



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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***kingi* wins a new award and expands its culinary team**



*kingi*, the Britomart restaurant with a focus on sustainable seafood and the best fresh New Zealand produce, is celebrating the new year with an exciting award and the expansion of its expert culinary team.

This week, *kingi* was awarded Best Hotel Restaurant in the Cuisine Good Food Awards, as well as gaining a coveted two-hat rating with an overall score of 17/20. “It’s great to have a high-quality seafood restaurant in the heart of old Auckland that walks the talk without compromise when it comes to sustainability and ethical fishing,” the award’s judges noted in their citation.

Co-founder Tom Hishon (above centre) is now working with *kingi*’s new Chef de Cuisine, Uelese Mua (above right), to deliver *kingi*’s unique all-day offerings. Tom continues to drive the creative direction and menu concepts for the restaurant, with Uelese executing that vision for the restaurant each day.

Uelese’s arrival coincides with the hiring of Andrew Lautenbach, the new Head Chef for The Hotel Britomart, who is responsible for overseeing the hotel’s overall food offerings including The Libraries, the private function spaces in the heritage Masonic Building above *kingi* that are also part of The Hotel Britomart.

"Now that *kingi* is a year old, it's really exciting that we're able to expand the team and refresh our offerings," says the restaurant's co-founder, Tom Hishon. "As well as welcoming Andrew and Uelese on board and winning Best Hotel Restaurant in the Cuisine Good Food Awards, we have a new glass roof on our laneway dining space and fresh seating arrangements in the restaurant – all of which means we have great experiences to offer our guests in 2022."

Andrew Lautenbach is originally from Hamilton and spent the early part of his career working in the French Alps before returning to Auckland, where he has worked at O'Connell Street Bistro and Hallertau in Riverhead. Classically trained in French cuisine, Andrew has developed his own personal cooking style focused on local and seasonal produce with an uncomplicated and fresh approach.

"I am looking forward to working with the team at The Hotel Britomart as we have the same goals and ethos regarding sustainability and a positive team environment. Creativity is important and working alongside Tom and Uelese at *kingi* will only make the brand stronger," Andrew says.

Uelese brings a wealth of experience to his new role, including leadership at several high-end Auckland restaurants – including Euro and Soul – and a six-year stint in France in kitchens in Paris and Marseille. Uelese has Samoan heritage and enjoys bringing Pacific flavours to his cooking.

"I am thrilled to be working at *kingi* and being able to focus on cooking with sustainably caught fish – and honouring it by reducing food wastage and utilising the entire product," Uelese says.

"We're delighted about having Andrew's experience and expert eye overseeing The Hotel Britomart's culinary offerings, especially in The Libraries, our exceptional suite of private dining and private function spaces," says Clinton Farley, General Manager of The Hotel Britomart. "With Andrew and Uelese joining the team, we are extremely excited about the continued evolution of our Food and Beverage offering in the year ahead."

*kingi* is open seven days for all-day service including dinner, inviting guests to experience the best of local seafood and produce. Aperitivo Hour offers specialty drinks, wine and beers and flat breads from the woodfire oven, daily between 4-6pm. The spaces available for private functions in The Libraries include the Papuke Room, the Chef's Library, the Wine Library and The Lounge.

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Images saved here: [Link](#)

**What's in a name:** *kingi* (short for kingfish)  
**Website:** <https://kingibritomart.com/>

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#### About *kingi*

*kingi* (short for kingfish) is a restaurant that offers fresh, locally sourced food in thoughtful, approachable ways. Located just steps from The Hotel Britomart lobby on the ground floor of the heritage Masonic Building (which has been refurbished as part of The Hotel Britomart project), *kingi* introduces guests at the hotel to the city, and welcomes Aucklanders with an easy-going warmth that tells them it's their place too. Open for everything from early-morning coffee to drinks, snacks, aperitifs, and fuller plates at night, *kingi* also offers The Hotel Britomart guests selected items as a room service menu throughout the day.