



## Tables for Two

It's the second-busiest day of the year and diners are ready to splurge on spending and decadent diets, but savvy restaurateurs build on the passion of the moment to create lasting emotional connections with their guests.

On Valentine's Day, even the nation's most romantic full-service restaurants understand there are decadent profits in the details. The National Restaurant Association estimates 25 percent of diners will splurge for something special on February 14, which has operators ramping up their offerings with everything from unique menus to rose petals to parting gifts.

Similarly, the National Retail Federation found, in a 2015 study, that last year consumers planned to spend a collective \$3.5 billion on going out for Valentine's Day. For restaurants, finding a way to stand out from the crowded field, and capitalize on the second-busiest day of the year (following only Mother's Day), can be key. Oftentimes, it's a matter of elevating a fine-dining experience to an unforgettable one.

Diners have certain expectations for Valentine's Day, says New York City restaurant consultant Arlene Spiegel. "They expect the restaurant to put them in the mood for romance," she explains.