



HOSPITALITYGEM RESEARCH INDICATES RESTAURANTS ESCAPING IMPACT OF DECLINE IN DRINKING

After the news that alcohol consumption in the UK has dropped 18 per cent in the last decade*, the latest research from HospitalityGEM indicates that this decline is on the part of the casual drinker, rather than the diner.

Of those surveyed, nine out of ten respondents said they drink alcohol when eating out, with the same figure stating that their consumption has not declined in the past year. Only 18 per cent say they are most likely to drink alcohol without a meal.

The majority drink in moderation, with 46 per cent consuming two drinks per meal, and only one per cent drinking four or more. The biggest influence on the amount drunk according to diners is a special occasion, with price and drink drive limits following close behind.

While it is perhaps no surprise that Friday and Saturday are the most popular days to drink alcohol, the survey also showed that 34 per cent of respondents are most likely to drink on a Sunday – perhaps demonstrating the long-lasting appeal of a relaxed Sunday lunch with a bottle of wine.

In terms of drinking companions, it is our spouses/partners who are the most popular, with 74 per cent saying these are who they are most likely to drink with. This is followed by friends (52 per cent), although colleagues lag far behind on 17 per cent – perhaps indicating after-work socialising is not a popular choice.

For the restaurant operator, these findings reiterate the importance of upselling – but also the importance of tailoring the guest interaction. While only forty per cent of those surveyed believe they are likely to drink more if upsold a drink, the research found that guests are more likely to be susceptible to upselling on Fridays and Saturdays, as they are already drinking more at these times. Therefore, if staff pay attention to the guests that are drinking more and upsell accordingly, there may be greater opportunities for increased sales.

Steven Pike, Managing Director of HospitalityGEM commented: “It’s certainly interesting to see that people are not choosing to drink less alcohol with their meals, which seems to indicate that it is the causal drinker who is in decline. For the operator, our research demonstrates the importance of encouraging staff to pay close attention to their individual customers rather than adopting a cookie cutter approach. If one table is drinking wine, while another is sticking to soft drinks, it makes more sense to focus on upselling alcohol to the first – perhaps offering coffees or additional sides to the other table.”

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* **Source:** <http://www.beerandpub.com/news/uk-alcohol-consumption-falls-again-in-2013-and-is-down-18-per-cent-in-past-decade-new-stats-handbook-from-the-british-beer-pub-association>

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