

Ministers must act fast to save restaurants, warns hospitality boss

The boss of one of [London](#)'s highest profile restaurant groups with A list venues including [The Ivy](#), Scott's and [Sexy Fish](#) has warned that the sector faces a fresh wave of closures next year [without major Government support](#).

Baton Berisha, chief executive of [Richard Caring](#)'s [hospitality](#) empire, said ministers wrongly believed hospitality was "resilient" and over the worst of the [pandemic](#).

He added that they had badly underestimated the impact of the end of the moratorium on rent payments, which has been extended to March.

He said: "The Government has do something quickly. Because of the moratorium a lot of businesses have been able to trade but after March a lot will be going under and that will be very sad to see."

Mr Berisha was speaking ahead of the launch of The Ivy Asia Chelsea, a £7 million 99-seater restaurant opening next door to The Ivy Chelsea Garden on King's Road.

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He called on the Government to freeze the VAT rate on restaurant food at 12.5 per cent and change visa rules to allow restaurant staff to count as skilled workers.

He also called on Sadiq Khan to return congestion charge hours to those in place before the pandemic so that customers can drive to [restaurants](#) in the evenings without paying the toll.