

INDUSTRY WEEKLY DIGEST

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GROWING OUTDOOR APPEAL

The COVID-19 Pandemic led to a greater desire from patrons to eat and drink al fresco which was matched by operators keen to expand their capacity by providing such settings. Despite the inclement British weather, this desire seems set to continue over the festive season.

In this digest, **Mark Ashton** explores this trend and identifies some operators exploiting these opportunities that you may want to indulge during this Festive Season.

Have a great weekend!

WE'RE ALL (DINING) IN A WINTER WONDERLAND

MARK ASHTON

The popularity of al fresco dining schemes in central London and beyond, typified in the main stream media by scenes of **packed streets of outdoor diners in Soho**, showed no bounds this Summer. Customers were keen to eat-out once again following multiple periods of lock-downs and took comfort from the relative safety of being outdoors. Operators were equally eager to meet this demand particularly given their indoor capacity was reduced due to social distancing measures. Other than some noise concerns from local residents, these schemes seem to have met the zeitgeist with the public enjoying a continental atmosphere and reduced traffic in these areas.

So, with the Summer firmly behind us and these temporary schemes due to have ended, a recent article by Country and Town House on the **best outdoor winter terraces in London** caught my eye with roof top bars, instagram-friendly Igloos, some amazing views and a shed full of sheepskins, blankets, fairy lights and fondue. **The Berkeley's** announcement of their 'Winter Cabins' which aim to bring après-ski to Belgravia, London at a mere £500 minimum spend per cabin equally gained my attention. So despite the inclement weather, the outdoor trend seems set to continue this Winter, but does it reach further than the Capital?



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The winter outdoor dining trend does seem firmly set to continue beyond London too - as with schemes in Soho, those in **Edinburgh** have come under attack for fears of them becoming too permanent a fixture, but I have found clear evidence of the same (London) approaches being used in **gastro-pubs** and **luxury hotels** in the provinces. With a further strain of the virus now evident in the population, perhaps these innovative al fresco offerings are one of the safer ways of eating-out and celebrating the festive season should you wish to do so!