

## Sweet Independents: The rise of the dessert parlour



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With the continued demand for dessert parlours and the increase in the number of both brands and franchisees, this food and beverage (F&B) offer looks set to replicate the spectacular rise of the coffee shop culture in the UK.

Like coffee shops, dessert parlours were relatively unknown on the UK high street and leisure scene as recently as 7 years ago, but we have witnessed them becoming more and more sought after and a regular in the F&B line up on retail and leisure schemes that we are bringing to the market, both in town and out-of-town.

Interestingly, apart from the US giants, Dunkin Donuts and Krispy Kreme - both of whom have only relatively recently themselves re-entered the UK market - the current demand for sites is largely being driven by independent operators and shows little sign of being a mere fad.

### Independent operators

Data released by The Local Data Company (LDC) and British Independent Retailers Association (BIRA) shows that independents opened more shops in the first half 2017 than in the same period last year, whilst national chains continued to fall. Café style operations, such as dessert parlours, is one of the key growth areas and this looks set to continue as independent operators, such as Patisserie Valerie - the original cake and dessert retailer with over 100 outlets - continues its organic growth and franchised operators such as Creams - who lead the franchised sector with over 50 outlets - look to roll the concept out nationally from London and the South East.

Hot on their heels are brands such as Kaspas, Treatz and Heavenly Desserts, as well as a

number of newer and smaller operations, all of whom already have double digit outlets in multiple locations with a variety of trading formats - operating on high streets, in shopping centres and on out-of-town retail and leisure schemes. These operators have all evolved to take advantage of the culture developing among young people, students and families of going out in the evenings for a dessert. Just like the quick service restaurant franchisees, the fortunes of these operators also look set to soar and accordingly add incremental value to the property assets they occupy.

**If the coffee shop experience is anything to go by, watch out for the rise of dessert parlours!**

We expect demand to continue to increase along with the profile of dessert parlours in retail and leisure schemes alongside the more established usual suspects - and there is a long list of operators they like to sit next to! Not only should the line up and marketing of schemes be geared to accommodating this use, but consideration should also be given to the design of centres to welcome these operators as part of the leisure mix.

**Rapleys is able to advise on the development/redevelopment of schemes to appeal to this wider market, as well as identify the appropriate operators to create a vibrant destination. For more information, please contact Alfred Bartlett.**