

'Lickable' menus, hippo petting zoos and job-stealing dogs: the best April Fools gags

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'Scratch and lick'

Greene King chain Flaming Grill announced on Saturday the launch of lickable menus across its 142-strong pub estate, utilising new 'LickTech' technology that allows intrepid guests to taste their food before ordering. But don't call the FSA just yet – the menus would all feature 'Sani-Safe' coating, which automatically cleans germs from the menus within five seconds of being licked, Greene King said.



Risk of paw-tomation?

Hospitality consultants HGEM's April fools was a tad more topical, warning that dogs were far more likely to put human hospitality jobs at risk than robots in the future.

Steven Pike, managing director of HGEM, said: "While many have predicted that robots will replace the need for human interaction as part of the guest experience, almost four times as many consumers we questioned would prefer to see canines take the lead when it comes to delivering a premium guest experience.

"Currently, we understand that there are no plans by the Government to introduce minimum wage or income tax for canine employees. Quarantine for migrants from the EU will remain in place, however."



Pygmalion

Hippo Inns, Rupert Clevely and Enterprise Inns (Ei)'s joint venture, announced the opening of London's first pygmy hippo petting zoo at its Waterloo pub the Duke of Sussex. Cute, eh?

However, giving the news a slightly dark twist, Hippo Inns said it would also swap the regular bacon in its cheeseburgers out for hippo bacon.



'Swishing tail' beer

Stockport brewer Robinson's unveiled some serious beer innovation, announcing the launch of an 'animal-friendly' ale for the brewery's three resident shire horses, made from hay and roasted malt with 'hints of sweet carrot and swede root'.

We're not sure its ethical to feed booze to animals here at MA Towers, but we understand Robinson's Swishing Tail amber ale is non-alcoholic. Robinson's also announced a range of upcoming flavours (including Polo Mint,

an obvious future best seller) so all horses could 'enjoy a beer in the sun'.



Getting fruity

Ivor Thomas Amusements announced a new innovation to help pubs battle the UK's burgeoning obesity crisis. The company's new fruit machines would reward gamblers with real fruit rather than money, it said. A great idea, no doubt, but we're not sure if the UK's punters are fond enough of healthy snacks to keep ploughing their hard-earned cash into these. At least, not when there's proper pub grub in the immediate vicinity.

Ivor Thomas managing director Paul Thomas clearly thought otherwise. He said: "Lifestyle changes have meant pubs are now serving healthy food. I suddenly thought, why not adapt our old fruit machine to vend real fruit and go with the trend?"

"We decided to tweak the old Jennings one-armed bandits to add a bit of nostalgia and create a focal point in pubs. It's taken nearly six months, but we've finally managed to get them to work. They take 10p coins and vend oranges, lemons, pears and cherries."