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WELCOME BACK TO OUR AUGUST ISSUE OF THE LAS VEGAS FOOD & BEVERAGE PROFESSIONAL and hoping everyone is keeping as cool as possible. I’ve been told that the summer is a slow season in the Food & Beverage Industry here in Las Vegas. Well…I recently visited the Strip with our SoCal journalists Lisa & Drew Matney visiting from San Diego and was totally impressed with the number of visitors that are in town. Kudos to the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority for keeping our numerous hotel rooms occupied with conventions, shows, expos and other events! Even in the so-called off-season…

Cover
Our August Issue Cover Feature is dedicated to the newest addition to SGWS, Executive Director of Mixology, Spirits Education and Special Events BRIAN VAN FLANDERN, and coming from a very impressive background which includes work with a Michelin Award-winning restaurant and writing his own cocktail books. We welcome Brian to Las Vegas from New York and are looking forward to working with him closely in developing and featuring many of the best restaurants in the United States that happen to be right here in Las Vegas. We had a Q&A with Brian, who brings his professional expertise to SGWS and the Las Vegas Food & Beverage Industry. WELCOME TO LAS VEGAS, BRIAN VAN FLANDERN…

PAGE 7 Max Solano begins a new monthly column we’re calling Spirits Confidential. Max is a principal mixologist at Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits of Nevada and is considered one of the most respected and premier authorities in the West Coast on all matters whisky and serves as a Spirits Judge at the coveted New York World Wine & Spirits Competition, International Whisky Competition and world-renowned San Francisco World Spirits Competition. This is Part 1 of 2 of Smitten with Rye and in Part 2 of this article next month, Max will go into detail and address many of the commonly asked American whisky questions and misconceptions, the laws and introduce you to some must-have rye whiskey brands. And, soon you’ll realize exactly why Max is “Smitten with Rye”!

PAGE 11 Another new column starting this month is Front & Back of the House by Gael Hees, who is a Las Vegas freelancer specializing in written, graphic and audiovisual communications. She has written for national publications and has won numerous awards for tourism-related printed materials and videos, is accredited in public relations by the Public Relations Society of America and is a certified hospitality educator. Gael’s first column is on a very happy host and tells us that when a person who is deeply committed to customer care and service finds herself working in a restaurant with the same philosophy, the result can be nothing short of a win for everyone—with the customers being the biggest winners of all. Monique Francia is just such a person and Sushi Roku is the restaurant. Thank you, Gael, and welcome to The Las Vegas Food & Beverage Professional!

CHEERS AND KAMPAI!
Mike Fryer Sr. Editor/Publisher
HOT OFF THE GRILL!

We recently had the chance to visit Seattle and attend and cover the Bite of Seattle and found this food truck, whose name gives new meaning to the acronym KFC!

LVFNBPro Editorial Director Bob Barnes met up with Golden Entertainment Director of Culinary Scott Green to experience the new happy hour menu he created, giving us yet another reason to visit one of the Group’s 59 (and counting) tavern locations. To learn about Chef’s new menu see Bob’s What’s Cooking column on page 12.

Last month we stopped in to check out the newly-opened The Stove in Henderson and observed Chef/Owners Scott Commings and Antonio Nunez hard at work pleasing a full-capacity crowd. To learn more about their innovative, non-traditional breakfast and lunch menu, read Shelley Stepanek’s reporting in her Best of Best column on page 22.
Sorghum: The Ancient Spirit of China

In June of this year, I traveled back to my home country of Taiwan, where I experienced a spirit beverage that has existed as far back as the Ming Dynasty. Travel with me to the country of China, where we explore the origin of baijiu (báijiǔ). Baijiu is a clear, or “white” alcohol, as the term directly translates to in English, and is the highest consumed spirit in the world, as of 2016, the fifth most important cereal crop in the world, depending on when it was first purchased! Cost of older produced baijiu can be marked up significantly after being aged in bottle, sometimes over 40 or 50 times the original cost depending on when it was first purchased! Cost is quite reasonable for this type of spirit, and recently, Kimmen Kaoliang received several awards at the 2017 San Francisco World Spirits Competition, winning gold ("38% Kimmen Kaoliang Liquor" and "Baoyue Spring Kimmen Kaoliang Liquor"), double gold ("Treasure Collection of Kimmen Kaoliang Liquor"), and even "Best Baijiu of the Year" for its 58% Kimmen Kaoliang Liquor.

Since KKL was established, many people have opted to buy and store the liquor to sell at a later time after being aged for a number of years. Cost of older produced baijiu can be marked up significantly after being aged in bottle, sometimes over 40 or 50 times the original cost depending on when it was first purchased! I recently had the opportunity to try a 35+ year Kimmen Kaoliang Liquor aged in bottle. Clearly the aging helps to diminish the harsh alcohol tendency as is with many distilled spirits. The baijiu was smooth and complex, perhaps even more like a whiskey rather than a clear spirit like vodka or rum when it comes to complexity and body.

Because it is gluten-free, the grain has begun appearing in the United States as a substitute. Lakefront Brewery, Inc. (Milwaukee) produces a gluten-free beer called “New Grist,” which is made from sorghum and rice. Anheuser-Busch (St. Louis, Missouri) also has their “Redbridge” beer, which is a sorghum-based, gluten-free beer that is nationally distributed in the U.S.

Kaoiang wine, also known as Gaoliang wine, is one type of the distilled baijiu spirit made from fermented, distilled sorghum. Historically, this alcohol has been around since the Ming Dynasty, and is sold in China, Taiwan, and even Korea today. One of the largest distilleries of sorghum today is Kinmen Kaoliang Liquor, Inc. (KKL). KKL itself first produced baijiu in 1952 as a government distillery. They initially encouraged farmers to grow sorghum by allowing them to barter their sorghum harvest in exchange for rice, and this relationship contributed to the local economy over the next several decades.

Baijiu is made over a period of over two months. After producing the yeast from a wheat/water mixture, the cooked sorghum is then distilled twice with a month of fermentation in between. Afterwards, first and second distillations are blended to the strength and quality required for the brand. It is traditionally served at room temperature in some variation of a small glass or flatbread, couscous, breads, syrup, beer, etc. It is even used beyond consumption as building materials or biofuels. It is the fifth most important cereal crop in the world, as of 2016, behind the other more familiar grains (corn, wheat, rice, etc…).

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Four categories that are produced are the strong aroma (nóngxiāng), light aroma (qīngxiāng), sauce aroma (jiàngxiāng) and rice aroma (mǐxiāng).

Four classifications of baijiu are currently recognized, over 10 classifications of baijiu, but the primary four categories that are produced are the strong aroma (nóngxiāng), light aroma (qīngxiāng), sauce aroma (jiàngxiāng) and rice aroma (mǐxiāng).

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Next time you’re at a liquor store looking for something new to try, see about searching for a baijiu! It is a unique experience that you might not find in other spirits.

Until next month, Cheers~!

Alice

See more at www.aliceswift.com.
what’s BREWING

Aces & Ales will host its 9th annual Strong Beer Festival on August 11 beginning at 3 p.m. at its Tenaya location. The event will offer an opportunity to indulge in more than 50 different specialty or extremely rare beers that range from 7-21% ABV. Participating breweries include Beachwood Brewing, The Bruery, Jolly Pumpkin and local breweries Big Dog’s, Joseph James, Tenaya Creek and Triple 7.

For more info, visit acesandales.com.

Last issue I reported on Steph Cope and Steve Brockman departing Las Vegas and their head brewer positions at CraftHaus Brewery to return to their homeland, Australia. While their brewer boots will be hard to fill, stepping in are Cameron Fisher taking over as Head Brewer and Bryson Bauducco, who will serve as Assistant Brewer. Both have experience brewing professionally. Cameron, a UNLV graduate, previously worked at Odyssey Beerwerks in Colorado and 13 Virtues in Oregon; and Bryson brewed at Mike Hess Brewing in San Diego and operated a mobile canning line all over Southern California.

Both brewers bring expertise in a variety of beer styles, with Cameron enjoying brewing beers out of the traditional beer style guidelines, as well as classic style such as IPAs and Belgian ales; and Bryson appreciates the depth and complexity of barrel aged beers and sours. They will be tasked with taking the brewery to the next level, ramping up production and putting to good use the new Wild Goose canning line, 40-barrel fermenter and large distribution cold room, which were part of the brewery’s latest expansion.

The Henderson-based brewery opened nearly four years ago and has seen thirty percent growth each year and anticipates surpassing this with the recent expansion and the new brewers ready to take the helm.

Speaking of new brewing gear, Triple 7 Restaurant & Microbrewery at Main Street Station in Downtown Las Vegas, is switching out its brewing equipment. Its existing system was new when the brewery opened in 1996, but the years have resulted in wear and tear so it will be replaced with a new Premier Stainless 15-barrel brewhouse (the same size as its original system). Brewmaster Tom Harwood says the new equipment will provide more consistency, but as the new construction will take place in October, brewing will have to take a breather for about a month. As a result, he’ll be brewing up a storm in the next few months to supply the brewpub and other Boyd Gaming locations including Bailiwick at Orleans, Filament Bar at Fremont, 90-NINETY at Suncoast and Holo Holo at the Cal.

In the June issue I reported on The Underground, the Prohibition-themed expansion with a small brewery and distillery situated in the basement of the Mob Museum. At the time of its opening the beer was not yet flowing, but now, after several test batches, it is being served to the thirsty public. Brewer/Distiller Cole Miller showed me around his 15-gallon brewing system and related that he has always been a fan of beer and spirits and coincidently, his ancestors in Mississippi were bootleggers, so you can say this new position is in his blood.

I sampled his Z’Cream Dream, brewed with pilsner malt and vanilla extract and oranges added during fermentation. Cole explained this cream ale is representative of a beer style popular before Prohibition that became a casualty of the following ban on alcohol. The brew reminds me of an orange creamscicle cocktail and is quite refreshing during our 100° dog days of summer. Cole says each month a group from Zappos (hence the Z in the beer’s name) meets with him to help select a new beer for the following month, and as the system is so small it can only produce one keg each month, you will likely experience a new and interesting brew each time you visit.

Admission to The Underground speakeasy is included with the museum’s general admission, and free anytime for patrons using the daily passwords found on Instagram Stories @MobMuseumUnderground. The Underground is also now offering happy hour M-F from 5-7 p.m. with 20% off; and free presentations Thu-Sat at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., during which educators talk about the Prohibition period and the process of making beer and moonshine, culminating with tastes of each.

After visiting the Mob Museum I made the short trip over to Tenaya Creek Brewery, and found owner Tim Etter hanging out at the bar, which is always a delight, but I was also quite happy and surprised to find that Jackalope, my all-time favorite barleywine, was on tap. Tim informed me Jackalope is now being made year-round, which is impressive, since very few breweries even make a barleywine, much less produce it year-round! (In case you are wondering, a barleywine is an intensely malty beer style named for its ABV content approaching that of wine—8-12%—and does not contain wine.) After this discovery, I just may be finding more reasons to head to the Downtown area.

For more info, visit acesandales.com.

Bob Barnes is a native Las Vegas resident, regional correspondent for Celebrator Beer News and covers the LV restaurant scene for Gayot.com.

He welcomes your inquiries.

Email: bob@lvfnb.com
I am convinced, now, more than ever, that what was once old is new again. That is certainly the common theme in our industry. A category like rum, for example, which experienced such resounding growth and popularity during the colonial days from what would eventually become this great country, was king of distilled beverages. If one was not distilling rum, one was certainly consuming it! Certainly, long before whiskey became a household staple and a major commodity. At different intervals in this country’s history during the decades that followed Prohibition and more recently, rum piqued the interest of spirits consumers worldwide. This was indeed the similar path that rye whiskey has followed.

Rye whiskey is enriched with so much history and importance that I struggle with what essential facts need to be mentioned versus the ones that have to be sacrificed like innocent lambs. Long before bourbon became a household name (circa 1820s), rye was the style of whiskey that started it all in this country. In 1640, William Kieft, Director General of the New Dutch Netherland Colony, established the very first New World commercial distillery and Wilhelm Hendrickson is credited as this country’s first master distiller whom experimented with rye distillates.

Rye whiskey’s popularity began skyrocketing just years prior to the Revolutionary War as the British continued to impose higher tariffs on molasses and began blockading trade routes to the Caribbean making it more difficult for the colonialists to produce and/or purchase rum. Without question, the two biggest rye whiskey producing states, Maryland and Pennsylvania, had two very distinct styles and flavor profiles from one another. Pennsylvania rye would become known as the more robust, earthy, spicy of styles, whereas Maryland’s style was more composed, delicate and finessed. And, let us not forget, our very first President, George Washington, was this country’s largest whiskey producer in 1798 after he had stepped down from office. Mount Vernon was a very majestic distillery and property located in Virginia and has been fully restored to its past glory. And, these whiskeys did not see long periods of maturation in barrels like they did beginning in the second half of the 19th century on.

Piggybacking off the Industrial Revolution, the 19th century brought many technological and scientific innovation from which our whiskey industry reaped the benefits and continued to grow and evolve. Since it wasn’t until 1870 when Old Forester became the very first company to offer commercially bottled whiskey, one would merely go to their local watering hole and either consume their fill there or come equipped with their own cask, flagon or other vessel for storing their own domestic stock.

Immediately following the Civil War there was a major whiskey shortage and unethical and hazardous blending practices came about that ultimately forced the government to become involved in spirits production oversight and eventually acts such as the Bottle-In-Bond Act (1897) and The Pure Food & Drug Act (1906) were passed. From the 1870s-1919, the liquor industry was booming and experiencing its first major Renaissance. Breweries and distilleries were opening up everywhere and by the 1880s the whiskey industry became responsible for almost 40% of this country’s GDP! Then, just like any satire, tragedy sadly struck! Following World War I, we again experienced another whiskey shortage. But, the sledge hammer that forever changed this country’s landscape, The Volstead Act, better known as Prohibition (a.k.a. The Noble Experiment), peeked its very ugly head. This 18th Amendment was ratified on January 16, 1919 and went into effect one year later on January 17, 1920. When the 21st Amendment was finally ratified on December 5, 1933, Prohibition was repealed and alcohol manufacturing, transportation, sale and consumption was once again legal. However, very serious damage was done! Many of this country’s earlier and great rye producers did not come back. For those that did reestablish themselves, in the following years they either were purchased by another company or sadly closed their doors for good.

Rye whiskey was holding on by a thread, especially those in Pennsylvania and Maryland. Luckily, over the years, the larger bourbon producers and other whiskey producers continued to produce some rye whiskey. As the global resurgence of classic cocktails began trending globally in the early 2000s, and in the years to come, a high demand for rye whiskey from bartenders started taking precedence. This was due to many of our country’s great pre- and post-Prohibition cocktails being made with rye whiskey. Whatever few rye brands were available were purchased and consumed faster than producers could release. And, just like that, rye whiskey was in high demand again. Although, during my years as a buyer, I very much recall a period from roughly 2010-2012 that rye became so popular amongst the bar community and whiskey consumers everywhere that we experienced a shortage for a while.

Fortunately, with this new and unprecedented growth and Renaissance in the alcohol beverage industry we are currently experiencing, the rye whiskey supply has caught up with today’s grueling demand. We can now find many styles of rye whiskey, young and old, readily available or very scarce, for cocktail mixing or sipping leisurely by producers old and new, and big and small. The craft distillers are constantly keeping the TTB on their very busy toes and slowly continue to expand the horizon of spirit styles, laws, innovation and creativity.

In Part 2 of this article next month, I will go into detail and address many of the commonly asked American whiskey questions and misconceptions, the laws and introduce you to some must-have rye whiskey brands. And, soon you’ll realize exactly why I am “Smitten with Rye!”
ENTERTAINMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Nitro Circus is creating its first resident choreographed sports stunt action stage show opening at Bally’s next spring in the Jubilee Theater, which is getting a multi-million redesign and name.

Wynn Las Vegas is planning its first-ever seasonal musical “The Holiday Show” for the Encore Theater Nov. 30-Dec. 30.

“The Voice—Neon Dreams,” a show planned for the theater being built at the Hard Rock Hotel, which is becoming Virgin Las Vegas, has been cancelled.

Colin Kane, master insult comedian, started his first residency inside Vinyl at Hard Rock with his new R-rated show, “The Wolf,” returning Aug. 31 and Sept. 28.


Penn & Teller will return to their Rio show Saturday, Aug. 18 after the silent partner’s recent spinal-fusion surgery.

Mirage headliner Matt Goss released his single “Red Flares.” This fall, a feature documentary about him and his twin brother’s life “When the Screaming Stops” will be released.

DIETING – BEVERAGE NEWS

An all-new Smith & Wollensky will debut next spring in the Grand Canal Shoppes at The Venetian/Palazzo in the former two-story Zeffirino Ristorante location.

Del Frisco’s Double Eagle Steakhouse has undergone a $2 million complete renovation with completion expected this month revealing a new modern look.

New at the Ethel M Chocolates’ factory store in Henderson is the addition of Trinchero Family Estates’ wine pairing at chocolate tastings on the odd hours from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily.

Z’Cream Dream, available through Aug. 31, is The Underground speakeasy’s first “Zap-on-Tap” craft house-brew at the Mob Museum.

Searsucker at Caesars Palace partnering with “Absinthe” is offering a dinner-and-show package.

Executive Sous Chef Thomas Tapat from SUSHISAMBA at Grand Canal Shoppes won Food Network’s “Chopped.”

Two established chefs Antonio Nunez and Scott Connings opened second-story The Stove for breakfast and lunch in space formerly occupied by Standard & Pour.

Fast-casual Sharyky’s Modern Mexican Kitchen committed to organic clean eating opened its second Las Vegas-location on Blue Diamond Road.

ABOUT TOWN NOTES

On The Record opening New Year’s Eve at Park MGM will be trendsetting fraternal twin brothers Jonnie and Mark Houston’s biggest project and first in Las Vegas. The three-room nightlife venue will have a modern “speakeasy” atmosphere with indoor and outdoor spaces.

The Rio introduced esports arena The Wall Gaming Lounge, the first phase of Las Vegas’ newest interactive space by Hybrid One, and first permanent esports venue for Caesars Entertainment.

Wayne Newton’s former home and ranch estate Casa de Shenandoah is now closed for tours and as a public attraction.

The Resort on Mount Charleston was sold for $4.8 million to a North Carolina couple, who will rename it The Retreat on Charleston Peak and make upgrades.

Cannabition, Las Vegas’ first and only immersive cannabis-themed museum, is opening at Neonopolis.

Corso a Crafts upscale DIY craft-and-sip studio opened in Downtown Summerlin offering crafting opportunities.

Resident Rehab Beach Club performer Flo Rida unveiled a dedicated memorabilia case at Hard Rock.


Japanese artist Kisho Mwkaiyama can be viewed working in a public studio at Bellagio on a commissioned art installation, Vendarta 100: Six Elements and The Seasons, through January 2019 to be placed at Mandalay Bay.

The LINQ headliner Jeff Civillico is the Las Vegas Natural History Museum’s first celebrity partner and “Ambassador.”

EVENTS

The 64th Miss Rodeo America Pageant will be held at the Tropicana Dec. 2-9.

Premier bodybuilding event, Joe Weider’s Olympia Fitness & Performance Weekend, will return to the Orleans Arena Sept. 13-15.

South Point Car & Truck Show will be held in Exhibit Halls Saturday, Aug. 18. Admission is free.

Gold Spike is holding Down & Derby dance party on skates every third Wednesday in the transformed roller rink “Backyard.”

The 32nd Annual Aid for AIDS of Nevada’s over-the-top Black & White Party fundraiser will be held Saturday, Sept. 8 at Daylight Beach Club inside Mandalay Bay.

SHOW RESIDENCY NEWS

One of Las Vegas’ longest running shows, “Frank Marino’s Divas Las Vegas,” closed suddenly at the LINQ.

Gwen Stefani debuted her residency “Just a Girl” show inside Zappos Theater at Planet Hollywood.

Backstreet Boys ending their residency at Zappos Theater Feb. 6-April 27 has a new single “Don’t Go Breaking My Heart” and will release a new album this year.

In its eighth year, “Rod Stewart: The Hits,” has new fall dates at The Colosseum at Caesars Palace Nov. 21-Dec. 2.

Paula Abdul will bring her “Straight Up Paula!” tour to the Red Rock Ballroom Saturday, Nov. 10.

Anita Baker, 2018 BET Lifetime Achievement Award recipient, will headline three shows at Wynn’s Encore Theater Aug. 29-Sept. 2.

“ABBA The Concert” returning to the Tropicana Saturday, Aug. 25 gets energized with release of Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again.

Celebrity social media influencer Perez Hilton is special guest host for Chippendales at the Rio through Sept. 2.

Interactive satire dinner show “Tony N’ Tina’s Wedding” opened at Buca de Beppo Italian Restaurant in Bally’s.

Guitar legend Al Di Meola is bringing his Opus Tour 2018 to Santa Fe Station’s Chrome Showroom Saturday, Sept. 29.

By Jackie Brett

Jackie is a freelance public relations specialist and writer specializing in the Las Vegas entertainment and travel scene. Her writings have appeared in magazines and newspapers nationwide and on numerous websites.

Email: jackiebrett@cox.net
Dive in

Deep Eddy Orange

Gluten Free
Distilled 10x
Small Batch

Vodka Made With Real Orange

Deep Eddy Madras
- 2 ounces Deep Eddy Orange Vodka
- 1 ounce Cranberry Juice
- 2 ounces club soda

AUSTIN'S ORIGINAL
HANDCRAFTED TO SMALL BATCHES

Real Orange Flavored

AUSTIN, TEXAS
Ferrari Brut

Usually when we think of taking a Ferrari for a test drive we look for our driving gloves. But those in the wine world know in this case, it’s a historic winery that has been in operation since 1902. This 12.5% ABV Italian sparkling wine is made from Trentino’s terroir with 100% Chardonnay grapes cultivated on the slopes of the mountains in northern Italy’s Trentino region, picked by hand between the end of August and the beginning of September. As with many good things, it takes time to perfect and spends at least 24 months on the yeasts. It’s definitely worth the wait, as it presents a nose of ripe Golden Delicious apples and wild flowers and flavors of ripe fruit and hints of crusty bread. The winemakers suggest it is perfect served as an aperitif or with lighter dishes, especially seafood. The Ferrari winery has collected several accolades, including earning the distinction of “Sparkling Wine Producer of the Year” at The Champagne and Sparkling Wine World Championships and as “European Winery of the Year” at the Wine Star Awards by Wine Enthusiast.

www.ferraritrento.it/EN

Ska Modus Hoperandi Bierschnapps

What if beer married schnapps? Well, that’s now possible, and exactly what the Palisade, CO-based Peach Street Distillers have done with this collaboration with its sister company: the Durango, CO-based Ska Brewing. “Bier Schnapps crafted in the German tradition is simply beer that has been distilled to varying degrees of alcohol content,” says Peach Street Distillers Co-Founder Bill Graham. This 82 proof rendition was distilled with Ska’s Modus Hoperandi IPA and aged for about a year in bourbon barrels. Ska Brewing and Peach Street Distillers have long been sister companies, but this collaboration of brewers and distillers co-opting a final bottled spirit is a first. “We brewed Modus Hoperandi IPA pretty much top to bottom,” chuckles Ska Head Brewer Kurt Randall, “This is Modus, in its most concentrated form.” Although most of us think of schnapps as minty and sweet, after one sip you’ll realize this drink is more relatable as a whiskey. Hops are definitely in the nose and the flavor is the combination of a hoppy beer and a hybrid spirit with a unique taste that is both bitter and sweet with an intriguing spicy mouthfeel.

radcraftbeer.com/news/bierschnappsmodus

ChocZero Keto Chocolate Bark

Recent studies have shown that chocolate has positive health benefits such as lowering blood pressure and being an antioxidant superfood, but added sugar can nullify the positive aspects. Coming to the rescue is the ChocZero Keto Chocolate Bark, which are sweetened with monk fruit with no sugar added, and are gluten, soy and sugar alcohol free. ChocZero’s cocoa beans are sourced from some of South America’s finest, they use real Madagascar vanilla beans and use only the most premium of GMO free ingredients. Six flavors include 100% stone-ground dark chocolate almond, 100% stone-ground dark chocolate hazelnut, 100% stone-ground dark chocolate coconut, 100% stone-ground milk chocolate almond, 100% stone-ground milk chocolate hazelnut and 100% stone-ground milk chocolate coconut. I sampled the Almond and Hazelnut dark chocolate varieties and can attest that they are delicious and taste every bit as good as sugar-added versions. Since they come in at a respectable count of 120 calories and 15g of carbs balanced by 13g of dietary fiber (as dietary fiber is not digestible, subtract it from total carbs for the net carbs) for a net carb count of only 2, you don’t have to feel too guilty about indulging.

www.choczero.com
When a person who is deeply committed to customer care and service finds herself working in a restaurant with the same philosophy, the result can be nothing short of a win for everyone— with the customers being the biggest winners of all. Monique Francia is just such a person and Sushi Roku is the restaurant.

Nestled on an upper floor of the Forum Shops at Caesars on the Strip, Sushi Roku is as visually pleasing as the food is delicious. Cement-like walls provide a cool backdrop for the rich tones of wood furniture and lighting, textured fabrics and accents; and strategically placed windows give focus to snapshot views of the High Roller, the Strip to the south, and little-seen glimpses of Caesars Palace.

As one of the hosts, Monique is often the first person one sees when they visit the restaurant. Approaching the host station at some restaurants can be a bit intimidating, but not so Sushi Roku, especially if Monique is working. With a quick, sincere smile, efficient questions, and enough banter to make the customers comfortable, she quickly has guests seated and ready to enjoy their meal.

Monique has the perfect background for a job in the service industry. She grew up in Las Vegas and graduated high school from Southeast Career Technical Academy where she studied nursing. She has worked in home health care and is in the process of figuring out how her UNLV pre-med biology major courses can be transferred to the nursing program. Having worked in a hospital, she knows that patient care is her biggest interest and her long-term goal is to own a nursing home or other type of long-term care facility.

“I always want to treat the people I’m interacting with as a family member or close friend,” said Monique. “I want the service to be exceptional and something that will be comfortable as well. I always want the guests to feel well taken care of.”

In a similar manner, the restaurant management stresses being responsive to customer needs and wishes. Group meetings, a communications notebook, and even texts keep hosts and others informed if something changes or an especially important guest is coming in. Careful attention is paid to customers’ dietary restrictions and other needs. Plus, most of the restaurant’s employees have tasted almost everything on the menu and are prepared to make recommendations.

“My manager, Johnny Seo, always knows what is going on,” said Monique. “He is aware when there are big groups coming in, or if someone has a special cake they want cut or a favorite bottle of wine they are bringing in,” added Monique. “This really helps us,” she continued.

Monique’s days at the restaurant are usually well-planned and reliable. When she arrives in the afternoon, she is able to look at the reservations for the night, knowing that most if not all customers on the list have been confirmed by someone on the lunch shift. The confirmation calls include directions to the restaurant and suggestions for parking. She also knows who is serving that day, when different areas of the restaurant will open and many other bits of information that will make her job easier.

Monique has had her share of challenging moments. With a huge percentage of the restaurant’s clientele from out of town, almost everyone is new to the venue. There are several spaces in the restaurant including a dedicated sushi bar, rooms with views of the Strip, and private rooms with more intimate seating. Guiding customers through the restaurant who see places they like with open tables can sometimes be difficult, as can asking someone to sit in the bar and wait for a table when they see tables available.

“Not everyone understands the workings of a restaurant,” Monique related. “We try to explain that tables are held for those who have reservations, but it can still leave a guest frustrated. In a bad situation, we can always call a manager who may suggest one of his ‘favorite tables’ or offer the guest a complimentary appetizer or drink.”

Guests are not the only ones who benefit from Monique’s attention to care and attention to detail. She is acutely aware of the needs of the waitstaff and others who benefit from tips. If she places a large party in one service area, she tries hard to give other servers similar or equivalent numbers of customers so everyone is equally compensated.

When not working at Sushi Roku, Monique may be serving at her second job—home health care—or even working her third part-time job as a model for automobile shows. And soon she’ll be back in school, with studying and homework to do. When asked what skills she thought a restaurant host or hostess should have, she replied, “Definitely a positive outlook; a calm, reflective attitude; a cheerful demeanor; and good listening skills.” She later added that “good time management” would also be helpful.

www.lvfnbpro.com
By Bob Barnes

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What’s Cooking

Chef Marty Lopez Now Heading the Kitchen at Herringbone

A few months back, after Chef Geno Bernardo left his executive chef position at the ocean-to-table concept Herringbone at Aria, the reigns were handed off to Marty Lopez, a very gifted chef who has more than 15 years of experience working for high-profile Las Vegas restaurants. Born in the Philippines, Chef Marty moved to the US when he was 12, and began cooking at the young age of 5. As he frequently went with his grandpa to the market, learning how to pick produce, he quips that as a child: “cooking was my baseball.” Chef’s previous executive chef positions were at Andre’s Bistro & Bar and 35 Steaks + Martinis; and in 2012 was part of the opening team for Bacchanal Buffet and Gordon Ramsay Pub and Grill at Caesars Palace. But in 2014 he introduced his bar & grill concept to the burbs, opening his first eatery off of the Strip: Wolfgang Puck Bar & Grill at Downtown Summerlin.

Speaking of his new position, Chef says, “I’m thankful that I’ve been given the freedom to have at it, be myself, work with ingredients and flavors I’m familiar with and draw from my background and experience.” And evidently he is doing exactly that, as a new menu has been rolled out, with 95% of the items new dishes created by the talented longtime Las Vegan.

I happily allowed Chef to cook for us and he proceeded to bring out nearly the whole menu. Unfortunately space won’t allow mention of all of them, but here are some of my favorites: Crudo of the Day—Tuna Tataki with 5-spice and shaved foie gras; Shrimp & Scallop Aguachile—avocado, cilantro, cucumber flowers, crispy lotus chips and Mexican bay scallop & Florida rock shrimp marinated in cucumber water, serrano and lime; Blue Crab & Corn Bisque—lump crab, cilantro, roasted corn, ginger and saffron; Vegetable Fritto Misto—a large shareable tempura-style crispy vegetable patty with champagne vinaigrette; Viking Village Scallops—New Jersey jumbo-sized scallops with carrot puree, morels, English peas and squid ink adobo; Day Boat Halibut—asparagus, roasted eggplant, summer squash and tamarind broth; and a Herringbone mainstay served at all Herringbone locations: Buffalo Octopus—a play on chicken wings, 6-7 hour-braised Spanish octopus marinated and fried in Frank’s Red Hot sauce.

From this tasting it’s quite evident that Chef Marty is utilizing what he learned about cooking seafood while at Alizé, as well as drawing from his family background and stellar experience in some of Las Vegas’ finest establishments. Herringbone is open daily for lunch, small bites, dinner and weekend brunch and is the only restaurant at Aria offering an option of al fresco dining. To view all of the menus visit herringboneats.com/locations/las-vegas/menus.

Wolfgang Puck Bar & Grill Bringing the Cuisine of the Iconic Chef to Downtown Summerlin

Austrian celebrity chef Wolfgang Puck has been awarded two James Beard awards and multiple Michelin stars and has built an empire of restaurants throughout the world. His Spago is recognized by many for igniting Las Vegas’ dining scene when it debuted at Caesars Palace in 1992, after which he followed with Cut, Wolfgang Puck Bar & Grill, Cucina and Lupo on the Vegas Strip. But in 2014 he introduced his bar & grill concept to the burbs, opening his first eatery off of the Strip: Wolfgang Puck Bar & Grill at Downtown Summerlin.

Manning the kitchen is Chef de Cuisine Tim Duda. Raised in New Jersey, he has been with the Puck group for four years, and worked at Cucina in CityCenter and Lupo at Mandalay Bay before leaving the Strip. Chef relates that the menu is a collaboration with all of the chefs in the company, with 95% of the menu unique from other Puck concepts and 75% the same as the same-named concept at the MGM Grand.

Chef Duda works closely alongside General Manager Devyn McLaughlin, who was hired in February with intentions and goals to move up within the company, and after beginning as a server to learn every aspect of the Wolfgang brand, after a month moved to lead bartender and shortly after was promoted to GM. Also
moving up through the ranks is Banquet Manager Ian Cordero, whose career with Puck began as a server in 2013 at Cucina and after also spending time at Spago and opening the Summerlin location, in 2017 stepped into his role as manager.

As for the aforementioned menu, a must-have is the simply-made but quite addictive Truffle Chips topped with a blue cheese sauce and just the right amount of truffle. Another great starter is the Hummus Vegetable Crudite with sourdough pita made from the same starter Wolfgang Puck introduced to his restaurants more than 30 years ago.

Loyal Knights fans will want to check out the Vegas Golden Knights Shrimp Basil Pesto Pizza, which was created by Nate Schmidt and Wolfgang Puck, and is so delicious Nate may have a future in menu design once his NHL hockey career is over. This collaboration is only fitting, as Schmidt’s business involves playing with a “Puck” and Wolfgang initially gained fame for his pizza at Spago.

Main course delights include the Spicy Calabrian Brick Chicken served with shishito peppers, which despite the name only brings mild heat to the table, and also big flavors. The rotating Oven Roasted Market Fish during our visit was a delectable halibut served in a white wine butter sauce with spinach, summer squash and corn puree. Another stellar fish entrée is the Salmon en Papillote, cooked and served in parchment paper to retain its moisture, accompanied with roasted tomatoes and fennel. The 8-hour Braised Beef Short Ribs was an enjoyable, hearty dish, but it was outshined by the rich, creamy polenta it was accompanied with.

Two desserts unique to this location are the Crème Brûlée made with fresh vanilla bean (no extract) topped with blackberries and blueberries; and Cheesecake Fromage Blanc made with ricotta served with fresh berries. One that is found at all Puck restaurants is the Chocolate Chip Cookies, which are made from scratch and religiously follow Wolfgang Puck’s iconic recipe.

Another example of distinctiveness can be found in the cocktail list. The Barrel-Aged Old Fashioned utilizes both a rye and bourbon (the brands change periodically, but usually are Buffalo Trace and Bulleit Rye), which are barrel aged for three months before being mixed with orange, bitters and the not-too-sweet demerara. Prices are reasonable (mostly in the $10-$25 range), especially considering you are experiencing the cuisine of the renowned Wolfgang Puck, and are considerably less than those found at his Strip locations. Show up during daily happy hour from 3-7 p.m. and prices plunge to $3-$10 on items such as chicken wings, calamari and shrimp ceviche; featured beer drafts and wine by the glass for $5; and cocktails for $5-$7. And, oenophiles will appreciate the ½ off on bottles of Rose deal during Sunday brunch and ½ off bottles of wine Mon.-Thu. Wolfgangpuck.com/dining/wolfgang-puck-bar-and-grill-summerlin

PT’s Entertainment Group Launches New Happy Hour

PT’s Entertainment Group currently comprises 59 taverns throughout the Las Vegas Valley and Nevada (reportedly more outlets than Starbucks!), including PT’s Pub, PT’s Gold, PT’s Ranch, PT’s Brewing Company, Sean Patrick’s, Sierra Gold and SG Bar, all of which are open 24 hours daily. Its new happy hour can be found across all of its locations, and best of all, the deals are offered twice daily: from 5-7 p.m. and midnight-2 a.m.

Director of Culinary Scott Green (whose resume includes opening the Bacchanal Buffet and more recently heading Robert Irvine’s Public House) has created the menu, which I learned-first-hand offers not only great deals (all priced from $6-$8) but excellent quality. Selections priced at $6 include mildly spicy Sriracha Chicken Bites and Potato Skins loaded with bacon and PT’s beer cheese; $7 selections include innovative Chicken Parmesan Sliders; and flatbreads, including Three-cheese, Meat Feast, The Gilroy and Buffalo Chicken, are $8. All are great choices, but the standout has to be the Pub Burger for only $7, which at a generously-portioned half pound, served with fries, is more food than most could handle in one sitting, and is as good as burgers I’ve enjoyed in specialty gourmet restaurants, making it the best deal in town for a burger of this quality.

Drink deals are half-off all drafts (including PT’s own locally-made craft brews like the 2017 GABF award-winning Boulder Stout), select wine choices (such as Trinity Oaks) and several premium wells (includes Buffalo Trace, Bulleit and Pendleton bourbon).
This July, we were fortunate enough to travel to Willamette Valley AVA to visit Roserock and Domaine Drouhin and Walla Walla AVA to visit Dusted Valley Winery. The Drouhin family has been in the wine business for centuries with Roserock Vineyard being their latest endeavor. Dusted Valley just celebrated its fifteen-year anniversary. What these wineries have in common is that each is steeped in family values and a passion for crafting the best possible wines their regions can offer.

During our trip, we were fortunate enough to hear from Veronique Drouhin, winemaker for Maison Joseph Drouhin in Burgundy as well as Domaine Drouhin and Roserock in Oregon, and meet Corey Braunel, co-owner and winegrower of Dusted Valley. Braunel owns and operates Dusted Valley alongside his wife Cindy Braunel, her sister Janet Johnson, and Janet’s husband, Chad Johnson. It truly was an honor to become better acquainted with these talented people, their beautiful wines and the growing wine regions of the Pacific Northwest.

Veronique Drouhin

In your opinion, what makes Domaine Drouhin so special?
The fact that my family believed in Oregon more than 30 years ago, and involved themselves personally in the farming of the grapes and making of the wines. Philippe, Robert, Françoise or myself have been at DDO for every single vintage since 1988, taking the delicate decisions of picking and vinemaking using our longtime experience from growing and making pinot noir and chardonnay in Burgundy.

What is your favorite stage of the winemaking process?
All of them! Bud break when vines wake up from a long dormant time. Flowering because of the enchanting smell. Harvest because you have not seen grapes for a year. The beginning of fermentation when the winery gets filled with an extraordinary range of aromas and bottling because you have spent two years of your life taking care of your vines and wines.

What has been your greatest challenge in winemaking?
Is there a varietal you have not yet worked with that you are interested in doing so?
Yes, syrah!
Which of the wines you make (or have made) are closest to your heart and why?
1992, 1994 and 1996 because each of these years I made both a wine and a beautiful child.

Corey Braunel

Who in your group was the biggest initiator/instigator of making a drastic lifestyle change and entering the wine business?
Chad and Janet had moved from the Midwest to Portland, Oregon in 1998 to get to the Pacific Northwest. Upon visiting Chad and Janet, Cindy and I fell in love with it. Chad began sharing Walla Walla Valley and Washington wines with me while I was living back in Madison, Wisconsin and I took a transfer to move to Walla Walla in May 2003. Dusted Valley was born by June of that year and we crushed our first vintage that October!

How did you decide that Walla Walla was the best place for your winery?
Once you visit this place you get the “why Walla Walla” factor. Walla Walla and world-class wine are synonymous with quality and are recognized around the globe today. The people in our community and industry are amazing and the comraderie is infectious here.

What prompted you to incorporate American White Oak from northern Wisconsin in your barrel program?
We all grew up in the northcentral area of the state. It’s about as far north as American White Oak grows in the river valleys. We harvested our first logs from that area and had them sawn into staves in Minnesota and air dried there for three years of seasoning before being coopered in California. What we found was the tighter grain from these trees made the barrels subtler and more restrained as compared to other American Oak.

What has been your greatest challenge in winemaking?
Building the business to get to a point where we could control as much as possible. Today we farm sixty acres of estate vineyards and work with only three other growers who are amongst the absolute best in Washington. In 2015, we brought our new winery online which affords us total control of processing, fermentation, ageing and bottling.

Which of the wines you make (or have made) are closest to your heart and why?
We name our top cabernet sauvignon and top syrah after our grandfathers. V.R. Special is named after Chad’s grandpa, Vernon Rhodes. The V.R. Special refers to Vern’s Special Chocolate Chip Cookies that he was famous for. Tall Tales Syrah is named after my grandpa, Fred Sicklinger, Fred was an amazing storyteller who kept his seventeen grandkids on the edge of their seats waiting for each story’s sensational ending. We honor Grandpa Fred and his oral tradition in our estate-grown and -produced syrah from Stoney Vine Vineyard.

Leaving my children back home in Burgundy.
Chef Spotlight
Dan Krohmer

Early on in life, Dan Krohmer loved sushi. The cuisine has influenced much of the life of the owner-chef of Other Mama, but the restaurant is much more than that. Krohmer’s life has taken him all over the world, including time in Japan, farm-to-table work in his home region of Northern California, Philadelphia, the Caribbean and across North America cooking for touring bands. Eventually he settled down in Las Vegas, but cringed at the idea of working on the Strip. He signed a lease without a restaurant concept and began constructing it, all while developing the menu in his mind.

What was it about sushi that caught your eye early on?
When I was a kid, I just thought sushi chefs were the coolest thing ever. I don’t know why, I just liked the presence of it, the artistry of it. I liked that it wasn’t just food, but an experience. That was the biggest thing for me, I think. That’s what turns me on. I like cooking, but the whole package of dining, everything being balanced and hitting that sweet spot. I really enjoy the communication with the customer in an open kitchen.

What was it like cooking for and touring with bands?
I got super bored and demotivated from doing the same crap. I did Coachella and Van’s Warped Tour. Spring to fall, I’d travel around in a tour bus, different city every day and boring generic food. It is a challenge. The kitchen was built into a 50-foot semi, no air conditioning, getting deliveries at 5 a.m., setting up and having breakfast ready by 7 a.m. for 300 to 1800 people. It was a lot, but I liked it, and it gave a different perspective and logistics. Sometimes you get burned out in the short order and routine of the kitchen, but as long as the food hit the table, they didn’t care what we did.

How’d you end up in Las Vegas?
I was working in the Caribbean in the winters, consulting and teaching local people how to make sushi and just got super burned out being on the road. It was one of those grass is greener situations. There was a girl I worked with in Philadelphia, we wound up dating and decided to end up here. I interviewed on the Strip a few times and just hated the idea of it. That was about it. I got a job at a local place and I was a grumpy asshole and I realized I was over working for other people.

So you signed a lease without a concept, how’d it develop?
I had a bunch of ideas, but at the end of the day I had to cook what sounds good to me. That’s why I named it Other Mama, something totally neutral without a cultural connotation. The restaurant is a combination of my life and career. Things I picked up in the Caribbean, like my favorite way to eat a whole fish: super simple, salt and pepper grilled perfectly. I don’t need stuffed with wild sausage or a crazy sauce. I want to taste the fish. We have hush puppies; my dad is a super redneck Oklahoman, so I grew up with that, a very nostalgic inclusion. I traveled a lot to Panama, Belize and Mexico, so ceviche. Then sashimi from Japan.

How is sushi different in Japan?
Lots of different ways. Rolls and stuff are an American thing. They have rolls, but just like one item, not 10 different things. It’s slower paced. It’s not sushi bars with loud music that distracts from the focus of the sushi chef. That’s what you’re going there for, to watch and feel the ambiance of creating. It’s about slowing down and enjoying the moment, being present. So many of us consume while doing three other things at the same time and don’t realize what we’re eating. I like being present and aware, appreciating what you have. A lot of things I’ve learned radiate into your personal life, the little things that go along with life than just food.

Other Mama is a chill atmosphere and a wide price range, it’s easy to come in and have any sort of experience...The idea is to have everyone feel welcome, especially in this town and that side of town. There’s something for Uncle Terry who hates everything. My dad gets mad if a place doesn’t have Bud Light. It’s all about hitting that spectrum for everyone, but not dumbing it down too much. I’m happy it is that way. You can come in and get a $3 Pabst and some hush puppies and get out for $10, or have a $100-plus meal for a special occasion, but I don’t want it to be a one time a year place.

What are you eating at Other Mama?
I’m always eating the sashimi. I love our product. I love crazy seasonal fish, nothing to it, just soy sauce and a little wasabi, call it a day. I’m proud of what we get in and the money and time we put into sourcing. It makes me feel proud that this is what we’re serving.
Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits of Nevada recently made the prudent move to step up the training of its Wine, Beer and Spirits Academy by appointing Brian Van Flandern Executive Director of Mixology, Spirits Education and Special Events. The industry veteran, who spent 25 years as a bartender in NYC, comes with some quite impressive credentials, and enough accolades to fill several pages, including being named ‘America’s Top Mixologist’ by The Food Network, opening Thomas Keller’s Per Se and serving as the Michelin three-star restaurant’s head mixologist, authoring award-winning cocktail books and appearing on various TV programs such as the CBS Morning Show and Foodography on the Cooking Channel.

We sat down with Van Flandern to learn about his storied career and how he plans to apply his vast and impressive experience and knowledge to his new position at Southern Glazer’s.
Can you tell us about the training you received when opening Thomas Keller’s Per Se?

My career didn’t really start until 2004 in New York City, when by a fortunate chain of events, I landed the coveted job as the opening head barman. It was an eye-opening experience that forever changed the course of my life. Chef Keller’s passion for food and his legendary attention to detail was infectious. It was an incredibly stressful joy to come to work every day and learn, in detail, about every single facet of the restaurant’s operations.

Our opening training was nothing less than a full culinary education. For six weeks, we had the owners of top purveyors come in twice a day and instruct us about everything you could think of from the front to the back of the house. We learned voluminous tomes about salt, olive oil, coffee, tea, bread, poultry, woodcock, pheasant, grouse, quail, beef, pork, heirloom vegetables, caviar, glass eels, truffles, and so on. We tasted dozens of varietals of garlic, tomatoes, beans, cheese, chocolate and so much more...and that was just food. We learned about marking, clearing, presenting, posture, flatware, glassware, art, interior design and even took an 18th century ballroom dance class, with a feather in hand, to learn to be more graceful when walking through the dining room.

I was very excited when we finally got to the training on fine wines, beers of the world and distilled spirits. Finally, I could contribute and show off my knowledge on a topic that I was comfortable with...or so I thought. It was then, that a much younger Francesco Lafranconi (on recommendation from Larry Ruvo and Steve Wynn to Chef Keller) trained the opening staff on distilled spirits. I learned more in three hours than I had in the previous twenty years about the products behind my bar. I was so inspired and fascinated with the knowledge and stories behind each label that I eventually became an encyclopedic sponge. Since then my knowledge has increased 10,000-fold.

What did you do after leaving Per Se?

In 2008, I left Per Se and branched out on my own to try my hand at private consulting. I was extremely fortunate to be courted by Diageo to become their first ever global brand ambassador for Tequila Don Julio and was part of the original team that designed their World Class Cocktail Competition, helping to define the rules by judging regional finals in over 40 countries around the world, sending the winners to the World Class finals. As a founding member of the USBG New York chapter, now the largest national chapter (formerly Vegas), I was instrumental in bringing Diageo World Class to the United States.

You’ve appeared on numerous TV programs. What are some that are most memorable to you?

I appeared on The Barefoot Contessa with Ina Garten, after which The Food Network called me ‘Americas Top Mixologist.’ I also did several episodes of Bar Rescue with Las Vegan Jon Taffer, including a positive ‘uplifting’ episode shot at UNLV set to air in late July or early August of this year.

What books have you written?

I’ve written five award-winning cocktail books including Vintage Cocktails, Craft Cocktails, Celebrity Cocktails, Tequila Cocktails and the most recent Whiskey(ey) Cocktails, which is set to be released in September with a book launch right here in Las Vegas.

What different spirits do you feel confident in speaking about and how do you prepare for your presentations?

Today I lecture on Vodka, Gin, Tequila, Rum, Whiskey/Whisky, Brandy, Mezcal, Cachaça, Genever, Aquavit, Eau-de-vie, Vermouth, Amaro, Pisco, Grappa, Singani, Bajitji, Raki, Sake, Soju, Shochu, Aguardiente, Sherry, Port and hundreds of various liqueurs. I try to learn the stories about each label, their histories, awards, distillation techniques, aging practices, yeast strains and various quality control standards.

What do you hope to accomplish in your new position with SGWS?

I will be assuming the role of Special Events Director, as industry legend and new friend Michael Severino slowly transitions out of the position and takes on a more leisurely role as a consultant. This tremendous opportunity will allow me to embrace the community and get to know the major players in Las Vegas and throughout Nevada.

My primary objective is to service the community by giving back through education. It’s not just good business, it’s part of SGWS’ mission statement to give back to those who have supported us so generously over the years in a meaningful and tangible way. Thanks to visionary philanthropist Larry Ruvo, SGWS has become a magnet for those who have a passion for excellence within their respective fields of study in the beverage industry.

For now, my job is to listen and learn. The collective talent and knowledge within the walls of SGWS is staggering. I am learning their culture, past and present, and working with their incredibly talented mixologists and events teams to review projects that have already been set in motion.

Following in the footsteps of my long time friends and colleagues Francesco Lafranconi and Livio Lauro, it is my intention to build upon their legacy and solidify SGWS Senior Managing Director Larry Ruvo’s vision of making Southern Glazer’s Bar Academy the preeminent beverage and service standards training facility in the world.

What are some projects you are planning?

Future projects on the horizon include expanding the wine, spirits and beer education and certification programs; partnering with UNLV to expand their world-renowned hospitality and leisure management program within the halls of SGWS; and implementing a barista training and certification program, including the first-ever barista-cocktail certification.

And, perhaps most exciting, per the direction of Larry Ruvo, I will lend my experience to establish a service standards training program based on the principles of Michelin. Students coming out of the academy will be in high demand within the industry with a certification in hospitality, armed with my knowledge of Michelin three-star service skills as well as comprehensive beverage knowledge and culinary oriented mixology certificates.

How has your move to Las Vegas gone for you and your family?

This is a dream job and the whole team at SGWS has been extremely welcoming to me, my wife Kelly and my beautiful daughter Katherine Rose. So far, we are genuinely enjoying the city, but it is the people that drew us here and it is this wonderful embracing community that has reaffirmed that my instinct to pull up roots and settle down in Sin City was the right choice. I have come home.

For more information on how your team can benefit from SGWS Beverage Education or Hospitality and Service Standards Program, you can reach out directly to Brian at 702-248-3306 (work), 702-902-0126 (cell) and via email at brian.vanflandern@sgws.com.

www.lvfnbpro.com
I am not writing this article to create a political statement. Sometimes the facts are just facts. Even if you do not believe in global warming, statistics say that seven of the hottest years on this planet were in the last 10 years. The average global temperature in 1980 was 57.2°F and in 2015 the hottest year on record increased 1.8°F to 59°F. This might not seem like a lot but it certainly makes a difference in agriculture and livestock cultivation.

You certainly can be aware of the difference in the weather patterns with the droughts that we’ve had in the last couple years. On a personal note I’ve been in Las Vegas 25 years and the last two Junes were definitely the hottest that I’ve experienced. Another sign of global warming is the droughts that we’ve had in the last couple years. On a personal note, I’ve been in Las Vegas 25 years and the last two Junes were definitely the hottest that I’ve experienced. Another sign of global warming is the increase in ocean evaporation, which has led to much bigger storms in the Northeast, a hindrance to their growing. In 30 years we might lose half of the bean production that we produce now. As it gets warmer, maple syrup which needs the cold weather has not been producing the level it used to in New England and has to move further north. The almond, a $4 billion industry in Northern California, is getting smaller and smaller due to the drought situation. Lobster harvesting has moved further north, leaving the Boston area into the Maine bays but that is going to become too warm for them as well. And wines from Napa Valley will be coming in short supply due to the heat.

What foods are affected?

50% of coffee plantation land will be unusable in 30 years. Cocoa trees that like the heat don’t like the dryness. As the ocean warms up we’re finding smaller hauls of oysters. Apples which require a certain number of days of winter chill are finding the 8+ days of frost in the Northeast a hindrance to their growing. In 30 years we might lose half of the bean production that we produce now. As it gets warmer, maple syrup which needs the cold weather has not been producing the level it used to in New England and has to move further north. The almond, a $4 billion industry in Northern California, is getting smaller and smaller due to the drought situation. Lobster harvesting has moved further north, leaving the Boston area into the Maine bays but that is going to become too warm for them as well. And wines from Napa Valley will be coming in short supply due to the heat.

What can you do?

If every American cut out meat one day a week it would be the equivalent of taking 16 million cars off the road annually. Agriculture is responsible for approximately 14% of greenhouse gases. There are 1 1/2 billion cows in the world and 1 billion other animals that create methane through belching and flatulence. Another way to fight this is by composting, which relates to an article I’ve written recently. This could save the equivalent of the production from 5.2 million cars annually. If we reuse water bottles it would be the equivalent of taking 2 million cars off the road annually. By eating organic, due to the lack of fertilizers needed to grow and breeds of animals that live well in the desert climates. One example is cows. Most ranchers in the west breed Hereford and Black Angus breeds, which are British and were bred in a country that has large amounts of rain and large amounts of grass. The advantage of these breeds is they bulk up quickly, but they do not do well in the drought-stricken Southwest of the United States. The solution is a Criollo breed which comes from Mexico, originally brought over from Spain. This breed has already been adapted to the dry environment and to naturally find ways to protect themselves from the high heat. They feed at night, which is unusual but gets them out of the daylight heat and they have learned to shelter themselves under trees during the day. The most amazing thing about these animals is that they’ve adapted to their environment and survive on mesquite, cacti and other desert plants as a food source.

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What foods are affected?

50% of coffee plantation land will be unusable in 30 years. Cocoa trees that like the heat don’t like the dryness. As the ocean warms up we’re finding smaller hauls of oysters. Apples which require a certain number of days of winter chill are finding the 8+ days of frost in the Northeast a hindrance to their growing. In 30 years we might lose half of the bean production that we produce now. As it gets warmer, maple syrup which needs the cold weather has not been producing the level it used to in New England and has to move further north. The almond, a $4 billion industry in Northern California, is getting smaller and smaller due to the drought situation. Lobster harvesting has moved further north, leaving the Boston area into the Maine bays but that is going to become too warm for them as well. And wines from Napa Valley will be coming in short supply due to the heat.

What can you do?

If every American cut out meat one day a week it would be the equivalent of taking 16 million cars off the road annually. Agriculture is responsible for approximately 14% of greenhouse gases. There are 1 1/2 billion cows in the world and 1 billion other animals that create methane through belching and flatulence. Another way to fight this is by composting, which relates to an article I’ve written recently. This could save the equivalent of the production from 5.2 million cars annually. If we reuse water bottles it would be the equivalent of taking 2 million cars off the road annually. By eating organic, due to the lack of fertilizers needed to grow and breeds of animals that live well in the desert climates. One example is cows. Most ranchers in the west breed Hereford and Black Angus breeds, which are British and were bred in a country that has large amounts of rain and large amounts of grass. The advantage of these breeds is they bulk up quickly, but they do not do well in the drought-stricken Southwest of the United States. The solution is a Criollo breed which comes from Mexico, originally brought over from Spain. This breed has already been adapted to the dry environment and to naturally find ways to protect themselves from the high heat. They feed at night, which is unusual but gets them out of the daylight heat and they have learned to shelter themselves under trees during the day. The most amazing thing about these animals is that they’ve adapted to their environment and survive on mesquite, cacti and other desert plants as a food source.
CHARDONNAY SUMMER

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I can remember very clearly a few individuals that I have encountered in my life that not only had little ethics or moral fiber, but that also seemed to thrive on the notion that they were better than others and didn’t have to be accountable for their actions. I recall that most of them acted in a manner that was disrespectful and unnecessarily rude toward others. The first very significant lesson that came out of those encounters for me was that I was as ashamed of them and their behaviors, even embarrassed; and secondly, that I vowed that I would NEVER act toward others in the way they did towards me.

One person in New Mexico was a classic bully and egomaniac, and found great pleasure in berating his senior team for their opinions after entrapping them with a challenging question about a subject that they must give their opinion on. I’ve never witnessed a more deplorable and sickening display of sheer ego, harsh bullying and inexcusable harassment. Another was a female manager at a company in Florida that was so insecure by my people and networking skills that were superior to hers, that she would sabotage me and purposefully countermand the directions that she had given me just moments before. Needless to say, she was respected by no one.

While those situations made an indelible impact on me, I can promise you, they do not linger or cause me to be insecure. I have learned over the many years of life’s trials and errors, that you can’t fix stupid and that you can’t be made to feel inferior by others unless you allow them to do so. Many of us take these “encounters” personally and then retain them in a way that is not productive or healthy for us. We allow ourselves to become consumed with fear or doubt by the unfounded and off-handed remarks or comments of a bully, egomaniac, etc. What I believe needs to happen is a return to good, down-home, honest and feel-good RESPECT! This process involves interactions that are open and honest, respectful and are based on the principles of common courtesy. What do I mean by that you ask? I mean that these types of things need to happen…

• Do not act one way when your boss is present and then turn into a “bully” to your staff when he/she is not.
• Do not say you’ll do one thing when in reality you have no intention of doing it.
• Listen with an open ear and mind; do not pre-judge situations. Objectively evaluate the person/situation and give the person a chance to prove their worth.

Show courtesy! Have manners, be polite, act in a civil manner and show consideration for others.

Do not assume guilt of the “lesser” party (the person without the title/years of service) but instead give them a chance to thrive, grow and learn from mistakes and lessons.

Don’t always assume that your management team is honest, ethical, untouchable and perfect angels—you may be surprised to find out that they are not close to that standard! Here are a few key concepts, in my book, on how to excel at building and earning respect…

Remember, respect is earned, but only if it is displayed and provided honestly to others.

Always say what you’ll do and do what you said—keep your word, commitments and promises.

Keep respect as a key tenant of your principles. Never allow anyone on your team to disrespect others.

Finally, remember people never respond well to unwarranted, unproductive criticism. Be honest in your feedback but do so in a productive way. The goal is to make change without demoralizing others.

If you always remember the Golden Rule when dealing with and interacting with others, you are already on the right path. Treating others the same way you want to be treated makes not only good business sense—because your employees will treat your customers in the same manner in which they are treated—but it is the moral and ethical way to live your life. With respect as a foundational value, your business and your employees can grow and thrive in an environment that is more productive, instructional, and most of all, respectful!
The Stove. Henderson’s newest addition to first class restaurants, premiered its beautiful property in July. High up on the hill, with an unlimited view of the city, they are only open for breakfast and lunch. Chefs Antonio Nunez, Scott Comnings and Steve Grodkiewicz are thrilled to show you their newest culinary concept. They offer a great Twisted Tea Room, which of course comes with your grand choice of teas, and the amusing concept of every cup and saucer being mismatched. With the most fabulous blueberry muffins, fresh baguettes, and an amazing menu, I was there two days in a row. The pecan pancakes were expertly made, a twist on eggs Benedict featuring chicken fried steak on waffles, and a table-side bananas Foster with cold vanilla ice cream was more than two people could handle. Don’t be shy to order, every dish is marvelous and almost always big enough for two to share. There is a private dining room for 45 guests, with total capacity of 75. Located at 11261 S. Eastern Ave. #200. Elevator or stairs to the great view.

El Dorado Cantina celebrated its 4th anniversary. Margaritas were served non-stop the second you arrived. With all guests wearing flowers and huge sombreros, the regular crowd indulged in great appetizers all evening, with Chef Paco Cortes overseeing the festival. Mini tacos, table-side guacamole, gluten-free empanadas, tostadas with grilled onions and chicken and coconut rice were some of the true Spanish food served. A rousing group of Mariachis played the room. Chef Paco believes in sustainably-raised products, which means all their meats are from carefully selected farms which are totally free of antibiotics, pesticides and steroids. Open 24 hours  3025 Sammy Davis Drive.

Andre's Bistro and Bar now has an afternoon tea on Saturdays and Sundays. The staff is very knowledgeable on every kind of tea, as we found out from our fantastic server Nathaniel Ventura. Tea time starts with a soup du jour, along with smoked Scottish salmon and asparagus spears, chicken salad with cranberries and walnuts, fresh dill cream cheese and English cucumbers and egg salad mini sandwiches. Along with this, the famous English-style scones with Devonshire cream, lemon curd and preserves. There is an assortment of tiny cookies and cakelettes, and of course your pick of wonderful teas. I had the cinnamon spice and it was full-bodied and wonderfully fulfilling. Price for all this is $26 per person. Their regular menu features from seasonal granola and yogurt parfaits to Lyonnaise salads, quiches, frittatas, Benedicts and burgers. One of my dining partners ordered the duck confit on his Benedict and it was outstanding. They can cook up a pepper-crusted rib-eye, or on Sunday, duck a l’orange. Located at 6115 South Fort Apache Rd.

The hilarious Tony n’ Tina’s Wedding is the longest running off-Broadway comedy in history. Opening in 1988 in New York City, this wedding party has danced and sung its way around the world, and is now the longest running off-Broadway comedy in history. The hilarious interactive comedy and dinner theater show has now come back to the Strip, where it ran at a couple of locations, this time around at Buca di Beppo inside Bally’s Las Vegas. At their media opening party on June 15 among those in attendance were Chippendales, the cast of FANTASY, Menopause the Musical, Murray Sawchuck, Andrew Freeman of Raiding the Rock Vault, Ricardo Laguna, the cast of Sex Tips for Straight Women from a Gay Man, the Tenors of Rock, the cast of WOW and Xavier Mortimer. The pre-party was at Tequila Taqueria next door. Flowing sangrias and plenty of sliders, mini-tacos and jalapeno poppers as appetizers was the course for the night. Manager of both restaurants, Jeremy Coleman, was the perfect host as always. Larry Pellegrini, the original producer, is back on board, with his cast featuring Breon Jenay as Tina and Joseph Ben Shimon as Tony. The show starts with the wedding ceremony, the celebration in which the audience doesn’t just watch, they participate directly in the fun. You join the numerous wedding party, the cameraman, the mother and Tony and Tina, along with their crazy family members, and can kiss the bride (well, sort of), dance with the groom and meet a cast of new friends. Dinner includes salad, rigatoni and Chicken Parmesan. Plenty to eat-don’t be shy! Performing in Buca di Beppo @Bally’s Friday through Wednesday at 7 p.m. Tickets start at $99, which includes dinner and the show.
International expansion may seem like an impossible goal on the surface, but in reality isn’t that much different than domestic expansion. In some cases, international expansion can even be easier than opening a new location just a few miles away. Of course the circumstances vary based on the restaurant, but for the most part, international expansion involves a framework paralleling that of a budding franchise.

Whether you’re looking to copy your current restaurant or open an entirely new concept, take some of these pointers into account when taking your business abroad.

**Have a firm hold on your current restaurant(s).**

Before expanding internationally, it’s imperative to demonstrate financial and operational success in your current location(s). If you’re struggling with sales, sourcing, staffing or any other element of running a restaurant, that obstacle will be even harder overseas. Expanding before solving any current issues will divert necessary attention away from these pressing issues, and before you know it you’ll be struggling with properties both at home and abroad.

Only when you’ve established a firm foundation can you think about expansion. With a firm foundation comes staff you can trust…more on that later.

**Know your potential audience and make tweaks accordingly.**

Different countries mean different cultures—different tastes in food, ambiance, presentation, service and so much more. What works at home may, and likely will, need to adapt to your target audience abroad. For example, a US-based taco shop looking to open a location in India will likely need to place a heavier focus on non-beef products, given that certain regions don’t eat beef.

Décor and layout are additional elements that may change drastically. Get a feel for your direct competitors in the new area. Study their color schemes and table setups, and note which facets you should incorporate with properties both at home and abroad.

In the same way that you’ve shaped your restaurant around your local clientele, you’ll want to make changes to meet the needs of the new neighborhood, whether that neighborhood is 10 or 10,000 miles away.

**Partner with locals.**

Once you’ve done some initial research on your own and have a firm understanding of what you think you want, it’s imperative to find a partner with local roots. A local partner is going to help you navigate the business landscape in a way you’d never be able to accomplish on your own. Building codes, health codes, permitting, licenses, suppliers and other infrastructure elements will be manageable only with someone who knows how the local system works.

From there, your partner will build on your foundation of menu, ambiance and service. Chances are that they know your target audience in a way that observational research can’t match. They should take it a level further by knowing the marketing channels and promotional tactics that work best.

Partnerships like this can take one of several forms:

• Hiring an advisor in a consultant-style role
• Hiring a full-on business partner, whereby they will hold ownership in the business
• Pursuing a joint-venture, where you’re partnering with a pre-existing local business and leveraging their network and buying power
• Franchising, where an overseas owner will do the vast majority of the work while you collect royalties

Finding a partner in any of the above capacities is always a challenge, and will come through time spent in the area, networking in the same way you did to establish your initial location(s).

**Have trusted staff on the ground.**

When you’re not able to physically be in the new location, a reliable contact is imperative. Inquire with your staff at home if anyone is willing to relocate. While this will be a huge ask, having someone you know, and who knows your business, will help tremendously in achieving the balance between the demands of the new local market and your restaurant’s core values.

If nobody on your staff is able to relocate, you will need to spend significant time onboarding your staff abroad. Involve your partner(s) in the process as much as possible, so that you have a well-oiled machine up and running.

Designate key points of contact so you can get regular status updates. Maintain consistent communication and trust your people to make changes when you’re not present. And, of course, be sure to visit on a regular basis to ensure quality and brand control.
Do you know how you would survive if a gunman starts firing bullets in your bar or restaurant? In essence, your best plan can be summed up three ways: Run, hide or fight.

**ESCAPE** – Getting as far away as possible immediately should be your first concern. If that’s not possible, you should **HIDE** someplace with a durable, lockable door. A bathroom is not a good choice, unless the door is substantial. If there’s nowhere to run or hide, you’ve got one option left: **FIGHT**. Fight hard for your life and don’t stop until either you are unable or the assailant has been stopped and the attack has ended.

A common and critical mistake made by many restaurants or fast food outlets, is not having **ALL EXITS** clearly marked and lighted. Most restaurants will have signs above main exits, but in an active shooter scenario, one of those may have been the shooter’s entry point. The best course of action is to use less obvious exits, such as back doors, windows, trash exits or the kitchen. **ALL** potential exits should be clearly marked. Practice evacuation and designate a rally point far from the scene so that you can account for all the workers.

Being aware of every exit is integral to being in any environment, even a fast food restaurant or a dining establishment. Unfortunately, many restaurants and fast food outlets are not designed with these scenarios in mind and often doors are blocked with trash and other items, which prevent quick egress.

Create a Plan Now – Think, Practice and Discuss … it’s too late once it’s happening to wonder what you should do.

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**SOUTHERN NEVADA HEALTH DISTRICT APPOINTS FIRST CHEF, NICOLE BRISSON, TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

LAS VEGAS (July 2018) – For the first time, the Southern Nevada Health District has appointed a chef to its Board of Directors. Chef Nicole Brisson will serve as a member-at-large on the board for a 2-year term.

As noted on their website, “the Southern Nevada District Board of Health, through policy development and direction to staff, identifies public health needs and, as mandated by County Ordinance 163, establishes priorities on behalf of local taxpayers, residents, tourists/visitors, and the commercial service industry: to establish and conduct a comprehensive program of health which shall include the promotion of environmental health, exclusive of air quality matters, maternal and child health, control of communicable diseases and the further programming of the prolonging of life and the promotion of the well-being of the people of Clark County.”

“It is an honor to be the first culinary professional on the board, especially at a time where the destination is experiencing such tremendous growth and change. I feel it is important for the culinary community to be active in the changes we want to see and that is why I proactively sought this position. One of my goals is to bridge the gap between the culinary industry and inspectors. Working together, we can continue to safely run the city’s best kitchens and accomplish great changes for the industry,” says Chef Brisson.

Chef Brisson has recently accepted a position as the new executive chef at Eataly Las Vegas. Prior to this position, she served as culinary director for B&B Hospitality Group. During her extensive career, she was the executive chef at Carnevino at The Palazzo and chef di cucina at OTTO Enoteca e Pizzeria at The Venetian. Before joining B&B Hospitality Group, she opened Wynn Las Vegas where she worked under Chefs Steven Kall and Paul Bartolotta.
IN THE TIME IT TAKES TO READ THIS AD, WE’VE MADE LITTLE TO NO PROGRESS.

We slow-roast the finest 100% Weber Blue Agave for more than three days and then slowly crush it with a two-ton tahona stone wheel. The result is an earthy, complex taste that’s more than worth the wait.
Chances are, you know Terry Clark either from his two years in the USBG or his beautiful cocktails (from sitting at his bar or via social media). When he is not behind the stick at Sparrow + Wolf, he is the Las Vegas “Whiskey Guardian” for Angel’s Envy. When asked about his two gigs, his excitement is brimming: “At Sparrow + Wolf, it’s amazing how much they foster creativity. They are also big supporters of promoting others in the industry, which is a rarity.” And when talking about Angel’s Envy he says, “The Whiskey Guardian position is amazing. Everyone who works for Angel’s Envy believes in what they’re doing and takes an immense pride in it. Getting to go support industry family with a product I love is a great thing to experience.”

Terry is a native of the Southwest, having been born in Phoenix and growing up in Vegas. He has grown up in the hospitality industry about which he stated, “It’s the only thing I’ve ever known. The first five years were spent at Spago, N9NE and Nove as a server. After getting my Sommelier Certification I moved behind the bar.”

“Over the next 7 years I worked a couple of more places but the most impactful thing for me was being hired at Oak & Ivy. I quickly realized I didn’t know as much as I thought I did. I owe a ton to Chris “Tater” Gutierrez for everything I learned from him, mostly by me losing arguments. Who I am behind the bar and whatever skill set I have leads directly back to Oak & Ivy.”

About the USBG, “There is nothing better you can do for your career than joining the Guild. We support each other and together are making the world see Vegas has the best bartenders on Earth.”

Terry’s self-described approach to bartending is “Profitability Through Hospitality” and he has some great advice for all of us: “Treat your guests well and have sincere appreciation for them choosing to come and spend their money at your bar. Don’t be an elitist and understand subjectivity is everything. Your favorite whiskey could be store brand. Does that make you wrong? No it doesn’t. Drink what you like and don’t snub your nose at what others enjoy.”

**Totes Jelly by Terry Clark**

- 1.5 oz Angel’s Envy Bourbon
- .5 oz Liquor 43
- .75 oz Honeycrisp Apple Jelly
- .5 oz Riesling Reduction
- 5 drops Malic Acid Saline Solution
- .5 oz Lemon

Add all to shaker, light roll until incorporated and then “dirty dump” into double rocks glass.

Lizster is a new but very active member of our chapter. Liz used to work for the State of Nevada as a case manager and always wanted to try bartending. So after making the decision to change careers, she learned some basics from Crescent School and is now putting them into practice at Flock & Fowl. There she really enjoys it: “It’s a great place to work and learn from some of the best bartenders in Las Vegas.”

Gaining knowledge is also one of her mantras of bartending. “I think continuing education is key to stay on top of the ever-changing trend in the F&B world. I love learning! In addition to the USBG, I have taken classes at SGWS Academy and have learned more about beer and wine. I’m currently taking their Academy of Spirits and Fine Service course. Knowing about the history of a spirit is a great conversation tactic and key to up-selling.”

Along with the learning opportunities available in the United States Bartenders’ Guild, she enjoys the Guild for other reasons. “I love the camaraderie! Being a new member and not knowing anyone in the industry was quite intimidating. It took a very short time to make friends in the Las Vegas chapter; they were very warm and welcoming. Another thing I love about USBG is that there are always plenty of learning events.”

Lizster is also a photographer specializing in majestic scenery (check out her IG page @liz.lizter). She has had many of her photos shared thousands of times. Liz also plays guitar and sings very well and you may even find her sometimes at Flock & Fowl’s open mic night on Thursdays.

Come say hi very soon!
On February 7th, I had accepted the offer to participate in MGM Resorts International’s internship program. I was exploring topics to cover in this month’s issue, but couldn’t resist the urge to recount my Food and Beverage internship experience. Since early June, I’ve been an intern of MGM Resorts International, committed to learning and forming experiences.

It all started in February, with a phone call from a college recruiting representative. I was offered an internship as the Food and Beverage intern with The Signature at MGM Grand. Ever since the application deadline and initial interview in November 2017, I thought this was all beyond my reach. Yet, an opportunity presented itself and opened a branch of roads.

I knew I wanted to embrace and embody this core belief: “In our eyes, entertainment is not an extracurricular—it’s a fundamental human need. Therefore, we exist to entertain the human race.” MGM Resorts International’s mission statement and culture compels me to uplift daily negative energies and seek collaborative opportunities. Under a unified company culture, I am to be the best performer that I can be, desiring daily improvements and positive social change.

I found the internship ideal for professional development, community engagement and critical thinking. I entered the internship program with one simple goal: gaining operations knowledge. This is because I want to truly understand the procedures behind industry experiences and be able to construct thought-provoking ideas.

The Hospitality Internship Program (HIP, for short) is a 10-week summer internship which provides participants with career and professional development. MGM’s college program includes customized learning plans, an information session, Corporate Social Responsibility event and outreach opportunities, Resort Knowledge days and a capstone case study project.

Anyone interested in the internship program should be aware and keep in mind: “This internship is what you make of it. It’s your journey and you get what you put into it,” a college program manager said. In retrospect, interns are surrounded by industry leaders who provide career navigation and constructive criticism.

One such leader is assigned to each intern: An advisor who is a manager or higher within their respective department. I had the pleasure of having Ms. Doreen Fang, the Senior Hotel Operations and Food & Beverage Manager at The Signature, mentor me. She provided me with insight for the office environment and shared direct constructive criticism when it was appropriate. She taught me a crucial lesson in self-development and professionalism: “Everything you do is a reflection of yourself, so be very conscientious of how you present yourself, how you act and how you speak,” Ms. Fang said.

With my advisor’s help, I was able to map a schedule that best suited my desired learning goals; it not only illustrated my path, but allowed me to communicate with the departments in advance. Instead of committing to one department within Food and Beverage, I decided to make my journey broader and rotated through Outlet Operations, Culinary & Stewarding, Catering & Banquets and Food & Beverage Administration. My first weeks were spent shadowing line-level employees and managers of each outlet: Starbucks, Delights, Delights Delivery and the pool. My activities ranged from handling the point-of-sales system, inventory management or outlet inspections.

When it came time to rotate to back-of-house, the difference from front-of-house was almost unnoticeable since the two are closely united. It was my first step into a commercial kitchen and I had an immediate opportunity: I made my first ‘Classic Scramble’ and a ‘Chicken Pesto Sandwich’ for guests of Delights. My second task was reorganizing the walk-in cooler and counting bread inventory, I spent the last couple days with Stewarding, familiarizing myself with their cleaning supplies and surveying the property.

My tasks were detail-oriented and required prior back-of-house knowledge to which I owe to UNLV. I recognized that I lack experience in Catering, Banquets and Convention Sales. After bringing it to Ms. Fang’s attention, I observed their department and provided an external perspective to the catering/banquet team. Firstly, I needed to learn their procedures and lingo. Within two days, I had the pleasure of completing my own mock banquet event order using their booking and sales systems. Their supervisor and servers showed me their banquet areas, meeting spaces and pre-function areas.

Acquainting myself with the Food and Beverage team at The Signature has opened doors to eye-opening experiences. One of the Assistant Food and Beverage Managers offered our team a tour of the Cîroc VS launch event at APEX Palms, where I had the pleasure of tasting a new French brandy.

To College Recruitment at MGM Resorts and the Food & Beverage Team at The Signature: thank you. I joined forty-four exceptional interns, gained the mentorship of management and engaged with a limitless number of leaders. Every moment I take the stage and live the Show.
You can’t afford to not make a great first impression. There are too many other options for your guests in today’s marketplace. And with fewer dining out experiences per week, the amount of chances you have is also down.

Here are five points of contact I find often get ignored in independent restaurants. If you ignore these five points of contact, you reduce your opportunity to build your business. You actually drive business away.

Increase your chances of winning and keeping business.

1. First contact: Make it count. Your guests encounter you the first time in many ways and all must be stellar. Whether it’s print advertising, your social media, people driving by or how your staff answers the phone, it all counts. You have one chance to make a first impression; there are no second chances.

2. Facilities: A little spit and polish can only help. When people walk up to your front door, is there trash? It doesn’t matter if you share a strip mall with 20 other tenants who never pick up trash. If it’s in front of your door or around it, pick it up. Make your employees aware and make sure they’re cleaning it up when they see it. Do you let your employees smoke out front and leave their cigarette butts? Are your windows clean? Once your guests get into the dining room, what will their impression be? Are the tables clean, the chairs free of crumbs, condiments clean and organized on the tables? Are your tables balanced? Make sure your team is keeping it all clean.

3. Greeting: At my semi-annual workshop, I teach restaurant owners about my GUEST philosophy. The G stands for greet and it must be done within 30 seconds. Make it a rule that someone is near the door at all times. Never fall down on this job because a guest should never have to approach you. And train your employees to all be aware of it. If they’re not sure if someone has been greeted and helped, they should ask. Even if we THINK someone has been helped, don’t ASSUME. You know what they say about what happens when you assume? It makes an ASS out of U and ME.

4. Bussers: Try to be seen and not heard. And this doesn’t just apply to official bussers. It applies to anyone who busses a table, from a server walking by to managers. My mom taught me this rule: No one comes in or out of the kitchen empty handed. If you see dishes on a table, pick them up, and do so without disturbing guests. How do you train your servers to see it as their duty? Yes, this guest isn’t in your section today, but they may be in your section tomorrow. But they won’t come back to be in anyone’s section if they don’t have a great experience.

5. Servers: Your servers spend the most amount of time with your guests. You must train them to think like a salesperson, not an order taker. In so many restaurants I see human vending machines. Train them to change their attitude. It’s not about upselling and increasing ticket averages, but improving the guest’s experience. If the server thinks the experience will be better if the guest has a premium vodka, then the server has the attitude necessary to make the suggestion. It’s not pushy. It’s about improving the guest’s experience. They need to guide the guest, show off what they know, be the expert, talk about what they like. To do this, your servers must be trained in everything menu related. They have to know ingredients, allergens, portions, prices, extras that are available, etc. Servers need to use the right words, such as “featured item” and “special.” The right words will influence the purchase.

One side note related to a clean dining room: have clean and fresh menus. It must be reflective of your business, just like your entrance, your advertising and your phone greeting. Your menu is your sales tool; treat it like one.

You have few opportunities to keep business, but many to lose business. Every point of contact counts.
Top 3 Catering Freebies
Restaurant Owners Should Charge for Immediately

Every time I speak about the things that restaurant owners give away for free that they could charge for, I have someone tell me they felt like I hit them across the head with a baseball bat. In fact, one man recently told me, “I’m so glad my wife couldn’t make it to your session. My legs would have been all bruised from her kicking me under the table. She’s been telling me for years that I’m giving away too much.”

What do I mean by giving away things you could charge for? Picture your next catering event. It’s at a bank for 150 guests. In addition to the food and beverage service, you agree to provide glass plates, glasses, ice, waitstaff and removal of all garbage for the event. The problem is you aren’t charging for all of these things. You’re giving your catering clients too many freebies in the name of convenience.

### Freebie #1: Providing glassware from the restaurant for the event.
Restaurant owners do this because they own all of the glassware and it seems reasonable and easy enough to provide it for the event at no charge. They haul, store and clean all of that glassware without really thinking about the impact it has on their bottom line. For example, for 150 guests, you must provide two to three glasses per person depending on the length of the event. That is a minimum of 300 glasses. You can fit 24 glasses in a crate, so that is 15 crates of glasses. You also need 160 8-inch plates and 140 6-inch plates. That is a total of seven crates of plates plus another crate of forks. So far you have 23 crates. Those 23 crates will fill one and one-half vans or one truck. It will take a minimum of one and one-half hours to pack these items in crates and then pack the van or truck. An extra person will be needed with a dolly to unload the glassware at the event. This will take anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour to unload depending on the venue. After the event is over the crates must be reloaded in the van or truck and driven back to your restaurant. After a 30-minute unloading period, the glassware, plates and forks must all be washed and moved back to the appropriate place in storage and an inventory must be taken.

Providing free glassware for the event cost you approximately seven hours of time you were not paid, but your staff was! Your staff hauled 23 crates back and forth to the event. After all the hauling cleaning, inventory and storing, you paid the staff for a minimum of seven hours of labor. At $12 per hour, that equals $84. Oh yes, and then there is breakage or loss of utensils which amounts to about a $60 loss. Add that in and you spent $144. You moved 23 crates of glassware and plates for $0.

### Freebie #2: Providing ice from the restaurant at no charge.
A 600-pound ice machine produces a lot of ice, so it doesn’t feel like an imposition to many restaurant owners to add it onto their catering services. You tell the client, of course we’ll provide your ice. It’s no problem. However, you have someone bag the minimum amount of ice needed for this event, which is around 350 pounds, and store it in your freezer. You have to haul it to the event in your large ice chests (that your staff had to clean the day before because they smelled like fish). They unload the four large ice chests and haul them up three stories. You then realize that it is over 85 degrees that day, and you really need more ice. So you quickly return to the restaurant and pack more ice and repeat the whole process for $0.

### Freebie #3: Providing garbage service at no charge.
Have you ever really looked at the amount of garbage there is for 150 guests? There are beer and wine bottles, soda cans, napkins, food scraps, etc. Garbage is a pain to haul away. It leaks and your vans stink for days. But like many restaurant owners, you want the catering job and you want to please the client, so you agree to haul away the garbage from the event for $0.

I hope this list of mistakes made an impression on you. These are three simple ways you are providing a huge convenience to your client. If the client had to rent these items, it would cost them a minimum of 50 cents per plate, 50 cents per glass and 50 cents per fork. Plus, they would be charged at least $50–75 for delivery and pick up. If you want to provide the glassware and plates for your client, charge them the same or a discounted amount that the rental company would charge them. If they balk about the charge, then tell them you were providing them a service, and give them the phone number of the nearest rental company and let them take care of it themselves. Believe me, they will call you back requesting the convenience you offer!

The same idea applies for the ice. In Dallas, the minimum ice delivery is 350 pounds and the cost is $90. If you want to haul all of that ice, then at least charge them what the local ice company would charge for ice plus delivery.

When it comes to garbage, in my catering company, we will only haul away garbage in a truck owned by one of our employees versus a company van. We charge the client a minimum of $150-200 to provide that service. I pay my employee who hauls it a minimum of $125 to do that dirty job.

Convenience, convenience, convenience: your client hires you for convenience and you don’t have to give it away for free. You MUST charge for it or you are wasting your time and leaving profits on the table in the process.
EVENTS

There are several major food & beverage events coming up in the next few months. Here is a sampling of some of the events we highly recommend, so if planning to attend you can start booking now.

August 11 Aces & Ales will host its 9th annual Strong Beer Festival at its Tenaya location in northwest Las Vegas, offering an opportunity to indulge in more than 50 different specialty or extremely rare beers that range from 7-21% ABV. acesandales.com

August 19-21 This year the Western Foodservice & Hospitality Expo will be co-located with the Coffee Fest and Healthy Food Expo and returns to the Los Angeles Convention Center, organized by the CA Restaurant Association featuring new product and services geared for the food & beverage industry. www.westernfoodexpo.com

September 14 The 2018 Greek Food Festival marks the 46th year of Greek dancing, Greek music, Greek food and just plain fun and excitement sponsored by and held at St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church in Las Vegas. www.lvgff.com

September 21-23 The Life is Beautiful food, music and art festival returns to Downtown Las Vegas, held across streets encompassing 18 city blocks. lifeisbeautiful.com

October 5-6 The 10th annual Las Vegas Food & Wine Festival moves to a new location, this year convening at Tivoli Village in Summerlin, where you can expect two days of events showcasing some of the world’s most renown chefs, spirits and wine. vegasfoodandwine.com

October 8-11 G2E (Global Gaming Expo) will return to Las Vegas, hosted at the Sands Convention Center. This is the largest gaming show in the world which includes F&B@G2E in the Food & Beverage Pavilion dedicated to all F&B related food & beverage products and services to the casino gaming industry. www.globalgamingexpo.com

October 13 The Martha Stewart Wine & Food Experience, a 12-city culinary series, will make a stop at the outdoor Las Vegas Festival grounds at Las Vegas Blvd. and Sahara with a cooking demonstration from Stewart, the chance to explore various kitchen gear and other products and samples of cuisine from the MGM Resorts International family sips of cocktails and wine from top Las Vegas mixologists and sommeliers. wineandfood.usatoday.com/lasvegas

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