

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Lauren Fitchett speaks to the Noisy Lobster team, as it marks its 10th anniversary and celebrates the opening of its new beachside deli and bakery



NOISY LOBSTER STAFF

The Noisy Lobster is something of a Dorset institution. It's a popular restaurant, lobster hatch, coffee spot, beach hut business and, most recently, delicatessen and bakery. Having been taken over by brothers Peter and Stephen Hayward in 2012 when it was the Avon Beach Café, it has since grown into a thriving complex that is a celebration of its surroundings. Most recently, coinciding with its 10th anniversary year, it has transformed a humble beachside shop into a modern delicatessen and bakery.

"Since Peter and Stephen took over, the shop has been the only area that hasn't

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been transformed," marketing manager Monica Taylor explains. "They had been waiting for the right idea. We found a lot of our customers were asking us if they could buy our butter, or seafood, or sauces. A lot of

people were requesting the food they were enjoying in the restaurant, so it really was customer-led."

Once the decision was made, six weeks of work began. "We closed in January this year and completely gutted the shop, ripped everything out and started from scratch," Monica says. They opened in February, a quieter time for a beachside business, which gave them the opportunity to receive feedback from locals and make tweaks before the busy season began. "We have sold out quite a lot since then and the feedback has been brilliant," she says.

In such a unique environment, it's no surprise that Noisy Lobster puts the spotlight on all things local. Much of what's sold in the delicatessen is made in-house - Monica says all the bread, cakes and pastries are prepared in the on-site bakery, the seafood is cured there and butters, sauces and jams are also home-made. Where the goods aren't produced by the Noisy Lobster team, they are sourced from nearby businesses, including Dorset Tea, Artful Baker, Dorset Spice Shed, Cornwall Pasta, Premier Foods, Calcot Farm Produce and eco-friendly homeware. The result? A microcosm of the local area.



NOISY LOBSTER SIGNATURE DISH



“ We are lucky with our location and want to keep it pristine ”

put in any buckets and spades that are broken or not being used, so they don't leave them on the beach. We are very lucky with our location and we

want to keep it as pristine as possible.”

As you read this, the team will be in the middle of its busiest season, with trade steadily building since the jubilee weekend and no doubt having been spurred on by the spell of July hot weather. During summer, queues of more than an hour often form outside their lobster hatch and the restaurant is regularly fully booked. The nature of the business means that, with the exception of Christmas, winter is traditionally a quieter period (though it stays open all year round, closing only on Christmas Day), but wine tastings, themed evenings and Christmas hampers tide it over for the colder months.

The continued move towards staycations, though, means a British break is becoming more of a 12-month affair. “We are located next to a holiday park, so people from London and the north do come down all year round,” Monica adds. “With the flight disruption this year, staycations are still massive. Half terms are always busy, as are bank holidays. It is beautiful here and it is our hidden treasure.”

While some businesses gear their offer at a niche, Noisy Lobster has instead focused on providing something for everyone, from young couples to families and everyone in between. Its beach huts are sold or rented out, while two occasion huts, which are bigger and have electricity, provide a perfect beachside setting for a special celebration.

Is it this broad appeal that has made Noisy Lobster so popular, then? “People like a family-run business and what has been created down here is really special,” Monica says. “There really is something for everyone. We can cater for you, regardless of if you are a young child or an adult, vegan, vegetarian, a lover of seafood or not. We provide something for everyone.”

And there seems to be no slowing down for the site. “Next up is the coffee cabin, our coffee hut on the beach,” Monica says. “A planning application is in to extend that and make it bigger and provide another food offering. After that, who knows? I'm sure we'll find something - there's always something going on here.”



NOISY LOBSTER PICNIC

This responsible approach doesn't just extend to the economy, though. As Monica says, the team was determined to create an ethos of being environmentally friendly at the new delicatessen. “We have ditched plastic bags and only use paper, and we don't have any plastic buckets and spades, only recycled ones or silicone ones

from Scrunch Kids,” she says. “We have recyclable crab lines, because crabbing is really popular in the local area. We have soap made from seashells and Love Liga's eco-friendly placemats.

“While we have really been pushing that within the shop, we also have a box outside that we have created which is our beach clean box. It encourages people to