

Food pubs beat the recession

Publican Food Report 2009 underlines diverse menus and value-for-menu offer

Food pubs are responding to the recession with a better value-for-money offer and more diverse menus – and growing their sales as a result.

The Publican Food Report 2009 has blown a hole in claims that pub food is in the doldrums.

Of 182 pubs surveyed for the report, more than four out of 10 (43 per cent) have seen their sales grow in 2009.

Pubs have kicked back at the recession by introducing more ‘2 for 1’ deals – up nine per cent and now in 26 per cent of pubs – and discount offers.

But the report also makes it clear that cheaper prices are not the only game in town.

Whilst traditional British food is more popular than ever in pubs, there have been significant rises in healthy options – now in more than four out of 10 (42 per cent) pubs – as well as vegetarian and ethnic dishes.

And more pubs are getting behind national events such as The Publican’s Proud of Pubs Week as they look to lever extra sales with factors other than price.

Martin Bates, chief executive of the Craft Guild of Chefs, said the Food Report highlighted the fact that more customers were looking to alternative, cost-effective venues for out-of-home dining.

“Pubs can offer good quality food with local produce and quality ingredients in a range of atmospheres from casual and relaxed through to the fine dining or gastro pub experience - having more flexibility than high street competitors,” he said.

He also praised the fact that pubs were now offering a variety of both meal occasions, from breakfast to dinner, and dishes – illustrated by the rise in healthy, vegetarian and ethnic food set out in the report.

(Publican 19 November 2009)