

# THE CAPTIVATING CAPITAL

Whether it's to motivate staff or to hold a conference or event, London has something to offer every business need

**WITH CHRISTMAS EXCESS FRESH IN** the memory, many of us will still be struggling to stick to New Year's resolutions. But away from the must lose weight/must drink less/must get fit worries of our personal lives, the beginning of another year is also a perfect moment for organisations to motivate their staff. And there's no better city than London, with its endless roll-call of attractions, business venues, hotels and restaurants, to get your team committed and excited about the next 12 months.

Objectives, milestones, plans – increasingly, business people find that standing back and mapping out the year ahead is best done

away from the distractions of the normal working environment. And for those who want to take staff away from the office, London is an understandably popular choice.

Yet as any business person will tell you, as well as clear goals and intelligent management if they're to thrive, there's nothing like some downtime together to cement team relationships. A meal in a inspiring restaurant, motivating courses, or experiencing one of the hundreds of specially-created corporate team-building activities are all on offer in the capital – all important ways to knit a team together. And what better place to start that with people's stomachs?

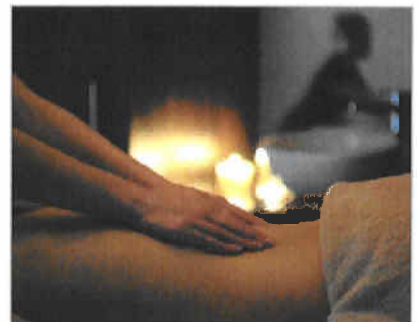
## FEED THE MIND

Cuisine, of course, is a real speciality of London. Gone are the days when the city was a poor relation to the more refined dining available in Paris, Rome or New York. Today London is home to no fewer than 49 Michelin-starred restaurants, and the heavyweights of the industry are all represented. Gordon Ramsay, Jamie Oliver, Marco Pierre-White, plus a long and illustrious list of their peers, all offer customers world-class dining.

And if that wasn't enough to whet the appetite, plans are already afoot for the second London Restaurant Festival in 2010. The inaugural event, held last October, was a



CONFERENCES & EVENTS



celebration of the quality and diversity of the capital's eating scene. Hundreds of restaurants created great value fixed-price Festival Menus showcasing the very best of their specialist cuisines. Meanwhile, the six days of the festival were packed with once-in-a-lifetime foodie events. From eating dinner cooked by a top chef in one of the pods on the London Eye, to several hundred hungry Londoners tucking in to the capital's biggest ever Sunday roast, there was something for everyone.

Grabbing the headlines though was the much-anticipated Pierre Koffmann pop-up restaurant on the roof at Selfridge's. The chance to savour the cooking of the grand-daddy of fine dining proved such a draw that his residence at the world-famous department store had to be extended no fewer than three times.

One great choice for eating out on a team-building evening is the rejuvenated area of 'London Eastside'. The term coined to describe the five 'Olympic' boroughs of east London (Newham, Hackney, Greenwich, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest), this area is one of London's best-kept secrets.

From the Dockmaster's House Restaurant

set in a graded Georgian building, to the Plateau Restaurant with its futuristic décor and views of the surrounding Canary Wharf, to the traditional charm of Greenwich gastro-pub The Gun with views across to The O2, there's good food at every turn.

And if you think a bit of retail therapy might be best for bonding your team, the markets will leave you spoilt for choice. Columbia Road flower market, Petticoat Lane market, Old Spitalfields market – they're all in London Eastside.

**WEST END GIRLS (AND BOYS)**

For some glamour in the heart of the west end, treat your team to cocktails, a meal, or even a stay at the celeb-magnets that are the Sanderson and the St Martin's Lane hotels. Uber-stylish decor and beautiful people make both a great destination to wow your staff.

Just as likely to knock their socks off is the Renaissance Chancery Lane. Set in a stunning 1912 building with sweeping marble staircases, grand archways and stately public rooms, it is also home to a renowned day spa, as well as Pearl, the critically-acclaimed restaurant

