



# Chatsworth House, Derbyshire



WHEN CARRYING OUT NEW DEVELOPMENTS AT A STATELY HOME STEEPED IN HISTORY DATING BACK TO THE EARLY 16TH CENTURY, A GREAT DEAL OF CARE HAS TO BE TAKEN. THIS WAS PART OF THE BRIEF FOR TURPIN SMALE WHEN COMPLETING A PROJECT AT THE HOME OF THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE

In a bid to offer the 650,000 annual visitors to Chatsworth House in Derbyshire a top quality catering offer, the owners decided that renovation work was needed to upgrade the former Jeanne Pierre's Bar.

And so after early planning, the wheels were set in motion in the Autumn of 2007 when Chris Brown FCSI of Turpin Smale Foodservice Consultancy was contracted to advise on the upgrading.

Sara Sweetland, Head of Trading at Chatsworth, explained that the former bar was "tired looking" and in desperate need of a facelift and the concept of the new Cavendish Rooms was first mooted.

"Then it was a matter of bringing in Chris with his thought processes to introduce a more adaptable venue to cater for events. He came up with a new bakery-led menu produced in-house by the Chatsworth bakery team.

"We have a team of five bakers, with two or three on duty each day for the seven-day operation, and they can create everything from delicious meringues to tasty brownies.

"The feedback for these treats has been really positive. Now we offer the Afternoon Tea promotion at Chatsworth, which can be booked online, and is proving really popular."

Sara explains that the redecorations, which began in January 2008 and were completed for the launch in mid-March, focused on the Devonshire family's horseracing traditions.

The Cavendish Rooms are located in the former stables that were built by James Payne in 1760. Now the walls are adorned with a colourful variety of paintings going back over two centuries as well as photographs featuring the family's racing links.

"All the renovation work was completed on schedule and went according to plan with the building work coming in on time."

Brown was also involved with refining the Carriage House self-service restaurant. "The whole idea was to ensure our visitors received a streamlined offering and to push through the numbers being served and this has certainly been achieved thanks to input by Chris and his team," says Sweetland.

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#### REVIEW OPERATIONS

Brown explained that as a management consultancy, his company was initially brought in to review the former Jeanne Pierre Bar operation.

“Chatsworth wanted to transform this catering area into a new afternoon tea concept. The plan was to retain the waitress service but have an attractive cake display near the entrance to promote sales throughout the day.

“And with this in mind I arranged a tour of 20 of the best cafés in London for them to see the ‘buy with your eye’ café concept.

“Presentation is a vitally important factor of any visitor attraction venue catering if sales are to be maximised – and this was what hopefully I managed to get across.”

In addition to the new afternoon tea concept, Turpin Smale was used to carry out an operational review of Chatsworth’s main visitor café, the Carriage House self-service restaurant. A particular issue was how to decrease customer waiting times and bust the peak-time queues.

“Chatsworth already had a good café in operation but what was wanted was a great café.

“The operational improvements included rearranging the counter layout to reduce customer waiting; sourcing of new products and a better children’s offer. It was all a matter of improving quality while allowing a better financial return by reviewing food and labour costs.

“Chatsworth was a really great client committed to quality,” said Brown, adding that the contract with them was typical of the help that his company gives to visitor attractions throughout the UK.

He praised Chatsworth Catering Operations Manager Paul Cotterell who implemented many of Turpin Smale’s suggestions as well as Sweetland.

“They have a really strong bakery operation which was being well used and all that was needed was some fine tuning and improvements to reflect the fact that quality standards are ever changing and improving.”

Brown, who has been with the London-based consultancy for eight years, has also been involved with Chatsworth’s colleagues at Bolton Abbey.

“We are being kept busy at the moment and have a number of contracts in the North West, including major visitor attractions, one in Doncaster and another further north in Berwick.”

#### CONSULTANT’S OWN BUSINESS

Turpin Smale Foodservice Consultancy is one of the UK’s leading firms - well established, independent and with a client listing that speaks for itself.

The company’s catering consultants Chris Brown and Peter Smale own the business (no juniors are employed) and have the experience to resolve clients’ catering issues throughout the UK.

The consultants specialise in improving quality standards and financial contribution by strategic reviews, market tendering and in-house advice.

They work across the UK covering:

- Leisure and visitor attractions
- Employee restaurants, cafés and coffee shops
- Corporate hospitality areas
- Restaurants, pubs, bars and fast food
- Roadside, transport and travel
- NHS and private healthcare
- Universities, colleges and education
- Conference centres

Following an initial meeting, with no cost or commitment, the company says that it will prepare a proposal showing what the client will receive, by when, who will do the work and how much it will cost.

Chris Brown FCSI has previously been featured in Aspire for his work on the Unicorn Theatre for Children and has subsequently managed projects at Shakespeare’s Globe and the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry.

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