

## CONTRACT CATERING

SODEXO SCOOPS £1.5M  
SPORTSCOTLAND CONTRACT

Sodexo has won a £1.5m catering and hospitality contract at SportScotland's national sports training centres in Inverclyde and Cumbrae.

The three-year deal will see Sodexo provide full catering and event services at the Inverclyde centre just outside the Ayrshire town of Largs, as well as manage the retail outlet, vending and hospitality functions.

Susan Pike, senior account manager for Sodexo Scotland, said: "SportScotland wanted a partner who could understand the different customer needs, modernise the services and provide quality hospitality and we are delighted that we fit the bill."

MEDIREST ORDERED TO PAY  
£200 COMPENSATION AFTER  
HOSPITAL PATIENT CLAIM

Compass Group's healthcare brand Medirest has been ordered to pay £200 compensation after a patient took the caterer to court to reimburse the cost of eating elsewhere.

Michael Cooper, a retired lorry-driver from Millbrook, described Medirest's meals as a "disgrace" and told Thisishampshire.net that he would not have fed them to pigs.

Instead, during a 14-day stay in Southampton General Hospital he chose to eat meals in the canteen at a cost of £200. When he was

discharged he asked Compass to reimburse the money but the firm refused.

Cooper launched a county court case against Medirest and won a legal judgement ordering the contract caterer to pay him back the money. In a statement, the company said: "We dispute Mr Cooper's claim and had the relevant Medirest personnel been aware of the claim being issued we would have taken the necessary steps to defend this."

COMPASS WINS HAT-TRICK OF  
NEW HOSPITAL CONTRACTS

Compass Group has won three new hospital contracts, including a Costa Coffee outlet at Tunbridge Wells Hospital, Kent.

The contracts, worth £1.7m in total annual turnover, come at a time when the caterer is experiencing a period of rapid growth in grab-and-go retail outlets within the healthcare market.

Lynn King, business director – retail at Compass, said that demand for well-recognised branded offerings such as Costa Coffee was increasing.

"Retail outlets – coffee shops, convenience stores and so on – provide a valuable revenue stream for some trusts, either as rent concessions or through turnover-based shared income arrangements," she said.

BENUGO WINS £20M DEAL WITH  
NATIONAL MUSEUMS SCOTLAND

Café-to-restaurant operator Benugo has won a seven-year catering contract with National Museums Scotland worth about £20m in sales.

The caterer will manage a 100-seat café and a 100-seat restaurant within the National Museum of Scotland site in Edinburgh when it fully reopens in July following a £46.4m redevelopment of the public space.

Benugo, part of BaxterStorey parent company Westbury Street Holdings, currently provides catering at the Natural History Museum and the V&A in London

HOST TEAMS UP WITH  
ANDREW FAIRLIE  
(RESTAURANT ANDREW  
FAIRLIE)

Contract caterer Host has announced a formal working partnership with Gleneagles chef Andrew Fairlie.

The two-Michelin-starred chef will become trainer and mentor to the caterer's expanding team of head chefs as part of an initiative to develop their food knowledge and provide inspiration.

Key Host personnel will visit the 50-seat Restaurant Andrew Fairlie at Gleneagles for a three- to four-day training course.

Fairlie, who opened the restaurant in 2001, said that Host chefs will get involved in the kitchen's day-to-day running. "I'll be looking at their techniques and they'll be introduced to new ways of cooking and new ingredients. I'm certain they will go home inspired about food and cooking," he explained.



and last April it won a £35m contract to provide catering and event services at Edinburgh Castle and other Historic Scotland properties.

SEARCYS TO OPEN CHAMPAGNE  
BAR AT ONE NEW CHANGE

Upmarket caterer Searcys has revealed the details of its latest Champagne Bar, which will open at the newly built St Paul's shopping

district, One New Change in London.

It is the second launch this year for the Champagne Bar brand and Searcys plans to launch a further five Champagne bars in 2011 at transport hubs and retail outlets.

The Interbar-designed space will accommodate up to 100 guests and will offer more than 30 Champagnes by the glass and more than 100 different cuvées by the bottle.



## PUBS, BARS AND CASUAL DINING



**ARKELL'S HIRES COMMUNITY MANAGER TO HELP RURAL PUBS**  
Wiltshire-based brewer Arkell's has appointed what it believes is the first "brewery community liaison manager" to engage local parish councils and communities to help sustain rural and pub life.

Richard Turner, a retired director at the 168-year-old business who has more than 30 years' experience in the brewing industry, has taken on the role. He will encourage local communities to use pubs for other activities and services such as yoga lessons, toddler groups, post office services and shops.

Brewery chairman James Arkell said: "If new initiatives are supported by the local community, they could improve a pub's viability and reintroduce local amenities which have been lost."

PUBS AND RESTAURANTS SHRUG  
OFF VAT RISE

The pub and casual dining market appears to have shrugged off Janaury's VAT hike, with February like-for-like sales rising 3.1% on the same month last year.

Meanwhile, total sales including the effects of new site openings were up 5.1% on 2010, according to the latest monthly Coffer Peach Business Tracker which follows sales performance across 19 major pub and restaurant operators, including Mitchells & Butlers and Tragus.

"Consumers may be cutting back on big ticket purchases, but they are still willing to go out to eat and drink," said Peach Factory's Peter

Martin. "People may tell researchers they intend cutting-back on pubs and restaurants, but these figures tell a different story."

FAMILY BREWERS URGE TIED  
TENANCIES FOR START-UPS

Taking on a tied tenancy in a pub owned by a family brewery is still a good route for chefs and other hospitality professionals to open their first business, despite the debate still raging on the issue of the tie.

That's the message from Paul Wells (pictured), chairman of the Independent Family Brewers of Britain (IFBB) and chairman of the Charles Wells pub company.

Wells, who heads a body which represents 29 family brewers and pub companies including the likes of Fuller's, Everards, Wadworth, and Brains, called on aspiring hospitality entrepreneurs to try taking on a pub tied to an IFBB member as a low-cost entry into the market.

His comments came in the same week that backbench Liberal Democrat MP Martin Horwood introduced the Tied Public Houses (Code of Practice) Bill to Parliament. The bill proposes the introduction of a statutory code of practice to require pub companies to provide their tied lessees with a guest beer option and the option to become free of tie, accompanied by an open market rent review.

Wells said a free-of-tie option, aimed at large pubcos which do not produce their own beer, could have unintended consequences for family brewers with pubs.

WETHERSPOONS BLAMES TAXES  
FOR PROFITS SLUMP

Tim Martin, chairman of pub chain JD Wetherspoon, has blamed the "pernicious" influence of higher taxes for an 11% slump in pre-tax profit to £32.2m in the half year to 23 January 2011.

The company also pointed to rising labour and food costs and interest charges on bank debt as operating margin declined to 9.4%,

compared to 10% in 2010. Like-for-like sales at the firm climbed 2.3% over the period and total sales increased 7.6% to £525m thanks to the net addition of 12 pubs.

Martin's comments on tax came as the British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA) and SIBA called on Chancellor George Osborne to reduce the tax burden facing pubs ahead of next week's Budget (23 March).

The BBPA warned that the continuation of the beer duty escalator, which sees duty rise 2% above inflation each year, could give rise to a 7% increase in the cost of beer this year. In separate research issued this week, it highlighted that beer consumption fell 2% in 2010, as overall alcohol consumption rose 0.6%.

KEEP UP WITH NEXT  
WEEK'S BUDGET

Caterer will be holding a live online debate on what the Budget holds in store for hospitality on [www.caterersearch.com](http://www.caterersearch.com). To have your say and offer your own reaction to the Budget, log on to the website on 23 March at or before 12.30pm. A link to the debate, as well as instructions on how to join, will be available on the homepage.

## BALLS BROTHERS BARS BOUGHT

Bar and restaurant operator Novus Leisure has bought 17 Balls Brothers bars out of administration, including six which trade under the Lewis & Clarke brand, for a total of £7.8m. Novus currently runs 38 venues in across the country including the Tiger Tiger brand.

## LOUNGERS OPENS 17TH SITE

Casual dining and drinking group Loungers has spent £380,000 opening its 17th site, Loco Lounge, in the Kings Heath suburb of Birmingham. It is the company's second site in the city.

