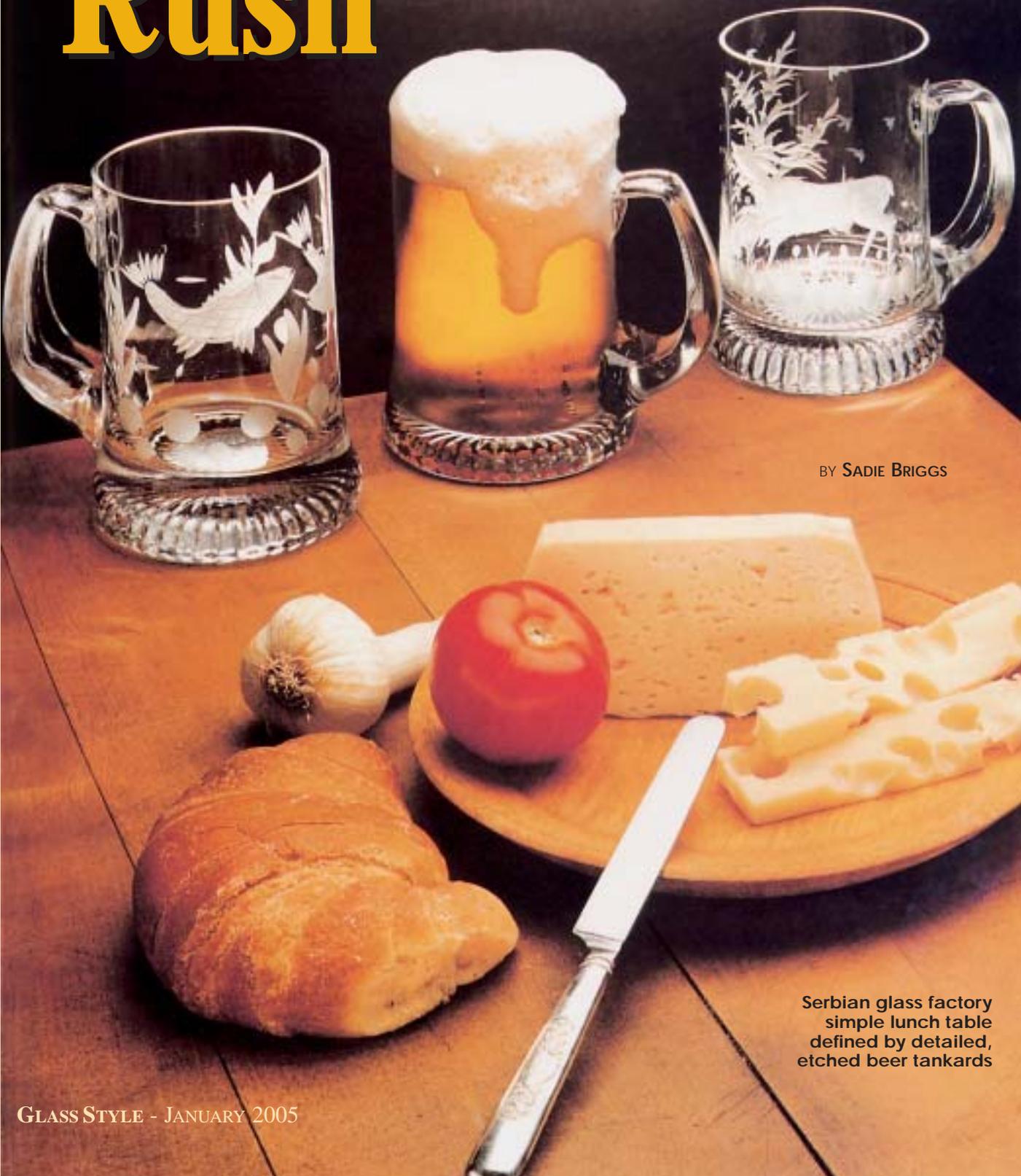


The LUNCHTIME Rush



BY SADIE BRIGGS

Serbian glass factory
simple lunch table
defined by detailed,
etched beer tankards

"Let's do lunch!" This heart-felt and frequent phrase is used by many to arrange meetings at the mid-day break. Attitudes have changed as lunch has become a fashionable activity for knowingly chic. However, the pleasure of convening with friends, family and colleagues to share a meal and thoughts is universal. Glass Style checks out the new fads and daily realities of lunching.

E VOLVING LUNCH PATTERNS

A few decades ago, lunch was a relaxed, sit down affair, a chance for a break or to spend time together as a family. Now, Sunday lunch seems to be the one time in many British and European households, when the family are guaranteed to sit at the table together. In fact Sunday lunch is so revered for this that many living independently

return to the safety of their mother's home cooking.

The average lunch of today has evolved through the last few decades of changing lifestyles, social attitudes and attitudes to food, diets and fitness. There has been a creeping social trend since the 1950's, known increasingly among social analysts as the "breakfastization" of meals. This refers to how the attention and attitude shown towards preparing and eating lunch and often dinner,

appears to be increasingly individualistic and fragmented, as it is at breakfast time when people arrive at different times and generally serve themselves.

In the 1950s & 1960s changes in lifestyle for Europeans after World War II, showed in the kitchen, with the microwave oven and food processor revolutionising cooking and dining etiquette was important and design was getting more adventurous.

The 1970s burst in with health and fitness, the



Ercole: simple, clear, practical tableware by Bormioli Rocco

holistic attitude to food and drink emphasising nature. Health foods became a trend and today's fashion for informality began as the concept of breakfastization took hold. The open house meant increasing emphasis on mood and music and less on fancy, matching tableware. The 1980s showed a hedonistic desire for plastic pleasure and a rich, falsely full life. Strong colour and uncompromising design and décor was everywhere. Fast food lowered dining standards and the yuppie lifestyle meant more working hours and skipped lunch breaks. Increasing globalisation of food became an issue in the 1990's, with increasing concern about genetically modified crops.

Thinness once more was a fashion and nouvelle cuisine had its hour. Table trends returned to nature and minimal purity.

THE GLOBAL LUNCH MIX

Now as ever, the family unit is often split into different timetables in the middle of the day. It is for many a meal to spend with colleagues or friends rather than with family. Most people in northern Europe and Britain now lunch on convenient sandwiches, toasted sandwiches or pizza. In southern Mediterranean countries there is more tendency to sit down and take time over lunch on salad, freshly prepared sandwiches, or in Italy pasta or pizza. This is greatly due to the

weather of course, with the desire to stay outside in the sun for an hour in the middle of the day persuading people away from their offices. In France, taking time to lunch in calm can be a sign of culture and discussing work over lunch is often disapproved of, whereas in America, the business lunch is standard practice. Business lunch is seen as more relaxed, sociable way in which to discuss business affairs, come to agreements or even present ideas. Businesses often hire hotels in order to carry out impressive lunch-time presentations. The buffet lunch method is common to such business conventions or on ceremonial occasions such as weddings, due to its convenience.

By lunchtime even the most unsociable risers want conversation, so the meal is one we usually prefer to spend in company. It is more important as a ritual than breakfast, yet not so much as dinner. That 'do lunch' invitation is heard so often these days, no longer consigned to the fashion world. Between business people, as said, it can be a pleasanter way of discussing work. Colleagues get to know each other outside the office atmosphere and friends use it as an excuse to get together and gossip or to celebrate something small but special. Meeting a friend or partner in the working lunch-hour can be the most enjoyable way in which to break up the daily routine and a great excuse to try out some new cuisine. Somewhere like London's Soho area, it is possible to lunch from a different culture every day of the week. The perfect girls' day out is considered to be a mix of shopping and lunch in a cool wine bar or café and as said, lunch has become a highly classy thing to 'do' for twenty-somethings upward. So what do we devour in this chic mid-day social break?

SHOWING OFF SOUP

Soup accompanied by a chunky slice of bread, is a very country thing, which can be a lunch in itself. Traditional, homemade soup, served



Invitation by Paşabahçe is linear and minimal

Square plates have become a fashion



the variety is not so mixed and confusing. They generally tend to stick to what they know works well. America, on the other hand, churns out thousands of alternative flavour combinations and spreads for sandwiches. A common favourite is peanut butter and jelly (jam). Germans tend to go for the sandwich fillings such as chilled meats, sliced sausages and savoury meat patés, not only for lunch but also breakfast. Spreadable meats and cheeses are also popular in these countries, as in

in traditional pottery soup bowls, has a comforting feeling of warmth that is welcome on cold winter days, very characteristic of northern European countries. In a more chic ambient, however, where cool summer soups are consumed, transparent glass soup bowls allow them to be seen while adding to their refreshing lightness. At home, many now choose ready-made tinned soup, but the real thing, prepared with vegetables and pulses in a large steel pan and ladled into the waiting bowls, is still a popular dish in France and Italy.

THE SANDWICH STOP

Sandwiches have been mixing and matching between nations at an incredible rate in the last few decades. Especially in northern European countries and Britain, the range on offer in shops is baffling. From sliced white bread, to wholemeal baps, to French baguette, to Italian Ciabatta and Indian style chapatti for wraps. Fillings vary from British cheddar and chutney to egg and mayonnaise, getting adventurous with avocado and salmon or chicken tikka. Then when you have finally chosen the most desirable bread and filling match, you notice the healthier organic or low-fat versions. In countries such as Italy and Spain, where there is more awareness of simple, traditional food,



Glass surfaces add interest to the lunchtable

Everyday Glass



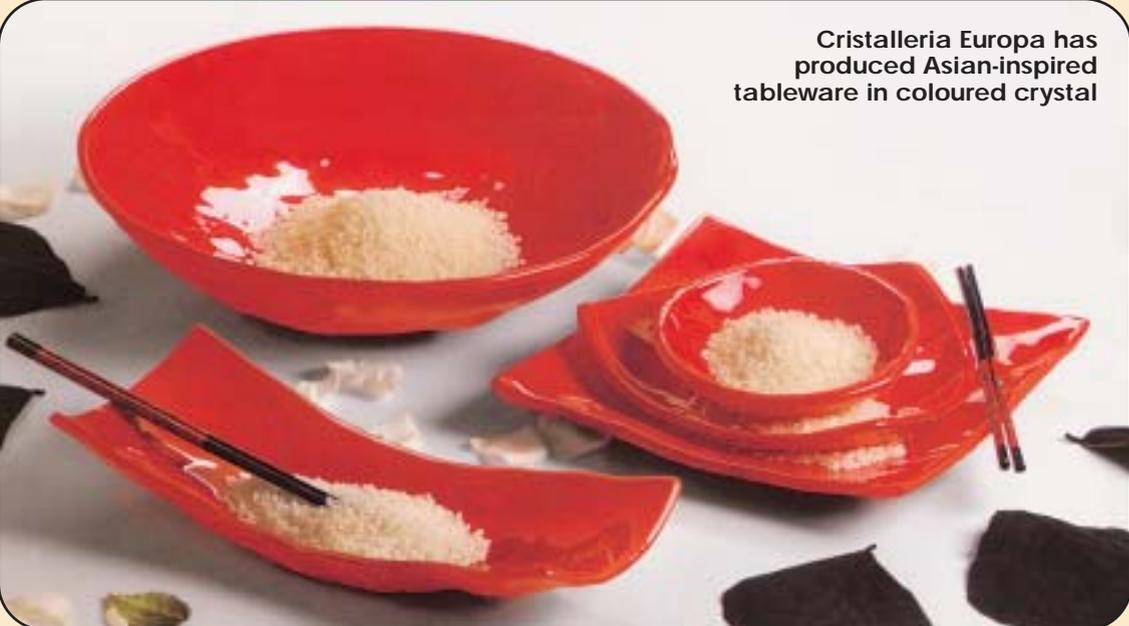
Britain and are mainly used for their convenience in sandwiches. Presently, lunch kits are being developed which will threaten the traditional packed lunch of sandwiches and fruit, the former being more convenient, ready packaged and more fun.

“LAZY” LUNCHERS

When there is time, a cooked lunch is great to have a conversation over, as it takes longer to prepare/ order and to eat.

Rice, pasta or chips accompany simple dishes such as omelette, ham, grilled meat, fish and so on.

Italian pizza is an extremely easy compromise between the sandwich



Cristalleria Europa has produced Asian-inspired tableware in coloured crystal

and the cooked lunch.

Picnic lunches are at their most extravagant and elegant when real glassware is used. Dining with such a delicate, decorative material in such

inappropriate circumstances, merely emphasises the sheer luxury using this beautiful material, which can take up a whole Sunday afternoon and is ideal for those with small children.



Glass is as good as its rival ceramics, as showed by the Veronica dish set by Bormioli Rocco

WASHING IT DOWN

Drinks make another geographical definition, with tables decorated by red, white or sparkling wine for the French and Italians and wine, beer or cider for the British and northern Europeans. Traditional lemonade or iced-tea, homemade and served in a large, round, blown glass pitcher, carafe or jug, is still nostalgically enjoyed in England and America today. It is normally drunk from tumblers which can provide a fun and decorative touch to the table. They can be in different colours of either plastic or much more effective glass, like shiny jewels. Their shape should be co-ordinated, but can define the style of the table or match the design of the surroundings.

CHANGING SETTINGS

When lunches suffer from breakfastisation, attention to the table settings and tableware becomes careless and cheap, utilitarian items that look good and serve their purpose are preferred. Lunch is usually a far more simple and casual affair than dinner, so table settings are less extravagant and formal. Like the time of day, the style is somewhere between breakfast and dinner, appropriately simple as there is more concentration

on conversation than surroundings, in the easier, more relaxed atmosphere. There are definite lunch trends, however. Sushi has caught on worldwide and is greatly favoured as a fashionable alternative to the traditional national lunch, even in countries such as Italy, renowned for pride in its cuisine.

With this, has come a fashion for Japanese tableware and lunching with chopsticks.

However you normally lunch, time should be set aside for that intimate midday meeting with friends, lovers or spouses. We often need it in order to slow down and catch up on other important parts of life.

So pick up your cell phone and make it a date!



Carafes
add traditional elegance
add plenty to the table