



Luke Johnson, Simon Kossoff and Steve Richards lead Casual Dining's 2016 Keynote line-up

With visitor registration now open, Casual Dining – the UK's multi-award winning trade event for the multiple restaurant and pub group sector, has announced its initial Keynote line-up for 2016.

Brighton - Returning to the Business Design Centre in Islington, London, on 24-25 February next year, the show's extensive Keynote programme will feature an exclusive interview with Luke Johnson, chairman of private equity firm Risk Capital Partners. Johnson, one of Britain's most successful entrepreneurs, is well-known for his involvement in growing the Pizza Express, Giraffe, Strada, and Patisserie Valerie brands. He'll be discussing his experiences in the UK casual dining sector – and its future prospects with Propel's managing director Paul Charity.

Steve Richards, CEO of Casual Dining Group (owner of the Café Rouge, Las Iguanas and Bella Italia brands), Simon Kossoff, chief executive of Italian restaurant and food shop chain Carluccio's (in interview with Peter Martin, vice president of CGA Peach), and Anthony Pender, chairman of The British Institute of Innkeeping and MD of Yummy Pub Co, are among the other big name speakers also confirmed today.

Pender, who has previously called Casual Dining a "welcome change to the trade show calendar", will head up a panel session featuring a host of well-known pub operators, including Brian Whiting, managing director of Whiting & Hammond. As in previous years, Horizons' Peter Backman is back to report on the latest trends and developments in the 'thriving' casual dining market, now said to be worth over £7bn.

Casual Dining 2016 sells out in record time

One of the fastest growing parts of the UK's eating out market, casual dining is a lifestyle trend that shows no sign of abating. If anything, as a dining experience, it's only increasing in popularity. And it's still got plenty of room for expansion – with 16 new pub and casual restaurant openings per week, according to the latest findings in a M&C Allegra Foodservice report, commissioned by Estrella Damm in July.

It is this strong market performance, combined with glowing testimonials and a strong onsite rebook, that has helped the show sell out of all available exhibition space over four months early. The 2016 edition will now feature 170 exhibiting companies (up from 150 last year and 117 when it launched in 2014).

New additions to the exhibitor line-up include The FoodFellas, Jascots, Kerry Foodservice, Morgenrot Group, Kent Frozen Foods, General Mills, Twinings, JJ Food Service, Hepworth Brewery, and Ascentia Foodservice Equipment. Whilst returning brands include Coca-Cola Enterprises, Reynolds, Lamb Weston, Unox UK, Rational UK, DiSotto Foods, Britvic Soft Drinks, McCain Foodservice (GB), Fresh Direct, Nisbets, Thistly Cross Cider, Electrolux Professional, Nestle Professional, Alan Nuttall, Sacla' UK, and Bar & Restaurant Foods.

They'll be joined by over 4,000 key buyers and decision makers from many of the country's biggest casual dining pub groups and restaurant chains, hotels, contract caterers, and independent operators. Gourmet Burger Kitchen, wagamama, Greene King, Punch Taverns, Fuller's, Carluccio's, Bella Italia, Café Rouge, YO! Sushi, Jamie's Italian, Pizza Hut Restaurants, Pizza Express, Elixir UK, BaxterStorey, Compass Group, Whitbread, Holiday Inn, Hilton are just some of the big name brands to feature on the show's visitor list so far.

Brilliant, lively, informative, refreshing and relevant is just some of the feedback from the 2015 event, with Paul Pavli, operations director at Punch Taverns, calling it "a must attend event".

"Bringing the latest thinking and innovation from our dynamic industry together with all the key players in one event certainly gets my vote!" says Karen Forrester, CEO of TGI Fridays.

"For food driven pubs in the 'casual' pitch there is no better show," says Bruce Brunning, chairman of family-run pub group Brunning Host.

"Casual Dining is a great addition to the industry calendar, it's a really worthwhile visit," says Andrew Walker, MD – business development and investment at Casual Dining Group.

Casual Dining Restaurant & Pub Awards – deadline for entries approaching

Operators in the multiple and independent casual dining sector are invited to nominate themselves for the inaugural Casual Dining Restaurant & Pub Awards via www.cdawards.co.uk. The deadline for entries is 27 November 2015, with the results to be announced at a dedicated award ceremony on the evening of 24 February 2016 at The Grange St. Paul's Hotel in London, following the first day of Casual Dining.

Register today

Casual Dining returns to the Business Design Centre, Islington, London, on 24-25 February 2016. For more information, and to register for a free trade ticket, please visit www.casualdiningshow.co.uk (direct link: www.eventdata.co.uk/Visitor/CasualDining.aspx?TrackingCode=PR1).

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Notes:

Casual Dining was the first launch show (UK and international) in over five years to win 'Best Tradeshow Exhibition under 2,000sq.m' at the Association of Event Organisers' Excellence Awards 2014. In 2015, it won the same award for the second consecutive year.

High res images from Casual Dining 2015 are available upon request:

Diversified Communications UK (Diversified UK) is a fast growing trade event organiser and publisher based in Brighton, Peterborough and Nailsworth. In addition to Casual Dining!, Diversified UK's event portfolio includes lunch!; Commercial Kitchen (new for 2016); Natural Food Show at Natural & Organic Products Europe; Nordic Organic Food Fair in Malmö, Sweden (co-located with Natural Products Scandinavia); Natural and Organic Awards; camexpo; office; Accountex; SITS – The IT Service Management Show; GEO Business; Capturing Reality; Ocean Business; MARELEC Marine Electromagnetics conference; Euro Bus Expo; Coach & Bus Live; British Tourism & Travel Show; The Route One Operator Excellence Awards; and National Coach Tourism Awards. For more information, visit: www.divcom.co.uk.*

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