MENU

CANADA'S FOODSERVICE MAGAZINE



RC SHOW 2021
ONLINE LIVE

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As the Canadian foodservice and hospitality industry continues to be decimated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the light at the end of this along road starts with us taking advantage of the opportunity to rebuild, reinvent, and reconnect like never before.

This year's theme for RC Show 2021 ONLINE LIVE is "Feeding the Recovery", which has never been more appropriate. As the "voice of foodservice", we're proud that funds raised through ticket sales of the RC Show go directly back into supporting the industry at one of the most challenging times we've gone through.

While RC Show 2021 may not look like it did in years past, we're excited to explore the possibilities that going virtual has to offer. In this issue of MENU, you'll find a navigation guide to RC Show 2021 ONLINE LIVE that provides an in-depth look at the features and tech tools you can leverage through our platform, as well as the world-class programming you can expect.

This issue also highlights some of the incredible talent you can look forward to seeing and hearing at the upcoming Show. Read through the insights of leading business experts from our panels on pressing issues like ghost kitchens, alcohol delivery, and how to pivot your operations with retail. Flip through the pages of MENU to find an article written by one of our RC Show keynote speakers, Ritch Allison, CEO of Domino's Pizza.

We're also tackling some of the most important concerns of our industry in this issue and at RC Show. The Anti-Racism panel is mirrored in a piece that brings together a collection of opinions and thoughts from some of the most skillful BIPOC culinary talents in Canada. This year's Show includes a panel on Mental Health: Increasing Awareness & Supporting Tools which we also review in this issue as we think about not just the effects but how management can play a part in harm reduction.

With the Show on the horizon, we're not losing sight of the importance of consumer confidence and support at a time like this. Our team is continuing to push forward with the 'Picture life without restaurants' Campaign. We're thrilled that our public service announcement has been able to reach over 61M+ across Canada since launch - meaning the campaign has been able to reach Canadians almost twice within the first month and the momentum continues to grow with radio spots rolling out across the country.

Restaurants Canada is continuing to meet with key federal departments and elected officials as part of a formalized working group. This national working group will feature innovative, multi-stakeholder discussions around forward-thinking solutions that will ensure restaurant operators are set up for success in the post-pandemic economic environment.

While the future is still uncertain, we see a glimmer of hope in the activities and actions we have in front of us.

The 'Picture life without restaurants' campaign, national working group, and RC Show prove that though we're faced with difficulties, we will surmount the obstacles ahead. To a better and brighter 2021!

Guy Laframboise
Chair of the Board



Todd Barclay
President & CEO



Winter 2021
Volume 6 Number 1

Restaurants Canada

The voice of foodservice | La voix des services alimentaires

Do you have comments or a story for us? If so, please email menueditor@restaurantscanada.org.

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RC Show

2021

FEB 28 - MAR 3, 2021

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As the foodservice and hospitality industries continue to reel from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, RC Show 2021: ONLINE LIVE is Feeding the Recovery with four days of insightful programming, valuable networking opportunities and a dynamic Exhibit Hall.

While it may not look like Shows past, Restaurants Canada has partnered with Nextech AR Solutions to bring this year's virtual show to life.

Across the country, foodservice operators faced the pandemic with **innovation, resilience and creativity.** Regions saw **major changes in delivery charges, in alcohol sales legislation and in community engagement**. Concepts were reworked, menus were tweaked, and new strategies and tactics were put into play. **When faced with the impossible, foodservice operators rose to the challenge.**

Shift from survival to revival with the most up to date insights to help you **plan for the future.** To hear hear from leading experts and discover the revenue-generating tactics that have worked for operators like you and to meet the suppliers who are ready to collaborate and support solutions for the coming era. All proceeds generated from the RC Show go back into making the industry stronger through government advocacy, education, resources, programs and events.

What follows is a brief introduction to the format, technology, and content of this year's RC Show. A little advance planning will help you smoothly navigate RC Show 21 and make the most of your experience.

NEW TECHNOLOGY

The pandemic has changed the way people interact and do business, so the RC Show will have a different format this year: ONLINE LIVE. Restaurants Canada has partnered with Nextech AR Solutions, a provider of world-class virtual trade shows and events, to create a custom, accessible, easy-to-use conference platform to host the RC Show.

Nextech AR knows that nothing replaces a live event: instead, the goal is to combine a flexible and interactive user experience with broadcast-quality sound and visuals.

Exhibitors and attendees will use the same platform, with the same icons in the same places, to keep the experience as seamless as possible. The search function will allow you to find anyone you're looking for, individuals or businesses, so you can connect with old colleagues and friends and discover new connections and suppliers. The event platform offers attendees a wide variety of enabling technologies to help bridge the in-person and virtual gap while providing next-level online experiences. Each attendee will have a personal planner, the ability to set up one-on-one, live-video meetings and chat functions, and the freedom to see as much of the RC Show as desired. Exhibitors will have online booths in which to offer demonstrations and downloadable resources. Plus the platform will live stream the many seminars, activations and panels from the RC Show's three themed stages.



PROGRAMMING

This year's Show encourages attendees to rebuild, reinvent and reconnect. To come together and collaborate in order to plot the course of recovery for both individual businesses and the sector as a whole. The stage programming, curated and designed to support industry recovery, is available across three stages over four action-packed days and provides attendees with the thought leadership, information and insights they need to succeed.

SPEAKER STAGE

The Speaker Stage provides inspirational insights on all aspects of the foodservice industry. Topics will address social issues such as Tackling Systemic Racism to Create an Inclusive Kitchen, and how to Recruit and Rebuild your Team Post-Pandemic, as well as Safeguarding Mental Health (both theirs and your own). Chris Elliott, Senior Economist with Restaurants Canada, alongside Canada's top research companies, will share the latest forecasts and survey findings, providing the big picture as well as the granular data that will allow operators to plan for the next quarter, year and beyond. Additional stage sessions will focus on strategies and breakthroughs like the Future of the Delivery Model, the Maturing of the Ghost Kitchen Concept and Engineering Menu Models for Maximum Return to guide operators in their decision-making.

BAR & BEVERAGE STAGE

The Bar & Beverage stage will showcase a wealth of solution-based sessions for operators, coupled with experts' insights. Gather up-to-the-minute information from the Global Bar Check-In including leading bar masters from around the globe. Hear the insights and forecast from the informative The State of the Bar session. Bar & Beverage Stage programming also includes: learning more about the New Cellar-Keepers; Pisco Masterclass; tactics to provide Guest Services Without the Guests; Rethinking Training; Diversifying Your Revenue Stream, plus get the scoop on how to make Progress in a Recession and learn how to make wine, beer and coffee pairing kits to go with Canadian dairy and cheese, to highlight a few sessions.

CULINARY STAGE

The Culinary Stage will shine a spotlight on presentations from a wide spectrum of talent, including sessions that highlight Indigenous and global cuisine. Take inspiration from featured country Peru, who will be on hand to showcase the scope and creativity of their ingredients. Celebrate all things pizza with a demonstration workshop from Bellavita Pizza Academy -- and World Pizza Champion Chef Pahal Carlone will go live to share the secret of making the perfect dough. Canada Beef and High Liner will demonstrate techniques and products to optimize your menu. Discover how Dairy Farmers of Ontario is working to help operators and foodservice differentiate and scale through smart, local partnerships in a session hosted by Ontario Cheese Ambassador Afrim Pristine and Chef Victor Barry.



WISDOM, INSPIRATION, FACTS AND FIGURES

To fuel the industry's resurgence, the RC Leadership Conference content normally presented as a separate ticketed event will be available to all attendees as part of RC Show 2021, an additional $250 value. Get the hard data on the impact of COVID-19, the real numbers and patterns that will directly affect your next moves. Take inspiration from exciting newcomers and the Ones to Watch, like Carl Heinrich from the successful Toronto-based restaurant Richmond Station. Witness leading operators discuss the future of independent restaurants, all the difficult truths, encouraging pivots and potential triggers for change.

The CEO panels are always the Show's most hotly sought-after and highly attended sessions. This year the RC Show will present eight CEO panels, so attendees can hear directly from leaders about the trials and triumphs from every category and segment of the industry. From fast-casual to full-service, from chain restaurants to independents; from wine, spirits and beer to a much needed look at coffee and the change in cafe culture, the CEO panels will offer different approaches, targeted assessment and experienced advice.

COMPETITIONS

The Garland Canada Culinary Competition is back! With a mandate to increase the profile of female and BIPOC chefs, the competition will look and operate a little differently this year. A Canada-wide search discovered up-and-coming chefs who will compete for $10,000 in cash and prizes.

Twelve talented finalists will cook under the watchful virtual eyes of the competition judges. Tune in to enjoy the drama, and be inspired by the meals they create.

Attendees will even have a chance to select a fan favourite. The **Beyond the Rail** contest is back too, this time in the form of a Cocktail Kit Pitch Competition. Competitors from coast to coast will have the chance to present their ideas for innovative cocktail kits, including recipes, cost sheets and marketing plans, to judges from across the industry. The finalists will compete for $3,500 in prizes and have the opportunity to demonstrate and share their unique creations.

EXHIBIT HALL

Last year, the RC Show floor covered almost five acres. This year, thanks to the boundlessness of virtual space, it's infinite. Experience all the innovations and special RC Show offers from the comfort of your own space.

Nextech AR Solutions is working with the RC Show team to create customized online booths for each exhibitor, with exciting technologies that include augmented reality as well as 3D images and holographic displays. Suppliers are limited only by their imagination: they can showcase products and activations, create a holographic ambassador, share downloadable resources, conduct demonstrations and even award prizes to visitors.

Attendees are encouraged to book meetings and live-chat with exhibitors, or simply drop off a digital business card if a later follow-up is preferred. Of course, meetings aren't mandatory to see a booth: you can visit any exhibitor at any time and can click through brochures and videos, and download desired materials directly. The event platform is designed to award special prizes for the highly engaged attendees who make the most of their RC Show experience. In short, the Exhibit Hall will work much like usual, though with less wear and tear on your feet.



NETWORKING EVENTS

The RC Show has always been a much-valued place to connect and network, where foodservice operators can find the kind of people who understand and share similar issues and experiences, and build the kind of relationships that make everything worthwhile. After such a difficult year, it's more important than ever to have a chance to reconnect. To check in, to say hello, to share stories of victories, commiserate and work together to connect and build for the future.

For the Opening Night event, Restaurants Canada has partnered with Shindig to allow for personal networking as well as entertainment. A third-party video-conferencing app, Shindig is the technological version of a big party: it allows for both a mainstage presentation AND multiple private and small group conversations. Attendees can enjoy an evening of entertainment and mingling as they experience the broadcast and individual connections concurrently, on the same screen.

With a simple login, attendees will be able to watch the welcome broadcast and entertainment and at the same time scan the room, search for friends and meet up with other attendees. Profiles of everyone present will appear on the screen; by simply scrolling and clicking, you'll be able to have private chats with up to six people at a time. And that's actual chat, not just texting (though text is available if preferred). Guests can feel free to wander, to join and leave conversations naturally. To greet old friends and make new ones. Just like a party, only there's no designated driver required.

BREAKFAST WITH CHAMPIONS

This signature event and power breakfast is back this year, in a slightly different format. What won't change is the intimate talks with industry leaders, sharing their unique observations and experiences. There are big insights to be found at this Breakfast to give you the data and insights you need to help you successfully chart the course of your recovery.

Featured speakers at Breakfast with Champions include: Danny Meyer, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Union Hospitality Group, David Henkes, Senior Principal at Technomic, Ryan Freeman, Director of Enterprise Partnerships at DoorDash, and Todd Barclay, CEO and President of Restaurants Canada.

MAKING THE MOST OF RC SHOW 2021

To help everyone plan their time at the RC Show, and for maximum efficiency, attendees will have access to the event platform welcome page. Two weeks prior to the opening day, registered attendees will be sent an email with instructions on how to log in which will allow them to complete their profile details and upload a photo in advance. Also on the Welcome page, attendees will find a calendar icon that will launch the RC Show Meeting & Conference Planner. This planner can be used to book meetings in advance with both exhibitors and attendees, as well as add stage sessions to strategically plan their experience.

LOOKING AHEAD

It's been a tough year for everyone and we know the difficulties aren't over yet. Even as the vaccine rollout begins, there are shutdowns and lockdowns and restrictions on the sector and on everyday life. As an industry we've demonstrated endurance, resilience and enthusiasm. The RC Show brings together the experts, the data, the solutions and the best examples to help industry professionals rebuild, reinvent, reconnect and successfully move forward.

Learn from success stories and share your own. Distill the trends that affect you most. Acquire the data and hard numbers that will rebuild your business now, and help steer you through what's still to come. Be inspired by unexpected innovations, and discover tactics and products that will encourage your own efforts at reinvention.

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Founder & CEO, Calii Love



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ROGER MOOKING
Chef & Host on Food Network
& Cooking Channel



RITCH ALLISON
CEO, Domino's Pizza Inc.



SUZANNE BARR
Chef & Judge on TV's Wall of Chefs



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STAGE HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE



EIGHT CEO PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Leaders of Canada's top restaurant and beverage brands will discuss the biggest challenges facing the industry today and how they are addressing them.



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Find out the latest data and trends in foodservice sales and changes in consumer behaviour from Canada's top research companies including Ipsos, The NPD Group and Technomic.



INSIGHTS TO ADAPT & EVOLVE

Explore the next generation of ghost kitchens, learn how to market to a virtual customer, gather the latest revenue-generating ideas and set your business up for success.



STATE OF THE BAR

The bar industry has been one of the most impacted areas of hospitality due to lockdowns. Find out how veterans have been pivoting their business model and what the outlook is for the future.

FEEDING THE RECOVERY

Restaurants Canada is further supporting the industry by incorporating RC Leadership Conference content throughout the four days of the RC Show ($250 value).

THE INDUSTRY IS COMING TOGETHER FEB 28 - MAR 3 TO REBUILD, REINVENT, RECONNECT.

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This year's RC Show ***ONLINE LIVE*** *is four action-packed days of business-building content, special offers and solutions from exhibiting brands and virtual networking opportunities to help our industry rebuild, reinvent and reconnect in 2021.*

Restaurants Canada is ***Feeding the Recovery*** of our industry by integrating **RC Leadership Conference** content into RC Show programming for 2021 (an additional $250 value). Look forward to hearing from top experts on the state of the foodservice landscape and gather valuable insights to help you make important business decisions. Some highlights include:

NPD:
Where did the foodservice spending dollars go?

Ipsos:
Shifts in work from home and what that means for foodservice in the future

Technomic:
What full service, limited service and self-service will evolve to coming out of and post-pandemic

Check out the full conference schedule at rcshow.com to plan your time.

The CEO panel has historically been one of the most popular sessions at the RC Show. It's the one and only place where the top leaders in the hospitality industry come together to share how they are addressing the toughest issues facing the industry today and how they are moving forward. For 2021 we're giving attendees more of what you're looking for with eight ultra-targeted CEO panel discussions from the following segments: fast casual, quick-service, full-service, independent operators, coffee, spirits, beer and wine. Exclusive to the RC Show - don't miss out!

Breakfast with Champions is Restaurants Canada's annual power-breakfast event. It's where the leaders of the hospitality industry gather to learn from the top research companies, gain insights from industry innovators and inspiration from world-class speakers. This is where the latest research, trends, ideas and insights are presented to equip participants with the knowledge and tools to successfully set a path forward. It's two hours you can't afford to miss.

Get your four-day show pass at rcshow.com

2021 and Beyond
Part Two: What Lies Ahead

2/2

The following is part two of a two-part series about the state of Canada's foodservice industry. Part one reflected on the changes that occurred in 2020 due to COVID-19 and the lessons learned; part two looks at Restaurants Canada's latest forecast for the foodservice industry for 2021 and beyond.

BY CHRIS ELLIOTT



While the numbers for 2020 are not yet final, preliminary estimates indicate the pandemic crisis caused massive devastation to Canada's foodservice industry. COVID-19 led to the closure of more than 10,000 foodservice establishments by the end of 2020, resulting in hundreds of thousands of lost foodservice jobs, and erasing more than $20 billion in commercial foodservice sales[1]. Battered and bruised, where does the industry go from here in 2021 and beyond?

Forecasting Foodservice Sales

Restaurants Canada relies on several econometric models to forecast foodservice sales. Prior to COVID-19, fluctuations in employment, economic activity, demographics and disposable income had the largest effects on spending at restaurants and drinking places. The Canadian exchange rate also played a role, impacting the number of international visitors, domestic tourism spending and menu prices. These economic factors accounted for 98% of the total variation in foodservice spending. The model has since been updated to factor in the repercussions of COVID-19.

The future is clouded by two very big unknowns: current and/or future bans of on-premise dining (or lockdowns) across the country and the timing of the vaccination rollout.

Short-Term Outlook

The first quarter of 2021 will sadly be a repeat of what we witnessed in Q4 2020. With significant stay-at-home orders in Ontario, a curfew in Quebec and other provinces taking measures to limit the spread of COVID-19, foodservice sales in Canada are projected to fall by 22.9% in Q1 2021 on a year-over-year basis. As sales had already declined by 10% in Q1 2020, this will result in foodservice sales being 31% below Q1 2019 levels.

Overall, all segments are expected to see lower sales in Q1 2021 compared to Q4 2020, after adjusting for seasonal variation. Caterers and drinking places will be hardest hit: sales are forecast to drop by as much as 57% below pre-COVID-19 levels. Full-service restaurant sales will remain 45% below Q1 2019 levels. Although take-out and delivery will help quick-service restaurants relative to other segments, sales in Q1 2021 are projected to be 9% below Q1 2019 levels.

The Outlook for 2021

Thankfully, hope is on horizon. With the approval of the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines, Canadian health authorities estimate that most Canadians will be vaccinated by September 2021. This helps our forecasting timeline, as sales will steadily improve in the latter part of 2021 due to both the reduced risk of COVID-19 and pent-up consumer demand.

As a result, annual commercial foodservice sales are forecast to grow to $62.9 billion in 2021. While this represents an increase from the projected $55 billion in sales in 2020, Canada's foodservice industry will remain 18.3% below 2019 levels, when sales were a record $77 billion.



In 2021, sales at quick-service restaurants are forecast to increase to $32 billion. While this represents a 9.5% increase over 2020, sales in 2021 will remain 5.1% below 2019 levels. Having experienced a 38.4% drop in sales in 2020, sales at full-service restaurants are forecast to climb to $25.3 billion in 2021 – a 19.4% increase over 2020. Still, sales will remain 26.2% below 2019 levels. For caterers and drinking places, the climb back will take even longer, as sales for both segments will remain more than 30% below 2019 levels.

The outlook for 2022

In 2022, commercial foodservice sales in Canada are forecast to grow by 17.3%, rising to $73.8 billion. This will still not return the industry to pre-COVID-19 levels. Caterer and drinking place revenues are forecast to remain more than 10% below pre-COVID-19 levels in 2022, while sales at full-service restaurants will be down 7.5%.

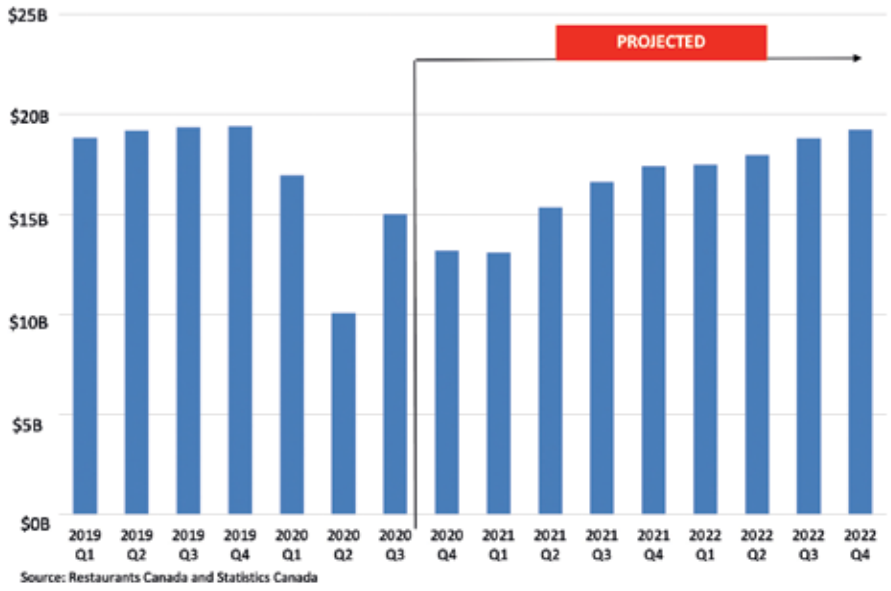
Once a vaccine is widely administered, strong pent-up demand could lead to a faster-than-expected recovery in foodservice sales in the latter part of 2021 and into 2022. However, any reluctance to take the vaccine and/or a weaker-than-expected recovery in business dining and tourism will result in lower-than-expected sales in 2022 and postpone the recovery until 2023 or beyond.

For more information, look for the 2021-2025 Long Term Foodservice Forecast on Restaurants Canada's member portal.

1. Commercial foodservice sales includes full- and quick-service restaurants, caterers and drinking places. When non-commercial foodservice are factored in (foodservice from accommodation, institutions, retail and other), total foodservice sales in 2019 were $95 billion. Currently, data for the non-commercial foodservice are unavailable.

Quarterly Commercial Foodservice Sales – Canada

(seasonally adjusted, in billions)



Source: Restaurants Canada and Statistics Canada

As the **Senior Economist for Restaurants Canada, Chris Elliott** manages and produces a comprehensive research program that has made Restaurants Canada a leading source of information for and about Canada's $93-billion foodservice industry. Chris produces a number of member reports that analyze key industry trends and economic forecasts. Chris has worked with Restaurants Canada for 20 years, has a Bachelor of Arts and Master Degree in Economics and specializes in economic modeling and forecasting.

Join us at RC Show 2021 'Where do we go from here: COVID-19's impact on foodservice & hospitality' on Sunday, February 28, 9:00AM-9:55AM on the Speaker Stage to hear more from Chris Elliott, Senior Economist, Restaurants Canada.

Q&A *with* Todd Barclay: 2021 and Beyond



With RC Show 2021 ONLINE LIVE just around the corner, MENU Mag sat down with Restaurants Canada's president and CEO, Todd Barclay, to get a pulse of the industry during this challenging time.

While things may be different than last year, attendees can still count on valuable networking opportunities, a dynamic virtual Exhibit Hall and world-class content from RC Show. This year's Show will shine a light on pressing issues like labour, mental health, anti-racism and more.

We checked in with Todd to get his thoughts on these topics and to understand major challenges facing our community.

MM In terms of labour, how was the foodservice industry affected by the pandemic? Can you take us through some of major stats?

TODD BARCLAY: The restaurant sector lost more jobs in the first six weeks of the pandemic than the entire Canadian economy during the 2008-09 recession. At the height of the pandemic, our industry lost over 800,000 jobs.

It is important to note that no other sector is still experiencing such a shortfall. While all other industries have recovered about 90 per cent or more of their pandemic job losses, at least 25 per cent of the foodservice workforce has still not returned to work in the restaurant sector. There are still more than 316,000 fewer jobs in the foodservice sector than there were in February 2020.

It is vital that we are able to recover these lost jobs. Restaurants are the number one source of first jobs for young Canadians, providing a launch-pad for fulfilling and rewarding careers. Women make up 58 per cent of the restaurant workforce; 31 per cent of restaurant owners, operators, and staff belong to a visible minority; and half of all Canadian restaurants are run by entrepreneurs who came here as immigrants.

If we want to build back a stronger, more resilient Canada that continues to reflect our country's incredible diversity, our industry is the best place to start.

When it comes to liquor regulations, restaurants have seen benefits from being able to deliver alcohol. What changes to regulations or licensing do restaurant operators need to see now in order to benefit their bottom line during the pandemic?

TODD BARCLAY: With our 2019 Raise the Bar Report (a report card on provincial liquor policies for bars and restaurants), we saw that provinces like Alberta, Quebec, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia all scored 'B' grades for their foodservice-friendly liquor policies. However, provinces like Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick and Ontario (among others) were in need of support to raise their 'C' and 'D' grades.

Restaurants are reopening under challenging restrictions that make it difficult to just break even. Wholesale liquor pricing can help lower the cost for all licensees and can make the difference in whether an establishment can remain viable in these challenging times.

Wholesale liquor pricing for bars and restaurants has long been the number one liquor policy recommendation from Restaurants Canada and has become even more critically needed in the face of the devastating toll that COVID-19 has had on our industry.

Mental health has been top of mind during the pandemic as we all struggle with lockdowns and uncertainty. Can you speak to the importance of ensuring best mental health practices and how managers can support their employees?

TODD BARCLAY: Mental health was already a global issue within foodservice prior to COVID-19. Prior to the pandemic, research shows 63 per cent of chefs worldwide report they were suffering from depression, 53 per cent feel they are pushed to the breaking point, 60 per cent of young chefs feel there are limited possibilities for career progression and 74 per cent of foodservice staff feel sleep-deprived to the point of exhaustion.

We encourage restaurant operators and staff to take advantage of programs available to educate and train individuals in mental health and substance use support skills to identify, understand, and respond to crisis situations.

The most important things right now as we navigate the COVID-19 pandemic are empathy, support and being there for each other. While you can not always be there physically, you can, with the technology we have today, stay close with others.

How do you think the ghost kitchens trend will fare in the coming year and beyond? How has this trend been accelerated by COVID?

TODD BARCLAY: The strength of Canada's restaurant industry is its creativity and sheer determination. While restaurant sales will one day return to pre-COVID-19 levels, the industry will be vastly different from before.

In the coming years, we will see the acceleration of many trends, such as the rise in ghost kitchens. ghost kitchens present an opportunity for brands to operate with no storefront and focus entirely on delivery through mobile and online platforms. Our Foodservice Facts report showed that 60 per cent of customers surveyed show interest in ordering delivery from a ghost kitchen.

How can we begin to address and tackle systemic racism in Canada's foodservice industry?

TODD BARCLAY: The foodservice and hospitality industry is made up of many Black, Indigenous, People of Colour and new Canadians, who all contribute to our industry and it could not function without their input and work. The suggestion that there is no racism, discrimination and hatred within our industry is in itself a barrier to addressing it. Now is the time to listen, learn, and reflect on how systemic racism contributes to injustice and inequality so that we can take actions to dismantle the systems that hinder and hold back BIPOC members of our community.

Our growing coalition (which includes members: BLACK FOODIE, High Liner, and Technomic) is currently in the early stages of conducting foodservice-specific research so we can better understand how we can address the issues at hand and are working to bring educational sessions that will speak to not just the importance of inclusivity in foodservice, but how we can all work together to create a better future.

> **"This year's theme of 'Feeding The Recovery' has never been more appropriate. It is time to rebuild, reinvent and reconnect as we take stock of the past year, and we look forward to a brighter future."**
>
> **– Todd Barclay**

2020: REPORT FROM THE FRONT-LINES

BY
IVY KNIGHT

In March I spent a week interviewing people in the restaurant industry on the effects of that very first lockdown across Canada. As 2020 exits, I want to take a look at the rest of the planet to see how folks are coping. This isn't a year for 'best new restaurant' lists, where only a select top ten are singled out for praise - this is a year where the value of the restaurant community as a whole deserves recognition, because we are in danger of losing such a substantial portion of it. If you work in food, chances are you that love it. This is a career path that doesn't attract half-assed loyalties. When we go in, we go all in. Consider this a look at 2020 from folks on the ground in restaurants around the world. From a chef discovering therapy in Brazil to a food writer re-evaluating diversity in Calgary, here are your colleagues.



"I'm from Nigeria, I've been in New York for 15 years. Currently in Harlem. Pretty much the whole eight months straight I've been unemployed. In the beginning it was mostly because there were no jobs. Half the time when a job came up it was gone the same day. I'm working now, some days it's busy and the next day I have two orders.

Unemployment is state-by-state and luckily New York City has a pretty good package. The worst part was that every New Yorker that was unemployed, three million plus, applied at the same time.

I'm still fairly new in this business, seven years of experience, but this has made me value it more. 2020 has given me time to understand where I am with my craft and where I can go. If this didn't happen I'd just be in a kitchen sending out plates and not realizing what I could do."

Adeyoju "Sam" Adedipe, Cook, Harlem, New York



"After the first few months of COVID we realized that independent owners were really struggling to negotiate with landlords. People couldn't pay their rent on time. A couple of restaurateurs got together and rounded up about six hundred smaller restaurants who were not well represented and not being heard. By setting up Save Hong Kong F&B we were able to start voicing our needs and concerns. We've had a chance to talk directly to our representatives in government about solutions to help the industry survive as a whole, not just as individuals.

We're in our fourth wave. Our whole December has been affected. We have to close by 6 p.m. every day, so no dinner service. The great thing about Hong Kong is that dining our culture has always been a huge part of the city and takeaway has become very strong."

May Chow, Hong Kong, China
Chef/Owner, *Little Bao* (Hong Kong)
Happy Paradise



"I am a member of a Facebook group for Canadian food writers which is comprised primarily of white, cis-gendered, middle-aged people. Okanagan chef Aman Dosanj raised a question about diversity in the group and asked what writers were doing to better showcase it. The lack of engagement on the question compared to a flurry of comments over cake pans on a different post was shocking and disappointing.

While I had always prided myself on celebrating female industry professionals and helping promote inclusivity, through Eat North's LGBTQ2+ community-minded events, the human rights movements that took place made me realize that everything I was doing was still very, well, white. I think about diversity every single day now. I find myself continually asking how I can showcase a diverse range of individuals through my writing, TV interviews and livestreams."

Dan Clapson, Calgary, Alberta, Journalist, *Globe and Mail*, *VICE*, *Eat North*



"Here in Japan we never experienced the same kind of hard lockdown that you have in North America and other parts of the world. We did have a period of restrictions starting in April. Many businesses were asked to shut or reduce their hours but the government does not have the power to actually force businesses to comply with those requests. For businesses that did comply, assistance was available. Anyone who can show that they have suffered as a result of the pandemic, in terms of a loss of 50 per cent or more of their earnings for this year, were eligible to apply for a subsidy of one million yen, which is a little over $12,000 CDN. This is in addition to the 100,000 yen, almost a thousand dollars, that every resident in Japan received for one month - a one time kind of stimulus cheque, much like what you saw in the US.

The Tokyo food community has been supportive of restaurants. Many restaurants are offering delivery and take out, which was really uncommon prior to this, especially for independent restaurants. Considering that we were expecting to have the Olympics this year a lot of investment was made for new openings, renovations and expansions, so this is a very heavy burden on the restaurants of Tokyo."

Melinda Joe, Tokyo, Japan, Journalist, *Japan Times, Conde Nast Traveler*

Photographer credit: Luuvu Hoang



"All that has happened in 2020; I got divorced and I lost my father. For the first time I actually had to go into therapy to hold myself together. Staying at home staring at the ceiling - an empty head is not a good thing for someone who is used to being very active. I've learned to give more value to what I have rather than worry if I'll get three Michelin stars or not. That's not top of my priority list anymore. COVID has made me change my perspective.

I talk to my staff about therapy. I'm very open to them about it. I say, "Guys, you have health insurance that covers that, it's been paid already, if you're interested just go". I think we're going to have a better generation of chefs and cooks. We already have a better kitchen culture than we did when I started twenty years ago."

Alberto Landgraf, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Chef/Owner *Oteque*

Photographer credit: Mileny Melo



"This second lockdown we received help (from the government) as 75 per cent of the revenue of January last year. This is very good, although [at the time of writing] we have not been paid fully. We only received part of it and the rest will come.

During the crisis, many restaurants changed to takeout business, farmers market shops, sandwich shops. The Berlin community supports each other very well. I received support from Kristian Bauman from 108 in Copenhagen. He personally helped bring traffic to us, and MAD from Copenhagen also helped spread the word when we re-opened.

What I've learned from 2020 is that life isn't predictable and your strongest asset is love. Love from your friends, love from your partner, chosen family or the love from the community you live in."

Dalad Kambhu, Berlin, Germany
Chef/Owner *Kindee*

photographer credit: Robert Rieger



"I'm from Boston. My wife, Enkhzaya Bat-Orgil, is Mongolian and we met in the States. We came here for a two week consulting job to open a restaurant, and now, nine years later we have six businesses and two kids. Two restaurants, a butcher shop, a fine grocery, wholesale bakery, smoothie company, and a catering business.

We've been in a weird bubble for the last year. In January the Mongolian government shut the borders, so we didn't get our first case until a month ago and we're just about to come out of a month-long lockdown. The nice thing about Mongolia is the community was very quick to adopt handwashing and wearing PPE; everyone was on board.

We're in a unique situation because of the diversification of our business - that was driven by the fact that Mongolia is a challenging place to be in the food business. We border Russia and China, so it was a no-brainer to open a grocery store and butcher shop just to supply ourselves. We're one of the only places to get western dry-aged beef, the first large scale sourdough baking company in the country, we're nixtamalizating corn and making tortillas, we're importing mezcal for the first time in this country. Because of all that we can keep our staff employed."

Cliffe Arand, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
Chef/Owner *Rosewood Hospitality Group*

photographer credit: Breanna Wilson and Nomin Munk

"Right now I'm more worried about having to let my staff go and not being able to carry their health insurance anymore.

The Thai public health system is way better than the U.S. If they get sick [in Bangkok] they can see a doctor. If I let my [San Francisco] staff go, what happens to them? If I let my dishwasher go, he'll make less than half of what he would make as a dishwasher. And I don't see any urgency on the part of anyone in Washington to help.

From a business perspective the best thing for me to do right now is to close. But if I do that what am I doing for the people who work for me who have kids, who depend on me? Every day I'm just trying to hold it together with duct tape. I'm worried about the industry in general, what's going to happen to dining culture? And what happens meanwhile? What is the human cost?"

Pim Techamuanvivit, San Francisco, California
Chef/Owner *Nari* and *Kin Khao*, San Francisco, *Nahm*, Bangkok

"Winter is lean. So when COVID came about in March we were all coming out of our leanest season, and we missed the opportunity to stuff some money in the mattress to make it through this winter. Not only are we being struck with the pandemic, there's also a huge shift to focus on what is wrong with our industry - worker's rights, abuse, people being underpaid. Our industry is in a lot of trouble, it already was, and this has made the movement strong.

2020 has confirmed what I already knew about myself and other people in this business, we're a resilient bunch, and very creative. I have an incredible team of people who believe in this industry and want to fight for their jobs. It's heartening to see that there are still people who are very passionate about working in restaurants, even through all this."

Dyan Solomon, Montreal, Quebec
Chef/Owner, *Olive + Gourmando, Foxy* and *Caffe Un Po' Di Più*

"I anticipate [this year's] NYE service being a bit more subdued than years past - equal parts 'Woohoo! We survived 2020!' and 'Let's get this year behind us already: NEXT!' But all that being said, the entire team is grateful to be open, to be serving our guests and neighbors, and to once again be hopeful for in-real-life scenarios that won't need to involve the phrase 'six feet apart'. Though we will miss the typical high-energy services with full and bustling dining rooms (simpler times!), the smaller guest count allows us to safely and attentively serve while we look forward to brighter days ahead."

Alicia Rae Blegen, Brooklyn, New York
GM *Lilia*

"I've been in the restaurant business for 45 years. My first business was a small hamburger place I opened in 1975. I got into the kitchen 23 years ago and got my Michelin star 10 years ago. We have six restaurants with 150 employees. We had three months of lockdown until June, everybody was paid by the government. Healthcare is covered here - everybody gets in, even if you are not Spanish. They will never let anyone go without care.

When things are going well you never have a month, or six months, to think. I'm 65 now, I want to do what I want to do. We have one life, it is not forever.

My Michelin-starred place is going to become a garden in the city. I have a big building and I'm going to move to the roof and make a vegetable garden. I want to focus on the environment and sustainability. I want to be 100 per cent sustainable. If it doesn't bring me a second star then it means that Michelin isn't doing their work. It isn't going to be fancy, but it's going to be real, more real than ever."

Maria José San Román, Alicante, Spain
Chef/Owner *Monastrell*

"With shutdowns happening left and right I built a model that allows us to change quickly. It's very adaptive. Basically what I do is take requests, like a concierge service - it's just really about listening to the guests from the outside rather than imposing what we do in the restaurant on the guests.

Multiple courses or a la carte - app, main, dessert - none of that exists now. Tweezers, garnishes - cuisines based off things that don't work. Scoop and go are better off and not something that costs a lot of money. I'm not trying to serve everybody, that's a Cheesecake Factory model, trying to make everybody happy. There has to be something more.

I don't see these problems going away for two or three years. We have so many







irresponsible people debating whether they'll wear masks or take the vaccine - this whole thing's been politicized and it's really silly. We're in a lot worse position now than we could be."

Eric Rivera, Seattle, Washington
Chef/Owner *Addo*

"In a post-COVID future, with all the right health measures in place and with lesser sanctions, I believe we will be doing pop-ups and non-traditional food business models moving forward.

In Venezuela, when the situation started to become unbearable, people started making food at home and selling it. I've been seeing this more and more here in Toronto. So maybe that's the way of the food future. Maybe this pandemic is bringing us back to a more sustainable economy of community, sharing, trading and more room for all to succeed."

Isabel Sanchez, Toronto, Ontario
Chef/Co-owner *Playing With Food*

"The pandemic has unveiled and solidified how fragile and toxic the food industry (including the media) truly is, so I've seen myself pulling away and questioning the space I choose to take up. I hope to help hold space for other cultures and writers from these cultures and to amplify as much as I can. I am lucky that I have culinary training because I can do recipe developing from home for publications and food clients. I truly love food so I don't want to leave food media, but the question then is: how do we fix the industry and move forward together?"

Eileen W. Cho, Paris, France
Photographer, journalist *NPR, USA Today, Food & Wine*

"Basically, I signed the lease on my space a week before the first lockdown happened. So that was pretty nerve-wracking. I was like, uh-oh, what the heck are we gonna do? But, luckily, my landlord was quite supportive, and she allowed me to, like, push back the lease start date 'til June, and then I just pulled the trigger. I went in here and built it out, and we opened in October.

Pretty much up until the day we opened our doors, I had no idea what to expect, and I was very, very, very terrified. And then we opened, and we were met with a lot of success pretty much off the bat, which I was not expecting at all, especially with the climate, and being a first-time restaurateur. So, I feel truly blessed how it happened to us. I know a lot of amazing places across the city, places that I love, are not doing very well. So, it's kind of a strange feeling for me, you know - it's weird to have success while all this is happening."

Justin Leon, Toronto, Ontario
Co-owner *Lambo's Deli*

"We opened at the end of August. I don't think that I was scared - it wasn't fear that I felt, I was hopeful. Things are obviously a little crazy but whenever there's chaos and disruption it always means growth. I feel like the next generation are really stepping up to change things that have been the norm for too long. These things that we're considering now, our previous employers would not have considered. We're happy to take this opportunity to shake things up a bit and re-define the model, to think about healthier ways to be restaurant owners and build something that's sustainable over time."

Carmelina Imola, Toronto, Ontario
Co-owner, FOH manager *Bernhardt's and Dreyfus*

FIRESIDE CHAT WITH KEYNOTE: RITCH ALLISON



People come together around a meal. So many of our great ideas, conversations and social occasions occur around food in a restaurant —and in 2020 we were stripped of those opportunities.

The ability to sit in a restaurant, to gather amongst friends and strangers alike, transformed from something we desired to something we must avoid at all costs. The coronavirus pandemic altered how every part of our society operates, with the hospitality industry among those most greatly affected.

Domino's entered 2020 just like many other restaurant companies did: with strategies in place, plans and projects that we had on the calendar. And just a few weeks in, as COVID started to make its way around the world – and here in North America – we really had to make a quick pivot.

We're a 60-year-old brand, but we had to rewrite most of our standard operating procedures, at the store level, in about six weeks to adapt to this new, contactless world.

We completely revamped our tech development roadmap for 2020 to adapt to this new environment. For example, we launched Domino's Carside Delivery, which is a contactless solution for carry-out where one of our team members would bring your pizza out and place it right in your vehicle.

Domino's also has more than 17,000 locations worldwide in over 90 countries, so we had to dramatically change the frequency of communication with our franchisees. We held twice-weekly calls in the U.S. (where we have over 6,200 locations) and weekly webinars with our international master franchisees. We did all this while also changing the method in which we communicated, such as holding virtual town halls – which I hosted on a weekly basis to keep our team members informed and ensure they could continue operations.

We felt very privileged to be in a position to stay open, when so many other businesses had to close, and we took that privilege very seriously, making commitments to our team members, our customers and our community to operate in a safe and effective manner.

The last 10 months have been unlike any other, but there are learnings and takeaways that have risen from these difficult times, which can carry us into the future.

The acceleration of online ordering and digital infrastructure – is a massive push for our industry, which will now be more prepared to pivot and handle future adversity.

In recent years, Domino's added Hotspots, where we worked with almost 800 franchisees and their thousands of delivery drivers to incorporate geo-fencing into its digital ordering process, meaning we could deliver to more than 200,000 outdoor locations—without needing a numerical street address.

We also had a pre-established zero-click ordering, where customers could load a preferred order into the app and have it sent within 10 seconds. Domino's cloud-based



AnyWare platform enabled ordering via any digital channel, including desktop, smartphone, social media, Smart TVs, digital assistants and gaming consoles.

Those early innovations led to digital ordering already composing about 70 per cent of Domino's sales—and better helped us navigate the incoming pandemic. The change in consumer habits, due to COVID-19, immediately increased our digital ordering by about five more percentage points as the entire restaurant industry saw a broad shift towards online ordering.

While delivery will likely come down from the COVID-19 highs, I think it's going to maintain a level above where it was before the pandemic. That's a good thing for our business, as delivery and at-home consumption has been a big part of Domino's for 60 years.

We've made adjustments that will improve our ability to operate on a day-to-day basis and we've proven that office operations can make great achievements in a flexible working environment, which can make our industry more attractive for job seekers in the future.

COVID-19 also forced us to become very creative and innovative – on how we wanted to keep our business operating. We asked ourselves, "What do we need to do to put the safety of our team members and our customers first?" and from that, we implemented options such as our contactless curbside pickup and reinvigorated our commitment to being engaged in our community.

We put in a program called, "Feed the Need," where we donated food and labour—and went out and gave away *10 million slices of pizza* to thousands of people, including kids that were not able to replace missing lunchtime meals as a result of schools being shut down.

That got our system excited, because what do we do for a living?

We feed people.

And when there are people in need, with us again having that privilege to still be open, we felt like it was our corporate responsibility to help feed those people in times of need.

In a time with so many families and businesses struggling, for the restaurant industry to lead by example and show everyone that we are in this together and that we want to help – and are still able to help even when we're vulnerable—that is be invaluable to reminding people that our industry will always be there for people.

I know that Domino's, of course, wasn't the only company to give back to the community, so let's give a round of applause to everyone that did what they could to support their community.

It has been a pretty wild ride, to say the least, but I see 2021 as being a big bounce-back year for the restaurant industry.

As vaccines are distributed and things return more to normal, people are going to want to go out and eat again. It's my sincere hope that the operators who are struggling now will be able to hang on because we, as an industry, serve a very vital need in our society—not just the physical need of feeding people, but we also serve a very important purpose in society.

I think we're a stronger company and a stronger industry – having gone through COVID with an innovative spirit and a capacity to change, which will serve us well into the future.

So hold your heads up, keep helping those around you, and continue perfecting how to be the best version of your business and yourself, as 2021 will see us return to what we do best:

Fostering great ideas, conversations and social occasions as people, once again, come together around a meal.

Ritch Allison is the **Chief Executive Officer of Domino's Pizza**, the world's largest pizza company in terms of retail sales. Domino's operates more than 17,000 stores in more than 90 markets around the world, including several hundred in Canada.

Catch Ritch Allison give his keynote speech at RC Show 2021's 'Delivering During the Pandemic: Fireside Chat With Domino's CEO' on Monday, March 1, 3:00PM-3:30PM on the Speaker Stage

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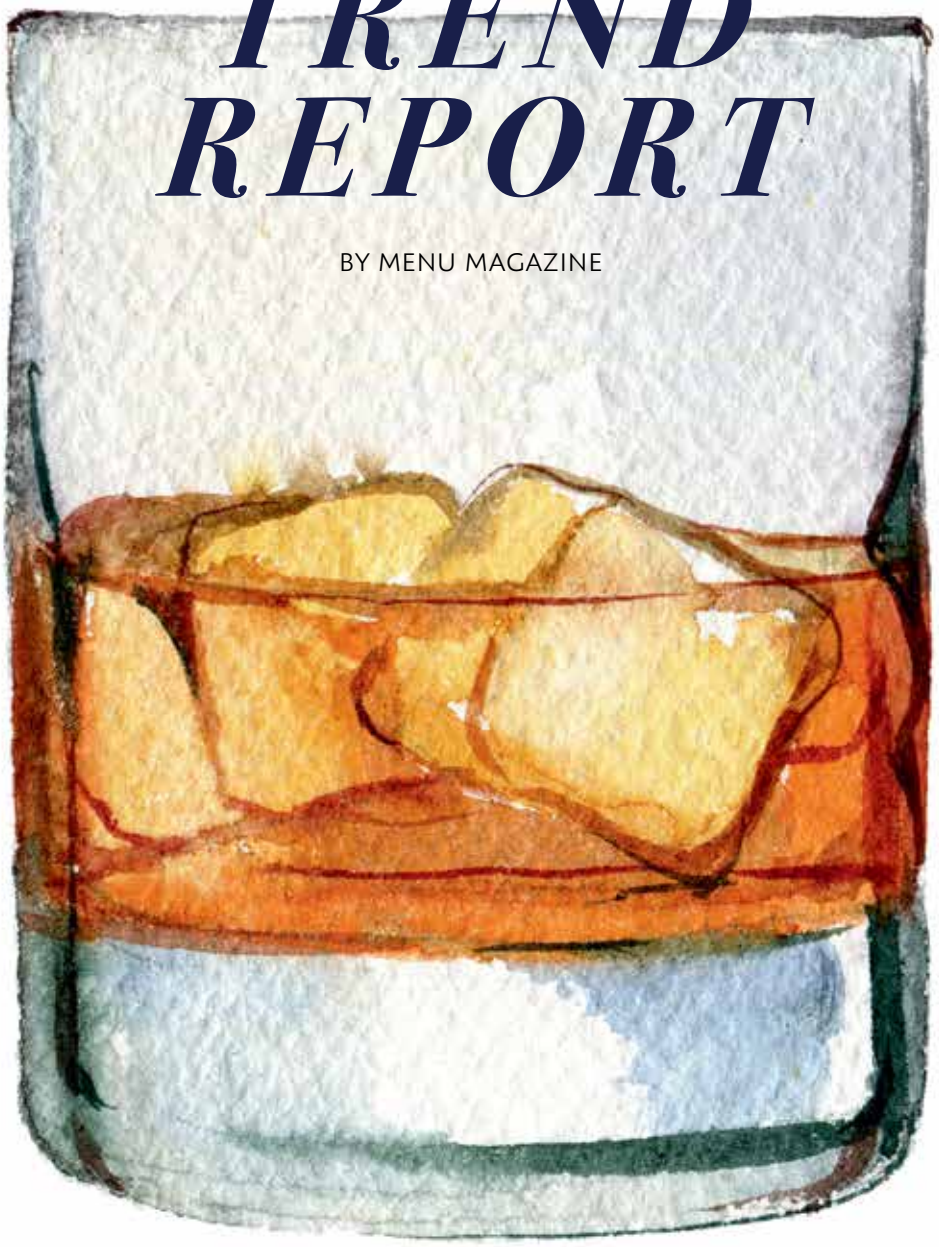
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2021 TREND REPORT

BY MENU MAGAZINE





Evelyn Chick

Founder, Evelyn Chick Projects

What do you think consumers will be looking for in the next year in the bar/bev space?

I think the experience of a bar will be drastically different in the coming year than it has been previously. There should be a focus on the health and safety of the patrons, as well as more unique serves that perhaps require less interaction with the serving staff.

The dynamic between over-the-bar service will also be different, depending on the restrictions of each individual venue. Knowing that there are a few bars and restaurants that have opened in Asia and in Europe during the pandemic, it seems to have curated some experiences that are individualized to the group.

I remember when patios were allowed to open, a few venues got creative and built yurts, glasshouses, domes, etc. to enhance the guest experience while keeping them socially distant. I think being able to make their experience unique in that sense while keeping those protocols in mind will be of importance.

What ingredients/flavours do you think will rise in popularity in the coming year?

With the world being physically apart, people are actually more connected together online and are able to explore different cultures virtually—something where they previously may have overlooked. With notions of trying to create diverse and inclusive spaces, I think there will be a focus on international flavors, but highlighting locally sourced-ingredients. Unique serving vessels that allow for a full experience at your own table would also rise in popularity, as I mentioned in the previous answer about spatial awareness.

We've seen some culinary trends emerge from the pandemic like comfort foods. What trends did we see this past year in Bar & Bev and will they/how will they continue in 2021?

The no-to-low ABV movement isn't going away. More and more non-alcoholic and spirit free options are coming out of the woodwork - think interesting kombuchas, drinking vinegars, even cold brew nitro teas, highlighting different textures without the alcohol. In Ontario, bars and restaurants are finally allowed to serve alcohol to-go, and even serve mixed cocktails to-go. I think this is a really big move from the government and the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO), allowing more accessible cocktails to reach the consumers' hands. Instead of having to buy a few bottles of rare amaros and additives that are at a higher price-point, they can now experiment with different flavours that are already bottled for them at home without having to break the bank. As someone who has created a platform for consumers to understand the workings of cocktails behind the scenes, I feel like the simplicity of three to four ingredient, well thought out cocktails are going to come back in a drastic way, similarly to comfort foods in the culinary world. People like to feel a sense of nostalgia, something that is greatly executed but approachable.

Since 2018, **Evelyn Chick has worked with RC Show as a Bar & Beverage Curator**. We're proud to welcome her back once again for RC Show 2021 ONLINE LIVE. This year, as with others, **Evelyn will be ensuring the Bar & Bev Stage content is world-class and cutting-edge. Check out the Bar & Bev programming for 2021 at rcshow.com.**



Steve Zmudczynski

National Vice President of Sales, On-Premises and Emerging Growth, Molson Coors Beverage Company

What do you think consumers will be looking for in the next year in the bar/bev space?

The next year will be a journey in building consumer trust to get back to their favourite spots. Having clear protocols and making patrons feel safe will be an important part of their overall experience in the beginning, but also critical in the longer-term path to relaxing some of the anxious social behaviours we've developed throughout the pandemic.

Once patrons start coming back and the initial novelty of being able to do something "normal" again (like socializing with friends off-screen) wears, they'll look for more from bars and restaurants to keep them coming back versus retreating to the creature comforts of home. They need to feel that what they're getting outside is not something they can re-create inside – be that food, ambiance, draught quality beer, live entertainment/experiences, or other.

What ingredients/flavours do you think will rise in popularity in the coming year?

Flavour continues on the up because drinkers enjoy growing their repertoire and having a beverage or a flavour of choice for different occasions. We see classics like citrus and berry still ranking high in popularity in both beer and ready-to-drink, but consumers are also open to experimenting with flavours and combinations they haven't seen before. By way of ingredients, consumers are demanding more of their products through high quality, ethically-sourced ingredients – we're seeing it clearly in the rising demand for premium products and organic products.

We've seen some culinary trends emerge from the pandemic like comfort foods. What trends did we see this past year in Bar & Bev and will they/how will they continue in 2021?

In times of uncertainty, people turn to what they know, what they love, and what they trust. We saw, especially at the onset of the pandemic, that consumers were showing preference towards familiar brands like Coors Light or Molson Canadian. As the summer came around and new innovations or flavours presented themselves, consumers were excited to experiment and add something new to the mix. More broadly for the bev-alc industry, Seltzers, in particular, are booming and that's going to continue in 2021. And finally, e-commerce accelerated beyond what anyone would have imagined through 2020, which we believe will continue in 2021 and represent between 5-15% of total sales in the OP channel – establishments will need to continue progressing with e-comm through food bundles, features and other.

Be sure to get tickets for the upcoming RC Show 2021 to gain access to the **Beer CEO Panel: Business Building Beer Insights on the Bar & Bev Stage and hear from Molson Coors Canada President & CEO Frederic Landtmeters**



Frank Polley

VP of Trade Marketing at Tito's Handmade Vodka

What do you think consumers will be looking for in the next year in the bar/bev space?

With limited access to bars over the past year and a slow return to on-premises businesses, we believe consumers are looking forward to being out with their friends and family once it is safe to do so. New cocktails combined with classic go-to drinks will make it easy to celebrate together again. We'll likely see more experimenting with cocktail ingredients as people feel more comfortable with the environment near the end of this year and into 2022.

What ingredients/flavours do you think will rise in popularity in the coming year?

In the vodka category, we continue to see growth in mixing with espresso, elderflower, orange liqueur, and cranberry. Some additional ingredients that will remain popular for years to come are salt, grapefruit, cucumber, peach, and berry.

We've seen some culinary trends emerge from the pandemic like comfort foods. What trends did we see this past year in Bar & Bev and will they/how will they continue in 2021?

Similarly, we have seen scaled back drink menus offering the house favourites. Bars and restaurants are pairing cocktails with food menu items making it easy to enjoy them at the counter or to-go!



Grant Sceney

Creative Beverage Director for Fairmont Pacific Rim

What do you think consumers will be looking for in the next year in the bar/bev space?

Normalcy to some level, this will be a long way off but people are looking to return to a safe bar/restaurant environment and interact with their friends again. They want to meet new people outside of a zoom call and have genuine interactions.

What ingredients/flavours do you think will rise in popularity in the coming year?

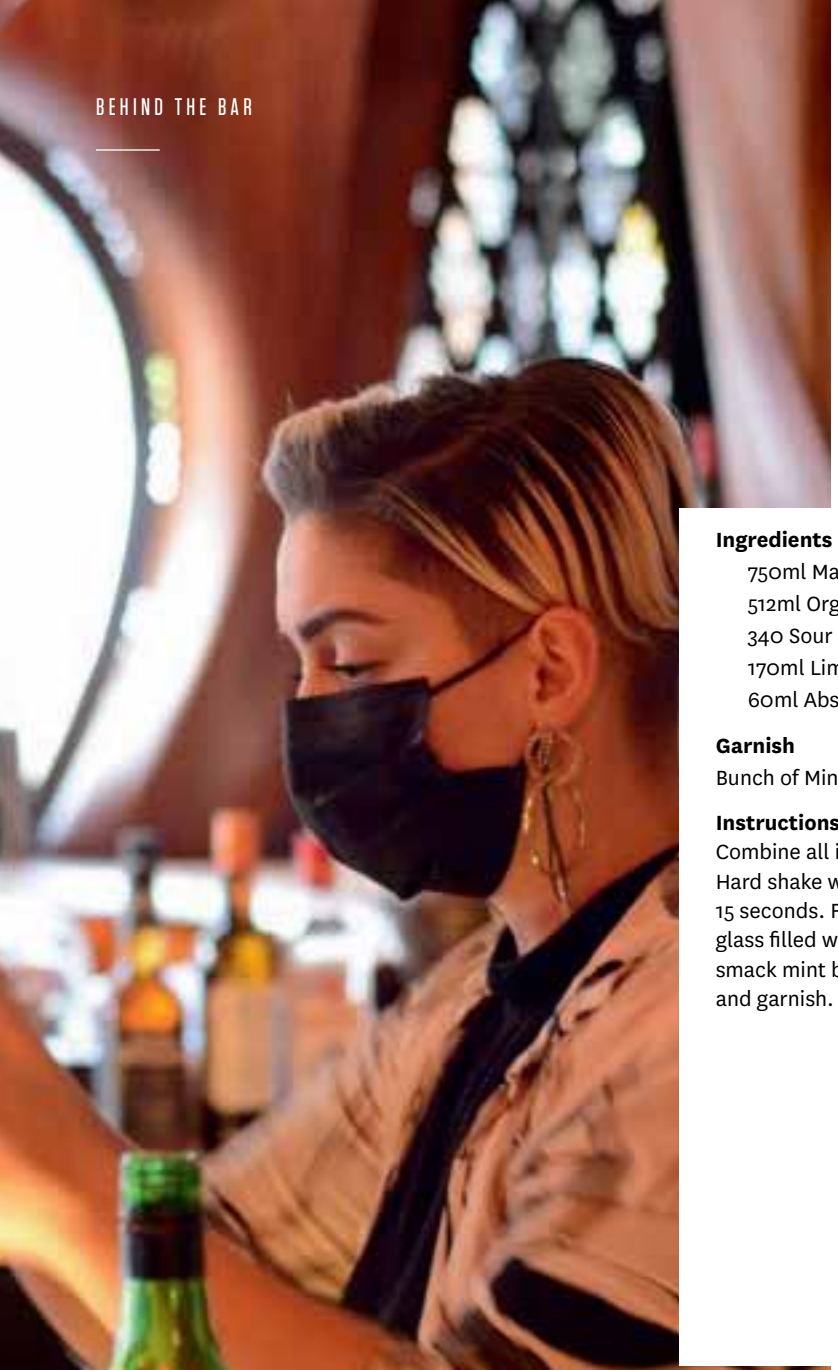
This is a difficult one to predict, but low alcohol cocktails will still be an ongoing trend. So low ABV spirits, vermouths aperitifs, etc. but the big one will be the continued rise in non-alcoholic spirits and cocktails.

We've seen some culinary trends emerge from the pandemic like comfort foods. What trends did we see this past year in Bar & Bev and will they/how will they continue in 2021?

Comfort cocktails and 'to-go' cocktails/cocktail kits will continue to grow. You have some talented bartenders having the time to put together ingredients for your home that they never previously would have shared. Some provinces have relaxed the rules in to go alcohol and I think it is an opportunity for people to have great cocktail food experiences at home even after this pandemic is over.

RC Show 2020 was treated to cocktails made by Grant Sceney and the Botanist at Hotel Fairmont Pacific Rim team in the Pop Up Restaurant & Bar. **Check out Bar & Bev programming at RC Show 2021 ONLINE LIVE at rcshow.com.**





MARGIE IN THE JUNGLE

As restaurants and bars across Canada continue to leverage alcohol delivery and takeout in order to comply with changing COVID regulations, ensuring creative and exciting offerings is a way to extend your reach and find new customers. We asked **RC Show Beyond the Rail 2020 Winner Monique Godinho** for her award-winning recipes that took home first place at last year's Show. To rework these recipes in a to-go friendly format, Monique says, *"I would simply prepare the syrups and bottle them separately from the spirits in a ratio that makes sense for the volume of spirit in the T/O Cocktail Kit."*

Ingredients

750ml Maker's Mark
512ml Orgeat
340 Sour Stout Syrup
170ml Lime Juice
60ml Absinthe

Garnish

Bunch of Mint

Instructions

Combine all ingredients in shaker tip. Hard shake with Kold Draft Ice for 15 seconds. Fine strain into a collins glass filled with crushed ice. Gently smack mint bouquet to release oils and garnish.

Syrup Prep

Oat Milk Orgeat

1 L Elmhurst Unsweetened Oak Milk
3 Cups (750 ml) White Sugar
Rose Water (to taste)

1. Combine oat milk and sugar in a saucepan.
2. Gently bring up over medium heat until sugar is dissolved.
3. Remove from heat. Cool.
4. Add rosewater to taste.

Blood Brothers Cherry Dark and Sour Stout

375 ml Blood Brothers Dark 'n' Sour Cherry Stout
125 ml white sugar

1. Combine ingredients in a saucepan. Simmer over heat until sugar is dissolved.
2. Remove from heat. Cool.

The Blood Brothers Cherry Dark and Sour Stout is a seasonal brew but can also be substituted for similar brews,



Beyond the Rail Competition will back for RC Show 2021 ONLINE LIVE with a twist! This year, attendees can watch the **Cocktail Kit Pitch Competition** as finalists compete for $3,500 in prizes and have the opportunity to demonstrate and share their unique creations.

bubly™

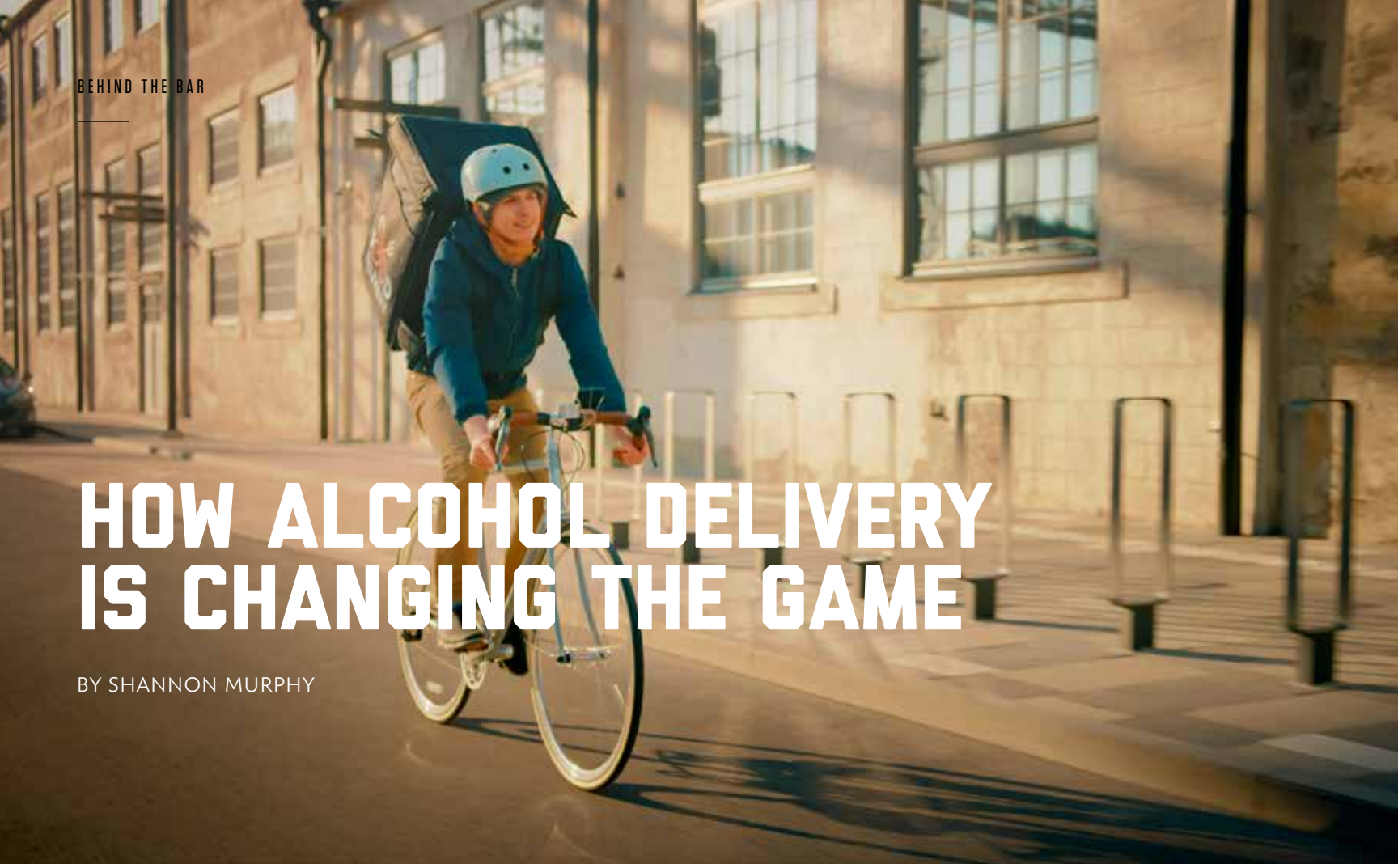
sparkling water beverage



"no calories. no sweeteners. all smiles™"

PEPSICO foodservice

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HOW ALCOHOL DELIVERY IS CHANGING THE GAME

BY SHANNON MURPHY

In March 2020, shortly after COVID-19 flung most of Canada into lockdown, resulting in the shuttering of the restaurant industry, many provinces across Canada adopted temporary policy changes including the sale of alcohol with takeout orders and reducing the minimum pricing requirements for spirits sold as part of a takeout or delivery order. Meant to provide relief to businesses in the hard hit hospitality sector, these changes provided a much needed life line to restaurants who pivoted their operations in the hopes of bringing in revenue.

Later in July 2020, Ontario introduced further changes which made it possible for app-based delivery services to work with alcohol retailers to deliver their products. The changes also allowed licensed liquor delivery services to deliver to any private place.

As of December 2020, these temporary measures were made permanent, at least in Ontario. These changes are important to ensure restaurants are being supported during the pandemic by expanding opportunities in alcohol sales. This change was welcomed by many in the industry. "It didn't surprise me when it was announced that it was permanent," says Richard Anderson, Executive Director at Smart Serve Canada. "The Ontario government has been all about modernizing and changing and I think you'll see more modernization moving forward with the liquor licence act."

Some of the additional items that have been approved include:

- removing restrictive rules to allow for the delivery of alcoholic beverages in food boxes and meal kits;
- allowing eligible alcohol manufacturers to deliver their own products and charge a delivery fee;
- allowing restaurants and bars to offer mixed cocktails and growlers as part of a takeout or delivery order; and,
- permitting eligible manufacturers to sell spirits and 100 per cent Ontario wine at farmers markets.

These changes have also been beneficial to app delivery services such as Uber Eats and SkipTheDishes. SkipTheDishes has been delivering alcohol since 2017, and currently delivers alcohol from restaurant partners in ON, NB, QC and from both restaurants and alcohol vendors in MB, AB, and BC.

Regardless of whether a restaurant delivers themselves or opts to use a third party service, the two main considerations operators need to keep in mind while approaching alcohol delivery are safety and compliance. The requirements that apply to alcohol sales, service and delivery will continue to apply to liquor delivery services, including checking ID, Smart Serve training and not serving or selling to intoxicated people.

"Social responsibility is the key to the Smart Serve program", says Anderson. "And what we do is assist those who sell and serve alcohol to understand the current legislation and liability and the duty of care. A big part of the program is to protect the employee whether they are handling and selling alcohol or delivering it."

SkipTheDishes had already been delivering alcohol in some provinces prior to the broader adoption of alcohol delivery across Canada, and had existing systems and processes in place to make sure they could safely deliver alcohol from restaurants. They deliver to over 30,000 partners



“The opportunity to sell liquor off site with our curbside offerings has been a great adjustment and an advantage to our bottom line. Wine pairings and cocktail kits akeep our creativity honed, our relationships with distributors alive and we sincerely hope these measures will continue post pandemic.”

– Patrick Saurette



on the Skip network and have seen a 99 per cent increase in restaurants joining the network since the pandemic began. “As provinces began changing legislation, we updated our network to support the nuances of each province and implemented new app features that allow our restaurant partners to diversify their menu offerings, giving them the ability to sell alcohol with food orders,” says Howard Migdal, Managing Director, Canada, at Skip the Dishes. “We’ve also added thousands of couriers to the network that are certified to deliver alcohol, with Skip’s algorithms only assigning alcohol orders to couriers who have verifiable proof of required training (such as Smart Serve certification).”

So have these changes in legislation made any impact on the industry? According to SkipTheDishes an order that includes alcohol typically sees cheque sizes increase by 44 per cent compared to a non-alcohol order from that same restaurant, and, where alcohol is included on a menu, between 5 per cent and 10 per cent of all orders will include an alcohol. “More than 80 per cent of customers have ordered from a restaurant they have never been to in person—these are brand new customers for our restaurant partners that they would not have been exposed to otherwise, and this creates an opportunity to ‘wow’ them with their food, increasing the likelihood of repeat orders.”

For SkipTheDishes, wine and beer are the most popular beverages with customers who are ordering alcohol from restaurant partners. In AB, BC, and ON, beer is the clear winner, accounting for more than 69 per cent of alcohol items ordered. Out of those same provinces, BC shows an affinity for wine, placing 15 per cent more wine orders than customers in ON. Most interestingly—Quebec was split right down the middle, exactly tying for the number of beer and wine orders placed across the province.

Understanding that many restaurants are critical of the fees charged by food delivery platforms, support is critical to the food industry. “When the second wave of COVID restrictions hit in late 2020, we immediately re-introduced our support package for local, independent restaurants in affected areas of the country where dining rooms were required to close,” says Fatouros-Richardson. “When taking into account the 25 per cent commission rebate we have implemented in affected regions of the country as part of that package, all local, independent restaurant partners on the SkipTheDishes platform are paying less than 20 per cent in commission while their dining rooms are closed, which is lower than the commission caps put in place by some provinces. In addition to the 25 per cent commission rebate, we’re offering new restaurants joining the network during lockdown periods 0 per cetn commission for 30 days, and a 10 per cent commission rate to any restaurant looking to utilize staff to facilitate their own delivery.”

To optimize delivery menus, SkipTheDishes recommends restaurants are strategic with how they list alcohol items on menus. “We’ve seen that the menu location and overall awareness of alcohol on restaurant menus can lead to customers adding alcohol to a food order, which leads us to believe it is more of an impulse decision than a planned decision to come onto the platform to order drinks with their meal,” says Fatouros-Richardson. “To increase awareness of those products and tap into those higher chequee sizes, our teams can work with our partners on not only how to best strategically place their products, but how to recommend wines and beers with different food items, and even to suggest specific recommendations based on user preferences, just as they would if the customer was dining-in. It’s similar to including menu images of food—the presentation and placement directly influences the likelihood of ordering.”

Seeing even more modernization in alcohol legislation is something that both Smart Serve and SkipTheDishes are in support of. “We certainly encourage restaurants and bars to continue to lobby for changes through associations like Restaurants Canada,” says Anderson. “The ACGO (Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario) has been developing a new product called the LLCA (Liquor License and Control Act) which is the new vision for alcohol and delivery which hopefully will be approved by the government in the next six months, addressing a lot of the legislation that hasn’t been changed in an awfully long time. It’s important that we see our restaurant community become vibrant again because it’s a really important part of our economy.”



Onyx is a unique new expression of Crystal Head Vodka, crafted from premium Blue Weber Agave and sourced from a single farm in Mexico.

The bottle is a celebration of the powerful warrior crystal, Onyx. Sharing its powers of intuition, focus, positivity and protection to those who keep it close. Like all Crystal Head expressions, Onyx is blended with the purest water from Newfoundland, Canada, giving the final product a clean, semi-sweet finish. Staying true to Crystal Head values, Onyx does not contain any oils, sugars or additives. Onyx offers subtle hints of agave, citrus, green grass and white pepper.

Pricing: CAD$69.95 (pricing may vary)
Available across Canada

For more information about Crystal Head Vodka, visit crystalheadvodka.com or contact us at info@crystalheadvodka.com

Red Bull® Zero is a refreshing new zero-sugar drink

Red Bull® Zero gives consumers another zero-sugar product option, with a different taste than Red Bull® Sugarfree. Restaurants can order 250ml signature size portions, ideal for minimal contact serving, delivery and restaurant pick-up. Red Bull® Energy Drink is available in over 170 countries worldwide and more than 6.7 billion cans of Red Bull® were consumed last year. A signature size 250ml can of Red Bull® Energy Drink contains 80mg of caffeine, about the same as a home-brewed cup of coffee.

Pricing: $4.50-$5.00 depending on location
For more information, visit redbull.com





Discovering Quebec Spirits

Gin, brandy, vodka, liqueur, and now even whisky: the spirits market in Quebec has completely exploded since 2015. Quebec is the largest gin market in Canada and has more than 50 craft distilleries spread over the whole province.

The distillers in Quebec combine passion and expertise to define the identity of their products, using local aromatics to create fine spirits with the flavours of different regions of Quebec. They set themselves apart from the competition by offering consumers products with unique tastes. The launch of Acérum, a product representing Quebec's identity, gives a whole new dimension and a new breath to maple products. Quebec distillers have showcased their know-how and their inventiveness to the entire world with the creation of this unique spirit.

Whether you are a novice or a connoisseur of spirits, you will discover and taste remarkable products from a wide range of spirits created and produced in Quebec!

For more information, go to: QCspirits.com/RCshow



Stella Artois is a premium European lager brewed with the finest Saaz hops.

With its wonderful floral aroma, well-balanced malt sweetness, crisp hop bitterness, and a soft dry finish, Stella Artois is the perfect beer to savour with food and friends. The mild malt and light hops of Stella Artois accentuate the richness of dishes such as lamb, lobster, and shellfish. Now more than ever we need to unite and support our local restaurants and bars. Stella Artois established Rally For Restaurants, an initiative to provide local restaurants/pubs and bars with immediate financial help. **Find out more at rallyforrestaurants.ca/.**

Pricing: Pricing varies by province and retailer
Availability: National; 58.6L and 20.0L kegs, 473ml and 355ml can, 330ml bottle
For more information head over to stellaartois.com

Søbrii 0-Gin is a Canada's best non-alcoholic spirit distilled from classic gin botanicals including Juniper, Coriander, All Spice and Star Anise with the addition of Canadian Ginseng.



It provides adults with alternative but familiar non-alcoholic drinks without compromising the cocktail taste or experience. Best of all Søbrii has 0 sugar, 0 calories, no artificial flavours, no sweeteners and is vegan. Søbrii 0-Gin is distilled in small batches in Stratford, Ontario. Bartenders can simply substitute Søbrii for gin in most cocktail recipes or it can be used in custom, unique creations. We support local!

Pricing: $35.00 750ml, $17.00 200ml (SRP)
Available at: Sobrii.ca, Well.ca, Cocktail Emporium, Pusateri's, Harvest.ca, The Mercantile, Bradshaw's, Jill's Table, Yatta Brands, Vincenzo's, Junction 56 Distillery, Unboxed Market, Better Rhodes (US), Nickle 9 Distillery, Chef's Paradise, Yonge St. Winery, Farm Organica, Richmond Station, Founders Bar, Bar Chef & Bar Sazerac.



Hornitos Reposado

A Shot Worth Taking. Made with 100% Agave, Hornitos Reposado Tequila rests for two months in large oak vats to ensure minimal contact with the wood, giving it a livelier agave taste than most wood-treated tequilas. Benefitting from this craftsmanship, this tequila takes on a smooth, mature character that delivers the purest agave flavour possible from barrel-treated tequila. Fine agave, herbal and green apple aroma notes tantalize with a balanced and slightly woody taste, finishing medium- to full-bodied.

Pricing: CAD$38.95 (SRP, ON, prices may vary)
Availability: Available Nationally



Legend has it in 1796, Master Distiller Basil Hayden Sr., broke 'the rules' and created a masterpiece.

A Maryland transplant unafraid to stand out amidst the residing establishment, Basil conjectured that the spicy flavor of rye would be a striking complement to the sweet smoothness of corn in his distillery's standard bourbon. And much to the chagrin of the traditionalist set, Basil was right. His recipe was a masterpiece, resulting in a unique, singular small batch bourbon whiskey that was blessed with rich hints of peppermint, notes of pepper, slight citrus overtones, and a spicy, warming finish.

Pricing: CAD$54.95 (Prices may vary)
Availability: All of Canada
For more info, reach out to Beam Suntory Canada Inc. at 416-849-7300 or visit beamsuntory.com

Nutt Bar Peanut Butter Whiskey

Four-year aged Canadian whiskey blended with natural roasted peanut flavour creates a rich and luxurious flavour. Try it on its own over ice, or mix with Créme de Cacao to create a Peanut Butter Cup cocktail. For a dessert treat, pour gently over vanilla ice cream, topped with a touch of cracked pepper. 35% abv / non-allergenic

Pricing: CAD$34.95 for 750ml
For more information visit h2craftspirits.com





Fever-Tree's premium mixers are the world's and Canada's #1 premium mixer brand

"Voted #1 Selling and #1 Top-Trending Tonic for 7 Consecutive Years," by Drinks International and the World's Best Bars, our co-founders Charles and Tim both spotted that premium spirits were growing quickly, fuelled by consumers' increasing awareness of the provenance of what they ate and drank; however, this growing interest had seemed to neglect mixers. It struck them both as extraordinary that people were paying a good deal of money for a high-quality spirit, so a similarly premium mixer was needed. Our range of high-quality mixers and total commitment to using the highest quality ingredients and flavours, means that bars and restaurants can now deliver great mixed drinks, simply, quickly, and consistently. The use of premium spirits plus premium mixer justifies the on-premises to charge a premium price-point that consumers are willing to pay for, driving all-important value and margin back into the category.

Pricing: Available on Request **Availability:** National
For more information, reach out to: TFB & Associates Ltd. at orderdesk@tfb.ca or call 905-940-0889



Spiritliss Hibiscus Gin & Tonic

The first of its kind, this innovative new non-alcoholic Hibiscus Gin & Tonic combines the botanical flavours of gin, the sweet aromatics of hibiscus, and the bittersweet notes of tonic in a ready-to-drink sparkling cocktail. No sugars, low calorie/carb, and Keto friendly. Pour over ice in a highball glass, and garnish with fresh cucumber or a sprig of rosemary.

Pricing: CAD$2.50 for 355ml can
Available now through h2craftspirits.com and at the LCBO (starting in February)

Genuine Tea

Born in the tea fields of Taiwan and raised on the streets of Toronto, Genuine Tea is at the crossroads of tradition and innovation and is a proud Leader in the Third Wave Tea movement.

Voted Best Tea in Toronto in 2017, 2018 and 2020, Genuine Tea is well known for its outstanding food service programs for cafes and restaurants. These programs include all the tools and training needed for an elevated tea program that is both consistent and highly profitable.

Genuine Tea offers award-winning farmer direct teas, biodegradable tea bags, ceremonial grade Kato Matcha, Hand-Crafted Sparkling Iced Tea and herbal blends as well as microground teas for lattes.

Pricing: starts at $0.18 per cup.
Genuine Tea offers free next day delivery and curbside pickup.

For inquiries please email:
Genuine Dave - Chief Steeping Officer - dave@genuinetea.ca

To access Wholesale pricing or find out more, check out:
genuinetea.ca | social media @genuinetea
orders@genuinetea.ca



Get insights into the state of the Bar & Beverage industry at the Beer, Wine, and Spirits CEO Panels happening from March 1 - 3, 2020 at RC Show 2021 ONLINE LIVE. Learn more at rcshow.com.

INCLUSIVE KITCHEN:

TACKLING SYSTEMIC RACISM



MOHAMAD FAKIH



MICHELLE CAINE



PHILMAN GEORGE



TREVOR LUI



STEPHANIE LUI-VALENTIM



ELLEN ASIEDU



JOSEPH SHAWANA



HEMANT BHAGWANI



NUNU RAMPEN

MENU Mag gathered a group of chef, educators and restauranteurs to give us their opinion on the positive steps the industry can take to foster a more inclusive and anti-racist work environment. Understanding how to break down barriers and biases to create real change in kitchens and operations is the start to becoming a workplace that is welcoming and open to all.

MM What's the first action an employer should take to ensure that they are fostering an anti-racist work environment?

Hiring from different backgrounds, religions and cultures is key and then to also celebrate their success and culture inside our walls, as we become what we celebrate. When people befriend each other, they also start respecting each other which ultimately leads to respecting each other's cultures.

Further on hiring: concentrate on newcomers and the BIPOC community, including refugees, and install them in all departments of the organization, creating a corporate culture where people welcome these new employees and take pride not only in integrating them into the company but possibly helping them adjust to a new country.

This culture of cooperation not only helps the newly hired, but also translates across the entire culture of the company and could be transferred all the way to the families of your executives and employees who tell their stories from work at dining tables hoping it develops respect both at home and in the workplace.

Also need to create an environment where employees can confidentially share their concerns and feedback without fear of reprisals from their co-workers or management. Impose a zero-tolerance attitude for employees (and guests) who violate your organization's anti-racist policy.

- Mohamad Fakih, CEO & President, Paramount Fine Foods

Work with your teams: owners, leadership, supervisors, front line. This is the time for committees, a task force and working groups. Talking about race and racism has recently hit the top of many business priorities; however, not everyone is prepared or comfortable. Don't force it; if your organization is not ready or armed to have these conversations, be careful. The wrong approach can lead to more damage than good including resentment and dissent.

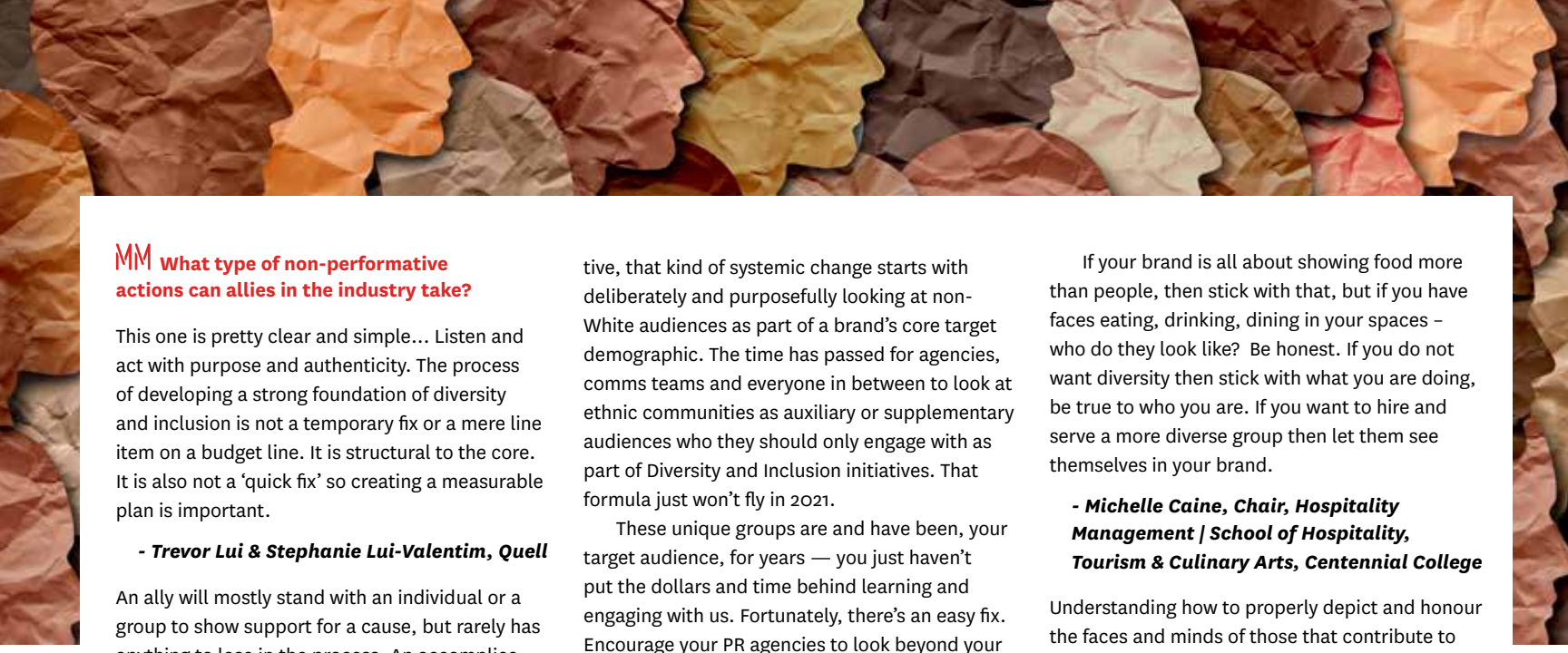
Bring in a consultant, HR leader, diversity expert, or a senior leader in the organization who can broach the topic.

Set realistic goals. An anti-racist work environment is broad and ambitious. Perhaps goals that include more open dialogue. Encouraging behaviour that supports respect and positive employee relations that involve race relations.

- Michelle Caine, Chair, Hospitality Management | School of Hospitality, Tourism & Culinary Arts, Centennial College

Ensure that the entire leadership team goes through anti-oppression training from a trusted source. Ideally, this is done in a group setting and is facilitated by a trainer who has experience setting the stage for uncomfortable conversations. Large organizations must ensure the board of directors goes through the same training.

- Chef Philman George, Corporate Chef, High Liner Foods



What type of non-performative actions can allies in the industry take?

This one is pretty clear and simple… Listen and act with purpose and authenticity. The process of developing a strong foundation of diversity and inclusion is not a temporary fix or a mere line item on a budget line. It is structural to the core. It is also not a 'quick fix' so creating a measurable plan is important.

- Trevor Lui & Stephanie Lui-Valentim, Quell

An ally will mostly stand with an individual or a group to show support for a cause, but rarely has anything to lose in the process. An accomplice will focus more on dismantling the structures that oppress that individual or group and will use their privilege and power to challenge the status quo, often risking their physical and social well-being in the process. We need more accomplices!

- Chef Philman George, Corporate Chef, High Liner Foods

Actively listen to Black people. Seek to understand and consider how you might be a part of the problem, consciously and unconsciously and the ways you can be part of the solution. Engage with them, follow and learn from leaders in the community who are talking about actionable ways that the hospitality industry needs to change in order to effect real change. Maybe that's about amplifying Black voices, hiring Black influencers for campaigns, or recommending that the Black people and people of colour in your organization be put forward for promotions where their opinions will truly count. I'd also strongly suggest that allies do as much research as they can on their own. Asking Black people, and especially Black women+, to take on the labour of explaining systemic racism to you for free is not the appropriate way to move forward when there are so many other avenues of research.

- Ellen Asiedu, CEO, BLACK FOODIE

Where does the food media need to place more energy/effort/give more attention?

The food media industry is still very homogenous from the top down, so those who have the power to change those structures should take the first steps to do so. From a marketing perspective, that kind of systemic change starts with deliberately and purposefully looking at non-White audiences as part of a brand's core target demographic. The time has passed for agencies, comms teams and everyone in between to look at ethnic communities as auxiliary or supplementary audiences who they should only engage with as part of Diversity and Inclusion initiatives. That formula just won't fly in 2021.

These unique groups are and have been, your target audience, for years — you just haven't put the dollars and time behind learning and engaging with us. Fortunately, there's an easy fix. Encourage your PR agencies to look beyond your usual White influencers and chefs to promote products and services. Collaborate with brands like BLACK FOODIE to create culturally relevant content and do market research in and on diverse communities to learn how users from all walks of life are interacting with your products. There are millions of dollars to be made by listening to, featuring, and spotlighting diverse stories - don't miss out because you're afraid to do something different.

- Ellen Asiedu, CEO, BLACK FOODIE

This is a great question and one that should be asked more (this is the first for me). I strongly feel that the media should talk to the chefs, foragers, distributors, educators plus so many more and really talk to them to get to know them and their story. There is a huge gap between where the food comes from and how it becomes something amazing on your plate. Each chef that I have worked with in the past 25 plus years and has a story of why they became a chef.

Most of them was to honour their heritage and preserve their history through food. As for me I wish there was more effort in telling the origins of everyone's cuisine, as with indigenous foods there are many stories tied into each plate.

- Chef Joseph Shawana, Chair of Indigenous Culinary of Associated Nations and a Professor at Centennial College

Representation. I don't appreciate the word 'tokenism' but sometimes we need to see at least one face that looks like us. Black, brown with different shades and tones.

What does your social media say about your guests and staff? Who are your suppliers, what do their social media and online presence look like?

If your brand is all about showing food more than people, then stick with that, but if you have faces eating, drinking, dining in your spaces – who do they look like? Be honest. If you do not want diversity then stick with what you are doing, be true to who you are. If you want to hire and serve a more diverse group then let them see themselves in your brand.

- Michelle Caine, Chair, Hospitality Management | School of Hospitality, Tourism & Culinary Arts, Centennial College

Understanding how to properly depict and honour the faces and minds of those that contribute to our community. This includes the food we cook and how that is shared with the public. There is still a void on how food, technique, and creation taken from traditionally ethnic sources are presented as such. There is a gap in how food is sold and depicted compared to the cross-section of what our population looks like.

- Trevor Lui & Stephanie Lui-Valentim, Quell

How can food be used as a form of resistance?

Food is very closely linked to an individual's identity. Food can be both personal and political. Food has to battle preconceived notions about smell, taste, pungency, greasiness. Food language is important and has to be accurate. There is a tendency to dismiss a place that has been opened by a person of a specific ethnicity. Yet, the same food is accepted if a mainstream restaurant offers it on the menu. Again, if an ethnic chef offers standard fare like pasta or pizza, the automatic assumption is that those offerings won't be good because, "What does he know of pasta/pizza?" There are multiple layers of food "blinders."

I think it is human nature for white people to pigeonhole BIPOC. There seems to be a lot of resentment out there but it is important that people understand the sensibilities around food and culture, because they are vital parts of a person's identity. It is a very uncomfortable topic, but it is the elephant in the room that must be acknowledged and addressed.

- Hemant Bhagwani, Chef, sommelier, restaurateur, cookbook author, and entrepreneur

Food is not a form of resistance – at least not in the way we conventionally think about overcoming oppression. It is much more subtle and ultimately more powerful. It is a way of creating common bonds and breaking down the stereotypes that divide us. Food can be a great uniter – it often takes the good parts of different cultures and puts them together in new forms and it does it democratically.

Take the Banh Mi: you take French mayonnaise and baguette, American K rations, and Vietnamese pickles and approach and you create something way better. The Vietnamese took from the colonizers and made the best of it.

When I came to Canada a lot of people saw the wave of Vietnamese as an invasion. I think bowls of good Pho have played a significant role in changing that perception.

Food is a path into appreciating another culture and different people.To me one of the fundamental causes of racism is a lack of curiosity – hopefully, great cooking can change that.

- Nunu Rampen, Chef and Owner of Nunu Ethiopian Fusion

Every country, every culture, every religion, every environment has something special around food. When people celebrate, they do so around food. Breaking bread with others is about sharing not just food, but time, conversation, and ideas as well.

I also believe food is used as a form of resistance, as a way to help and support one another. For example, with our most recent Paramount campaign, we sent meals to those caregivers and the frontline workers in long term care homes. Our goal is to help them feel supported and help them shoulder the strains they are facing with every day of this pandemic.

I also believe that food can also potentially serve as the (tasty) medium and connection between opposing views and individuals who otherwise might never connect.

- Mohamad Fakih, CEO & President, Paramount Fine Foods

Join us for one of RC Show 2021's most important panels ***'Inclusive Kitchen: Tackling Systemic Racism'*** featuring:

Eden Hagos, Founder, BLACK FOODIE
Philman George, Corporate Chef, High Liner Foods
Joseph Shawna, Chair of Indigenous Culinary of Associated Nations & Professor at Centennial College

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CARE IS THE CURRENCY OF OUR TIMES

LEADING YOUR TEAM AND - YOURSELF - THROUGH TURBULENT WATERS.

Post-pandemic, one of the most important employer brand differentiators will be the actions taken by leadership during a time scarred by layoffs and closures.

Facing the urgent necessity of labour reductions is a devastating, gut-churning moment many operators have had to meet head on over the past year. In some ways, the universal context of the pandemic may have helped with these conversations, if only because every employee would have had some awareness of the heightened probability of layoffs, and some may even have taken some solace in knowing their job was a casualty beyond anyone's control.

Context aside, no owner or manager is automatically off the hook. The quality of the communication of 'bad news', and what happens in the hours, days and months afterwards are important and often overlooked leadership opportunities. Forward-thinking operators and foodservice companies are seeing beyond the challenges of the current workforce landscape and laying the groundwork for a bigger, better return to normal.

The restaurant industry is interconnected. People talk. Leaders should assume that word of company strength or vulnerability is circulating freely as employee social groups both within and beyond their company connect to share their concerns and career prospects. Taking the time to care for and nurture your workplace culture will help ease the return to normal and restore companies to a place of health and profitability.

Employees are brand avatars and ambassadors. How you treat them matters now more than ever. Peer-to-peer and peer-to-consumer stories of employer thoughtfulness and consideration will help move strong foodservice brands forward. We are in a unique cultural time, where a company's emotional intelligence and compassion - kindness - are more connected to the bottom line than ever.

But what about the leaders themselves? Even when the cause is beyond their control, it's emotionally difficult for leaders and managers to carry out dismissals. The weight of feeling you've failed or let someone down takes a heavy toll. Taking the time to communicate and support both affected and unaffected staff in a clear, compassionate and thoughtful way – doing your best - can help mitigate the emotional cocktail that comes with causing another person pain or stress. Don't avoid difficult conversations, embrace the opportunity to connect meaningfully and sincerely with staff, treating them as you would like to be treated. This is the currency of the times.

EFFECTIVE SUPPORT FOR STAFF AFFECTED BY LAYOFFS, DISMISSALS OR BUSINESS CLOSURES:

1. **Transparency.** As much as it's human nature to want to take the edge off a tough conversation and 'make everything okay', being open and honest about the likely duration or permanence of a layoff is crucial. When employment is suspended or stops, employees need and deserve to make often immediate career and life changes. Unless an employee is being terminated for cause, your first duty is to them.
2. **Preparation.** When an employee is dismissed, they should have everything they need to move on. Make sure any outstanding payments, ROE and other employment paperwork is ready for them in the moment. It is not fair to expect employees to wait or follow up after dismissal.
3. **Listening.** Some people accept bad news in silence, leaving the conversation (and workspace) as quickly as possible, while others need and appreciate the time to ask questions, seek additional information or emote. Often, an employee will not assign 'blame' for dismissal on the messenger and may want to engage in a longer conversation as they work through the change in their situation.
4. **Support.** Immediately after a dismissal conversation, ask if you can call a taxi to help the affected employee home. Each person is unique and will react differently. Some may be extremely upset. Recognize that, in the moment, routine activities like driving home may not be safe and provide safe transportation if possible. Give dismissed employees a little time, then reach out to ask how they're doing and if you/the company can help in any way. If the dismissal is a temporary layoff, be sure to keep the lines of communication open, both ways. Don't assume employees who have been laid off do not want to hear from you, whether or not you are in a position to offer news on a return to work.
5. **Connection.** Too often, in an effort to get through a tough conversation, we make promises we do not keep. Promising to keep in touch with employees during layoffs and terminations and not following through may suggest that the employee was not actually valued by the company. For some, this can damage self esteem during a vulnerable time, particularly if a long period of unemployment follows. If you say you'll stay in touch, do it. If you hope to restore employee roles when the business recovers, ask employees for their personal email address and send regular updates or simply check in to see how they're doing.



STRENGTH IN OPEN COMMUNICATION: THE CHARCOAL GROUP

It's surprisingly rare for a CEO to reach out to all customers, staff and stakeholders to air their thoughts and plans during tough times. That is precisely what Charcoal Group CEO Jody Palubiski did at the beginning of the pandemic. The Charcoal Group is the parent company of popular Ontario restaurants Beertown, Sociable, The Bauer Kitchen, Wildcraft, Moose Winooski's and Charcoal Steakhouse. He published an open, publicly-available letter on their corporate website, A Letter from our CEO. The letter does not mince words about the severity of the times, but quickly pivots to reinforce the company's confidence and resolve by announcing their Return to Operations Playbook. The Playbook is a strong statement of faith in the strength and value of hospitality built on the efforts of many and includes each of those people in the language that announces it. This is strong leadership, especially when the chips are down.

On top of that, Palubiski and his team made the tough business decision to close voluntarily to keep their team and community safe. "In the beginning, during the shutdown our focus was on taking care of the team and each other. We worked hard to get ROEs out within 24 hours, along with information for employees to help them access available supports, services and grants. Along the way, we have provided budgeting, physical fitness and mental health resources in addition to weekly team fan-out phone calls. As time went on, our management team wondered whether or not staff wanted to hear from them so frequently, but staff reported actually missing out on the phone calls.

Managers even offered to meet with employees who self-identified as struggling or isolated, with some meeting staff in shuttered restaurant locations, socially distanced. “We really doubled down on the importance of taking care of our people, asking, “How do we serve each other better?” So, we started CG Family Dinners, where we all cooked the same meal together on a Friday night, sharing on social media. Recently, we invited three comedians to a Zoom stand-up show for the team on a Monday night. All that aside, I’d say the most important part is the weekly phone calls.”

Recently, the Charcoal Group engaged Counselling Collective to offer their management team accredited training on how to recognize any signs of emotional or mental troubles among furloughed staff and each other. Managers reported recognizing some of the symptons and experiences within themselves, which could be as simple as how they’re practising self care – sleeping, eating, exercising, meditating, etc. “The first shutdown everyone felt like we were all in this together. The second time around, those in the hospitality industry feel like they’ve been put out in a lifeboat all on their own,” says Palubiski, “But we’re here for each other.”

Palubiski is optimistic about Charcoal Group’s place within a new normal. “They say that difficult times are character building. I would say that difficult times are character revealing. The pandemic has put a lens on it. We know who we are and what we want to continue to be as employers, coworkers and colleagues as we move forward. We are a social society. I’m very confident that if we do all of the right things and take care of each other, when the doors open, we will flourish.”

Nivera Wallani, President & General Manager at KFC Canada at Yum! Brands

“The employee experience continues to be a key focus area for businesses. Studies show that employees with a positive work experience are 32 per cent more likely to perform at a high level and 52% less likely to leave. Critically, they are also 73 per cent more likely to go above and beyond in their roles and devote the kind of discretionary effort that leads to business success (Globoforce and IBM, survey).

Employee well-being also strongly impacts how they will perceive their work. That’s why at KFC we put a high priority on our employee value proposition. Studies show that companies who invest in wellness programming report a 40 per cent drop in absenteeism. (Benefits Canada). Additionally, more than 60 percent of employers said well-designed wellness programs have a return on investment of $1.50 to $3 per dollar spent over a two-to nine-year timeframe. (The work Comp Experts, Survey)”

Learn more at RC SHOW 2021: CEO Panel: Fast Casual Restaurants Tuesday, March 2, 11:00AM-12:00PM Speaker Stage

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PIONEERING THROUGH THE PANDEMIC:

BIG IDEAS & FRONTLINE INSIGHTS TO HELP OPERATORS DIVERSIFY AND THRIVE

As we assess the restaurant and foodservice business nearly a year into what has surely been the most challenging to the sector on record, we can agree that what was initially thought to be a pivot is, more accurately, a zeitgeist. What is still unknown is what new ideas service delivery methods, will persevere.

Early on, most restaurants obediently moved into the takeout and delivery space and many found it tough to compete with the high competition and low margins. Summer and patio season offered some respite for operators with the facilities to make hay while the sun shone, but the seasons were beyond the reach of anyone's control. Within this timeline though, some smart operators moved to the head of sector innovation, taking risks and pioneering new ideas.

CHEF KEN YAU: FROM K.DINNERS TO K.DUMPS

Toronto's Chef Ken Yau distinctly remembers his thoughts in mid-April 2020 as he prepped for his extremely popular k.Dinners series. He was receiving guest inquiries to confirm whether he was still open. Then, when Prime Minister Justin Trudeau made his now-famous speech, Chef Ken was admittedly "freaked out". "He [Trudeau] looked into the camera and was just… very serious. So, I called my guests and cancelled. I had bought all of the food, so I was really bummed out. I cancelled the next week's dinner as well, and I only really made money once a week, so if I didn't do a dinner, I'd lose a whole week of income."

Like many, Yau was optimistic. But then, Toronto went into lockdown. His dinners were a popular, word-of-mouth series of events that were booked three to four months in advance. He called every guest and cancelled, but couldn't rebook as the future was uncertain. "It took me awhile to figure out what to do next. People think chefs are very innovative and creative, but we were creating out of desperation."

As the days and weeks ticked by, Chef Ken – like many of us – was drawn to comfort food. In his case, it was dumplings. "I was thinking a lot about comfort food and wanted to find a way to make people laugh. Dumplings freeze really well, and I thought I'd call it something ridiculous – 'Dumps'.

It's insane that you can go from serving 12-course meals to sending out frozen dumplings. It makes me really happy. I mean, dumplings are so versatile – you can freeze them, then throw them in water and it doesn't matter if they're fresh or not. I've never met a person who doesn't like a dumpling."

Chef Ken prioritized the safety of his family, choosing to work alone in Toronto's Strange Love coffee shop's kitchen. By January 2021, he had made 45,000+ dumplings, entirely by hand, without even a food processor, earning a case of carpal tunnel in the process. "I made the dumplings, I froze them and I delivered them myself."

The Dumps (known officially as 'k.Dumps' after Yao's k.dinners series) are thicker and chewier than a typical dumpling with familiar flavours presented in unconventional ways. While pork and chive is by far the most popular combination, creative and delicious options like Mapo Tofu Vegan Dumps, Dan Dan Chicken Dumps, Red Thai Curry Wontons or Kimcheese Fishcake Wontons are in high demand. "I also make Mama Yau's Big Zongzi, a big dumpling wrapped in bamboo leaf. It's one of those things that's very labour intensive and a lot of people don't know how to make. My mom and grandmother made them every year, and that's how I learned. It brings people a lot of joy. They're a platform for sharing my culture, so I'll sometimes add one to orders to encourage customers to try something new."

An average k.Dumps order is about $50 for 50-60 hand-made and hand-rolled Dumps, often with the pungent and fierce Yau Sauce "that rules over all sauces" or the elegant Yuzu Ponzu Sauce, inspired by a traditional Japanese ponzu.

After working seven days a week for months, k.Dumps is doing well enough to hire people, and Yau has begun to build a small, part-time team. "I wanted to keep the workspace as safe as possible and minimize risk and make sure I could work and still spend time safely with my family. Now that I've hired, I can't go home to visit for a while."

Chef Ken acknowledges that he has and continues to struggle with using machines to help automate aspects of his business. While the cost savings, speed and consistency are obvious advantages, keeping things "handmade and differentiated" is important to him, having only recently caved and started using a dough mixer. The prep and filling are still done by hand.

Yau's fast pivot to frozen dumplings was born of a moment, but as the business continues to grow, it's clear that it has the potential to mature and

thrive and he admits it's time to think about undertaking scalable, permanent ventures and moving from web-only customer orders delivered once a week on Sunday to retail distribution. Toronto's chef-run fish shop Hooked and ethical butcher Stock-in-Trade now carry the Dumps, packaged simply in packages of 12 or 15 and labelled by hand. With a newly-hired, small team, he plans to reach out to other local shops interested in carrying his Dumps.

"I know I take it to an extreme, but I test everything in every way possible. I take the same approach I would for a 12-course meal. If it was blue skies, I'd try my best to do both – k.Dumps and k.Dinners. Dumplings are the perfect comfort and literally came out of a joke, but dinners are where I shine. I love watching and living off the energy of people as they enjoy my food."

Post-COVID, Yau believes operators will reconsider their spaces, diversifying and creating new dining experiences. "It's a great opportunity for people to be creative. I really, really miss the dinners. In terms of creativity, I can do anything I want. I'm able to experiment every single week. I do think there will be a huge move to smaller shops – you really don't need a whole dining room. There may be an extreme pivot to easy, comfort food now, but eventually it will plateau. Everybody eventually needs the experience – that special place. People always need that. It can't all be takeout."



ALO FOOD GROUP: PACKAGING UP FINE DINING

Alo Food Group's flagship Alo restaurant is legendary. When the pandemic arrived, the beloved French fine-dining location was among the first to embrace and launch a $65 prix fixe takeout program, Alo at Home, in April 2020. And, it's been a notable success. "We sell out almost every week. We're doing 150 covers each night. Over the holidays, we were open seven days per week. It saved the restaurant." says Chef and owner, Patrick Kriss.

In fact, three Alo Food Group brands – Alo, Alobar and the casual concept restaurant Aloette – have seen great results from takeout, and have preserved the experience and delivered to their customers' expectations for each restaurant's brand. Alo and Alobar offer multi-course meals, with Alobar also offering a small a la carte menu through Uber Eats. Aloette is open for both takeout and delivery. In fact, the takeout model has been so successful, Alo Food Group is opening a new Aloette location in 2021 to complement the original restaurant's Spadina Avenue location. Yet, Kriss insists they're not thinking too far ahead. "Our mindset is that we're going to be doing takeout for the rest of our lives. Restaurants will eventually return to what they were, but now we see there's another revenue stream—Mother's Day, Valentine's Day, Superbowl… It gets us out of the restaurant business and into another clientele. We can service more people. Takeout has been so great. We believe in it."

The company's strategy is to "get into people's routines", developing takeout experiences that work as hard as in-room dining to make people feel special, making sure they never have a reason to go anywhere else. "We're doing things we never thought we'd do. We're trying to stay ahead and plan out our delivery concepts, figuring out which menus work, and which don't. People are still looking for experiences and something to do Saturday night. We give it to them."

The strength of their brand portfolio and word of mouth have minimized the need for heavy marketing, other than focused investment and promotion on Uber Eats. Their customer loyalty has even seen one customer order every week since the takeout program launched, other than during barbecue season. "When you open a restaurant," says Kriss, "you try and open the perfect environment for your customer, and this mentality carries through to our takeout offering. We were very excited to see that Valentine's Day was on a Sunday - three days!"

Kriss and John Bunner, Alo Food Group Operations Director, note that the new addition of cocktail delivery has been a real boost to their offering and revenues. Now, they're selling private-label wine and working on offering their signature Alo bread in grocery stores. They have even taken on some industry consulting work. Kriss' advice for fellow restaurateurs is simple and backed up by his own experiences, "We're in a different time where you can try as many things as possible. Get it out there, listen to your staff and your customers and get it right live. John kept a little diary of all the challenges we'd endured at the beginning of the pandemic—it was like a 50-thing list, but now we know what we need to focus on. When everything stops for a bit, you're able to stop and take a look. I'd like to go back to our restaurant lives and keep growing this."

KFC CANADA: EXPLORING AND EXTENDING YOUR BRAND

While much of the innovation conversation has focused on how to continue to deliver service and experience during rolling shut-downs, strong brands like KFC may offer compelling insight on new avenues for revenue diversification with strong marketing potential. The KFC brand was built on the Colonel's 11 herbs and spices, but the brand has organically grown to occupy a distinct position in the cultural vernacular, largely propelled by its customers, but ingeniously embraced by the KFC brand team.

"KFC is a brand known for our world's best tasting fried chicken but we have a rich history and meaning that goes beyond our food – from iconic bucket, to the story of our secret recipe, to our Colonel himself." shares Nivera Wallani, President and General Manager for KFC Canada at Yum! Brands. "The Colonel was the ultimate showman and believed in the power of connecting with consumers and culture in new and distinctive ways – to entertain, to nurture, to build purpose. Today, we continue that tradition through bold marketing activations and bold innovation grounded in who we are as a brand but dynamic enough to push outside those boundaries and show up in unexpected and attention-grabbing ways."

Within KFC's brand transcendence and brand line extension to include smart and culturally viable retail products is a lesson for operators

seeking new ways to stay connected with their customers and grow revenue. Products like the *KFC 11 Herbs and Spices Firelog* may seem a little risky, but the courage to produce branded goods comes from a deep understanding of KFC's connection with customers. "Those who love fried chicken – really love fried chicken." says Nivera, "And there's a lot of nostalgia and love for our brand that goes beyond just our world-famous taste. Our sole intent is to embrace that love for our brand and then ensure KFC shows up at the heart of culture in an entertaining, unexpected way that lives up to the spirit of the Colonel and our brand. The *KFC 11 Herbs and Spices Firelog* became an instant global viral sensation and has sold out each year since its inception in the US in 2018. Although the KFC Firelog is a recent example, branded retail is not new for KFC Canada. In 2019, we launched Colonel & Co. (colonelandco.ca) where Canadian fans can celebrate their love of fried chicken with KFC exclusive merchandise."

Before trialling branded retail, the KFC team created strategic partnerships with suppliers and retail partners, carefully selecting those that are aligned to their values and outcomes. Determining production volumes is a delicate balance between insights, testing and data; however, for smaller, localized brands, it's smart to start with small volumes to learn what products connect and resonate with customers. For some, it may be specialty, house-made food products like sauces, breads or jams. For others, it may be t-shirts and other apparel, candles or cookbooks. Ultimately, it's about figuring out which elements of your unique offering make you special and amplifying that rare element. It could be an aspect of your food, your environment or your culture – it's about knowing what differentiates your business.

Nivera's sage advice for operators looking to diversify and get into new opportunities is to keep your strategy authentic to your brand. "Lean into the iconic elements of your brand. Once you've grounded yourselves in who you are as a brand, look for new ways to show up and express that. Customer expectations are constantly shifting. Anybody can be current – you simply insert your brand into trends as they happen. To be relevant, you need to truly know who you are as a brand and bring that to life in a way that emotionally connects with your consumer. We're very fortunate that our brand has several distinctive, iconic brand assets including our founder, Colonel Sanders. There are very few brands that can say their logo was or is a real person. It's important for us to share his story, his values and what he stood for with the world because so much of his spirit still permeates throughout our business today."



Innovate Now:

Thoughts & Tips to guide your business evolution.



People are creatures of habit. Assume that even when restrictions are fully lifted, it will take time for a full return to restaurant dining. Don't wait.

This is the time to try new things. It's never been more okay to make mistakes. The shared pandemic experience has permeated every aspect of social living – everyone is figuring it out. A small, but significant silver lining is that customers are rooting for the people and brands they love, and they are more patient and forgiving.

People want good food. While internet recipe searches have obliterated records, there is a clear ennui with home-baked bread. Customers will return, but not necessarily through your front door.

Your brand can thrive beyond your menu. Great products are about stories and cultures that capture the hearts and minds of consumers. Build a culture around your brand and exploremerchandise, cookbooks and products to grow your revenue and reach.

Let opportunity redefine who you are. If you feel that takeout, mass production, marketing are beyond or beneath you, take a look around. The sector is redefining itself, shattering old ideas and assumptions, and new leaders are emerging to seize opportunity.

Embrace digital. Even before the pandemic, digital platforms and audience engagement were a crucial part of foodservice growth. Building a culinary brand for both personal and digital service is now a matter of survival.

Hear from **Patrick Kriss, Chef & Owner of Alo Food Group** on RC Show 2021's ***'Canada's independent leaders talk the fate of the independent restaurant'*** panel taking place **Sunday, Feb 28, 12:00PM-1:15PM on the Speaker Stage.**

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From the Ashes of a Pandemic… Opportunity for a Mental Health Revolution



Most who have worked in the hospitality industry will attest to its unique, compelling and, at times, utterly engrossing culture.

In many ways, it's not that different from working in theatre. Whether you work in fine dining or quick service, each shift is a performance, with a curated set, lines, cues from colleagues and high expectations from patrons. When the door closes behind the last guest, the players relax and share their stories and successes.

There is enormous—and too often unacknowledged—pressure on each team member to live up to the promise of delivering an unforgettable experience; to suspend their emotions and vulnerabilities for the sake of the 'show'. This routine is both a stimulant and a crutch, and, while there's always been talk about mental health and substance abuse in the industry,

the preservation of the 'glamour' has often been prioritized over thoughtful examination of foodservice culture and the strong business reasons to invest in healthier work environments.

While there's no minimizing the economic chaos caused by COVID-19, the upheaval brings an opportunity for real change and evolution. The pandemic has thrown accelerant on a work culture fire that's been smouldering for decades, illuminating fractures and gaps in the system for all to see. While mental health and wellness is by no means a new conversation, it's finally moving to the front of the line.

Hassel Aviles, Executive Director of the non-profit Not 9 to 5 organization, is cautiously optimistic. "It's a strange positive that the pandemic has actually surfaced some of the mental health issues that have always affected hospitality employees. The conversation has become more intense, but it is not new. What is new is an awareness and demand to reimagine and rebuild the industry in a different way. There's a lot of intolerance for things that were previously accepted as the norm."

The business case for committing to a

resilient, sustainable workplace culture that prioritizes all aspects of employee wellbeing is worth examining. In 2019, the Deloitte Canada

Insights report, *The ROI in workplace mental health programs: Good for people, good for business*, found that investing in employee mental health and wellness accelerated profitability, delivering a median annual ROI more than double for every dollar spent by companies with significant mental health programs in place after three years. To underscore the power and promise of the business case derived from the findings of its report, in November 2019 Deloitte Canada increased its own annual employee mental health benefits from $300 to $4,000 per person.

While the hospitality sector continues to struggle under unprecedented pressure, Aviles counsels a bias to immediate action, encouraging operators and leaders to start prioritizing employee mental health and well-being right now, whether their business is open or temporarily closed. "Increased isolation is very dangerous and is now being enforced. Social distancing should be renamed 'physical distancing' because we need social connections now more than ever—it's a fundamental part of feeling human and mentally well. Businesses are closing routinely now, deepening a shared sense of collective community grief. That has an impact on everyone. Strong leaders acknowledge what's happening in conversation, in the media and on social media because it validates what people are feeling. That said, we need to make sure we're still offering hope. There are incredible opportunities that will come out of this."



Even as the industry continues to respond and evolve on a near-daily basis, Aviles encourages the adoption of high-impact leadership actions that can and should be taken now and that she believes can help businesses embrace the new opportunities to come:

1. Acknowledge and promote mental health for everyone, across all aspects and seniority levels across the business. The same care should be provided for mental health conditions as is available for physical injuries in the workplace.
2. Understand, create and foster psychological safety. We have been inundated with resources for physical safety protocols – PPE, distancing, etc., but there's been little mention of what is needed for psychological safety. Amy C. Edmondson created the term 'psychological safety', defined as an environment where,"team members feel safe to take risks and be vulnerable in front of each other. This is the is standard we all need to reach.
3. Demonstrate engagement. Be approachable, present and focused in conversations with staff and colleagues, whether or not the team is currently working. Practice active listening to understand, not only to respond."
4. Be a role model. Leaders and employees should share examples of how they promote and protect their own mental health. Sharing personal perspectives on your own work, successes and failures is crucial.
5. Be approachable. As a leader or employee you need to be available to people and build rapport; make time and space for others to approach – often owners/operators are so busy they are not available to employees.
6. Make mistakes and risk-taking okay. Encourage and celebrate mistakes and new ideas as learning innovation opportunities to increase engagement and productivity.
7. Involve your team. Operations often revolves around chefs or owners, but helping people contribute and provide input/opinions is important. Listen to new ideas, consider alternative perspectives and options, then take the ones that hold value.
8. Create new reward systems. If you have a great service and you celebrate with alcohol or substances, then you have a disappointing service and you heal with alcohol or substances, you may feel it's just part of the culture, but you're creating a pattern that associates substances with workplace highs and lows. Humans are habit-based. It's important to mix up the environments and activities for celebrations or community, taking care not to institutionalize patterns that may cause harm.





Not 9 to 5 is a community non-profit organization empowering hospitality, food and beverage service workers by mobilizing education and support for mental health and substance use. Not 9 to 5 promotes harm reduction practices and helps to connect the hospitality workforce to mental wellness resources. **Learn more at: not9to5.org**

Not 9 to 5 recently launched **CNECTing**, a resource-rich platform created to distribute mental health and suicide prevention education and bring the hospitality, food and beverage community together. **Learn more at: cnecting.podia.com**

Leaders need to consider their obligation to support mental health and wellness; not only because it's the 'right' thing to do, but because its crucial to business success. Aviles also believes that leaders need to be active participants in building healthy workplaces, starting with eliminating competition and nurturing collaboration.

"This is all new to us – it's everyone's first pandemic. The shift the times and the industry demand of all of us are new to us. The industry has not been following these principles. We're all figuring it out and right-sizing it for our own environments. My hope is that people will take the tools and make them their own. Be gentle and kind to yourself along the way, but don't give up on the potential of a reimagined business. It's not about doing it right, it's about getting right."

Nivera Wallani, President & General Manager at KFC Canada at Yum! Brands

At KFC, employee mental health is one of our guiding principles. Our Employee Value Proposition is focused on 3 elements, "Be Your Best Self, Make a Difference, and Have fun."

We strongly believe that for employees to be their best self they need to feel whole in all aspects of their life. Our internal wellness program focuses on healthy living by addressing the physical, nutritional, financial, and mental well-being of our employees to allow them to be their best selves in both their personal and professional lives.

This comes to life in different ways across our franchise system – but we're proud of the unique culture we've built and really lean into building relationships, building trust and credibility with our employees through collaboration as well as open, honest conversations. We have a one-team mindset where we focus not only on the growth of the brand but growth for our franchisees, their teams, and their organizations.

Scott Boatwright, Chief Restaurant Officer at Chipotle Mexican Grill. on the importance of a culture that cultivates wellness...

It is critically important that organizations recognize, celebrate and invest in their employees – not just during a global pandemic but as an ongoing best practice. At Chipotle we strongly believe that employees are the backbone of our business and continually analyze and evolve our benefits, like the addition of access to mental health care and the option to earn a debt-free college degree. Chipotle also offers three paid sick days starting on the first day of employment so there is no accrual period - we have found this a valuable benefit to build a culture that cultivates wellness. Consider what you can do or change to best serve your workforce – it is not always easy, but it is crucial to create and maintain a culture of wellbeing where employees feel safe, valued and heard.

Learn more at RC SHOW 2021: CEO Panel: Fast Casual Restaurants Tuesday, March 2, 11:00AM-12:00PM Speaker Stage

MENTAL HEALTH & COMMUNITY OVER CHEESEBURGERS AT MATTY'S PATTY'S BURGER CLUB





Photos by Reynard Li



Chef Coulson Armstrong found his way into the kitchen after falling in love with food on a trip to Europe.

The plan had been to go to business school, but instead he found himself at Oliver & Bonacini, working his way up under John Horner to head chef at Canoe, where he oversaw a team of 40. He learned the business through the crush of the Summerlicious and Winterlicious programs, which took a toll on his mental health it took awhile to recognize and unpack. "I took some time off to travel to Nepal, India, Vietnam and Thailand, spending a month in each place. I needed to disconnect. I'd spent so much time immersed in the business it took me six months to decompress. I ended up in Australia and worked in about 10 different restaurants. I just wanted to cook, and it made me feel really alive again. After moving to New Zealand, all of a sudden, I went from feeling nothing to feeling alot. I was depressed for the first time and that was tough to admit. I realized I needed to work on myself, so I started yoga and swimming. I started working on changing the culture of the restaurant, being happy at work and taking the time to sit down and eat together."

Armstrong's path led him to California, where he crossed paths and connected with Chef Matty Matheson and, when the pandemic arrived, their plans to open a fine dining restaurant were deferred. Armstrong and Matheson's quick pivot and collaboration begat Matty's Patty's Burger Club, a contactless burger pop-up across the street from Toronto's Trinity Bellwoods Park. From the beginning, the leadership team planned Matty's Patty's as an intentional, safe workplace. "Most of our team had been hand-picked to work in the fine dining venue, and when plans changed, everyone needed to work. We sat down and planned how to build our team and how to build the culture. We close every day between 3 and 4:00 to sit down and eat together. The staff has full benefits and we do daily mental health check ins to make sure everyone is comfortable and getting what they need. There are things outside of our walls that affect people at work, so we've expanded to take on space for a staff room where we can be safe and decompress."

The wellness mindset at Matty's Patty's does not end at the pick-up window. The team has participated in numerous charitable endeavours and regularly delivers their burgers to residents of the tent encampment across the street in Trinity Bellwoods Park. "We've opened in a community, and we need to get to know our neighbours. For now, our neighbours are a homeless camp in Trinity Bellwoods park. There's mental health right across the street and we need to make sure we're doing what we can as part of the community."

Chef Coulson feels the culture at Matty's Patty's isn't the end game for the partners. "It's something we want to grow—it's the stepping stone toward building an enduring cultural foundation. When we move into fine dining, we will refine our model as the stakes are a little higher. Look, I never thought I'd be running a cheeseburger smashing joint, but change is always there and you work with it. We're all locked together in this little community and I've learned a lot in the past months. More than I could ever imagine. People are feeling more than ever — it's our job to hear everyone's voice."

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Egg Farmers of Canada Ambassador: Chef Craig Flinn
Nominee: Chef Renée Lavallée

LOCAL CHEF. LOCAL HERO.

NOVA SCOTIAN CHEF WARMS HEARTS WITH WARM MEALS

These days, simple acts of kindness and compassion are more powerful than ever. That's because in complex times, it's important to get back to basics. As a core part of Canada's food supply chain, egg farmers coast-to-coast have always been about the basics. Whether it's helping neighbours, supporting the local community or providing a warm meal; back to basics means having each other's back. And it's worth recognizing.

Chef Craig Flinn is the renowned owner of 2 Doors Down in Nova Scotia. Flinn's culinary creations, charity work, and fundraising has earned him the love of all the communities he's touched. Though deserving of kudos, chef Craig would rather share the spotlight, choosing to nominate another local culinary hero: Renée Lavallée. Mother, chef and owner of The Canteen restaurant, Renée has shown us what the hospitality industry is really all about.

Chef Craig: I remember when we met at Chives many years ago. Seems like yesterday in so many ways.

Chef Renée: Me too! Way back in 2004. Nova Scotia has a tight-knit community of chefs and many of us are more than acquaintances - we've become true friends who can depend on each other. When I went into labour with my son, you stepped up and catered an event I was scheduled to manage. Likewise, when you had that knee injury a few years later, I was happy to step in for you. The whole food industry is like that though, we look out for one another.

You've always had a big heart. You find ways to give, and in this past year even more than most.

When COVID restrictions began and we had to close down our restaurant, my husband Doug and I became inspired to use our restaurant to help others. We began producing meals for The North Grove, a local food centre, for them to distribute to the community. Over six months, our "Canteen Community Kitchen" distributed over 500 meals a week through The North Grove community food centre. Because we all need a little help sometimes.

One thing so many chefs have focused on in recent years is knowing we're using fresh, local, high-quality ingredients. What does maintaining the strength of Canada's food system and supporting locally-produced food mean to you?

Our food system is extremely important; it's a beautiful, interconnected chain. Farmers, suppliers, transporters, restaurant workers and customers, all Canadians play a role in this system. It takes all of us to make it work. In Nova Scotia specifically, I love that we have many local markets. I know all my suppliers and I get to interact with them on a weekly basis. The more we can support local, the better it is for everyone.

How do you think Canadians can help champion local foods and highlight the incredible offerings from our culinary community?

I think Canadians need to be very vocal about it. Whether it's posting recipes, to recognizing local food producers, to educating our restaurant guests. I encourage our culinary community to step away from their kitchens to help educate their communities, by teaching, listening, and being there to show support and compassion.

Resilience and community are the bricks and mortar of Canada's culinary community, and while our brick and mortars may have changed for the time being, our foundation has not. Stories like Renée's are why Canadian egg farmers are so proud to play a role in Canada's food supply chain. Discover more at @eggsoeufs or #LocalChefLocalHero.

Read the full story on menumag.ca.

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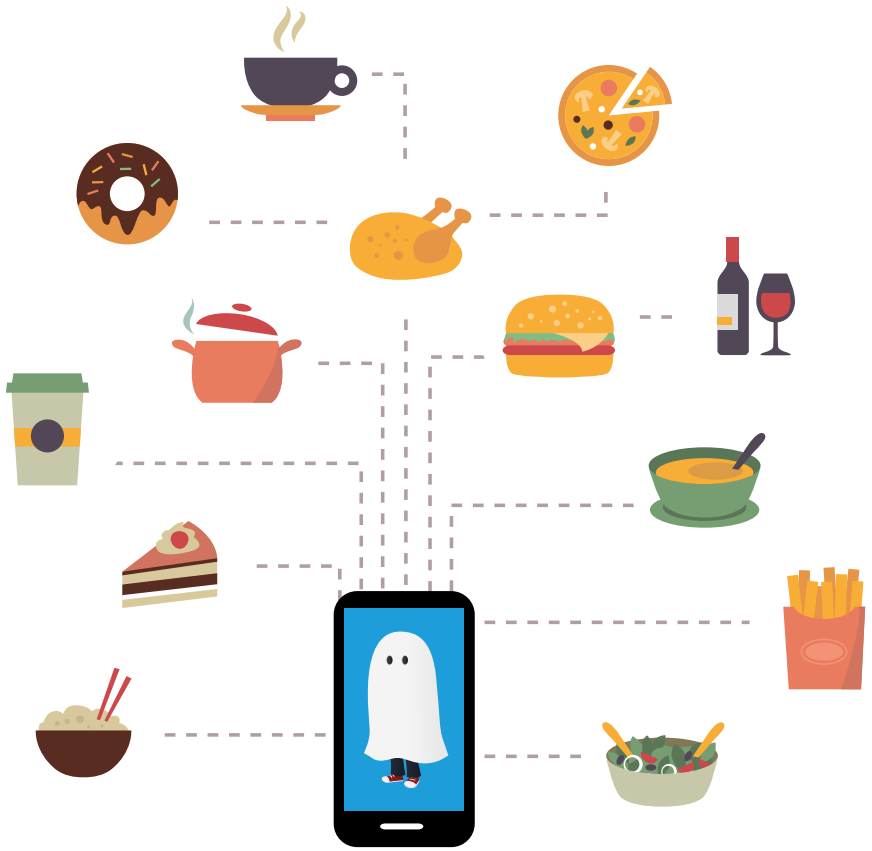


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The Evolution of the GHOST KITCHEN



The ghost kitchen concept has been around for a long time, creeping around the periphery of the food scene for years. Early prototypes were primarily focused on the simplicity and margin potential of virtual restaurant brands with low overhead, low rents and scalable labour model. It made for an attractive, comparatively safe investment that was favoured by start-up types chasing fast returns with delivery-only service. It seemed a no-brainer: if waffles don't work, maybe we'll try tacos...?

Like many disruptive ideas, ghost kitchens needed a catalyst to catch fire and hurtle the model into adolescence. In this case, it was the shared experience of staring blankly into our home pantries to see if any of the rag-tag ingredients leftover from our last 'big shop' wanted to work out their differences and hang out on a plate together. The all-virtual delivery joint truly came of age when we slammed our collective fridges shut and picked up the phone to order in, eating our battered emotions in home bubbles.

Ghost kitchens, of course, are a kind of blank slate. Here, restaurant brands are virtual, simplified to a delivery app blurb, logo and the quality of the food that arrives at the door. There's no human connection or environmental experience required or expected here – that's not the point.

While many restaurant operators have either explored the ghost kitchen opportunity or been forced into it headlong, there's no question the model is not only gaining traction, but rapidly evolving beyond the original back-alley grill-to-courier model.

The evolution beyond the early prototypes really centres around a few big ideas. The first is *mobility*, from both a location and brand perspective. If you haven't sunk all your hopes, dreams and start-up money in a brick-and-mortar build out, experiential brand, menu development and marketing, you may have the latitude to make a few extra pivots along the way to getting it right. Mobility grants operators the opportunity to test the viability of a location and adapt to the needs of the community around it. It's essentially a built-in market research opportunity that leaves operators less exposed to the real-world challenges of real estate availability and competition.

The second big idea is really about scale. If the cost of entry is lower, it is also easier to replicate a virtual brand and grow to a multi-unit business.



> **For us, it's about thinking of the parking lot as a new urban hub that can bring goods and experiences to consumers where they live and where they need them most."**
>
> **– Carl Segal, REEF Technology**

REEF's *Neighborhood Kitchens* leverage the power of proximity... from a parking lot

The combination of mobility and scale are further advanced by REEF Technology, a parking lot management company with the vision of transforming unloved parking lot spaces into profitable Neighbourhood Hubs, where carefully curated goods, services and experiences are brought in to optimize parking lot properties once perceived as a sort of 'necessary evil' with a singular purpose. If their successful $700M capital raise in November 2020 and meteoric growth are any indication, their strategy has clearly caught on. Carl Segal, COO, shares the REEF Technology vision, "The idea began with a story around the parking business and our founders' quest to use technology to improve the parking situation – how people access and engage with parking spaces. They are amazing, underutilized spaces with proximity to where people live and meet. He imagined them as neighbourhood hubs. For us, it's about thinking of the parking lot as a new urban hub that can bring goods and experiences to consumers where they live and where they need them most."

The REEF Technology team launched REEF Kitchens in 2019, starting with their own restaurant brands, to learn the business, the neighbourhoods that housed their properties, and how they could reduce complexity and deliver proximity for independent brands. With about 5,000 parking garages and parking lots in their management portfolio, the company has an incredible distributed real estate network across the U.S. and Canada.

"We're able to get brands up and running," says Segal. "In markets where there's a cuisine gap, we'll fill in with our own brands until we find a suitable independent partner." The REEF Kitchens team has not only 'reduced' complexity, they've eliminated it. REEF Kitchens not only provides the kitchen vessels and real estate, but actually operates the restaurants they house on behalf of brands. The model allows them to easily trial cuisines and brands in their markets, making rapid and effective performance and insight-driven location changes as necessary. Perhaps most remarkably, the company is not a landlord, but a kind of partner-licensee working with independent brands under a revenue-sharing agreement with a shared P&L.

Segal believes it's an ideal opportunity for entrepreneurs and regional brands hoping to expand. "We have an amazing business intelligence team that has created not only a mapping system, but true business intelligence on what types of cuisines are being ordered and where. This tool helps brands predict and make informed decisions about where brands need to be. We have also created this connection for restaurants who had to close and have helped bring many of them back to life on our platform."

With over 100 Neighborhood Kitchens in place in 22 major urban areas across North America, Segal says the company has plans for aggressive growth. "In Canada, we have 10 kitchen vessels in Toronto, three in Calgary and two in Edmonton. We're opening in Ottawa soon, followed by Vancouver and possibly Montreal. We're working with some great brands at our Canadian locations, including Via Cibo, Bangkok Buri and Salus Fresh Foods, and we work with all four major delivery partners (UberEats, DoorDash, GrubHub, Seamless). We encourage chefs and start-ups to come to our platform. If they don't have a brick and mortar – maybe they're an amazing chef with a quality menu, a unique differentiator and a great idea – there's a really good chance we can get them up and running."

REEF Kitchens worked with both Chef Michelle Bernstein (Michy B's) and Chef Michael Schwartz (Michael's Greatest Hits) delivering their most sought-after favourites to lucky Fort Lauderdale neighbourhoods. They are even facilitating the deployment of celebrity-fuelled virtual food brands, like YouTube phenom MrBeast's MrBeast Burger. The simple menu offered by an established web celebrity has been embraced by digitally native and savvy consumers with 100 operational storefronts and counting. In Canada, Wendy's Restaurants has embraced the Neighbourhood Kitchens concept as part of their non-traditional growth strategy, allowing them to position their brand in dense urban neighbourhoods with positive results.

Canadian brands and independents are also looking at partnering with REEF Kitchens to help them enter into new geographies, including the U.S. market with less risk and complexity. "We're helping brands reconnect." says Segal. It's been a bit of a rollercoaster. Pre-pandemic, we were still talking about helping food entrepreneurs expand, and it was mostly independents. Larger companies took more of a 'wait and see' approach. It was somewhat lukewarm. Once the pandemic hit, it changed restaurants' relationships with their customers. It changed operators' mindsets – particularly in larger companies. Now, it's, "We can't live without this." They recognize that need to change and change now."

FAT Brands: Using ghost kitchens to explore via delivery in high-density markets

FAT Brands, parent company of Fatburger, Buffalo's Express and Hurricane Grill & Wings among others has also jumped into the ghost kitchen space, opening with an experienced operator in the San Francisco market. Andy Wiederhorn, FAT Brands CEO, says it was an easy decision. "The benefit of ghost kitchens is that they allow you to seed a market where you don't presently have brick and mortar locations and see how they perform and how customers react to them. If successful, they reveal a clear path to future brick and mortar locations. The San Francisco market has very expensive real estate and labour, so utilizing a ghost kitchen greatly lowers the risk and raises the viability of our brands in that market."

> **"They allow existing franchisees to spread out in the territories they operate, meaning, if they have a location in a city and they want to grow, they don't have to build to satisfy more customers."**
>
> **– Andy Wiederhorn**

With regular, in-person visits and a robust partnership model, the FAT Brands training and operations support team ensures brand quality standards are met. "Today, we're operating ghost kitchens within four of our brands." says Wiederhorn, "It allows existing franchisees to spread out in the territories they operate, meaning, if they have a location in a city and they want to grow, they don't have to build to satisfy more customers."

The model is working so well, the company plans to explore and use ghost kitchens globally. "We've had ghost kitchens in Singapore for more than a year, and allover South America with the Johnny Rockets brand." says Wiederhorn. "They're a mechanism to support customer's delivery needs without the need for an entire brick and mortar restaurant. Our goal is to achieve sufficient sales from ghost kitchens so that an operator is profitable, and customers can access our brands. That is the definition of success."

Early concerns about the loss of the hospitality experience central to many restaurant brands through to move to delivery-only operations have been pushed aside due to the pandemic. The ghost kitchen model has been well received by FAT Brands customers who, Wiederhorn shares, have been exceptionally tolerant and forgiving during the pandemic. "It's an easier time to roll out something new. People aren't being so picky. The market is going to continue to expect extremely safe packaging (tamper-proof, etc.). Packaging that prioritizes quality throughout the delivery process will also be something customers come to expect."

Kitchen Hub: A virtual food hall focused on quality and community

Kitchen Hub co-founder Oren Borovitch is no stranger to the food delivery business. He was one of the first employees at DoorDash Canada, steering restaurant strategy and operations for the then-fledgling delivery app. With almost spooky timing, in January 2020, Borovitch and his co-founder, Adam Armeland, launched Kitchen Hub, Canada's first virtual food hall, not to be confused with a typical ghost kitchen. Kitchen Hub takes care of the logistics, operations, infrastructure and equipment, while bringing great restaurant brands together to penetrate high-demand locations and gain traction in the digital restaurant space through smart locations. "Generally speaking, the term 'ghost kitchen' is quite literal—a restaurant location that is not meant to be seen but rather interacted with through digital channels like SkiptheDishes, Uber Eats, DoorDash, etc.". says Borovitch, "Ghost Kitchens allow a restaurant to operate in a less desirable, non-retail kitchen space and generate meaningful sales through digital channels exclusively. This model can work for certain restaurants."

"Kitchen Hub is more than a ghost kitchen, it is a collective of small, local tastemakers and a place to experience the best a city has to offer. We go beyond just offering new locations to our partners – we actively help manage, track, and optimize our partners' performance for online sales. The magic of our model lies in the incredible brands that we curate for each of our facilities. Together they can leverage their good will and provide offerings through Kitchen Hub Food Hall—allowing the consumer to order from one or many on the same order. Life's short, order both."

Kitchen Hub's goal is to make Canada's top restaurants available to everyone via high-quality takeout or delivery in just a few clicks, while offering restaurants a dedicated, turnkey kitchen space in an intelligent, shared facility. "Our model developed as consumers were eating more of their meals via takeout and delivery, where our passion grew in an effort to assist restaurants with a platform that addresses off-premise sales through a low cost, quick and high margin solution." says Armeland. "Outside of Kitchen Hub, we encourage and support our restaurant partners' brick and mortar operations because we believe it is important for consumers to be able to experience the brand and establish a direct personal relationship with it. The success of a restaurant's brick and mortar locations helps them expand their brand through digital channels on the Kitchen Hub platform."



“The magic of our model lies in the incredible brands that we curate for each of our facilities. Together they can leverage their good will and provide offerings through Kitchen Hub Food Hall—allowing the consumer to order from one or many on the same order. Life’s short, order both.”

– Oren Borovitch, Kitchen Hub

Patron use of digital food delivery platforms has increased based on convenience, and more recently, necessity. Borovitch identifies “a growing shift from prime real estate at main and main to the importance of prime digital real estate on consumers phones/computers. “At Kitchen Hub, we focus on the growing trend of restaurants and brands being consumed digitally while providing our restaurant partners with the tools and resources to be successful on digital channels. Consumers can interact with the restaurant the way they want to; whether it’s through kitchenhub.ca, on their favourite app, in-person, or through the phone. Restaurants are successful at Kitchen Hub because restaurants can focus on what they do best – COOK!”

Kitchen Hub is poised to powerfully integrate local with digital, creating a platform across Canada of interconnected facilities for restaurants and brands. This allows their partners to expand into a digitally-focused model with higher margins at a lower up-front investment, while increasing online presence and sales. For customers, Kitchen Hub delivers surprise and delight by enabling the freedom to order from their favourite restaurants and brands digitally, within the same delivery order, to enjoy wherever they are.

Since opening their first Kitchen Hub location in January 2020, the start-up has seen very positive results. Their restaurant brands are beating sales targets, achieving profit margins and a return on investment in excess of what they typically see in their traditional brick and mortar locations.

Kitchen Hub is expanding into new locations in the GTA, including a Kitchen Hub in Toronto’s east end by March 2021 and a summer 2021 launch of a flagship location in Toronto’s midtown. “Customers continue to express excitement towards Kitchen Hub because of the quality of our offerings and their ability to order from multiple brands in a single order.” While Armeland acknowledges that COVID-19 restrictions have played a role in their early success, he is confident their model will continue to grow, by delivering quality and choice in the right places. “The one feature that we look for in all brands that we partner with is that they are focused on expanding their ability to sell through e-commerce channels. Given the fast-paced and ever-changing landscape of the industry, we believe that restaurants who innovate and adapt to the new norm will win the day.”

Join us at RC Show 2021 for ***‘Maturing of the Ghost Kitchen Concept’*** panel to hear from ***Oren Borovitch, COO & Co-Founder, Kitchen Hub, Carl Segal, COO, Reef Technology, and Andy Wiederhorn, CEO, Fat Brands.*** Taking place **Monday, March 1, 2021 at 11 a.m. on the Speaker Stage.**

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TOP 10 FOOD AND BEVERAGE TRENDS OF 2021



ELLEN SMITH
MANAGING EDITOR
&
MISHAL OMAR
MANAGING INSIGHTS
EDITOR,
TRENDHUNTER

This year's hospitality trends consist of pandemic rules, social and ecological issues and tech innovations that come together to form unlikely advancements. Here are the top 10 trends that will guide the food and beverage industry in the coming months:

CONTACTLESS DELIVERY

Contactless delivery options became extremely popular as the COVID-19 pandemic began, and will remain popular as Canadian consumers continue to deal with government restrictions and personal concerns about contact with others. Delivery services are promising safe and touch-free drop-offs and pick-ups in order to reduce consumer anxiety and follow regulations.

An increased need for touch-free delivery has resulted in innovations like Geoffrey - a food delivery robot - operating in Canada. After partnering with Foodora, the pink-clad robot offered autonomous food drop-offs, reducing person-to-person interactions.

PRIVATE LABEL

Restaurants looking to remain on consumers' minds despite dine-in restrictions have released private label collections that include everything from branded groceries to alcohol. This shift also allows for new revenue streams for businesses struggling with limited customer turnout.

Craig Wong, chef and owner of Toronto's Patois, quickly pivoted to private label after partnering with the PC Chef restaurant meal kit delivery program -- a curated initiative run by Loblaws in which the city's finest chefs prepare meal kit iterations of their restaurant's popular dishes.



UPCYCLED ALCOHOL

A continued topic of conversation in the food and beverage space is how it'll adapt to the environmental concerns of today and the future. Some brands in the alcohol industry are finding ways to adapt to consumers' eco-expectations with beverages made from food waste.

Loop Mission, for example, is a Montreal-based beverage brand that partners with local businesses to turn leftover food into alcohol. Excess potatoes sourced from a chip factory are distilled into a zesty gin, while stale bread from a local bakery is used to make beer.

RESTAURANT TRUCK

Though not new, the food truck model's role in helping restaurants survive pandemic restrictions has made these mobile restaurants crucial for businesses. Brands not typically involved in this space have turned to these trucks in order to reach more customers.

Building off of this concept, the Calgary community came together to creatively support local businesses by throwing a 'food truck drive-thru' for nine of the city's most-popular vendors. More than 3,000 cars come to support the drive-thru concept, which took place in a COVID-safe environment.

CONNECTED FARMER

One of the ways in which communities have come together in recent months is through supporting small businesses, including local farmers. Digital solutions are connecting people with farmers and the fresh produce they offer, since other avenues of purchasing have become restricted.

Local Line is a Canadian eCommerce solution, helping to increase accessibility to farms, food hubs, and farmers' markets by allowing consumers to pre-order artisanal and farm-fresh ingredients online. The user-friendly tool connects local farmers with those seeking fresh produce.

FOOD TRANSPARENCY

Consumers are increasingly interested in what's in the food they purchase, and how ethical its production is. Brands catering to this growing demand for transparency are using digital traceability tools that give people more clarity on the background of their purchases.

iFinca Verified takes a tech-friendly approach to the coffee industry with its blockchain platform that enables full traceability. Simply scanning a product's QR code will reveal the coffee brand's producer as well as farm-gate pricing.

BLACK-OWNED BUSINESS

The global movement in support of BLM and communities of colour sparked a demand from consumers for brands to step up and do their part in tackling systemic inequality. One of the ways in which these inequalities can be addressed is economically, and some brands have chosen to highlight Black-owned businesses so that consumers are able to support them locally.

Uber Eats Canada made it easier for consumers to spend their money thoughtfully by launching a new feature that not only highlights Black-owned businesses, but offers free delivery to further incentivise support for those select spots.

SUBSTANCE RESPONSE

The pandemic-related pivots made by alcohol and cannabis industries in Canada were swift and have implications for the direction of these industries even post-pandemic. Takeout, drive-thru options and virtual tastings are all examples of how these industries are evolving.

Ontario lifting its alcohol takeout restrictions led to a province-wide boom in at-home cocktail-making. Local hot spots like Toronto's Baro are leveraging this opportunity by offering to-go cocktail kits that can be pre-ordered online.

SOBER CURIOUS COMMUNITY

As more consumers, particularly Millennials and Gen Z, take interest in low-alcohol experiences, brands are following suit. Everything from bars to wine clubs are opting for non-alcoholic experiences to cater to "sober curious" consumers.

Everything Dry caters to this rising demographic with a non-alcoholic wine club that delivers de-alcoholized wine options to the doorsteps of sober curious or low-alcohol consumers. Shipping throughout Canada, Everything Dry offers a curated selection for those looking to cut back, without missing out.

DINING PROTECTION

One of the most necessary and likely long-term changes made to the food and beverage industry is restaurants adjusting their physical spaces to account for protected in-person dining. Everything from distanced seating to transparent barriers are keeping customers safe without taking too much away from the dining experience.

Distillery Restaurants Corp started working with Canadian eateries to offer a tech-driven approach to safe in-person dining throughout the pandemic. The integrated service allows diners to browse menus, place orders, and make payments digitally, using their mobile phones.



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