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Your guide to pop
up restaurants
from PKL Group

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Planning for pop-ups

In response to the growing popularity of 'pop-up' temporary restaurants, PKL has launched a new website (www.popup-restaurants.com) detailing the key considerations behind the success of such projects, based on the company's experience in this area.

By their very nature pop-up restaurants can be set up almost anywhere and at any time, their uses ranging from providing short-term facilities during peak seasons to promoting a new venue or product. They may be located in existing buildings – recent locations include old breweries, tram sheds, building sites, cafes and bars – or they may 'pop-up' in an open space at a festival or other large public gathering.

In all cases the planning, project management and implementation of the temporary kitchen facilities are the key to success. PKL has supplied pop-up kitchens to many such projects, including Westfield Stratford City's Studio East Dining Pavilion, Innocent Smoothie's 'Five for Five' promotion, the Bloomsbury 'Big Top' and Jason Atherton's two-day restaurant at the London Restaurant Festival which raised funds for the homeless.

For example, when Innocent established its 5 for 5 'pop-up' café at the Tramshed in East London for a week, caterers Bread and Honey selected PKL to supply the temporary kitchen facilities. PKL's equipment selection was matched to both the menu and the building's requirements to deliver a tailored solution with a kitchen, preparation area and dishwashing area.

Innocent, best known for its

smoothies and veg pots, aimed to enable 5,000 people to get their recommended '5 a day' in a two-course meal, for just £5. To that end, they worked with top chef Gizzi Erskine to create suitable lunch and dinner menus, with a view to serving 600 meals per day.

"The kitchen design was immensely important in enabling us to achieve this," commented Bread and Honey's James McDowell. "PKL worked closely with us to optimise the layout so we could maximise throughput, as well as helping us to work within the constraints of the site. These included the need to use low power electrical equipment as there was no gas and we couldn't exceed the building's electrical capacity," he added.

The equipment supplied by PKL included ovens, fryers, a hot cupboard, refrigeration equipment, washing areas, preparation tables and racking.

In another successful 'pop-up' venture, Michelin star chef Jason Atherton set up a restaurant to raise money for the homeless, availing himself of a wide range of catering equipment donated by PKL.

Located in a building in London's Mayfair, loaned by Grosvenor Estate, the restaurant was open for two nights as part of the London Restaurant Festival and the proceeds were donated to StreetSmart, the Festival's



official charity. The restaurant was managed and operated by Restaurant Associates, and had to be put in place within a very short time frame.

"From the time that the site was loaned to us by Grosvenor Estate we had just two weeks of frenetic activity to organise everything," recalled David Simms of Restaurant Associates. "PKL was very supportive and Jason Atherton was very pleased with the equipment he had to work with," he added.

The restaurant was assembled in a previously empty building so the dining area and kitchen had to be specially built, with just 40 places available each night. Guests were treated to a taste of things to come at Jason Atherton's new restaurant, due to open in January 2011.

PKL supplied a range of equipment including solid top stoves, hot cupboards, upright fridges and freezers, servery equipment and preparation tables.

When Westfield Stratford City opened its 'Studio East Dining Pavilion' in collaboration with Bistrottheque and Carmody Groarke there was no existing building, so the facilities had to be specially constructed.

The restaurant was erected on the roof of the 35m high Westfield Stratford City development in East London and was open for just three weeks, feeding around 2,000 people while treating them to breathtaking views across London.

Designed by architects Carmody Groarke, the restaurant was made from scaffolding and boards borrowed from the site and covered in recyclable plastic sheeting, in keeping with its setting. PKL's kitchen facilities - comprising a 'mini-kitchen', preparation kitchen and dishwashing area - were pre-fabricated off-site and delivered to site in portable buildings, reinforcing the 'construction site feel' of the project. The kitchens were designed to Bistrottheque's strict specification.