

NOVEMBER 2021

Foodservice

equipment & supplies

Forecast
2022

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New
Dining Hall
at the University
of North Texas

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A New Age
of Hotel
Dining

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18 2022 Outlook: It's Complicated

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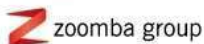
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Refreshing an Old Kitchen
National Editorial Award — Bronze

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October issue
National Design Award — Gold

Front Cover Photo
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Full Issue, May 2020
Honorable Mention

Long-Form Feature Content
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Northrup Grumman
Honorable Mention

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2019
Long-Form Feature Content
Facility Design Project of the Month,
Yale University
Winner

Profile or Q&A
Dealer of the Year, TriMark
Honorable Mention

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May Issue 2019
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At Issue

As the year drags on two main issues continue to dominate the conversation throughout the foodservice industry: supply chain and labor.

Many operators hold their breath when they place food orders, hoping their suppliers have the items that match their specs. It was not that long ago, I ventured into a local operation to order some chicken fingers for my daughters. Recognizing me as a regular, one of the employees pulled me aside and said, "Look we have chicken fingers, but they're not our usual ones. The supplier's having issues." Luckily for everyone involved, my daughters' favorite food group is the brown one, so the crisis was averted. But this scenario is all too common for operators of all shapes and sizes.

Supply chain challenges continue to dog companies that manufacture and distribute foodservice equipment and supplies, too.

Supply chain challenges continue to dog companies that manufacture and distribute foodservice equipment and supplies.

More than 96% of respondents to a member survey conducted by the North American Association of Food Equipment Manufacturers (NAFEM) say they face escalating supply chain issues. Limited access to steel and aluminum represents the most pressing supply chain challenge among equipment and supplies manufacturers, per NAFEM. Shortages of plastics, polyurethane/foam insulation and semiconductors increased as well, NAFEM reports.

These supply shortages impact factories' ability to control costs (100%) and fulfill orders (92%). More than 40% of NAFEM member companies say these shortages impact their ability to deliver finished goods to customers by two to three months. For more than 10% of NAFEM member companies, that delay can extend to more than 4 months.

Let's be clear: These supply chain challenges affect the entire foodservice industry. These challenges impact dealers' ability to

provide equipment to operators that are either replacing an item or trying to open a new location. And they impact service agents' ability to repair existing equipment.

The second issue that continues to hamstring the industry is labor. Nobody has enough of it and no one knows where to look for more. While this may seem like a pandemic-induced problem, the fact remains that the industry's labor struggles go back to at least 2018.

Trying to solve their labor woes, companies continue to get creative. Take Raising Cane's, for example. The fast-casual chicken chain deployed 50% of its corporate employees to its restaurants to help keep day-to-day operations flowing. While there, the company is asking these corporate employees to help recruit 10,000 new employees.

While that was an eye-catching move, the way the industry will continue to weather its labor and supply chain woes is to continue to look for ways to become more productive and make more efficient use of what resources they already have on hand. The recipe for success will include flexibility paired with open, honest communication.

And those attributes of communication, teamwork and being creative are key lessons longtime foodservice designer Mike Berard of Commercial Kitchen Consulting learned during his decades of experience in the U.S. military (page 72). In fact, those lessons continue to shape the way Mike leads his team and works with his supply chain partners on foodservice design projects. Given we celebrate Veteran's Day this month, it seemed appropriate to have Mike share his perspective with the readers of FE&S. I learned a lot and hope you will too.

Joseph M. Carbonara, Editorial Director



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The Moose is Loose ...

If you missed the first two installments of our FED Lunch & Learn series, you may want to circle back and catch up by listening to the archived one-hour presentations at FEDThoughtLeadership.com, before the third and final installment on Nov. 9 at 1 p.m. CST. For the investment of your time, what you will gain is valuable insight from a variety of viewpoints on some of the most important issues facing the foodservice industry today.

Does culture really matter? Well, according to our real-world industry leaders ... only if you want to retain high-value employees, deliver on your brand promise, and delight your customers. That's where the "moose" comes into play: It's one of ways Rudy Miick, CMC, FCSI, founder of The Miick Companies, connects to culture. It can start at a company meeting by asking, "Who's got a moose?" Think of it as a variation of "the elephant in the room" expression. The faster the moose has a name, the better the odds it stays small and goes away.

Of course, there is a process to dealing with a moose. Rudy and the full lineup of FED Lunch & Learn speakers offer a chance to listen to industry experts. These top-level discussions range from the post-pandemic supply landscape to the meltiness of a grilled cheese sandwich and everything in between.

*Does
culture
really
matter?*

As a perfect pairing, in fine-dining parlance, you might consider Joe Carbonara's look at the year ahead on page 18 of this issue of FE&S. Twists and turns lie ahead as we lurch forward in fits and starts toward a complete recovery from the disruption of the past two years. How long will this recovery take and how different will the world look once the dust settles in 2022? Joe provides some level-headed insight based on years of careful observation.

Once you have digested all that, you may want to join us as we drill down on the changes happening within a specific segment: hotels. Contributing editor Lisa Shames takes a peek with "A New Age in Hotel Dining" beginning on page 26.

Altogether we hope to provide you with a satisfying offering, with plenty of flavor and lots to chew on in the coming month.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maureen".

Maureen M. Slocum, Publisher



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Solutions for Foodservice



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QUICK BITES



Cousins Subs Adds Storefront to Ghost Kitchen Location

Cousins Subs added a storefront at its previous delivery-only commissary location in downtown Milwaukee. The 5,300-square-foot location now features a small storefront with seating for 14 guests. The location also now offers pickup options in addition to delivery and dine-in. The commissary and storefront encompass the brand's signature Milwaukee Sub Shop design, complete with natural wood, stone and metal accents. It also includes digital menu boards.

"While we wanted to test a ghost kitchen concept for Cousins Subs, we feel that the addition of a storefront with pickup options and seating will allow us to take advantage of this great location and convenient parking in one of Milwaukee's most established neighborhoods," said Joe Ferguson, vice president of development at Cousins Subs.

Smoothie Factory Co-Brands with Friendly's

Smoothie Factory's first two northeastern locations came with a twist: These units operate from inside two Friendly's Restaurants. If all goes well, Smoothie Factory may look to introduce more co-branded units in the future. BRIX Holdings owns Friendly's and Smoothie

Factory. Both locations will offer the Smoothie Factory menu for online ordering and delivery, which includes a selection of specialty smoothies and four power bowls, made with a blend of superfruits and topped with whole fruits, coconut and granola.

This store-in-store footprint is the first from the unified leadership team.

"We are uniquely positioned to capitalize on existing real estate and increase foot traffic by using our Friendly's kitchen to prepare and serve Smoothie Factory items for online ordering and delivery," said Craig Erlich, president and CEO of Friendly's Restaurants.



\$30,000

The amount the North American Association of Food Equipment Manufacturers donated to Meals on Wheels.

|||||

\$300,000+

The value of the foodservice equipment Henny Penny donated to the Shular Institute, a Georgia-based culinary education provider. The Shular Institute includes rigorous culinary training and incorporates a full-service restaurant, the Farmed Kitchen & Bar, that is open to the public and is supported and staffed in part by students.

|||||

70

The number of U.S. locations Yogen Früz plans to open by the end of 2022 in a deal with Ghost Kitchen Brands. The chain also hopes to open 30 Canadian locations during that same time frame. Ghost Kitchen Brands will offer a select menu of Yogen Früz's most popular menu items.

|||||

600

The number of locations Portillo's says it could grow to in the next 25 years. The 67-unit chain known for its Chicago-style hot dogs and Italian beef sandwiches has filed papers with the Securities Exchange Commission to become a publicly traded company.

Foodservice Professionals On the Move

Jim Nelson was named senior vice president of sales for **AllPoints**, a foodservice parts and supplies provider.

Alto-Shaam hired Jennifer Voitek as regional sales manager for the Northeast. Prior to joining Alto-Shaam, Voitek was a sales manager for Thomas Automotive. Her background also includes serving as learning and development manager and marketing associate for Sysco Virginia.

Cal-Mil promoted Mary Dunn to director of marketing from regional sales director for the company's Eastern territory, a position she held since joining the company in 2019.

Andrew Cathy became CEO of **Chick-fil-A**, succeeding his father, Dan Cathy. Dan Cathy will remain chairman of the board. Tim Tassopoulos will continue as Chick-fil-A's president and chief operating officer. Andrew Cathy will be only the third member of the Cathy family to lead Chick-fil-A in its 54-year history. His grandfather S. Truett Cathy founded the company.

Brian Jenkins retired from his post as CEO and a member of the board of directors for **Dave & Buster's**, effective Sept. 30, 2021. Kevin Sheehan, chair of Dave & Buster's board of directors, will serve as interim CEO until the eatertainment chain names a permanent successor.

The Association of Correctional Food Service Affiliates (ACFSA) awarded Demetrios Selevredes II the 2021 Al Richardson Founder's Award. The award recognizes an outstanding ACFSA member for their promotion of ACFSA and dedication to the correctional foodservice industry. Selevredes, of Federal Supply USA, received the award for his many years of dedication, support and volunteer service to the association at the state, regional and international levels.

FLAT Tech appointed Joe Fera, CFSP, to the role of vice president of national accounts. Fera brings more than 30 years of experience to his new role with FLAT. His background includes senior leadership positions at Edward Don & Company, Edlund, Clipper Corp and, more recently, Mercer Culinary.

Mike Williamson retired from his post as general manager of **Hotel & Restaurant Supply's** Jackson, Miss., location. He was with the company for more than 38 years. In addition to serving as GM of the foodservice equipment and supplies, he was also Hotel & Restaurant Supply's director of purchasing.

Antoinette "Toni" Watkins, MS, RDN, is the recipient of the 2021 Gold Plate Award presented by the **International Foodservice Manufacturers Association**. Watkins is system director of Food & Nutrition Services at Riverside Health System.

Hoshizaki America appointed Stephanie Wall to vice president regional sales, responsible for sales of Hoshizaki products in the United States and Canada.

IHOP hired Jacob Barden to serve as vice president of development and Michael Kaufman to serve as vice president of strategy and business analytics.

Sabir Sami will become **KFC** Division CEO, and Dyke Shipp will become KFC Division president, effective Jan. 1, 2022.

Krowne Metal Corp. appointed Joe Wilson as its Eastern regional sales manager for the company's plumbing division.

Lancer Worldwide introduced Matt Whitener as president. Most recently, Whitener served as the general manager of Emerson's Commercial, Water & International businesses with the InSinkErator division.

Multiconcept operator Focus Brands promoted Mike Freeman to chief brand officer for its **McAlister's Deli** chain. Freeman has been with McAlister's Deli for 13 years, most recently serving as vice president of operations.

Mercer Culinary tapped Carrie McDonald to serve as director of national accounts. McDonald previously served as national accounts manager for San Jamar, a CFS Brands line.

Katie Cox was appointed vice president of business development for **The Middleby Corporation**. In this role, Cox assumes responsibility for large Middleby chain accounts while also working on new business development.

The **National Restaurant Association** named John Zimmermann, vice president of quality assurance and food safety at First Watch Restaurants, as the 2021 Outstanding Food Safety Leader.

Pink Taco hired Stephan Schneider, an industry veteran with international experience, to serve as chief operating officer.

David Graves will become president of **Pizza Hut U.S.**, effective Jan. 1, 2022. He will replace Kevin Hochman, who is serving in this role on an interim basis. Hochman will retain his role as president and chief concept officer of KFC U.S., a position he has held since 2017.

Polar Leasing Company hired David Kelty to serve as an inside sales representative.

RATIONAL AG promoted Simon Lohse to executive vice president of North America from managing director of RATIONAL United Kingdom.

Stoner's Pizza Joint hired William "Judd" Carlisi to serve as vice president of purchasing and franchise sales.

Veteran foodservice designer Marisa Mangani has joined Florida-based **TBCI Design** as vice president of special projects.

Tropical Smoothie Café promoted Richard Key to chief operating officer from senior vice president of operations.

Wood Stone Corporation tapped Paul Humphreys to serve as vice president of innovation and strategic marketing for the Bellingham, Wash.-based manufacturer of stone hearth and specialty cooking equipment.

Launch of new Marketplace Helps Parts Town Expand Beyond Replacement Parts

Add Parts Town to the list of companies now participating in the foodservice equipment and supplies related e-commerce arena. The Addison, Ill.-based OEM parts distributor entered the fray in late September with the launch of Parts Town Marketplace, which makes available a curated list of light equipment, smallwares, tabletop items, consumables and other products available for purchase.

“The products we are going into are the ones our customers are asking for. The customers are leading us into this,” says Emanuela Delgado, senior vice president and general manager of Red Lightning Group, an innovation incubator Parts Town introduced in December 2020. “For many years, our existing customers have looked to us to add more products. We are focused on OEM parts, but we can get into these other areas by partnering with other organizations that are experts in this area. We can provide a digital platform with our existing customer base.”

Foodservice equipment and supplies dealers represent Parts Town’s target partners for this Marketplace initiative, Delgado adds. “Many dealers are trying to figure out what their digital strategy is, and this could be a way for them to

do it with minimal investment,” she says. “It will be companies who are experts in the distribution of these items.”

Companies that wish to participate will have to apply to become a member of Parts Town Marketplace. “It has to be someone who can provide the inventory, pricing and fulfill the orders in a timely manner,” Delgado says. “Parts Town is not selling the product or setting the price. We are facilitating that sale for our partners and providing value to our customers. Our expertise is in OEM parts, our e-commerce platform and digital marketing. There’s plenty of partners out there that are experts in [the equipment and supplies] product fields and in distribution.”

She also points out that Parts Town is not trying to be all things to all people and acknowledges that there are some larger, more established players in the foodservice equipment and supplies e-commerce arena. “Those e-commerce sites are very good and provide a lot of value,” Delgado says. “But our customers are looking for more from Parts Town. And we are trying to make it easier for our customers to find what they need. We are doing this to meet customer requests and demand.”

Foodservice Acquisition News

There were a spate of acquisitions spanning a variety of foodservice industry segments in recent weeks. Here’s a quick overview of some notable transactions. For more information about these deals and others that have happened since then, visit FESmag.com.

In a deal involving a pair of foodservice equipment and supplies dealers, **Arizona Restaurant Supply** acquired **United Restaurant Supply**. Based in Colorado Springs, Colo., United Restaurant Supply reported annual sales of \$11.54 million in 2020. Despite the change in ownership, United Restaurant Supply’s day-to-day operations will remain under the purview of vice president Nate Brewster, per a release announcing the transaction.

Middleby Corp. acquired Imperial Commercial Cooking Equipment, a Corona, Calif.-based manufacturer of ranges, fryers, ovens, countertop equipment and other specialty cooking products for commercial kitchens. Imperial has annual revenues of approximately \$40 million, per a release announcing the deal. “While we are enhancing our current brand portfolio, this acquisition also expands our West Coast footprint and allows us to provide broader capabilities and support to our domestic customers,” says Tim FitzGerald, Middleby CEO, in a statement. “Working with our long-standing international distribution partners, Imperial has a prime opportunity to expand its global reach. Imperial also has an established presence in the quickly growing fast-casual chain

restaurant segment, which will be a benefit to the Middleby brands as well.”

Smallcakes Cupcakery and Creamery was acquired by The Derbyshire Group. Smallcakes opened its doors in 2008 in Overland Park, Kan., and has since grown to more than 180 locations across the United States.

Service agent **Tech-24** acquired Yukon Refrigeration. Headquartered in Mount Vernon, Ill., Yukon provides repair services, preventative maintenance, and installation for foodservice and HVAC equipment to customers throughout southern Illinois.

FAT Brands acquired Twin Peaks, a polished casual, sports-oriented chain, from investment firm Garnett Station Partners.

In Brief

86 Repairs was named the Momentum 2021 Rising Star Award Winner by 1871, a Chicago-based nonprofit recognizing early-stage businesses for their innovation, growth and community-focused business ventures.

Accurex launched its Aftermarket Certification Program, which offers on-site inspection of the maker's commercial kitchen ventilation equipment to ensure it is operating correctly. During a scheduled on-site visit, a qualified technician follows a standardized checklist and inspects, tests and troubleshoots equipment.

Foodservice equipment and supplies dealer **Bargreen Ellingson** opened a showroom and warehouse in Bozeman, Mont.

BradyIFS, a distributor of foodservice disposables and janitorial and sanitation products, will expand its reach into northern California with the acquisition of two distributors: Fishman Supply Company and Armstrong Paper Group.

Overcoming significant supply chain challenges and other factors, sales of foodservice equipment and supplies increased 19.1% in the second quarter of 2021, beating projections by 3%, per the Business Barometer published by the **Manufacturers'**

Agents Association for the Foodservice Industry. Looking ahead, MAFSI members project a 20.7% sales increase for the third quarter of 2021 compared with the same period in 2020.

Nyco Products Company opened a new distribution and customer service center in McCook, Ill., near its corporate headquarters and manufacturing plant in Countryside, Ill. The new location expands the company's operations by providing additional space for storage, warehousing, deliveries and pickups, as well as serving as home for the Nyco customer service team.

Welbilt shareholders approved Ali Group's offer to buy the company, with 99.72% of shares that were voted being cast in favor of the pending merger, per a Welbilt press release. In addition, the companies report having received a second request for information from the U.S. Department of Justice that focuses on the manufacturers' ice brands. As a result, they have agreed to divest Welbilt's Manitowoc Ice brand. They expect to complete the sale of Manitowoc Ice in early 2022. The companies anticipate Ali Group will complete its acquisition of Welbilt shortly after.

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| By Lisa White |

Meal Kit Momentum

Piggybacking on the success of meal kits delivered to homes, many restaurants added meal kit variations to carryout menus as a revenue driver in the last 18 to 24 months. One key benefit to consumers is the convenience of typically being

able to skip the food prep and jump straight to cooking their meals. According to New York-based Statista, the fresh-food meal kit delivery segment will reach \$11.6 billion in revenues in 2022. That's up from \$1.5 billion in 2016.

By the Numbers

According to July 2021 data from Chicago-based Datassential, 58% of consumers said they won't need to rely on meal kits as much in the future and plan to purchase them less, while 42% of meal kit users say they love them and plan to order them as much or more in the future. This data includes meal kit users across all sources (restaurants, e-commerce subscription, supermarkets, etc.).

"There is going to be some drop-off in meal kit usage post-COVID as restaurants open back up," says Mike Kostyo, trendologist at Datassential. "But considering how many consumers tried meal kits again or for the first time during COVID-19 restrictions, that's still a sizeable percentage of consumers who will keep ordering them. We're also likely to see interest rise again, as consumers change their behavior due to the delta [COVID-19] variant."

Last year, 23% of consumers said they were interested in meal kits from a restaurant during the holiday season, this was 12 percentage points higher among Millennials, according to Datassential. "This may be on the increase this holiday season as well," Kostyo says.

He adds that restaurants can also meet consumer needs by offering more mix-and-match or customizable options to fit a wide range of tastes, which consumers reported they prefer. This could help assuage some of the 44% of consumers who told Datassential they avoid meal kits because family members want to choose their own dishes.



Cote Korean Steakhouse offers specialty cuts of meats in a meal kit bundle.

Meal Kit Offers Via Restaurants

avec, Chicago: avec's meal kit centers on its three best sellers: dates, focaccia and slow-roasted braised pork shoulder. The kit includes eight chorizo-stuffed bacon-wrapped medjool dates, a quart of piquillo pepper tomato sauce, two 22-ounce slow roasted pork shoulders, 8 ounces of smoked garlic sausage, a quart of braised greens with pork au jus and two focaccias with taleggio cheese, ricotta, truffle oil and fresh herbs.

COTE Korean Steakhouse, New York City: Since the early months of the pandemic, COTE has offered several options through Goldbelly, including Cote's Original Butcher's Feast, an assortment of specialty cuts like prime hanger steak, dry-aged ribeye, American wagyu steak and marinated galbi, along with grilling accompaniments.

Kyma, Atlanta: Chef Pano Karatassos created meal kits at this Buckhead spot that have remained popular and on the takeout menu. Packaged family-style, the Octopus Meal Kit contains four parcooked tentacles that are ready to be grilled and served with accompanying onions, capers, vinaigrette and a jar of Chef Pano olives. The Beef Souvlaki Kit offers marinated, ready-to-grill beef tenderloin, cooked fingerling potatoes, tzatziki, herbs, lemon vinaigrette and Chef Pano's meat marinade for basting.

Milo & Olive, various California locations: DIY Pasta Kits that debuted during COVID-19 remain available. On this menu is organic chicken and meatballs made with Parmesan, pecorino, garlic, parsley, rosemary, sage, nutmeg, chili, breadcrumbs, eggs, salt and tomato sauce. Customers can add ravioli, spaghetti or rigatoni for an extra charge as well as a 4-ounce block of Parmesan and wine.

Stella Barra Pizzeria & Wine Bar, North Bethesda, Md., and Santa Monica, Calif.: Part of Chicago-based Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises, both locations have continued offering build-your-own pizza kits. These include all the components for a Margherita pizza, including hand-stretched pizza dough, tomato sauce, fresh mozzarella and detailed instructions for preparation.

Concept Close-Up Dream Dinners, Snohomish, Wash.



Tina Kuna,
CEO of Dream Dinners

Not unlike restaurants, which were required by many municipalities to limit customers to slow the spread of COVID-19, companies specializing in guest meal assembly events had to pivot during the pandemic to remain relevant and fiscally viable.

Such was the case with Dream Dinners, a concept co-founded in 2002 by Tina Kuna, now the CEO. "It started as a girls' night out to make dinners with less stress — then the word spread. We rented a catering kitchen, [and the rest is history]," she says.

After a pandemic pivot to curbside delivery, Dream Dinners has seen its business model shift to 75% meal kit carryout/delivery and 25% of meals assembled on-site by customers. The company utilizes in-house staff as well as third-party companies for delivery.

Its 12 company-owned sites also recently implemented mail-order service to 30 states. Dream Dinners currently has 68 locations — 56 franchised — in 22 states.

Q: What was the initial kitchen setup for Dream Dinners' sites, and how has it changed since adding curbside service?

A: When we first designed our assembly sites, kitchen refrigeration was key. We replicated

Subway's sandwich-style refrigerated tables with slots, and guests went from station to station with instructions on how to assemble dinner. During the pandemic, we shifted to 100% curbside delivery and pickup, eliminating the in-store sessions. As a result, we downsized our new locations' footprints, going from our traditional 1,500 square feet used for prep, pickup and delivery. Our back of house used to be a third of our square footage, and now it's two-thirds to accommodate prep space. We still have our same refrigeration stations but have incorporated larger walk-in freezers. To expand their market reach, we offer franchisees the option of opening 750-square-foot satellite locations in addition to their brick-and-mortar site for pickup and delivery only. All prep is done at the main stores.

Q: Describe your equipment lineup.

A: There is no cooking on-site, and all food is precut. We have one four-door walk-in freezer with a glass front for merchandising, one or two two-door refrigerators and stainless steel prep tables. Our new store layout includes four 5- to 6-foot prep tables for a total of 20 to 24 feet in the back of house. This area also includes dry storage and is separated from the front of house by a wall and swinging doors.

Q: How does Dream Dinners differ from traditional restaurants from a menu perspective?

A: Unlike traditional restaurants, we purchase food weekly for what is required, only buying based on what's ordered in advance by customers. As a result, we don't hold a large inventory. Our menu, which changes monthly, is condensed to include a pantry list of items.

Revalize: Helping the Foodservice Community Work More Efficiently

A Q&A with Jim Contardi, CEO of Revalize



AutoQuotes is now part of Revalize. Can you expand on the formation of this new company?

Jim Contardi: Revalize was formed to meet

what we saw as an unmet need in the market. It is clear that the buyer's journey has become increasingly digital; operators and channel partners want to discover, explore — and even transact — digitally. Yet despite this secular trend, there is no at-scale provider of software solutions that helps manufacturers and their channels navigate this new world. AutoQuotes built a widely adopted solution suite that is optimized for the foodservice equipment and supplies segment, benefiting manufacturers, reps, consultants and dealers. We realized that there are other "AQs" out there that have been optimized for other product segments. By acquiring these types of businesses and weaving them together with our in-house innovation, we feel we can address this unmet need.

How will becoming a part of Revalize benefit someone who is involved with restaurant equipment and design?

JC: If you are a business in the restaurant equipment and design community, becoming a Revalize customer brings all the same benefits that AQ customers have become accustomed to — and more. Our increased scale means we can invest more in customer support and our technical platforms; our solution portfolio has grown, offering even



more solutions than AQ provided; and our geographic footprint has grown to better serve our multi-national customers.

What types of changes can current AQ users expect to see in the near future?

JC: Each quarter, we add new manufacturers to our catalog, so — as always — the value for AQ users continues to grow; but that's really "business as usual." In terms of near-term changes, we will be making a number of new products available to our foodservice equipment and supplies customers and prospects. For example, we will be showcasing LeadMethod, an innovative and easy-to-deploy application for manufacturers to share leads with their reps and dealers, helping to drive more revenue. And for designers and consultants, we will be showcasing AGi32, a terrific application that simulates the illumination created by architectural lighting, allowing designers to see the effects of their lighting selections in the front of house.

For those who are using payment products like AQ Pay, what benefits and/or access to new products will they now have with Revalize?

JC: Revalize will continue to support all the current products of AQ (and our other brands); and we will be introducing new products to our existing customers.

Will AQ customers have the opportunity to access new products from AQ's sister brands?

JC: Absolutely! As we expand our product portfolio, we will explore how each product might be applicable to the various segments that we serve, including foodservice equipment and supplies. I would like nothing more than to enable manufacturers and dealers to create digital test kitchens by assembling and configuring all the key equipment to fit-out the back of house, visualizing it in 3D, and even allowing their operator customers to explore the kitchen in virtual reality. We are really excited about enabling the digital buyer's journey for our customers.

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| By Joseph M. Carbonara |

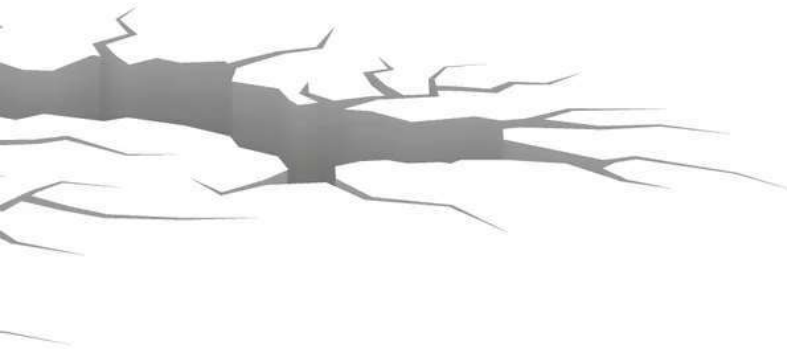
2022 OUTLOOK

IT'S COMPLICATED





OK



When the pandemic first hit the U.S. and wreaked havoc on the restaurant industry, projections about how long the downturn would last and the shape of the recovery were like noses — everyone had one. The industry’s road to recovery remains a long and winding one, marked with plenty of potholes that seem to be keeping restaurants from sustaining any true momentum.

So how is the industry faring in 2021? And, what’s in store for 2022?

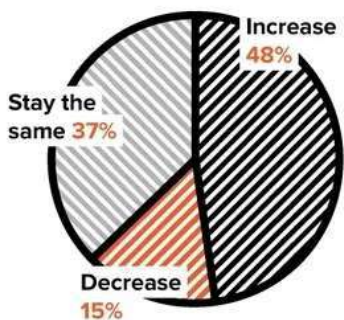
Well, it’s complicated.



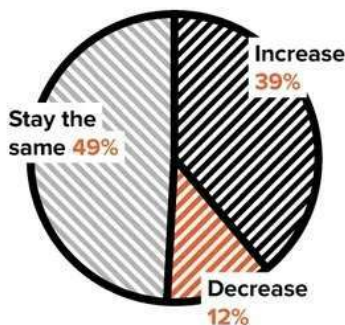
EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES BUDGETS 2022 VS. 2021

Nearly half of all commercial foodservice operators report their budgets for next year will increase. Fewer noncommercial operators say the same, with more reporting that 2022 budgets will stay at the same level as 2021.

COMMERCIAL FOODSERVICE OPERATORS



NONCOMMERCIAL FOODSERVICE OPERATORS



Source: FE&S Forecast 2022

RESTAURANT INDUSTRY OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Consumers will spend \$771 billion in restaurants in 2022, per forecast data from Chicago-based market research firm Datassential. This represents an increase from the \$608 billion consumers spent in 2020 and the \$701.4 billion they will spend this year, per Datassential's projections. By 2023, consumers' expenditures on prepared food and nonalcoholic beverages will total \$817 billion.

In terms of growth rates, industry sales declined 29.6% overall in 2020, per Datassential. This year, the industry will grow at a rate of 10.4% compared to last year's total revenues, and next year it will experience a 4.9% growth rate. In 2023, when the industry finally exceeds 2019 revenues, its overall growth rate will be 1%, per Datassential.

"The road ahead remains long. So, 2022 will continue to be a year of transition for the industry. Industry sales will continue to move forward, but the potholes will still be there in 2022. Consumers will continue to be very deliberate in terms of how they spend their food dollar," says Hudson Riehle, senior vice president of research for the National Restaurant Association. "Even though there are challenges in place, the industry will continue to increase the proportion of the food dollar spent away from home."

Despite all the challenges from the pandemic, the main reasons consumers want to patronize restaurants remain the same: convenience and socialization. "Convenience is evident in the use of off-premises options. And socialization is evident in the pent-up demand for on-site," Riehle says. "For the table-service segment, the socialization component will be the most important. When consumers return to restaurants, they are reminded why that on-site dining experience was so important to them. It's important

for table-service operators to engage consumers and bring them back to a hospitable environment with such good food quality."

Labor, or more precisely the lack of it, will impact the industry's ability to hasten its recovery. In its 2021 State of the Industry Mid-Year Update, the National Restaurant Association reports that 75% of operators say recruiting and retaining employees are their top challenges.

"One of the things the pandemic did was give people who work in the hospitality field a chance to take a step back and ask is it worth it for me to stay in this industry," says Warren Solochek, principal of Insights to Opportunities in Chicago. "There have been a number of people — servers, back-of-house workers, etc. — who have said I don't want to do this anymore. Scarcity of labor will continue to have a negative effect on the industry. This is particularly true of full-service restaurants, who will have to cut back on hours because they can't find enough people to work."

And that can lead to longer service times, be it waiting for a table or for staff to complete an order or both. "This will force people to keep turning to the drive-thru, carryout and delivery because the on-premises service levels are diminished," Solochek notes. "In some instances, the time between placing your order and getting your beverages, which should be very quick, has gotten to be pretty long. And the times between courses being served are longer. It's not fun for anyone involved. Operators often find themselves rushing orders out of the kitchen with inexperienced people. It's going to be really difficult for the industry to hire enough people to get back to smoother running operations the way they were prior to the pandemic. Even with higher industry wages, people can go to other places and make more."



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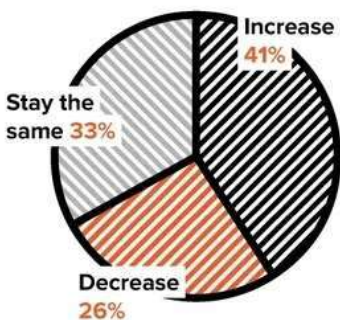
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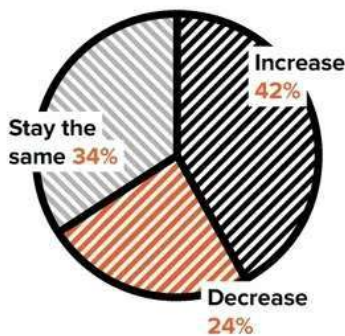
EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES BUDGETS 2022 VS. 2019

When comparing budgets to 2019, both commercial and noncommercial foodservice operators reported they anticipate equipment and supplies budgets will increase for 2022 compared to prior to the pandemic.

COMMERCIAL FOODSERVICE OPERATORS



NONCOMMERCIAL FOODSERVICE OPERATORS



Source: FE&S Forecast 2022

This is where technology can help. “The factor going ahead is the use of technology to increase the productivity of a typical restaurant’s operations. That means labor is reallocated,” Riehle says. “Some of that is moved down to the supply chain too.”

One example of technology playing a greater role in helping offset labor woes is Dunkin’s first digital-only location, which the chain debuted in September. Customers at the Boston restaurant place their orders using the Dunkin’ app or via an in-store kiosk. Guests fetch their orders from what the chain describes as an enhanced pickup area. Interestingly enough, while guests place orders digitally, the chain claims it will still employ the same number of people as it would at a traditional location. This is an example of technology not reducing labor but potentially making more effective and efficient use of what a restaurant already has.

As a result of the changes, challenges and opportunities described here, the restaurant industry almost has two different recoveries taking place: one for quick-serve restaurants and one for the other segments. “You can see that when you review the market research. The quick-service operators have recovered faster than some other segments because they can drive more volume out of their locations,” Solochek says. “Time has value, and people are saying, ‘I will go get it myself’ and that plays into the strengths of QSRs.”

By the end of 2022, sales at quick-service restaurants will be at 107% of the segment’s 2019 revenues, per Datassential. In contrast, the more table-service-centric segments will continue to show improvement but will remain less than their 2019 levels, like midscale dining (81%), casual dining (91%) and fine-dining (87%). Even the fast-casual segment, which served as the industry’s growth vehicle for a long time, won’t exceed its 2019 revenue levels until 2023, per Datassential.

Quick-service operators continue to take notice of consumers’ evolving dining habits and adjust their plans accordingly. “Their new prototypes have smaller footprints, smaller dining areas and, when they can, multiple drive-thru lanes,” Solochek says.

“They are reacting to people’s preference of wanting their orders as fast as they can get it. All those new designs are all focused on throughput. These new designs enable operators to make their footprints smaller, which saves on building costs, and it may make their real estate costs lower in the long run. These operators are rewarding people who order ahead. That reward includes faster drive times. A bunch of things need to happen back of house, but you can manage that.”

One notable example of this approach made headlines back in August when Taco Bell unveiled its Defy prototype. The 3,000-square-foot restaurant, set to open in the summer of 2022 in Minnesota, will take a vertical approach to enhancing speed of service by placing the kitchen on the second floor of the restaurant. The unit will feature four drive-thru lanes, including three that will serve only mobile or delivery order pickups. The fourth lane will handle traditional drive-thru traffic. Digital check-in screens will allow mobile order customers to scan in their order via a unique QR code and then pull forward to pick up their meals. Staff will deliver food via a proprietary lift system. The unit will also feature two-way audio and video technology that lets customers interact directly with the team members above in real time.

No story about restaurant operating conditions would be complete without a nod to the industry’s ongoing supply chain challenges. Roughly 4 out of 5 table-service operators report supply chain shortages and that jumps to 7 out of 10 when homing in on the quick-service segment, Riehle says. “The supply chain challenges

have added fuel to the fire to simplify the menu,” he says. “When you think about how consumers order both remotely and on-site, it becomes apparent that menu simplification will continue. Menu reengineering is driven by not only price point considerations but what is available on a long-term basis too. The period from 2009 to the pandemic was the longest period of post-war economic expansion. And it allowed menus to become more complicated and expansive because the underlying economy could support that. Now the challenges with the economy and the supply chain have realigned operators’ approach.”

The supply chain challenges are not limited to the ingredients foodservice operators use in executing their menus. They also pertain to production of foodservice equipment and supplies. Manufacturers report

ongoing supply chain challenges related to the sourcing of metals, component parts and, once they make the products, shipping, per the North American Association of Food Equipment Manufacturers. In fact, 45% of NAFEM member companies say challenges in sourcing metals alone have led to two- to three-month delays in shipping finished goods to operators.

2022 AND BEYOND: A FOODSERVICE ODYSSEY

When will things get back to normal? “At this point, one out of five operators thinks it never returns to normal and 44% think it’s more than a year,” Riehle says.

One thing’s for certain — the industry will be different moving forward due to increased technology use, changes in menu development and

ongoing labor issues. “The industry is like a large tree that gets toppled by a windstorm. That tree continues to grow but, the branches of growth are different from pre-pandemic,” Riehle says. “It will be different but in a positive way. There are new avenues in channels of growth that add diversity to the industry. The industry now has many additional avenues of growth.”

For example, ghost kitchens and virtual brands increase consumers’ points of access to restaurants, Riehle notes. And during the pandemic, consumers became more comfortable with digital ordering — they had to as it was often the only game in town. Even the shift to off-premises got a boost during the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, 61% of all restaurant orders were consumed off-premises, Riehle notes. “During the depths of the pandemic, that jumped to 90% because the



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One significant issue that will affect the future of the restaurant industry is when and how business districts and city centers bounce back from the pandemic.

restrictions were so severe. That's about 80% now. It's not likely, though, this will drop back down to the 60% range. There will be some gradual shifting as the months go by, but that off-premises market will remain more important for the consumer and the operator."

The industry will also continue to grapple with labor challenges in the coming months. "That's due to the nation's core demographics. The nation will continue to age," Riehle says. "And during normal times, one of the industry's top challenges was recruitment. The demographic impact on America's workforce is not limited to the restaurant industry. One thing the pandemic did was led some baby boomers into retirement."

One significant issue that will affect the future of the restaurant industry is when and how business districts and city centers bounce back from the pandemic. "Prior to the pandemic, these areas had high growth and restaurant sales surged. Then comes the pandemic and people leave and sales tumble," Riehle says.

Many companies continue to kick around the idea of a hybrid work environment. "You are never going to see the office environment the way it was pre-pandemic. There will be larger groups of people working from home full-time or at least a few days a week," Solochek predicts. "Offices won't be the central hub of the work environment."

If that scenario plays out, "the loss of business could be as high as 20% due to the loss of having those people in these city centers week after week, month after month," Riehle predicts.

The uncertainty surrounding back-to-work plans impacts more than the restaurants that operate in the central business districts. It also impacts the corporate feeders, and as of August, Datassential reported 19% of B&I operators were completely closed. Looking ahead to 2022, Datassential projects B&I revenues will only achieve 76% of 2019 levels. In other

words, there's still a ways to go in this segment's recovery.

As the adage goes, when one door closes another opens. "You will see an acceleration of operators in central business districts closing because the demand will not be as great. On the other hand, you will see greater demand for restaurants in suburban areas because the people who work from home will want that convenience," Solochek predicts. "But those restaurants better cater to automobiles and up their game in terms of carry-out and delivery. But the big question remains: Can they find enough labor?"

What does this all mean for the coming year? Well, once again, it's complicated, as Datassential's projections for noncommercial segments indicate. For example, in healthcare, senior living will hit 100% of its 2019 revenue levels in 2022 followed closely by long-term care at 98%, per Datassential. Hospitals, in contrast, will only be at 88% of 2019 revenues by the end of next year. This is due to a variety of reasons, including the fact that a large portion of hospital foodservice revenue comes from people working at or visiting these healthcare campuses. As these employers continue to flesh out their return-to-work approach and policies about having guests on campus, expect these revenues to continue to evolve.

In other words, the industry will remain a work in progress for the next year or so. "In 2022, the industry as a whole will show some growth relative to 2021, if for no reason other than the first quarter of 2021 was so weak because of COVID. So, the year-over-year comparison will be favorable," Solochek says. "The deeper you get into 2022, the year-over-year comps will still show growth but just not as much. The demand is still there as consumers love going to restaurants. The question becomes, "Where can I spend it? Where I can have a satisfactory experience?" **FE&S**

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A New Age of Hotel Dining

| By Lisa Shames |

Like so many other hospitality providers, hotel restaurants have undergone an identity shift. Hotel restaurants that exist mostly to execute private events or to serve travelers whose schedules or desires don't include

an exciting dining experience are becoming relics of the past. From a restaurant located inside a hotel on a tourist-friendly pier to those inside a converted beloved brewery, hotel restaurants — and the designers and culinary teams behind them — now embrace their unique settings and the opportunities they offer to create distinct dining venues for those spending the night and, just as important, those who aren't.

But the process of creating a destination-worthy hotel restaurant that pleases everyone isn't without its challenges.

"When you're doing a restaurant in a hotel, the way you lead people through a space can either be really seductive and beautiful or it can be awkward," says Smith Hanes, founder of Atlanta-based Smith Hanes Studio, a

group of interior designers, architects and industrial designers whose work includes restaurants, hotels, retail, workspaces and personal residences.

For one of his recent projects, Hanes worked on the rebranding of Bullard Tavern in the Woodlark Hotel in Portland, Ore. Hanes also redesigned the hotel's debut restaurant, Bullard, which opened in 2018. As part of that original construction, which married two side-by-side 1911 buildings, the floors first needed to be leveled. Hotel guests now seamlessly enter the restaurant from the lobby without navigating stairs, achieving an elegant flow between the two entities.

Additionally, Bullard Tavern features a prominent street entrance. "As a result, the restaurant faces the street and has its own presence. It isn't just an also-ran restaurant," says Hanes. "When I have to walk into a lobby to get into a hotel restaurant, it's too many experiences at once."

Two restaurant entrances, while preferred for hotel restaurant



Designed by Nick Dryden of DAAD, the dining room at The Continental features plush banquettes, two bars and large booths.



Above, left: Chef Sean Brock's recently opened The Continental located at the Grand Hyatt Nashville features a gallery of Brock's own photography pieces on a wall of the private dining area.

Vivid colors, as well as bold patterns, add an unexpected edge to the sophisticated space at The Continental.

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designs, do come with their own unique set of concerns. Take, for example, the renovated historic Hamilton Hotel in Washington, D.C.

"The street access front door is on the opposite side of the restaurant compared to the hotel access door," says Joe Palminteri, area director of food and beverage for the Hamilton Hotel. "This element made the placement of the host stand come into conversation in order to ensure guests were greeted in the proper amount of time."

Serving Two Distinct Customer Bases

As part of the multimillion-dollar

After a multimillion dollar renovation, Le Meridien St. Louis Clayton reopened with a focus on art to reflect its proximity to the area's museums. That inspiration is carried over at Café La Vie, the hotel's new French-leaning bar and restaurant. In the morning, the expanded bar provides a welcome spot for coffee drinks and pastries in the morning as well as cocktails, bubbles and snacks later in the day.

renovation of the iconic 318-room 1922 Hamilton Hotel, an authentic osteria, Via Sophia, was created from the ground up. The restaurant includes a traditional Neapolitan pizza oven, imported from Naples, Italy, which serves as the focal point and was custom built specifically to fit into the dining room. Only a few short months after the September 2021 renovation, Via Sophia has established its own identity, which

included an invitation for the chefs to participate in the Invitation to Cook program at the James Beard House.

A multimillion renovation was also recently completed at Le Meridien St. Louis Clayton, a 268-room hotel in the heart of the business district of Clayton, Mo., which features a curated art program of some 50 pieces throughout the public spaces and guest rooms. One design imperative at the Café la Vie was ensuring smooth transitions from one daypart to the next.

"Café la Vie has the ability to transition from day to night with a faux skylight," says executive chef Michael Frank. "Once it hits 4 p.m., the lights are dimmed, which naturally sets the ambience." Additional renovations included opening the previously



enclosed dining room and building an L-shaped bar with additional seating, going from 10 seats to 25.

"During the week, we are a business hotel, so it's important for us to incorporate some local dishes," Frank says, citing toasted ravioli as one example. "We have to understand that, for people who aren't from here, these are new dishes, and they're excited to experience

St. Louis." He works to find the balance in the menu that acknowledges both the business traveler and locals.

Another hotel, the just-opened Sable at Navy Pier Chicago, creates distinct interior design personalities between the hotel and its Spanish-leaning restaurant, Lirica. The intent is that two entities each appeal to a unique audience. "There are two large customer bases for the restaurant, those on the pier and those staying in the hotel. We wanted to differentiate their designs for this reason," says Stephen Stoll, chief operating officer of restaurants for Maverick Hotels & Restaurants, a Chicago-based hospitality management firm. "While most hotel

restaurants serve as an amenity to the hotel, Lirica does this while also catering to the 9 million people that come to Navy Pier on an annual basis."

Two entrances to Lirica — one from the hotel and the other from the pier's bustling pedestrian walkway — help drive this point home. Menu changes also play an important role. "It can be a difficult balance as the tastes and interests of a family visiting Navy Pier can vary significantly from a couple that walks to us from the nearby Streeterville neighborhood," says Stoll. "Our menus have been and will continue to be an evolution until we strike that proper balance. Also, what we offer during the summer when it is high time for tourists at Navy Pier will differ substantially from the winter

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While set inside Sable at Navy Pier Chicago hotel, Latin-leaning restaurant Lirica maintains its own interior design identity, making it a destination for those staying in the hotel as well as a large numbers of locals.

months when locals take advantage of the smaller crowds."

Well-Designed Hotel Kitchen Spaces

At San Antonio's Hotel Emma at Pearl, a 146-room hotel set inside a 19th-century brewhouse, chef John Brand's passion is so great that he approaches his role as culinary director and the menus of the hotel's trio of restaurants (Supper, Larder and Sternewirth) as almost a calling. His motivation to work in hotel foodservice was to look out for the underdog because someone once told him that you can't get good food in a hotel, says Brand, who has previously worked at other culinary-focused hotels, including The Little

Nell in Aspen and The Broadmoor in Colorado Springs. "I'm still out to prove that you can." By creating menu items that speak to the culture and heritage of San Antonio that are also easy on the wallet, the clientele of Emma's various restaurants includes many loyal locals.

An open 3,000-square-foot kitchen, which handles all the restaurants' cooking, including for private events and room service, helps Brand communicate easily with his 40-person team. "You can see everybody in the kitchen, including the dish station," he says.

The kitchen also includes a large window at Supper. "I've made that transparency a part of our culture in that the guests can see us, and we can see them, and we are reflective of that. Our kitchen can't be in chaos and vice versa in the dining room," says Brand, who adds, "The ability of the back-of-the-house staff to see outside also helps their mental well-being."

Lack of kitchen space is a common challenge at many hotel restaurants, and that's especially true at Bullard Tavern. "When we were building out the kitchens, we had to consider all of the outlets and how much space that would require, as well as being in a very old building, which creates limitations on space and usage," says executive chef John Baxter. "We had to be very clear about what equipment was dedicated to prep and what was dedicated to service and create



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two kitchens based on that setup.”

Below the restaurant is the 1,000-square-foot prep area, home to two combi ovens, two large proof boxes, a full-size pastry sheeter and a smoker, which serves as the workhouse of the kitchen, says Baxter. Upstairs is the finishing kitchen, which sits in open view of guests and includes a wood-burning oven more or less in the middle of the dining room.

To counter the low ceiling in the dining room, the walls and ceiling were painted the same color. “It’s a little bit of a theatrical thing we do, which helps people believe they’re in a more expansive space, when all walls are the same color,” says Hanes. “Your mind kind of blows the space open, and you imagine a room that’s more spacious than it really is.”

For Frank at Le Meridien, like many chefs, organization and detailed checklists become important tools when it comes to countering small back-of-the-house

spaces as well as keeping up with the multiple culinary demands of running a hotel dining operation.

“Everything has to be in its place and serve a purpose,” he says, and that includes the variety of smallwares such as glasses and plates. “You have to constantly look at things and assess if that’s the best way to do it,” he says. “If a piece of equipment would be better for operations if it was moved, don’t be afraid to make those changes.”

Part of Frank’s initial evaluation during the renovation included making improvements to the garde manger area. To add more working space, Frank drilled a pass-through window onto a stainless-steel table. “Now I can have an expanded dessert program as well as during lunch we can operate with more salads and cold items,” he says. To ease line

An 880-pound wood-burning oven handmade in Italy serves as a focal point at Via Sophia in Hotel Hamilton. A 10-seat pizza bar offers an up-close view.

operations, one area is committed to banquets

with a dedicated convection oven and heating window. (Plans for a separate banquet kitchen are in the works.)

Another piece of equipment Frank swears by is a double-sided vacuum sealer on wheels. “Those are important for preserving products and protecting your investment,” he says.

With real estate a premium on Navy Pier, Lirica was designed with less back-of-the-house space than you would normally see in a free-standing restaurant and far less than what you’d see in a full-scale hotel operation, says Stoll. All of the prep for banquets takes place in the 1,500-square-foot restaurant kitchen, which is on first floor, and then staff bring everything to the second-floor

banquet area. The equipment package in that second-floor 600-square-foot banquet kitchen includes a combi oven, roll-in refrigeration and a few roll-in prep tables that staff can configure based on the type of event and whether the service style is buffet or plated. "We try to keep the space pretty minimal and adaptable," he says. Outsourcing several specialty items, including pastries and wedding cakes, helps save on precious kitchen space as well.

At Hotel Emma, to offset operations that were built smaller than current business levels demand, deliveries occur six days a week, says Brand. In addition, some crossover exists between the various restaurants' menus. "We try not to be homogeneous, but we do so deliberately sometimes because we have dishes guests like everywhere at the property, whether it's at the pool, the bar or room service," says Brand. Flexibility and restraint help when it comes to menu management, he adds.

Dealing with Bullard Tavern's small kitchen means Baxter leans heavily on his prep kitchen and staff. "The prep team handles a lot of our big sellers, like smoked San Antonio chicken and monster beef ribs, while the service kitchen focuses on working with great ingredients and letting them shine without much alteration," he says. A

large smoker is a key piece of equipment. Additional equipment includes two combi ovens, two holding and proofing boxes, as well as a full-size pastry sheeter.

Tech Tie-Ins

During the pandemic, Le Meridien experienced an influx of to-go orders via online ordering from the neighborhood when the restaurant wasn't open to dining. "For a hotel to capture some to-go outside revenue is very intriguing for us," Baxter says. "If you can tap into that and get some consistent business from neighborhood diners and offices that's a wonderful opportunity."

At Le Meridien, an exclusive, integrated mobile dining platform allows guests to order food at the pool terrace as well as from their rooms.

Six years ago, when Brand pushed for order screens in the kitchen at Hotel Emma, not everyone was convinced the then-modern approach was the way to go. Now, he and his staff couldn't imagine working without them. Besides being much more environmentally friendly than paper printers, the reduction of noise in the open kitchen, and their ease of use, has made them invaluable. Next up, Brand is thinking of tablet service at the bar and doing away with credit card machines at stations. "I really think America needs to get into that system, so the credit cards don't have to leave the table or guest," he says.

But technology, no matter how sophisticated, won't solve every challenge that hotel restaurants will inevitably face.

"It's important to have a good mix of talent on your team, both those with stand-alone restaurant experience and those with hotel

Nod to Historic Hotel Fine Dining

Sometimes the best way to embrace the future is to go backward. Or, at least, that's the case at The Continental, the new restaurant from acclaimed chef Sean Brock located inside the Grand Hyatt Nashville hotel in the Nashville Yards development. Celebrating the unique history of hospitality and hotel fine dining through the 19th and early 20th centuries and Brock's meticulous approach to classic American dishes, The Continental aims to make fine dining fun. Part of that entertainment factor involves custom service carts — made by a local artisan — that serve signature dishes tableside, such as prime rib with horseradish cream and natural jus, and vanilla bean custard cream with a selection of shaved ices and toppings.

The playful and sometimes theatrical plating of the food reflects the restaurant's location across from Nashville's Frist Art Museum. Complementing the cuisine, the design by Nick Dryden of Nashville-based DAAD represents an homage to American hotel dining in the Golden Age with plush banquettes and large booths. Vivid colors such as red and citron, as well as bold patterns, add an edge to the sophisticated space. "The idea behind this restaurant is to embrace and be inspired by the original great American hotel restaurants and to invigorate the spirit of those historic dishes in a new way," says Brock. "We want to remind everyone what makes going out to eat so enjoyable and exhilarating."

experience," says Stoll. "Oddly, kitchens are run very differently in these two sectors, both having pros and cons. It is all about finding the proper balance."

And once that mixed team is in place, don't underestimate the old-school art of relationship building. "Get to know the dynamic of the generation of people you would be hiring and what's in their world. We aren't always receptive enough," says Brand. "Be open and vulnerable to change, opportunity and thinking differently." **FE&S**



Via Sophia was designed to embody an authentic Italian osteria.



OPERATORS BEEF UP ECO-FRIENDLY PACKAGING

| Amanda Baltazar |

Restaurants and foodservice accounts continue to sit up and take notice what customers want from their food packaging. Over the past 18 months, with more takeout and to-go orders than ever, materials that keep food hot (or cold) and retain its quality and integrity have been increasingly in demand.

But consumers, especially younger ones, want less packaging, and packaging made from sustainable materials. That means recyclable, or made from recycled materials, compostable products, or even reusable items that consumers return to be washed and sanitized.

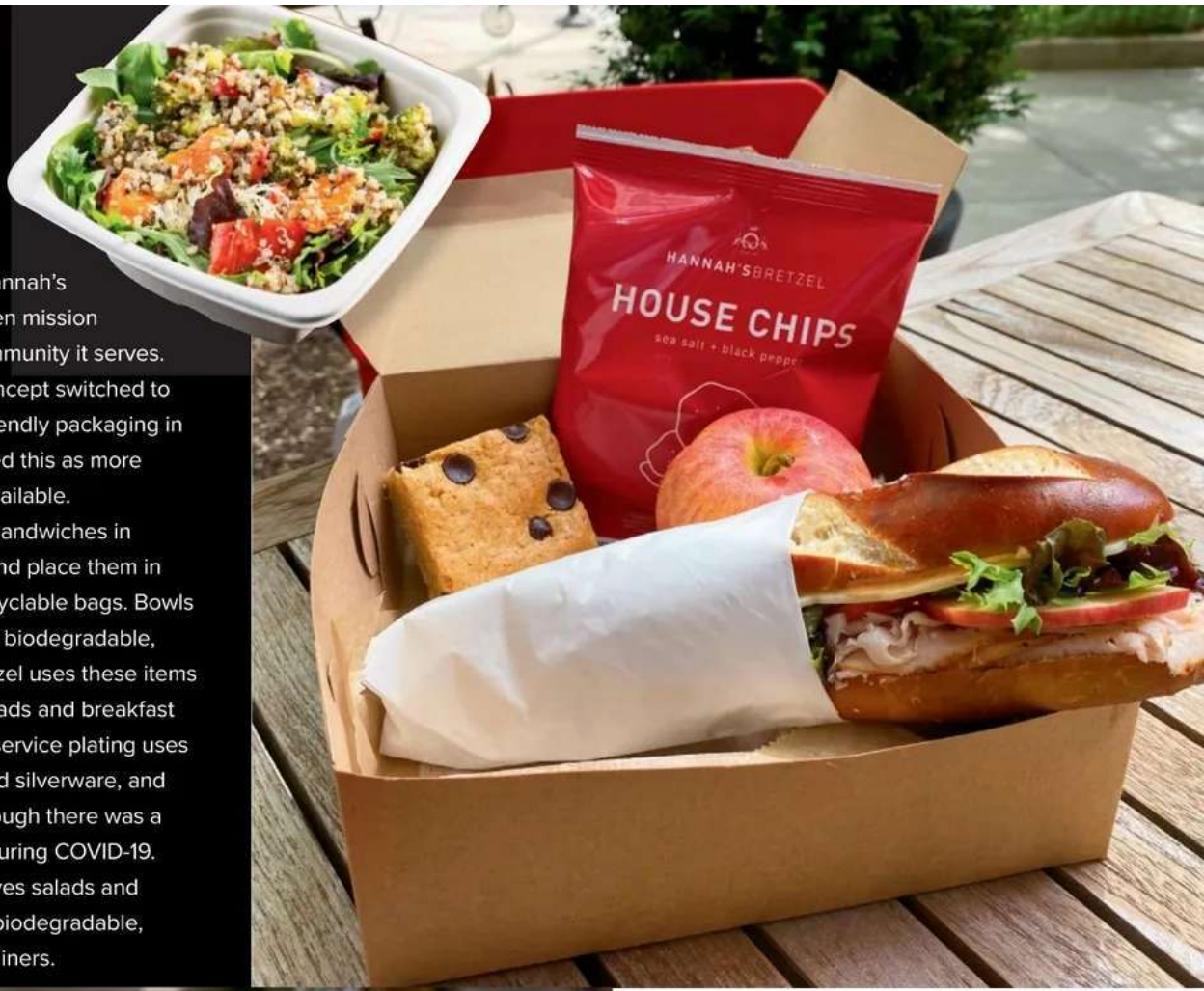
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reports that containers and packaging constitute 30% of all waste produced in the U.S. Consumers hear numbers like this, and that this waste can harm the environment, may be more willing to pay a small premium for packaging that aligns with their beliefs.

HANNAH'S BRETZEL

Fast-casual sandwich shop chain Hannah's Bretzel is on a green mission in the Chicago community it serves. The eight-store concept switched to environmentally friendly packaging in 2008 and expanded this as more options became available.

Staff wrap all sandwiches in recyclable paper and place them in post-consumer recyclable bags. Bowls and cups are 100% biodegradable, and Hannah's Bretzel uses these items to serve soups, salads and breakfast offerings. In-store service plating uses porcelain, glass and silverware, and has since 2016, though there was a temporary hiatus during COVID-19.

The chain serves salads and catering orders in biodegradable, compostable containers.



UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

The University of Vermont, in Burlington, Vt., began using eco-friendly containers for all orders placed through its app a year ago, and during the 2020-2021 school year it eliminated nearly 90,000 disposable containers from the waste stream.

Students can opt to get a reusable container to take food to go, and there's no charge for the containers in this Sodexo-managed program. Students receive a discount in all retail locations if they opt for reusables in place of a disposable container, whether they're paying with cash or a meal plan. Having students return the containers is a big challenge, despite the 20 collection stations around campus, says Nicole Reilly, Sodexo sustainability and campus partnership manager.

Additional costs do come with the containers, Reilly adds, such as washing them and purchasing drying racks, storage and collection bins.



OPERATORS BEEF UP ECO-FRIENDLY PACKAGING

KISCO SENIOR LIVING

Kisco Senior Living in Carlsbad, Calif., ditched single-use food containers in its 20 locations and replaced them with eco-friendly reusable takeout packaging, following its move to room-service-only dining during the pandemic.

It uses containers made of melamine for meal kits that residents cook at home and plans to implement them for curbside pickup soon.

Disposable containers were costing Kisco more than \$170,000 every month and leading to more than 3,000 cubic feet of Styrofoam waste every day. Randall Lonoza, national director of culinary services, says the operation breaks even after just two weeks when the reusables are used three times a day. The real benefit, he adds, is to the environment.



SQUARE PIE GUYS

Square Pie Guys in San Francisco provides the option of reusable containers for take-out food. This costs \$1.99 per pizza, and around 4% of diners choose to participate in this initiative, which translates to around 300 containers per month.

In 2021, to make this program operational in its two stores, owners Danny Stoller and Marc Schechter joined with a local startup company that supplies and then picks up the dirty items.

At that point the supplier washes, sanitizes and then returns them to each store. Since the partnership began, Square Pie has saved 5,523 single-use containers from the waste stream, 552 pounds of material waste and 12,151 gallons of water — all of which translates to about two trees saved per month.



C3

Multiconcept operator C3 (C3 stands for “creating culinary communities”) packages menu items for its four virtual concepts in custom carbon-neutral take-away boxes made from recycled materials and cardboard. The Miami company’s virtual brand partners include Krispy Rice and Sam’s Crispy Chicken, along with brick-and-mortar chain Umami Burger and Las Vegas restaurant Kumi — all of which fall under the sbe Entertainment Group umbrella.

The off-premises containers contain soy-based ink, vegetable-based glue and water-based coating, and each tells its brand’s story. For example, Krispy Rice’s eye-catching pink takeaway boxes feature an inscription with playful Japanese-inspired illustrations. The boxes are also practical for the menu items, such as the customizable shelves that cushion food items in the Krispy Rice and Kumi boxes.

C3’s packaging includes a note on the bottom indicating how to dispose of the containers responsibly. Customers recycle the boxes or discard them in waste bins. The packaging features help it to break down on its own.



BURGER KING

In May, Burger King launched a green packaging pilot program in 51 Miami restaurants focused on finding scalable solutions for eight of its most-used, guest-facing items including forks, spoons, knives, straws, drink lids, french fry containers, Whopper wrappers and napkins.

The packaging features alternative materials, such as the packaging for french fries made with renewable unbleached virgin paperboard, cutlery made with compostable material, paper and plant-based straws and strawless lids, which could potentially eliminate up to 500 million single-use plastic straws annually.



SHOUK

Middle Eastern fast-food restaurant Shouk aims to go plastic-free. For its pita sandwich, the chain uses 100% paper-based packaging. The package holds the sandwich but has a perforated line halfway down, so customers can remove it as they eat and continue holding their sandwich, making more of the food accessible as they eat.

"It's street food, designed to be eaten while walking," says co-founder and CEO Ran Nussbächer. The package contains no plastic lining, which was important. "It's in accordance with our values," he says. "And we have a lot of customers who look for that and want that."

Shouk, which plans to have four locations by the end of the year, also launched retail sales of its burgers — initially online but soon in stores — and these packages also contain no plastic. The burgers are sold as a set of four in a round, squat, Pringles-style container that's 100% cardboard. The burgers are separated by butcher paper, which protects against freezer burn better than plastic, according to Nussbächer, and also gives the product a premium feel.



BRESCA

Before the pandemic, the only plastic used at fine-dining restaurant Bresca in Washington, D.C., was plastic wrap. Even tasting spoons used in the kitchen were metal.

But since the arrival of COVID-19, owner Ryan Ratino has had to make concessions for his BeeHome takeout program. Fully compostable containers would cost around \$4 for a \$40 meal, so moved to what he considers the second-best option: packaging with a compostable base and a plastic lid, which costs around \$2.

"It's proved very challenging [to do the right thing], and we've talked about this multiple times," Ratino says. "We're trying to stick with our core values regardless of the situation around us."

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

This summer, Harvard University piloted a reusable bag for undergrads to use for takeout food. It was so successful the foodservice department gave one to all undergrads this fall. The bag is large enough for just one meal's worth of food, "and the hope is to significantly reduce plastic or paper bag use in our FlyBy operation or meals-to-go from the dining hall," says spokesperson Crista Martin.

In addition, Harvard's Crimson Catering team developed packaging in support of prewrapped, individual portions of catered items that still has the appearance of a special event, which will help with safety perceptions surrounding catered food.



OPERATORS BEEF UP ECO-FRIENDLY PACKAGING



WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Washington University in St. Louis, Mo., kicked off a reusables program for its students during COVID-19.

To encourage responsibility, students take a pledge and do a short education piece about reusables before they join the program, with the goal of attracting the students who are most invested in the program, according to Andrew Watling, associate director of dining services.

Watling purchases the containers, which feature the school's logo and messaging, through his local equipment distributor.

There are a number of spots around campus for students to return the boxes, with the return on investment hitting at about nine or 10 uses, Watling says. "Updated branding on the containers and return receptacles have shown to be highly effective in increasing the return rate," he points out.

"We've partnered with student sustainability groups on campus to raise awareness of the program as well as help coach other students as to how to use the eco2go program," Watling says.



THE COMPASS GROUP

Compass Group USA introduced a vending machine variation of reusable containers at some accounts, especially business and higher education locations. Customers return the containers on-site, where the operator washes and sanitizes them. In most cases, customers buy into the system then receive a token so they can get bowls in perpetuity, although sometimes the operator chooses to absorb all costs. Typically, the operator sees a return on their investment — often \$30,000 for the starter kit — within the first year through the elimination or reduction of single-use containers.

"A fair amount of these clients are already utilizing reusables for dine-in service and are looking to eliminate their single-use to-go disposables," says Jesse Hocker, sustainability development director.

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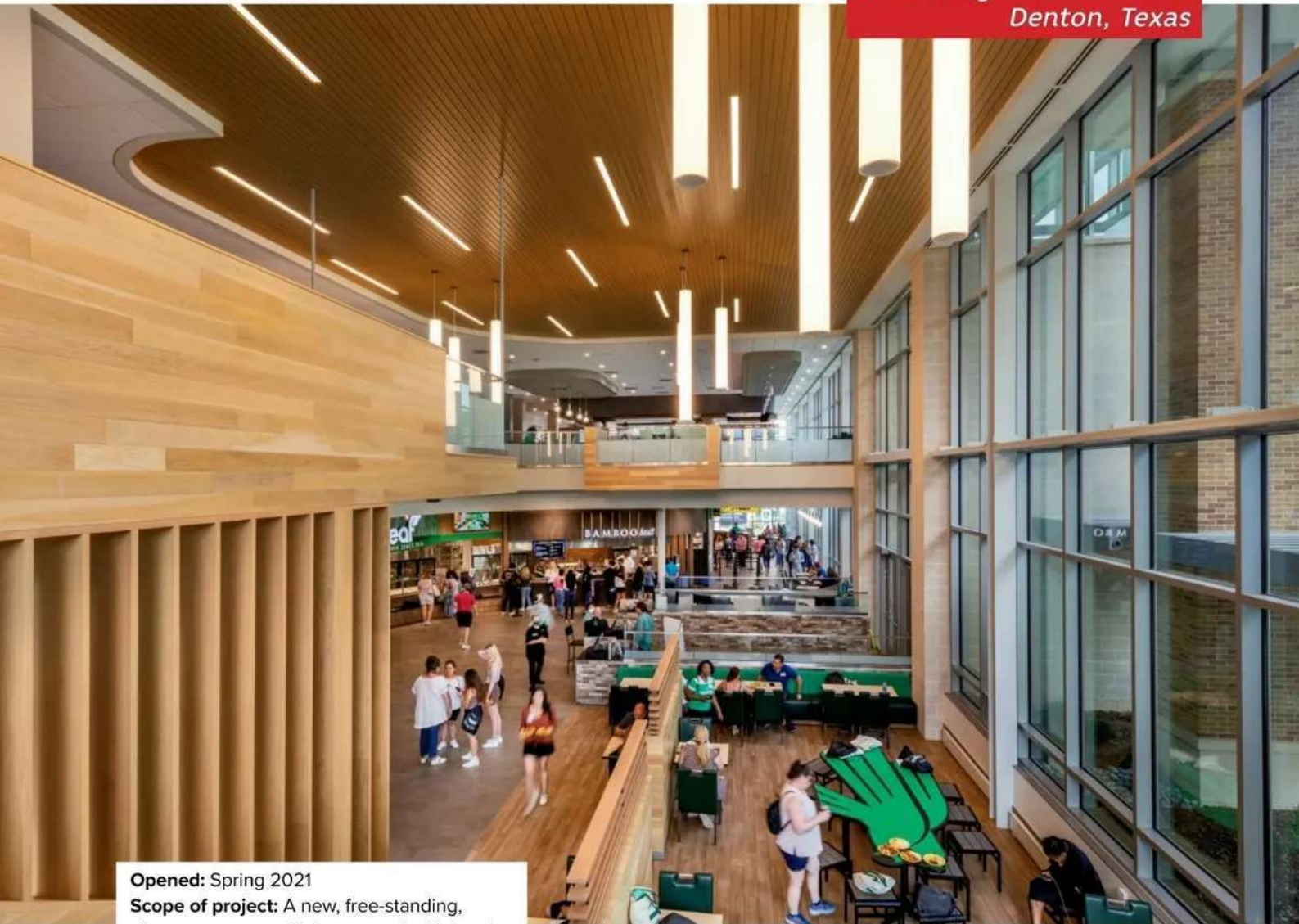
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Equipment investment: \$3 million

Website: dining.unt.edu/eagle-landing

| **By Donna Boss** |

Photos by Joe Aker

New Dining Hall at the University of North Texas Focuses on the Food Experience

Eagle Landing is the first free-standing dining hall at the University of North Texas (UNT). With seating for 700 guests, it boasts 16% more seating capacity than the next largest dining hall. “We now have a \$25-million building on campus based on food and the food experience,” says Peter Balabuch, executive director of Dining Services.

The Eagle Landing project team set out to provide the students and community with a dining facility that enhances its made-in-house, fresh food model, which has been evolving since 2009. “Dining used to serve processed foods from the freezer to the oven,” says Balabuch. “We’ve gone to the other extreme: buying the best ingredients, hiring top-level chefs who get to create chef-driven menu items from scratch and preparing nearly all the food we serve here on campus.”

FACILITY DESIGN PROJECT OF THE MONTH

Eagle Landing, named after the university's mascot, replaces the 365-seat Kerr Dining Hall. "Kerr had become outdated in concept and operational efficiency, convenience of staffing the kitchen and serving stations, maintenance of equipment and energy consumption — costing more to continue operation versus a noticeable return on investment of a new facility for the next 50 years," says foodservice consultant Rodney A. Worrell, president of Worrell Design Group Inc. in Houston.

The new dining center, which sits directly across the street from the campus welcome center, contains a kitchen, seven restaurant-style food

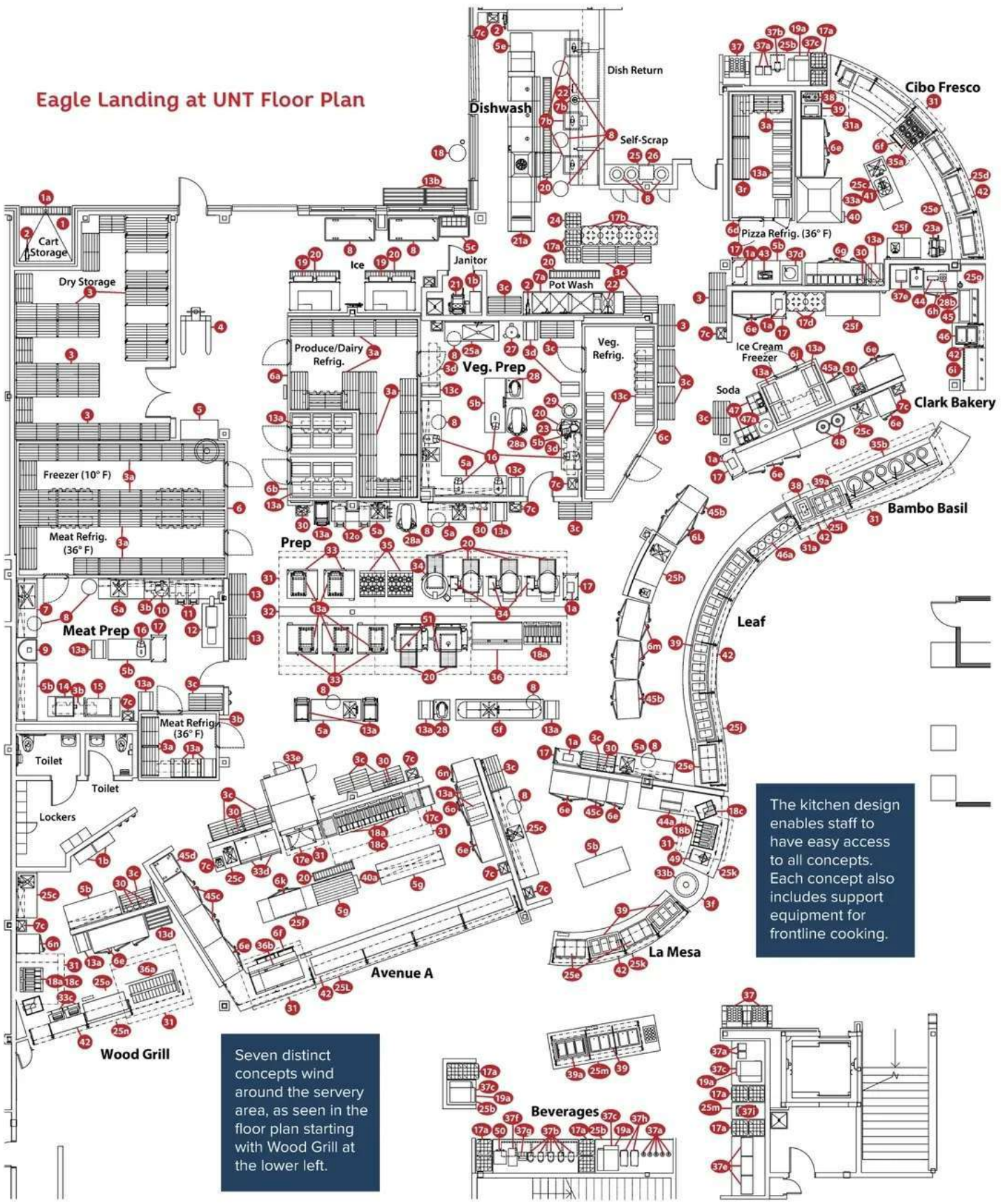


The kitchen equipment lineup includes skillets, a flattop griddle and fryers.

Floor Plan Equipment Key

- | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Cart wash | 6i. Refrigerated pastry case | 18. Used fryer oil tank | 28. 20-qt. mixer with stand | 37g. Condiment dispenser |
| 1a. Dry steam unit | 6j Cold storage assembly, ice cream freezer | 18a. Fryers/filter | 28a. 60-qt. mixer | 37h. Tea brewers/dispensers |
| 1b. Steam cleaners | 6k. Undercounter freezer | 18b. Double fryer | 28b. Shake mixer | 37i. Juice dispenser |
| 2. Hose reel(s) | 6l. Pass-through refrigerator | 18c. Dump station | 29. Egg sheller | 38. Noodle rethermalizer |
| 3. Dry storage shelving units | 6m. Vegetable merchandising refrigerator | 19. Ice machine/bin assemblies | 30. Fire protection system(s) | 39. Refrigerated cold pan |
| 3a. Cold storage shelving units | 6n. Reach-in freezer | 19a. Ice maker | 31. Exhaust hood | 39a. Refrigerated cold/heated pan |
| 3b. Meat prep refrigeration coils | 6o. Roll-in refrigerator | 20. Trench drains/grate(s) | 31a. Condensate exhaust hood | 40. Pizza tool holder |
| 3c. Storage shelving unit(s) | 7. Brining sink | 21. Portable pressure washer | 32. Utility distribution system | 41. Pizza wedge cutter |
| 3d. Vegetable prep refrigeration coils | 7a. Soak sink | 21a. Flight-type warewash machine | 33. Roll-in combi ovens | 42. Breath protector assembly |
| 3e. Meat prep refrigeration coils | 7b. Mobile soak sinks | 22. Disposer | 33a. Pizza oven | 43. Pizza sheeter |
| 3f. Glass enclosure | 7c. Hand sink | 23. Slicer | 33b. Tortilla press and oven | 44. Fudge/syrup warmer |
| 4. Pallet jack | 8. Trash container(s) | 23a. Prosciutto slicer with stand | 33c. Conveyor toasters | 44a. Tortilla chip warmer |
| 5. Receiving table | 9. Patty maker | 24. Rack dolly | 33d. Bread ovens | 45. Ice cream dipping cabinet |
| 5a. Worktable with sink | 10. Food cutter | 25. Soiled self-sorting counter | 33e. Smoker | 45a. Heated holding cabinet |
| 5b. Worktable | 11. Mobile ingredient bins | 25a. Prep counter with vegetable wash | 34. 100-gal. stationary kettle | 45b. Pass-through heated cabinet |
| 5c. Silver sort table | 12. Braiding machine | 25b. Beverage counter | 34a. 60-gal. tilt kettles | 45c. Reach-in heated cabinet |
| 5d. Soiled-dish table | 13. Mobile utensil racks | 25c. Back counter with sink | 35. Six-burner ranges | 45d. Proofing cabinet |
| 5e. Transfer bridge | 13a. Mobile pan racks | 25d. Serving counter | 35a. Six-burner range top | 46. Drop-in hot food well |
| 5f. Worktable w/sink and utensil rack | 13b. Wood storage racks | 25e. Heated surface | 35b. Wok range | 46a. Soup wells |
| 5g. Butcher block table | 13c. Mobile storage racks | 25f. Back counter | 36. 72-inch flattop griddle with stand | 47. Soda dispensing containers |
| 6. Cold storage assembly | 13d. Firewood displays/storage rack | 25g. Serving counter | 36a. Wood grill | 47a. CO ₂ tank |
| 6a. Cold storage assembly, produce/dairy | 14. Mixer grinder | 25h. Back counter with sink and lavatory | 36b. 72-inch griddle | 48. Rice cookers |
| 6b. Blast chiller | 15. Marinating vacuum tumbler | 25i. Serving counter | 37. Utensil dispenser kiosks | 49. Tortilla chip chopper |
| 6c. Cold storage assembly, vegetables | 16. Food processor | 25j. Serving counter | 37a. Napkin dispensers | 50. Coffee brewer |
| 6d. Cold storage assembly, pizza | 17. Utility cart | 25k. Serving counter | 37b. Cold and sparkling water dispenser | 51. 40-gal. braising pans |
| 6e. Reach-in refrigerator | 17a. Cup/glass rack carts | 25l. Serving counter | 37c. Soda dispenser | |
| 6f. Refrigerated equipment stand | 17b. Dish transport carts | 25m. Condiments/toppings counter | 37d. Pizza sauce dispenser | |
| 6g. Pizza prep refrigerator | 17c. Fry staging cart | 25n. Serving counter | 37e. Milk dispenser | |
| 6h. Undercounter refrigerator | 17d. Bowl carts | 25o. Three-pan heated surface | 37f. Double cream dispenser | |
| | 17e. Staging cart | 26. Scale | | |
| | | 27. Lettuce dryer | | |

Eagle Landing at UNT Floor Plan



Seven distinct concepts wind around the servery area, as seen in the floor plan starting with Wood Grill at the lower left.

The kitchen design enables staff to have easy access to all concepts. Each concept also includes support equipment for frontline cooking.



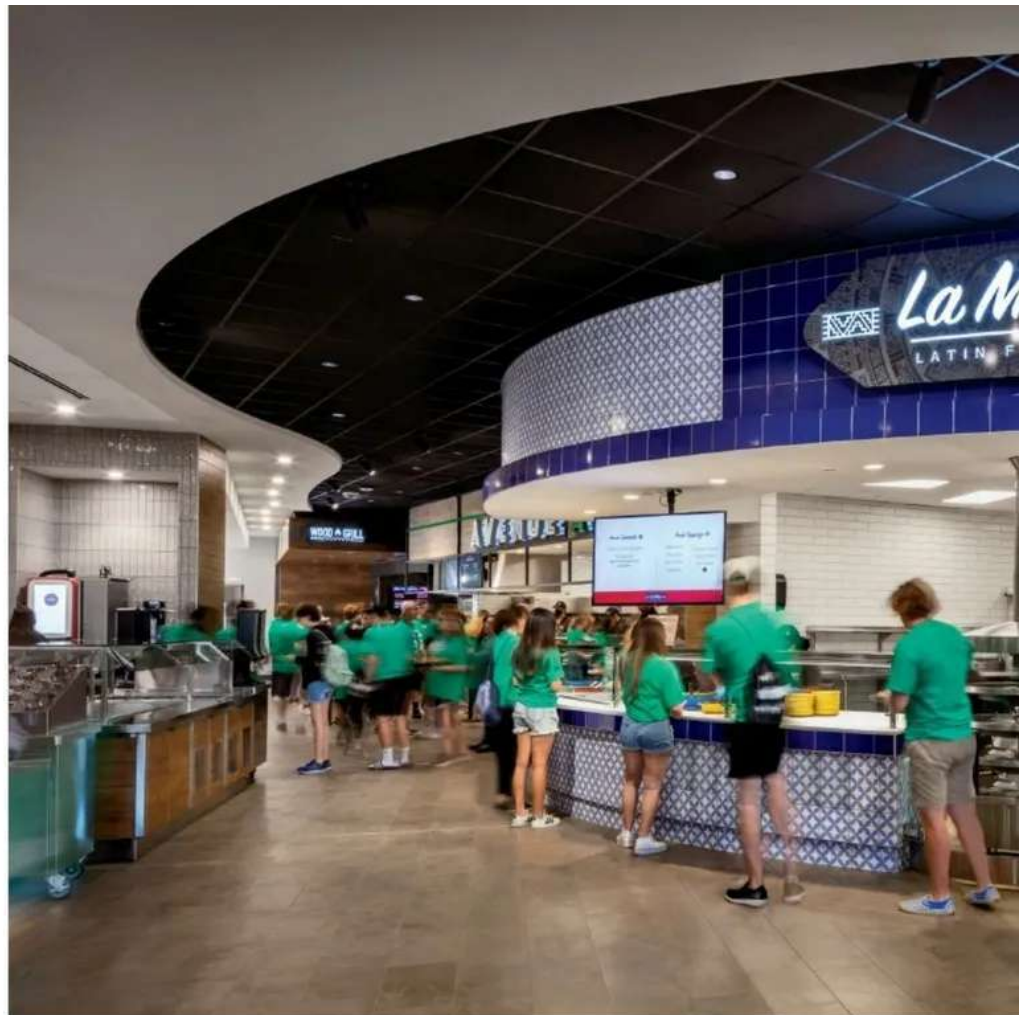
Eagle, a broadline manufacturer of commercial foodservice equipment, is pleased to sponsor the "Facility Design Project of the Month" department. To learn more about us, visit www.eaglegrp.com. Go Green. Go ECO-Built™ by Eagle.

concepts, three beverage stations and seating on two levels. Staff in the kitchen and serving areas produce up to 4,788 meals per day.

“This dining center helps sell UNT as a campus of choice,” Worrell says. “It is planned to be a strong recruitment tool for students determining where they want to go to school,” he says. “Parents also are pleased to see the attention given to healthy eating and a wide selection of menu ingredients.”

Interdisciplinary collaboration allowed the team to establish sustainability objectives and ensure they were carried out throughout construction.

Careful consideration was given to indoor air quality, which played a major role in material selection. A whole building flush-out was conducted prior to occupancy to reduce exposure to possible pollutants. Strict



procedures during construction helped minimize landfill waste and avoid pollution of local storm sewers and waterways. More than 90% of construction waste was diverted from landfills. Water-efficient plumbing fixtures and Energy Star-rated appliances contributed to more than 30% reduction in indoor water use. The project also prioritized local materials with high

percentages of recycled content. As a culmination of these efforts the project team is pursuing LEED certification.

“Occupant experience played an important role in the design,” Worrell says. “Orientation, ample daylight, access to quality views and window-shading solutions enhance occupant comfort within the built environment but also aid in 10% energy savings.”

Glass windows provide views inside and out while providing natural light and connections to the exterior.

Eagle Landing’s entry point provides a wow factor with a monumental staircase connecting a double-height space. “The idea of the stair element was to make it a destination, with integrated seating areas, while visually connecting students to the

FACILITY DESIGN PROJECT OF THE MONTH



Above: Customers looking for Latin fusion cuisine frequent La Mesa.

Far left: Tilting kettles help staff to produce soups, sauces and other menu items.

Left: A staff member mixes flour in the back of the house. Photo courtesy of UNT Dining Services

second level, where a majority of the seating space is located,” says Steve Durham, principal

in charge at Kirksey Architecture in Houston. At the top of the stair element sits a dramatic cantilevered seating area called the Eagle’s Nest as well as other unique seating areas.

Seating areas provide options for dining, socializing and studying. The second floor features a 24-foot-long community table, a quiet zone, seating overlooking the first floor and a table

About the Project

UNT Dining Services: One of the largest self-supported foodservice departments in North Texas. Contains 20-plus retail food shops, five dining halls, an upscale dining restaurant, an in-house bakery and full-service catering. It serves nearly 5 million meals annually.

Seats: 700 on two levels, including seating types ranging from banquet tables to bar seating and four-top table arrangements

Average check: Accepts UNT’s dining residential plan (which is accepted at all dining halls). The plan serves most resident students, plus commuter students, faculty and staff. The price for those who are not meal plan members is \$8.45 plus tax.

Total annual sales: \$25 million for residential dining throughout campus

Daily transactions/covers: Up to 5,500 on busiest day since opening

Hours: 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. to 9 p.m., daily

Menu concepts and specialties:

- Wood Grill offers burgers and plant-based cuisine cooked over a wood grill.
- Avenue A provides homestyle, traditional foods like fried chicken, macaroni and cheese, in-house smoked barbecue meats, and breakfast all day.
- La Mesa offers a Latin fusion menu including street tacos, chips and house-made flour tortillas.
- Leaf features greens grown at Mean Green Acres, an on-campus, organic hydroponic garden that the UNT Dining Services team operates. Menu items at Leaf include salads, soups, vegetables and 100% plant-based menu items.
- Bamboo Basil offers Asian-inspired stir-fried rice and noodle dishes.
- Clark Bakery is a dessert and baked goods station featuring cookies, cakes, cobblers and campus-made hand-dipped ice cream.
- Cibo Fresco features pizza, calzones, stromboli and a daily pasta toss.
- Beverage stations on the first and second levels of the dining hall offer soda, juice, milk, cold and sparkling water, coffee and tea.

Staff: 36 full-time equivalents; 250 students

Total project cost: \$25.47 million

shaped like the UNT diving eagle symbol.

Another key design feature provides acoustics in seating areas that enable students to gather and talk without excessive noise distraction. “It is difficult to control acoustics in large open spaces with a lot of hard surfaces,” Camacho says. “We analyzed each of the dining spaces and central gathering areas individually to apply efficient acoustic treatments at the ceiling and mechanical system rather than applying one general catch-all solution for the entire building.

Also on full display in this space are the food concepts. “We’re providing as much culinary transparency as we can, as well as allowing guests to

customize their menu items by showing more preparation in front of the guests,” Balabuch says.

The food concepts use custom branding and unique finishes to give each concept a unique character, similar to the ambience at a food hall. “Key highlights include creating a show around the food concepts that the audience experiences and engages while enhancing the learning component of the food program,” Balabuch says.

The material palette features natural hues to accentuate the food concepts. In addition, “a key design feature maximizes lighting at the serving stations to present the food at its fullest potential,” says Linda Camacho, senior project coordinator at Kirksey Architecture.



Avenue A attracts customers who enjoy homestyle food and breakfast all day.

“For instance, the project budget was constantly reiterated in the programming and design phases, which influenced the selection of materials and complexity of building,” Worrell says. In addition, the project site was smaller than the project’s square footage needs, which influenced a two-story solution.

All kitchen and serving stations had to be on one floor to avoid confusion about the location of each of the services. “Clarity from the moment you enter the building was of key importance,” says Durham. “Additionally, a separation of services vertically would have created budget issues in terms of duplication of services.” Staff had to have direct access at any point in the kitchen to all food serving stations. No dead end or customer backtracking situations were allowed in the physical layout of serving stations. Also, at ground level and adjacent to the kitchen, the

fully screened, off-street loading dock area had to be sized for two full-sized tractor trailer delivery vehicles, four trash and recycle dumpsters, as well as an area to place the firewood racks and holders used for the wood-burning grill and smoker in the servery.

Food Deliveries and Production

After taking delivery of ingredients, staff place items into walk-in coolers specified for meat, dairy and produce, a freezer that holds proteins and dry storage.

“The flow of operation is very linear, so staff members don’t have to backtrack from the receiving dock to storage to prep to cooking to serving to warewashing to the dock,” says Worrell. With the exception of storage and cold rooms, staff do not need to negotiate doors in the open kitchen.

Staff work in a garde manger room to prepare vegetables and fruit.

A separate refrigerated meat prep room allows staff to handle meat and use the automated patty maker at safe temperatures. The placement of these rooms gives staff direct access to their respective bulk food coolers as well as separate but direct access to finished prep coolers. Two walk-in-size blast chillers also contribute to safe production of menu items including meat, soups, sauces and other ingredients.

“Certain finished or prepped foods might be completed at this kitchen as specialty categories that can be transported to other campus dining locations; thus, freeing up those locations from duplicate work and saving labor costs and space,” Worrell says.

The warewashing area contains a soak sink for pots, a flight-type dishwasher and conveyor-less dish return. “All warewash functions are centralized and placed at one end of the servery for student dish return — this is a

Bamboo Basil features Asian-inspired cuisine prepared in woks.



trayless operation — that is adjacent to the service dock for trash removal and also linked to kitchen for pot/pan-washing aspects,” Worrell says.

Front-of-the-House Stations

“Each concept is a separate restaurant with a wide variety of menu offerings for a diverse student population,” says Balabuch. “Each concept has all the support equipment it needs for the staff to do frontline cooking.”

Staff can access all seven food serving stations from the open kitchen. Each station contains appropriate refrigerated rails, undercounter refrigerators and food warmers, heated cabinets and hot/cold surfaces as needed. Each station contains an equipment showpiece that further creates an experiential wow factor for guests. Staff serve all items except soup and salad. For other items, staff portion the food, but customers can request

Each restaurant has a unique design and color scheme. Different shades of wood and sinuous shapes define restaurant concepts.



FACILITY DESIGN PROJECT OF THE MONTH

as many portions as they like. Portion control for each serving contributes to keeping food waste in check.

Wood Grill features house-formed burgers, plant-based burgers and french fries. Staff cook the items on an Argentinian gaucho grill that uses hardwood lump charcoal and real wood. The grill can produce up to 280 burgers per hour. The firewood is on display at the counter. The station also features shoe-string fries and house-made chips. Staff at Clark Bakery, a centralized bakery on campus, make the burger buns.

Avenue A offers homestyle foods such as macaroni and cheese, in-house smoked barbecue meats, grilled cheese sandwiches and breakfast all day. Staff use a smoker to barbecue the meats and cook black beans, pulled pork and chicken. The station also contains a bread oven and proofing cabinet. Fryers produce chicken tenders, old-fashioned fried chicken, okra and steak fries. The station also offers breakfast all day with biscuits, scrambled eggs, sausage links and crispy potatoes.

La Mesa offers Latin fusion nachos and street tacos on house-made tortillas pressed on-site in an automated, free-standing tortilla press and cooked in a spiral tortilla grill. The station also offers fresh fried tortilla chips, refried beans and fresh toppings.

Leaf, a vegetarian concept, features fresh vegetables, build-your-own salads, composed salads, daily soups and hearty, 100% plant-based vegan entrees such as chana masala and green curry tofu. Leafy greens and herbs at this concept grow at Mean Green Acres, UNT's non-GMO hydroponic campus garden. A 24-foot-long refrigerated cold counter offers ingredients for self-serve.

Bamboo Basil features an Asian-inspired menu including stir-fried chicken, rice and noodle dishes, as well as sesame tofu and vegetable lo mein. A 13-foot-long counter contains 6 front-facing woks so guests can see culinary staff preparing menu items.



Clark Bakery at Eagle Landing, a dessert and baked goods station, offers cookies, fresh pastries, cakes, cobblers, milkshakes, pies and campus-made hand-dipped ice cream. All menu items are made at Clark Bakery.

Cibo Fresco features Mediterranean-style, quick-baked pizzas and pasta such as penne Alfredo, primavera, and spaghetti and marinara. A large capacity four-deck pizza oven features sliding glass doors, a lighted interior, dual gas system and rotating decks. The oven can serve 200 pizzas per hour. Staff use basil grown at the

hydroponic garden.

Beverage stations on the first and second levels of the dining hall offer soda, juice, milk, cold and sparkling water, coffee and tea.

The future looks bright for Eagle Landing as customers discover a new landscape of diverse flavors and intriguing design. Balabuch and his team are well on their way to realizing the goal they set for continuing to enhance the positive food experience on this campus. It's little wonder why Balabuch's colleagues are coming from all over the country to see this new operation. **FE&S**

Key Players

Owner: University of North Texas
Associate vice president, Auxiliary Services: Daniel Armitage
Executive director, Dining Services: Peter Balabuch
Senior director of operations, dining services: Derrick Cripps
Executive chef, residential dining, operations: Rudy Vasquez
Assistant director, culinary operations, Eagle Landing: Klaus Meier
Architects: Kirksey Architecture, Houston: Steve Durham, AIA, LEED AP, executive vice president and director of collegiate projects; Darrell Whatley, AIA, LEED AP, NCARB, vice president, senior project manager; R. Linda Camacho, senior project coordinator; John Wilkinson, project designer; Frances Oguntuga, LEED AP, SITES AP, WELL AP, sustainability coordinator
Interior design: Kirksey Architecture, Houston
Consultants: Worrell Design Group Inc., Houston: Rodney A. Worrell, president; May Boitel, space programmer; Johnny De La Rosa, project manager
Equipment dealer: Pasco Foodservice Equipment, Plano, Texas: Joey Eaves, project manager
Construction: Rogers O'Brien Construction, Dallas



Peter Balabuch,
executive director,
Dining Services, UNT.

Balabuch joined UNT 23 years ago. He has held numerous

positions ranging from production supervisor to culinary trainer and director of residential dining services.



May Boitel, space programmer, Worrell Design Group. Boitel

worked for the firm from 1981 until 2001 and joined again in 2005.



Linda Camacho,
senior project coordinator, Kirksey Architecture.

Practicing architecture for 22 years, Camacho

joined the firm in 2004 and developed expertise in K-12, collegiate and community projects.



Steve Durham,
executive vice president and director of collegiate projects, Kirksey Architecture.

Durham's professional experience spans 29 years. He joined the firm in 1997. He also founded and spearheads Kirksey's Outreach Committee, which focuses on giving back to the community.



Johnny De La Rosa,
project manager,
Worrell Design Group. De La Rosa

worked for the firm from 2009 until 2013

and joined again in 2016.



Rudy Vasquez,
executive chef,
Culinary Operations, residential dining, operations. Prior to

joining UNT, Vasquez

held positions with Aramark, Hilton DFW Conference Center and Gaylord Texas Resort and Convention Center.



Rodney A. Worrell,
president, Worrell Design Group. After 16

years with Mulhauser/

Cleary Associates,

Worrell reestablished

the practice as Worrell Design Group Inc. in 1994. Other projects include Texas Children's Pavilion for Women in Houston and Hilton Granite Park in Plano, Texas.



At Leaf, a build-your-own noodle bowl contains house-made pho broth that is 100% plant-based, along with lo mein noodles, shredded napa cabbage, roasted mushrooms, fried garlic, green onion, fresh jalapeno and a slice of lime.
Photo courtesy of UNT

ON-SITE PROFILE |||||

Spectrum Health Lakeland
St. Joseph, Mich.



Renovated Hospital Cafe Alters Guests' Food Experience

| By Donna Boss |

Photos by Kirk Snyder, Blue Tie Photo

A bright, inviting environment greets staff and visitors within the Spectrum Health Lakeland Medical Center Pavilion in southwest Michigan. This project includes a new addition to the hospital and a renovation of existing space. The new addition features an airy public atrium with a more welcoming entrance and a better customer flow to and through the renovated cafe, renamed The Atrium.

“The design challenge for the cafe was to create appealing and exciting food concepts with added production

support at each concept and all within the original footprint,” says Jodie Hardesty, RDN, director of Nutrition Services, Spectrum Health Lakeland.

Of course, achieving such goals was easier said than done. Before the remodel, employees and guests traveled through a corridor in the basement to access the cafe. The former grill/hot food line cut off this entrance so customers had a hard time viewing all of the offerings. “Low ceiling height required developing each menu concept as a unique stand-alone

destination,” says Stephanie Occhipinti, vice president, production principal of Bakergroup in Grand Rapids, Mich. Now, shallow soffits sit over each venue to anchor the concepts and bring life to a space without any natural light.

Designers also focused on developing a more dynamic experience by combining different lighting techniques to elevate and create an atmosphere that emulates a restaurant. In the newly designed space, accent pendants complement the character of some venues, while others include directional lighting and wall-washing to help accent key features, such as signage, wall graphics and product display.

Another challenge, the cafe’s overall small servery footprint, required designers to carefully plan how to fit five unique concepts, plus a grab-and-go area and a beverage area, into the space. “We suggested

Facts of Note

Opened: Fall 2020

Spectrum Health Lakeland: 3 hospitals; 4,100-plus team members

Scope of project: Complete renovation of the front-of-the-house retail servery from a traditional food court to a microrestaurant operation

Total project cost: \$972,000

Total project size: 355,000 sq. ft., including a new 260,000-sq.-ft. clinical pavilion and 90,000 sq. ft. of renovated space, including The Atrium (2,750 sq. ft.)

Average check: \$4.73

Total annual sales: \$1.3 million

Daily transactions/covers: breakfast, 240; lunch, 500; dinner, 170

Cafe hours: 7 a.m. to 12:30 a.m., Monday through Sunday. Hours vary by concept.

Menu concepts and specialties:

- Lakeland Grill House offers burgers and sandwiches
- Crust Pizzeria specializes in grab-and-go pizza
- Homestyle provides comfort foods
- World features a rotating global menu
- Greens Kitchen is a soup and salad bar

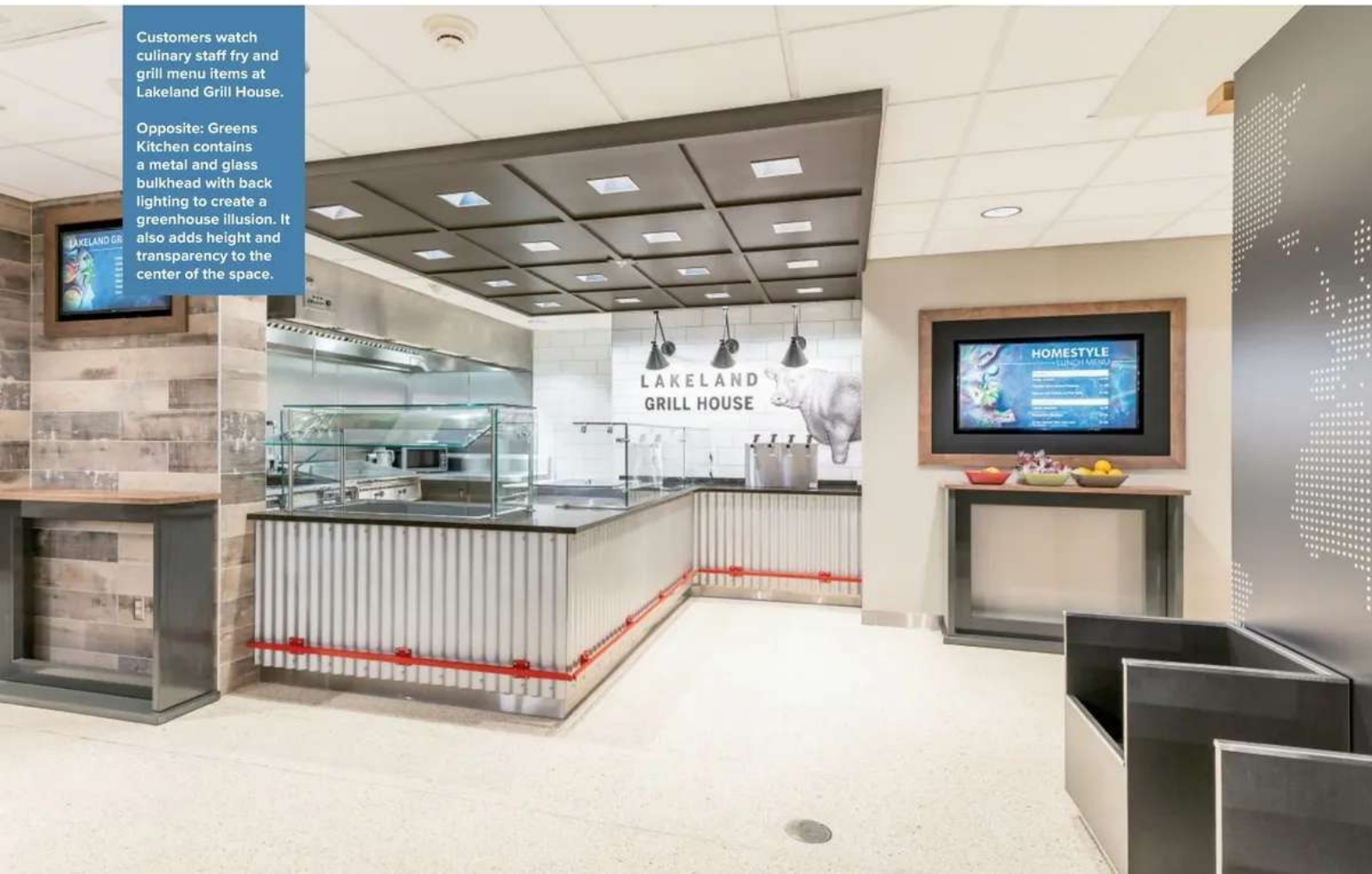
Staff: 20 employees

Equipment investment: \$300,000

Website: spectrumhealthlakeland.org

Customers watch culinary staff fry and grill menu items at Lakeland Grill House.

Opposite: Greens Kitchen contains a metal and glass bulkhead with back lighting to create a greenhouse illusion. It also adds height and transparency to the center of the space.



unique material patterns, with neutral coloring and paired them with finishes that repeated throughout the space to help create a varied yet cohesive look and feel,” says Kaitlin Oppenhuizen, interior designer at Bakergroup. Changing paint colors, adding glass panels around the centrally located Greens Kitchen and World concepts and accenting backlighting also helps to maintain variety, height and transparency throughout the space.

In addition, each unique name/brand gives guests a quick snapshot of the cuisine and menu offerings at each concept. “This helped to add another layer of complexity to help define each microrestaurant and encourage efficient wayfinding,” Oppenhuizen says.

The project team also considered line queuing for each concept. “An added benefit of the renovation is that it allows some food concepts to tuck queuing lines out of the flow of traffic,” Occhipinti says. For example, at the new Lakeland Grill House, the queuing line now resides in the back of the servery near the old entrance to the cafe. The new pizza concept, Crust Pizzeria, accommodates preordering

and facilitates the rapid pickup of pizzas by sitting closer to the entrance. As a result, long lines at this concept have diminished.

Designers also placed beverages in the corner of the service area along the exit path. The placement of beverages created an easy and convenient location for customers to obtain a beverage without cutting off the flow of traffic around the food concepts, Occhipinti says.

Flow and Production

The Atrium attaches to the main kitchen, which was not part of this project. No changes were made to the flow of menu items from delivery to production to customer service. Due to space constraints, staff continue to produce most of the food for the front-of-the-house menu concepts in the back-of-the-house kitchen, though some menu item production takes place in the front of the house at Lakeland Grill House and Crust Pizzeria. The project’s designers provided production support with reach-in refrigerators and hot-holding cabinets in Lakeland Grill House, Greens Kitchen, World and Crust

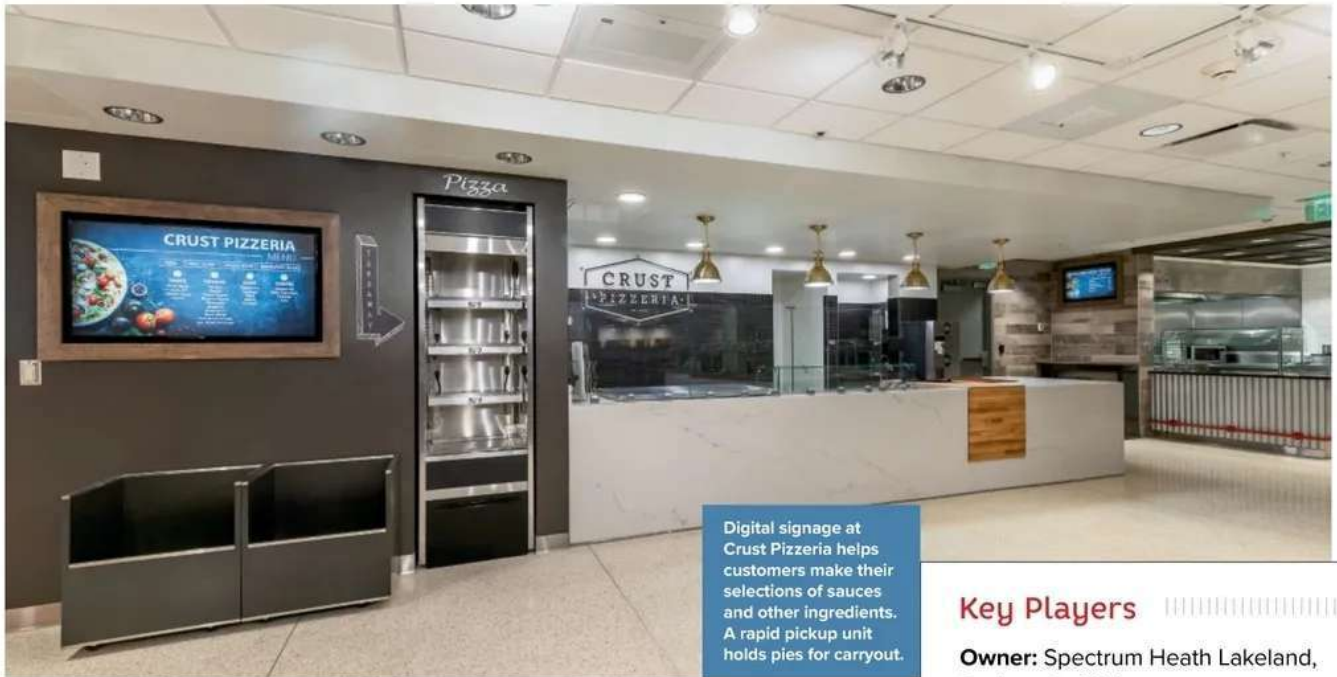
Pizzeria. These pieces of equipment provide support from the kitchen to these venues during rush-hour periods.

The large salad bar, Greens Kitchen, sits strategically in the cafe so it becomes visible to customers as they enter. Designed as a colorful, fresh, build-your-own soup and salad bar to promote eating healthier foods, this concept sits centrally within the servery. To keep up with demand at Greens Kitchen, an island configuration, reach-in refrigerator and refrigerated rails allow staff to easily restock food items and clean the space. The area contains a metal and glass bulkhead with backlighting to create a greenhouse illusion and give height and transparency to the center of the space.

“Until state restrictions are lifted, staff at Greens Kitchen take customers’ orders and assemble ingredients before handing the salads to guests,” says Tina Brink, retail supervisor for Nutrition Services. Guests select their salad dressings, which are individually packaged, as are servings of croutons.

On the back side of Greens Kitchen, the World concept’s mosaic tile counter facade and large-scale





Digital signage at Crust Pizzeria helps customers make their selections of sauces and other ingredients. A rapid pickup unit holds pies for carryout.

global graphic define the space. This area, which is now closed and will open when construction is complete on the coffee concept and the pizza station returns to its original position, features a rotating global-inspired menu featuring Asian, Italian and Mexican cuisine. Menu items are displayed in steam table pans.

Homestyle, which features classic cuisine and a carving station for freshly roasted meats, has a new steam table in the counter space. The breakfast menu features eggs, egg casseroles, biscuits and gravy, potatoes, bacon, sausage links and oatmeal. The lunch and dinner menus feature items such as crab macaroni and cheese; roasted red potatoes; creole stewed okra, corn and tomatoes; and soups such as potato bacon. An aged wood-paneled counter facade serves as this area's unique design feature. Customers also find bread at this station.

While Lakeland Grill House's space received a facelift, most of the prerenovation equipment is intact. A dark-paneled ceiling with feature lighting and a corrugated metal counter facade help this space to stand out in the servery.

Staff use a flattop griddle to cook pancakes, made-to-order omelets, French toast and breakfast sandwiches on a rotating schedule for breakfast. They also use the griddle at lunch and

dinner to make hamburgers, cheeseburgers, veggie burgers, plant-based burgers, a black bean burger, catfish and chicken. Two double fryers cook vegan nuggets, chicken tenders, fries and onion rings.

Crust Pizzeria, which stands out with its mosaic tile wall, offers baked pastas, pizzas and build-your-own half and whole pies. Staff use a ventless, quick-speed impingement pizza oven to bake pies in 90 seconds and a large butcher block slab to cut the pies. They also cook breadsticks stuffed with cheese in the pizza oven. They keep menu items warm on a heated plate with heat lamps above. A built-in, heated pickup display unit resides at the front of the station.

The grab-and-go and beverage station features a three-door glass-front cooler for takeout menu items including salads, soups, wraps, yogurt, cheese, desserts and packaged meals that customers can heat in a microwave oven. Beverages sit in another cooler. Other beverages offered along a counter include coffee and tea drinks and juices, all dispensed from carafes or dispensers. "This area is open 24 hours a day," Brink says. "A grab-and-go scanner registers the items guests select. They pay with payroll deduct and debit or credit cards."

Designers moved the cashier/checkout area into one of two dining

Key Players

Owner: Spectrum Heath Lakeland, St. Joseph, Mich.

Manager of facilities planning, design and construction: Philip Cooper, AIA, manager

Director of Nutrition Services: Jodie Hardesty, RDN

Retail supervisor for Nutrition Services: Tina Brink

Chef for Nutrition Services: Jeff Thomas

Architects: Creative Design Solutions Inc., South Bend, Ind.

Foodservice consultants: Bakergroup, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Stephanie Occhipinti, vice president, production principal; Kaitlin Oppenhuizen, interior designer

Equipment dealer: Stafford-Smith Inc., Kalamazoo, Mich.

Construction: Roggow Construction Co., St. Joseph, Mich.

spaces. "This gave us more floor space to walk in," says Hardesty.

The 850-square-foot coffee cafe, located on level two, is under construction, and the project team anticipates it will open in December.

Introducing a new cafe with an expanded menu and easy-to-navigate foot traffic at Spectrum Health Lakeland couldn't have come at a better time. In the midst of the pandemic, when stress levels have been high, a new servery is a gift that brings joy, comfort and nourishment. **FE&S**

| By Joseph M. Carbonara |

Linda Tell

The Sam Tell Companies

The foodservice industry remains a business segment that rewards old-fashioned hard work and dedication. Such is the case with Linda Tell, a sales representative with The Sam Tell Companies, a Farmingdale, N.Y.-based dealership. The fact that Marc Tell, Linda's father, leads the business made her reluctant to initially pursue a career with the company. Instead, she started her career in advertising, looking at clients' target demographics, products and budgets before working with a team to build messaging. It's a skill set that has served Linda well since joining The Sam Tell Companies in 2017. Her growing book of business includes independent restaurant operators and some restaurant groups.

Q: How do you leverage your advertising experience to support your current customers?

A: The agency I worked with trained me to be very results driven. A lot of my job was reporting. If we ran a campaign, we had to prove it was successful. I use those reporting skills to track orders and manage logistics. The skill set I built in advertising helps me add value to my customers.

Q: You learned the industry from the ground up. What was that learning process like?

A: VP of sales Heather Kogan put together a really thorough training program when she hired a new cohort of sales reps. We met with our manufacturer partners and learned about their products and how we would work with them. And over two weeks, we had a foodservice supply boot camp, which was really helpful. From there, we just had to do it. I had to do a lot of cold calling and have a lot of conversations where I would have to say, "I will have to get back to you." We got started right away selling and making mistakes and calling manufacturers for answers. That all happened until I knew what I was doing.

Q: Tabletop and smallwares are specialty areas of yours. What goes into developing a good tabletop?

A: Everyone is different, and everyone has different tastes. I don't want to be an order taker. I want to be more of a consultant. When someone wants us to make a proposal, I ask a lot of questions. I ask about the number of seats and volume. I ask about the look and feel of the restaurant. I ask if they want white china. And, of course, I ask about budget. When possible, I like to take them to a showroom and even send them physical samples. Receiving the samples allows the chef to plate menu items to see what it looks like in the restaurant.

Q: What excites you most about the industry?

A: People are engaged with restaurants in a way they have not been before. It's a time where people have social media accounts dedicated to restaurants. Celebrity chefs bring in clientele simply because of their reputations. But because I started in this business young, I have the chance to make relationships with up-and-coming chefs and develop long-term relationships with them. We will be able to grow together. I am starting to get calls from chefs that worked with me on past jobs, and it's because they like my service. I think things are really starting to get good.

Q: Complete this thought: In ten years, I hope to ...

A: Be a part of ushering in a new era for the industry. I really like what I do in sales and am definitely leaning on my strengths. I have so many ideas and am starting to lean on my advertising background to pitch in with our marketing efforts. In ten years, I hope to have a much bigger impact on the industry and help bring it into the 21st century. So in ten years, I hope to see more women in the industry. And if I can inspire more women to join the industry, that would be amazing.



People are engaged with restaurants in a way they have not been before.



Grange Hall features outdoor dining and a brewery, as well as eight restaurant concepts in a 13,000-square-foot space. Photo by Marc Piscotty

Food Halls Position for the Future

Built-in flexibility, from vendors to equipment, add to the resiliency of food halls.

| By Donna Boss |

Food halls continue to thrive in the U.S. “The food hall model turned out to be resilient during the pandemic,” says Phil Colicchio. Colicchio serves as executive managing director of specialty food, beverage and entertainment consulting, Colicchio Consulting Group, Cushman & Wakefield, in Princeton, N.J. “We determined that fewer than 10% of the 248 U.S. food halls we track closed their doors completely during the pandemic and

MARKET SPOTLIGHT

more than half of those are now fully operational. The halls that closed were either single-operator food halls or they were heavily dependent on urban office traffic.”

Colicchio says this speaks to the nature of food halls as a place for a group of independent businesses — in

this case, foodservice operators — to do what they do well, operating under one roof and sharing expenses for common areas, which often include seating, back-of-the-house storage and dishwashing.

Food hall development happens in a multitude of ways. For example,

Joe Sorgent, director of sustainability with Cini•Little International’s office in Los Angeles, identifies one type of food hall that extends from the farmer’s market concept, featuring a mixture of individual business tenants with food servicing units and, usually, food retail units placed randomly

Office Building Development with Food Hall

Touted as the largest new creative office development in New York City, Jacx & Co. is part of a mega-development by architect Tishman Speyer Inc. and Jacobs Doland Beer, the foodservice consultant.

The food hall’s lineup includes Crif Dogs, an East Village staple with inventive hot dogs and burgers; Kissaki, a New York City restaurant serving omakase sushi and kaiseki dishes; Al Volo, an Italian concept; Beebe’s, which features NYC thin-crust pizza and Italian dishes; Taim, with Israeli-inspired Mediterranean street food; Fieldtrip, which offers bowls with a variety of global rice options; Ghaya, an all-day cafe; Lotus + Cleaver, a fast-casual Chinese restaurant; and Mèxology, serving up Mexican food. A full-service bar offers local beer and wine, and a cocktail menu complements the various culinary concepts.

“We specified all the basic equipment for each area and made adjustments when the vendors committed,” says Gary Jacobs, principal at Jacobs Doland Beer in New York City. Vendors share back-of-the-house space and the communal dining area seating 215 guests.



The dining room at the Jacx & Co. office development seats 215 customers.



Beebe’s at Jacx & Co. offers pizza and Italian cuisine.



Jacx & Co. in Long Island City in New York, is touted as the largest new creative office development in New York City. Photos by Rachel Vanni

within an area. In another type of food hall, restaurants are operated by the same owner or single operator on behalf of the building owner.

The differentiation between food halls and food courts remains flexible depending on the location. In some instances, it has to do with design. "For example, what is happening in some of the larger-staffed, contract foodservice companies operating at business and industry accounts that are transitioning from scramble servery workstations to food halls is enlarging the finishing workstations to be more independent, offering more menu items and menu concepting per station/unit and also spreading these workstations among the dining area," Sorgent says. "This is typically single operators, and the units are supported from a main kitchen."

In other instances, it has to do with the types of restaurants present. "Food courts typically have national chain restaurants or concepts developed by one operator that do not run financially independent from one another," says Phillip Landgraf, principal at Ricca Design Studios in Greenwood Village, Colo.

Price point can often serve as a differentiating feature between food courts and food halls. "Food courts are more value driven while food halls are more quality driven," says Gary Jacobs, principal at Jacobs Doland Beer in New York City.

Local real estate markets may play a role in an owner's decision to add a food hall, too. "Food halls have evolved in great part as a solution for landlords' challenges of how to make their buildings more appealing to existing and potential tenants and fill non-office spaces with something that is attractive to the younger workforce that wants to work in hipper spaces," says Arlene Spiegel, FCSI, president of Arlene Spiegel & Associates, a New York City-based restaurant and hospitality consulting firm. For example,

Food Hall Amidst Business Center



Residing in a 13,000-square-foot space in the heart of the Denver Tech Center, Grange Hall features nine food vendors and Little Dry Creek Brewery. Operated by Troy Guard, chef-owner and founder of TAG Restaurant Group, and partners Ken Himel and Kevin Hawkins, the food hall's vendors include a collective of artisan chefs and restaurant operators, some local concepts and others out-of-state, all hand-picked to include a balance of known and up-and-coming brands. The historic space features indoor dining and houses an outdoor patio with views of Pikes Peak and an event space.

Guard is betting these concepts will attract customers looking for out-of-the-norm variety. In addition to the brewery, concepts include Uptown & Humboldt with Mediterranean-style food, the first brick-and-mortar location for the popular Denver food truck; The Crack Shack featuring fried chicken developed in Southern California; Rado Burgers, which features toppings ranging from foie gras to duck egg and from gorgonzola aioli to Funyuns; Crazy Love Pizza, which offers Sicilian-style pizza; Bubu, which specializes in build-your-own bowls; Honey Fish, which features temaki hand rolls and sushi; Eiskaffee, a cold brew coffee concept; and J. Dawgs a Utah-based hot dog restaurant.

A unique offering is a pop-up space that will be rented to restaurateurs and home chefs who want to try out their concepts for a limited time and for new concepts the food hall's owner might want to try.

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Customers come to Little Dry Creek Brewery for beer on tap and other beverages. Photo by Marc Piscotty

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one of her projects at Brookfield Place in Battery Park in New York City was a reuse of a space that was accessible to tourists and residents. Another, The Pennsy, at Amtrak railroad station near Madison Square Garden in New York City, was built in a space that had been a bookstore. It closed in 2020 after a longer-than-expected run.

“Another type of food hall serves as an incubator space for independent specialty food, beverage and retail businesses,” says Spiegel. Such is the case with The AMP, an artisan marketplace in the 16 Tech Innovation District in Indianapolis. The AMP features more than 20 spaces for food, drink, retail and entertainment. Of these, 56% are new concepts, and 65% are minority/women led or owned businesses. Vendors operate out of restaurant stalls and modular containers in addition to an open-air bar and full-service restaurant. Residents, visitors and 16 Tech employees can dine in or order food and beverages to go.

Developed with local merchants in mind, Sawmill Market in Albuquerque, N.M., also attracts up-and-coming



A vaulted ceiling provides an airy, open space for interior seating at Grange Hall.

Hotel and Casino Food Hall

Cherokee Hotel & Casino in West Siloam Springs, Okla., is out to transform its buffet service into a food hall concept. Two firms are working together to conceptualize the reworking of the space and advise the hotel and casino about the project: Arlene Spiegel & Associates, a New York City-based restaurant and hospitality consulting firm, and Glen and Co., a New York City-based architectural and interior design firm.

The reworking of the space became necessary due to limitations of seating and serving resulting during the COVID-19 pandemic, says Arlene Spiegel FCSI, president of Arlene Spiegel & Associates.

The hall will feature seven proprietary concepts developed by the in-house culinary team with Spiegel's input. Concepts include barbecue, burgers and chicken, tacos, international sandwiches, flatbreads and greens, bakery/grab-and-go and a bar. All concepts will share a common seating area.

Equipment selection focused on providing a 90-second to 3-minute turn-around threshold to keep the flow moving. Most new equipment sits in the front of the house. “We captured all of the benefits of the old buffet's back-of-the-house to support various concepts,” Spiegel says. “The bakery/grab-and-go and the burger and chicken concepts have their own back-of-the-house prep areas.”

restaurants. “Sawmill contains vendors’ testing concepts — sometimes this is their first brick-and-mortar location — as well as owners of more established restaurants,” says Landgraf, who helped design the market's foodservice areas. “These are small, 150- to 200-square-foot spaces with a very basic equipment package, giving start-ups a minimal initial investment.”

A great deal of food halls’ resiliency results from owners’ flexibility to change vendors if they do not bring in enough traffic and generate an acceptable level of sales. Operators, on the other hand, can also leave a food hall if they aren't pleased with their financial results or if they determine that they have fulfilled their intention to get excellent exposure for their concepts without having to take on a full-build or solo-tenant investment.

Operators and Equipment

Most food hall developers decide what type of vendors and menu concepts

they'd like to attract and build areas with standard equipment. “If a vendor fails, we must be able to transition to another vendor,” Colicchio says.

The basic equipment package at a food hall varies. Flexibility is essential, although a few pieces of equipment are somewhat commonplace, says Spiegel. That list often includes upright and/or undercounter refrigerators, hot food holding units, a plug-and-play panini grill, a steam-jacketed kettle, a small rapid-speed oven and induction heating units. In addition, wells and countertops that can hold hot or cold items with the flip of a switch contribute to the flexible lineup. “If specialty equipment is required, the vendor pays that expense and takes the equipment with them if they leave,” she says.

In terms of identifying basic equipment packages, Jacobs says, “We start with basic, generic equipment on the drawings and update them. Early in the process we need to put

enough equipment in the drawings so mechanical engineers can put in what is basically needed. We can update when tenants take specific locations. But you don't want to have to change the mechanical engineering each time a vendor comes in. We try to design in some flexibility so if programs change, you have adequate opportunity to change out vendors without too much drama. This may mean putting in extra

electrical and robust mechanical services and a large enough hood for a range of food programs." Substantial back-of-the-house storage space to support programs is helpful, as well, Jacobs adds.

In addition, Jacobs works with an eye toward waste management, thinking through the entire waste stream. "To the greatest extent possible, this should not be visible to guests," he says. The exception is the early stage

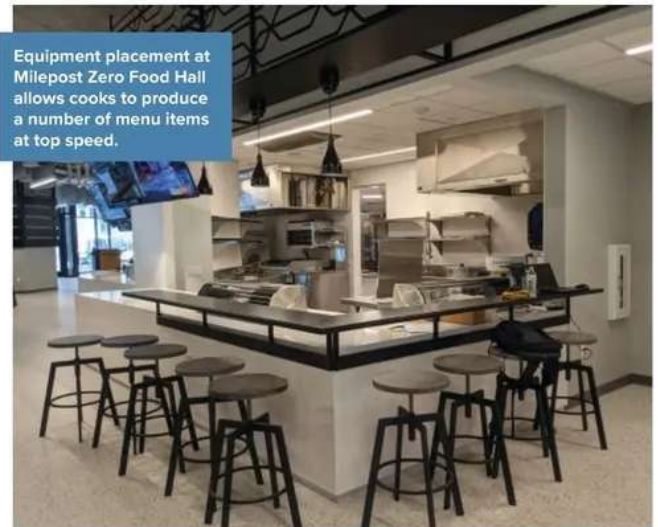
of waste management, where Jacobs recommends putting in extra drop-off areas by seating areas for customers to place organic waste and recyclables. "If you give customers enough opportunity to use these areas, they'll do so," he says. Placing filtered water stations and hand wash sinks in a public space to make usage easy is also effective. "People are sensitive to sanitation today more than ever," he says. **FE&S**

Stadium-Adjacent, Mixed-Use Development with Food Hall

The debut of Milepost Zero in Denver was delayed by both the pandemic and supply chain issues, but it finally opened in the summer of 2021 across from Coors Field, the home of Major League Baseball's Colorado Rockies. Part of the McGregor Square development, the Rockies and a group of investors own the mixed-use property.

Milepost Zero's vendors, which are listed as food stalls, include Atomic Chicken, Buona Beef, Field Greens, Little Chingones, Pulpo Creamery, Tiny Giant Sushi, Wazee Coffee and Tora Poke + Noodle House. A bar offers craft cocktails, beer and wine.

Equipment packages changed as the vendor list shuffled prior to opening. "With the exception of the hood, we had to alter equipment packages each time a new vendor became interested," says Phillip Landgraf, principal, Ricca Design Studios. "We tried to customize for each vendor's needs as much as possible, but with some



Equipment placement at Milepost Zero Food Hall allows cooks to produce a number of menu items at top speed.



Different types of communal seating at Milepost Zero Food Hall allow customers to watch the cooking action.

limitations. For example, one vendor needed a charcoal grill system for its concept — but the building couldn't support that, so the vendor backed out. Another vendor came in with a similar concept using equipment the building could support. We at Ricca design food halls to be as flexible as they can be so future vendors can change easily."

The vendors share front-of-the-house space, including water stations and the dish return. McGregor Square vendors share a single walk-in cooler, with lockable fencing separating every vendor's space. This space-saving strategy can also be carried over into dry storage and sometimes warewashing. "At the time of design, Colorado permits sharing three-compartment sinks, but some states require each vendor to have a separate sink," says Landgraf.

| By Lisa White |

The Self-Service Revolution

A broader, more dynamic version of self-service is emerging.



This Brooklyn, N.Y., office foodservice program has enhanced its grab-and-go offering.

Self-service in commercial foodservice has undergone a metamorphosis. Although this has occurred out of necessity, it has resulted in added efficiencies and safety protocols that have enhanced functionality and customer comfort.

With today's state-of-the-art technology, the definition of self-serve has evolved. "It's all changing now," says Scott Gilkey, principal of The Gilkey Restaurant Consulting Group, Sammamish, Wash. "I'm not sure if you'd call ordering through kiosks or apps self-serve, but it feels like that is the revolution and definition."

Ed Doyle, president of RealFood Hospitality, Strategy & Design, Newton, Mass., agrees that the self-serve category has become more

comprehensive. "People look at it from where they sit," he explains. "We're doing everything from on-premises institutional feeding including salad bars to air curtains with prepacked grab-and-go items, kiosk-based unattended areas, and c-store space and what that entails. It has broadened and is dynamic."

Yet, despite the industry's changing climate, self-serve buffets as well as beverage and condiment stations continue to come back online.

"The benefits of it are variety and self-choice from a customer standpoint and big labor savings from an operator perspective," says Robert J. Doland, principal at Jacobs Doland Beer, New York City.

Enhanced Functionality

With any type of self-service area, the layout and components make it not only functional but also successful. The most important traits include visibility and accessibility, which enhance the guest flow.

"With placement, it's important to make self-serve a separate area with no crossover so people can naturally flow into the station," says Jay Bandy, president of Goliath Consulting Group, Norcross, Ga.

Buffets typically have a different dynamic compared with beverage or condiment stations. "These are typically located for quick and easy restocking by the kitchen entrance, while also being accessible to

customers,” Bandy says.

Space allocation depends on what the operation offers in a specific self-serve area. Beverage stations can be a conundrum as selections have grown monumental in recent years. “Our biggest challenge is the proliferation of beverages. You don’t want a 20-foot counter with a lot of solutions, but it’s difficult to get anything less than 10 feet,” Bandy says, adding that a 10- to 12-foot self-serve beverage station is preferable in fast-casual/QSR formats.

Determining how many people

will go through a self-serve area at one time will impact the amount of space necessary. Anticipated traffic will give insight into both capacity and flow of self-serve areas. “Because throughput can be dramatically impacted by traffic, operators may want to duplicate cases of the same items in high-volume environments,” Doyle says. “This minimizes backups as grab-and-go areas in particular are about speed.”

In addition to allocating the appropriate amount of space in a convenient location, circulation and physical design represent critically important factors in self-service design. “You can’t control the flow like with a curated station, and you don’t want congestion points,” Doland says. “Beyond that is the ergonomic design of how components are laid out.

“Not leaving enough space for self-serve areas becomes a hindrance,” Doland says. “And not taking into

account how food is backed up and stored as things run out and

having proper backup in the right location and right amounts [can lead to problems].” He adds that people are surprised at how restrictive codes are in terms of access when food guards are installed.

Buffet layouts generally include a location for customers to access plates and utensils at the front of the line. From a design standpoint, Doland prefers consumers access condiments and beverages at the end of the buffet or grab-and-go section. “This prevents people from coming back through the circulation flow if they forget something,” he explains. “The other thing is, beverages are tricky to manipulate through the food process [when grabbed first].

“There also has been movement away from paying at the end, with customers paying up front as they order or on their phone with an app,” Doland adds.

Designers should also consider the appropriate holding temperature in food zones when designing a



Some office foodservice programs are using taps instead of bottled beverages to decrease the environmental impact. Offerings include iced tea, lemonade, sparkling beverages, kombucha and cold brew.



self-serve option. “[In buffets], holding temperature devices should lend to an attractive food display,” Doland says. “While some food is great laid out on a flat, heated ceramic surface, whether this works depends on volume and capacity. Convertible equipment provides either hot or cold holding, so operators can maximize their self-serve footprint.”

With customers helping themselves, the station flow needs to be easily understood and efficient. This is where signage becomes an invaluable tool. It’s also preferable to minimize the amount of travel in a self-serve environment.

The goal is combining innovation and design to deliver an experience. “That’s where the industry needs to go and not fall back on the predictable with foodservice design,” Doyle says. “So much of the hospitality experience is through human engagement, so something else needs to fill the void in a [self-service] or grab-and-go environment; all the pieces need to line up.”

As important as logistics and flow are to these areas, it also pays to consider the impulse-purchase potential. “There are impulse buys typically by the settlement point, whether this is a kiosk or cashier area,” Doyle says. “These incremental areas are at the end of the journey and where you drive the check.”

Incorporating new technology can help enhance self-serve stations while also expediting throughput. “What’s trending on the beverage side is a huge demand for app-based beverage dispensing,” Doland says. “Customers can order and dispense beverages from their smartphone.”

Doyle sees more equipment manufacturers offering equipment with touchless delivery for self-serve

beverages. “What’s also popular are optical systems that scan food and ring it up automatically,” he says. “In addition, there is technology where items are put on a surface to be scanned and rung up. This speeds up and changes the checkout process entirely.”

Equipment and Supplies

In the self-serve space, equipment and supplies choices center on ease of use, durability, and maintaining food temperature and quality.

“We start with the guest experience and what we’re trying to create,” Doyle says. “Brand messaging, who the guests are and what we’re trying to be as an operation are the starting points. If we can solve that, it allows us to dig deeper into equipment solutions.”

Designers and operators can choose from a variety of equipment options, and what works best will depend upon the operation’s logistics, budget, menu and volume. “This includes hot and cold holding and display units, whether shelves, wells, or display cabinets with doors,” says Doland, who adds that plate and utensil storage can be incorporated into the cabinet design, on a counter or in a separate area entirely. “With exposed food, sneeze guards are very important. Items can be enhanced with light, and heat lamps can be built in.”

With self-serve, beverage stations typically encompass a soft drink tower, a tea station with tea urns, and potentially a bubbler that follows the soda machines. “Otherwise, there is typically an ice dispenser to start, then straws and lids,” Bandy says. “People have self-serve utensils and condiments back online; however, some may be packaged individually rather than with dispensers that were standard prior to 2020.”

Sauce stations can attach to or operate separate from beverage stations, depending on the footprint and flow. Especially when designing these areas for high volume, such as in food halls or fast-casual operations, equipment capability needs to match the demand. “Operators should make sure the units can keep up with rush periods,” Gilkey says.

Along with volume considerations, designing flexible self-serve platforms allows for menu and service changes down the line.

Other design considerations come into play with prepackaged food items. “In a grab-and-go environment, engagement of the menu offering becomes more important,” Doyle says. “With equipment, we need to think about what we are holding at what temperature as well as how we are presenting food and packaging.”

With both fresh and packaged product, operational conversations prior to choosing equipment require looking at how food is presented and held. This has changed in recent months due to the pandemic. “We’re looking at how we create the visual element of grab-and-go with packaged product or a safer environment with robots delivering the salad bar experience in a touchless environment,” Doyle says.

Switching gears requires a different mindset. Moving from a buffet to packaged product involves finding a visually compelling method that also ensures product quality is retained.

Space allocation may also shift with this change. “When designing a hot buffet or salad bar, there is a certain amount of square feet designated to cold product, no matter what it is,” Doyle says. “But when it’s packaged product or full-serve grab-and-go,

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Altoona, Fla., retirement community Lakeview Terrace's efficient buffet setup features a streamlined self-service design.

it's a different conversation." This would entail more open-air display cases or packaged product dispensed in cold wells. It could also encompass dispensed product in a touchless environment.

"What I'm seeing, particularly with food halls and college dining outlets, is action stations," Gilkey says. "This lets customers watch food being prepared before it's transferred into holding units like steam tables. Guests then select the items they want. It's an interesting addition to the self-serve foodservice situation that elevates the level of freshness. Customers see the food being cooked and know it hasn't been sitting there for hours."

A self-serve business model can help operators contend with staff shortages, which have become more prevalent. "[With self-serve], labor is loaded on the front end prior to the peak sales period to handle the influx of guests," Doyle says. "Labor also can be banked in a grab-and-go environment."

Because safety, like labor, remains top of mind, a proliferation of touch-free equipment has been launched in the last year, providing more options for operators.

Even with top-of-the-line technology, appearance and aesthetics remain important. "From an equipment standpoint, we have people going in two directions," Bandy says. "One is

stainless-steel cabinets that are durable, easy to clean and fit in with many people's decor. These

include upgraded doors with laminated panels that complement decor. We also see millwork cabinets with solid-surface tops."

Ease of Cleaning and Maintenance

Creating a self-serve design that is easier to clean and maintain helps minimize labor and ensures these areas look inviting to customers. "Cleaning is a challenge with any self-service area," Doland says. "Customers invariably make a mess, and there is a labor component in keeping things organized, not making messes or food transference."

For this reason, when the front and back of house are blended, specifying equipment with easily cleaned interiors and visible spaces makes sense. "Cleaning is big with grab-and-go areas as people relate that to food safety and quality," Doyle says. "We need to make sure to evaluate operational issues like cleaning, maintenance and how well equipment will perform. With more casework built in, and as we start wrapping cases, how do we make rough woodwork in a food-safe manner and meet food codes?"

Ease of cleaning impacts equipment design. Materials make a difference. Stainless-steel exteriors are durable and easier to wipe down.

"Some people prefer hard white laminate in condiment areas to match the design," Gilkey says. "But it's preferable to have a cleanable, nonporous surface that is easily sanitized."

From an equipment maintenance perspective, keep mechanical systems in cabinets and counters accessible and easy to maintain. Also consider proper clearance for dispelling heat with refrigeration units.

Accessibility goes hand in hand with organization. Having a well laid-out self-serve station goes a long way in keeping the area looking clean for longer periods. "It's about understanding the guest experience," Bandy says. "Look at cabinet depths, integrating trash deposits for straws and sugar packets, including a drip tray in beverage units, and mounting beverage dispensers on legs for easier cleaning."

"Condiment stations should have storage underneath the cabinetry," Gilkey says. "Items come in bulk, so we like to build cabinetry underneath service counters. This way, whoever is maintaining the area can easily grab what's needed to replenish."

While there can be a lot of challenges in self-serve design and execution, there are also many rewards. "There is a big opportunity to elevate quality and revenue by expanding the menu with self-serve," Doyle says. "It doesn't have to be a compromise if you're doing it right." **FE&S**

Foodservice

equipment & supplies

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PRODUCTS

Worktables with
Prep Sink



Worktables with Prep Sink

Advance Tabco

The KMS-11B line of worktables comes with a built-in 16-inch-by-20-inch-by-12-inch prep sink. All tables measure 30 inches wide with 48-inch, 60-inch or 72-inch lengths. Operators can choose for the sink to be on the left or right side of the table. Other features include a 304 stainless-steel top, legs and bullet feet; a 5-inch backsplash; an adjustable undershelf; a 4-inch on-center deck-mounted faucet; and a basket drain. advancetabco.com

Updated Remote Oven Management System

Alto-Shaam

New features to ChefLinc, the maker's cloud-based remote oven management system, include enhanced error messages that allow operators to see exactly what has gone wrong and reference simple step-by-step instructions to resolve the issue, custom alerts sent to email addresses, and advanced reporting options. alto-shaam.com

Updated Remote Oven Management System



Slicers

Berkel

The B-Series line of slicers includes four manual gravity-feed slicers and one automatic model. The slicers come with 9-, 10-, 12- and 14-inch knives for the manual units and a 12-inch knife for the automatic unit. Each knife is made of chrome-plated carbon steel, and each unit features an anodized aluminum finish. Operators can submerge the slicers' removable carriages in water to further simplify cleaning. berkelequipment.com

Slicers



Meal Delivery Cart



Meal Delivery Cart

CFS Brands

The Totally Quiet Supreme meal delivery cart features such customizable options as interchangeable woodgrain, stainless-steel or custom paneling. The unit is 15% lighter than previous models, per the maker. Other features include four-sided top rails, a perimeter bumper and vertical/horizontal push handles. cfsbrands.com

Prep Table with Portioning Software
Delfield, Welbilt

The Smart Make Table is a prep table that incorporates Perfect Company's ProMeasure portioning software, which tracks the amount of ingredients operators use in assembling menu items. This will help operators better track ingredient usage and facilitate more consistent recipe execution, per the maker.

welbilt.com

Frying Oil Test Kits

FreshFry

This frying oil test kit analyzes the contaminant levels in fryer oil, which indicate when it's time to filter or change out the oil. Users can take a sample of fry oil with the included dropper and visually compare the color to best determine if the oil is reusable or ready to be discarded. Choose between standard kits with a general discard color and custom kits to suit a brand's specific discard needs.

freshfry.me

Food Lockers

Hatco

The floor-mounted Flav-R 2-Go Locker can hold multiple orders of hot or ambient food with secure access. Each locker unit has a 10-inch touch screen on both the operator side and the customer side to facilitate and control access. Each locker also has a timer that will hold prepared and packaged food for up to 45 minutes. Lockers come preset to 150 degrees F but can be adjusted up to 180 degrees F.

hatcocorp.com

Undercounter Square Ice Cube Maker
Hoshizaki America

The 2by2 Square Cube Undercounter Ice Machine makes 1.9-inch-by-1.9-inch-by-2.3-inch square ice for cocktail presentations with minimal dilution, per the maker. The unit produces up to 50 pounds (189 cubes) of ice per 24 hours. Features include a built-in storage bin with 22-pound capacity and a durable stainless-steel exterior with an easy to remove and clean air filter.

hoshizakiamerica.com



Prep Table with Portioning Software



Frying Oil Test Kits



Food Lockers



Undercounter Square Ice Cube Maker



Sliding Door Feature for Security Fences



Mobile Bars



In-Counter Cooling Cylinder



China With a Pottery Aesthetic

Sliding Door Feature for Security Fences

New Age Industrial Corp

The maker has redesigned the sliding door feature on its security fence. The new sliding door has two options: a split door, which separates in the middle, moving both directions, and a single door, which rolls left to right. The mechanism located toward the top of the fence allows for smooth sliding. newageindustrial.com

Mobile Bars

Perlick

The Tobin Ellis Signature Series Limited Edition Mobile Bar features luxury surface finishes that work well in upscale spaces. Other features include double-drainboard design; increased capacity that allows the unit to hold up to 27 liters, 36 pieces of glassware, 40 cans or bottles of soda, 3 types of ice, and more depending on setup; and storage for glass racks, backup cases, bus tubs, etc. perlick.com

In-Counter Cooling Cylinder

U-Line

U-Chill is an in-counter cooling cylinder that is suitable for use with a variety of beverages, including wine, champagne, craft beer and bottled water. The cylinder integrates into any surface, per the maker, and incorporates into various settings, including bars, tables and suites. Choose from 27 different color lighting options. u-line.com/commercial

China with a Pottery Aesthetic

Villeroy & Boch

The Crafted collection provides a fresh and modern pottery appearance. A reactive glaze applied to the porcelain results in different color effects every time, so each item is one of a kind, per the maker. Items include a coffee cup and mug, a saucer, a dinner plate, a breakfast plate, a deep plate, and a bowl suitable for use in multiple dayparts. Operators can choose from a variety of colors. villeroy-boch.com

Back-of-House Worktables

Vollrath

The 4-Series Back of House Worktables is a customizable product line with a variety of optional features. Predesigned worktable configurations offer either open or enclosed storage and are available in lengths between 36 and 144 inches in 12-inch increments. Each model comes with adjustable leveling legs. Custom features include added shelving, enclosed cabinets, a sink and a 4-inch stainless-steel backsplash.

vollrathfoodservice.com

Back-of-House Worktables



Chicken Rotisserie Rack

Winholt

The model AL-1806B-XB-5PU-DP is an aluminum product that supports chicken rotisserie prep, storage and transportation. The rack can hold up to 6 trays measuring 18 inches by 26 inches. Each tray can hold six skewers of chicken when stacked. The load capacity per runner is 30 pounds, per the maker. A lower stainless-steel drip pan with two handles captures liquids to help maintain a safe and sanitary environment.

winholt.com

Chicken Rotisserie Rack



Automatic Deck Oven

Wood Stone

The Fire Deck Automatic 9660 stone hearth oven now includes updated touch-screen smart controls and improved heat management. A new burner design prevents debris from falling into the burner well, making crumb collection easier, per the maker.

woodstone-corp.com

Automatic Deck Oven





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Marching in Step With Foodservice

I had the honor of serving our country for more than 32 years, including 4 years in active duty as a Marine and 28 years in the reserves as a Navy Seabee. During that time, I served multiple tours of duty, including my last one at Camp Fallujah in Iraq, back in 2008, where I turned 50 years old. My military experience definitely developed me into who I am today. It's been the driving force for my life. It showed me who I was from the inside out. And that experience continues to profoundly influence my role as a foodservice designer and business owner.

After graduating high school, I was not ready for college. So, I enlisted in the military. During boot camp with the U.S. Marines, I began looking inwardly, asking myself, "What does Mike Berard's signature mean to me? How serious are you about completing boot camp?" It did not take me long to decide the answer was a resounding "I stand by my commitment."

In the Marine Corps, they break you down and build you up. They do this physically and mentally, while instilling small-unit integrity. During boot camp, one drill instructor

saw something in me I did not see and put me in charge of a squad of 16 people. During 16 weeks of boot camp, I was in charge of three of the four squads in our platoon. They moved me from one squad to the next because I kept motivating them and instilling discipline. This experience gave me the skills and tools necessary to be a leader, many of which I apply in my consulting firm today.

In the military, you are never alone. You quickly learn you can't do it all by yourself. You learn to rely on others within your

military organization to accomplish the mission. That's similar to how our consulting firm approaches projects.

I used to tell my troops I was only the bus driver, often breaking things down to a basic level and discussing how we were going to accomplish a mission. I would point to someone and say they were the steering wheel, and another would be the tires on the bus, and so on. The point was we, as a unit, were not going to be successful unless we all worked together to complete the mission. It's the same now at Commercial Kitchen Consulting. When working on projects, we need to break it down to the simplest levels before we can build it up and move forward with completing the mission, which is the design process in our case. Not everyone understands all the steps that need to happen during the mission or even what technology we will use.

When talking with foodservice directors and management involved in a project, I explain how important it is to talk with everyone who works in that kitchen, from management to the dishwasher. This discussion ensures everyone understands the design intent and how it will help them efficiently do their job. If we have their buy-in and they understand their role in the mission, the operation will be successful.

In the military, we would hold debriefing meetings and generate "lessons learned" notes once a project was complete, writing down the good, the bad and the indifferent. The same applies to every design project, which helps ensure the success of future design projects.

One final thought: It's impossible to know everything about the foodservice industry. I continue to learn new things every day, and you should, too.

The views expressed in this column are not necessarily those of FE&S.

When working on projects, we need to break it down to the simplest levels before we can build it up and move forward with completing the mission/design.



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