

LUXURY | BNB

THE MAGAZINE FOR OWNERS AND MANAGERS OF BnBs, INNS, BOUTIQUE HOTELS & HOLIDAY LETS

DINING AREAS Unlocked

CROWD CONTROL

The World's Best B&B for the second year running, The 25 in Torquay is limiting its guest numbers only selling up to four out of its six rooms in order to avoid having too many people crowding the dining room at the same time for breakfast.

Co-owner Andy Banner-Price says: "When we have three or four rooms booked, we ask guests for their chosen time slot for breakfast the day before so we can try to split them up somewhat."

"From our point of view breakfast now takes a lot longer and takes considerably more effort to serve the guests."

Breakfast at The 25 was traditionally served as a buffet and has had to be restructured for as long as restrictions are in place. Andy explains: "Everything including every aspect of the buffet has to be served individually, to all guests, down to salt, pepper and jams. All the things that would have been on the table, and then all the buffet items including cereals, yoghurts, fruit salad, juices – the whole lot has to be served to them rather than any of our guests helping themselves."

He adds: "If the guests did their usual trick of all coming down for breakfast at once then it would take forever to serve everybody."

SUSTAINING QUALITY

The 25 is still offering all its guests the same broad range and high quality of breakfast food and drink as before the virus crisis. "It just means everybody has to ask for what they want to eat rather than helping themselves," he says.

Fortunately not everything has had to change. For example, all the B&B's suppliers are back as they were before the crisis. "The butcher is working as normal, and we haven't had to change anything with regard to the actual menu itself. A lot of the items were homemade anyway," he adds.

In some regards the leading world class breakfast experience has taken a knock from the COVID-19 contact restrictions. For example, instead of guests using elegant grinders, both salt and pepper are now provided in sachets, which they proprietors have had to order in for the first time. "We have sachets for sugar and sweeteners too, but we already had these for the bedrooms anyway," he says.

"We have tried to keep the breakfast experience as similar to normal as possible. All we have done is tweak it so you don't have your normal menu but instead guests have a printed menu."

PHOTOGENIC FAYRE

"As regards the buffet, we print out colour photographs of our buffet in its full elegance like a virtual buffet along with a list of each of the

available items. But we have always had a fairly detailed menu with signs on everything on the buffet. The only difference is everything is in front of them in picture format."

They have resisted the temptation to take the digital route. "We did discuss it but then we decided it's just faff for the sake of it," he says. "Many of their guests wouldn't bring their phone down with them to breakfast as it's just a bit rude to be using it at the table. And when you get to a certain age you need your glasses, and on a tiny phone trying to read the menu simply makes it even more difficult than it is normally. We thought it was best just to stick with paper version of the menu that we can just chuck afterwards."

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

The only downside he sees comes from an environmental point of view. "We are using more sachets and using things only once. It's the same with the guest information folders in the rooms."



THE FULL ENGLISH @ THE 25 IN TORQUAY