

## RESTAURANT DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

The following article can be viewed here: <http://www.fastcasual.com/article.php?id=5765>

### Restaurant design: Fast casuals need more than a good décor

by [Fred Minnick](#) \* • 07 Sep 2006

A restaurant's interior can enhance a brand and invite customers in, or misrepresent the brand and drive customers out.

If the design does not complement the menu, the look is a lost cause — especially in fast casual. Restaurant consultant Arlene Spiegel believes operators can't just plop a sofa in a store or create an upscale design and call a fast-food spot fast casual.

"A fast-casual design should incorporate the best of full-service restaurant design and the convenience and speed of quick-service," Spiegel said. "Material finishes and furniture should be high quality, including lighting, art and artifacts."

That's what Buona went after when it recently redesigned two stores. Joe Buonavolanto's family had operated the 11-store Chicago chain for 25 years and had always served high-quality, fresh-made food like the Tuscan Harvest salad and the Pollo Pomodoro sandwich. But Buonavolanto believes the Italian fare did not receive its due recognition inside the QSR's walls. Buonavolanto sought an atmosphere to match the store's price points.

"We wanted to make sure value was represented and that it was a real comfortable family atmosphere," Buonavolanto said. "We wanted the design to complement our food and convey freshness."

Buona's new 4,000-square-foot design made the dining room more of a backdrop for the food. The flow of the store takes guests by preparation areas, allowing them to watch pizza assembly. Indeed, the open kitchen keeps the line moving while influencing purchasing decisions.



“ A lot of people don't understand what they're getting into when designing a store ”

-- Michelle Bushney  
Vision 360