

“In a year when cheesecake has finally surpassed trifle as the UK’s favourite dessert, things are changing in the UK dessert market,” observes Rob Morrish, director, Classic Desserts (www.classicdesserts.co.uk). **“With people finally moving away from the more traditional offerings, those able to offer something a bit different look set to benefit.”**

Morrish believes not enough operators are taking advantage of the potential vibrancy of the sector, with many still grossly under-trading in desserts. “If desserts constitute less than three per cent of your total sales, then there is significant room for improvement,” he says. “The British public tend to gravitate towards things they recognise and trust, but also like to be wowed on occasion. An innovative twist or a variation on a theme is sometimes all it takes to breathe life into a product range.”



The new range of Minis from Classic Desserts provides diners with a treat that will neither break the bank nor pile on too many calories

Mark Dean, sales director, Classic Cuisine (www.classiccuisine.co.uk) agrees: “At the moment our most popular desserts are classic puddings with a modern twist, such as chocolate cheesecake with a salted caramel swirl topping, chocolate brownie with a salted caramel top and even a rocky road cheesecake. My one tip to improve the sale of dessert products would be to stand out from the crowd; innovation is very important as this will always ensure interest and intrigue from clients and customers.”

Portion sizes

Morrish is convinced that many operators miss out on dessert opportunities because of the size of the portions they offer. “They are simply too large. After a large satisfying meal, the last thing you want is to tackle a heavy dessert weighing 230 grams plus. Take PF Changs in the US, for example, a premium fast casual Chinese restaurant chain with over 200 outlets. They had minimal dessert sales contributing to approximately one per cent of total revenue. They felt that consumer psychology was creating a barrier to purchasing as diners were generally looking for an excuse to be social and extend the meal occasion. However, female diners, who are often the critical opinion former on whether a dessert is ordered, didn’t want to appear as if they were over indulging.

“To combat this, PF Chang’s launched a range of mini shot glass desserts and dessert sales immediately jumped to six per cent of total



Classic Cuisine – Chocolate Fondant

Classic Cuisine – Apple, Cherry & Lemon Sponge

revenues. The additional unexpected benefit was that sales of coffee and wines also increased as diners remained in the premises for longer.”

Having visited the world’s ‘Dessert Hotspots’ while researching the new product line for Classic Desserts, Morrish is convinced that the company’s recently launched range of mini desserts are sure-fire winners for, as he says, “what is trending in New York today, will be in the UK within two years.”



Classic Desserts’ Mini Gateaux can be enjoyed throughout the day



Prescient pudding producer

Twenty one years ago Philip Weldon gave up a lucrative career as an estate agent and followed his passion for all things sweet by founding The English Cheesecake Company. “Back then we had just one flavour – a classic vanilla cheesecake that I baked at home using my aunt’s recipe,” says Weldon.

Today the company produces over 250 different varieties of cheesecake as well as artisanal cakes and desserts, all of which are supplied frozen. “We thrive on being highly creative, always on trend and determining the next trend – cheesecake is definitely the king of desserts at the moment. Currently we are into chocolate éclair cheesecake, cupcake cheesecakes and also desserts with an amazing peanut butter that is, believe it or not, peanut free!”

www.englishcheesecake.com