

food

FOR THOUGHT

SERVED UP BY SSP THE FOOD TRAVEL EXPERTS

CUSTOMER STUDY

New trends in F&B

ROEL HUININK

JFKIAT's CEO talks sustainability

BREWDOG'S BIG DOG

James Brown on travel retail

MENU DEVELOPMENT

With our Food and Beverage
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DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Why it matters



SUMMER 2023

News and comment from around the SSP business



CONTINENTAL EUROPE

SSP has opened a new food court at Helsinki Airport. The new facility offers a diverse selection of six concepts.

Free-flow restaurant and café Café Tori is a brand that has been a favourite at the airport since 2011, while Asian Corner brings the experience of the best food stalls in Asia to the terminal. At Pala Pizza Bar, pizzas are served from a service counter to make sure even the busiest travellers have time to enjoy their meals.

The food court also features three established international concepts. Bastard Burgers serves classic New York-style burgers with a Scandinavian touch, and Middle Eastern favourite Fafa's offers filled pitas, mezés and salads. Iconic Finnish chain Robert's Coffee provides home comforts to Nordic travellers and new experiences to international visitors.

CONTINENTAL EUROPE

SSP is working with Italian rail station operator Grandi Stationi, to open LEON, YO!, EXKi and Granaio at Rome Termini Station. These openings mark SSP's debut in Italy.

LEON serves 'fast food but good food'. YO! will offer travellers 'fresh, flavoursome, authentic Japanese food', including hand-rolled sushi, classic hot bowls, street food and innovative fusion dishes. Italian casual dining concept, Granaio, will serve classic Italian dishes. And for guests seeking healthy, gourmet dishes made with fresh and seasonal produce, EXKi will offer high quality and sustainable choices, freshly prepared each day.

All four outlets will begin operating in October this year.



EASTERN EUROPE AND MIDDLE EAST

SSP has launched Runway(R)12, a bespoke sports lounge overlooking the concourse at Bahrain International Airport (BIA).

Located in the departures area, the lounge shows live sports 24/7 on screens throughout the venue. It can accommodate 148 guests and features well-curated interiors with an industrial, vintage, and 'classy' ambience. It also houses a dedicated smoking room. Passengers can enjoy a range of F&B options in a comfortable and distinct setting with stunning views of the runway while waiting for their flights.

SSP Bahrain is a joint venture between SSP, Buhindi Group, and Gulf Air Group Holding.



UK & IRELAND

SSP has opened a new street food-style concept called The Mezz at Dublin Airport. It features six brands including Camile Thai (serving 'Good Mood Thai Food'), Handsome Burger (which serves what has been dubbed 'Ireland's best burger'), the SSP-developed brand Erin's Kitchen (offering classic, homemade comfort food), and Ancho Hanco, serving a variety of Mexican-inspired dishes. Local Irish coffee roasters, Badger & Dodo, will provide a range of outstanding coffee options. A bar boasting a selection of locally brewed beers complements the offer.

Ordering is quick and easy and The Mezz offers innovative digital solutions, including digital kiosk screens which allow customers to order from each of the brands in one, convenient place. A 31-metre digital banner – one of the longest in Europe – uses colourful displays to showcase menu options from each of the brands.





ABOVE: SSP's The Palm at JFK

JFKIAT President and CEO, Roel Huinink, explains why sustainability is important



As the operator of the largest air terminal at John F. Kennedy International Airport, sustainability is a key pillar for JFKIAT. We have a responsibility to reduce our carbon footprint, and through our comprehensive sustainability programme, we are on a journey to continue investing in initiatives focused on energy efficiency, water conservation, waste management, biodiversity, indoor environmental quality, sustainable transportation and innovation. We are committed to leading the industry by operating a sustainable and healthy facility for our employees and the millions of passengers who enter the terminal each year.

Our strategy is centred on operational efficiency, environmental stewardship, economic stability, and a commitment to providing an exceptional experience for our customers and employees.

Last fall, T4 became the first pre-existing air terminal in the nation to be awarded LEED Platinum certification for operations and maintenance by the U.S. Green Building Council – the most widely used green building rating system in the world and an international symbol of excellence. Additionally, JFKIAT was recently named Crain's New York Business' inaugural Notable Leaders in

Sustainability, recognising our team's incredible work to help create a greener future for our communities.

- Our team is focused on implementing innovative programmes that are in line with the UN's Sustainable Developmental Goals. In the past year, we have launched a diverse mix of initiatives that have enabled us to advance our sustainability goals throughout T4.
- Oscar is T4's zero-touch, zero-waste station that gamifies recycling. Operating on an artificial intelligence platform driven by sensors, Oscar instructs customers on how to properly dispose of waste, turning recycling and waste disposal into an educational customer experience.
- Earlier this year, we launched our new electric buses provided by COBUS Industries, a leading manufacturer of airport mobility products.
- As part of our commitment to the aviation industry's continuous transition to sustainable aviation fuels (SAFs), JFKIAT purchased 5,000 gallons of SAFs as part of our efforts to compensate for corporate air travel in 2022.

- We implement a compost programme in our corporate offices to help increase our diversion rate. Additionally, we launched a donation platform, where T4's tenants can recycle used furniture by donating to non-profits, schools, religious institutions, and other communities.
- We also launched a sustainability page on our website, which provides information and updates on our sustainability efforts.

Our work with SSP America has enabled us to significantly advance our core sustainability goals. As a result of our continued partnership, this year T4 was awarded the 2023 Greenest Airport Terminal Award by the Green Restaurant Association. Our terminal has 32 concessions that are Certified Green Restaurants®, which is more than any other airport terminal. Additionally, JFK Airport was recognised as the airport with the most Certified Green Restaurants®, with 67 Certified Green Restaurants® located across the airport. We are so proud of this prestigious award, and we look forward to our continued work with SSP America to foster a sustainable environment within T4.



UNDERSTANDING YOUR CUSTOMER

It's not what you know, it's who you know - SSP's new customer survey

SSP's new customer survey paves the way for an even closer match between customer needs and travel F&B brands

Understanding your customer' has always been fundamental to any business success. But with the pace of change now accelerating at unprecedented rates, it has never been more important.

SSP commissioned its first global customer survey with Saatchi group research consultancy, Clear, back in 2007.

Since that time, the survey has been repeated regularly, providing a rich bank of data on shifting customer tastes and trends.

WHAT'S NEW THIS TIME

Over those years, some things have remained the same. While tastes vary across geographical markets, there are more similarities than differences between consumers across the world. Time pressure, the need for convenience, and value for money remain the paramount concerns governing choice in the travel environment.

However, we've also seen substantial evolutions. Consumers are increasingly reliant on digital, and expect to receive information instantly and for things to happen seamlessly. In addition, while price, convenience and quality remain

stronger drivers to purchase, wellbeing and sustainability are growing in importance.

CUSTOMER SEGMENTS

SSP's research formed the basis to define seven different key customer segments in the travel market according to their unique attitudes and behaviours. All of these segments exist in all markets.

One example group is the **'aspirational foodie'**. These customers want to see choice and explore new options, but also want to keep a close eye on what they're spending.

'Mainstream fans' seek the comfort and reliability of mainstream and much-loved brands. They look for foods that the whole family will enjoy and offer great value for money.

'Frugal eaters' are price sensitive and will prioritise cheaper F&B options over service experience. Frugal eaters look for meal deals and want to be served as quickly as possible.

FIVE TRENDS TO WATCH

It goes without saying that we have seen huge shifts in customer behaviour since Covid-19.

1. Customers that are eager to travel now see F&B as an integral part of their holiday experience

Over half (52%) of leisure customers see eating and drinking at an airport as an essential part of their holiday experience. What's more, as travel has returned to 'normal', 83% of travellers now say they're more likely to purchase food and beverage in the airport.

2. Continued increase in digital competency across all demographics. Digital services are important to customers to simplify their journey

1 in 5 travelling consumers want to be able to order digitally. Customers are looking for ease, and digital is seen as something that can simplify the journey.

3. Sustainability and wellbeing have grown in importance to customers

1 in 5 say they choose more ethical or sustainable options. Globally, more than two thirds of travellers state healthy F&B options are important to them when travelling. However, customers are also looking for value and quality, so these factors must play a strong part in the mix.

4. Important to have a tiered offer approach to pricing

A third say that value for money is now a key motivation when choosing an F&B outlet. However, 40% say they're willing to pay more for the best quality food and drink and it is important that we have products that cater for customers' different price needs.



5. There is still work to be done on closing the gap on the high-street

The travel sector has to operate in a more complex environment and customers have a heightened sense of self, making some customers more stressed and others more indulgent.

Understanding the way customers think, feel and behave as they travel provides the foundations to respond and meet the needs and behaviour of the modern traveller. This study helps put us on a well-defined path to that understanding.

For more information about this fascinating project contact: partnerships@ssp-intl.com





WHAT'S BREWING FOR BREWDOG

BREWDOG'S TRAVEL PLANS



*BrewDog's CEO, **James Brown** believes the travel environment offers a wealth of opportunities to the uber-cool beer brand*

TO BEGIN WITH, CAN YOU GIVE US AN INSIGHT INTO THE BRAND AND THE STORY BEHIND THE CONCEPT?

We've come a long way! BrewDog was founded in 2007, in Fraserburgh, by James Watt and Martin Dickie. Both are still in the business - James as CEO of BrewDog and Martin as CEO of BrewDog Distilling Co. They were keen homebrewers at the time, and after a chance encounter with a renowned beer writer, Michael Jackson, who told them to quit their jobs and start making beer full time, they set about wanting to change the beer industry in the UK as we knew it. They started BrewDog with two humans and a dog, and the mission to make everyone as passionate about beer as they were. This was at a time when lagers and cask ale dominated the marketplace, but James and Martin became obsessed with the ultra hoppy beers being brewed on the US West Coast and set about creating their own recipes to mirror these new modern styles. Thus, Punk IPA was born.

WHAT MAKES BREWD OG BEERS GREAT?

BrewDog's ethos is always centred around three key pillars: Beer, People and Planet. We love making great liquids and experimenting with styles. In our bars we serve up the ultimate BrewDog experience - this is the show point for our world class beers. All the meticulous stages throughout the brewing process are brought together with the knowledge of our fantastic teams to deliver that BrewDog brand experience. We strive for world class beers using the best ingredients and rigorous quality control throughout our whole supply chain until that beer is poured in the glass in one of our iconic locations.

WHY IS THE BRAND SUITED TO THE TRAVEL SPACE?

People's relationship with 'the great British pub' is a big part of our culture, and we feel BrewDog is uniquely positioned to bring the concept of this to travel environments in an exciting and modern format. Good service, great beer as well as our

legendary food is what it's all about. This is an ideal match for what people are looking for when they're travelling.

If they're heading on holiday, they want to celebrate, and BrewDog is perfect for those types of occasions. It's not just about grabbing some food and a drink, it's starting the holiday before you reach your destination.

We're a global brand with international locations so it makes sense to be able to enjoy our beer and food whether people are travelling for work or heading off on holiday. It's a huge sector that we're super excited to be expanding in.

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE CHALLENGES OF MOVING THE BRAND INTO THE TRAVEL ENVIRONMENT?

At BrewDog, we're used to operating in testing environments. Airports however present their own challenges, and specific issues, such as space limitations. It's been great working with SSP as they're experts in the sector, and understand the things that are important in travel such as the need for speed, and the technology required to deliver the ultimate BrewDog experience.

HOW DID THE BRAND HAVE TO BE MODIFIED?

Actually, there was very little that customers would notice. We worked carefully to make sure that while our airport bars might not be standard BrewDogs, they will be a place where the excitement happens, and keep the fun element that our customers love. In London Gatwick, we've managed to include some recognisable brand touch points, for example, we've got 'Zoom rooms' - little private pods for taking Zoom calls on the go - as well as signature neons and our 'press for beer' beer buttons!

SSP and BrewDog are set to open new bars at London Gatwick and Amsterdam Centraal Station, with more to follow.



A LIFE-LONG PASSION



*Serving the right food at the right time to passengers across the world requires insight, skill and dedication says SSP's Food and Beverage Director **Jerry Davies***

A chef since the age of 16, SSP Group Food and Beverage Director Jerry Davies has a lot on his plate. From looking at SSP's own brands such as Ritazza and working out what new items might work in the ranges in different global markets, to partnering with single-outlet downtown restaurants and superstar chefs such as Gordon Ramsay and Jamie Oliver, Jerry and his team of executive chefs are experts in how to make food work in the travel environment.

As consumers' understanding of food deepens, that task has become more complex. "Expectations have changed. Six years ago, for example, few people knew what quinoa was – now you see it on menus everywhere. Kiwis were the most exotic fruit most people ever ate and the now ubiquitous pomegranate was a rarity."

Jerry and his team meet regularly to exchange ideas and enjoy the opportunity to raise the culinary bar. "We're ambitious and so are our landlords. They want to win Moodie Davitt FAB awards, and they won't do that with anything mediocre. Some of our outlets, such as our first-class lounge in Mumbai and another soon to open in Malaysia, serve food as good as any of the finest restaurants in the world's capitals."

Encouraging customers to choose healthier and more sustainable options is a challenge Jerry relishes. "We have

a fabulous celeriac schnitzel on the menu at Vienna Airport, and we've just created a chicken Caesar burger in Hong Kong that has all the crispness and flavour of a chicken Caesar salad in a burger that's a healthier choice than beef." Jerry admits however that while he and his team are the masters when it comes to designing recipes, marketers have a role to play when it comes to persuading customers to think differently about meat-free products. "We had a vegan club sandwich, but it didn't sell. When it was renamed harissa-brushed aubergine with humous and chilli tomatoes, customers bought and loved it."

There is of course a need to meet all customer demands. "Ham, cheese and beef burgers will always be bestsellers." And with seasonality becoming increasingly important, Jerry believes we need to be mindful about how the demand for fresh products is met. "We do need to think about if we should sell strawberries in Northern Europe in November, for example."

Jerry says he's never frightened to test and learn, whether that's trying new offers in different countries, or using technologies to improve production. "We're on a great food journey now, and as we share best practice across the business, it's only going to get stronger. The great French chef Escoffier created by making mistakes. We learn every day."



A PLACE FOR EVERYONE

Why DE&I is a top business priority

Organisations that operate in global travel retail have more reasons than most to take the issues of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion seriously, according to Leanne Knight, SSP's Head of Talent and Inclusion. "We're truly global, with a wonderfully diverse group of colleagues in terms of race, ethnicity, disability, education, sexuality or life experience. Our customer base is diverse too, and it is important that's reflected in the teams who welcome and serve them."

Having a diverse outlook adds richness to the conversations around the business, which in turn leads to better business decisions. "The more perspectives we can have, the more interesting the outcomes. Similarly, diversity needs to run through to the most senior levels, so that all colleagues in the business have role models that represent and inspire them."

To ensure that progress is made, Leanne and her team are introducing a range of initiatives designed to make a genuine impact. The first item on the agenda is attracting at all levels of the organisation. A new global career website means that stories can be shared, and all countries are able to contribute to this narrative. In addition, a survey conducted by research company Gallup has quizzed colleagues on their sense of belonging, and is spotlighting areas where action is needed.

Such initiatives need to be rooted in company culture from the very top. A workshop programme is helping leadership teams understand why DE&I is important, and helping them navigate their own personal journey around unconscious bias and belonging, providing a foundation for them to formulate their own country-specific action plans. A

reverse mentoring programme for the company's senior executives will provide another channel for different viewpoints.

As a culture of inclusion began to flourish, a number of networks for groups under the banners of menopausal issues, LGBTQIA+, women in tech, and neurodiversity, among others, were formed. "These groups were founded by people who came forward and said, 'this is really important to me', and have created spaces for connections with like-minded individuals who know what it's like to feel as they do."

In addition, a council of 18 colleagues from around the world with interests in inclusion, chaired by Group Executive Committee member Sukh Tiwana, will continue to support the programmes. "These people are not specialists, but they are individuals who feel passionately and have come together to shape the agenda."

Working in partnership with an association called WiHTL, a collaboration community devoted to increasing diversity and inclusion across the hospitality, travel and leisure industries, SSP now has a firm strategy in place for future progress. "For many of our leaders these subjects are not new to them, but this is first time we've created a formal framework for the discussion. We're definitely seeing more colleagues recognising that we're making a change."