

Report
Catering

Brain food

Appetite for excellence

Preface

Keeping conference delegates well nourished is a major consideration for any seminar organiser. Monocle meets the men and women behind three top catering outfits.

PHOTOGRAPHERS
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Broms Catering

Garage brand

Hidden away in a former garage in the middle of Bromma, an upscale residential area of Stockholm, is one of Sweden's best catering companies. Broms Catering, run by Anna and Henrik Bauer, is a family business and now employs six people in addition to the couple. The company has grown steadily over three years from its early roots of selling meals to local families.

"Four years ago we sat in the garden discussing what we could do with the garage space," says Henrik. "It was Anna's idea and before long we had hired workers to build a professional kitchen in it."

"We've built up a dream clientele," adds Anna, a chef with experience in top restaurants in London and Paris. "We have demanding customers who are willing to pay a little extra for good food."

Location and quality have been the key to Broms Catering's success. Bromma is an area popular among entrepreneurs, creatives and well-heeled Stockholmers. Many of them discovered the company as a personal service and then started using it for their companies. Clients include banks, law firms, airlines and PR companies – everyone from monarchs to businessmen.

"We deliver 24/7," says Anna, who is preparing breakfasts for a morning flight when MONOCLE visits. The day-to-day operations are run by Anna, while Henrik, who also works as a professor in orthopaedic cancer surgery, is the company's skilled baker. Before going to work at Karolinska Institutet, he gets up at the crack of dawn and whips up



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Lunch for 20 keynote speakers

Starter Black sesame salmon carpaccio, shiso, lemon powan roe and celeriac soup

Main course Roasted duck breast, parsley braised chestnuts, walnut butter and honey glazed figs

Dessert Small sweet things



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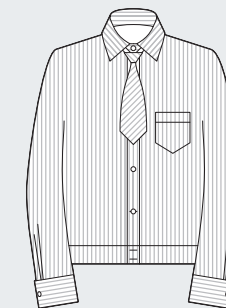
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- 01 Broms cold plate
- 02 The Bauer's home and business base
- 03 Broms van livery
- 04 Roast duck main course
- 05 Today's menu
- 06 Broms kitchen staff
- 07 Anna and Henrik Bauer

- 08 The sweet board
- 09 Black sesame salmon carpaccio starter
- 10 Broms packaging
- 11 Perfectly cooked fish
- 12 Honey glazed figs
- 13 Chef at work
- 14 Fresh figs



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Urbane outfitters

It's not just the catering that can go spectacularly wrong at a conference, but the uniforms too. We'd turn to Tokyo-based outfitters Haku'i (above) – who do everything from waiter's uniforms to bell boy outfits.



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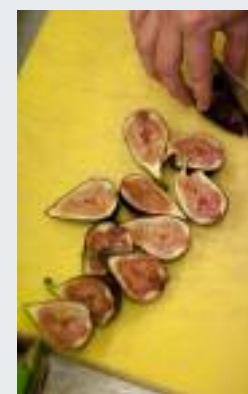
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10-20kg of delicious sourdough bread. "I also take care of the numbers and act as a discussion partner to Anna," he says. "And, on occasion, I do the dishes."

Anna's catering ethos is about high quality and finding the best custom-made solutions to each client. "I don't really like 'catering' as a word because when you say it, people's expectations go down," she explains. "We want to take responsibility for the guests' dining experience from the first mouthful to the last. The guests should go home with happy bellies."

To Anna and Henrik, the company is a lifestyle, something that Anna has taken with her from her childhood home. Her mother was a seamstress who ran her atelier from home, just as Anna and Henrik run Broms Catering from the house they live in.

"It's something you have to be comfortable with, having a house full of people. And we are," says Anna. "Sometimes our kids think the chefs live in the basement." — ENA



01

Cellar Society
Drinks before dinner

Now in its 11th year, Cellar Society was founded by Bertie and Andrea de Rougemont to lay on wine-tasting dinners for bankers in the City of London. Dissatisfied with the quality of food and service provided by external caterers, Bertie and Andrea decided to cook their own food to accompany the Burgundies and Bordeaux they were serving.

That food could and should be equal to the world's greatest wines is at the heart of the company's ethos. "We wanted to capture the joy and pleasure of food and the magical match that occurs when a great bottle meets a great dish," says Bertie. It soon became clear, however, that their food was more popular than the wine and Cellar Society began to attract catering requests from Gucci and Prada. Experts in conference catering, they have been flown to Lake Como to cater for a banking conference and have advised lacklustre hotel banqueting teams on how to escape the formulaic rubber chicken gala dinner.

With just five chefs, they average 250 events a year and in one month alone put on events in castles in the Highlands of Scotland, on the shores of Lake Geneva, and in Madrid. Other destinations have included Dublin, Paris and the South of France; in the past they have catered in Boston, Gstaad and Monaco. "If you need us, we will come," says Bertie.

Although they tailor their menus, the core of their business is in British seasonal cooking with French and Italian influences. They source ingredients locally: langoustines from Skye, crayfish from Lincolnshire, beef from Wales, asparagus from Secretts Farm in Surrey, wild mushrooms from the New Forest, oysters from Colchester and vegetables from allotments in London.

"We have always stayed true to our basic philosophy: if you are going to do something, do it properly, put your heart into it and don't cut corners," says Bertie. — DJM



02

Sit-down dinner for 30 speakers

Starter Scottish langoustines with homemade lemon mayonnaise

Main course Chargrilled veal chop with anchovy butter, steamed green beans and potato mousseline

Cheese course Brie stuffed with freshly shaved Périgord black truffle

Dessert Tarte tatin with Glenilen crème fraiche



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- 01 Chargrilled veal
- 02 Waiting staff
- 03 Elegant tableware
- 04 Bertie de Rougemont
- 05 Table settings
- 06 Finishing touches
- 07 Scottish langoustines



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Dress for success

After a day's listening, speaking and networking, it's nice to smarten up to discuss the key developments over dinner, and we expect the staff to do the same.

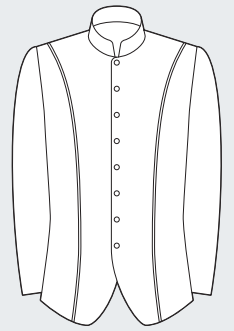
- 01 Drinks service
- 02 Fresh spring rolls, furofuki daikon (stewed Japanese radish) with mustard miso
- 03 Serving the right drinks
- 04 Hitokuchi (meaning one bite) sweets



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Ladies and gents in waiting

When a room is full, you're mid-flow chatting to a new contact from Korea, and you're desperate for a nibble (or a refill), it's essential the waiters and waitresses are easily spotted.



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Canapés for 50 delegates

- Cold vichyssoise
- Gomadofu, or sesame tofu
- Omelette with vegetables
- Fried lotus root with chicken or prawn pâté
- Stewed beef with mashed potato
- Rice ball (placed on a wooden plate for guests to pick by hand)
- Pork cutlet sandwich

Simplicity
Distinctive flavour

With its small portions, delicate flavours and all-round lightness, Japanese cuisine makes ideal event food. For a gathering of 50 for drinks and canapés we would ask Simplicity in Tokyo. The company was founded in 1998 by Shinichiro Ogata, a Kyushu native and dedicated foodie who made the Japanese capital his home and opened his popular restaurant, Higashi-yama, in the city's Naka Meguro district.

When it opened, Higashi-yama was a new type of modern Japanese restaurant, offering relaxed Japanese cooking in a great setting with late-night hours and an even later bar downstairs. The music was just right, the beautifully cooked food was presented on handcrafted Japanese tableware designed by Ogata – even the handsome staff seemed to be a whole new breed.

It was no surprise that it was a roaring success and 12 years on, it is still going

strong. Ogata has since opened several traditional sweetshops, tea salons and another restaurant – and the attention to detail remains the same as ever.

The catering business grew through word of mouth as friends who liked the Higashi-yama style started asking Ogata to cater for their parties. Intimate, small-scale events are their strength. The food is cooked by the Higashi-yama chefs and the staff come from the restaurant and the Higashi-yama salons.

The presentation is immaculate and as at the original restaurant, distinctively Japanese. Soup is served in small bamboo cups, sandwiches are skewered with fragrant pine twigs, and fresh sesame tofu is served on bamboo leaves. Drinks are given a Japanese twist – the bar staff like to blend sparkling wine or *shochu* with powdered green tea or sprinkle with preserved cherry leaves. Wine is usually from a Japanese vineyard, with Grace Winery in Yamanashi a favourite for its easy-drinking white wine made from Japan's sturdy native koshu grape.

At the restaurant the food is seasonal and so is the party fare. Instead of fixed menus the Simplicity staff look to see what food would work best at any particular time of year (and whether it should be light bites or heartier plates) and discuss their suggestions with the client.

If pudding is required – and slender Japanese customers do not tend to ask for it – Higashi-yama does a simple mousse with a layer of green tea. Another option is wagashi – the freshly made Japanese confectionery that Ogata sells at his shops.

As an alternative to crockery, guests can eat from eco-friendly Japanese paper plates and bowls made by Wasara for which Ogata is creative director. The overall look of a party catered by Simplicity will be as carefully thought out as the food – interior design is an important part of the business after all. For party-goers Simplicity catering gives an intriguing taste of the Higashi-yama experience and inevitably leads new customers to its door. — FW