

NEW RESTAURANT TO OFFER TRAINING BOOST TO HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY



EKC Group's new restaurant in the heart of Folkestone is set to boost the local hospitality sector, providing top-quality training opportunities for aspiring chefs and front of house professionals, and more than 22 jobs for residents.

Affectionately named after the Group's recently retired Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Anne Leese, Anne's Restaurant on Shorncliffe Road is in the final stages of development and is due to open its doors later this year.

The restaurant will build on the successful model of EKC Group's four-star Broadstairs hotel, The Yarrow, providing local students with the opportunity to gain a wealth of practical experience in a commercial setting alongside highly skilled professional staff.

For students studying Catering and Hospitality pathways at the Group's Folkestone College, Anne's will play a pivotal role in strengthening the link between College-based learning and the hospitality industry, ensuring every student gains the knowledge, skills, and experience needed to thrive in their chosen careers.

Anne's Restaurant General Manager, Steven Hayes, commented: "I am very proud to be building a team in preparation for Anne's launch later this year.

"My team and I are excited to help inspire the next generation of hospitality professionals and give them the best start to their futures.

"We can't wait to welcome the community through our doors and share our delicious new menu."

EKC GROUP STUDENTS IMPRESS AT VIRTUAL REGIONAL SKILLS SHOWCASE



Talented young locals from EKC Group's family of Colleges recently joined students from across the county to demonstrate their technical and vocational skills during Kent Further Education's (KFE) third annual Skills Showcase.

The students from Ashford College, Broadstairs College, Canterbury College, Dover Technical College, and Folkestone College, exhibited their abilities in areas such as Culinary Arts, Web Design, Early Years, and Performing Arts.

In a change to the usual single day competition, this year's event took the form of an online celebration, with more than 200 students from across Kent showcasing their skills through videos and digital portfolios.

Stand-out moments included: Broadstairs College Professional Cookery student, James Littlejohn's 'Seared Duck with Potato Rosti and Asparagus' culinary demonstration; Ashford College Beauty Therapy student, Chelsea Eggesden's manicure and hand massage video; Folkestone College Early Years student, Katie Mollie's 'Sensory Box' creation; and Canterbury College Media student, Luke Sanders' short documentary exploring the differences between home education and state education, to name a few.

Each student was awarded a certificate and medal in recognition of their achievements.

Speaking about the showcase, Principal of Canterbury College, Lucy McLeod, commented: "It was fantastic to go ahead with the KFE4Skills event as a virtual showcase. So many talented students and so many videos and presentations.

"The event really showed the talents of our students across all of our KFE partnership colleges, and it gave a great sense of pride to watch the videos in this condensed way. A real tribute to our students especially, many of whom have had a really challenging year during the on-going pandemic.

"Equally a credit to our fantastic staff for helping make it happen whilst also trying to complete assessments, exams and catch up with lost teaching time notably in the more hands on technical subject areas and those industries closed by Covid restrictions.

"We look forward to getting back to our usual competition format in 2022, but the virtual event was a great way to celebrate talent at the end of the year!"

ROCK STAR STUDENTS GAIN SUCCESS WITH INTERNATIONAL MUSIC LOVERS FESTIVE PERIOD

A quartet of young musicians who studied at EKC Group's Broadstairs College are building momentum after attracting a global fanbase online.

The Thanet-grown Alternative Hard-rock band, 'State of Mind', have been making waves after releasing their first single titled, 'Buried Alive', last year.

Current Level 3 Music student, Sam Ring, along with Broadstairs College alumni, Aimee Allin, Luke McFarlane, and Eevie Taylor, formed the band in 2019, and have since attracted a swathe of bookings, including spots supporting bands such as Nervus, itoldyouiwoulddeatyou, and Karobela.

Speaking about the students' success, Music Lecturer at the College, Alex Bowden, said: "Although the band wasn't formed in College, we are incredibly proud of what they are achieving.

"It has been great to work with them on developing their skills and it is something we are passionate about in the department.

"If the students have areas, they want to explore that aren't on the curriculum then we certainly make time for this. It is vital to their creative development and what College is all about."



Having recently featured on 'Arts Education Exchange', a platform for young creatives in Thanet, the band is looking forward to premiering the music video for their latest single, 'One in the Same', at the POW! Festival later this year.

[To listen to the band's singles, search 'State of Mind UK' on Spotify.](#)

BROADSTAIRS COLLEGE CELEBRATES FIRST SWIFT SIGHTING AT NEW NEST SITE

EKC Group's Broadstairs College is celebrating a successful first step in its swift conservation efforts after a small flock of the endangered birds were spotted at its newly created nest site.

Coinciding with 'Swift Awareness Week', the sighting comes just months after local Wildlife Conservationist, Nik Mitchell, installed seven nest boxes on the side of one of the College's tallest buildings as part of a pioneering conservation initiative between Broadstairs College, the RSPB's Thanet Local Group, and himself.

The project aims to establish Kent's first artificial swift colony and help safeguard the future of the exceptional bird.

It was hoped that the 21 nest cavities on the College's premises would become home to first-time nesters when the young swifts returned from their fledgling flight in two to three years' time. However, the discovery of swifts



circling the site has prompted optimism that a new colony may be established earlier than expected.

Assistant Principal of Broadstairs College, Sarah Benfield, commented: "We are incredibly excited to see late-arriving swifts showing interest in our new nest boxes.

"The swift conservation initiative in collaboration with Nik and RSPB's Thanet Local Group is one of many projects we're undertaking to protect local wildlife and to provide safe spaces for nature to thrive on-site."

POP-UP GALLERY SUCCESS FOR CANTERBURY CREATIVES

Have you ever been to a high street shop that has turned into a pop-up gallery and fashion show? Students from the Canterbury School of Visual Arts (CSVA) at EKC Group's Canterbury College have produced just that.

On Thursday 24 June, with the expert help of the College's Lecturers, budding student artists were able to go above and beyond to create a show of a lifetime in Canterbury's Whitefriars Shopping Centre.

The pop-up exhibition's private view offered students and their families the opportunity to celebrate the end of the year in style.

The perfect combination between Milan Fashion Week and the Tate Gallery, the event offered an eclectic mix of visual arts, complete with a cutting-edge fashion show, with the amateur models gaining a roar of applause from the crowd.

"It has been a great night," cheered 'Best in Show' award winner and Graphic Design student, Connor McCullen. Meanwhile, proud drag queen and fellow student, Will Roberts, who spent weeks utilising a stepladder and lipstick to create his look, summarised his experiences of the past year commenting: "It has been good - sometimes chaotic - but well worth it in the end".

Head of Visual Arts at the College, Ben Kidger, who opened the event, commented: "I am tremendously proud of our students' resilience - they truly could have quit at any time during the struggle that the pandemic has caused, but everyone showed tenacity and should be proud".

Meanwhile, Principal of Canterbury College, Lucy McLeod, said: "I am very proud of our students.

"The last year has been a tough one for all, nevertheless the young creatives displayed exceptional tenacity. Not only were the Canterbury College students successful in creating high-quality art, but they all came together to produce a show of a lifetime."



AND THEY'RE OFF! BROADSTAIRS STUDENTS RACE TO BECOME FIRST GO KARTING CHAMPIONS



Students and staff members from EKC Group's Broadstairs College recently put the pedal to the metal, competing to become the first-ever champions of the College's inaugural 'Gravity Go Kart Race'.

The event, organised by Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) Project Lead at Broadstairs Junior College, Hollie Coulson, saw students and staff members go head to head, designing, building, and racing custom go-karts around the College's grounds.

A 'Mario Kart' inspired vehicle propelled a team of students from the Junior College into pole position for the 'Design Prize'. Meanwhile, a student team from Supported Learning powered through the finish line with their skateboard-themed kart to secure first place in 'Speed Prize' despite crashing earlier in the race.

Elsewhere, a valiant effort from the College's Estates team resulted in disqualification for propulsion, after they set off the biodegradable confetti cannons on the back of their kart.

Assistant Principal at Broadstairs College, Sarah Benfield, commented: "The event was a great success, with students and staff supporting within their bubbles, and our Creative department supplying music and a microphone for our Assistant Principal, Nicola Kelly, who did an excellent job at whipping the crowd up!

"A fun time was had by all at this event, and we can't wait for it to become an annual feature in the Broadstairs calendar."



TIMED CHALLENGE TESTS STUDENTS' CONSTRUCTION SKILLS



Built Environment students from EKC Group's Folkestone College recently put their construction know-how to the test by taking part in an end of term skills competition.

The internal event saw Bricklaying and Plastering students go head to head to complete a timed challenge within their respective specialisms in a bid to claim victory and take home state-of-the-art toolkits.

Each student was given a drawing to work from and the same period of time to complete the challenge.

In the bricklaying challenge, Level 1 student, Jordan Vincent, scooped the top prize for their impressive wall building skills, receiving a certificate and a bricklaying tool kit. Close behind, in joint second place were Ethan Moss and Charlie Haynes, who both received a certificate.

"It's a great way for the students to demonstrate the skills they have learnt this year and goes a long way to promote student independence and the ability to work to a deadline," commented Level 1 Bricklaying Tutor, David Rowe.

He continued: "It has been good to still be able to hold our internal competitions in what has been a challenging year and we are looking forward to being able to go to regional and national skills competitions in the future."

Elsewhere, the plastering challenge saw Level 2 student, Ben Wakefield, claim the top spot for their high-quality skills, taking home a plastering toolkit and certificate. Meanwhile, Linsey Field received a certificate for second place, whilst John Molroe claimed third place.

Speaking about the event, Level 2 Plastering Tutor, Andy Lockyer, said: "We took what would normally have been part of the course and turned it into a competition to produce a fibrous moulding and fix it to a wall.

"We are really fortunate at Folkestone College that we are able to fully cover this complex part of plastering in our workshops and the students loved the challenge of a task that really stretched their knowledge and skill level."

CELEBRATION HAT-TRICK FOR THE YARROW AFTER EXTRAORDINARY YEAR



EKC Group's leading four-star hotel in Broadstairs, The Yarrow, has been celebrating an extraordinary month of accolades following a year unlike any other.

The hotel kicked off its winning streak by retaining its four-star status after a successful inspection by Visit England, an exceptional achievement given the events of the past 18 months.

The award was followed quickly by news that The Yarrow was officially named the 'Best Place to Stay in Kent', ranking number one out of 191 Kentish hotels on TripAdvisor.

With more than 900 five-star reviews for its hotel and restaurant, The Yarrow rounded off its month of celebrations by receiving a prestigious TripAdvisor 'Travellers' Choice Award' for the second year running, placing it in the top ten per cent of hotels and restaurants worldwide.

The Yarrow's Hotel Manager, Lee Osborn, commented: "We are incredibly proud to retain our four-star accreditation, to be named the 'Best Place to Stay in Kent', and to receive the 'Travellers Choice Award' for the second year in a row.

"We'd like to thank all of our wonderful guests from far and wide who have taken the time to submit a review for us.

"We really do love what we do here at The Yarrow, and we're looking forward to what the next few months bring."

The Yarrow is the only hotel of its kind in the UK to offer students high-quality training experiences in a luxury establishment.

For more information about The Yarrow, visit yarrowhotel.co.uk