



## Hospitality in a post - apocalyptic (\*covid) world

**The hopeful road to normality after arguably the worst hit to the hospitality industry ever witnessed.**

The hospitality highlight of the last year was the pivot of fine dining restaurants and premium independents who provided upmarket delivery options and 'boxed' menus for cooking in the home, sparking the culinary wizard in us all. From educating the consumer, to empowering them, this has been a strategic success that we hope stays for the long term.

What we would like to see is an evolution of how at home entertainment can continue to be stepped up further. Our main prediction is the partnering up of amazing restaurants with equally renowned cocktail bars to deliver 'takeaway parties'. All-inclusive DIY kits including glassware to ensure the delivery of experience matches that of their hospitality standards in situ.

We know that 'dark kitchens are on the rise with the ever growing food delivery platforms.

They enable a far more cost effective model that has no concern for overheads other than just a service kitchen, but could there be a future in how these interact with smaller parties and gatherings?

As we all slip out of our isolated bubbles it may feel overwhelming to jump straight back into the clubs, so could we see a trend towards 'dark venues' where décor, cocktail kits, food and even service suggestions are supplied from the click of a button and a cost-effective rental space?

*In ancient Rome, lead pipes had a negative effect on taste buds, the recipes documented from that time were packed full of overpowering flavours to counteract the effects.*

And then there's the food. From what we know, a relatively small percentage of people have lost their sense of taste and smell whilst being symptomatic, which in many cases continues beyond recovery. A fun reaction to this, more of a stunt or serve rather than retail shelves, could be a 'double the flavour range' - a whisky sour with 3x sour or a spaghetti carbonara served extra smoked.

Interestingly, there is a fun anecdote of this happening in ancient Rome; where they had used lead pipes which had a negative effect on the taste buds (in essence, killing them). The recipes documented from that time were packed full of overpowering flavours to counteract the effects.

Alternatively, could reduced taste and smell be an opportunity to kick start a healthy diet with ingredients usually more unpleasant on the palate? Consider earthy green smoothies with a blend of botanicals and roots.

We also believe the reaction of Covid-19 and the subsequent fear of germs could see an evolution of antibacterials and pasteurisation techniques being incorporated into food or food service. For example an amuse bouche of scented non toxic antibac mist to spray over food before consumption – watch this space!

### Something mental has to come out of this right?

After WWI the Prohibition ended. Now, we're not comparing the 2020 Pandemic to WWI, but the social impact that the Pandemic has had across the globe is likely to result in something equally spectacular in this industry, reminiscent of the change that the end of prohibition brought. Some thoughts from us:

**Combined dining experiences-** Restaurants coming together to serve 'igloo parks' which are a modern/post-Covid take on streetfood market benches. Customers book an igloo and have a choice of 3 or 4 local restaurant menus to order from. Serviced from the phone, delivered to the igloo to avoid crowding, the need for restaurant seating and a weather resistant solution to 'virus safe' dining.



 Coppa Club

**Convenience is king-** Are we going to go all the way to a department store to smell a candle any more? Could the next step be 'emailed smells or tastes'. Picture our homes with high tech depositors containing cartridges of thousands of tastes and smells, meaning millions of combinations. One click of a button and your blended sample is ready. 'Madness, that's lightyears away' we can hear you say, check out the [The Alchemist Atelier](#) making waves already.

### What if we look further afield?

In Japan and Hong Kong there are many restaurants that capitalise on introverts and single dining where there is almost zero human interaction. A popular chain of restaurants called [Ichiran](#) invites the guest to sit at a booth facing a bamboo curtain, use a tablet to select your ramen, which then gets served by the service team 'slipping' your dinner through the curtain with minimal human interaction.

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If we continue to look to Asia, who've had a longer-term culture for face mask usage and regulated public hygiene, we can predict some hospitality trends which would make sense for Western societies to also adopt. We can all assume that buffets will become a thing of the past, sitting with Blockbuster and Opal Fruits. In replacement, cloche covered conveyor belt service, fewer humans working the floor and more tablet or phone ordering. BYOC could soon be 'bring your own cutlery' which could see a huge opening for innovating the 'taste enhancing' element that cutlery so often lacks. The first stop for researching this more has to be experimental psychologist [Charles Michel](#), who has spent years researching everything from a spoon that feels like licking your fingers to a fork that can make your food taste bitter.

# Colour us...something not grey please.

**Pantone releases the colour of the year, for the year ahead.**

**2019's 'Living Coral' saw a growth response of Pink Gins, Rosé, Rose Ciders. 2020's 'Classic Blue' had us drinking limitless amounts of spirulina....2021 is a little more complex with a DUAL colour of Ultimate Grey x Illuminating Yellow**



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Working with Grey and Yellow in the F & B space may not make as much sense as a single block colour. However we think it's important to analyse the approach to these juxtaposing shades, as they're reminiscent of the 'Bouba and Kiki Effect', a study run by psychologist Wolfgang Kohler.

In short, our speech and sounds can map to the visual shape of objects. "KIKI", which is made up of hard consonants forms something like this...

KIKI

BOUBA

whereas the word "BOUBA", with it's softer consonants creates an object symbolically rounder

The Bouba and Kiki Effect, in theory, forms our unconscious bias. It's what we automatically use to react emotionally to colour, sounds and language. Therefore it makes sense, that during such a tumultuous year, we would be stuck in this half way point between 'illuminating light at the end of the tunnel' and 'the grey'.

## What does this mean for F&B?

The complex conflict in colours translates also to flavour. Fresh vibrant summer aromas, floral and refreshing citrus with rounded soft textures of illuminating yellow, clashing against the smokier, bitter, thicker alliance of ultimate grey. What we're predicting and working on, is a range of inspiring flavour clashes.

Think, spicy cream cheese blended with all peppered berries, Smoked Sicilian lemon drop cocktails

all the way to texture clashes that bring to mind the Bouba and Kiki Effect. Soft pillowy tops on sharp cutting flavours. An evolution of this, in the cocktail space specifically, could be having bitter/spicy foams topping the sweeter cocktails on the menu giving a multi-dimensional drinks experience.

In the ready to drink market we imagine there will be some interesting flavour pairings, albeit softer citrus notes paired with more bitter overtones like kefir water or strawberry with black pepper. Brands such as Nix & Kix have already shown a progressive approach to such flavour contrasts with huge success.

*We're imagining a world where it's not just a 'Heston space' but a mainstream space that serves drinks which taste both hot and cold at the same time.*

In short the upcoming trends is going to be "opposites attract". Think opposite flavours, textures, temperature and how can we blend them together and have them create something new and unexpected.

## And then what happens?

As for 2022, we all have to hope the grass will be greener and with the continuous strides we're seeing being made in our industry towards green energy and the reduction of our carbon footprint; we believe that the Pantone Colour 2022 should be 'Spring Green', calming and nature driven, providing hope after this VERY long winter. We believe 'Spring Green' is a representation of positivity and change for good.



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# Touch me, I'm delicious. And Eco

**We know you know the story; single use plastic is the devil. You'd have to live under a rock to not notice the global movement towards eradicating it completely. Alternative solutions however are either lacklustre (think milkshake mushy straws) or can be mind-blowing but complex like 3D printed compostable packaging. We are yet to see what the next step could be, however we have some ideas...**

Lets start with the obvious one, straws. We know lots of people just don't like to drink directly from the glass, with that in mind, single use straws are corrupting our world.

Reusable straws have been around for a while but they come with their own challenges. Currently the main concern is with bacteria build up, particularly on the time poor hospitality sector. So, what about 'Smart Straws'. They let you know when to clean with a hydrophobic spray and confirm when all surfaces are fully hygienic to use again. They could also update you on intoxication, hydration, sugar levels, calories consumed aligning with the more health-conscious consumer. Like an advancement of the Fitbit, you have your personal straw to add to your arsenal of personal tech.

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Developments in packaging can be seen across the drinks space, more recently with Carlsberg and Johnnie Walker leading the way with their paper bottles. Does this mean we're going to see a nostalgic throwback to some 'old school' traditions?, boxed wine anyone?

On that note, we may see the 'super size' model make waves in this trend. Post-pandemic we could see smaller 'group socialising' becoming more popularised, It makes sense therefore to reduce packaging in line with more product. A great example would be moving away from multi-packs of beer and replace with 2L growler bottles. Sales growth would increase in line with a reduction of materials and provide a cost benefit to both the manufacturer and consumer.

## We all want to do good, but show me the money

With Polystyrene, bubble wrap and peanuts all being ousted, we still need ways to protect our products. Welcome the Magic Mushroom, not the one prevalent in the 70s, but the innovations of businesses like Ecovative Design, based in Green Island New York. They're making huge breakthroughs in the future of sustainable packaging, including Bacon Leather and food packaging made from mushrooms, or technically mycelium.

Made from the "roots" of mushrooms, mycelium can fill any form or shape. The manufacturer simply blends this durable material with other organics like hay or oats, and folds in the mushroom spores.

Now before you echo the sentiment "there's no way it will replace glass or plastic because it's way too expensive", just give it time. If more brands start to invest in this technology, which is clearly better for our future, costs could become competitive with plastic sooner than you think. Some smaller brands like Seedlip are already pioneering the shift. Hopefully bigger brands will get the memo and start instigating action soon.

## Why stop there...

The other brilliant asset of Mycelium is that, unlike metal or glass, it's porous, which means we could actually infuse those pores with innovations such as scent. A nostalgic throwback to the 'scratch 'n' sniff' but also reminiscent of coffee bags, where ventilation enables a 'try before you buy' sniff. Technically speaking they're there as a one way valve letting out carbon dioxide, but we much prefer 'sniff holes'. Imagine wandering down the Beers, Wines & Sprints aisle smelling the rum packaging before making your choice of tippie.



## Is this translating to other industries, if so, how?

Absolutely, our favourite pick in this space has to be Nairobi based Nzambi Matee, who's company Gienge Makers Ltd is creating plastic waste into bricks that are stronger than concrete. Now this is the future.

# Do you taste Vegan?

**Its not just veganism on the rise, its consumers opting for more plant based alternatives. But what effect will this have on our taste preferences? Many sectors have seen a significant shift towards bitter and sour flavours as appose to sweet and salty. Can't put your finger on that taste? It's probably the taste of 'vegan'.**

79 million! That's the estimated number of 'Active Vegans' in the world right now. In the US the estimated number represents 2% of the population. Potentially not as high as you'd have thought, considering the plethora of brands in the last 2-3 years who now cater to a vegan or non-dairy audience.

There are clear synergies between veganism and 'healthier lifestyles' both of which, generally speaking, come hand in hand. But how is one affecting the other when it comes to our evolving taste buds?

Take the rise in Gin and craft beer, both of which can be considered bitter flavours. As consumers, our lifestyles and choices are leading us to crave less sweet items in general.

*Another reason we can 'taste the vegan' is the steep rise of Jackfruit. Durian, famous for its very pungent smell, aligns with the rise in fermented fruits, pickling, sauerkraut and kimchi. Which brings us to believe the 'sour' taste will continue to evolve'*

One of the biggest sectors that has seen this shift is confectionery. The past few years has seen a significant rise in the cacao levels of milk chocolate, increasing the 'bitterness' in line with this natural taste evolution. Green & Blacks most popular chocolate in 2020 was their 70% cocoa, and Hotel Chocolat reporting hikes in their year-on-year sales increases for 100% cocoa bars.



 Bitter Union

Beer has historically averaged an approximate score of 20 (international bitter units), but with a reduction of sugar in our diets, the average craft beer today sits around 60-80 which is a quadrupling in bitterness. Now with people consuming less junk food, meat and milk which are high in fats, salt and sugar, we can expect our diets and preferences to continue to move towards favouring more complex, less sweet flavours.

## So give me something Juicy I don't know

Taste buds can completely change in a matter of weeks (some cravings may take longer to kick because of habits). A quick taste bud change is our interaction with fats; hence the success of alternative milks. Consumers in the UK and US have created such loyal followings for Milk Alternatives (Oatly being the most lauded over the last couple years), that a return to wholly farmed dairy is unlikely.

It's difficult to pinpoint what exactly is going to happen in terms of long term dairy eradication, but what will be interesting is whether the alternative milk markets continue to grow, or if something completely new takes the lead. We're thinking vanilla infused oat milk in morning coffee, or strawberry pieces replacing cereal and coconut water to replace the milk. We are also likely to see a progressive trend in sugar alternatives with honey, maple, agave and birch syrups readily available.

*'some gaps in our nutrients may start to become more prevalent. B12, Omega 3, zinc, iron and calcium rich foods may start to make a strong emergence to fill the deficiency and also cater to our new cravings'*

Another trend that continues to thrive in the US but is yet to popularise to the same extent in Western Europe, is adding fats to your coffee. The likes of BulletProof coffee have been around for years, however we are starting to see the evolution of this trend. So amongst choices of oat, almond or coconut milks and sugars including agave or honey; consumers may be able to order flavoured fats like brown butter or pecan butter. Imagine the technology expanding also, adding a dissolvable individual 'fats' tablet into your morning brew.

Another reason we can 'taste the vegan' without being a vegan is the steep rise in use of Jackfruit and other replacement meats. Durian, famous for its very pungent smell, has come out of nowhere, aligning with the rise in fermented fruits, pickling, sauerkraut and kimchi. Which brings us to believe the 'sour' taste will continue to evolve in many other F & B corners of mainstream shelves.



### Some wild card thinking

With only an estimated 2% of US consumers committing to veganism but a huge rise in consumer appetite for alternatives, some gaps in our nutrients may start to become more prevalent. B12, Omega 3, zinc, iron and calcium rich foods may start to make a strong emergence to fill the deficiency and also cater to our new cravings. We're thinking:

- Spirulina cereals.
- Mushrooms: from 'Mushroom Bacon', made up of a sponge like mycelium, that when pan fried, tastes and feels like bacon to earthy 'Mushroom Coffee' made up of Lions Main & Rhodiola.
- Beetroot ice cream.
- Fish Jerky.
- Crisps/potato chips made up of Omega 3 rich grape leaves, spinach or hemp seeds.
- Nutrient dense seasoning including dried and powdered super foods, blended with classic household seasoning such as salt and pepper to add further value to meals.

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## CASE STUDY

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Client: Bombay Sapphire

**BRIEF:** With the launch of 'Stir Creativity', produce a garnish which will inspire bartenders' innovation & impress consumers.

**PRODUCT INNOVATION:** Bombay Sapphire, Geranium flavoured, blue coloured, Edible Paint

**USAGE:** A finished paint, in tin, to be 'painted' inside the glassware and remain a solid block colour, withstanding ice + liquid for 1.5 minutes. After which, the colour and flavour infuses the drink, enhancing the cocktail experience.

**RESULTS:**

20K+ cans of 'paint' manufactured

438% uplift in G&T sales at a 'Paint' stockists

Distributed globally to over 15 countries

*We're all about 'Freshly Squeezed Innovation' at Juicy Brick. A full-service R & D Innovation agency. Here to work with passionate brands on new product ideation, strategy, all the way through to finished, manufactured products on shelves.*

*We specialise in all things 'edible': food, beverage and all the weird and wonderful in between.*

*We're the founding team from Smith & Sinclair + Pollen, two award-winning, successful, consumer brands; so we truly know how to take a concept all the way through to international distribution. Our extensive experience combined with our network of manufacturing partners across the globe, has earned us an impressive reputation for excellence.*

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