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**Ascot Continues to Raise the Standard for Fine Dining:  
Raymond Blanc OBE and Phil Howard to play key roles in 2016**

- Raymond Blanc OBE to advise Ascot throughout 2016, as well as hosting the Panoramic Restaurant at this year's Royal Ascot
- Raymond will also run a bespoke Service Academy for Ascot staff involved in fine dining
- Phil Howard returns to Royal Ascot for the second year running to host On5 at this year's Royal Meeting

**Ascot, Berkshire** - Ascot Racecourse has appointed two of the nation's most respected chefs to help deliver its fine dining offer for 2016. Raymond Blanc and Phil Howard will host the Panoramic Restaurant and On5 respectively, for all five days of this year's Royal Meeting. Raymond and Phil hold two Michelin stars each and will create a high quality and memorable fine dining experience for racegoers.

Raymond Blanc is the Chef Patron of Belmond Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons, the legendary restaurant and hotel in Great Milton, Oxfordshire, which has held two Michelin stars for 32 years. Raymond will host the Panoramic Restaurant during Royal Ascot, as part of a wider partnership with Ascot that will enable the racecourse to benefit from his infectious passion and wealth of experience in providing first class fine dining experiences. Raymond will advise on many aspects of the fine dining offer in the Panoramic Restaurant during the Royal Meeting, including menu design, staff training and service standards.

Part of this partnership will also see Raymond Blanc deliver a 'Service Academy' to help ensure elegant and uplifting service standards across all of Ascot's restaurants. The details of the initiative are being finalised, but the aim is to ensure that the service in all of Ascot's restaurants is as good as it possibly can be.

Speaking about his work with Ascot Racecourse, Raymond Blanc said;

*"All of my working life, I have strived for excellence and providing our guests with the best possible experience. I look forward to bringing my knowledge and my passion to the heart of Ascot. I am delighted to be working with the brilliant Ascot team to raise the bar even higher. Hosting the Panoramic Restaurant during the Royal Meeting is a real privilege and we'll give race goers a memorable gastronomic treat. I am equally excited about the Service Academy that I will run in partnership with Ascot. I believe that the guests experience is as much about the service as it is the food. As it should be."*

Phil Howard, co-owner of The Square and winner of Great British Menu in 2012 will bring his love of home grown ingredients to create a spectacular summer menu in On5. Phil returns to Royal Ascot after a very successful five day stint in 2015, where his dishes proved wildly popular with racegoers.

Speaking about his decision to host On5 at Royal Ascot this year, Phil Howard said:

*"I'm really looking forward to being a part of Royal Ascot 2016, especially following the success of last year. Again, this year I will be using my interest in British ingredients to create a stunning menu to match the spectacle of a day at Royal Ascot. We have been growing our own vegetables within the grounds of Fulham Palace for a year now and using them at The Square is something I*



*am very proud of. I am greatly looking forward to bringing them to the Royal Meeting this year.”*

Speaking about fine dining at Ascot Racecourse this year, Juliet Slot, Commercial Director, said;

*“We’re delighted to have Raymond Blanc and Phil Howard on board for 2016. We have worked with both of them before and we had to have them back this year. Last year Raymond Blanc had a role advising us on dining options for some of our Private Boxes. Working with him was so inspiring that we have invited him back to advise us on our wider fine dining offer. Through his Service Academy Raymond will mentor and train our staff in service excellence, helping to raise standards even further at Ascot this year. Guests who book the Panoramic Restaurant, which Raymond will be hosting during the Royal Meeting, are in for a real treat.*

*“We’re also very proud to have Phil Howard back for Royal Ascot. Last year, the feedback from racegoers who ate in his restaurant was incredible, so he really is back by popular demand. His technical ability, relentless energy and attention to detail, mean that he never produces anything that is less than exceptional.”*

Around 35,000 guests enjoy fine dining at Royal Ascot every year, attracted by the combination of internationally revered Chefs, innovative menus and the unique spectacle of the Royal Meeting. There are 12 restaurants to choose from, each with their own individual flavour. The broad range ensures there is a choice to suit all tastes and budgets for both private and corporate guests.

Restaurants include:

- The Parade Ring. Ascot’s most prestigious restaurant with views overlooking the Parade Ring and its own private trackside viewing area. Guests will be served a stunning five course lunch followed by afternoon tea. Each course will be paired with Champagnes by Royal Ascot’s Official Champagne partner, Champagne Bollinger.
- Trackside. Right at the centre of the activity and popular with racing purists, Trackside has a 40m balcony running adjacent to the track. Guests will be served a four course menu with ingredients sourced from the Crown Estate.
- Windsor Forest. An intimate setting considered by regulars as one of the hidden gems of the Royal Meeting. The Windsor Forest directly overlooks the Winning Post.
- Carriages. Named after the historic landaus of the Royal Procession, Carriages is a stately restaurant on the upper floor of a luxury marquee with a light and airy interior and stunning head on views down the final straight from its own viewing balcony.
- Sandringham. Sandringham occupies the lower level of the same luxury marquee as Carriages. Taking its name from Her Majesty’s Royal Estate, the interior is inspired by the orchards the Sandringham Estate is well known for.
- Royal Ascot Village. Ascot’s take on British eccentricity – the Royal Ascot Village is located on the Heath near to the track and looking back towards the Grandstand. Guests will be greeted with a Pimms No.1 Reception, served a four course lunch followed by a ‘Mad Hatter’s’ afternoon tea and enjoy live music and pop up entertainment throughout the afternoon.



- Ascot Pavilion. With a private balcony overlooking the Plaza Lawns and traditional singing around the Bandstand, the Pavilion is the place to soak up the atmosphere at Royal Ascot and watch racegoers pass by in their finery.
- Old Paddock. An intimate restaurant over-looking the pre-parade ring and just a short walk from the Grandstand.

Private Boxes are also available where guests can enjoy a champagne reception, four course menu and private service in their own private space. Fine dining has always been an important ingredient of the Royal Ascot experience, with a total of 330 chefs, and 12 private dining facilities. During the five day event in 2015 around 2,400 kilos of whole sirloin beef, 3,700 rumps of lamb and 2,900 Scottish lobsters were served. A further 51,000 bottles of champagne, 125,000 glasses of Pimms and 45,000 afternoon teas were consumed.

For Royal Ascot 2016 Bollinger Champagne, Royal Ascot's official champagne partner, will have two exclusive bars in the Royal Enclosure Gardens and the Bollinger Lounge on the Motivator Lawn. Bollinger Champagne is also available at all bars throughout the racecourse and during the Royal Meeting there will be a specially created Bollinger Champagne afternoon tea.

To book or for further information, please call 0844 346 3000 or visit [www.ascot.co.uk](http://www.ascot.co.uk)

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