

Brand new brasserie back from the brink

A new restaurant that opened just weeks before lockdown has come back from the brink, even though its owner was told it was too new to qualify for grants or the furlough scheme.

Pier Brasserie had just undergone a £100K transformation in the former Prezzo site, at Newhaven's prime former Fishmarket building, and launched with much excitement and anticipation in February.

Within weeks it became clear that the spread of Covid-19 was set to devastate the sector along with the dreams of owner Mark Patonyi, restaurant manager, previously front of house at Martin Wishart's The Honours, Manager of Martin Wishart at Loch Lomond and general manager of Steak Restaurant at Picardy Place.

Now, Mark, 36, alongside head chef and friend Vladimir Garcik and a further team of two, has opened a take away offering, enabling foodies to sample high-quality bistro dishes while taking in the views of Newhaven lighthouse and the bridges, from the harbour.

Mark moved to the UK from Hungary in 2007. He said: "It may sound cliché, but 2020 has been an unbelievable rollercoaster of emotions.

"From the highs of our amazing opening – and those initial few weeks which saw us packed out – everything came crashing down.

“It looked like we would never be able to recover – and it has been heart-breaking that we can’t even offer our team the small comfort of furlough, as we’re so new we didn’t receive our PAYE reference number until after the 19 March cut-off date.

“We’re still doing everything we can to appeal that, as it just feels so unfair. As a new business we’ve not had any chance of building up cash reserves.

“Up until a few weeks ago it didn’t seem feasible that we could launch a take-away offering, but it got to the point I couldn’t sit around and wait for my fate any longer.”

He has subsequently launched a carefully selected menu utilising the best local and Scottish produce, including seafood landed in the harbour and meat from Donald Russell butchers. Included in the menu will be ciabattas, fish and chips, burgers, salads and desserts – as well as few options available each day for children.

Mark added: “The menu is an honest reflection of the food we were serving in the restaurant prior to lockdown – and easily enjoyed outside or at home.

“We’ve put in place all safety precautions too and had the team practice everything rigorously to ensure we can do this in the safest possible way. It gives us a chance to safely gear up to a potential part-opening in weeks, depending on how guidelines change.

“I also want to give a huge thanks to those that have offered kind messages during lockdown, knowing the situation we’re in.”

Ahead of the February launch Mark had been at the heart of the £100,000+ transformation of the site, project managing each process to ensure they meet his exceptionally high standards – as well as hand-picking a 15-strong team.

For more information about Pier Brasserie or to get first sight of the new menu when it launches,

[CLICK HERE](#) or follow them on Facebook @pierbrasserie and Instagram /pierbrasserie

