



# The modern menu

Smart operators know how to get the most out of their menus. From content to design, Howard Riell explores some of the ways to optimize them.

**R**estaurant operators can better optimize their menus by reducing the number of options, updating design and content, and using technology to better track live food inventory – and in so doing, render their overall operations both more efficient and profitable.

## Design considerations

Operators want patrons to interact with their menus, which is why improving their look and feel is considered so important.

Menu design, color and material combine to subliminally influence customers' purchasing decisions.

Menus can also become more effective selling tools by keeping both

production and patrons squarely in mind when crafting them.

## Control the when

The more challenging kitchens, are those that have menu items that take different and varied times to cook and produce.

“No operator can afford to keep expensive inventory on-hand,” says Arlene Spiegel FCSI, president of Arlene Spiegel & Associates in New York City. “There are off-the-shelf software programs that tie the inventory to menu items and create automatic purchasing orders based on established par levels. This takes the guesswork out of the picture and allows for easier and more

accurate reconciliation by staff. These programs also provide a daily snapshot into what is selling on the menu, and allows negotiating for best prices for purchasing of high-volume items.”

## Size counts

As with so many things, smaller can be better. When working to incorporate more sustainable food items.

More expansive menus also take longer to order from. The more choices you have on your menu, Malody says, the longer it takes each table to peruse that menu, and the longer it takes for them to order. ■