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Hello, Holidays!



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FALL 2020
VOLUME 18, NUMBER 3



Umami Bomb

Bringing the elusive fifth taste into your plant-based cooking



From A to Z

Find out how you can tap into the discerning tastes of Generation Z



Ready, Set, Grow!

Farm-to-Table cooking offers connection to the land



behind the cover

Vegetables have often been the root of a quality fall-forward dish. Pumpkin or squash soup? Yum. Roasted carrots or potatoes? Yes please. You can practically taste and smell this fall-centric photo courtesy of ingimage.com.

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Individually composed hors d'oeuvres

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Better times are ahead



A lot has happened since I wrote my last editor's note; I won't be able to cover it all in the very small space I have here. I will say this first, however: I live in Minneapolis, MN. On the day after George Floyd's death I received a t-shirt in the mail—I had ordered it the week before to support a local James Beard award-winning restaurant and adjoining retail outlet. I liked the sentiment it touted. "Cold hands, warm hearts. Northern Hospitality."

I still believe this to be true about my city and state, despite its ugly history leading up to—and after—that tragic, transformative day. I am well aware a lot of work needs to be accomplished.

Beyond Minnesota, a lot of work also needs to be done across the U.S., and at Catersource, to ensure that all voices are heard and respected, and that everyone fully understands that Black Lives Matter. Should you have questions about the approach Catersource is taking regarding diversity and inclusion within its content, go to catersource.com/about.

And then the pandemic. That restaurant I noted above? It's out of business now, a similar fate many catering and event companies are experiencing. I know we all hoped that by this point we might be back to some semblance of normal. I recently listened to New Orleans business owner Emily Sullivan talking on her local news about the state of the event industry, and it's heartbreaking. Her poise through that interview was astounding. I'm not sure I could have been quite as.

In the next few weeks, I will be sending out a survey, asking how you have been faring and what you hope to achieve in 2021. Please fill it out and return it promptly—your answers will be a part of our State of the Industry feature at the end of the year.

Finally, what a joy to be able to sit in on the Culinary Institute of America's (CIA) Plant-forward Summit in Q2. With the coronavirus's impact on meat-processing, plant forward cuisine is the shining star for 2020 and beyond. Much of this issue's focus surrounds ideas to present your guests with delicious plants of all kinds, beginning on page 12 with a piece sprung from one of the CIA discussions. We'll also talk about the proclivities of Gen Z appetites, farm-to-table, and a host of holiday-related content.

Until we meet again in Q4, stay the course, be hopeful, enjoy the beautiful fall season, and give thanks. Better times are ahead.

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by Kathleen Stoehr



Conference updates

CS/TSE 2021 event details

CATERSOURCE CONFERENCE & TRADESHOW UPDATE

Due to the prolonged circumstances of the 2020 pandemic, Catersource & The Special Event has announced it will move its co-located event to July 19–22, 2021 at the same location: the beautiful, sunny city of Miami Beach, Fla. at the Miami Beach Convention Center.

Here is a look at what has been adjusted since our last communique:

CALL FOR SPEAKERS: Due to the change of dates, we kept the call for session speakers portal open. It will remain open until October 23 early evening. Here is the link: <https://cs2021.catersource-cfp.com/>. Sessions can include demonstrations, hands-on activities, powerpoint presentations, and more. All track focuses are listed on the website and include culinary techniques and trends, staff development, on- and off-premise catering strategies, event production, and health and safety. With a focus on rebuilding our industry, it will be time to share

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best practices and offer solid ideas to your colleagues: recipes, research and development, décor ideas, business building, leadership, and more in response to our new societal norms.

We'd love to have you share your expertise at this show. All speakers receive a free education pass to attend the show.

REGISTRATION: Registration opens in Q4 of 2020. Go to <https://conference.catersource.com> for the latest information.

AWARDS COMPETITION: The Catersource ACE and Special Event Galaawards nomination portal is opens October 01. Awards will be presented on Thursday evening, July 22 at a TBD location in the Miami area. Here is a brief list of the Achievement in Catering Excellence categories:

On-Premise Catering East

Catered events of any size in the eastern region, executed in the company's own venue.

On-Premise Catering West

Catered events of any size in the western region, executed in the company's own venue.

Off-Premise Catering East

Catered events of any size or type in the eastern region, executed in a venue or area owned by an entity other than the catering company.

Off-Premise Catering West

Catered events of any size or type in the western region, executed in a venue or area owned by an entity other than the catering company.

Catering International

Catered events of any size or type executed outside of the United States of America, either executed in a venue or area owned by an entity other than the catering company, or on the catering company's own property.

Product Innovation

Celebrating an innovative product that has helped solve a problem for the catering and events industry. Examples include, but are not limited to, new sanitary and hygienic products, unique packaging, time saving products, and products that can be customized or personalized.

Use of Space

Celebrating creativity employed within unique spaces. This award will recognize a company that was able to "think outside the space" when adhering to social distancing restrictions, reworking a problematic or uniquely shaped or sized space, or

implementing unique floor plans.

Technological Innovation

Technology continues to aid in elevating events to new heights. Whether it's a fully virtual, hybrid, or in-person event, this award is looking for unique ways that technology has been incorporated, including video, audio, lighting, virtual reality, floor plans, and so much more.

Community Servant Award

This award will recognize a company that has taken it upon themselves to help the greater community, incurring little financial gain. This can include, but is not limited to, feeding the less fortunate, providing meals for medical staff and first responders, volunteering or providing services at cost for non-profit fundraising, aid to local hospitals or long-term care facilities.

Best Boxed, Plated or Contained

This category will honor a caterer who has offered consistently beautiful solutions in to-go catering: boxed, bagged, bottled, or plated items for one or many.

Eligible events run from Sept. 30, 2019 to Dec. 31, 2020 (also extended due to show move) with a first deadline for entry on January 25, 2021. Late bird deadline is February 01, 2021. Nominees will be notified no later than March 20. Go to <http://conference.catersource.com> for information regarding entry.



DICED & SWIZZLE Competitions:

Both competitions will be held at the Miami Beach Convention Center on July 21, and we are currently seeking chefs and bartenders to compete in these lively (and slightly revamped for 2021) events. Email kathleen.stoehr@informa.com for details or go to <http://conference.catersource.com>.



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ART OF CATERING FOOD Update

Because of the rescheduling of Catersource Conference & Tradeshow to July 2021, the Art of Catering Food (AOCF), in partnership with International Caterers Association (ICA), has postponed its re-launch to summer 2022.

More information on this chef-forward event will be available mid-2021 via Catersource's bi-weekly Get Fresh e-newsletter and this magazine. To get the latest updates, sign up for the e-newsletter via: <https://www.catersource.com/sign-up?mail=>





The Comfort Zone

Beets Hospitality Group's Executive Chef Clay Brunton demonstrated the tradition of dumplings during Catersource Conference & Tradeshow in Las Vegas



After months of turmoil and stress, it's time for a little comfort, and what could be more comforting than warm, delicious dumplings? Dumplings could very easily be considered the ultimate comfort food with their delicate pockets of meat and/or vegetables. There's a reason the word "dumpling" is a term of endearment. Be it pierogies, samosas, empanadas, potstickers, or even stuffed ravioli, it's difficult to find anyone who doesn't have childhood memories of dumplings in some form.

"Dumplings are an amazing comfort food and they're a really great cultural touchpoint," said Clay Brunton, Executive Chef at Beets Hospitality Group.



CHEF CLAY BRUNTON DEMONSTRATED THREE DIFFERENT TYPES OF DUMPLINGS DURING HIS SESSION “WHAT’S IN THE DUMPLING? DUMPLINGS FROM AROUND THE WORLD” AT CATERSOURCE 2020 IN LAS VEGAS ON THE CULINARY EXPERIENCE STAGE

Photo courtesy WASIO Photography

Brunton brought dumplings to the masses during the Catersource Conference & Tradeshow with his session “What’s in the Dumpling?” on the Culinary Experience Stage.

Always inspired by fresh ingredients, Brunton has taken on the challenge of creating boldly flavored, deeply satisfying, award-winning dishes in a wide range of culinary styles geared toward a banquet setting—with dumplings as part of that aesthetic.

During his session, Brunton demonstrated the preparation and cooking methods of three different dumpling styles. On the following pages are his recipes for two of the dumplings: crab rangoons and pork and shrimp sui mai. Visit www.catersource.com for the third, chicken empanadas. *Bon Appetit!*



BRUNTON BEGAN HIS CAREER IN PORTLAND, OR AS A DISHWASHER, AND THEN A COOK, BEFORE ATTENDING CULINARY SCHOOL IN SAN FRANCISCO. HE POLISHED HIS CRAFT IN HOTELS AND FINE DINING RESTAURANTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY BEFORE JOINING BEETS





CRAB RANGOON

YIELD 200

INGREDIENTS

6 lbs cream cheese, softened
2½ lbs red crabmeat or
chopped imitation crab, drained
and squeezed dry
1½ cups Worcestershire sauce
½ cup soy sauce
½ cup lemon juice
4 packs of 50 wonton wraps

METHOD

Place the crab meat, cream cheese,
Worcestershire sauce, soy sauce,
lemon juice in a bowl. Stir to
combine.

INGREDIENTS FOR PASTE

1 cup all purpose flour
½ cup water

METHOD

Mix to form paste

TO BUILD RANGOON

1. Place a wonton wrapper on a flat surface. Brush the wonton with the paste and drop 2 teaspoons of the crab mixture into the center.
2. Bring 2 opposite corners together in the middle of the wonton and pinch. Repeat with the other 2 corners and pinch to form a crown.
3. At this point you can freeze them on sheet pans for up to two weeks.

TO COOK RANGOON

1. If the rangoon are frozen, fry the rangoon at 350° until the wontons are brown and crisp then transfer to the oven to heat through. If fresh, fry rangoon at 350° for 30 or 40 seconds. It doesn't take long.
2. Optional: Garnish with sweet chili sauce and green onion or chives.



Rangoon photo courtesy of WASIO Photography.



PORK & SHRIMP SUI MAI

YIELD: 100

INGREDIENTS FOR DOUGH

- 2 cups all purpose flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup hot water
- 1 tsp salt

METHOD

1. Mix flour and salt into a bowl. Slowly add in water while mixing. Bring everything together into a rough ball with your hands.
2. Transfer the dough on a working surface and knead for 10 minutes or until smooth. Form into a ball and place in a lightly floured bowl. Cover tightly with a cling film and rest for 1 hour.
3. Cut dough in half and roll out very thin.
4. Using a ring mold cut the dough into 2½-inch wide circles.

Note: You can also use 2 packages of wonton wrappers as an alternative.

INGREDIENTS FOR FILLING

- 3 T canola oil
- 5 lbs ground pork
- 2½ lbs chopped shrimp
- 25 ea shiitake mushrooms
- 7 ea green onions, chopped
- 7 tsp ginger, minced
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup oyster sauce
- 7 tsp sesame oil
- 3 T granulated sugar

METHOD

1. Remove stems from shiitakes and discard.
2. Pulse in food processor until minced.
3. Saute in canola oil until cooked.
4. Add all ingredients to a bowl. Mix well.

INGREDIENTS FOR PASTE

- 1 cup all purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water

METHOD

- Mix to form paste

INGREDIENTS FOR DIPPING SAUCE

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup low sodium soy sauce
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water

- 3 T lime juice
- 2 T Sriracha
- 3 T cornstarch

METHOD

1. Mix sauce ingredients.
2. Bring to a simmer until it thickens slightly.

TO BUILD SUI MAI

1. To wrap the sui mai, place 1 wonton wrapper in the palm of your hand. Place about 1 tablespoon of filling in the middle of the wrapper.
2. Bring two opposite corners toward each other and press gently to adhere them to filling.
3. Repeat with remaining 2 corners to form a little cup around the filling, gently squeezing to hold wrapper in place.

TO COOK SUI MAI

1. Place sui mai in steamer and cook for 7 minutes or until done.
2. Garnish with minced carrot and green onion. **CS**



UMA BON

Bringing the elusive
your plant-based co

by Kathleen Stoehr

How might your clients respond if they were asked to describe the flavors and ingredients of plant-based cuisine?

PERHAPS THEY WOULD

MENTION the basic starting point for any good soup or mélange: the soothing mirepoix of carrots, onions, and celery.

How about the Three Sisters: corn, beans, and squash? Yes!

Lots of leafy greens and tomatoes with a sprinkling of green onions and dill, dressed with a lively buttermilk vinaigrette. Summer on a plate!

Responses lean mostly to vegetables on the side or “as part of.”

But at the center of the plate? This has been a long row to hoe for plant proponents. Why is that so? And, what can chefs do to promote and incorporate



UMAMI

the fifth taste into
cooking

u·ma·mi

/oo' mämē/

noun

Umami is a term coined by Japanese chemist Kikunae Ikeda, who identified in 1908 the chemical responsible for the distinct flavor of dashi (that being glutamic acid), the base of much of Japanese cuisine. The Japanese word for delicious is *umai*; the word umami translates most closely to “deliciousness.”

plants into fully vegetarian or (even more popular in 2020) flexitarian meals? To start, it's about understanding the difference between plant and animal protein.

Culinary scientist, chef, and author Ali Bouzari, PhD, presenting at the Culinary Institute of America (CIA)'s May/June 2020 Global Plant-forward Culinary Summit, says that it all simmers down to communication styles.

“Animal life is based on movement,” offered Bouzari. “Animals yell at you, they will charge you, they will use their posture for interaction.” But while delicious, animal protein is, “really rudimentary. It's basically bundles of proteins that ... have simple functions and are chemically relatively very plain.”

Conversely, “Plant interaction is based on chemical warfare,” says Bouzari. “Every bit of

communication from a plant, whether it's a warning to stay away, or enticing for a mating ritual, or anything in between—is based on a chemical language that provides colors, tastes, aroma, texture.”

How does this impact flavor?

“Plants are just this incredible spectrum where all of those pieces of chemical machinery that were left over for storing energy, for communicating with allies, or communicating with enemies—all of that stuff carries flavors,” Bouzari noted. “The palette of colors we have to paint with, with plants—just purely chemically speaking—is an iridescent rainbow compared to the gray slab that is meat.

“That gray slab is a really great foundation and it’s really important, but it can’t do quite as much as what plants can do.”

The low tone

One aspect, however, that has been more difficult to bring forth in the evolution of plant-based cuisine is that mostly-meat-associated taste:

umami, an exceptionally pleasant, savory undertone that Bouzari compares to the bass line in a song—as opposed to the melody. This “fifth taste”—after sweet, sour, salty, and bitter—is elusive, hard to describe even...but it’s a layer that if missing causes one to quizzically look at a dish and say, “I don’t know what it is, can’t quite put my finger on it but...it’s missing something.” (Think David Bowie/Queen’s song, *Under Pressure* minus the bass line and you’ll know what I’m talking about.)

Another way to think about umami: Developmentally, one of the very first pops of flavor we receive as babies is rich in umami—that is, human breast milk. “It’s a taste familiar to us all from birth,” says Gary Beauchamp of the Monell Chemical Senses Center, Philadelphia, PA. We want umami, we crave umami. Plants have it too—just not in the prominent way our culture has grown accustomed to it.

Yum: glutamic acid!

Junk and fast food. This is where the U.S. began its journey, as it were, with that awareness of umami savoriness. Pringles, Doritos, Chick-fil-A’s chicken sandwich, instant ramen noodles to name a few. All contain monosodium glutamate or MSG, a flavor intensifier developed by chemist Kikunae Ikeda in the early 1900s while researching umami. The flavor of MSG itself is not pleasant, but when combined with something edible, it activates our taste buds positively.

It wasn’t until 2002, however, less than 20 years ago, that the presence of umami receptors in the tongue’s taste buds was revealed and umami was elevated to a primary “fifth” taste. The Umami Information Center (<https://www.umamiinfo.com/>) notes that when our taste buds sense umami, it triggers “the secretion of saliva and digestive juices, facilitating the smooth digestion of protein.” Protein. Center of the plate. Heck, are we back to talking about meat again? Uhm...

The dining experience

At Chef Amanda Cohen’s Dirt Candy restaurant in New York City (I dined there in early February 2020), she says, “Dinner is an experience of the raw and the cooked, the bold and the beautiful, full of roaring fire, tableside grilling, strange broths, and dishes that are both deceptively simple and staggeringly complex.” And that, ladies and gentlemen, is the key to moving plants to center of the plate: applying the cooking techniques typically associated with meat... to plants. Bouzari concurs: “Pairing umami with other meat-associated savory cues (such as smoking, grilling, or charring) leaves a trail of breadcrumbs for your brain that will make diners relate a plant-forward dish with what they previously might

UMAMI RICH

Some types of plants have, or can develop, stronger umami profiles just in the way they are produced, such as dry farming tomatoes in order to concentrate the tomato flavor, or even the biological training (depriving them of a certain amount of UV food) that Matcha tea leaves go through in order to change their metabolism, which causes the leaves to pump

up their glutamate production. Here is a partial list of umami-rich foods, according to [healthline.com](https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/umami-foods):

- **Kombu seaweeds** such as Naga, Rasau, Hidaka
- **Soy-based foods** such as miso, soy sauce, soy beans
- **Aged cheeses** such as comte, parmesan, gouda
- **Kimchi**
- **Seafood** such as yellowtail, scallops, anchovies
- **Mushrooms** such as shiitake, truffles, and enoki

For a full list, go to <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/umami-foods>





LEFT: FENNEL FRONDS
GARNISH THIS WARM SIP

BELOW: CHARRING VEGGIES
VIA A TABLETOP TEPPANYAKI
GRILL ADDED UMAMI

*All photos courtesy
Kathleen Stoebr*



TOP LEFT: FAUX CAVIAR AS DESCRIBED BELOW

ABOVE LEFT: ALMOST EVERY MEMBER OF THE BRASSICA FAMILY IS REPRESENTED IN THIS DISH OF RICOTTA DUMPLINGS, PICKLED PURPLE CAULIFLOWER, PERNOD, PAK CHOI, AND SMOKED CABBAGE BROTH. DECEPTIVELY SIMPLE, DEEPLY COMPLEX.



“Pairing umami with other meat-associated savory cues (such as smoking, grilling, or charring) leaves a trail of breadcrumbs for your brain...”

have only thought of in relation to animal protein.” These cooking techniques, which may also include the addition of acids, sugars, or oils, chemically break apart the “chain of pearls” that each plant contains, allowing it to fly its own savory umami freak flag.

At Dirt Candy, my taste buds were on overdrive as I roasted slices of beets and onions on skewers via a

tabletop teppanyaki grill; sipped smoked cabbage broth surrounded by ricotta dumplings and pickled purple cauliflower; and enjoyed the salty, savory pop of faux caviar made with seaweed draped over miniscule cucumber balls. This decadent experience—replete with twee receptacles containing caramelized carrot sliders and impressive tiered towers harboring little veggie-

filled flowerpots—made for an unforgettable night. Except for meat—totally forgot about that.

Bring the umami

In a recent CIA poll of chefs, a smidge over 53% favored incorporating umami-rich ingredients such as seaweed, mushrooms, tomatoes, and

anchovies into a plant-forward dish to enhance the flavor; 34% looked to searing, grilling, and other techniques that elicit the Maillard reaction (a reaction between amino acids and sugars that happens via heating); and a bit over 13% of chefs chose fermentation. One of those chefs was probably Greg Shapiro, out of Naples, Florida.

Favoring fermentation

At Catersource 2020, Chef Shapiro of Tastebuds Custom Catering taught *Funk, Bacteria and Bubbles*—a beginner’s tutorial to adding the element of fermentation into the catering kitchen. “Anytime you are looking to increase the umami, sourness, spice, salt, or overall uniqueness of a dish, this is where



fermentation is king...or queen,” he said. “There are so many applications for fermentation, you will never get stuck in a rut. It’s the most simplistic thing you can add to your kitchen.”

A big proponent of the #nowastechef movement, Chef Shapiro noted that fermenting also reduces kitchen waste and utilizes every ingredient that comes through the door. “It’s like crumpling up money and throwing it in the trash,” when you toss or compost food remnants versus utilize them for fermentation. To bolster that, Shapiro discussed a method for converting leftover corn cobs into corn katsuobushi, for which, “the umami punch is absolutely insane,” adding, “and the coolest part is that it doesn’t go bad. It’s not going to mold because the moisture content is gone; and the flavor is intense.”

Future food

The plant-forward movement is taking a firm hold on palates as chefs develop new concepts and techniques that elevate all types of plants—not just vegetables—to the forefront. Fruits. Vegetables. Grains, beans, and other legumes. Plant oils. Soy, nuts, and seeds. Herbs, spices. Innovative concepts are on the rise, especially in tandem with a wee aspect of meat as the side or garnish, versus center.

As of the writing of this article, I’d love to speak about those restaurants and caterers across the U.S. who are elevating plants, with or without meat accompaniment, to great success. Bad Hunter in Chicago, Naked Fig Catering or Dirt Candy in New York, Gjolina in Los Angeles, Chow Girls Catering and Demi in Minneapolis (see *As Seen In* on page 46 for a closer look). But it’s a tough time for those of us in the food business and all we can do is keep those positive vibes flowing.

The bottom line: increasing menu choices for flexitarians focused on eating less animal-based protein should be a primary objective for your 2020 and beyond menus. Want to keep them coming back? Make sure you have your secret weapon—the umami bomb—in your arsenal. **CS**

CORN KATSUOBUSHI

1. Generously cover leftover and stripped corn cobs in **shio koji** (easily found at any Asian market) and kelp extract.
2. Place in a hotel pan and slowly ferment at 180° F for 48 hours.
3. Take the whole cob (as you would katsuobushi) and using a microplane, grate shavings over your dish. Similar to bonito flakes (only in this case vegan), the shavings add depth to a dish, but also a rich corn flavor.





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MIAMI BEACH

By Amber Kispert-Smith

Events Continue to Roll On

Drive-in events have become the trend du jour in the midst of COVID-19

Get ready to let your creative juices flow with the following examples of recent drive-in events that could potentially be the right solution for your next event.

Fundraising on wheels

Footers Catering teamed up with Project Helping (projecthelping.org) for Limelight 2020 earlier this summer. The nonprofit, which aims to improve mental wellness, was exploring different opportunities for guests to still safely gather while supporting the organization's



Picture this. It's a beautiful summer evening. There's a slight breeze rustling through the trees and the sun begins to dip below the horizon. Music and laughter fill the air as the smell of gourmet food greets you. No, this isn't one of your traditional outdoor fundraising galas or weddings, you're at the drive-in movie theater with your clients where the nostalgia of yesteryear is making a comeback in the world of COVID-19.

"Things are changing every day, so obviously we've been trying to brainstorm some creative ideas to give our clients pathways for event solutions that may look different," said Lindsey Gertz, Event Coordinator for Footers Catering, Denver, CO., which catered a drive-in fundraising event in June. "I definitely think the direction is putting our creative thinking caps on and conceptualizing ways we can still help our clients."

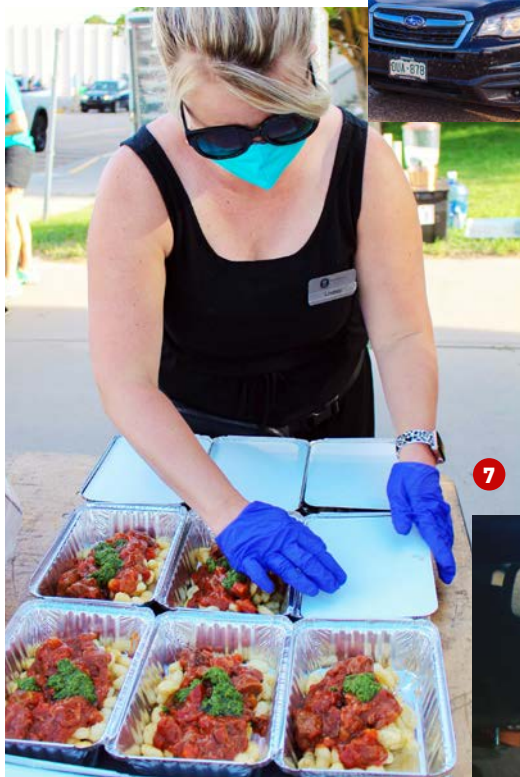




#1 & 2 LUXURY WEDDING AND EVENTS HAS SCHEDULED SEVERAL DRIVE-IN MOVIE EVENTS TO FILL THE VOID LEFT BY CANCELLED SUMMER FESTIVALS AND ACTIVITIES. *Photos courtesy Luxury Weddings and Events*

#3 THERE IS DEFINITELY A SENSE OF NOSTALGIA WITH DRIVE IN MOVIES, SO PLAY UP THAT ANGLE LIKE LUXURY WEDDINGS AND EVENTS DID BY SHOWING AN OLD MOVIE, SUCH AS "GREASE." *Photo courtesy Luxury Weddings and Events*

#4 & 5 THE BOXED MEALS PROVIDED BY FOOTERS CATERING INCLUDED HUMMUS CUPS, A CHOPPED WEDGE SALAD, LAMB RAGÙ AND GNOCCHI, AND FOR DESSERT A SNICKERS PIE BOMB. CAKE. *Photo courtesy Footers Catering*



#6 GUESTS WERE HANDED THEIR MEALS UPON ARRIVING AT LIMELIGHT 2020. *Photo courtesy Footers Catering*

#7 THE FOOTERS CATERING TEAM WORKS ON PREPPING MEALS AT LIMELIGHT 2020. *Photo courtesy Footers Catering*



#8 THE DENVER MART DRIVE-IN IS LOCATED AT 451 EAST 58TH AVE. IN DENVER, CO. *Photo courtesy Footers Catering*

#9 GUESTS PLACED WINDOW HANGS IN THEIR CARS TO INDICATE TO THE CATERING TEAM HOW MANY MEALS THEY NEEDED. *Photo courtesy Footers Catering*

mission. Gertz proposed utilizing the local Denver Mart Drive-In, which would allow for guests to socially distance.

"We just thought that was genius," she said. "They are in the comfort of their cars and they are still safe."

During the event, guests pulled into the drive-in where they were greeted by the Footers team and were given their four-course boxed dinner. Once guests parked, they consumed their meals before enjoying the

movie "Inside Out" under the stars. Attendees also had the opportunity to participate in a virtual auction. Gertz believes that events like this will continue to be popular alternatives to traditional fundraising events, and it's a great opportunity to think creatively.

"It's been really fun to be a part of these moments," she said. "Things look different, but we can still pour our hearts into it."



Brake for a bar mitzvah

Earlier this spring the Mitzvah Sisters, a Los Angeles, CA event planning company made up of sisters Marni Aksut and Dana Abrams, were working a bar mitzvah in the Los Angeles area when all guests and service staff were exposed to COVID-19.

"I actually got sick, the DJ got sick, the videographer got sick, the client got sick, and the guests got sick," Abrams said. "So, obviously I'm very sensitive to making sure that we have safe events."

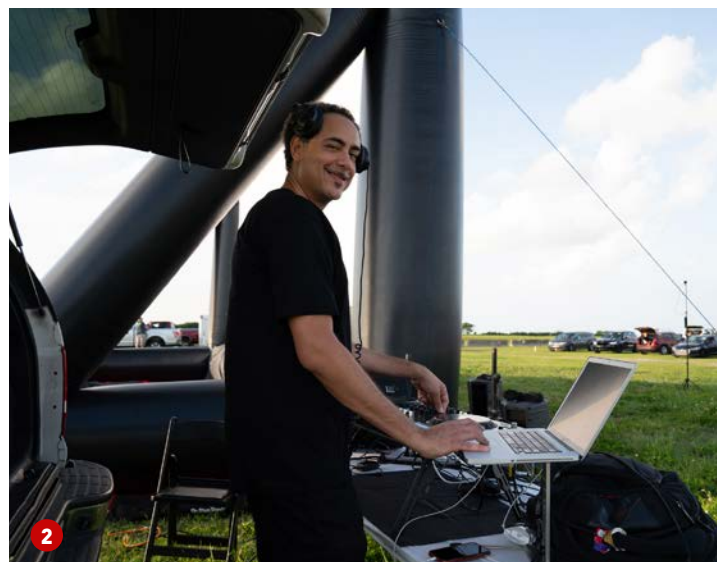
Which is exactly why the Mitzvah Sisters, along with Los Angeles-based Schaffer, joined forces to deliver a bar mitzvah that was able to dot all of the Is and cross all of the Ts in terms of health, safety, and social distancing—via a drive-in "car mitzvah."

"We were able to create a completely unique experience for people that they were not expecting," Abrams said. "It was super fun and meaningful."

The bar mitzvah was held in July and took place on the roof of a parking garage in the Los Angeles area. Upon arrival, guests were gifted a boxed meal and then they continued up to the roof.

"It's a literally a gift with food inside," said Melissa

That stalwart of the '50s and '60s of the 20th century, the drive-in movie theater, numbered over 4,000 across the U.S. at the peak of popularity and were the place for informal gatherings, but began a steep decline beginning in the 1970s as home entertainment improvements surfaced. By October 2019, just over 300 drive-ins remained, more curiosities than the great summer success stories of yore. That is, until the pandemic.



#1 SCHAFFER CATERING PROVIDED SHINDIG BOXES FOR THE BAR MITZVAH. PICTURED HERE: ROASTED LEMON CHICKEN, FARMER'S MARKET CRUDITÉ, CHEESE, FRUIT AND CROSTINI, SPRING VEGETABLE SKEWER AND ISRAELI COUS COUS. *Photo courtesy Schaffer*

#2 BOOKING A LIVE DJ CAN HELP BRING AN EXTRA LEVEL OF EXCITEMENT TO ANY DRIVE-IN EVENT. *Photo courtesy Luxury Weddings and Events*

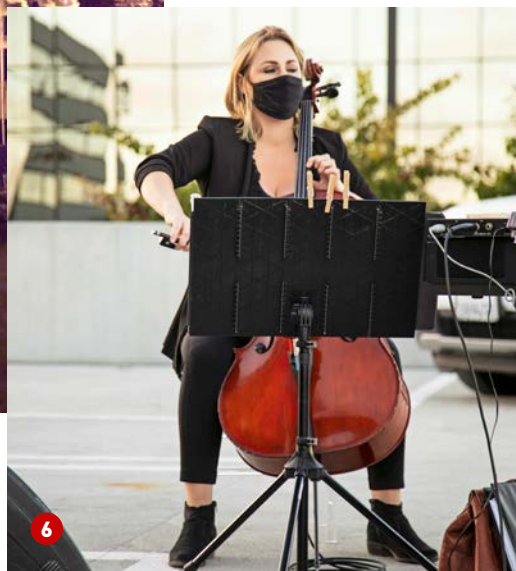
#3 DRIVE-IN FIREWORKS HELPED GUESTS IN JEFFERSON, LA TO CELEBRATE THE FOURTH OF JULY. *Photo courtesy Jefferson Chamber of Commerce*

#4 AND 5 SERVERS ON ROLLER SKATES WERE ON HAND TO PROVIDE SODA, CANDY AND POPCORN DURING THE DRIVE-IN BAR MITZVAH. *Photo courtesy Rachel B Photography*

#6 A CELLIST WELCOMED GUESTS TO THE BAR MITZVAH. *Photo courtesy Rachel B Photography*

Darpino, Director of Sales and Marketing for Schaffer. "It's a win-win for everyone."

Once guests found their parking spots, that's when the real fun began. Guests were treated to a spectacle of excitement as they were greeted by musicians, and roller-skating service staff passing out popcorn boxes filled with candy. A photo booth and selfie booth also served up a bit of entertainment for the event. For the actual ceremony, a stage was set up with a jumbo screen for guests to watch safely from their cars.



“Even if they’re not dancing in a circle, they’re still able to hear it and experience the music,” Abrams said.

Keep it going

Drive-in events won’t be going anywhere, just ask Misty Flachman, General Manager for the Denver Mart Drive-In.

“As we move forward, we won’t know what the new normal will look like, and drive-ins can create

something fun surrounding social distancing while keeping everyone safe in their cars,” she said. “There’s the ability to still honor graduates, still have their fundraisers, still be able to give them a creative unique experience.”

The Denver Mart Drive-In has traditionally offered the opportunity to rent the space during the week

for private events, but they have never seen a response quite like they’ve seen this year, Flachman said. Every available day during the week, from Memorial Day through Labor Day has been reserved for a variety of different events, including graduations, beauty pageants, dance recitals, non-profit fundraisers, corporate team building events, and everything in between.

“They’ve certainly run the gamut,” she said.

Even if you don’t have a drive-in theater in your community, there are plenty of options to host a drive-in event, whether it’s renting an inflatable screen, hiring solo acts to perform on an outdoor stage, or a plethora of other socially distanced entertainment.

“It’s an opportunity for people to fulfill an entertainment need that is socially safe and acceptable during these times,” Flachman said.

And of course, don’t forget about individualized food options going forward. Schaeffer has launched a new sub-business called Shindig (www.schafferla.com/shindig) which offers individual or party-style boxes for events. The Shindig party boxes serve 8–12 guests and include such options as fish and chips, charcuterie, antipasti, salads, chicken or fish entrées, and other choices.

“I believe there will be a need for this type of service beyond this ‘in between’ phase,” Darpino said. “We’re trying to make the best of a challenging situation, and these types of events meet the needs and exceeds the expectation of what guests need right now.”

Events will continue to evolve as caterers continue to navigate the new normal, but one thing is for sure: Guests and professionals alike are ready to start gathering again.

“I miss my old kind of events, but I’m excited about this new style of events just as much,” Abrams said. 



by Christie Osborne



Using Google Analytics for Your Fall Marketing Audit

We often associate spring with a time to refresh and clean house, but why not embrace the restorative energy that fall brings to the scene? When the leaves start to turn, we naturally begin planning for the winter months to come, and it's wise to translate that mindset to your business as well. Just as spring cleaning helps to gear us up for a busy summer, a good autumnal cleanse puts us in the best position to tackle all the holiday events and prep us for a successful new year.

In fact, fall is the ideal time to perform a marketing audit, even if it's something you only revisit once a year. In a typical year, it's just as peak season is slowing down, so you'll have a wealth of fresh insights to guide your planning.

Of course, 2020 hasn't been a "typical" year by any means. As we grow more comfortable in this new landscape and continue serving clients amidst the pandemic, it's high time to evaluate where your marketing currently stands and determine where to take it in the coming months.

While positive reviews and testimonials are great for bolstering your reputation, quantitative data will tell you whether your marketing approach is effective. Because your website is your hub and should drive inquiries, you should start your marketing audit with metrics gathered from Google Analytics. It will reveal everything from your most valuable sources of traffic to the demographics that make up your visitors.

Even those who don't consider themselves savvy with Google Analytics can find a wealth of valuable insights with minimal effort for setup. Here are key reports to access in order to define the effectiveness of your current marketing efforts.

“AS WE GROW MORE COMFORTABLE IN THIS NEW LANDSCAPE AND CONTINUE SERVING CLIENTS AMIDST THE PANDEMIC, IT’S HIGH TIME TO EVALUATE WHERE YOUR MARKETING CURRENTLY STANDS AND DETERMINE WHERE TO TAKE IT IN THE COMING MONTHS.”

Traffic report

This report is the best place to start because it provides a big-picture look at how much traffic your website gets and where it is coming from geographically. Small, local businesses should aim for at least 1,200 sessions each month, but these visits need to be from qualified leads. Bots and spam visits are worthless, so fewer quality visits will always be more beneficial than an abundance of meaningless traffic.

To gauge quality traffic, check your “geography” report and see where a majority of your traffic is coming from. Ideally, the top locations are those you market toward—typically your local area and nearby cities. If you’re seeing a majority of your traffic coming from other places, it’s a good sign you need to adjust your marketing efforts to attract your target market.

Demographics report

Another way to determine the quality of your traffic is to look at the demographics report. It can give you an idea of who is browsing your website and how that overlaps with your target audience. This

report will reveal your visitors’ age and gender, which can tell you if it matches your ideal client. For example, wedding businesses should expect to see a majority of their visitors in the 25 to 34 age range. While there are certainly men planning weddings, it’s still heavily-oriented toward females. If same-sex weddings or corporate events are your specialty, your desired demographics may look different.

Regardless, the goal is for the demographics of your actual traffic to align with your expected traffic. If they are not in line with one another, it’s a strong sign that you need to revisit your marketing channels to ensure they reach the leads you want to engage.

Note: The demographics report must be turned on manually, but it’s as simple as agreeing to the terms of service and enabling the feature.

Referral report

This is one of the most valuable reports you can run on Google Analytics, and with good reason: It can tell you where your website traffic is coming from elsewhere on the Internet. This is incredibly

important to understand what is and is not working in your existing marketing plan. For example, if you allot a portion of your ad budget to advertise on The Knot, you’d likely change your tune if you see that you get very few referrals.

This is also where you can see the top sources of referral traffic from social media platforms, so you might find that you need to spend more time on Facebook instead of Instagram (or vice versa).

Conversions report

Conversions are where the money comes in—while the referral report shows you where visitors are coming from, the conversion report tells you which sources are sending you the most leads that actually convert into real-life inquiries.

This also requires a bit of manual labor to turn on; more than the demographics report. You’ll need to set up a goal for your Thank You page (where they are directed after completing your inquiry form), which will then allow you to track total conversions. There are plenty of helpful guides on YouTube that can help you set up your conversion report properly.

With these four reports compiled, you’ll have a treasure trove of information to make smart, data-driven decisions that will enhance and optimize your marketing approach for whatever the next several months bring us. 



Christie Osborne is the owner of Mountainside Media, a company that helps event industry professionals brands develop scalable marketing strategies that bring in more inquiries and leads. Christie is a national educator with recent speaking engagements at NACE Experience, WIPA, and the ABC Conference.



FROM **A** to

Tapping into the Generation Z market

By Amber Kispert-Smith

GENERATION Z WANTS IT ALL: delicious food, exciting flavors, anytime, anywhere—and why wouldn't they? Those born in 1993 and later are in their young 20s, and they're products of a fast-paced world. They're active, with instant access to the world through their monitors, their tablets, their smartphones—even their watches. Overall, Generation Z comprises more than 25% of the current U.S. population, according to the American Egg Board's white paper, *A New Generation to Feed*, so it's essential to find ways to tap into the market.

Even though campus dining will look very different this fall, the foods that Generation Z gravitate to, and the ways they prefer to eat, will remain largely unchanged.

"Generation Z will always be a very discerning customer base," said Datassential's Mark Brandau during Food Management's recent "Back to School" webinar series. "This is a

pretty resilient group of customers, so they will be able to handle a lot right now."

A is for all of the options

When it comes to food, Generation Z has a flair for adventure, while also looking for customization and variety. This generation enjoys experimenting with creative food fusions, flavors, and health options; while also experimenting with new styles of diets or fads, such as gluten-free, vegetarian, paleo, or dairy-free.

"Colleges were hyper into customization," says Tara Fitzpatrick, Senior Editor for the Restaurant and Food Group. "Everyone was a chef."





“Generation Z will always be a very discerning customer base. This is a pretty resilient group of customers, so they will be able to handle a lot right now.”

But what are some of the contributing factors to Gen Z’s food preferences?

“They have traveled, and they have eaten out a lot,” says Beth Emery, Director of Dining Services for Boston College.

According to *A New Generation to Feed*, Generation Z’s appetites largely gravitate toward:

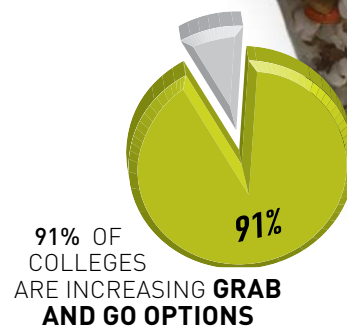
- ✿ Breakfast all day comfort foods from a wide range of ethnicities

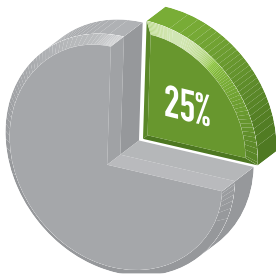
FAR LEFT: BAM BAM SHRIMP BOWL FROM VIRGINIA TECH
Photo courtesy Darren Van Dyke

ABOVE, TOP: AT MISSOURI UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY (MST) IN ROLLA, MO, THIS SALMON IS GLAZED WITH HOISIN AND SERVED WITH WILD RICE AND VEGGIES

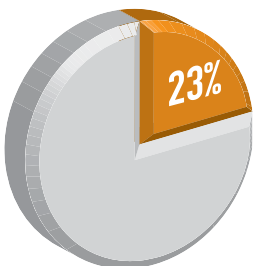
ABOVE: BRUNCH FOOD IS A GREAT MENU ADDITION FOR GRAB AND GO, AS SHOWN AT NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

RIGHT: A POPCORN SNACK FROM BRYAN MEDICAL CENTER





**GENERATION Z
COMPRISES MORE
THAN 25% OF THE
CURRENT UNITED
STATES POPULATION**



**23% OF GENERATION
Z IS EATING MORE
COMFORT FOOD.**

- ❖ More authentic and varied global offerings, such as Mediterranean, Southeast Asian, Korean, and Middle Eastern
- ❖ Hot, spicy, and more adventurous flavors
- ❖ Plant-based menus

Here we will look at three of the most common food trends among Generation Z: comfort food with a global influence, healthy and sustainable foods, and smaller portion sizes.

When global meets comfort

As the whole world attempts to cope with the stress of COVID-19, the idea of seeking comfort in food has become a sort of lifeline, and Generation Z isn't any different. According to statistics from Food Management, 23% of Generation Z is eating more comfort food.

"There's that comfort factor of making people feel good with food,"

Fitzpatrick says. "Kids are away from home, they're homesick, so they're missing certain types of food."

For many people, the thought of comfort food might bring to mind visions of grilled cheese, meat loaf, lasagna, and other heartier, American dishes that evoke feelings of home. However, the definition of comfort food and homestyle cooking for Generation Z includes so much more.

"Generation Z is one of the most ethnically diverse populations," says Sheryl Thompson, a General Manager for one of Boston College's dining halls, "so of course they want more ethnic, more global—they're looking for dishes that remind them of places they've traveled."

According to *A New Generation to Feed*, almost half (48%) of Generation Z is listed as non-Caucasian. Additionally, this group also has been brought up with certain expectations regarding food having been raised in cultures that entertain with and celebrate food.



OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP: CHICKEN BURRITO BOWL FROM CAFE RA IN CAMBRIDGE, MA

OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM: AT NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY, BOWLS ARE THE WORKHORSE OF A TO-GO MENU, AND THESE GRILLED CHICKEN-BASMATI RICE-ROASTED VEGGIE BOWLS CHECK THE GLUTEN-FREE BOX

CENTER: LIKE MANY OTHER COLLEGES, THE FOCUS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS HAS SHIFTED TO GRAB AND GO

LEFT: FOR THE PLANT-BASED SIDE OF THE MENU, VEGETARIAN CHILI MAC HAS BEEN PROVIDING A HEARTY MEAL OPTION AT MISSOURI UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

BELOW: NO MORE SALAD BAR, BUT YES TO CHEF-COMPOSED SALADS, LIKE THIS BEAUTY AT BRYAN HEALTH.

“There’s that comfort factor of making people feel good with food. Kids are away from home, they’re homesick, so they’re missing certain types of food.”

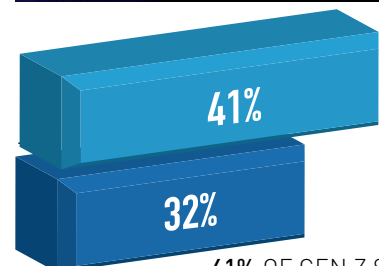
Some of the popular global dishes that fall under the umbrella of comfort food range from Korean barbecue to burritos to samosas to sushi to curries and everything in between. *Flavor & The Menu* magazine cites yuzu, tamarind, lemongrass, and vinegar as flavors that are on the rise and expected to gain in popularity among Generation Z.

Go green

Above all, Generation Z is in search of food that is fresh, authentic, ethically sourced, and sustainable. Additionally, they are more likely to embrace flexitarian dining, with

vegetables as the star of the show, coupled with a complementary protein. According to *A New Generation to Feed*, 79% of Generation Z wishes to go meatless more often. Additionally, almost half (41%) of Gen Z say they would pay more for foods they perceive as healthier, compared to 32% of millennials, according to a Tufts Nutrition Report.

“Most students are really health conscious and looking for healthier alternatives to the old-style expectations of dining halls,” says Michael Gaidusek, Campus Executive Chef at the University of Florida.



41% OF GEN Z SAY THEY WOULD **PAY MORE FOR FOODS THEY PERCEIVE AS HEALTHIER**, COMPARED TO 32% OF MILLENNIALS



ABOVE: FACE-MASKED WORKERS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS

BELOW: AT NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY, MEATLOAF HAS BEEN A FAVORITE FOR STAVING OFF THE BLUES



Some of the most popular food items at a number of different college dining halls include acai bowls, greens bowls, grain bowls, stuffed avocados, and various vegetable wraps. There's even an opportunity to bring in a global element with vegetarian dishes as well through the use of different spices. With various spice blends, "you can incorporate those global flavors in a different way," Thompson says.

Less is more

Generation Z grew up during the height of the tapas craze, which could be why they are more likely to put together a meal of smaller components such as appetizers and small plates, rather than sit down for one big gut-busting meal. In fact, 23% of Generation Z say they prefer to build a meal of appetizers or snack foods, according to *A New Generation to Feed*. Compare that to Food Management's data that shows that 29% of Generation Z are turning more toward snacking in response to COVID-19.

"The future of dining is not bulk portions," Gaidusek says. "Students



TOP: CHILI LIME TILAPIA AS PART OF A TO-GO MEAL AT BRYAN HEALTH

ABOVE: COUS COUS SALAD FROM CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

nowadays do not care for a giant plate of food."

Generation Z's tendency toward snacking has also given rise to another trend, which we'll dive into next: convenience.

"There could be pretty good opportunities for an off-premise offering around snacking by incorporating healthy snacks such as protein-forward or nut-based snacks," says Brandau. "Snacking and health can overlap more than you think."

Z is for zero inconvenience

What Generation Z eats is just as important as how tech-savvy Generation Z eats. Consider these statistics from a recent Food Management survey: 67% of colleges are adding or increasing

the use of mobile ordering; 40% are adding or increasing the use of delivery; and 91% are increasing grab and go options.

“The students who come to our campus today have grown up with GrubHub, DoorDash, and EatStreet, and they’re used to having that convenience of food being brought to them whenever, wherever they want,” said Peter Terstory from the University of Wisconsin-Madison during the “Back to School” webinar series. “They’re going to want the service; they’re going to want convenience.”

There are so many different options for setting up a convenient delivery or grab and go program, whether that’s through partnerships with third party delivery services, utilizing staff, or hiring outside student drivers. Some colleges have even invested in fully-automated delivery robots, like the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

“You can’t talk about a more contactless delivery option than putting food into a robot,” Terstory says. “[Our students’] lives are extremely hectic and they’re juggling a lot of things, so by offering delivery we are giving them the gift of time.”

Beyond the convenience of food delivery, Generation Z also wants the convenience of customization.

“What they care about is that they have input in making their food,” Gaidusek says. “They decide which sauces, which grains, which vegetables, which meats they want to eat. The most important thing is giving them the creativity to have it made the way they want it. As I build menus, I constantly look at them and think, ‘How I can give more options, more variety and create a unique experience that excites our guests every time they dine with us?’”

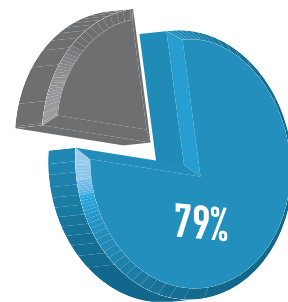
The needs of Generation Z will constantly evolve. “We really need to be on trend and looking out for

what’s out in the marketplace,” Emery says. “This generation is exposed to so many more types of really good food.” **CS**

Editor’s note: *The publication, Food Management and the Restaurant and Food Group is owned and operated by Informa Connect, Catersource’s parent company.*



23% OF GENERATION Z SAY THEY PREFER TO BUILD A MEAL OF APPETIZERS OR SNACK FOOD



79% OF GENERATION Z WISHES TO GO MEATLESS MORE OFTEN



UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS STUDENTS ENJOY THEIR LUNCH WHILE SOCIAL DISTANCING



Move forward, close, or sell: **What are my options?**

Thinking back to March, many of us probably believed we'd be back to normal by this point.

The early months of COVID-19 were fraught with uncertainty and left industry professionals confused about how to keep their businesses running. Although there's still plenty of uncertainty surrounding the future, most of us have come to terms with the "new normal" that we'll experience until there is a vaccine available.

While we're scanning headlines and waiting for updates, it can feel pretty jarring: You're physically stuck inside, but your brain is working in overdrive. Every week that goes by with no updates may leave you wondering about the right move for your business.

Of course, most business owners have had to make plenty of hard decisions already. There have been countless difficult conversations, sleepless nights, and second guesses. Some have been forced to furlough, layoff, or even terminate their team members. Many companies are operating at 20 percent capacity or below.

There's no way to sugarcoat the impact COVID-19 has had on the industry, but there is a bit of solace in the fact that we're all in this together. Regardless of what you are going through, you're not alone in this battle.

We've all asked ourselves that one difficult question: Is it time to call it quits? The answer to this question isn't any simpler—it depends on numerous factors, including the impact on your clients and employees. In this article, I'm getting candid about your options going forward and how to make the best decision for you, your business, and your stakeholders.

Maintaining your business

This seems like the easiest option, but it can also be one of the most challenging choices. If you are moving forward, recognize that the catering industry will look different—even after the virus threat subsides. Social distancing is nearly a habit at this point and, post-pandemic, people will still be mindful of the boundaries they've established this year.

For live events, of course, this is tricky. Mingling is the opposite of social distancing and, until there is a vaccine, we need to continue encouraging physical distancing and requiring masks when guests are away from their tables. Clients should also be encouraged to limit their guest counts, even if there isn't a state or local mandate in place.

This plays into your sales approach heavily, as sales isn't just about touting your accolades and creating

a sample menu. Now, prospects will be looking for your commitment to health guidelines to ensure the safety of their guests.

It's clear the future of the industry is very different, but who is going to make it to the other side? The truth is that there is certainly going to be an economic downturn and, in my opinion, the leanest companies will be the ones to survive. These are the businesses that have sufficiently diverse revenue streams or have a single revenue stream that is insulated from the downturn. They are also the best-managed companies, in that they have a strong leadership team in place.

Closing your business

This is a difficult decision to make, but one made even more challenging if a business owner doesn't take the proper steps. Ideally, you want to create and follow a closing plan that keeps your reputation intact and protects your assets as much as possible.

First, you need to determine whether your company has liquidation value, which depends on how your business is structured. Contracts are valuable if also transferable, so determine the cost attached to each. You can also consider liquidating client lists and operational documentation (i.e., the tricks of the trade), as well as certain types of hard equipment (although this market might saturate quickly as more businesses fold).

When it comes to accounts payable with vendors, it might require negotiation. If you're staying in business, you can simply ask for an extension; however, if you close, you do owe the balances in your and your businesses' name. If you don't have the resources to pay off your debt, it could be worth considering the bankruptcy route.

Now, for the hardest part: letting go of your employees. It's a hard situation for everyone, so do everything possible to treat your team with dignity as you approach the end date. Be honest about what you can do for them and do what you can to help them find positions elsewhere. Call your competitors. Reach out to your network. Your team had your back, so it's time to return the favor.

Selling your business

Selling a catering company to an unrelated third party can take months or even years. Smaller companies will be less complex to acquire, so if you earn less than \$1 million annually, I've heard of deals happening in a matter of a couple months.

One major consideration is whether you have ownership over the property your business uses. If you do, you can

always try to retain the property as a landlord. This is the best option (especially if your purchasers are willing tenants), but some buyers will want to own the property along with the business. How you navigate this greatly depends on the purchaser's requests and the overall logistics of the deal.

Prior to COVID-19, the market for catering companies was quite active and was on a strong upward trend. Although it has hit the pandemic speed bump, there are still deals moving forward so it's certainly not impossible.

If you want to sell, these are the factors buyers will be looking for:

- Market position
- Brand equity
- A history of quality management
- Low turnover rate
- Existing infrastructure
- Profitability and room for growth
- Well-documented historical sales and financial information
- Existing contracts
- Positive press coverage, reviews, and awards

If selling is the right option for you, be sure to work with quality professional advisors to help streamline the process. Clean up your financial reporting to make it easy to understand and ensure compliance with industry standards. Then, have your company valued—most caterers have seen a 10 percent profit in the past several years, but your consultant will have the best grasp of your situation.

So, move forward, close, or sell? It really depends on your current standing and your tolerance for risk. Regardless of which you choose (or whether you're still pondering), hiring a consultant to see you through this process is invaluable. They'll help you make smart business decisions and ensure that you do so in a way that ensures you are legally and financially sound. Remember: You are not alone and you don't have to do it by yourself. 



With 30 years of experience owning event planning, high-end catering, and design and décor companies, **Meryl Snow** is a Senior Consultant for Certified Catering Consultants and a Senior Consultant & Sales Trainer for SnowStorm Solutions. Meryl travels throughout North America training clients in the areas of sales, marketing, design, and branding.



READY, SET,

Farm-to-table cooking offers connection to the land

By Amber Kispert-Smith

Vegan. Plant-based. Flexitarian. Green. Animal-free. Call it what you will, but one thread is woven through it all: Freshness. Eating fresh has grown in popularity over the past number of decades but is especially evident now, in the new world of COVID-19.

“People have more time, so they are more focused on fresh fruits and veggies in a different way,” says Pat Christofolo, owner of Artisan by Santa Barbara Catering, Tempe, AZ and an ACE (Achievement in Catering Excellence) award winner.



GROW!



“People are looking for that connection to the land. They prefer to eat healthy, have organic—especially as we get further along in this epidemic.”

— PAT CHRISTOFOLLO, OWNER OF ARTISAN BY SANTA BARBARA CATERING

From farm to table

The concept of farm-to-table menus are nothing new, but it's become so much more than a fad. “People are looking for that connection to the land,” says Christofolo, who not only

offers farm-to-table catering menus, but also grows her own ingredients at The Farm at South Mountain in nearby Phoenix. “They prefer to eat healthy, have organic—especially as we get further along in this epidemic.”

The popularity of farm-to-table is primarily being driven by consumers who are more health-aware, but it's so much more than looking for the low calorie or fat-free options. It's also a desire to know what is in the



food they eat and where those foods come from. It's the desire for greater quality with a focus on whole foods and short ingredient lists.

"It's about tapping into a part of our heritage, our history," says Mark Lopez, owner of Crave Catering which operates its own farm. Lopez, along with Steve DeAngelo from DeAngelo's Catering and Events presented a session during the 2020 Catersource Conference & Tradeshow on *Growing Your Own! From Herb Gardens to Small Acreage Farms*.

"It's about wanting to create dishes with the utmost flavor, and you can't get better than freshly picked, warm tomatoes off the vine."

The farm-to-table movement has also given rise to plant-based dishes.

Plant-based food speaks to the trend in overall consumer health improvement goals, as well as sustainability. While being on a plant-based diet has been shown to assist with weight loss, that's not the only reason some people choose to go that route. Some refrain from eating meat due to ethical reasons; others decide to lead a plant-based lifestyle to reduce their carbon footprint and help to alleviate greenhouse gas emissions.

One example regarding how plant-based food is impacting catering can be seen in Marcia Selden Catering and Event's one-year-old business venture

with Chef Matthew Kenney: Naked Fig Catering. The company's entirely plant-based menu includes items such as Harissa and Maple Rainbow Carrots with Maple Fluff and Pistachio Dust; King Oyster Bao with Cashew Hoisin and Pickled Cucumbers; and Avocado Tikka "Taco" with Curry Leaf Yogurt, Candy Cane Beets, and Affilla Cress Micro.

But before you start incorporating farm-to-table or plant-based options into your menu, you must first consider your ingredients.

Growing your business

Christofolo encourages those who haven't previously grown their own produce to keep it small to start with, whether that means a small backyard garden, or even herb planters.

"I do think small is better," she says. "Farming is not an easy task, so you want to create something that is manageable and that you can handle."

When thinking about the types of produce you want to have on your property, consider not only what you have access to, but also what you can successfully maintain for a considerable part of the year. If you live in a cold weather climate, for example, fresh fruits may not be the best route in the winter months, but perhaps hardier root vegetables or greens are.

"You want to plant products that are going to be accessible to you," Christofolo says, "and then you can plan your menu accordingly."

Christofolo's 10-acre property has about an acre of farm field, as well as a greenhouse, tree-shaded picnic tables, and a light-lined outdoor area with rock walls, tailor made for events. Her farm-fresh breakfast and lunch menus include everything from eggs, pizza, and pasta to pie—a selection which includes a to-die-for pecan featuring nuts picked from her canopy of trees. Some of her most popular freshly grown ingredients include kale, tomatoes, carrots, micro greens, artichokes, and beets.





FAR LEFT: FRESH ROOT VEGETABLES ARE JUST SOME OF THE OPTIONS FOR A FARM-TO-TABLE MENU.

Photo courtesy crave catering

LEFT: A FRESH STRAWBERRY AND SPINACH SALAD FROM ARTISAN BY SANTA BARBARA CATERING

Growing your own can also lead to a small side business venture as well. If you can harvest more produce than you need, you can investigate community supported agriculture memberships, or canning and selling at farmers markets.

Beyond the beet

Another option would be to expand your products beyond fruits and vegetables to honey or eggs of all kinds. Or with a large enough property, a few dairy goats might allow you to make your own cheese. The possibilities really are



ABOVE: A FARMTABLE SPREAD AT THE FARM AT SOUTH MOUNTAIN, PRE-COVID

BELOW: THE INCREDIBLE (DISAPPEARING!) PECAN PIE





endless, if you have the space, time, and dedication. “There’s an appreciation for connecting with our food,” Christofolo says.

But don’t forget about your local farmers and growers either, she adds, because many of them are struggling as well. “They need your orders so that they can continue doing what they do best.”

Gardening during a pandemic

While getting out into the garden is a great way to stay busy regardless, the fresh air and activity are balm in the time of social isolation.

An added bonus? Depending upon how large your farm or field is, there is an opportunity to bring back furloughed employees to help, while still adhering to social distancing regulations. “When there are no hours in the kitchen,” Lopez says, “you can shift some labor over to the farm.”

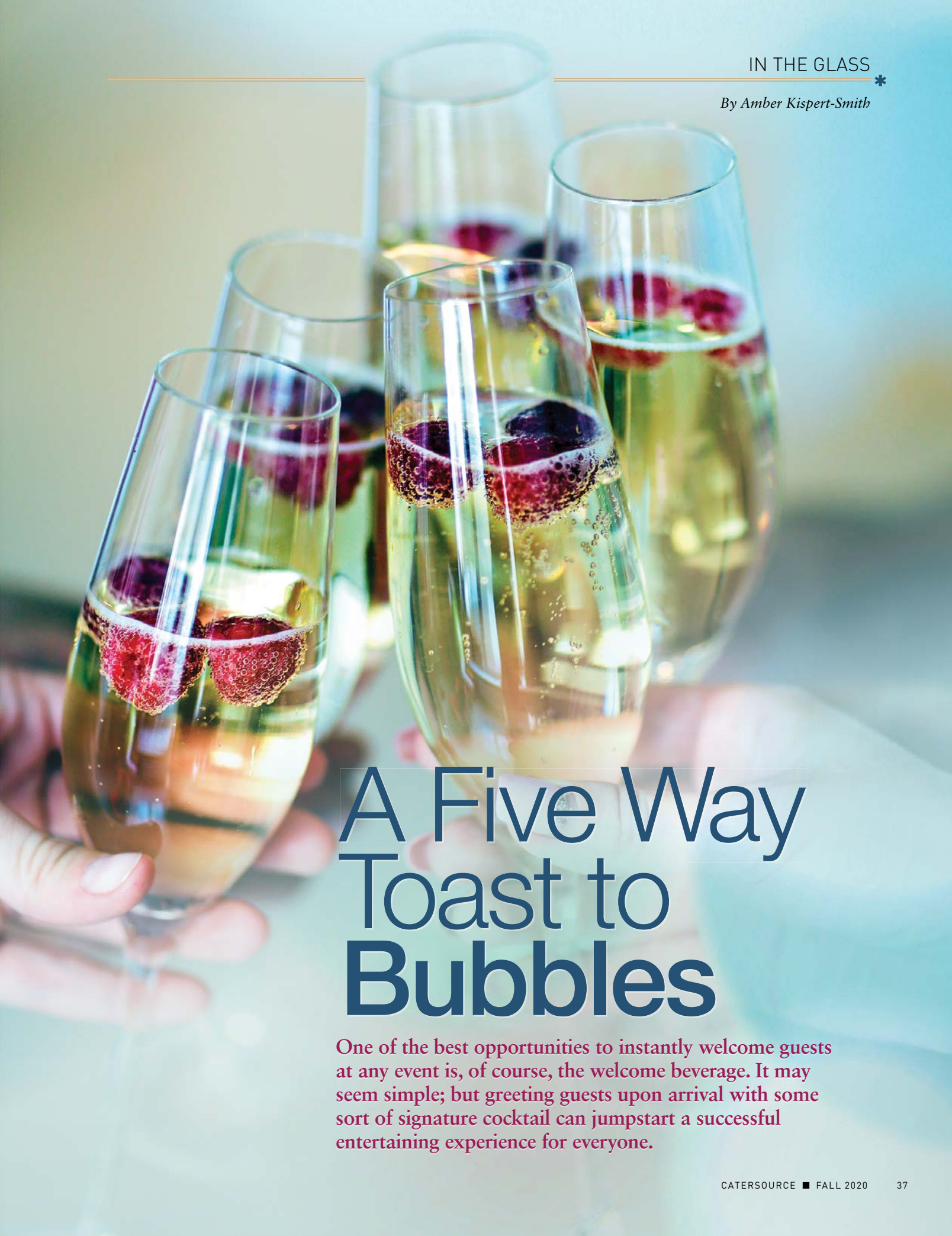
Farm-to-table and plant-based meals will continue to grow in popularity post-pandemic, Christofolo says, because there’s a renewed appreciation for food that has a very small trip to get to the plate.

“Guests don’t want a ton of people touching their food before they get it,” she says, “so they love to hear that you grew something, because it means fewer people have interacted with it.” **CS**



ALL PHOTOS THIS PAGE: FALL HARVEST SCENES FROM THE FARM AT SOUTH MOUNTAIN

All photos except where noted courtesy Kathleen Stoehr



A Five Way Toast to Bubbles

One of the best opportunities to instantly welcome guests at any event is, of course, the welcome beverage. It may seem simple; but greeting guests upon arrival with some sort of signature cocktail can jumpstart a successful entertaining experience for everyone.

We all know that when selecting the welcome beverage, simplicity is the name of the game. The goal is to get something into guests' hands as quickly as possible, leaving the bar areas less slammed. Now more than ever in this time of physical distancing, offering a beverage upon entry versus lining people in queues at the bar is of utmost importance.

Question: how often do you rely on the quick pour of a red or white wine, or sparkling brut? Efficient, though perhaps a bit unremarkable. Let's take a look at how you can elevate a simple glass of bubbly to the level of cocktail with a few easy add-ons. **CS**



▲ CLASSIC CHAMPAGNE COCKTAIL

The eye-catching bubble stream emanating from the dissolving sugar cube makes this official classic an eternal favorite.

YIELD: 1

INGREDIENTS

- 1 sugar cube
- 3 to 5 dashes Angostura bitters
- Champagne
- Lemon or orange twist, for garnish

METHOD

1. Soak the sugar cube in Angostura bitters and drop into a champagne flute.
2. Top with a luxury champagne or a sparkling wine.
3. Garnish with a lemon or orange twist.



▲ KIR ROYALE

The dark but sweet berry flavored crème de cassis can be pre-poured at the bottom of each vessel and then topped off quickly with bubbles right before serving.

YIELD: 1

INGREDIENTS

- ½ oz crème de cassis
- Dry champagne or other sparkling wine, to top
- Lemon twist or blackberry garnish

METHOD

1. Pour the crème de cassis into a champagne flute.
2. Top with the champagne or sparkling wine.
3. Garnish with a lemon twist.

◀ BLACK VELVET

For the guest who generally prefers beer over wine, now you can offer the best of both worlds!

YIELD: 1

INGREDIENTS

- Guinness beer
- Champagne or sparkling wine

METHOD

1. Half-fill a flute with Guinness.
2. Gently top with champagne and serve.





◀ ELDERBERRY FIZZ (NON-ALCOHOLIC)

So much better than a Shirley Temple!

YIELD: 2

INGREDIENTS

¼ cup elderberry
syrup(substitute 100
percent elderberry juice
for a less-sweet option)
½ lime, cut into 4 slices
8 oz chilled sparkling
water or sparkling fruit
juice of your choice

METHOD

1. Pour 2 tablespoons elderberry syrup or juice into each glass.
2. Squeeze a slice of lime into each and fill with sparkling water or sparkling fruit juice.
3. Garnish with remaining lime slices.

APPLE CIDER MIMOSA ▶

This is your fun, fall-forward cocktail, a little more labor intensive than the rest but ultimately delicious.

YIELD: 1

INGREDIENTS

4 oz brut champagne
2 oz all-natural apple cider
1 oz cinnamon whiskey
1 slice of apple, for garnish

METHOD

1. Mix cider and cinnamon whiskey in a champagne flute.
2. Top with champagne, then stir lightly until incorporated. Garnish with an apple slice.





Defining & winning your new game with **reboarding**

Even before the current nationwide crisis, we assessed that many organizations were not evolving in their workplace leadership, strategy, and engagement skills.

Here's the good news—there is a tremendous opportunity right now to “re-board” yourself and your team. Like onboarding, which orients employees to an organization and its culture, re-boarding is necessary when the game (work) and the rules have changed, forcing a new way of doing things to succeed.

Re-envision

When you begin work tomorrow, you have two options of approach. Which would you rather choose?

1. Lead the way you did before, using the same strategy and style. Retain the same teammates and culture that made you successful in the past. Will your past methods of leading work in this new world?
2. Have the courage to re-envision a new game, one that takes advantage of your strengths and is defined by your goals and strategy.

What type of people do you want on your team? What skills do you need to succeed? What is meaningful to you, your team, and your customer? What does success in this new game look like? What are your rules for success?

Re-clarify

A new game requires new rules and new skills. Through honest assessments you can clarify the strengths you possess, the gaps and roadblocks holding you back, and the new skills needed to perform. Get clarity around the following questions:

- What leadership and coaching skills are necessary for success?
- What technical and emotional skills are necessary?
- What communication and meeting skills are necessary?
- What roadblocks do we keep stepping over versus moving out of the way permanently?

- Does each person routinely provide on-time, predictable results?
- Is your team individually and collectively accountable?

Re-negotiate

You should now have a clear vision of the game, the skills necessary to play, an understanding of your team's strengths, and also the roadblocks that exist. Now you must define the rules to play successfully.

These rules are the actions, commitments, and behaviors it will take from the leader(s) and teammates to succeed. We like to involve the entire team in an exercise to co-create and commit to the new rules. This becomes a negotiated agreement and accountability document for everyone involved.

Discuss, agree upon, and record answers to the following questions:

What are the expectations of a leader in our company in the following areas?

- Behavior
- Crucial conversations
- Accountability
- Personal and leadership development of ourselves and others
- Meetings

Add other questions as necessary for your organization.

Record this on a large, branded piece of paper to be hung where all can see. Start with a statement such as "The members of X team have agreed to the following expectations of a leader in X company." Make it inspiring and from the heart. Have each member of the team sign this

document. Go over it often as a team. These are the rules of your new game and you should hold each other positively accountable to it.

Re-engage

Employee engagement studies show that only 30% of U.S. employees are actively engaged in their work. The cost of unengaged workers is in the billions. It is crucial to commit to engagement by embracing these proven steps:

1. Safety: Make sure the people you lead feel secure and supported at all times. Ensure you recognize how their work affects you personally as well as propels the organization's success.



2. Performance planning: Each person will have gaps or improvements identified in the above. Co-design performance improvement plans for each

teammate to successfully re-board to the new game and new rules.

3. Improved meeting pulse: Change will be frequent. You and your team need to embrace flexibility. Design a weekly, if not daily, meeting where everyone reflects on the realities of the marketplace and their goals.

4. Engage: Author Marcus Buckingham defined a simple way to regularly engage with your direct reports. Commit to asking each of your reports these three questions each week:

- a. What was the most important thing you experienced last week?
- b. What is the most important thing you are working on this week?

c. How can I help coach or mentor you?

5. Own your own wake: Your positive or negative actions will affect people long after you have left. Be mindful and intentional. Lead your life and work by example.

Use these suggestions to lead your aspirational vision for the new world we live in. Don't worry about getting it all right or perfect. Show your leadership by beginning and engaging your team in the creation of your new game. 



Greg Karl is an Ontological Executive Coach, Leadership Development Expert, Professional Traction and OKR Coach. Greg is a member of Certified Catering Consultants and consults, writes and speaks for hospitality companies in catering, restaurants, destination management, and professional sports.

Greg can be reached at greg.karl@certifiedcateringconsultants.com



Holiday parties 2020: how to plan & pivot for the unknown

While we are all excited to get back to business and start creating magical events that operate safely in our new normal, things will look different, with flexibility and creativity at the forefront. Many caterers are wondering what the future holds, and the truth is, no one knows for sure. The International Caterers Association (ICA) have been speaking with industry partners to uncover how companies will be adapting during one of the most festive times of the year: the holiday season.

To help caterers prepare for this celebratory season, the ICA spoke



with Renee Miner, Owner of Empyrean Events and Catering, and Amy Iserman, Director of Sales for Forte Belanger, to explore how their companies are pivoting holiday catering services for the 2020 holiday season.

These are a few trends the ICA has uncovered that will dominate the 2020 holiday season.

Individual packaging & delivery services

One of the biggest trends we will see is food served up in single-serve packaging. Whether it's an individually wrapped charcuterie board for cocktail hour or a delicious meal for two sent straight to their door, there are a lot of creative individual packaging options for in-person events or a curated experience at a distance.

Miner discussed how she and her team are implementing this new



AMY ISERMAN

trend, explaining, “our focus has been on unique individual packaging that aligns with our sustainable core value. Our team is working to create menus that are individually packaged and delivered. These menus include a full meal for two, a bottle of wine, and a small holiday décor piece. We also have several clients interested in delivering individually packaged meals to their offices.”



RENEE MINER



ABOVE AND BELOW:
ADD A LITTLE CHEER
TO YOUR BAR MENU
WITH HOLIDAY-THEMED
COCKTAILS. Photos
courtesy Empyrean
Events and Catering



ABOVE AND BELOW:
AS PART OF THEIR
HOLIDAY OFFERING,
FORTE BELANGER
WILL BE DELIVERING
INDIVIDUALIZED MEAL
KITS WHERE GUESTS
CAN COOK ALONG WITH
A VIRTUAL CLASS. Photos
courtesy Forte Belanger



Iserman noted that while we don't know if in-person events will be in full swing, events are all about connection, and that connection can still be made from afar. Forte Belanger is crafting virtual experiences for teams that want to celebrate the season together from a distance. One option clients are loving is a holiday-themed virtual cooking class led by their chef.

Iserman explained, "we will deliver their meal kits ahead of time and livestream our chef cooking from our Innovation Center; they will be able to ask questions as they go and have a nice meal to enjoy at home. During breaks or down time, there could be live entertainment."

While there are a lot of logistics that go into these meal delivery services, they are half the battle in the catering business, and the same principles utilized to execute a large event can be applied to this new business model.

Creative & safe event setups

One issue catering companies are navigating is how to remain diligent

"You can and will come out on top if you put intention behind your solutions for the 2020 holiday season."

with ever-changing health and safety standards while also providing a positive aesthetic and event design.

Iserman stated, "we want to avoid guests touching any shared utensils or vessels without them feeling like they are surrounded by all things COVID. Having unique and beautiful displays

and/or chef-attended stations that are safe and easy for the guests to access will be critical."

Miner is operating similarly, stating that they're helping clients, "reimagine their events with a broader timeline of service, allowing smaller groups of guests to flow through the venue space and adjusting service styles to reduce contact risks." Emptyrean Events and Catering has also crafted an innovative fully enclosed plexiglass performance station booth that can be customized with company branding or holiday scenes to allow for unique design and safety all in one simple solution.



Even more flexibility

The future of our world and our industry is unpredictable right now. Catering companies will need to stay vigilant, remaining educated on new guidelines and policies as they are released so that business can be adapted accordingly.

Iserman stressed, "at Forte, we want to make sure our guests know that we are flexible. We promise to adapt as the guidelines do, many times covering the costs of any additional measures that need to be taken to ensure the safety of our guests is at the forefront of planning for each event." This is the mindset that catering companies will need to adopt to remain successful during this uncertain time.



ABOVE: PACKAGED MEALS FROM FORTE BELANGER. *Photo courtesy Forte Belanger*

LEFT: EMPYREAN EVENTS AND CATERING HAS DESIGNED A FULLY ENCLOSED PLEXIGLASS PERFORMANCE STATION FOR EVENTS. *Photo courtesy Emptyrean Events and Catering*

Get the word out now

While some companies are not sure if now is the appropriate time to be upping their sales and marketing, there really has never been a better time. People are itching to gather and celebrate again. That being said, many don't even know where to begin with events right now, and the thought of planning a holiday event becomes a stressor. As catering companies, you're providing a solution to this quandary, and potential clients will welcome the suggestions from experts like you.

Miner emphasized, "getting ahead of your clients is vital. Do not wait for them to contact you, and do not wait for the perfect answer to all the scenarios to fall in your lap; there simply isn't one." She also noted that many companies don't have extra money to spend on marketing right now but stressed not to let that get in the way. After many trials and tribulations over the past few months, she has found a perfect solution: "put your money behind a high ROI with social media ads; this is where your clients are spending time right now (and always!). Call out the obvious—

things are different—and highlight the solutions you've created for potential clients."

We are ready to celebrate together

We are all in this together, and our industry will come back booming. Said Miner, "you can and will come out on top if you put intention behind your solutions for the 2020 holiday season. Stand out as the leader in your market by being bold about how you can solve the client's problems in the COVID holiday season." As caterers, we are known for being innovative leaders that craft creative solutions for the unknowns that are inevitably thrown at us at each event. Now is the ideal time to let that skillset shine while helping people come together again to celebrate the holiday season more joyfully than ever before! 

Forte Belanger and Emphyrean Events and Catering are proud members of the ICA. For more information, visit internationalcaterers.org.

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AS SEEN IN MINNEAPOLIS



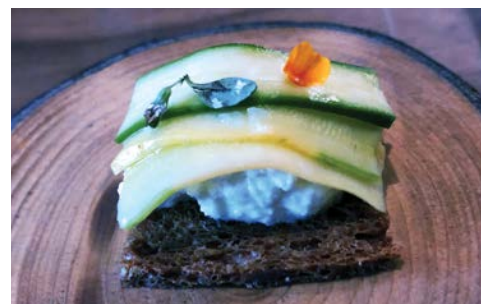
A birthday dinner that was supposed to happen in early April, then moved to May, then July was well worth the wait. At demi, helmed by James Beard award-winning chef Gavin Kaysen, I asked my server, “have you ever had a guest weep because a course was so good?” The reply was affirmative. Yep. Flavors can bring a person to tears of gratefulness. The diminutive demi, with just



Compressed honeydew with black lime salt accompanied by (not shown) wheatgrass broth



Boules wheat cavatelli with duck confit, makrut lime & corn mousse, shiso, lemongrass, lovage and puffed corn



Sunflower rye toast with fresh ricotta and marinated summer squash, lemon

20 counter seats at full capacity pre-COVID, was a finalist for a James Beard Best New Restaurant 2020. The winner will remain ever a secret, as it was announced in late August that the award, among others, would not be presented due to changes at the Beard Foundation. —Kathleen Stoehr



Au bon canard foie gras terrine with strawberry gelée, Sicilian pistachio, sumac, sorrel, and accompanied by buckwheat naan



The dish that made me weep: a first course twist on a Greek salad with Dutch herring, summer vegetables (Persian cucumber, kohlrabi, more), milkweed capers, coriander blossoms, and fermented tomato coulis



Orange & poppyseed puree, oat, bing cherry, marcona almond, goat's milk ice cream



Left: Wild rice crusted halibut with fava beans, roasted turnips, garlic, ginger, kanyaku, koji sauce with lemon basil and nasturtium garnish

STEAL THIS



Fresh ideas to use or adapt at your next event.

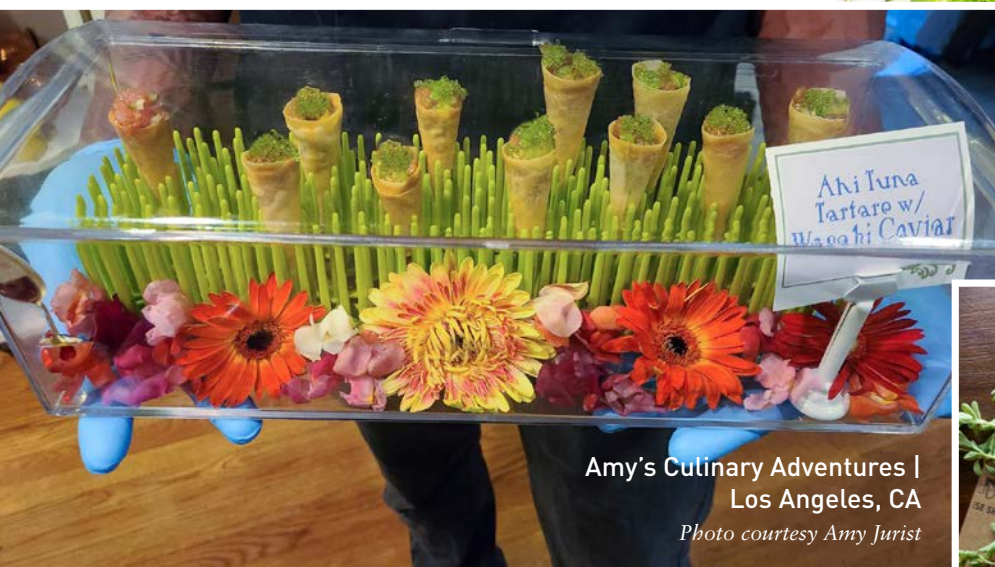
No Need to SHARE

Gone are the days of the communal charcuterie trays and appetizer tables, instead individual and pre-packaged reign supreme. Get inspired with these beautiful and creative ways to continue to serve delicious bites during a traditional cocktail hour. —*Amber Kispert-Smith*



Schaffer | Los Angeles, CA

Photo courtesy Schaffer



Amy's Culinary Adventures | Los Angeles, CA

Photo courtesy Amy Jurist



France 44 | Minneapolis, MN

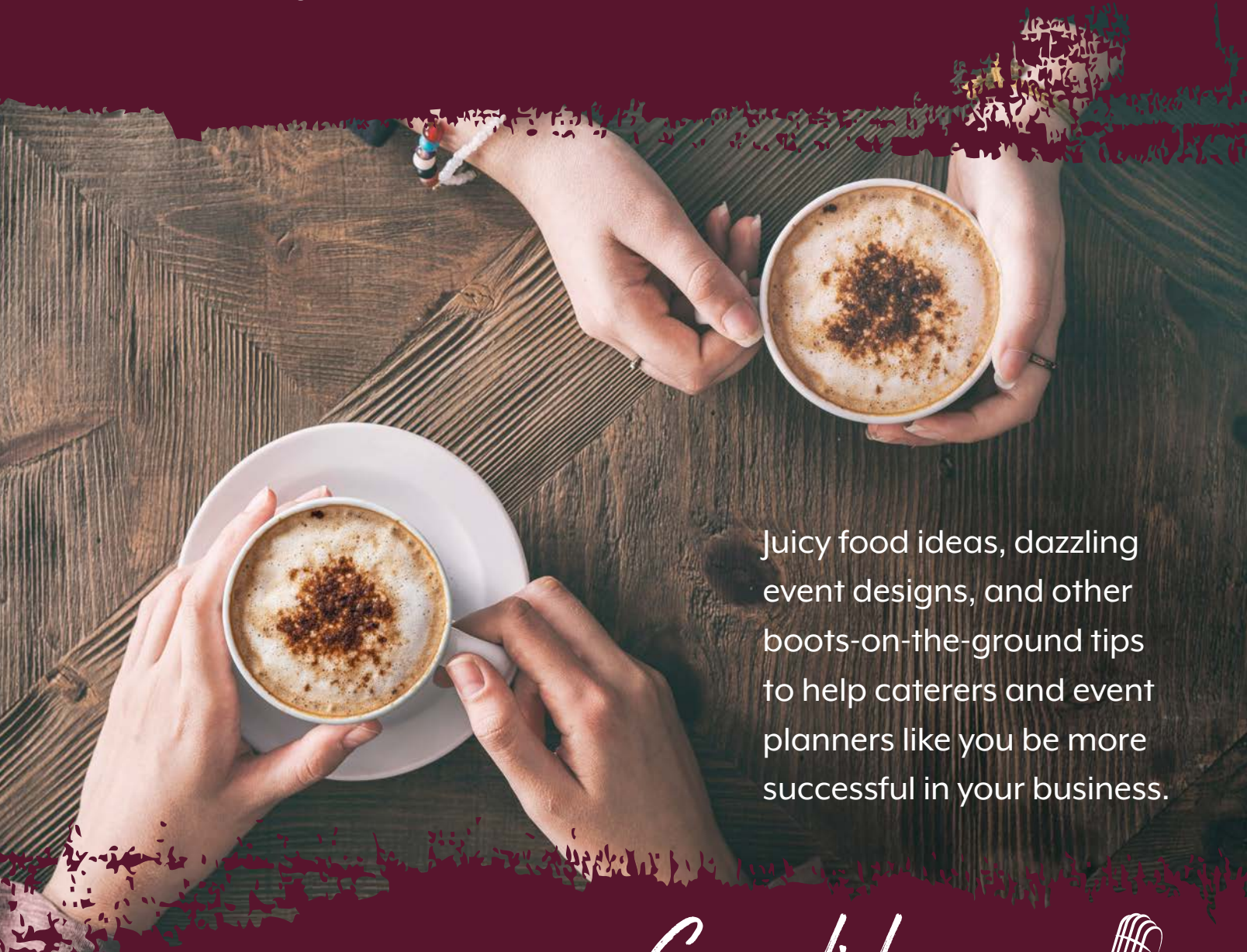
Photo courtesy France 44



Amy's Culinary Adventures | Los Angeles, CA

Photo courtesy Amy Jurist

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RESTOCK *to* REOPEN



At Barilla, we've been making pasta since 1877, when Pietro Barilla opened a modest bread and pasta shop in Parma, Italy. Every day, we strive to give people food that you would give your own children.

As a family company we have a particular duty to be a "people first" organization, and that means we must help support our friends, colleagues, and customers in the industry. Your partners at Barilla are committed to supporting the foodservice industry as we weather the challenges brought on by COVID-19. As we begin reopening the doors, reigniting our stoves, and rebooting our businesses, it's also time to restock the pantry. We'd like to help make that a little easier with this special "restock to reopen" rebate.

EARN \$5 PER CASE ON ALL BULK BARILLA PRODUCT UP TO \$500 WHEN A MINIMUM OF 5 CASES ARE PURCHASED! MAXIMUM REBATE IS \$500 PER FACILITY. VISIT BarillaFS.com/rebate

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Please visit BarillaFS.com for training videos, recipes, plus tips and strategies for serving pasta in almost any venue or format.

Program Rules & Guidelines: Earn \$5 per case on all 2/10 bags of Barilla pasta product up to \$500 when a minimum of 5 cases are purchased.

The stated promotional allowance is for a case (2/10lb bags) of Barilla pasta purchased between 5/1/20 and 10/31/20. The maximum rebate is \$500 per facility when all other purchase and eligibility conditions are met.
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