

Today's Restaurant

THE FOODSERVICE INDUSTRY AUTHORITY

VOLUME 29

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New survey shows...

Ohio hospitality overwhelmingly oppose proposed new tipping system

The survey, released by the Ohio Restaurant & Hospitality Alliance, was conducted by Dr. Lloyd Corder of Carnegie Mellon University and includes responses from nearly 1,000 Ohio tipped workers.

Columbus, OH – Recently, the Ohio Restaurant & Hospitality Alliance (ORHA) released the results of a new survey showing that the state's local servers, bartenders and other tipped employees are strongly opposed to a proposed ballot measure that would eliminate Ohio's existing tip credit system. The results are staggering and clear as 93% of Ohio servers and bartenders responded that they want to keep the current tipping system.

The online survey was conducted in April 2024 by national research and consulting firm CorCom Inc., which is led by Dr. Lloyd Corder, a professor at Carnegie Mellon University. It received 990 individual responses from tipped employees currently working at full-service restaurants in Ohio and had a margin of error of 3%.

Key findings from the survey include the following:

- ◆ 93% of servers and bartenders say they want to keep the current system with a base wage and tips that provide the ability to earn more than the minimum wage.



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- ◆ 91% agree that the current tipping system works well for them and does not need to be changed.
- ◆ 83% of tipped employees say they are earning \$20 per hour or more while 64% of tipped employees say they are earning \$25 to more than \$40 per hour.
- ◆ 85% say they can maximize tips through excellent customer service.
- ◆ 69% say they can make more money than they could in a job in other sectors.
- ◆ 64% like having schedule flexibility.
- ◆ If tipped wages are eliminated, 91% believe that tipped employees will earn less money.
- ◆ 85% of servers and bartenders believe that customers are unlikely to continue tipping on top of any mandatory service charge.

Under existing law, Ohio's tip credit allows the operator to pay a portion of the tipped employee's hourly minimum wage, with the rest of their income being made up by tips. By law, no worker in an Ohio restaurant ever makes less than the state minimum wage for every hour they work. In the face of a potential ballot measure from an out-of-state special interest group attempting to eliminate the tipped wage and fast-track the state minimum wage, Ohio servers and bartenders are imploring the dining public to protect tips in Ohio.

"I've been in the industry 20 years and love it because of the people, especially my regulars," said Lindsay Odell, a bartender at Submarine House in Huber Heights. "I make good money – well above \$30 an hour – working at Submarine House where we serve wings, pizza, burgers, and of course, subs. I am the breadwinner in my family because of the restaurant industry. My husband is an engineer and I make more money than he does. The proposed change is said to help me, but to be very clear, I will make less money while my regulars pay more for a cheesesteak and a beer."

Ohio's restaurant and hospitality industry is the third largest private employer in the state employing 564,000

See **TIPPING SYSTEM** page 4

Click me to see if your company is eligible for ERC funds!



Latest LIVE! Destination-LIVE! AT THE POINTE ORLANDO

Orlando, FL — The Cordish Companies announced that their 73,000-square-foot dining and entertainment destination at Pointe Orlando will take on the Company's nationally acclaimed Live! hospitality and entertainment brand. **LIVE! AT THE POINTE ORLANDO** will bring a unique food and beverage, social, nightlife and special event experience to Orlando's tourism corridor when it opens this fall.

Located on International Drive, Live! at The Pointe Orlando will be just a short drive from Orlando's major theme parks and across the street from the Orange County Convention Center. The Company also announced two new venues for the project – **HOUNDSMEN ENGLISH LOUNGE** and **SHARK BAR** – joining previously announced anchor concepts **SPORTS & SOCIAL** and **PBR COWBOY BAR**. A major announcement of an additional two-level anchor

concept will be happening within the next few weeks.

In Florida, Cordish was the original development partner of the Seminole Tribe of Florida for Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood and Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa, two of the most successful casino entertainment resorts in the world. Further demonstrating their strong commitment to the State of Florida, Cordish recently

See **LIVE! DESTINATION** page 12



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Appell Pie

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Howard Appell ♦ Today's Restaurant Publisher

It's Mother's Day 2024 and there are no children for thousands of miles so we decided to have a leisurely day. By four o'clock we had enough leisure and decided to try and go out for dinner at Texas Roadhouse. We called the restaurant and got the expected answer that there was an eighty-five-minute wait so we put our name on the list via their wait-list app and scheduled our departure time from our house.

Mother's Day in Florida is usually the last weekend before the Summer heat and humidity arrive for the next six months, but it arrived early this year. The heat index was around a hundred and there were people waiting outside the main entrance for their name to be called. No one passed out yet.


*Texas Roadhouse
has always been high
on my list of well-run
restaurants with high
volume food, good
service and a friendly
atmosphere...*

Texas Roadhouse has always been high on my list of well-run restaurants with high volume food, good service and a friendly atmosphere, but this Mother's Day they went above and beyond customer care. (I don't know if they have a standard procedure for high volume days at every location since this was the first time we attempted to get in on a holiday.) Two square portable canopies were erected on the grass with bench seating for those who needed to stay in the shade. A table with two drink

dispensers was alongside the canopies and games were set up for kids and adults to play alongside.

We waited about ten minutes under the canopy and received our text message alerting us to enter the lobby to be seated. We waited by the butcher counter/bakery mentally selecting the type of steak we wanted to order while watching baskets of hot yeast rolls beginning their journey to waiting diners. The hostess then showed us to our table. All in all, it was not a bad experience for the busiest day of the year in a restaurant.

While preparing to write this column I came across an online article entitled 14 Things You Should Know About Texas Roadhouse (www.tastingtable.com/1589197/things-to-know-about-texas-roadhouse). I did not know you can buy a candle that smells just like a warm basket of Texas Roadhouse classic rolls with delectable honey cinnamon butter.

May 30th is my birthday and every year we rack our brains to go or do something to include our two Florida granddaughters and keep them involved before during and after dinner. This year while discussing where to go to celebrate the oldest one overheard the suggestion to go to Texas Roadhouse and she yelled out, "Yeah, the place with the hot cinnamon butter rolls?" She had never been there but must have heard about it from one of her friends. That was all we needed to hear, it was set. Amazingly my son and daughter-in-law are not meat eaters and they graciously gave in to our night of down-home country fun. Country music, line dancing and fun for the whole family along with my favorite 12-ounce rib eye, Caesar salad and green beans. Oh yeah don't forget the peanuts! Yee Haw. 



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What's Going On

Important new products, corporate news and industry events

The unique Japanese dining experience of **Pepper Lunch** is soon entering Florida, as the Majestic Restaurant Group announced an ambitious plan to open 10 locations across the state within the next five years. Ferdian Jap, the entrepreneurial force behind Majestic Restaurant Group, has set his sights on bringing the experiential fast casual dining concept to the sunny landscapes of Tampa, Orlando, and Gainesville. This venture into the Pepper Lunch franchise signifies a new chapter for the group, which currently operates successful Asian cuisine concepts like Zukku Sushi and ATO Poke, among others.

◆◆◆◆◆
◆ Detwiler's Farm Market has recently broke ground on a new facility. Their new main distribution center will be located at Florida International Tradeport in Palmetto. The family-owned and operated grocery chain house and distribution center, and will be their main center for its stores between Palmetto and Venice. The markets offer Seafood and Meats along with locally sourced



The best of the best in foodservice produce use have been named by the **International Fresh Produce Association**. Sponsored by FreshEdge®, The **Produce Excellence in Foodservice Awards program** pays special tribute to chefs and foodservice operations for their produce innovation, creativity, and all-around excellence in the use of fresh produce in the culinary arts. Winners gain global recognition and a trip to **The Foodservice Conference** from IFPA, July 25-26 in Monterey, Calif. "We are honored to offer this platform that recognizes these foodservice professionals for their produce prowess," said IFPA vice president Joe Watson. "Nominated by their peers, these honorees drive produce consumption by offering unique, delicious, produce-forward dishes.

produce, Bakery & Desserts along with many other items. Sam Detwiler is the President of the company. Visit the company online at: www.detwilermarket.com.



Battle Creek, Mich. The contribution reflects the generosity of Wings Etc. consumers and the mission of the Wings Etc. Foundation formed in September 2023. Administered by leaders in the Wings Etc. Grill & Pub franchise organization and its affiliated companies, the foundation passionately pursues a simple, vital mission: "Improving children's lives."



◆◆◆◆◆
◆ Hobart has introduced its new CL conveyor type commercial dishwasher series with features designed to save time and money and simplify operation. **The series has been awarded the 2024 Kitchen Innovations® (KI) Award from the National Restaurant Show (NRA)** due to its cutting-edge technology. "We are honored to be

recognized by NRA for this innovation in commercial dishwashing equipment and are thrilled to introduce our latest innovation in high-volume washing technology," said Jaehan Kim, product manager for Hobart Warewash. "With simplified and improved cleaning and maintenance features, the CL offers



Wings Etc. of Fort Wayne, Indiana was pleased to present St. Jude Children's Research Hospital with a check for \$50,000 at the Wings Etc. Brand Summit held April 15-17 at FireKeepers Casino Hotel in

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

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Leadership transitions announced at Welbilt



Clint Reed



Marcy Mathews

Vernon Hills, IL – Filippo Berti, Chairman and CEO of the Ali Group, has announced several organizational changes to become effective immediately.

After a 17-year tenure in various roles with the Ali Group, Will Means, President of Beverage-Air and Victory, has departed from his current position as of late April.

In response to this leadership change, Ali Group is pleased to announce that Clint Reed, currently serving as President of Delfield and Kolpak, will assume the role of Interim President for both Beverage-Air and Victory. Reed will oversee the day-to-day operations of these companies while continuing in his role as President at Kolpak. In his expanded role, he will have direct oversight of all North American refrigeration companies within the group, including Beverage-Air®, Delfield®, Harford™, Kolpak®, RDI® and Victory®.

Additionally, Ali Group is delighted to announce the appointment of Marcy Mathews as the new President of Delfield. Mathews will manage the

day-to-day operations of the company and is expected to bring her vast experience and innovative approach to this role.

"We are immensely grateful to Will for his dedicated service and significant contributions to the Ali Group over the years," said Berti. "We are equally excited for Clint and Marcy as they step into their new roles. We believe their leadership will guide our brands to continued success and innovation in the commercial refrigeration industry." 

About the Ali Group: Founded in 1963 by Luciano Berti, the Ali Group is an Italian corporation with headquarters located in Milan, Italy, and North American operations based in Chicago, Illinois. Through its subsidiaries, the company designs, manufactures, markets, and services a broad line of commercial and institutional foodservice equipment used by major restaurant and hotel chains, independent restaurants, hospitals, schools, airports, correctional institutions, and canteens.

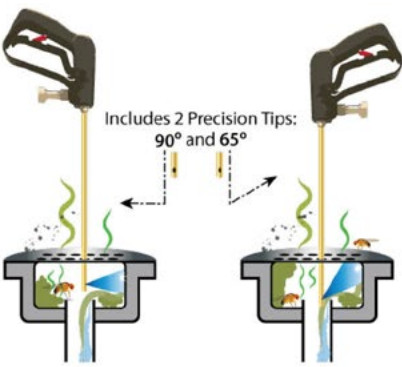
The Ali Group – aligroup.com - and its more than 110 global brands employs approximately 14,500 people in 29 countries and, in terms of sales, is the world's largest group in this industry. It has 74 manufacturing facilities in 17 countries and sales and service subsidiaries throughout Europe, the Middle East, Africa, North America, South America, and Asia Pacific.

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Tipping system from page 1

Ohioans. In Ohio, and nationally, the median income for tipped workers is \$27 an hour, far above the proposed changes.

"The results of this study send a thunderous message: servers and bartenders do not want this outside group to mess with their tips," said John Barker, president & CEO of the Ohio Restaurant and Hospitality Alliance. "Eliminating the tipped wage would negatively impact their earning potential. It will also force restaurant operators to raise menu prices to cover higher labor costs, which would drive further inflation. It would also decrease their workforce, as we have seen in Washington, D.C., where the tip credit is being eliminated. There's no question that our industry does not want the tip credit eliminated."

"I am an independent restaurant operator in the heart of downtown Cleveland and Mallorca was a dream come true for my family 28 years ago," said Laurie Torres, owner & operator of Mallorca Restaurant. "Most of my

service team members have worked at Mallorca for 15+ years and make \$40 per hour, on average. I've run the numbers and now share two menus with customers; one with my current prices and a second where my menu prices would have to rise about 22% to cover the elimination of the tipped wage. Time and time again, customers say they would visit less often and tip less dollars. If the ballot initiative passes, my guests would pay more, my servers would make less and there is a real chance I would have to close my restaurant and lose my dream."

The study is one of more than a dozen conducted by Dr. Corder and his firm on tipped wages in recent months. "In most of these surveys, we get 300-400 responses, but in Ohio we got nearly 1,000 responses," said Dr. Corder. "That gives us a margin of error of plus or minus 3%. In other words, you can be very confident that the results are accurate and reflective of what all tipped workers in Ohio think." 



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Colombia avocados continue to grow in U.S. market presence

Orlando, FL – Colombia, a global supplier of Hass avocados is currently at the peak of its travesia season. The travesia season typically runs April through August and can peak anytime between May and June.

Currently during the peak of this season, the U.S. market can expect arrivals of more than 50 containers a week of avocados from Colombia and the volume will decrease gradually over the course of the season.

The growth of the Colombia avocado market comes on the heels of continued year-over-year increases of double and triple digits and maturity of the Colombian growing regions. Today, more than a dozen state of the art packing sheds and more than 400 growers are certified to ship Hass avocados to the U.S. market.

Colombian avocados are available year-round and due to the region's tropical climate, have varied blooms and harvest times with two distinct harvest seasons. The seasons include the current travesia season and the main season that runs September to January.

Manuel Michel, Executive Director of the Colombia Avocado Board (CAB) remarked, "Colombia is at a crossroads of opportunity that is generating economic development and the Hass avocado sector is spearheading efforts in



Manuel Michel


For 2024, shipments are projected to increase by over 50%, reaching a total volume of 50 million pounds for the entire year.

sustainability thanks to their rich agricultural heritage and commitment to maintaining biodiversity through environmental stewardship." Michel continued, "CAB is excited to be part of the



ongoing development and to support the avocado growers, exporters and importers as they invest in Colombia and leverage their logistical advantage to the East Coast."

Colombia has produced and distributed avocados for decades, however, the growth and popularity of Colombia Avocados has expanded due to access to U.S. market starting in 2018 along with expanding country infrastructure improvements. The 2023 season concluded with its highest shipment totals ever, exceeding 32 million pounds. For 2024, shipments are projected to increase by over 50%, reaching a total volume of 50 million pounds for the entire year.

Colombia is a global avocado exporter with unique advantages thanks to a growing region with reliable rainfall and direct worldwide distribution. CAB has been vital to the success of their grower and importer partners as they partner with global competition for maximum reach which has proven successful for everyone involved. 

About Colombia Avocado Board: The mission of CAB is to build the tools to work in sync with HAB to cultivate consumers in the United States by aligning growers, exporters, and importers together under one cohesive marketing effort focused on Colombian avocados. CAB was certified by USDA on January 7, 2020, under the authorization of the Hass Avocado Promotion, Research, and Information Act of 2000 (7 U.S.C. 7801-7813). For more information or a full list of the Board of Directors and committee assignments, visit the "About the CAB" section of avocadoscolombia.com or contact Manuel Michel, Managing Director of CAB at mmichel@AvocadosColombia.com.

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What's Going On from page 3

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praising its effectiveness and ease of use. Lois L. of the Four Seasons Catering and Banquet Hall, a satisfied customer, shared, “The Drain Wizard worked wonders on my facility’s kitchen drains and lines. It has kept my facility clean and free from those common dank and heavy odors that frequent such facilities.” For more details: Doug Mendoza 954.646.1409 Email: doug@twbinnovations.com twbinnovations.com. See ad on page 7 of this issue.



◆ Chicago based **The Buona Companies** recently announced a series of multi-unit development agreements with 10 new franchise groups to expand its footprint in new markets. Orlando and Tampa are two of the new markets and with Dallas and Ft Worth, Texas. The agreements of these and other states make up over 30 new restaurants slated to open over the course of the next few years. Concepts include: **The Original Rainbow Cone** has been a Chicago tradition for over 95 years. “We still stack the same five flavors today: Orange Sherbet, Pistachio, Palmer House,



Rafael Thissen

Strawberry, and Chocolate. We slice (not scoop) these flavors into a cone or a cup.” The Buona Companies also has **Buona the Original Italian Beef** restaurants as well.



◆◆◆◆
Hoshizaki America, Inc., a leading innovator in commercial kitchen equipment, is has just broken ground on its new two-story warehouse, located adjacent to its current manufacturing facility in Peachtree City, GA. The

groundbreaking marks the beginning of construction for a 120,000 square foot facility that will revolutionize Hoshizaki’s material flow throughout fabrication and assembly processes for its commercial ice machines. on in March 2024, with completion slated for June 2025, the new facility will bring component warehousing back on-site. Allan Dziwoki is the President of Hoshizaki America.



◆ **Refrigerated Solutions Group (RSG), featuring industry-leading brands Norlake and Master-Bilt, recently announced an addition to its team. Rafael Thissen** joined RSG as Key Account Director in April. He is a highly respected industry veteran with deep relationships within the food-service industry. Rafael’s extensive

culinary and operations background will make him an excellent partner for our valued key customers. Rafael was most recently with H&K International as the Senior Account Executive. He was instrumental in managing all aspects of new account development. Before H&K, he was Director of Client Development at Rational and the Global Corporate Chef at Duke Manufacturing. Visit them online at norlake.com.



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See **WHAT'S GOING ON** page 14

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Understanding the growing disparity in the restaurant industry



Paul Segreto ♦ Today's Restaurant Contributor

In recent times, the restaurant industry has witnessed a dramatic dichotomy. While some well-known restaurant brands and large franchisee groups are declaring bankruptcy, others are being acquired for substantial sums by private equity firms. This disparity raises important questions about the underlying forces shaping the industry and what the future holds for these businesses.

The contrasting fortunes of restaurant brands can be attributed to several key factors:

Adaptation to New Consumer Behaviors

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated changes in consumer behavior, including an increase in demand for delivery and takeout services, and a preference for digital ordering systems. Restaurants that quickly adapted to these changes by integrating robust delivery systems, digital ordering, and contactless services tended to thrive. On the other hand, those that failed to pivot or were slow to adapt often struggled to maintain their customer base.

Financial Resilience and Management

Restaurants with stronger balance sheets and better financial management were more equipped to withstand

the shocks brought on by the pandemic and other economic pressures such as inflation and rising labor costs. These brands often had the capital needed to invest in technology and expand their footprint. Conversely, those with high debt levels and poor financial controls found themselves in precarious positions, making them more susceptible to filing for bankruptcy.

Differences in Branding and Market Positioning

Successful restaurant brands often have a strong brand identity and clear market positioning that resonates with their target demographic. This branding helps them retain customer loyalty even in tough times. Brands that lack this strong identity or fail to clearly differentiate themselves often struggle to compete and capture customer interest.

Private Equity Involvement

Private equity firms are increasingly interested in restaurant brands that show potential for growth or operational improvement. These firms often bring in additional resources, operational expertise, and capital to optimize the performance of these brands, making them more viable in the long term. Brands that are not attractive acquisition targets for private equity or

other investors often lack the resources to invest in necessary improvements, leading to their decline.

Future Considerations: A Growing Gap?

As these trends continue, there is a genuine concern that the restaurant industry might become dominated by a few successful players, potentially leading to decreased diversity and innovation within the sector. This potential future raises several considerations:

◆ **Market Consolidation:** As stronger brands continue to thrive and expand, smaller and less financially stable entities may find it increasingly difficult to compete, possibly leading to further consolidations in the industry.

◆ **Innovation and Customer Experience:** The dominance of major players might stifle innovation unless these players actively invest in new technologies and dining experiences to meet evolving consumer demands.

◆ **Economic and Regulatory Influences:** Changes in economic conditions and regulations (such as minimum wage laws and food safety regulations) will also play a critical role in shaping the industry. Brands that can navigate these challenges more effectively will likely emerge stronger.

The disparity in success among restaurant brands highlights the importance of agility, strong financial management, and the ability to anticipate and adapt to changes in consumer preferences and economic conditions. While it is possible the restaurant industry may see a future dominated by a few major players, the ongoing evolution of consumer behaviors and technological advancements provides a counterbalance that could foster new opportunities for innovation and growth. Ultimately, the survival and success of restaurant brands will hinge on their ability to adapt to an ever-changing landscape and the strategic decisions they make in response to these challenges.

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

About Acceler8Success Group Coaching: Acceler8Success Group, with over 70 years of combined experience in entrepreneurship, small business, franchises, and restaurants, is dedicated to helping entrepreneurs and business owners succeed in various economic climates. The group has supported hundreds of franchisors and business owners in meeting their development goals and has helped thousands of individuals and investment groups achieve the American Dream of business ownership, including franchises and restaurants.

About Paul Segreto: Entrepreneurship coaching; management & development consulting; franchises, restaurants, service businesses; thought leader, influencer & content creator; passionate about fueling entrepreneurial spirit.



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Chris is the founder of Restaurant Recruiters of America, a wholly owned subsidiary of Chris Kauffman & Co
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Atlanta, GA - After graduating with a BA in Marketing from Valdosta State University in August of 1973, Chris Kauffman's first career was Assistant Editor of The Southeast Georgian in Kingsland, GA. In the winter of 1974, Chris changed careers from Journalism to Restaurants. When asked, "Why change from Journalism to Restaurants?" Chris said, "I was hungry. And in my Restaurant Management interviews every company had the same great perk of Managers eat free!!" From March of '74 until March of '81, Chris held a series of successively more responsible Restaurant Operations positions with: **Red Lobster, Hyatt Hotels, Steak & Ale / Bennigan's, Magic Pan Restaurants** and Director of Ops for an **Independent Restaurant Company** in North Carolina. Since April 1981 Chris Kauffman has specialized placing All-Star caliber talent for: **Clubs, Hotels, Restaurants, Institutions and Sales.** Chris can be reached at 404-ALL-STAR or text at 912-245-4540. Chris consulted for **Kevin Costner** at his restaurant in Deadwood, S.D.



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Giving back to his industry, in 2003 Chris Kauffman placed Ron Wolf as the CEO of the Georgia Restaurant Association on a pro bono basis. Chris Kauffman is also a professional speaker and entertainer. Kauffman has been seen on **ABC-TV's "Good Morning America"** as well as TV commercials, plus professional voice-over work. In 2019 Kauffman was the **Opening Comedy Act for Roy Clark**, former Host of **Hee-Haw**, at the Civic Center in Savannah, GA. Kauffman's 6 min Demo Reel of his TV Commercials and Comedy (suitable for all audiences) is at www.ChrisKauffman.com. On a volunteer basis in his community, Chris has produced charity comedy shows for the benefit of Crossroads Community Ministries, Atlanta's oldest soup kitchen, helping the homeless in Atlanta find employment, secure benefits and arrange housing. Kauffman's six charity comedy shows produced in excess of **\$100,000 for Crossroads.** **TR**

Here is a sampling of placements by **CHRIS Kauffman & Co.**

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RESTAURANT CITY ATLANTA



Using tech to tackle the labor cost debate

The issue of rising labor costs continues to be a hotly debated topic, but in Chicago, fine-dining Italian concept Adalina has quietly cut weekly labor costs by \$800, and not by reducing head count. At Boqueria, a multi-location tapas concept, results have been even more dramatic. In a single year, management redirected \$100,000+ in labor hours from non-revenue-producing work to high-value tasks.

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Adalina, Boqueria, and other restaurants across the nation are using advanced employee scheduling tools that sync in real-time with their restaurant point-of-sale to:

- ◆ Use historic sales data to take the guesswork out of scheduling and keep labor costs in check
- ◆ Streamline tip management, meaning less time on the clock because servers don't have to distribute cash tips
- ◆ Stay compliant with labor laws to avoid costly fines and lawsuits
- ◆ Automate payroll so data is

accurate and passes directly to their payroll provider

- ◆ Give employees more control over their schedules and faster pay

"SpotOn helped us eliminate ten platforms and multiple processes, making everything more automatic for our administration and teams," says Emma Blecker, Chief of Staff and Director of Business Systems at Boqueria.

With restaurant employees deservedly seeking higher pay and restaurant management fighting rising costs on multiple fronts, the new technology offers a win-win for everyone. **TR**

About SpotOn: SpotOn - www.spoton.com - is one of the leading software and payment companies providing the technology and support that helps local businesses—and the people who run them—to succeed on their own terms. Known for its flexible, cloud-based technology and personalized support, SpotOn offers an end-to-end platform to accept payments, boost revenue, streamline operations, and create exceptional guest experiences. From seamless and efficient point-of-sale systems to integrated restaurant management solutions, SpotOn builds technology that "works the way you work" and backs it up with a 24/7 team of experts that make sure it always does—with fairness, flexibility, and a personal touch.

You can reach Mike Sardone, Hospitality Specialist in the Atlanta area for SpotOn by email at mike.sardone@spoton.com or call 678.231.2279.

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Jeffrey Scott is the Owner-Consultant of Food Service Consulting, Atlanta, GA. Call 607-280-8689 or email jscott@foodservicepride.com. Online at www.foodservicepride.com.



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Red Lobster files voluntary Chapter 11

56-yr-old seafood chain petitions to strengthen financial position and maximize value for stakeholders

Orlando, Florida - Red Lobster Management LLC, along with its direct and indirect operating subsidiaries (“Red Lobster” or “the Company”), owner and operator of the Red Lobster® restaurant chain, has announced at the end of May, that the Company has voluntarily filed for relief under Chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Code in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Middle District of Florida.

The Company intends to use the proceedings to drive operational improvements, simplify the business through a reduction in locations, and pursue a sale of substantially all of its assets as a going concern. As part of these filings, Red Lobster has entered into a stalking horse purchase agreement pursuant to which Red Lobster will sell its business to an entity formed and controlled by its existing term lenders.

Red Lobster’s restaurants will remain open and operating as usual during the Chapter 11 process, continuing to be the world’s largest and most-loved seafood restaurant company. The Company has been working with vendors to ensure that operations are unaffected and

has received a \$100 million debt-or-in-possession financing commitment from its existing lenders.

Jonathan Tibus, the Company’s CEO, said “This restructuring is the best path forward for Red Lobster. It allows us to address several financial and operational challenges and emerge stronger and re-focused on our growth. The support we’ve received from our lenders and vendors will help ensure that we can complete the sale process quickly and efficiently while remaining focused on our employees and guests.”

Thai Union Group, the main seafood supplier owns Red Lobster.

In its bankruptcy filing, Red Lobster stated it employs 36,000 workers that serve 64 million customers per year.

King & Spalding LLP, Berger Singerman LLP and Blake, Cassel & Graydon, LLC are serving as legal advisors. Alvarez & Marsal is serving as financial advisor and providing corporate leadership as Chief Executive and Chief Restructuring Officers. Hilco Corporate Finance is serving as M&A advisor to Red Lobster. Keen-Summit is serving as real estate advisor. **TR**

Hawthorn Supply secures North American distribution for Flavour Blaster JetChill

Louisville, KY - The craft cocktail bubble isn’t going to burst any time soon — in fact, there may be more bubbles, filled with aromatic smoke, along with other innovative and experiential beverage techniques at bars across the country. Hawthorn Supply’s recent exclusive partnership to distribute Flavour Blaster and JetChill products are now a team.



Flavour Blaster is the original “cocktail bubble” tool, allowing for the infusion of custom smoke aromas into food and drinks. It is owned by England-based JetChill Ltd., which also produces dry ice drink machines that create safe

and stunning smoking cold beverages. The company also manufactures lines of glassware, clothes and servingware, all of which will be part of Hawthorn Supply’s portfolio.

Hawthorn Supply, a subsidiary of Hawthorn Innovations, is building on its existing relationship with JetChill and Flavour Blaster — the companies routinely work together on prototyping and ideation of new food and beverage products across the globe.

“At Hawthorn, all our extensions are rooted in innovation — we know from our history working with JetChill and Flavour Blaster that we share the same goal of leaving guests with lasting impressions the bring guests back to our clients,” said Josh Durr, Hawthorn Innovations CEO. Durr said they will work with JetChill and Flavour Blaster on sales, marketing and future product development.

Flavour Blaster inventor Colin Myers echoed Durr’s comments on the close alignment between the companies. “Hawthorn’s creative mindset aligns with our ethos, and we know there will be many exciting projects ahead as we expand our reach in North America.”

Hawthorn Innovations, headquartered in Louisville, Ky., has a 30,000-square-foot facility near the Muhammad Ali International Airport and UPS Worldport shipping hub. **TR**

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LIVE! Destination from page 1

opened Vivo!, a 62,000-square-foot dining and entertainment destination in Miami, and is under crane on a 223-acre master planned mixed-use development in Pompano Beach called The Pomp that combines casino gaming with best-in-class entertainment, retail, dining, hotel, residential, office and lifestyle amenities into one dynamic destination.

LIVE! AT THE POINTE ORLANDO is being developed by Live! Hospitality & Entertainment, a division of The Cordish Companies, with plans to bring approximately 73,000 square feet of immersive indoor and outdoor dining and entertainment space to Pointe Orlando, including 37,000 square feet of exterior gathering space. The world-class dining, entertainment, nightlife and social destination will feature several venues centered around an incredible outdoor **LIVE! PLAZA** that will serve as the living room of the community for special events, live music, sports watching and festivals year-round, giving guests a variety of experiences to enjoy and always a reason to come back. Among the new venues announced so far for the project are:

◆ **HOUNDSMEN ENGLISH LOUNGE** is a thoughtfully considered cocktail lounge that offers a curated list of expertly crafted drinks featuring fine spirits, dark whiskeys and diverse inspiration. With rich interior finishes, wood-paneled walls, low lighting and leather accents, the lounge will offer an elevated space that provides

a sophisticated destination to relax, unwind and gather. The captivating 4,800-square-foot venue will transport guests to the highlands of England, creating a welcoming space for all.

◆ The home of endless summer, **SHARK BAR** brings an endless party to Live! at The Pointe Orlando. The 4,600-square-foot venue offers a spacious interior that blends retro surf with retro cool with vibrant colors, retractable garage doors and plush exterior patio seating, making it the perfect oasis for cocktail parties, receptions, happy hour and late-night social scene. "Riding a mechanical bull at PBR Cowboy Bar, imbibing crafted cocktails in an elevated lounge reminiscent of the English countryside, or watching your favorite sporting events on state-of-art screens in Sports & Social are just a few of the one-of-a-kind experiences you will soon find at the newly renovated Pointe Orlando. The addition of The Cordish Companies' Live! Brand is another example of why Pointe Orlando is Orlando's dining and entertainment destination that embraces sophisticated fun indoors and outdoors," said Matt Ryan, EVP & President South Region for Brixmor Property Group, owner of Pointe Orlando.

◆ **SPORTS & SOCIAL** is the premier restaurant and bar concept in the United States that brings elevated food and drink offerings, premier sports watching, live music, a high energy nightlife, and social games all under one roof. Guests can expect a full menu of

made-from-scratch gameday favorites, curated cocktails and specialty drinks, including its signature Crush selection, and a variety of beer from national brews and local favorites. The two-level, 11,700-square-foot venue will feature one of the best sports watching experiences in the region with its premier game-day Sports Watch activations. Sports & Social will have ample seating inside and out, including multiple signature bars and an indoor/outdoor bar that flows out to the Live! Plaza.

◆ Born from the toughest sport on dirt, the iconic **PBR COWBOY BAR** lives up to its legendary namesake, Professional Bull Riders, which embodies toughness, determination, and a true spirit of independence. PBR Cowboy Bars fuse that spirit with first-class hospitality, bringing an authentic country western experience that marries an electric combination of 'cowboy cool' and big-time entertainment. The 8,400-square-foot venue in Orlando, the 16th location to open in the country, will feature a professionally endorsed mechanical riding bull, multiple signature bars, and private VIP booths, offering an incredible venue for celebrating special occasions and hosting private events. The soul of PBR Cowboy Bar comes alive through its great entertainment, the best in country music, and its rich traditions. PBR Cowboy Bar venues have welcomed some of the biggest names in country music including Luke Bryan, Old Dominion, and Justin Moore. Additionally, each PBR Cowboy

Bar recognizes Freedom Friday, a night of appreciation once a month for all military personnel, veterans, first responders and public service members. **TR**

About The Cordish Companies: The Cordish Companies' origins date back to 1910 and encompass four generations of privately-held, family ownership. During the past ten decades, The Cordish Companies has grown into a global leader in Gaming; Commercial Real Estate; Entertainment Districts; Sports-Anchored Developments; Hotels; Residential Properties; Restaurants; Coworking Spaces; and Private Equity. One of the largest and most respected developers in the world, The Cordish Companies has been awarded an unprecedented seven Urban Land Institute Awards for Excellence for public-private developments that are of unique significance to the cities in which they are located. The Cordish Companies has developed and operates highly acclaimed dining, entertainment and hospitality destinations throughout the United States, many falling under The Cordish Companies' Live! Brand, highly regarded as one of the premier entertainment brands in the country.

About Live! Hospitality & Entertainment Live!: Hospitality & Entertainment is one of the largest and most successful developers and operators of restaurant and entertainment concepts in the United States. Recognized as a leader in the food, beverage and entertainment industries, Live! Hospitality & Entertainment has created and developed multiple award-winning concepts including growth brands Sports & Social and PBR Cowboy Bar, branded concepts such as NBC Sports Arena and Budweiser Brew House, concert and special event venues such as Arlington Backyard and The Hall, and restaurants in partnership with premier chefs and celebrities like Guy Fieri and Troy Aikman. Its portfolio of over 100 concepts can be found at the front door of professional sports stadiums and arenas, high profile entertainment districts, and world-class casino resorts around the country. Live! Hospitality & Entertainment is a division of The Cordish Companies - visitlive.com - one of the oldest and largest real estate development companies in the country now is in its fourth generation of privately-held family ownership.

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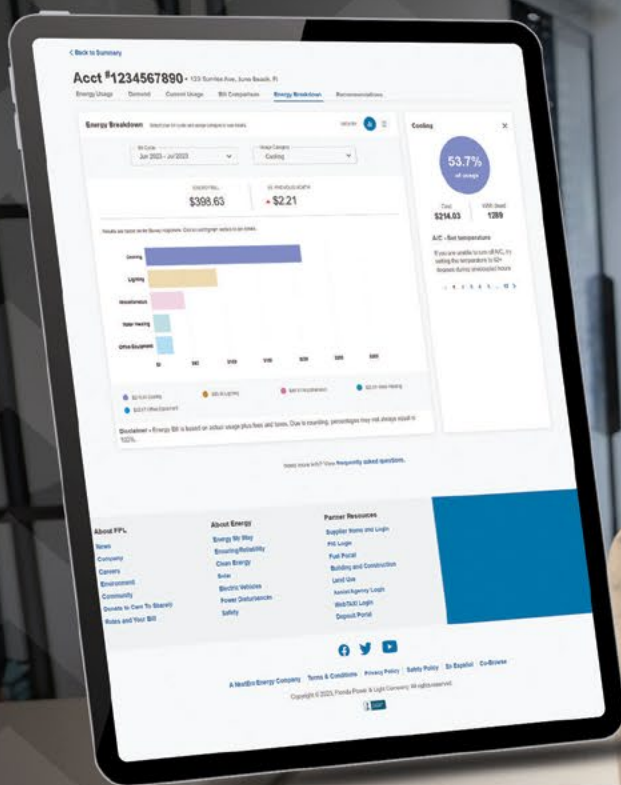
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What's Going On from page 6

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The Vollrath Company has announced its findings from an independent study conducted this past year examining the performance of its Insta Cut® 5.1 manual food processor compared to using traditional knife skills. The study delivered impressive proof of the efficiency and labor-saving capabilities of the Insta Cut 5.1. According to the study, the Insta Cut 5.1 manual food processor cut a tomato into a quarter-inch dice up to 74% faster than a chef using only a knife. It was up to 66% faster when dicing onions, stressing its exceptional speed and precision in specific food preparation tasks. "Vollrath's Insta Cut 5.1 manual food processor is not a high-tech tool, but it is a huge time saver in the



commercial kitchen," comments Becky Guentner, Vollrath's product manager for Countertop Equipment. "The time and labor savings it can provide are significant in an industry where margins are increasingly slim."

Scooter's Coffee®, LLC, the Midwest-based drive-thru coffee franchise experiencing record-breaking growth, announced plans to open 15 more of its world-class coffee locations, as the result of nine new franchise agreements. The new signings are the latest boost to Scooter's Coffees network of more than 750 stores in 30 states as the brand strives to become the #1 drive-thru specialty coffee franchise system in the nation. **Joseph and Michaela Young are the news franchisees that will open locations in Ormond Beach, Port Orange, and New Smyrna Beach.** For information on the other states visit their website.

Today's Restaurant invites you to submit your info for the What's Going On column. E-mail your company, product, service or event information to terri@trnusa.com. **TR**

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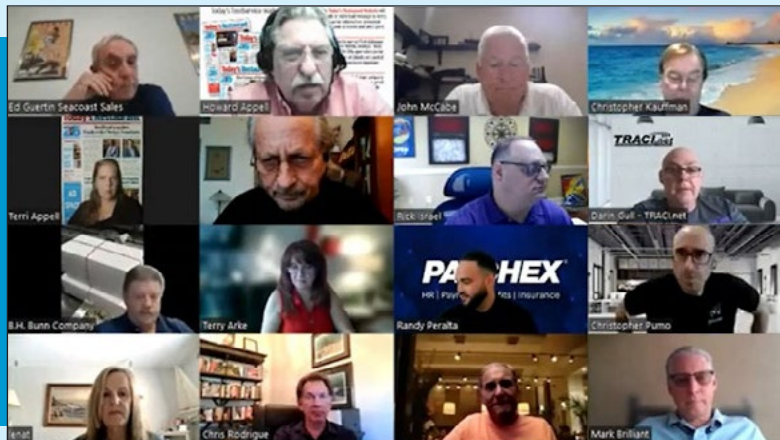
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