

eco

# EAT YOUR GREENS

Restaurants are starting to put their eco-credentials on the menu.  
Here's our top ten guide to the greenest eateries

WORDS XENIA TALLOTIS

**T**he food and drink industry has always struggled with sustainability. From the colossal amount of packaging that's largely unrecycled or unrecyclable to the mountains of leftovers that get binned each second, the overriding message is want not, waste lots.

A recent report by WRAP calculated that food waste represents a cost to the restaurant sector alone of £682 million each year, including food procurement, labour, utilities and waste management, while a survey by the UK's Sustainable Restaurant Association (SRA) estimated that for every meal eaten in a British diner, half a kilo of food is thrown away.

But it's not all doom and gloom. There is actually promising progress, and at all levels of the industry and on every aspect of sustainability. In January 2018, Starbucks opened another store – its 45th – made from recycled shipping containers. The drive-thru, in Hualien City, Taiwan, is one of 10,000 'greener' outlets the coffee giant hopes to have up and running by 2025, comprising new openings, renovations and adaptations to existing properties.

Designed by Kengo Kuma, one of Japan's leading architects and the man behind Dundee's recently opened V&A Museum, the Hualien City Starbucks is made from 29 containers and, says Kevin Johnson,

president and CEO, emphasises the chain's commitment to sustainability. 'Sustainable coffee, served sustainably, is our inspiration,' he says. 'Designing and building green stores is not only responsible, it's cost-effective too – we want to demonstrate to others that the pursuit of profits is not in conflict with the pursuit of doing good. We estimate these outlets will save us \$50 million in utility costs over the next decade.'

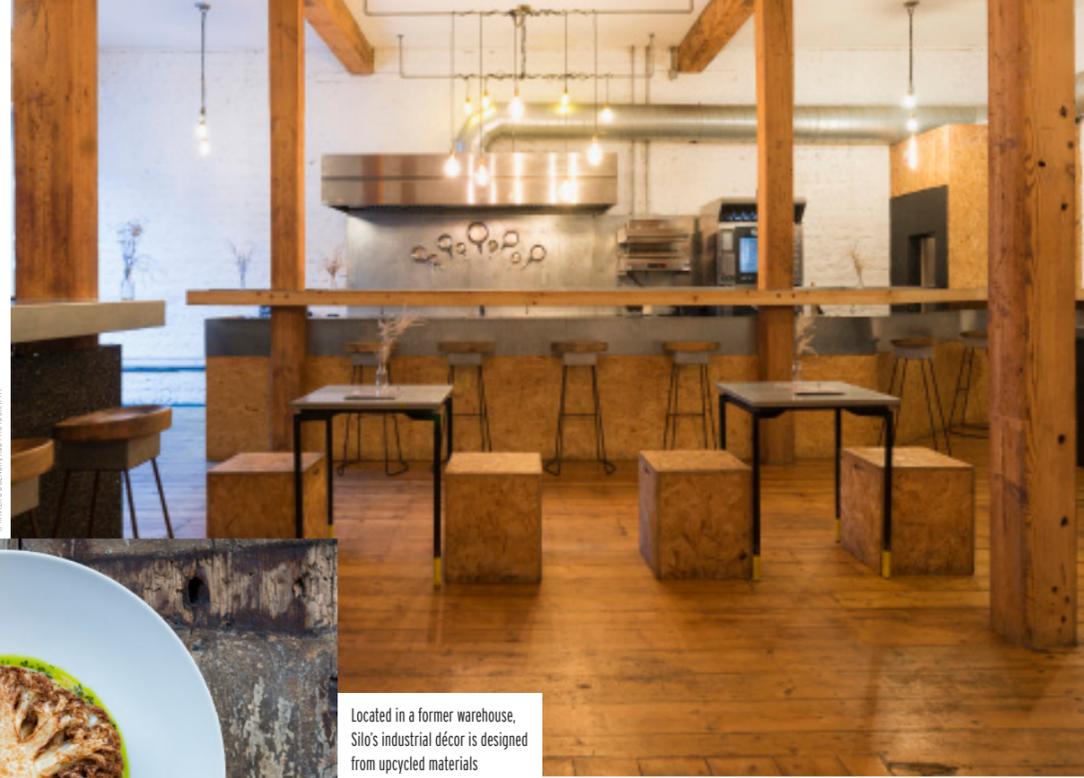
What's more encouraging, is the number of other food and drink outlets that are improving their green credentials. From small local restaurants that are aiming to produce zero waste and other multinationals, such as Pret – which is introducing compostable cutlery to all shops this year and hoping to trial a plastic bottle deposit return – to Real Junk Food and chef Massimo Bottura's Food for Soul community Refettorios, which use surplus ingredients to produce nutritious meals for those in need, there is now a concerted effort to put sustainability at the top of the menu.

Millennial chefs and bar owners throughout the UK appear to be putting their money where their mouths are with some excellent initiatives. Here's a selection of those leading the way, from a pub that only serves drinks from recyclable kegs to a restaurant that's aiming for zero waste by putting every peeling, carrot top and core to good use.

© STARBUCKS



Starbucks Hualien City outlet in Taiwan, made from disused shipping containers



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Located in a former warehouse, Silo's industrial décor is designed from upcycled materials

## Silo, Brighton

Lauded as the first and, according to owner Douglas McMaster, only truly zero-waste restaurant in the UK, Silo has been wowing foodies and greenies since 2014 with a menu that excels in taste and sustainability. Produce is grown or picked locally – foraged horse parsley, sea succulents and sea weeds are among McMaster's favourite ingredients; suppliers bring everything in reusable crates, jerry cans, pails and urns; scraps are composted in an aerobic digester, which neighbours are also encouraged to use; and all furniture and fittings are made from material that would have ended up as landfill.

○ silobrighton.com

## Can Waterloo, Liverpool

Louise and Ryan King opened their (almost) plastic-free, vegan diner in August last year and, judging by the reviews, it was just what the city needed. Customers sit on benches made from crushed cans, drink from cans – which are then either re- or upcycled – and enjoy a regularly changing menu that's packed with local, seasonal veg. The friendliness of the staff, the bright, airy décor and the ambience have garnered as much praise as the food.

'We're very new to this and the road to sustainability is endless,' says Louise. 'We thought we could be plastic-free but weren't able to maintain that, because even eco-friendly cleaning products come in plastic. But we reuse all our plastic by hold eco-brick-making workshops, teaching people how to create plastic blocks that can then be used to make furniture and even buildings.'

○ Facebook: Can Waterloo

A plant-based menu at Can Waterloo is served in a virtually plastic-free environment



Chef Neil Forbes offers sustainable classic French dishes in his chic brasserie-style restaurant



© CHEF STHONORE

## Café St Honoré, Edinburgh

Neil Forbes, chef and director of Café St Honoré, was quick to sign up to SRA's One Plate Campaign, which asked leading restaurants to prepare sustainable dishes to mark WWF's Earth

Hour. For Forbes this was nothing out of the ordinary: he has been an SRA member for 10 years and holds a three-star rating from the association. 'I'd encourage all food outlets to do whatever they can to be more sustainable,' he says. 'Even small changes can have a huge impact on the future of the planet, and it really starts from taking eating back to basics. We support local and, where possible, organic businesses. Sustainability is at the heart of what we do – and we work with mongers, farmers and foragers who share our views.'

○ cafesthonore.com



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Drinks at Tap 13 are served from keg to tap to glass, avoiding waste from bottles and corks

## Tap 13, Tooting, London

The concept at this bar couldn't be simpler – it serves four beers, two ciders, three wines, one frizzante and three cocktails from 13 reusable kegs that come direct from its suppliers. 'All the drinks, including the cocktails, arrive ready mixed,' says owner Paul Belcher. 'So there's no need for mixers, bottles, corks, or any of the other paraphernalia associated with running a bar. We pour from keg to tap to glass and send the empty barrels back to our supplier to be reused. And we also provide glass "growlers" for takeaway drinks, which customers then return to us.'

○ dscgroup.london/tap-13

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Poco's menus change with the seasons, offering a British take on tapas dishes

### Poco Tapas Bar, Bristol

Poco's shelf is heaving with awards, among them 2016 Sustainable Restaurant of the Year, 2016 Food Made Good Restaurant of the Year, and 2018 Food Made Good Business of the Year, but the skilled team behind this imaginative tapas bar is not content to rest on its sustainably sourced laurels.

'We recycle 97 per cent of our waste and monitor every single bag of rubbish that leaves the restaurant, with a view to becoming zero-waste,' says Jennifer Best, director and co-founder. The restaurant upcycles cooking oil and coffee grounds, operates a root-to-fruit and nose-to-tail cooking policy, and works with suppliers to reduce packaging. And on the menu, there's lots for everyone, whether you're vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free or an out-and-proud carnivore.

○ pocotapasbar.com





© JOHN SCOTT BACKWELL

Restaurant Sat Bains grows almost half its vegetables and herbs from an urban garden

### Sat Bains, Nottingham

Two Michelin-starred Restaurant Sat Bains is justly proud of its sustainability initiatives – they are one of the reasons chef Bains has been awarded his second honorary degree from Nottingham University, after working on a number of green projects with the university. The restaurant grows about 40 per cent of its plants and herbs and was one of the first in the UK to install a closed-loop composter, which produces nutrient-rich soil from cooked and raw foods, including meat and fish. It also uses electrolysed water instead of chemicals to clean down the kitchen, LED lighting, energy-efficient hobs and water butts to collect rainwater. But perhaps the restaurant's biggest contribution to sustainability is the fact that it's only open four days a week. 'It gives our team members a better work-life balance,' says Bains. 'And also makes us one day more efficient.'

○ [restaurantsatbains.com](http://restaurantsatbains.com)



### Farmacy, Notting Hill, London

Camilla Fayed's vegan, zero-waste Farmacy is all about conscious eating – an all-encompassing concept covering everything from producing food that's as good for the planet as it is for diners and sustainability. Furniture is made from reclaimed wood, there's an electric van and food storage is plastic-free. 'Minimising waste has to be considered at every stage of the business, starting with the ingredients you grow and use, through to prepping and storage and, of course, portion size,' says Fayed.

At first, Fayed was sourcing her ingredients from organic farms across the UK, but now grows most of her produce instead. 'We've replaced many of our ingredients with more sustainable alternatives, and are using the same staples in several dishes and cocktails. Our chefs use everything. If anything escapes our juicers, blenders, stock pots and dehydrators then it's taken home by staff or composted.'

○ [farmacylondon.com](http://farmacylondon.com)



Farmacy's ethos is to promote wellness for people and the planet, with vegan dishes in a zero-waste establishment

### The Warren, Carmarthen

Simple, wholesome, local and mainly organic food, prepared with love and served with grace is what defines The Warren, which has recently won gold for the most exciting tourism business in Carmarthen. Chef and owner Deri Reed admits that while zero-waste is his ideal, it's not something he's likely to achieve in the immediate future. Nonetheless, The Warren still scores highly on eco-friendliness, using recycled or palm-leaf plates, plant-starch straws and sending all food waste to an environmental centre for composting.

On the menu is a great selection covering all foodisms: among the favourites are a roasted carrot burger with pickled red cabbage and an aromatic thali – turmeric rice, dhal, carrot chutney and curry.

○ [warrenmanselst.co.uk](http://warrenmanselst.co.uk)



© NICKY PHOTOGRAPHY

The Warren offers rustic-style dining and wholesome dishes in an eco-friendly setting



© JOHN SCOTT BACKWELL



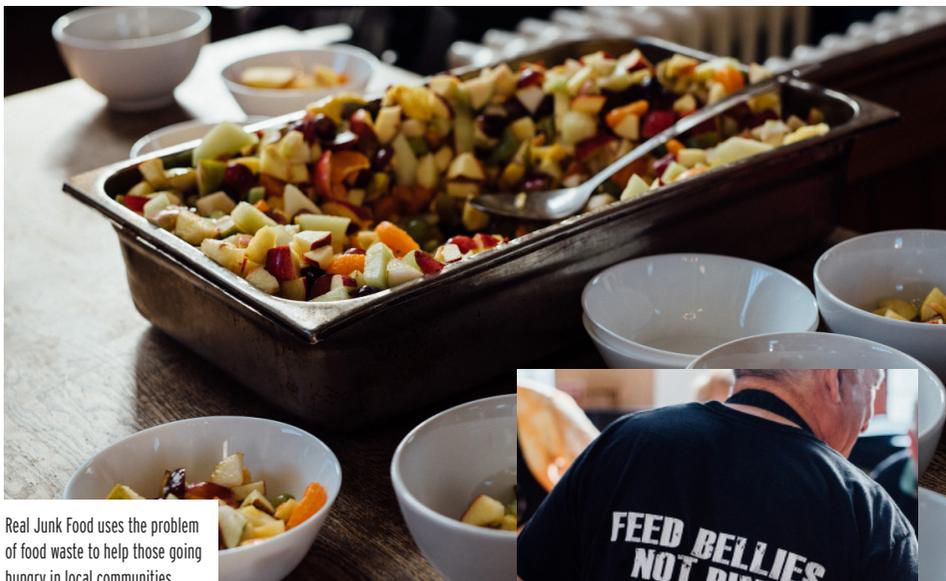
### Jelbert's Ice Cream, Newlyn, Cornwall

Newlyn institution Jelbert's went plastic-free in March 2018, swapping plastic tubs and spoons for completely biodegradable and compostable alternatives, made from vegetable derivative. Olympic rowing champion Helen Glover (pictured above), who is the owner's daughter, said: 'If a small, old-fashioned business that hasn't changed in 100 years can go plastic-free, then so can the multimillion pound ones. We all have to do our bit.'

○ Facebook: Jelberts



Jelbert's now serves their traditional ice cream with compostable tubs and spoons



Real Junk Food uses the problem of food waste to help those going hungry in local communities



### Real Junk Food, 13 locations from Rosyth to Brighton

This global network of cafés and 'sharehouses' (which distribute uncooked produce to the public) operates on a pay-what-you-feel (or can) basis, using still-in-date but surplus food that would otherwise go in the bin, to provide food for everyone in their community. The cafés cater for all tastes and all budgets. To date, Real Junk Food has saved 167 tonnes of food and served nearly 45,000 meals since 2013.

○ [therealjunkfoodproject.org](http://therealjunkfoodproject.org)