

Consumer Attitudes Towards Fine Dining - UK - June 2011

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What is this report about?

The economic turbulence of recent years, coupled with mounting food and other bottom line costs, has had a significant impact on the eating out market in recent years leading to a contraction in value terms. However, the industry has proved more resilient than during previous recessions partly due to increased demand from consumers.



What have we found out?

- The focus for the eating out market is to tap into the 46% of diners who tend to eat out for a regular treat with a view to increasing the frequency of their visits: this is particularly true for the fine dining market, where casual dining trends are being incorporated into the offer so that visits are no longer limited to just once or twice a year.
- Emphasising the 'experience' of dining out is increasingly important as consumers continue to value experiences over commodities when it comes to their consumer spending priorities. Fine dining venues are well placed to tap into this demand and can effectively offer a tiered structure: eg high level customer service as a basic experience, short cocktail classes as a mid-priced event and chefs tables and/or all day cooking masterclasses for those looking for something really special.
- Fine dining restaurants can build on the fact that nearly half of consumers enjoy splashing out on a meal by focusing on developing their brand personality eg a distinct ethos towards food/drink. This also helps to build consumers' interest in and excitement about eating out.
- Consumers are placing greater emphasis on restaurant guides, reviews and awards as the economic downturn has driven them to scrutinise purchases more closely: around a fifth of consumers now say that they tend to be influenced by comments/review posted online by other internet users.
- Fine dining restaurants can tap into the 50% of diners that are interested in house specialities: it is a key industry trend at present which helps to demonstrate brand personality, added value and food enthusiasm.
- The modern approach to keep fine dining menu descriptions short, concise and with minimal cooking descriptions should appeal to nearly four in ten diners who are put off certain dishes due to descriptions they don't understand (eg haricot blanc veloute).

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