

# Back to business

## *back to the table*

A guide to creating a safe dining experience, with expert insights from hospitality professionals.

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## Steelite International has had a place at the table for almost 150 years

**Our reputation for 'toughness with elegance' goes back to 1875, when Thomas Wood Bennett, who invented the reinforced edge, created his hotel tableware factory in the heart of the UK's famous pottery region.**

Today, our core range is still proudly made in Stoke-on-Trent, using only the finest raw materials. With a unique body recipe, all Steelite International products are fully vitrified, extremely strong and durable. As an ISO registered tableware supplier, Steelite International ensures consistent material and product quality.

The Lifetime Edge-Chip Warranty, meanwhile, assures that all Distinction and Performance products manufactured in the UK factory will withstand the rigours of the modern commercial kitchen and minimise edge-chip damage.

Working exclusively for the hospitality and catering industry gives us a full understanding of what is important to professional caterers - in terms of both practicality and style. We conduct thorough product testing, both in-house and independently, to give you the peace of mind that your products will perform time and again.

As hotels, bars and restaurants reopen in a post-pandemic world, operators will be looking to invest wisely, while consumers will demand quality and safety. With our experience and know-how, Steelite International can help meet post-Covid needs for safety, hygiene, and sustainability.



Steelite International is proud to back the British Ceramic Confederation's campaign to promote the hygiene benefits of using ceramic tableware, #DineSafe.

The campaign is based on Spanish guidance by the hotels sector, which warns against serving food and drink on broken or cracked dishes or utensils.

**Dr. Laura Cohen, Chief Executive of the British Ceramic Confederation, says:**

“ The UK has a world-renowned reputation for high-quality, durable ceramic cateringware. Chipped or cracked plates can absorb bacteria, which in turn can cause illness, so replacing damaged tableware and investing in high quality durable ceramic cateringware will be a ‘must-do’ investment for hospitality, leisure and tourism businesses who are looking into how they can reopen safely during coronavirus. ”

**Leo Kattou, Head Chef at Simpsons**

“ Investing in quality tableware is all about attention to detail. We spend a lot of time and effort in creating and plating up quality dishes - it is important to match that with the tableware. Covid-19 hasn't changed what tableware we intend to use, but we're being more conscious of hygiene levels. If you are using good quality tableware, then there's the reassurance that it cleans more efficiently and lasts. ”

#DineSafe



## The state of the nation

**While some bars and restaurants reopened their doors on 4 July, many are preparing to do so in the coming weeks.**

According to a UK Hospitality and CGA survey, 44% of consumers said they wanted to wait a while before visiting the on-trade. The CGA survey also found that a laser focus on hygiene is important. "It's clear that ultra-high standards of care and hygiene will be needed to convince wary British consumers that it is safe to venture out after lockdown," the report says.

Though they may be wary, it is important to note that consumers do want to venture out. According to global information company The NPD Group, two-thirds of UK consumers miss eating out and are keen to get back into restaurants. But there is a significant change in consumer behaviour, with a stronger focus on safety and hygiene: three quarters (76%) stated that good hygiene will be a more important factor in choosing a restaurant than before lockdown.

Digging deeper into consumer expectations and in a recent report by Délifrance, aimed at hotel F&B operators, findings show the top three requirements for breakfast room users include free hand sanitiser (52%), more space between tables (49%) and enhanced cleaning protocols (40%). At the same time, 48% of consumers who expect their breakfast buffet requirements to change would like food to be covered - and 50% would like individual products to be available.



### 76%

of consumers stated that good hygiene will be a more important factor in choosing a restaurant than before lockdown

### 50%

of buffet consumers would like individual products to be available

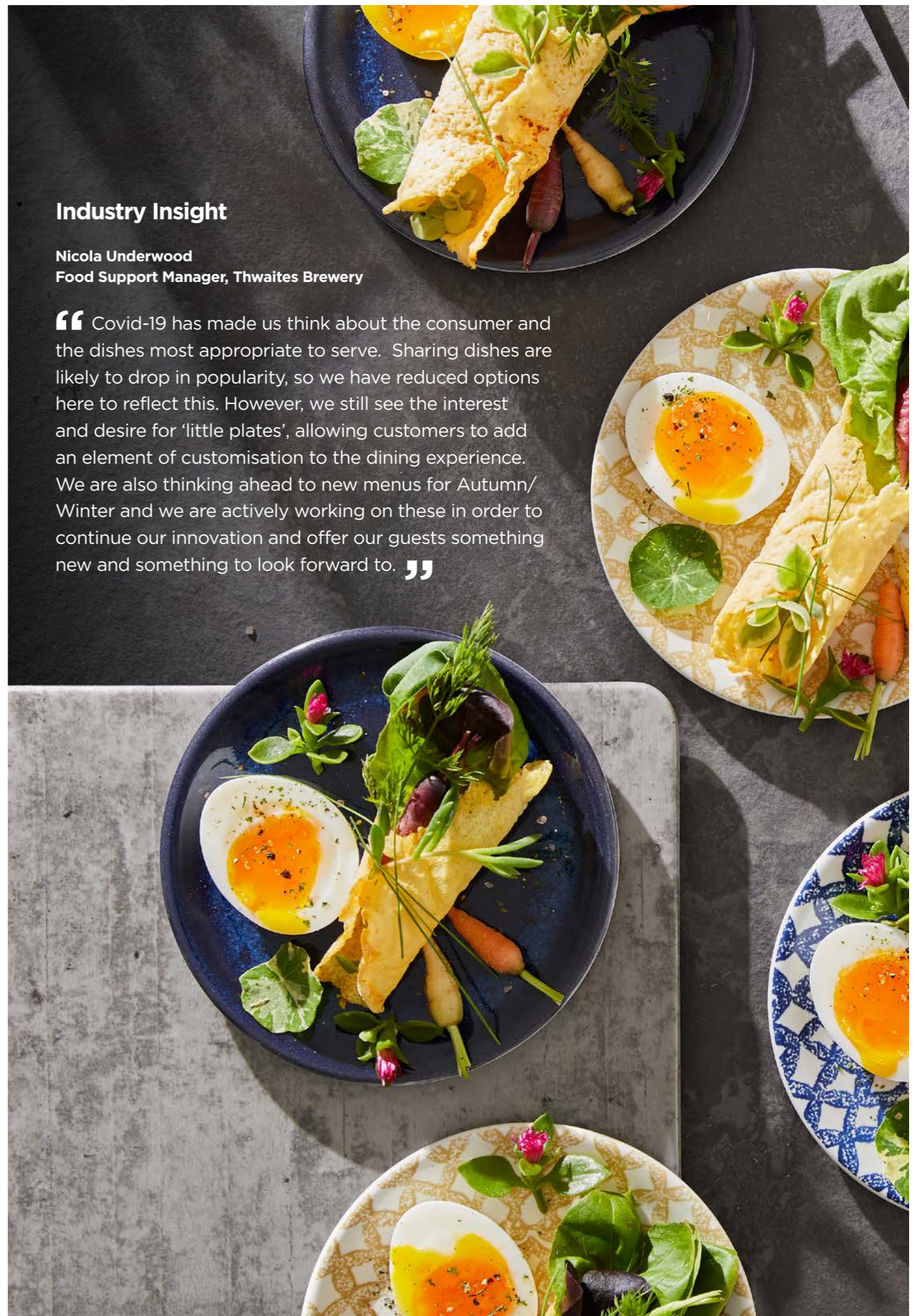
**David Mulcahy,**  
Culinary Director at Sodexo:

“ Given today's climate where hygiene, cleanliness, and safety offer much-needed consumer confidence, the tableware, and vitrified products used must be of the highest quality. ”

## Industry Insight

**Nicola Underwood**  
Food Support Manager, Thwaites Brewery

“ Covid-19 has made us think about the consumer and the dishes most appropriate to serve. Sharing dishes are likely to drop in popularity, so we have reduced options here to reflect this. However, we still see the interest and desire for 'little plates', allowing customers to add an element of customisation to the dining experience. We are also thinking ahead to new menus for Autumn/Winter and we are actively working on these in order to continue our innovation and offer our guests something new and something to look forward to. ”





## Local heroes

**Strategist advisor & futurist Simon Stenning says consumers will have high expectations over the standards employed to keep them safe, and operators will need to build the levels of trust that consumers have in them.**

"We expect that many of the local, community-focused businesses that traded through the lockdown supporting their neighbourhoods will benefit in the long-term from some of the trust that has been built up, but especially if more people stay closer to home," he says.

The importance of trust will also cover products and a recent Kantar survey suggests that trusted brands are expected to provide safety and security in testing times. Back in February 2020, MCA's Foodservice Conference predicted a movement for consumers to back products made in the UK. "Consumers won't stop being curious, but there may be better champions of all things British." This is likely to be even more critical now with an increased focus being placed on supporting the British economy.



#DineSafe

**John Miles,  
President and CEO Steelite International:**

“ Companies that have been producing chinaware for all these years should be the natural choice, with a proven track record in providing quality products of the highest standard. ”



## Next steps and solutions

As a result of this uncharted environment, operators will seek out products that provide their customers with the safest, most hygienic solutions with competitive aesthetics.

With a proven track record in providing quality products of the highest standard, Steelite International has outlined key tableware considerations to assist with the reopening of food outlets and hotels during and post Covid-19.

### Disposables or reusables?

First instincts may lead you to believe that purchasing disposable tableware and cutlery is the safest option during Covid-19 but clearing tableware after each course and washing using a commercial grade dishwasher is standard practice.

Continuing this behaviour is paramount because the measure gives businesses complete control of tableware handling, something that is not possible with disposable items. There are both environmental and business reasons for using your own tableware, cutlery and glassware, since there is no need to purchase additional costly throw-away items.

Customers expect good, memorable and safe dining experiences and quality and hygienic reusable tableware plays a huge part in this.



"The guest experience is enhanced through a beautiful looking plate or bowl, allowing delicious food to be presented in a visually attractive manner," said David Mulcahy, Culinary Director at Sodexo as part of the #DineSafe campaign. "From a hygienic perspective, vitrified products produced in the UK to the highest standards not only look great but don't stain or absorb bacteria leaving no residual traces of food after cleaning. These features offer peace of mind and reassurance for food businesses and guests alike."

Simon Hulstone, chef-proprietor of The Elephant, Torquay, says he used plastic containers over lockdown. "I'm disgusted at how much we got through," he says. "You end up with wastage, too, as you are left with more than you needed. And what you do use, you know is going into landfill, not to mention the costs incurred in throwing it away."

Hulstone adds that disposable tableware puts consumers in a "takeaway" mindset.

"It seems very rushed. And much like when drinking out of a plastic bottle, the taste is never as nice. Reusable quality tableware is fine dining - it is eating in a restaurant and enjoying or looking forward to a special experience.

"There's something special about the 'knife and fork across a plate' sound that adds to the satisfaction."



Besides Core collections, Steelite offers an array of Portfolio products to satisfy operator's needs.

In terms of hygiene, Hulstone says it is important to make sure that tableware is sterilised properly and he advises using the correct temperature on a washing machine as well as ensuring operators can use dishwasher-safe crockery.

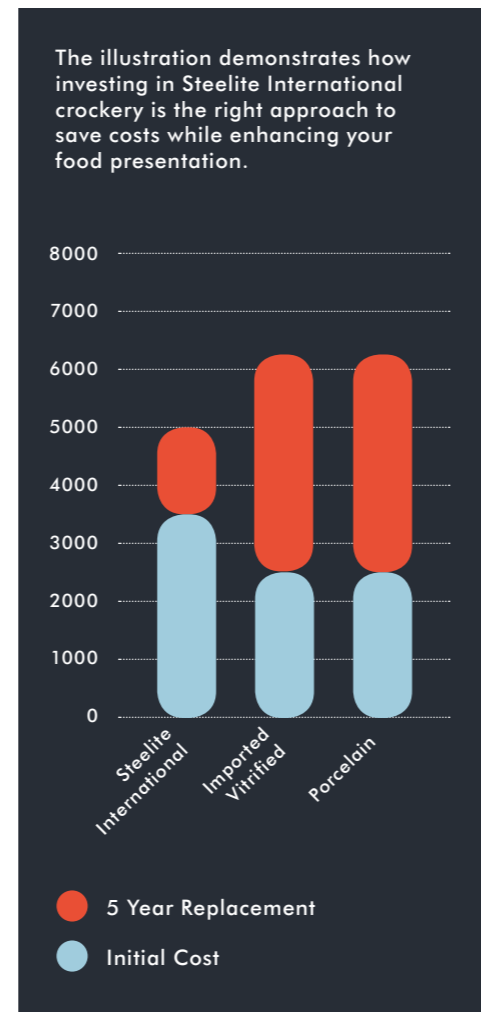


## Invest in the future

**The temptation to buy cheaper, imported tableware is a natural reaction when times are tough.**

However, the on-going cost of replacing tableware will far outweigh any perceived initial savings. While purchasing Steelite International tableware may seem expensive in comparison to cheaper imported tableware, its high alumina content makes Steelite International tableware extremely strong and durable - and less likely to chip or crack during service.

Cheaper imports or porcelain tableware is likely to result in the need for more regular replacements, which in turn will cost you more money. Over a period of five years, you could spend at least 20% more on your tableware.



### Secure Handle Adhesion

Every time you serve a customer with a Performance or Distinction cup or mug, relax in the confidence that the handle has gone through 7 different quality checks to ensure it stays where it belongs - on the cup!



### Stackability

Stackable shapes result in space-saving solutions! A fully glazed base minimizes contact, preventing damage and wear.



### Microwave & Freezer Safe

Our products offer complete versatility. However you work, be confident our products work with you.



### Thermal Shock Resistance

Performance and Distinction products withstand temperature fluctuations of up to 350°F. Work with our products and work with confidence.



### Heat & Chill Retention

Piping hot main course or ice-chilled desserts, serve your food as it is meant to be served.



### Stain Resistance

All products have great stain resistance, which means you can work comfortably with any food time and time again... without leaving a trace.



### Glaze Damage Resistance

Durable transparent glaze provides an excellent quality finish and great performance in service.



### Dishwasher Safe

Our products withstand the dishwasher better than most by enduring the rigours of the food service industry wash after wash.



#DineSafe



## Industry views

**Alex Cooper, F&B manager at the Haymarket Hotel.**

“ Investing in quality tableware ultimately gives a sense of security for guests. It says to them that the detail is being looked after, and you’re in a safe pair of hands. This in turn also demonstrates consumer confidence in the hygiene of the venue. Tradition is important and quality tableware is something which is an expectation of guests when dining out. We at Firmdale have our own signature “Mythical Creature” and “Sailor’s Farewell” sets which are designed by the owner and give us an identity and talking point. While the initial cost of quality tableware can seem expensive, it has long term benefits as you

don’t have to keep re-ordering – providing care is taken with them, so the investment is worth it. Basic things such as resistance to wear, being non-porous and not affected by acid erosion is obviously important, quality tableware ensures this is covered. ”



**Cyrus Todiwala, Chef Proprietor at Café Spice Namasté and TV Chef:**

“ Investing in cheap tableware means that the entire setting looks sad and it automatically shows that the quality of what will come to your table may not be of the best and that the establishment may be cutting more corners than meets the eye. ”

**Dean Wilson-Hartles, Head of Food and Drink Development Leisure & Concessions, The Restaurant Group:**

“ First impression matter. It’s not always about the food, it’s what it is served on and that sets the right mood for the diner, it also sets off the visual aspect of the product you are putting on the plate as well as getting the colour palette correct. ”



**Nicola Underwood - Food Support Manager, Thwaites Brewery:**

“ Premiumisation is a very important factor. We’ve noted the trend for more up-scale dining, where the theatre and ambience of dining is as equally important as the food to the overall customer experience. Using reusable tableware allows us to ‘tap into premiumisation’ and elevate dishes. ”



## Made in Britain

Steelite International tableware is made to exacting standards - and, more importantly made for life. All tableware manufactured at our Stoke-on-Trent site comes with a Lifetime Edge Chip Warranty, our commitment to producing an excellent quality product that will stand the test of time - and the kitchen.

### Our Performance and Distinction collections benefit from:

- **a high alumina content** increasing strength and providing a whiter body colour
- **comparable body strength** across both collections
- **considered design** resulting in strong, practical products
- **design and manufacturing** processes working in parallel to produce the most durable solutions
- **a tough glaze** developed with product use in mind, on a par with porcelain hotelware products and resistant to industry strength detergents
- **durable transparent glaze** provides an excellent quality finish and great performance in service
- **being thermal shockproof** - take your product from freezer to oven or microwave to table with confidence\*
- **longer product life cycles** - 2-3 times longer than typical porcelain products, manufacturing that meets international legislation and regulation regarding product performance
- **many stackable ranges** - from cups and saucers to teapots - keeping storage space to a minimum
- **plate stacking** that minimises foot to face contact reducing glaze wear and tear during storage\*\*
- **53 quality checks** - each piece is inspected, examined, and tested to ensure that it is fit for purpose
- **Lifetime Edge-Chip Warranty** giving added assurance that your Steelite International product will withstand the rigours of a busy commercial environment and remain chip-free\*\*\*

\* excludes gold and platinum decorations. \*\* on most ranges. \*\*\* covers plates, rimmed bowls and saucers. Terms and conditions apply.



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## Environment and sustainability

**Steelite International is continually monitoring, developing and improving procedures to create minimum impact on the community and environment.**

We are a member of The Green Organisation that rewards and promotes environmental best practice around the world. We have a dedicated and innovative approach to caring for the environment.

Steelite International is the only tableware manufacturer to use a Lamella system for recycling clay waste. This has a positive effect on the environment and water discharged from the site is also cleaner.



**350** tonnes of clay per year

that does not need to be quarried – reducing the impact on the landscape and the energy required to remove/purify it

**350** tonnes per year

that does not need to be transported to Steelite International from Cornwall – creating savings on vehicle emissions and the use of fuel

**350** tonnes per year

can be reused that would otherwise have been sent to landfill – reducing landfill and the impact on the environment by saving fuel and vehicle emissions that would have been created to transport the waste



#DineSafe

**Simon Hulstone, Chef-Proprietor  
The Elephant, Torquay**

“ Quality tableware is the first thing the customer gets to see, and it’s the first intention of us saying we are serious. Chefs aren’t just looking at quality ingredients, we’re looking at quality suppliers. The best crockery is key to the experience of what chefs can offer. It is a statement of intent. ”



## Get in touch

**Our history goes back almost 150 years - and we're here to stay.**

To find out more about our British-made tableware and our Lifetime Edge-Chip Warranty, **email** [headoffice@steelite.com](mailto:headoffice@steelite.com) or **call** 01782 821000

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