



What inspires diners in the UK?

OnePoiit


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'8 out of 10 consumers consider the quality of tableware as important or very important when choosing where to eat out'





Today's discerning customer is noticing and critiquing everything from the food to the service and the style of presentation.

The survey commissioned by Steelite International and carried out by research specialist, One Poll asked 2,000 adults who dine out at least twice a month what role tableware plays in their overall dining experience.

The results demonstrate how presentation in restaurants, pubs, cafes and hotels can affect the bottom line.

OnePoll

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'70% of consumers said I like my table to be well presented when I eat out'

Stylish tableware drives business

Tableware is a profit generator. Presentation of the table plays a vital role when it comes to choosing where to eat out, with 81% of diners stating that presentation of tableware is an important or very important factor. A well-presented table positively impacts their dining experience, according to 61% of diners.

Despite its importance to the diner, operators often treat tableware as an after-thought and sometimes don't consider what the tableware will be used for.

To make the most from the opportunity operators need to consider the presentation of their dishes in the early stages of a design project and as part of their menu planning process.

It is important to order samples to do a dry run and try the dishes out on different tableware, for example using different shapes and surface finishes to complement the presentation.

Hotel diners are impressed by tableware

35% of hotel diners surveyed placed tableware as one of the top three reasons that they return to an establishment and said plates are the most noticeable item on the table.

Whilst diners across the board think that the creativity of food presentation has improved over the last five years, 30% of hotel diners think it is less creative, highlighting a need for hoteliers to focus on their presentation.





Matching the offer – it's key to your bottom line

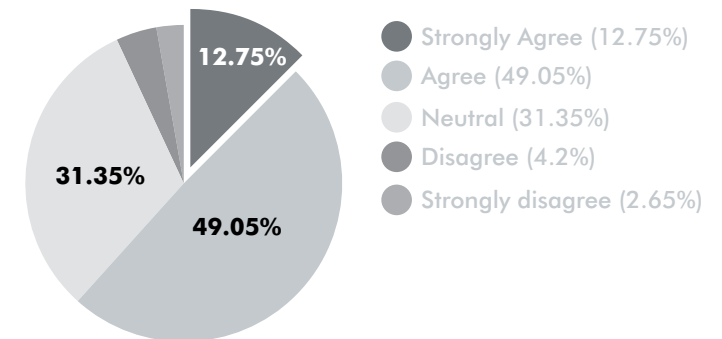
Whilst food and drink is the most important factor when eating out, diners believe that the tableware should match the offer. Three quarters of diners believe that it is important for the style of tableware to reflect the establishment. A customer needs to see visual synchronization when they walk into an establishment.



Simon Hulstone, head chef at the Michelin starred Elephant restaurant and brasserie in Torquay and captain of the Steelite sponsored English Culinary Team, is a great believer in the power of good tableware,

“At The Elephant we have fine dining in The Room and a more relaxed style in the Brasserie. Along with the menu and the dishes available, we use tableware presentation as a way to distinguish the two styles and often invest in new pieces to keep our dishes up to date and increase their visual appeal.”

How much do you agree with this statement? ‘The right tableware can enhance the mood of the occasion.’



‘62% of diners agreed that the right tableware enhances the mood of the occasion’



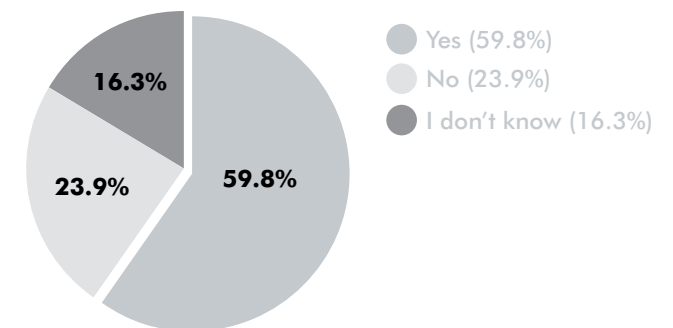
'60% of diners expect a higher level of tableware the more they pay for the meal'

Tableware can also be used to justify price points. 60% of diners expect a higher level of tableware the more they pay for the meal; a clear indication that an investment in quality tableware means operators can charge more for a meal. For example, a menu staple like fish and chips can be turned into a more premium dish, simply by serving it on a different shaped plate.

The silver pound is becoming increasingly valuable to operators with 63%* of consumers aged 50+ eating out at least once a week. Of all the age groups surveyed, diners over the age of 55 had the highest expectations, with 69% expecting a higher level of tableware the more they pay for a meal..

*Allegra Strategies, Eating Out in the UK, July 2012

Would you expect a higher level of tableware the more you pay for your meal?





Failing to impress your diners?

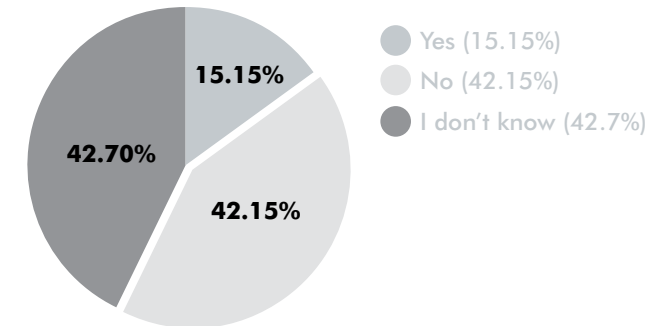
Whilst stylish tableware clearly makes a positive impression on diners, poor tableware can pose a risk to business. 48% of diners would complain if the tableware was chipped. There's a clear impact on a business as a direct result of neglecting presentation, with almost half of diners stating that they would be unlikely to return to an establishment if the table is poorly presented.

Tableware should be able to withstand the demands of the modern commercial kitchen. Chipped tableware is avoidable. It is important that operators match the right quality product to the environment and asks their supplier about warranty, longevity and the controls they have in place to ensure consistent manufacturing quality.

Surprisingly, this figure was higher among males, highlighting that presentation is equally important in pubs and outlets that have a male-biased customer base.

Cutlery is the first thing diners notice, closely followed by the table arrangement. Elegant, sophisticated, traditional or contemporary – the right cutlery can instantly lift a table and set the tone for the rest of the meal. As well as looking good, operators need to consider usability. It should be hardwearing and well balanced for a comfortable feel in the hand. They also need to consider practicalities such as durability and ease of cleaning.

Would you visit an establishment again if the presentation and tableware were bad?



'42% of diners are unlikely to return to an establishment if the table is poorly presented'

'48% of diners would complain about chipped tableware'



The latest tableware trends

Front-of-house is about creating theatre and tableware has become increasingly creative over the last five years. It is all about what's fashionable so manufacturers need to constantly invest in researching the market in order to produce innovative products.

Staying on trend and introducing different things is an easy way for operators to keep regular customers happy by giving them the variety they are looking for.

The colour of tableware is the first thing diners notice and we are seeing a move away from plain whites to coloured glazes, inspired by Asian and Eastern European influences.

Twenty years ago it was all white tablecloths, plain white crockery and silver service. Now there's a more eclectic range of stylish tableware to choose from. Different colours, shapes, sizes and effects can all be used to add a unique touch. Embossed tableware is popular and can be used to enhance plain tableware.

The rules are also becoming more relaxed and operators can achieve great results by using less traditional tableware and mixing it up with different shapes and materials to show off the food. The rustic look is fashionable and the right tableware, along with wooden or faux wooden boards, can be used to create a natural and earthy feel.



Tableware to take your business to the next level

It is clear from the One Poll survey that hospitality businesses have the opportunity to take advantage of tableware to enhance their profits.

At Steelite International, we can help you to do this. Our aim is to provide you with inspiration and a vast range of innovative and stylish tableware that helps you set the scene and to make an impact whatever your offer.

Our Performance and Distinction ranges are designed to withstand the modern commercial kitchen environment and come with a lifetime edge chip warranty.

To find out how we can help you make a lasting impression on your diners contact us on 01782 821000.

