

PRESTIGE

THE MAGAZINE FROM
SODEXO SPORTS & LEISURE

SPRING 2017

PLAYING TO
THE GALLERY

Launch of the
National Café | 21



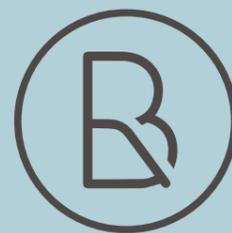
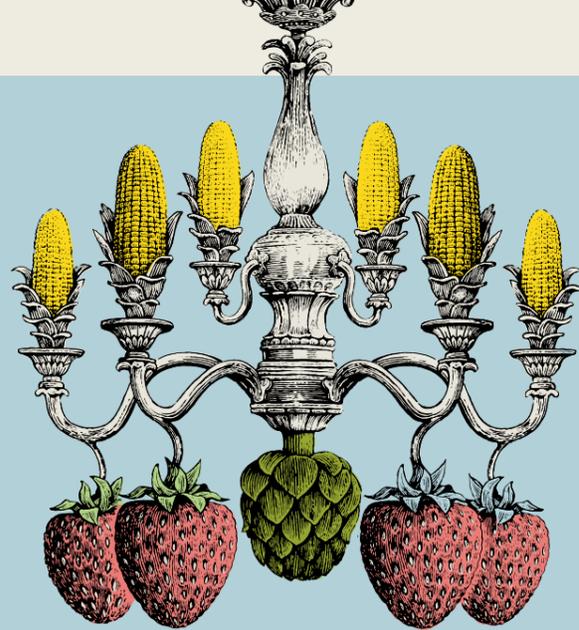
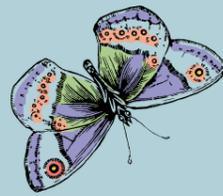
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“For many years I have been a visitor – and sometimes a competitor – at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. I am truly pleased to now be designing a space, menus and an experience that we hope will delight you and your guests. We have been hard at work and we cannot wait to welcome you.”

Raymond Blanc

WELCOME TO OUR SPRING ISSUE

Chris Bray
CEO, Sports & Leisure
UK & Ireland



2016 was an intensely rewarding time for Sodexo Sports & Leisure. With acquisitions, high levels of client retention, global expansion and another packed summer events season, our teams have been busy delivering great service and producing occasions of high quality.

Starting with one of the most significant developments for our business, we completed the acquisition of a number of Peyton and Byrne public catering contracts and also Peyton Events in October and I am really excited about the potential we have to make an impact in the retail and visitor attraction market in London. One of the first projects we have worked on with Peyton and Byrne has been the renovation of the National Café at the National Gallery. This is the first significant initiative following the acquisition and has brought together Sodexo’s operational and project management expertise with Peyton and Byrne’s food and hospitality credentials. With design from the esteemed designer Ramy Fischler, the new space is light and airy, while simultaneously reflecting the historic heritage of such a key London institution. We were delighted to host, together with Peyton & Byrne, a party to celebrate the launch of the beautifully refurbished National Café. Don’t miss our report of the event, which included appearances from a number of celebrities and marked the transformation of the customer and dining experience, providing new creative potential for events as well as gallery visitors.

From glamorous events in London, to fine dining across the country, some of our chefs have been busy cooking up a storm in the kitchen

and producing world-class culinary creations. Ben Dutson at Ascot Racecourse has a Michelin star inspired dining experience (a preview of which you’ll have seen on the stunning front cover), and Stephen Frost has crafted a new range of banqueting menus for our Scottish venues, while Tom Beauchamp has worked on an imaginative menu to help Dundas Castle celebrate 600 years of their Auld Keep.

Moving across the Irish Sea, we have recently added the National Football Stadium at Windsor Park, Belfast to our Prestige Venues and Events portfolio. It’s a great venue, having enjoyed a multi-million pound major refurbishment, and it is now set for hosting all sorts of events, ensuring the NIFA are in the best commercial position.

Celebrating football success back in England, we interviewed the PFA Women’s Player of the Year, Izzy Christiansen. Supporting diversity is a key objective for Sodexo, and our sponsorship of this award means we are championing the growth of this exciting sport. Izzy’s focus on building up the women’s game and her dedication and hard work are a true inspiration. We are excited to continue our sponsorship this year of the Women’s categories at the PFA Awards this April.

2017 promises much for Sodexo Sports & Leisure and we are already capitalising on the successes of 2016.

I hope you enjoy this issue and all the best for the year ahead. •

CREDITS

Morag Kent, Editor-in-Chief
Natasha Carr, Venues/Food Editor
Joshua Corbett, Events Editor
Chloe Howard, Digital Editor

For all advertising and business development enquiries contact:
Sarah Armstrong
sarah.armstrong@sodexo.com

Designed and published for Sodexo by Onimpact

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A SPRING KITCHEN

Sodexo chefs Malcolm Emery (right) and Ross Clark (left) working with Raymond Blanc OBE at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2016. Exclusive cookery demonstrations will once again be on the menu in 2017 at Jardin Blanc. Call 0845 268 0251 to book your place.



BREAKING THE RULES

Fine food is undoubtedly one of life's most exquisite pleasures. A perfect culinary experience takes a diner on a multi-sensory journey, with every course creatively planned and lovingly crafted to match the mood of the occasion, season and venue. Sodexo Prestige Venues & Events chefs are connoisseurs at capturing this spirit of fine dining; skilled in creating beautiful food that delivers an impact way beyond expectation.

When Sodexo Head Chef Ben Dutton and Executive Chef Gemma Amor were approached to plan an exclusive Christmas experience for Ascot Racecourse, they seized the opportunity to design a menu that echoed the anticipation of a race day, with a show-stopping final course every bit as exhilarating as the sight of a race winner crossing the finish line.

Excited by cooking and presentation styles they had seen at first hand during a bench-marking visit to a pop-up restaurant in Spain; Alinea: Madrid, (run by the same team behind Michelin 3-star restaurant Alinea in Chicago), Ben and Gemma bottled that enthusiasm and brought it back to the Sodexo kitchen. The experience inspired the duo to create Ascot's 'Gastronomic Food Journey'

experience, a 10-course tasting menu that draws on both a sense of drama and fun. Limited to just 40 covers, it's a fascinating and exclusive addition to a race day.

"Our goal was to create something for Ascot that you would normally only expect to see in a Michelin-starred restaurant, using a blend of textures, flavours, aromas and sights that stimulate the senses and leave lasting memories," explains Ben.

The 10 courses begin with a glass of Bollinger champagne enhanced with a sugar cube flavoured with elderflower, raspberry or vanilla. The cubes are arranged on a mossy bank called 'the flavour wall', allowing the guests to choose their favourite.

This opener sets the tone for a truly immersive eating experience, and in the manner of Michelin-starred restaurants there are unexpected offerings. The trio of Japanese tuna, salmon and beef tartare canapés is designed to create intrigue – served in cones topped with caviar, they look sweet but taste savoury. The amuse-bouche of smoked eel, soft cooked quails egg and a parsley velouté is poured at the table, and sea water splashed onto dry ice creates a living work of art for a risotto noir with squid

ink and butter-poached lobster. Wagyu beef is served raw on a hot stone so guests can sizzle it to their taste at the table, and the caramel popcorn presented in a smooth, liquid form fascinates the senses still further.

Undoubtedly, the menu's pièce de résistance is a stunning dessert involving no plates, but plenty of artistic imagination. Ben explains: "A chocolate egg filled with praline brownie, freeze-dried raspberries and yoghurt, and raspberry powder, is placed on the table. Two chefs then spread a colourful array of ingredients around it, as if they were artists painting from a palette."

The tablecloth becomes adorned with beetroot fluid gel, vanilla anglaise, mango coulis, aerated chocolate mousse and raspberry pearls. The egg is then dramatically smashed, leaving the table resembling a culinary version of a Jackson Pollock masterpiece.

With diners free to blend and savour the ingredients in any way they want, directly from the tablecloth, this is a meal where no two tables, or experiences, are the same. »



Head Chef Ben Dutton preparing a chocolate egg filled with praline brownie, freeze-dried raspberries and yoghurt, and raspberry powder.



Wild sea bass, roast scallop from the West Coast of Scotland, salsify and spouts with celeriac purée and jus fume.

» Stephen Frost's philosophy is to design every fine-dining menu with one thought in mind: "You only have one chance to deliver your best. Treat every event like the first; remember you may never serve the same group of diners twice."

It's little wonder Sodexo is proud to have Regional Executive Chef Stephen as one of the creative forces working to create fine-dining menus for some of the most exclusive venues and events in Scotland. From private weddings and corporate dinners to hospitality planning for high-profile sporting events such as The Open Golf Championship where the eyes of the world are looking on, Stephen relishes

“
*You only have
one chance to
deliver your
best...*”

the freedom he's given to create. "We love that challenge, and our team of chefs is never frightened of looking at each other and saying: "let's bend over backwards to deliver the best menu we can," he says.

Conscious that food trends constantly evolve and fully aware of the value placed on local sourcing, the team loves to introduce a quirky twist on the traditional to its dishes. "Whether it's creating a dessert gel from Irn Bru, curing salmon in Eden Mill Gin from St Andrews or using ground coffee as a dry roast on beef ribs, we do revel in altering people's perceptions of how things should look and taste on a plate," Stephen admits.

Creating a buzz around Sodexo's fine dining credentials is also something he loves to do, and a recent event at the Edinburgh New Town Cookery School proved a great platform to showcase the calibre of the craft and innovation team. Stephen selected a five-course menu from the latest banqueting offering, and he and three Sodexo chefs cooked the dishes live in front of invited guests, talking the diners through each course and the story behind it. Reflecting both the season and the venue, the dishes included pickled mackerel landed in Peterhead, beef from The Buccleuch Estate with wild garlic foraged by the chefs that morning, and cheeses from Fife and Lanarkshire.

The preview aimed to intrigue and involve, with guests invited to help recreate dishes from the canapé selection which included duck from Scotland's award-winning Rannock

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*The creative drive
behind Sodexo's
new banqueting
menus has
undoubtedly been
energised by the
time Stephen and
his fellow executive
chefs spent working
alongside Raymond
Blanc OBE.*”

smokery on toasted brioche; purple potato crisp with scallop tartar, soy and sesame, pink grapefruit and Knochraiche Farm crème fraîche; and avocado, pomegranate and sweetcorn served on a parsnip crisp.

The creative drive behind Sodexo's new banqueting menus has undoubtedly been energised by the time Stephen and his fellow executive chefs spent working alongside Raymond Blanc OBE at last year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show in May. "He is so inspiring," admits Stephen. "What impresses me most about Raymond is the care and attention he pays to everything, not just the food. His table designs always allow his diners a carefully measured amount of space, and he'll place grazing platters at an exact level for the eye to see them at their best. It's something that really resonates with me: the setting is as important to the experience as the menu." »

Perthshire raspberries with whipped Lothian cream, toasted oatmeal, honeycomb and mint.



» Challenged with creating a fine dining tasting menu to celebrate a milestone anniversary for the historic Dundas Castle in Scotland, Head Chef Tom Beauchamp confesses he wasn't afraid to call in his 'less is more' approach to menu planning, despite the magnitude of the occasion.

"I think the trick is never to over-complicate things and always make the ingredients the main focus," admits Tom – the man behind the dishes that celebrate the 600-year birthday of the Castle's Auld Keep, and head of a team that provides bespoke catering for over 100 private and corporate events at Dundas Castle every year.

Sodexo showcased Tom's menu (available for groups of up to 20 to book without the need to hire the venue as a whole) at a preview event for 16 invited guests, including food critics from the national press. With such a rich history behind the venue, matching the food to the Castle's story and unique location was at the forefront of Tom's mind when he made his selection. "The Castle offers an incredibly intense surrounding, and we set the table inside the Auld Keep's Stag Chamber which has very little natural lighting," he explains. "It's beautiful, magnificent and imposing – something I tried to reflect in my food."

Making this strong connection between food and environment is a passion many Sodexo chefs share, and Tom set about creating a menu to combine the variety and quality of Scotland's larder with the Castle's heritage. "We used ingredients from the Castle's estate itself including dried chive flowers and Scots pine oil extracted from tree branches," he explains.

The eight-course banquet strikes the right balance, moving successfully through a range of tastes and textures. Tom's plan was to begin with a series of small courses that deliver intense flavours, starting with devils on horseback using dates stuffed with foie gras and home cured duck ham, followed by roast potato vichyssoise served in elegant tea cups and West Coast scallop with pickled grapes.

"I was keen to be adventurous and evoke the atmosphere of a medieval banquet, so opted for a roe deer

tartare, a meat that is quite sweet and mild, which I teamed with pumpernickel purée for a nutty flavour," he says. "This is a castle renowned for its hunting, so to have my guests sitting at a table under a stag's head eating beautifully-presented roe deer is exactly the kind of ambience I wanted to create," adds Tom.

A light stone bass fish course is followed by Scottish Blackface lamb, with three types of broccoli and anchovies. And with Tom a firm believer that chocolate should be on every good menu, a chocolate pave with Hebridean sea salt, honeycomb and crème fraîche ice cream finishes things off perfectly.

"Creating menus like this allows you to apply yourself at the highest level," Tom enthuses. "And it's fun." Sir Jack Stewart-Clark, owner of Dundas Castle, called the flavours 'exquisite', the presentation 'impeccable' and hailed it as the 'perfect menu to celebrate 600 years of the Auld Keep'.

Thanks to Tom's passion and incredible attention to detail, Dundas Castle has recently become the first exclusive-use venue to receive the prestigious Visit Scotland 'Taste our Best' award, celebrating Scottish food.

While Sodexo's fine-dining philosophy advocates creativity, innovation, provenance and respect for the dining environment, what looks good on paper can only be ignited by one essential element, and that has to come from the chefs themselves. Stephen Frost sums it up perfectly. "It's got to be done with passion," he says. "That's the way to stay at the top of our game." •

Roe deer tartare teamed with pumpernickel purée for a nutty flavour.



LE PRÉ CATELAN

Opened in 1856, Le Pré Catelan enjoys a rural yet Parisian setting in Bois de Boulogne to the west of the city. Colette and Gaston Lenôtre took over Le Pré Catelan in 1976 and turned its reception rooms into one of the French capital's top venues for events, particularly renowned for high-end cuisine.

In 2007, thanks to the talents of chef Frédéric Anton, the restaurant of Le Pré Catelan received 3 stars in the Michelin Guide and in 2011 became one of Sodexo's venues and part of the Prestige Venues & Events collection in France.

Coming to the present day, Le Pré Catelan has achieved a remarkable feat. The latest Michelin Guide marks a milestone in the history of this beautiful venue. This is the tenth year that the restaurant has received a three-star rating, the highest distinction given by the Guide Rouge. This also coincides with an anniversary for Frédéric Anton, who took over the reins in the restaurant's kitchen 20 years ago.

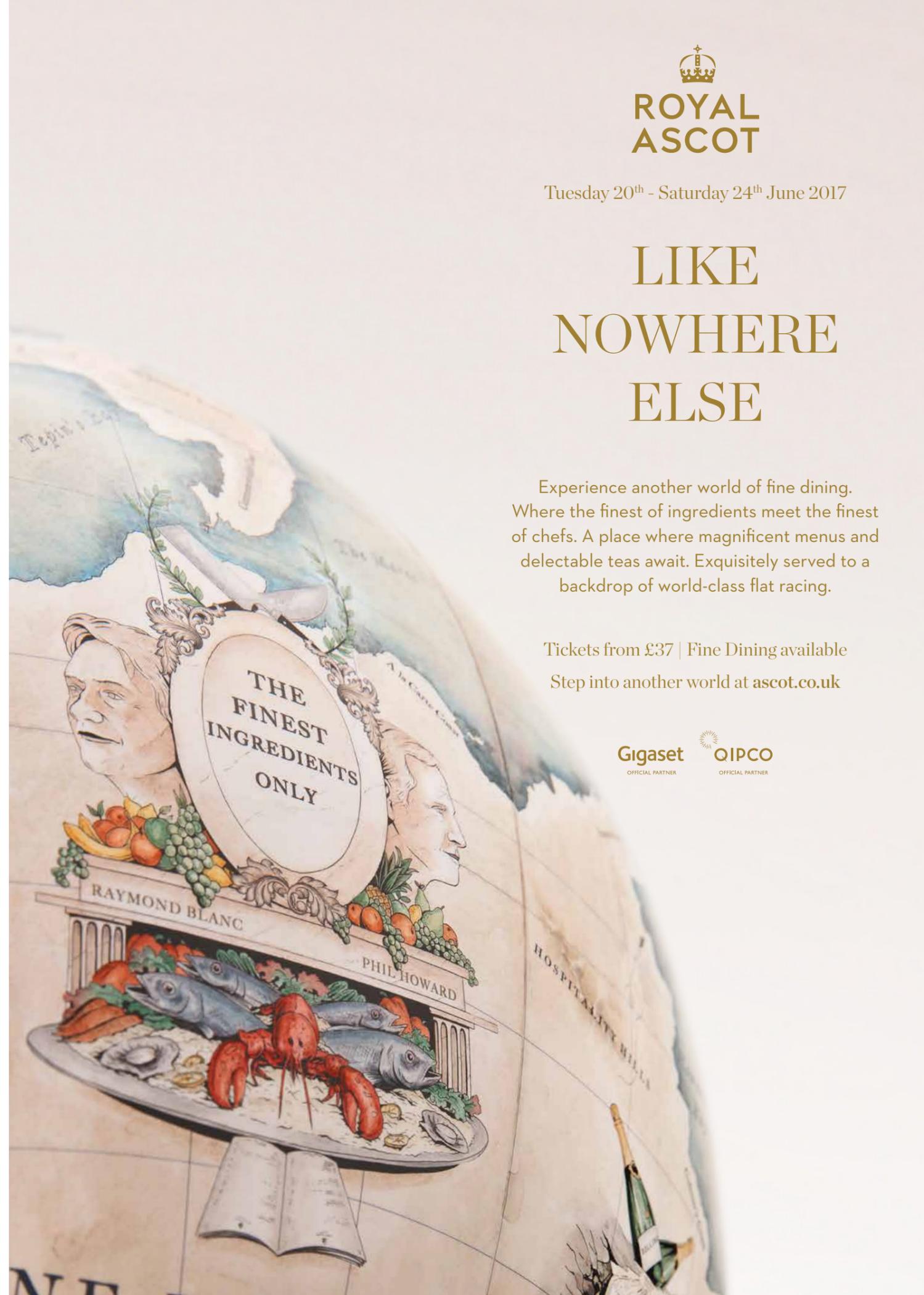
Frédéric comments, "I am particularly proud to receive the renowned three-star rating for the tenth consecutive year. My thanks to the Michelin Guide for its show of faith and to my entire team, both in the kitchen and the restaurant room at Le Pré Catelan." •

Tuesday 20th - Saturday 24th June 2017

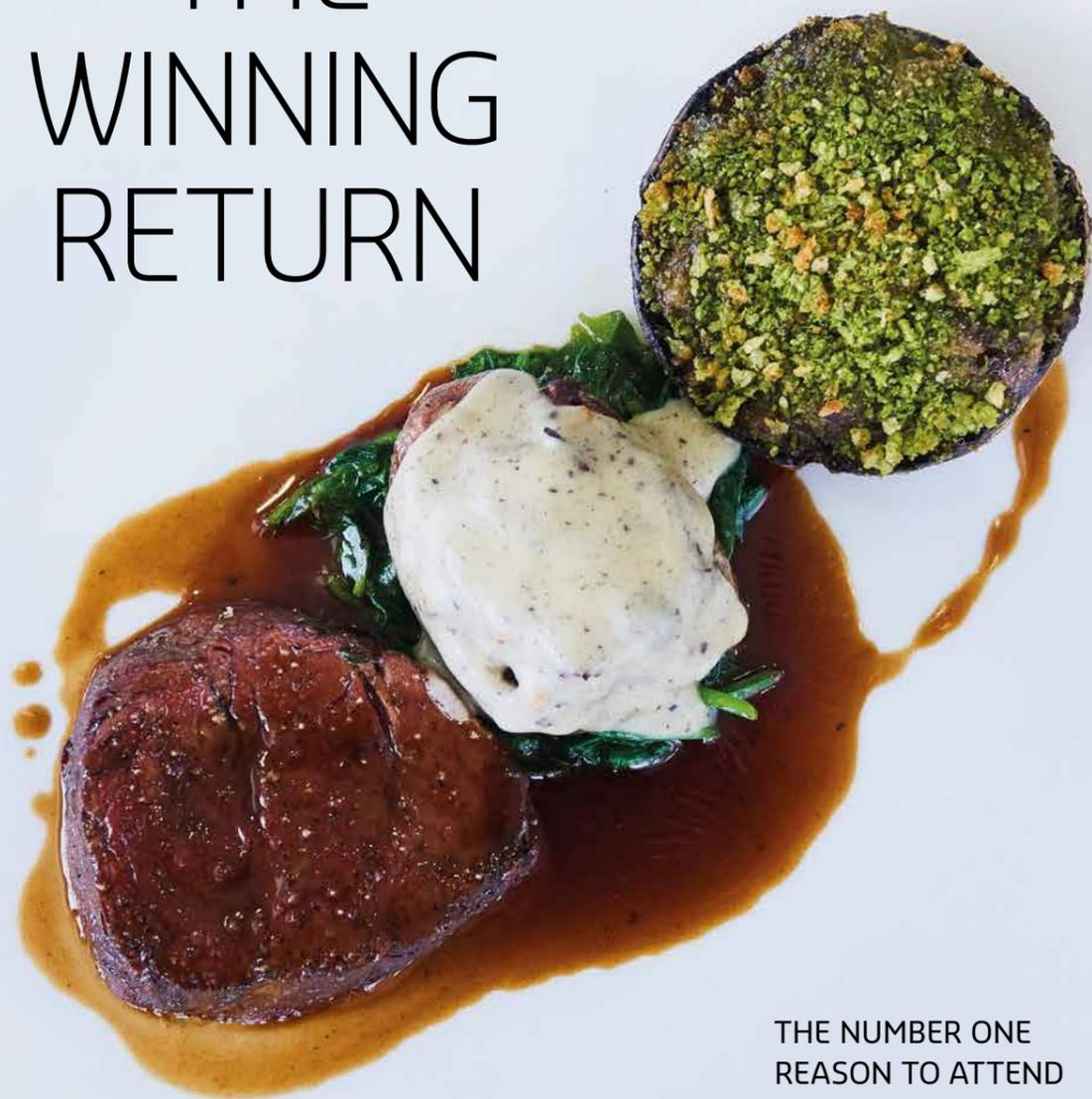
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REASON TO ATTEND
ROYAL ASCOT, APART
FROM THE THRILL OF THE
RACES, *IS THE FOOD.*



Phil Howard's
fillet of beef
with an oxtail
stuffed potato,
field mushrooms,
truffle butter and
red wine.

Following their extremely successful residency in 2016, celebrated chefs Phil Howard and Raymond Blanc OBE are back at Ascot and have designed a series of extraordinary new menus for The Royal Meeting in 2017. The Panoramic Restaurant and On5 restaurant will be commandeered by Raymond and Phil respectively, working alongside Ascot's in-house team led by award-winning Executive Chef Gemma Amor and Head Chef Ben Dutson.

The Panoramic Restaurant sits high on the sixth floor of the Grandstand within the Royal Enclosure at Royal Ascot, with uninterrupted views down the Straight Mile and also of the Winning Post. On5 is located within the Grandstand and has a spectacular balcony that spans its entire length. Waiters and waitresses attend The Ascot Service Academy and are educated in the intricacies of the menus and ingredients, service excellence and attention to detail – giving the customer a real gourmet experience and enhancing their enjoyment and knowledge of the food. »

» While hailing from Saône in eastern France, Raymond's Panoramic menus are a true celebration of British summer produce. Raymond will be using ingredients that represent the first flush of summer, with Gariguettes strawberries (a French and particularly full-flavoured variety) served alongside delicate vanilla pannacotta, and freshly picked crab from the West Country served in tantalising combination with exotic Asian flavours.

World famous, his legendary restaurant Belmond Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons has held an impressive two Michelin stars for 32 years. For Royal Ascot, ingredients are sourced close to home. In fact, the strawberry jam that's served with afternoon tea comes courtesy of Le Manoir's own kitchens. The almond and olive crusted loin of lamb was also grazed just down the road from the racecourse, at the Royal Estate.

An ingénue, at 24 Phil Howard opened The Square with his business partner, Nigel Platts-Martin. Since then, he has earned two Michelin stars (held for an incredible 17 years), been crowned



winner of The Great British Menu and opened a second restaurant, the critically acclaimed Elystan in Chelsea.

Phil's vision for On5 was to create menus that championed the best of British produce: "When planning the menu, seasonal British produce was at the forefront of my mind to create dishes that are both delicious and visually stunning." Dishes are signed off with his trademark 'delicate decadence': truffle butters, Bollinger Champagne and lemon

verbenas are seamlessly incorporated into this traditional British menu. It is the quality of the ingredients Phil uses that give the On5 restaurant's menus their incredible richness of flavour. Hand-harvested asparagus from The Wye Valley and Jersey Royal potatoes from rich Channel Island soils have been carefully selected for the diner's delight.

This culinary finery, however, is not exclusive to the two main restaurants. A dazzling four-course lunch is available in the private boxes, with menus featuring British Wagyu Beef and the finest rainbow trout from the 'gin-clear' Hampshire Chalk Stream. In the main enclosure, The Parade Ring Restaurant will be serving a medley of British seafood, including magnificent Scottish langoustines from the seas of the north-west highlands, hand-dived Orkney Island Scallops (renowned for their beautiful, melt-in-the-mouth white flesh) and Scottish Atlantic Halibut. The event's Champagne partner, Bollinger, also offers a few, thirst-quenching privileges in 2017 – with two exclusive bars in the Royal Enclosure Gardens and the Bollinger Lounge on the Motivator Lawn.

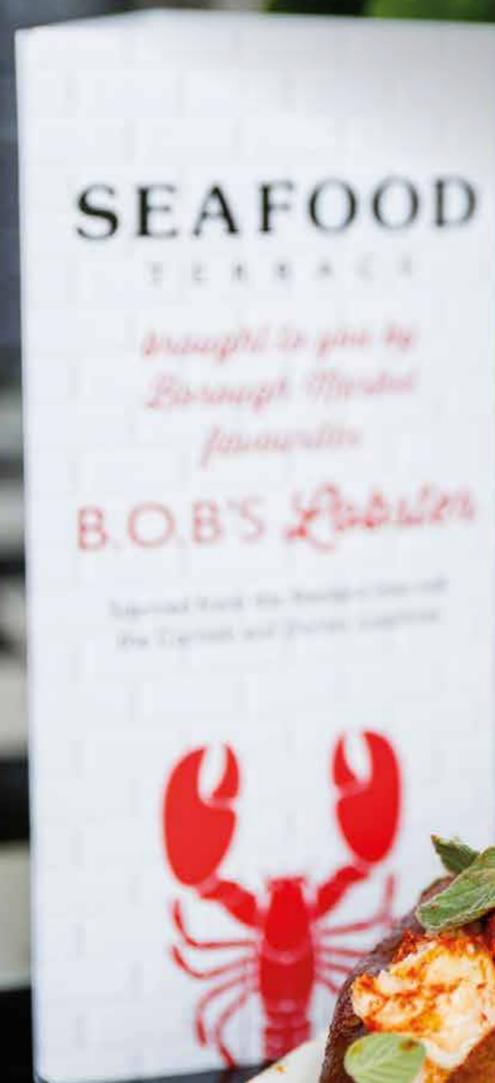
Both Raymond and Phil hold provenance at the forefront of their processes and Ascot is extremely proud to represent Assured Food Standards – a British organisation that promotes and regulates food quality. This attention to detail alongside both Raymond's and Phil's expertise demonstrates Ascot's prestige in catering, as they continue to raise the standard for fine dining in 2017 and onwards. •

Raymond Blanc's cornish crab salad with a coconut bisque.



RETAIL DINING EXPERIENCES TAKE THE LEAD FOR RACEGOERS

WITH THE HIGH STREET STEALING A MARCH ON ADOPTING THE LATEST FOOD TRENDS, THE EXPECTATIONS OF RACEGOERS ARE HIGHER THAN EVER. SODEXO HAVE TAKEN THE LEAD BY ADDRESSING CUSTOMERS' INCREASINGLY SOPHISTICATED PALATES AND DESIRE FOR PREMIUMISATION AT A DAY AT THE RACES. »



BOB's Lobster, now a key feature of the 'seafood terrace' at Ascot Racecourse.



Fresh and sustainable food by The Wood Fired Pizza Company at Ascot Racecourse.

“
The Sodexo team’s skill in choosing brands that combine quality with convenience has quickly proved its worth, with an impressive 80% leap in sales.

» Top quality food and drink can elevate a good day out into a great one, and Sodexo is not prepared to gamble when it comes to giving visitors an unforgettable race day experience all round.

“We scrutinise the food and beverage concepts and concessions to make sure they embrace popular trends, complement customer profiles and highlight Sodexo as leader in racecourse retail, not a follower,” says Alex Lewis, head of food and beverage operations at Ascot Racecourse.

Partnering with some of the UK’s most iconic racecourses brings with it a responsibility for reputation, a fact respected by Sodexo’s teams. “We constantly challenge ourselves to push the boundaries and respond with the right selection of brands and products to mirror a track’s location and heritage,” says Tim du Pon, responsible for Scotland’s Perth Racecourse. “It’s important to ensure the setting keeps pace with customer demand and we take our cues from the latest restaurant and high street trends” adds David Trotter, in charge of racecourses in Scotland including Hamilton Park Racecourse, just outside Glasgow.

Alex, Tim and David are brimming with excellent examples of how these ambitious plans play out in practice and ensure Sodexo’s retail offer is a race winner, not a non-runner.

In the three years since Sodexo renewed its contract at Ascot, there’s been a retail revolution across the main enclosures, with new food and beverage concepts introduced to suit visitor profiles and make a conscious move away from high street names.

A casual dining venue in the Queen Anne Enclosure, Ascot’s largest, has filled a void for good, inexpensive meals with table service yet no booking required. The Smokehouse launched 18 months ago and came directly from Sodexo’s eye for current food trends. “Every six months we tour the restaurants creating a buzz in London and that’s where our inspiration for The Smokehouse came from,” says Alex Lewis. “It’s transformed a tired grill into an à la carte restaurant.” All food is freshly smoked on site and diners can choose from tasty dishes including Angus steak, spiced crusted buttermilk chicken and smoked seafood linguine.

Racegoers in the King Edward VII enclosure are now enjoying Lavazza coffee, an Italian brand regarded as one of the world’s finest. With bespoke menus and products, including the introduction of a Lavazza espresso martini, it’s been another of 2016’s big successes. This has been reflected in the recent victory in the Racecourse Catering Awards 2016, where Lavazza won Most Effective Brand for Ascot Racecourse.

The enclosure also offers a constantly changing menu of cocktails using ingredients to reflect each season from the Bit & Bridle Cocktail Bar, and premium range beers and ciders at the new Brown Jack Bar.

“The latest newcomer is The Wood Fired Pizza Company, which has replaced the incumbent high street pizza concept, and uses fresh and sustainable products,” adds Alex. The Sodexo team’s skill in choosing brands that combine quality with convenience has quickly proved its worth, with an impressive 80% leap in sales.

On-the-go food options at Ascot have also stepped up a level with both permanent and mobile units offering changing menus that capture seasonal trends. “Since its introduction in 2015, Bob’s Lobster has grown steadily in popularity and its vintage VW camper van unit is now a key feature of our ‘seafood terrace’

“
The signature lobster roll uses local fresh seafood, matched with an original recipe brioche bun.

during the summer season,” explains Alex. As with every brand Sodexo’s Ascot team selects, originality, quality produce and seasonality are must-haves. The signature lobster roll uses local fresh seafood, matched with an original recipe brioche bun – bringing a touch of luxury to grab-and-go food.

Responding well to fluctuations in crowd volumes is something Sodexo is equipped to do, and the Ascot team isn’t afraid to challenge its client to get the right result. The new 20-metre long Goldikova Bar made its debut at Royal Ascot 2016, and transformed the east side of the Queen Anne Enclosure. “Previously we were building additional bars outside to cope with the big events, which can attract crowds of up to 80,000 a day,” explains Alex. “We suggested that a new permanent bar was needed, and Goldikova is the result. It was an instant hit and the bar with the highest turnover during Royal Ascot.” »



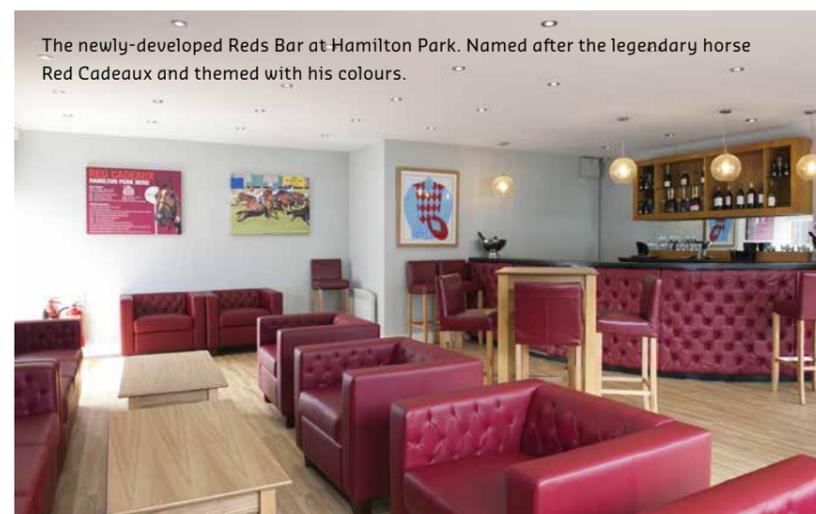
Lavazza coffee – the Racecourse Catering Awards 2016 winner for Most Effective Brand for Ascot Racecourse.

» At Hamilton Park, Sodexo grasped the task of catering for crowds of anything up to 11,000 following the introduction of a popular new Super Saturday for 2016. In a UK first, the Lanarkshire racing venue opened its gates at 12pm for the ground-breaking series of events. The team moved away from the traditional opening of two hours before the first race to create an exciting line up of fantastic events which entertain the crowd all day, from midday until late, with live racing in the evening.

“The three Super Saturday dates throughout the summer consisted of a family day, ladies day and music festival. This is encouraging the customers to the racecourse for a full day’s entertainment and activities. Flat racing tends to attract visitors looking for an exceptional day out; the social side is a big part of the experience,” explains account director David Trotter. “Racegoers can be on site for up to 11 hours and so not only will they want different food and drink options throughout the day, they need quick service as there’s usually just a half hour window between races.”

Partnering with local mobile catering companies with a shared passion for providing high quality, responsibly sourced produce.

“Danny’s Event Catering provide excellent support on big event days,” says David. A family run business with over 40 years’ experience, Danny’s is as comfortable providing a hog roast as it is a coffee stand.



The newly-developed Reds Bar at Hamilton Park. Named after the legendary horse Red Cadeaux and themed with his colours.

For David and the team, it’s all about the right brand for the customer, and that means that no two race-days offer the same. “For ladies day for example we will place the emphasis on lighter bites such as afternoon tea and lighter finger food over the traditional burgers, pizzas and chicken that we might focus on for a family day,” he says.

The team also builds branded bars for favourites like Moët & Chandon champagne and fashionable fruit ciders. “The partnerships we have with our suppliers such as Moët & Chandon, Heineken, and our mobile food providers support and enhance our offer, ultimately heightening the experience for our customers.”

Champagne, high-quality wines and spirits are also the focus of the newly-developed Red’s Wine Bar at Hamilton Park, named after the legendary horse Red Cadeaux and themed after the owner’s colours. “Customer feedback highlighted the lack of a VIP or high-street bar facility at the racecourse,” says David. “We looked to create a venue that would encourage increased customer spend through longer stays but at reduced capacity as we felt it was important to include luxury seating. Giving our customers somewhere they could meet, sit and enjoy not only the racing but the social aspects of a day/night at the races.

“We felt the previous bar wasn’t reaching its potential, especially as it has a great terrace view of the track and opposite the winning post. A season long partnership with

“
It has certainly proved a winner, and sales have increased by up to 50%.”

Moët & Chandon really enhanced the offer in the bar,” David adds. “Now we have a very popular space that gives a real VIP touch.” It has certainly proved a winner, and sales have increased by up to 50%.

Well-known beverage brands sit alongside niche names at all locations. Visitors to Ascot can expect to see a superb range of craft beers from popular breweries in the area such as the Windsor and Eton Brewery and Ascot Ales. At Perth, there’s a Craft Bar featuring Scottish beers, ciders and fruit wines – with the most recent additions being craft spirits such as Valt Vodka, Gilt Gin, Glenturret Whisky and Dark Matter spiced rum. The vendor of these products Nigel Large Consulting recently picked up the Merit award for ‘Best Local Supplier’ accolade at the Racecourse Catering Awards.

With passionate racing enthusiasts regularly drawn to the 16 annual jump meetings at Perth, food quality has to be consistently high. “Regular racegoers want value for money. If a burger is tasty, filled with the best Highland Buccleuch beef and top quality they’re happy to pay good money for it,” admits general manager, Tim du Pon.



Fortunately Perth’s meat lovers need not worry. Supplier Puddledub Buffalo Farm, based in West Fife, rears its own pedigree Aberdeen Angus cattle and water buffalo, using traditional farming methods. Visitors can pick up succulent buffalo burgers and Angus beef-steak rolls from the rustic wooden stall. “This is an exclusive product in the racecourse market, as Buffalo Farm meat is not available in supermarkets,” adds Tim.

When research at Perth revealed that customers wanted a new fast food option that was full of flavour, filling, value for money, quick to serve and easy to eat, Sodexo’s team saw an opportunity to create something bespoke. Step forward development chef Tom Beauchamp, a passionate advocate for quality Scottish produce. Tom created and named The Thoroughbread, a delicious combination of freshly-baked chargrilled sourdough, Hornigs haggis, Cora Linn and mozzarella cheeses and cajun mayonnaise; baked until golden.

“I used local ingredients that reflect the unique identity of Perth,” says Tom. “It was fun to develop and the feedback since the launch has been so positive, with one seasoned racegoer who’s visited over 50 tracks saying it was the best racetrack food he’s ever eaten.”

Sodexo has also developed grab-and-go snack The Steeplecheese, which captures Scotland’s love of macaroni cheese pies, but presents the flavours

in bite size cubes. “The macaroni is coated and deep fried but instead of breadcrumbs we use pie crust crumbs and add truffle mayo,” Tom explains. “This is something we’re determined to do more of – create food that’s unique to one location so it becomes a talking point and a boost to a venue’s reputation.”

So whether it’s a total retail refresh, insightful selection of the best-fit brands and suppliers, rapid response to fluctuating crowd numbers or creation of a bespoke product for a location, Sodexo’s racecourse retail teams always design with the customer front of mind. •

“
This is an exclusive product in the racecourse market, as Buffalo Farm meat is not available in supermarkets.”

LATEST NEWS

Following the signing of a new 10 year contract, Hamilton Park is currently undergoing an extensive £800k refurbishment of its grandstand area which will see the whole of the first floor transformed.

The extensive re-modelling project will see full renovations taking place across the Duke’s Bar and Restaurant, Panorama Bar and the Conservatory Café – which is being re-modelled as an upmarket bar and eatery.

Duke’s Bar and Restaurant will benefit from new flooring, new wall and ceiling decor and contemporary furniture. The stunning new dining room will also be extended to comfortably seat 160 guests, while developments in the bar will create an exclusive and customer focused environment.

The Panorama Bar will also undergo a complete refit with an all new bar area, flooring, furniture, fixtures and fittings providing a slick and stylish space for guests. The Conservatory Café will be extensively transformed to create a family friendly bar and eatery with a brand new outdoor serving area which will offer guests the chance to grab a bite to eat while enjoying stunning views across the parade-ring and lawns. •



Artist’s impression.

PLAYING TO THE GALLERY

Peyton and Byrne have run The National Gallery's catering contract for 10 years. The National Café is one of two stunning, independently-run restaurants at The National Gallery. Situated in The East Wing of one of London's most popular museums the Café's recent refurbishment is in-line with the grandeur of this institution.

The redesign of the National Café is the first major initiative conducted by the new partnership between Sodexo, Peyton and Byrne and The National Gallery. As Chris Bray, CEO Sports & Leisure at Sodexo explains, "We have combined Sodexo's considerable infrastructure and support network with Peyton and Byrne's pioneering approach to food and hospitality. Combined with close client collaboration, this translates into new creative concepts such as the National Café, improving the visitor experience for a wider group of customers."

This has delivered a solution faithful to the venue while delivering commercial success for all parties resulting in a fruitful and beneficial arrangement. Already, the new space has attracted more evening trade and business in the bar area – perhaps signifying a well-deserved 'cheers' to the partnership, as well as to the new space.

The National Café is a vast and versatile space: comprising of a restaurant, bar

area, private room and a more casual self-service area. Before its recent makeover the café was modelled on a traditional Viennese restaurant with dark wood, burgundy and red interiors. Now the space has been updated with a light, pastel colour scheme, sleek modern furnishings and a new modern-British menu.

As the Director of The National Gallery, Gabriele Finaldi explains, "After working with Siobhan and Oliver (Peyton) for a number of years we felt it was time for a refresh, a complete rethink of what we did at the National Café and that's exactly what happened. But the reason why it happened is two-fold; because Sodexo have supported us through all of this and secondly, we have had Ramy Fischler working with us, a fantastic designer from Belgium. We're delighted that the National Café is his first major commission in London and it really is marvellous."

As the concept architect behind this new aesthetic, Ramy works from his studio in Paris, RF Studio, producing designs that are typically chic, clean and take into consideration how the space will be used, as well as the visual impression. The new National Café follows suit: with a soft colour palette that reflects natural light and makes the most of the café's magnificently large, 19th century windows. Dividing panels are used in

the restaurant to give the impression of different areas, each with a different mood as dictated by the furniture. The self-service area is equally divided, maximising seating for customers and shelving for product placement.

Ramy's references to The Gallery are bold and elegant. In the private Trafalgar Room, empty picture frames hang across the walls, subverting their usual functional purpose and giving the space a sense of wit. In the restaurant area, banquet seating is presided over by huge Mediterranean sky scenes hanging from panels. These images are taken from Claude-Joseph Vernet's *A sporting contest on The Tiber at Rome*; a painting that sits in Room 33 of The National Gallery today. The carpet also depicts a cloudy sky, a bespoke design by Frederic Nale of Paris.

The project took just under 6 weeks to complete (between 23rd January – 3rd March 2017) and was executed by Sodexo's Capital Projects team, with previous experience on prestigious projects such as London 2012 and the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, alongside development architects, Brown Studio. The Trafalgar Room's frames were provided and hand-painted by, King & McGaw Studios. Furniture from the old restaurant was up-cycled too: the original table-bases have been repurposed and the Calacutta Gold Oro marble bar still stands tall. >>

The newly designed and refurbished National Café located at The National Gallery.



» The new National Café menu, designed by Oliver Peyton and Executive Chef Richard Oxley, was created with provenance at its heart, as Richard explains, “All ingredients are sourced directly from UK-based, artisan suppliers. We have ensured that the restaurant offers an array of classic British or European dishes with a twist: including Goosnargh duck and pistachio terrine with blood orange salsa, or for seafood fans, a Cornish monkfish, cod and pollock fish pie, with langoustine and spring leeks. For pasta lovers there’s also a delicious spaghetti vongole. This gives visitors a hearty yet sophisticated set of dining choices and for those wanting a lighter option, the bar menu features some similarly delightful small plates to accompany a new cocktail, wine and craft beer list”.

Since reopening, General Manager Angela Ward notes, “These more traditional dishes, such as the fish pie



(mentioned above) and the Rose veal burger are selling really well, both with our regular and new clientele. We’re also finding that the new bar menu is proving popular with visitors. Customers are enjoying the brighter environment of the new café design and many have commented on how fresh it now feels. The screens are creating a lot of interest with all our visitors, sparking up lots of conversation.”

All stakeholders anticipate that the restaurant will be a destination in its own right, outside of its stunning location within The National Gallery and for Gabriele Finaldi it’s about offering the customer a complete experience, “We host 6 million visitors a year and we want each one to come through this space as the National Gallery is a complete experience. You don’t just see the pictures, you have an opportunity to also talk with your friends, choosing to attend special lectures and also to visit the National Café and enjoy what’s on offer here which is fantastic.”

With this physical revival of a classic venue, it’s clear the National Café has much to offer the discerning guest, whether tourist, art critic or event delegate. Oliver Peyton commented, “Whether visiting an exhibition at the National Gallery, looking to enjoy a pre-theatre menu or holding a bespoke event, the new National Café provides a stunning setting and we look forward to welcoming guests, whatever their preference – through the door for casual dining, lunch or dinner in the restaurant or a drink at the bar.” •

“
All stakeholders anticipate that the restaurant will be a destination in its own right...



OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED on Thursday 9th March 2017, guests from London and Paris, from the design-world, art-world, food and event industries gathered to celebrate the National Café’s new interior and menus, hosted by Oliver Peyton and Gabriele Finaldi, Director of the National Gallery. Canapés and seasonal cocktails were served to over

three hundred partygoers by particularly well-dressed waiters, charming in Bretton stripes. Celebrity guests included Jimmy Carr, Claudia Winkleman and Hugh Bonneville. All of whom got down to the sounds of Lou Hayter, Chiltern Firehouse’s resident DJ, though the rhubarb martinis and Champagne may have helped along the way. •

KEEPING COUNT

The Auld Keep, situated at the highest point of the truly elegant Dundas Castle, celebrated its 600th birthday in 2016. During this time the venue has been a home, a fortress, an RAF base and now a stunning venue for weddings and group events. Dundas Castle is one of Scotland's most beautiful and historic castles.

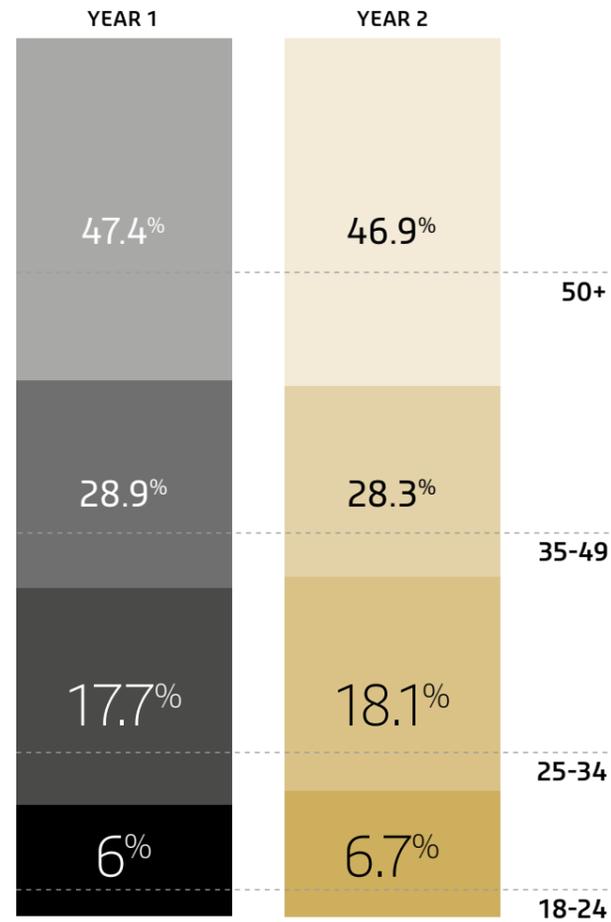
FOOD TRENDS, FASHIONS AND FADS

WHEN, HOW AND WHAT WE EAT IS CONSTANTLY CHANGING. WE TAKE A LOOK AT THE LATEST FOOD TRENDS TO SEE WHAT'S HOT.



YOUNGER CUSTOMERS START TO SHOW STRENGTH

When looking at the age of those eating out every two weeks, the increasing importance of targeting millennials is showing no sign of slowing down, with 18-24 year olds up in number of visits compared to 35-50+ who are slowing down.

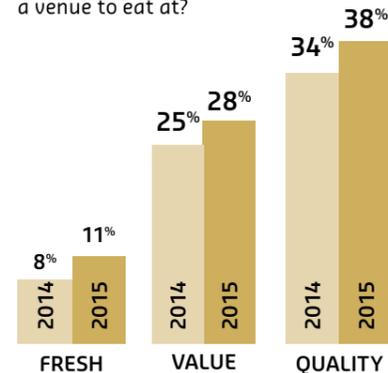


CONSUMER HABITS

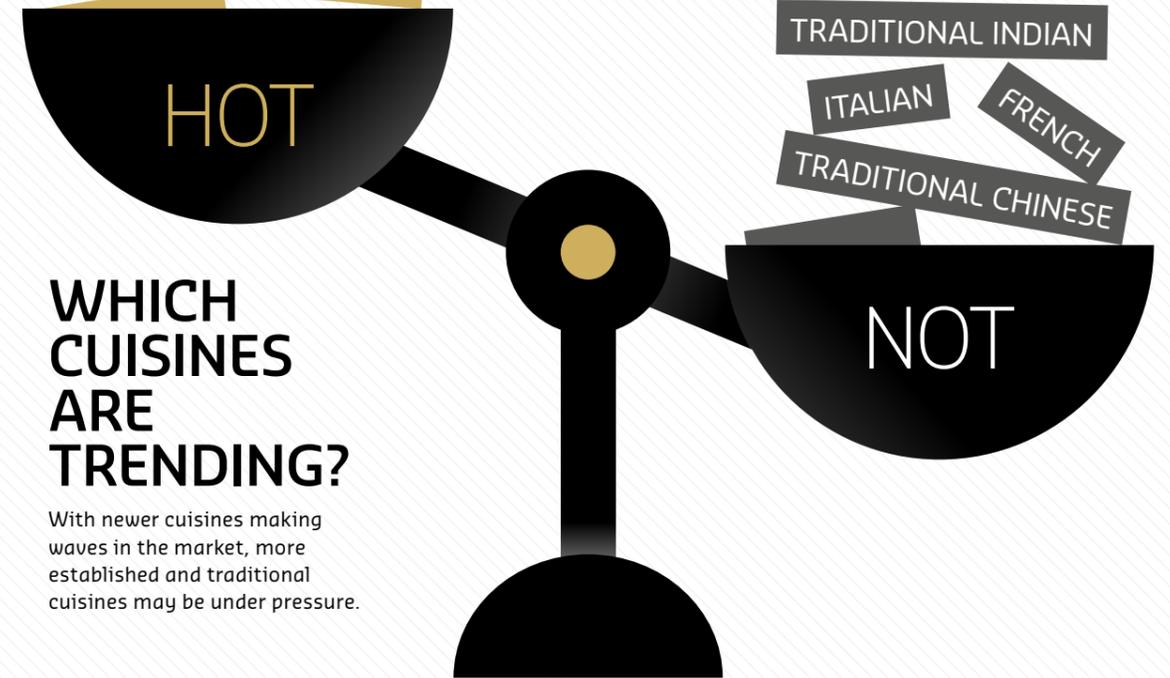
LIFESTYLES	EMERGING	HOT
Adventurousness		Artisan everything
Authenticity		Bar-side dining
Delivery		Gastro-tourism
Late-night dining		Intelligent health
Specialisation		Plant-based cooking
PRODUCTS		
Breakfast pots		Avocado
Chipotle		Banh Mi
Harissa		Cauliflower
Kimchi		Chia Seeds
Quinoa		Crab

CHOOSING A VENUE

What qualities are most important when choosing a venue to eat at?



AUTHENTIC SPANISH
CARIBBEAN
CONTEMPORARY INDIAN
KOREAN
LATIN/SOUTH AMERICAN
TAIWANESE



WHICH CUISINES ARE TRENDING?

With newer cuisines making waves in the market, more established and traditional cuisines may be under pressure.

INDUSTRY OPINIONS

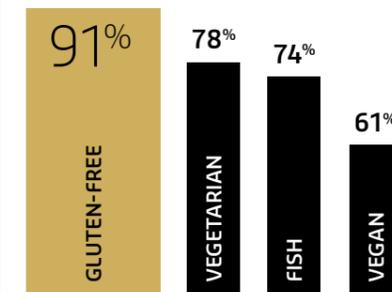
3 FASTEST-GROWING CUISINES

- 1 HEALTHY
- 2 BARBECUE
- 3 PREMIUM



NEW MENU FAVOURITES

Which food groups are believed to have the biggest influence on our menus over the next 3 years?



TRADITIONAL COOKING IS ON THE RISE

What cooking methods will become more favourable with industry chefs?



BRINGING
THE
WORLD'S COOLEST
BARS TO
HEATHROW

IT'S NOT OFTEN YOU GET THE CHANCE TO EXPERIENCE THE AUTHENTIC AMBIENCE OF FIVE OF THE WORLD'S MOST REMARKABLE COCKTAIL BARS IN ONE PLACE. BUT THAT WAS THE EXCITING PROSPECT AWAITING CUSTOMERS OF THE VIRGIN ATLANTIC CLUBHOUSE AT LONDON HEATHROW AIRPORT OVER THE SUMMER.

Cutting-edge bars from London, New York, Hong Kong, San Francisco and Los Angeles took it in turns to hold an exclusive one-week residency in the Clubhouse's stylish Loft Bar. Every week, this stylish venue was transformed to showcase each guest bar's unique brand experience and reflect their home city, culture and general 'vibe.'

And with evocative themed soundtracks for each city playing in the background, customers felt like they'd already travelled the globe before they'd even taken off.

AN EXTRA-SPECIAL EXPERIENCE FOR EVERYONE

It was all part of the 'Five Up' season – an innovative pop-up bar takeover hosted by Virgin Atlantic, Sodexo and Bacardi, and featuring some of the finest mixology talent on the planet.

Clubhouse Food and Beverage Manager, Mark Murphy explained, "Looking at our Clubhouse locations, it was these destinations where we started to search out the best mixologists in the world to help us with Five Up and deliver something really unique in the airline industry. Five Up was born from our desire to continually improve the customer experience, and started a year ago with our launch of the Los Angeles Clubhouse where we collaborated with Hinoki and The Bird in Hollywood. This showed us that we could work with an outside brand that shared our values and it got us thinking about who else we could work with. We started to approach bars across the world that have been listed as some of the best in the industry." »

virgin atlantic 

» To capture their unique flavour, every bar created a customised cocktail menu served by their own staff, who had been flown in specially for the event. They were joined by Sodexo teams based in the Virgin Atlantic Clubhouse in each of the cities, who enjoyed an unmissable opportunity to learn new skills, develop their experience and put it all into practice on their return.

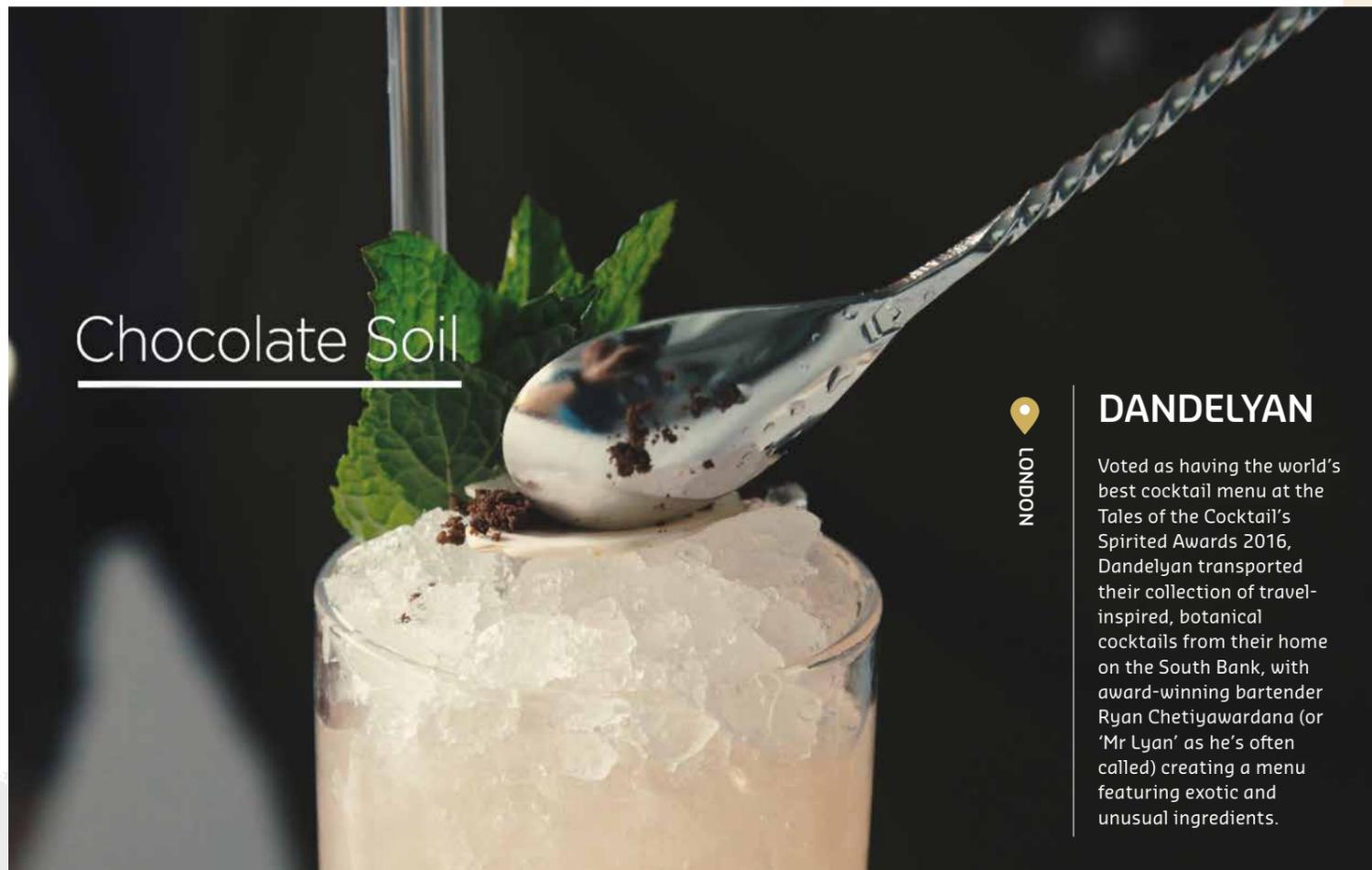
HERE'S A RUN-DOWN OF THE FAMOUS FIVE BARS WHO TOOK PART:



NEW YORK

EMPLOYEES ONLY

Created to evoke the late-night spirit of the 1920s and 30s, Employees Only is among the most glamorous watering-holes in New York City. It's the charismatic place where the craft cocktail movement began in the Big Apple in the early 2000s, and where white-coated bartenders mix exotic creations with lavender-scented gin, red tea-flavoured vermouth and agave nectar.



Chocolate Soil

LONDON

DANDELYAN

Voted as having the world's best cocktail menu at the Tales of the Cocktail's Spirited Awards 2016, Dandelyan transported their collection of travel-inspired, botanical cocktails from their home on the South Bank, with award-winning bartender Ryan Chetiyawardana (or 'Mr Lyan' as he's often called) creating a menu featuring exotic and unusual ingredients.

FLYING FURTHER WITH VIRGIN ATLANTIC

Virgin Atlantic have recently signed a 5 year extension to their contract with Sodexo to provide catering and hospitality at all their Clubhouses globally. This cements the strength of the relationship between the two companies and builds on their combined experience since they started working with each other in 2009.

The global account management model that Sodexo pioneered with Virgin Atlantic was a key reason behind their decision to re-sign, and as Mark Murphy says, "Without a doubt Sodexo offers us in Clubhouses something really unique, with a global management structure that allows us to deliver a world-class proposition to our customers. We don't make the decision on a tender lightly; we make sure that the people we're working with are the right partners to make sure that we look good. At the end of the day, we know that Sodexo, albeit working behind the scenes on our behalf, are making us look good on a global scale."

SAN FRANCISCO

BOURBON AND BRANCH

Customers at Bourbon and Branch take a magical journey back to a speakeasy in the era of Prohibition, when the sale and consumption of alcohol was outlawed. Dapper bartenders nurture each cocktail they make, using rare bourbons, hand-squeezed juices and individual bottles of mixers.



LOS ANGELES

HINOKI AND THE BIRD

This LA bar takes its cues from travels along the Silk Road to blend Asian and Californian influences. The refreshing cocktails follow the fruit-driven approach favoured by high-end Japanese bars. A selection of 'Cups' offer a fresh take on gin-based standards using black Szechuan pepper and local tangerines, while 'Quaffers' feature double-decker glasses so that a blend of Choya plum wine and Yamazaki whiskey is followed by freshly-pressed apple juice.



HONG KONG

QUINARY

At Quinary, cocktail-making is all about understanding why certain aromas, flavours and textures work together. Drawing on unorthodox preparation tools such as caviar boxes, rotary evaporators and centrifuges, its creations stimulate all five senses. Notable examples include a wasabi-tinged Bloody Mary and an Earl Grey Caviar Martini.



BEHIND THE SCENES

NIGEL SCOTT



As the Global Account Director for aviation at Sodexo, Nigel oversees all Clubhouses throughout the world and is the Virgin Atlantic client's main point of contact.

Making sure the service and products are consistent at every Clubhouse, whether it be in Hong Kong or California, is fun but tiring work, so it's not surprising that one of Nigel's favourite hobbies is sleeping!

When he's not flying, Nigel likes golf and DIY. This is no amateur though; as he's recently completed a log shed for his woodburner and likes nothing more than relaxing in front of the fire with a glass of red wine.



ALL-ROUND SUCCESS

Set in the heart of Hertfordshire, Knebworth House boasts a historic deer park covering over 250 acres. On a visit you may be lucky enough to catch a glimpse of the grazing herds of Red and Sika deer which have been at Knebworth for even longer than the resident Lytton family.



THE RISING
STAR OF
WOMEN'S
FOOTBALL

A MIDFIELDER WHO WAS SECOND BEST SCORER LAST YEAR FOR THEIR TOP FLIGHT CLUB, ONLY BEHIND THE TEAM'S TOP STRIKER (INCIDENTALLY A PREVIOUS FA YOUNG PLAYER OF THE YEAR), THIS PLAYER ALSO HELPED THEIR TEAM TO ENGLISH LEAGUE AND CUP GLORY IN 2016, BUT WE'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT MAHREZ, AGÜERO, ROONEY OR MATA.

Isobel Christiansen (known as Izzy), is riding the crest of a wave; on the back of consecutive Women's Superleague Championships, the Continental Tyres Cup and also the personal accolade of Women's PFA Player of the Year (sponsored by Sodexo). And she's buzzing, despite landing back in the UK in the early hours of the morning from Siberia after beating Russian side Zvezda Perm.

"We were drawn against Zvezda Perm in the first round of the Women's Champions League and played the home leg last week which we won 2-0. Flew over to Russia Monday morning, trained at the stadium Tuesday night, played last night (Wednesday evening) and ended up winning 4-0, so 6-0 on aggregate. We flew home in the early hours of this morning so it was an incredible experience." Izzy reflects, "That's my third time playing in Russia. It's always fascinating to see different cultures, and it was great

for us as a team to have the chance to do that." She doesn't even seem tired, but much of that must be down to her impressive fitness regime and diet, all overseen by the world-class specialists at Manchester City FC.

"Our training regime is periodised, so we work on a four-week schedule where each week gets harder and harder and the fourth one is used as a rest week. The only difference between a normal week and a rest week is that the timings of training adjust a little bit so it's reduced time. The intensity is kept the same to ensure you sustain a match level of fitness." Izzy also gleefully admits to enjoying all aspects of training. When asked which exercises she dreads, she replies, "I'm quite a geek and like learning, to know why we do things. I enjoy working with the technical, tactical team out on the training field and also working with the sports science team who provide the science behind what we do." »



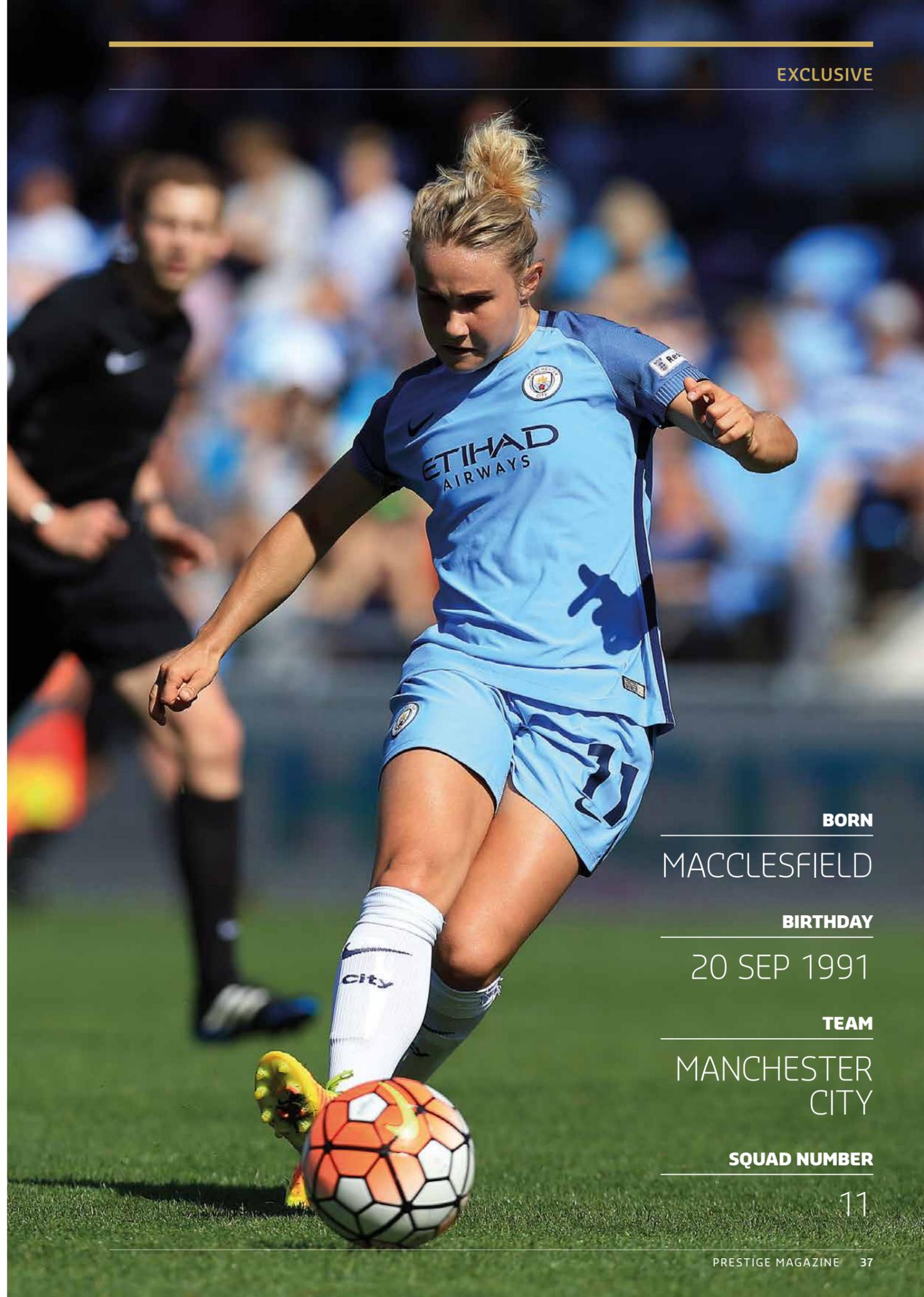
“
*Growing up
 there were two
 key footballers
 I looked up to.
 In the women’s
 game it was
 Kelly Smith...*”

» Even an untimely injury at the start of this season didn’t stop her taking part in training, albeit with modified exercises. “I was out with an ankle injury so was in a protective boot for a good 4-5 weeks and it did restrict what I could do in the gym. One of the exercises the strength and conditioning coach had us do was single-leg burpees – my leg in the air and the rest of my body doing the burpee!” With her suffering the injury in one of the opening games of the season it would have been easy for Izzy to let her head go down, but she is a resilient young woman and explained, “I was obviously really disappointed to have worked so hard during our pre-season period and then to get injured. It’s part of the game though, and injuries certainly adjust your diet and your training. The nutritionists at Manchester City worked with me very closely during that period and really helped me to ensure that I stayed on track.”

Like any normal woman in her 20s she admits to loving chocolate “It’s definitely my weak point”, and hankers after the comfort of her mum’s home cooking, particularly roast dinners. However, her determination and commitment to her sport mean that she takes nutrition seriously. “Where we are now with Women’s football, diet has become

even more integral than it was 5-10 years ago,” she explains. “As with any professional sport there’s a key amount of science that goes into what we need to eat and why we need to eat it. Again, I’m really interested in that side of things and I find it quite easy to maintain a good diet. My diet mainly consists of lots of vegetables, very good protein sources, carbohydrates when needed to fuel training and games, and increasing protein intake for recovery post-training.”

The Women’s FA Super League has gone from strength to strength in recent years, so when it comes to role models Izzy had heroes in both the men’s and women’s game. “Growing up there were two key footballers I looked up to. In the women’s game it was Kelly Smith (Arsenal Ladies) who is a pioneer of the women’s game in England. A hugely experienced England international and a fantastic player as well, she was recognised as one of the best players in the world in her prime. When I was younger I looked up to her as I play in a similar position. I took a lot of time studying what she did on a football field. In the men’s game it was Frank Lampard. Absolutely loved watching him play. Some people have compared me to him as I make a lot of late runs into the box and try to add goals for the team.” »



BORN
 MACCLESFIELD

BIRTHDAY
 20 SEP 1991

TEAM
 MANCHESTER CITY

SQUAD NUMBER
 11

» When quizzed on how much of a compliment that must be when being compared to one of her heroes, Izzy says, "I take great pride in that as I've got a huge amount of respect for what he did during his time in England." But despite having been at the same club (Manchester City) for a brief spell she's never actually met Frank: "It was my dream to meet him but it never really came about. I didn't want to come across as a superfan!"

However much she may be in awe of Frank Lampard and Kelly Smith, Izzy is very much a star in her own right, having been voted by her peers as the PFA Women's Player of the Year, something she describes as being a "huge honour" but also "a massive shock". On the back of winning consecutive Women's FA Super League titles with Manchester City, her views on the future of the women's game are similarly positive, "The amount of progress it's made over the past five years is phenomenal really. The key moment for me was becoming professional. The majority of the teams in the Women's Superleague are now professional and I only see it going up and up. I think the more teams that we can get, the wider the participation. We can improve the standard of the players coming through to strengthen the league, and make it bigger and more competitive."

Izzy also recognises the importance of her position as a role model for those looking to football as a possible career, "Now it's a great time for girls to realise that football isn't just a hobby; it can be a career as well. In 10 years' time, those girls could be earning ten times what we're earning and playing on an even bigger stage than we are now."

With three awards in the space of a year, you may wonder how she will try to emulate those achievements. Izzy is resolute, even in the face of family teasing, "Well, my brother made a comment to me fairly recently. He said, 'You're always never going to be as good as you were last season,' but I use that as a challenge to better myself. I think I just need to work hard at what I do and keep enjoying it, and I reckon I'm at the best possible place to do that at Manchester City." •

“
Now it's a great time for girls to realise that football isn't just a hobby; it can be a career as well.”

Izzy collecting her PFA Women's Player of the Year award from Chris Bray, CEO Sodexo Sports & Leisure.



NATIONAL TREASURE

IT'S BEEN AN EXCITING YEAR FOR NORTHERN IRELAND, NOT LEAST BECAUSE OF THE MAGNIFICENT PERFORMANCE OF THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL TEAM WHO REACHED THE LAST 16 OF THE EURO 2016 TOURNAMENT. THE FEEL-GOOD FACTOR HAS BEEN BOOSTED FURTHER BY THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL STADIUM AT WINDSOR PARK, WHICH HAS GIVEN THE TEAM AND ITS PASSIONATE FANS A NEW HOME TO BE PROUD OF AS WELL AS AN OUTSTANDING MULTI-PURPOSE VENUE TO BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY.



With qualification for the 2018 World Cup well under way, the Stadium provides the perfect platform for success in a setting worthy of a nation with such a rich sporting heritage. Its official opening coincided with Northern Ireland's match against San Marino, and the event was a sell-out – with a host of celebrities including former world snooker champion Dennis Taylor, actor Jimmy Nesbitt and ex-goalkeeper Pat Jennings taking part in a 'Lap of Legends' before kick-off.

The £35 million redevelopment programme has seen the outdated wooden stands of the existing Windsor Park ground replaced with three brand new ones to create a European-style stadium with 18,600 seats. Customers can now use modern

lifts and 17 purpose-built catering and beverage units offering them far more quality and choice than the humble concession vans that were the only previous options.

The new stadium's potential has been increased still further by the award of a new full licence, which allows the sale of alcohol at all sporting events. This represents a major step forward, as a key objective of the redevelopment is to maximise commercial as well as sporting success.

NEW FACILITIES, NEW POSSIBILITIES

Hospitality wasn't on the agenda at the old Windsor Park, simply because the facilities didn't exist. In the new stadium, it's a different story. It boasts four new lounges with spectacular floor-to-ceiling views of the pitch,

conveniently located on the same level with dedicated reception areas. Aptly, each lounge is named after a famous Northern Irish footballer: George Best, Billy Bingham, Pat Jennings and Danny Blanchflower. In addition, there are 10 executive boxes for up to 20 guests plus a selection of unusual events areas for hire including the changing rooms, press room, players' lounge and museum.

Bringing a distinctive new conference space to Belfast, where the main options have previously been hotels, the National Stadium has already created a real buzz around the city. Sodexo will provide food and beverage retail and hospitality services for all match day and non-match day events, adding to the strong portfolio of stadia in their Prestige Venues & Events collection.

Stadium Director Louise Doyle is excited about the possibilities, commenting that: "Sodexo will allow the venue not only to offer a high standard of food, refreshments and a variety of options in our public concourses, but also superb and innovative hospitality in our outstanding and unique corporate areas, all with a view of the iconic pitch."

A SUCCESSFUL START

The first major event held at the venue was the Visit Belfast AGM and dinner on 22nd September. Its aim was to harness the support of the local business community and attract even more business events to the region – boosting visitor numbers and spend in the local economy. It was a spectacular success, with guests »



Guests enjoyed a hearty breakfast at the venue launch.

» enjoying a superb dinner with a menu devised by Sodexo's Divisional Executive Chef, Stephen Frost. A starter of Parma ham, roast fig, soft mozzarella pearls, pea shoot salad and red pepper dressing was followed by slow-cooked beef, grilled Portobello mushroom topped with tomato chutney and spinach, creamy horseradish mashed potatoes and red wine jus; and rounded off with creamy lemon posset with hand-made lemon biscuit and raspberry crumble. After a welcoming speech from Gerry Lennon, CEO of Visit Belfast, there was a lively question-and-answer session with Northern Ireland Manager Michael O'Neill.

To officially launch Prestige Venues & Events at the National Stadium a breakfast showcase was held on 27th October. Local contacts and businesses were invited to sample the fantastic food available at the venue and enjoy an exclusive chance to tour the new stadium. The breakfast incorporated plenty of locally-sourced ingredients and included traditional mini Ulster fry sticks, scrumptious blueberry smoothies and wonderful buttermilk pancakes. The event was hugely successful with a great turnout and a brilliant atmosphere; guest speakers included Oonagh O'Reilly from the IFA and ex-international footballer and current Northern Ireland assistant manager Jimmy Nicholl.

Six party nights also took place over the festive season where guests enjoyed cocktails, a three-course meal and danced the night away.

So clearly, with all these exciting developments both on and off the pitch, the future of this impressive new venue is looking very bright indeed. •

“
...both on
and off the
pitch, the
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very bright
indeed.”

GOING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH IN UK STADIA



EVERTON CONTRACT EXTENDED

Having recently agreed a four-year contract extension with Everton FC, Sodexo will continue to deliver catering, hospitality, retail and non-match day conference and events services at Goodison Park under a £12 million deal.

In March, Sodexo made a public pledge to promote the adoption of the living wage to its clients, and permanent Sodexo employees at the club will be paid this wage under the new agreement.

Robert Elstone, Chief Executive at Everton, was delighted to continue the association: "We have enjoyed a strong relationship with Sodexo for almost a decade, and I am really pleased the Club will be entering into another four-year contract. Working closely with our colleagues at Sodexo, we have been able to develop a partnership to be proud of which offers an excellent product and service for all our supporters."



CARRYING ON THE GOOD WORK AT HAMPDEN PARK

Building on a partnership which began in 1999, Sodexo will go on providing food and beverage services at Hampden Park – Scotland's national stadium – until 2020. Retail, hospitality and the Museum Café are all included, as well as conference and event services on non-match days.

Hampden Park's Managing Director Peter Dallas said: "We are delighted to continue our long-standing partnership with Sodexo. From hosting the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, when the eyes of the world were upon us, to international football, rock concerts and hosting conferences and events, the Sodexo team provides excellent service to our customers." •

BEHIND THE SCENES

LAURA WEST



Laura West is responsible for generating and developing revenue from the impressive event spaces and corporate hospitality facilities at the National Football Stadium. She's well qualified to help the venue succeed commercially, having worked in the hospitality business in Northern Ireland for over 20 years, from international hotel chains to family-run businesses.

Laura is really excited about the versatility of the National Football

Stadium, and is looking forward to making the most of the many spaces for exhibitions, conferences, weddings, car launches and even concerts. She says it's a particularly exciting proposition considering the recent success of the Northern Ireland football team, because "success breeds success".

Away from her day job, she still enjoys using the skills she uses in her career, and has a particular passion for helping brides and grooms organise their wedding. When she eventually crashes on the sofa, a glass of wine, good food and a great book help her relax (but not all at the same time!), with friends and family being the most important thing in her life.

A CHANGE OF SCENE

NEED A SPACE WHERE YOU CAN GET YOUR MESSAGE ACROSS WITH DRAMA, CLARITY AND FOCUS?

Across the UK, Prestige Venues & Events can provide auditoria in spectacular settings – from gardens, galleries and museums to sports stadia and innovative new buildings. With the addition of Peyton Events there's also a number of central

London venues boasting lecture theatres in places you wouldn't expect.

Each auditorium is equipped with state-of-the-art technology and facilities that help ensure a high-quality experience for delegates. And although many are set in unique surroundings with idyllic views, they're still located within easy reach of main road and rail links. These facilities should not be limited to presentations, conferences and lectures – auditoria are ideal for awards ceremonies, exhibitions, product launches and seminars too.



THE APEX BURY ST EDMUNDS

Incredibly versatile and award winning floor design

Configurable space – seating can be arranged in rising tiers like a lecture theatre (516), or hidden under the floor for a large, flat space which can take 270 for a gala dinner

Frequently used for music recitals and concerts

Three studios for smaller meetings and break-out sessions

FASCINATING FACT · There is a secret door (called the 'Narnia Door' by staff) that allows stars such as Brian May and Joan Collins private access to the venue.

THE CRYSTAL LONDON

Stunning location at London's Royal Victoria Docks, just 10 minutes from Canary Wharf and London City Airport

The Capital's most sustainable events venue

A striking red sphere at the heart of the building houses the 270 capacity modern auditorium

Guests enter via the breathtaking lobby area with high ceilings and views of the Thames and Canary Wharf

FASCINATING FACT · The Crystal Exhibition adds interest through interactive environment-focused exhibits.



**HAMPDEN PARK
GLASGOW**

Located within the BT South Stand, the auditorium seats a generous 250 guests

Excellent acoustics, two large projection screens, variable lighting and air-conditioning

Soundproof booth, the latest AV and technicians on site

Exhibition suite large enough for 60 stands and suitable for registration and refreshment area

FASCINATING FACT · The stage was transformed into a spectacular designer catwalk for a recent wedding show.



**ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN
EDINBURGH**

Recently refurbished lecture theatre takes up to 240 guests

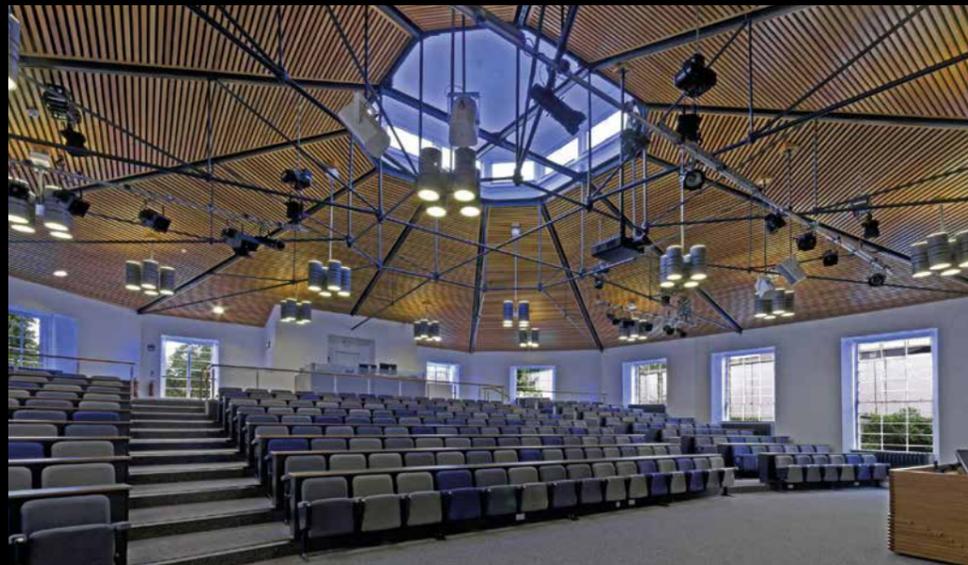
Light and airy room with stunning octagonal ceiling

Amazing acoustics, sophisticated audio-visual and lighting

Convenient conference room next door for refreshments or break-out use

One mile from Edinburgh city centre

FASCINATING FACT · Add interest to your talks with a treasure hunt around the garden and barbeque in the summer months.



**NATIONAL MUSEUM
OF SCOTLAND
EDINBURGH**

Based in the heart of Edinburgh's Old Town

Capacity of 200 in the fully equipped auditorium

Hire includes exclusive use of the South Hall Gallery and Events Space, versatile areas for breakout sessions, catering and exhibitions

FASCINATING FACT · The Museum has just celebrated its 150th anniversary, marked by a £14m restoration of the Grade A listed building.



**IWM LONDON
LONDON**

Cinema with a flat floor allowing flexible set up

Can be used as a classroom (36), for a standing reception (200), a seated lunch or dinner (120) or even a dinner dance (60)

Dolby digital surround sound and a large screen with great clarity

Adjacent foyer perfect for refreshments

FASCINATING FACT · The beautiful Grade II listed exterior of IWM London was once the Royal Bethlem Hospital.



**PEYTON
EVENTS**



**PEYTON
EVENTS**

**THE NATIONAL GALLERY
LONDON**

Home to one of the greatest collections of Western European painting in the world – private tours can be arranged before or after conferences

The Sainsbury Wing lecture theatre seats a mighty 328

Four conference rooms are also located in The Sainsbury Wing – seating 15-30 conference style and 30-75 theatre style with air-conditioning and state-of-the-art AV equipment

FASCINATING FACT · The mosaic terrace can be used for receptions and dinners and has a marble mosaic floor that depicts Greek muses based on celebrities of the day.

**WALLACE COLLECTION,
LONDON**

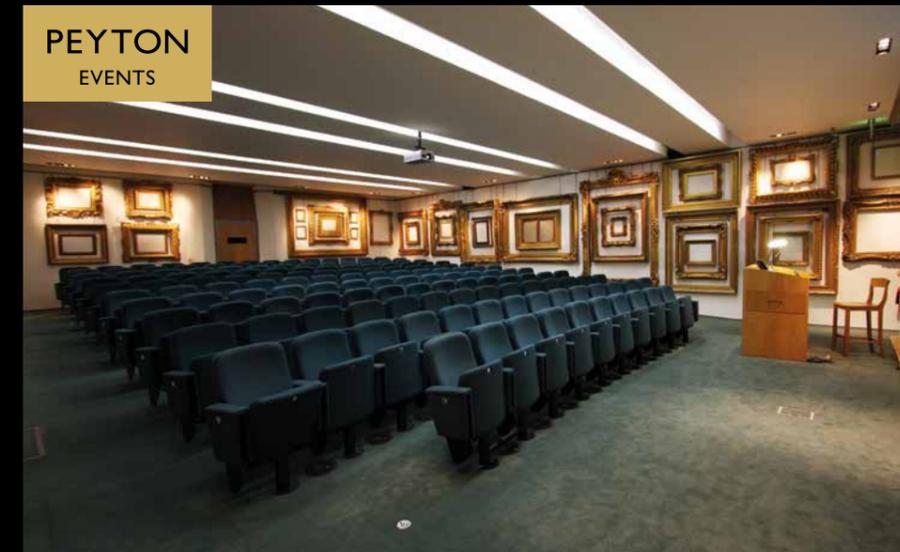
The Wallace Collection is located in fashionable Marylebone, just off Oxford Street, central London

The Wallace's lecture theatre is located in the heart of the museum and seats 150 for intimate presentations. The AV is state of the art, being updated in 2015, including surround sound

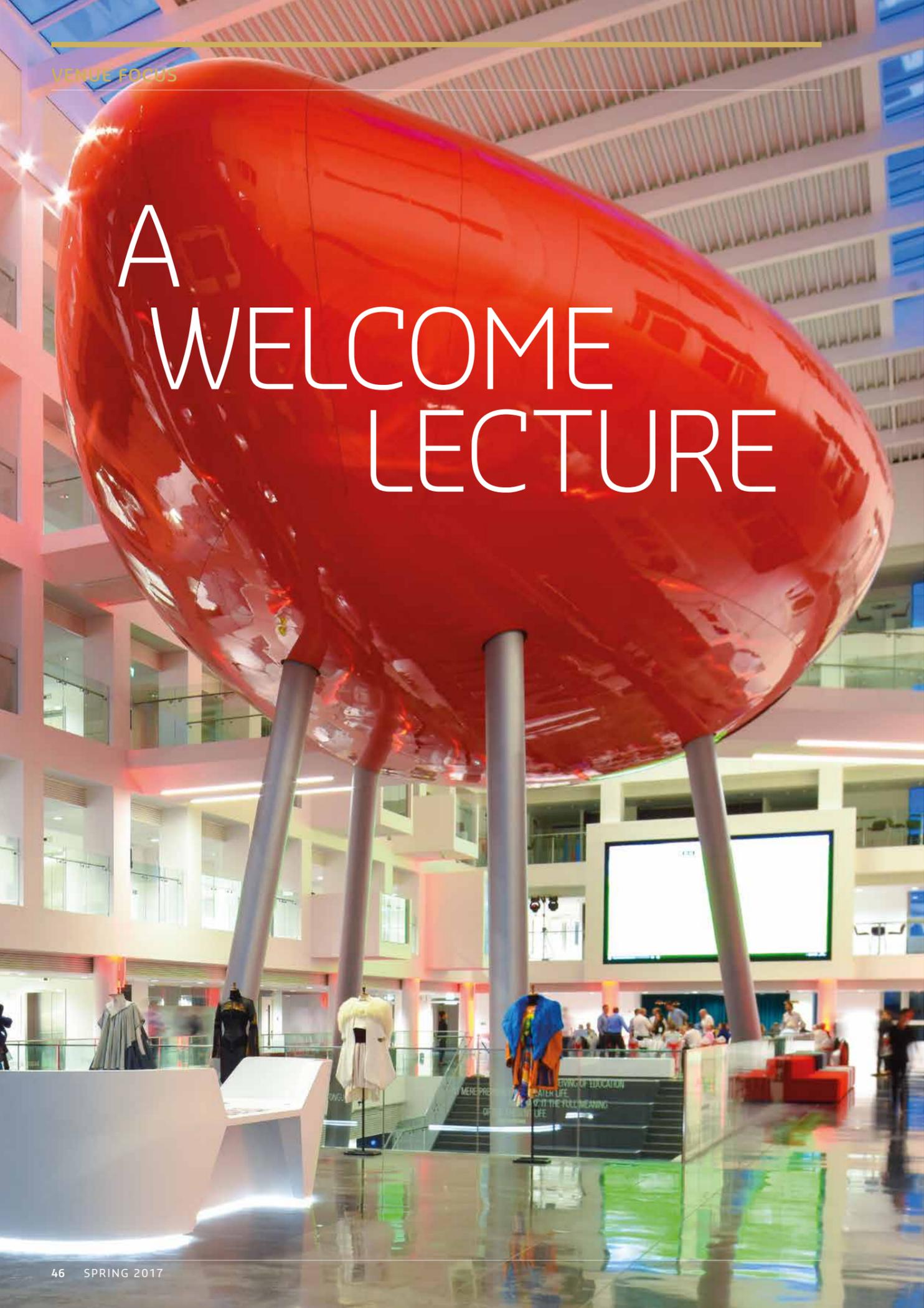
Fully accessible with step-free access and induction loop for hard of hearing

FASCINATING FACT · The walls of the Lecture Theatre are hung with ornate frames once used to house some of the masterpieces of the collection including the iconic Laughing Cavalier.

**PEYTON
EVENTS**



A WELCOME LECTURE



A mysterious red orb looms over your head, but it isn't a UFO. 'The Pod' is a suspended free-form meeting room and is the focal point for visitors entering 'The Spark' – the impressive new home of the Solent Conference Centre and a new addition to the Prestige Venues & Events collection.

Located on the campus at Southampton Solent University, The Spark marks a futuristic addition to the Southampton skyline. Costing £33m, the light-filled venue features almost 3,000m³ of glass and hundreds of solar panels help power the building. It offers a wide range of event spaces, from meeting rooms, lecture theatres, conference suites, a 3D cinema and a private dining room to TV and photography studios.

Although Sodexo have recently added the Solent Conference Centre to their Prestige Venues & Events portfolio, this is not an entirely new relationship with Southampton Solent University. The Schools and Universities segment has looked after all catering, retail, hospitality and vending on the campus and at other SSU sites for six years.

This involves a wide and varied range of buildings and venues; The Warsash Maritime Academy looks after 250 maritime cadets from across the world, teaching them everything they'll need for a life on the seas and there's even a super yacht academy. It's a residential school and also features a 28 bedroom hotel.

From large-scale sailing to something more miniature, Timsbury Lake is a unique venue that's used as a proving ground for scale models of vessels. Sodexo look after the vending and catering for VIP events, at which Prince Phillip is a regular guest. Test Park sports ground boasts 3G football pitches, an FA-accredited pitch which Premier League teams often use for training before playing Southampton FC, and the site hosts tournaments for clients like BP. Sodexo support Test Park with pitch-side catering in addition to the on-site restaurant for hungry athletes to refuel.

While Sodexo has been on site at Southampton Solent University since 2010, there is a significant number of staff who have served there for over

“
Long gone are the days of uncomfortable benches...”

15 and some 20 years. With a perfect blend of experience and new ideas, the contract has gone from strength to strength, and turnover has doubled since Sodexo took it over.

As part of a recent re-tender, it made sense for the Education team to tap into the strength of the broader Sodexo business and offer solutions designed to add value and drive commercial results. They therefore proposed sales and marketing support for the Solent Conference Centre in the form of Prestige Venues & Events. As Nick Hayter, Group Account Manager, explains, “The beauty of being part of a global organisation like Sodexo means we can utilise expertise from a

very varied skills-base. The specialist knowledge of our colleagues at Prestige Venues & Events provided us with a unique selling point that helped the client make the most of the commercial potential of Southampton Solent University. They are now reaping the rewards of being part of a portfolio of venues and it's great to see the Solent Conference Centre succeed as one of the key venues on the south coast.”

Being situated at a university, it's only natural that lecture theatres would abound at the Solent Conference Centre – and the venue doesn't disappoint. Long gone are the days of uncomfortable benches and uninspiring OHP screens; this venue is equipped with modern gadgetry and all the functionality needed to create an interactive and compelling presentation.

If you're looking for drama, the Austen Lecture Theatre features a green room for VIPs to prepare themselves before taking to the stage and greeting some 200 delegates. Nestled in the basement of The Spark, it features state-of-the-art technology, lighting and split-screen viewing compatibility. Alternatively, the Palmerston Lecture Theatre is rather more intimate, taking 150 guests and based on the educational success of the Harvard University style formation. Shaped like a horseshoe, it facilitates a more immersive and connected experience between presenter and delegate, ensuring all messages hit their mark. •



The Palmerston Lecture Theatre, located in 'The Pod' at The Spark, Southampton Solent University.

UP AND RUNNING FOR ROYAL ASCOT

STAFFING THE CATERING AND HOSPITALITY OPERATIONS FOR THIS WORLD-FAMOUS RACE MEETING IS A MASSIVE CHALLENGE. TO EXCEED EXPECTATIONS, SODEXO BROUGHT IN TWO INNOVATIVE NEW SYSTEMS – AND BOTH HAVE PROVED TO BE WINNERS.



Staff at Royal Ascot check in securely using the new finger-scanning system.

As one of the country's biggest sporting events, Royal Ascot attracts 300,000 spectators over five days. To provide the world-class service these customers expect, 3,000 staff work at the venue every day of the event. Although well-versed in managing this operation after 18 years at Ascot Racecourse, Sodexo have striven to make things more efficient and reliable, as General Manager Ryan Underhill explains: "Recruiting, training and checking in and out this large number of staff creates an administrative challenge. We wanted to ensure the highest level of service and efficiency from a majority casual workforce simultaneously easing the time pressures in receiving and processing these employees every day of the meeting, so we looked into the technological possibilities and ended up introducing two new, integrated systems – TimeTarget and FLOW." The development and implementation of the solutions was headed up by Commercial Projects Manager, David Hill, who met the challenge with gusto.

BETTER SCHEDULING, BETTER TRAINING

David explained, "Thanks to TimeTarget, the Royal Ascot event management team were able to

allocate shifts that matched each employee's levels of training and experience and to make scheduling clearer and simpler, each member of staff was given a profile which they could access from their own computer or mobile device to confirm which shifts they wanted to work. The new system went down very well with team members, and we had great feedback, with many appreciating the convenience the system gave them – particularly the ability to see their shift allocations way in advance."

But what could Sodexo do to make sure that employees hit the ground running? That's where FLOW came in. An e-learning platform packed with training modules covering all kinds of useful topics, it enabled staff to brush up on anything from food safety to emergency procedures, as well as the values of Sodexo and Royal Ascot, before joining the teams on site. Ryan outlined the benefits, "FLOW has meant that we can train the temporary staff remotely through the e-learning platform well before they set foot in Ascot. It gives us and them a head start before they come on site for training and their first shift. Saving time in this way has meant training can be more focused on practical areas which can only be taught in person."

BEATING THE QUEUES

Perhaps the most pressing issue in previous years concerned the time it took to check staff in, with the average time having been as long as 30 minutes – causing long queues that meant some shifts had to be staggered. A mainly paper-based check-in process was frustrating for event managers, and also impacted on staff punctuality as well as their employee experience.

Sodexo's idea to revolutionise staff check-in and improve the start of their working day at Royal Ascot was a finger-vein scanning solution – something David enthused about as he explained, "Each morning, employees simply scanned their finger in one of up to 15 devices on reception desks at Ascot. This gave a unique reading that allowed their identity to be securely checked – as well as where they were working that day, what training they had and their uniform requirements. To make the whole process even easier for them and their managers, they were given a wristband with details of their name, shift time, uniform needs and location. Super safe, quick and easy for the temporary work-force."

The result? The check-in process took less than 30 seconds – reducing average queue times to just 7 minutes, and saving tens of thousands of pounds in staffing costs by enabling more efficient resourcing and shift management. One recruitment agency partner was particularly complimentary: "Check-ins are now generally more efficient and the security aspect was a big plus for us. Given the timescales and the size of the task, the roll-out was a great success."

The fact that the new systems captured useful data on training scores plus valuable feedback from both management and staff meant that Ascot partners benefitted as well as Sodexo and Ascot Racecourse. The Russell Partnership, who provide consultancy to Ascot Racecourse, have said, "The system provides a win-win environment for us. There's no question that it has already had a positive impact on the operations and quality of staff we are now engaging."

All in all, the implementation of these two relatively simple yet detailed systems has had a major impact on the quality of race day delivery for Sodexo. Ryan concludes, "TimeTarget has been a real asset to how we manage our people for major racedays at Ascot. It's made our people's lives easier, both for our managerial teams and also the thousands of temporary staff we rely on each race day. Their experience as employees has a direct bearing on the quality of customer service we can deliver, so it's great to see the positive impact this has on them and the subsequent benefits to our business, including the bottom line."

It's clear that the clever use of new technology can give large-scale and high-pressure operations an advantage when service levels are so crucial to event success, and contribute to staff, customer and client satisfaction. •

BEHIND THE SCENES

DAVID HILL



David is the man behind the planning and roll-out of TimeTarget and FLOW. He's come through the ranks at Sodexo, having started as a casual worker in the summer events season 10 years ago. Now Commercial Projects Manager, David is the crucial link between the business, IT and technology vendor, always looking for ways to improve processes.

He says the hardest thing about rolling out TimeTarget and FLOW was getting everybody's finger scanned, although drop-in sessions, tests at race days before Royal Ascot and agencies taking the scanners back to their offices did help.

When he's not scoping out the latest gadgets, David likes to play squash; or you may find him buried in an Urban Fantasy book – particularly one featuring vampires!

“
The result?
The check-in
process took less
than 30 seconds
– reducing
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TROPHY ROOM

2016 WAS A VERY SUCCESSFUL YEAR FOR SODEXO SPORTS & LEISURE. LET'S CONGRATULATE OUR AWARD WINNERS WHO HAVE BEEN RECOGNISED THROUGH NUMEROUS INDUSTRY AWARDS.

SPRINGBOARD AWARDS

Springboard Ambassador
Gareth Billington, Everton FC

RACECOURSE CATERING AWARDS

Best Bar at a Racecourse
The Goldikova, Ascot Racecourse

Most Effective Brand at a Racecourse
Lavazza, Ascot Racecourse

Best Local Supplier to a Racecourse
NL Consultancy (craft beer), Perth Racecourse

SHINE AWARDS

Mentor of the Year
Gareth Billington, Everton FC

DOWNTOWN IN BUSINESS AWARDS - LIVERPOOL

Sports Hospitality Venue of the Year
Everton FC

SPORT AND LEISURE CATERING AWARDS

Event Caterer of the Year
Henley Royal Regatta

ACE ROBYNS

Ace Robyn Award
Leanne Findlay, Sodexo Aviation

CRAFT GUILD OF CHEFS

People's Choice Award
Gareth Billington, Everton FC

STADIUM EVENTS AND HOSPITALITY AWARDS

Matchday Hospitality Award - Large Stadia
Hampden Park

Matchday Hospitality Award - Medium Stadia
Everton FC

Matchday Hospitality Award - Small Stadia
Dundee United FC

Director's Choice Award
American Express Community Stadium, Brighton

Chef Team of the Year
Everton FC

Operations Team of the Year
American Express Community Stadium, Brighton

Non-matchday Mystery Shopper Award
American Express Community Stadium, Brighton

Media Choice Award
American Express Community Stadium, Brighton

TICKETING TECHNOLOGY AWARDS

Best Premium Hospitality or VIP Ticketing Experience
Mike Burton Group, Rugby World Cup



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