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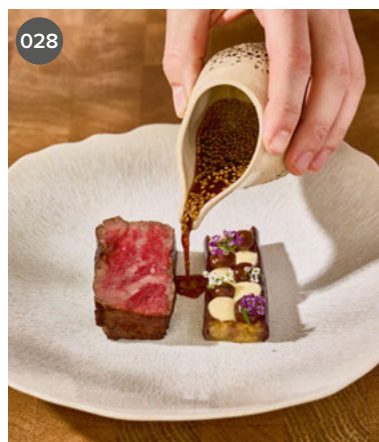


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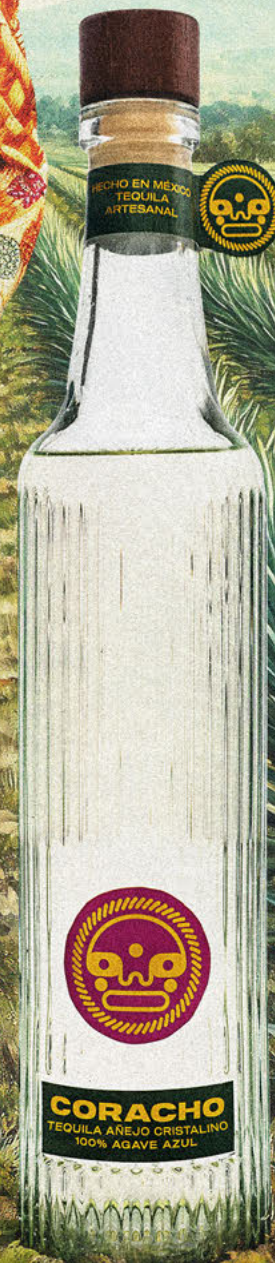
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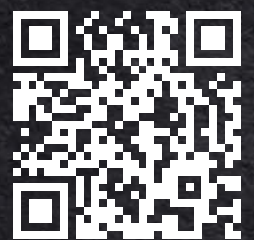
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ENTRÉE



ON THE COVER
30 Years of Nobu
© Courtesy of Nobu Hospitality

Life Lessons

The start of a new year is typically celebrated with renewed enthusiasm for attaining personal and professional goals, a fact supposedly written in stone – or more accurately, erasable pencil – when we set out our resolutions for the coming months. In the past, that might have meant bagging a clutch of accolades as a chef – Michelin stars among them – but increasingly, we’re seeing a tendency to look for proof of achievement above and beyond the typical channels. Gone is the relentless quest for perfection, and in its place comes something more fluid; a low-key attitude that permits more space and freedom to colour in the gaps.

In part, this change is being driven by consumers. As documented in our trend report, a summary of PoB Hotel’s Elevating Hotels 2025 whitepaper, only 32% of luxury travellers cite a Michelin star as the benchmark for memorable dining experiences. Instead, they’re looking for the prioritisation of local ingredients and locally inspired dishes, not to mention a sustainable, farm-to-table approach. They’re willing to travel long distances to rural locations for the privilege – a feat I can attest to, having trekked the country on an almost day-long train journey to review Briar in Somerset for this issue, though admittedly, it was worth it for the tasty Westcombe cheddar gougères alone.

Chef mindset is reflecting a similar shift. While speaking to Sam Lomas, the mastermind behind Briar, he admitted that the style of cooking at the restaurant is unlikely to win over a Michelin reviewer – the menu changes almost daily to reflect the seasons so could never encompass the consistency required for an award. That’s no judgement on the quality of the fare (spoiler: it’s exceptional), but rather, confirmation

that he’s happy to follow his own, more sinuous path, while taking guests along for the deliciously unpredictable ride.

All this isn’t to say that high-flying awards aren’t still vital, of course. In this issue, Endo Kazutoshi talks about his mission to score a second Michelin star for Endo at the Rotunda in London, while Heinz Beck proudly recounts his pride in maintaining three Michelin stars for La Pergola at Rome Cavalieri. Plus, we’re always delighted to recognise the incredible work of our AHEAD winners, not least because the prestige of winning is excellent publicity and a major draw for diners, but also because of the value it brings for the innovative designers, agencies and suppliers working behind the scenes of the year’s most inspired new openings.

Even so, perhaps the boundaries for what constitutes success in the kitchen and beyond are quietly evolving, and while gold standards remain significant, there’s increasingly more room to deviate from the established blueprint. That can only be a good thing for the industry and everyone involved, as diversity of choice and experience proves beneficial for all. If nothing else, it gives us permission to put aside the resolutions – at least for this year – and instead embrace the possibilities presented by the unknown. There’s a life lesson in there somewhere.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Abby Lowe'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of 'Abby' and 'Lowe' being larger and more prominent.

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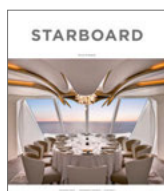
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APPETISERS

The luxury travel sector is undergoing a transformation, driven by the evolving preferences of affluent British holidaymakers who are redefining what luxury truly means.

While staycations have gained traction in recent years, more nuanced trends are now emerging; a notable shift is the growing prominence of culinary experiences. Food is no longer just fuel, but rather, has become an immersive part of a trip, offering guests a tangible connection to a region's culture. Research carried out by PoB Hotels in collaboration with Altiant underscores this point. Presented in the Elevating Experiences whitepaper – which surveyed 2,046 affluent and high net worth individuals (HNWIs) – it was found that 36% of UK respondents seek

Delving deeper into the findings, the whitepaper reveals that a local focus is essential for the discerning traveller, with 79% of respondents regarding the sourcing of local ingredients as 'very important'; 75% valuing locally-inspired dishes; and 66% appreciating a garden-to-table approach. As a result, hotels that have their own herb gardens, vegetable plots or beehives are setting the standard, as are those that establish partnerships with local farmers or source cheese from a nearby dairy. For guests, savouring a dish made using authentic local produce forges an unforgettable connection that lingers in the memory – more so than accolades. The research suggests that Michelin stars are not necessarily the ultimate benchmark for luxury travellers, with just 32% citing this as a priority.

Conscious Indulgence

Affluent travellers in the UK are seeking a tangible connection to the country's culture and history through memorable and sustainable foodie experiences.

out luxury dining experiences, rising to 47% for HNWIs (those with £400,000+ of investible assets). The message is clear: gastronomy has the power to elevate a stay. "Food and dining continue to be crucial factors for travellers, with growing demand for exciting and varied culinary options," confirms Kalindi Juneja, CEO of PoB Hotels, which holds a collection of independent properties across the British Isles.

For hotels in rural destinations, a high-quality, on-site restaurant is key. With few nearby alternatives, a fine-dining offer is not only a desirable amenity but an expectation, often becoming the main reason to visit. And for hotels in urban locations, it's all about choice; a mix of casual and more refined options is an effective way to cater to a spectrum of tastes and budgets.

The survey also found that although diners expect specialist diets to be catered for, only 25% of respondents deemed vegetarian options as important – perhaps surprising given the recent rise of vegetarianism and veganism.

Sustainability, however, remains crucial. "Consumers are embracing more conscious travel choices, with higher standards and eco-friendly practices expected across the board," Juneja explains, stressing the importance of the company-wide initiatives that have been introduced in partnership with EarthCheck. Indeed, 48% of survey respondents said they are more likely to book a hotel that demonstrates sustainable practices: reducing food miles, minimising waste and eliminating single-use plastics are among the initiatives highlighted. The challenge now is to integrate these practices into a luxury hospitality setting. "Luxury is a concept that holds diverse meanings for each individual, just as sustainability resonates differently based on personal priorities," Juneja concludes. "The connection lies in their mutual focus; by seamlessly integrating sustainability into luxury offerings, brands cater to a conscious, discerning audience while making a positive impact on the planet."



© Ben Hickman

Beigels in Bed

This one's for anyone partial to a late-night snack, whether rolling in from a big night out or in need of fuel while burning the midnight oil. Cult East London institution, Beigel Bake, is offering guests at The Hoxton Shoreditch a chance to indulge in beigels in bed, thanks to a new out-of-hours service that delivers direct from the Brick Lane bakery.

Producing 7,000 beigels every day, Beigel Bake was founded in 1974 and has run as a family business ever since, with hungry devotees queuing around the block to get their hands on the East End staple. Now, The Hoxton is helping guests jump that queue – without causing any beef. Guests staying at the hotel can order beigels direct to their door between 10.30pm and 7am, while those booking the Bed, Beigels & Beyond package get to stay in The Hoxton's very own Beigel Bake concept room adorned with much-

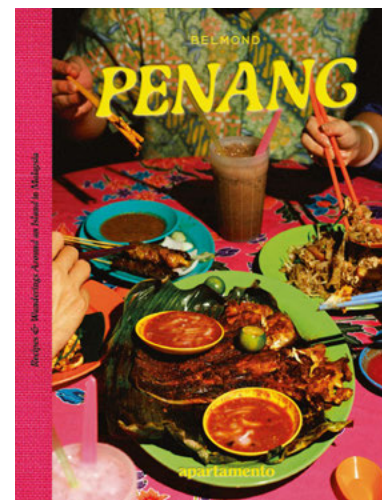
coveted merch, where they will be treated to a hearty feast for two.

Highlights from the menu include the crown jewel Salt Beef Beigel with tangy pickles and English mustard; the veritable classic Smoked Salmon & Cream Cheese Beigel; and all manner of pastries and sweet treats.

The collaboration expands on the Shoreditch outpost's existing affinity with Beigel Bake, which introduced a never-before-seen pizza topped with the famous salt beef. It also continues the hotel brand's legacy of becoming an extension of its neighbourhood, inspired by the diversity and originality of the streets that surround its properties. With locations in Amsterdam, Paris, Rome and beyond, the group offers vibrant public spaces and exciting dining concepts, which mean every Hoxton is as much a destination for the local community as it is for guests.

Island Bites

For the discerning traveller with a taste for adventure, Penang: Recipes & Wanderings Around an Island in Malaysia, offers a passport to the soul of this vibrant country. Produced by Apartamento and Belmond, the launch marks the second instalment in the Recipes & Wanderings series, a collection that blends the traditions of regional cuisines with the unique perspectives of celebrated photographers and writers. This edition immerses readers in the flavours and landscapes of Penang through the lens of Luo Yang, a rising star of Chinese photography, bringing the island's lush landscapes, bustling markets and soulful kitchens to life. Following an introduction by André Chiang, Culinary Director of Belmond's Eastern & Oriental Express, the tome features essays from those inspired by Penang, including Malcolm Lee, Abby Lee, Anna Sulan Masing and Kirthanana Naidu. As well as recipes to recreate at home – such as Duck Curry, Nasi Lemak, Wanton Mee and Oyster Omelette – the book is a celebration of the local suppliers and neighbourhoods that make Penang such a celebrated culinary destination. Readers walk through bustling wet markets and savour kueh snacks at a traditional kopi house, all without leaving their kitchens.





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Hospitality at Home

AvroKO unveils a first-of-its-kind gallery and gathering space, where a new collection of service trolleys take centre stage.

Described as a love letter to the art of hospitality, Host on Howard has made its debut in New York. The visionary venture comes courtesy of Kristina O’Neal, Adam Farmerie, William Harris and Greg Bradshaw – the founding partners of AvroKO – and combines a gallery and gathering space, as well as serving as a showcase for the design studio’s growing collection of furniture, lighting and objets d’art.

Located at 21 Howard Street in Manhattan, Host is not only a physical space, but an opportunity to welcome others who value the art of hospitality. “Hospitality is about creating meaningful connections,” explains O’Neal. “As part of our daily business we are constantly creating objects that bring people together and enhance our shared experiences; Host is our celebration of hospitality as a ritual for both gathering and belonging.”

On arrival, guests are greeted by an arched hallway in nurturing shades of green, leading to a fully-stocked bar available for creative

collaborations and exclusive product launches. The main gallery space is arranged in thoughtful vignettes of furniture and lighting – tools for gathering, say AvroKO. Hospitality-grade seating, privacy screens and soft-glow chandeliers all feature, as well as height-adjustable tables suitable for both cocktails and dining.

A further highlight is AvroKO’s exclusive collection of service trolleys, each named for its function – Bread, Dim Sum or Ice Cream, for example. The meticulously designed pieces draw inspiration from the custom carts the studio has crafted for the likes of Orla by Michael Mina and Bourbon Steak at Essex House, and blend beauty and practicality to elevate service to an art form.

With a focus on craftsmanship and the core tenets of hospitality, Host showcases the best custom designs from AvroKO, as well as a mix of thoughtfully-curated pieces from independent designers. Furthermore, every item is available for purchase, enabling hotel lovers to create hospitality at home.

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CHEF'S TABLE

Martín Berasategui

The San Sebastián chef behind **Jara at The Lana** shares his favourite foodie memories, revealing that family is at the heart of his culinary creativity.

When did you fall in love with cooking?

Growing up in the family restaurant with my mother and aunt in the kitchen. Ever since I was a child, I dreamed of dedicating myself to the same work as them, and here I am.

What's your favourite hotel restaurant?

I'm proud of all my restaurants, it's a privilege to work with the different hotel groups. I share the same goal of making sure guests leave happy by offering my spirit and professionalism direct from the kitchen. My latest pride and joy is Jara at Dorchester Collection's The Lana in Dubai. It is very exciting that such an inspiring place bears the name of my first granddaughter.

Which chefs have inspired you?

My mother and aunt left an indelible mark, and I admire every chef that has dedicated their time to teach me. I have also been able to meet so many chefs who have become friends: Didier Oudill, Michel Guérard, Joel Robuchon, André Mandion, Pedro Subijana, Hilario Arbelaitz...

How often do you dine out?

Not as often as I would like but every time I do, I enjoy it like a child with new shoes. The privilege of sitting at a table as a diner alongside family and friends is a unique feeling.

Are you an easy going or a demanding diner?

Chefs are the easiest guests in the world because we understand the effort that goes into a well-served table – we enjoy ourselves twice as much.

Tell us about your most memorable meal?

It's those I host at home, surrounded by family and friends – there's nothing like cooking for the people you love at your own pace; it surpasses any expectation.

What's your favourite dish and who cooks it?

Traditional Basque fish stews encapsulate the ways of living, thinking and feeling of my homeland, they are unbeatable – hake cheeks in pil-pil sauce; cod cheeks with cockles in txakoli wine; cod in pil-pil or vizcaína sauce; marmitako; fish soup; and squid stewed in its ink. And then there are the dishes that I'll remember forever, like my mother's roast or the stews cooked by my aunt, María.

And your favourite drink to accompany?

A well-chilled Louis Roederer Champagne. I also admire the winemakers around the world who dedicate themselves to producing the very best drops straight from their vineyards.

It's Sunday evening at home: who's cooking and what's on the menu?

I cook. My last family dinner included boiled goose barnacles, clams in marinara sauce, roasted sea bream and a beef chop. For dessert, it's Basque cheeses and ice cream. And plenty of lively conversation.

What's your go-to cooking soundtrack?

I usually catch up on what's happening in the world, and I enjoy listening to the radio and

sports broadcasts. I'm a football fanatic and a devoted supporter of Real Sociedad. I'm also a rowing enthusiast and follower of legendary San Sebastián club, Arraun.

Where do you get your creative inspiration?

Life is very inspiring, and I'm so privileged to be able to channel that energy into my dishes. It's also important to be surrounded by an incredible family and team and to have excellent resources. I'm fortunate enough to be able to cook in incredibly inspiring spaces, which makes my job so much easier.

Which cookbooks can we find on your shelf?

I'm an enthusiastic collector of cookbooks from all eras and different cultures. I have thousands, perfectly organised and sorted by subject. It's one of my great passions to read, consult and be inspired in my culinary practice.

Which new restaurant are you eager to try out?

I'm eager to travel to Dubai to explore the city's culinary offerings – I have some dinners booked that I'm really looking forward to.

Which city is food heaven for you?

That's a very easy question with an obvious answer: San Sebastián. The city where I was born and to which I owe everything. My great legacy is to ensure that new generations carry this forward and that my homeland continues to be a top-tier gastronomic beacon with seamless generational succession.



Destiny Calling

Becoming a sushi chef was written in the stars for **Endo Kazutoshi**, but generations of tradition didn't stop him from railing against the culture that he eventually came to thrive in.

Words: Abby Lowe • Portrait Photography: © Benjamin McMahon

Rebellion courses through the veins of Endo Kazutoshi, so much so that when he was younger, he couldn't contain it. He railed against his mother when she encouraged him to follow the path of a sushi master; he rejected the idea of inheriting his family's restaurant; and he refused to forfeit a university place, despite his parents' wishes that he pursue a career as a chef once graduating from school. He animatedly regales these personal revolutions with a mischievous twinkle in his eye, perhaps because they proved fruitless in the end; perhaps protest is futile when there are larger forces at play. "Being a sushi chef wasn't my choice," he admits with a wistful smile. "But it has always been my destiny."

Born in Yokohama, Japan's second-largest city, just south of Tokyo, Kazutoshi was surrounded by sushi culture growing up. His grandfather opened a sushi restaurant in 1940, and once he was experienced enough to inherit the role, Kazutoshi's father took over. The family lived in the flat above the restaurant, so every day Kazutoshi would pass through on the way to school, observing the daily rituals unfolding. "It was a disaster," he laughs. "Usually, I'd see my father telling off one of the young chefs, so I never got a positive impression of the job!"

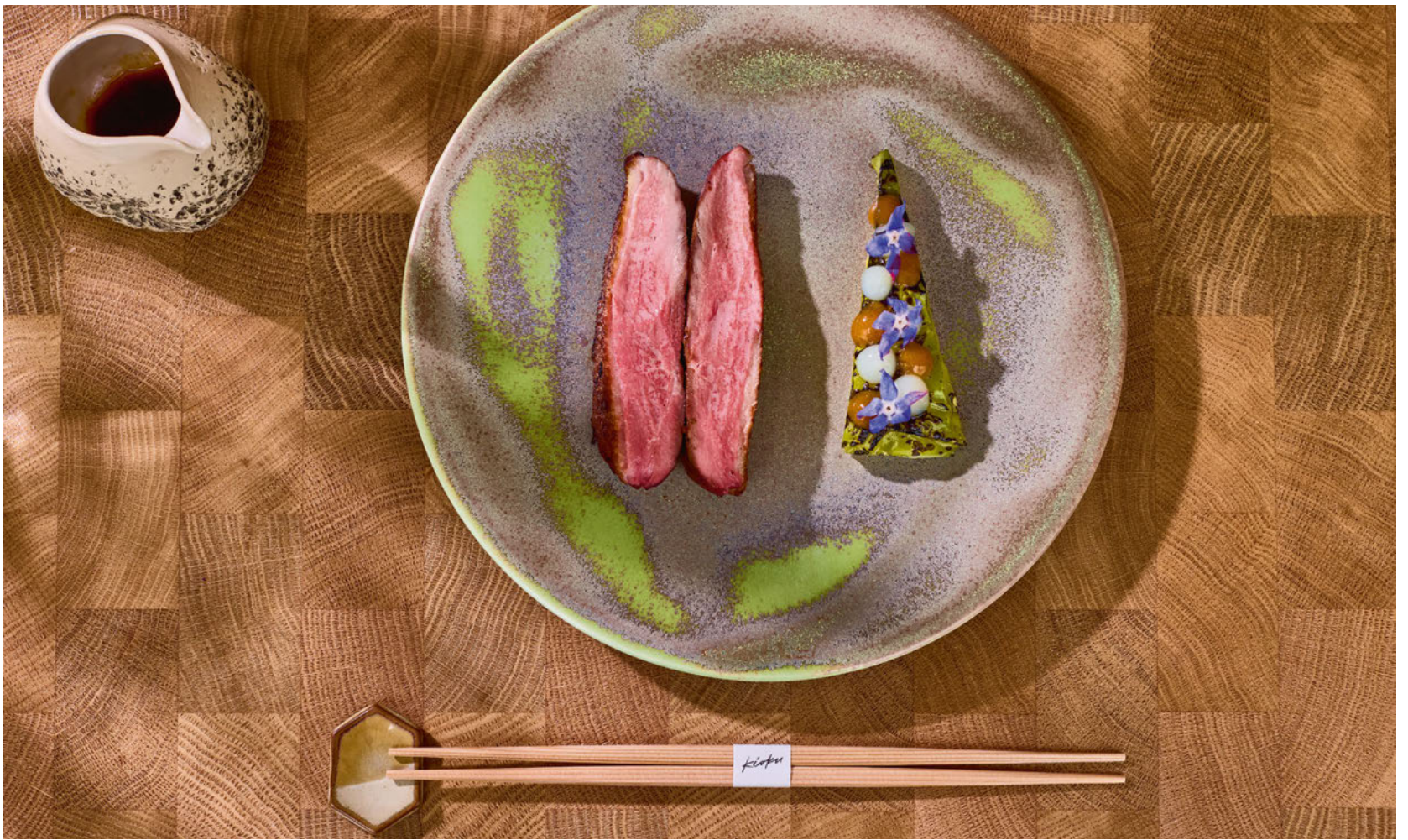
Even so, as the firstborn son, and in keeping with the deeply rooted concept of generational succession that permeates Japanese tradition, Kazutoshi was expected to take the reins of the restaurant one day. His mother took great care in priming him for the position, dedicating herself

to his development by organising creative pursuits designed to form the foundations he would need to become a sushi chef. Ikebana, or flower arranging, imbued the importance of beauty and balance; the ritual of the chadō tea ceremony inspired humility and togetherness; and Shodo, or Japanese calligraphy, encouraged discipline and attention to detail. For a young Kazutoshi, it felt like all work and no play.

"Other kids got to enjoy themselves at clubs after school," he explains. "But for me, it was the total opposite. At seven years old, I was already in training." As the years passed, the teachings intensified, and with it, Kazutoshi's objections strengthened. "I cried every day," he says. "I just wanted a normal life." He found solace in judo, and within months of practising, he became a champion of the sport. It was a pivot that – at least for a period – changed the direction of his life, earning him a scholarship to Kokushikan University in Tokyo. Initially his parents rejected the offer, but eventually they relented and let him attend. He subsequently spent years happily competing in countries around the world, and when his course ended, he was offered a teaching position at a Tokyo school. It was crunch time.

"There was a family meeting and my mother said 'you can follow your heart, do whatever you want – but if you do, we are finished'," he says with surprising light-heartedness. "And she only gave me 10 minutes to decide!" Kazutoshi chose family over the job, and reluctantly agreed to start sushi training. It was what his parents had wanted all along. "I had no interest in it," he admits. "But I was stuck."

That constraining sensation remained for years, so it was



Dishes at Kioku blend
Kazutoshi's Japanese roots
with Mediterranean influences

“When it’s your destiny, nothing ever ends. So, now I aim for consistency. Every day is different, and that’s what gives me room to grow.”

a tough time for Kazutoshi, who was forced to accept what he considered the machine-like mundanity of working for a famous sushi master at one of Tokyo’s leading omakase restaurants, where his sole tasks were cleaning fish and making tea. It’s only in hindsight that he realised how invaluable those days observing other chefs at work had been. Over time, his perspective changed, and while straddling the worlds of traditional edomae and more contemporary sushi styles, he developed a deeper admiration for the complexities of the craft and the individuals dedicating their lives to perfecting it. Slowly, he began to emerge from his self-contained cocoon, only now with less fight and more acceptance. “I did a 180-degree flip,” he admits. “I decided to concentrate on getting better every day.”

Such laser focus is an essential component of being a sushi chef, where factors like produce, atmospheric conditions and mood must be reckoned with daily, directly impacting the outcome of each dish. Mastering that precariousness is merely part of the process, and though he may have initially lacked direction, Kazutoshi was never short on talent. As a result, he quickly climbed the ranks of his profession, and at age 29, he was asked by his master to accept a position at the Japanese embassy in Madrid. Naturally, his parents didn’t want him to leave Japan – and if he was honest, he wasn’t fussed about going, either – but after some cajolement, he accepted the role, and once acclimatised to the Mediterranean way of life, learned to appreciate jamon, croquetas, wine, and the Spanish capacity for always being late.

It was while embracing siestas and fiestas that Kazutoshi was approached by Rainer Becker, who asked him to join Zuma in London as head chef. Once again unsure if it was the right move, Kazutoshi put aside his reticence when he realised the role came with the opportunity to change the city’s perception of his home country’s cuisine. He moved to London in 2007, promising his parents that it would only be for a year. Eight years later, and he had overseen the

opening of eight new outposts of the rapidly-growing group in various locations around the world.

By this point, it was clear that accepting responsibility for the family restaurant had become an ever-distant dream. And in fact, in his heart, Kazutoshi had already decided that it simply wasn’t part of his future. He did consider going back to Tokyo, but instead, settled on London, where he could channel years of his intense training into opening his own restaurant. “No one was doing omakase at the time,” he explains. “So now was the moment.”

The realisation came in 2019 with Endo at the Rotunda, set within The Helios – the redevelopment of the former BBC Television Centre in White City. The intimate 10-seat experience that Kazutoshi describes as a personalised collaboration with his guests was awarded a Michelin star within months. It brought him to tears, perhaps because of the personal pride of having proven himself; perhaps relief that after years of battling expectation, he accepted that a prophecy had been fulfilled.

That was five years ago, and he continues to blend tradition with innovation in the hunt for an illustrious second star. The restaurant recently shuttered for a six-month period, allowing for a beautiful Kengo Kuma redesign with a 200-year old hinoki wood counter at its centre. It gifted Kazutoshi the space required to reassess his ambitions. For this, he lent on the Japanese concept of Onkochishin – finding new wisdom in old ways. The process led him to re-examine the scribbled notes on recipes and techniques compiled by his grandfather. “I want to understand tradition so that I can move forward,” he says.

Meanwhile, Kazutoshi has been expressing his creative flair at another new opening, Kioku by Endo at The OWO – another London landmark that has undergone major restoration to now include a Raffles hotel and multiple F&B outlets. Here, the concept combines his vibrant Japanese heritage with glimmers of European memories that he has

“Being a sushi chef wasn’t my choice, but it has always been my destiny.”

collected while travelling and working on the continent. “Kioku means memory,” he explains. “So each section of the menu represents a part of my story.”

More elaborate than sushi, dishes include lobster fregola with sansho pepper and kinome; ox cheek agnolotti flavoured with sobacha tea and black truffle; and duck breast accompanied by fermented chilli, barley miso and hispi cabbage. Set to an interior design scheme crafted by Pirajeon Lees, which layers tactile materials such as natural oak, cork and linen with traditional Japanese detailing, and takes advantage of a striking rooftop backdrop of the city aglow beyond, the restaurant is another way for Kazutoshi to make sense of his current reality and the myriad twists and turns it took to reach this point.

Many of those, in their own serendipitous way, also paved the path for his position as culinary director at Creative Restaurant Group, where he oversees a series of outings including another Japanese venture named Niju on

London’s Berkeley Square, which boasts its own cocktail space that’s modelled on the traditional Japanese listening bar; a more casual sushi venue named Sumi, after his mother; and in a deviation to the cooking he’s renowned for, Abajo, a love letter to Colombian cooking styles.

At 51, the rebel within Kazutoshi still exists, but it’s quieter now. It appears in his mop of bleached blonde hair, and enduring love for punk music; his determination to sport traditional Japanese, open-toed geta, even in cold weather. And of course, it’s ever-present in his perseverance to veer away from a pre-ordained path. His brother has taken over the family restaurant now, and so the intense pressure he once wrestled with, and the sense of letting his family down despite his impressive stack of achievements, has dissipated, leaving room to concentrate on what he calls ‘the big picture’. “When it’s your destiny, nothing ever ends,” he says. “So, now I aim for consistency. Every day is different, and that’s what gives me room to grow.”



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The Ugly Duckling

Marking the launch of Cygnet at the newly-opened QT Singapore, **Sean Connolly** shares the journey of how a Yorkshire lad became one of Australia's best-loved chefs.

Words: Ianthe Butt

Supporting tinted glasses, tousled hair and chunky silver rings to accompany crisp chef whites – a look that's giving dapper culinary whizz and debonair 70s punk in equal measure – Sean Connolly is drinking a cup of tea. Controversially, given his Huddersfield roots, it's not traditional Yorkshire Tea, but a fruit variety. "I'm a fan, but only when it's made with proper Yorkshire water," he says with a smile. Unsurprising really, given that Connolly – one of Australia's best-known chefs and restaurateurs – has a renowned penchant for provenance.

Connolly's tongue-in-cheek motto, 'make it unf*ckupable', underlines his ethos. He keeps things simple, prioritising origin of ingredients. "It's important to know your butcher, your fishmonger, your fruiterer," he explains from within his newest restaurant, Cygnet by Sean Connolly. The just-opened, smart-casual steakhouse and grill sits inside QT Singapore, making it the first foray outside Australia and New Zealand from QT Hotels – the hip group for whom Connolly is Creative Director of Food & Beverage.

"With my restaurants, I want to transport people into a different world," he explains. "Lighting, design, music – it's all theatre." Cygnet certainly does drama, thanks to a low-lit dining room furnished with sultry jet-black marble tables, Mid-Century inspired, rattan-backed seating and an open kitchen framed by teal tiles. Add to that a soundtrack courtesy of The Strokes and a menu featuring baked

scallops with pistachio pesto, a steak library and honeycomb mac'n'cheese, and it could be New York. The views out to zipping traffic and smoky plumes rising from satay stalls at Lau Pa Sat hawker centre, however, give away the true location in Singapore's Central Business District.

Connolly, who currently helms five other restaurants in Australia and New Zealand, including Esther in QT Auckland, and Gowing's and Parlour at QT Sydney, lives between Sydney and Byron Bay, with frequent trips to Auckland, and now Singapore. "Saying that out loud, I appreciate how lucky I am; how far I've come," he says. Despite his myriad successes, Connolly remains down to earth, and one gets the sense he is still pinching himself. It has, after all, been quite the journey since he first put on his chef's jacket, working unpaid shifts as a 13-year-old in the prawn cocktail section at the Pennine Hilton in Leeds. Around the same time, his home economics teacher told him he would never make it as a chef. His crime? Putting too much jam in his jam tarts. "Can you ever?" he still ponders.

Connolly's early years were shaped by his down-to-earth working-class family. That first stint in a professional kitchen was set up by his father, a gear engineer-turned-lecturer, who knew his son wouldn't follow him into academia. Much time was also spent cooking at the elbow of his beloved grandmother. Another influence was the documentary series Whicker's World, set on the QEII cruise liner, which then stocked a third of the world's caviar. 'I'm gonna be on that





Dishes at Cygnet include a classic Connolly devilled egg served in a porcelain swan's foot, and a tasty beef flight

“With my restaurants, I want to transport people into a different world. Lighting, design, music – it’s all theatre.”

ship one day,’ he thought to himself. Within five years, via a Yorkshire Post advertisement and a drive to Liverpool in a Robin Reliant, Connolly was cheffing aboard on a seven-month sailing through 48 countries, including Barbados and Bora Bora. Even so, it was Australia that made a lasting impression. “I remember thinking, this is as far away from England as you can possibly get,” he says. “The sun shines every day and everyone says g’day mate!”

A move there beckoned in 1988, followed by stints at Sydney’s Boulevard Hotel and The Park Lane. The latter, working with Mediterranean-born chef, Olivier Massart, proved transformative. “Before, I was a classically French-trained roast beef chef; Olivier taught me the flavours of the sun,” he says. A 15-year period at The Star Casino in Sydney followed and marked another turning point when CEO Jimmy L’Estrange took a punt on Connolly, putting him in charge of new restaurant Astral, with a money’s-no-object approach. It paid off, with Astral winning five consecutive Chef’s Hat Awards between 1995 and 2000 and gaining renown for its AUS\$1,000-a-head, 10-course tasting menu. Despite Astral’s avant-garde fare being a far cry from the stripped-back, comforting food Connolly is now known for, it propelled him into the spotlight.

Successes kept coming, with Connolly named Chef of the Year by The Sydney Morning Herald in 2008 and a starring role in TV show, My Family Feast, which saw him learn about migrant cuisines from Iraqi, Italian and Congolese families. “Seeing passata made Nonna-style was an a-ha moment – the simplicity and inherited tradition of it,” he recalls. This cemented an already-developing interest in provenance. Today, Connolly cites Tetsuya Wakuda and Neil Perry as living heroes. “I don’t ever say I’m in the same league as them,” he says. “But I believe in what they believe; no flowers, no foams, no bubbles required.”

After a period of “following fashion and trying to fit into corporate demands”, the past 15 years have seen Connolly lean into who he really is. The result is an ever-evolving empire of restaurant successes, with menus typically centred around grills, gills and other seafood. These include Sean’s Kitchen in Adelaide, Gusto at the Grand and The Grill by Sean Connolly – both at SkyCity Auckland Casino – as well as Balcony Bar in Byron Bay and The Morrison Bar and Oyster Grill. Along the way, there have been less triumphant ventures. Sean Connolly at Dubai Opera, a grand 350-seat brasserie next to the Burj Khalifa, closed its doors in early 2019, 18 months after opening, despite Connolly being named Chef of the Year in 2018 by Esquire Middle East. “Things aren’t always perfect,” he reflects. “It was a large space and we simply couldn’t fill it. It was sad but it’s still one of the best things I ever did. I learnt a lot. And I never thought I’d see a Yorkshireman’s name above the Dubai Opera House.”

But one door closes and another opens. In the airport lounge leaving Dubai, Connolly called QT, having been in touch with the group in the past. He had heard they might be on the lookout for a chef to partner with, and while they weren’t looking immediately, Connolly’s take-a-chance attitude paid off. In 2020, a slew of projects followed, including Esther at QT Hotel Auckland, a Mediterranean restaurant with a Spanish hacienda-feel; the reimaging of QT Sydney’s signature Gowings Bar & Grill into a New York-inspired T-bones and spaghetti restaurant; and the launch of Parlour, a neo-French bistro at the Sydney property. He describes the ongoing partnership with QT – a hospitality group known for its playful attitude and showstopping interiors – as special. “QT embraces individuality. I’m eccentric and they’re quirky; we meet in the middle. It’s a wild, very fun dance,” he explains.

That love for collaboration extends to design. Cygnet’s

“QT embraces individuality. I’m eccentric and they’re quirky; we meet in the middle. It’s wild, very fun dance.”

Connolly’s venues tend to focus on grills, gills and other seafood

dining room, for instance, was delivered by acclaimed interior designer, Nic Graham, with Connolly’s stamp reflected in brass salt-and-pepper grinders, brooding blue-to-black ombre glassware by WMF Germany, and scallop-edged Serax plates he selected to sit atop tables.

The chef boasts the same approach to all his hotel-based projects. “Restaurants live or die depending on whether they are built for the community, whether inside a hotel or not,” he says. That means Cygnet is the culmination of 45 years’ worth of experience, and it shows. Steak connoisseurs delight in the steak library that’s stocked with Tomahawk to Wagyu from trusted suppliers like David Blackmore. Another USP is its beef flight, a daily changing, three-cut selection, which might see Australian grass-fed ribeye paired with miso hollandaise, followed by a Japanese Wagyu slice, then Argentinian beef cheek with salsa verde. Other fan favourites

include the signature orgy of mushrooms, an array of pan-fried fungi in a mushroom broth-beurre blanc sauce with ricotta ‘pillows’, first made during Connolly’s Gusto at the Grand days; famed duck-fat potatoes a la Sean’s Kitchen; and a classic Connolly devilled egg – rich in Clive of India curry powder flavouring and 1970s nostalgia. At Cygnet, the fan favourite comes with a fresh look, served in a porcelain swan’s foot.

Connolly still gleans so much pleasure from the job that he plans to keep going well into his eighties. “I’d love to stay relevant that long, like Vivienne Westwood,” he grins. Then up he springs, back to the kitchen to make sure the strawberry consommé on a cognac-infused soft serve is just-so. Later, in a follow up, he reveals another restaurant might be in the works for 2025. Whatever comes next will undoubtedly be worth the wait.



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PROFILE

David Martin
Global Head of Restaurants & Bars
Corinthia Hotels

Prior to joining Corinthia Hotels, David Martin spent 12 years at Gordon Ramsay Restaurants, first as a General Manager, before rising through the ranks to become International Operations Director. He was appointed as Global Head of Restaurants & Bars at Corinthia Hotels in 2022, where he oversees the entire portfolio of F&B venues within the group's international array of luxury properties.

Family Values

Strong relationships are at the heart of every **Corinthia Hotels** dining destination, proving that considered collaborations are the key to success.

Words: Abby Lowe

Starting out with a fine-dining restaurant on the island of Malta, the Pisani family have spent the past six decades building their business, growing from a single outpost to a global portfolio of luxury hotels. The group pioneered the 'Grand Boutique' movement, blending the elegance of a grande dame with the energy of a boutique hotel, and, despite its prowess, maintains a family-first ethos, placing emphasis on building relationships. Corinthia Hotels is currently cresting a wave of exciting new openings, with Bucharest and Rome on the horizon, followed by Doha, Riyadh and Maldives.

STRONG BONDS

Memorable experiences are at the heart of every Corinthia Hotel, an approach that has been cemented by the recent appointment of Simon P Casson as CEO, and David Martin as Global Head of Restaurants & Bars – a position that didn't previously exist. The pair began their hospitality careers as pot washers, diligently working their way up to senior level, and this has proven pivotal in a hands-on attitude to their respective roles, as well as a shared appreciation for the importance of impactful restaurants and bars. "We have a very forward-thinking mindset because we understand every part of the F&B development process and the challenges that come with it,"

Martin explains. "Our strategy moving forward is focused on continuing to build our ecosystem of industry-leading partners. After all, it's the team that creates the experience."

A wide-ranging network of like-minded collaborators is, of course, crucial to that mission. While many elements of a Corinthia Hotels signature restaurant or bar differ depending on factors like the character of the property and its location – "we don't have a one-size-fits-all approach," Martin confirms – the commitment to sourcing the best possible regional talent is steadfast. "We can design and build the most incredible restaurants in the most incredible hotels, but it amounts to nothing if there isn't a skilled team in place to deliver the concept," he continues. "We want people to be a part of the Corinthia family as much as they're a part of a venue's success."

ORGANIC GROWTH

The recently opened Corinthia Brussels is a prime example. Helmed by an inspiring group of locals with roots firmly in the city, they have proven integral to how F&B blueprints can organically blossom. "We design our restaurant spaces with very intentional concepts," Martin explains. "First and foremost, they need to be destinations in their own right."



© What The Fox

In the case of Corinthia Brussels, this meant reaching out to local culinary icon, Christophe Hardiquet, one of Belgium's top restaurateurs and founder of the two-Michelin-starred Bon Bon, which closed in 2022. The collaboration has resulted in Petit Bon Bon, a modern take on the classic Belgian brasserie. Meanwhile, French chef David Martin will take care of the hotel's fine-dining fare at Palais Royal. "The chefs come with a certain pedigree, but it's about more than just bringing in a big name to tick a box," Martin adds. "We work towards introducing relevant chefs and concepts, and sometimes that means getting out our crystal ball and predicting the emerging trends."

Unusually, it also means bucking the tendency for celebrity-led enterprises adopted by some hotel groups. "We're open to new ideas, to something a little different and more meaningful," Martin confirms. "We go on a considered journey to select our chef partners as we want to ensure they're the right fit."

With that in mind, award-winning Belgian mixologist, Hannah Van Ongevalle, has been tasked with overseeing the hotel's bar concepts, another appointment that has unexpected benefits for guests. "The front-of-house team act as a connection to the city," Martin explains. "They have their ear to the ground; they know

what's going on and are well-informed – it's a great way for our overseas guests to connect with the destination."

LOCAL LEANINGS

Tapping into a location's culture is a pillar of Corinthia Hotels' success, with locals a key demographic of the type of visitor the group hopes to attract. "We need our F&B concepts to align with the premise of the brand and character of the property, but they should also appeal to the local community," Martin says. "That's how we create an authentic product. If a venue has a lively buzz, then it becomes appealing to non-hotel guests too. We want to create a welcoming home-from-home, which in turn builds loyalty. After all, it's the local clientele who will make our spaces successful, not only the guests booking in for an overnight stay."

"We can design and build the most incredible restaurants in the most incredible hotels, but it amounts to nothing if there isn't a skilled team in place to deliver the concept."

Naturally, this positive outcome is built on strong companywide foundations, and that links back to the family values and smooth relations between the internal team and culinary collaborators. "We always look for partners who come from a similar culture to Corinthia; that's why we've teamed up with Christophe and David in Brussels," Martin explains. "By taking the time to meet the right people, we can ensure the partnership works for both parties."

The results of this ethos have so far proven promising, with more opportunities than ever for Corinthia. "As we grow our ecosystem and gain global exposure, great chefs and brands have approached us to suggest working together. And that's when you know you're starting to make an impact – because people want to be part of it. Quality attracts quality, and that's what opens the door to new relationships."



Sumosan Address Beach Resort

BAHRAIN

Words: Abby Lowe
Photography: Courtesy of Address Hotels



IN A BITE

Owner: Janina Wolkow
F&B Operator: The Collection of Experiences Hospitality
Interior Design: Bishop Design
Head Chef: Isakov Abdula
www.addresshotels.com

A compelling collaboration between award-winning interior design firm Bishop Design and Japanese restaurant chain Sumosan continues, this time with a beautifully adorned venue within Address Beach Resort in Bahrain. Following on from the successful partnership that launched Sumosan Riyadh in 2022, this project incorporates contemporary finesse and natural materials in the creation of a space that reflects both the cultural spirit of the local area and Sumosan's vibrant global identity.

Characterised by the smooth lines of carefully juxtaposed stone, metal and walnut-shaded wood, the brand's signature deep green hues are interwoven throughout the venue, providing intimate nooks and a visual counterpoint to the hard surfaces. "This organic harmony grounds guests in an ambience that feels simultaneously exclusive and inviting, while the tactile contrast of light and dark materials infuse it with both freshness and warmth," explains Dylan Adams, Senior Designer at Bishop Design.

Standout features include the shadowy, golden-lit bar with its eye-catching ceiling of undulating angular panels – designed as an ode to the nearby ocean's waves – and the show kitchen's dramatic, slate-tiled façade that marries functionality with visual allure. "These theatrical focal points epitomise architectural grace, embodying the refined balance of Sumosan's culinary artistry and innovative design," Adams continues.

Elsewhere, the custom, Asian-inspired, oversized lanterns that hang gracefully from the dining room ceiling were provided by local lighting specialists, Lumen Art, while UK-based Into strategically embedded lighting throughout the venue to enhance textures in the creation of a distinctly mellow, golden glow – perfect for tucking into plates of lobster salad, sashimi taquitos and 24-hour miso-marinated black cod. "The venue's narrative evolves from day to night, ensuring the design is as versatile, sophisticated and immersive as the culinary journey it complements," Adams concludes.

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Bascule Bar Cape Grace

CAPE TOWN

Words: Hannah Currie
Photography: © Claire Gunn



IN A BITE

Owner: Kasada Capital Management
Operator: Accor
Interior Design: 1508 London
Lighting Design: Pamboukian Light Design
Graphic Design: Spoken Studio, X-Potential
Art Consultant: Lezanne van Heerden
Head Chef: Asher Abramowitz
F&B Manager: AJ Durow
Mixologist: Albre Marais
Head Sommelier: Alvezo Abrahams
www.capegrace.com

Once illicit and underground, South Africa’s shebeens first emerged in the 1800s, evolving into dynamic drinking dens in the wake of the Liquor Act 1927, which barred non-white South Africans from entering licensed bars. When the Great Depression followed shortly after, economic degradation solidified the appeal of these exuberant homespun speakeasies, especially when coupled with so-called Shebeen Queens, the charismatic hosts who offered a lively sanctuary soundtracked by upbeat African jazz.

Today, these spirited dens of resilience are finding renewed respect. Enter Bascule Bar at Cape Grace, an upscale homage to Cape Town’s storied past. “The new Bascule Bar is a loving recreation of the original,” says Anthony Taylor, Design Principle at 1508 London.

The venue’s atmospheric lighting and deep-hued interiors whisper of mystery, while the semi-circular banquettes are ideal for cosy catch-ups. A selection of artworks curated by Lezanne van Heerden punctuate the space,

with pieces by established and emerging artists selected to honour the past. “The artwork celebrates the Shebeen Queen through a series of paintings that depict strong African women, while the interior is elegantly designed to feel timeless,” Taylor explains. “The ambience evokes feelings of discovery, excitement and freedom of expression. It’s a place to let your guard down and enjoy the moment.”

Culinary artistry is also woven into the concept. Head Chef Asher Abramowitz and Mixologist Albre Marais have devised a cocktail menu brimming with homemade cordials and syrups. Signature serves include the herbaceous Garden Martini with lemongrass and Earl Grey syrup, and the refreshing Beauty of Seasons with kumquat-infused gin. Furthermore, a whisky library boasts over 500 rare selections including single-cask vintages dating back to the 1950s. In all, Bascule Bar is a refined haven for the adventurous, where history meets modern indulgence, and Cape Town’s past and present unite over the perfect pour.



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LouLou The Home Hotel

ZURICH

Words: Abby Lowe
Photography: Courtesy of The Home Hotel



IN A BITE

Developers: Manfred and Günter Weilguni
Interior Design: Stylt Trompoli
Affiliation: Design Hotels
Chef: Inbar Zuckerberg
F&B Manager: Anezka Solarova
Head Bartender: Sayedur Khan
www.thehomehotel.ch

The natural eclecticism and free-thinking spirit of the Dadaists has been channelled into the lively interiors of The Home Hotel Zurich, a venue that reimagines a former paper factory, built in 1836, on the banks of the Sihl River. Designed by Stylt Trampoli as an ode to the anti-establishment individuals who pioneered the early 20th-century movement, interiors evoke a playful mindset that celebrates their unique and boundary-defying aesthetic. A brand-new gathering place for the Swiss city's contemporary creative scene, as well as adventurous, open-minded travellers, it's a blank canvas for convivial days and nights.

Core to the offering is LouLou French Grill & Raw Bar, where plates riff on traditional Gallic cuisine with global influences, and interiors are a feast for the eyes. "LouLou's design enhances the dining experience by creating a vibrant yet intimate atmosphere," explains Günter Weilguni, founder and co-owner of The Home Hotel. "The mix of contemporary and classic design fosters a warm, sophisticated setting."

That feat is achieved first and foremost through a rich, absorbing colour palette of aubergine, emerald green and burnt amber. Details come in the form of sculptural chandeliers, curated objets d'art and a mishmash of materials like crushed velvet, polished brass and rattan, which create intriguing vignettes from every angle.

Meanwhile, the lively open kitchen allows guests to connect with the culinary process – one that favours local ingredients from France and Switzerland. Menu options include grilled meats, entrecôte, fresh fish and sourdough pizzas. There's also an extensive selection of vegetarian and vegan fare.

In keeping with the collaborative spirit of the Dadaists, the venue is set to host kitchen parties, guest chef residencies and cooking classes, and at the adjacent Home Bar & Lounge, guests can indulge in a bold mix of classic cocktails, creative drinks and fine wines, just like true artists of the era. Weilguni concludes: "LouLou is a dynamic space that invites boldness and creative freedom."

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La Pergola

Rome Cavalieri

ROME

Heinz Beck teams up with Jouin Manku to reimagine his three Michelin-starred restaurant, bringing the spirit of the Eternal City to the plate.

Words: Hannah Currie • Photography: © Janez Puksic (unless otherwise stated)

Depending on your perspective, Rome is many things. It's the dreamlike brushstrokes of Piazza Navona captured by Canaletto; the silhouette of St Peter's Basilica rising above the skyline; or the Italian parasol pines piercing a bright summer sky. It's the carefree charm of Nanni Moretti zipping through the city on a Vespa, or the elegance of Marcello Mastroianni strolling along Via Veneto. Together, these iconic images are distilled into the essence of the Eternal City. And it's this fusion of past and present that serves as the backdrop to Heinz Beck's La Pergola. For the past 30 years, the German-born chef – who calls Italy home – has meticulously shaped the gastronomic experience at his three-Michelin-starred restaurant atop Rome Cavalieri, A Waldorf Astoria Hotel. Today, with a reimagined menu and a striking redesign by Parisian studio, Jouin Manku, Beck ushers in a new chapter, paying homage to the Italian dolce vita while embracing the health-focused cuisine of the future.

“Good art requires some science,” Beck muses, reclining in the cognac leather and dark timber-clad lounge of the ninth-floor eatery. He gestures towards the painting-lined walls, which feature works from the hotel's museum-worthy collection – ranging from a Tiepolo triptych in the lobby and a Warhol in the penthouse, to contemporary works by Mario Schifano and Roberto Crippa. It's the ingenuity of

these masters that sets the scene for a dining experience painted from a palette of science, aesthetics and Roman heritage, or what Beck calls his “culinary portrait”. Yet, he is clear that taste remains his foremost priority. “I would never sacrifice flavour to make a dish look quirky or to create special effects,” he says. “Equally, no-one wants to come to a three Michelin-starred restaurant and say, ‘I ate the healthiest food of my life, but it was not delicious.’”

This delicate balance is reflected in the kitchen itself, which could easily be mistaken for a high-tech laboratory, with medical-grade equipment like ultrasound baths, rotary evaporators and high-speed centrifuges atop counters. Beck himself appears as the enigmatic professor, whose pursuit of knowledge has led him to collaborate with respected researchers on international studies into the effects of food on the body and its impact on the ageing process. For him, food is medicine, and this principle guides his work at both La Pergola and at Palazzo Fiuggi, a wellness retreat just down the road that integrates traditional practices with advanced western medicine. At both locations, Beck and his team use the maximum number of raw materials through biological or enzymatic processes inherent in nature. There's also a growing emphasis on the plant world, where Beck discovers increasingly intense flavours using modern technologies and ancient preservation techniques.





An eight-course menu at La Pergola makes use of raw produce to exemplify Beck's ethos of food as medicine

Throughout an eight-course tasting menu, he seeks longevity – not only for his diners, but also for the planet, a feat he achieves by using biodynamic produce, adopting the circular cuisine concept and minimising waste. One of his latest creations is 0.01%, a dish named after the minuscule percentage of Earth's biomass that humans represent, and a nod to our tendency for reproducing resources in a superfluous way. Featuring freeze-dried tomato and charcoal, it's shaped into a 'sanpietrini' – a traditional Roman cobblestone – then paired with wild herbs symbolising the resilience of nature. "It's about reclaiming the space human beings have left behind," Beck explains, referencing a time during Italy's Covid lockdown in the spring of 2020, when grass grew between the stones, most noticeably in Piazza Navona and Piazza del Popolo. Techniques include plunging tomato water into -60°C , then freeze-drying for 36 hours at -47°C . Another new dish, Lamb on the Via Appia Antica, transports diners to one

of Rome's most historically significant roads, pairing the rich flavour of the cut with wild-grown legumes, while the plating evokes the ancient fields that once lined the Appian Way.

Rome's past and present is also reflected in the restaurant's rich, red interiors. "Breathing new life into a space while honouring its heritage is a delicate task. The main challenge is to create a seamless connection between past and present, blending memory with the innovation we seek to introduce," Patrick Jouin explains. "In a restaurant as iconic as this, the priority is to preserve its soul while adding a fresh touch that harmonises with Heinz Beck's culinary experience. It is a quest for balance between yesterday, today and tomorrow."

With panoramic views over the city from the verdant hill of Monte Mario, La Pergola's design seamlessly fuses modern sophistication with Roman grandeur. "The restaurant was crafted to allow a natural dialogue between the city and the dining experience," says Sanjit





Manku. “Rome is not merely a backdrop but an active presence, inviting itself in through its colours, materials and warmth. Each meal unfolds against a vibrant, living portrait of the city.” In the main dining area, terracotta-coloured Alcantara is the basis for a colour palette inspired by the natural tones of the Eternal City, while travertine, synonymous with Rome’s rooftops, is used extensively throughout the space, notably in the flooring and bar. “We wanted each element and material, to tell a story of Rome – whether through its landscapes or cinematic ambiance,” he adds. “The experience is imbued with the spirit of la dolce vita, while honouring the timeless history that makes Rome unique.”

Up above, the rippled ceiling textiles create a play on light that changes throughout the day, bathing the space in a warm glow, while a glass chandelier resembles a cascade of light. “If you visit in the day, the light is more orange; at

night, it becomes redder, like a Roman sunset in the summer,” explains Beck. “We don’t have to change the lighting inside the restaurant at all – the effect is all the work of nature.” The same organic abundance can be seen in the silk walls embroidered with delicate motifs of kitchen herbs, originally painted by Beck. The botanical theme then continues on sculpted alcoves with plant-like patterns and tables topped with hand-crafted vases by Roman studio Madlen, and Limoges plates designed specially for the restaurant. “The biggest luxury is exclusivity in details. Every piece in the restaurant is made and designed especially for us, and that was very important to me,” the chef concludes. “After 30 years of La Pergola, we had to do something unique, with timeless elegance. For me, inspiration for that comes from everywhere: a picture, a smile, beautiful architecture. The only thing you have to do is be open for it to capture you.”



IN A BITE

Operator: Waldorf Astoria

Interior Design: Jouin Manku

Chef: Heinz Beck

Restaurant Manager: Simone Pinoli

Head Sommelier: Marco Reitano

Dinnerware: Rosenthal

www.romecavalieri.com




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Number One Bruton

SOMERSET

Local connections and creativity combine at Sam Lomas' first solo outing, where the wonders of West Country ingredients are celebrated on the plate.

Words: Abby Lowe • Photography: Courtesy of Number One Bruton

The quaint town of Bruton in Somerset is named after the River Brue that slices through its core. Cradled by green sloping hillocks that resemble the gentle rise and fall of a giant's belly taking breath, it's sleepy by nature, and still, this seemingly unassuming southwestern bolthole has a history of creative richness. American author John Steinbeck burrowed down here in 1959, when he went in search of fabled King Arthur mythology, reportedly finding his own version of Avalon instead. Fashion designer Stella McCartney is a resident and war photographer Don McCullin is happy to call the place home.

Among all this unbridled talent, an arty-focused community has perhaps unsurprisingly sprung up. The main street is a treasure trove of quirky, independent shops (and a Spar selling cold smoked trout and Champagne) that's carpeted by Birkenstock-wearing ex-Londoners with tiny toddlers in tow. Hauser & Wirth set up a gallery here in 2014, and The Newt is just on the outskirts. It's full to the brim with people who have swapped city life for the eternal appeal of a rural escape, and the result is undeniably boujee but also a bit brilliant; there are plenty of things happening here worth shouting about.

The newly launched Briar at Number One Bruton is one of them. Helmed by Macclesfield-born chef, Sam Lomas, who cut his teeth with Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall at River

Cottage, appeared on Great British Menu in 2022, and went on to become head chef at Glebe House in the neighbouring county of Devon, before opening his first solo venture. And yet, it already bears all the marks of a confident debut outing, with his farm-to-fork philosophy and respect for craft-based cookery rippling through the menu and into the intimate restaurant space beyond. Humble, unfussy and localised, every element is admirably down to earth.

"We wanted to make it accessible to people who really like food," he explains from the restaurant on a grey autumn morning. "So, adopting a price point that means they can just pop in and have a few plates if they fancy, and come back time and time again." Owner Claudia Waddams elaborates: "Sam's vision was to create a restaurant whose changing menu speaks of its surroundings, where the food is extremely high quality yet affordable."

It's a far cry from Michelin-starred Osip, which previously occupied the space but has now moved to larger premises to meet demand, but it fits perfectly at Number One Bruton, a boutique hotel where friendliness and accessibility appear prized attributes. In fact, a lack of pretension is central to the overall approach. Keen to encourage a deeper connection to the rivers, fields and forests that pepper the leafy landscape, Lomas has rooted the Briar menu firmly in the West Country. "I've always been interested in ingredients and where they





Briar's cheese gougères are made with local Westcombe cheddar, while desserts reflect the seasons



come from,” he explains, before hopping up to take some sourdough out of the oven. “And I think that for anyone staying in the hotel or visiting the region, it’s nice for them to get a sense of what Somerset is like on the plate.”

That mission is helped immeasurably by an abundance of quality local suppliers. Meat, dairy and fish is sourced from Stream Farm, a small-scale, organic enterprise located in the nearby Quantock Hills; cheese, charcuterie and beer comes from Tom Calver’s Westcombe Dairy, which prioritises diversity of pasture and wellbeing of its herds; and when produce isn’t being plucked direct from the kitchen veggie patch or the owners’ own garden in Batcombe up the road, it’s collected from Off-Grid Organics in Wyvern Fields. And the exceptional cheddar served at breakfast should also get a mention: The yield of a small herd at Stavordale Priory that’s owned by theatre director, Sir Cameron Mackintosh – the world would be a better place if everyone could nibble on it.

This interweaving network of people and

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produce is central to Lomas' vision. "I like the human connection part of these stories," he confirms. "And with so many incredible ingredients available locally, we're able to react quickly and be responsive and flexible with what we serve."

The result is an almost daily changing blackboard menu of small plates, with staples like porridge sourdough – Lomas' forte: "if I could only make one thing, it would be bread" – and Westcombe cheddar gougères, in which the cheese is whipped into smooth cream and the crispy outer casing has an almost wafer-like quality. Meanwhile, seasonal specials include dishes like fresh curds, grilled leeks and hazelnuts; buttermilk fried partridge with tarragon mayonnaise; and slow cooked shoulder of lamb served with carrots, yoghurt and smoked almonds.

It's all savoured in an intimate dining room with just a smattering of tables, where walls are the colour of spicy mustard, accented by a mint-striped banquette and exposed brick pillars. At

the far end, Lomas and his two-person team toil away in the kitchen, visible to everyone as they settle in for a cosy night at his and the season's whim. "Bruton was calling out for a restaurant that sings the praises of our locality, and Sam's food is exciting and delicious," Waddams notes. "We look forward to facilitating his ideas and seeing him grow into himself as the operator of the restaurant."

On his days off, Lomas likes to amble across the verdant countryside, often without aim, though inevitably, there are always stacks of ideas queuing up to crack into his consciousness, like a prickly stem of briar bursting through the soil. "I find that if I don't have that little bit of space then I'm less able to think of interesting things for the menu," he explains. "But when I'm outside, I have more time and that makes it much easier to be creative."

Indeed, Steinbeck once wrote of the very same landscape: "I wish you could feel this place. There's goodness here... something that clears your eyes." Perhaps he was on to something.



IN A BITE

Owners: Claudia Waddams, Aled Rees
 Interior Design: Frank & Faber
 Head Chef: Sam Lomas
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Casa Tua The Surrey

NEW YORK

Miky and Leticia Grendene's revered Miami members' club gets a sleek Manhattan makeover for a new Corinthia landmark.

Words: Ayesha Khan

Photography: © What The Fox (Unless otherwise stated)

When Casa Tua opened its doors in a Mediterranean-style villa in Miami in 2001, the members' club model was something of a novelty. Not knowing it at the time, founders Miky and Leticia Grendene – who simply sought to create an extension of their own home for friends to enjoy – were paving the way for an elite members' club trend. Their Miami enterprise instantly became a hit, spawning new outposts in Paris and Aspen. 25 years on, Casa Tua has finally made its way to New York.

Set within The Surrey, which recently emerged as a Corinthia following a top-to-toe refurbishment, the new venue had some tough shoes to fill; its Madison Avenue site was once home to Café Boulud, one of the best-loved evening hangouts on the Upper East Side. Nevertheless, the new concept doesn't disappoint, bringing a contemporary clip to the notoriously exclusive, upper crust Manhattan neighbourhood. "I love the sense of community, sophistication and timelessness here," Miky says. "I felt there was an opportunity to introduce something fresh and dynamic that would bring the Downtown energy Uptown."

This dichotomy was achieved by partnering with renowned Florentine designer Michele Bönan, who has worked with the couple on a number of Casa Tua projects. Like others



Interiors by Michele Bönan feature low-slung armchairs upholstered in herringbone plaid alongside black-and-white photography and walnut-lined bookshelves

in the collection, interiors are homely in style, featuring sleek tables made in Italy alongside low-slung armchairs upholstered in sophisticated herringbone plaid. White panelled walls and wide-plank flooring bring the charm of an Upper East Side apartment, while walnut-lined shelves are edge-lit to highlight a collection of books from the likes of Assouline and Taschen. Also central to the design is the art and photography – a collection curated by Leticia and incorporating pieces by Patrick Demarchelier, Irving Penn and Vik Muniz, all available for purchase. “Every time we rotate the exhibition, the space takes on a new identity,” Miky explains, adding that he has also brought some design details over from Miami. “Nature is important to us no matter the location, so we introduced elements of the tropical landscape.”

A dedicated show kitchen conjures the concept of entertaining in one’s own home, and the dishes served have a decidedly homely theme too. At lunch, signatures include a nut-

crusted salmon and Miky’s salad – a tasty mix of lentils, quinoa, farro and roasted lemon. For dinner, there’s a veal Milanese and a host of hearty pasta dishes, as well as the ever-popular Mediterranean branzino served on a bed of cherry tomatoes, artichoke and asparagus.

Despite this being Miky’s first foray into hotel F&B, he was excited rather than daunted. “It’s a new challenge, but also a new opportunity to be creative and redefine what in-room dining can be,” he says of the spread that guests can order to their suite. This is also the first time a Casa Tua venue is serving three meals alongside room service, so the round-the-clock kitchen ramp-up was an additional challenge.

The group has also put its name to the adjacent lounge bar, where walls are luxuriously clad in walnut and a ribbed ceiling adds the illusion of height. A statement bar serves as the focal point, and artwork includes a signed piece from Malian photographer Malick Sidibé, one of Miky’s favorites. Though the cuisine in the restaurant is consistent across all Casa Tua





© Nick Timenka

outposts, the lounge features bespoke items such as a never before seen selection of maki and nigiri, along with crudos curated by the Grendenes, who felt it gave the space New York cosmopolitan flair.

Past a stairway featuring Frank Gehry's Fish on Fire sculpture – on loan from the nearby Gagosian Gallery – Casa Tua features a club lounge and private dining rooms for members to use at their leisure. Wellness activations, weekly live music sessions and various masterclasses are on offer too.

Asked about the considered progression of Casa Tua thus far, Miky notes: "In reality, I do very few things. Over 25 years, there could have been many Casa Tua locations around the world, but I chose to spend time with my family and ensure the brand remains strong, evolving in the right ways. Now, with Casa Tua New York, we are at an inflection point, but I still treat every project the same way – with intention and focus on the details."

Next, the Grendenes are taking their love of

hospitality to the skyline of Brickell in Miami, with an integrated short-term residential and hospitality concept on a scale unlike anything they have tackled before. With the children now part of the business, Miky is excited by the challenge. "We are trying to put ourselves in the shoes of our customers again," he says. "In this case, we consider how people want to live, how they want to be treated and what type of lifestyle they crave. Our aim is to build a true vertical community."

Named Ora by Casa Tua, the development features three distinct dining destinations, in addition to a market concept, a private club and a sky garden, towering 500 feet above the city streets. "It's a building with a strong identity that I hope will become the city's greatest amenity," he adds.

Although he's keeping mum about a Casa Tua hotel concept (Miami's original outpost has a series of guestrooms), there's no doubting that Miky and Leticia Grendene would create something truly outstanding.



IN A BITE

Owners: Miky and Leticia Grendene

Operator: Casa Tua (F&B)

Operator: Corinthia Hotels (hotel)

Interior Design: Michele Bönan

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Gallery

The Savoy

LONDON

BradyWilliams breathes new life into a London icon by blending heritage charm with sumptuous vision.

Words: Abby Lowe • Photography: © BradyWilliams

London in 1912 was a largely conservative city, where restrictive social constructs were the norm. But there are always outliers, and two revealed themselves one evening at The Savoy. During the hotel's renowned dinner service, one daring couple leapt up to dance in the small gaps between the tables. This spur of the moment spin started a penchant for dinner dances, a trend that The Savoy embraced by installing a dance floor. In the dark war years that followed, people enthusiastically tangoed between courses, lifting spirits and escaping the grim realities that dogged daily life.

The same pioneering pair are once again mainstays at The Savoy, only this time appearing as elegant silhouettes sweeping across the walls of its newly refurbished restaurant, Gallery. When considering the renovation, Shayne Brady, Director at London-based studio BradyWilliams, instinctively knew it was a tribute he had to make. "It's our ode to them," he says, tucking into a scone with lemon curd as part of the restaurant's legendary afternoon tea. "It's a lovely feeling to sit in the room and watch them dance."

These striking artworks by Michael May and Atma Studio are just one standout element of a venue that's studded with understated flamboyance, perhaps an inevitable consequence of Brady's innate extroversion. "I think all our projects are considered theatrical," he muses. "But at the same time, we don't scream for attention. It's more about making something feel timeless and modern."

Understandably then, The Savoy called on BradyWilliams







New additions to the Gallery menu include sole tacos and a soon-to-be-iconic chicken tikka pie

to pitch when a spruce up was confirmed to coincide with the hotel's 135th anniversary. "I remember coming to London from Ireland when I was younger and seeing The Savoy – it's just so iconic. Redesigning here was a real moment."

As a kid, Brady wanted to be a set designer in the West End, and his approach is still woven with threads of drama. "I'm fascinated by the fact that one of my designs could be the backdrop for someone's first date or signing a work contract for a job they always wanted," he says, gesturing to the surrounding space. "So, the restaurant becomes the backdrop for whatever story is being told at the time. For us, it's a place where people are living their lives, and that's special." This sentiment, combined with a meticulous planning process, meant his team was able to turn around the refurbishment in just three months.

The first task was to create a walkway through the centre of the restaurant, leading directly to a newly installed bar. Laid in black and white marble, it's a continuation from

the entrance that Brady feels was an essential upgrade. "People walk through this room to get to Gordon Ramsay's restaurant so I thought, let's give them a catwalk!" he says. "We had to embrace what was naturally happening, and if people are going to travel through the space, we may as well give them a fabulous setting."

A fresh colour palette was also vital, especially now that the Gallery offering has been extended to incorporate breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner and cocktails. "I wanted something light and fresh by day that leads into intimate and sexy at night," Brady explains. "It was important that the room is comforting whatever the time of day." In the end, he plumped for hues of rust, sienna and caramel, a combination that conjures feelings of welcoming warmth. This is complemented by crafted pale timber panelling and the softest leather seating.

On any given project, the team at BradyWilliams designs around 90% of the furniture, ensuring that each piece is both impactful and perfectly placed. The same theme

Onda

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transpired at Gallery, where tables, chairs and banquettes were crafted by Ben Whistler, and light fittings are produced by Atelier Lighting. The dazzling chandeliers, akin to upturned ice cream cones, are show-stealers, while the low-level, Art Deco-inspired table lamps add lavishness. As darkness falls, a custom curtain falls dramatically behind the bar, signalling a shift towards more seductive nocturnal energy.

But while many features of the redesign have been plucked from the fertile imaginations at BradyWilliams, in Gallery's case, the subject of heritage was equally, if not even more, significant. Brady worked together with English Heritage throughout, particularly in relation to a series of listed marble columns. Already beautiful, Brady was keen to modernise them. Each party agreed that paint was the best way forward, so the pillars are now a deep shade of russet flecked with gold. "It makes them more sumptuous," Brady notes.

The elevated design scheme is also complemented by a new menu. Inspired by

culinary pioneer, Auguste Escoffier, chef at The Savoy when it opened over a century ago, highlights include Cornish tuna tataki, a soon-to-be-iconic charcoal grilled chicken tikka pie, and sole tacos, adapted from the chef's famed Sole Veronique. Meanwhile, the hotel's prized afternoon tea is plied over by pastry chef Nicolas Houchet and his team, with glazed treats served on crockery by William Edwards. Dishes and plates echo the colours of the new surrounds, while saucers are embossed with a pattern that reflects the domed glass ceiling above.

BradyWilliams has also been responsible for Scoff, The Savoy's baked goods hub where scones are adorned with all manner of toppings. But it's perhaps the blend of innovation and history at Gallery that's made a lasting impression on Brady, especially since it marks the beginning of a new era for the space. "There's an excitement in designing F&B," he concludes. "And at The Savoy, there's so much history to work with. For me, that makes the task very human, and that's what we love – that's our niche."



IN A BITE

Owner: Kingdom Associates
 Interior Design: BradyWilliams
 Procurement: Benjamin West
 F&B Consultant: Aware Hospitality
 F&B Manager: Chris Murphy
 Tableware: William Edwards
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Against All Odds

As Nobu celebrates its 30th anniversary, we look at the past, present and future of a hospitality brand built on the indomitable spirit of its founder.

Words: Abby Lowe

For a man midway through his seventies, Nobu Matsuhisa fizzes with enviable zeal. The figurehead behind the restaurant and hotel brand, which has just celebrated its 30th anniversary, famously travels for 10 months of the year, ploughing in long hours without complaint; scan his Instagram page and there are photos of him casually leaning into lunges on a yoga mat. Having spawned a hospitality empire that now spans five continents, he could happily slip on a pair of slippers, sit back and revel in his success, but retirement isn't on the horizon. "I try to live in the moment rather than thinking about the future," he says. "I only focus on what's happening right now."

It's a wise move considering the chef has more on his plate than ever. Nobu Hospitality now encompasses 56 restaurants and 18 hotels, with a further 23 in development, and as is customary, Nobu himself visits them all, criss-crossing the globe to ensure that every venue

bearing his name meets the high standards that have become synonymous with the brand. "I am constantly inspired by the next generation of chefs and managers I meet," he explains. "They are passionate about culinary arts and hospitality and it's their excitement and thirst for knowledge that motivates me. I learn as much from them as they learn from me."

Such instinctive humility has been shaped, and perhaps strengthened, by a life and career that hasn't always been easy. Born in Saitama, Japan, Nobu was only eight years old when his father passed away in a motorbike accident, a poignant loss that defined a difficult childhood. He left school at 17 and moved to Tokyo, scoring a job as a dishwasher at a family-run sushi restaurant where he worked for many years. As the days passed, he accrued skills that set him on the path to becoming a sushi chef, an all-consuming process that takes dedication. The investment in time paid off when his talent was spotted and he was offered the chance to run a restaurant in Lima, Peru.







Sea bass tiradito with tierra andina is a staple of the 30-year celebration omakase menu

“While most hotel operators focus on selling rooms as the greatest engine of profit, we rely first and foremost on F&B.”

TREVOR HORWELL

It was a turning point that Nobu would question but ultimately, never look back from. Aged 24, he switched continents to helm Matsuei, a pivotal move that led him to discover Nikkei cuisine – in part a response to using what ingredients were available to him, but also thanks to generations of culinary cross-pollination that emerged as a by-product of immigration between South America and Japan. The venture itself wasn’t a success, but by forming the building blocks of the cooking style he would later become best known for, the experience proved invaluable. He finished up in Lima and a short stint in Buenos Aires came hot on its heels, but when that didn’t work out either, Nobu reluctantly returned to Japan to contemplate his next steps.

What followed was unexpected but welcome – an invitation to open his own restaurant among the white-tipped peaks of Anchorage, Alaska. Nobu uprooted once again, but just weeks after opening Kioi, tragedy struck when it burned to the ground in a fire. Blood, sweat, tears and the last remains of his money literally went up in smoke. It was a twist in the tale that nearly broke him. “It was the darkest time of my life and the biggest challenge I’ve ever faced,” he says. “But it taught me patience and to never give up.”

Embodying that philosophy and spurred on by the love and support of his young family, Nobu’s tenacity again shone through as he gathered his shattered dreams and flew to Los Angeles, last few dollars in his pocket. Starting afresh, he took on a few jobs here and there but was thrown a lifeline by a Japanese diplomat who sampled his cooking and subsequently offered to loan him the cash to open his own restaurant. Nobu accepted and finally, in 1987, began welcoming guests to the eponymously named Matsuhisa in Beverly Hills. It was a

hit, and soon enough, celebrities from all over the country were queuing up for a seat at his counter. Among them, Robert De Niro.

Despite Nobu only speaking broken English, the pair struck up a friendship, and after four years and more than one refusal (surely not many people have braved turning down De Niro?), De Niro eventually convinced his friend to open a sister venue in Manhattan, where few Japanese restaurants were in operation at the time. Film producer Meir Teper and restaurateur Drew Nieporent were enthusiastically brought on board, and in 1994, the 150-seat, newly named Nobu made its debut on a quiet block in Tribeca. Its imprint was stratospheric, with praise for both its boundary-defying cuisine and its distinct, minimalist style, carefully crafted by Rockwell Group. More than just a place to eat Nobu’s now famed miso black cod and yellowtail sashimi, the restaurant became a destination in which to see and be seen – a dining revolution appealing to A-list actors, Wall Street bankers and sports stars. Finally, after years of setbacks, Nobu’s apex beckoned.

At least, that’s how it seemed at the time. But there was much more to come. Surging popularity meant that international expansion was inevitable, and Nobu’s transformation into a worldwide sensation, a foregone conclusion. Branches of the restaurant popped up in the most vibrant locations on the planet, and to keep up with continued demand, Nobu Hospitality was born. Hospitality gurus Trevor Horwell and Struan McKenzie were welcomed to the fold, and since then, the pair have been responsible for the strategic growth of Nobu Hotels & Residences, a seemingly unstoppable force. “Nobu was already a gamechanger with a loyal following,” Horwell says, looking back on those early years. “So, the goal was to bring the brand’s culture and service to the hotel sector.

That was over 10 years ago, and now we have over 40 hotels open and in development, plus 13 residences. It really is incredible to see how far we’ve come.”

With an impactful Nobu blueprint already in place, the vision for the brand was relatively clear. But that didn’t mean that the process came without challenges. “We entered the hospitality business with an upside-down business model,” Horwell explains of the approach. “While most hotel operators focus on selling rooms as the greatest engine of profit, we rely first and foremost on F&B. We know that luxury hotels have incredible rooms, lobbies and facilities, but they don’t all have exceptional destination dining as part of their offering.” With that in mind, the aim was to make Nobu Hotels representative of the excellent service and great design the restaurants were renowned for, while maintaining incredible dining as the primary draw.

The concept burst to life in 2013, when Nobu Hotel within Caesars Palace opened on the electrifying Las Vegas strip. A boutique offering of 182 deluxe rooms and suites, it set the benchmark for the extended Nobu experience. Outposts in Manila and London followed, and in the subsequent decade, openings snowballed to encompass almost every corner of the world, from Mexico to Morocco and beyond. The trick has been to tap into the enduring allure of Nobu while also blending into the local setting. “We pride ourselves on tailoring our offerings to suit the characteristics of each destination,” Horwell confirms. “Working with local partners allows us to gain an understanding of each new region’s culture, history and market dynamics. We also conduct extensive research and analysis to identify opportunities that align with our brand ethos and complement our portfolio.”

This translates to relaxed beach chic in Ibiza;

“We’ve been in the hospitality business for 30 years and have always stayed true to our vision of creating memorable experiences that centre around food.”

NOBU MATSUHISA

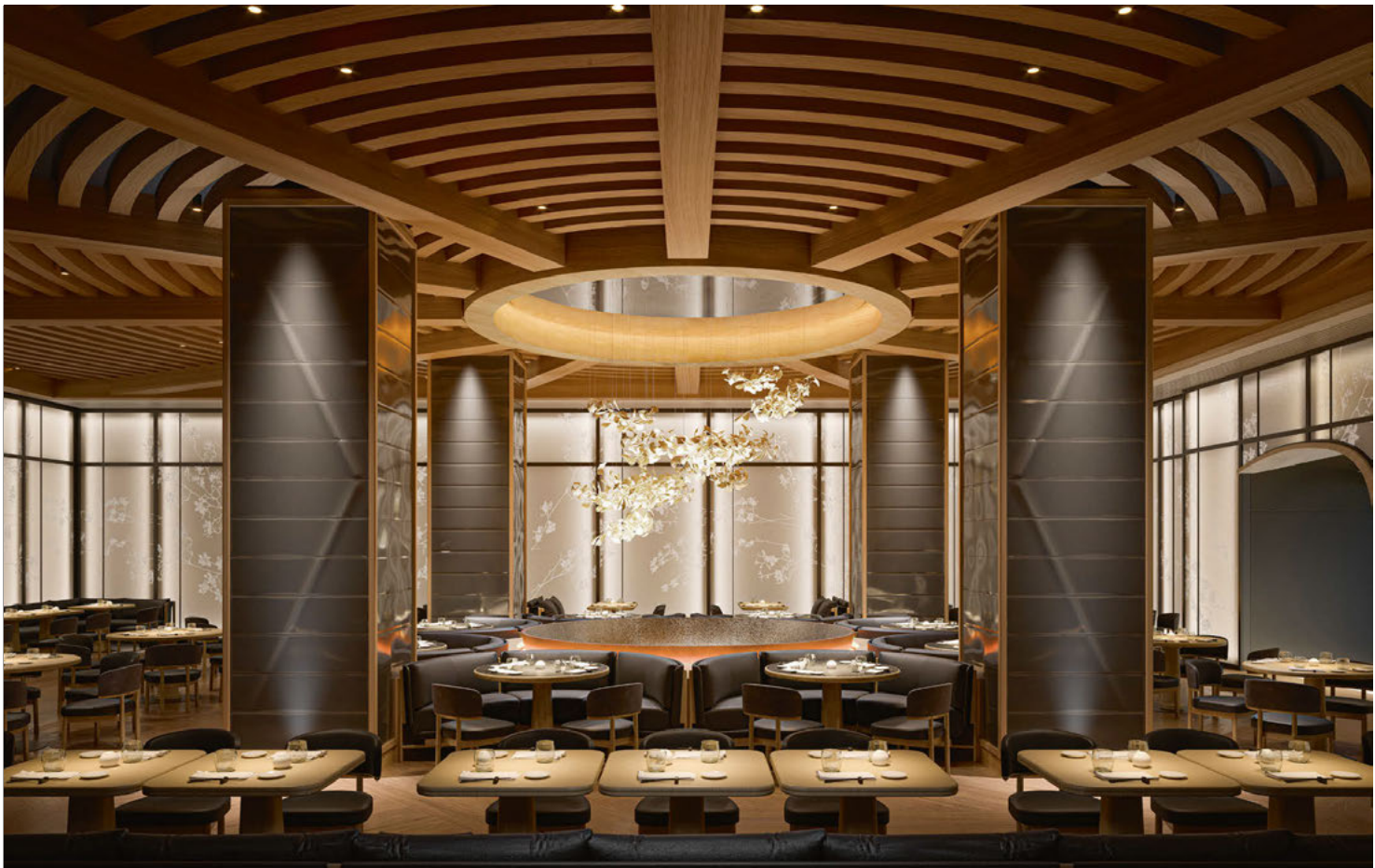
Designed by Studio Munge, Nobu Toronto is scheduled to open in spring 2025

whitewashed stone houses in Santorini; post-industrial poise in Chicago; and in some cases, a tweak of the original Nobu menu to reflect a more local slant, like Nobu San Sebastián’s omakase menu to mark the hotel’s one-year anniversary. Curated by Executive Chef, Oscar Santos, it blends bold Basque flavours with the Nobu DNA in dishes like o-toro ceviche with dragon fruit; sea bass tiradito with tierra andina, and king crab with dashi and caviar. “Nobu food continues to bring our customers back,” Horwell says. “This is why when selecting destinations for our hotels and residences, we always choose those where we know a restaurant will thrive.”

And there’s no shortage of new areas ripe for plucking, with a slew of new openings scheduled for 2025. The arrivals of Nobu Hotel New Orleans (in continued collaboration with Caesars Entertainment) and Nobu Hotel Madrid are imminent, while Toronto and Roma mark debuts for the brand in Canada and Italy. Residences have been added to the

portfolio too. “These give our guests a more permanent connection to the Nobu lifestyle,” Horwell explains. “And over the coming years, we will continue to scale strategically with developments in destinations such as Al Marjan Island, Al Khobar, Cairo and Danang.”

Given 60% of restaurants fail within the first year, and even fewer last beyond five, the achievement of a self-confessed shy and unassuming chef from Saitama can’t be overstated. With a helping hand from a clutch of close associates, Nobu has created a complete outlier, with nothing else even comparable. “People trust our brand. We’ve been in the hospitality market for 30 years now and have always stayed true to our original vision of creating memorable experiences that centre around food,” he concludes. “Each hotel and residential project is inspired by the restaurant experience. This makes us consistent, which is what sets us apart. This is what our guests expect, so we don’t ever lose sight of it.”



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SIGNATURE

Le Spaghetti Debout

La Maison 1888

InterContinental Sun Peninsula Resort

DANANG

Three Michelin-starred Chef Christian Le Squer often likens his cuisine to the haute couture seen sashaying along the Parisian catwalk. The doyen of French gastronomy brings this signature flair to La Maison 1888, the glistening jewel of InterContinental Danang Sun Peninsula Resort and the only Michelin-starred restaurant in central Vietnam. Here, every dish is a seasonal expression of artistry, crafted from the finest local ingredients, but it's Le Spaghetti Debout that best encapsulates the chef's masterful technique. The bucatini is cooked in a rich blend of parmesan and butter and is carefully arranged to 'stand' in place, creating a striking illusion. Meticulously assembled,

the upright strands cradle a sumptuous black truffle cream, while the addition of French chicken mousseline, wild mushrooms and Bigorre black pig ham elevate the intensity of the flavours. A crunchy stick of parmesan serves as garnish, and to finish, a warm golden chanterelle cream is poured tableside. The bold yet elegant presentation makes it one of Chef Le Squer's most celebrated dishes – a true example of haute cuisine meeting style and innovation.



Coffee and Chocolate Mousse

The Avenue
Lainston House

HAMPSHIRE

Elegant, bold and locally inspired are the hallmarks of Tom Hamblet's culinary vision at The Avenue, the newly reimagined restaurant at Lainston House in Hampshire. After a stylish redesign by Russell Sage Studio, the country retreat is ready to debut its new look, and with MasterChef alum Hamblet at the helm, guests can expect a fresh take on flavour. One standout creation is his coffee and chocolate mousse, featuring Pedro Ximénez, pickled cocoa nib gel and banana ice cream. "I didn't expect to like the combination of banana, coffee and chocolate," Hamblet says. "But after tasting an opera cake made by another chef, I knew I had to adapt one of my own desserts to capture the magic."

The dish is a sophisticated blend of textures and flavours featuring two mousses – one infused with coffee and the other a lush dark chocolate – atop a coffee-soaked sponge that's enriched with Pedro Ximénez. Layers of crème fraîche Chantilly, torched banana and a delicate salted chocolate tuille add complexity, while a scoop of banana ice cream brings a cool, creamy finish. It's not as easy as it looks though – perfecting this plate requires a deft hand, as Hamblet notes: "The tuille is tricky; it's made from two separate tuille bases, piped as dots and then spread in one motion, otherwise the colours mix together. You only have one shot to get it just right."





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APERITIFS

Mushroom-infused teas and freeze-dried fruit powders might not have been top of your Christmas wish list, but they are about to make a big impression on cocktail menus in 2025. Kimpton's annual Culinary + Cocktail Trend Forecast has arrived, and its in-house experts have shared what's brewing behind the bar in the months ahead.

First up, vegan clarified and fermented milks are among the ingredients on the rise. Think almond milk paired with bourbon, cinnamon and nutmeg, or coconut milk alongside tequila and amaretto. These creamy, non-dairy milks add a smooth texture to cocktails, while fermented options like Kefir and goat's milk with clarified lime bring a mix of salty, sour and umami to the

Innovation isn't just limited to ingredients; bartenders are also pushing the envelope with new techniques. Sous-vide prepping, forced carbonation, and clarified citrus are becoming common practices, allowing for drinks like homemade sparkling coconut water or salted plum syrup, as seen at Kimpton Kitalay Samui. Acid correction is another hot trend, where local fruits replace exotic ones like using acid-corrected local citrus to stand in for lemons in the Caribbean. Freeze-drying fruits and veggies is also making an impact with this zero-waste technique allowing bartenders and chefs to repurpose leftover produce creatively.

But there's no need to reinvent the wheel entirely. Reimagined classics are on the rise,

Cocktail Hour

Kimpton's annual forecast reveals the trends set to shape global bar menus for the year ahead.

glass. As for garnishes, fruit leather is the new black. The dehydrated fruit puree transformed into thin, leathery sheets might use mangos, strawberries, apricots, peaches and plums, or come mixed with chilli or habanero, offering a beautiful garnish that can enhance the flavour notes of its paired spirit while offering a sustainable way to use leftover or overripe fruit.

Wellness trends continue to influence the scene, with a focus on functional beverages. Teas and coffees will take centre stage, but not just any teas, instead, mushroom varieties like ashwagandha, reishi and damiana will be popping up for their adaptogenic powers. Herbal teas post-dinner or green teas for an energy boost are also key ingredients. In the same vein, non-alcoholic drinks are staying in the spotlight. Cocktail menus are set to feature complex, flavourful drinks without the booze, like the Aper-no Sour at Kimpton Margot Sydney. Expect botanicals, herbs and roots to play a starring role, with no processed alternatives in sight.

too. The martini is evolving with quirky additions like pickle brine, wasabi and seasonal flavours such as vanilla and cinnamon. The midori sour is also back, offering a sweet-and-tangy punch. Elsewhere, highballs are getting an upgrade with premium spirits like Japanese whisky, tequila, and gin, while Carajillos – a pour of espresso with Licor 43 – make the perfect conversation starter or nightcap.

"Kimpton's in-house culinary and beverage experts are delivering innovative and memorable experiences while keeping a pulse on the ingredients and influences that will set the tone for what's trending in the kitchen and behind the bar," says Scott Gingerich, Vice President of Restaurants, Bars & Events, Luxury & Lifestyle Americas, IHG Hotels & Resorts. "Through expansive experiences that inspire our guests, paired with the ambience of the space and the food on the plate, we're setting new standards while creating truly spectacular moments for all who enter our restaurants and bars."



© Matt Sillis

Coastal Spirit

Ready to trade your usual whisky tasting for something a little more adventurous? Look no further, as Talisker Whisky has teamed up with The Gallivant Camber Sands, the beach-house style hotel on the East Sussex coast, to launch Drams in the Dunes: a whisky experience that brings together nature, spirit and adventure.

Whisky connoisseurs who stay overnight will have the opportunity to enjoy an exclusive, sensory-driven event crafted to foster a deep connection with the natural world and Talisker's rich heritage. For this escapade, Talisker is packing its signature 10-Year-Old single malt. Known for its bold maritime character, making it the perfect companion for a coastal escape, the whisky unfolds with aromas of sea spray and coastal breeze, capturing the essence of the rugged Isle of Skye where it has been made for the past 200 years. On the palate, it offers hints of fresh sea salt and smoky sweetness, followed by warming spices and a peppery finish.

Drams in the Dunes, meanwhile, kicks off with a scenic, self-guided coastal walk, where guests can breathe in the salty air and soak up the surroundings. Along the way, they will be treated to a dram of Talisker with a warming Talisker hot chocolate, complemented by a beach-ready food pairing of British cheeses in the shelter of the dunes. For those who like their adventure with a side of style, sustainable outerwear from Talisker's partner Finisterre – including a cosy dry robe jacket and blanket – ensures everyone stays warm while they wander.

Back in the comfort of The Gallivant's bar, the fun continues with brand new, Talisker-inspired cocktails like the Campfire Hot Chocolate and the Storr Highball, to warm the cockles after a day spent in the great outdoors. Additionally, guests can enjoy an Oyster Happy Hour, taking advantage of unlimited fresh oysters, which have been chosen to pair with a single serve of Talisker 10-Year-Old.

Dram Diaries

The rich complexity, varied malts and distinct flavour profiles of Scotland's amber nectar can still prove a bit of a mystery for many. But now, The Balmoral is pulling back the curtain on the liquid enigma with *Scotch: The Balmoral Guide to Scotch Whisky*. This debut publication from the Edinburgh landmark celebrates the essence of Scotland's famous tippie, crafted by the experts behind the hotel's iconic whisky bar, Scotch, and local whisky writer, Moa Reynolds. The book is a loving tribute to the country's most famous spirit, and provides answers to burning questions like: Does the colour of whisky determine its quality? Should you decant your bottle? And, is mixing your dram ever acceptable? It also offers a comprehensive introduction to whisky tasting, plus a curated selection of 100 hand-picked whiskies from The Scotch Bar, complete with tasting notes, distillery profiles and personal insights from Head Whisky Ambassador, Cameron Ewen. "My hope is that this book serves as a guide into the world of whisky through my eyes," says Ewen. "It's a distillation of my passion and knowledge for whisky." Perfect for both newcomers and seasoned enthusiasts, the book also features an illustrated map of Scotland's whisky regions and their famous distilleries.



Chill your martini glasses



An exciting new premium grape-based Australian vodka and gin has arrived, ready to make waves in the spirits sector.

Mother of Pearl is redefining the global spirits market with our super premium vodka and gin, crafted to align with our uniquely Australian lifestyle and a refreshing, youthful feminine appeal.

  motherofpearl.vodka



MOTHER OF PEARL

Palmer & Co

CHAMPAGNE



Timeless signature of Palmer & Co, LA RÉSERVE is a champagne of great precision, harmoniously balanced by the freshness and fullness of the great terroirs of the Montagne de Reims.

DRINK RESPONSIBLY

COCKTAIL



Ceci N'est Pas Une Pipe
 Le Magritte
 The Beaumont

LONDON

Ever sipped a cocktail so good that it makes you question reality? Let us introduce a drink that's as much a philosophical pondering as it is a libation. Served in a whimsical pipe-shaped glass, this cocktail isn't just an invitation to sip; it's a indulgence in a little surrealist magic.

At Le Magritte, the newly revamped bar within The Beaumont Mayfair, Ceci N'est Pas Une Pipe is just one of the creative cocktails on the new surrealism-flecked menu. Inspiration for this head-turning concoction comes from René Magritte's 1929 painting, *The Treachery of Images*, depicting a pipe accompanied by the words 'ceci n'est pas une pipe' (this is not a pipe). The cocktail version is a similarly playful contradiction: it may look like a pipe, but it tastes of something altogether more intriguing.

Behind the magic is Antonino Loiacono, Head of F&B at The Beaumont, whose own love for the finer things in life comes together in this bittersweet blend. A base of Buffalo Trace whisky is gently mixed with a sharp hit of Punt E Mes vermouth, while dry coffee liqueur and orange essence bring depth and warmth. A steam gun is then used to pump flavoured smoke into the bowl, which wafts out with every sip, giving the illusion of a smoking pipe.

"There are two separate parts to the drinking experience, first is the spectacle: the cocktail itself is incredibly visually striking with the unique glassware and smoke exiting the pipe," Loiacono concludes. "Secondly, is the taste itself: bittersweet and fruity, making for a memorable and creative moment."

Tiramisu

CopperBay
Hôtel Lancaster

PARIS

Inspiration is never in short supply when it comes to Mediterranean cuisine. From the sun-drenched shores of Spain to the romantic streets of Italy, the region is home to a whole host of iconic dishes. So, when French cocktail bar CopperBay opened a new venture at Hôtel Lancaster on the Champs-Élysées earlier this year, it made sense that the Mediterranean would play muse. The new menu comprises eight cocktails, each emblematic of a dish from the region. Spanning salty and sweet, these drinks blur the boundaries between food and drink, transforming Mediterranean favourites into flavoursome sips.

Stepping up to represent Italy is the beloved tiramisu. “It is one of the country’s most famous desserts and so we could not help but rework the tiramisu into a cocktail,” says Aurélie Panhelleux, Head Bartender and Founder of CopperBay. “It’s not just a drink, it’s a dessert.”

The cocktail mixes Metaxa 7, Amaretto and homemade vanilla syrup with mascarpone, which is infused then filtered for a smooth and silky finish. Cocoa nibs and a shot of cold brew coffee liqueur bring the unmistakable tiramisu effect. “This menu is a bridge between food and drink,” concludes Panhelleux. “When people take a sip, I want them to have that wow moment and immediately recognise the dish that inspired the cocktail.”





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Collective Collection



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COLLECTIVE

DRINKS



Two Drifters Distillery Two Drifters Rum

Nestled in the heart of Devon, Two Drifters Distillery is on a mission to produce world-class rum in a sustainable way. As one of the world's first carbon-negative distilleries, the company sources eco-friendly ingredients and uses low-carbon procurement practices, partnering with Climeworks, a specialist in carbon removal technology. Founded by a husband-and-wife team with backgrounds in chemistry and brewing, Two Drifters rums are a harmony between creative artistry and scientific precision. Its Pure White Rum is characterised by a clean, crisp and versatile profile, with notes of lime zest and a creamy, smooth finish making it the ideal cocktail companion. There are also two spiced rums in the portfolio; made using waste cacao husks from fair trade chocolatiers around the UK, they're characterised by depth of flavour and a natural amber hue. The Lightly Spiced Rum offers a subtle blend of spices, allowing the quality of spirit to shine through, while the Overproof Spiced Pineapple Rum brings bold, tropical flavours.

www.twodriftersrum.com



Coracho Añejo Cristalino

Coracho has introduced Tequila Añejo Cristalino, with a palette evocative of strong agave, mineral undertones and wood. The unique character of this Tequila stands out for its crystalline colour and rich, dense body. Whether savoured neat or used as the basis for an innovative cocktail, it offers a drinking experience that resonates with a modern and bold way of life. Coracho is a sophisticated new brand specialising in a range of premium Tequilas that showcase the unique flavours of the Jalisco valley and sea of Nayarit – the largest blue agave producing region in the world. Each represents the authentic taste of the ancient ancestral territories of the Coras and the Huicholes, two cultures united by a common language, Corachol. The group's full portfolio includes six Tequilas: Blanco, Blanco Rosa, Reposado, Añejo, Añejo Cristalino and Extra Añejo. Coracho has received high-level industry recognition, securing three golds and one silver medal in the Global Spirit Business Tequila and Mezcal Masters 2024, as well as six medals in the International Spirits Challenge 2024.

www.coracho.com



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sake tasting glass

A groundbreaking vessel designed to establish a new benchmark for sake evaluation and propel Japanese sake onto the global stage. For centuries, inconsistent tasting practices due to varied glassware have hindered the global appreciation of sake's diverse flavor and aroma profiles. Glassbacca, in collaboration with the National Research Institute of Brewing (NRIB), Japan's leading authority on sake research, has taken a bold step to address this challenge.

NRIB
独立行政法人
酒類総合研究所

National Research
Institute of Brewing (NRIB)



Mother of Pearl Spirits

Mother of Pearl Vodka and Gin

Founded among the rugged natural beauty of Australia's north west coastline, Mother of Pearl is inspired by the raw pioneering history of pearling. While most vodkas are distilled from grain, corn and primarily starch-like potatoes, the brand's premium grape-based vodka is made with pinot gris grapes from South Australia's Limestone Coast, picked late off the vine, distilled through coconut husk and then charcoal-infused with pure spring waters. The result is a silky-smooth neutral base with subtle creaminess and a lingering sweetness. In addition, lively mineral notes with a hint of citrus lead to a harmonious blend of peppery spice and sweet vanilla on the palate, complemented by a satisfying mouthfeel and fruity finish. Mother of Pearl is an Australian company that aims to redefine the international spirit market by producing a premium product that complements its distinctly Australian lifestyle and youthful feminine appeal. Mother of Pearl Spirits has partnered with Brand Tap Group for UK distribution.

www.motherofpearl.vodka



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FRANKE



Saicho
Saicho Sparkling Tea

Founded in 2020 in the UK, Saicho is a non-alcoholic, single-origin sparkling tea brand created by husband-and-wife team, Natalie and Charlie Winkworth-Smith, both holders of a PhD in food science. These champagne-like teas are designed to pair with food. There are three tea expressions in the range: Darjeeling, Jasmine and Hojicha, each with a set of distinct flavour characteristics unique to the respective regions in India, China and Japan. Saicho proudly produces a tea that is vegan-friendly, sulphite-free, low calorie and with no added artificial sweeteners or preservatives. The Hojicha variety has tasting notes of roast chestnut, hazelnut and nori seaweed; Darjeeling is reminiscent of mandarin, ginger and wood spice; and Jasmine has hints of apple, lychee and vanilla.

www.saichodrinks.com

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Champagne Palmer & Co La Réserve Nature

Champagne Palmer & Co has unveiled its first Brut Nature, La Réserve Nature. According to the house, the founding idea is to create an intense, pure and racy wine that extends the signature La Réserve towards a more mature palate, while also preserving its energy and balance. As with every Palmer & Co creation, time is at the heart of the subtle equation between the freshness and fullness of the great terroirs of the Montagne de Reims, alongside the art of blending. La Réserve Nature ages six years on the lees for the wine to reveal its full range of aromas, with notes of citrus fruit, brioche and toasted almonds. “Although technically it is a zero dosage wine, one would never guess it by tasting it blind – there is nothing missing,” says Xavier Berdin, Cellar Master at Champagne Palmer. “That is because the idea behind La Réserve Nature had nothing to do with creating a wine with less sugar, but rather with more time and flavours.” Tasting notes are described as complex, precise and pure. Mineral tension is underpinned by notes of citrus fruit, chalk and candied lemon. Delicate roasted notes are combined with a persistent and saline finish. www.champagne-palmer.fr

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© Messe Frankfurt / Petra Weizer

Ambiente 7-11 February 2025

FRANKFURT

The leading trade fair for the dining sector is set to enhance its hospitality programme with renewed emphasis on design.

Every February, Frankfurt transforms from a bustling city into a global hub for the leading tastemakers and decision-makers of the hospitality industry. An incredible 140,000 visitors from 176 nations descend on the German hotspot, arriving to take part in Ambiente, the largest and most international consumer goods fair in the world. The premise is simple: mix, mingle and be inspired by fellow professionals; build on existing partnerships, and foster connections that pave the way for future collaborations.

Over the years, Ambiente has become the go-to place for new perspectives, networking and ordering, making it a must-attend addition to the calendar for the industry. Taking place from 7-11 February 2025, the event hosts 4,000 exhibitors across four distinct product areas: Dining, Living, Giving and Working, with the addition of Christmasworld and Creativeworld. The Dining section is the world's largest international procurement platform for the hospitality sector, featuring tableware treasures, innovative kitchen accessories, storage suggestions, state-of-the-art electrical appliances and unique hospitality concepts – offering invaluable insight into the dining trends and solutions of tomorrow.

Influential brands including RAK Porcelain, Steelite, Utopia, Villeroy & Boch and Vista Alegre are all set to

showcase their wares, keen to both motivate and take advantage of the professional audience of decision-makers at their disposal.

Furthermore, Ambiente is enhancing its Hospitality programme for this next edition, with added emphasis on design expertise and special areas such as The Lounge. Commercial buyers are pointed in the direction of companies with in-depth knowledge of equipping hotels and resorts, restaurants, cruise ships, lounges and other hospitality venues, with curated opportunities to browse the latest tableware, glassware, kitchenware, home accessories, interior design ideas and office solutions. In addition, visitors can find a comprehensive HoReCa-labelled trade fair section in Hall 11.0, while the Hospitality Academy (formerly the HoReCa Academy), offers lectures from renowned experts, with a focus on current trends, concepts and hands-on tips.

The unrivalled global number one for hotel, catering and the laid table, Ambiente celebrates the art of hospitality, linking commercial buyers with interior designers, specifiers and project planners across 350,000m² of inspiring exhibition space. For those keen to forge ahead with renewed enthusiasm and insight, there's simply no platform like it.

www.ambiente.messefrankfurt.com

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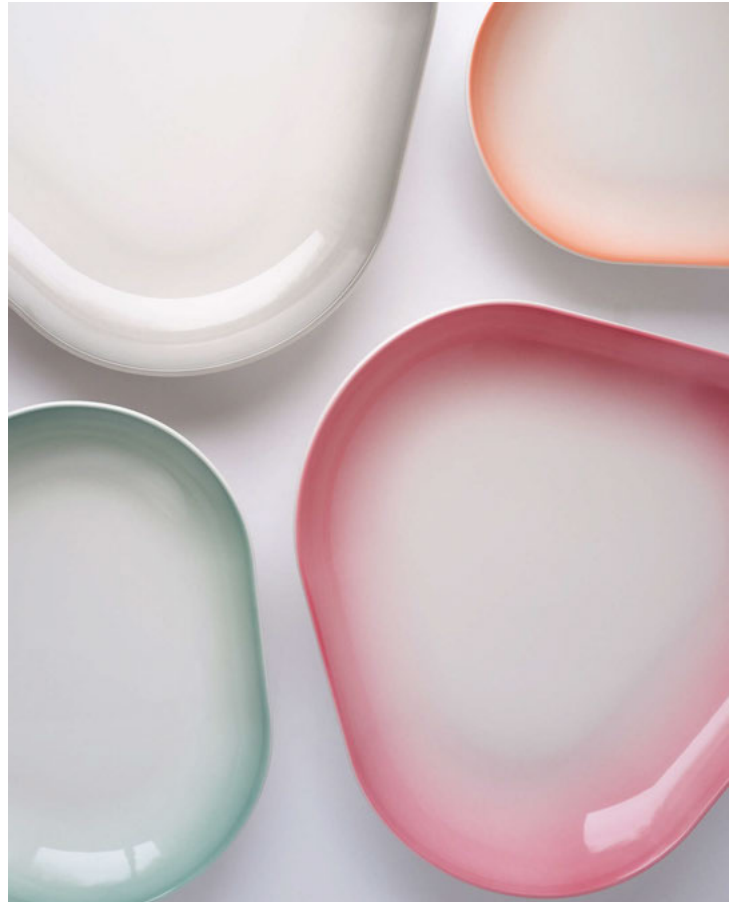
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Nordic DNA

While some Scandinavian manufacturers have moved production overseas in search of cheaper labour and energy, **Figgjo** is a proud outlier.

Words: Hannah Currie

Surrounded by mist-clad hills, glistening waters and pine forest, the Norwegian village of Figgjo in winter could burst straight from the pages of a Scandinavian fairytale. The landscape here, a delicate balance of nature and industry, is the perfect setting for a company that, against all odds, continues to craft porcelain as it has since 1941. While some Scandinavian manufacturers have moved production overseas in search of cheaper labour and energy, Figgjo is a proud outlier, enthusiastically protecting its heritage. It's a process that preserves both craft and a vital piece of Norwegian culture.

Despite the cost of manufacturing in one of the most expensive countries in the world, Figgjo doggedly refuses to outsource production. "Our products are for those who understand the value of high-quality craftsmanship, of something made to last," says Sales Director Dusan Stijepovic, who oversees Figgjo's growing international presence. "We know we are not for everyone, and we don't want to be for everyone."

Indeed, what makes Figgjo stand out is not only its beautiful porcelain, but an unapologetic commitment to maintaining operations in the factory where it all began. The building, constructed in 1918 as a hydroelectric plant, sits beside the river that originally provided much of the energy required to power the company's kilns. A mix of old and new, the factory has undergone multiple upgrades over the years,

with state-of-the-art machinery and a focus on sustainability. Even so, it remains a testament to the skill of artisans who rely on hands-on techniques passed down through generations. "We are the last remaining full-scale porcelain manufacturer in the Nordics. To us, this is not just about making beautiful products; it's about preserving our Nordic DNA," Stijepovic adds. "We could move production elsewhere but doing so would erode what makes us Figgjo: our authenticity and identity."

This commitment to people and place has made Figgjo a beloved brand in Norway. A partnership with the Nordic Chef Association further ensures a connection with professionals, inviting them to be part of the development process. "Everything is made with the chef in mind," explains Marketing Manager Christian Vassdal. "Chefs are not just users of our products, they're our partners. We're constantly developing and improving through continuous dialogue with them."

This approach extends beyond product development; it's about creating pieces that chefs can trust and that stand up to the rigours of professional kitchens while also delivering on aesthetics. Notably, the company has carved a niche with its resistant Vitro porcelain, which has been in production since the 1970s. "Our pieces are built to last, both in terms of function and design," says Vassdal. "When you buy a piece of Figgjo, you're buying something timeless that outlives trends."

Figgjo's design philosophy, anchored in minimalist, functional Nordic design, has never been about the flashy or the fleeting. "We're not inspired by Scandinavian design heritage, we are Scandinavian design heritage," says Vassdal. With over 300 shapes and 60 colour options, Figgjo offers a level of flexibility rare in the mass-produced world of porcelain. "Our customers can create their own concepts, mix and match pieces across collections and create something entirely unique," explains Design Manager Mariken Steen-Forgaard.

But perhaps the most impressive aspect of Figgjo's ethos is its people. With many employees hailing from the local area, it's not uncommon for multiple generations to work side-by-side in the factory: "It feels like this is their company, and in a way, it is," adds Stijepovic. "This is a place where people take immense pride in their work."

Looking ahead, Figgjo's leadership team is committed to both heritage and innovation. "It's a balancing act," says Steen-Forgaard. "You need to be true to the historic values but to also keep evolving and questioning." Indeed, Figgjo's story is a reminder that in a world that often values speed and cost over tradition, there are still brands that prioritise authenticity and longevity. She concludes: "Despite the odds, we're proud to still be here in Figgjo, creating porcelain and proving that curiosity and hard work always pays off."

www.figgjo.com



© Hayley Keising Photography



© Lauri Lean

Culinary Canvas

Portuguese ceramics brand **Vista Alegre** introduces its latest Chefs' Collection, fusing culinary creativity with porcelain design expertise.

Words: Hannah Currie

In the world of fine-dining, the plate is more than just a surface; it's a canvas, a frame and an integral part of a chef's artistry. For Vista Alegre, a brand synonymous with timeless porcelain craftsmanship, the latest launch of its Chefs' Collection takes this idea to a new level. Created to mark the company's 200th anniversary, the series has been developed in collaboration with five celebrated chefs from across the globe, fusing their culinary creativity with Vista Alegre's porcelain expertise. As such, each individual plate reflects the chef's identity, telling the story of their heritage or serving as a tribute to the world around them.

First up, Italian chef Marco Stabile – known for the Michelin-starred Ora d'Aria in Florence – has drawn inspiration from the rich cultural and artistic heritage of the Tuscan city. Named Stabile, the tableware pays homage to the frescoes on the ceiling of his restaurant, designed by Gianluca Biscalchin. The artwork is a contemporary interpretation of the 'grottesche' in the nearby Uffizi Galleries and depicts mythological and gastronomic motifs. This style has now been transposed onto the porcelain plate, with a delicate biscuit trim featuring bas-relief representations of angels, plants and animals.

The theme of nature also plays a role in the design of Wabi-Sabi, created by Portuguese chef Pedro Pena Bastos, whose Lisbon restaurant, Cura, is lauded for as its innovative approach to

sustainable and seasonal cooking. In homage to the Japanese philosophy of Wabi-Sabi – which celebrates the beauty of imperfection – the plate mirrors the irregularity of tree roots and weathered stone, representing the passage of time in the natural world. This results in a tactile experience that invites diners to appreciate the unfinished, complementing a dining philosophy that seeks to highlight the impermanence of ingredients through each season's harvest.

From the natural world to the landscapes that shape it, Diogo Rocha's Serra creation brings the essence of the Serra da Estrela mountains to the dining table. As the chef behind Portugal's Michelin-starred Mesa de Lemos, Rocha is deeply connected to his homeland and the region's produce. His plate design reflects the rugged, mountainous terrain through irregular edges and a texture that evokes the bark of the pine trees. It speaks not only of the chef's heritage, but of an ongoing commitment to showcase the best of Portugal's terroir.

While Serra captures the essence of land, German chef Matthias Diether's plate embraces the power of water. Named Waves of Noblessner, the unique creation finds inspiration in the Baltic Sea, visible from the windows of 180 Degrees – the chef's fine-dining restaurant in Tallinn. The plate's asymmetrical, organic shape reflects the gentle rhythm of the waves, while the generous rippled rim mimics their ebb and flow. For Diether, the waves represent

the interplay between the environment and the dining experience, creating a visual connection between sea and plate.

The final piece of the collection sees Brazilian chef Henrique Fogaça take a different approach to the natural world. Salina is inspired by the salt mines of his home country and has been designed by his niece and artist Luisa Fogaça Moraes Barros. The plate captures the natural shapes created over time by salt deposits, with sculptural curves of unequal proportions expressed in organic and smooth forms. The high reliefs represent the salty sand dunes, while the low reliefs symbolise the action of the water as it penetrates soil in natural and spontaneous harmony.

Vista Alegre's Chefs' Collection is not simply a collaboration, it's a celebration of culinary creativity and porcelain design expertise – a testament to the vision of chefs who understand that the plate is as integral to the dining experience as the cuisine itself. "This collection represents heritage, excellence, functionality and design," concludes Denise Madeira, Marketing Manager of Hotelware at Vista Alegre. "Chefs are our clients, our ambassadors and our prescribers. We aim to grow and be a relevant player in the tableware horeca market, so we make it our intention to listen to chefs' needs, anticipate their desires and pay tribute to their personal identities."

www.vistaalegre.com

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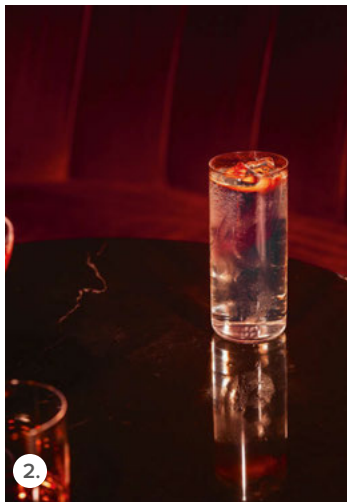
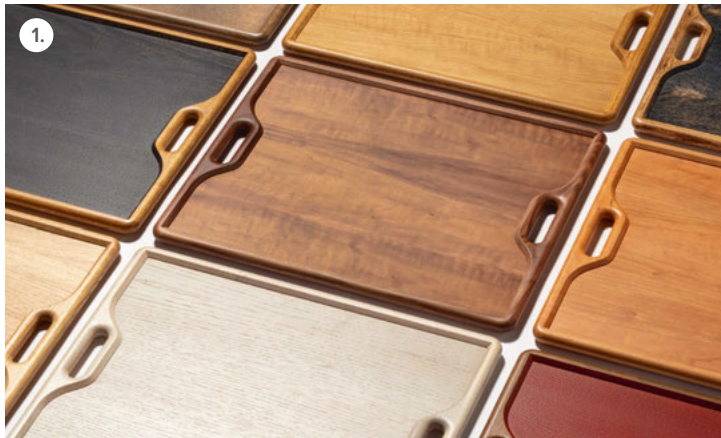
PETITS FOURS

ID Fine Mix & Match

For those in the restaurant and hotel industry, presentation is everything. From the way in which food is served to the harmony created on each plate, every detail plays a crucial role in curating the guest experience. With ID Fine, there is the opportunity to create a unique tableware concept for a restaurant. Rather than being limited to a single, pre-selected collection of tableware, hospitality decision-makers can choose from a variety of pieces to create a custom look. This gives chefs the opportunity to showcase their individuality and style, while also allowing the flexibility to adapt and evolve as trends and consumer preferences change. Mix-and-match products aren't only limited to the creation of a personal dining experience – they're also a smart investment, with the possibility of updating a restaurant's look with just a few key pieces, rather than investing in a whole new series. The added bonus is waste reduction and a streamlined supply chain offering a variety of options rather than just a one-size-fits-all approach.

www.idfine.com.tr





1. Rewthink
Bespoke Products

Rewthink has been creating bespoke front-of-house products for top chefs and restaurateurs for over a decade, with a design ethos that prioritises both functionality and aesthetics. The brand's classic service tray features 'inside-out' handles and a low frame profile, while its stackable design offers practicality. Fully rounded corners as well as easy-to-grip handles make the product not only durable but comfortable. The full collection of Rewthink trays is available in a range of designs, sizes, materials and finishes, including natural, fumed and ebonised European oak and American walnut. This wood is sustainably sourced from managed forests.
www.rewthink.co.uk

2. Stölzle Lausitz
Kyoto

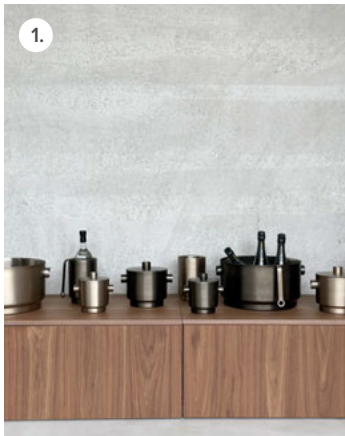
The new Stölzle Lausitz Kyoto barware series is inspired by the minimalist precision of Japanese design. Each piece in the collection is crafted from ultra-thin, lead-free crystal, ensuring clarity and brilliance and allowing mixologists to highlight the vibrant hues and intricate details of their cocktail creations. A lightweight, refined design enhances the tactile experience for guests, offering both comfort for the mixologist and sophistication for the consumer. Specifically designed for use in professional bars, the Kyoto series aligns with the key principles of cocktail mixology by emphasising balance, creativity and aesthetic appeal.
www.stoelzle-lausitz.com

3. Urban Bar
Glassware and Barware

Urban Bar, a family-run company founded in the UK, has been pursuing excellence in glassware and barware since 1983. Today, the brand is a one-stop shop, offering services including bespoke design and product branding, serving as creative partners for global drinks brands, distillers, restaurants and bars. A comprehensive premium product range combines both Urban Bar's own designs and collaborations with mixology experts. With a belief that glassware and barware production should go hand in hand with environmental stewardship, Urban Bar's mission is to give back to the world by committing to ethical practices, sustainability and social equity.
www.urbanbar.com

4. Ariane Fine Porcelain
Eclipse

At Ariane Fine Porcelain, each collection is made by industry professionals, for industry professionals, and is designed to encompass creativity, functionality, durability and timelessness. The Eclipse collection in particular has a striking pattern that provides a modern backdrop for a range of culinary presentations, with clean lines and minimalistic design. Meanwhile, its sturdy construction withstands the rigours of commercial use. Founded in 2014, by a group of partners with years of experience in the porcelain industry, Ariane is a European brand, crafting a wide array of ivory porcelain tableware out of its state-of-the-art facilities in India.
www.arianefineporcelain.com



1.



2.



3.



4.

1. XLBoom
Rondo

Founded by Geert-Jan Van Cauwelaert and Ann De Cock in 1997, Belgian brand XLBoom maintains its commitment to craftsmanship through a process that ensures each item is handmade from start to finish, with pieces brought to life in one of its international atelier spaces. XLBoom's mission is to produce objects that in addition to fulfilling a functional need, also evoke intense emotions. This corporate philosophy is encapsulated by the Rondo collection. Envisioned by the design studio, Sascha Sartory, the range includes a wine chiller, ice buckets in a variety of sizes and a pair of tongs. The line is available in three different finishes: copper, black and pure stainless steel. www.xlboom.com

2. John Jenkins
Havana

British glassware manufacturer John Jenkins presents Havana, a collection of handmade cocktail glasses comprising six distinct shapes, from a straight-sided glass to a flared shape for Martinis. The brand is known for its range of handmade and machine-made glassware that runs the gamut from wine and cocktail glasses to classic tumblers, all of which are available for immediate delivery. John Jenkins also has an in-house design department that can create bespoke pieces and exclusive patterns. Each piece benefits from the latest advancements in glass-making technology, employed to enhance clarity, durability and of course, scratch-resistance. www.johnjenkins.co.uk

3. G&G Goodfellows
Silver Roll-Top Caviar Pot

This handmade, silver-plated roll-top caviar server by G&G Goodfellows offers a luxurious way to savour caviar. Beneath its domed lid lies a hidden glass dish set within a silver tray, adding an element of surprise. The brand offers a spectrum of food presentation solutions for anything from oysters to grand, high-end hotel cuisine. Recognised for its tabletop innovations, G&G Goodfellows engages extensively with global hospitality partners, tailoring bespoke options and branding solutions. The company can offer a number of services; from creating individual tableware pieces to fully-fledged dining concepts and everything in between. www.goodf.co.uk

4. Robert Welch
Armscote Bead Bright Cutlery

The finely detailed Armscote Bead Bright cutlery collection from Robert Welch combines timeless design with contemporary refinement. Featuring a curved profile with delicate beading along bevelled edges that catch the light, the pieces have been inspired by the historic Old English Parish pattern. The new collection is crafted from 18/10 stainless steel, while a subtle accent on the underside of each fork and spoon adds an unexpected flourish. With a straightforward pricing structure across 40+ ranges and over 4 million items in stock, the company offers dispatch within 10 days. Stainless-steel products come with a 25-year lifetime guarantee. www.robertwelchhospitality.com



1. Costa Nova
Arenito

Crafted exclusively from Costa Nova's recycled clay formula, Ecogres, the Arenito collection combines sustainable design with functionality. Featuring coffee cups, lungo cups, latte bowls and poke bowls in six colours, each piece showcases an interior matte glaze and an unglazed underside for a distinctive artisanal aesthetic. Arenito's versatility is designed to suit a variety of culinary presentations, from beverage service to creative food displays. Its style allows establishments to craft unique dining experiences while highlighting sustainability and refined craftsmanship in every use, from casual gatherings to formal events.
www.costanovaprofessional.com

2. Sambonet
100

Sambonet draws from the past for its latest collection, celebrating its original designer, Roberto Sambonet, and the 100 years since his birth. 100 is born from the brand's desire to create contemporary cutlery capable of expressing understated elegance. The design recalls the avant-garde design typical of mid-20th-century Italy, with thin and slightly arched lines. Made of stainless steel, the new cutlery is offered in a classic mirrored stainless steel finish as well as a gold PVD version. The six-person set, which also comes with dessert cutlery, is available with soup spoons, butter spatulas, cake forks and matching cutlery rests. Sets of chopsticks and chopstick rests are also available.
www.sambonet.com

3. Bonna
Lagoon

Turkish tableware brand Bonna introduces the Lagoon Ocean series. Each porcelain piece features a design reminiscent of ocean waves and currents, with a matte finish that gives a beautiful artisanal quality. Here, hand-crafted and organic patterns have been used to elevate the presentation of seafood dishes or hearty main courses. Meanwhile, the Lagoon Olive series evokes the landscapes of the Mediterranean with its rich green tones and swirling motifs. Again, a matte surface adds an authentic, earthy feel to the table setting, making it a versatile option designed to complement a variety of culinary styles.
www.bonna.com.tr

4. Porland
Danshari Collection

Inspired by the Japanese art of minimal home organisation, the Danshari Collection by Porland incorporates three key colours which represent sky, earth and forest. The product line aims to bring a feeling of tranquillity and serenity to hospitality spaces and encourages a more holistic return to living simply while fostering a deeper connection with nature. The Turkish company, which is considered an industry giant in porcelain production, came from a humble glassware store opened in 1976 that had a desire to beautify living spaces. The company produces approximately 70 million pieces per year and exports 65% of these.
www.porland.com

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1. Franke Coffee Systems
A1000

Designed to handle up to 300 cups per day, the Franke A1000 creates barista-quality beverages with its patented FoamMaster technology, crafting indulgent milk foam. Its intuitive 10.4-inch touchscreen simplifies drink selection, while the optional flavour station adds up to six flavours, offering customisation to satisfy different tastes. Meanwhile, the A1000's advanced iQFlow technology guarantees every cup is brewed with precision, while CleanMaster ensures high hygiene standards with fully automated cleaning. With the option of two milk types and three precision grinders, this machine caters to a range of guests preferences.
coffee.franke.com

2. Humble
Firefly

Humble has captured the warm glow and cosy charm of candlelight for its wireless Firefly table lamp. Designed to avoid the fuss of melting wax or matches, this statement piece is safe, sustainable and portable. Firefly offers a balance of elegance and practicality. Its wireless and rechargeable features, combined with up to 100 hours of battery life, ensure seamless functionality. Users benefit from conveniences like group remote control, wireless charging and smart integration. In line with Humble's commitment to sustainability, this product is built for life and is easy to repair, ensuring it remains a valued part of any dining space for the years to come.
www.humblelights.com

3. RAK Porcelain USA
Pose Le Ballet Bone China

RAK describes its latest collection as light as a feather and sturdy as a bull. The Pose Le Ballet Bone China line aims to mirror the graceful, delicate appearance of ballerinas, balanced with an athletic core. Due to its high mechanical and physical strength, RAK's Bone China is chip resistant, made with natural mineral powder. RAK Porcelain started its journey in 2005 with a vision to be a one-stop shop for tabletop solutions. Its professional and experienced ceramicist engineers are backed by skilled artisans, bringing to life the creative innovation of European tableware designers who work in close association with Michelin-star level chefs.
www.rakporcelain.com

4. Vista Alegre Hotelware
Chef's Collection

In designing new plates intended for fine-dining settings, Vista Alegre aims to appeal to those who best know this universe: nationally and internationally celebrated chefs. Inspiration for this particular plate has come from wabi-sabi, the Japanese philosophy referring to the beauty of the irregular or the incomplete, a concept chosen by chef Pedro Pena Bastos. Part of the Chefs' Collection, the biscuit piece is sized for tasting experiences with a well-defined plating area, which is the only glazed portion of the plate, with depth for pouring sauce. Its delicate relief work on the porcelain is reminiscent of a complex web of serpentine tree roots.
www.hotelware.vistaalegre.com

ZENIT

Inspired by the warmth of the earth's and the golden hours of a tranquil dawn, the Zenit series embodies the harmony of nature. With its minimalist design, it transforms every meal into a calming ritual, bringing timeless beauty and balance for your table.

Cordially invites you to visit our booth in
AMBIENTE - Frankfurt, Germany
7-11 February 2025
Hall 11.0 - D11





1. Elia International
Wine Cooler and Stand

Elia International presents two new additions to its barware collection. The Stainless Steel Wine Cooler features a highly polished surface resulting in a mirror-like finish. Crafted with double wall insulation to keep wine colder for longer, this feature also ensures the cooler remains condensation free. Holding up to two standard wine bottles, its tapered design makes a striking addition to the tabletop. Fitting together perfectly, the new Elia Wine Cooler Stand frees up space on the dining table and has been polished to a gleaming mirror finish. It is also designed with a double wall top and an aesthetically pleasing curved base for added stability.
www.elia.co.uk

2. Steelite
Steelite Distinction Morella

The Steelite Distinction Morella tableware collection presents a fusion of historical inspiration and modern design, evoking the essence of the medieval town of Morella in Valencia. This latest range showcases intricate embossing, intended to be reminiscent of natural textures. The mid-rim style plates feature an engineered spiral effect, adding depth to each piece. The collection is designed for fine-dining settings, and includes signature banqueting pieces and a dramatic teapot with a distinct mid-century aesthetic and impressive height. Each of these beautiful pieces combines a timeless aesthetic with stylish modern design aspects.
www.steelite.com

3. Costa Verde
Calm Collection

Costa Verde's professional porcelain collections offer contemporary, European styling combined with exceptional quality and durability. Proudly made in Portugal, the brand now introduces its latest product as part of the Mood series. These pieces are extensively tested to resist intensive and massive use, with decorations that incorporate reactive or matte glazes. At Costa Verde, porcelain is produced with a sense of performance. From visual impact to tactile sensations, each piece is designed to be both seen and felt. This ethos is encapsulated in the Calm series, which is inspired by the mood of twilight and a symbiosis between light and shade.
www.pro.costa-verde.com

4. Lazzaro
Reactives

Designed with the work of exceptional chefs in mind, the Lazzaro Reactives collection aims to bring artisanal craftsmanship and understated elegance to the dining experience. Each piece features distinct reactive glazing, and boasts subtle variations and natural tones, a design that's been crafted to complement chef-driven menus. The blend of rustic textures with a refined finish creates a versatile canvas, and is equally suited to fine dining or more relaxed hospitality settings. By balancing form and function, Lazzaro Reactives brings quiet sophistication to the table, allowing vibrant culinary creations to take centre stage.
www.lazzaro.in



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www.finediningandliving.eu



1. Cookplay
Oceancook

Oceancook is a collaboration between design-led tableware brand Cookplay and the Oceanografic Valencia Foundation, which works towards awareness for the conservation of the marine environment in the Mediterranean Sea, protecting a high number of endangered species. The project aims to answer a premise that was its starting point: is it possible to represent endangered marine species in a format that adapts to the needs of tableware design? The result is a collection of defiant forms with undulant volume, where each product evokes a species' morphology, movement and visual expression, giving the tableware set a modern, organic style. www.cookplay.eu

2. Mesa Ceramics
Palermo

Mesa Ceramics is a Portuguese factory renowned for crafting high-quality fine stoneware products. The new Palermo collection, part of the Único range, infuses dining tables with a touch of colour, reflecting the landscapes of Palermo, Sicily, through its delicate greens, blues and browns. This collection prioritises durability, ensuring resistance to damage and chipping. Manufactured using an innovative ID7 vitreous stoneware body, the Palermo line benefits from advanced isostatic pressing and a single firing process, enhancing sustainability by reducing energy consumption and waste. Cutting-edge digital printing technology adds soft texture to each piece. www.mesaceramicshotel.com

3. Pordamsa
Lake Collection

Pordamsa believes that porcelain is not just a material, it's an expression of art that comes to life through the hands of artisans. The brand's new Lake Collection combines glossy and matte finishes, while its organic silhouette on the inside of each piece is inspired by the unique shape created by the movement of waves, designed to reflect the glow produced by the sun on crystalline water. Pordamsa designs have been known to accompany the culinary creations of some of the best chefs in the world. The business offers creative design concepts to global hotel design projects and aims to find solutions that are both aesthetically pleasing and functional. www.pordamsa.com

4. Corby Hall
Onda

Corby Hall, a family-owned business based in Randolph, New Jersey, USA, has supplied the international hospitality industry with high quality flatware, holloware and white porcelain dinnerware for the past 50 years. With designs ranging from traditional to contemporary at competitive price points, its global distribution network coupled with production facilities in Europe and Asia allows for seamless service for both opening orders as well as re-supply. The latest Onda dinnerware collection by Corby Hall offers contemporary, textured design with bright white porcelain construction, alongside organic curves and fissures. www.corbyhall.com



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Top of the Table

Francéclat showcases four innovative French brands blending tradition with contemporary aesthetics.

As the tableware industry continues to evolve, French innovator Francéclat is spotlighting four brands to watch this year at the Ambiente 2025 consumer goods fair in Frankfurt. From luxurious porcelain to crafted cutlery, these labels continue to shape the art of dining, blending their own rich heritage with modern sensibilities.

Legle

In Limoges, porcelain production reached its technical peak at the end of the 19th century, in particular with the advancements in high temperature firing, which enabled the creation of bright colours. Today, Legle has continued this tradition, offering a range of colours and designs, while fostering a dedication to beauty, luxury and exceptional moments.

Forge de Laguiole

Nestled in the heart of the Aubrac plateau, Forge de Laguiole has reimaged the iconic Laguiole knife while preserving its historic roots. The brand marries artisanal qualities with modern design, as lauded designer Philippe

Starck creates innovative, contemporary pieces in which every knife tells the story of a region and its heritage.

Manufacture de Digoïn

With a legacy dating back to 1875, Manufacture de Digoïn brings new life to the age-old ceramic traditions of Burgundy. The tableware business came back to life in 2014, when several investors joined forces to save the company with an ambition to perpetuate its historical expertise by re-injecting meaning into culinary objects from the past.

Extranorm

Taking pride in its Limoges-based manufacturing, Extranorm produces high-quality, ultra-thin porcelain. The brand offers both traditional and contemporary pieces, such as the bold Maniériste collection and the mosaic-inspired Mia series. Founded in 2014, Extranorm blends artistry with practicality, creating luxurious yet lightweight tableware that is resistant and dishwasher-safe.

www.franceclat-international.com

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ID Fine

www.idfine.com.tr    idfineporcelain  idfine-porcelain





1. Rona2Serve
Sake Tasting Glass

Rona2Serve's Sake Tasting Glass is a vessel designed to establish a new benchmark for sake evaluation while propelling the Japanese rice wine onto the global stage. According to the company, there have been centuries of inconsistent tasting practices due to varied glassware, which has hindered the overall appreciation of sake's diverse flavour and aroma profiles. Today, Glassbacca, in collaboration with the National Research Institute of Brewing (NRIB), Japan's leading authority on sake research, has taken a bold step to address the issue. The Sake Tasting Glass is more than just a piece of glassware, it's a commitment to quality and education. www.rona.glass

2. Revol
En Scène Collection

With simple lines and painstaking finishes, the En Scène collection by Revol has a coherent, intuitive architectural construction to allow hospitality professionals to showcase the creativity of their buffet displays. Comprising metal and oak risers that act as the foundation for various combinations of trays and maple wood boxes, which provide sleek platforms for food presentations, the studio has developed a new oblong tray designed to bridge the gap between round risers as well as display multiple juice fountains and salad bowls. Revol has been at the forefront of the industry since it was first founded in the South of France in 1768. www.revol1768.com

3. Ceramirupe
Terrafina Stoneware-Seixo

Inspired by naturally worn stones, the Seixo collection, part of Terrafina Stoneware by Ceramirupe, combines organic textures with a sleek matte interior, creating a distinct canvas for culinary artistry. These design elements are crafted to provide timeless appeal and are particularly suited for fine-dining experiences. Every item in the series is meticulously handmade, ensuring craftsmanship and attention to detail are key priorities. Seixo is available in three striking finishes including metallic, matte grey and black, providing versatile options to suit a variety of dining styles. Born of Ceramirupe Cerâmicas, a renowned Portuguese manufacturer with over 38 years of expertise in international markets, Terrafina embodies a blend of tradition, sustainability and innovation. The brand is a result of Ceramirupe's legacy of more than three decades of production, which has roots in Portugal's rich cultural and natural heritage. Consequently, the group is dedicated to defending handmade practices and committed to the preservation of timeless quality. Designs are now available through a dedicated b2b platform, while Terrafina provides tailored solutions to meet the needs of the hospitality industry. The ambition is to offer high-quality stoneware that enhances the dining experience with distinctive designs and lasting durability. www.terrafinastore.com

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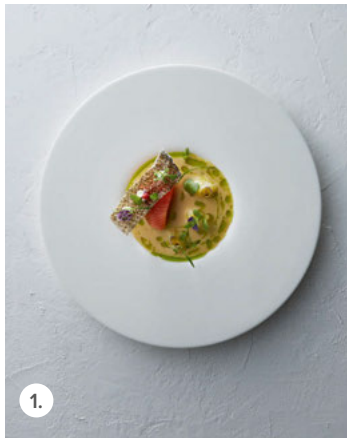
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1.



2.



3.



4.

1. Narumi Super Neutral

Japan-based bone china manufacturer Narumi has introduced its latest product line, the Super Neutral collection. This new launch features designs that cater to a wide variety of cuisines, emphasising versatility and functionality. Rather than expanding the number of items in the range, the collection focuses on maximising the utility of each individual piece through minimalistic design. The concept of Super Neutral is defined as a culture-free approach, which seamlessly accommodates different food genres. The Super Neutral Signature Plate features a narrower well and a wider rim, offering an elegant and visually appealing way to showcase dishes. www.narumi.co.jp

2. Fine Dining & Living Fine2Dine - Vita

Fine Dining & Living is a Belgian company that specialises in the design, production and distribution of creative and high-end tableware. Within the hospitality sector, it represents Fine2Dine, which supplies to restaurants, hotels and other catering establishments. Bringing a summer atmosphere straight to the table is Vita, the latest collection from Fine2Dine. This strong porcelain line with organic shapes exudes a handmade feel. Sitting in the off-white and beige colour spectrum, the reactive glaze creates distinctive texture on plates, bowls and platters. Vita combines aesthetics with functionality and guarantees a relaxed, memorable dining experience. www.finediningandliving.eu

3. Zieher The Pantry

The Pantry is designed to be more than just a buffet system, instead offering an elegant and functional solution for presenting bread, pastries, fruit and other delicacies at breakfast or dinner within a hotel setting. Thanks to the product's flexible application options, quick set-up and dismantling, the system is also suitable for conferences, coffee breaks, events or out-of-home catering. Zieher stands for innovative design in the tabletop and buffet-section, citing its main target audience as high-end hotels and top class restaurants serving innovative gastronomy, where dedicated professional chefs are recognised for trend-setting dishes. www.zieher.com

3. LSA Collective

LSA's latest Collective series is a mixed-material collection of tableware with a mission to enhance different environments, cuisines and occasions. The versatile pieces have been selected to complement each other and be curated to create personal table styles. "Collective recognises dining as a shared experience. From simple family meals to abundant dinner parties, it's a symbol of connection and community," explains Monika Lubkowska-Jonas, LSA's Creative Director. The London-based design studio specialises in contemporary handmade glass. Its ambition is to use skilled craftsmanship to create thoughtful, considered designs with intrinsic value. www.lsa-international.com

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Proof Elements

Proof is a trusted choice for food service professionals, delivering premium porcelain collections crafted exclusively for the hospitality industry. Designing in collaboration with industry experts, the company marries durability, modern aesthetics and affordability. The new Elements collection embodies this vision, blending craftsmanship with contemporary design. With warm, earthy tones like mineral, mustard and maroon, each piece of this collection pairs unique forms and subtle speckles, creating depth and character. From versatile bowls to elegant plates and cups, every item is meticulously crafted to meet the highest standards of performance and style.
www.prooftableware.com

Modbar Espresso AV

The result of years of collaborative research and development between Modbar and La Marzocco, the Espresso AV by Modbar is an espresso machine that blends sleek design with high performance. The under-counter solution serves to elevate the aesthetics of a workspace, creating a barrier-free interaction between guests and baristas. This technology gives professionals complete control and the ability to choose between multiple brewing modes, pulses, mass, or brew ratio to fine-tune the espresso volume. There is the option to set up one or two taps per module, and the system features an easy-to-use lever with four programmable positions.
www.modbar.com





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www.tothetableforums.com

Or contact Justin Wall: justin@tothetableforums.com



Andrew Bloomer
F&B Director
London Marriott Hotel County Hall

A London F&B Director considers the power of an impactful coffee moment for guests, and why Nespresso Essential is the best brand for the job.

What role does coffee play in your food and beverage experience?

Coffee is a crucial part of our guests' experience, especially during breakfast. It sets the tone for their day, offering a moment of relaxation and refreshment amid the bustling atmosphere of London. Coffee not only complements our food offerings but also enhances our ability to deliver a memorable and elevated guest experience across our venues. It is the glue that binds the breakfast experience for many of our guests.

Can you explain why you are offering Nespresso Professional coffee?

We've chosen to partner with Nespresso Professional because it delivers high-quality coffee with consistency. Across all our venues, it's important that guests experience the same premium taste, whether they're enjoying a cappuccino at breakfast or a late afternoon espresso. Nespresso's ease of preparation, without the need for a barista, means that we can offer that perfect cup time and time again, even during our busiest periods.

What do you consider the most powerful coffee moment during the day?

For our guests, breakfast is the most powerful coffee moment. Whether they're starting a busy day of meetings or heading out to explore London, a great coffee is essential. The first sip of a perfectly brewed coffee at breakfast can be transformative, elevating the entire meal. Our guests consistently tell us that starting their day with a high-quality coffee makes all the difference, and it's something we focus on delivering every day.

Why would you recommend partnering with Nespresso Professional to support in the creation of that critical coffee moment?

I would highly recommend partnering with Nespresso Professional because they deliver on every aspect that's important to us. The high quality of their coffee, combined with easy preparation, ensures we can maintain service excellence without needing a dedicated barista. The machines allow us to serve coffee quickly, ensuring consistency and variety, even when serving at high frequency during breakfast or events. The diverse range of beverages also means we can cater to every guest's preference, making each coffee moment special.

What is your personal favourite coffee moment?

My favourite coffee moment is that first cup at breakfast. Watching guests enjoy a fresh Nespresso coffee while taking in the views of the River Thames from our restaurant is a special moment that reflects both the luxury and warmth we aim to provide at London Marriott Hotel County Hall.

www.nespresso.com/pro





ANDREW BLOOMER
DIRECTOR OF FOOD & BEVERAGE
LONDON MARRIOTT
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Flavoursome Flights

Jumeirah Al Qasr takes to the skies with a new culinary journey through world cuisine.

Hold onto your hats, because Jumeirah Al Qasr is entering a new stratosphere of dining with Balloons at the Palace, a pop-up experience that's high-flying in every sense of the word. Up on the rooftop of the beachside resort, guests can seemingly float over the Arabian Gulf in a hot air balloon, taking in the Dubai skyline as they embark on a culinary journey around the world.

From the comfort of a beautifully crafted dining pod, there are two experiences to choose from – both promising an unforgettable adventure that blends culinary artistry with a touch of whimsy. The elevated dishes have been created by the hotel's team of award-winning chefs, who each bring their local specialities to the table.

Afternoon Tea in the Sky is a parade of perfectly proportioned bites, ranging from smoked salmon on rye and the classic egg mayonnaise, to

handmade pastries, freshly baked scones and a mini chocolate fountain with strawberries.

The five-course dinner meanwhile takes a flavoursome flight across continents, beginning in France with Chef Kim's seabass carpaccio drizzled in a zesty lemon dressing. Next, it's off to Italy for Chef Beatrice's Ravioli del Plin, featuring pillowy pasta parcels in a cognac-infused jus. The journey continues to the exotic spice markets of Thailand and Chef Amara's succulent tiger prawns in a creamy coconut and tamarind sauce. Then it's over to the Middle East for Chef Elias' seabass harrah, infused with the aromatic flavours of zatar. The main course brings a taste of Canada in Chef Eric's beef tenderloin with a rich maple glaze. And the flight concludes with Chef Dimitri's signature Madeleine; a sweet send-off back to Dubai.





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hotelware.vistaalegre.com

