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1. Nielsen, chocolate category 5 years, 1/11/20
2. Datassential, custom study 2019

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SUMMER IS BACK

Welcome to the summer edition of Food Fanatics® magazine!

A new season is here, and everyone is hungry to bring in more revenue and delight diners with fresh recipes and ideas.

In this edition, we celebrate the joy of returning to a bit of normalcy. As customers head back to restaurants – whether it's to eat indoors or al fresco – we're seeing new trends toward explosive flavors and distinctive dining experiences. Dive in to find tips on impressing guests of all kinds, from casual diners to foodies.

In *Menu Must-Haves*, the cover story brings the unusual to the table. From savory to sweet, there is something to surprise and delight everyone. Plus, learn how restaurants across the country are including canine companions in the dining experience!

The *Money Moves* section reveals resourceful tips to help guard your bottom line. Find forward-thinking solutions for navigating supply chain uncertainty and building compelling and immensely popular subscription programs.

In *Meeting the Moment*, we introduce you to a restaurant entrepreneur who is providing employees with a second chance, plus ownership in the business. Also, discover unique concepts that are sprouting up in small towns and revitalizing the local communities. Hear from Lauren Fernandez, founder/CEO of a restaurant development and investment firm, who advocates for – and invests in women- and minority-owned restaurant concepts.

We hope this edition of Food Fanatics sparks some inspiration and helps you make it – all summer long!

Thanks for reading,

Andrew Iacobucci
Interim Chief Executive Officer, US Foods®

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Turn to page
10 for Zucchini
and Cilantro
Hummus.

MENU
MUST-
HAVES

By Amber Gibson
Photography by Matt Armendariz
Food styling by Adam Pearson
Prop styling by Christina Wressell

HUMMUS ALONG

The multi-purpose dip has legs
that go the distance



Live up hummus with seasonal vegetables like fava beans or try fresh green chickpeas, opposite page.

BIG PROPS TO HUMMUS FOR PAVING THE WAY TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF DIPS.

Its ubiquity and ability to extend beyond its Mediterranean and Middle Eastern origins has spurred innovation at a time when the demand for meatless is at a fever pitch. Other plant-based vehicles, such as pureed black-eyed peas, white beans, lentils, carrots and beets, can be roasted or soaked and then pureed into creamy goodness. These colorful dips are super versatile and easy to batch. They're giving toast and avocado backlash a new life and make for a popular shared starter with bread service, crackers and crudite. Plus, these plant-based dips are crowd pleasers that are suitable for a variety of diets and concepts.



► AVOCADO HUMMUS

At new all-day cafe Tommy's in Beverly Hills, avocado gets the hummus treatment, blended with charred poblano peppers, tahini, lime, garlic, yuzu and white soy. Executive chef Vartan Abagaryan creates a deep well in the center for salsa macha—a blend of ancho, pasilla and arbol chiles with sunflower, sesame and pumpkin seeds, peanuts, lemon zest and salt. This Mexican twist on hummus is a far cry from guacamole, and rather something entirely new, garnished with sprigs of cilantro and served with crispy charred flatbread.



► FAVA BEAN HUMMUS

Zooba is a fast casual restaurant in New York specializing in modern Egyptian street food. Executive chef Moustafa Refaey says that in Egypt, fava bean hummus is more common than the chickpea variety known stateside. "In Egypt, we call it *besara* and it's an old dish that dates to more than 1,000 years ago," Refaey says. "It comes in different variations, often with coriander, malo leaves or sometimes lentils."

Zooba's fava bean hummus is lighter than traditional chickpea hummus, a sage green that works well for summer. Refaey serves it as an appetizer or side dish, topped with a handful of crunchy toasted fava beans with baladi—a whole wheat, housemade pita—for dipping. It's also used as a condiment in salads and sandwiches, including an Egyptian falafel salad alongside roasted eggplant, shredded carrots and lightly pickled beets. "It's often described as being very creamy, tangy and balanced," he says. "Customers love it."

Fava Bean Hummus

*Executive chef Moustafa Refaey
Zooba, New York City*

- 50 grams extra-virgin olive oil
- 75 grams Spanish onion, thinly sliced
- 20 grams garlic, sliced
- 500 grams fava beans, shelled
- 15 grams sea salt
- 3 grams ground cumin
- 1 gram black pepper
- 1,400 grams hot water
- 100 grams parsley, washed and chopped
- 60 grams lime juice
- 75 grams raw tahini paste
- Seeded crackers, your choice

In a stockpot over medium heat, heat oil and saute onion for 3 minutes; add garlic and cook for 1 minute. Add fava beans, cook 5 minutes and add seasonings.

Add water and simmer for 20 minutes to cook the beans through. Transfer to a blender while the mixture is still hot; add parsley and lime juice and puree until smooth. Cool and add tahini, adjusting seasonings for taste. Serve with seeded crackers.

► BLACK GARLIC HUMMUS

When chef Raymond Li was looking for a more creative version of hummus for Kaori Miami, a Mediterranean and Asian fusion restaurant, he turned to black garlic for its distinctive sweet and pungent flavor. He blends a 3:1 ratio of a gingery black garlic base to garbanzo beans and finishes this popular appetizer by garnishing it with pumpkin seed furikake and chili sesame oil.

“Black garlic provides an added depth and funk to the hummus,” Li says. “The crunch from the toasted pumpkin and sesame seeds plus the slight heat from the chili oil really complement one another. Guests are loving the uniqueness.” Li goes through so much hummus, pictured below, that batches are made daily, but it can last two weeks vacuumed-sealed.



► RED LENTIL HUMMUS

Dips, spreads and condiments are important features of the shared plates menu at Little Saint, a new farm-forward, plant-based restaurant, cafe and wine shop in Healdsburg, California, by Kyle and Katina Connaughton of SingleThread. One of chef de cuisine Bryan Oliver's favorite dips is a red lentil hummus served alongside housemade flatbread and raw vegetables from their Little Saint Farm.

“I prefer hummus to be smooth and creamy without being overly thick,” he says. “This recipe's tahini ratio adds a well-rounded nuttiness to the hummus while still letting the flavor of the red lentils shine.” Oliver creates a well in the center of the hummus and adds harissa almond oil with coarsely chopped almonds for a spicy, crunchy accent. It's also an opportunity to cross-utilize harissa paste, which he's already making from scratch using peppers from their farm.

Red Lentil Hummus with Harissa and Toasted Almonds

*Chef de Cuisine Bryan Oliver
Little Saint, Healdsburg, California*

- 1 cup split red lentils, cooked
- ¼ cup tahini
- 2 tablespoons coriander, toasted and ground
- 1 tablespoon cumin, toasted and ground
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1¼ cups ice water
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 teaspoons salt
- Raw vegetables for dipping such as carrots, radishes and cucumber sticks
- Harissa almond oil, recipe follows

Combine lentils, tahini, coriander, cumin, garlic, lemon juice, water, olive oil and salt in a high powered blender or food processor and puree until smooth.

To plate, scoop the hummus into a wide bowl, using the back of a spoon to create a circular well. Add harissa-almond oil. Serve with vegetables. Makes about 1 liter.

To make Harissa almond oil: Combine ½ cup toasted and coarsely chopped almonds, 1 tablespoon harissa paste, ½ cup olive oil, zest of 1 lemon, 1 teaspoon kosher salt and 1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds.

BLACK GARLIC HUMMUS PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID SALAZAR



Check out the recipe for this red lentil hummus on the opposite page.

Probiotic Beet Tahini grabs diners with its color.



“DON’T BE AFRAID TO GET CREATIVE BECAUSE ALL SORTS OF VEGGIES CAN CREATE DELICIOUS HUMMUS. GOOD HUMMUS CAN BE MADE OF JUST ABOUT ANYTHING.”

—Executive chef Seizan Dreux Ellis of Cafe Gratitude

► PROBIOTIC BEET TAHINI

Cafe Gratitude’s Ellis also serves a vibrant, velvety smooth purple and red beet tahini. “Color is always an important element of selling any kind of plant-based food,” he says. “You want the beet tahini to be veggie forward, as the tahini is really only a binder that gives the dip a healthy fat component. Too much tahini can overpower the flavor.” The probiotic element comes in with the addition of kimchi and sauerkraut, which add a splash of tangy acid and help preserve the tahini for a couple extra days. “Tahini sauce in itself can be too fat forward, so the acid from the kimchi and sauerkraut balances it out.” At Cafe Gratitude, beet tahini is served with a flash-fried romanesco dish in winter, but for summer, try it as a colorful and creamy salad dressing.

► ZUCCHINI CILANTRO HUMMUS

At vegan haven Cafe Gratitude in Southern California, zucchini cilantro hummus has been on the menu for more than a decade, served with a raw falafel plate, slathered on a summer falafel burger and alongside muhammara on a Mediterranean appetizer sampler with crudite and housemade sprouted buckwheat flax crackers. “Don’t be afraid to get creative because all sorts of veggies can create delicious hummus,” says executive chef Seizan Dreux Ellis. “Good hummus can be made of just about anything, but make sure that it’s not too dense by adding some liquid to it. And don’t overdo the oil because it’s not as tasty or appealing if the dip is too heavy and fatty.” Ellis prefers to leave this hummus with a little more texture so you can see green specks from the zucchini. ■

Zucchini Cilantro Hummus

*Executive chef Seizan Dreux Ellis
Cafe Gratitude, Los Angeles*

- 4 cups zucchini, rough-chopped**
- 4 cups soaked and rinsed sunflowers**
- ¼ cup tahini**
- 2 teaspoons chopped garlic**
- ¼ cup lemon juice**
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin**
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper**
- 1½ teaspoon salt**
- ½ teaspoon black pepper**
- ¼ cup cilantro, leaves and stems-roughly chopped**

Combine all ingredients except olive oil in a high powered blender and run on a low speed.

When all ingredients are well blended, keep the machine running and add ¾ cup olive oil. Blend until well-emulsified. Makes 4 cups.

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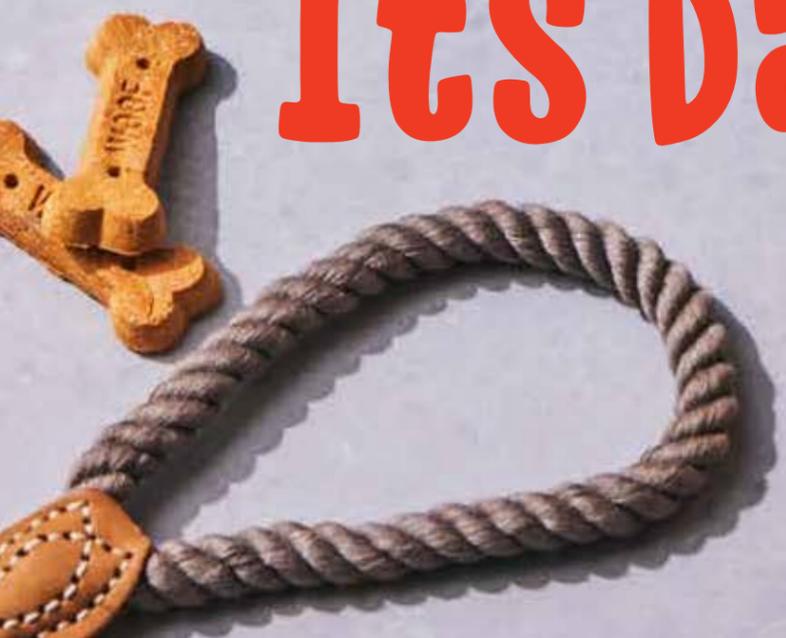


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Get the K9
Chicken and
Rice recipe
on page 16.



EVERY DOG HAS ITS DAY



The benefits of
pups on patios

By Jacqueline Raposo
Photography by Matt Armendariz
Food styling by Adam Pearson
Prop styling by Christina Wressell

Restaurants serving canine companions

are no longer diamonds in the ruff. Sure, the pandemic's increase in outdoor dining spaces and to-go meal kits has encouraged growth. But customers have long been loyal to restaurants that welcome furry friends. But let's cut to the chase: What modifications to the menu, space, safety and service would increase the pool of customers to sit, stay and be merry? Take in some trends and tips from these leaders of the pack.

The Right Bite

About seven years ago, Minnesota-based Craft & Crew Hospitality started offering a dog menu. "It led to this whole new niche that resulted in more people knowing us as a great neighborhood restaurant," says co-owner Luke Derheim. Today, all six locations, including The Howe Daily Kitchen & Bar in Minneapolis and Pub 819 in Hopkins, Minnesota, offer a 3-course dog menu. Appetizers include bones sourced from a local meat market, entrees like a ground turkey Muttloaf® and Pup Cream for dessert—a blend of bananas, peanut butter and coconut oil topped with whipped cream and a pup cookie. There's also the Muttloaf® with brown rice and vegetables. It became so popular that Craft & Crew trademarked the name.

At Norm's Eatery in Seattle, a \$6 chicken or beef veggie dish is called a Bow Wow Bowl. At Art and Soul in Washington, D.C., A-Woof Con Pollo of chicken, rice and vegetables runs for \$10. The peanut butter frozen treat? A Pupsicle.

Doggie dining can also take an upscale approach. At Lobster Bar Sea Grille in



Play It Safe

Each state dictates whether dogs are permitted in restaurants. Most only allow service animals inside and all dogs must be kept on a leash. But 17 states say it's OK for pups to accompany their human for outdoor dining. Local government—cities and counties—can enact such ordinances and laws; in many cases, approval can be as simple as rallying local officials. Some municipalities require a permit so be sure to ask the local and state department of health.

Concerns center on sanitation and canine behavior, which means establishing protocols with staff and expectations with customers on how to handle mishaps and those who don't want to sit by someone's pet.

Craft & Crew staff are schooled to double down on hand washing when interacting with dog customers. "It's really important that we preach that from a sanitation standpoint—we really have to be careful on that," says co-owner Luke Derheim.

For a list of states and more detailed information, visit the Animal Legal and Historical Center at Michigan State University, animallaw.info.

Fort Lauderdale, Florida, pups can feast on an \$18 filet mignon served with potato mash and jus and wash it down a Dirty Dog Martini (filtered water and jus). In New York City, The Wilson offers pups grilled steak for \$24. They even have a "spa day" menu that includes housemade dog biscuits and a Pupsicle made from pumpkin, banana, peanut butter and coconut oil.

A Place to Sniff Around:

At Craft & Crew, dogs are welcomed outdoors with a yoga mat, water, a complimentary housemade Vanilla Woofier and heated floors that keep their paws toasty during brutal Minnesota winters. Designing the trademarked Pawtios® areas means the loss of a table or two. But the investment has been worth it. "I don't think that we would do the volume of sales at all of our heated Pawtios® if it wasn't for



@graciegirltravels enjoys
Craft & Crew Muttloaf



“IT LED TO THIS WHOLE NEW NICHE FOR OUR COMPANY THAT RESULTED IN MORE PEOPLE KNOWING US AS A GREAT NEIGHBORHOOD RESTAURANT.”

—Luke Derheim, co-owner of Craft & Crew Hospitality

@thegolden.bell and Pup cream from Instagram.



the dog menu,” Derheim says. “It’s helped all of our brands continue to grow even in the winter months where similar concepts see a large drop off.”

Small touches make an impact, too. Set by the ocean in Northern California, Moss Beach Distillery’s patio perches pet friends on fluffy dog beds. The staff at Mayfel’s in Asheville, North Carolina, are known for being extra loving with dog customers, bringing them water bowls. And at Lucy’s in New Orleans, staff usher canines inside—not just on the patio—and cool down hot doggies by giving them bowls of crushed ice water.

Make it Special

Staff at Craft & Crew are trained to care for the dogs on par with their human guests. Each location has a designated dog ambassador to ensure they’re well stocked and ready to welcome.

Most dog-friendly operators host dog birthdays complete with cakes and singing. But celebrations can carry further. At the Watering Bowl in Denver, officiants oversee “Bark Mitzvahs” and dog weddings. The Wilson hosts a popular Puppy Bowl in January and a Santa Paws Brunch complete with a Santa for pup photos and treats.

Join a Pack

Offering their Pawtios® as event space for local pet rescues has helped Craft & Crew further connect with the community.

Collaborations extend to sales of services and merchandise, too. The Wilson has partnered on events with Bond Vet and Paw Originals Pet Supplies. At Tin Shed Garden Cafe in Portland, Oregon, proceeds from signature dog bandannas benefited Street Dog Hero—a nearby rescue—while offering customers 50% off their next dog menu purchase.

“Dog parents are very vocal,” says Sorenson. “When they find something that they truly love for their dogs, they tell everybody. And then you’ve got them.”

Bark Up the Right Tree

Craft & Crew celebrated serving 80,000 dog meals last winter by consistently leaning into fan enthusiasm on social media. The Wilson reposts guest Instagram posts with links to their dog menu. Norm’s Eatery and The Tin Shed Garden Cafe also post and repost—especially when a dog influencer comes to their table. “Then you’ve got more people reaching out to see what you’re doing,” says Sorenson.

Pup Cream

Craft & Crew Hospitality
Minneapolis and surrounding area

64 ounces bananas, peeled, sliced and frozen

8 ounces of peanut butter

6 ounces of coconut oil

Whipped cream, as needed

Peanut butter dog biscuits, recipe follows

Add bananas, peanut butter and coconut oil in a blender and blend well.

Portion into 4-ounce cups or molds and freeze.

To serve, unmold and place in a dog bowl. Top with whipped cream and peanut butter dog biscuit. Makes about 20 servings.

To make peanut butter dog biscuits: combine 1 cup low or no sugar peanut butter with 1 egg, ¾ cup water and 2 tablespoons honey. Add 2½ cups whole wheat flour or rice flour to form, adding more if needed. Transfer to a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough about ½ -inch thick. Use a dog- or other-shaped biscuit to create shapes. Bake in a 350 F oven for 18 to 20 minutes, until lightly browned; cool. Makes about 18 cookies depending on size.



Pups go crazy for the frozen Pup Cream at Craft & Crew restaurants.

@thegoldenluma
on the Pawtio®



Dogs Don't Always Rule

Sanitation may seem obvious but what about customers who don't want to sit near tail-wagging, friendly but overeager Rover? And dog fights handled? Operators say it begins with a plan and protocols for staff and guests that include preventing and remedying problems. That would include removing unruly dogs immediately, designating a part of the patio for dog diners only and clearly communicating to customers on the website, social media and on the menu that the restaurant allows dogs on the patio. It's also imperative, Derheim says, that dog owners understand that their pet demonstrates good manners. "Honestly, dog owners don't bring their pet with them if they can't socialize properly so we don't typically have such problems," he said. ■

K9 Chicken and Rice

*Craft & Crew Hospitality
Minneapolis and surrounding area*

- 4 cups brown rice
- 24 chicken breasts
- 4 cups celery, diced
- 4 cups carrots, diced
- 4 cups sweet potatoes, diced
- 4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup of parsley, chopped

Cook brown rice in 8 cups water; set aside. Grill chicken breasts; set aside to rest. Saute vegetables with oil until soft, add parsley. Saute for a few more minutes; cool.

Add cooked rice to vegetable mixture and combine well. Slice breasts, portioning 1 breast per serving. Place 6 ounces rice mixture in bowl and fan out chicken over the top. Makes 24 servings.



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Chili crab, left, is an iconic Singaporean dish, drawing on other cuisines.

THE MANY ROADS TO SINGAPORE

The nation's cuisine is the ultimate Asian mashup

By Jacqueline Raposo
Photography by Matt Armendariz
Food styling by Adam Pearson
Prop styling by Christina Wressell

As chefs blur the lines

that separate one country's food from another, Singaporean cuisine is poised to gain ground. It's the ultimate amalgam of Asian cooking.

Singapore's history as a significant historical trade hub led British, Portuguese, Chinese, Malay, Indonesian, Indian and others to layer their traditions in Singaporean culture, which is reflected in the country's cuisine today.

"Being such a small country, the one thing that is truly Singaporean is the food," says Salil Mehta, the chef at Singapura in New York City. "Because that truly represents everything—that melange of cultures, the marriage of flavors."

Yet Singaporean cuisine can be nearly impossible to define; the ingredients and preparations are shared by so many countries. "You see some Malay ingredients, some influence from Chinese techniques, things like that," says Amy Pryke, founder of Native Noodles in New York City.

That seemingly negative aspect, however, can be positive. Asian ingredients are so ubiquitous, riffing from a native Singaporean component or classic dish is an easy way to insert excitement onto any menu.



DEBAL CURRY

MAIN INGREDIENTS: Spam, sausage, potatoes, cabbage, chicken, chili paste, vinegar and mustard seeds

ORIGINS: Malaysia and Portugal

The Portuguese colonized Malaysia in 1511. With time, Malay chicken curry with vinegar evolved into a Portuguese version that included meats, potatoes and mustard. "The mustard part of it is not native to Singapore, but the heat part of it is," says Mehta of Debal Curry's particularly fiery element. "All these ingredients come together in one dish that's extremely Portuguese."

BAK KUT TEH

MAIN INGREDIENTS: Pork ribs, black pepper, garlic

ORIGINS: Malaysia and Fujian, China

This pork rib soup is common in Malaysia and Singapore. In Malaysia, pork ribs are slow-simmered in a dark broth heavy with star anise, cinnamon, cloves and other Chinese seasonings. In Singapore, a white broth is heavy on the pepper and cloves. Singaporean *bak kut teh* is often served for breakfast with a pot of tea, rice, or *yau ja gwai*, fried Chinese crullers.



The smokiness from a wok makes all the difference for char kuey teow.



CHAR KUEY TEOW

» **MAIN INGREDIENTS:** Wide rice noodles, shrimp paste, dark soy sauce, hot chili paste
» **ORIGINS:** Malaysia, China, Indonesia

In Malaysian char kuey teow, rice noodles are stir-fried with cockles, Chinese sausage, eggs, bean sprouts and soy sauce. In Singapore, hawkers fry the same components with *kecap manis*—a thick and sweet caramelized soy sauce from Indonesia—and plenty of shrimp paste. Fried with the Chinese wok technique, it comes together in sweet, salty, smoky satisfaction.

SATAY BEE HOON

» **MAIN INGREDIENTS:** Rice noodles, peanut sauce, squid, sprouts, chicken
» **ORIGINS:** Malaysia, Java, Teochew (China)

This niche Singaporean dish is credited to various Teochew hawkers who combine fragrant satay peanut sauce, vermicelli noodles and fish. “It looks like a heap of something on your plate—it can be a little hard to relate to,” says Pryke. For her take, Pryke chose the thick egg noodles Americans often find in pan-Asian sesame noodle dishes and opted out of the fish. “You want there to be some element of accessibility,” she says of hoping customers explore from there.



NASIL LEMAK

» **MAIN INGREDIENTS:** Coconut rice, roasted nuts, egg, cucumbers, dried anchovies, sambal
» **ORIGINS:** Malaysia

One of Malaysia’s national dishes, this “fatty rice” is incredibly popular across Singaporean hawker culture. In Malaysia, fragrant coconut rice, salty anchovies, egg and sometimes chicken curry or vegetables are served with spicy sambal. In Singapore, the sambal leans into both spicy and sweet. Hawkers are as likely to use basmati rice as jasmine and add anything from crispy fried chicken, sweet chili, sausage or fried fish.

Laksa Noodles

Founder Amy Pryke
Native Noodle, Washington Heights, New York

- 75 grams lemongrass, white part only
- 45 grams belacan shrimp paste, browned
- 36 grams sugar
- 25 grams shallots, minced
- 22 grams curry powder
- 22 grams ginger, peeled and chopped
- 22 grams galangal, peeled and chopped
- 10 dried chiles, soaked in hot water, most seeds removed
- 7 ounces dried shrimp, ground into powder
- 3 ounces fried onions
- 3 ounces candlenut or macadamia
- 2 ounces garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 teaspoons turmeric
- 5 grams kosher salt
- 8 ounces vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon chicken bouillon, dissolved in 1 cup water
- 28 ounces coconut milk
- 14 ounces lai fun thick rice noodles
- 16 cooked shrimp
- 8 to 12 ounces bean sprouts
- 8 fried tofu puffs, quartered
- Rau ram, chopped, to garnish

Combine lemongrass, shrimp paste, sugar, shallots, curry, ginger, galangal, chiles, dried shrimp, fried onions, nuts, garlic, turmeric and salt in a food processor to create a smooth paste. Heat oil in a large saucepan and add paste, stirring until fragrant.

Add bouillon liquid and coconut milk, bring to a boil and simmer 10 minutes, adding more liquid for desired consistency. Adjust seasoning with salt.

Cook noodles per package instructions, drain. To plate, place about 6 to 8 ounces noodles in a bowl, top with 4 shrimp and tofu puffs. Ladle sauce over center so that it does not cover shrimp and garnish with bean sprouts and rau ram herb. Makes 4 servings.

LAKSA

» **MAIN INGREDIENTS:** coconut milk, shrimp, rice noodles, chiles, shallots, candlenut, curry paste
» **ORIGINS:** Malaysia, India, China

Many variations of this loose, wet but mostly soup of coconut milk (Indian), rice noodles (Chinese), and spicy shrimp curry paste (Malay) are most Americans’ gateway into Singaporean cuisine. Pryke couldn’t find the particularly coconut-y and shrimp-forward Nyonya laksa she loves in New York and debuted her menu with that. “But different styles have grown in popularity in Singapore over the past few years, with businesses creating ‘dry’ versions that are stir-fried or sauce-based,” she says. Keeping up with evolution, she now offers both versions on her menu.





Hainan chili sauce adds brightening heat to poached chicken.

Hainan soy sauce brings depth to the chicken.

Poaching the chicken results in a velvety smooth texture.

The ginger garnish completes the dish.

Broth from the poached chicken can be added to the rice.



HAINANESE CHICKEN

- › **MAIN INGREDIENTS:** Poached chicken, ginger, scallions, rice and accompaniments
- › **ORIGINS:** Hainan, China, Malaysia

Originating from southern Chinese settlers, this ginger-poached chicken and rice dish has traveled across almost every Asian country. In Hong Kong, it's served with a dipping mix of five spice, monosodium glutamate, salt and sugar. In Thailand, it's served with *tao-jiao*, a soybean sauce mixed with garlic and cilantro. In Singapore, it's served with fiery hot sauce to contrast the fragrant ginger. "Hainanese chicken would probably be the one dish that Singapore perfected," says Mehta.

Hainanese Chicken

Chef Salil Mehta
Singapore, New York City

- 3- to 4-pound-whole chicken
- Kosher salt, as needed
- 7 slices ginger, peeled, divided use
- 1 bunch green onion, trimmed
- 8 shallots, divided use
- 4 tablespoons toasted sesame oil
- 1-inch piece of ginger, peeled and sliced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 cups jasmine rice, rinsed
- 5 pandan leaves
- 2 tablespoons powdered chicken bouillon
- Hainan soy sauce, recipe follows
- Hainan chili sauce, recipe follows
- Cilantro, to garnish
- Sliced cucumber, to garnish
- Minced ginger garnish, recipe follows
- Carrots, spiralized, to garnish

Rub chicken with salt and rinse. Season again with salt; rest 30 minutes. Bring water to boil in a pot and add 6 slices ginger, green onion and 3 shallots, halved. Add chicken, cover and cook for 20 minutes. Remove from heat and let the chicken poach for another 20 minutes. Cool in liquid, debone with skin intact. Reserve stock.

Heat sesame oil in a saute remaining 5 shallots, chopped, and garlic until golden. Transfer to a rice cooker and add rice, 2 cups reserved stock, pandan leaves, bouillon powder and remaining ginger slices. Cook, adjusting stock to rice cooker.

Arrange chicken on a platter. Serve with soy sauce, chili sauce, cilantro and sliced cucumber along with a bowl of heated broth. Mound rice and top with the ginger garnish and carrot.

To make Hainan Soy Sauce: Heat 2 tablespoons sesame oil to saute 2 shallots, 6 slices ginger and 4 minced cloves garlic until golden brown. Add ½ cup chicken stock, 4 tablespoons soy sauce, 2 tablespoons oyster sauce, 4 tablespoons sugar, 2 tablespoons Shaoxing wine and 2 tablespoons dark caramel soy sauce and cook for 5 minutes on medium. Strain and transfer to a bowl.

To make Hainan Chili Sauce: Combine 3 or 4 red chili peppers, 6 slices peeled ginger, 3 cloves minced garlic, ¼ cup sugar, 1 cup chicken stock and juice from 2 limes in a blender. Pulse until the mixture reaches a chunky consistency; add salt to taste and set aside in a small bowl.

To make minced ginger topping: Heat 1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil and 3 tablespoons oil until smoking hot and saute 3-inch piece peeled and minced ginger until golden. Cool and stir in 1 bunch green onion, mostly white part, minced and salt to taste.

BEE HOON OR SINGAPORE NOODLES

- › **MAIN INGREDIENTS:** vermicelli noodles, soy sauce, vegetables, seafood
- › **ORIGINS:** China, Hong Kong

In Singapore, hawkers fry *bee hoon*, vermicelli noodles, with vegetables and fish or serve it for breakfast with Spam or sausage. But the dish has roots in China, where noodles are fried with soy sauce and vegetables. "Then someone immigrated to Hong Kong and fried it with curry powder. Others immigrated to Singapore and did it without. And immigrants from Hong Kong moved to the U.S. and started to put it on menus as Singapore Noodles," says Pryke of the curry-heavy version. "It's an example of how people have different interpretations."



FISH HEAD CURRY

- › **MAIN INGREDIENTS:** Grouper head and spicy coconut curry
- › **ORIGIN:** India, Malaysia, China

Most Indians in Singapore are from Tamil, a southern state known for particularly thick and fiery curries. According to Mehta, fish head curry, pictured above, came when Indian curry chefs adapted to serving Chinese clientele, who prized the fish heads they wouldn't traditionally include. The funky fish heads add a tender texture to thick coconut curry with okra and eggplant often laced with sweet tamarind, spicy ginger, turmeric and fish curry powder.

MEE GORENG MAMAK

- › **MAIN INGREDIENTS:** yellow noodles, cucumber and tomato sambal
- › **ORIGINS:** Malaysia, Indonesia, China, India

A vegetarian noodle dish, Indian Muslims in Singapore saute fresh yellow noodles in a sambal of ketchup, soy sauce, oyster sauce and dark caramel soy sauce. "The flavor profile is so Indian, but the execution is so Chinese," says Mehta. "That makes it very Singaporean."

CHILI CRAB

- › **MAIN INGREDIENTS:** Crab, chili sauce
- › **ORIGIN:** Singapore

This Singapore national dish was created in the 1950s by hawker Cher Yam Tian. The broth is sweet, spicy, and somewhat eggy—a combination of onions, garlic, tomato, chili paste and the broth from the crab as it simmers and stews. Singaporean hawkers and restaurants lean a little into the sweet side, adding a sometimes heavy hand of sugar. But the sweet-and-savory balance that slathers throughout is key. ■

Singaporean Chili Crab

*Chef Salil Mehta
Singapura, New York City*

- 2½ pounds mud crab or similar crustacean
- 8 chiles de arbol, stemmed
- 6 garlic cloves, peeled and roughly chopped
- 4 Holland chiles, stemmed and roughly chopped
- 3 small shallots, peeled and roughly chopped
- 2 tablespoons taucu, soy bean paste
- 1 (5-inch) piece ginger, peeled and roughly chopped
- ¼ cup canola oil
- 1 tablespoon belacan shrimp paste
- 8 ounces tomato puree
- ½ cup sweet chili sauce
- 1 large egg
- 3 tablespoons white vinegar
- Sugar, to taste
- Cilantro, to garnish
- Green onions, thinly sliced to garnish
- Steamed or fried buns, such as Homei brand

Remove the carapice from the crab; wash, scrub, and remove the lungs. Break the crab down into parts. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Rehydrate the chiles de arbol. Add to a food processor and puree with garlic, Holland chiles, shallots, taucu and ginger.

Heat oil in a wok over medium-high. Add belacan and cook, breaking it up into a paste, until fragrant and toasted. Add garlic paste and cook, 3 minutes. Add tomatoes and cook, about 4 minutes. Add crab, chili sauce and 2½ cups water and stir to combine. Reduce heat to a simmer, cover and cook about 7 to 8 minutes.

Drop egg in the sauce and slowly whisk in. Season with the vinegar and sugar. Transfer to a plate and garnish with the cilantro and scallions. Serve with the steamed buns. Makes 2 to 4 servings.



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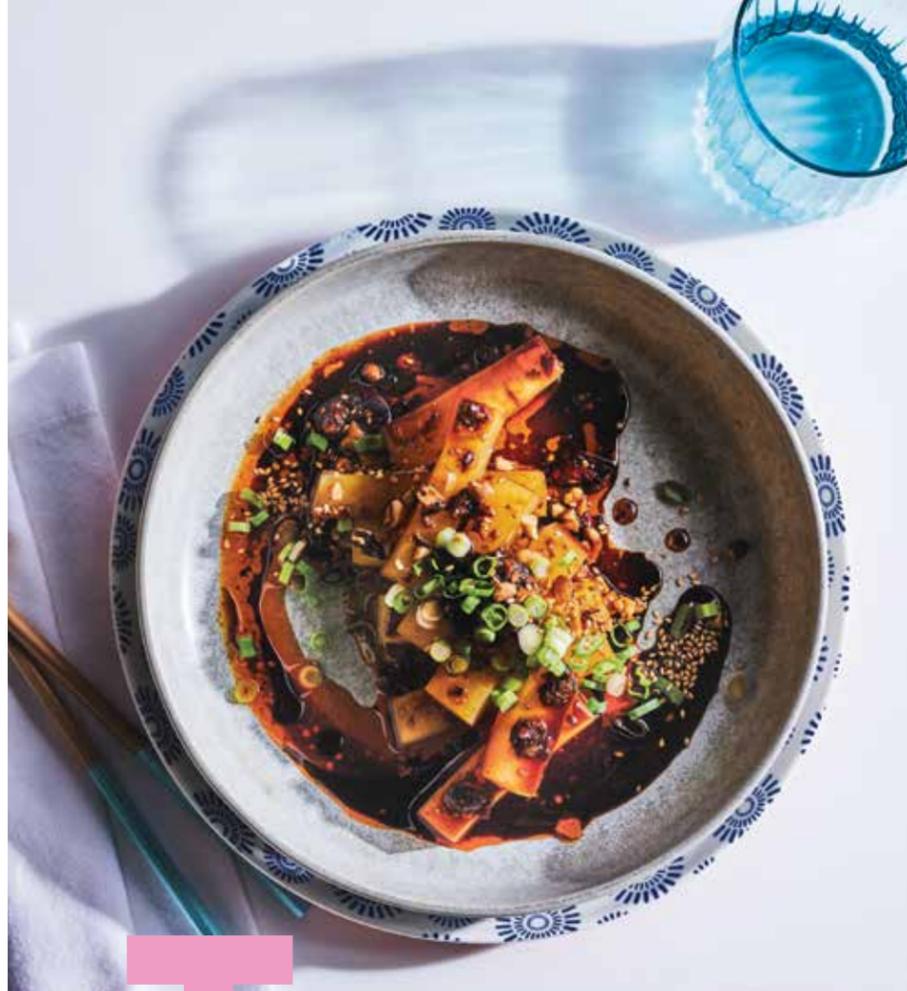
BEAN JELLO LOGS

Bean Jell-O makes it easy to be weird. See recipe on page 28.



By Amber Gibson
Photography by Matt Armendariz
Food styling by Adam Pearson
Prop styling by Christina Wressell





Bean Jello in Red Chili Sauce

Executive chef Lijun Han
Z & Y Restaurant, San Francisco

- 110 mL green bean or pea starch
- 750 to 800 mL water, boiled, plus extra for dissolving
- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon dark soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon thick bean paste
- 2 teaspoons chili oil or Lao Gan Ma chili sauce, to taste
- 1 garlic clove, grated
- 1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon Tabasco sauce
- 1 teaspoon mature vinegar, to taste
- Fermented garlic black beans, to garnish
- Fried peanuts, crushed, to garnish
- Green onion, chopped
- Toasted sesame seeds, to garnish

Dissolve starch in some water, reduce heat to boiling water and add starch solution; stir quickly. Stir until the paste is transparent and lump-free. Pour it into a greased container. Cool and refrigerate 4 to 5 hours. Unmold, cut into thick strips and plate. Combine remaining ingredients except garnishes and drench the strips. Top with a dollop of black beans, crushed peanuts, green onion and sesame seeds.

Notes: The green bean starch and water ratio should be roughly 1:7. Beware of it becoming too watery or starchy. Keep the heat low and stir to prevent overcooking. Remove from the heat once the paste is transparent.

There's no playing it safe anymore. Like the design of a restaurant, consumers want food that excites them in a way that's unexpected or unusual and prompts a double-take. When that happens, the item has social media muscle, driving engagement thanks to FOMO, and it makes consumers want to try the "next best thing."

The spectrum for odd is wide, varied and subjective, making it suitable for any restaurant. Just be sure that the end result always tastes good and that it's not weird for weird's sake, these operators say.

BEAN JELLO IN RED CHILI SAUCE

These chilled white noodles with the consistency of gelatin are a popular dish that originated in northern Sichuan during the late Qing Dynasty. At Z & Y Restaurant in San Francisco, executive chef Lijun Han prepares the tender noodles by stirring dissolved green bean or pea starch quickly in simmering water

until the paste becomes transparent. Sweet potato starch also can be used as a substitute. Once the concoction sets in the refrigerator for several hours, thin noodles are cut and tossed in a chili- and sesame oil-based sauce, which can be easily adjusted to taste, including for milder palates. As a final garnish, he adds crushed peanuts for a sweet crunch.

"This dish is more popular with Chinese guests than American guests," Han says. "And it's especially popular during warmer summer months. This is a more fragrant spicy, so it's not as spicy as many Sichuan dishes." The noodles can last for up to a week in the refrigerator; you'll just want to rinse with warm, then cool water to rehydrate them and restore the tender texture. Han says the plain gluten-free noodles are a great foundation for a number of flavors, so you can get creative with any special housemade sauces—even sweet flavors.

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FOIE GRAS DIPPIN' DOTS

At Jattö, in Miami's Wynwood neighborhood, chef Henry Hané uses a squeeze bottle and liquid nitrogen to turn foie gras into nostalgic Dippin' Dots, served as a shareable appetizer with mango and papaya. "I wanted to create a fun and nostalgic take on the typical foie gras terrine," Hané says. "Typically, when working with liquid nitrogen, heavy, fat-based ingredients lend themselves very well to being frozen and not losing any of their flavor profile characteristics." The dish has quickly become one of their bestsellers and most commonly posted on social media.

TARTARE CIGARS

Sometimes you don't need a new recipe, but just a new presentation to refresh a menu. Reimagine a tired tartare as a tartare cigar by rolling it in feuille de brick pastry or phyllo dough for a playful but sophisticated finger food. At The Green Room in Burbank, California, rolled brick pastry is filled with steak tartare with a dollop of caviar on the end to resemble cigars. The dish is served in a crystal ashtray with burnt onion ash and a smoke-filled cigar box for tableside pomp. Similarly, the tuna cigars at Crustacean in Beverly Hills are also presented in a smoky cigar box. This easily shareable version of tartare ensures diners get the perfect ratio of tuna to crispy brick pastry in each bite.



WHAT YOU SEE IS NOT WHAT YOU GET (BUT IN A GOOD WAY)

Pastry chef Cedric Grolet has inspired countless peers with his hyper-realistic fruit desserts—lemons, apples, figs and strawberries—that are carefully composed entremets with layers of praline, mousse and cake, all encased in a glossy chocolate shell or glaze.

The optical illusion is known as *trompe-l'œil* in the art world—trick of the eye. Grolet's Instagram stories, @cedricgrolet, and reels show how he assembles these vivid creations and chefs in North America are learning from the Parisian pastry master. At Ariete in Miami, chef Michael Beltran serves an "orange" inspired by Florida citrus made of chicken mousse and duck sour orange pate served over crumbly sweet chocolate dirt with a loaf of white bread for spreading (see above photo). The crowning glory at Park Hyatt Toronto's modern afternoon tea service is a glossy larger-than-life cherry that encapsulates the flavors of black forest cake in each bite: chocolate sponge cake, whipped cream and a macerated cherry center, finished with a chocolate stem.

PINK FRIES

Serving a familiar food in a bright and unexpected hue is sure to turn heads across the dining room. Much like Starbucks famous "pink drink," one of the most popular sides at Spark in Oklahoma City is simply called "pink fries." The eye-catching pile of crinkle-cut fries is piled high with Parmesan cheese, fresh parsley and Spark's pink sauce, made by folding beet puree into a scratch-made aioli for a sweet and earthy condiment with a garlicky punch.

"Guests are more curious about our pink fries than anything else on the menu," says Kyle Toland, director of operations. "They are a 'must try' item to see what all the hype is about. People order them for the first time for the Instagram post, then keep coming back for more." To keep up with demand, Spark makes batches of their pink sauce daily to top the fries piping hot from the fryer.

Spark Pink Fries

Spark, Oklahoma City

- ½ cup canned beets, drained**
- 2 cloves of garlic smashed**
- 1 cup mayo**
- 32 ounces frozen crinkle-cut or regular french fries**
- Kosher salt, as needed**
- Parmesan cheese, grated, as needed**
- Parsley, finely chopped, as needed**

Combine beets and garlic in a blender and process until smooth. Add mayonnaise and blend until smooth.

Cook fries in oil heated to 350 F for about 3 minutes until golden brown. Drain, toss with salt, drizzle with pink aioli, and garnish with Parmesan and parsley.



DIP AND DOTS PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF JATTÖ. TARTAR CIGARS PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF THE GREEN ROOM. ARIETE PHOTOGRAPHY BY FUJIFILMGIRL



PINK AIOLI

DEEP-DISH TOASTED BLACK SESAME BASQUE CHEESECAKE BROWNIE

Chef/owner Jessie Smith takes a rebellious approach to her desserts at St. Beatrix in Portland, Oregon, with whimsical and exuberant twists on classic pastries. For this double-decker gluten-free cheesecake brownie, she layers black sesame flavored Basque cheesecake on top of a fudgy brownie. “It’s a relatable but exciting pastry,” she says. “Definitely for somebody who likes bold, rich flavors. Black sesame and chocolate both share nutty, roasty depth, and texturally the fudgy brownie is nicely complemented by the lighter, fluffier and creamier cheesecake.”

Plus, Smith says this is a forgiving recipe and an extremely simple traybake that can easily be frozen. “Typically this brownie would cook a lot quicker and baked at this temperature, would burn,” she says. “But the layer of cheesecake on top protects the heat exposure from reaching the brownie too much. There’s also a lot of room for thickness variance and dish variance in size and cutting of a traybake, so it’s a flexible product.” ■

Deep-Dish Toasted Black Sesame Basque Cheesecake Brownie

*Chef/owner Jessie Smith
St. Beatrix, Portland, Oregon*

FOR BROWNIE:

564 grams unsalted butter
1,120 grams sugar
328 grams dark cocoa
2 tablespoons vanilla
8 eggs
280 grams gluten-free flour*
2 teaspoons kosher salt

FOR CHEESECAKE:

2 pounds cream cheese, room temperature
4 scant tablespoons black sesame seeds, toasted and ground
1½ cups sugar
6 large eggs, room temperature
2 cups heavy cream
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1 tablespoon vanilla
⅓ cup cornstarch
Toasted black sesame seeds, for garnish
Raspberries, to garnish

To make brownie: In a large pot, melt butter and slowly add sugar until mostly dissolved; cool slightly. Transfer to a bowl and whisk in cocoa. When cool, whisk eggs in one at a time; add vanilla. Combine flour and salt and fold into mixture until no streaks remain. Pour into a greased and parchment-lined 12x12-inch pan or 11x13-inch deep dish pan. Level brownie batter with off set spatula; chill.

To make cheesecake: In the bowl of a stand mixer, combine cream cheese and toasted black sesame and beat for 3 minutes. Slowly add sugar and beat for 10 minutes; add eggs, one at a time. Slowly add a stream of cream and vanilla, scraping down the bowl with each addition. Sift in cornstarch lastly and fold.

Spread cheesecake over chilled brownie batter and bake in a heated 400 F oven for 30 minutes; reduce temperature to 350 F for 30 more minutes. Turn off oven and cool 10 minutes. Chill cheesecake until set. Cut as desired and plate with sesame seeds and raspberries.

TOASTED BLACK SESAME BASQUE CHEESECAKE BROWNIE

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WINE WISE

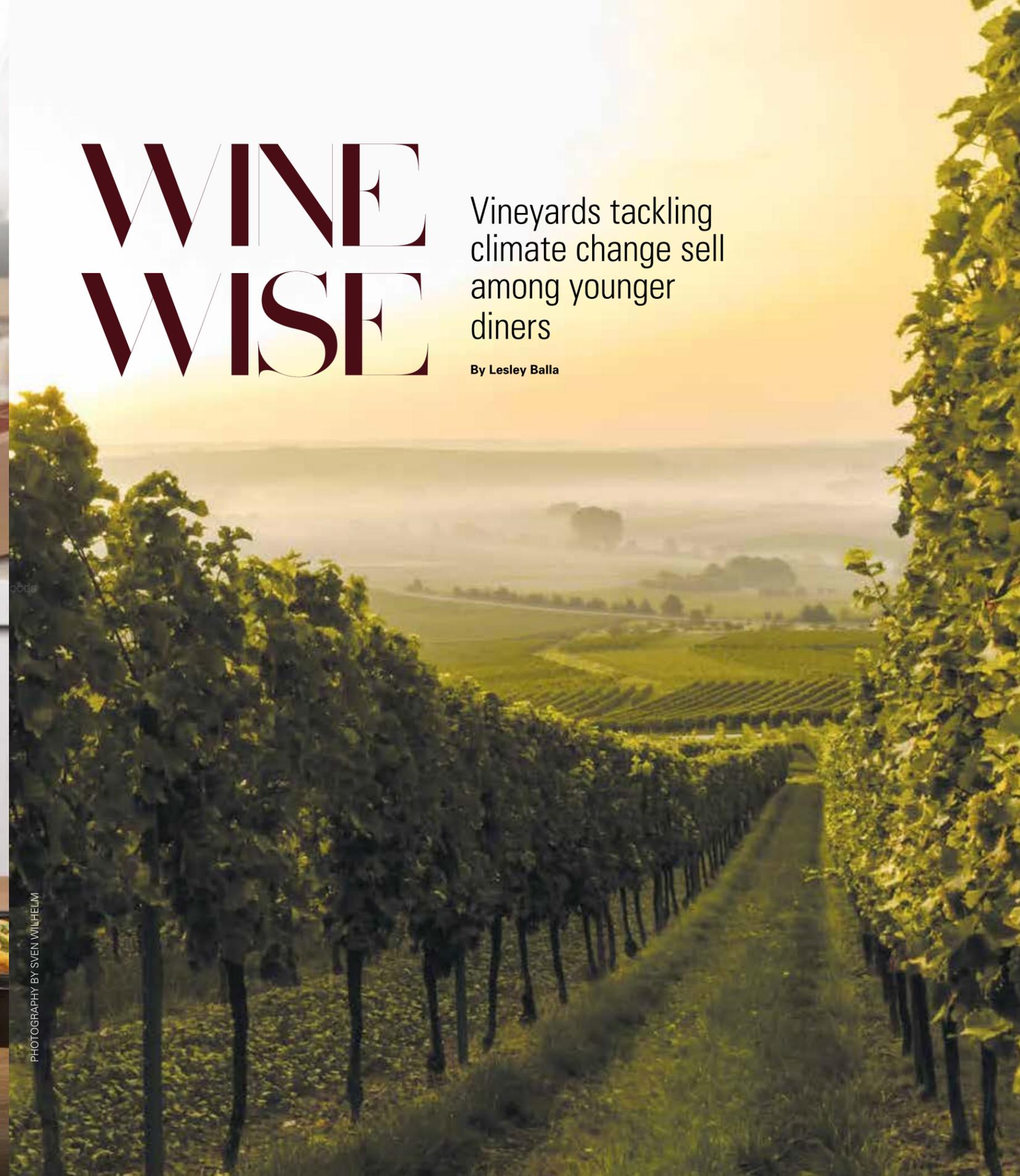
Vineyards tackling climate change sell among younger diners

By Lesley Balla



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PHOTOGRAPHY BY SVEN WILHELM





► **CLIMATE CHANGE** has touched every wine region in the world. Heat waves and unusually heavy rains in France debilitated whole swaths of grapes in Champagne, Alsace and Beaujolais while extreme weather in Italy cut wine production by almost 10% in 2021. In the U.S., massive wildfires and drought have affected vineyards up and down California.

For their own survival along with the planet's, many wineries are making noteworthy strides in adapting more eco-friendly practices, from how they're growing grapes and powering equipment to the type of shipping materials.

To capture the climate-conscious audience, many restaurateurs are changing their beverage programs based on what young wine drinkers expect to see and sip.

"This trend is going strong and will continue well beyond 2022," says Los Angeles-based Belle Bermúdez, wine consultant and founder of winesofimpact.com. "For those actively seeking out ways to make an impact with their disposable income, we're helping curate wine lists that feature small-production, sustainably farmed wines. It's one way to make a small dent in a huge problem while attracting a crowd willing to spend money."

For restaurateurs, wine experts say it's not as simple as offering a few on-trend wines. It's taking a holistic view of the wineries featured, both large and small, from the vines to the bottle. To get started, here are sought-after brands making a difference in their regions, according to sommeliers.



**FESS PARKER,
LOS OLIVOS, CALIFORNIA**

ABOUT: Founded in 1989 by actor Fess Parker, this pioneering Santa Barbara County winery is known for consistent and highly rated pinot noir, chardonnay, and Rhone-style reds and whites. Understanding that the longevity of the family-owned winery relies on a healthy planet, the Parker family has made significant eco-conscious changes over the last decade.

METHODS: Grapes are sourced from SIP (Sustainability in Practice) certified vineyards, including its own estate Rodney's Vineyard. The strict certification standards cover everything from soil and pest control to recycling and treatment of workers. The Santa Maria production facility recently installed a solar power system as another step toward conservation.

RESULTS: By improving the natural ecosystems to produce healthy grapes, Rodney's Vineyard, a source for the Fess Parker and Epiphany labels, has earned a stellar reputation for their quality Rhone varietals.

**ETUDE,
CARNEROS, CALIFORNIA**

ABOUT: Established in 1982, founding winemaker Tony Soter set his sights on the cool-climate Carneros region that straddles Napa and Sonoma counties to produce world-class pinot noir. Etude is certified by various groups such as the Fish Friendly Farming Environmental Certification Program and New Green.

METHODS: Etude participates in holistic farming practices, such as grazing sheep to keep tractors out of the vineyards, using recycled water to reduce reliance on local groundwater and installing solar panels to generate energy at the winery.

RESULTS: Whether sourcing from vineyards in southern Sonoma or along the Central Coast for Etude's highly rated pinot noir, senior winemaker Jon Priest relies on the grapes first. "We first take care of our soil and native ecosystem, intervening in the land as little as possible, so that the unique nature of our vineyards shines through in the final result."

What is Earth-friendly?

For a wine to be considered sustainable, winemaking must protect the environment and support social responsibility. Words like organic, natural, and biodynamic are often used interchangeably along with sustainability with wine. And while nuanced differences exist, the fundamentals are the same: Winemakers and viticulturists care for the long-term health and wellbeing of the farm and winery; they encourage and implement biodiversity measures to ensure the soil is healthy and stable; conservation of water and energy is paramount as is protecting the welfare of workers and the community.

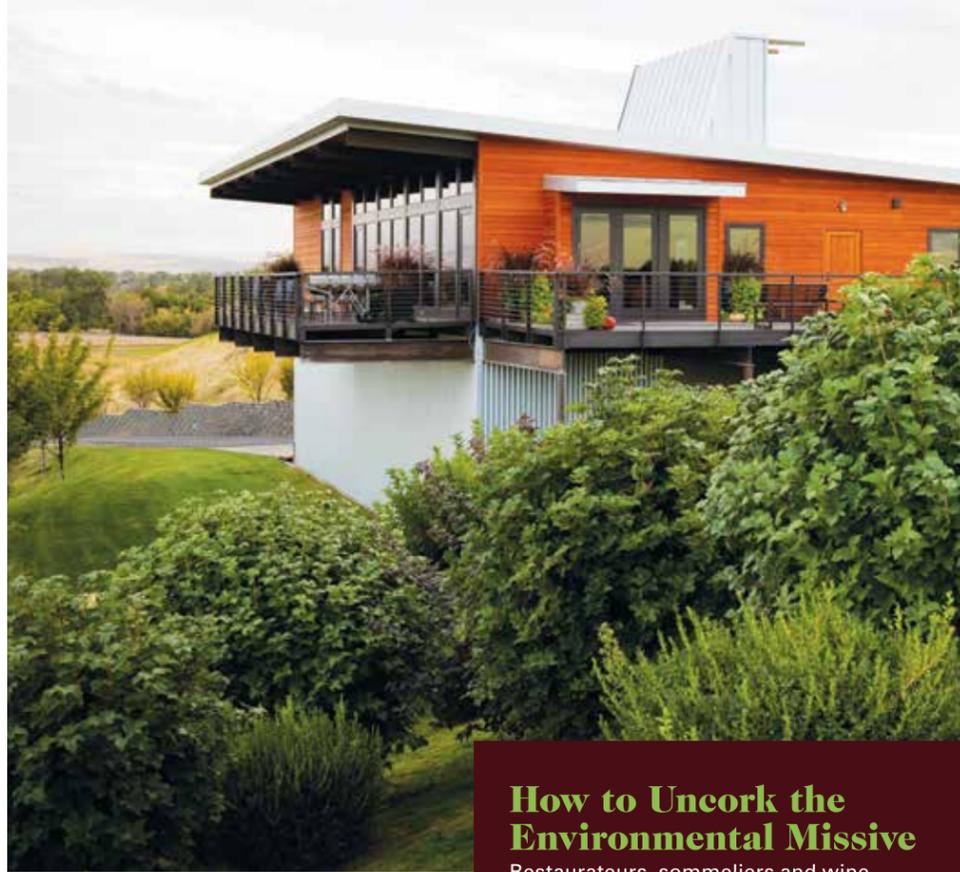


WINE FOR THE PEOPLE, AUSTIN, TEXAS

ABOUT: Wine consultant-turned-winemaker Rae Wilson uses 100% Texas fruit to showcase the breadth of the state's terroir. Widely known for her first bottling, Dandy Rosé, she's now making about 2,500 cases a year, including recently released, limited production La Valentia wines.

METHODS: Wilson works with growers who use low-impact farming methods such as natural insect predators to combat pests, amending the soil with compost teas to cultivate a natural balance in the vineyard and vine training methods to allow natural airflow and minimize the use of fungicides.

RESULTS: "This allows the vines to deepen their root system, making them more resilient through weather changes, and produce low yields of high-quality fruit," Wilson says. "The longevity of the vine and complexity of the fruit is what makes the difference between a good wine and a great wine."



AMARI WALLA WALLA, WASHINGTON

ABOUT: Producing more than 10,000 cases a year, Amavi (pictured above) is a legacy brand that understands the need to take climate-friendly measures more seriously and started implementing new practices in 2000.

METHODS: Amavi is certified annually by LIVE, which supports environmentally and socially responsible wine growth throughout the Pacific Northwest. Efforts include forgoing herbicides and enhancing biodiversity throughout their properties. More than 60% of the winery is solar-powered.

RESULTS: "I can definitely see that our vineyards handle very hot summers and very cold winters much better than some of our neighbors who farm conventionally," says Jean-François Pellet director of winemaking. "I believe our wine quality is becoming more precise, intense and complex." ■

How to Uncork the Environmental Missive

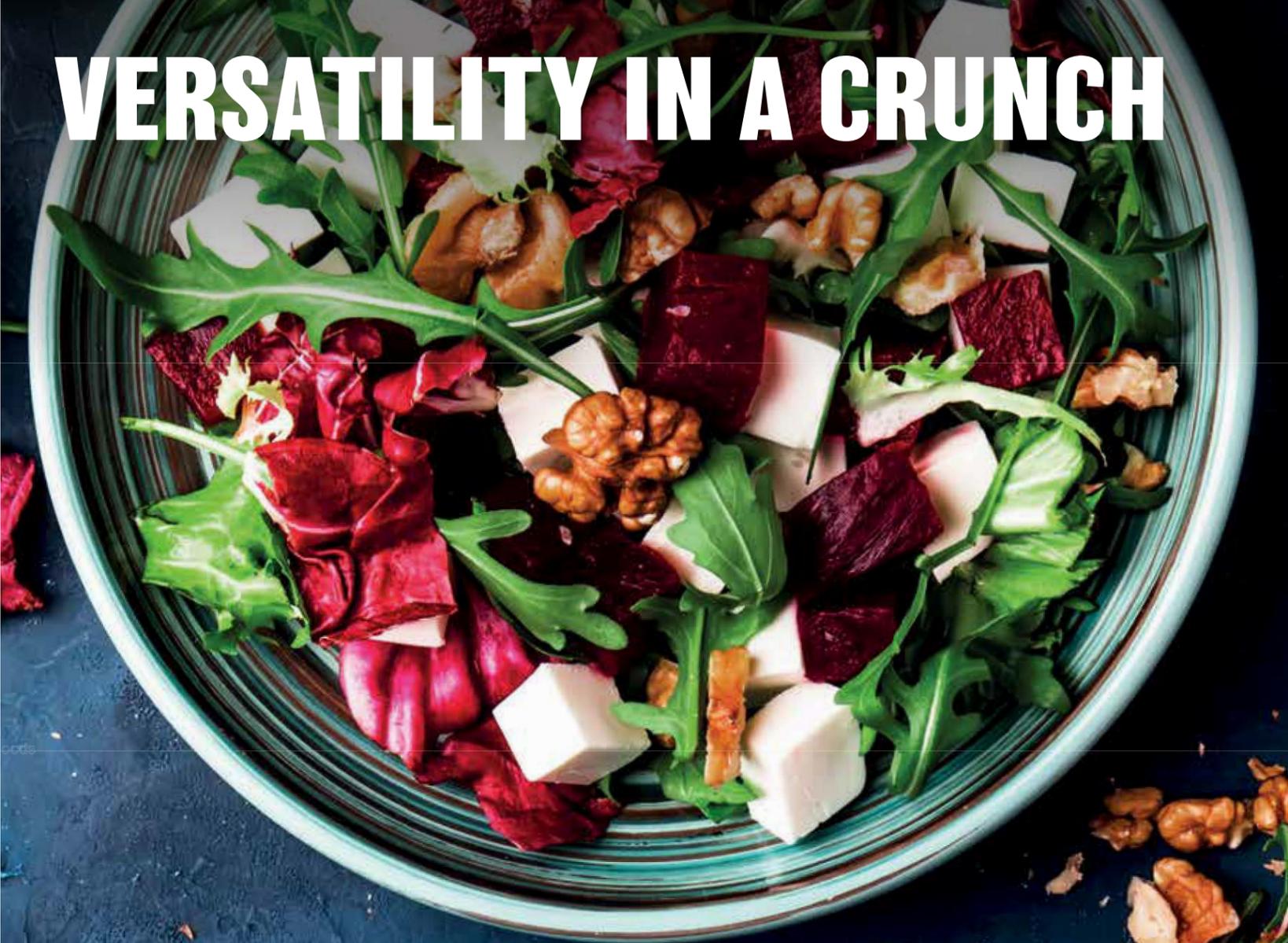
Restaurateurs, sommeliers and wine directors want to promote their climate-conscious wines on their lists, but don't want to be heavy-handed. Three experts weigh in on getting the messaging right.

"We note the farming practices of each wine on the wine list. I personally think it's important to put it out there upfront."
—Caroline Styne, co-founder and wine director of A.O.C, Los Angeles.

"Upon introducing a new wine to the staff, I take them through a thorough tasting and description of the wine, the farming practices and why I have chosen it for the list. The staff then relays this to the guest at the table."
—Kellie Holmes, wine consultant for Herd Provisions, Charleston, South Carolina

"The by-the-glass program has added more 'natural' wines over the last few years, which has given us more opportunity to interact with guests and talk about the growing natural wine industry."
—Neal McCarthy, general manager, sommelier and owner of Miller Union Restaurant, Atlanta

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ON THE RADAR



Breakfast of Champions.

Imagine repurposing croissant dough scraps into crunchy cereal. Gallery Pastry in Indianapolis did, tossing it in cinnamon sugar and serving it with steamed milk, housemade preserves and candied pecans.

HIGH ALERT



Where Food Sings.

No wonder the people of Singapore are so food happy: Eating is a national pastime, a vibrant amalgamation of Malaysian, Indian, Chinese and Peranakan cuisine. See page 18 for more.

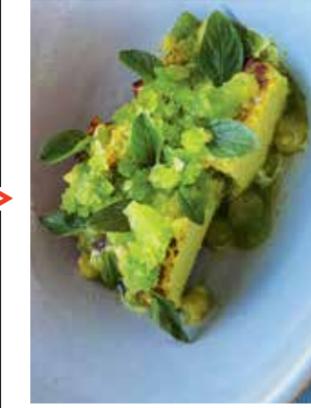
FADING OUT



Egg Foo Young 'ns.

A new generation of Chinese American chefs are the reimagining classics that boomers grew up eating.

▶ **TRY THIS INSTEAD:** Modernizing dishes, such as sweet and sour can be as simple as using fresh fruit and higher quality proteins.



Double Downing on Veggies.

Not just the center of the plate or a side anymore, vegetables are dessert-bound. Pastry chef Erika Chan pairs English pea cheesecake with shiso and mint granita at Rustic Canyon in Santa Monica, California.

Hummus-ing the Same.

When it's served in airplane snack packs, it's no longer a menu-worthy item.

▶ **TRY THIS INSTEAD:** Riff on plain hummus with black garlic, red lentils and fava beans. See page 5 for details.

BETTING ON NFTS.

Non-fungible tokens, cryptocurrency and the metaverse are descending on the restaurant world. Can you say [cryptofoohall.com?](https://cryptofoohall.com/)

BURN BUTTER BURN.

Elevating bread service is as simple as bruleed butter or as upscale as the brulee foie gras butter with pecorino and rosemary scroll loaf at Bruno Restaurant in Richmond, British Columbia.

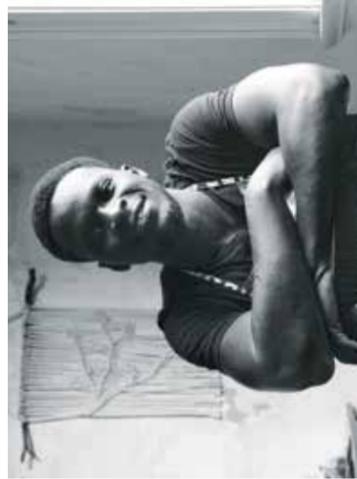


Dressing Up Dressing.

Vinaigrettes are fab but full-bodied, umami-packed dressings are making their moves with ingredients such as anchovies, soy sauce, Dijon and Worcestershire.

Fine Dining Fights Back.

Younger chefs eager to show off their culinary chops aren't willing to let coronavirus crush their dreams. Just ask Kato chef Jon Yao in Los Angeles or Serigne Mbaye (above) of Dakar Nola in New Orleans.



PHOTOGRAPHY © LINO ASANA

Dull Ice.

Now that prepping cocktails has become a tableside show unto itself, ice cubes are expected to do more.

▶ **TRY THIS INSTEAD:** Add some flair with stamped ice that reflects your restaurant's brand, like the stylized pictures of leaves at Eleven Madison Park in New York.

PATIENCE IS NO LONGER A VIRTUE.

The goodwill from diners dealing with slower service has evaporated.

▶ **TRY THIS INSTEAD:** Help diners understand why gaps in service and mishaps are happening. Use the opportunity to earn loyalty via complimentary desserts, promo codes for takeout or any form of appreciation.

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EGGS AND POTATOES

are breakfast and brunch winners, especially for the protein-focused and gluten-eschewing diners. They're mainstays that present opportunity—blank canvases ready for riffing and embracing the flavors of just about any cuisine.

This daypart is ideal now for increasing the bottom line. Chefs across the country say brunch is back. Workers are returning to offices at a time when customers are increasingly more comfortable dining on premise.

"People want to be out, and as much as we may not want to be back in the shop after a busy night, it makes sense," says Michael Tsonton, executive chef at Chicago's East Bank Club. "You're still paying for utilities and the space whether you're open for business or not."

While the popularity of eggs is stable, potatoes show a 4% increase over the next three years, according to research firm Datassential. But factor in preparation, presentation and ingredients—from global flavors to plant-based proteins—and the numbers soar.

EGGS ONE WAY

Soft scrambled eggs dominate menus. In Santa Monica, California, chefs Erin Eastland and Connor Underwood recently revamped their Milo & Olive breakfast menu with the likes of prosciutto soft scrambled eggs on cheesy bread with fontina cream, aged Parmesan and arugula. At Lula Cafe in Chicago, soft scrambled eggs are folded with smoked trout, arugula, dill and cream cheese on toasted sourdough while High Street Philly in Philadelphia serves them with kale, Swiss cheese, pickled mushrooms and mushroom mayo.



BOWLED OVER

Bowls continue to be an appealing vehicle, making inroads through the morning daypart with grains. Italian-inspired OSPI in Venice, California, serves a grain bowl with farro, cucumber, spicy eggplant, zucchini, radish and poached eggs. In Brooklyn, New York, Clover Hill serves a hen egg poached or fried on farro, shiitake mushrooms and a sherry sabayon.

WHAT'S ON FIRST?

Eggs benedict remains popular but is no longer partial to the English muffin. At Merkado in San Francisco, sopas cradle carnitas, spinach and a poached egg draped with chili-spiked hollandaise sauce. Nasturtium garnishes the plate.

For those who pass on gluten, hash browns do the job. They hold together scrambled eggs, avocado mash and vinaigrette-tossed greens at the East Bank Club.



Hash browns hold together a to-go option with avocado mash and eggs, top. They also act as a base for gravalax and labneh, above, while roasted potatoes take on chimichurri at the East Bank Club, opposite page.

Seasonal vegetables work for a frittata while fried herbs accent roasted potatoes.

KEEP A LOOKOUT

Eye-catching out-takes

▮ **Griddled baos** filled with soft scrambled eggs, cheese and bacon called a “baonini” at Bluestem Restaurant & Market in San Francisco

▮ **Fried eggs** in Reggiano broth with crostini, salad greens, prosciutto and grated parmesan at Foreign Cinema in San Francisco.

▮ **Sunrise sandwich** of porchetta, fried egg, cheddar, Brussels sprout leaves, chorizo aioli and house greens at Sugar Palm Ocean Avenue at the Viceroy in Santa Monica, California

▮ **Scallion pancake** with scrambled eggs, soy and chili at Win Son in New York City



An egg adds richness to a salad served at breakfast and brunch at Lula Cafe.



A TOAST TO TOAST

At Cafe Lift in Philadelphia, toasted sourdough is slathered with garlic aioli, topped with spring peas, truffle oil mushrooms, shaved pecorino, crispy shallots and poached eggs. The menu also features avocado toast, also on sourdough with blistered cherry tomato, asparagus, poached eggs, espelette and olive oil drizzle. When Datassential reports that avocado toast is expected to increase 4665% over the next three years, it's safe to say that pairing it with eggs and other ingredients is a smart bet.

PORK'S FUTURE

Ham is on 43.8% of menus but is projected for a 12% decline over the next three years, says Datassential. Pork belly, however, is the pork to watch. At Watson's Counter in Seattle, Egg's Benny features pork

belly, classic hollandaise, green onion and k-peppers. The protein appears again on the same menu but on an English muffin with a fried egg, green onion and ssamjang, an umami-filled Korean condiment.

POTATOES MIX IT UP

When potatoes appear with eggs, they're oftentimes in the ubiquitous breakfast burrito along with cheese and a variety of fillings, including chorizo and seasonal vegetables. But they are increasingly playing a larger role.

At Finch & Pine in Seattle they're oven roasted and served with a pepper aioli but at Café La Maude in Philadelphia spuds are fried and paired with saffron aioli. Or potatoes can be tossed with Old Bay seasoning and accompanied by aioli—the way High Street Market in Philadelphia serves them. Imagine a bold, flavorful sauce and the possibilities are endless. ■



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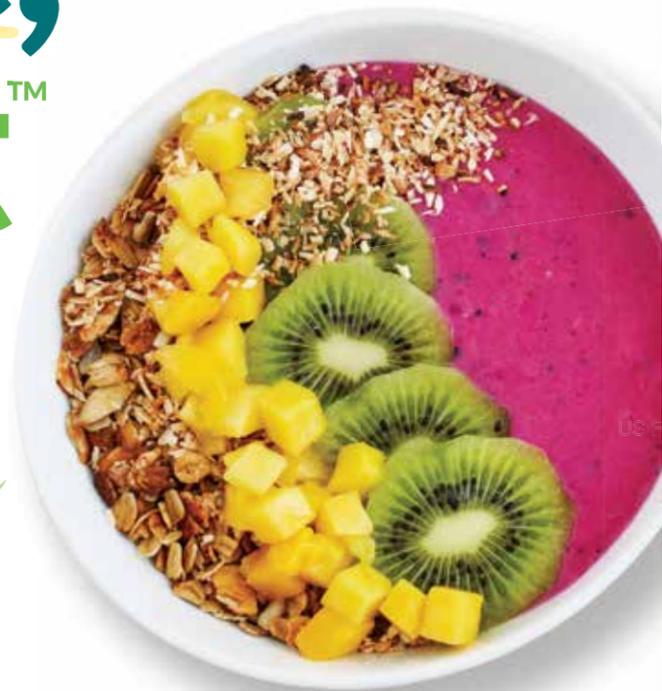


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FORECASTING THE FUTURE 7+ ways to head off supply uncertainty

By Abigail Covington



Planning for the unexpected is just as important as planning a menu—especially in 2022.

Inflation is driving food prices to an all-time high, conflict in Europe is causing ingredient shortages, and the coronavirus continues to circulate around the world, causing restaurant traffic to fluctuate drastically month to month.

“Sometimes the situation is just beyond your control,” says restaurateur Robin Wertheimer, “but that’s when you have to pivot.” Together with her husband, chef Thomas Ferlesch, Wertheimer owns and operates Werkstatt, a casual Viennese restaurant in Brooklyn, New York.

Recent supply chain issues have wreaked havoc on Werkstatt’s day-to-day operations, according to Wertheimer. As part of their ode to Austrian cuisine, the couple primarily serves imported, European beer. When her usual order of Hofbrau Original was delayed for months, stuck on the shipping container jammed in the Suez Canal, Wertheimer says she learned an invaluable lesson: “Stock up on non-perishable items whenever you can.” Now, Wertheimer stores extra kegs of the uber-popular beer just in case a U.S.-bound shipping container gets stuck mid-voyage again.

Stocking up on non-perishable goods is one of a few tried-and-true strategies Ferlesch, Wertheimer and other ace operators use to guard their bottom line against unpredictable challenges like inflation or supply chain shortages. **Here are others:**

1

Know your audience

Every restaurant has its regulars and its crowd-pleasing dishes, and every chef should know what they are. If you’re new to the game, study the numbers. What are you routinely selling out of? What isn’t catching on with diners like you thought it would? **Set up your operations software so that it integrates your point-of-sales data,** and you’ll have immediate access to the information for planning with maximum profits in mind. If you’ve been in the industry for a few decades like Wertheimer and Ferlesch, you can rely on your instincts, too. “You get a pretty good idea over the years of what your days look like,” says Wertheimer.



“TALK TO OTHER OPERATORS IN THE AREA ABOUT THEIR MENUS AND TRY TO STAY WITHIN THE BELL CURVE OF YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD’S AVERAGE PRICES.”

—Restaurateur Robin Wertheimer of Werkstatt

2

Get smarter about ordering

“Your first step towards profit is how you do your ordering,” says Wertheimer. “If you’re not good at ordering, then your restaurant’s losing money from the get go.” To avoid losses, **prioritize dishes that use versatile and shelf-stable ingredients and avoid delicate and highly perishable ones.** For Ferlesch that means saying no to avocados, which aren’t a traditional element of Viennese cuisine, but yes to Brussels sprouts as an appetizer and a side dish. It also means knowing what to do with an ingredient that’s got age on it. When tomatoes for a special menu item began to brown, he quickly pivoted and used the remainder of his order to make a red sauce.

3

Make friends with your purveyors

For small, independent operators, it pays to be close to purveyors. They often have information about product forecasting, crop yields and international agricultural output that you meant to research before menu planning got in the way. At Werkstatt, chef Ferlesch’s fishmongers, whom he has worked with for decades, let him know what’s coming down the pike and what may not be available for a while.

Better yet, they fill him in on potential disruptions so he can plan his menu accordingly well into the future.

4

Save splurging for specials

If you want to use highly perishable ingredients, save them for the section of your menu that’s based on what’s available seasonally. And when you’re putting together an order for a delicate, expensive ingredient like truffles **take care not to buy more than you can sell.** “Waste is the worst thing you can do in a restaurant,” says Wertheimer. Worst case scenario: Not



“SOMETIMES THE SITUATION IS JUST BEYOND YOUR CONTROL, BUT THAT’S WHEN YOU HAVE TO PIVOT.”

—Restaurateur Robin Wertheimer of Werkstatt

enough of an ingredient purchased and the dish sells out. As long as it's a special, diners will understand.

5

Check refrigeration

"One thing I didn't understand until I ran a restaurant is how long something will hold if it's refrigerated properly," says Wertheimer. "That's why the health department exists." State health inspectors typically follow FDA guidelines, which require refrigerators to be set at or below 40 F, but Wertheimer says commercial operators should set walk-ins to 38 F and freezers to 0 F. **To ensure your ingredients stay fresh as long as possible, get them into cold storage immediately.** "The faster they are sent down" says Wertheimer, "the better they maintain."

It's worth shelling out a few extra dollars for top-of-the line cold storage because an unreliable walk-in will cost you in the form of spoiled ingredients. Also, since almost anything can be frozen, make sure cold storage is large enough to fit your needs, and when in doubt, size up.



6

Don't skimp on quality ingredients

If out of nowhere the price of the organic chicken quadruples, don't immediately start shopping for a cheaper alternative. "You'll lose more money if you try to compensate by ordering a cheaper product," warns Wertheimer. **Diners, especially regulars, can distinguish fresh, quality ingredients from lesser ones.** Instead of trying to recreate the exact dish, see if you can use other proteins like pork loin to come up with a similar profile. If not, consider switching out the menu item entirely and replacing it with a more affordable, high-quality ingredient.

7

When all else fails, pass the cost onto your customers

When inflation is on a tear and the price of everything is going up, there's only so much you can do. "Sometimes you have to pass the cost on," says Wertheimer, offering the reminder operators know all too well. "The profit margin in a restaurant is so slim. If you've tightened your operations and your costs are still on the brink of breaking 30%, it's time to raise your prices."

Your most loyal customers will understand and new ones will shuffle in who don't know the difference. Cost out the dish and charge what needs to be charged. Most importantly, "just keep going," says Wertheimer. ■

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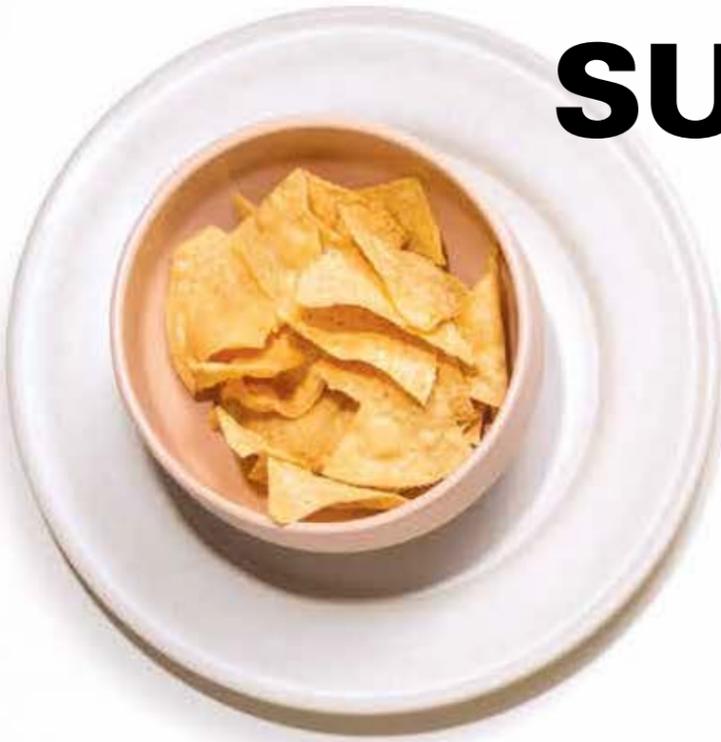


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Loyalty programs that add to the bottom line

By Peter Ganovsky

If there's one thing businesses can bet on, it's their customers who want to feel special.

Subscription/membership programs fill that need, providing benefits, access and a sense of belonging for the diner. For the operator, they help build the restaurant's brand while providing another source of revenue.

While the concept is not new, it's ever-changing, reflective of the shifting culture of the pandemic-influenced landscape. Daniel Azarkman, owner of San Francisco-based El Lopo says the move toward his current subscription model has been "definitely fueled by the pandemic," the likes of which have morphed from a distanced revenue-making program into a more contemporary dine-in membership.

Today's subscription programs typically offer a range of amenities. For example, a wine-tasting-led membership may go beyond its selling point and offer a delivery, personalization or gifting option as well as the opportunity for a tasting class, bringing in new tiers to their service and varying revenue. Here, five restaurants provide a snapshot of the subscription program they've integrated into their business strategies.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY NEIL BURGER

► Type: Take Out

Soul & Smoke, Evanston, Illinois

HOW IT WORKS Run through Table 22, the restaurant's Meat of the Month subscription program offers a monthly, fully prepared meal for takeout but only for subscribers. All a member has to do is heat it up at home.

SUCCESSFUL? "The program keeps growing every month," says co-owner Heather Bublick, adding that it has become a solid source of revenue. Table 22 is easy to use and helps with controlling inventory and costs, she says. "We get the orders well in advance for ordering and prep, so it's easy to plan for our kitchen."

BOTTOM LINE: CHEF D'ANDRE CARTER CAN GET MORE CREATIVE, WHICH LEADS TO A MORE SATISFYING EXPERIENCE FOR CUSTOMERS.



► Type: Meal Kit

Monteverde, Chicago

HOW IT WORKS Subscribers to Pasta & Provisions receive a monthly easy-to-make pasta kit fit with an ever-changing pasta, sauce and select provisions, such as oils, spices and cheeses, from the restaurant's favorite purveyors. Tips on using the products and notes from staff about the ingredients are also included. The restaurant also offers a wine program of curated bottles and personalized notes. Delivery and pickup are offered.

SUCCESSFUL? The subscription has reeled in over 100 members within the first few months.

BOTTOM LINE: MONTEVERDE PARTNER ROB MOSHER IS CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC

because of labor challenges. Saying "the jury is still out," Mosher cites challenges like returning to normal service, regulating staff levels and continuing to-go/delivery services while maintaining Monteverde's level of quality. "It's a bandwidth question. Will there continue to be enough time, space and staff in the existing restaurant space to get back to what we've always done (pre-pandemic) and add on incremental new business?"

How to start

Third-party partners can make subscription programs simpler than launching your own. Resources such as Table 22, Third Place and Summerlong Supper Club work closely with restaurants to customize, accounting for personalized plans that increase exposure and diversify revenue streams.

Don't forget that you'll need ways to broadcast such efforts, such as a robust social media presence, a strong website and a solid email marketing list.

► Type: Wine Club or Cocktails

Salt Collective, San Francisco
(Restaurant group includes Dominique Crenn's concepts, Humphry Slocombe ice cream shops and Lazy Susan)

HOW IT WORKS For \$120 per month, subscribers can choose between the Wine Collective (four bottles of wine) or the ABV collective (two bottles of wine, a batched cocktail and either cider, sake or similar bottled libation). Subscribers can also choose between monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly memberships. Monthly Zoom tastings hosted by experts, such as sommeliers, bartenders and winemakers, are also offered.

SUCCESSFUL? Despite modest goals, the program has been a success considering the "fun monthly get-together exploring great labels of attractively priced wine," says Hanson Li, founder of Salt Partners Group.

BOTTOM LINE: TIMING CAN BE EVERYTHING.

Salt Collective established the program at the height of the Delta variant emerging. "Salt Collective as a subscription program was a timely offering at a time when a lot of customers were mostly staying home again," says Li. "The monthly cadence gave us some certainty of sales and cash flow."



The Take Care of Me Club delivers more than revenue.

US Foods

► Type: Events/Cooking classes

Vimala's Curryblossom Cafe, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

HOW IT WORKS Inspired by pre-pandemic in-person cooking classes, a virtual online course is offered monthly. Recipes and ingredient kits that include potentially hard-to-locate Indian spices and herbs accompany the course, making the program highly accessible. Alternatively, subscribers may opt for a fully prepared takeout meal each month.

SUCCESSFUL? "It's been very well-received and has given us a big chunk of revenue each month," says executive chef Vimala Rajendran. "It also provided some needed extra hours for many of our employees." The restaurant fulfills around 100 member subscriptions each month, creating as much revenue in one week as several of their major catering jobs.

BOTTOM LINE: DESPITE ITS SUCCESS, THE PROGRAM IS LABOR INTENSIVE, BUT RAJENDRAN STILL PLANS ON GROWTH.

Rajendran has hopes to continue the program by expanding the menu for the cooking courses and by marketing to a larger audience. "We would love to be able to make these lessons available to people worldwide."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDREW CURRY / EL LOPO

► Type: Dine-in

El Lopo, San Francisco

HOW IT WORKS Subscribers to the restaurant's Take Care of Me Club choose between two tiers, paying \$89 per month for a redeemable \$100 food and beverage credit and \$175 per month for a \$200 credit redeemable in-house. Based on an ongoing, personalized record of each members' palate, staff at El Lopo craft dishes and drinks specific to each subscriber.

SUCCESSFUL? The restaurant would like more than its current 25 members but believe it has built loyalty. They dine in more, some as often as three times a week. Most of the time, they exceed their monthly credits.

BOTTOM LINE: BEYOND THE EXPECTED PERKS, OTHER BENEFITS INCLUDE

gifting free drinks to other guests, ordering glasses of wine from the strictly curated bottle list and guaranteed seating. Azarkman has high hopes for programs, citing financial stability as a main catalyst for his vision. "I would love to see subscription programs normalized," he says. "Hospitality businesses are bogged down by unpredictable sales volume. Having a substantial portion of our revenue come through subscriptions would make a huge difference." ■





WASTE NOT, WANT MORE

Know
this about
disposables



For years, environmentalists have been sounding the alarm on plastics destroying the environment.

And many restaurants have responded with compostable takeout packaging, some because of state mandates and others out of responsibility to the Earth.

But as options have grown so has confusion thanks to the labeling and terminology on the products. Prices may be lower but compostables aren't necessarily an eco-smart solution to single-use plastic.

► WHY THIS MATTERS:

While pricing has become more competitive, smaller restaurants, because of volume, usually pay more for compostables, but not all takeout packaging is created equal.

Depending on the material, some degrade at slower rates, breaking down no better than plastic, while other compostables are showing up in waterways.

Most cities lack the infrastructure to collect compostable foodservice packaging.

Even in municipalities that collect food waste, compost facilities reject foodservice packaging, including plant-based containers made from cornstarch and sugar beets because the two cannot be processed together.

As a consequence, compostable foodware ends up in a landfill because they require certain conditions to break down.

Few operators, let alone customers, are aware the containers are contributing to the growing amount of waste not reducing it.

► THE BIG PICTURE:

Customers are willing to pay more for earth-friendly products, including 66% of all respondents and 75% of millennial respondents in a 2021 McKinsey Co. survey last year.

More states and municipalities will regulate single-use plastics and more will continue to ban Styrofoam like California has.



While the science continues to advance on disposables, do the homework before purchasing.

► WHERE IT STANDS:

Expect organizations that support a cleaner planet to step up while earth-friendly packaging continues to improve.

The Center for the Circular Economy at Closed Loop Partners has launched a composting consortium that includes big brands, such as McDonald's and Starbucks, to create a plan for a sustainable composting infrastructure that can accommodate organic food waste alongside compostable packaging. The end result would be to ultimately create compost that will nurture soil and cut greenhouse gas emissions.

"Technology is always changing and new products enter the market as a result," says Todd Jongen, senior director of non-food and packaging science for US Foods.

"THE SEARCH IS ALWAYS FOR THE BEST POLYMER. NO ONE HAS LANDED ON THE ULTIMATE YET, BUT IMPROVING TECHNOLOGY WILL ULTIMATELY MAKE THEM CHEAPER AND MORE AFFORDABLE."

—Todd Jongen of US Foods

► IN THE MEANTIME:

Ask questions about the packaging and the terms before purchasing. Know the terminology, ask about the journey of how the packaging breaks down. Your best choices: packaging made from post-recycled products and compostable packaging that is federally certified and shows how its journey can be traced. ■



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**MEETING
THE
MOMENT**

BREAKING BARRIERS

How ownership addresses retention and social equity

By Abigail Covington
Photography by Frank Lawlor





Workers are motivated by being owners, Peter Kaden says.

Talks over pizza still resonate today: father and son Michael and Peter Kadens.



▶ Weekly pizza night outings with his dad led entrepreneur-turned-philanthropist Peter Kadens to open a restaurant rooted in correcting inequality.

“We talked about having empathy for other people. We talked about suffering in the world,” Kadens says of his father Michael Kadens. “He just taught me a lot of stuff in those Monday night discussions at pizza parlors.”

These one-on-one outings put him on a path to addressing social equity. In 2020,

he paid full tuition for a senior high school class in Toledo, Ohio. Last September, to reframe the narrative on the restaurant industry, Kadens opened Poppy’s Social in Glencoe, Illinois, an upscale suburb of Chicago.

The restaurant’s model is aimed at giving the less advantaged, such as the

previously incarcerated or those with a spotty work history, a second chance while providing a livable wage and equity in the business. All full-time workers are offered health insurance and earn at least \$20 per hour.

“The people who work in my restaurant are smart, capable people. They’re just different from me in terms of their privilege and where they come from, but they’re worthy of being invested in,” says Kadens, who amassed his fortune in cannabis, fully aware that the war on drugs has disproportionately impacted people of color.

Poppy’s Social, which serves pizza, wings and other American comfort food, is a part of a growing movement of socially conscious restaurants forgoing the industry’s traditional top-down structure in favor of more inclusive models like worker-owned co-ops and employee stock ownership plans. According to the Democracy Work Institute, the trend is a part of the ongoing disruption caused by Covid-19, which illuminated just how precarious the lives of restaurant workers tend to be.

Membership and ownership models are seen as a potential solution to that precarity, as well as a tool for wealth distribution, employee empowerment and

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Talks with his dad, Michael, inspired Peter Kadens, left, to reframe the narrative on the restaurant industry.

retention. Advocates say the logic behind these models is as sound as it is simple: if you give workers a say in how a restaurant is run, they will care more, work harder and stick around longer—no matter their background or circumstances.

“What I’m going to prove is that if you treat people with respect and you pay them fairly, you can still make money,” says Kadens.

► **On the mechanics of ownership**

Kadens invested about \$3 million into this restaurant, allocating 30% to employee ownership. Because the 30% is acquired over time, only 12% of the restaurant is currently owned by employees. “But I’ve allocated another 18% so that as people grow and perform and stay with the restaurant, I can give them more and more equity,” he said.

After 90 days, workers start to earn equity as long as no criminal or disciplinary actions are pending. Instead of the customary two- to three-year vesting cycles, Poppy’s is 6 and 12 months for equity. It’s shorter, Kadens says, so it can be used as a hiring and retention tool.

“Typically in a startup, the people who invest their money at the beginning, get their money back first. I did away with that,” Kadens says. “Rather than having everybody wait for two or three or four years, I decided to start distributions after the first year because usually, the first year in a business is pretty tough. We’re just getting to break-even now. We’ll be making money in 2023 based upon the growth and the projections, and I’ll start taking distributions then.”

► **On how ownership benefits the business**

Poppy’s Social isn’t suffering from the typical 75% industry turnover rate. Kadens believes a direct correlation exists between ownership and retention. “People have been fired because they haven’t performed or they aren’t team players or they did something stupid, but I’ve had only one person leave voluntarily (in seven



Workers are not judged by their past at Poppy’s Social.



“I ALWAYS SAY TO OUR PATRONS, ‘HEY, IF A SERVER COMES UP TO YOU AND THEY ACT LIKE THEY OWN THE PLACE, IT’S BECAUSE THEY DO.’”

—PETE R. KADENS OF POPPY’S SOCIAL

MORE OWNERSHIP MODELS

Member-owned restaurants and establishments transitioning to employee-first models are putting a dent in turnover.

Hell’s Kitchen, Minneapolis

Hell’s Kitchen reopened as an employee-owned restaurant in 2020. Thanks to an employee stock ownership program, workers at the famous Minneapolis-based burger joint are now shareholders. Nearly a dozen staffers have worked at Hell’s Kitchen for more than a decade.

Joe Squared, Baltimore

When Joe Squared founder Joe Edwardsen pivoted to a worker-owned model last year, he invested 33% of the restaurant’s profits back into the business and distributed the rest evenly among the worker-owners. Now, 13 employees own and operate the beloved Baltimore pizza joint.

Phoenix Coffee, Cleveland

Phoenix Coffee is an employee-owned coffee company with five locations across the city and a wholesale roaster and bakery downtown. In addition to membership, Phoenix Coffee offers employees reimbursement for health insurance and profit-sharing.

months),” he says. Naysayers told Kaden’s he’d be out of business in 6 months, but instead Poppy’s Social is headed to breaking even and making money. “It’s illustrative that you can treat people fairly, pay them well, give them benefits and still create value as a restaurant owner.”

► **On whether the model is scalable**

Kadens admits that some restaurateurs may not be able to pay similar wages or offer quality benefits. But in the long term, Kadens believes he will lose fewer people. “If you treat people right and if you give them opportunities they wouldn’t otherwise receive at another restaurant, you will lose far fewer people. As a result, you will make more money because turnover management is a cost driver. If restaurant owners could step back and say, ‘I want to save money by retaining people, but in the process, I need to spend a little up front,’ they’d get it.”

► **On what employees think of it**

“This is the first restaurant job they really feel at home at. It’s the first restaurant job where they feel like they’re a part of a community. It’s the first restaurant job

where they enjoy and they look forward to coming to work.”

“They are very appreciative and they show their appreciation by sticking around,” Kadens says. “I think they’re genuinely happy.”

“Is it perfect? No, it never is. Is there drama in every restaurant? There is. Have we had a couple troublemakers? Yes, we have.”

► **On how ownership impacts the culture**

“When you walk into Poppy’s and you open the door, I guarantee you someone will say hi to you with a smile on their face,” Kadens says.

“We never told people to do that. It’s not some sort of Danny Meyer thing that I installed. It’s just part of our culture, and it’s a function of how happy our employees are. It happens because people like being there and they feel at home. It’s amazing.

“When you treat people well and you make people owners, guess what? They act well and they act like owners. I always say to our patrons, ‘Hey, if a server comes up to you and they act like they own the place, it’s because they do.’” ■





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OVER THE MOUNTAINS AND THROUGH THE PLAINS

Small town
independents,
revitalized

By Kathy Stark
Photography by Frank Lawlor

Bozeman and surrounding tourist spots have seen unprecedented growth.



Welcome to a road trip through Montana, Wyoming and South Dakota.

These states are vast, and although many stops along the path from the Black Hills over to Yellowstone National Park and Big Sky are old-time, long-time mom and pops, innovation is thriving.

Many of these routes lead to seasonal businesses, but as people leave big-city life for cleaner air, stunning surroundings and the allure of small mountain town life, more businesses are opening year-round. Restaurateurs are doing the same, reviving old buildings, closed storefronts and even a defunct hotel. Menus are becoming more than chicken-fried steak and all things deep-fried.

Each of these businesses has a noteworthy story that demonstrates a commitment to building a strong staff and a menu driven by sound business practices. Just look at the seven establishments that made the 2022 semifinalists and finalist lists for the 2022 James Beard Awards, from The Marble Table in Billings, Montana, for Best New Restaurants to Rainbow Ranch Lodge in Gallatin Gateway, Montana, for Outstanding Wine Program.

These concepts are especially unique: Newcomers have uprooted to be here specifically for a better quality of life while locals are energized by the excitement of a growing community.



Beet and root vegetable hash with poached eggs can be found at Jam!, above, along with inventive cocktails at Brigade, both in Bozeman, and Northern walleys from neighboring Livingston.

1. and 3. Cocktails from Brigade with Kyle Parsons mixing; 2. and 4. Chef Sean Lehmann from Jam! with mini housemade cinnamon rolls; 5. Lemon tart with raspberry and mascarpone from Wild Crumb; 6. Fresh oysters on the half shell from Brigade.



► Bozeman, Montana

Located downtown in a historic building destroyed by a 2009 gas explosion but rebuilt to capture its charm of yesteryear, **Brigade** has the most innovative, vegetable-forward menu in the state with dishes like edamame hummus and cauliflower steak with confit garlic and herb gremolata.

Its restaurant group, **The Okay Cool Group** is lighting up downtown with other concepts, such as **Happy Box**, an Asian street food and karaoke concept; **Kitty Warren**, a speakeasy featuring fun cocktails and small bites; and **Main Street Market**, a wine bar, breakfast and lunch cafe.

You'll also find **Wild Crumb**, a bakery opened by Caroline Schweitzer and Lauren Heemstra, finalists for the 2022 James Beard Outstanding Baker Award. Their croissants, sourdough and desserts are outstanding. Like Schweitzer and Heemstra, Tory McPhail—James Beard Best Chef winner and former executive chef at legendary Commander's Palace in New Orleans—also relocated to the mountain community for its beauty and slower-paced way of life. He's overseeing and mentoring staff at Jam!, Dave's Sushi and Revelry.

How it shows: High quality, on-trend food (think plant-based and global flavors), friendly service and entertainment draw diners while flexible schedules, mission-based company culture, superior training and great communication retain workers.

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◊ Lewistown, Montana

An old mercantile building is the new home for **Central Feed Grilling Co.**, a restaurant and games venue that shares space with Big Spring Brewery. A venture among longtime friends and family, the business caters to visitors and locals based on a company culture of Montana hospitality and quality food.

How it shows: The business has clocked impressive retention rates after creating a supportive and caring environment that understands staff needs so they want to come to work.



The Central Food Grilling Co., goes beyond chicken-fried steak with menu items such as upscale burgers and duck drumettes. A supporting environment has helped with staff retention.



◊ LEAD, SOUTH DAKOTA

An empty, long-closed hotel along a major tourist stop to Yellowstone National Park is on its way to restoring its glory day. **The Stampmill Restaurant, Saloon and Victorian Suites** offers a simple but elevated menu with the help of on-trend sauces and seasonings. It's currently one of the few year-round restaurants, staying open past the tourist season.

How it shows: Restaurants can drive traffic during the off-season with smart marketing and streamlined operations while catering to locals.



◊ LIVINGSTON, MONTANA

How do Josh Adams and his partners get it right at **Campione Roman Kitchen**? They traveled to Italy, giving them the tools to prepare and promote their artisan, old-world foods authentically, which matches their commitment to service and community involvement.

How it shows: By putting staff needs before their own, such as taking shifts themselves if a worker calls off, workers feel appreciated. The same messaging flows to their social media, where their strong presence reinforces the brand.

Collaboration and appreciation go far at Campione Roman Kitchen, below, from menu innovation to management.



◊ Helena, Montana

The first certified green restaurant in Montana, **Wassweiler Dinner House & Pub** is located on a hot springs and restored farmhouse, which also features a greenhouse and local artist shop. Regional specialties and up-to-date favorites such as charred Brussels sprouts with smoked bacon, Tuscan lemon oil and shaved Parmesan and grilled bison with spinach blackberries and sage pesto all turn newcomers into regulars.

How it shows: The owners balance innovation with tradition, from the kitchen to the front of the house, by treating customers, staff and vendors with respect and kindness. The efforts, they say, return to them tenfold.

◊ Big Horn, Wyoming

Once a flailing old saloon, **Just Ledoux It Saloon and Stakeout** is now a go-to spot for locally crafted spirits and an elevated Western menu. It's also a distillery label and a music venue with a sequined saddle disco ball, making it a much sought-after spot.

How it shows: While people are eager to be out and enjoying themselves again, restaurants need to be smart about technology. The restaurant leverages it to sell tickets online, handle waitlists and manage table turns for the best possible profitability. ■

Kathy Stark is a restaurant operations consultant for US Foods.



CAMPIONE PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF CAMPIONE ROMAN KITCHEN

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Want to start a new concept or expand big time?

Read this first

By Kristin Eddy

Everyone with the dream of starting a restaurant also has a dream of money falling from the sky to get those doors open.

Lauren Fernandez, founder and CEO of Full Course, an Atlanta-based restaurant development and investment firm, knows her job is to shake off some of the stardust.

Fernandez says the company's "sweet spot" is emerging fast casual dining, but they also incubate product lines, licensing and franchise startups. Her role encompasses everything from "cheerleader and coach to confidante," and she has particular interest in supporting and elevating women, people of color and immigrants.



No support from the company's investment fund comes without a deep dive into the operator's vision for their restaurant, a receptiveness to the realities of the business and the commitment to a solid strategy. Here's more, in her own words.

Q. What's your typical first impression of the clients who come to you?

A. The vast majority of people have no idea of the myriad ways to grow their business. You'd be shocked at how many people are ill-informed and lack a strategy. The most common thing I see is a knee-jerk, 'I'm going to franchise.' I have clients with that squirrel distraction. With all of our clients, we ask, 'What's your end goal?' It always comes back to serving your goal."

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF FULL COURSE

Q. So, you have to tone down the enthusiasm a little?

A. I want to hear all their crazy ideas. But we have to focus on what the real agenda is. We work with them on a five-year plan. There are many people out there with a dream but maybe it's the wrong horse in the wrong race.

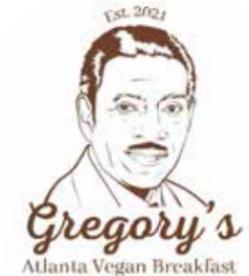
Q. What are some of the mistakes people make right from the beginning?

A. I find that they make a lot of decisions without thinking of questions they should have asked. In choosing real estate, for example. This is arguably one of the hardest things to undo. They like the way the building looks, the intersection it's located on. But they haven't done the research to really understand who their customer is, where they live or work and at what time of day they're usually going out. Oftentimes, the client's focus is on the stuff that's fun: The design. The logo."

Q. Are there distinct challenges for women and people of color?

A. We started our LAUNCH program after discovering many women and minority entrepreneurs are struggling to even open their first restaurant. When dealing with brands that are culturally representative there needs to be sensitivity to how it's introduced into the market, and a lot of them don't get the funding they need. It has never felt more glaringly obvious, with my gender and Hispanic background, that private equity is primarily a male-dominated environment. We need to invest in the early stage of growing diverse brands to succeed. Not to just coach them.

The menu, culture and management style are just a few factors considered for expansion of a concept.



Q. How important is technology to the business?

A. New restaurants start with the easiest to use and the cheapest, not thinking about all the ways they need to scale. The most obvious one is they choose a POS system that doesn't integrate with sales, catering, loyalty programs. It's a huge problem if you choose tech platforms that don't integrate with each other. For small businesses, maybe it only becomes a really big problem down the road, but the earlier you catch these issues in tech, the easier and cheaper it is to fix.

Q. What's the key to sustainable success?

A. A strong team is the most important thing. One of the biggest risks of failure is people trying to wear too many hats. You have to learn delegation and role definition and a chain of command. I tell people the goal is getting you out of the business so you can focus on the business. Define the brand, the mission and shape its culture because that flows into everything. It's not just about paying more for your employees but them wanting to come to you and keep working for you.

Q. How hard is it to get people to pull back from more locations to grow sustainably instead?

A. It's like an onion; it will make you cry at first but you'll feel better in the end. ■



What's It All About?

The voice of experience: Lauren Fernandez spent decades in corporate roles from international mergers, trademarks, and intellectual property to developing supply chains for food companies and growing multi-unit franchises after working as general counsel for FOCUS brands, the parent company of Carvel and Cinnabon.

What's on the menu: Her company, Full Course, covers a wide-range, from restaurant growth, licensing, franchise and product development consulting to investing through their FC Polaris Fund.

Price tag: Packages range from educational courses at \$99 to full consulting support at \$9,000.

BY THE NUMBERS

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Brussels sprouts	+ 25%
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Little gem	+ 20%

CRUNCH TIME

Ancient grains	+ 145%
Brittle	+ 105%
Za'atar	+ 92%
Roasted cashews	+ 92%
Tobiko	+ 79%
Pretzel	+ 75%
Brown rice	+ 74%

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Cheese sauce	+ 53%
Smoked cheddar	+ 46%
White cheddar	+ 45%
Burrata	+ 44%

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Toasted coconut	+ 23%
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Berries	+ 17%
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