadium, Brighton and Hove Albion, Brighton



FutureChef 2014 Winner Anna Carmichael with Executive Chef Gareth Billington at Goodison Park

## STADIUM EVENTS AND HOSPITALITY AWARDS 2014:

**GOLD** – Match Day Hospitality for medium stadia: Brighton & Hove Albion, AMEX stadium

**GOLD** – Director's Choice (voted for by visiting football club directors): Brighton & Hove Albion, AMEX stadium

**GOLD** – Match Day Hospitality for large stadia: Newcastle United, St James' Park

**GOLD** – Future Star Award: Elisha Lindsay, Newcastle United, St James' Park

**GOLD** – Conference and Events Sales and Marketing Award: Hampden Park

**SILVER** – Media Choice Award (voted for by journalists): Brighton & Hove Albion, AMEX stadium

**SILVER** – Conference and Events Sales and Marketing Award: Newcastle United, St James' Park

**SILVER** – Future Star Award: Vinnie Shields, Everton, Goodison Park.

**SILVER** – The Big One, Overall Match Day Hospitality: Newcastle United, St James' Park

**BRONZE** – Match Day Hospitality for large stadia: Everton, Goodison Park.

to Huddersfield Town FC and Huddersfield Giants) and Headingley Carnegie Stadium in Leeds, which operates under the banner of the Headingley Experience.

The Leeds site is home to two sporting grounds covering three sports; rugby league, rugby union and cricket and has the only conference and events suite in the world which overlooks two international pitches.

At the John Smith's Stadium, one of Sodexo Prestige's newest contracts, the menus are labelled "no nonsense" - reflecting the kind of stoicism for which Yorkshire is renowned.

There's a concentration on products with regional provenance- Swaledale pork and leek sausages, meat pie made with Yorkshire beef and tiny toad in't hole to name but a few.

"It's important to us to have local provenance," said Colin Perkins, account director for North and Stadia, for Sodexo Prestige Venues and Events. "Aside from us taking into consideration important factors such as our carbon footprint and food miles.

"Fans at the stadia like to feel that the food on offer - while relatively standard in style - reflects the local community and local fare."

Across the country at Everton FC, Sodexo Prestige also makes its mark in the kitchens of Goodison Park. Under the control of award-winning executive chef Gareth Billington, match days have become as equally well known for the fine dining experience as for what's happening out on the pitch.

As well as heading up the kitchen Gareth has

become just as renowned for his mentoring of the next generation of chefs, who get to learn their craft against the backdrop of the hallowed turf. He recently guided Anna Carmichael on to win the Springboard FutureChef competition. As part of her prize package she will now spend a day behind the scenes with the Sodexo catering team at Royal Ascot.

Anna wowed judges with a menu of pistachio and mint pulled lamb, pan-seared lamb, shallot puree, butternut squash fondant, sautéed spinach and turned potatoes with a rosemary jus, followed by warm chocolate and raspberry syllabub and chocolate chip cookies.

Goodison Park also, unsurprisingly, has taken a Liverpool classic and come up with an offering that's extremely popular with Everton fans - the Scouse pie.

Colin Perkins believes the food experience is a massive part of going to any sporting occasion. "Ultimately you have a captive audience and although at a football match the game only lasts 90 minutes, fans are likely to be in the ground for up to three hours. "It's the same at cricket and rugby - depending on the game fans could be there all day so food is an integral part of the experience, quite apart from the fact that it's an important income stream for the club."

It's the same story if you head up country towards Scotland, where a passion for food and sport can be found in equal measure.

At Aberdeen FC adding a little local flavour into the mix is definitely the order of the day.

*'Fans at the stadia like to feel that the food on offer reflects the local community and local fare.'*



Always on the menu are stovies which, to uninitiated "Sassenachs", are a potato hash kind of dish combining potato, onion and diced beef which are served with oatcakes, beetroot and a good dollop of brown sauce. Here regional variations also stretch to the pies as well, where fans can enjoy a Haggis and Tattie offering comprising a pie shell filled with the Scottish delicacy and topped with potato. At Hampden Park, the home of Scottish football, reflecting regional dishes is always an important consideration. The chefs constantly rise to the challenges put before them.

Down on the South Coast and at the AMEX stadium, home to Brighton and Hove Albion, regional favourites once again find a place on the menu.

It also happens to be the home of the undisputed top pie in the football league, produced for the club by local company Piglets Pies whose offerings include mouth - watering steak and ale, chicken, gammon and leek and even a vegetable tagine pie.

Chefs use Sussex reared lamb and pork and locally sourced goats' cheese and asparagus to add a real local flavour to their menus.

Of course whatever you eat, you always need something to wash it down with. While Scottish licensing laws restricts the sale of alcohol at football stadia, no such rules exist in England which has paved the way for the introduction of local ales.

Headingley offers Black Sheep Yorkshire Ale, which during rugby matches has the option to be sold in two pint pots, while Harvey's Sussex Ale also goes down well at Brighton and Hove Albion.

As you would expect, down at Headingley and Huddersfield they are not averse to the odd cup of "Yorkshire Tea" which goes down well with both home and visiting fans.

"For us it doesn't matter which ground you attend, it's all about giving the fans a great experience," said Colin. "And that's from the right product prepared well, the right number of staff, to the right number of kiosks ensuring high speed of service to the fans.

"It's about them being able to use their limited breaks to take advantage of the catering offering in a way that ensures they don't miss one minute of the sporting action." ■



Smoked haddock Tart with poached egg



Apple strudel with toffee apple pudding and apple and sultana cream



Fillet of Venison with white truffle mousse and wild foraged mushrooms



Duo of white and dark chocolate



# HOWZAT - AS HEADINGLEY BATS FOR WAITROSE

IT'S NOT JUST MAIDENS WHO ARE BOWLED OVER BY THE SUPERB CATERING AT HEADINGLEY. NOW, EXECUTIVE CHEF STEFAN BUTLER HAS CAUGHT THE EYE OF NONE OTHER THAN TOP SUPERMARKET CHAIN WAITROSE



WHEN it comes to sports stadia, the Headingley Carnegie Stadium, Leeds, has one unique advantage – it is the only stadium in the country to boast not one, but two, international sports grounds.

Home to both the Leeds Rhinos rugby team and the prestigious Yorkshire County Cricket Club, it is no wonder that the stadium holds a very special place in the hearts of Yorkshire men and women and of sports fans the world over.

Now, the spotlight has fallen on the stadium once again – only this time,

however, it's shining not on its famous pitches but on its chef.

Fittingly, all the catering at Headingley is overseen by Yorkshireman Stefan Butler who, in 11 years at the venue, has worked his way through the ranks to the position of executive chef.

During that time his dishes have not only sustained match day fans but impressed guests at a vast array of weddings and corporate events – and now one dish in particular is set to impress a far greater audience.



*Stefan's zesty  
mackerel fillet:*

Thirty-four-year-old Stefan is one of just 10 chefs from around the country who has been asked to create a recipe for supermarket giant Waitrose, which is the official England Cricket Team sponsor.

In a bid to find the best food at the 10 international venues hosting England cricket matches this summer, Stefan and chefs from Lord's, the Kia Oval, the Ageas Bowl, Emirates Old Trafford, Emirates Durham International Cricket Ground, Bristol County Ground, Edgbaston,

Trent Bridge and the SWALEC Stadium were invited to the Waitrose Cookery School in London for the Waitrose Cricket Cook Off.

Each had to create an inspirational recipe under the watchful eye of 2010 MasterChef winner Dhruv Baker; Gordon McDermott, executive chef at the Waitrose Cookery School and former England cricketer and ECB Selector, Anqus Fraser.

Stefan's dish of Zesty mackerel fillets with raspberry and rocket salad proved so popular that it will now be featured on a recipe card available to shoppers in West Yorkshire Waitrose branches throughout the Summer.



*Under the watchful  
eye of the judges*

Not only that, but food lovers can also vote for it in an online competition, with the chance to win a variety of cricket related prizes.

"It's been a huge honour to be asked to produce a recipe for Waitrose," said Stefan "and it's great to think that people all across the country can access my recipe and create it themselves at home."

"This is one of my favourite dishes and it really sums up Summer for me. The sweet tartness of the berries complements the mackerel perfectly and, combined with the crispness of the lemon and coriander,

it's the perfect summer salad."

"I was astounded by the quality of dishes served up by the 10 chefs taking part in the Waitrose Cricket Cook Off," said Dhruv Baker.

"There is no doubt that these chefs serve up some of the finest food in cricket and anyone lucky enough to be at one of the grounds this summer and taste them will enjoy some inspirational recipes and cooking of the highest standard.

"I look forward to seeing which of the dishes is deemed to be the winner by the public."



To try out Stefan's recipe and vote for it in the on-line competition, visit [waitrose.com/cricket](http://waitrose.com/cricket) at <http://bit.ly/CricketCookOff>. ■







# DOWN TO THE VERY LAST DETAILS

THE RHS CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW IS AN ANNUAL HIGHLIGHT ON THE INTERNATIONAL SUMMER CALENDAR, BUT WITH SO MANY EVENTS TO HOST AND GUESTS TO CATER FOR, IT'S TRULY AN EXERCISE IN METICULOUS PLANNING

As the sun began to go down on what had been a gloriously warm afternoon on 19 May, the gates to the grounds of the Royal Hospital Chelsea were ceremoniously opened. It was time once again for the great opening highlight of the social season: gala preview evening at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

With distinguished guests inching their way into the temporary Great Pavilion and dozens of jeroboams of Laurent-Perrier uncorked, it wasn't long before 5,100 palms were claspng flutes of Champagne to mark the start of the 101st staging of this quintessentially English event on the north bank of the River Thames.

Behind the scenes moments before, the Sodexo Prestige team preparing to serve all this bubbly were being maneuvered into place alongside the red welcome carpet, events director Alex Beaumont lining up the waiting staff in their alternate black and white uniforms on one side and, on the other, Champagne station manager Ian Simpson urging: 'Let's see your smiling faces.'

The Monday of the RHS Chelsea Flower Show is always a bit special. It's invited-

*Her Majesty the Queen is escorted around the show by RHS director-general Sue Biggs and, shortly after her departure, thousands descend on the charity gala preview evening.*

guests only during the day; a time when celebrities take a stroll around the displays together with the world's press and TV crews, eagerly reporting on the medal hopefuls and eyeing the amazing show gardens on 'Main Avenue'. Late afternoon, Her Majesty the Queen is escorted around the show by RHS director-general Sue Biggs and, shortly after her departure, thousands descend on the charity gala preview evening.

Sodexo Prestige caters for both private

dinners and the public throughout the week of the show but Monday evening is the major focus of activity with prestigious figures from the capital's financial institutions and industry leaders enjoying Champagne and canapés ahead of formal dinners.

The evening is the culmination of months of planning and six hours ahead of the service period, events director Alex Beaumont and senior event manager Tim Furnival address the 50 managers who will direct front-line staff. They come from other parts of the Prestige portfolio: Ascot Racecourse, Knebworth House, Everton FC, United Airlines and in-house purchasing, and Alex is delighted to welcome them and share the news that Sodexo has won a two-year extension to the Chelsea contract.

There are seven bars within the 10-acre showground and a total of 34 companies have exclusive individual meeting points



Afternoon tea in the Champagne and Seafood Lounge



Chelsea Pensioner Major Adrian Coles MBE





in various locations across the site, from which the Sodexo staff will serve their guests Champagne (or Orchard Press non-alcoholic mocktails) and canapés. Depending on the size of group to be served, they have one, two, three or even four six-foot trestle tables, each to be dressed with a pale green fitted cloth. Everyone has detailed briefing notes showing precisely where each of the six platters of canapés should be positioned on the table, so that every table looks identical. Timings for getting tablecloths in place and warnings to tray-carrying staff

to be wary of TV crews' trailing cables and microphone booms follow, together with a rallying cry: 'We deliver the best service and the best hospitality experience we can.'

No detail is left to chance as Tim runs through exactly how the Orchard Press mocktail should be presented (glass three quarters full of ice), how vinyl gloves

are provided to enable staff to prod any canapés dislodged in transit back into place on the platters, and how porters have been allocated to assist with getting all the equipment into place from three lorries strategically located around the site.

*'It's such an amazing event to do,' he said. 'I love it. It's a big plus that I enjoy my job.'*

For Debbie McGhee there's a 3pm afternoon tea to oversee in the Champagne and Seafood Lounge. Debbie has 14 staff lined up to serve what she describes as a 'posh afternoon tea' to a special group of RHS volunteers – 320

plant experts from across the UK who are brought together here once a year and treated by the RHS.

Deputy Company Secretary Judith Neville explains: 'They are experts in various types of plants who advise the RHS and this is our thank you to them for their contributions throughout the year, and



*In the nearby Ranelagh Restaurant it's a hive of activity: bags of cutlery are being unpacked, green napkins folded and placed on the matching tablecloths and chair stacks wait to be dismantled*



the one opportunity in the year when they meet and talk shop.'

In the nearby Ranelagh Restaurant it's a hive of activity: bags of cutlery are being unpacked, green napkins folded and placed on the matching tablecloths and chair stacks wait to be dismantled. In the Rock Bank Restaurant, manager Andy Ward – at his fourth Chelsea Flower Show – is preparing for 346 gala dinner guests. He has 48 staff to serve a three-course meal at 35 tables and, aside from a slight concern about the

warmth in the room, he's looking forward to it. 'It's such an amazing event to do,' he said. 'I love it. It's a big plus that I enjoy my job.'

Gala dinners were also taking place in the North Ranelagh Restaurant (RHS), Garden Terrace Restaurant (M&G), Exhibitors/Serpentine Restaurant (KPMG) and Thames View Restaurant (PwC).

At Chelsea for the first time, Juliet Kay was working on the seafood theatre point in the Great Pavilion. 'It's a really good experience,'

she said. 'I have worked at Ascot Racecourse but I have never been to the Chelsea Flower Show before. I'm learning so much.'

There were four theatre points in the Great Pavilion: in addition to the seafood, there was The Chocolate Box, The Bakery and Woodall's Charcuterie who are working with Sodexo Prestige at a number of events this summer. Woodall's obviously enjoyed the occasion, taking to Twitter to declare: 'Fantastic evening. We loved the canapés you made with our British charcuterie.' ■





# A NEW ERA

## PRESTIGE VENUES & EVENTS

THE LAUNCH OF A NEW PREMIUM OFFER FROM SODEXO  
PRESTIGE CALLED FOR A PARTY SHOWING OFF ITS  
VENUES, CUISINE AND SUPERB SERVICE



The company behind catering and hospitality at The Open Championship, Ascot Racecourse, RHS Chelsea Flower Show and the Scottish food and drink 'Oscars' threw a memorable party of its own. Sodexo Prestige, Sodexo's sports, leisure and travel division, called on all of its event experience when it launched its new premium service, Prestige Venues & Events (PV&E), in style during a showpiece function at Edinburgh's historic Assembly Rooms on March 27. Some of the biggest movers and shakers of the events and conferences industry attended and helped celebrate the launch of this new service including a state of the art website ([prestigevenuesandevents.sodexo.com](http://prestigevenuesandevents.sodexo.com)) and a dedicated Central Enquiry Hub service, which promises to bring new business to a range of renowned venues and events across the UK. The Central Enquiry Hub provides a 'one stop shop' for venue finders with a portfolio of over 50 unique and iconic venues across the UK.

The glamorous gathering was designed to illustrate the brand's ethos and showcase the expertise of the company. With the spotlight well and truly on food, more than two-hundred guests including clients, prospects, customers, trade bodies and press contacts were treated to a vast display of culinary talent, the venue reflecting four main themes and concepts: a fine dining tasting restaurant, an edible garden inspired by the Royal Botanic

Garden Edinburgh, a taste of Scotland seafood banquet and a hydration station featuring local brews.

The evening began with Austin Tilsley, regional director Sodexo Prestige in Scotland, who introduced an army of renowned Sodexo Prestige chefs, amongst them Stephen Frost, Tom Beauchamp, Ben Dutson, Ben Harrison and Trevor Garden, responsible for creating the menu for the evening. He said: "It's an exciting time for the company as we launch our new service which is eagerly awaited by the sector. What better way to mark the occasion than by doing what we do best and organising a truly memorably event with outstanding hospitality – only this time to entertain our clients and customers. The company has enjoyed success across the UK, and we are determined to continually innovate to keep up the momentum.

"The launch of Prestige Venue & Events comes after extensive research and consultation with the venues we work with and the booking agents who are the engine room of the sector. Of course we also sought the opinions and input of customers, who simply want to know their conference or event will be a success. As a

result we have created a new product which will benefit all of those groups. We have taken what can be a complex process and instead made it incredibly simple to find and book a venue for any type of event."

This was followed by a speech from Chris John, managing director Sodexo Prestige UK and Ireland, who explained the benefits the new service aims to offer clients and



*Ayrshire ham hock, garden pea puree, shallot and broad bean salad. Cured Shetland salmon, beetroot and vodka jelly with horseradish crème fraîche. Watercress egg custard, soft boiled quail's egg with a toasted bread soldier*





customers. "It's because of this strong focus on our local teams around the world that we continue to grow as a business. Perhaps more importantly, by showcasing these talents we've been able to create an offer that gives our clients and customers the reassurance that the same highly skilled and engaged teams across the board will help deliver events for any occasion and size, helping the business to grow even further throughout 2014 and beyond".



Guests then tucked into an array of dishes designed by various members of the award-winning craft team, including such creative delights as savoury goats' cheese ice cream, white truffle and Parmesan popcorn, lobster brioche club sandwich, beetroot macaroons and Parmesan millefeuille. The event also gave a nod to Prestige Venues & Events' commitment to using locally sourced and sustainable produce wherever possible, serving up Loch Fyne oysters, Inverawe Smokehouse trout, Lanark blue cheese and a selection of Ayrshire charcuterie as prime examples of this core ethos.

Stephen Frost, executive chef for Scotland said: "At Sodexo Prestige we pride ourselves on using the finest local produce in all of our dishes. That's why we decided to serve up some of the best food sourced from right here on our doorstep. Scotland has such a rich larder that we intend to take full advantage of it whenever

possible. We also like to create exciting new flavour infusions, constantly pushing our skills to new levels to keep our clients coming back for more.

"The launch of Prestige Venues & Events has given us a real chance to showcase the innovation and talent our executive team has to offer. It has also allowed us to build and deliver a new standard in customer experience that we look forward to introducing to all our clients."

'It was very interesting to appreciate the sheer scale and global presence of the brand,' one guest commented of the launch event. 'It was very evident that Sodexo Prestige has a great deal of support from their senior colleagues which, coupled with the incredible venues they cater for plus the solid brand behind them, will ensure their presence in the marketplace continues to go from strength to strength.' ■

### INTRODUCING THE CENTRAL ENQUIRY HUB – A NEW ERA FOR PRESTIGE VENUES & EVENTS

Sodexo Prestige introduces Prestige Venues & Events, a new service that promises to make sourcing and booking the perfect venue easier.

The Central Enquiry Hub is now live and is ready to take calls from event bookers, providing:

- A first point of contact for the entire UK collection
- Easy access online or by phone
- A streamlined process from initial enquiry through to event delivery
- Exceptional customer service
- Expert knowledge from our friendly team
- A quick and timely response

Call: 08456 055 699

Or visit:  
[PrestigeVenuesAndEvents.sodexo.com](http://PrestigeVenuesAndEvents.sodexo.com)





# LET IT SNOW

THIS MIGHT SEEM LIKE A PECULIAR WISH GIVEN THE CURRENT SEASON, BUT WITH THE DAZZLING ARRAY OF CHRISTMAS PARTY PACKAGES ON OFFER THIS WINTER, GETTING SNOWED IN AT ONE OF THESE UNIQUE VENUES IS SOUNDING BETTER BY THE MINUTE



Knebworth House

Whether it be an office gathering, client event or simply an evening of festive celebrations with family and friends, there's nothing quite like a Christmas party. Of course, the right amount of Christmas cheer, crackers and culinary indulgence are essential, but ultimately the success of a Christmas event comes down to one thing; the venue – and, when it comes to Prestige's portfolio, there's certainly no shortage of choice.

With everything from stadiums to stately homes on offer, and in locations right across the country, it's difficult to envisage any preference going uncatered for. Each venue has its own unique Christmas package, designed and themed specifically to complement the space and reflect its heritage, with various options created to suit parties of all different sizes and sorts. Large gatherings can hire out

whole venues, while smaller groups have the alternative of sharing with others on one of several 'party nights' over the festive period, all of them including food, drink and entertainment with tickets priced per head.

Glasgow's legendary stadium at Hampden Park, for example, offers shared bookings in their dazzling winter-themed suite, beginning with festive cocktails in a specially-created grotto overlooking the pitch, followed by an elaborate three-course meal, music and entertainment. The venue also caters for private parties of between seventy and five hundred guests throughout December and January, allowing the option of having the space themed and personalised by an on-site team as well as offering exclusive accommodation rates for

*Each venue has its own unique Christmas package, designed and themed specifically to complement the space and reflect its heritage*



Knebworth House

hotels in the city centre.

A particularly unique venue is Suffolk's Athenaeum, a recently refurbished Grade I listed building perched on Angel Hill in the centre of historic Bury St Edmunds. With a Georgian chandeliered ballroom and recently refurbished lounge, The Athenaeum is a popular event space all year round, though its historic charm and old-world elegance make it a particularly special place for a Christmas soiree. Packages cater for between seventy-five

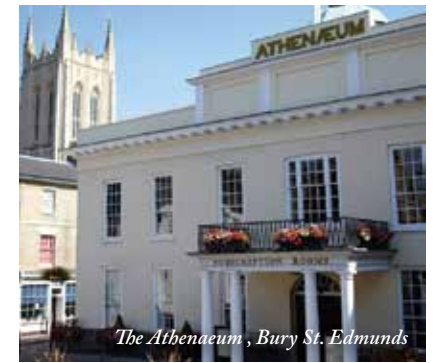
*Everything from secluded stately homes to legendary stadium venues are available for hire, ensuring an entirely unique festive celebration*



The Caledonian Hall, Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh



The American Express Community Stadium, Brighton



The Athenaeum, Bury St. Edmunds

and a hundred and eighty guests and include a traditional Christmas dinner in the Ballroom followed by a disco, with an assortment of drinks options ranging from beer to bubbles.

And then, of course, there is beautiful Knebworth House, a magnificent country manor in Hertfordshire dating from the 16th century. Set against the backdrop of the house itself and attached to the Lodge Barn, shared Christmas parties are held in a large, stylish marquee with a full bar and a traditional theme. Shared party nights are held on each Friday and Saturday in December and include a three-course meal, entertainment, a bar and a themed disco. For larger groups, exclusive hire is available throughout November, December and January and includes full use of the estate's Cobbold Barn from 7pm until midnight for a minimum of sixty guests, as well as a three-course Christmas menu with optional extras such as midnight snacks, all-inclusive

wristbands and a DJ.

'Planning for Christmas at Knebworth starts in January each year as we know how important Christmas parties are, often being the only social event of the year for companies,' explains Sodexo sales manager for Knebworth House Katy Doherty. 'We look to offer our clients a memorable experience and 2014 will

be our eighth year hosting parties in our stunning marquee. We have grown our offer since starting with a simple marquee for two-hundred people, to a fully themed starlit marquee that now seats four-hundred. This year we're offering a Winter Wonderland event where our evenings include a delicious three-course meal, entertainment and our resident DJ until 1am.' ■





# CHELSEA'S GROWING STAR

FROM WAITING TABLES TO TAKING ON THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF OPERATIONS MANAGER, THE LAST TWENTY YEARS HAVE CERTAINLY SEEN EVENT GURU JULIE BROMAGE MAKE HER MARK ON THE RHS CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW

A young waitress serving diners in the Rock Bank Restaurant at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 20 years ago is now running the event's whole catering operation.

Julie Bromage has risen through the ranks from waitress to function manager to event manager and is now Sodexo Prestige's operations manager for the show.

It's a life she's grown accustomed to from an early age because she used to work alongside her late mum, Maureen Pincham, who also used to work for Sodexo at Chelsea, serving in the President's Marquee.

Event management is a real family affair because her sister, Deborah, has worked with her at Ascot, her brother, Mark, worked at the 2012 Olympic Games and husband Grant helps at weekends too!

"It's very much in the blood," admitted Julie, who has been running the account for seven

years. "It's hard work – up to 16 hours a day during the show – and it takes over your life, but everyone in my life accepts it."

It's not as though the event is on her doorstep, either, because Julie has to commute from her home in Rugby, in the Midlands.

Julie enjoys the challenge of planning the logistics for operating in the relatively confined space of the grounds of the Royal Hospital and said: "It's always quite exciting when you are at the show and each year I'm always looking at areas we can improve."

Not that the horticultural expertise on show has rubbed off on Julie. "I do appreciate all the work that goes into making the gardens on Main Avenue but most of the time I'm whizzing past them and I don't get a chance to do any gardening at home. My back garden is all bark and decking!"

This year's show saw Julie appear on TV



with event director Alex Beaumont and executive chef Ben Dutson as part of a BBC *Countdown to Chelsea* programme describing all the pre-show preparations.

"It was a bit nerve-wracking being in front of the camera," she said. "I preferred it when they were following me round while I was doing my job rather than when I was being asked lots of questions."

Reflecting on the 2014 show, Julie is delighted to say it was "hugely successful" and that sales forecasts were hit. And, after a Summer helping out at other events of the season, September will see Julie busy beginning planning for the 2015 Chelsea Flower Show. You could say it's a perennial affair! ■



# DELIVERING THE DIFFERENCE



**STEPHANIE LEE**  
NATIONAL ACCOUNTS AND ENQUIRY  
HUB MANAGER

the enquiry hub can give to them by bringing all our venues together in one place – on the phone.'

As well as setting up and managing the enquiry hub, national accounts manager Stephanie is also responsible for leading the hub's team and ensuring that the concept of this new venture is communicated and well received by agencies and corporate bookers. This is undeniably a role filled with new challenges, not least the fact that potential venue bookers want to hear back about availability and pricing as soon as possible, meaning that managing tight deadlines for enquiries and making sure they deliver to a target three-hour response time is the team's highest priority.

*'It's exciting as it's a completely new venture for Prestige and offers a brand new service to the MICE market. As a 'one-stop-shop' for both agency and corporate bookers, our enquiry hub team are always ready to take calls and questions about our venues.'*

'We manage this by carefully monitoring and tracking enquiries and our subsequent responses with clear accountability within my team and at our numerous venues,' she says. 'Strong communication is vital in both my own team and also with all our venue sales teams to make sure we are all focused on delivering our promises to our clients. With over 50 venues across the UK, this can get hectic but it's enjoyable to give clients the information they need within – and often beating – their timeframe. We aim to deliver above their expectations to build loyalty.'

It's no surprise, then, to hear that Stephanie prides herself on being both professional and very approachable, both key qualities for good team leadership, explaining that she strives to create a positive yet focused atmosphere in the office.

Her home, she says, is her sanctuary, though family life is no less hectic, with daughters Gracie and Trina and husband Gerard keeping her busy outside the office, as well as training for her first half marathon (due to take place in October) taking up any spare minutes. The training is tough, but she's typically optimistic, saying 'It's one way of making my milestone birthday next year more palatable while celebrating health and happiness!'

As manager of Sodexo Prestige's new Central Enquiry Hub, 2014 is shaping up to be a busy year for Stephanie Lee.

'The development and delivery of the new enquiry hub is my main focus,' she explains. 'It's exciting as it's a completely new venture for Prestige and offers a brand new service to the MICE market. As a 'one-stop-shop' for both agency and corporate bookers, our enquiry hub team are always ready to take calls and questions about our venues. I've been working with our venue teams to train them on responding in the best and most efficient way to deal with enquiries sent to them from the hub team. We're also ensuring our reporting processes are robust so we can better understand the volume, nature and importance of enquiries and bookings. Getting the message out to the agent market about the Prestige Venues & Events brand is key and I'm excited about the unique service



WILSON ALVES  
TECHNICAL SUPERVISOR AT EMIRATES  
EXPERIENCE



Recently seconded to Dubai to share his knowledge with the team there, technical and maintenance supervisor Wilson's main role is to provide technical support and supervise a customer service team for the high-profile Emirates Aviation Experience, based in Greenwich. It's a public attraction which aims to provide an insight into the operations and modern achievements of commercial air travel through the use of state-of-the-art technology, interactive displays and life-size aircraft models. Wilson also instructs in the attraction's realistic simulators, which he thinks provide an excellent experience for customers.

'I'm currently working on improving our simulators by adding more functionality and destinations to fly to,' he says. 'This will enhance the experience by making it more of a challenge for the customers, especially for the aviation enthusiasts.'

Wilson would certainly count himself amongst the latter, and enjoys flying a small propeller plane with an instructor to build his flying experience, as well as keeping himself updated with the latest information regarding aviation and IT. He describes himself as committed, loyal and fun outside the office, and professional and ambitious at work – characteristics which help him tackle the various challenges his role presents.

'My main challenge is to provide on-site technical support for the simulators and the rest of the hard services by undertaking the "first line" fix on all the assets and equipment,' he explains. 'I meet these challenges by fixing and reporting the fault immediately by coordinating with sub-contractors to ensure the Aviation Experience is maintained to the highest standard and open to the public.'

GEORGE SWANEPOEL  
LOUNGE MANAGER FOR AVIATION

George describes himself as patient and hardworking which, considering the scope of his demanding role as lounge manager for the complete Malaysian Airlines set-up, is just as well. His extensive duties include the cleaning of the airline's main offices in Earls Court and their operation offices at Heathrow's Terminal 4, as well as their ticket desks and the lounge as a whole, from cleaning to catering and daily operations – certainly not a remit for the faint hearted.

At the moment, George is working to get all the new changes in the renewed Malaysian Airlines contract installed, and after that he'll immediately start working on the brand new Gulf Airlines contract. 'This contract will form part of my patch so these are

very exciting times,' he explains. 'I also had the pleasure of being a part of the United tender and played a role in the start-up, which was very exciting too, although I wasn't able to see that through to the end as I had other areas to look after.'

It's certainly a challenging job, particularly when even the smallest detail can have huge implications. 'Being at the airport you have many day-to-day challenges, but you just need to face each one head on and move on to the next. The biggest challenge here is that the lounge is strictly Halal, and this opened a whole new world for me. We really have to learn as we go, but I have a fantastic team here who support me very well and together we make this lounge the success that it is.'



# DISCOVER THE ULTIMATE CHRISTMAS VENUE

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ASCOT RACECOURSE BERKSHIRE		HMS BELFAST LONDON		
				12 
		THE JOHN SMITH'S STADIUM HUDDERSFIELD		
			16 	
ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS EDINBURGH				KNEBWORTH HOUSE HERTFORDSHIRE
				24 
NEWCASTLE UNITED FC NEWCASTLE		SIEMENS CRYSTAL BUILDING LONDON		

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