



ANDREW FREEMAN AND COMPANY'S

2016 TRENDS REPORT



THE YEAR OF MULTIPLE PERSONALITIES

As Andrew Freeman & Co. (AF&Co.) celebrates their 10th Anniversary as one of the country's leading boutique hospitality and restaurant consulting firms, the team is thrilled to release this year's trends report, *The Year of Multiple Personalities* – a preview of the hottest trends and predictions that will be shaping the restaurant and hotel industries in 2016. This comprehensive annual report identifies key influences in hospitality marketing, hotel, food and beverage for the coming year.

In 2016, chefs, restaurateurs and hoteliers will have to flex their creative muscles even more than in years past in order to satisfy many audiences – hence, taking on “multiple personalities” to please multiple types of people at multiple times. The pressure is on like never before to pull out all the stops, think outside the box, and stand out from the crowd. From top to bottom, everyone in the hospitality world will need to get inventive and identify coping mechanisms to keep the sanity, while still being profitable, in the coming year.

“One’s age, financial status or location no longer dictates whether they will visit your establishment,” says Andrew Freeman, president of AF&Co. “Guests are looking for more multi-faceted unique experiences, and sometimes those are conflicting. It wouldn’t be unlikely for a guest to want a vegetable-centric meal on a Monday and then want to have an over-the-top decadent brunch on that same Sunday. The boom of new offerings coupled with the labor crisis and the increasing costs of running businesses have also forced

restaurants and hotels to re-invent meal periods, add new offerings and develop their several personalities. This year's theme is reflected in every facet of the business. We are inviting businesses to get their crazy on!"

**TOP TRENDS & PREDICTIONS FOR 2016 ACCORDING TO
ANDREW FREEMAN & Co.**

How We Trend

Trend Reconnaissance:

- Client interactions
- Industry conversations, conferences and events
- Consumer and trade publications
- National and international travel
- Research – We go out a lot!

Our Panel of Experts:

- We asked industry leaders and clients for their insights and predictions.
- Luigi Di Ruocco, Vice President, **Mr. Espresso, Oakland, CA**
- Tony Mantuano, Chef/Restaurateur, **Spiaggia and River Coast, Chicago, IL**
- Cameron Mitchell, Owner, **Cameron Mitchell Restaurants, Nationwide**
- Mel Muoio, Lifestylist, **Levy Restaurants, Chicago**
- Jenny Schwartz, GM and Co-Owner, **Hopscotch, Oakland, CA**
- Lou Trope, Senior Vice President, **Destination Hotels, Nationwide**
- Carolyn Wente, Fourth Generation Winegrower and CEO, **Wente Vineyards, Livermore, CA**
- Joanne Weir, Cookbook and Television Chef, **Copita, Sausalito, CA**

THE YEAR OF MULTIPLE PERSONALITIES In Food, Beverage and Hospitality

Food Trends

Go Veg or Go Home

Vegetables are the hero this year. They've become the center of the plate component, not simply a side dish. People want less animal protein and are requesting that veggies are ramped up to their fullest creative potential - and if a dish happens to be vegetarian or vegan, hey!, that's ok! Millennials love this trend, since there is an environmentally-responsible edge to it. Dedicated menus and menu items are an absolute must since guests are identifying themselves as Vegan, Vegetarian, and Gluten Free more than ever.

- **Paleo "Lite" and Plant Based Diets**
- **Vegetable filled sandwiches** check out the King Oyster Mushroom "BLT" with Basil Mayonnaise from Chef Richard Landau's V Street (Philadelphia)
- **Bar and Nosh Menus** filled with vegetable and grain centric items like Quinoa Fritters with Aji Amarillo Aioli from the Chefs Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger of Border Grill (Santa Monica)
- Bon Appetit's **restaurant of the year** goes to Al's Place (San Francisco) where proteins are served as sides

Happy in Hawaii, Wish You Were

Hawaiian food is the latest regional 'New American' food that's getting its place in the spotlight.

- *Liholiho Yacht Club (San Francisco) serves up grilled spam and other Hawaiian delicacies under the direction of award-winning Chef Ravi Kapur.*
- *Poke To The Max (Seattle) is a crowd-pleasing food truck serving up poke rice bowls, salads and wraps under the direction of Chef Sam Choy.*
- *Noreetuh (New York City) serves up casual Hawaiian fare in the East Village.*



Sliders Landslide, Where's The Burger?

Sliders continue to lend themselves to more than just mini burgers these days and due to their small size, they're the perfect mini-bite indulgence for restaurants to experiment with. For bar menus and beyond, sliders satisfy.

- *Rock Cod Sliders with beer-battered cod and avocado on bun with tarragon aioli at the Hungry Cat (Santa Barbara).*
- *The Dorian (San Francisco) features creative French inspired provisions like their Dungeness Crab and Shrimp Cake Sliders served with Sausalito Springs Watercress.*
- *Cafe Aion (Boulder) served up Moroccan spiced pork sliders with Greek yogurt sauce.*
- *Gravy Meatball Sliders at Little Owl Cafe (NYC) are a crave-worthy hit among regulars.*



Fiery, Fiery Foods...I Can't Feel My Mouth When I'm With You.

Have you heard? Fiery, spicy foods are not only delicious, but supposedly really good for you, according to various news sources. From the obvious chili oil to the now-ubiquitous sriracha to the creatively-inspired spicy maple syrup, American palates are embracing and relishing the heat. Now more than ever, desserts and beverages are enhanced with spice and heat.

- *E&O Kitchen and Bar (San Francisco) first introduced their Chili Tamarind Margarita as a special, but it quickly became a top seller and year-round cocktail menu staple.*
- *Presidio (Chicago) works with the popular Dogma Group to curate their cocktail program. They've put a spin on classic pisco cocktails, serving their Presidio Pisco Punch #1 with house made Thai chili infused pisco, mango puree, lime and coconut water.*
- *The always creative and cutting edge Humphry Slocombe Ice Cream (San Francisco) incorporates ingredients that burn in flavors like Strawberry Sichuan Sorbet and Ancho-Chocolate.*
- *Pastry chef Kierin Baldwin's Mexican Chocolate Bread Pudding at The Dutch (New York City) combines spicy and comfort with classic French technique. It's topped with brown butter Mezcal sauce and Arbol-spiced cinnamon ice cream.*

Rock & (Lobster) Rolls

The ultimate comfort food / seafood sandwich is the lobster roll. Despite always appearing as a more premium-priced menu item, diners willingly pay the price for decadent, buttery lobster meat on a bun.

- *Kane's Handcrafted Donuts (Massachusetts) makes a lobster roll with their brioche based donuts.*
- *Lobster ME (National) is a rapidly expanding chain focused on offering a variety of rolls and items. From the classic with drawn butter to the Old Spice-seasoned roll to a roll with truffled aioli spread, the variety of flavors won't disappoint. Don't forget to try the Lobsicle!*

- *Eventide Oyster Co. (Portland) makes their lobster sandwich with a Chinese-style bun and Maine lobster meat tossed in a brown butter vinaigrette*

Discarded to Delicious

With higher food and labor costs impacting restaurateurs, there's a growing need to figure out how to save money. Add to that process, the move toward creating less waste, and you will find that chefs are embracing and utilizing the bits and pieces of all sorts of ingredients that were previously discarded to create delicious new dishes.

- *Blue Hill Chef Dan Barber created a burger made entirely from food waste for an epic three week pop up event at Madison Square Park's Shake Shack (New York City).*
- *Belcampo (multiple locations in California) **matches McDonald's in price** with one dollar burgers featuring lower cost, less-used and often discarded beef trim meat from their farm in California's Shasta Valley.*
- *Saucy by Nature (Brooklyn) got its first brick and mortar after many successful pop-ups with the **"zero waste" concept**. Lunch and dinner menus change daily to ensure ingredients remaining from the night before are utilized in a new and creative way.*



Flour Power Hour

Restaurants and cafes have been creating unique condiments, pickling veggies, rolling pastas, and making dairy items in house for quite some time now. Looking to expand upon these in-house programs, these same restaurants and cafes are sourcing small grain mills to create small-batch flours, which they use in a vast array of breads, desserts, and more, ensuring that all dishes contain the freshest and most flavorful ingredient grains

- *Baker Miller (Chicago) features "sweet and savory dishes, like Strawberry Lemon Chiffon pie and Biscuits and Gravy" made from in house milled flours.*
- *Josey Baker Bread mills their own flours for a variety of loaves and toasts sold at their popular cafe, The Mill (San Francisco).*



You're So Cuke – Slice 'Em, Smash 'Em, Smoosh 'Em

Cucumbers have become the 'it' vegetable, prompting chefs to source more varieties that go way beyond the familiar English seedless varieties like tiny Kirby and Lemon cucumbers. Cucumbers are versatile because they add texture, coolness, freshness, and absorb flavoring easily (and they're packed with fiber).

- *At Superiority Burger (New York City), smashed cucumber is mixed with yogurt, jalapeño honey and crushed sesame breadsticks. MY China (San Francisco) serves Honey Glazed Cucumber Shrimp with Wasabi under the creative direction of popular tv Chef Martin Yan.*
- *Danny Bowien, Executive Chef at Mission Chinese Food (San Francisco), uses smashing and other methods to hand process cucumbers to get the most flavor and alter the texture for his dishes.*



Under Compression

Compressed melon and root vegetables are becoming staples in both high end and casual establishments, as modernist technique is further investigated and integrated in ways that aren't so "science experiment" like.

- *Gaspar Brasserie (San Francisco) prepares a Serrano Ham and Charentais Melon with arugula, mint, pumpkin seed crumble, and a red wine reduction.*

- At Kingsley (New York City), Chef Roxanne Spruance combines classic French and modern technique, made evident in the Heritage Pork served with blistered ground cherries and compressed carrots.
- Bluestem Brasserie's (San Francisco) serves Beet Cured Salmon Tartare with compressed cucumbers, horseradish crème fraiche, salmon roe, rye crisps, and fresh dill. Their Crispy Pork Belly comes with a white balsamic glaze, compressed strawberries, pickled fennel, and Sausalito watercress.



Pillow Talk

Samosas, empanadas, dumplings, and blintzes... Oh my! Every culture / cuisine has a filled item of deliciousness, and what's not to love about that? Chefs continue to delight in the pleasures of the familiar, filling, and always delicious foods of the world.



- Sens Restaurant (San Francisco) serves up their house made chorizo empanadas with arugula salad to make the perfect happy hour bites.
- Babu Ji (New York City & Melbourne) serves assorted samosas like their pomegranate and green mango and spiced potatoes and peas, both in a crisp pastry served with a seasonal chutney.
- Russ & Daughters (New York City), a Jewish Lower East Side deli that has been around for over 100 years, opened a new café in 2014. Cheese Blintzes among other appetizing Jewish delicacies attract a regular foodie audience

This Is How We Roll

Table service rolls through the dining room giving an added touch to service in upscale restaurants across the globe with Spanish, Italian, and French concepts giving new life to the once overdone tableside salad and flambé cart. Depending on the night, guests may be served by the Chef or Sous Chef themselves.

- Barcelona Wine Bar (Boston) slices their Mangalica, cured Hungarian Pig, Spain tableside.
- Chef Ben Balesteri at Poggio Trattoria (Sausalito) serves their bollito misto (a northern Italian inspired stew that highlights five different meats and assorted root vegetables) every January through March.
- Restaurant Daniel (New York City) offers an over the top cheese cart with two dozen imported and domestic cheeses as part of their tasting menu experience.



My Brunch Is Bigger Than Your Brunch

Breakfast and brunch go full-throttle with decadence and indulgence. Why not throw caloric caution to the wind once a week? Decadent French Toast, egg dishes, foie, caviar, oysters, you name it - it's what's for over-the-top break(brunch)fast.

- One-Eared Stag (Atlanta) serves a chef's breakfast with four dishes selected by the chef that morning. Over-the-top brunch items have included pancakes with duck liver butter, coddled egg with salty salmon roe, and pork belly on top of a bed of kimchee with a fried egg on top. All chef breakfasts come with a tall boy of local brew. Hash House (San Diego) is a crowd favorite (1 to 2 hour waits are the norm here) serving up the ultra indulgent Sage Fried Chicken and Bacon Infused Waffle Tower.



- *Longman & Eagle (Chicago) knocks regional American fare out of the park with their Brioche French Toast with Foie Gras frosting. In case this brunch sends you into a food coma, the attached six room boutique inn is available to sleep it off.*

Between The Sweets...Ice Cream Sandwich Mania

Go ahead, order one. We know you want to! Ice Cream Sandwiches have been popping up on dessert menus from casual spots to fine dining eateries.



- *Hinoki & The Bird (Los Angeles) serves up Ice cream sandwich, chocolate chiffon, cocoa shortbread with caramel milk chocolate crunch.*
- *The Good Cafe (Jakarta) serves up west coast inspired comfort foods like their larger than life ice cream sandwiches.*
- *At Qui (Austin), Chef Paul Qui brings together the best of both worlds with his cheddar cheese ice cream sandwich.*
- *At The Meatball Shop (New York City) guests can build their own creation with an assortment of house made cookies and ice cream. A DIY dessert for the win!*

Fried Chicken Flies The Coop

Fried chicken continues to grow in popularity from authentic, southern-inspired to ethnic-influenced twists on the favorite comfort food.

- *Addendum, Thomas Keller's seasonal lunch spot at Ad Hoc (Napa), serves their buttermilk fried chicken with two sides and cornbread. Take it for the road or enjoy it at one of their picnic tables.*
- *Hopscotch (Oakland) serves up their Fried Chicken & Biscuits with pork sausage gravy, scrambled eggs, and a green salad or a Bucket O'Chicken to go. You'll also find this fan favorite dish on their brunch menu served with house made biscuits and sausage gravy and at dinner with marble potato salad.*
- *David Chang's newest concept, Fuku (New York City) is serving only four menu items with their spicy fried chicken sandwich with it's Korean inspired spice and presentation taking center stage.*



Beverage Trends

Are You Mocking Me?

Mocktail offerings are popping up all over America's food cities from San Francisco to New York. They target consumers watching their diets, designated drivers, pregnant women, and even "foodie" children. Some chefs have experimented with pairing an entire meal with mocktails, which gives them a unique opportunity to blend ingredients that complement the food without the overpowering strength of alcohol (or the cost).

- *Vincenzo Marianella's new Restaurant, Love & Salt (Manhattan Beach), offers three different mocktails made from sage, almond syrup, jalapeno and seedless white grapes.*
- *Atera Restaurant (New York) launched a temperance pairing menu creating mocktails inspired by cocktails. Their Cote de Beet mocktail is a combination of black currants and beets that are aged in hopes of matching the taste of the rich red wine.*



Everyone Kombucha!

Restaurants and bars across the country are getting creative with Kombucha juice. The popular earthy drink is being incorporated into cocktails to create more botanical and fruitful alcoholic beverages. Favorite cocktail drinks are being enhanced by the trend with new concoctions like the kombucha rita. Breweries are even getting in on the idea too, working alongside popular Kombucha drink companies to introduce new beer blends to its consumers.



- *Crooked Stave (Denver) always has at least one kombucha on tap. The house speciality is cranberry-lavender, which is blended with one of their Saison beers. Right now, one will also find mango kombucha on draft, which the brewery mixes with their Vieille Saison.*
- *At 83 Degrees (San Diego), choose straight up kombucha or have it mixed into one of three cocktails. Wheeler incorporates Living Tea ginger kombucha into his take on a Moscow Mule and The BU lavender kombucha into the restaurant's kombucha breeze cocktail.*

The Bubble Bursts

Bubbles mania expands from champagne and sparkling wine to sparkling water and fancy house made sodas. Restaurants and breweries are embracing this new preference by introducing their own house-made sodas and producers are creating their own alcoholic and non-alcoholic brews by infusing them with ginger and other botanical flavors.

- *LeCroix offers pamplemousse, peach-pear, and coconut as well as Dry Sparkling's lemongrass and cucumber flavors sparkling water.*
- *An influx of craft ginger beer producers are popping up, including Matsos Broome Brewery and Rachel's Ginger Brew out of the Pacific Northwest.*
- *ZIMA, anyone? Products like Not Your Father's Root Beer from Small Town Brewery in Wisconsin and the Orange or Ginger flavors from Henry's Hard Soda are on the rise.*



I Wanna A New Buzz

The popular morning drink continues to evolve with the popularity of nitro-coffee. Coffee shops and restaurants alike are expanding on the trend, incorporating coffee into alcoholic drinks and non-alcoholic coffee beverages by infusing new techniques and flavors to create balanced and "treatful" coffee drinks.



- *Saint Frank (San Francisco) offers a Kaffe Tonic, the infusion of tonic water and fresh espresso creates a refreshing way to enjoy coffee.*
- *St. George's introduced a NOLA liquor, made with rich ethiopian coffee and infused with madagascar vanilla, chicory root, and natural cane sugar. This beverage is sure to please any caffeine fanatic.*
- *Coffee Bar (San Francisco), which serves Mr. Espresso coffee, has combined the sweetness of horchata and the bitterness of coffee by blending ice, cinnamon, and vanilla infused cold brew coffee topped with milk to create a creamy, flavored (but not artificial) sweet treat.*

The Gin Game

Martinis and Gin & Tonics will never go out of style, but bartenders are putting a creative spin on the classic old school drinks with barrel-aged gins on the rise. Aged in whiskey, brandy or rum barrels, these gins are infused with tastes of botanicals and sweetened with hints of vanilla, maple, and brown sugar creating a gin that is easy to sip and is the perfect complement in any number of cocktails

- *Citadelle Gin Reserve, a recent addition to the citadelle collection is made using the barrel aged process. This gin sits in oak barrels for several months, giving it a hint of vanilla flavor before being bottled and sold. (France)*
- *Made with a mix of juniper berries, coriander and fennel, Death's Door has a subtle botanical influence that allows it to stand on its own or be paired with other ingredients. (Wisconsin)*
- *Starting off as Brandy, Bummer & Lazarus, is redistilled and the flavors of Juniper berries, orris root, coriander seeds, angelica root, bitter orange peel, lemon peel, cinnamon bark and licorice root are infused. (Treasure Island)*
- *Beehive Barrel Reserve Gin distills their strong botanical gin and hand-charred french oak barrels. The flavor profile is smoke, oak, and vanilla. (Utah)*

Tropical Storm Cocktail

Tropical cocktails are making their way back into the mainstream. Umbrella decorated drinks are on the rise and are bringing a little more flare to your glass. Restaurants are recreating some of the popular cocktail drinks from the original tiki days and are putting a fresh and creative spin on them with high quality ingredients and fresh squeezed juices. You may just see that Tiki glass at your local watering hole. This drink craze is booming and how could you not love it? It arrives in a fun 70's style glass, freshly decorated with juicy, sweet fruit and a zany straw.



- *Barbara Lynch's No.9 park (Boston) offers Potions of the Caribbean focusing on the history of tiki, the use of tropical flavors, and cocktail making.*
- *The Well bar and Grill (Kansas City) introduced a new tiki cocktail menu. Inspired by the tropical drink trend, the restaurant created Tiki Tuesday, an event hosted every Tuesday night on their rooftop. The event features live island music and gives guests the opportunity to enjoy one of their many handcrafted tiki cocktails.*
- *Fairweather (San Diego) not only has the best views of PETCO Park, they also have an entire menu of tiki cocktails. From an artisanal Pina Colada to their various takes on the classic Mai Tai, locals and visitors alike keep their bar bustling.*

Cocktails By The Course...Of Course!

Pairing wine with food is an old standing tradition, but this tradition is being made anew with cocktails now being paired in multi course meals. Bartenders are creating drinks with flavors designed to specifically complement dishes. This new trend allows bartenders to highlight signature drinks and bring a new level of balance to main course food offerings.

- *The classic sazerac at North End Grill (New York City) is made with local Long Island rough rider rye. It's paired with the restaurant's Fiorentina-style Porterhouse Steak and the combination is meant to balance the intense and rich flavor in the dish.*
- *Square Root (New Orleans), Chef Phillip Lopez draws on his Mexican-American background bringing modern food paired with creative cocktails to his all tasting menu concept.*



Ice Cube & Pop Diddy = The New Jello Shot

Alcoholic Ice Cubes & Boozy Popsicles // The Beyond Zero icemaker, a new innovation that freezes alcohol is putting a cool spin on your favorite cocktail drinks.

- *Boozy Ice Pop Cocktails at Loopy Doopy, the rooftop bar at the Conrad Hotel (New York City), are topped with prosecco and come in a variety of flavors (Blueberry Peach, Strawberry Lemongrass, and Empire Apple).*
- *These boozy ice cubes help keep your glass cold and your drink strong. Everyone's favorite cocktails are now hitting the freezer and are being turned into delicious frozen treats.*
- *Gracias Madre (Los Angeles), a plant based Mexican restaurant, offers a Boozy Popsicle on their cocktail menu that rotates seasonally from blood orange and Mezcal to tequila blanco with roasted pineapple and jalapeno.*

The Best Dressed Drinks

Instagram worthy garnishes from gold dusted flowers, dehydrated fruits, sugar stirrers, and designer straws are growing in popularity and giving restaurateurs and hoteliers equal opportunity to add pizzazz to their beverage offerings.



- *Dress the Drink offers culinary and mixologist garnishes nationwide and can customize and develop any garnish based on the bar's concept and drink profile. From shimmering exotic flowers floating in cocktails to gold flakes dusted on a glass rim, these garnishes take any cocktail offering to the next level and merit a higher price per drink.*
- *Toki Underground (Virginia) tops their bourbon and pepper-honey cocktail with a perfectly smoked piece of Pork Belly.*
- *Bon Marche (San Francisco) serves fun straws in their cocktails like the Last Metro*

Bloody Mary Bonzana

Although Bloody Mary's have always been popular, we expect to see more and more creative presentations of this fan-favorite. From inventive garnishes, new components, to larger-than-life carts at posh brunch spots throughout the country, they continue to evolve and grow from their traditional spicy tomato juice and vodka recipes.

- *1313 Main's Bloody Mary Cart (Napa) has over 20 choices for add-ons including fried oysters, duck pastrami, fried shrimp cocktail, sriracha salt, fresh grated egg yolk cured in salt, kimchi brussel sprouts, and candied jalapenos. Their tomato juice is made from heirloom tomatoes grown in their own garden and combined with lemon, spice, and everything nice to make a one-of-a-kind recipe.*
- *Bar Toma's (Chicago) Bloody Mary Tower is meant to be shared (groups of 2-4). What sets this apart from the rest? It's got a slice of pepperoni pizza soaking in it.*
- *The All About Mary at Todd English's P.U.B. (Las Vegas) doubles as a meal. It's topped with a chicken wing, slider, cocktail shrimp, a corn dog, and pickled veggies.*



A Matcha Made In Heaven

Plants, Leaves, and Roots - Matcha is taking the world by storm. With its hint of sweetness and its many health benefits people are going crazy for it! In the past year alone, Matcha sales have gone up by nearly 55%. Botanical drinks are also giving drink connoisseurs something to talk about. With people looking for healthier food and drink alternatives that are less sweet, people are turning to plant based beverages. From teas to smoothies to your favorite cocktail drinks people are asking for fresh plant based ingredients. Mint, ginger and everything in between add a bit of freshness and flare to our favorite drinks.



- *Inspired by the age-old Japanese tea, Matcha bar (New York City) hopes to share the ancient tastes and traditions of matcha with the people of the modern day foodie city. Matcha bar is the first specialty matcha cafe that dedicates itself to everything matcha. Everything they serve is boosted by the green energy supplying tea.*

- *L.A. Chapter at ACE DTLA (Los Angeles) has a full menu of 80s inspired drinks including their Midori Sour with Aylesbury Duck vodka, Midori, Green Chartreuse, lime, honey, egg white and Matcha tincture*

Taps Gone Wild

An innovative and effective way to pour wine is now gaining in popularity. More restaurants and wineries are now offering wines on tap. Pouring from tap, rather than going through the traditional process of popping open a stubborn cork helps to keep things moving. The ability to keep the wine in kegs increases preservation time. With the efficiency that it provides, it's no wonder why restaurants are turning to the popular trend.

- *City wineries tasting room in Napa offers over 30 wines on taps including Mondavi, Barrett, Hobbs, and Finkelstein.*



New Wave White Wine

Whites wine, particularly moderately oaked will continue to rise. Even traditional red wine drinkers are exploring more white wines. Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Gris show double digit growth and Chardonnay, America's #1 selling varietal, continues to rise. French Chenin Blanc is gaining popularity and the dry and off dry Rieslings from Germany and Austria are continually the most prized. Wine Makers are using more oak and less interventionist methods like native yeast in their wine.



- *Kendall-Jackson Avant*
- *Wente Vineyards, Morning Fog Chardonnay*
- *New entrant Tom Gore*

On The Rise - Cool New Products

- *Zu Bison Grass Vodka*
- *Ancho Reyes chili liqueur*

- *Barrow's Intense Ginger Liqueur*
- *Wondermint – The only artisan craft peppermint schnapps in the world. It's blended with peppermint extract, bitter almond, rosewater and a bit of absinthe.*



Hotel Trends

The Itsy, Bitsy, Teeny, Tiny Room

“Micro rooms.” All that square footage for communal spaces in hotels has to come from somewhere. Hotel rooms are shrinking to the micro level - think 160 square feet. For the guest that doesn't care to spend that much time in their room, these are perfect. These micro hotels are meant to be affordable and have lots of other amenities to satisfy guests.



- *Hyatt Centric*
- *Tommie, A Commune Hotel*

Hostel + Posh = Poshtels

This might be this year's version of glamping. Hostels are no longer just for college students backpacking through Europe. Modern upscale hostels are popping up in major cities all over the globe. More than just places to sleep, they are urban chic with a touch of luxury in the lobby and communal spaces. So while you will still book a bed in a dorm-style room, you'll sip cocktails on a white leather banquette, hang out on a cool rooftop lounge and play ping pong, or listen to a band play in a slinky bar. They are budget-friendly, but guests are also making a statement by being there.



- *Stay on Main (Los Angeles)*
- *Clink 78 (London)*
- *New York Loft Hostel (Brooklyn)*

Come and Go As You Please

Redefining “a night stay,” hotels are saying “yes” to late checkouts more and more. Some are even looking at a 24 hour stay model. The New York Times recently explored this in a piece in September, “Checking out at a leisurely pace.” Key cards will be programmed at arrival versus a traditional check in and some hotels are attributing high guest return rates to the policy.

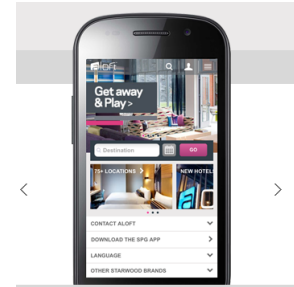
- *Capella Hotel Group (National)*
- *Peninsula Hotels (Beverly Hills)*



Virtual Service: Text Me. Tweet Me. FaceTime Me.

How may I help you? It's a virtual world. It's nothing new that tech is everywhere in hotels, but we are seeing that it's not only about automation, it's about bringing convenient, live interaction to guests. Concierges are having conversations on twitter and hotels are looking at systems and apps that let guests check in online and simply pick up their key.

- **Hotel Lincoln (Chicago)** Provides online check-in from a confirmation email to text message alerts when your room is ready.
- **Hilton** and **Hyatt** have concierge accounts on Twitter.
- **Starwood Hotels & Resorts'** app lets guests FaceTime with staff at any hour of the day.



No-Service Room Service

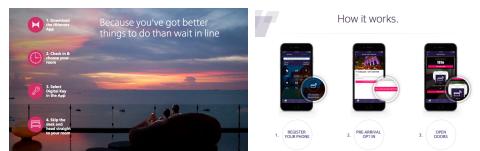
Traditional room service is on it's way out. Guests no longer want to sit in their room to wait for a burger with a candle on a tray. Hotels are starting to rethink both their menus and the delivery. Vessels are changing with more grab and go options and delivery anywhere in the hotel, as well brown paper bags and cool boxes that you pick up in the lobby.

- **The Public (Chicago)** The Ian Schrager Hotel offers a "Public Express Menu," delivered in 6 to 8 minutes in a paper bag to go.
- **Hotel RL (Baltimore)** "The Pick Up Artist" has food available for pick up in the lobby.
- **Skamania Resort, (Washington)** A Destination Hotel, Skamania offers food delivery anywhere in the hotel, packaged to go.

Your iPhone is the (actual) key

You can pay with your phone at Starbucks and now you can open your hotel room door. Concerns loom about whether it's gimmicky or if it actually makes life easier for guests, but we believe smooth implementation is key. (Get it?) We are seeing some big players moving forward on it, so we'd expect the technology to follow.

- **Hilton**
- **Starwood Hotels**



Banquet & Event Trends

Doin' it Restaurant-Style

Even the word "banquets" is passe as the focus shifts to "events." While set menus have an operational purpose, people want experiences that they've become accustomed to in restaurants. They don't want to compromise quality for being in a group and want their food to feel "made to order." From the bar, we're seeing higher quality bartenders, but also labor-saving elements like bottled cocktails and cocktails on tap.

Different Spaces, Unique Places

- Events are getting even more experiential, with caterers either giving flexibility and personality to existing spaces or seeking additional venues, like subway stations, art studios, breweries and even private

residences. Seating is designed for socializing and interacting. Uniforms are taking a cue from restaurants. "Say goodbye to the old penguin suits!" (Lou Trope, Destination Hotels)

Station Nation

- The desire to explore and choose your own adventure is extending to events as well. Everything is customizable, interactive, fresh and delicious with street foods, mason jar salads, noodle bars, make-your-own sandwiches, and build-your-own desserts. Interesting grazing stations for long meetings to keep people engaged.

Marketing Trends

The Rise Of The Celebrity Restaurateur

Move over celebrity chefs...there's a new hero in town. We have Danny Meyer and the Shake Shack IPO to thank for this one. It used to be that the multi-concept world was filled with big business and "chain" operators, but now we're seeing many restaurateurs move beyond one or two great restaurants to expanding their empire.

- *KARIM MASRI & NICOLA SIERVO, KNR Hospitality,*
- *Cameron Mitchell, Cameron Mitchell Restaurants*
- *Obie Ostergard, Au Bon Repas*

Daily Transformations

Multiple Personalities by Meal Periods. Restaurants are no longer confined to the same identity throughout the day. Lunch can be fast and a bit more casual, while dinnertime can be slower paced with more formality. We are seeing restaurants that go from counter-service by day to seated dinner by night, with a totally different vibe. This is communicated in service style, but also with music, lighting and tabletop changes. It's multiple personalities, but there's always a unifying factor in the food and approach. It's about meeting guests' needs as they change throughout the day.

- ***Precita Park Cafe*** (San Francisco) serves light breakfast options and counter service at lunch, while by night it's a full service dining experience
- ***Tropisueno*** (San Francisco) changes its function and appearance everyday from a quick-service Taqueria for lunch to a full-service restaurant dinner.
- ***Panbon*** (San Diego) is a fast casual market by day and a destination restaurant by night.



The "Free From" Frenzy

They say it's healthier. According to a recent Mintel study, "Free-from Food Trends," 43 percent of the consumers Mintel studied "agree that free-from foods are healthier than foods without a free-from claim." Additionally, another 59 percent agree with the statement that "the fewer ingredients a product has, the healthier it is." Just Say NO to GMO... and other ingredients that are not immediately recognizable to guests. Restaurants that already have consumers trust have an edge.

- ***McDonald's*** will transition to Cage Free Eggs over the next 10 years
- ***Panera*** released a "no-no" list of ingredients they pledge will not be in their foods.
- ***Shake Shack's*** buns are going GMO free.

Friends with Benefits

Millennials are seeking restaurants with purpose and see an emphasis on giving back as a differentiator, according to research from Nation's Restaurant News. Restaurants are taking new approaches to take advantage

of this. It's not just about showing that you care, it's about tapping into guests' passions and being a part of the story. It's also a very open transaction: guests allow themselves to be marketed to for the sake of a charity. It's a win-win.

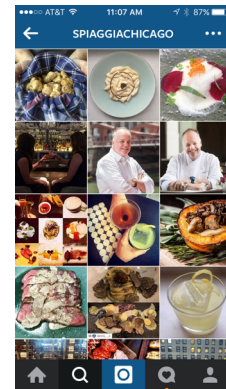
- **Conflict Café** (London) is a month-long pop-up restaurant that uses food as a vehicle for dialogue on conflict and peacebuilding.
- **Park Cafe Group** (San Francisco) donates \$1 to CUESA for every person to sign up for their email
- **Sam's Grill**, (San Francisco) has a monthly dinner, "Dine for a Cause" where 15% of food and beverage sales are donated to a rotating local charity.

Instagram Does It Better

While Facebook and Twitter are still important, chefs and restaurateurs have found Instagram to be an ideal tool for projecting brand message. As images of #eggporn, #foodporn and #meatsweats flood our feeds, it's clearer than ever that we eat with our eyes.

Top Instagram Marketing Trends:

- **Aesthetics lean toward "light and bright"** – Goodbye candlelit dinner shots; nobody wants to see food that looks dark, gray or grainy. The trend is to use bright natural light when photographing food or drinks and white or light/bright colored backgrounds to emphasize the ingredients, color and texture of dishes.
- **Step away from the filters** – When it comes to food/drink images, we're seeing less filtering and more brightening, contrasting, "lux-ing" and perhaps a touch of saturation or warmth if the image calls for it. Food looks fresh, not sepia-toned from 1970.
- **Leverage influencers** – Saavy restaurateurs are establishing relationships with key influencers by engaging with their content and hosting instagram takeovers.



Following the Pack

With the ever-growing popularity of Instagram, comes a new wave of social media influencers and lifestyle bloggers who impact the daily dining decisions of foodies across the nation. More and more, diners are turning to social media for recommendations on where to get the trendiest, most instagrammable dishes in the city. The hashtags mentioned before, such as #eggporn, #foodporn and #forkyeah make searching for delicious bites easier than ever and bloggers continually contribute their recommendations.

- **Create Custom Experiences** Invite bloggers in for a special meal, a cocktail class, or partner with neighboring restaurants to curate a comprehensive neighborhood stroll.
- **Offer Special Deals to Followers** To thank bloggers and instagram influencers for their support, send out a code or a secret password for a special promotion created specifically for their followers.
- **Leverage Relationships** Encourage bloggers to host their own events such as cocktail tastings to bring in business and create buzz on social media. Instagram takeovers are also a great success in gaining new followers.

The Boomers are Still Booming

Baby Boomers are responsible for more than 50% of all vacation dollars spent in the US. As these folks age, they aren't traveling alone—they're bringing their grandchildren along with them. Hotels and tourism companies are catering to these multigenerational family units.

- *The Nickelodeon Suites Resort (Orlando, FL) offers special Grandparent Packages designed to help make memories.*
- *Road Scholar, a non-profit educational travel operator, leads a number of intergenerational trips to adventurous destinations like Iceland, Kenya and the Galapagos Islands.*

Concept Strategy Trends

Good Help is Hard to Find

Last year we saw restaurants in California coping with droughts and this year restaurants across the country are dealing with labor shortages. We're seeing restaurants cope with this in creative ways by streamlining operations. High quality batch cocktails, all sorts of drinks on tap and automation in both the front and back of house are driven by labor issues. We're also seeing increased attention from smart restaurateurs on creating employee-focused environments to combat high-turnover rates. (More on that tipping thing next!)

- ***Ocean Prime*** (National) has developed a strong culture that puts employees first, with the idea that employees who feel cared for will provide superior service to guests. This has also resulted in some of the industries highest retention rates at 87% percent for managerial staff and 60 percent for hourly associates.
- ***Cheddar's Casual Cafe*** (National) incorporates recruitment incentives into it's scheduling software and offers staggered bonuses for recommended hires.
- ***Union Square Hospitality*** (New York) recently announced a no-tipping policy, stating that the current system did not allow for adequate recognition of back of house staff and others who contribute to the service experience.

No Tipping - It's at the Tipping Point

Danny Meyer's recent announcement that all Union Square Hospitality Group restaurants will be "Hospitality Included" is a game-changer. Many outside the industry may not recognize that this is really about creating an employee-centered culture and one that recognizes how the front and back of the house together create the service experience. With so many regulations about who may share in gratuities, doing away with the system all together completely changes employee incentives. Fine dining seems to have a higher tolerance for the risk of increased menu prices, at least for now, but more casual and regional restaurants are jumping in too.

- ***Dirt Candy***, (New York)
- ***Next & Alinea***, (Chicago)
- ***Petit Crenn*** (San Francisco)
- ***Per Se*** (New York)
- ***Bar Marco & The Livermore*** (Pittsburgh)

Tech Takeover

Our friends at Technomic reported this summer that Millennials and Generation Z customers now expect technology-friendly service in all restaurants, especially with online ordering and mobile payments. While this is definitely a bigger deal to fast casual, coffee shops and pizza places, we're seeing it creep beyond.



- ***Eatsa*** (San Francisco) boasts, "No lines. No cashier. No nonsense. We're engineered to get you in and out fast."

- **Muten Kurazushi** (260 locations in Japan) delivers sushi via food “bullet trains”—quick-moving conveyor belts that rocket your table’s choices right to your seat. Back of house, most of the food is also made by machine and the check is tallied like a hotel room mini bar - items are added once a plate is removed from its place on the conveyor belt.
- **Starbucks** announced that in some locations guests will be able to order for pick up via mobile app.

What’s Your Soundscape?

Sound is a design element. Restaurants are designing both for noise control and ambiance, working to create environments that are good for conversation, but also amplify certain vibrant sounds too. (kitchen, music, an energy etc..) Music choice is also important with restaurants hiring well-known deejays to curate perfect playlists that change from weekdays to weekends. What’s playing? A mixture of hip hop, 90’s classics, and indie pop with a dash of 80’s.

- **Untitled** (New York) utilizes a porous acoustic plaster that mops up noise like a giant sponge.
- **Four Horseman & Houseman** (New York) have acoustical plans that magnify selected environmental noise.
- **Palm House** (San Francisco) has a playlist curated by international DJ Viceroy.

You Had Me At Goodbye

The way a dining experience ends is just as important as all of the service steps that come before a check is dropped. Restaurants are finding creative and fun ways to say goodbye, reinforcing a feeling of hospitality, generosity, and gratitude for their visit.

- **River Roast** (Chicago) leaves guest with chance of good luck. Guests who order their roast chicken receive a wishbone with their check.
- **Carson’s American Kitchen** (Sunriver) gives cotton candy to tables when their check is delivered.
- **Butcher Bar** (New York City), has gained loyal patrons for more than just their tasty BBQ, each guest receives a complimentary apple cake at the end of their meal.



Fast Casual Gets Boozy

Fast casual is getting in the bar game and looking to profit from high margin alcohol sales. This may reflect the costs associated with higher quality ingredients that are being demanded by guests. Or maybe they are just figuring out that a burrito is better with a margarita?



- **Chipotle**
- **Taco Bell**
- **SmashBurger**

Bow Wow Meow

The emergence of pet friendly and pet-driven restaurant concepts. From pet cafes, where the concept is actually focused on the opportunity to hang out with kittens, to doggy happy hours in bars and restaurants, there are lots of ways to bring your pet along.

- **Cat'fe** (Chicago), **Meow Parlour**, (Chicago) and **Meowtropolitan** (Seattle) have kittens meowing around.
- **Art & Soul** (Washington DC) is a Joie de Vivre restaurant that offers dogs the option to order steak and a beer. The beer is non-alcoholic and made of chicken broth and malt extract. The steak is a grilled and sliced sirloin.
- **Medium Rare** (Washington DC) hosts a daily doggie happy hour on the patio.
- **Governor Coumo** in New York just passed a law that allows dogs on outdoor patios of restaurants. Dog lovers and patio lovers, rejoice!



Granny's Touched the Table

It seems that some restaurateurs have raided their granny's china cabinet. The more ornate, the better. We are seeing reinterpreted china, old English style plates, and lacey shapes accenting tables from coast to coast. Crystal style cocktail glasses, etched coupes, and modern takes on a classic crystal rocks glasses are popping up on tables.



- **Guild House** (Columbus)
- **Chicago Athletic Association**, (Chicago)
- **Saison**, (San Francisco)
- **Trick Dog**, (San Francisco)

NonUniformity

In the front and back of house, we're seeing the return of the classic Dickies style work shirt. No longer just for repelling grease from the garage, chefs in some of the swankiest kitchens like the durability and retro look. It's being used on it's own and also underneath the ever-popular apron. While Hedley & Bennett is booming and continuously cranking out apron awesomeness, restaurants are also partnering up with local makers. Every station in a restaurant has a specific function and now a specific uniform. Each uniform makes a statement with many pieces custom or even handmade.

- **Bohemian House** (Chicago)
- **Parlor Pizza Bar** (Chicago)
- **SoHo House** (Los Angeles)
- **Roberto's** (Brooklyn)



Bathroom Humor

Restrooms are not just for peeing anymore. From the lighting to the artwork on the wall, bathrooms are not just functional. Restaurants and hotels are having more fun and seeing signage as a way to carry their concept through. Also, the lines may be blurring as gender identity becomes more of a topic for discussion. Signage is less specific and communal sink areas are becoming more popular.



- **Virgin Hotel** (Chicago)
- **Hotel G** (San Francisco)
- **Rebelle** (New York)
- **Gitane** (San Francisco)

###

AF&Co. is an innovative restaurant and hospitality consulting firm, headquartered in San Francisco with clients across the country. The team has developed and launched concepts for over 100 restaurants and hotels and provided ongoing marketing, public relations and operations consulting for over 200 others. AF&Co has created unique culinary events of all sizes from intimate dinners to food and wine festivals drawing over 10,000 people. Offering tailored, flexible programs that include: creative/concept development, branding, recruiting, graphic design, public relations, sales/marketing, training, and event management, AF&Co specializes in restaurants, hotels, food, wine, spirits and travel. For more information, visit afandco.com or follow them on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

An industry veteran, prior to opening AF&Co. ten years ago, Andrew worked at legendary New York venues including Windows on the World, the Russian Tea Room and the Rainbow Room. Eventually Andrew left New York to become the Vice President of Public Relations and Strategic Partnerships for Kimpton Hotels and Restaurants, based in San Francisco. He spent ten years with Kimpton, launching the global brand and over 40 hotels and restaurants. Andrew is currently the head of a dynamic hospitality agency offering full service marketing, public relations and consulting for hotels and restaurants. In the ten years since opening, the agency has concepted, launched and promoted over 200 hotels and restaurants.