

intouch

SUPPORTING YOUR BUSINESS

DANNY PECORELLI

2014'S HOTELIER OF THE YEAR ON EXCLUSIVE
HOTELS' SENSE OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

PLUS...

HOW TO LOOK GREAT ON THE WEB

LIVING WITH THE NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE

INTERVIEW WITH CHEF MARC WILKINSON

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

THE CATERER 

Informed...

AA LAUNCHES NEW SILVER STAR RATINGS

To coincide with the launch of the new 2016 AA hotel and B&B guides, the AA launched the new silver stars awards for both the hotel and guest accommodation recognition schemes. The silver stars award is reflected in both editions of the guide book, the AA.com and the mobile apps.

This silver stars award recognises hotels that have been selected for their superior level of quality, high standards of hotel keeping and for the quality of food within its star rating. A one-rosette award is the minimum requirement. Currently there are four two-silver-star hotels, 35 three-silver-star hotels and 43 four-silver-star hotels; 72 of them are in England, four in Scotland, two in Wales, two in Northern Ireland and two in the Channel Islands.

Silver stars for guest accommodation identifies those establishments that offer a superior level of quality within their star rating, high standards of hospitality, service and cleanliness.

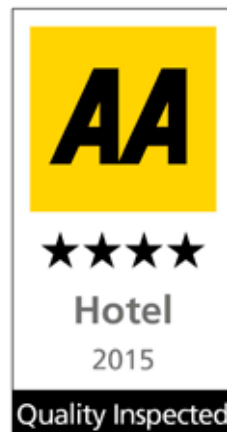
For guest accommodation, there are currently 38 establishments with three silver stars, 128 with four and 41 with five. Of those, 186 are in England, 11 in Wales and 10 in Scotland.

We would like to congratulate all of the establishments that have achieved silver stars already and this award will continue to be assessed for by our inspectors over the coming months should the criteria be met.



New logos

Our AA logos have been redesigned and updated with a new modern feel. These are now dated as per the scheme year with a standardised look and feel to improve the overall look when used together.



These are now available to download from www.aa hospitalityawards.com/recognition-scheme-logo-packs or contact HotelServices@theAA.com and they can email your logos to you.

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Follow us on Twitter

See @TheAA_Lifestyle, @AAHospitality and @Caterertweets for updates to the scheme, hospitality news, stories from our establishments, updates on awards events and much more.



Comments from the AA

THE CATERER Comments from The Caterer

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Welcome notes

Welcome to our autumn edition of Intouch. It is at this time of year we all wonder where the year has gone, but it is pleasing to hear that again trading levels have been good for most of our hospitality businesses. Whilst there will always be challenges, shortage of quality people in particular chefs and the impact of the living wage, the positive trading view looks set to continue into 2016.

We were delighted to host the annual AA Hospitality Awards earlier this month and it was great to see so many establishments supporting the event. Robin Hutson our Lifetime Achievement recipient gave a very inspirational speech focussing on both the importance of support of your family and people / team work as the key ingredient to success. I know this outlook resonated with the whole audience and it was great to see the impact for all the teams on achieving an

award that night. It is an absolute pleasure for us to recognise the hard work and commitment of all the hotels, guest accommodation, restaurant and pubs in delivering high quality standards to the consumer. My congratulations to all of those to have achieved an AA award this year and I would encourage you to download and use our new look logos to help promote this hard earned recognition.

In this edition we talk to the current Hotelier of the Year Danny Pecorelli, Managing Director of Exclusive Hotels and feature the excellent Master Innholders Conference which will be held in January which I would thoroughly recommend. Finally you will find many articles from our various partners who are sharing their expertise and insight to provide really useful information to help support your businesses.



Simon Numphud
Head of AA Hotel Services

The picture for the restaurant sector is mixed at the moment, at least according to the casual dining market representatives at one of our recent roundtables. While August was tough, the impression is that September was much more positive.

If business is tough, it suggests the high street is struggling or that consumer confidence has improved. The consumer has more choice than ever, so restaurateurs face competition from every conceivable direction – from street food to pop-ups to caterers improving their offer, to hotels installing more casual operations in their own sites rather than bringing in a big-name chef, to supermarkets and other retailers.

Discounting and vouchers are also back. Is this aggressive discounting back to stay? It is hard to say. Certainly, the average price of a meal is falling, according to Horizons' latest Menu Trends report. And yet spend is up (in part because operators have got clever at keeping main meal prices down but selling more sides, drinks and other items). The Barclaycard

Consumer Spending Report for 23 August to 26 September 2015 found that spend in pubs had risen by 11.6%, and restaurants by 12.6%, marking the sector's 26th month of consecutive double-digit growth.

Meanwhile, PwC reports that the hotel market is continuing to grow but will do so more slowly in 2016. Hotel occupancy in the regions will hit an all-time high in 2016 while in London the figures will be the highest for a decade. Half of all new rooms set to open in 2016 will be branded budget rooms.

The Rugby World Cup has had a positive effect, with room rates surging by up to 1,000% in Cardiff at around the time of the quarter-final in the Millennium Stadium on 17 October, according to Trivago. A hotel stay on a match night was predicted to cost an average of £261 in the 11 host cities, compared with £92 in 2014.

Finally, a heartfelt congratulations from all at *The Caterer* to all the winners at this year's AA Hospitality Awards. It was a fabulous night and we enjoyed catching up with so many of you in the room.



Amanda Afiya
Editor
The Caterer

TOP HOSPITALITY STORIES

Each week, *The Caterer* and www.thecaterer.com bring you the most important news from around the hospitality industry. Here's a selection of stories about AA members from the past three months

CRATHORNE HALL HOTEL UNVEILS £4m RESTORATION ONE YEAR ON FROM FIRE



Crathorne Hall hotel in Yarm, North Yorkshire, has unveiled its £4m restoration work one year on from the fire that severely damaged the property's east wing.

The relaunch of the four-red-AA-star hotel, which is owned and operated by Hand Picked Hotels, marks a year of intensive rebuilding after a fire broke out in the roof.

The hotel remained closed for over a month and reopened with 20 of its 37 bedrooms in use. The east wing, which is away from the historic main house, remained closed until now.

In consultation with English Heritage and Hambleton District Council, a team of specialist craftsmen refurbished the site's grand architectural features.

CAREYS MANOR EMPLOYEE ON BRITAIN'S BEST WORKERS LIST



The longest-serving employee at Careys Manor hotel in Brockenhurst has been

listed alongside Professor Stephen Hawking as one of the UK's best workers over 50.

Anna White, aged 77, has worked at the New Forest hotel for 45 years. She made it into the top 10 of the '50 over 50' list published in *People Management*, the official magazine of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, following hundreds of public nominations.

White, chef de rang at Cambium at Careys Manor hotel, said she was "truly delighted" to make the list.

PRIDE OF BRITAIN NOTCHES UP TWO NEW MEMBERS

Sales and marketing consortium Pride of Britain has announced two new members, nudging the collection up to 46 hotels, close to its limit of 50.

The latest additions are the five-AA-star Rockcliffe Hall



The upcoming Peninsula London on Grosvenor Place, London

hotel in Darlington and four-red-AA-star Armathwaite Hall in Keswick, Cumbria.

At 33 years old, Pride of Britain markets its hotels to UK consumers through a mix of online and offline communication channels.

DETAILS OF THE PENINSULA LONDON REVEALED

The development of one of the world's oldest luxury hotel brands in London's Belgravia has moved a step closer after plans were submitted to Westminster City Council.

The £500m, 190-bedroom Peninsula London will be located on Grosvenor Place, overlooking Buckingham Palace and Hyde Park Corner, and adjacent to the relaunched Lanesborough hotel. It is expected to open in 2021.

Grosvenor Britain & Ireland and the Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels (HSH) launched a 50:50 joint venture partnership two years ago to undertake the development, which will involve the replacement of a 1960s office block with a new building.

The hotel, designed by British-based Hopkins Architects, will feature a grand pedestrian entrance

on Grosvenor Place and a palazzo-style inner courtyard, as well as a spa, restaurants, bars, shops, a ballroom and up to 28 apartments.

HSH, which today has 10 hotels, was founded in 1928 and launched its first Peninsula property in Hong Kong. Its first European hotel opened in Paris in August 2014.

CINNAMON CLUB REOPENS FOLLOWING £1m REFURBISHMENT



Vivek Singh

Vivek Singh's Michelin-starred restaurant the Cinnamon Club in St James's, London, has reopened following a £1m refurbishment ahead of its 15th anniversary.

It closed for six weeks at the beginning of August this year.

DOMESTIC TOURISM MAKES A RECORD-BREAKING START TO THE YEAR

Results from the Great Britain Tourism Survey show 28.7 million trips were recorded in England between January and April, a significant improvement on last year, when numbers suffered due to severe weather conditions.

It also represents an 18% increase year-on-year and is the highest number of trips recorded in the period since the survey began in 2006. Spending was also up 18% on 2014, to almost £5b.

NEW GENERAL MANAGER APPOINTED AT KINGS HEAD HOTEL IN CIRENCESTER



Sally Russell

The Vineyard Group has appointed Sally Russell as the new general manager of the 45-bedroom Kings Head hotel in Cirencester.

Russell replaces Stephen Mannock, who has moved to Brunei as operations director at the Empire hotel and country club. She previously worked for the Vineyard Group as deputy general manager and then manager at the Donnington Valley hotel and spa near Newbury, where she worked for the last five years.

Opened in September 2014, the Kings Head is owned by Wildmoor Properties and operated by the Vineyard Group.

TOPLAND GROUP MERGES HALLMARK HOTELS AND MENZIES UNDER ONE BRAND

Hallmark Hotels and Menzies Hotels are to be merged by their owner Topland Group under one brand.

The two brands' 20 hotels and 2,700 bedrooms will now operate under the Hallmark name, and the Menzies brand will disappear.

Topland is set to invest millions in refurbishing the newly created portfolio, with the four-AA-star, 61-bedroom Hallmark London Chigwell Prince Regent (below) – previously a Menzies property – the first hotel to feature the new look.



Hallmark Hotel London Chigwell Prince Regent

IN HOTELS, EXCELLENCE IS NO COINCIDENCE



Held annually, the Master Innholders General Managers' Conference is known as a leading forum for debating and forecasting hospitality trends and an important place to do business in the hospitality calendar.

The 2016 theme is 'Excellence is No Coincidence' and the conference will take place at Grosvenor House in London on 11-12 January. Conference chairman and general manager of Grosvenor House, Stuart Bowery MI, will play host to what is expected to be the largest conference yet. Building upon the success of 2015, Bowery wanted a conference that would not only inspire, but would challenge traditional thinking: "With the help of the committee we have shaped a conference that really addresses today's issues in the industry and will also provide insight to help build and grow for tomorrow."

"This industry is built upon excellence and it's certainly no coincidence we are one of the greatest providers of hospitality in the world. I hope that hotels from across the UK will take this opportunity to spend two days to come and learn and network together and celebrate all that makes hoteliers and their teams great."

One of Europe's top leadership experts, Steve Radcliffe, will be opening the conference with thought-provoking insights on creating a mindset that delivers extraordinary results. Well known for his no-nonsense approach, Radcliffe has provided leadership

coaching to over 50 chief executives, heads of the Civil Service, the NHS and the other government departments. Channel 4's former chairman, Luke Johnson, has been confirmed as headline speaker and will inspire the audience on business success as a leading British serial entrepreneur.

Other confirmed speakers include Robbie Bargh of Gorgeous Group, digital expert Dan Christian, Global Growth founding partner Wayne Clarke, Martin Couchman and Ufi Ibrahim from the British Hospitality Association as well as internationally recognised behaviour expert Jez Rose. In addition to this, media coach Alan Stevens will chair a panel discussion on managing PR in a crisis.

The first day will be chaired by David Morgan Hewitt MI, managing director of The Goring, and will be packed with sessions focusing on legislation, global market trends, leadership and learning. On day two Peter Hancock MI, chief executive of Pride of Britain Hotels, will introduce the speakers, who will bring to life the topics of examining behaviour, crisis management, the reality of digitalisation and moulding excellence.

The 2016 Master Innholders conference is expected to be a sell-out. Tickets are available online now at www.masterinnholders.co.uk/ conference. Follow the Master Innholders on Twitter: @MasterInnH #GMConf16.

Master Innholders General Managers' Conference 2016 Programme and timings

Monday 11 January

11.30am Sponsors' Showcase, registration and light lunch

1.00pm Welcome from the chairman of the Master Innholders, Jonathan Raggett

1.05pm Session chair: David Morgan Hewitt, managing director, The Goring

1.15pm The Leadership Expert: Steve Radcliffe

1.55pm Legislation and Hospitality: Martin Couchman, deputy chief executive, British Hospitality Association

2.25pm Global Travel Market Trends: Katherine Le Quesne, Deloitte

2.55pm Break

3.15pm Beverage Trends: Robbie Bargh, founder of Gorgeous Group

3.45pm Master Innholder Scholarships

4.00pm The Mindset to Achieve Extraordinary Results: headline speaker, Luke Johnson

4.50pm Closing remarks from the chairman of the Master Innholders, Jonathan Raggett

7.15pm Champagne reception and gala dinner

Tuesday 12 January

8.30am Registration and breakfast

9.00am Welcome from the chairman of the Master Innholders, Jonathan Raggett

9.05am Session chair: Peter Hancock, Pride of Britain Hotels

9.10am People Engagement: Wayne Clarke, founding partner, Global Growth

9.45am Managing your PR in a Crisis: panel discussion with Alan Stevens, Michael Gray and Gareth Jones

10.30am Break

10.45am The Latest Technology: Dan Christian, digital expert

11.30am Political Lobbying: Ufi Ibrahim, chief executive, British Hospitality Association

12.00pm The Behaviour Expert: Jez Rose

12.55pm Closing remarks from the chairman of the Master Innholders, Jonathan Raggett

1.05pm Lunch

Programme timings subject to change.

WINNERS OF THE AA HOSPITALITY AWARDS 2015



AA HOTEL OF THE YEAR



England Cliveden House



London Corinthia



Ireland Galgorm Resort and Spa



Wales St George's



Scotland Rufflets

AA LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



Robin Hutson, executive chairman, PIG

AA PUB OF THE YEAR



England The Porch House



Scotland The Scran & Scallie



Wales The Kinnel Arms

AA WINE AWARD



England and overall
The Sun Inn



Scotland The Ubiquitous Chip



Wales The Walnut Tree

AA RESTAURANT OF THE YEAR



England House of Tides



London Tredwell's



Scotland The Gannet



Wales Coast

AA ECO HOTEL GROUP OF THE YEAR



Exclusive Hotels and Venues



The Savoy

AA SPIRIT AWARD



Churchill Bar and Terrace

AA FOOD SERVICE AWARD



Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons

AA HOUSEKEEPER OF THE YEAR



Sarah Middlemass, The Old Course Hotel

AA HOTEL GROUP OF THE YEAR



Brend Hotels

AA CHEFS' CHEF OF THE YEAR



Daniel Clifford, Midsummer House





SPOTLIGHT ON...

IXWORTH HOUSE

Suffolk

A brief stay at Ixworth House is absolute proof that a little bit of love goes a long way

Built in 1908 for Dr Gelston the village doctor, Ixworth House has been lovingly restored by its owners John and Sharyn Snell to retain a wealth of original Edwardian features such as period fireplaces, leaded and stained glass windows and a grand sweeping staircase. Sharyn, an art history and architecture graduate, has demonstrated her talents throughout the beautiful interior, providing guests with three comfortable, spacious and luxurious en-suite bedrooms, one with the original rolltop bath for an indulgent wallow.

"Nobody would imagine now how unloved the house was when we bought it. The place was leaking like a rusty bucket, and was as cold inside as out in the winter. Our daughters thought we were mad!" says John.

Buying the house was John's retirement plan six years ago, but the couple's love of people and beautiful renovation was too good not to share. "Several of our friends and family suggested that we give running a B&B a try, and we just love it. It's so rewarding." Those 'rewards' have also brought Ixworth House a TripAdvisor certificate of excellence and the AA five-star gold award.

Regular Channel 4 viewers may recognise the couple and their B&B from the *Four in a Bed* series (which Ixworth House won). "The programme was a big leap outside of our comfort zone. I don't generally like having my picture taken, let alone appearing on national television!" Sharyn laughs. In fact, the programme broadcasts internationally, and has attracted visitors from as far afield as Australia to the B&B as a result.

A restful stay often commences with tea, coffee and tasty treats served in the gorgeous garden or drawing room

John and Sharyn are excellent hosts (as many TripAdvisor reviewers have noted), and a warm welcome always awaits guests at Ixworth House. A restful stay often commences with tea, coffee and tasty treats served in the gorgeous garden or drawing room, and will include a sumptuous breakfast with quality ingredients, many locally sourced.

The village of Ixworth itself oozes charm and character, from its narrow, period-property lined high street, to the community's coffee shop, boutique, butcher, post office, general store, hairdresser and two pubs. For lovers of fine dining, Theobalds restaurant sits right around the corner from Ixworth House, with another award-winning restaurant, the Leaping Hare, just a short drive into the countryside at Wyken Vineyard.

Many visitors like to visit the historic market town of Bury St Edmunds, and enjoy the Abbey Gardens, cathedral and twice-weekly markets. With bags of charm, wonderful restaurants (such as the acclaimed Maison Bleue) and a lovely array of boutique and high street shops, there is plenty to see within a short drive of Ixworth House. There are also a number of National Trust properties nearby, including the similarly named but entirely different Ickworth House.

For those seeking a peaceful escape from everyday life, Ixworth House has proven a haven of restful tranquillity.

For more information about Ixworth House B&B visit www.IxworthHouse.co.uk or call John and Sharyn Snell on 01359 230639.



INTERVIEW WITH...

MARC WILKINSON



Name: Marc Wilkinson
Restaurant: Restaurant Fraiche
Position: Restaurant owner

How did you get to where you are now?
I drove here!

To your place in the industry we mean.

Dedication to the craft. I started off at the bottom, working in kitchens while I was at school, and then went on to do an apprenticeship. After that I just worked my way up.

Who is your greatest inspiration?

Pierre Gagnaire. While in Paris I ate in one of his restaurants and I've never cooked the same since. He absolutely blew me away. If I were to say someone I have worked with, it would be Germain Schwab. I worked with him at the Winteringham Fields in Hull and I have a huge amount of respect for him.

What are your top tips for an aspiring chef?

Common sense, getting your head down, working hard, not being too greedy for promotion and building strong foundations.

What has been your greatest career achievement to date?

Apart from getting a day off? Joking aside, getting my AA rosettes has been amazing. The achievement with the biggest impact has to be getting the number one spot in *The Times* top 100 restaurants.



How did that feel?

For a small restaurant the size of a shed it was massive! Where the AA rosettes had a trickle effect, this was on a completely different scale. Instantly, my social media and booking system went mental.

Where did the name Fraiche come from?

It's a play on words, French but with a fresh twist.

What is your favourite ingredient?

Without a doubt it's truffles. I love them. Not the summer ones though, just the winter ones. They only grow in certain regions and are much rarer than the summer variant.

Do you have truffles on your menu?

Yes, all the time. The ingredient I spend the most on would definitely be truffles.

What would be your last supper?

Winter truffles! Winter truffles in a cheese and onion pasty heated up on the George Foreman. Perfect.

Where do you eat on your day off?

Difficult one... if I go anywhere it's to my friend's pub, the Fox and Barrel.

And what would you have?

Anything he's willing to cook me, I'm not fussy.

You've just added a new extension, are you pleased with the outcome?

Having it built was a big headache, it caused lots of problems. I'm really pleased it's all finished and I'm really happy with the way it looks. I've got a few more covers to fill now.



THE SOCIAL HOTELIER

Current Hotelier of the Year Danny Pecorelli of Exclusive Hotels and Venues knows that his responsibilities extend beyond the bottom line. *Emily Manson* reports on his eco-friendly, staff-improving and future-ready empire

Danny Pecorelli has been in the news a lot recently. He's the current Hotelier of the Year and he's opening a cookery school, developing a new spa and playing host to the England rugby team for the World Cup. There's a lot of journalistic hooks to write about.

But while all of the above are obviously important, prestigious and coveted, they are also transient and almost window dressing for the Exclusive Hotels and Venues Group, its managing director, and their 34-year journey.

He is, in fact, the modern embodiment of a socially responsible family hotelier, with his ultimate goal being an Exclusive legacy. He is a social hotelier in every sense.

SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE

While for many in hospitality, social responsibility is just a line, for Pecorelli it's a deeply held philosophy that links to his ultimate aim of leaving a legacy. "We tread lightly because it's the right thing to do," he says bluntly.

Every decision is assessed for its environmental and ecological impact – none more so than the development of the aforementioned new spa at South Lodge with its 100% biomass boiler. But the bricks and mortar is only one element of this socially responsible philosophy. The new spa will have a very different feel to the one at Pennyhill Park. "I am particularly excited about designing the spa into the landscape to make the most of the area's natural beauty. We want to bring the South Downs inside," he says.

To this end, the pool will end with a glass wall overlooking the downs, as will the balcony and hydropool. Even the sauna will have a glass cutaway via which guests can enjoy the stunning natural scenery. The food and beverage concept will also continue the natural, organic and local philosophy, as will the spa treatments.

"It's relatively easy to build a spa," Pecorelli explains, "but the key is making sure all the bases beyond that are covered – picking the

right people, training them and putting in the infrastructure to ensure that each and every product picked has been done with the clarity of the responsible eco-friendly brand we believe in and are trying to create. You have to keep returning to and referencing the core principles so your building blocks are consistent. It's no good having great people when they're dressed in polyester uniforms made in a sweatshop!"

SERIOUSLY SOCIALLY CONSCIOUS

Pecorelli's natural affability lends itself easily to the classic host role. Although Pennyhill Park is his base, he frequently 'walks the floor' in all his properties and tries to visit each one at least every fortnight. He knows many of the regular guests by name.

But as a seriously socially responsible employer, he not only talks the talk with guests, but walks the walk with staff. He is adamant that the key to success is 'his people'. He continually puts back profits into investing in their training and progression and always has a significant number of trainees within the group at any one time.

Already deeply involved in many of the industry's leading training initiatives, such as the Edge Hotel School, Pecorelli has spent even more time this year engaging with universities and colleges. But he also insists that the industry needs to recognise that the key is about retaining the talent as well as recruiting it. He notes: "There has to be a whole strategy around that for every hotelier. Their offerings must be stronger, so they can help attract more people into the industry."

Looking ahead, this is what he sees as the biggest challenge to the industry. "We've really been a victim of our own success. The industry is growing rapidly and the number of people coming into the industry, while growing, isn't growing at the same speed. So attracting the best talent to deliver the best service and product really is the number one focus."



"You have to keep returning to and referencing the core principles so your building blocks are consistent"

PECORELLI ON...

...being named Hotelier of the Year 2014

"It has been absolutely fantastic, the year has just had a lovely warm glow to it. But in a bizarre way it drives you even harder to improve your product, the service and your overall offering, as you feel even more people are expecting great things from the properties and it's your job to deliver. The nicest thing has to be the fact that the awards are voted for by my peers, which is truly the greatest accolade you could have."

...what makes a great hotelier

"You've got to have great attention to detail but at the same time be able to see the big picture. You also need the strategy and vision to do the two successfully and know when to focus on the detail or the big picture or both at the same time!"

...his industry inspiration

"There are just so many from Ramon Pajares and my dad, to today with Robin Hutson and the Pig brand and Jonathan Raggett at Red Carnation. Then there's people within my business such as Julian Tomlin, general manager at Pennyhill Park, and Michael Wignall at the Latymer, whose food never ceases to amaze me."



SOCIALLY SAVVY

As the second generation to run the Exclusive group, which was started by his father in 1981, Pecorelli has witnessed the arrival of the many and varied social media platforms – changing the hotel scene irrevocably and splitting opinions across the sector.

Although he maintains it's important to retain control of your own inventory by having "a good product and providing a good service", he embraces TripAdvisor as it is "positive for the customer". He also recognises the reasons for Airbnb's meteoric rise in popularity.

But he also sounds a note of caution: "I do have a slight issue with the way that Trip Advisor interacts with hotels, and that it isn't a level playing field." Similarly with Airbnb, he explains: "The way a lot of the internet companies are structured, they are not paying tax like physical hotels. If we sell a cup of coffee and make a profit on it we have to pay UK corporation tax, they (and other international companies) don't."

From a legislation point of view, he also notes: "The law, particularly around health and safety, is much stricter on hotels, which I don't have an issue with, but almost anyone can rent out a room to Airbnb without the same strict legislation that applies to hotels."

SOCIALLY SENSITIVE

Pennyhill Park, South Lodge, Manor House and Lainston House hotels are undeniably luxurious, with 20 AA stars, 19 AA rosettes and four Michelin stars between them. But perhaps one of Pecorelli's smartest moves was made a decade ago, to broaden his group's appeal by expanding into different market segments.



"Attracting the best talent to deliver the best service and product really is the number one focus"

The venues within Exclusive Hotels and Venues cleverly tap into austerity Britain's modern sensitivity of not wanting to be perceived as excessively indulgent, and these properties allow Pecorelli's guests, many of whom at other times frequent the hotels, to enjoy Exclusive's core principles even within the meetings and conference format.

"There was a massive opportunity at the time – and even to a degree it's still not that innovative, although there are more really

good spaces now. With Venues we were able to develop a very creative product."

That ability to spot an opportunity – be it an underdeveloped market, a chance to offer unrivalled food and beverage, or even to become the home of English rugby – is combined with social awareness in respect to environmental, personnel and media issues, to ensure that Pecorelli's goal to create the Exclusive legacy is surely in safer hands than any rugby ball.

EXCLUSIVE HOTELS AND VENUES PORTFOLIO

EXCLUSIVE HOTELS

Pennyhill Park, an Exclusive Hotel & Spa, Bagshot, Surrey

Five AA red stars, seven AA rosettes, two Michelin stars

South Lodge, an Exclusive Hotel, Horsham, West Sussex

Five AA stars, six AA rosettes, one Michelin star



The Manor House, an Exclusive Hotel & Golf Club, near Bath, Wiltshire

Five AA stars, three AA rosettes, one Michelin star

Lainston House, an Exclusive Hotel, near Winchester, Hampshire

Five AA stars, three AA rosettes

EXCLUSIVE VENUES

Royal Berkshire, an Exclusive Venue, Ascot, Berkshire



Fanhams Hall, an Exclusive Venue, Ware, Hertfordshire

EXCLUSIVE GOLF

Mannings Heath, an Exclusive Golf Club

The Manor House, an Exclusive Golf Club

THE COOKERY SCHOOL AND FOOD PHILOSOPHY

Season, the new cookery school at Lainston House, has just launched. A stunning space with a dual purpose, the cookery school will be used as a base for the Exclusive Chefs' Academy to train the group's chefs and share ideas within the team as well as a cookery school for external guests and corporate entertainment.

With capacity for up to 24 participants, Pecorelli is keen to point out that many of the courses are not 'overly technical' despite the group's multi-Michelin-star standing. The cookery class themes will cater to all levels.



He cites *Cooking the Perfect Steak* by Richard Davies (executive chef at the Manor House), through to *Classic French Pâtisserie* by Denis Drame (master of culinary arts head pastry chef at Pennyhill Park) as examples of the scope.

The Exclusive Chefs' Academy will also make the most of this facility. Pecorelli says: "We have more than 20 of the next generation coming through the business. We take on 10 students a year, who have an amazing opportunity. Each student works within one of the properties for three days a week and then

for two days on a course with Andy MacKenzie, the executive chef of the Chefs' Academy. It's designed to take them from commis to chef de partie in two years and really is an amazing opportunity."

Pecorelli was responsible for the original drive to evolve the hotels' food offer when he first joined the group, working with his father.

Although he never chased accolades, he explains: "It's slightly nuanced but I always chased the quality and the talent. It's old fashioned perhaps, but food is the heartbeat of the hotel and if you're staying here then food is an integral part of the hospitality experience."

With 20 AA stars, 19 AA rosettes and four Michelin stars, he doesn't believe in actively seeking more but "in being confident that what you're doing is the best it can be".

This is helped enormously by the chefs of each property meeting periodically to brainstorm and collaborate.

Pecorelli says: "They're all different but on friendly terms, so we actively encourage collaboration alongside individuality. People would be surprised at how little I get involved. It's like giving Monet and Picasso a blank canvas each – they will both create something amazing but totally different from each other."

PENNYHILL PARK AND THE RUGBY WORLD CUP

The relationship between Pennyhill Park and the Rugby Football Union (RFU) began in 1999, after the last tournament to take place in England. Pennyhill Park had hosted the New Zealand All Blacks to great acclaim.

Pecorelli was contacted by England's coach Sir Clive Woodward and they agreed to build a training pitch for the team. "The rest is history," he says.

The hotel is now on its third incarnation of that pitch and has just signed a 20-year deal with the RFU, which includes building a first-class training centre featuring a state-of-the-art gym, synthetic indoor pitch and changing areas.

From the food and beverage perspective, huge effort goes into creating the special menus for the team. Players need around 5,500 calories a day but within a strictly controlled, protein-heavy diet.

Delivered by the hotel's banqueting department, the team's nutritionist doctor discusses menus with the chefs to provide the right dishes for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

"There is a lot of emphasis on good-quality protein but they also get choices so no one is ever forced to eat anything," says Pecorelli.

He is also quick to recognise the benefits of the RFU link. "There's a lot of kudos to hosting the England rugby team. It's a very important



client and has certainly helped Pennyhill Park to develop very high brand recognition." But he also notes that it is important not to become "known as just a rugby hotel, as we're so much more with the spa, bakery and restaurants. It's a fine balance."

While the multiple non-disclosure agreements prevent him revealing too much about plans for

the actual World Cup, he does admit they have freshened up the team's routine and it feels very different to any other tournament.

Practical logistics have also been a key concern – for example employing extra ground staff to maintain pitch quality and erecting a huge marquee in the car park just to house the press, at a cost of £100,000.

REDUCE
FOOD
WASTE

PSL
THE FOOD
PROFESSIONALS



“How many food bins did we throw away yesterday?”

That is a question you should ask at your next management team meeting. This month, we talk to the industry experts, PSL – The Food Professionals on how the UK’s leading kitchens are increasing their profits and reducing their environmental impact by improved food waste management.

Whilst every hotel and restaurant generates food wastage, according to Daniel Wilson, PSL’s Managing Director, “It is important owners do not view it as a problem which is a fixed cost of running a food business. Instead they should consider it as both a margin and environmental opportunity”. Wise words indeed when one considers that the UK hospitality industry is forecasted to throw away over £3billion of food in 2016. Using data collated from their extensive client portfolio, PSL suggest that each large bin bag equates to roughly £10 which means a typical hotel will be throwing thousands of pounds away each year.

Today we look at the most effective ways that leading hotels are reducing food wastage and increasing profits.

1 Recording wastage – Start simply by counting the number of bins being thrown away. Once you know the quantity and multiple against the PSL average £10 value you will soon know the size of the issue. It then might be worth implementing a wastage log for the teams to write down everything they throw away – ‘What’s in my bin?’ It is important chefs are not penalised for completing the log (as they will avoid doing it!) so encourage its use. It is the only real way of identifying what foods are being thrown away and why.

2 Monitoring wastage – Consider the use of clear bin bags in kitchens as they can make it much easier to check what food is being wasted in your kitchen. Involving the whole kitchen team to visually inspect the bags at the end of service will shock and inspire a change in behaviour.

3 Action Plan – knowing you have wastage and where it comes from is great, but unless you have an agreed action plan nothing will change. It is important to involve all the team in exploring ways the food waste can be reduced – you will be amazed how many great ideas come from this.

4 Maintain Awareness – growing, transporting, storing and cooking food is a carbon-intensive business. Raising and maintaining awareness of the financial and environmental impacts of wastage with all your stakeholders will inspire significant improvements as to how your business operates.

The United Nations Environment Programme highlighted the fact that around 1/3 or around 1.3 billion tonnes per annum of all food produced for human consumption eventually becomes wastage. The UK hospitality industry can play its part in helping reduce that number – the best bit is it will save not cost you money in doing so!

PSL is the largest independent food procurement company in hospitality, and works with hundreds of AA members to increase food margins. Since being founded in 1993, PSL has gone on to work with many of the country’s leading hotels who currently boast over 400 AA rosettes between them.

Daniel Wilson,
Managing Director
PSL



What PSL’s clients say ...

“The last 12 months of working with PSL has been exceptionally good. We reduced our FCOS further Year on Year whilst further improving the quality of the product served to our guests”

Franck Bruyere - Director of
Food & Beverage, Fairmont St
Andrews

“I knew PSL could deliver the price savings we were looking for whilst at the same time introducing quality suppliers across all the hotels”

Jim Gordon – MD, Legacy
Hotels



“PSL – It’s a no brainer”

Brian Hladnick – MD,
Landmark Hotel Group



Top 5 tips for reducing food wastage

- 1. Out of date stock** - this is an indication that purchasing is not in line with business levels and or storage management needs improving. Implement a first in, first out procedure in the fridges. Insist on the fridges being checked before orders are placed
- 2. Over purchasing** - Introduce a par stock holding on fresh produce which is large enough to cover an average day’s business but small enough to avoid holding unnecessary stock
- 3. Over production** - Introduce production guides especially for buffets and work on the principle of cooking little and often and flexing volumes in line with the estimated numbers at particular times
- 4. Plate waste** - if you have a lot of food coming back this could indicate your portions are excessive. Make changes to portion sizes if this is an issue
- 5. Wastage in the bin** - use clear bin bags and regularly inspect the wastage. Encourage staff to record all food wastage in a log which then is regularly reviewed for ideas and actions how to reduce it.



For more information on tackling food wastage, visit PSL at www.psl-uk.co.uk or call our head office on 01926 315111

LOOKING YOUR BEST ONLINE

How words and pictures drive bookings from online travel websites

Whether you're a B&B, guest house or hotel, your property is probably listed on a number of different online travel websites. Appearing on multiple websites undoubtedly boosts your occupancy, but have you thought about how to make sure your property stands out against the competition? Think of your online profile on these sites as your shop window – are you making the most of it to encourage potential guests to choose you?

The best way to do this is by understanding what exactly users of online travel websites are looking for when they see your property listing. A recent survey by Eviivo looked at properties that follow the simple steps below and discovered that they generate eight times more revenue and receive five times more room nights booked via online travel websites compared to those that don't.

Make sure that you:

- Show at least 20 high-definition photos of your property.
- Have four photos of each room type, including a bathroom.
- Keep the photos relevant – pictures of well-known local landmarks won't help potential guests choose their accommodation.
- Show photos of everything, including rooms, exterior of the building, shared areas, breakfast room, garden and facilities.
- Include a photo of your sea view or mountain view to capture the viewer's attention.
- Remember to use high-definition images so that they look great on any screen size.

When you are taking your photos it is important to consider the following:

- You should take your photos in the daytime and in good natural light.
- It is important that you can't see any people in the pictures – for example, in a mirror's reflection.
- Ensure that the rooms are clean and tidy; maybe take them just after the cleaner has been.
- Double-check that all windows and mirrors are clean.
- Play with your camera's settings. For example, if you're in a room that has little natural light, increase the ISO setting.
- A digital camera can hold hundreds of



Recent survey data suggests that hoteliers must invest in a strong online presence

images, so take lots of photos, experiment with different angles and settings and then use your best 20 shots.

Not only do you need good images, you also need the right words. But what information is going to get you noticed? You have on average just 3.4 seconds to capture a guest's attention, so how can you showcase your rooms in that time?

- Promote your higher quality rooms by calling them 'executive', 'superior' or 'luxury'.
- Suggest the location of your rooms by calling them 'sea view,' 'garden view,' 'ground floor' or 'balcony'.
- Know what adds value to your rooms. Is it position, size, the view or facilities?

Then, make sure you show off your unique selling points:

- **Meal options** What breakfast and dinner choices do you serve?
- **Facilities** Do you have a bar, restaurant or parking?
- **Things to see** What places are there to visit locally?
- **Things to try** Do you have local crafts or foods to sample?
- **Things to do** Are there sports events, shows or concerts in the local area?
- **Things to buy** Are there interesting boutique shops nearby?
- **Where to go** Local restaurant and pub recommendations are a great addition here.
- **The story** Help your potential guest understand

you a little better by, for example, telling them about your property's interesting history.

The important thing to remember is that on an online travel website listing, you only have a very short time to impress and influence the potential guest before they move on.

By keeping your information sharp and to the point, having high-quality images and describing your facilities, your potential guests will have no reason to look elsewhere!

Eviivo suite can connect you to over 150 online travel websites with just one click. You can manage all of your information such as bookings, rates, images and descriptions all in one place. To see how Eviivo can help your business, visit www.eviivo.com.

WHY YOUR B&B NEEDS A GREAT WEBSITE

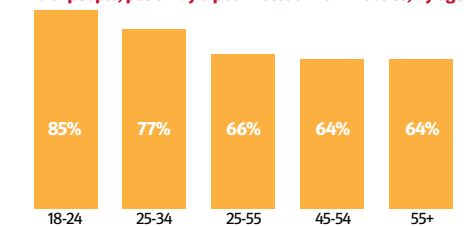
A recent Eviivo survey of 500 people across the UK and Ireland found that 74% of people are less likely to book a hotel or B&B if it doesn't have its own website. The internet has changed the way people find and book accommodation and the impact of sites such as TripAdvisor, Expedia and Booking.com on consumer expectations has been huge.

The five points below tell you everything you need to know about how important a good website is for your hotel, guesthouse or B&B.

1. Just having a website is not enough

It has to look good. 68% of people are put off making a booking if a property has a poor website. If your website isn't as well presented as it should be, it may be time for a revamp.

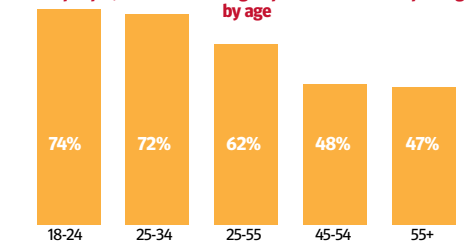
% of people, put off by a poor hotel or B&B website, by age



2. Your website has to take online bookings

56% of those surveyed would be put off booking a hotel or B&B if they had to telephone or email to book. That rises to over 70% for the under-35s and even for over-55s the figure is 45%! Potential guests don't want to have to call or email to make a booking.

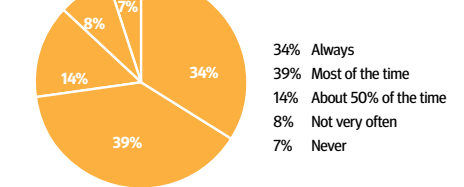
% of people, who find needing to phone or email off-putting, by age



3. Very few people don't book online nowadays

73% of people make all or most of their accommodation bookings online. Only 5% of people don't book online at all. The way we purchase goods is changing rapidly. When was the last time anyone paid for anything with a postal order?

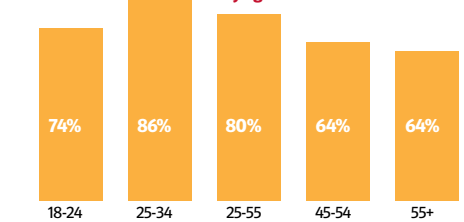
How often do you book your hotel or B&B online?



4. Age is just a number

65% of people over 55 said they make most or all of their accommodation bookings online. It's not just the younger generation who like to make their bookings at a click of a button.

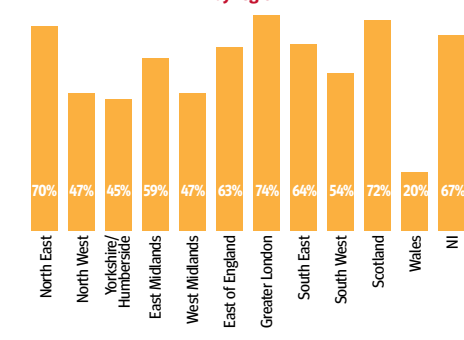
% of people, who book all or most of their accommodation online, by age



5. Location, location, location

Desire to book online varies by location. Over 70% of people in Greater London, Scotland and the North East are put off by needing to telephone to make a booking compared with just 20% of potential guests from Wales.

% of people put off booking by not being able to do so online, by region



Another survey, this time by the Statistic Brain Research Institute, found that 65% of same-day reservations are done online via a smartphone. So you don't just need a website – it also has to be good, be able to take online bookings, and work on PCs, tablets and smartphones.

To find out more about getting an effective website for your business, visit [eviivo.com](http://www.eviivo.com).

PROVIDING A WARMER WELCOME FOR LESS



AvantiGas highlights the importance of heating

Within the hospitality sector, energy costs may only be a small percentage of turnover, but reducing them can directly increase revenue without the need to increase sales.

Money saved on energy goes straight to the bottom line, which makes businesses more competitive – and with rising energy prices, this is more important than ever.

For those thousands of hotels, bed and breakfasts, pubs and restaurants who are off the gas grid, reviewing your total heating costs can lead to significant savings in both costs and carbon emissions.

In addition to financial benefits, increasing awareness about energy reduction and climate change issues has seen customers and guests becoming more discerning about the environmental credentials of the businesses they deal with. Being energy-efficient can enhance businesses' reputations and help to attract more customers.



According to the Carbon Trust, heating can account for 60% of your energy costs, and up to 40% of the energy used in a building.

SIMPLE TIPS

Reviewing the temperatures of your guest rooms can be a simple tip for energy saving and the easiest way to manage your energy consumption. According to the Carbon Trust, the optimal temperature for a guest room is between 19° and 21°, and 26° and 27° in guest bathrooms.

In addition, ensuring that your appliances are serviced and maintained on a regular basis by a qual-



ified engineer gives the piece of mind of knowing that things are working efficiently, and can also reduce your bill by up to 5%.

REFURBISHMENT

The hospitality industry renews and refurbishes building stock on a regular basis. Considering energy improvement can significantly improve the energy efficiency of a hotel and the comfort of its customers at the same time.

This might involve considering the changing of appliances, the use of controls and zoning in the building, fuel type, or a combination of all these factors.

For AA members off the gas grid, AvantiGas is offering a unique heat consultation to offer its holistic energy expertise as an AA partner.

WE'LL HELP YOU:

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- Lower your carbon footprint
- Fund the investment of biomass, so owners won't need to make any capital outlay upfront.

To book your free heat consultation register today at avantigas.com/AAhotels or call 0808 208 0000 for more information.



Marketing Your Hotel 3 Time Saving Tips



The inescapable digital era has been a game-changer for hotels across the world. Social media is now the #1 activity on the web, a blog can increase your website traffic by 55% and, of course, Wi-Fi is no longer a unique selling point - your guests expect it. In order to attract brand new guests, retain that competitive edge and maximise your ROI, you need to be able to move with (and contribute to) the times - and that goes for marketing your property, too. Content marketing, social media, graphic design - done right, these are just 3 of the big things that make your hotel stand out from the competition and give your customers the right impression online. But how can you ensure you are not wasting valuable time?

Read on for 3 tips to save time with your marketing.

1 Consolidate your providers

You already have a PMS, and potentially numerous other software or IT solutions in your hotel. We find that hoteliers working on marketing typically use (and pay for) a survey provider, an email provider, an image manipulation tool (e.g. Photoshop), a print house, a designer, a website administrator, and sometimes an agency for content, and a freelance or part time social media manager. What a lot of invoicing! If you want to get a real handle on marketing and 'hold the reigns' on what you spend, the #1 takeaway is to bring as much of these services into one place as possible. That means a full data integration, and even 1 agency who handles the whole array of services you use.

2 Don't Start Without A Plan

Blogging and social media can be rounded up to around 2 hours a day if you go in blind. With a plan? Under 15 minutes and your blog is posted, it's been promoted, and you can carry on with your day. A typical day in a hotel? There's no such thing. But what we would recommend is laying out a specific calendar for your hotel marketing. This means every tweet, image, blog post, guide, letter and email is mapped out well before it leaves your

property. The cost in time could be a couple of hours over a weekend, working on the plan, creating the document, and finally, adding content. The benefit is that everyone, from your head chef you interview for a piece to your general manager or any other stakeholder can all view, add to and contribute to your marketing. If you have no time for content, curate it from RSS feeds, Google News, or use a marketing service where it's written and delivered for you.

may want you to devote your budget to PPC or affiliate advertising, showing success as clicks to your website. If you want to get more people leaving positive reviews, will the money spent have been a waste? Wasted metrics take up time. Recording the retweets and followers you get is no use if you already have 200,000 followers, but haven't had a booking off Twitter since you joined. Save time by laying down goals to truly determine if your marketing has been a success. More guests coming direct? More email subscribers? Increased website traffic? Positive reviews following your new survey sends? More time on the front desk saved as automated marketing is used? It's all a reasonable request – and improved goals mean that you will know what's working.

Introducing Marketing Managed by BriefYourMarket.com

We hope you found this article helpful. Whether you're looking to get started with an area of marketing you haven't tried before, or you want to 'top up' what you already do, our solution might just be the missing link in your strategy for business success. Available to all BriefYourMarket.com customers, we can manage the creation, sending and analytics of all your marketing - from a monthly newsletter (or 2!) all the way to full social media management. Exclusive to members of the AA, you qualify for £300 off the setup fee of BriefYourMarket.com, enabling you to send out unlimited emails, newsletters, surveys, direct mail campaigns and so much more, helping you to stay in control of your marketing strategy.



3 Don't Waste Time On The Wrong Metrics

No matter what your hotel's size or specialty - whether you have a restaurant to die for, a luxurious spa or great golfing facilities - you need a strict budget and a strong idea of what good marketing is. For example, an agency

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To see just what we can do for your hotel, call: **0344 800 84 24** or email hospitality@briefyourmarket.co.uk and quote INTOUCH.



HOW TO HANDLE THE NATIONAL LIVING WAGE

Jawaid Rehman explains what the change in the law will mean for those currently employing staff on the National Minimum Wage

The problem

I run a restaurant and we pay our staff the minimum wage. As the new living wage is being introduced, what do I need to do to ensure my staff are being paid the right hourly rate?

The law

Following the eagerly anticipated announcement of the Budget, one of the big talking points was the new National Living Wage, which will replace the existing National Minimum Wage for all workers aged over 25 with effect from next April.

The current minimum wage of £6.50 an hour will be replaced with a new rate of £7.20, which is expected to rise further to more than £9 an hour by 2020. This could fuel a significant jump in costs for employers across the country and many are anticipating a cut in employment levels in labour-intensive industries, such as retail, pubs and restaurants.

The concept of a 'living wage' already exists (as recommended by the Living Wage Foundation), and has been voluntarily adopted by more than 1,000 employers across the UK who have been given 'living wage employer' status. It is set at a higher rate and is not to be confused with the new National Living Wage, which will be mandatory and the rate of pay set by the government.

Expert advice

By enshrining such a living wage in law, this will compel businesses in certain industries to implement a potentially significant pay rise for many of their employees. Employers will therefore need to consider carefully how they implement this change within their organisation, including assessing the knock-on effect it is likely to have in terms of their existing pay scales, job evaluations schemes, pension costs and other employee benefit schemes.

There is significant uncertainty around the impact the new wage will have. Employers are effectively losing a large element of control over what they pay some of their staff, and therefore they may have to make difficult organisational decisions which may result in contractual changes; for example, reducing or stopping bonus payments and cutting back on other employee benefits. Such changes could lead to complaints from disgruntled employees across the business.

In order to avoid employee relations issues and potential claims arising, employers will



“There is significant uncertainty around the impact the new wage will have”

need to carefully consider their approach and any proposed measures (and the legal requirements for implementing such measures), particularly given the phased increase in the rate of the National Living Wage.

To-do checklist

Key considerations are likely to include:

- Unpredictability of payroll costs and subsequent issues with budgeting and forecasting.
- Whether to retain existing pay scales and use a supplement or implement new ones.
- Practical admin and payroll implications.

- Any employee relations issues that might arise – for example, where an employee's wages have been inflated to a level where they are being paid as much as their supervisor.

Beware

Any contractual changes to employee terms and conditions will need to be handled carefully. Equally importantly, any consultation requirements will need to be adhered to and dealt with in good time to avoid expensive tribunal claims.

Therefore, employers need to ensure they are carrying out modelling exercises at an early stage so they are clear how they will implement the change in a way that minimises the risk of employee relations issues and any associated claims.

Contact

Jawaid Rehman is an employment partner at national law firm Weightmans
jawaid.rehman@weightmans.com

THE IMPORTANCE OF TYRES

Research conducted by the AA has revealed the alarming risks motorists are taking. Two-thirds of female drivers (65%), and a third of male (36%), put their lives unnecessarily at risk by running worn tyres.

The research further highlights how many motorists take tyres for granted, courting danger as they fail to check tyre pressures and tread depth. AA Tyres' director, David Bruce, confirms that millions of drivers ignore these safety issues: "Tyres aren't 'optional extras' – the four small patches of rubber, each the size of your hand, are the only parts of the car that touch the road. If they're worn, poorly inflated, or damaged, then you really are dicing with death."

AA Tyres highlights how motorists can easily avoid such risks. The mobile tyre fitting service allows customers to order replacement tyres online or over the phone. It ensures drivers are



AA Tyres' mobile tyre fitting service means customers can order online

in complete control of their vehicle, removing the stress of finding time for replacements.

Bruce says of the advantages: "AA Tyres brings the depot to the driver at a place of their choosing.

It cuts an hour or more to just a few minutes. Customers place their order with AA Tyres online or over the phone, arranging a time and place for the work to be carried out."

AA RECOMMENDATIONS

AA recommends replacing tyres when the tread depth reaches 2mm (3mm for winter tyres).

Make sure you check the pressure and condition of your tyres regularly – AA recommends at least fortnightly.

When checking pressure also check for wear, bulges or cuts in the tyre.

Always use the same size and type of tyres supplied with the car.

It's best to have the same brand and pattern of tyre on the same axle, different tyres may affect performance or road noise.

The least-worn tyres should be on the rear axle. Newer tyres are less likely to puncture and it's more difficult to control a car with a deflated rear tyre.

The maximum fine for driving with a defective tyre is £2,500 and three penalty points. If there is more than one defective tyre, the penalty will apply for each one.




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† Source: Independent Brand Asset Valuator April 2014. Survey of more than 3,000 people in the UK aged 18 to 74 between 4 January and 7 February 2014 by Rainey Kelley Campbell Roalfe/Y&R's BrandAsset Valuator (BAV).

* We are on average 25% lower than high street prices and we guarantee to match high street and online prices at Kwik-Fit, National Tyres and Autocare, ATS Euromaster, Tyres on the Drive, eTyres or Kwik-Fit Mobile.



HOW TO CAPITALISE ON THE BOOMING BREAKFAST INDUSTRY WORTH £76M EVERY DAY



Brits are spending £76m every day on eating out for breakfast, according to a new survey by Beacon, Britain's leading purchasing company. Of the 2,000 people questioned for the survey in June 2015, one in three said that they eat breakfast outside of the home at least once a week, with 9.6 million people eating out every day. So how can the hospitality industry capitalise on the booming morning mealtime?

Almost half of those surveyed eat breakfast out more now than they did five years ago, and on average Brits are now spending £7.31 on breakfast outside of the home, with an indulgent 1% of those asked splashing out more than £21.

Furthermore, 80% consider breakfast to be the most important meal of the day – and they gave a number of different reasons for choosing to eat breakfast outside of the home. The explanations for going out to buy breakfast include a weekend treat, staying at a hotel and business meetings.

Most important meal of the day

Paul Connelly, managing director at Beacon, says: "This research into our morning eating habits has proven that breakfast, considered to be the most important meal of the day, is a

multibillion-pound a year industry, with £76m being spent by Brits every day.

"With almost half of those asked eating out for breakfast now more than they did five years ago, across all age groups, this trend can be seen as indicative of growing consumer confidence, which in turn signals a continued boost to the UK's economy.

"These results in turn should give assurance to the UK's hospitality market and impetus to invest in their breakfast offer to ensure that growing customer expectations are met."

Based on these results, as well as data from Beacon customers, Emma Warrington, senior buyer at Beacon, has put together her top tips for those in the foodservice industry to consider for a profitable breakfast.

Capitalise on your healthier options

Our customers are telling us that healthier options at breakfast are hugely popular, with 81% of those asked telling us that they have seen a real increase in the popularity of healthy options at breakfast over the past 12 months.

There is real scope here for hotels and restaurants to capitalise on this trend, and set themselves apart from their competition – think juice bars, low-carb options and smaller portions.



How important is local produce?

While 79% of those asked in our customer base said that local produce was an important part of their menu, data from our consumer survey shows that customers are decidedly sitting on the fence, with 54% of respondents saying they may or may not be more likely to order breakfast from somewhere that uses local produce. At Beacon, we work closely with both national and regional suppliers across the

country to give customers the option of localised supply.

While the findings do not show overwhelming consumer support for hyper localised sourcing, we would argue that supporting your regional suppliers is not just about appealing to your guests, but giving back to your communities and supporting regional economies. Sometimes the perception is that regional suppliers are a lot more costly, which isn't always the case. Always research your options, and if you are using local, ensure you are effectively communicating this to your guests.

Full English reigns supreme

Overall, we're traditionalists at heart and the English cooked breakfast reigns supreme, with 65% of people choosing it as their 'go to' breakfast when outside of the home. This is a figure that is echoed by our customers, with most of those surveyed telling us that they had not seen a decline in sales of the fry-up. As important as it is to vary your menu and keep it exciting, there should always be a place for the classics.

For more information about Beacon, please visit www.beaconpurchasing.co.uk or follow Beacon on Twitter @Beacon_YPP.



TEMPLESPA

IS YOUR HOTEL A RARE FIND?

Your guests expect more these days, don't they? They long for some luxury me-time and crave those little feelgood factors. They yearn for the stress to drop off a little, to be looked after and leave their cares for a while. That's what they quietly desire from you.

But it takes a savvy business to recognise that. And it takes insight to know that SPA is the new entertainment and perhaps the secret weapon you've been looking for.

We love helping make your guest's dreams come true. Our 'secret weapon' is a range of five star skincare, gorgeous aromatherapy products and divine spa treatments – all stamped with our unique 'spa wherever you are' ethos. After all, we are a total spa-lifestyle brand.

You'll find us in places where your guests like to go: high-end stores such as Harrods and Selfridges London, premium spas, Harley street clinics, first class airlines, resorts and boutique & five-star hotels. We are a niche brand that is a unique and rare find, and guests love that. They love to feel they've discovered something.

So if you are seeking some fresh, creative perspective and style, or some inspiration to set your business apart, talk to us. We can help transform your guest journey into a virtual spa experience.

We have been called the 'brand to be found' – we'd love to help make that true of you as well.

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