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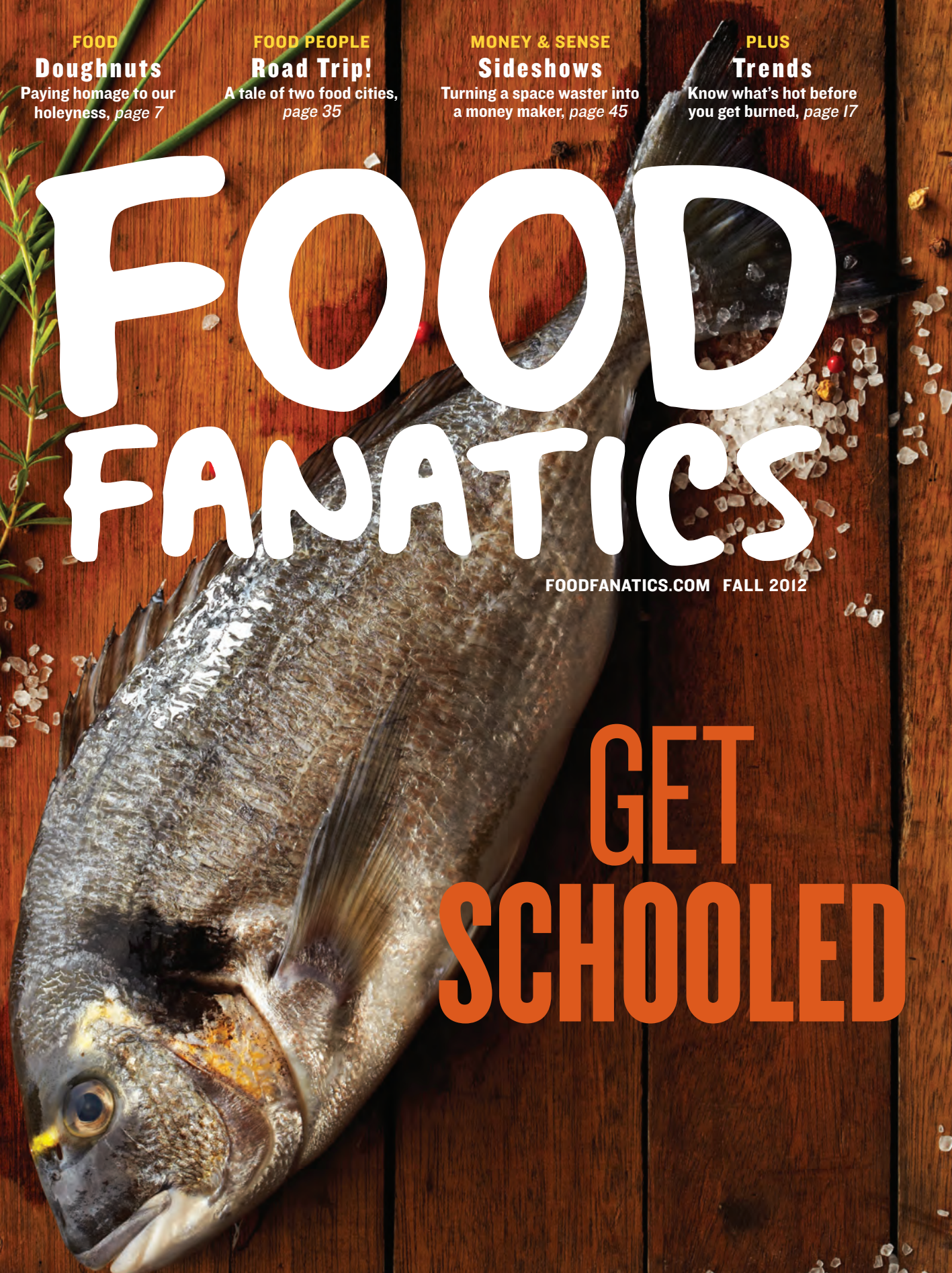
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FOOD FANATICS

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GET SCHOOLED



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FOOD

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Who are these people?

It takes a bucketload of people to conceive, create and launch a new magazine, so give a round of applause to the giant list of names to the right. For the particularly nosy, a few are called out below.

Laura Yee happily waved goodbye to hard news reporting for food writing just before chefs became celebrities, giving her a taste of the more esoteric side of Rick Bayless, Thomas Keller and their brethren while she was the food editor at the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* and *Restaurants & Institutions* magazine. After an eight-year stint in restaurant and hospitality public relations, she cannot imagine anything more gratifying than creating a magazine from scratch.



Nicole Dudka is an art director and illustrator who has worked for a variety of publications, from magazines to newspapers, such as the *Chicago Tribune*, and on a wide range of content, from serious to silly. When she's not at work, she dabbles in creative and crafty things like sewing and printmaking. She has a deep love for white space, detective shows, the color teal and all tomato-based foods.



Peter Gianopulos, a dining critic for *Chicago Magazine* and adjunct journalism professor at Loyola University Chicago, once spent an entire week in his teens fishing in northern Wisconsin without snagging a single catch. Embittered, he now leaves fishing to the experts but dreams of one day creating the most elaborate Feast of the Seven Fishes spread this side of Naples using, of course, only sustainable seafood from start to finish.



Kate Leahy is line cook turned freelance writer based in Oakland, Calif. While taking a break from cookbook projects—including “The Preservation Kitchen: The Craft of Making and Cooking with Pickles, Preserves, and Aigre-Doux,” with Paul Virant, and “SPQR: Modern Italian Food and Wine,” with Shelley Lindgren and Matthew Accarrino, she often walks through San Francisco’s Mission District scouting storefronts offering the Next Big Thing in food. Her favorite: Korean shaved ice.



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*Compared to Spring mix

FOOD

Hungry for food trends and ideas to fatten up your bottom line? Keep reading.



What's light, airy, round all over and could have you rolling in the dough? ➡



Doughnut Vault closes for the day when cinnamon-sugar and other varieties sell out, usually in less than four hours.

PHOTO AT LEFT AND ON PREVIOUS PAGE COURTESY OF THE DOUGHNUT VAULT/KARI S. KAFLIN

Step aside, cupcake—coffee’s classic counterpart is making a slam-dunk comeback

DOLLARS TO DOUGHNUTS

BY CARLY FISHER

RALPH PRIMO HAD NEVER MIXED BATTER, let alone fried dough, when he offered \$500 to stake claim on a failing strip mall doughnut shop in 1956. Today, his Primo’s Westdale Donuts still stands as Los Angeles’s premier doughnut hole. Such impulsive dives into the unknown have inspired a new wave of designer doughnut shops from coast to coast, each with unique spins on the classic morning pastry. Their success is varied, but one thing holds true across the board: they’re satisfying customer cravings for a sweet, filling and comforting treat that can be eaten out of hand and on the run. Now, doughnuts have been reborn as fun and creative: studded with bacon, glazed with high-end chocolate or rolled in childhood cereal. ➡

➡ Doughboy Pioneers

Primo and his wife, Celia, were small business amateurs when they opened the doughnut shop—and benefited as the only game in town. “Today, people would tell me to develop a business plan and other considerations, but at the time, we just went for it,” Primo says, adding that the \$500 to hold the retail space was originally earmarked as a down payment for his first home. “That’s the great thing about being young and stupid.”

Primo’s epitomizes the power of customer loyalty, serving doughnuts to generations of dedicated families, which is how it’s endured competition from convenience stores and encroaching franchise doughnut shops.

Government regulations like zoning laws, taxation and new state trans-fat guidelines have hit the operation hard. The shop has proven to be a stable source of income, but Primo insists it’s not a get-rich business. “It’s a tough nut,” he says, “but it’s a tremendous ride to be your own boss and create your own doughnuts.”

Overall, the morning day-part has become a thriving one, allowing for the rise of quick-service breakfast concepts like Dunkin’ Donuts and daring up-

starts like Voodoo Doughnuts in Portland, Ore.

When Kenneth “Cat Daddy” Pogson and Tres Shannon opened their 24-hour Voodoo Doughnuts in 2003, skeptics abounded. Cupcakes were the food industry darlings, and doughnuts sold at a national average of 40 cents apiece. With signature frills like extra frosting, crushed Oreos and bacon, Voodoo peddled doughnuts that required a higher price. Yet within a week of opening, the shop gained cult status.

“No one believed me, but I thought the nighttime would outsell the daytime,” says Pogson, whose shop rings in the most business at 2 a.m. “We purposefully opened in the drinking district because people get the

DOUGHNUT VS. DONUT

Grammar dictates that **donut** is only used in business names as the informal version of **doughnut**.

THE BLACK MAGIC BEHIND VOODOO DOUGHNUTS



The mascot:
The Voodoo Doll is yeast raised, filled with raspberry jelly and topped with chocolate frosting and a pretzel stake.



Fastest seller:
The maple bacon bar

Time to make a Voodoo doughnut: 8 hours

MORE ON THE RISE?

As more doughnut shops enter the playing field, the trend shows no signs of slowing. The concept is a proven boon to business and continues to inspire new shops.

Demand and revenue suggest a larger space might generate more profit, but Doughnut Vault’s success is rooted in its approach.

“Simplicity is key,” says owner Brendan Sodikoff. “Committing to do a few things really well is a great model.”

munchies at night. Plus, in order to be open for the 6 a.m. rush, I have to be there all night anyway. If customers are there, might as well sell what you got.”

Nearly a decade later, Voodoo Doughnuts’ three shops are rarely without a long line at all hours of the day. At the flagship location in Portland, a team of 16 to 20 people work nonstop to maintain production demands of stocking 100 varieties and selling up to 20,000 doughnuts per day.

Becoming A Cult Master

Like Voodoo, Chicago’s Doughnut Vault gained celebrity status quickly, but its meteoric rise came through social media. Three months before unveiling the shop, owner Brendan So-

dikoff created the Tumblr blog of an elusive pastry chef known only as “François,” who documented doughnut-making from proofing to glazing. Every few days, he teased locals with mouth-watering photos of fluffy chocolate cake and golden glazed doughnuts, along with historical tidbits and peeks into the shop’s construction. By the opening, Sodikoff had secured his initial customers with virtually no marketing costs. Social media continues to grow his customer base.

A year and a half later, Doughnut Vault’s social media accounts provide live updates about available flavors and the length of the customer line. They also help keep tabs on customer requests. “Social media makes people feel con-

“We were such amateurs when we opened that our first customer handed us a dollar for his nickel doughnut and we realized our cash drawer had no change. So, our first customer was a credit customer—but he stuck with us for another 10 years until he passed.”

—Ralph Primo,
Primo’s Westdale Donuts,
Los Angeles

nected to the business and want to get involved,” Sodikoff says.

As for any shop with a would-be cult following, exposure is key. The internet has provided essential support for even longtime operations like Primo’s. Accolades from Yelp and online foodie forums helped Primo attract new business after losing several corporate accounts during the economic downturn.

For Voodoo Doughnuts, video has played a pivotal role in making the shop a tourist destination. Shannon and Pogson’s wacky personas are a natural draw for the camera, primed after former gigs in bands, and stints as a wrestling announcer and game show host, respectively.

Airy fried dough is only part of

the reason customers wait outside Doughnut Vault at 8:30 a.m. The real secret is Sodikoff’s business model, which allows him to rake in \$500,000 annually from this side operation, which usually sells out of doughnuts in less than four hours. Once the inventory is gone, doors close for the day.

Taking a cue from established boutique shops like Doughnut Plant in New York, Sodikoff carved a space within his existing craft cocktail salon, Gilt Bar, allowing for a minimal investment (roughly \$50,000) and shared infrastructure. Limited storefront hours also help lower labor costs, providing breathing room elsewhere.

“You can produce a doughnut that’s 10 to 15 percent food cost, or you can make a product that’s 40 percent food cost,” Sodikoff says. “We tend to use high-quality ingredients like premium chocolate and fresh butter, so our food costs are usually in the high 20s.”

At Primo’s, food costs are a steep 40 percent due to pricier ingredients like soy shortening, which adheres to recent trans-fat guidelines without compromising the textural stability of his product. Voodoo’s Pogson says his base food costs are exceptionally low, but add-ons like Oreos and bacon can add up fast.

Voodoo Doughnuts generates additional revenue, however, with branded merchandise, a self-owned ATM (the shop is cash only) and even voodoo-themed weddings. Pogson has officiated a few hundred weddings since the store opened, charging \$25 for fake weddings and \$200 to \$300 for bona fide ceremonies.

“It’s ‘the \$5 Date,’ where you can buy two doughnuts, two cups of coffee and still have a quarter left for the jukebox,” Pogson says. “In bad times, people need that. For me, it’s been a recession-proof business.” ■

Think you can turn dead space into new revenue? Go to page 47 and read about restaurants that are cashing in.



Social media has been integral to propelling the doughnut shop trend.



Daytime sees decent traffic, but the busiest times at Voodoo Doughnuts in Portland, Ore., take place after local bars close and patrons get the “munchies.”

AT LEFT: PHOTOS COURTESY OF VOODOO DOUGHNUTS; ABOVE: PHOTO COURTESY OF THE DOUGHNUT VAULT/KARI SIKARLEN

SEASONAL
SPOTLIGHT

THE GAME PLAN

Scoring with killer tailgate options

BY MONICA KASS ROGERS

Higher education knows a thing or two about the art of tailgating. But they aren't the only ones wise about getting the party started. With a little creativity, caterers, bar and grills, and just about any foodservice operation can score. Here's a game plan:

Know the Offense

Karen Lacy, director of catering and co-owner (with husband Chef Glyn Lacy) of Skeeter Barnes in Lincoln, Neb., wins big during tailgate season at the University of Nebraska with staples such as smoked chicken and bacon-wrapped shrimp.

"In Nebraska, people really like their meat," says Lacy, who stays on point with affordable alternative cuts like prime tender (petite tender) from the shoulder. To spice up meaty St. Louis pork ribs, she applies popular hot-wing methodology (bread- ing, frying, saucing), creating her menu's Flying Pig Wings. "People order them by the dozen," says Lacy. "They really do fly out of here."

Mix It Up

Near Michigan State University in East Lansing, Steve Montayne, owner of the Spartan Hall of Fame Café, says a growing number of catering customers are "interested in stepping up and differentiating their tailgate."

Montayne has seen success with bourbon chicken—a boneless breast seasoned, grilled and basted with bourbon-sugar sauce—and his Hall of Fame chopped salad with gorgonzola, strawberries, smoked bacon and toasted pecans.

At Ohio State University in Columbus, game day fare is also evolving. "We are doing a lot more that's culturally diverse, fun and non-traditional," says Zia Ahmed, senior director of dining services. Easy-to-eat sandwiches and finger foods are still mainstays, as well as sausages and burgers, but their menu also includes frenched lamb chops, fish tacos and coriander-crusted beef tenderloin.

Yet sometimes, it's about comfort food. Husband-wife chef team Tracy and Peter Assue of

the Livanos Restaurant Group's City Limits, an upscale diner concept in White Plains, N.Y., and Stamford, Conn., say their tailgate approach elevates everyday favorites. "Our meatloaf, for example, is hand ground from several cuts of meat and prepared more like a meat terrine," says Tracy, a pastry chef.

Morning Kickoff

When games begin early, try featuring brunch, says Joe Mehring, a catering manager at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Favorites include Bloody Marys, hash browns, egg bakes and sausages. Regional spins are popular among those he feeds, such as the Wisconsin cheesy egg bake served with grilled—and locally produced—Klements brats.

In Nebraska, says Lucy, people like pulled pork breakfast burritos, with either Bloody Marys or tomato-juice spiked "red beer."

Strategic Play

Olenjack's Grille in Arlington, Texas, shuttles diners to nearby Cowboy Stadium. Chef-owner Brian Olenjack capitalizes on the increased diner traffic by testing new menu options. Football fans have tried pulled-pork sliders with house-pickled red onions, smoked duck tacos with sour cherry crème fraîche, and even poached lobster shooters when the New England Patriots were in town.

"It's a good time to try out fun stuff we want to do," says Ryan Gallagher, Olenjack's sous chef. "The sliders worked so well, we now do those for private events, too." ■

Writer Monica Kass Rogers recently sent her second child off to college.



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Find more winning
tailgate recipes
online



Kugelis

For chilly tailgates in Michigan, potato salad just won't do. A comforting alternative? Kugelis, a hot egg, bacon, potato and onion bake.

Adapted from "The Michigan State University Experience" by Robert Bao.

5 pounds Idaho potatoes, peeled
2 large onions
6 eggs, beaten
1 cup unsalted butter, melted
1 tablespoon salt or to taste
¼ pound bacon
Sour cream

With the fine side of a hand grater, grate potatoes and onion into a large bowl, squeezing out excess liquid. Fold in eggs, butter and salt. Spread in greased 8-by-13-inch baking pan and bake in preheated 350 F oven for 1 hour, or until golden brown. While kugelis is baking, fry bacon until crisp. Drain and crumble. Cut warm kugelis into squares; top each with a dollop of sour cream and sprinkle of bacon. Makes 10 to 12 servings.

Chicken that's CLUCKING amazing

BY JANET
RAUSA FULLER

ROASTED CHICKEN IS SIMPLE —IN THEORY. Bird meets hot oven. Dish is plated. But how to take it from good to that golden intersection of crisp skin and moist meat is where the debate begins. The variations are numerous, the allegiances to them strong and likely to spark a knock-down, drag-out battle of wills before the path to the best roasted chicken is put to rest. Even the time-tested methods are being mined for perfection. After more than 25 years, Boston Market continues to explore various rubs and seasonings for its signature chicken, says Sara Rosenberg Bittorf, chief brand officer for the Colorado-based chain. So why mess with roasted chicken if it's such a good thing on its own? To make it even better, of course.

Filipino-Style Roasted Chicken

*Chef-owner Kristine Subido
Pecking Order, Chicago*

2 tablespoons salt
4 tablespoons sugar, divided use
½ gallon water
One 3½-pound chicken
½ cup light* soy sauce or tamari
¼ cup cane vinegar
5 garlic cloves, smashed and
chopped
2 teaspoons cracked pepper
1 bay leaf
1 stalk lemon grass, quartered
1 knob ginger, peeled and roughly
chopped
Kosher salt and freshly ground
black pepper as needed
1 tablespoon annatto powder
4 ounces unsalted butter, melted
Juice of 1 lime

Bring salt, 2 tablespoons sugar and water to a simmer in a large pot. Cool, immerse chicken and brine for 4 hours.

Combine soy sauce (or tamari), vinegar, garlic, remaining sugar, black pepper and bay leaf; stir well. Remove chicken from brine and marinate in soy mixture for 4 to 6 hours.

Remove chicken from marinade and pat dry. Season with salt and pepper, and stuff with lemon grass and ginger. Combine annatto powder, butter and lime juice in small bowl. Truss chicken and place in a roasting pan.

Roast in preheated 350 F oven until chicken reaches an internal temperature of 160 F, approximately 50 minutes to 1 hour, basting with the annatto butter sauce every 15 minutes. Increase temperature to 400 F for the last 15 minutes. Rest chicken 15 minutes; quarter. Serves 4.

*Light refers to color, not sodium content.

2 MORE
ROASTED
CHICKEN
RECIPES 



The Product

The quality of the raw product makes a world of difference in taste and texture, chefs say. At Fig in Charleston, S.C., the free-range chicken comes from nearby Keegan-Filion Farm.

“We wouldn’t have chicken on our menu if it wasn’t grown locally,” says Chef-owner Mike Lata.

Quality can also mean chicken raised naturally—drug- and antibiotic-free from hatch to harvest—like the birds Kristine Subido uses at her Chicago restaurant, Pecking Order.

The Prep

Brining overnight ensures moister meat and a more luscious texture, says Chef Jeremy Blutstein of Tremont in New York City. He changes the brine seasonally, including his herbs, such as rosemary, sage and other aromatics, and a variety of fruits.

Some chefs shower the bird with salt—inside and out—a day before roasting, convinced that it helps achieve a crispier skin. Others simply smear butter or olive oil with herbs on and under the skin. Purists swear by a little salt and pepper. Despite the difference in methods, everyone agrees salt is essential.

The Style

Truss the bird so it cooks more evenly and prevents the breast from drying. Or keep it simple, stuffing the cavity with lemon or onion halves and herbs to promote even cooking.

More complex preparations



Chicken al Forno with Salsa Verde

Chef-owner Jonathan Waxman, Barbuto, New York

4 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
4 anchovy fillets
2 tablespoons green olives, pitted and finely chopped
1 tablespoon capers
1 cup olive oil, divided use
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
1 bunch parsley, washed and chopped
1 small bunch each: basil, oregano and arugula, chopped
One 3-pound organic chicken
1 lemon, halved
2 ounces olive oil

Place garlic, anchovies, olives and capers in a large mortar and crush with pestle. Dribble in ¼ cup olive oil and season with salt. Add red pepper flakes, herbs and arugula and mash well. Dribble in the remaining olive oil and stir in pepper. Taste, adjust seasonings and let sit at room temperature.

Rinse the bird in hot water; pat dry. Remove the backbone to split bird in half. Season with salt and pepper.

Place lemons and chicken on two sizzle platters and brush with olive oil. Roast chicken in preheated 425 F oven for 30 minutes, basting every 10 minutes. Let rest 10 minutes, and cut into quarters, sauce with salsa verde and garnish with roasted lemon. Serves 2.

have also been winning fans. The brioche-wrapped whole roast chicken at the Greenhouse Tavern in Cleveland is a showstopper and top seller. It’s presented at the table with a big knife for carving. “It’s really become our signature,” says pastry chef Matt Danko.

Subido hopes for the same fate for her Filipino-style chicken. It’s the star at the chicken-cen-

tric, quick-casual restaurant she opened earlier this year after a longtime stint as a fine-dining chef. Her chicken goes a step beyond the brine with the help of a soy-vinegar marinade. It’s then placed on a rotisserie and slow roasted to perfection. ■

Janet Rausa Fuller is the former food editor at the Chicago Sun-Times.

Roast Chicken in Puff Pastry

Executive Chef Jonathon Sawyer, The Greenhouse Tavern, Cleveland

One 3-pound chicken, halved, backbone removed
Salt and pepper to taste
½ cup unsalted butter, room temperature
1½ teaspoons white wine vinegar
½ cup fresh herbs, chopped (sage, thyme, parsley)
2 cups mushrooms, sliced (mixture of shiitake and cremini)
1 sheet frozen puff pastry, thawed
1 egg
1 tablespoon water

Season chicken liberally with salt and pepper. Beat together butter, vinegar, herbs and mushrooms in a bowl. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Roll out puff pastry sheet into two pieces, about ¼-inch thick. Combine egg with 1 tablespoon water and brush along edges of pastry. Brush butter mixture over chicken.

Center chicken, breast-side down, in middle of pastry and wrap each half, leaving about an inch of the leg sticking out. Make sure there are no holes in the dough. Turn wrapped chicken breast-side up and place on a rimmed baking sheet. Bake for 45 to 50 minutes in preheated 375 F oven. Test for doneness by inserting a cake tester through the pastry into the thickest part of the breast. Remove and place tester to the front of your wrist or on your lip. If it’s extremely hot, the chicken is ready.

Allow bird to rest for 15 minutes. Slice open top and drizzle with juices from cooking. Serves 2.



PUFF PASTRY CHICKEN PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GREENHOUSE TAVERN

TREND TRACKER

The heat index on what’s happening

Vegetarians get the last laugh as vegetables become center plate stars.



Celebrity chefs headline music festivals alongside rock stars.

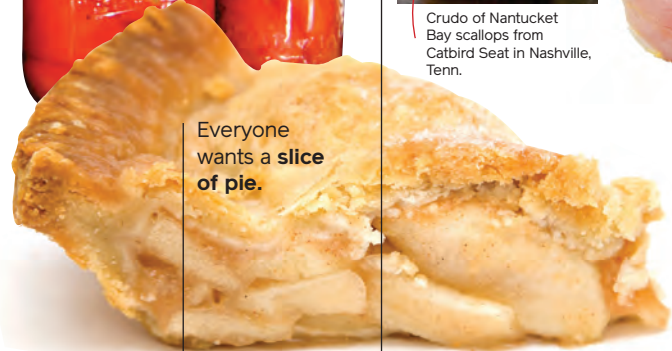


Chefs go **DIY** with house-made ingredients: “We can pickle that!”



Pickled tomatoes from Barley Swine in Austin, Texas.

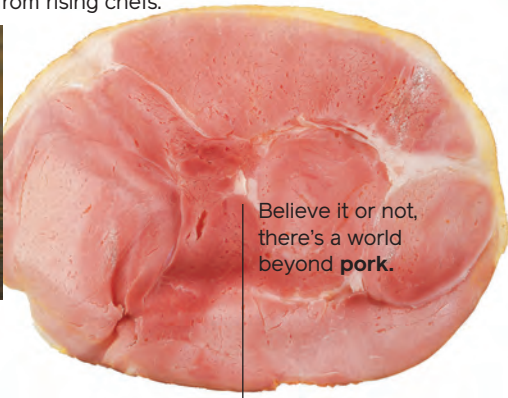
Everyone wants a slice of pie.



Southern cuisine reclaims the Union with reinvented classics from rising chefs.



Crudo of Nantucket Bay scallops from Catbird Seat in Nashville, Tenn.



Believe it or not, there’s a world beyond pork.

Diners tire of cozing up to strangers with **forced communal dining**.

The allure of secret **speakeasy-inspired lounges** loses its edge when lines grow to an hour.



WARMING UP

TSA is still a mess, but **airport dining** continues to improve thanks to diverse gourmet franchises.



Custom burgers by Pat La Frieda at LaGuardia Airport.

Know your fisherman.



ON FIRE

The classic **American diner** gets a modern facelift.



The **doughnut** trend is on a roll.



Necessity or fad? **Gluten-free** gains momentum.



Know your farmer.



Food trucks pile up, but they try to keep on trucking.



Cupcakes may never die, but we’re tired of hearing about them.



IMAGES FROM THINKSTOCK, EXCLUDING CATBIRD SEAT IMAGE BY JOSH HAGIBER, PAT LA FRIEDA BURGER COURTESY OF US FOODS AND PICKLED TOMATOES COURTESY OF BARLEY SWINE



COVER STORY

TURNING THE TIDE

*As the fishing industry fights to save
endangered species, restaurants are doing
their part—and engaging diners—
with sustainable seafood programs*



A sustainable choice: mackerel
IMAGE BY ISTOCKPHOTO

By Peter Gianopulos

FOR A MOMENT, forget the statistics, the scientific studies and the data on overfishing and depleted seafood populations. To understand where the sustainable seafood movement is heading, imagine instead the prospect of “extinct flavors.”

The most passionate chefs cannot fathom living without the taste of wild-caught salmon, bluefin sashimi or a simple beer-battered cod, so they’re turning the cause into a culinary crusade. It’s not just to conserve what already exists in our oceans, but to replenish what was there before.

A groundswell of restaurateurs, chefs and seafood advocates are on board, using a novel strategy that blends old-fashioned storytelling with newly established sourcing guidelines. So far, they’ve learned one indispensable

truth: dramatic narratives may hold the greatest hope for instigating real change.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations reports that 80 percent of fisheries are fully exploited, over fished, depleted or recovering from depletion.



Join the conversation on facebook.com/usfoodfanatics

Deep water net pens that sustainably raise cobia provide a story to share with diners.

The Fisherman as Hero

“Some restaurants can tell you everything you ever wanted to know about the peach that goes into your dessert: what farm it comes from, the name of the guy who picked it,” says Sheila Bowman, outreach manager of the Monterey Bay Aquarium. “That information gets people excited. I’m not sure we’ve told those stories about seafood. But we are now, and it’s making a difference.”

Take Barton Seaver, former executive chef at Hook in Washington, D.C., and now a National Geographic fellow. Seaver is on a quest to help restaurants transform the way they brand their seafood programs, starting with changing the term “sustainable seafood” to “restorative seafood.” He believes the latter suggests that everyone—chefs, restaurant owners, customers and fishermen alike—can help lead a seafood renaissance.

In his favored narrative, the world’s small-scale fishermen are silent, unsung heroes, selling their catch—and their stories—directly to restaurants. But because that’s a challenging and limited approach, there’s a solution for everyone: choose seafood suppliers with an ecologically conscious story, one that describes how they catch or raise seafood.

“When we dip our hooks into the water, we don’t always know what we’re going to get,” Seaver says. “What we do bring up, however, can be a window for exploration, a way of introducing diners to new flavors.”

At Sea Change in Minneapolis, James Beard Award-winning Chef Tim McKee prefers visual cues. He uses a wall-spanning blackboard to detail information on how his fish are caught, where they are sourced and, occasionally, the name of the vessel from which they are pulled. The results have been surprising—increasing sales of everything from farm-raised abalone to Arctic char.

“You can go to a farm and see animals grazing, but it’s a lot harder to observe a school of mackerel,” says McKee. “It’s really important have a strong relationship with seafood vendors, large and small.”

Fish Locally, Eat Seasonably

The Tennessee Aquarium, in partnership with TV chef Alton Brown, has picked up on the importance of seafood diversity—which serves as the starting point for its new Serve & Protect program. It asks landlocked diners, like those in Tennessee, to consider local seafood options, such as catfish and rainbow trout, instead of overfished populations, like Chilean sea bass and monkfish.

The hook? Old-fashioned community

THE LURE

Making Sustainable Seafood Profitable

SMALLER PORTIONS – Don’t be afraid to serve 5-ounce portions or even cut an 8-ounce portion in half for two small plate servings.

BREAK IT DOWN – Give staff a refresher on deboning fish and use remaining parts after filleting for soups, chowders and stock.

GO LOCAL AND SEASONAL – Offering local freshwater fish provides a narrative and can save money. Order fish in season, when they are abundant and less expensive.

TELL A TALE – A story about the fisherman or details about a supplier’s sustainable policies can serve as a side dish to your entrée, enticing customers to order and return for more.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR SEAFOOD SUPPLIER

Where did this fish come from?

Well-managed fisheries can be found around the globe. But do your homework and make sure you’re buying from certified fisheries (MSC certified, for example) or from countries with strict catching guidelines.

How was this fish caught?

Some methods are more destructive to the ecosystem than others. Bottom trawls and dredges can damage the sea floor and trap unwanted by-catch while midwater trawls have minimal impact on habitat. Line caught methods are also environmentally friendly and often yield better-quality, firmer filets.

What’s the standard?

A certified fishery or a strict quota system should be the standard for purchasing.

pride. With a little historical context on the uniqueness of the regional fish, and how it’s only properly cooked by locals, a forgotten species becomes a local treasure.

In Miami, Chef Michael Reidt has made it policy to pull 85 percent of his seafood from a United Nations-protected region called Area 31, which stretches from the Western Caribbean into the Gulf of Mexico and from the coast of the Carolinas to the northern tip of Brazil. Using geography as a guiding principle, he serves local seafood at his appropriately named Area 31, like 11 varieties of snapper and farm-raised red fish, as well as exotic choices, like paiche, an Amazonian freshwater fish. The latter allows him to build narratives around the importance of supporting sustainable-minded fishermen in Third World countries.

“Like anything else, it’s about educating your customers,” says Reidt. “And about using the best products available to you.”

Many Fish in the Sea?

Larger-scale restaurants can turn to certifications programs, such as the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and Friend of the Seas (FOS) to learn about bringing sustainable seafood to life. Both programs have established sustainable seafood standards restaurants can adopt or use to create their own guidelines.

But as debate swells over how certification programs rate seafood, Wayne Samiere, founder of the Honolulu Fish Company, suggests restaurants look to suppliers for exotic alternatives to overfished standbys like cod and tuna.

A trained marine biologist, Samiere says suppliers are excellent resources for hard numbers on catch rates, which help operators determine which species are truly abundant. He only encourages fishing lesser known species—moonfish and monchong, for example—which are plentiful and often cheaper than many endangered species.

Sharing the toil of catching a particular fish is also important, says Chef Alan Fairhurst of family-owned Scoma’s in San Francisco. Diners may have more difficulty choosing seafood that’s been caught by unsustainable methods,

But some good news: Groundfish Forum reports cod quota increases in Atlantic and Pacific fisheries around the world.

such as bottom trawling, where a net is raked over the ocean floor, pulling up everything—the intended catch and otherwise—in its wake.




When Fairhurst recently featured sustainably caught swordfish as a special (harpooned the very moment he was calling his supplier), he recounted the story to his waiters, who passed it onto customers.

It was portioned small and priced higher than the other appetizers but sold out quickly. “Everyone who heard the story had to try it,” he says.



SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD CHOICES

Some fish to feel good about serving, according to the experts:

- Alaskan pollock
- Alaskan halibut
- Arctic char
- U.S. barramundi
- Basa
- 
Catfish
- Farm-raised white shrimp
- 
Farm-raised salmon
- 
Haddock
- Monchong or wahoo
- Latin America or U.S. farm-raised tilapia

Water World—The Promise of Open-Ocean Aquaculture

Take a seven-mile boat ride off the coast of Panama with Brian O’Hanlon, owner of open-ocean aquaculture farm Open Blue and he’ll introduce his vision of sustainable, clean sea-food production for the 21st century.

Dive 30 feet into pristine waters to find what looks like a giant circus tent. Inside, an imposing central pole rotates its Kevlar-like skin, similar to a bicycle wheel, as schools of blue cobia swim within its confines in the kind of clean, cool waters they’re supposed to thrive in.

O’Hanlon feeds them cobia fishmeal pellets that mimic their natural diet. He orders co-bia eggs from the University of Miami, which thrive in Sea Station cages for more than a year after they hatch. The fish are then harvested with special stress-free pumps.

“Technology has come far enough that we can begin to move away from the coasts and into that vast open ocean,” says O’Hanlon. “I know our cages are just one piece of a bigger puzzle, but they certainly are a move in the right direction.”

The Ripple Effect—The Positive Impact of Sustainable Seafood Initiatives

Seaver, who recently penned the restorative seafood cookbook, “For Cod and Country,” is optimistic. Oysters, for instance, are experiencing a renaissance on the East Coast. The bivalves, Seaver says, are as close to “perfect” as possible. They freely breed when properly farmed and clean the waterways where they live, helping replenish wild seafood that once populated the area. Farming them, he says, is like making a deposit on the future.

Fairhurst believes more restaurants are opting to serve seafood seasonally. This indicates the industry is grafting the “eat local, eat seasonal” tenets of the organic food movement onto seafood.

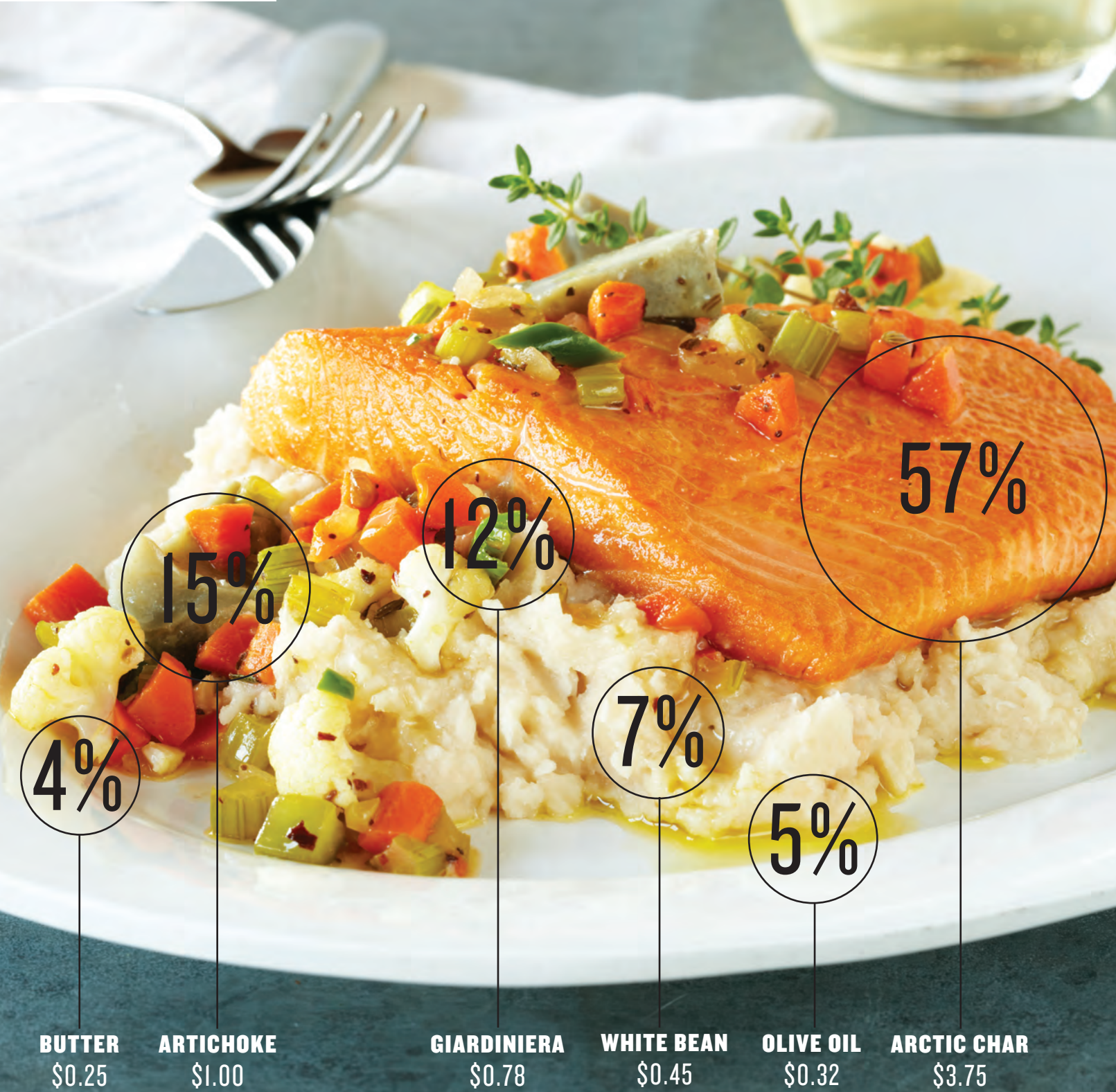
Some of the best news may come from a recent report from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries Service, indicating that overfishing is declining while the number of fisheries considered “rebuilt” is increasing. It’s evidence that the culinary crusade by restaurateurs, chefs, fishermen and distributors is impacting the future of the seas and our collective dinner tables. ■

Peter Gianopulos is a dining critic for Chicago magazine and adjunct journalism professor at Loyola University Chicago.

ALL ABOUT BALANCE

Analyzing the cost of each component can help size proportions that satisfy the diner and the bottom line.

TOTAL COST: \$6.55



Arctic Char with White Bean and Artichoke Giardiniera

Executive Chef Tim McKee, Sea Change, Minneapolis

- 1 cup canola oil, divided use, plus extra for cooking
- 4 teaspoons garlic, minced, divided use
- ½ teaspoon chopped rosemary
- ½ teaspoon celery seed
- ½ teaspoon mustard seed
- ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- ½ teaspoon fennel seed
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ bay leaf
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt, divided use, plus extra to taste
- ½ cup Champagne vinegar
- 6 artichokes, cleaned by tourne
- 1 cup white wine
- 1 sprig thyme
- 3 lemon slices
- ½ cup carrots, diced
- ½ cup onion, diced
- 1 cup cauliflower florets
- 1 cup celery, diced
- 4 Thai chiles, split
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling
- ½ cup cooked white beans
- 1 teaspoon roasted garlic
- Kosher salt and pepper to taste
- 5 ounces Arctic char
- 1 tablespoon butter

For the giardiniera marinade, heat ½ cup canola oil in saucepan and saute 2 teaspoons garlic until lightly golden. Add herbs and spices, heating until fragrant. Remove from heat; whisk in sugar and ½ teaspoon salt. Stir in vinegar; set aside.

Sous vide artichokes by vacuum sealing in a plastic bag (on ‘10’) with white wine, remaining garlic, thyme, remaining salt and lemon. Cook at 185 F for 45 minutes; chill.

Saute carrots and onions in remaining canola oil for 5 minutes. Add cauliflower and saute 2 minutes. Add celery and saute 2 more minutes. Add Thai chiles; cool and add artichokes and olive oil. Vacuum seal (on ‘4’) and marinate overnight.

At service, heat beans and roasted garlic using enough water to thin and avoid scorching. Season with salt; keep warm.

Lay fish skin side down on a paper towel and season with kosher salt. Heat 1 tablespoon of canola oil in a very hot pan and add fish, skin side down. Reduce heat to medium-high and allow fish to cook until it can be moved easily.

Add butter and when it foams, spoon over fish until cooked through. Remove from pan and place on top of beans. Top with giardiniera. Garnish with a drizzle of high-quality extra-virgin olive oil. Makes 1 serving with extra giardiniera.

FOOD PEOPLE

*Keep your eyes peeled
on these individuals*



'TWEEN

twēn
a noun

An 8- to
12-year-old
who should
be seen
and heard.

New Kids on the Block

*Restaurants are catering to an underserved segment of youngsters
with more grown-up food and greater variety for all ➡*

9 JUN 10 R APPETITES 11 2

LUCKY NUMBERS

Play to this combination and you just might win a new influential dining segment.

BY MONICA KASS ROGERS

NO ONE'S SURE WHEN IT HAPPENED, when that inescapable trifecta of deep-fried chicken tenders, gloppy mac 'n' cheese and gooey pizza set up camp on kids' menus and became standard fare.

But now, they're getting elbowed on the menu by some competition—options for older kids, specifically tweens, ages eight to 12. Foodservice is discovering what fashion retailers have known for several years—they're untapped and have purchasing power.

"By age eight, kids start asking to order from the adult menu," says Julie Casey, founder of MyKidsPlate.com, a site that analyzes kid-friendly dining.

As parents heed warnings about the dangers of high-fat, low-nutrient diets, operators are responding with kids' menus that offer greater variety, healthier choices and better quality. Menus espousing "cleaner"

dishes—those featuring local, sustainable and organic ingredients—are also becoming more prevalent.

According to Technomic, a company that provides consumer insight on the food industry, 75 percent of 8- to 12-year-olds surveyed last year said they want more choices. A similar percentage wished restaurants would create a separate older kids menu.

That could make for happier parents who often balk at paying adult entrée prices for a child. To avoid losing family business, some full-service restaurants are introducing more variety and adding portion sizes that fall between those traditionally offered for kids and adults.



Kids' Chicken Potpie

*Chef-owner Kelly Liken
Restaurant Kelly Liken,
Vail, Colo.*

1 sheet puff pastry
1 egg, beaten
2 tablespoons olive oil
3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cubed small
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
½ cup onions, diced
2 teaspoon garlic, minced
½ cup carrots, diced
½ cup celery, diced
¼ cup flour
1 quart chicken stock
1 sachet with sprig of thyme and a bay leaf
½ cup peas
¼ cup heavy cream
Salt and pepper to taste

Roll puff pastry about ¼ inch thick, cut into 4-inch squares or rounds, and chill for 15 minutes. Add a little water to the egg, brush pastry and bake in preheated 375 F oven until golden brown, about 15 minutes.

In a heavy-bottomed saucepan, heat olive oil until smoky. Saute chicken until lightly browned but not cooked through. Remove chicken and add butter to pan, allowing it to brown. Saute onions and garlic for 1 minute, then add carrots and celery. Saute a few more minutes and stir in flour to make a roux.

Add the chicken stock, whisking to remove any lumps, and add sachet. Bring to a simmer for 15 minutes and return chicken to pan. Cook 5 more minutes, then add peas. Remove sachet, finish with cream and season with salt and pepper to taste. Divide among three shallow bowls and top with puff pastry rounds. Makes 3 servings.

Texas Roadhouse, for example, provides middle-of-the-road choices for the nine- to 12-year-old set: Ranger Meals. “Our best-selling options for kids under nine are Jr. Chicken Tenders, Mac ‘n’ Cheese and Lil’Dillo Sirloin Bites,” says Travis Doster, spokesman for the Louisville, Ky.-based chain. “But with the Ranger Meals for kids nine and up, the Chicken Critters (same dish, larger size) are last on the list, and the 6-ounce steak, which is the same served on the adult menu, is the number one option.”

Menus Get a Trainer, Workout
Among the inaugural group to connect with the National Restaurant Association’s Kids LiveWell program, 128-unit Joe’s Crab Shack worked with registered dieticians to revamp the kids’ menu. Lean proteins, vegetables, grains, fruits and low-fat dairy, are now highlighted, striking a balance between the common (chicken tenders, mac ‘n’ cheese) and unusual (kid-friendly portions of seafood, sausage and corn on the cob).

“Parents love that we provide options—like snow crab—that are outside of what is traditionally expected,” says Robin Ahearn, chief marketing officer of Ignite Restau-

and the Kids Teriyaki Bento with teriyaki tofu or salmon, heirloom brown rice, steamed vegetables and ginger-carrot dressing. The best sellers for adults “are now our best sellers for kids, too,” says Gross.

Play With your Food
Chevy’s Fresh Mex—another participant in the NRA’s Kids LiveWell—rolled out a revamped menu last year after working with panels of parents and kids ages 12 and under. The result? “A blend of good-for-you and fun,” says Brian Wright, president of the Cypress, Calif.-based company.

One fruit of their labor: Chevy’s Build-Your-Own Taco, which lets kids craft their own creation from ramekins of cheese, chicken or beef. Other new items include a Chicken Bowl (with rice and choice of mesquite-grilled or salsa chicken), chicken or steak fajitas, and a Fresh Mex pizza. Meals come with healthier sides, including grilled or raw vegetables, fruit and applesauce.

The kid’s menu platings and presentations have also been revised, and in many cases, the portions of healthy sides increased.

After conferring with the NRA initiative to breathe a big dose of healthy into kids’ menus, Chicago chain Nookies launched a 12-item

FAILING GRADES

The country’s 12 largest quick-service restaurants offer a combined **3,039** kid’s meal combinations*

Of those, only **12** met USDA nutrition criteria for preschoolers;

15 made the grade for older children.



In menu items purchased by children and teens, at least **30 percent** of the calories came from sugar and saturated fat.

*Yale University’s Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity.

GET AN “A”

Create fresh, low-fat sauces and dips for dunk-friendly vegetables, fruits and lean proteins.

Kids like finger foods that are easy to grasp. Go beyond chicken nuggets with vegetable or fish croquettes, grilled produce and foods safely skewered on sugar cane, straws or herb stems.

Think interactively. Explore build-your-own options or items that invite playful eating.

Even fine-dining and trendy neighborhood spots are paying more attention to kids. At her eponymous restaurant in Denver, Chef Kelly Liken serves kids a mini three-course menu to match the adults’ fixed price offering.

“If kids are here for dinner, it’s a special thing,” Liken says. “Their meal should be delicious, fun, healthy and creative, just like their parents.” A menu may include soup or crudités with dipping sauces; organic chicken potpie, spaghetti and meatballs, or a filet with hand-cut French fries; and fruit or a housemade ice cream sandwich for dessert.

Old Options, New Ways

While more kids—particularly tweens—are ordering healthy options, most restaurants are reluctant to completely step away from the old standards. Chicken fingers, mac ‘n’ cheese and pizza still rule the sales roost.

However, some operators, like the 330-unit Jason’s Deli, believe they need to take the lead. “We have an 60-item salad bar that we offer as a \$3.99 all-you-can-eat option for kids,” says Pat Herring, director of research and development for the Beaumont, Texas, concept. “We’re seeing more and more children up there, which I’m really excited about.”

Taking things a bit further, Delaware-based Iron Hill Brewery boasts a 17-entrée kids’ menu with a separate gluten-free section. “We do not look at kids’ meal items as a profit center,” says Kevin Davies, director of culinary operations.

If kids are happy, he reasons, their parents will be, too, and the restaurant’s bottom line benefits.

“The dance won’t change unless the steps change,” says Suzy Badaracco, trends forecaster and president of Portland, Ore.-based Culinary Tides. “We’re in that awkward phase where some people are trying the new steps, but others are still dancing the old dance.” ■

Monica Kass Rogers is a blogger at lostrecipesfound.com, Chicago-based writer and mom of kids ages 9 to 24.

FOOD FANATIC ROAD TRIP!



Minneapolis



John Byrne is a Food Fanatic for US Foods, an adventure-some diner and avid ice fisherman who lives in Minneapolis.



@ChefJohnByrne
Follow the Food Fanatic on Twitter for more insider tips.

Visitors always wonder how we locals can stand the cold, as if the Twin Cities were on the same latitude as Antarctica. Believe it or not, it’s not all ice floes and igloos up here.

Minnesota’s known as the land of 10,000 lakes, but I’d say it’s also a land of 10,000 tastes. We’re famous for the **Juicy Lucy** (a cheese-stuffed burger that oozes melty goodness on the first bite) and Eat Street—block after block of ethnic restaurants on Nicollet Avenue. There are too many to name, but if Jay Leno overnights ribs from **Market BBQ** and hordes line up for **Masa**, that’s good enough for me.

Take my advice and it won’t matter whether it’s 80 degrees or 8 below. You’ll see why “the Cities” is such a great food town.

Get a mouthful from our resident expert

THE HIGHLIGHTS

Brit’s Pub (Minneapolis)

Home to the best burger in town, but it’s also the place this Irishman heads when he wants a piece of home. The fix: a little lawn bowling.

Bunkers (Minneapolis)

So many restaurant types show up on Mondays for live music (where Prince once jammed) that it’s become an unofficial industry night.

Crave (Bloomington)

Mall of America visitors can find something for everyone here.

Cossetta Italian Market & Pizzeria (St. Paul)

The best pizza in town, bar none.



Eat Street Social (Minneapolis)

A crowd-pleaser for fans of charcuterie everywhere (me included).

112 Eatery or Bar La Grassa (Minneapolis)

Either one of Isaac Becker’s restaurants will impress you, but the bar-like seating that runs along the open kitchen at La Grassa might tip the scale.

The Strip Club Meat & Fish (St. Paul)

In one word: great. The menu wants to have fun and it does. Let the bartender make a “one-off” cocktail, a libation spurred by the “moment” with your input.

JOHN’S JUICY LUCY



6-ounce mix of ground chuck and shortrib
2 slices blue jack cheese
Sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1 ounce blue cheese dressing
1 pretzel bun, toasted
1 ounce baby spinach chiffonade
1 slice heirloom tomato

Make a Juicy Lucy patty by flattening 3 ounces of meat. Place cheese on top and surround the cheese with the remaining meat, ensuring no gaps and that the cheese is sealed in. Season with salt and pepper. Flat top 5 minutes per side, place patty on bun and garnish with dressing, spinach and tomato.

STAFF MEAL

THE FAMILY MEAL

WITHOUT THE DYSFUNCTION

*Give your staff the gift of a loving
food coma this holiday season ➡➡*

STORY BY LOUISA CHU // PHOTO BY RYAN NICHOLSON



Staff meals at Bluestem in Kansas City, Mo., are important for bonding every day but especially during the holidays.

➡ WHETHER YOU CALL IT

STAFF MEAL, FAMILY MEAL or comida, just don't miss getting called to the table, especially during the holidays.

"We're in Kansas City, so we're big steak eaters. For Christmas Eve, we brought in rib-eyes and drank some good red wine," say Chef Colby Garrelts of Bluestem, a progressive fine-dining restaurant in Missouri that he owns with his pastry chef wife, Megan. "For the holidays we'll get some (great) stuff in."

The staff meal has come to mean more than providing food for employees. It's a way to foster camaraderie, reinforce the meaning of hospitality, promote team building, test menu items and show appreciation. For some restaurateurs, these reasons especially hit home during the holiday season.

At the casually elegant Mexican restaurant Empellón Cocina in New York, every station contributes to the staff meal. It's either "hyper-authentic Mexican, like mole, or it has absolutely nothing to do with Mexican cooking," says Chef-owner Alex Stupak.

"We have a cook who worked for Dave Chang who's made the Momofuku ramen, poached eggs and all," he says. "We've got a multicultural kitchen. Either way, it's an opportunity to try a recipe."

But during the holidays, Stupak—a self-described dictator—goes for the tried and true.

"I'm very much a traditionalist and I like to cook Thanksgiving dinner," says Stupak, who sets aside modernist experimental

ingredients like hydrocolloids in favor of turkey, brined and roasted. "Stuffing, mashed potatoes, gravy—nothing like a turducken—that's what I'm into. But we had mole poblano on the side."

At Christmas, Stupak, who also owns Empellón Taqueria, still veers classic, albeit more indulgent, for the staff meal.

"For Christmas, we had prime rib, wrapped in bacon, cooked sous vide to medium-rare, then roasted at an incredibly high temperature," he says.

CULINARY DETOUR

While some restaurants embrace the classic Thanksgiving spread, Chef de Cuisine **Hillary Sterling** breaks tradition with this Mexican-inspired menu at **A Voce** in New York.

Turkey: Mole-rubbed and roasted chicken

Stuffing: Chorizo and cornbread stuffing

Side: Sweet potato tacos

Dessert: Smoky pecan pie

Desserts are also traditional. Stupak's pastry chef wife, Lauren Resler, makes pies for staff meals during Thanksgiving and a Yule log for Christmas. Kitchen and front-of-the-house staff are also likely to find heart-shaped cookies around Valentine's Day.

Taking the "family meal" a step further, Chef-owner Mark Mendez and his sommelier wife, Liz, close their Chicago restaurant, Vera, during the holidays. "We know how important it is to be with your family on major holidays," she says. "The day before Thanksgiving we did a take on turkey dinner, with roast turkey sandwiches with stuffing, mashed potatoes, and gravy."

The couple's approach to the holiday season and the accompanying staff meals personifies their definition of the industry they love: hospitality.

"In so many restaurants, back of the house eats in back of house and front of house eats wherever, and that creates this unspoken division," she says. "I said, 'We're all going to sit down like human beings. We're not sitting on crates holding plates.'"

"We're in the hospitality business, but a lot of times how we eat family meal is not very hospitable. It's important having really good comida," Liz Mendez says. ■

Louisa Chu is a food blogger for National Public Radio.

“...prime rib wrapped in bacon, cooked sous vide to medium rare, then roasted at an incredibly high temperature.”

— Chef Alex Stupak at Empellón Cocina in New York on the star of a holiday staff meal



FOODFANATICS.COM

Get more recipes
for holiday staff
meals

Bluestem Gingerbread Ice Cream Sandwiches with Butterscotch

*Pastry Chef Megan Garrelts;
Bluestem; Kansas City, Mo.*

½ cup packed light brown sugar
½ cup dark or blackstrap molasses
3 large eggs
½ cup vegetable oil
¼ cup porter or stout beer
2 tablespoons ginger root, peeled and grated
1½ cups flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon cinnamon
⅛ teaspoon allspice
¼ teaspoon cardamom
¼ teaspoon salt
½ gallon chocolate or vanilla ice cream, softened
Butterscotch Sauce, recipe follows

In a mixing bowl, beat brown sugar and molasses until combined. Add eggs one at a time. Add the oil and beat until combined. Combine dry ingredients, and stir until just combined. Add porter and ginger, beating just enough to make the batter smooth. Pour batter onto greased 18-by-13-inch baking sheet lined with parchment paper and bake in preheated 325 F oven for 10 minutes or until toothpick inserted comes out clean.

Cool, remove parchment and cut in half to yield two 13-by-9-inch pieces. Place one half on plastic wrap and top with a ¾-inch layer of ice cream. Top with other half and cover with plastic wrap. Freeze at least 2 hours. Slice into 12 equal pieces.

To serve, place a slice on a plate and drizzle with sauce. Makes 12 servings.

Butterscotch Sauce: In a small saucepan, combine 1 cup light brown sugar, 10 tablespoons unsalted butter, ½ cup heavy cream, 1 teaspoon vanilla, 1 teaspoon butterscotch liqueur and ½ teaspoon salt. Bring to a boil, whisk and stir in 1 teaspoon lemon juice. Makes about 1¾ cup.

CHEF
PROFILE

SEAN BROCK

Life on the pirate ship, duping diners into loving sweetbreads

BY CARLY FISHER // ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOSUE EVILLA

Despite its roots in American culinary history, Southern cuisine has gained a bad rap, stereotyped for heavy, unhealthy dishes. But the region is undergoing a transformation, driven by old-fashioned recipes and modern techniques. One of the denizens carrying this cuisine back into the spotlight is James Beard award-winning Chef Sean Brock, who has gained international acclaim for blending modernist technology with local Low Country ingredients. Brock was drawn to the tatted-up, foul-mouthed line cook lifestyle (which he likens to “a pirate ship”) but sought the discipline of the European brigade system. Here, he riffs on his love of sorghum, Led Zeppelin, Southern tradition and a trait he wishes all cooks could have today.

Your alter ego wants to say this to diners: If there were no repercussions? [laughs] Don’t look at the bill, just eat.

Most famous person you’ve ever cooked for: Lionel Richie, Neil Young, Hank Williams, Jr., Bill Murray and the band Drive-By Truckers.

The dish you wish your diners would try: Sweetbreads. We decided to pretend like it’s chicken because everyone loves chicken. So we came up with a list of the most beloved chicken dishes and came up with General Tso’s sweetbreads. People loved it.

The ingredient that’s grabbing your attention right now: Sorghum. It’s impossible to find because it’s an extremely labor-intensive process. I’m growing it side-by-side with corn, and it looks nearly identical. When I was a kid, each year we had a sorghum potluck, where everyone would get together for an all-day affair. One person would have a mill and a kettle, and would use horses to power the mill; or if you’re a red-neck, you’d use a lawnmower with a brick duct taped to the power the mill. The beauty is how it brings a community together. When you lose the sorghum, it’s just another thing we lose as a culture.

Your favorite jam to rock out to in the kitchen: “The Life Aquatic” soundtrack has a song called “Ping Island/Lightning Strike Rescue Op.” It’s this really quirky song with no lyrics, just really crazy electronic music that makes you work faster. Led Zepelin, Lynyrd Skynyrd and Drive-By Truckers. On Sundays, it’s Waylon Jennings, Merle Haggard and Johnny Cash.

When you knew you wanted to be a chef: When I was 10 or 12, I was fascinated with the power

“

By the time I was of legal drinking age, I was operating kitchens as a manager.

The first restaurant I worked at was as a dishwasher at The Hardware Company Restaurant in Hillsville, Virginia. I would watch these crazy dudes with bandanas smoking cigarettes and blasting Metallica, while cranking out 250 covers.

”

of food and the table, watching Julia Child, Martin Yan and Jacques Pepin.

Free time is spent doing this: I play guitar, read and play with my pug, Yuzu. Right now, I’m completely wrapped around this book “Mugaritz: A Natural Science of Cooking” by Andoni Luis Aduriz.

The one person you’d like to cook for: Thomas Jefferson. He knew the climate of the South and traveled the world, bringing hundreds of varieties of plants back to the South—he knew that olives would grow here. He was so experimental and really paved the way for our culture and cuisine through his unwavering disregard of failure.

The traits you wish every cook could have: Humility, because it keeps you focused. ■



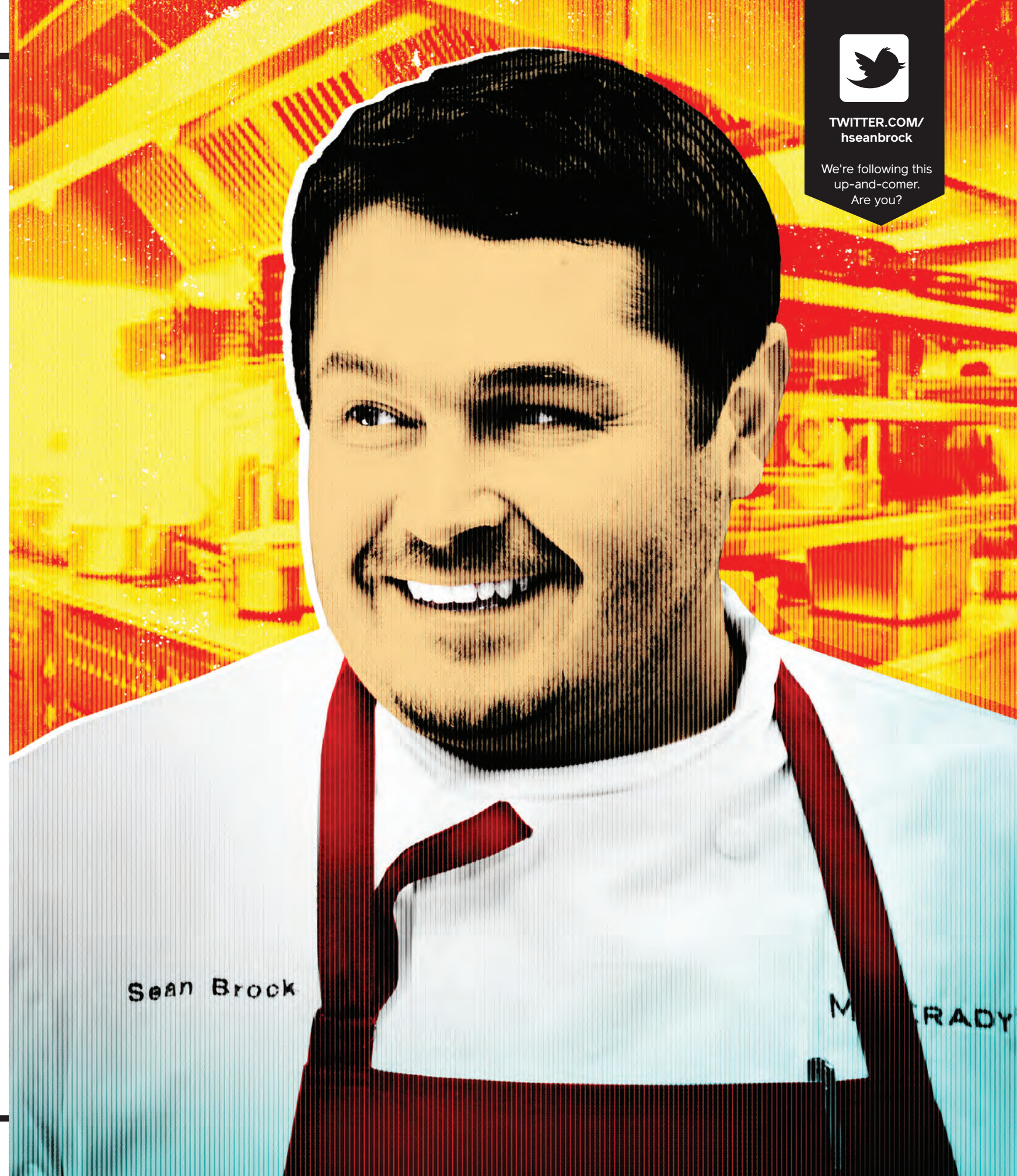
WHO'S THIS BROCK GUY?

Age: 34 **Employer:** McCrady's and Husk, both in Charleston, S.C. **Hometown:** Pound, Va. **Education:** Johnson and Wales in Charleston, S.C. **Mentor(s):** Chefs Robert Carter of Carter's Kitchen in Charleston, S.C.; Frank Stitt of Highlands Bar and Grill in Birmingham, Ala.; Louis Osteen of Louis' at Sanford's in Pawleys Island, S.C.; Ben Barker of Magnolia Grill in Durham, N.C.



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up-and-comer.
Are you?



CHEF PROFILE



ERIC ERNEST

From Easy Bake Oven to cooking for the president

BY RENEE PINCKNEY

After carving out a career at world-renowned restaurants, Eric Ernest is catering to a new wave of diners. As the executive chef at the University of Southern California, he cooks for thousands of students and oversees 40 menus, product development, and culinary training. One key to success, he says, has been honing a keen business sense—something he encourages all aspiring chefs to develop. Here, Ernest professes his love of sweetbreads and a Gordon Ramsay jab he'd rather not share with diners.

Your alter ego wants to say this to diners: My favorite thing comes from Gordon Ramsay's show, "Hell's Kitchen." These women were looking to order food and Gordon says to the maitre d', "Would you please escort these women back to plastic surgery." I use that as a reminder that I would never say that to someone.

Most famous person you've ever cooked for: President Obama, last year when he came to USC for a fundraiser.

The dish you wish your diners would try: I wish our diners at USC would be more adventurous with dishes made from whole pigs and sweetbreads.

The ingredient that's grabbing your attention right now: Whole animal cookery is a big trend right now. We use this new style in butchery and at some events.

Your favorite jam to rock out to in the kitchen: Anything by Bob Dylan.

When you knew you wanted to be a chef: When I was a little kid I cooked a lot. There was a mix-up with my sister, and I was given an Easy Bake Oven and immediately started baking cakes. I have always been intrigued by the science and technique of cooking and what happens when you whip an egg white. I remember making cookies in school, and going through a cerebral process

WHO'S THIS ERNEST GUY?

Employer: University of Southern California
Age: 35
Hometown: Milwaukee, Wis.
Education: Waukesha Community College
Mentor(s): Worked with Chef Lee Hefter at Wolfgang Puck before overseeing the food and beverage programs at leading restaurants including: Jardiniere, Masa's, and Aqua in San Francisco; Chadwick, La Cachette, Katasuya, XIV by Michael Mina, Bazaar by Jose Andres, Gladstones, and The Abbey Food & Bar in Los Angeles.

of following directions but asking why. I graduated high school early so I could go to culinary school.

Free time is spent doing this: I spend most of my free time working out a lot, scuba diving and surfing.

The one person you'd like to cook for: I'd like to cook for my dad. By the time I got back from traveling across the country, he had been sick for a long time and eventually passed away. He was never able to sit down at the restaurant where I was a chef.

The traits you wish every cook could have: A sense of urgency. It's important because it's the cornerstone for service. ■

“ Even if you have skills, culinary school can teach the language behind it. Higher education also provided the business side, from economics to accounting. ”

MICHAEL MABRY

Finds zen through clanging pots, pasta Bolognese

BY ADAM JABLONOWSKI

What does it take to run a fast food empire? Get to know Michael Mabry, one of the personalities behind growing franchise Mooyah. Known for its thick sliced applewood-smoked bacon, seasoned patties and intense six-step, 24-hour French fry making process,

the Dallas-based burger business is gaining steam as a nationally recognized name. In the past five years, the company has expanded to 35 locations from coast to coast, with another 10 on the way. Alongside mouthwatering burgers, Mooyah is driven by a passionate team that weighs in on matters, from new locations to new burger toppings. Here, Mabry dishes on his famous customers, triathlons and the secret to a solid pasta.

Your alter ego wants to say this to diners: *Unfortunately, Mabry is not a kiss-and-tell kind of guy.*

Most famous person you've ever cooked for: Heather Locklear, Slash from Guns N' Roses and Will Smith. I was working for an Italian restaurant. His favorite meal was our lasagna and Caesar salad.

The dish you wish your diners would try: Our burgers with blue cheese, bacon and fried onion strings.

The ingredient that's grabbing your attention right now: Sriracha. (It) can go with anything and complements meat very well, but currently, we're developing a sriracha sauce for our french fries.

Your favorite jam to rock out to in the kitchen: The sounds of pots and pans banging around on each other. I find this sound extremely relaxing and invigorating.

When you knew you wanted to be a chef: About age 13. I used to stand in the kitchen and watch my mom prepare all sorts of meals. She cooked everything from Italian and Mexican, to comfort foods like burgers. My favorite dish growing up was definitely pasta and Italian-type foods. I was fortunate enough to learn this recipe (pasta Bolognese) while I was on a food tour in Italy. I was intrigued by the amount of different meat used from veal to pork with different grinds.

WHO'S THIS MABRY GUY?

Employer: Mooyah **Age:** 44 **Hometown:** Frisco, Texas **Education:** El Centro Community College **Mentor(s):** I'm very fortunate to work with one of my mentors, Rich Hicks; he is the co-founder of Mooyah. Chefs that influenced me include Christian Gerber and Barry Partos. I also worked with chefs Michael Moser and Bruce Ballard in the '90s.

CHEF PROFILE



“ I started in the restaurant business in my 20s and it was a long, winding road to my current position as director of franchise at Mooyah. After culinary school, I started a catering business with a friend. From there, I jumped at every opportunity to further my career and had some great mentors help me along the way. ”

Free time is spent doing this: I spend time with my family, cooking new things and exercising, especially mountain biking with my son. A few years ago, I competed in some sprint triathlons and I'm looking to race again this season.

The one person you'd like to cook for: My grandmother. I never got the opportunity to cook for her because she passed away when I was about 12 years old, though I remember her as a phenomenal cook from Puerto Rico.

The traits you wish every cook could have: You have to have respect for people you work with and a passion for the food you cook. If you're not a sincere chef, people will pick up on that. ■

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MONEY & SENSE

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A GOOD REASON TO **PUNCH** A HOLE IN YOUR WALL

Operators are tapping into new revenue by starting a restaurant within a restaurant ➡

BY KATE LEAHY

ILLUSTRATION BY MCKIBILLO

SEATING CUSTOMERS cheek-to-jowl during peak hours only goes so far as a way to grow revenue. To take full advantage of square footage, some operators are breaking down walls, learning new business models and serving entirely different experiences—on the side.

Creating a restaurant within a restaurant isn’t uncharted territory, but it’s proving to be a fiscally savvy move. In some instances, the success of an offshoot eclipses the original. When Chef José Andrés turned the second floor of then-restaurant Café Atlántico into his experimental Minibar by José Andrés in 2003, snagging one of its six seats became the hardest reservation to score in Washington, D.C. (Café Atlántico reopened as pop-up restaurant America Eats Tavern this year.)

Several advantages come with opening a restaurant within an existing infrastructure: shared kitchens, bathrooms, and dish rooms. New staff hires are minimal. And the concepts can often share one liquor license. “There’s a real way to capture every bit and sell it,” says Chef-owner Greg Hardesty, who runs two restaurants, fine-dining Recess and casual Room 4, out of the same location in Indianapolis. “You’re always chasing that tiny margin, so if you can expand your margin without spending more money, you do it.”

Hardesty learned the value of running a casual concept adjacent to a fine-dining restaurant when working for Chef Dieter Puska at The Glass Chimney in Carmel, Ind. Puska allocated prime cuts for The Glass Chimney while turning trimmings into stews served next door at his casual place, Deeter’s Nasch & Nip.

Offshoots also provide chefs with creative outlets. “We’re always looking for ways to express ourselves, and for new concepts to develop,” says Tim Hockett, a division chef-partner at Chicago-based Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises. Hockett has opened several restaurants-within-restaurants for the company, including casual Pizzeria Via Stato in the former bar of Osteria Via Stato. His biggest recent hit is M Burger, a burger counter that first opened in the pastry kitchen of the fine dining restaurant, Tru.

For restaurateurs interested in transforming unused space, concept is key. Extensions make sense (Italian restaurant with an offshoot focusing on pizza) or juxtaposition of opposites (such as fine dining and quick service). The concept also has to make sense and be clearly different from the existing restaurant—but with a caveat. “You need to do whatever feels authentic and organic to the team involved,” Hockett says. “I wouldn’t try to force a sandwich or sushi place in a restaurant just for the sake of doing something different. It’s about the team and what they are good at.”

ROOM 4, INDIANAPOLIS

Transformed space:
500 square feet

On the menu: pork carnitas with onions, avocado, queso fresco, and salsa verde

Room 4, Chef Greg Hardesty’s casual restaurant was born from the idea that two restaurants in a space are better than one. Before Hardesty opened fine-dining Recess in 2010, he signed a lease comprising three storefronts. He remodeled two spaces, turning them into one, and left the third, a former convenience store, vacant. Eight months after paying rent on a room full of cobwebs, he broke down the wall, added 22 seats and a small kitchen with a flat-top griddle and four burners. Thus, Room 4 was born with a menu Hardesty describes as after-hours chef grub.

“At the end of the night, chefs want salty, spicy, substantial food,” he says. “It’s my take on coming home and opening up the refrigerator.” Fifty percent of the food cost is shared between both restaurants. Remnants from sea bass at Recess become fish tacos while meat trimmings are ground for burgers or cooked into carnitas. The fryer, oven, and dish room are shared. This year, Hardesty expects combined revenue for the restaurants to top \$1 million. He’s also thinking of moving Room 4 into the larger dining room to better accommodate a growing number of regulars. “It has opened up my demographics,” he says.



SIDE BUSINESS

How about an oozy grilled cheese sandwich with seasonal tomatoes and arugula? You bet, say fans at the casual Room 4.



MAIN BUSINESS

Wakame wrapped red bass for more refined dining at Recess.



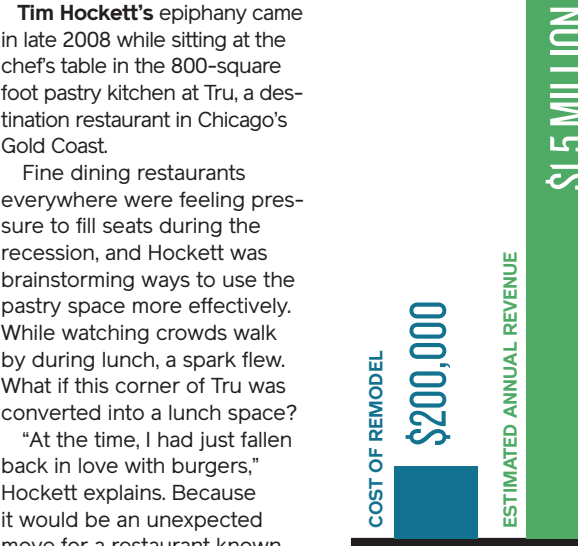
“OFTENTIMES, THE SPACE IS THE OPPORTUNITY AND YOU CREATE SOMETHING THAT WORKS WITHIN IT.”

—Michael Dellar, founder of San Francisco-based Lark Creek Restaurant Group

M BURGER, CHICAGO

Transformed space: 650 square feet

On the menu: M Burger (hamburger served with bacon, cheese and special sauce)



Tim Hockett’s epiphany came in late 2008 while sitting at the chef’s table in the 800-square foot pastry kitchen at Tru, a destination restaurant in Chicago’s Gold Coast. Fine dining restaurants everywhere were feeling pressure to fill seats during the recession, and Hockett was brainstorming ways to use the pastry space more effectively. While watching crowds walk by during lunch, a spark flew. What if this corner of Tru was converted into a lunch space? “At the time, I had just fallen back in love with burgers,” Hockett explains. Because it would be an unexpected move for a restaurant known for its tasting menus, “a burger concept would grab a quick audience and deliver a shock to the neighborhood.” M Burger (M for Chicago’s famed Michigan Avenue) sold nearly all of its first 500 burgers opening day, and now griddles 1,200 burgers daily, along with hefty amounts of fries and shakes. The quick-service burger concept required a modest remodel (a wall dividing M Burger from Tru, which is partially glass, as well as construction of a street entrance) and an investment in new equipment, such as a griddle and fryers. Tru accommodated spillover food storage, moving its pastry department to the restaurant’s main kitchen. Hockett believes that the symbiotic relationship between burger counter and haute cuisine is mutually beneficial, adding that business has picked up at Tru. “The chef at Tru, Anthony Martin, he watches out for us,” Hockett says. “And we watch out for him.”



SIDE BUSINESS

The signature cheeseburger at M Burger.

MAIN BUSINESS

A fancy heirloom beet salad with caviar and more at Tru.

WINE & WALL, SAN FRANCISCO

Transformed space
1,700 square feet

On the menu: duck rillettes
with croutons

For years, One Market used an atrium adjacent to the restaurant to accommodate large private dining events. But the space lacked the polish of the Michelin-starred restaurant. When the building's landlord asked Michael Dellar, founder of San Francisco-based Lark Creek Restaurant Group, for ideas on transforming the area, Dellar took the bait.

"Oftentimes, the space is the opportunity and you create something that works within it," Dellar says.

Dellar decided the 1,700 square-foot atrium was better suited for retail than a restaurant. At the same time, he wanted a space that would draw people but maintain the essence of the establishment.

The solution became Wine & Wall, a retail wine shop, wine bar and art gallery, which opened in June.

SIDE BUSINESS

Wine and Wall, once unused space attached to One Market, extends the dining experience through retail, private dining and small bites.



The remodel required new walls to display art, cubby holes to showcase wine and wine-related merchandise, card-operated wine dispensers, and a bar and lounge area. The restaurant group hired two employees with gallery and retail wine experience, and in the evenings, the space still accommodates private events, up to 100 people.

At Wine & Wall, bowls of almonds and olives and rounds of cheese are displayed alongside a rotating selection of wines, all of which feature artistic labels. Terrines and pâtés are made at One Market and served next door.

"There's synergy between Wine & Wall and One Market," Dellar says. "We tell our guests that if you'd like to follow your wine tasting with a meal, step 100 feet to the door." ■

COST OF REMODEL

\$500,000

ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE

\$1 MILLION

Kate Leahy is an Oakland, Calif.-based writer. She has written three cookbooks, including *The Preservation Kitchen*, with Chef Paul Virant.



MAIN BUSINESS

One Market thrives as a Michelin-starred restaurant.

DEAR FOOD FANATIC

Seasoned advice on the front and back of the house

Q The owner of the restaurant where I'm the chef keeps trying to dumb down my menu, telling me I need to do more with chicken tenders or he'll kick my (expletive) out the door. How can I keep my dignity and my job?

Ah, we've all been there. Nothing hurts more than an owner with great business sense, but no kitchen creativity. That's where the magic of a daily special comes in handy. Here, you can play around with seasonal items, divert from your usual offerings and flex your culinary muscles—while giving a subtle jab to your boss. Before you get too power hungry, just don't forget who signs your paychecks.

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FOOD FANATIC

Todd Pearson

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Everything is so friggin' expensive these days! Between labor costs and the rising price of commodities, keeping food costs low is choking my bottom line. How can I get a handle on my food costs?

You can boost sales and stay thrifty by working with underutilized cuts of meat that require a little extra love, such as pork shoulder, beef brisket and lamb shank. Not only do these cuts often cost less, they're trendy ingredients that are perfect for this time of year. Also consider whole animals, such as chicken, and use every part (even the carcass for stock).

My business is seasonal—and booming—but because of this ebb and flow, I can never find enough good cooks. What can I do about this?

During seasonal turnover, look to recent culinary graduates for a steady supply of

eager, unemployed cooks fresh on the market. Social media sites are also great for getting the word out about job openings. Consider Twitter, where shout-outs from local publications can help your listing travel faster. And if you're still without an extra pair of hands, pre-packaged goods provide an easy shortcut; stocks, stuffed pastas, par baked breads and quality-made desserts can help expedite your line.

What's up with cooks and bad habits? How can I get across the way I want them to hold down their station?

Sometimes, young cooks aren't shown the importance of keeping a clean station or using a spatula to get every last drop of dressing out of a mixing bowl. As the chef, you must mentor—repeatedly. Make sure you show your cooks how you want

things done. Don't assume. And remember to catch them doing things right every now and then—and acknowledge it.

Eco-guilt is getting the best of me. What are some ways for us to be more sustainable and earth-friendly without costing an arm and a leg?

Think baby steps—you don't have to implement measures all at once. The easy ones include recycling cans and bottles, changing lighting to the energy-efficient variety and installing switches that turn off lights to the walk-in when employees walk out. Seek earth-friendly cleaning supplies and take-out containers made of recycled paper products. To relieve landfills of plastic bottles and to add some cachet to your restaurant, install a water filter and serve your brand of water out of carafes. ■

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ONCE IS ENOUGH

CHEFS TOSS THE COOKIE CUTTER CONCEPT
IN FAVOR OF EMPIRES BUILT ONE UNIQUE
RESTAURANT AT A TIME ➡

"There's a sense of gratification when you start something from scratch," says Bill Kim of Urban Belly, Belly Shack and Belly Q.

BY LISA BERTAGNOLI

CHEF TOM DOUGLAS will soon own 16 restaurants within 10 blocks in downtown Seattle. Two of his most recent are twins named Serious Pie. The others? Unique concepts with their own menus, service styles and identities.

Douglas wouldn't have it any other way.

"I can walk to any of my joints in 15 minutes," he says. "They all get a lot of attention."

Douglas is among numerous other chefs, such as New York's David Chang, Chicago's Bill Kim and other independents building an empire in post-recession fashion: one unique restaurant at a time, rather than mass producing a single concept.

But these aren't fine dining, white tablecloth establishments. They're neighborhood restaurants, often fast casual eateries where traditional waitstaff is optional.

This approach might not have been possible—or even desired—a decade ago. Social media has allowed savvy chefs to build brands, and their own cult of celebrity, with lightning speed. "Everything is instantaneous," says William Bender, a Santa Clara, Calif.-based restaurant consultant. "That allows a chef and a brand to connect with a community immediately."

As chefs gain popularity with menus built around foodstuffs from nearby farmers and producers, they're likely to stay local to keep loyal diners happy, maintaining their relationship with the local food community. Take, for example, the other incarnations of Fatty Crab, a Malaysian inspired restaurant in New York. Fatty 'Cue is a Malaysian-style barbecue joint in Brooklyn while its kiosk spinoff is in Battery Park. There's a Fatty Snack—a quick service restaurant on wheels at the World Financial Center and a pull cart (food truck hybrid) in Central Park. Both serve Asian-inspired lunch fare.

"People want more local, niche-feeling places," says Lori Mukoyama, a principal of RTKL Associates Inc., a hospitality architecture and design firm based in Washington, D.C. Customers are more savvy now, she says. "The whole local twist is a big deal."

The recession helped make these types of operations possible. The slump created a public hungry for flavorful food at reasonable prices and made real estate accessible to independent chefs, especially those willing to open small restaurants in out-of-the-way neighborhoods.

Still, going the one-off route has more advantages than one would think. Restaurants spawned by the same chef are more alike than they are different, points out Dennis Lombardi, partner at WD Partners, a Columbus, Ohio-based restaurant design and consulting firm.

"You use the same POS system, the same architect and the same food supplier," he says. "There's a lot of leverage from one concept to another, even if the concepts aren't twins."

The drawbacks? Chefs still have to create a menu and recipes for each location. While that scratches a creative itch, it can be time consuming, not to mention risky. And there's no guarantee that the spinoff of a successful restaurant will succeed or that a brand-new restaurant will take off. But chefs, especially creative ones, are nothing if not risk-takers. "There's nothing on my radar screen that tells me this is going to slow down," Lombardi says. ■

Lisa Bertagnoli is a Chicago-based freelance writer.



ANGELO SOSA

Starting small when you're already big

Thanks to his 2010 *Top Chef* appearance, Angelo Sosa probably could have opened his second restaurant anywhere in New York City.

Yet Sosa, who placed second on the competitive cooking show, chose a risky 900-square-foot space on an unproven stretch of 10th Avenue for Anejo Tequileria, his full-service Mexican concept featuring small plates and rare tequilas.

Anejo opened quietly earlier this year without publicity or social media plugs, even though Sosa has nearly 15,000 Twitter followers. During the first months, Sosa responded to customer input, adding a menu of tequila flights when diners said they wanted to sample more than one of Anejo's rare tequilas.

The neighborhood rewarded Sosa for taking input and risks. The 80-seat

full-service restaurant rings in about 200 covers a night, and is on track to gross \$2 million this year, Sosa says.

Success breeds dreams. Sosa, 37, thinks about opening Anejos in other cities. But they won't be replicas of the original, and the growth has to be organic, he says.

"I'm more fixated on what's in front of me rather than sprawling things out," he says. "The core concept has to work 100 percent."

Meanwhile, he has more cooking to do in New York City. Earlier this year, he launched Rigamarolls, a wholesale business specializing in spring rolls. Social Eat, the full-service, Asian-inspired restaurant Sosa opened on the East Side last year, brings his New York count to three.

Sosa would like to open at least one more place this year, a full-service restaurant where he'll focus on flavor profiles, rather than a specific cuisine. After that, he'd like to open an Asian-style farm-to-table restaurant.

When that happens, "I'm in the kitchen day-to-day, really just cooking my cuisine and going for it," Sosa says.



← Sosa's Korean fried chicken with taro waffle and Gochujang butter.

“
You use the same POS system, the same architect and the same food supplier. There's a lot of leverage from one concept to another, even if the concepts aren't twins.
”

—Dennis Lombardi of WD Partners, a restaurant design and consulting firm



↑ Lamb and brandy dumplings with Chinese black beans and sundried tomato vinaigrette are served at the casual Urban Belly.

BILL KIM

Turning Chi-Town into Belly-Town

Bill Kim married Korean and Puerto Rican cooking, or at least put them in the same kitchen. The result: a successful union, now with three offspring.

Earlier in his career, Kim was a fine dining chef, at Susanna Foo's in Philadelphia and then Le Lan in Chicago. Windy City food lovers know him as the force behind Urban Belly, Belly Shack and Belly Q, three casual restaurants beloved for their flavorful, affordable cuisine.

Kim opened Urban Belly in a Chicago neighborhood strip mall in 2008. The tiny restaurant soon built a cult following, so in 2009, Kim opened Belly Shack, another quick casual restaurant a few miles south of Urban Belly under the city's Blue Line train tracks.

To his surprise, it didn't catch on right away. "It had its ups and downs," Kim says, adding that now, Belly Shack's business is equal to or greater than Urban Belly's.

Belly Q, his third restaurant, opened in August. At 200 seats, it's 10 times bigger than his first two endeavors, offers table service (the others offer have limited service) and is located in a well-trafficked neighborhood.

But building Belly-ville hasn't been easy, Kim says. Menu development and food preparation have been huge hurdles. For instance, Belly Shack serves Korean meatballs, made from Kim's mother's recipe. The restaurant also makes curry mayonnaise, a process that takes 24 hours. "You're starting from scratch every time," he says.

There are benefits—Kim can reward staff by moving them to new concepts—and his wife, Yvonne Cadiz-Kim, who's Puerto Rican, inspires the menus. The Bellys make money. Net profits at Urban Belly, Kim says, are 20 percent. "When I was a fine dining chef, 6 percent was like, 'Oh my god, you hit it big,'" he says.

TOM DOUGLAS

Conquering Seattle, restaurant by restaurant

A near disaster, not an overnight success, helped longtime Seattle chef Tom Douglas realize that unique concepts would lead to conquering the Emerald City.

Douglas opened his first of his 16-restaurant empire, Dahlia Lounge, in 1989. "We had no money, no backup and no business," Douglas says. "It took us two years to dig ourselves out of that hole."

Five years later, duplicating Dahlia was the last thing on Douglas's mind as he signed deals for his next two restaurants, Etta's and Palace Kitchen. "It made me think about what would have a better return, maybe be a little quicker," he recalls. "It made me be more thoughtful about what I should be doing and balance the portfolio."

Today, Douglas' array of restaurants is anything but balanced. It includes several American concepts, including Dahlia; a Tibetan dumpling stand, Ting Momo; and Brave Horse Tavern, a casual bar and grill. Douglas has also dipped his toe into duplicating—he has two Serious Pie pizzerias in Seattle.

The first opened five years ago, and when lines were out the door, he figured another would be just as successful.

Douglas sees nothing but upsides to opening unique restaurants. "With each place, you're trying something exciting," he says, noting that this past summer, he was hunting for falafel recipes for a new venture, Palace Falafel. Opening new restaurants also gives him places to promote his staff of 700, 200 of who have worked for Douglas for a decade or more.

"With each place, you're trying something new and exciting," says Douglas. "It makes me happy to see them all up and running."

↓ Sweet fennel sausage, made in house, tops the pizza at Douglas' Serious Pie.



A POS SYSTEM THAT WON'T SLAM YOUR WALLET

Simple software solutions to ordering and tracking sales

BY STACY WARDEN

THE PRICEY POINT-OF-SALES equipment that requires tedious paperwork, outside technicians and lengthy installation is facing some competition from its antithesis: the iPad.

Catering to restaurants large and small, iPad's POS systems provide a simple, sleek alternative to the long established standard at a fraction of the cost. The up-front savings on investment and software are significant—fully-equipped traditional systems can cost up to \$15,000, while long-term benefits include low monthly hosting fees and minimal rates on credit cards. Plastic remains the preferred payment method, but tablets can integrate with cash drawers, printers and smartphones. Restaurants can also cut time and drive

sales with functions like instant menu access, which allows servers to review ingredients and descriptions, including food allergy alerts. This means less running back and forth to the kitchen and more time with customers.

Customization is another big draw, allowing users to tailor the system's interface to meet their restaurant's specific needs. Icons and menu descriptions can be created instantly with a snap of the iPad camera, while accessories like unique enclosures add security and versatility. Most iPad systems are up and running in under two hours, including software training, and require little time to upgrade. And if a terminal experiences performance issues, an iPad can be easily and cheaply replaced. ■

HERE'S HOW SOME IPAD SYSTEMS ARE STACKING UP:

Atlas by Revel Systems

Self-described leader in the iPad-based POS market with its "enterprise system." Though not technically classified as higher level enterprise equipment, its performance goes beyond outdated counterparts, and with less effort from the end user.

Enables payment by mobile phone, eliminating transaction fee.

Offline mode keeps the system operating when there's no internet.

COST
\$1,000 and \$1,500 per iPad, plus a \$100 monthly cloud-hosting fee.

CUSTOMERS
National chains like Camille's Sidewalk Café, Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen and Twistee Treat.

POSLavu

Appearance on Gordon Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares put it on the map. Smart and simple; no previous tech knowledge needed.

Support for all areas, from installation to in-house training. Detailed reports viewable in real time.

View table layout, number of guests and up-to-the-minute sales.

No online mode but provides an in-house server that lets owners continue daily operations with Internet.

COST
Less than \$2,000; monthly hosting fees from \$29.95 to \$99.95. Free iTunes app and free software updates.

CUSTOMERS
Big Lou's in Vancouver, British Columbia; Cozy Oaks in Lakeland, Florida; and White Beach Hotel in Shimoda, Japan.

Olympus POS

In-house tech support, 24/7.

Restaurant's iPad can be handled remotely to change applications, add users and monitor any other aspect of the system.

Back-end support available, which takes the gritty financial aspects—accounts payable/receivable, payroll and budgets—off of an owner's hands.

No offline mode, but allows customer payment via credit card and plans to add a mobile payment plan.

COST
\$995 for the first iPad; additional units are offered at a discount. Monthly hosting fees range from \$45 to \$95.

CUSTOMERS
Mom-and-pop restaurants like The Rose Establishment, Sub Zero Ice Cream and Pizzeria Limone, all currently based in Utah.

Stacy Warden is a Chicago-based freelance writer obsessed with all things tech.

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Start with high-quality bread and pair with top notch butter, flavored oils or spreads inspired by the menu concept. Fresh is a must, so think par baked or daily delivery.

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Get the recipe for Black pepper and gruyère popovers from Foreign and Domestic in Austin, Texas

the dough?

Go ahead and charge for bread—but it better be really good

BY CARLY FISHER

T IRED OF SNACKING on unfulfilling baskets of cold bread and hard butter, Chef Stephanie Izard decided to take the dough into her own hands.

While plotting her highly anticipated Chicago-based restaurant, Girl & the Goat, the *Top Chef* winner opted to implement an in-house artisanal bread program using higher quality products.

“More people are starting to bake their own bread or serve better quality bread,” she says. “But it costs money to have a bread baker in-house, as well as the ingredients.”

Charging for bread may seem outrageous—even offensive—but executed smartly with a bit of verve, it can add to the bottom line and strengthen a restaurant’s brand.

For Izard, her bread program complements the flavors on her menu. “You put so much time and care into every other dish that we wanted to treat the bread as a dish,” she says.

Izard has two bakers kneading bread daily. Paired with thoughtful condiments like carrot sage and tomato soup oils, the fresh baked bread comes at a cost—\$4—which customers readily pay. Girl & the Goat offers three seasonal bread choices, and the most popular one is typically among the top four best-selling dishes of the night.

“It’s not our hugest profit margin,” she says. “It’s just taking that extra step and going above and beyond.”

Quality is the primary reason a restaurant charges for bread, but waste reduction is partly why Chef John Gorham asks \$1 for it at his restaurants, Toro Bravo and Tasty ‘n’ Sons, in Portland, Ore. Sourcing bread

YOU CHARGE WHAAAAT?



Euclid Hall, Denver

Bretzel bun, **\$2.50**

The Walrus & the Carpenter, Seattle

Bread and butter in sea salt and olive oil, **\$3**

Eat Street Social, Minneapolis

French baguette with garlic butter, **\$3**



Back Bay, Boston

Bread with eggplant and goat cheese puree, **\$4**

Sotto, Los Angeles

Housemade bread with olive oil, **\$3**; with lardo pestato, **\$7**; with burrata, **\$9**



Momofuku Ssäm Bar, New York

Bread with Vermont sea salt butter and whipped lard, **\$8**

Magnolia, Charleston, N.C.

Housemade pimento cheese with Charleston flatbread, **\$9**

from local artisanal bakeries like Grand Central Bakery and Fleur de Lis, and using premium olive oil and butter comes at a higher price than run-of-the-mill bread baskets. The minimal charge only supplements about 30 percent of the bread cost, but Gorham says it helps ensure that every bit is used.

“We’re getting really high-end, quality stuff at a pretty competitive price, so we really couldn’t afford to give it away,” Gorham says, adding that only the occasional diner asks for an explanation. “I’m paying for it; why wouldn’t the customer?”

Challenging restaurant norms didn’t work for Chef Carl Thorne-Thomsen, who tried to charge for a plate of bread, olives, prosciutto and olive oil when he opened his Kansas City restaurant, Story. “Our guests were aghast that they had to pay for bread,” Thomsen says. “We now serve bread complimentary, with the exception of the guest who wants to take a loaf home for \$8.”

Restaurateurs who charge for bread and butter agree that the cost must be justifiable. “Everyone who charges for it definitely uses much better bread,” Gorham says. “It really comes down to the price point of the menu.”

But Gorham says the model is feasible—and growing. Public Kitchen & Bar in Los Angeles and Peels in New York both charge \$5 for freshly baked Parker House rolls accompanied by Vermont creamery butter, while The Bachelor Farmer in Minneapolis offer popovers with honey butter for \$4.

At Foreign and Domestic in Austin, Texas, a pair of black pepper and gruyère popovers are \$8. They’ve become so popular since the restaurant opened two years ago that owners Ned and Jodi Elliott branded a popover pan and sell it online with the recipe for \$38.

Says Gorham of bread offerings, “I think it would work for any restaurant. I don’t see why a restaurant has to give something away for free.” ■

I'LL DRINK TO THAT!

AGED AND BITTER

Bartenders are revving up spirits with beer and barrel aging techniques

BY DAVID RANSOM

As the cocktail industry pushes the bar to new levels, bartenders are experimenting with long established ingredients and methodologies, like beer and barrel aging, in unconventional ways.

Widely regarded as the U.S. ambassador for the barrel-aged cocktail trend, bar manager Jeffrey Morgenthaler of Clyde Common in Portland, Ore., imported the concept after spotting it during a trip to London in 2009.

Morgenthaler pre-mixes classic cocktails like Manhattans and Negronis, then transfers them to whiskey or bourbon barrels that seasons the spirits' flavors.

"All of my barrel-aged cocktails are in barrels no more than eight weeks, and most are in for about four weeks," he says. "Any longer and they start to lose focus."

The trend has hit the mainstream with kits available to the public, such as Woodinville Whiskey Co.'s Age Your Own Whiskey kit, which costs \$149.99 and can be used to age the barrel with whiskey and reused to barrel age cocktails.

Beer is also taking off in the cocktail world at places like New



Letter of Marque

*Economy Club, New York
Bartender Aaron Butler*

1 ¼ ounce Plymouth Gin
¾ ounce Marie Brizard Apéry
¾ ounce Meletti Amaro
¼ ounce fresh lemon juice
2 dashes Peychaud's Bitters
1 ½ ounce Brooklyn East India Pale Ale
Lemon peel, for garnish

Shake all ingredients, except the beer. Pour into rocks glass over ice. Top with beer. Garnish with lemon peel.

York's Economy Club, where rising bar star Aaron Butler has played with it as an ingredient for about five years.

His Letter of Marque cocktail blends a hoppy Brooklyn Brewery IPA with herby Plymouth Gin, bitters and a squeeze of lemon. The drink won the silver medal at this year's Marie Brizard Cocktail Competition in New York.

Getting the balance in a beer cocktail just right is a delicate process, Butler says, "but made well, they can be a fabulous addition to any cocktail list." ■

David Ransom is a New York-based spirits writer.



DAILY SPECIALS

CREAM CHEESE MASHED POTATOES



CREAM CHEESE MASHED POTATOES

Yield: 41, half-cup servings
Prep: 5-6 min.

Mix-in ingredients:

1 pkg Potato Pearls® EXCEL® Mashed Potatoes
¾ c Cream cheese
1¼ c Milk
1¼ c Sour cream
1 t Garlic powder
3 qt + 3 c Water, hot

BUTTERMILK MASHED POTATOES WITH BLACK PEPPER



BUTTERMILK MASHED POTATOES WITH BLACK PEPPER

Yield: 40, half-cup servings
Prep: 5-6 min.

Mix-in ingredients:

1 pkg Potato Pearls® EXCEL® Mashed Potatoes
2 T Black pepper, ground
6 c Buttermilk
3 qt + 3½ c Water, hot

POTATO PEARLS® EXCEL® PREP:

1. Pour Potato Pearls® into 4-inch deep half-steamtable pan and add remaining ingredients.
2. Pour hot water over ingredients, stir 15-20 sec.
3. Allow to sit for 5 min., fluff with fork and serve.

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DEAR JOHN

Use the bathroom to set the mood, evoke a response and leave a lasting impression

BY LISA SHAMES



SERENDIPITY IN PLAY

Denise and Doug Robson got a head start on the fun vibe and bright colors they envisioned for Gallo Blanco when they discovered that the bathroom evoked just the right playfulness.

DINERS WHO STEP into the bathroom at Dish, a swank restaurant and lounge in Dallas, may be surprised to learn that they're being watched. Behind the mirrors at the communal sink, small flat screen televisions flash images of a blinking, oversized eye, giving patrons a hint of playful voyeurism. Fun, right? It's the reaction that Dwayne MacEwen, president and creative director of DMAC Architecture was after when his team designed the restaurant. The savviest of restaurateurs are serious about bathroom design. But some are taking it one step further, hoping to strike an emotional chord for a lasting impression. Call it mood-based design or simply the "surprise" factor.

PHOTO BY MARK PETERMAN

It might be elaborate or simple like the touches owner Arsalun Tafazoli works into his restaurants, including Craft & Commerce in San Diego. On the bathroom mirror, a simple sticker that reads "You look good" never fails to make people smile, Tafazoli says.

"We try to take very generic things and have fun with it," he says, adding that instead of music, he pipes British radio drama and audio of classic literature into the restroom. It's his way of playing off the library vibe of the restaurant.

Bathroom humor takes the ultimate form at Gallo Blanco Café in Phoenix, Ariz., where the men's room features urinals reminiscent of the Rolling Stones' infamous Jagger red-lipped mouthpiece.

"When a customer returns from the men's room, he always says, 'you got to see the cool bathroom,' " says Denise Robson, who owns the restaurant with her husband, Chef-owner Doug Robson.

Daring design elements need not be tongue in cheek—an elegant mood can quickly whisk diners away to a beach or a forest, like at Roka Akor, a Japanese steakhouse in Chicago.

MacEwen used natural and reclaimed materials Roka Akor's main dining room. To evoke a sense of walking into the clearing of a forest, the restrooms have black lacquered walls and suspended stumps of mesquite wood hanging from the ceiling.

At Morimoto in New York, floor-to-ceiling infinity mirrors create the illusion of an endless cherry blossom orchard. Luxe touches like soundproof stalls and toilets with a cyclone flush, deodorizer, and bidet give patrons a sense of privacy.

Memorable elements can be fun, but the budget should always allow for quality. "If you go over the top with your restrooms, it will resonate more with your customers than an amazing dining room space," Tafazoli says.

Creating a great restroom doesn't necessarily cost more MacEwen says, but it requires thought.

"In the grand scheme of things, you are making a statement to your guests showing that you care," he says. ■

Lisa Shames is the dining editor for CS, a Chicago-based luxury magazine.

THE WAY TO WOW

A diner's experience goes far beyond food and service. Consider the bathroom—at its best, diners will swoon. At its worst, customers might not return. Here are some ways operators are working toward impressing their guests.

Peep Show

Strange but true, New York-based restaurant Peep in Soho has bathroom stalls that provide a bird's eye view of the dining room, allowing patrons to spy on fellow diners with one-way mirrors.

Surf 'n' Turf

A trip to the bathroom at Loló in San Francisco turns into a kitschy Mexican seaside getaway with a palm tree-covered beach backdrop, reflective bird-shaped mirrors, and looping soundtrack of crashing waves and bird noises.

Room With a View

When a restaurant has access to panoramic views, it makes sense to extend it to the bathroom. Club 50 at the Viceroy in Miami offers guests stunning views of Biscayne Bay.

WHO'S THE VOYEUR?

At Dish in Dallas, inlaid mini TV screens depict a blinking eye.



"If you go over the top with your restrooms, it will resonate more with your customers than an amazing dining room space."

—Arsalun Tafazoli, restaurant owner, San Diego



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PR MACHINE

Sharp ideas to get butts in seats

Restaurant publicists are caught between a rock and a hard place. They're often hired to create media magic—without access to potions or pixie dust. When buzz isn't buzzing, the restaurateur blames the publicist.

Complaints from both sides are common, but they don't always spell disaster. We're offering a truce with advice from PR pros, including Melissa Libby of her namesake agency in Atlanta and Lori Randall of Randall PR in Seattle. Listen and learn from some of the most common issues.

RESTAURANT DILEMMA

Call Yelp, Urban Spoon, Open Table, etc., and have that bad review taken down.

Why should I be on Twitter? I don't want to have to tell everyone when I pee.

Call the writer and demand a retraction. We are not a one-star restaurant.

We're already busy on (insert holiday here), so don't spend your time on that. Tell the producer we're not interested.

Why was I left out of that story? I make the best (insert dish here). No one gets me.

Why am I bothering with social media? It's ridiculous.

PR PRO SOLUTION

→ There will always be haters in this world and you can't please them, so the sooner you stop trying to, the better your world will be. Listen to what people are saying and focus on finding a middle ground that will deliver an overall better customer experience.

→ No one talks about peeing on Twitter. Where did this myth come from? Take part in the conversation by being engaging and interesting in a way that builds your brand.

→ But that's what you got, and there's nothing factually incorrect. Make the good better and fix the bad.

→ So you don't want that TV cooking segment on the midday news? Or to become more familiar with 100,000 viewers?

→ Traditional media is no longer the only vehicle to reach your customers. Use social media to build your audience, connecting with other restaurant professionals and journalists on sites like Facebook and Twitter to get your name out to the public.

→ Let's spend less time telling fans about how great you and your menu are and give them reasons to share your content. Post photos of your latest dish, share special deals with your followers and help promote other people in your community—they'll be more inclined to help you in turn.



PR TIP

Make sure you articulate specific goals to your publicist and that the deliverables are fully understood. Most won't push back on a bad idea so make sure to get a clear point of view. And most of all, listen. You're paying for the advice.

GOT A PR OR MARKETING QUESTION? Send them to ask@foodfanatics.com and we'll have our PR pros take a stab at them in an upcoming issue.

BY THE NUMBERS

Mine the math for a lucrative season

A winning lottery ticket may still be in your future, but until then, these numbers could add up to a blockbuster combination.

33 million

No Muss, No Fuss

Forget cooking and clean-up—these people are the wise ones celebrating **Thanksgiving** at restaurants or ordering carry out to supplement the meal.

Stock Up on Stocking Stuffers

Offer **gift certificates** for this percentage of Americans who buy them from restaurants as holiday gifts. Gift card sales totaled \$28 billion last holiday season.

34%

Who Wants What?



7 out of 10

See Green on Black Friday

It pays to open early, close late and offer specials on **Black Friday** when these shoppers will visit a restaurant after mobbing department stores. That's about 32 million diners.



Take a Number

Diners are notorious no-shows on big holidays, so take a credit card number to **secure reservations** and watch that number fall closer to zero.



100 million

Rockin' New Year's Eve

About a third of the U.S. population spends the **last day** of 2012 at a bar, dining out or ordering in.