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MIDEXER

WHAT WILL IMPACT PEOPLE'S CHOICES IN FOOD, DRINK & TRAVEL?

2023 Mid-Year Trends Report

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2023 Mid-Year Trends Report

Key themes

Tech's new frontier

The power of generative artificial intelligence (AI) is infiltrating every sector, including food, drink and travel. By 2032, the prediction is that its overall market value will soar to \$188bn as AI demonstrates its capability to do virtually anything. The World Economic Forum has warned that AI could displace 25% of jobs within five years, making it a hot topic for debate. Despite concerns over the impact on employment, consumers show a willingness to adopt the technology - but brands will need to show that it's trustworthy and accurate first. Whether we like it or not, AI is here to stay and we're only beginning to scratch the surface of what it can do. For better or for worse, it's set to transform every aspect of our lives.

Living fantasies

Consumers are seeking fun and escapism with a thirst for entertaining, diverting or quirky experiences. There's a mood to live life to the full, cut loose from the tougher reality of the everyday and be fully immersed in fictional or other worlds. In bars and restaurants, this is being reflected through kitschy decor, intriguing new flavours on menus and unique, memorable experiences that can be shared and enjoyed with others. In the travel sector, there's a growing appetite for destinations and offers increasingly influenced by pop culture as consumers seek to escape, and explore the locations they love

Next-Level standards

The stakes are rising as consumers demand greater sustainability, higher quality and better value. This is being heightened by the ongoing financial squeeze. Whilst many are still willing to spend and splash out, they expect to get exactly what they want in return. As consumer expectations rise around sustainability, brands are being held to account. Ongoing labour shortages, the energy crisis and inflation are demanding new standards of innovation and enterprise in sustainability, but businesses are rising to the challenge. Next-generation spirits and foods that help the environment are increasingly appearing on menus alongside a growing move to greater inclusivity. Brands that cater to diverse audiences who have previously been sidelined have an opportunity here too.

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ANDRÉ HUESTON MACK

Sommelier and restaurateur

André Hueston Mack is an American sommelier turned entrepreneur, winemaker, and restaurateur. He made a name for himself as a sommelier at acclaimed restaurants such as The French Laundry and Per Se before launching his own wine label, producing unique yet easy-drinking, and accessible Oregon wines. He also crafts a Kentucky straight rye whiskey, Rye & Sons and owns six Brooklyn restaurants.





SIMONE CAPORALE

Acclaimed bartender and co-owner of SIPS

Simone Caporale is an acclaimed bartender and co-owner of SIPS in Barcelona, which has been ranked No.3 on the World's Best Bars list. With over 15 years of experience, Simone has established himself as an innovative mixologist known for pushing the boundaries of cocktail-making. He co-founded The Art of Shaking (TAOS), an independent global platform that designed to inspire and elevate the skills of bartenders.

JANE KNIGHT

Journalist and former travel editor for The Times

Jane Knight was travel editor of The Times for a decade until the end of 2019. She now works as a freelance editor, writer and consultant, with her work published in titles including The Telegraph, The Mail, Condé Nast Traveller and The Good



TRENDS



Introduction

After two long years, the food and restaurant industry is bouncing back. Reports suggest that sales are **recovering** to pre-pandemic levels and **studies** find consumers are now only dining out 10% less than in 2019.

That's not to say there are no challenges. Although showing **signs of falling**, food costs remain high. Take eggs, which hit record prices in the US in early 2023 (**reaching** \$4.99 for a dozen by January, up from \$1.93 a year earlier). And in the UK, the cost of living crisis means that **90% of consumers** are looking to save money when eating out. Nevertheless, people still want to spend money on food - one **survey** found that seven in 10 consumers see eating out as the treat they most look forward to, despite financial hardship.

To learn more about emergent food trends in the next 12 months, we sat down with André Mack, an NYC-based sommelier and restaurateur to gain his insights into the sector. We've identified five trends affecting the food industry, and what they mean for brands.

2023 Mid-Year Trends Report | Food

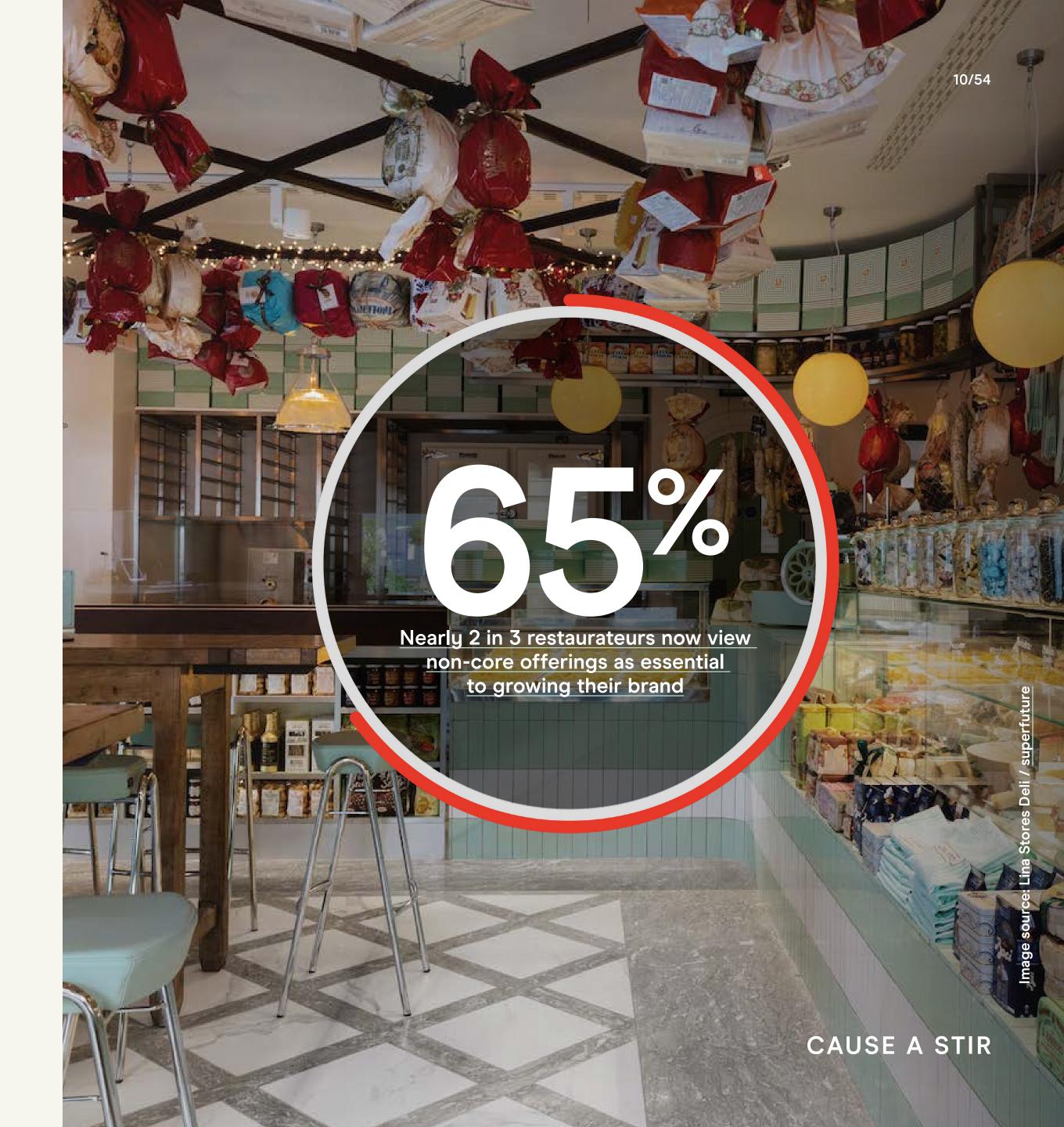
Highlights & takeaways

- What was old now feels new again. Nostalgic childhood dishes and traditional cuisine are being given a fresh new twist, appealing to a generation of consumers who value the connection to the past, but don't want to compromise their health or the environment.
- Diners want to keep things candid and are championing authentic, quirky restaurants that celebrate 'weird' dining experiences.
- Restaurants are looking toward the future. They're embracing rapidly-changing AI technology and adopting practices that can help secure a more sustainable, soil-rich, biodiverse world.

1 Do-it-all dining

As running a restaurant or food business becomes increasingly expensive, owners are looking for ways to maximise revenue and make their spaces more efficient. While offering takeout was vital during the pandemic, and is a continued offer by many, rising costs have further increased the need to diversify revenue streams.

With a Square survey finding three in five consumers have purchased retail items at a restaurant in the past year, deli ranges featuring pre-made chilled or frozen meals will continue to be a lucrative offer, especially as people choose to eat out less to save money in both the **UK** and **US**.



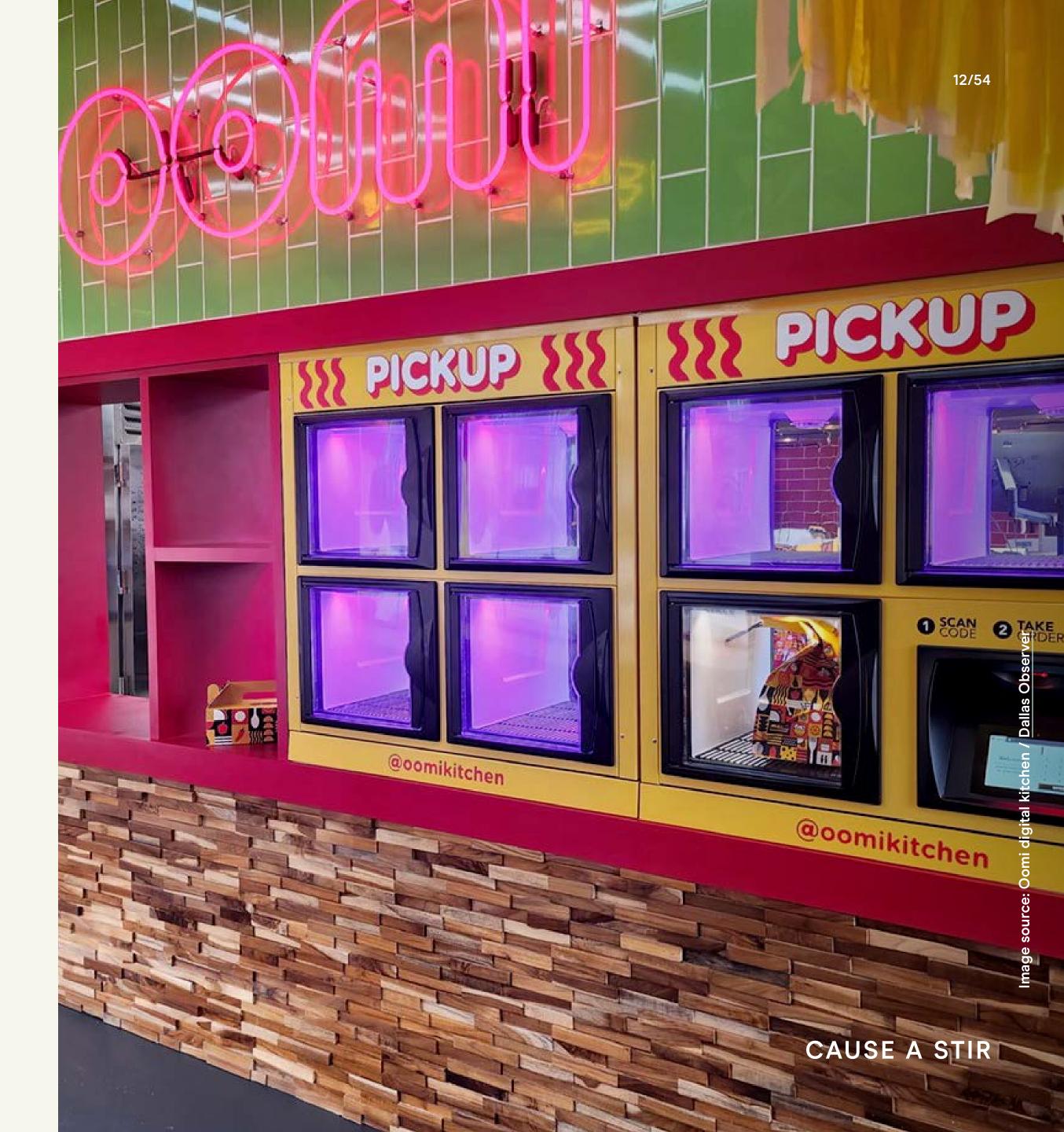


Despite **ongoing labour shortages**, some businesses are maximising use of their physical spaces by extending their opening hours. For example, the renowned **Superiority Burger** in New York City launched an **after-hours service** from 11pm to 2am that includes an exclusive menu featuring a 'late night burger'. Similarly, **Paradise**, a Sri Lankan restaurant in London, has launched '**After Dark**' evenings, where the restaurant morphs into an intimate bar with a lax island vibe. Running from 10pm Thursday to Saturday, guests can enjoy Sri Lankan house-batched cocktails, delicious eats, and easy listening beats. As restaurant owners continue to face rising costs, creating unique experiences outside of normal operating hours provides an opportunity to attract more customers from a wider range of demographics, as well as minimise waste of fresh ingredients leftover from normal service.

Alongside restaurants, daytime delis are finding ways to maximise retail space through evening offers. **Feeling Food** is a neighbourhood deli in South London that lives a double life. By day, its large central table is stacked with bakery and deli goods...but by night, it's a supper club style table for sharing tapas.

Even ghost kitchens are evolving, as many struggle to reach a high enough purchase volume to stay open on delivery orders alone. With an **estimated failure rate of 35%**, ghost kitchens are pivoting to broader possibilities to stay profitable. They're no longer hiding in the shadows and expanding beyond their initial sole purpose of preparing food for delivery. Instead, they're creating unique blends of off-premises and on-premises dining experiences, and many are shedding the "ghost kitchen" label altogether, opting for the term "virtual restaurant" in its place. Take **OOMI**, a Texas based business: it offers food from a dozen popular brands, provides self-ordering kiosks, uses smart pickup lockers, can be found on Google Maps (unlike true ghost kitchens), and is opening sites in central downtown locations. **Nimbus** in Brooklyn takes things a step further by inviting guests to enjoy their food on site and offering an event space for private events and programming.

The industry's current challenges present hurdles. However, this unique era also offers a chance for restaurants to stretch their legs and identify creative new offerings that only their own one-of-a-kind brand could pull off. Taking bold, strategic actions during times of uncertainty can be a winning strategy. By seizing this opportunity to set themselves apart and try something new, businesses can leave a lasting impression and develop true staying power.



2 Revel in eccentricity

In these challenging times, consumers are seeking out brands that offer a sense of escapism and fun. Thanks in part to the rise of social media platforms like TikTok, authenticity and eccentricity are becoming increasingly important for brands to connect with their audience. This marks a new era where being a little 'weird' is not just acceptable but is celebrated.

When legendary eatery **Noma** announced this year that it will close in 2024, it raised questions over the future of traditional fine dining – but there are plenty of enterprising new food talents ready to explore a new, more relaxed era in its place.





Take Chef Imana's Hi Felicia restaurant in Oakland, for example. This Michelin starred eatery features a daring neon green exterior and a black-and-white interior adorned with deliberately kitschy art and is self-described as vulgar. By infusing the restaurant with the owner's personality, story, and creativity, diners are treated to a truly unique and memorable experience. It's one that goes beyond just the food on the plate and allows them to connect with the restaurant on a more personal level.

Some spaces are offering an immersive escape from the world outside its doors. **Kapara**, an Israeli restaurant in London, beckons customers into a 'Tel Aviv Fantasy' of bright pinks, lush plants, and booming house music. Meanwhile, **Bad Roman**, an Italian restaurant in New York features statues of Italian greyhounds and wild boar, serpent shaped doorknobs, and mosaic fountains. It's been described as **maximalist**, **excessive**, **and wonderfully stupid**. Others recreate a time and place, like **Empire Empire**. The newly opened London space rejuvenates the carefree energy of India's 70s music scene, with drinking, dining, and dancing all under one roof.

Brands can connect better with customers in the coming year by embracing their properties' quirks. Consumers are looking for the unpolished traits that make a place memorable. 'Crazy' ideas for special dining events or pop-ups that might have been better dismissed in years past are well worth running with.

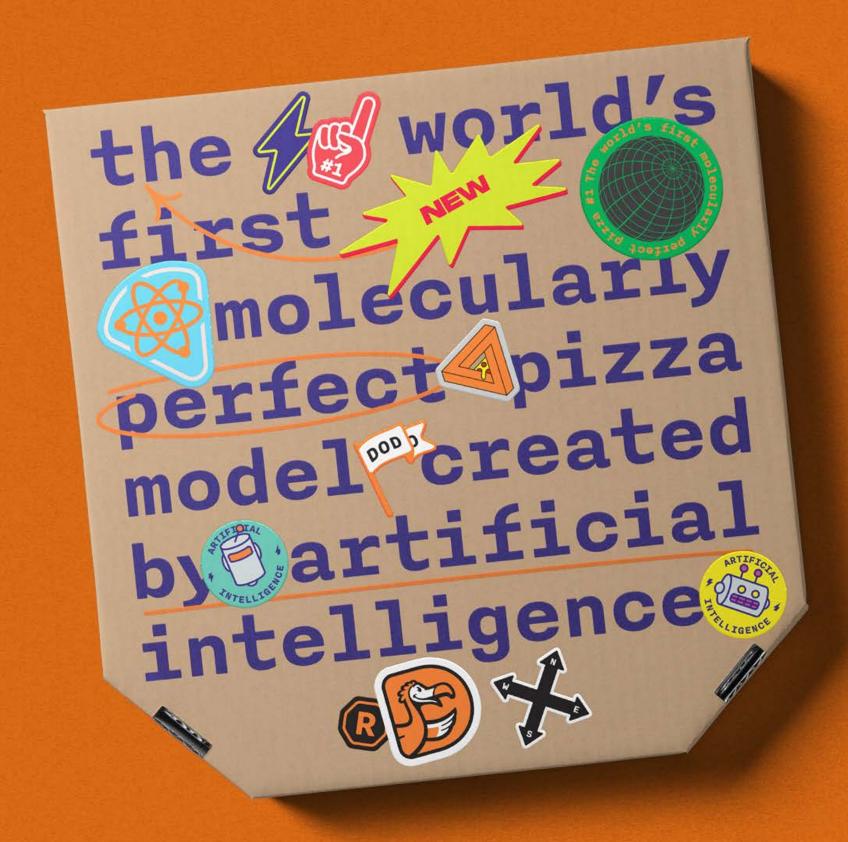
pade source. Dodo Pizza / Dribb

3 Al on the menu

The arrival of generative AI in late 2022 and early 2023 has kick-started a revolution in the food industry, and we're already seeing innovative chefs explore AI-inspired recipes. Take **Dodo Pizza**, a casual pizza chain in Dubai which attracted headlines after using AI to come up with new toppings. Meanwhile, **Branja**, a Miami restaurant, has used an AI image generator to inspire the restaurant's menu and décor using the prompt of "a chocolate mousse inspired by Picasso."

The growing use of this technology is helping restaurateurs come up with fresh flavours, pairings and surprising combinations of foods. Software startup **CloudChef** is utilizing AI to tap into something even more complex: a chef's intuition. The system can train by 'watching' a chef make a recipe, and can use that knowledge to help optimize each step of the food preparation process each time the recipe is made in the future.

AI also stands to help consumers interact with their favourite restaurants. ChatGPT is helping diners find **OpenTable**reservations, and AI system **Presto Voice** aims to optimize drive-thru experiences while offering a solution to labour shortages.





The AI revolution has expanded to home kitchens as well: ChatGPT has launched an AI feature that can use a photo of a stocked fridge to determine which ingredients the user has on **hand** and suggest relevant recipes. While the bot is still in its early experimental days, it will only get smarter – and in the near future it could become a go-to tool for home cooking. TikTokers have even found a pastime **conducting experiments to determine** how AI-generated recipes stack up to human-written ones. With the likes of **Barilla Open Carbonara video**, showing how to create vegan, halal and kosher versions garnering 4.2m views on YouTube and 43% of millennials globally living with dietary restrictions, AI can help adapt recipes to their needs while still allowing for variety in their meals. For example, for its new vegan range, Shake Shack analysed the molecular structure of its animal-based products using AI and replicated it using only plant-based ingredients.

The grocery sector is embracing AI with open arms as well: 59% of grocers say they plan to test AI-based solutions in their store in 2023, and 82% believe AI chatbots will help improve customer service. ChatGPT's recently announced partnerships with Instacart and Shopify signal changes ahead to many consumers' grocery routines.

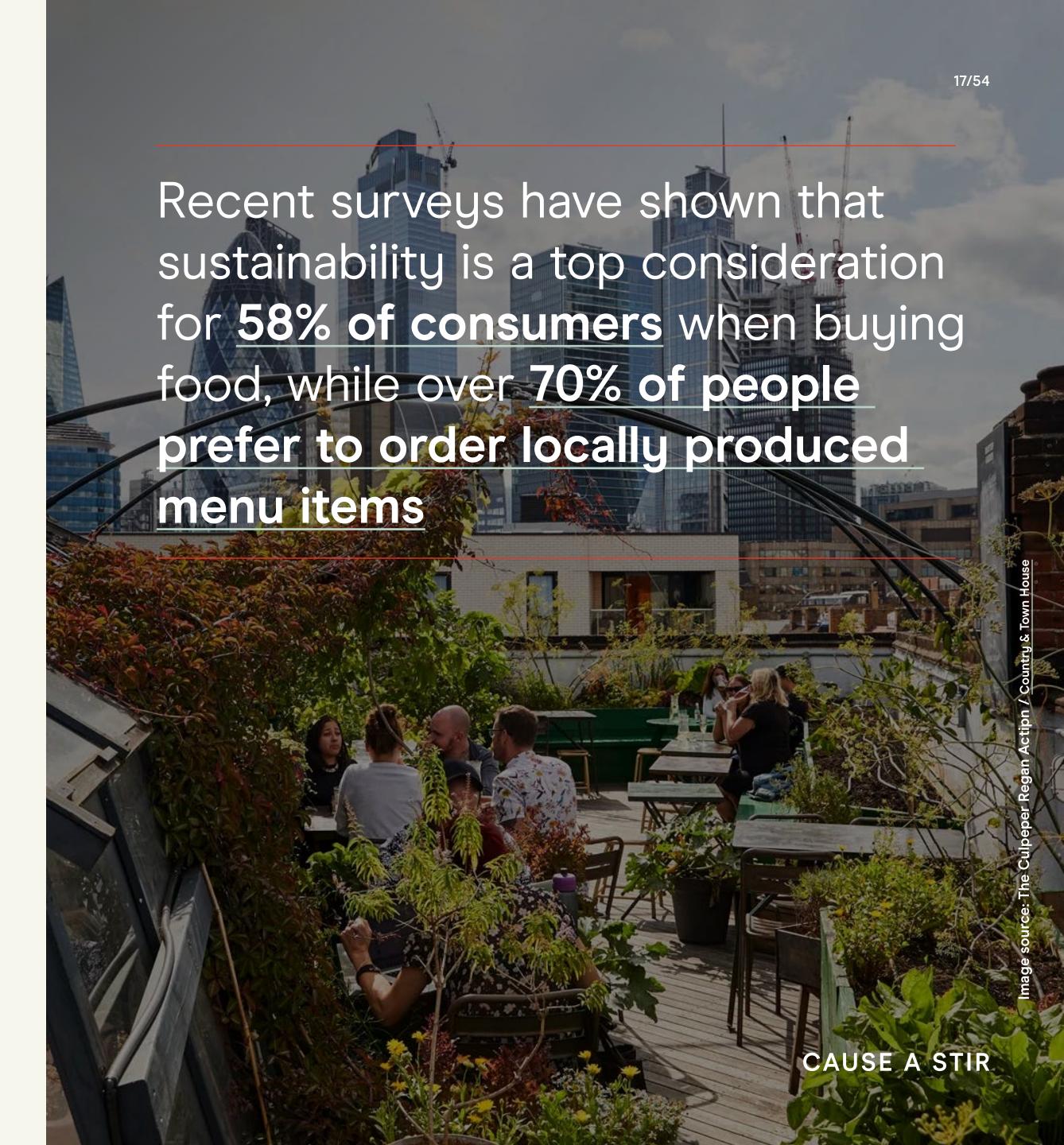
ChatGPT hit 1 million users just 5 days into its launch, quickly gained 100 million users by January 2023, and reached 1.6 billion visits in March. AI shows no signs of slowing down. Embracing its capabilities to enhance menus and to provide unique dining experiences can designate brands as user-friendly and future-focused.

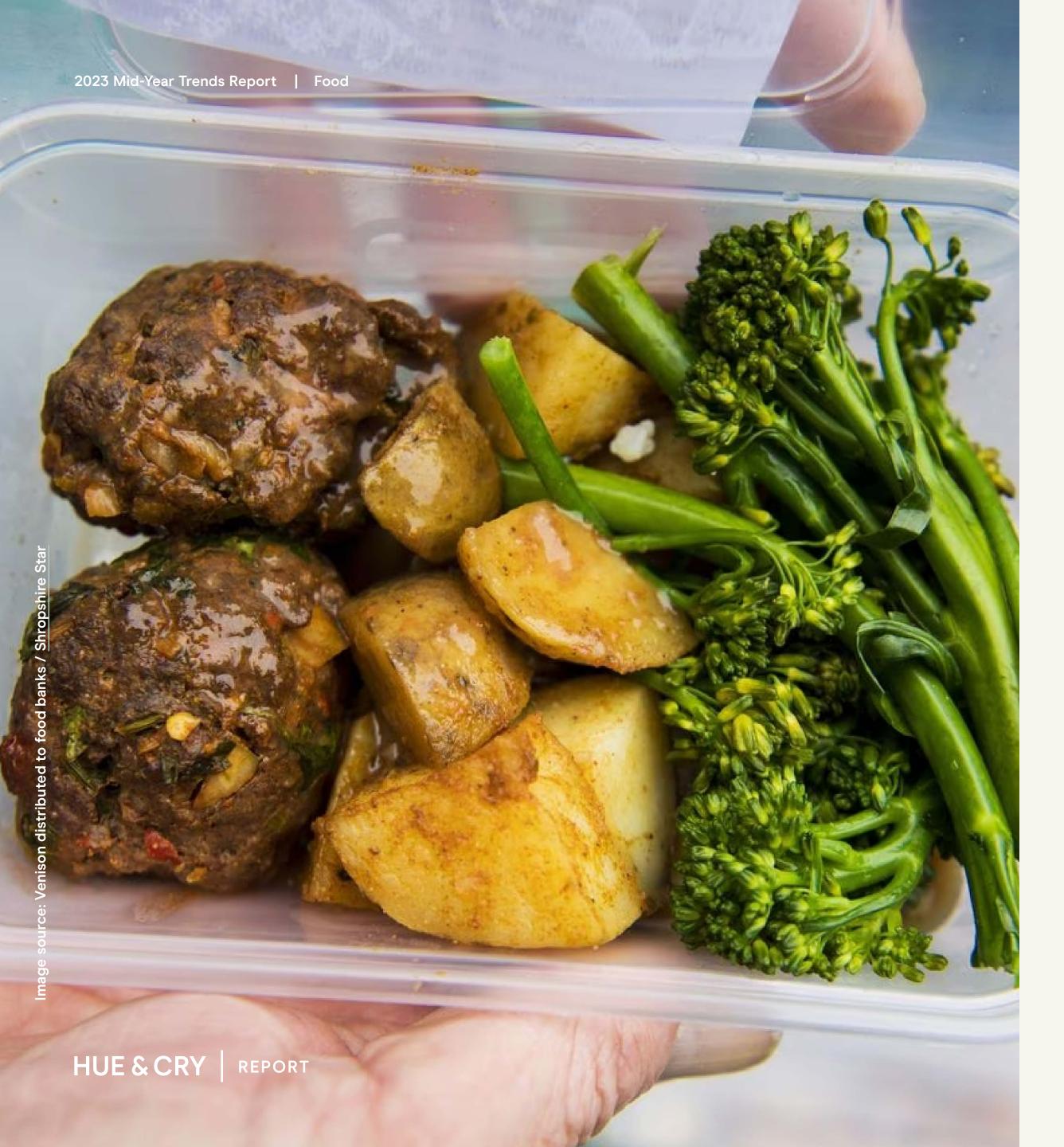
Dining for biodiversity

The next wave of sustainable eating is not just about reducing carbon emissions or limiting food waste, but about restoring biodiversity. As more people become aware of the relationship between what we eat and the health of the planet, there is growing interest in regenerative farming, responsible sourcing, and agriculture that prioritises nurturing the species we risk losing.

Although restaurants have been sourcing from regenerative farms for some time, consumer awareness of regenerative agriculture remains low. In the US a survey carried out by the International Food Information Council found that only 19% were familiar with the term, and similarly in the UK, the dairy sector found there is limited consumer understanding.

One example is **The Culpeper**, which hosted **Regen Action**, three days of talks, Q&As and dinners centred around regenerative farming. Ingredients were sourced from the likes of Two Fields Olive Oil, an entirely regenerative farm, and The Culpeper's newly-acquired plot of land in **Deptford.**





In addition to more sustainable farming practices, restaurants are also nurturing biodiversity by putting invasive species on the menu, which can be a great alternative source of protein and inspiration for innovative dishes.

A UK pilot scheme hopes to help tackle the cost of living crisis and invasive species at the same time by **distributing venison to food banks**. Thanks to a halt in culling during the pandemic, the UK deer population reached 2 million – its highest number in a thousand years. Because venison is often sold exclusively in higher end markets, it risks becoming food waste in times of austerity. This scheme aims to redirect the meat to families who need it.

This approach to invasive species is also being championed by intrepid restaurants such as **The Wildboar Inn** in Cumbria which has recently added **grey squirrel meat** to the menu. In the US midwest, copi is a fish that threatens the Great Lakes. It's been eaten for thousands of years in China but US restaurants like **Freight House** in Kentucky and **Frontier** in Chicago are only just beginning to add it to their menus.

Businesses can make an impact – both on the environment and on their success – by integrating locally invasive species into their dishes and educating diners who may not be familiar with the ingredients or have negative preconceptions surrounding them.

5 Nostalgia, remixed

Chefs and brands are reaching towards the past to uncover inspiration for the future. Consumers are eager for nostalgic tastes with modern, innovative twists. In 2023, chefs will improve upon much-loved dishes by adding updates that today's diners crave, like sustainable preparation, healthy ingredients, or elevated plating.

Nostalgia is almost certainly behind the success of two modern upgrades to childhood favourites: tbh and Chubby Snacks. Thh offers a healthier take on Nutella, with vegan ingredients and zero palm oil. Chubby Snacks feature a nutritious, grownupfriendly twist on Uncrustables, the popular sugary grab-and-go PB&J. Restaurants are also weaving nostalgia into their dine-in menus. In the UK, the baseline remit of Papi's food is elevated nostalgia. There, guests can find Retro- classic garlic bread on the menu, but made with fermented potato bread, grilled with new wild garlic and a winter citrus koshu. Likewise, lauded Cheshire restaurant **Linden Stores** is centred around local produce. Here, chef Chris Boustead incorporates cosy memories from his childhood in Scarborough through umami Bovril mayonnaise and whimsical desserts like Yorkshire parkin topped with rhubarb ice cream.





In the coming months, also expect to see brands and restaurants remixing traditional cultural cuisine for new audiences. This year, Italian chefs are tapping into new rice varieties and innovative preparation methods to create **new takes on risotto**. At **Erba Brusca** in Milan, chef Alice Delcourt uses more sustainable heirloom rice varieties and takes joy in adding unexpected flavours to risotto, like unusual spices, hints of sour, and beets. Due to its **sustainable credentials**, restaurants across the UK are seeing a resurgence in traditional Scottish cuisine. London eatery **Slow Richie's** serves up haggis beef burgers nightly, whilst **40 Maltby Street** dishes out haggis in lamb gravy.

In a more futuristic sector, food scientists and innovative chefs are combining the best of the old and new through working with cultivated meat. They aim to offer consumers the benefits of classic meat dishes without the environmental harms they carry. Beef production is the **largest source of greenhouse gases**, but global meat consumption per capita is set to grow to **35.6 kg by 2031**.

To combat this, companies like <u>Vow Food</u> are working on growing meat from animal cells rather than sourcing protein directly from livestock. The company is part of a wave of researchers investigating the prospect of mixing and matching cells from various species to create the healthiest and most sustainable meat possible. After studying more than 50 species, Vow recently introduced a mammoth meatball, cultivated from the extinct creature's DNA. Vow's meat will make its restaurant debut later this year, when its cultivated Japanese quail hits restaurants in Singapore.

Remixing iconic dishes and consumers' childhood favourites offers a great way to make everything old feel new again – especially if nostalgic products are updated to provide modern health or sustainability perks.

Insights & opportunities

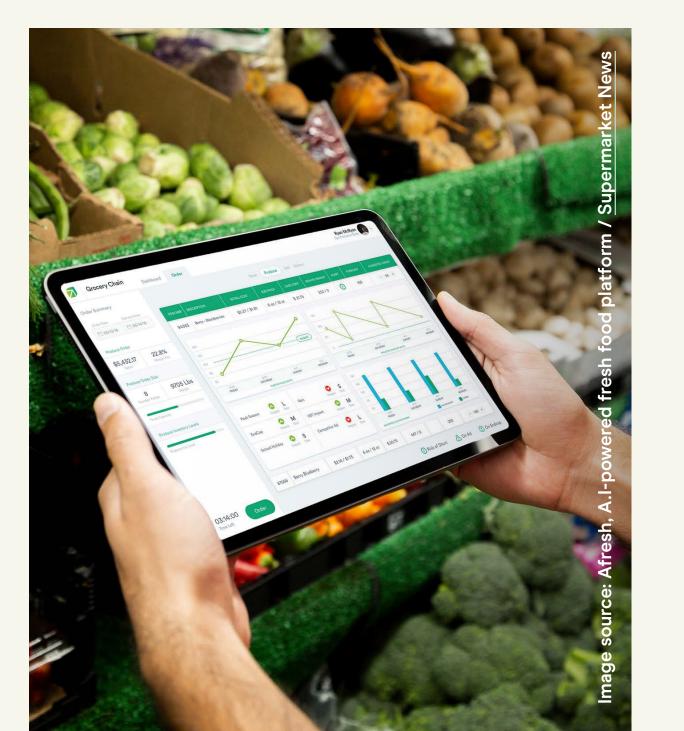
1. Embrace burgeoning technology

This year, AI in the food and beverage market was valued at \$3.07 billion and is expected to reach \$29.94 billion by 2028. In an industry in which 62% of restaurant operators don't have enough employees to meet demands, AI offers opportunity. It can help to fill labour shortages, assist with orders and streamline processes previously carried out by humans.

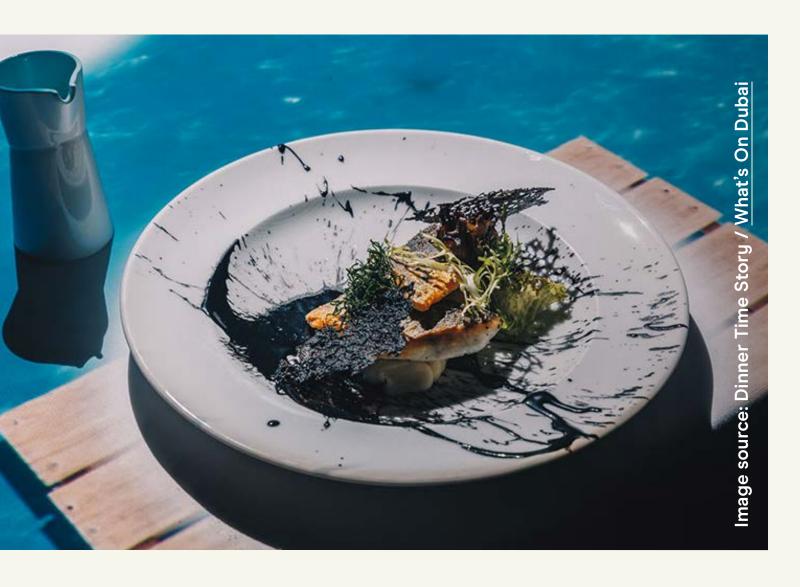
Grocery stores are looking to AI to help minimise food waste, make sure produce is fresh and predict consumer demand.

Because the technology is changing so quickly, brands need to be ready to know where AI can help them, adapt and embrace it.





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2. Infuse sustainability with entertainment

Consumers are hungry for immersive, personality-led dining experiences. With sustainability also high on the menu, brands and restaurants have the opportunity to embrace sustainability, and bring it to life in a fun, entertaining way. For example, Dinner Time Story has launched **Message in a Bottle**. The immersive adventure uses state-of-the-art 3D projection technology, interactive storytelling, and mind-bending illusions to create a one-of-a-kind sensory experience. And at the same time, the message of sustainability is woven into the experience from beginning to end, making it not only entertaining but also socially responsible.

3. Redefine what 'sustainable' means

Restaurants are currently contending with an energy crisis, labour shortages, inflation and climate change. That means that sustainability no longer just refers to the environment - it's about preserving the viability of the entire industry in the face of huge challenges.

Businesses need to find nimble ways to bolster their businesses.

From making physical spaces more versatile and product innovation to opening at non-traditional hours, innovation is essential.

A great example is **Fortnum & Masons**, in an attempt to become more relevant to more people more often, the department store recently opened a **third floor**. The space hosts cooking demonstrations and dining experiences by international and in-house chefs alongside a gin distillery.

2023 Mid-Year Trends Report | Drink



Introduction

Despite economic pressures, the demand for on-premise experiences in Europe, America, and the UK remains strong. However, recent increases in the cost of living have had a knock-on effect in the industry, with four in five consumers globally being severely impacted (35%) or impacted to some extent (45%). As a result, 24% of US consumers anticipate spending less in bars in the next three months than in the previous three, while only 14% think they will spend more. Nevertheless, there is still a strong desire among consumers to indulge in affordable luxuries that bars offer - just with more mindfulness and less frequency and spending.

To discover more about burgeoning drink trends in the next 12 months, we spoke with Simone Caporale, the acclaimed bartender and co-owner of Sips, the No. 3 best bar in the world. We've identified five trends on the horizon that will impact how people drink and what it will mean for brands.

2023 Mid-Year Trends Report | Drink

Highlights & takeaways

- The No & Low sector continues to experience a high demand, with no indication of slowing down. The latest innovations are opening new possibilities for the industry. They do this by catering to the more sophisticated and nuanced tastes of drinkers, while also adopting more sustainable and ethical approaches.
- Consumers continue to prioritise quality over quantity. They are also taking a greater interest in learning about cocktails, flavours and spirits. As a result, the industry will see a new level of appreciation for the skill and expertise of bartenders. New accolades and training programs from established industry players will also help to drive greater recognition and elevate bartenders to the kind of status chefs enjoy.
- With a growing emphasis on diversity, equity and inclusion, customers are seeking out bars that not only offer great drinks but also feel welcoming and safe for all. This includes spaces that are accessible to people with disabilities, as well as those that cater to a variety of cultural backgrounds and identities.

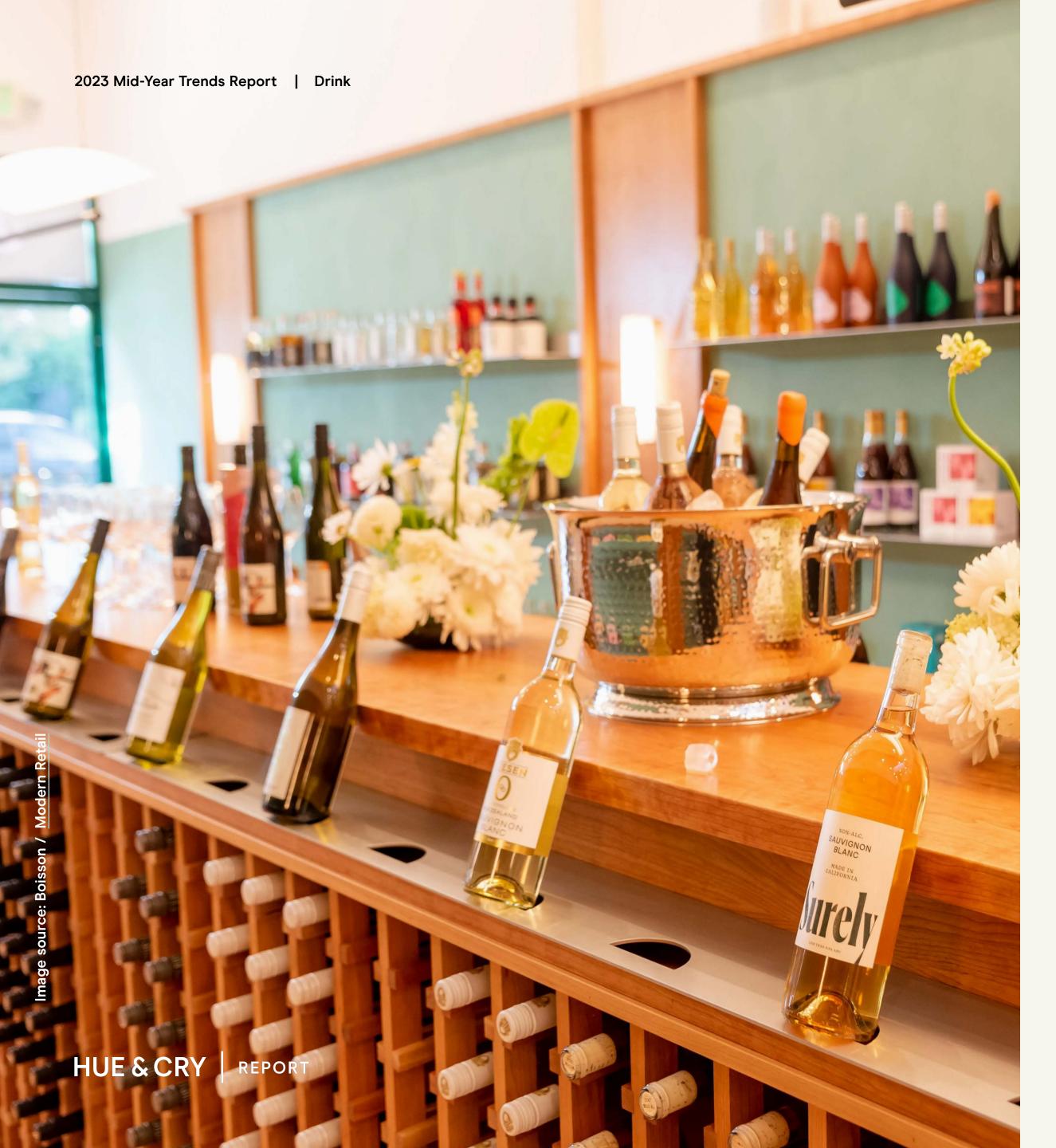
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1 Maturing moderation

The market for No & Low alcohol beer, cider, wine, spirits and ready-to-drink products grew by more than +7% in volume across 10 major global markets. Plus sales of zero-proof spirits increased by 90% over the last year. The continued growth is now expected to surpass the last four years, especially when it comes to no-alcohol products. Whilst first iterations of No & Low often didn't deliver against expectations, the category is now blazing its own trail to meet more nuanced tastes.

Wine drinkers can now approach No & Low options in the same way they would with traditional wine, exploring its regionality, grape variety and taste profile. Hand on Heart is a brand offering high-quality, non-alcoholic wines sourced exclusively from vineyards in California. The wines are hand-crafted by experienced winemakers and made using cutting-edge technology to remove the alcohol. Unlike other brands, a filtration system gently separates the alcohol and reincorporates essential aroma and flavour volatiles in a single pass. This results in wines including a Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon and Rosé with delicate aromas, flavours and Wand mouthfeels that rival their alcoholic counterparts.





With increased investment in the space and the University of Adelaide announcing the world's first NOLO wine research facility, we can expect significant advancements in the coming year. Especially amongst red wines, which have traditionally lagged behind whites and rosés.

Beyond taste, consumers are increasingly looking for no and low options which align with their values, opening doors to more sustainable, thoughtful and ethical approaches to beverages. For example, **Boisson**, a high-end no and low spirits retailer based in America and expanding to London, offers the option to search for Halal-certified wine and female-led brands on its website. **Everleaf**, a non-alcoholic aperitifs, recently announced it has achieved **B Corp** status. In the coming months, we expect more to follow.

As the No & Low category evolves, discerning consumers are willing to spend more on quality products aligned with their values.

With around 90% of No & Low alcohol volumes consumed at home, there is still a huge opportunity for bar and restaurants to profit.

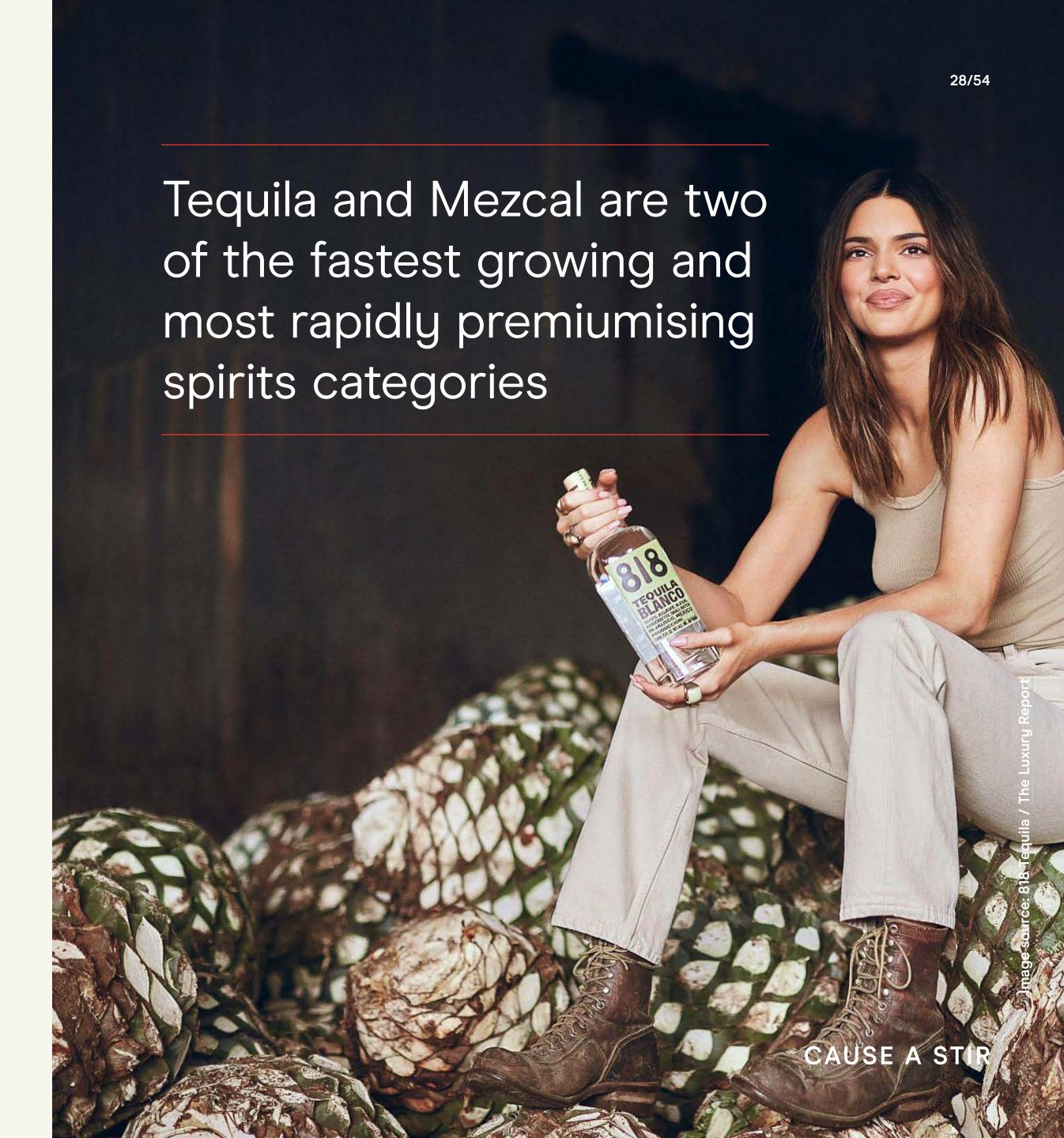
They can do so by offering more high-quality, value-orientated products and educating consumers around the diverse range of liquids now available.

2 New wave Mexican Spirits

Tequila and mezcal are two of the fastest growing and most rapidly premiumising spirits categories. In 2022, the global tequila market was valued at \$9.5 billion and is set to hit a value of \$14.69 billion by 2030. Meanwhile mezcal will hit a CAGR in excess of 22% between 2022 and 2031, topping out at US\$2.1 billion globally. In 2023, the industry will evolve to become more socially conscious, with a focus on sustainability and making space for marginalized groups.

In August last year, **Mijenta** announced it was the first tequila to enter the ranks of **B Corps**. More recently, **818 Tequila** and **Pensador Mezcal** have earned the stringent ethical business certification. In the coming months, we expect more brands to follow as they look to adapt to a more socially conscious and climate-aware consumer base.

As consumers become more educated about tequila and mezcal production and seek out ethically responsible brands, it will give rise to more Mexican owned brands. Erstwhile Mezcal is a Brooklyn based mezcal and agave importer, advocating for small, independent, family-owned producers who lack representation outside their local communities in Mexico. This drive will be supported by companies like **Zapotec Travel** who are promoting the accomplishments of indigenous women in the mezcal industry.





As more people visit mezcal production sites and purchase from local establishments, some women including Hortensia Hernández Martínez of **Mezcal Desde la Eternidad** are starting to see success and recognition in their own brands.

While tequila and other mezcals will continue to take centre stage, growing demand, potential climate-driven shortages and sustainability **concerns** will give room for some lesser-known agave or agave-adjacent spirits on drink menus. These include sotol, raicilla and avila, that share similarities to tequila, but differ in their production methods, use of distinct plants and origin regions, resulting in unique flavour profiles. Sotol, for example, is not made from agave, but from the Desert Spoon plant found in northern Mexico and parts of Texas. By 2026, the global value of agave spirits – including avila and raicilla – is expected to **rise** by 67% compared to 2021 and a wave of new distillers are hitting the market. With backing from Pernod Ricard, Lenny Kravitz has partnered with Casa Lumbre to launch **Nocheluna Sotol** and **Desert Door Distillery**, the only sotol distillery in the US, just announced plans to expand distribution to 14 states. Bars are catching the wave too. For example, **KOL Mezcelaria** in London intrigues curious drinkers with a wide range of Mexican spirits from nearly every state in Mexico, including bacanora, sotol and raicilla cocktails.

Brands looking to meet the increasing demand for Mexican spirits while preparing for potential shortages can support and help consumers discover and learn about the breadth and diversity of Mexican spirits, as well as prioritise more sustainable tequila and mezcal makers.

Levelling up

Consumers have become much better educated about what it takes to make a good drink. They're **prioritising quality over quantity** and taking the time to learn about cocktails, flavours and spirits. As such, there's a greater demand for craft and artisanal spirits in drinking establishments from consumers who are much more open to experimentation.

As a result, people are putting greater value on going out for drinks. Dubbed 'the bourbon barometer' in the US, statistics indicate that consumers are **four times more likely** to splurge on beverages than personal care when they're looking to treat themselves. The trend is not limited to the US either - 71% of UK consumers agree that drinking is one of the treats they most look forward to. With greater knowledge and understanding around what it takes to make a great drink, in the coming months we expect to see a growing appreciation of the bar industry and what it has to offer.

New accolades are shining a light on the skills in the industry too. Putting it on a level playing field with gastronomy, Michelin has begun to take note of top-notch cocktails at the restaurants it ranks. This year it granted Park Chinois in London its first-ever Great Britain & Ireland Exceptional Cocktails Award, bringing mixologists closer to the sphere of chefs.





This status will soon be cemented by the launch of the **Pinnacle Guide**, a new recognition system that ranks the world's best bars with one, two, or three 'PINs' of acclaim. With an unlimited number of pins to give out and an inclusive judging criteria, it offers the opportunity for bars of all sizes and styles to be recognised. At the same time, it will be elevating the industry by encouraging higher standards across the globe.

As staff shortages continue to **plague** the sector, elevating the industry and positioning bartending as a legitimate and prestigious occupation will be key to its future.

With recent launches in Madrid, South Africa, and Bermuda, Bacardi continues to expand Shake Your Future, an initiative to train unemployed young adults in bartending. The 10-week programme, run in collaboration with the European Bartender School, trains and provides participants with valuable work experience at Bacardi partner hospitality establishments. Grads leave the programme with an internationally recognised diploma and permanent work opportunities.

From understanding the heritage of a local premium spirit to sampling the highest level of mixology, there's a growing thirst and appreciation for exceptional, on-premise experiences. By creating elevated experiences and highlighting the authenticity of their products, a broader range of outlets beyond cocktail bars can appeal to this growing set of discerning drinkers.

Hospitality distilled

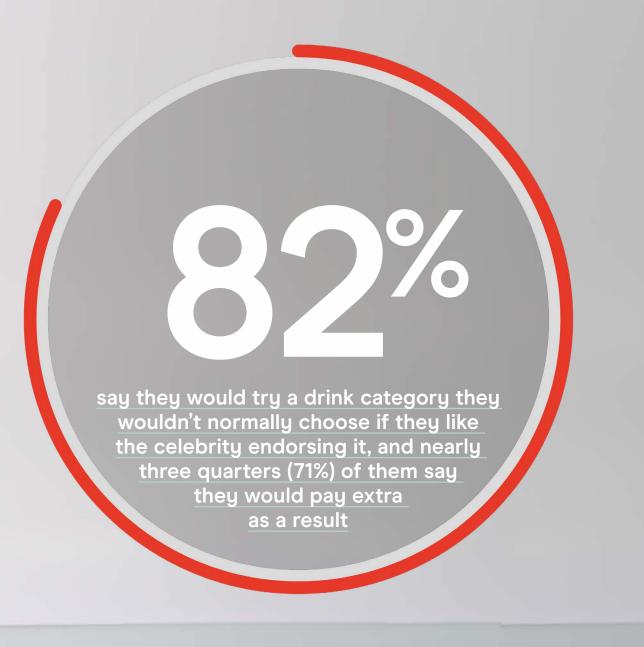
In recent years, the spirits industry has been witnessing an influx of mergers and acquisitions. Established players have expanded into fast-growing categories like **agave spirits**, **rum** and **American whiskey** by acquiring small craft brands. Simultaneously, celebrity-founded brands are being snapped up by drinks companies eager to leverage their star power.

Recognising the potential for increased brand presence and long-term sale opportunities, in the coming year, businesses emerging from other sectors, such as hotels and restaurants will be working to create their own signature serves. In doing so, they can offer their guests a unique experience whilst also building brand recognition and loyalty.

Having a signature spirit offers a key point of differentiation for restaurants. For example, chef Nobu Matsuhisha has joined forces with Qui Tequila to launch an extra anejo tequila called **Nobu Rare Reserve**. With only 1,500 individually numbered bottles available, the limited-edition tequila can be enjoyed at any of Nobu's 51 restaurants worldwide, creating a truly unique and personalised experience that guests can't find elsewhere.

In 2018, there were less than 40 celebrity-affiliated brands. Now there are over 350.





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Hotels are also leveraging their in-house bars and restaurants to showcase their own brands by investing in distilleries and partnering with experienced spirit makers to create unique offerings. **AKA** hotels worked with Philadelphia Distilling to create **a.vod**, a custom microbatch vodka served at all their AKA locations. Meanwhile, the Four Seasons Milano recently launched its own custom **Stilla Gin**, which was the brainchild of Luca Angeli. As the bar manager of the hotel's Stilla Bar, he wanted to create a distinctive spirit only available to hotel and bar guests.

Meanwhile, **P&O Cruises** has taken the concept of signature spirits to the next level. It's partnered with The Tidal Rum to launch the world's **first-ever rum distillery at sea**. Their custom rum is inspired and influenced by the sea and shore and will be available at select P&O bars aboard ships.

Beyond brand building, taking a DIY approach can help businesses reduce costs and become more self-reliant, demonstrated by Happy Accidents. In addition to being a bar, it is also a distillery with a craft-distiller and importer's license. It distills its own products and sources and blends products between distilleries and regions, producing each spirit specifically for the cocktail for which it is designed. Representing an entirely new business model for bars, it won **Best New Bar** in Liquor.com awards.

As the DIY trend gains momentum, we can expect to see more hotels, restaurants and bars creating unique and innovative spirits that reflect their brandvalues and identity. This presents an exciting opportunity for consumers to discover new and unexpected offers, while also strengthening their connection with their favourite hospitality brand.

5 Barrier-free beverages

Drinks may be a central element of the going-out experience. However, it's the warmth, humanity and sense of welcome that truly brings a bar to life. Now more than ever, people are seeking inclusive, friendly and accessible spaces that cater to everyone. This means accommodating patrons from all walks of life and ensuring their safety.

With an **estimated 1.3 billion** of the world's population living with a disability and an ageing population it's becoming even more important to cater to an increasing need for accessibility. TikTok star Taylor Lindsay-Noel is using her platform to raise awareness about the lack of wheelchair accessibility in many Toronto restaurants and bars. In her "Access by Tay Accessibility Review" videos, she offers reviews of popular establishments, including service, and level of accessibility for those with disabilities.

As more people and the likes of **Blue Badge Awards** continue to raise a spotlight on the issue, we will see an increase in bars, pubs, shops and products putting accessibility first in both their design and their culture. Leading the way is **Beaupierre**, a recently opened wine shop in New York. It displays wine bottles at eye level for customers in wheelchairs and offers business cards in braille.





Meanwhile the team at **Garden Bar** in Phoenix aimed "to think of everything we possibly can to make it more accessible to a wide variety of people". It covered all basis from widened doorways, to bathrooms without stalls, to a website with comprehensive details about the venue's layout. Extending through to packaging, **Hops and Dots Brew Co** in Bishop Auckland serves its craft beer in braille-stamped cans.

In the next year, we'll also see more inclusive spaces for the LGBTQIA+ community, especially catering to queer women and the trans community, who in the US have seen dedicated spaces reduce to **just 27**. In Los Angeles, newcomers like **The Ruby Fruit** and **Honey's at Star Love** have prompted lines down the block with the promise of great drinks, whimsical décor and a destination where consumers could feel safe being their truest, happiest selves.

And it's not just customers who will benefit from this growing push for inclusivity. Establishments are also prioritising the well-being of their staff, consulting with the likes of the **Healthtender** and **Safe Bars** to create healthy work environments, foster accessible workspaces and ensure safe spaces for both employees and patrons.

By prioritising safety, accessibility and acceptance in their spaces, brands can create welcoming places for all customers where everyone feels at home.

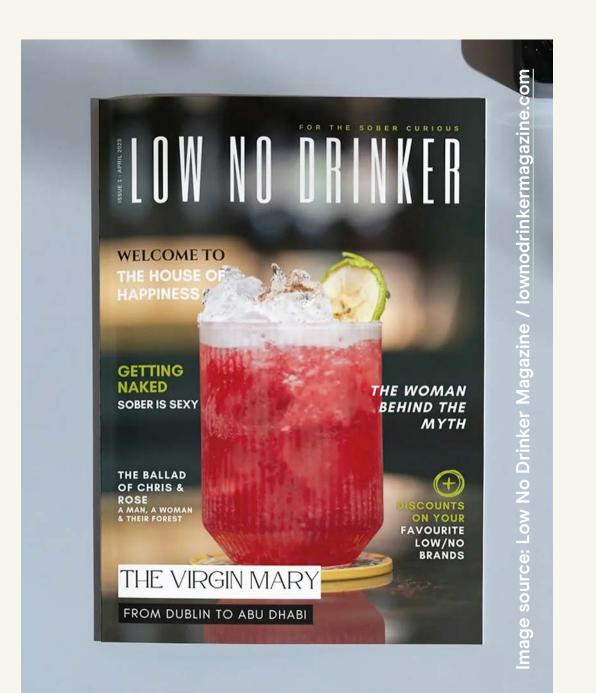
Insights & opportunities

Celebrate No & Low lifestyles

As drinking alcohol in moderation continues to become a mainstream lifestyle choice, catering to this group offers an increasingly lucrative opportunity. In fact, it's been claimed that **the UK on-premise alone loses £800 million (US \$985m) per year** due to a lack of non-alcoholic options.

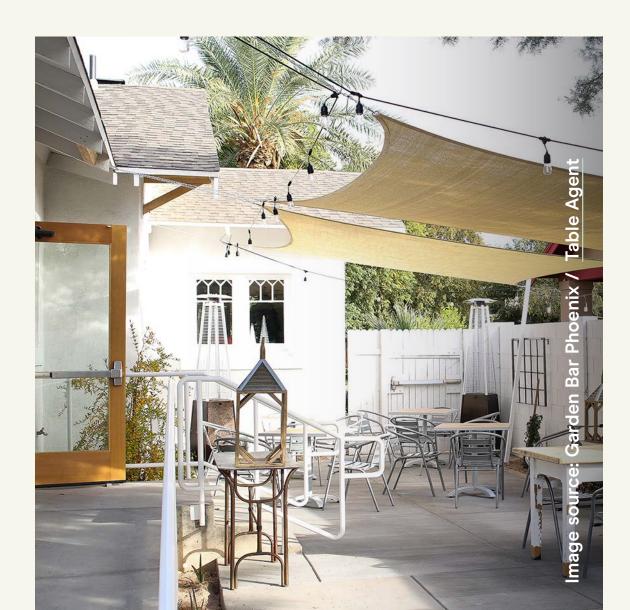
Whilst consumers may have been disappointed by their first No & Low experiences, a high-quality offer in the on-premise will be key to changing negative perceptions. Beyond the products themselves, brands that help people navigate a new moderated lifestyle are primed to do well. For example, **Sans Bar** offers alcohol-free party hosting classes and **Low No Drinker Magazine** is the UKs first magazine for the sober curious drinker.





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Promote new and lesser-known spirits

As climate change continues to put pressure on popular categories such as tequila and mezcal, bars and brands have the opportunity to educate, inspire and excite consumers around premium, local and lesser-known spirits. A great example is **Master of Malt** who use their customers' previous purchases to suggest new products from other categories, all offered in sample size. By creating personalised recommendation and minimising risk of trial, brands can introduce customers to new and exciting flavours, whilst promoting lesser-known spirits that help to mitigate supply issues and futureproof the industry.

Embrace inclusivity

The shift towards inclusive and ethical offerings is a positive trend in the industry. Brands that embrace this approach are likely to see significant benefits by increasing their reach and appeal. With 58% of disabled people avoiding venues if disabled access information isn't shared, strategies can range from small changes like high-contrast signage and updating website information to reimagining the entire experience. By taking a proactive approach to these issues, companies can build a reputation as ethical and responsible businesses that are committed to meeting the needs of all consumers.

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2023 Mid-Year Trends Report | Travel KLIVI of UK travellers expect to travel as much as they did in 2022 – and one third plan to travel even more HUE & CRY REPORT

Introduction

The outlook for the travel and tourism sector is increasingly positive for 2023. Despite continued challenges – from high consumer price inflation (10.1% in the UK this March), to strikes, war in Ukraine and staff shortages, the desire to travel is as steadfast as ever. According to the **Economist Intelligence Unit**, global tourism arrivals will increase 30% this year. Skyscanner's 2023 **travel trends report** finds that 41% of UK travellers expect to travel as much as they did in 2022 – and one third plan to travel even more. Similarly, an **AHLA survey** found 61% of US travellers want to take more vacations in 2023 than in 2022.

To better understand travel trends in the next 12 months, we spoke with journalist and former travel editor for The Times newspaper, Jane Knight. We've identified five trends which affect how, when and where people will travel in 2023 and beyond and what they mean for brands.

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Highlights & takeaways

- The growth of AI in the travel industry will undoubtedly transform the way we travel. With AI powered travel recommendations and assistant-like travel apps, we're seeing new opportunities to discover and explore the world.
- Media and pop culture will continue to have a significant impact on travellers' choices of destinations, mode of transport and travel style as visual escapes from TV, movies and TikTok influence their holidays.
- Flexible work schedules and desire to truly drink in a destination will lead to slower travel experiences. There will also be a demand for amenities offering a luxe, home-like atmosphere, from wellness offerings to workspaces to gathering places.

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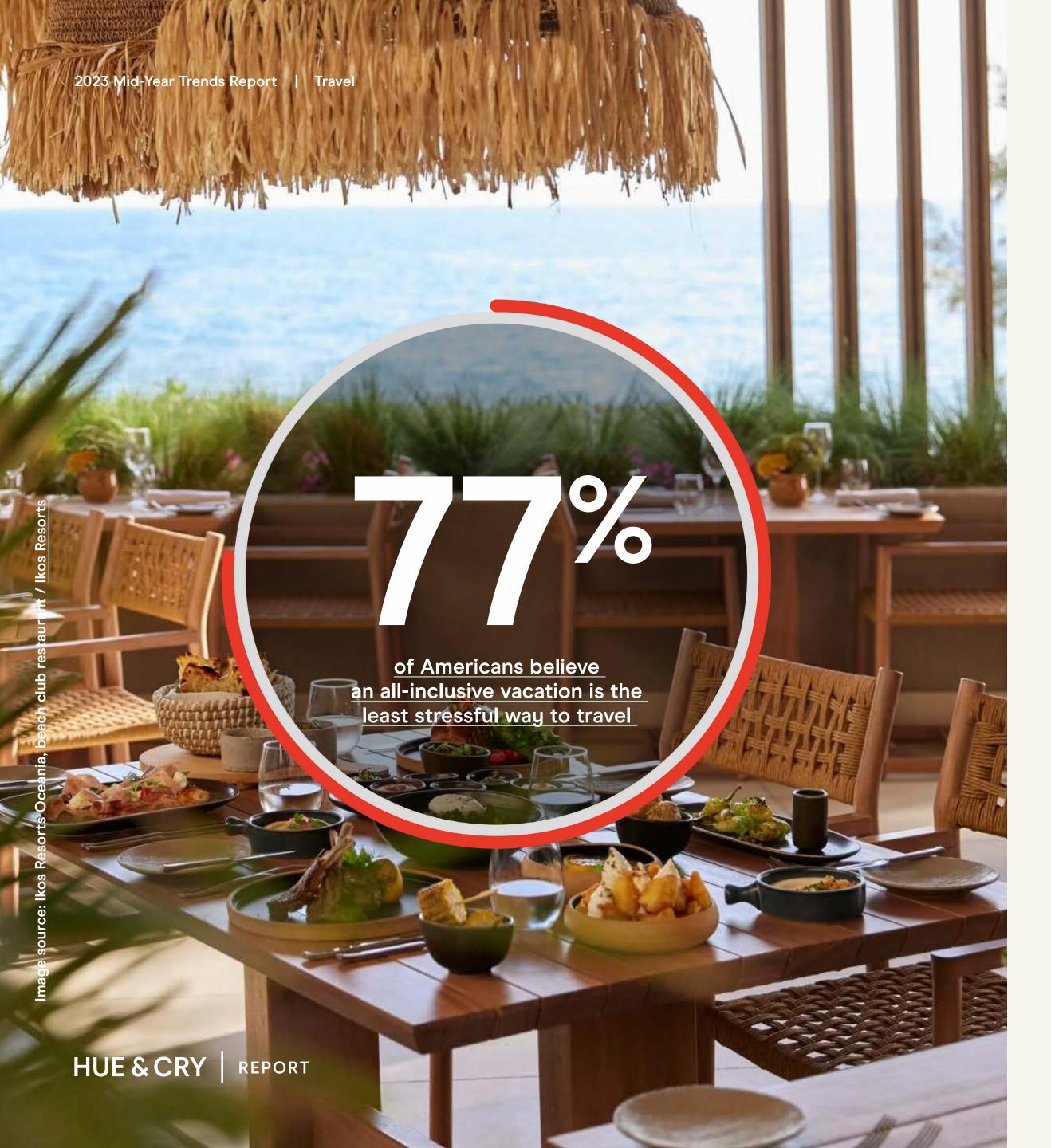
1 Super-savvy jetsetting

As we noted in our previous travel trends report, consumers are responding to the rising cost of living by maximising their travel experiences through expert advice and unique opportunities. As the impact of inflation becomes a **growing concern**, particularly for those in the US, the value for money has become the top priority for many travellers.

As a result, travellers are becoming increasingly strategic in finding ways to stretch their budgets and make their money go further, such as searching for destinations with favorable economic conditions or tracking currency exchange rates. In America, 21% of travellers have changed their desired destination in search of better value.

For instance, Travel Republic recently **reported** a 163% surge in British bookings to Egypt in March 2023 compared to 2019. This is likely due to the recent slide in the value of the Egyptian Pound. Meanwhile, strong currency rates have seen flight bookings from the US to the UK soar by 30% for April to June compared to 2019. With the dollar weakening against the euro, non-Eurozone destinations like Turkey could become **even more** attractive to US travellers in the coming months.





To cater to this trend, travel companies may want to offer tools that help consumers understand the impact of inflation and exchange rates on travel costs. For example, **NerdWallet**, a personal finance brand, has begun publishing monthly travel inflation reports measuring changes in travel-specific costs like transportation, hotels and entertainment. By offering such resources, brands position themselves as trusted experts in helping travellers make informed decisions about where to go.

Beyond currency, another way savvy consumers are looking to bolster their wallets is by going all-inclusive. According to the **ABTA**, 29% of people are planning an all-inclusive holiday this year (**compared with** 18% in 2018) and at the luxury Fairmont Mayakoba in Mexico, **almost half** of customers are now opting for all-inclusive stays. This is mostly down to the convenience and freedom it offers.

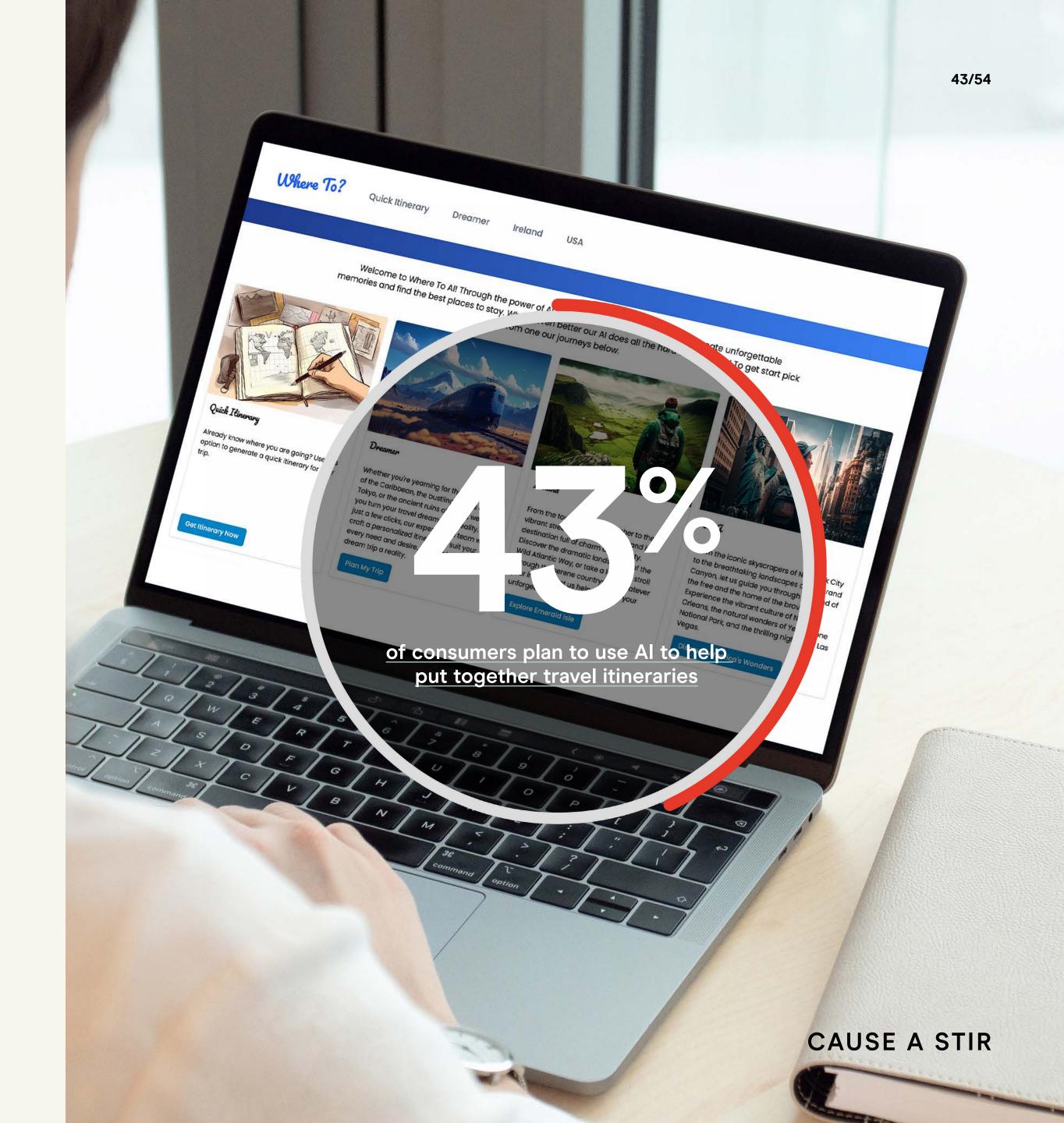
The surge in popularity is launching a new breed of superinclusive offers. These offers go far beyond buffet meals and basic drink selections. At the **Ikos resort chain** in Europe for example, Michelin-starred chefs cook dinner and premium spirits and Tattinger are available on tap. Major players such as Marriott are stepping up their game too: they've announced the development of an 'All Access' Ritz-Carlton and the first ever all-inclusive W Hotel, an adults-only playground that will open in the Dominican Republic in 2025.

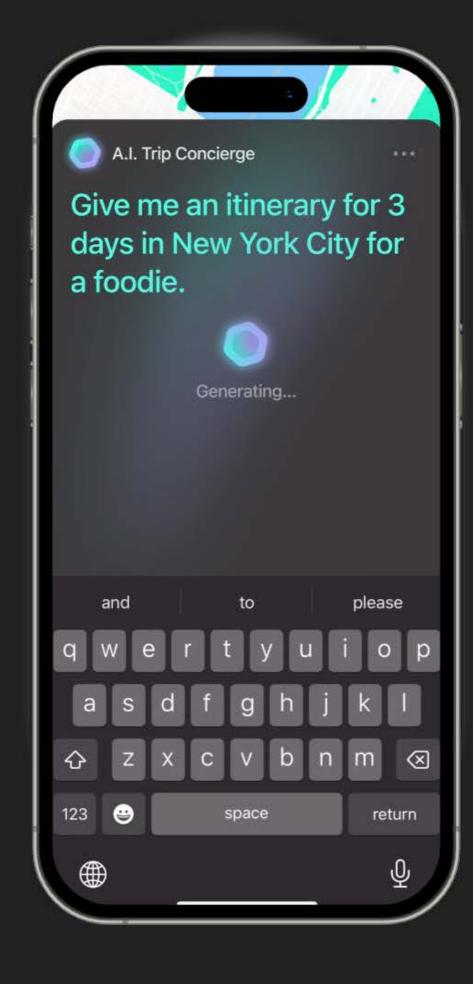
Al is your travel agent

The travel industry is undergoing a transformative shift with the advent of artificial intelligence (AI). This technology promises to revolutionise the way we plan, book and experience travel. While AI has been gradually integrated into various travel businesses, particularly as customer service chatbots, the launch of generative AI signals a new phase in the role of this technology.

According to a recent study by Forbes, 43% of consumers plan to use AI to help put together travel itineraries, indicating a growing interest in leveraging the capabilities of AI to simplify and enhance the travel planning experience.

Despite facing **criticism** for providing **unreliable travel advice**, AI-powered tools like **Where To** and **BetterTravel** have already begun to showcase their potential by offering personalised travel recommendations. By leveraging these tools, travellers can easily discover and plan trips within their desired budget, timeframe and distance. This ultimately streamlines the entire travel planning process.





Major travel companies such as **Expedia Group and Kayak**, are also exploring the possibilities of AI-powered solutions to enhance their customer experience. Both brands recently connected their own data with ChatGPT to suggest itineraries, flights and hotels based on more conversational interactions with its search engines.

Generative AI can also serve as a useful assistant to help make the most out of your travel through personalised recommendations and itineraries. **TripNotes** is a new AI-powered travel guide app, which aims to do just that. Positioned as 'your all-in-one, go-anywhere app,' it uses generative AI software to provide tailored recommendations. These are based on user queries, email content, social media such as TikTok, reviews and more. It can also adjust to weather conditions and present real-time business information, like location, hours, reviews and photos. Currently in beta testing, in the future it aims to offer users an end-to-end experience. It will have the ability to complete bookings from taxi to table by integrating with services such as Uber and Opentable.

Despite consumer concern (76%) about the possibility of incorrect information being disseminated by AI tools like Google Bard, ChatGPT and Bing Chat, a majority of consumers (65%) would still trust businesses that use AI technology. However, it is essential for travel businesses to prioritise the accuracy and trustworthiness of AI-generated content. By demonstrating responsible use of AI and its ability to provide dependable information, businesses can establish and maintain consumer trust in the age of AI solutions.

Exclusivehybrid havens

Although slower than anticipated, corporate travel continues to show signs of recovery. With flexible working now firmly established within the corporate world, hybrid travel is set to gain even more momentum in the coming year. In fact, 76% of business travellers plan to extend their trips for leisure in the next 12 months and 75% of millennial corporate travellers see business travel as a job perk.

As travellers increasingly seek versatile third spaces, forward-thinking hotel brands are combining remote offices, gyms, spas and social areas into one attractive package: the exclusive members' club. With members clubs **having seen a surge in popularity in the last year** and wellness tourism market projected to reach nearly \$2 trillion by 2031, these innovative concepts cater to the next generation of luxury travellers.

These will combine business and leisure travel, seek one-of-a-kind moments and look for purpose-led experiences whilst maximising revenue streams with local audiences.





For example, Six Senses has introduced **Six Senses Places**, a new kind of social club combining wellness, community, celebration and sustainability. The club's first location is at The Whiteley in London, but as it becomes widespread, a global membership service is on the horizon, offering travellers access to its clubs worldwide. Similarly, in the US, **Canyon Ranch plans to open urban, mid-size, partial-service wellness clubs** in Houston in early 2024 and in Fort Worth, Texas, by the end of 2023.

Some are directly targeting commuters, such as Sea Containers London. It recently launched 'Commuter Club', a subscription service for those travelling regularly to London. Members benefit from a number of hotel stays, gym access and a Cabin Trunk to safely store clothing, work files and other personal belongings including secure bike storage.

At the most exclusive end of the market, **Aman Resorts** introduced its first membership club with the launch of its New York property. For an initiation fee of \$200,000 and an annual fee of \$15,000, members gain 24/7 access to a private office that handles all their travel planning needs, including private charters by land, sea and air. They also gain access to unique experiences across Aman properties, private event planning, health and fitness guidance and privileged access to global sporting events, fashion weeks and artists' studios.

By creating membership models, hotel brands can play a more significant role in their audiences' lives, positioning themselves as wellness and lifestyle brands that cater to their needs far beyond stays at their traditional properties.

Slow travel renaissance

In recent times, pent-up demand and the fear of missing out (FOMO) have led to impulsive travel bookings and overpacked itineraries. This often leaves travellers feeling unable to fully unwind. According to a **recent study**, two in three Americans feel too much pressure during their vacation to actually enjoy it, with nearly a third worrying about not being able to do or see everything they planned.

To counteract this trend, a growing number of travellers are adopting a more mindful and conscious approach to their journeys. Instead of rushing through a soulless list of must-see sights, they are embracing the concept of 'slow travel'. This concept is all about allowing time to truly immerse in local culture, seek a deeper connection with the people and places they visit and uncover hidden gems off the beaten path along the way.

Although slow travel started to gain momentum in 2020, recent developments such as flexible work-from-anywhere policies and heightened environmental concerns will see it grow in **popularity** in coming months. Across Europe, the number of **domestic flights is already declining** as more sustainable and scenic overland options are being explored.





A brand at the helm of this trend is **Orient Express**, who is adding two new journeys to its offer. The Orient Express **Dolce Vita** will welcome passengers to travel from the Alps to the Amalfi Coast later this year, while starting in 2025 the **Nostalgie-Istanbul-Orient-Express** will run from Paris to Istanbul after a 40-year hiatus.

At the lower end of the market, many national and international carriers across Europe are increasing the number of sleeper trains they offer and Eurostar has announced a 'wine train' from London to Bordeaux. In America, Dreamstar Lines is also reportedly developing a luxury overnight hotel train service to connect San Francisco and LA. This will also provide an eco-friendly alternative to one of the busiest flight routes in the US.

When it comes to road travel, <u>Adventures Overland</u> have announced their latest trip. It will cover 12,000km in 56 days from Istanbul to London. Beyond the usual sights, the itinerary delves into Europe's offbeat destinations, such as Slovenia's green capital, Ljubljana as well as a drive on the Atlantic Ocean Road to Nordic cities. Meanwhile, tour operator <u>Intrepid Travel</u> has partnered with flight-free specialists **Byway** on a range of trips to Spain, Italy and even Morocco, showing travellers just how much can be explored overland.

As people become more conscious of their carbon footprints and seek out unique, lesser-known destinations, travel brands that provide eco-friendly alternatives to air travel and incorporate the journey as a significant part of a fulfilling travel experience are set to do well.

From dream world to destination

Travellers' choices of destinations are being influenced by an ever-wider range of media and pop culture influences. In a recent American Express survey, 70% of millennial and gen Z respondents say they've been inspired to visit a destination through seeing it highlighted on a TV show, movie, or news source. 'Set jetting,' a concept sparked last year in which people visit destinations from TV or movies, saw shows such as Emily in Paris and The White Lotus lead to direct increases in the number of people visiting their film locations and boost tourism by an average of 31%.

In the coming months this trend is set to continue. We're seeing a blurring of worlds between screens and reality, which presents a prime opportunity for destinations and hotels to bring travellers' fictional worlds to life.

For example, luxury travel company **Black Tomato** now offers 60 custom tours for James Bond fans set in filming locations around the world. In Taormina, Sicily, Quiky Tours is offering a White Lotus guided tour and Ireland Chauffeur Travel is taking travellers to explore the Irish filming locations of the Banshees of Inisherin.





In anticipation of the release of Barbie, Discover Los Angeles is **offering a guide** to the movie's filming location of Venice Beach. Meanwhile, Visit California is taking things a step further by sharing **Barbiecore tours** of the whole state, tying into both the film and the popular TikTok aesthetic.

Recognising the power of inspirational travel content, Expedia has launched a **shoppable travel channel** called **GoUSA TV**. It gives travellers the tools to shop and book hotels, flights and tours as they are watching travel content. The idea behind this is to bridge the gap in travel marketing between the growing influence of streamed movies and TV on tourism and travel bookings.

Beyond the screen, brands from outside the sector are finding ways to expand and diversify their brand reach, flex their creative muscles by offering travellers new inspiration. For example, Zara and Wallpaper recently partnered to launch the 'Where to Now'. A book series featuring five off-the-beaten-track adventures and slow-travel tempo itineraries. Bon Appétit is tapping into the growing popularity of food travel and their captive audience with the launch of chef-led travel experiences.

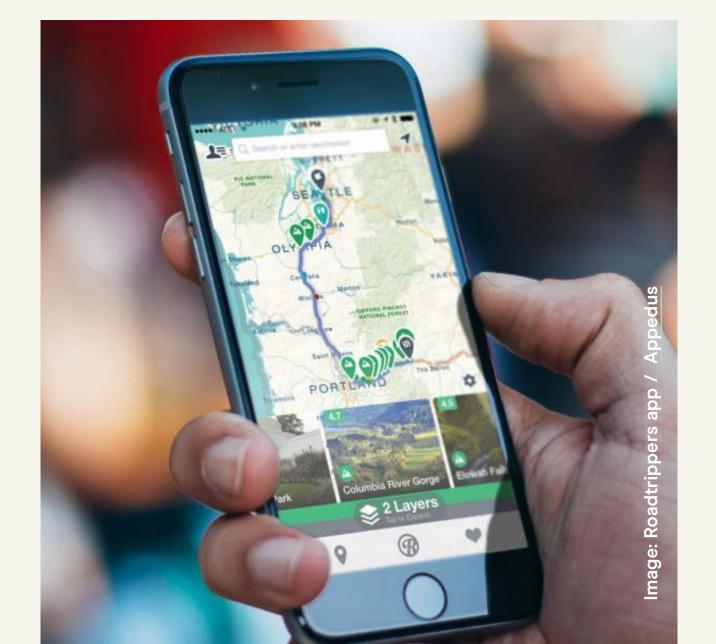
As the landscape of travel decisions continues to evolve, travel brands will need to find ways to align with popular culture to stand out. From collaborations with brands outside the sector, to immersive experiences that entice visitors to live out their screen-inspired travel dreams, doing so will maximise relevance and help to stay ahead of the curve.

Insights & opportunities

Inspire adventures close to home

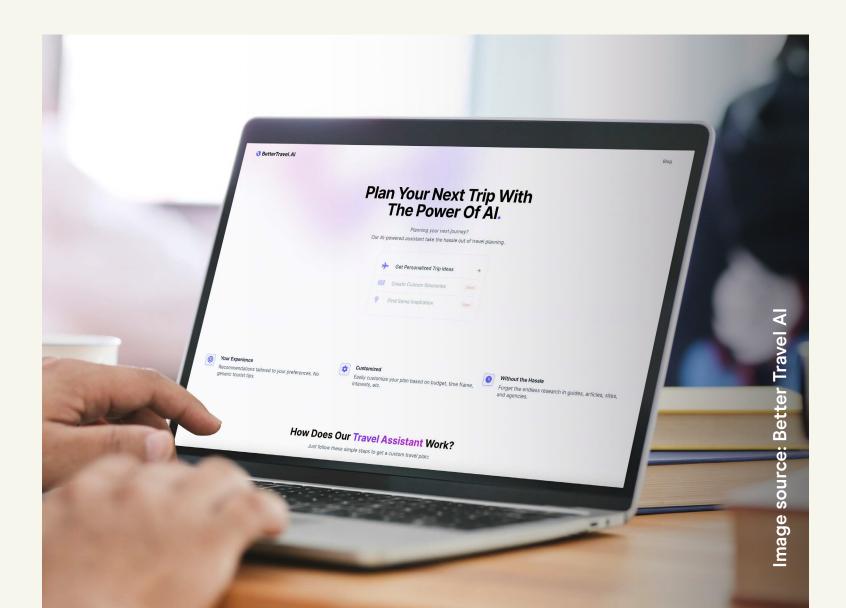
Despite the economic turmoil, consumers are still keen to travel, but have value top of mind. With sustainable options becoming increasingly appealing, brands who inspire road and train adventures closer to home are set to do well. Curated, accessible resources, like **Roadtrippers' series on one-tank road trips**, will inspire and empower this consumer desire for sustainable escapism and off the beaten path locations. Businesses that can also give expert guidance on thrifty travel tricks will find that it's well-received.





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Lean into likeminded lifestyles

Collaborations between consumer product brands and travel brands are creating exciting opportunities for guests to indulge in fashion, culture and culinary delights. The St. Regis New York's "J'adore New York" package celebrates The Brooklyn Museum's Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams exhibit with an exclusive stay in the luxurious Dior Suite, tickets to the exhibit, transportation, breakfast for two and a Dior cosmetics dressing table. This package exemplifies the trend of providing immersive and culturally relevant experiences that modern travellers crave. However, for these collaborations to truly resonate with guests, they must feel authentic, meaningful and be aligned with the values of both brands involved.

Embrace technology

AI is set to reshape the way we travel. To stay ahead, brands need to start exploring how they can leverage it to enhance their offer. However, as AI-powered apps continue to integrate, it is essential for brands to build digital trust in the reliability of their tech. If something goes wrong, it's likely to be a human that consumers want to turn to so getting the balance between AI and human interaction is crucial. Travel brands that strike this balance effectively can seize the opportunities in the industry in the months ahead.

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In the coming months, consumers will take a more thoughtful, intentional approach to how they eat, drink and travel. Global concerns like cost, sustainability, and ethics will continue to influence choice and prompt careful decision-making. When they finally book that flight or order that cocktail, they'll be doing it with full enthusiasm.

The industry will see a push toward the delightfully candid: embracing slow and relaxed travel, dining in kitschy-chic restaurants, clinking glasses of buzz-free cocktails and taking a serious look at how to make leisure more sustainable. At the same time, rapid advancements in Al technology are poised to create a smarter and more convenient industry. Brands who stand to thrive throughout the rest of the year will help consumers to balance value and moderation with a craving for unbridled adventure.

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