



# focus

on hospitality

## aston recruitment

### About Aston Recruitment

Aston Recruitment specialise in the Hospitality, Catering, Leisure, Retail, Food Management and Service Industry sectors. We recruit permanent, temporary and contract roles for our clients and candidates.

**'Working in Partnership'** – we successfully support and develop both our clients businesses and our candidate careers.

Aston Recruitment has established itself as the leading independent hospitality recruitment consultancy in Scotland with the ability to recruit throughout the UK.

We have five core values here at Aston Recruitment that we believe contribute to our continued growth and success. These attributes are not only at the heart of our business, but can also be found in the individuals that work at Aston and they are Fun, Integrity, Respect, Sense of Pride and Teamwork.

### For Candidates

We respect your expectations, and are firmly committed to ensuring that you, where possible, gain employment where you are able to develop your professional skills to the highest level.

We cover a range of full-time, part-time, temporary, permanent and contract opportunities within the Hospitality Industry.

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## NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER  
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### SCOTLAND HOTEL RESULTS FOR JULY



The monthly LJ Forecaster Scottish Intercity Report, from tourism market research specialists LJ Research, tracking city centre hotel performance in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen, showed occupancy fell in Glasgow and Edinburgh and rose in Aberdeen for the month of July. However, as average room rates grew more than occupancy fell in Glasgow and Edinburgh and, reversely in Aberdeen, as rates fell more than occupancy grew, the overall room yield performance was positive in Glasgow and Edinburgh and negative in Aberdeen.

The year-on-year figures showed that Edinburgh's occupancy fell by 1.9% to 89.8%. This was, however, outweighed by a steeper increase in average room rate of 3.8% to £131.04 which resulted in overall positive revenue per available room (RevPAR or room yield) growth of 1.7% to £117.67. A similar yet more positive picture was evident in Glasgow as occupancy fell by 2.4% to 87.4% and room rates increased by a significant 10.4% to £80.49. Consequently, RevPAR grew by a buoyant 7.8% to £70.24. Meanwhile, the opposite trend occurred in Aberdeen as despite solid occupancy growth of 4.4% to 68.2% there was a hefty 18.1% fall in daily rates to £65.07. Overall, yields as a result fell by 14.5% to £44.36. In addition to historic hotel performance, LJ Forecaster collects hotels' business-on-the-books figures to assess how accommodation demand is building across destinations. Forward booking data for July, being the first full month following the UK's vote to leave the EU, provides a useful early indication of the economic impact of Brexit.

LJ Forecaster data suggests that there are reasons to be hopeful: looking at the volume of new bookings achieved by hotels over the last month, it is apparent that hotels in Scotland's two largest cities have secured more new bookings in July this year compared to July last year. For example, in July 2016 Edinburgh hoteliers sold 1.8% and 1.6% more rooms for August and September, respectively, compared to the same period a year ago. A similar trend was evident in Glasgow as pick up rates were generally higher this year than last year. These results indicate more bookings for the next 12 months were made during the month of July 2016 compared to July 2015. In Aberdeen, however, the findings were reversed as, owing to different market forces at play, there was evidence of lower pick up rates and, hence, signs of reduced booking activity compared to a year ago.

The overall positive trend in Glasgow and Edinburgh is backed up by anecdotal evidence collected by LJ Research. Feedback from Scottish hotel general managers identified that roughly half anticipate that Brexit will not make a difference to their business and, among the remainder, there were more who believed Brexit will be a positive rather than a negative factor on performance. This sentiment was especially pronounced in Edinburgh, as hoteliers indicated that the weaker pound will result in more leisure guests from both overseas and the UK.

In addition, other hotel operators who are more exposed to business travellers (though not necessarily in the oil and gas industry) expect increased domestic activity as companies reorganise and need to travel more for business meetings. Sean Morgan, Managing Director at LJ Research said: "July saw solid performance for Glasgow and Edinburgh following the EU referendum. In Aberdeen we continue to see the consequences of the declining oil and gas market.

As far as Brexit goes, our forward bookings analysis shows an interesting spike in hotel bookings in Edinburgh and Glasgow within the last month compared to a year ago. In addition, general manager feedback on the impact of Brexit was fairly optimistic with the highest optimism evident looking two years out. Business confidence over the coming months will continue to be shifted by ongoing developments as lines are drawn for the negotiation of the UK's departure from the EU."

### HOSPITALITY ACTION SEEKS SUPPORT FOR LUNCH BOX DAY INITIATIVE



Industry charity Hospitality Action will be holding its second Lunch Box Day next month. The charity is urging hospitality employers to support the fundraising initiative by encouraging staff to bring a packed lunch to work on Friday 23 September. Companies that provide lunch for employees will be asked to donate the money saved for that day, while other businesses can make a donation on behalf of their team.

If lunch is not usually provided for workers, the charity has suggested employers treat their staff to lunch and ask them to donate the money they would have normally spent. The Hoxton and the Arch hotel are among the first to sign up to take part alongside Ace hotel and St Ermin's hotel. Penny Moore, chief executive, Hospitality Action, said: "In the first six months of this year, Hospitality Action spent £291,627 supporting industry colleagues in need through various grants and initiatives. "We couldn't have done this great work without our supporters getting involved in fundraising events such as Lunch Box Day. It's very simple to take part and we hope everyone will share the idea with other colleagues and businesses too."

For further information or to register your interest email: [fundraising@hospitalityaction.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@hospitalityaction.org.uk)



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### Temporary or Permanent

Aston Recruitment also supplies temporary staff to a wide range of hospitality businesses across the UK. We can support when you need short term staff to help cover seasonal peaks in business, fill gaps in personnel while you are recruiting for permanent positions or provide holiday and sickness cover. Whatever your need we can find the right people at the right time with an efficient, personal and professional service. We primarily supply relief chefs and managers for assignments ranging from a few days to a year in length.

### Unrivalled Industry Experience

Our clients are typically hotels from any level right up to 5 red star properties with 4AA rosettes; independent and branded restaurants of all sizes and styles; events businesses and venues; premium contract caterers; universities and colleges and some other niche hospitality businesses. We can also supply most other categories of staff within the hospitality and catering industry. Put simply, our temporary business is there to make your life easier.

### Independent and passionate

As an independent consultancy we are able to give our clients and candidates a more personal approach to recruitment. From both a client and candidate perspective our experienced and dedicated team of specialist consultants have established themselves in the marketplace for high quality service and outstanding success. They are able to offer a wide range of recruitment solutions to suit all needs.

### Dedicated to Excellence

We are dedicated to providing high levels of service and are committed to ensuring we bring retention and long-term value to the hospitality sector, through matching the right candidates to your vacancies and bookings.

Should you require assistance or further detail please contact:

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### UK BURGER MARKET WORTH £3.28b



The UK burger bar market is estimated to be worth £3.28b in 2016 according to Mintel, up 22% from £2.7b in 2011. Mintel research revealed that three in five (60%) Brits have visited a burger outlet in the last three months.

Londoners are the most frequent visitors of gourmet burger bars, with one in five eating at a gourmet burger bar in the last three months, up from a national average of 7%.

When it comes to what makes a burger venue 'gourmet', freshly made burgers top the list. Some 71% of Brits would expect freshly made burgers from a gourmet burger venue, followed by customisable burgers (54%) and a choice of how the burger is cooked (48%).

For others ingredients are more important. Almost a third (31%) of Brits would expect to see artisanal ingredients at a gourmet burger venue, while 25% would expect detailed information on where ingredients come from and 22% would expect information about which cuts of meat were used. For one in 10 consumers it's not about the burger at all; they expected a gourmet burger venue to have craft alcoholic drinks on the menu.

Even outside gourmet burger bars, customisation is a trait consumers are keen to see at fast food restaurants. Two in five (41%) fast food bar users are interested in seeing customisable dishes, for example selecting the bread, meat and toppings, and 35% are interested in a wider choice of burgers with meat other than beef. Meanwhile, 16% of fast food consumers would be interested in seeing alcoholic beverages on the menu. Nearly a third (31%) of UK fast food eaters would be interested in trying high-fibre bun options, 23% a wider choice of non-meat options and 14% more gluten-free dishes.

Kiti Soininen, head of UK food and drink research at Mintel, said: "Consumers see freshly made burgers as the biggest marker of a gourmet burger venue, something that sets them apart as this is not traditionally offered by fast food venues. Customisation is also a top expectation for gourmet offerings, in line with a more general demand for knowing what goes into one's food and the trend for personalisation. Fast food venues are already looking to incorporate customisation options into their menus and competitors should look to follow suit."

### NEWS IN BRIEF.....

- **Restaurant refurbishments boost like for like sales at Pizza Hut**  
Pizza Hut has credited a 6.2% increase in like-for-like sales on a brand wide refurbishment scheme that has seen the majority of its sites updated.
- **Wimpy owner buys Gourmet Burger Kitchen for £120m**  
Famous Brands, which also owns Wimpy and Paul, has acquired Gourmet Burger Kitchen for £120m.
- **London records highest revpar figures of the year in July**  
July saw London hotels record the highest revenue per available room (revpar) figures of the year so far, according to hotel benchmarking company HotStats.
- **ASK Italian to launch three new sites**  
ASK Italian has announced plans to open three restaurants in Newcastle, London and Milton Keynes.
- **PizzaExpress sales down, reflecting 'broader slowdown in casual dining market'**  
Like-for-like sales at PizzaExpress are down by 1.3%, reflecting what the company claims is a broader slowdown in the casual dining market.
- **The Restaurant Group to close 33 sites after slide in sales**  
The Restaurant Group is to close 33 underperforming sites following a 3.9% slide in like-for-like sales for the half year to 3 July 2016.
- **Ikea launches Shoreditch pop-up restaurant**  
Ikea has announced the opening of a DIY restaurant in Shoreditch, London, where diners can host their own dinner for up to 20 guests.



### JOKE OF THE MONTH

A guy walks into a bar. He asks the bartender, "Do you have any helicopter flavoured potato chips?"  
The bartender shakes his head and says, "No, we only have plain."



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