

# PRESS RELEASE

## Sodexo chefs enjoy whistle-stop tour of London's gastro hot spots

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**Chefs from Sodexo's National Craft Forum visited five of London's most popular restaurants to discover more about the latest dining out trends.**

The tour, which was organised in conjunction with Steelite International, saw David Mulcahy, craft and food development director, lead ten members of the Forum to sample different 'on trend' food styles.

Sodexo's National Craft Forum is the primary network for chefs across all its business segments. Sodexo has a strong commitment to culinary excellence, and the Forum is a testament to this.

**David Mulcahy, craft and food development director at Sodexo, said:** "This was a great way to show our chefs the different food styles which are becoming more and more popular, especially in London. On the restaurant scene we have seen a new type of diner emerge, one who seeks a lively atmosphere as well as good food and value for money.

"We want our chefs to be inspired by what is happening in the restaurant industry and take that away to their own site whether their client is a large pharmaceutical company, financial institution, independent school, university, the MOD or even the NHS. The day gave everyone a chance to try some great examples of the latest food trends which use different flavours, unique presentation of dishes and indeed the dining environment itself."

The tour kicked off at Jason Atherton's contemporary bistro, Pollen Street Social. Dishes sampled included venison steak tartare; Orkney sea scallop sashimi; roasted John Dory with artichoke & foie gras soup and Jerusalem artichoke with orange oil; roasted squab pigeon with salt baked red cabbage, beetroot stained onions and yakitori pigeon offal. The chefs were wowed by the techniques used and the combination of classic and modern styles of the dishes.

The following four restaurants on the tour gave the chefs a flavour of the increasingly popular casual dining style, many of which have grown from the street food concept and showcased the move towards sharing dishes.

The tour took in Peruvian Ceviche; Venetian bacaro, Polpo; Lebanese Yalla Yalla and the gourmet hotdog and champagne bar, Bubbledogs. All restaurants served the group with examples of their dishes which have put them on the culinary map.

Highlights included from Ceviche - fresh seabass ceviche in Amarillo chilli tiger's milk, limochilli, sweet potato and red onion; Polpo's arancini and its classic meatballs; Yalla Yalla's Sawda Djej, sautéed chicken livers with garlic and pomegranate molasses, listed in Time Out's Top 100 Dishes and not forgetting Bubbledogs' own homemade hotdogs.

**Peter O'Connor, executive head chef for Sodexo at ING, said:** "It has been a very interesting and informative day. A lot of concepts we have seen could work in both my staff restaurant and in our hospitality offering."

**Tom Allen, executive development chef for Independents by Sodexo, said:** "London at its best. Very now and contemporary. Each restaurant has completely different concept but what is the same is simply using great produce, and cooking and presenting it well. We can take elements from today and use them in our business."

**Rodney Zeiler, head chef at Sodexo's head office, said:** "There is no reason we can not take aspects of what we have seen today and make them work in hospitality. Presentation of simple dishes looked good and are great for events we hold."

**Richard Learmount, marketing offer manager for Sodexo said:** "I thought it was a rare and much welcomed opportunity for some of our creative thinkers and foodies to gain crucial insight into current consumer eating habits, and a fantastic platform to start working together to deliver some of these trends into workplace eating and continue to enhance the customer experience."

Martin Youds, national account director for Steelite International, said, "We were extremely pleased to host Sodexo's National Craft Forum on this tour, for us we were able to share our own market insights with Sodexo and see for ourselves the latest in food presentation which was invigorating, stimulating and in some cases, art like. I think everyone who participated took something away which they could use in their day-to-day jobs."

Members of Sodexo's National Craft Forum who attended the tour were:

Alan Shipman, executive food development chef; Colin Wheeler-James, executive development chef (defence); Mark Wetherill, head chef for Sodexo at AstraZeneca (Macclesfield); Tom Allen, executive development chef, independent schools; Derek Reilly, executive chef Sodexo Ireland; Peter O'Connor, executive head chef, Sodexo at ING, London; Rodney Zeiler, head chef at Sodexo head office; Michael Godfrey, executive head chef, Eton College; Mark Cheetham, executive chef for Sodexo at AstraZeneca (Alderley Edge); Richard Learmount, marketing offer manager and Sara Eddleston, customer insight manager.

From Steelite International were:

Martin Youds, national account director; Greg Fowke, national account manager; Jo Derbyshire, business support manager and Nick Mogridge, London regional business manager.

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