



# AVER/10

Aver Insight  
The future of dining  
May 2022

# Context: The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on hospitality

## During the Pandemic

The pandemic triggered a series of widespread changes in the hospitality sector and did so on an unprecedented scale.

Since 2020 the restaurant industry has been forced to evolve, with as many as **98%<sup>1</sup>** implementing some form of change to their business in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.



## Post-Pandemic

Consumer spending on hospitality remains at less than **70%<sup>2</sup>** of pre-pandemic levels.

**91%<sup>3</sup>** of businesses recognise revenue from takeaway services as key to increasing profit in the next twelve months.

**35%** of restaurants have invested in kitchen automation technology, with a further **41%** planning to invest in the coming months.<sup>6</sup>



# The 'Digitalisation Revolution': How is hospitality changing?

Aver takes a look at the new **digital and technological advances** that have emerged this year in the restaurant industry, and their impact on the future of dining.

In this report, Aver will explore case studies of restaurant responses to the impacts of the pandemic; from **Deliveroo's** efforts to improve efficiency in restaurant food delivery, and Milton Keynes' **Starship food delivery robots**, to the Beijing Winter Olympics **AI-controlled robot chefs**.




# Deliveroo's Pizza Paradiso: Dining industry domination or saviour?

In early March 2022, Deliveroo opened the doors to its first real-life, real-time restaurant, expanding the reach of its delivery industry-domination into the physical restaurant world.

The Amazon backed delivery giant purports that one of the fundamental reasons for opening its own venue is in an effort to better understand 'restaurants' pain points with the aim of solving them'.

The brand 'onboarded' the restaurant to its platform, charging the same restaurant commission as it does with the other destinations that are a part of its community.



**'If Deliveroo uses its Swiss Cottage location to draw up a replicable operational blueprint for other eateries, it might be able to attract more restaurateurs into its network'**

- Trish Caddy, senior food-service analyst at London-based market-research company Mintel Group Ltd.



# Pizza Paradiso: A closer look



Aver headed to Deliveroo's new restaurant, **Pizza Paradiso**, to see if the dining experience looks different when made with the future of hospitality in mind.

The site was designed with multi-use in mind, including a waiting bench for delivery driver pickups, a sleek front-of-house pizza oven, as well as a retractable awning to make use of the outdoor space in warmer months.

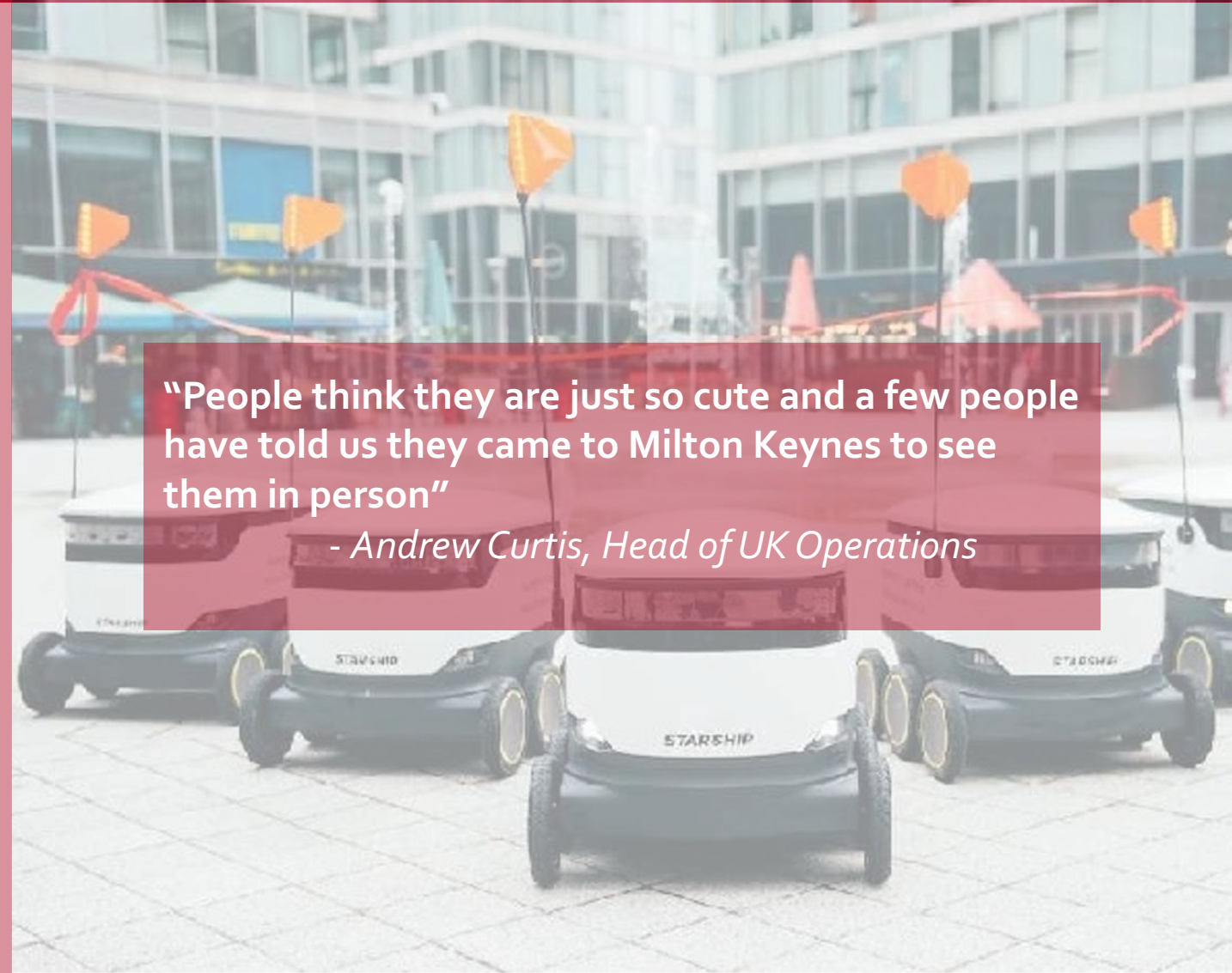
# Milton Keynes: Starship delivery robots

In Milton Keynes, the delivery process itself has been automated.

The robots are **advanced autonomous devices** that are used to deliver restaurant food as well as parcels and groceries. Customer requests are made and tracked via a mobile app.

There were **four times** the amount of orders during lockdown, marking the pandemic as a big factor for their recent successes.

In September 2021 Starship revealed that it will launch in **five** soon to be announced towns and cities in the UK, and that the service is now available to more than **one million** people across the globe on a daily basis.



**“People think they are just so cute and a few people have told us they came to Milton Keynes to see them in person”**

*- Andrew Curtis, Head of UK Operations*

# Beijing Winter Olympics 2022: the future of hospitality?



One extreme example of new dining innovations would be the use of robotic technology in the Beijing Winter Olympics 2022.

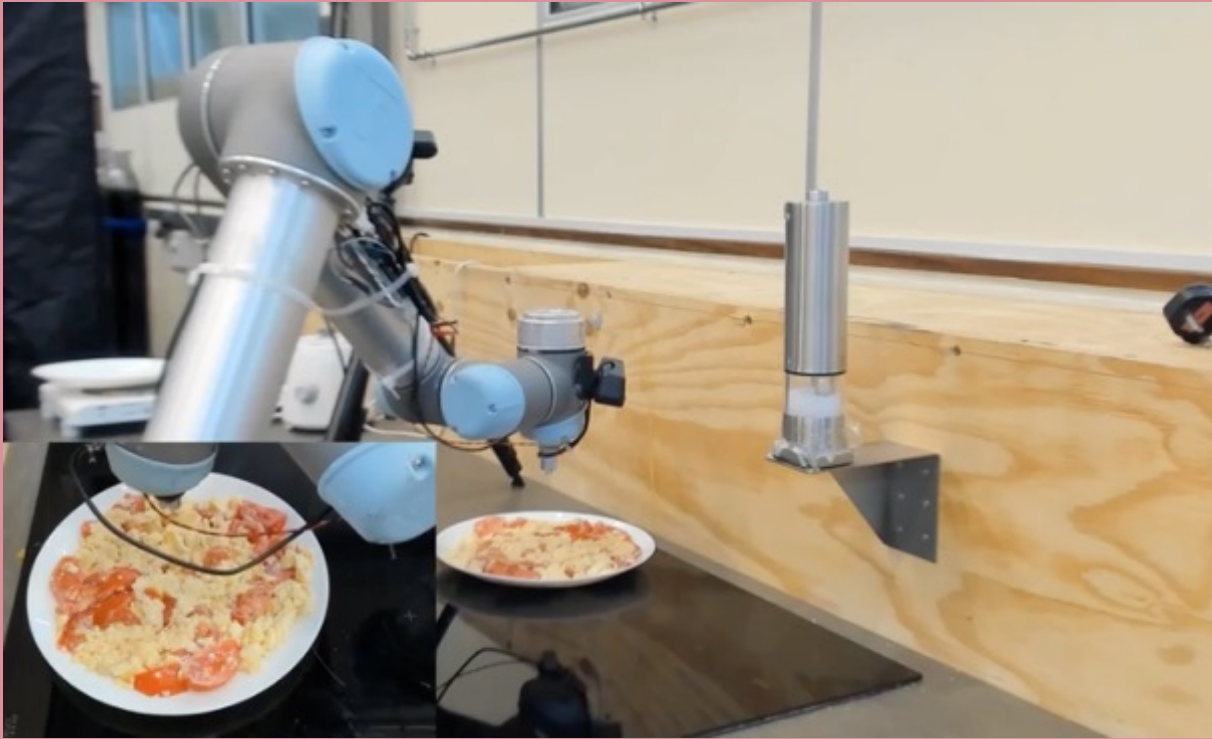
Athletes and delegates had their food and beverages prepared and served by robot chefs. Actions ranged from making cocktails, assembling hamburgers, delivering dishes to tables, and room service orders.

Robots were also used to transport equipment between venues, ensure social distancing, and to sanitise areas.





# Robochef: A taste of the future



Pictured: A robot designed by researchers at the University of Cambridge, trained to taste food and offer guidance, specifically whether or not it is salty enough.

“We believe that the development of robotic chefs will play a major role in busy households and assisted living homes. By using machine and deep-learning algorithms... robot chefs will adjust taste for different dishes and users.”

- Dr Muhammad Chughtai,  
senior scientist at Beko

Innovations such as the development of this ‘robochef’ by the University of Cambridge could be an indicator of the future of not only hospitality, but the future of food and cooking itself.



# 2022 headlines

Beijing introduces the world to 'robo-noodles' to limit COVID spread during the Olympics

**NEW YORK POST**

It's Happened, Delivery Giant Deliveroo Has Opened Its First Real Restaurant

**EATER**  
LONDON

Deliveroo, Probing Restaurant-Delivery Snags, Plans to Open Own Eatery

**THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.**

How London restaurants are leading the digitalisation revolution

**BigHospitality**

Robots Drop Meals From Ceiling at 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing

**5 CHICAGO**

Starship Robots on why Milton Keynes was the 'perfect place' to launch in the UK

**BuckinghamshireLive**

Boparan activate two service robots in a trial that could lead to deploying hundreds  
**HOSPITALITY & CATERING NEWS**

Robot Chefs Take Over Beijing for Winter Olympics

**FINEDINING LOVERS**  
BY S.PELLEGRINO & ACQUA PANNA

Ocado's big bet on smart warehouse and robots leaves investors nervy

**Evening Standard**

# Conclusion: Deliveroo, Starship, Winter Olympics



In starting up their own restaurant venture Deliveroo narrows the already shrinking gap between the online world of hospitality and the physical.



By cutting out the middle man and designing a restaurant built specifically to provide both dine-in and takeaway services with equal efficiency, Deliveroo's new concept makes an argument for a future for spaces purpose-built for both dining and delivery.



The continued popularity of Starship robots in the UK signals a sustained public favour for efficient and contactless delivery since the pandemic.

Use of AI-controlled technology in the Winter Olympics presented a vision of a potential future for hospitality, one where automation of basic processes become the norm.



# Conclusion: A look to the future

There are many benefits of increased automation, including combatting **staff shortages**, reducing **labour costs** and fulfilling public favour for **contactless service**. Nevertheless, multiple factors have to be taken into account, such as **expense and accessibility**, and the value of **human contact**.

A balanced view of hospitality's future could be considered – where automation may well be increased, but perhaps not at the pace the display at the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics might suggest.

The future may not be dominated by robot chefs or AI-controlled kitchen automation, but it does seem that since the pandemic and subsequent staff shortages, the industry is by no means shying away from evolving in favour of increased digitalisation.



# Sources

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