



← _____
 Aaron Solomon and Jed Hackling aim to make their startup, Ambl, the Uber of restaurants.

istered venues that meet their criteria.

The platform is free to use for diners, while businesses are charged £1 per head—a small price to pay, considering that cancellations and no-shows cost the UK hospitality industry £17.6 billion a year.

“We’ve spoken to a lot of venues to find out what their pain points are, and built a really simple solution,” Hackling says. Staff can share available capacity in just a few clicks, and the app’s autoresponder does the hard work for them by replying to customers and confirming bookings. “We’re essentially providing them with a screen that shows them a marketplace of people in the area, which they wouldn’t otherwise see,” Solomon adds.

While the 105 establishments currently featured on Ambl are all located within central London’s Square Mile, another 1,200-plus venues across the city are keen to come on board. A full London roll-out was expected by the end of 2022; thereafter, the duo have set their sights on other markets across the UK and even worldwide. “A key thing for us is scalability. We’ve built everything—from the technology to the processes—to be able to scale quite aggressively. If we need to onboard 10,000 new users all of a sudden, we can,” Hackling says. To this end, they’ve secured £2.3 million in seed funding—courtesy of big-name investors including restaurateur Jon Spiteri and serial entrepreneur Mark Gordon—which will be used to support their launch efforts and build out schemes that reward their venue partners.

From a humble ice-cream stall to a multi-million-dollar tech startup, Solomon and Hackling have certainly come a long way. And true to Ambl’s ethos of spontaneous living, they’re seizing the moment. “We were both previously in amazing jobs, and my parents went mental when I told them I had quit to start an app. But we’ll probably never get a chance like this again—to be part of a business that might one day become a household name,” Solomon says. “We’ve got a clear vision, and that’s what keeps us going.” *ambl.co*

_____ **DELLE CHAN** is a London-based writer and editor, and a WIRED contributor.

FOODIE FIGHTERS FOR FREE TABLES

‘Reservation culture’ is the bane of the spontaneous night out, but a new app for walk-ins could help both diners and restaurants

Londoners love a good time, but a great night out usually requires some pre-planning—booking that fancy Mayfair restaurant at least three weeks in advance, for instance, or getting on the guest list at a trendy Shoreditch bar. But what if you could turn up on the spur of the moment and get seated almost immediately?

This is the inspiration behind Ambl, a new app that enables users to make last-minute reservations at many of the capital’s most in-demand bars and restaurants, including Hawksmoor, Bob Bob Ricard and The Alchemist. It’s the brainchild of long-time friends Jed Hackling

and Aaron Solomon, the latter of whom experienced a “light-bulb moment” after ringing up countless venues one day, desperately trying—and failing—to make a booking for a party of seven.

Previously, Solomon and Hackling worked in financial services and tech recruitment respectively, but one might argue that the duo have long had a taste for the hospitality industry. After all, they set up their first foodie venture together when they were just 13, selling ice creams in their school canteen and raking in a cool £600 before they were ordered to shut down. After leaving school and going their separate ways, the pair teamed up again almost a decade later to launch Ambl in London during October 2022.

According to the duo, Ambl is modeled after convenience apps like Deliveroo, Just Eat, Getir and GoPuff. “It’s all about solving for the on-demand society we live in,” Solomon says. Indeed, they hope Ambl will become the “Uber of restaurants”.

Upon launching the app, users can browse establishments within a two-mile radius with real-time availability, and filter results according to party size, type of venue, and distance. Then, they can hit “Search” to view a map of available places, or “Broadcast” to send a request to all reg-