

Today's Restaurant

THE FOODSERVICE INDUSTRY AUTHORITY

VOLUME 30

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Winterizing your restaurant: Preparing for cold weather success



By Paul Segreto

Winterizing your restaurant is an essential step in preparing for the colder months, ensuring smooth operations and a welcoming environment for guests. Just as you would prepare your car for winter, your restaurant requires special attention to both the exterior and interior to maintain safety, comfort, and curb appeal.

Start by focusing on the exterior. Pruning bushes and trees, as well as planting flowers that thrive in winter weather, helps maintain the

restaurant's appeal even on dreary days. It's also important to upkeep exterior lighting, as daylight hours shorten. Make sure your outdoor lights are fully functional, including signage, parking lot lights, and accent lighting, which not only enhances visibility but creates a warm, inviting atmosphere for guests arriving after dark.

Beyond aesthetics, winterizing also includes protecting your restaurant's infrastructure. To avoid potential damage, ensure your water pipes are properly insulated to protect them from freezing temperatures. Regularly check

for any leaks or weaknesses, and consider installing pipe insulation in areas that are particularly vulnerable to cold. Additionally, fire safety equipment should be inspected, as winter often brings an increased risk of fire hazards from heating systems and holiday decorations. Be sure your fire extinguishers, alarms, and sprinkler systems are up-to-date and functioning properly.

Particular attention should be paid to exterior walkways and parking lots during inclement weather to ensure the safety of customers, staff, and vendors alike. Snow and ice buildup can create hazardous conditions, so it's important to regularly clear and de-ice these areas. Ensure that snow removal procedures are in place and that you have a reliable supply of de-icing materials on hand. Properly marked, well-lit walkways and parking areas can help reduce the risk of slips and falls, protecting everyone who visits or works at your restaurant. Installing slip-resistant mats near entrances can further help prevent accidents by keeping floors dry as people enter the building.

Inside the restaurant, take steps to make the space more inviting as the weather changes. Create a designated

See **WINTERIZING** page 14

Shipley Do-Nuts signs 22 unit deal for FL & TN

Houston, TX – Houston-based [Shipley Do-Nuts](#), one of the nation's largest and fastest-growing donut brands, will expand its presence in Florida and Tennessee under a 22-unit franchise agreement with the hospitality arm of private investment platform [Virentes Partners Group](#).

Virentes operates multiple franchise brands through its subsidiary, Virentes Hospitality. Its development agreement with Shipley is the brand's largest commitment inked in 2024.

Founded in 1936 in Houston, Shipley offers more than 60 varieties of fresh, handmade daily donuts, including its signature plain glazed, cut in the iconic Shipley hexagon shape, plus filled, iced and cake donuts, bear claws, kolaches, coffee and more.

"We exhaustively researched dozens of franchise concepts to expand our hospitality portfolio, and Shipley came out on top with craveable and highly differentiated products and an outstanding leadership team," said Virentes Managing Member and Chief Investment Officer Jim D'Aquila. "The Shipley team is


committed to the brand and to franchisee success, with exceptional unit economics, a strong business model and opportunities for growth. Shipley's products are the finest in the category, and their 'Make Life Delicious' slogan rings true with the millions that have experienced the brand."

Virentes plans to open three Shipley Do-Nuts locations in 2025 in Nashville, Tennessee, and Jacksonville and Tampa, Florida. Virentes recently hired Vice President – Operations Andrew Povec to oversee operational excellence and enterprise development and has also begun hiring general managers for the first locations.

"One of our key expansion strategies has been to partner with experienced multi-unit, multi-brand operators such as Virentes, who are ready to hit the ground running to grow the Shipley brand and open units," said Shipley Senior Vice President of Franchise Development Keith Sizemore.

"Their commitment to operational excellence will ensure that their locations will execute on our

brand values and deliver a great product and experience to new customers."

Fast-growing Shipley topped 360 units this year and is on track to achieve back-to-back years of record openings. It has added more than 110 units to its development pipeline so far in 2024 and will enter two new states, North Carolina and Virginia, in Q1 2025. 

About Shipley Do-Nuts: Founded in 1936, Houston-based [Shipley Do-Nuts](#) is one of the nation's oldest and largest donut brands, with more than 360 company-owned and franchised restaurants across 12 states, serving up its famous donuts, coffee and kolaches to generations of guests. Shipley is ranked No. 110 on Entrepreneur magazine's Franchise 500® 2024 list and No. 1 in its category and is No. 147 on the [Technomic 2024 Top 500](#). For franchising information, visit

www.shipleydonuts.com. Follow Shipley on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) @ShipleyDonuts, and sign up for Do-Happy Rewards at ShipleyDonuts.com/rewards to unlock free donuts, discounted coffee, exclusive merchandise and more.



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Appell Pie

A fatal mistake?

Howard Appell ♦ Today's Restaurant Publisher

The 2024 Holiday Season is done and now we enter the grind of the year 2025. Running a restaurant is the grind and it's tough as you know. Food costs, labor problems and customer reviews on Social Media so why would you want to add to it by making this possibly fatal mistake? Double booking a reservation.

Here's what I observed a few weeks ago at an established restaurant with a good reputation for many years. My cousin wanted to celebrate his birthday and dine at this restaurant on a Sunday taking advantage of the "Early Bird" with seating by five required. His wife called and made the reservation as usual, no problem.

When we arrived at the restaurant we were amazed to see a crowd in front of the restaurant as if they were watching the results of an auto accident. No formal line, people sitting on chairs, leaning on posts and just milling about.

wait, but my cousin was recently hospitalized and was in a wheel chair and had an aide and his wife with him also so we decided to wait it out.

Finally, after about forty minutes the door opened and the hostess started calling names from the reservation list. We were seating about one hour after our reserved time. No problem, we were spending good time together.

Problem #1 completed. The restaurant seating is in the area of 150 – 175 people and those of you who understand the operation of the kitchen know that the kitchen got slammed with orders from all the tables that were filled within five minutes. I'm sure the chef and crew were not happy but they carried on.

We got our food and we enjoyed the conversation but this mistake in booking reservations will echo throughout the neighborhood and will make customers hesitant to try and make reservations again.

Service is paramount in the restaurant business and due to a lack of training or the choosing of the wrong person to be the face of the business, they could have destroyed their reputation that has been developed over the last twenty-five years.

Training your staff is key to a properly run business and maintaining a happy guest community. Spending time and money advertising will not show an ROI unless your staff is trained to service your customers.

Do you have a problem similar to this or some other issues that you need help with? Join us on Friday at one of the Today's Restaurant News Networking Zoom Groups and meet with our members/vendors who are experts in their fields. We are here to help and never a charge for a solution. Don't let a problem continue to erode your business it can lead to a fatal mistake. Contact us at info@trnusa.com for invitation link or www.trnusa.com to sign up. 

Finally, after about forty minutes the door opened and the hostess started calling names from the reservation list.

Upon further viewing I noticed a sign on the locked door stating "Private Party." No explanation of the time period for the party and expectant diners milling around and mumbling about the situation.

Finally, the door was opened wide enough for one person to pass through one at a time and still no explanation to the crowd of hungry seniors. Ten minutes later the door opened again and more party guests left leaving us still confused. Normally I would not



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Bartinder is a new app for hiring bartenders, connects bars and restaurants with skilled bartenders quickly and easily. Bartinder is designed to support the diverse staffing needs of the hospitality industry, including bars, restaurants, and private event planners. Bartinder allows business owners and event organizers to quickly connect with skilled bartenders, providing a practical staffing solution for occasions ranging from busy bar nights to high-end events. For more information visit www.thebartinderapp.com.

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The Restaurant Group opened earlier this year at 8205 S. John Young Pkwy. in Orlando. The new facility is over 65,000-square-foot store. In 1993, The Restaurant Store first opened its doors to the public in Lancaster, PA. Since then, The Restaurant Store has become a leading supplier to the foodservice industry,



In 1973, the Nass family, Mel, Phyllis, and their young children, Robin, Andrew and Gregg, purchased a 150-acre vineyard near the Town of Lodi, in the heart of the NYS Finger Lakes Grape District. They began raising Concord Table Grapes and quickly became a National Distributor, shipping them all over the United States to the mega Supermarkets and Retailers. "You probably may remember buying them in 1 quart corrugated or clam-shell containers under the label name Venture Vineyards, says Mel." And now, Andrew is introducing another use for The Concord Grapes. **The Concord Grape Pie.** There are 3 versions of the pie to choose from, the Classic Concord Grape Pie, The Peanut Butter and Grape Pie, and the Classic Crumble. They are now at major farmers markets across Broward and Palm Beach counties. They're also making their way to select coffee shops, bakeries, and restaurants in South Florida and can ship as well. Visit www.theconcordgrapepiecompany.com.

with multiple locations across Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, as well as Florida. They will open another in Davie, Florida at 2750 Bridge Way in 2025 and have others in development in the Northeast.

◆◆◆◆◆
Main Street Eats, a new food truck park and restaurant concept,

is set to open downtown Lakeland in Mid 2025. Butch Rahman is a co-owner. Located at 1112 E Main St, Lakeland, the new concept will include a restaurant housed in a restored 112-yr-old building. Lakeland's Food Truck Park & Commissary project will offer up to eight food truck + a Commissary Kitchen for the local vendors.

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 Local entrepreneur and businessman John Wiggins, a native of Ft

Lauderdale, has opened his new venture in hospitality, **Johnny's Hungry Hoagies**, at 790 East Broward Blvd in Ft. Lauderdale. A second location in So FL is planned. Wiggins, the self-described lifelong foodie, believes there is



room for improvement when it comes to hoagies. He says the market has a lot of generic sandwich shops and he's created a unique and crave-able line of sandwiches, based on the highest quality meats and cheeses, along with chef-inspired recipes that will make Johnny's Hungry Hoagies stand out. The signature sandwich, Johnny's Epic Steak Sandwich, is made with ½ pound, hand-sliced USDA prime steak, with grilled onions, mushrooms, and chef-inspired seasonings. Visit JohnnysHungryHoagies.com.

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Submarine House, the iconic Ohio-based sports bar and grill known for its 16- inch sub sandwiches, Super Duper Cheesesteak, and full bar, has just landed a new franchise location coming

See **WHAT'S GOING ON** page 6

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FRESH Healthy Café set to expand franchising

The partnership with FRESH USA, LLC to accelerate growth of the Canadian-based, health-conscious eatery in USA

Cape Girardeau, MO – In an effort to continue bringing its healthy and nutritious, fast-casual concept to cities across the United States, [FRESH Healthy Café](#), a leading health-conscious restaurant brand, has entered into a strategic partnership with FRESH USA, LLC. The franchise development company is owned by Cape Girardeau, Missouri entrepreneur Rick Hetzel who also owns and operates three locations there. The collaboration is designed to accelerate FRESH Healthy Café's U.S. franchise expansion in the coming years and meet

the demand for offering its all-natural menu in communities everywhere.

FRESH USA LLC brings a solid restaurant management team to the partnership, including a history of accomplishing franchise growth in the competitive market. Hetzel and his wife, Cheryl Mothes, were drawn into the venture with the brand through their shared passion for supporting healthy lifestyles to help others thrive. They opened Missouri's FRESH location in 2019, followed by a second in 2022. Hetzel, a 30-year law enforcement

career veteran, has spent the past two decades building successful businesses across the restaurant, real estate and sports industries. Mothes, who holds a PhD in holistic nutrition, is a former nurse and now serves as a financial advisor for a national company.

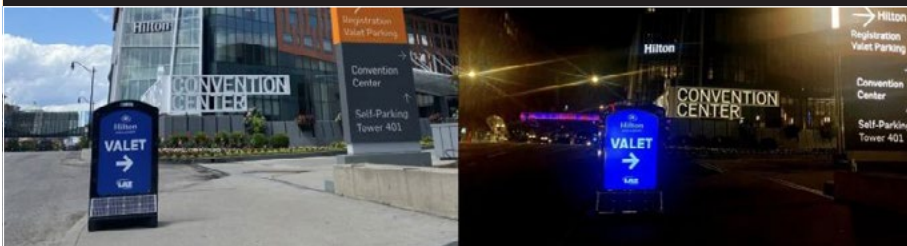
"FRESH Healthy Café is an incredible brand with a truly loyal following, and we have witnessed the strong desire for this type of healthy food here in the U.S. market," said Hetzel and Mothes in a joint statement. "We are committed to helping our franchisees advance and are ready to provide them with the resources and support they need to open and operate their own FRESH Healthy Café restaurants."

and delicious food to more communities nationwide," said Jeff Parker, President, and CEO of FRESH Healthy Café. "Rick, Cheryl and their team have a proven track record of success in franchise development, and we are confident that they will help us achieve our growth goals."

FRESH Restaurants is an innovator and the absolute leader in the booming healthy fast-casual food industry. Today's customers have an insatiable, growing appetite for nutritious, delicious food and drinks, unlike the unhealthy fare offered by other quick-service food franchises. We are perfectly positioned to meet this demand, providing our guests with an extraordi-

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Under the partnership, FRESH USA, LLC, will be responsible for identifying strategic locations for new FRESH Healthy Café franchises. In addition, the company will recruit and train franchisees and provide ongoing guidance to help drive awareness to their locations. Each establishment will showcase the restaurant's signature menu of nutritious smoothies and fresh-squeezed juices along with hearty meal choices including protein bowls, wraps, salads, paninis, and soups.

"We are thrilled to partner with FRESH USA, LLC to bring our healthy

nary health experience unlike any they've ever tasted. We can confidently claim that our menu is unlike anything else offered in the industry. Whether you're looking for a refreshing mid-afternoon smoothie or a hearty meal (including wraps, paninis, soups and salads), every item on our menu is as good for the body as it is for the taste buds. All our food and beverages are made fresh to order right in front of your eyes, using only natural ingredients of the highest quality. 

For more information, visit the company online at: www.freshrestaurants.com



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Keke's Breakfast Cafe accelerates growth in 2025

Florida-born breakfast favorite eyes greater nationwide expansion with over 140 cafes in development

Orlando, FL - Keke's Breakfast Cafe, the rapidly expanding breakfast and brunch destination beloved for its freshly made classics and welcoming atmosphere, recently announced an ambitious growth plan for new cafes in 2025 and beyond, targeting a wider nationwide footprint with over 140 cafes under development agreement. The announcement comes as the Florida-born brand reveals a transformative refresh of its restaurant design and brand identity, building on momentum from successful launches in four new states by this year's end.



"This momentum has not only kickstarted our expansion into four new states but also energized our robust franchise network..."

in Florida, Georgia, Texas, and Nevada will open by early 2025. With over 140 development agreements in place, Keke's Breakfast Cafe is positioned for further expansion nationwide, targeting 25-30% annual growth.

"The warm reception from the folks in Tennessee, Colorado, and California has shown us that Keke's Breakfast Cafe appeal stretches well beyond Florida," said David Schmidt, president of Keke's Breakfast Cafe. "This momentum has not only

kickstarted our expansion into four new states but also energized our robust franchise network, where we're actively recruiting talented, passionate entrepreneurs to join us in our journey to bring the best breakfast on the block across America."

Brand Refresh & Innovation

Branding: Keke's Breakfast Cafe unveils its new, unique visual identity, including a refreshed logo, a new secondary mark that resembles an

orange as a nod to the brand's Florida roots, and an updated color palette and fonts. The creative revamp conveys Keke's Breakfast Cafe's commitment to quality and gives the brand a fresh look to drive further cafe and franchise growth.

Cafe Design Evolution: The Hendersonville, Tennessee location that opened near Nashville in summer 2024 debuted Keke's Breakfast Cafe's refreshed design concept. The new look, featuring brighter decor and Florida-inspired motifs, is being rolled out to all new locations and serves as the foundation for a comprehensive remodel program, starting with the chain's high-traffic Doctor Phillips cafe in Orlando.

Investment: Technology investment and menu innovation will optimize the Keke's Breakfast Cafe experience for all guests, franchisees, and team members, ensuring that the unique culture and admirable consistency remain the top priorities. A new website has launched, and the brand is rolling out a more stable off-premise ordering software. Multiple locations are testing a new point-of-sale and kitchen-display system that elevates day-to-day operations for Keke's team members. Redesigned kid's menus, seasonal menu testing, and expanded beverage offerings add menu quality and quantity that will excite new guests and loyal regulars alike. 

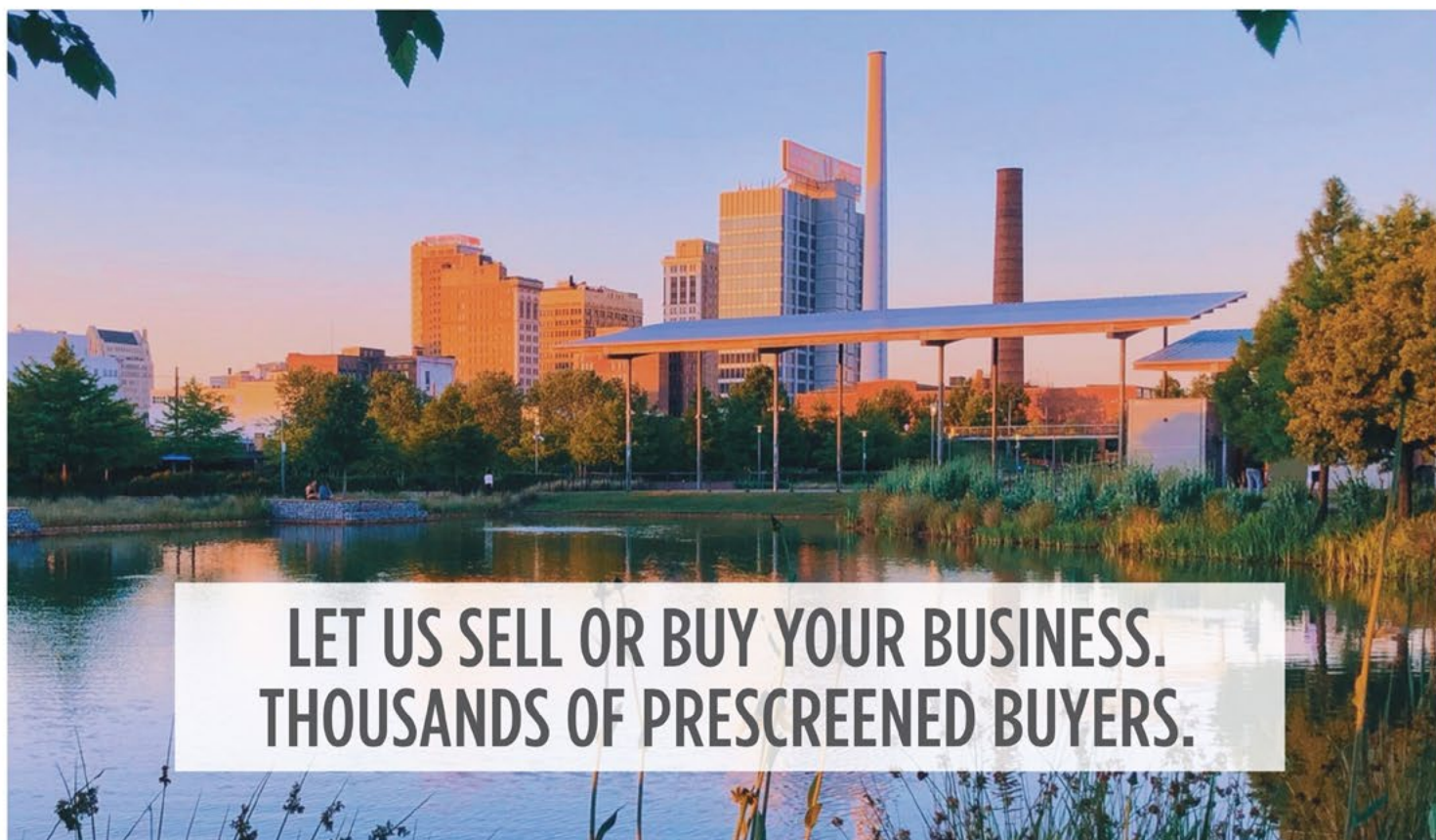
National Growth

In 2024, Keke's Breakfast Cafe, driven by its belief that everyone deserves a fresh start to the day, expanded beyond Florida into Nashville, Tennessee, Sunnyvale, California, and Highlands Ranch, Colorado. New cafes



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What's Going On from page 3

soon to Ohio. The company has worked with Atlanta-based franchise development and sales firm [Franchise Marketing Systems](#) since 2023, steadily gaining momentum in the marketplace. As part of a larger expansion strategy, Submarine House is aiming to add more locations throughout Ohio and surrounding states and plans to move into the first quarter of the new year with several strong prospective franchisees.



to his small Idaho town. Together with his wife they started serving Crispy Cones. Crispy Cones serves unique pastry dough ice cream cones that are grilled rotisserie-style then covered with cinnamon and sugar or specialty powder, filled with spreads gourmet soft-serve ice cream and more. Crispy Cones was featured on the TV show "Shark Tank" in March 2023, where Rexburg entrepreneurs Jeremy and Kaitlyn Carlson secured a deal with businesswoman Barbara Corcoran to expand via franchising. The Carlsons negotiated a \$200,000 deal with Barbara Corcoran for 20 percent of Crispy Cones' equity.

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Crispy Cones are coming to Palm Beach Gardens at 11940 US-1. They are on track to celebrate a grand opening at the end of January 2025. Crispy Cones specializes in unique European-inspired pastry dough cones and has experienced explosive growth since appearing on Shark Tank last year! The company continues to close new franchising deals across the country each week – bringing the total to 80 new franchises on the way so far in cities across the country. Crispy Cones currently operates eight locations across Idaho, Utah, Arizona and Florida and is on track to open 100 new locations by the end of 2025. They're called Crispy Cones, a cone-shaped pastry that originated in the Czech Republic. <https://thecrispycones.com>. A young man serving a mission there fell in love with the sweet treat and brought the idea back

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ReposiTrak, the world's largest food traceability and regulatory compliance network, leveraging its established inventory management and out-of-stock reduction SaaS platform, is proud to welcome 50 new produce suppliers to the ReposiTrak Traceability Network®. These new members will efficiently exchange intricate, FDA-required Key Data Elements for each Critical Tracking Event in their supply chains, ensuring proactive

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compliance well before the January 2026 deadline. Among the new suppliers are long-standing companies known for their strong regional presence and innovative practices. One supplier has been a trusted name in the Southwest since 1943, delivering fresh produce to food service and retailers. Another, founded in 1994, is the leading fresh-cut processor in the Southwestern U.S., providing a diverse range of value-added fruits, vegetables, and specialty items. A third supplier, established in 1976, specializes in supplying organic, local, and conventional fresh produce to a diverse range of buyers, including organic markets, food co-ops, independent retailers, and chain stores. Visit [ReposiTrak.com](#).

Ltd., a New Jersey-based product development and manufacturing group at the forefront of providing easily adaptable and affordable products. For more information visit [FloodBuzzPro.com](#).



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Encore Restaurants, LLC announced the launch of Encore 7 BREW, LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of [Encore Enterprises, Inc.](#), which owns the exclusive rights to build and operate franchise locations of 7 Brew drive-thru beverage stands throughout the Salt Lake City, Utah and Phoenix, AZ markets. In Utah, the new 7 Brew modular construction stands will create more than 3,000 jobs, and approximately 60% will be full-time positions. In Arizona, the new 7 Brew franchise locations will create more than 4,700 jobs, of which approximately 60% will be full-time positions. "Encore 7 BREW is a highly skilled, experienced franchisee with a proven track record of building and operating storefronts that outperform the competition; we've strategically selected them to helm 7 Brew's expansion into Utah and Arizona" said John Davidson, CEO of 7 Brew. "7 Brew is on a strong growth trajectory, and we have every confidence entrusting Encore 7 BREW's seasoned leadership to advance our mission of redefining the drive-thru beverage experience through personalized, human-centric customer service, premium products and exceptional efficiency."

See **WHAT'S GOING ON** page 10

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2025 Vision: Adapting restaurant design with customer needs and evolving technology

By Joemy Vega

As we approach 2025, restaurant design is undergoing a transformation. Customers expect more than just great food, they want dining experiences that align with their lifestyles, values, and needs. To stay competitive, restaurants must embrace customer-first design while integrating strategic technology and adaptable layouts that meet modern demands.

Here's how restaurants can prepare for the future with thoughtful, scalable design strategies that prioritize their customers and position them for long-term success.

Customer-first design: Building experiences that resonate

At the heart of every successful restaurant is a space that speaks to its customers. Today's customers seek more than a meal, they want environments that feel personal and adaptable. Whether it's modular seating for group gatherings, quiet nooks for solo diners or remote workers, or streamlined layouts for on-the-go customers, restaurant design must be intentional and versatile.

Designing for flexibility ensures that a restaurant remains relevant throughout the day. Multi-functional spaces allow for smooth transitions—from a vibrant breakfast spot to an intimate

evening setting. Thoughtful details like biophilic design (greenery), environmental graphics, curated music programs, and lighting schemes enhance the atmosphere, creating memorable customer experiences.



Consistency across every element from signage and uniforms to tableware and scent strategies, reinforces a brand's identity. This creates an immersive experience that resonates with customers and strengthens their connection to the brand.

Adapting layouts for convenience and growth

Modern dining behaviors have reshaped the way restaurants use their spaces. Traditional layouts, which once maximized seating and relegated other

functions to smaller back-of-house areas, no longer meet the growing demand for delivery, grab-and-go, and other convenience-focused options. Restaurants must rethink their layouts to incorporate dedicated zones for packaging, order pickup, and streamlined workflows.

These adjustments improve operational efficiency, enhance accessibility from the exterior, and create separate pathways for fast in-and-out pickup, reducing congestion at the main entrance. Not only do these changes optimize flow, but they also create a smoother, more satisfying experience for customers. Updating layouts is no longer optional—it's essential to meet the needs of today's fast-moving world.

For example, Hillstone Restaurant Group (e.g., Houston's) has reworked layouts in select locations to include designated parking and discreet pickup areas, offering a seamless takeout experience while maintaining their polished, customer-focused atmosphere. Similarly, Chipotle has introduced digital kitchens with separate pickup entrances and shelves for on-line orders, catering to delivery drivers and customers without disrupting the dine-in experience.

The role of technology: Supporting human-centered experiences

While design takes center stage, technology enhances and supports the restaurant experience. Artificial intelligence (AI), for example, has revolutionized both operations and customer

See 2025 VISION page 9

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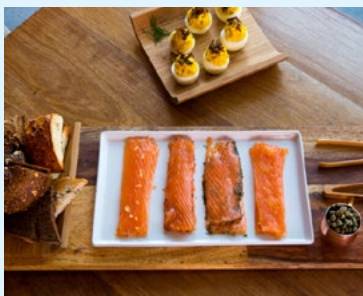
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Featured City Washington DC

Charlie Palmer Steak, closed its Capitol Hill location after over 20 years November 29 2024. The restaurant and its landlord were unable to reach an agreement on the terms of new lease after “lengthy discussions,” according to an email statement. It opened in 2003. They have other restaurants in Reno, NV and California.

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆
◆ **Chef David Teyf, has opened “Lox” at the Jewish Museum in**

New York City. The Museum is located at [1109 5th Ave](#). The menu at the kosher cafe, which specializes in the Ashkenazi-style cured salmon, will be similar to that of Teyf’s other Lox restaurant, which has been operating at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in Battery Park City since 2016.



Anthony, and Joseph Azzouz, Urban Roast opened its doors in the summer of 2020.

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆
SAGRADA, a new and upcoming restaurant from KNEAD Hospitality + Design, will open at 1901 14th St NW in D.C. in 2025. Based in Washington, DC, KNEAD Hospitality + Design

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆
Also opening at 15 E Street NW in Washington, D.C., is **Lucille’s Vintage Chophouse**. It is slated for a January opening. It is led by Chef Matt Baker of 101 Hospitality and is located inside the Kimpton George Hotel.



◆ ◆ ◆ ◆
◆ **Opening by Spring 2025 at 620 Maine Ave SW in D.C. is Urban Roast.** This is their 2nd location. The

is a multi-unit restaurant group which conceptualizes, designs and operates a variety of full-service and fast-casual restaurants which create unique dining experiences. This will be their 11th concept. SAGRADA is described at a unique multicourse menu place with a Mexico vibe. 



TRN FEATURED RESTAURANTS WASHINGTON

◆ Today’s Restaurant Features

Chef Andre Rush White House Chef to the Present

Washington, DC - Andre Rush is an American [celebrity chef](#) and [military veteran](#). He worked in the White House as a Chef for four administrations. Rush, a retired [Master Sergeant](#) of the [U.S. Army](#), gained additional attention for his large biceps and muscular physique.

Culinary Career

Rush enlisted in the [U.S. Army](#) in 1993. He has been deployed overseas several times, and served as a trainer in hand-to-hand combat and food service. In 1997, Rush began to work as a chef at the [White House](#). He has served the presidential administrations of [Bill Clinton](#), [George W. Bush](#), [Barack Obama](#) and [Donald Trump](#).

He worked at the White House part-time while simultaneously working at [The Pentagon](#). He was in the gym of the Pentagon when it was hit during the [September 11, 2001 attacks](#), and chose to volunteer for combat duties afterwards. He was also a member of the U.S. Army Culinary Arts Team.

In June 2018, Rush received fame when he was photographed by [CNN](#) reporter Kate Bennett and Wall Street Journal reporter Vivian Salama preparing a [Ramadan](#) meal for a White House dinner. The photo of him cooking on the [White House](#) lawn during the annual [White House Iftar dinner](#) circulated on [Twitter](#), and subsequently [went viral](#). Later that year, he signed a deal to

He was in the gym of the Pentagon when it was hit during the September 11, 2001 attacks, and chose to volunteer for combat duties afterwards.

Rush grew up in [Columbus, Mississippi](#). He played football in the position of [running back](#) at Lee High School in Columbus. He holds a bachelor’s degree in Business Management from [Trident University International](#) and an associate degree in Hotel Restaurant Management from [Central Texas College](#).



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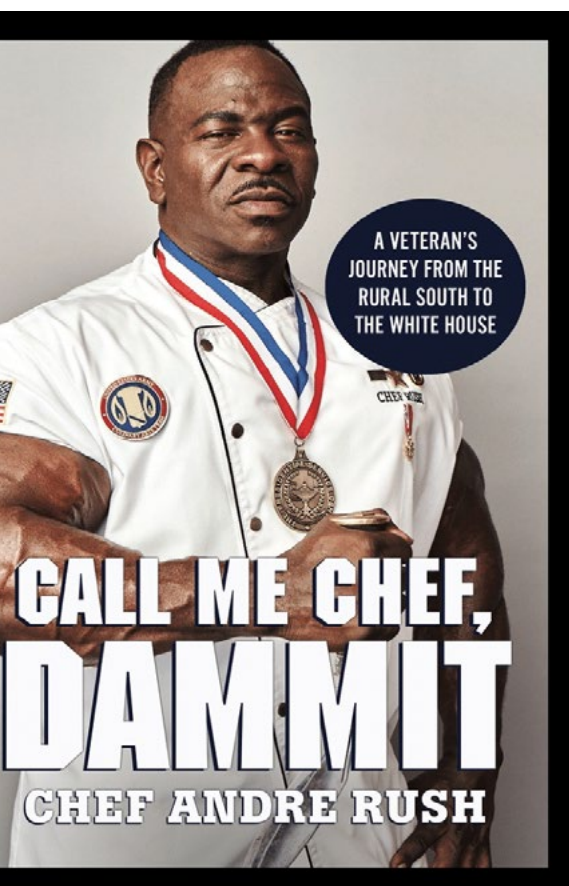




RESTAURANT CITY WASHINGTON, DC

Franchised Person of the Month • —


Andre Rush Presidents has a New Book



Commando, a show about helping struggling restaurants in the DMV Area. It was produced by Gordon Ramsay and premiered on Tubi in 2024, he was featured in Culinary Class Wars, a South Korean cooking challenge show broadcast by Netflix. In his episode, he participated in a restaurant challenge amongst YouTubers. Courtesy of Wikipedia

Chef Rush's Book 'Call Me Chef, Dammit!'

From his website:
"What does it take to go from growing up in a Mississippi housing project to becoming a master sergeant and a celebrity chef serving in the White House under four United States presidents? "Call Me Chef, Dammit! is the inspiring story of Andre Rush, who became an overnight sensation in 2018, after a photograph of his now-famous twenty-four-inch biceps went viral. However, his

journey to that moment could never be captured in a fleeting moment. Visit his website to order his book online: www.ChefRush.com. 

produce a television show entitled Chef in the City. He has since left his job as a White House chef.

In 2023, Rush starred in Kitchen



Vision 2025 from page 7

interactions. AI helps streamline processes like inventory management, staffing, and order predictions, reducing waste and improving efficiency.

For customers, technology like augmented reality (AR) menus and AI-powered chatbots enhances personalization and convenience. Customers can view 3D visualizations of menu items or receive tailored recommendations based on their preferences, creating a more engaging and interactive experience.

It's important to note, however, that technology should enhance—not replace—the human connection that makes dining special. Strategic implementation of these tools should complement, not overshadow, the design and customer experience.

Franchise-ready design for scalable success

For restaurants looking to expand, franchise-ready design systems are critical. Detailed style guides, scalable prototypes, and vendor partnerships help maintain brand consistency across multiple locations while allowing for localized adaptations. These systems ensure a brand remains recognizable and impactful, no matter where it's located—whether in an airport, stadium, or urban center.

More than ever, old-school layouts are being replaced with strategic

designs that prioritize functionality, flexibility, and brand consistency. Restaurants that adapt to these changes are better equipped to meet customer needs and remain competitive in today's dynamic market.

2025 and beyond: Setting the standard for restaurant design

As we move closer to 2025, the restaurant industry's evolution shows no signs of slowing down. Brands that focus on customer-first interiors, flexible layouts, and smart technology will lead the way in delivering exceptional experiences.

Successful restaurants will be those that adapt not just to trends, but to the ever-changing needs of their customers. By crafting thoughtful environments and leveraging technology strategically, restaurants can create experiences that leave a lasting impression and drive both loyalty and growth. **TR**

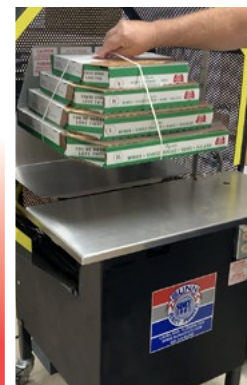
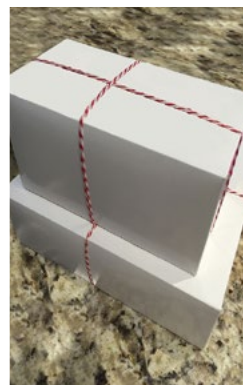
About the Author: Joemy Vega is the Founder and VP of Design at DV Studio in Orlando. We are a hospitality design firm specializing in restaurant interiors. DV Studio, team creates immersive, brand-driven ecosystems that include interiors, environmental graphics, uniform design, sensory programs, and procurement.

Joemy Vega and DV Studio are located at 255 S. Orange Avenue, Suite 104 in Orlando, Florida, 32801. Contact Joemy by phone at 407.630.7308, online at www.dv-studio.net or by email at info@dv-studio.net.



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Restaurant Supervisor or Restaurant Manager?

David Scott Peters ♦ Today's Restaurant Contributor

Understanding the dynamics of your management team is crucial for a smooth operation. Specifically, let's talk about the difference between a lead or line supervisor, and a manager.

Let's kick things off by defining who belongs in each category.

In one column, we have leads and supervisors. These are your hourly team members, including leads, supervisors, key employees, persons in charge and senior team members. They're the ones in the trenches, often working a station while supervising at the same time.

On the other side, we have managers. This group includes hourly managers in training (MITs), salaried managers, assistant managers and general managers. These individuals are in plain clothes, focusing solely on managing and ensuring the shift works properly.

Now, let's explore the day-to-day responsibilities of each role. Both leads and managers are essential for running shifts, handling opening and closing tasks, and keeping the restaurant machine running smoothly. However, their paths diverge in some key areas.


Leads are hands-on, working closely with the frontline workers, often a part of the tip pool. (Remember that

depending on the state, hourly supervisors may have restrictions on being part of the tip pool, so it's essential to check local regulations.)

Managers, on the other hand, shoulder more extensive responsibilities. They dive deep into the systems that run your business – from inventory management and scheduling to team training and accountability. They are your strategic partners, focused not just on day-to-day operations but also on ensuring the restaurant's long-term success. Managers are not part of the tip pool by law, emphasizing their broader responsibilities.

Regardless of the title, having a manager-type present on every shift is vital for success. They play a crucial role in setting up, taking care of guests, and filling in the gaps, especially during short-staffed or challenging times. This agility and foresight are essential in the dynamic world of restaurants.

Consider this scenario: a key employee is juggling serving tables while managing. It can be challenging for them to foresee problems, and when issues arise, they might be too swamped to attend to guest requests. Managers, with their experience, can anticipate and address problems quickly, ensuring a seamless dining experience.

There are a lot of different ways to build a team so that you have a lead/supervisor/manager on every shift because that is essential. And when it comes to deciding who should take on these roles, remember, it's not just about filling positions; it's about empowering leaders who can make real-time decisions, uplift the team and ensure guests leave with a smile. 

About David Scott Peters: David Scott Peters is an author, speaker, restaurant expert and coach who coaches restaurant operators how to stop being prisoners of their businesses and to finally achieve financial freedom. His first book, *Restaurant Prosperity Formula: What Successful Restaurateurs Do*, teaches the systems and traits restaurant owners must develop to run a profitable restaurant. Thousands of restaurants have worked with Peters to transform their businesses. Get his free 30-minute training video online at <http://www.davidscottspeters.com>.

What's Going On from page 6

Georgia-based Parker's Kitchen expects to open at least four gas station and convenience stores in NE Florida by the of 2026. Amanda Thompson is Parker's Kitchen senior director of real estate and development. There are other locations planned as well.



Supplies, and Service, has acquired Dubick

Fixture and Supply, a leading seller of Food Equipment to restaurants and commercial kitchens in northern Ohio. The transaction closed on Nov 26th, and an official announcement was made to Dubicks employees at the Company's Cleveland headquarters November 27th.

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3	Chef Driver	brand new	1481 E Irlo	St. Cloud	34771	407 556-5137 ext. 407		chris@froz-n.com
4	Owners An	specializing	1375 S Serr	Orlando	32807	407 704-2248		info@tasteofyucatan.com
5	Owner Scot	was Knead	1173 Edgev	Jacksonville	32205	904 398-10 Spring 201		info@maplestreetbiscuits.com
6	Peter Tsiali	also 15,000	728 Northv	Miami	33127	305 638-70 TBD checke		info@woodtavern.com
7	Jose Garcia		1657 N Mia	Miami	33136	786 329-08 Nov - Dec 2		info@taulafresh.com
8	Chef Marcc	Poinciana F	340 Royal F	Palm Beach	33480	212 966-27 Nov - Dec 2		Marco.barbisotti@santambroeus.com
9	Owners Chi	was McGov	321 West F	Decatur	30030	404 469-6863		scoutoakhursthiring@gmail.com
10	Co-owner Victor	Erazo	3975 Holco	Norcross	30092	470 395-7936		victor@peachtree-cafe.com
11	Elijah Sleigt	(NY Based)	3150 Hwy 3	Newnan	30263	678 423-8694		duffsnewnan@gmail.com
12	Chef Jason	was Mezza	2751 Lavist	Decatur	30033	404 330-83 Nov - Dec 2		hello@kitchensioakgrove.com
13	Daniel Kim,	(they have	3492 Satel	Duluth	30097	770 302-22 Late Nov -		lcs@boxete.com
14	Owners De	The old Sm	282 Norma	Valdosta	31601	850 629-40 TBD checke		Wahoosaefoodgrill.tally@gmail.com
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Ring in the New Year with a new you

Set goals and do whatever it takes to achieve them

John Tschohl ♦ Today's Restaurant Contributor

Each new year brings with it new opportunities. One of those opportunities is to be the best, most productive—and most admired—employee in your company. Another opportunity is to be the best boss in the company.

The first step in both cases is to conduct a personal assessment of your skills and attitudes and identify the areas you need to improve. To do this effectively, it's imperative that you are honest.

If you are an employee, here are some questions you need to ask yourself:

Do I wait for directions or instructions, or do I figure out what needs to be done—and then do it? If you don't do this, you run the risk of becoming complacent, and you will not perform in a manner that will increase your chances of being recognized and rewarded.

Do I think outside the box? Throw out those creative ideas, and watch what happens. Others will respect you for proposing ways to address issues or move things along in a way they haven't considered. Identify what

you would change—and then change it. Creativity leads to innovation, which leads to success.

Am I afraid to take chances—afraid to fail? If you answer "yes" to this, you won't advance your career. Identify and analyze your fears, dissect them, and develop a plan to overcome them. Step outside your comfort zone.

Do I believe in myself? It's

critical that you believe you can do whatever you set your mind to do. Energize yourself, develop a self-improvement plan that includes your skills, your attitudes, and your plans for the future. Use self-affirmations every day. If you don't believe in yourself, you can't expect others to.

Do I ask for feedback? When you

do this, it will help you understand how well you are performing and help you develop a plan to move forward. Be open to honest feedback; don't take it personally, and don't get defensive.

If you are a boss, ask yourself these questions:

Do I acknowledge the work my employees do and recognize their achievements? When you do this, you will motivate employees to do more and to do better.

Do I praise my employees, reward them, and value them? When your employees feel valued, secure, and supported, they will make empowered decisions and be willing to take risks. When they do that, they will drive your business to greater heights.

Do I make time to communicate honestly and openly? Let your employees know what you expect of them—and then ask how you can help them accomplish their goals. Ask for their feedback. Employees—especially those on the front lines—see barriers to providing exceptional service to your customers that you don't necessarily see.

Do I provide employees with the

Keeping your promises builds trust and increases employees' loyalty to you and your company.

tools they need to do their jobs? Help your employees refine and expand their skills by providing consistent and continued training. When you do this, you will boost their self-esteem and confidence to exceed expectations.

Do I deliver on my promises? This is critical; if you say you're going to do something, do it. Keeping your promises builds trust and increases employees' loyalty to you and your company.

Whether you're an employee or a boss, set goals for the new year that will move you toward becoming a "new you." Seize each day with energy, self-confidence, and determination.

For information on John Tschohl and the Service Quality Institute, visit www.customer-service.com.



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Winterizing from page 1

area for umbrellas, allowing them to dry and stay out of the way to prevent water from accumulating indoors. Keeping spare umbrellas handy for emergencies is a thoughtful gesture for guests caught in sudden storms. To keep the cold air out, check the seals around windows and doors, ensuring that drafts are minimized and that the interior remains warm and comfortable. Make sure your heating system is efficient, especially in sections of the restaurant that may be more prone to temperature fluctuations.

During inclement weather, paying attention to the condition of your floors is crucial. Wet floors can become a safety hazard, so regularly mop and dry them to avoid slips, while keeping your dining area polished and inviting. Offering a space for guests to hang coats and jackets adds a welcoming touch, and also helps keep your dining space clutter-free.

Adjusting your menu for the colder months is another important aspect of winterizing. Introduce seasonal drinks that evoke the mood of fall and winter, and pair them with comfort foods such as hearty soups, chili, and dishes featuring winter vegetables. This kind of menu not only appeals to the season but also draws in customers looking for warm, satisfying meals. Offering early bird dinner specials can cater to diners who prefer to venture out earlier, as darkness sets in sooner during winter.

If your restaurant offers outdoor seating, don't neglect it just because

the weather turns colder. Maintaining outdoor heaters and shades will allow you to keep this space open for customers who still want to dine al fresco. Offering cozy outdoor options sets your restaurant apart from others that may shut down their outdoor areas entirely during the winter months.

Taking these extra steps will protect your restaurant, ensure smooth operations, and help maintain a welcoming atmosphere all season long.


As the holiday season approaches, adding festive decorations can make your restaurant an attractive destination for guests seeking a celebratory environment. Holiday-themed decor, both inside and out, creates a welcoming atmosphere and encourages customers to visit for holiday gatherings. Promote your catering services for holiday parties and offer the option of hosting events at your restaurant, which can bring in extra revenue during this busy season.

Winterizing your restaurant also involves taking proactive measures to prevent any potential weather-related issues. In addition to snow and ice

removal from walkways and parking lots, inspect the condition of your roof and gutters to avoid leaks or structural issues caused by heavy snowfall. Stock up on de-icing products, and ensure your team is trained to handle weather-related challenges that might arise.

By thoroughly winterizing your restaurant, you can ensure a warm, comfortable space that attracts customers even during the coldest months. From functional heating and seasonal menu items to exterior lighting and holiday decorations, each aspect contributes to the overall experience, keeping

guests coming back throughout winter. Taking these extra steps will protect your restaurant, ensure smooth operations, and help maintain a welcoming atmosphere all season long.

Make today a great day. Make it happen. Make it count! 

About the Author: With more than 40 years of experience in small business, restaurant, and franchise management, marketing, and development, Paul Segreto is a respected expert in the entrepreneurial world, dedicated to helping others achieve success. Whether you're an aspiring or current entrepreneur in need of guidance, support, or simply a conversation, you can connect with Paul at paul@acceler8success.com.

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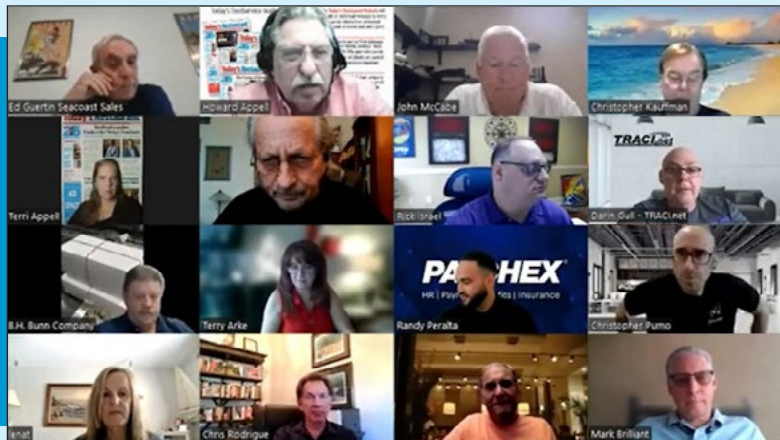
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