

Do-It-Yourself Dining Creates a Stir in Atlanta

by Dana Hazels Seith

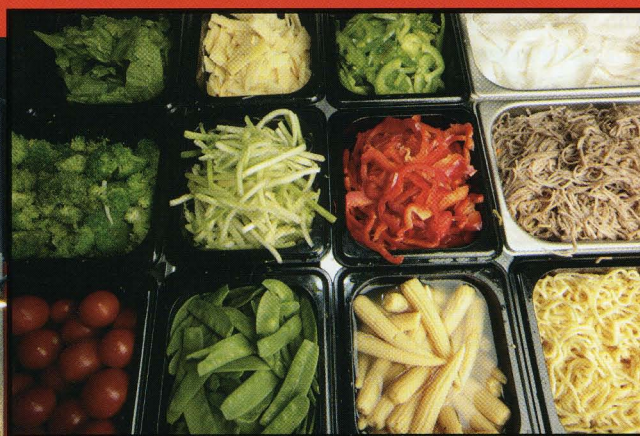
Lately, it seems that people are no longer food lovers, but food experts, with more and more folks categorizing themselves as “foodies.” It’s fair to say that using phrases like “balsamic reduction” or knowing the percentage of cocoa in your chocolate is no longer considered on the fringe, but mainstream. It seems that restaurant patrons are becoming so knowledgeable about what’s in the food they eat that they are willing, and actually prefer, to do it themselves.

It started with burritos. The customer could choose between several types of meats and various toppings. Now, there’s stir-fry. Stir-fry establishments are bucking the hamburger on the conveyor-belt notion of sameness and allowing customers the simple concept of “you create it, we cook it.” Both the burrito and the stir-fry concepts use the mindset that it’s all about the options, and customers should have a

variety of choices.

Options should be Hot Stix Stir-Fry Kitchen’s middle name. The newly opened stir-fry restaurant in Atlanta, Ga., offers customers the choice of 7 meats, 31 vegetables and 18 sauces, truly allowing its patrons to create their own signature dishes based on what they love, with literally thousands of combinations. The restaurant encourages its customers to create a stir with their stir-fry bowls by thinking outside the box.

“We wanted to create a restaurant where we could please a broad range of people and tastes. What better way to satisfy than to have them make dishes with only the things they love?” says Hot Stix Stir-Fry Kitchen’s owner, Jeff Safari. “Hot Stix appeals to the most finicky eater as well as the most daring. Not many restaurants can appeal to so many palates,” Safari adds.



Art

Continued from page 33

Sloan, with her beautiful, floral photography, and Rodney White, with his vintage looks that carry poetic statements," comments McKenzie.

The power of size and showcasing art on canvas can work well for commercial properties. "Canvas is easy to maintain and can be mounted instead of stretched to increase durability," explains McKenzie. "With Artaisance art, even the largest common areas can be accommodated as well as smaller, guest-room environments," he continues.

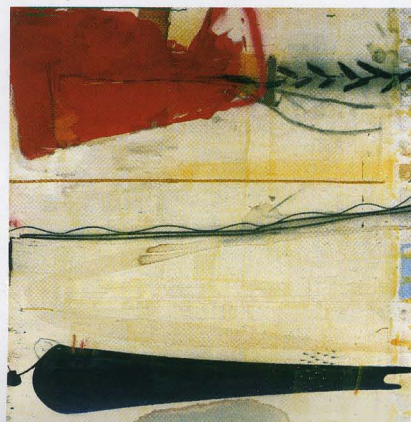
Custom sizing is, in fact, an advantage clients appreciate when purchasing art from Artaisance. Available on canvas or archival paper, the smallest pieces can be as small as 6x6 inches. The largest paper piece can be 32x52 inches, while canvas can be sized as large as 54x102 inches. A large piece of art makes quite a statement when hung in a high-traffic area.

Keeping your décor up to date can be the key to repeat guest visits. "It's so important to keep your art selection fresh for frequent guests. Digital, reproduced art is an easy and affordable way to stay current because you can pretty easily change pieces in main traffic areas," explains McKenzie. "As the seasons change, so can your art, thanks to the versatility of Artaisance art."

Whether you're just starting out with a clean slate or you're in the midst of an all-out renovation, don't forget that great art can provide a signature for your hotel or restaurant and will leave a lasting impression on your guests.

For more information on Artaisance, visit www.artaisance.com.

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Not only has do-it-yourself dining increased, but so has ethnic eating. Americans are choosing casual dining restaurants that serve foods with selections much broader than chicken fingers and hot dogs. According to the blog Food Candy (2007), the "interest in ethnic foods and bolder flavors continues to grow." Concepts such as Hot Stix really play into this, bringing Asian influences to everything the restaurant serves, from its dim sum to its stir-fry.

Customers can be as mild or as adventurous as they like. Hot Stix offers something for everyone. The customer is in full control, picking rice or noodles (everything from white rice to soba noodles), fresh fruits and vegetables (from pineapple to bok choy), sauces (from Kung Pao to Korean chili bean), spices (turn up the heat with wasabi seeds) and meats (from land to sea), and can

pile their bowls just the way they like. Everything is then cooked on a flaming hot, 700-degree, custom Mongolian grill that is the centerpiece of the restaurant. Another huge draw is that Hot Stix dishes have zero trans fats, zero MSG, and feature a variety of gluten-free items, including beer.

If you like the concept—good. Hot Stix opened with the intention of franchising, so not only will you get custom dishes, you likely won't have to travel too far to get them.

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