

Six of the best



Jean-Yves Guiomar



Beverley Seymour



Jack Bain



Vijay Singh Rawat



Jim Trevor



Ian Johnstone

Illustration by Eric Smith. www.ericsmithillustrator.co.uk



So what exactly is on the menu today? Right across the catering sector there are thousands of chefs planning, preparing, cooking and delivering their own particular brand of food to a wide variety of customers. The secret is to identify your customer and then create a menu that works for your target audience

Everything from sourcing the food to choosing your equipment will have an impact on your business and its success or failure. Here we look at six caterers in six very different environments, where they've come from and what works for them today.

If you would like to appear in our regular Six of the Best pages, email your details to editor@essentiallycatering.co.uk

Chef: Jean-Yves Guimar



From Brittany, Jean-Yves grew up in a family where food was his mother's passion. "With my parents and two sisters we always had our meals together. Weddings and other family events would bring about 100 and more relatives together. The food was amazing; live Breton lobsters and oysters, Ballan Wrasse, roast lambs – all fresh. We lived near the sea and had many farm products too. We made our own sausages and black pudding, and had a kitchen garden with grand-dad's own potato crops or my dad's cocoa beans."

J-Y's first job as kitchen porter in a luxury boutique hotel in the French Alps was the inspiration for him to become a professional chef. Working in different restaurants in France followed by a professional qualification in 1987 took J-Y to Le Marais and Opéra in Paris. In 1990 he moved to London and worked in a variety of French restaurants before becoming head chef at Chez Manny in January 2010. "Never forget that the animal or fish you are cooking with once lived," says J-Y. "Someone risked their life fishing or worked hard rearing beautiful animals. Treat them with great respect."

Restaurant: Chez Manny

Tucked away on Battersea High Street, Chez Manny brings quintessentially French cuisine to the London community. Since the delightful Emmanuel Lambelin (Manny) opened his eponymous restaurant in 2002, his passion for ensuring that every customer receives the very best he can offer at all times combined with great food and an extensive wine selection have gained the place both a solid reputation and loyal customer base.

Customer Demographic

Professionals of all ages who often live nearby. Others, who have moved away from Battersea, still return time and again either for a good meal or simply for a glass of Manny's carefully selected world wines or a classic French beer.

Average Price per Meal

£25.00 for two courses plus wine.

Signature Dishes

Hard to say as dishes change regularly; anything from cassoulet and duck confit to lobster, fresh fish, crème brûlée and tarte tatin.

www.chezmanny.com

Chef: Beverley Seymour



A graduate from The University of Manchester in Business Management with emphasis on Corporate Strategy, Beverley worked in a range of sectors until a visit to a friend's Australian coffee farm in 2009 kick-started her coffee love affair and a new career. After two years of immersing herself in the world of coffee, Beverley opened the first Green Cauldron Coffeehouse in the UK in February this year. "Australians take their coffee very seriously and we are bringing this ethos to the coffee-lovers in the UK," says Beverley. "Australia has long celebrated a rich artisan café culture and the country leads the world in creating the perfect cup of coffee – they are obsessed by it, and we are determined to raise the espresso bar in the UK."

Restaurant: Green Cauldron Coffeehouse

Already established as a brand in Australia, Green Cauldron is passionate about the origins of the coffee it serves. Indeed, much of the coffee comes from the company's very own 100-acre coffee farm in Byron Bay, Australia. Other coffees are a selection of single origin varieties from around the world grown by like-minded farmers for whom excellent taste and ethics are non-negotiable. The key theme is great-tasting coffee served by skilled baristas who are happy to talk coffee and share their knowledge. There is also a range of locally sourced homemade cakes and pastries. "Our toast and Vegemite is loved by our Australian customers," says Beverley. Green Cauldron plans to open another 49 sites over the next five years.

Customer Demographic

Located in the heart of Liverpool's business district, Green Cauldron has a loyal base of local workers, students and shoppers.

Average Price per Meal

Drink-in coffee from £1.40, espresso-based drinks such as Americano and Flat White from £2.00, takeaway from 99p.

Signature Dishes

Australian Flat White and Affogato – a short, strong and black coffee, poured over creamy organic ice cream.

www.greencauldron.com

Chef: Jack Bain



Jack Baine is the new chef at Memorial Woodlands, a woodland cemetery located in Thornbury, Bristol where mourners can hold both the funeral and wake at the same place. Jack has been cooking all his life, working professionally as a chef for the past six years. "Memorial Woodlands is a great place to work," says Jack. "The site is beautiful and the team here is great, but being able to make people smile on such a difficult day because of something I have created is by far my favourite thing about the job. Knowing that my food has provided a source of comfort is hugely rewarding and I am delighted that I am able to provide that small contribution to a grieving family. Some may want a very traditional meal, others may want an Indian selection, others may have very specific dietary requirements. Working here means adapting menus for every funeral I cater for."

Restaurant: Memorial Woodlands Cemetery

The number of people attending funerals at Memorial Woodlands varies from between 15 and 200; no two days are ever the same. Usually, when a funeral is taking place, Jack's day begins with preparing a joint and putting it in to slow roast. The rest of the buffet is then prepared, the meats are cured and the table is set. Just before the family arrives the hot food is brought up and the meat is carved at the table. To Jack, it is important that menus offer something for everyone and he is always open to specific requests from families. The standard menus are primarily traditional and are broad enough to offer something for everyone, including vegetarians. Sourcing products locally is very important and wherever possible, the ingredients used are grown or made within three miles.

Customer Demographic

Grieving families and friends.

Average Price per Meal

From £7.95 per person.

Signature Dishes

Salmon gravadlax and roast joints carved at the table.

www.memorialwoodlands.com

Chef: Vijay Singh Rawat

Vijay is the head chef at Red Hot World Buffet & Bar in Leeds. Growing up in India, he was always particularly partial to the street food there and used to experiment with different ideas in the kitchen at home, trying out new dishes on his friends and family. Eventually he turned his hobby into a serious career that has led him to work in many top restaurants all over the world. These include The Imperial Hotel – one of the oldest five star hotels in India – and the Bukhara restaurant at Mauyra Sheraton in New Delhi, which is considered to be the best Indian restaurant in the world.

Restaurant: Red Hot World Buffet & Bar Leeds

There are several Red Hot World Buffet & Bar (RHWB) restaurants in the UK – Liverpool, Milton Keynes, Nottingham, Manchester and Leeds, which opened in October 2010. With 350 covers, the restaurant is one of the largest buffets in the UK with 9000 diners passing through its doors every week. To keep up with such demand, 130 staff are employed with 35 chefs working at any one time. Each day, the chefs – most of whom have been trained in five-star hotels and restaurants – create a selection of 200 dishes that are inspired from all corners of the world and include Indian, Japanese, English, Mexican, Thai and Cajun cuisines. As well as the buffet, there are also live cooking stations, where customers can watch the chef cook their food for them.

Customer Demographic

Anyone and everyone.

Average Price per Meal

RHWB works on a set price menu with prices ranging from £7.99 to £14.99 depending on the time of day and day of the week.

Signature Dishes

Hydrebadhi biryani and peshwarie kebab.

www.redhot-worldbuffet.com

Chef: Jim Trevor

Jim Trevor began his love affair with food in 1980 at the age of 14 after stumbling into the kitchen at the Great Northern Hotel in Peterborough, where he was tasked with the washing up. Two years later, he landed an apprentice chef position at Rocco Forte's Grosvenor House Hotel in London, which included a day release at Westminster College. By 1985, Jim was working as a chef in the army, where he stayed for 10 years, getting to travel the world and play football. After stints working in hotels around the country and trading at The Jackson Stops for six years, he opened Jim's Yard (a refined restaurant and holder of a Bib Gourmand from the Michelin Red Guide) in Stamford in 2006, Jim's Bistro (a relaxed version of the Yard) in Peterborough in 2008 and the Beehive, also in Peterborough in 2010.

Restaurant: The Beehive

Opened last year, The Beehive is a food-led, modern city gastro pub and the newest of Jim's trio of eateries. While each establishment is very different from the others, the common themes are the locally sourced food and menus, which are British with a twist of flavour inspirations from around the world.

Customer Demographic

Aspirational professionals who demand good value for money.

Average Price per Meal

£25 for three courses.

Signature Dishes

Confit duck with braised red cabbage; corned beef hash with asparagus spears; tarte tatin with homemade vanilla ice cream.

www.jimsyard.biz

Chef: Ian Johnstone

Passionate about cooking from a young age, Ian began working in the kitchen at the Montpelier Group (MG) in Edinburgh while studying at university. Loving the busy and exciting environment of the kitchen, he decided to make food the mainstay of his career and stayed with MG to train as a chef. After five years, he moved in 2004 to The Glasshouse, which won Best New Scottish Restaurant in 2005. Since then Ian worked in a number of different establishments before taking up his current position earlier this year as sous chef at Treacle on the increasingly bohemian Broughton Street in Edinburgh.

Restaurant: Treacle

Well-known in the area for its excellent service, a premium spirits selection and contemporary fairtrade food offer, this funky cocktail venue with its team of award-winning bartenders boasts an eight-metre mural depicting a Japanese Manga animation interpretation of the last supper as well as sheepskins, a 200-year-old exposed brick wall and luxurious cushions made from vintage fabric. Treacle averages 750 covers a week.

Customer Demographic

Anyone wanting a vibrant eating and drinking establishment.

Average Price per Meal

Breakfast from £3.95, small dishes from £2.95, mains from £7.95, desserts from £4.95.

Signature Dishes

Seared sirloin salad with spring onions, bean sprouts, rocket and sesame

Deep-fried brioche jam sandwich with home-made vanilla ice cream

www.treacleedinburgh.co.uk

