

'Dish' predicts ...

A FASHIONABLE RETURN FOR RETRO FOOD

Foodie history has a soft spot for prawn cocktail and black forest gateaux ... and it's usually covered by 40 years of jokes and jibes.

But classic 70s retro dishes are on their way back - according to Manchester's newest catering operation 'Dish'.

Even fish finger sandwiches with ketchup, and a tall glass of knickerbocker glory for dessert, are climbing up the hit list for weddings and corporate entertaining – along with the new interest in classic 'people food' like cheeseburgers, toad-in-the-hole, bubble and squeak, barbecues and hog roasts.

"We have noticed this trend gathering pace throughout the country in the last six months," says Nick James, director of the London-based caterers 'Dish' – who are launching their first regional branch from a northern quarter Manchester office.

"There might be a little nostalgia involved but I think it's part of a trend away from fancy food with intense flavours, exotic sauces and different types of vegetables. People are looking for more basic food but given a different, modern twist and served elegantly well."

'Sharing food' is also being requested more often. Not only selections of canapés, starters and desserts but fashionably miniature main courses too – "which encourage people to talk more instead of sitting down to a stuffy dinner with stilted conversation," says Nick.

"People have got bored with having the same things to eat and, although we still do formal dinners, we believe in offering more informal choices."

CONTEMPORARY

Since beginning in London, 11 years ago, 'Dish' has grown into one of the UK's leading contemporary caterers – merging traditional values with modern professionalism and expertise from internationally experienced chefs and elegant but relaxed service.

"There are plenty of quality caterers around," says Helen Littlewood, Dish's Business Development Manager in Manchester, "but what's making the difference, these days, is people.

"Customers don't necessarily want their event catering run like a military operation. There may be occasions for this but 'Dish' has a reputation for being fast and efficient but adaptable and more laid back."

That style has gone down well with clients like H&M, Harvey Nicholls, Red Bull, Moschino, Virgin, KPMG, Reuters, Goldman Sachs, EMI, Google, BskyB, Nokia, O2, Ralph Lauren, Kodak, Pret a Manger, Sony Ericsson, Panasonic, Samsung and Tesco.

And for events at top London venues like the Natural History Museum, Royal Courts of Justice, Madame Tussauds, Guildhall, London Aquarium, London Dungeons and the Saatchi Gallery.

Now the Manchester base will be serving their signature brand of fine dining and imaginative buffets to a new north west customer base – at venues that already includes Macclesfield's Capesthorne Pavilion, Heaton House Farm and Manchester's Cube centre.

That includes Dish's innovative, fun ways to serve food – such as their eclectic gastro boxes – mini meals from the roasted epicure potatoes with star anise, poached quail eggs and slow roasted tomatoes through to suckling pig with soft white polenta, wild mushroom and balsamic.

And 'Dish' comes with an eco-policy of using as much locally-sourced British and seasonal produce as possible to support local communities, reduce food miles and lower the company's carbon footprint.