

SPRING 2022

# KENTUCKY

## RESTAURANT JOURNAL

The Official Publication of the Kentucky Restaurant Association

### CHEFS THAT SIZZLE:

PATTI'S 1880'S SETTLEMENT

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### 12 LIVE EVENT IDEAS FOR RESTAURANTS

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**June 13th - Sporting Clays Tournament**

Jefferson Gun Club, Brooks, Kentucky

**October 3rd - Golftoberfest**

Persimmon Ridge Golf Club

**November 17th - Tradeshow**

Location TBD

**January 23, 2023 - Restaurateur's Gala**

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**Sizzle** Chefs That

# A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT

by STACY ROOF


As I write this, it has been two loooooong years of enduring Covid and all that has come with it. It's hard for me to believe all that most Kentucky restaurants have survived, and I applaud you for your resilience and creativity. As we start Spring, there is so much hope on the horizon! Delayed events and celebrations will take place in our restaurants. Casual meet-ups for coffee, breakfast, lunch or dinner will be "normal," as they should be. Business lunches and travel are picking up again. I wish you all the business you can handle, and returning staff to go along with it.

This issue focuses on Events – we have a few this year! We started the year out with a bang at the Restaurateur's Gala. I was bracing for a lower turnout, but do you know we only had 8 fewer people than the 2020 Gala – which was the largest in KRA history? I think restaurant folks were ready to party! Check out the pictures in this issue if you

missed it. The KRA Northern Kentucky Chapter had its spectacular Mardi Gras taste on March 1 – also known as Fat Tuesday – and set records in attendance and funds raised for several homeless children's charities. Our Sporting Clays Tournament last year was such a big hit – and sold out very quickly – that we're bringing it back! It will take place again at Jefferson Gun Club in Brooks on June 13. The KRA Louisville Chapter will host its Firecracker Scramble on June 20 at Woodhaven Country Club – it's always a great time! More golf will bring Golftoberfest on October 3 at Persimmon Ridge Golf Club, where last year's event had a record amount of participants, food, beverage and camaraderie. The Taste of Louisville will be back this year on October 12 after a two year hiatus, and we can't wait to celebrate together! We're planning to hold a trade show on November 17 and still working out the details.

While I know it is challenging for you to leave your business for a day or even a few hours – especially with staffing shortages – it's important for us to get together, network, learn from each other and see new products. Based on this year's response, I predict the 2023 Restaurateur's Gala will top 300! Our tentative date is January 23, 2023.

I just wouldn't be me if I didn't reference membership. Restaurant owners, to be a member of KRA is a few hundred dollars a year AND it's 75% tax deductible! It's a business expense, and it gets you advice, experts, programs, savings and a whole family you didn't know you needed. You determine the dues you pay. The best part is you make the industry's voice louder when legislators and health departments need to hear us. Thank you to our already joined members, and we're waiting for you to our future members!



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# FRONT BURNER

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by STACY ROOF

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## House Bill 252

Rep. Killian Timoney (R-Lexington) filed **HB 252** that would lower the age to sell and serve alcohol for restaurants and package retailers to 18 years of age, so long as they are supervised by someone who is 20 years or older. There would also need to be someone over the age of 21 on the premises. The bill passed unanimously out of the House Licensing & Occupations Committee and then the House passed it. The goal of the legislation is to increase the pool of employees as restaurants and retailers face a labor shortage. The bill was taken up by the Senate Economic Development, Tourism and Labor Committee passed the bill and at this writing it is slated to be heard on the Senate floor.

## House Bill 475 continues to sit in limbo in the Senate

After passing the House easily, **House**

**Bill 475**, which could lead to local taxes, continues to be in limbo in the Senate after being assigned to the Senate Appropriations and Revenue Committee. It is imperative that members still call their senators asking they oppose the bills.

Rep. Michael Meredith (R-Oakland) is sponsoring **HB 475** that would open the door for voters to amend the Constitution to allow the General Assembly the ability to authorize local governments to levy any tax. Again, there would be only infinite possibilities that all General Assemblies of the future could give to local governments. All Kentuckians would lose their constitutional protections from over taxation by local governments. House Bill 475 would place on the ballot a constitutional amendment that if approved by voters would give the General Assembly the right to authorize

a county, city, town or other municipal corporations to collect any taxes and license fees not in conflict with the Constitution. Any authorization of the local sales tax shall apply to the same base and administered in the same manner as any state sales tax or use tax. A floor amendment was adopted in the House that would remove the expansion of franchise fees to local government authority, and clarify that license fees on franchises would be allowed. HB 476 keeps the status quo that local governments could not start charging new taxes and fees until the General Assembly comes in to approve such measures.

## 'Dark Store' Bill

**House Bill 260**, sponsored by Rep. Randy Bridges (R-Paducah), that would amend the sales comparison valuation method approach to allow for the consideration of sales and rentals

with similar uses and require market segmentation where like properties and businesses can only be compared to each other, has not received a reading. Those opposing the bill are encouraged to reach out to legislators and let House members know that they should vote ‘no’ on the issue. It would also limit an operating property to only be compared with other open and operating properties. All this can be completed by the PVA, but the PVAs want the General Assembly to do the job of the legislature for them.

## **Unemployment benefits bill heads to governor**

**House Bill 4**, which reduces the number of weeks unemployed Kentuckians are eligible for benefits, has been delivered to Gov. Andy Beshear for his signature or veto. The House approved a Senate Committee Substitute that removed the work search requirements if a beneficiary is enrolled in an approved job training or certification program or have return or recall to work prospects within 16 weeks of filing a claim. That vote was 58-36 to concur with the Senate change.

The bill cuts the number of weeks unemployed Kentuckians are eligible for the benefits would be reduced from 26 to anywhere from 12 to 24 weeks — with the exact time period indexed based on the statewide unemployment rate from nine to 12 months earlier. It would also increase work search requirements from one to five per week in order to remain eligible for the benefits, and would set up a mechanism for employers to report applicants who “ghost” out of interviews or showing up for work.

The bill would also add accountability to the work search requirements and increase the number of job contacts that the beneficiary must make. It also gives employers the opportunity to report those applicants that don’t show up for

job interviews or the first day of work. If an employee is offered employment and they don’t accept it, they are no longer eligible for UI benefits. The legislation ensures that those receiving UI benefits are encouraged to quickly find employment especially during the time when there are so many job vacancies and employers are scrambling to get back to work.

## **Private Barrel Selections Would Continue Under Legislation Adopted by House**

The House approved **HB 500** that would allow for the continuation of private barrel selections through retailers and restaurants, but it would also expand other privileges as well. It would allow for the creation and sale of batched cocktails in private bourbon barrels that could be sold by the drink at restaurants. It would also allow for distilleries to ship private barrel selects to consumers, but only to those consumers who purchased them through the distillery gift shop. It would require the distilleries to make 70% of private barrel selects available to wholesalers. It would also allow distilleries and retailers to sell distilled spirits, and in the case of retailers, they would be able to sell wine as well, at fairs and festivals if the territory where the fair and festival is wet.

The legislation passed the House 75-17 and now heads to the Senate for consideration. The Senate passed SB 160 that would allow for the continuation of the barrel selection program as it exists today.

## **RRF Taxes**

**House Bill 385** seeks clarification in the Kentucky tax code ensuring that restaurants and qualifying breweries can deduct expenses paid for with the proceeds of Restaurant Revitalization Fund Grants (RRF), conforming with the Internal Revenue Service’s decision

to deduct these expenses. The Kentucky Department of Revenue has determined that without a statutory change, these expenses will not be deductible from the Kentucky income tax. Restaurants have paid quarterly tax payments under the assumption that these expenses would be deductible. Without these changes restaurants would be faced with significant tax increases, and taxpayers may also be subject to a penalty for underpayment of estimated tax plus interest, at a time when the restaurant industry is still recovering from the effects of the global pandemic.

Restaurant Revitalization Funds kept restaurants open and saved restaurant worker jobs. A tax increase on businesses who received these funds would negatively impact their recovery. Business expenses paid with Restaurant Revitalization Funds operate in the same manner as business expenses paid from paycheck protection program (PPP) loans. House Bill 278, signed by Governor Beshear on March 15, 2021, allows expenses paid with PPP loan proceeds to be tax deductible for Kentucky income tax purposes, providing much needed relief for business and individual taxpayers. To maintain uniformity in our state tax laws, we should allow expenses paid with restaurant revitalization funds to be tax deductible for Kentucky income tax purposes and provide further relief to businesses as inflation, supply chain expenses, and workforce shortages become an increased burden. In Kentucky, 88% of restaurants reported that RRF grants gave them the ability to stay open, hire back employees, and helped them pay off expenses and debt that had accumulated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Without this funding, 38% of restaurants say that they would not be able to stay in business.





Jim Lyon  
Kentucky ProStart Coordinator  
Jim@kyra.org



# KENTUCKY ProStart

by JIM LYON

Please allow me to introduce the Kentucky ProStart Invitational winning Management and Culinary Arts teams for 2022. They will be heading to Washington, DC to represent Kentucky at the National ProStart Invitational May 6 – 8, going head-to-head with other states in both Culinary Arts and Management. Join me in congratulating them all!

## **Marion C. Moore – 2022 ProStart Culinary Management Team**



**Chef Sanborn, Errion Lamon Walker – 16  
Aaron La Von Clay – 17, Evan Robert Embry – 17**

## **Early College and Career Center (EC3) – 2022 ProStart Culinary Arts Team**



**Leia Reynolds – 16, Michael Nagao-Summers – 16,  
Jeremias Green – 17, Desmond Washington – 17,  
Trey Goodman – 18, Chef Ramsey**

If you are interested in learning more about the ProStart program in Kentucky or would like to become involved, please contact Jim Lyon at 502-400-3736 or email at [jim@kyra.org](mailto:jim@kyra.org).





# Calendar of Events



## APRIL

- April 6** DiningTek webinar
- April 11** KRA State Board of Directors meeting  
ServSafe class - KRA office in Louisville
- April 17** Easter
- April 18** Louisville Chapter Board meeting  
Tax Day

## MAY

- May 5** Cinco de Mayo
- May 6** Kentucky Oaks Day
- May 7** Kentucky Derby Day
- May 8** Mother's Day
- May 16** ServSafe class - KRA office in Louisville
- May 18** ServSafe class - Covington
- May 30** Memorial Day



## JUNE

- June 6** KRA State Board of Directors meeting
- June 13** Sporting Clays Tournament
- June 14** ServSafe class - KRA office in Louisville
- June 19** Father's Day  
Juneteenth
- June 20** Louisville Chapter Firecracker Scramble







**Q: I see KRA is working with ERC Today, but I thought it was too late to file?**

**A:** We asked David Stoessel with ERC Today. He said the ERC can be claimed for certain periods where either certain reduced revenue thresholds were met OR government shutdowns or restrictions were in place. If the revenue reduction thresholds were met, then the ERC benefit period could extend past the mid-June date. 9/30/21 is the end of the eligibility period. If the revenue reduction thresholds were not met, then the mid-June date would signal the end of the ERC eligibility period. We take these various reopening dates in to account for each locality that we deal with as the end of the shutdown eligibility. If the ERC has NOT been claimed, then it can still be filed for – with the above comments controlling the effective end date of the benefit. If your company would like to explore ERC, please email David at [david.stoessel@erctoday.com](mailto:david.stoessel@erctoday.com)

**Q: My restaurant desperately needs staff. I know all the usual ways to find new employees, but are there any new tools?**

**A:** KRA has two new members who may be able to help: Workstream and Gigpro. Gigpro is an app to help get you gig staff. KRA members get their first gig free up to \$200 and can sign up here: [go.gigpro.com/freegig](https://go.gigpro.com/freegig) Workstream posts jobs to job boards, provides a QR code for paperless applications and texts applicants the second they apply. KRA members get a 20% discount on Workstream's hiring platform and mobile app. Learn more at <https://www.workstream.us/kra-demo>

**Q: I just joined a new company and the previous company's manager was handling tips. Can they do that?**

**A:** No, in Kentucky the only tips the company should handle are service charges which can be shared with tipped employees. Managers and owners are not allowed to distribute tips or take any portion of tips. Please consult your CPA or payroll company for clear guidance.

## How may we be of assistance?

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### Account reconciliation

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- Reconcile electronic transactions into QuickBooks
- Reconcile credit card accounts

### Advice

- Prepare monthly financial statements
- Prepare monthly budget reports
- Tax planning
- General business consulting

### Tax

- Tax preparation

### Payroll

- Prepare payroll
- Submit payroll taxes to agencies
- Prepare payroll tax returns
- Provide employee access to electronic paystubs
- Provide employer access to electronic pay records
- Prepare W-2s
- Pension remittance
- Garnishment remittance

### Bookkeeping

- Process bills and payments
- Track credit card expenses and receipts
- Process employee expense reports
- Prepare 1099s for contractors
- Provide digital access to paid bills
- Quarterly video conference to review key performance measures

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# 2022 RESTAURATEUR'S *Gala*

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## KRA Restaurateur's Awards Gala Honors Industry's Best

The Kentucky Restaurant Association held the 16th annual Restaurateur's Gala on January 24th at Savor in Louisville, Kentucky. This black tie optional affair honored Kentucky's best in the hospitality industry. The atmosphere, food and beverages at Savor at River House were outstanding! Award recipients were as follows:

### Outstanding Restaurateur

Khalil Batshon, Khalil's, Louisville  
Matt Haws, Ripple Wine Bar, Covington  
Fernando Martinez, Ole' Restaurant Group, Louisville  
Dallas McGarity, The Fat Lamb, Louisville  
Ernesto Rivera, I Love Tacos, Louisville  
Enrique Roman, El Nopal, Louisville area  
Alan Salmon – Selena's, Louisville

### Outstanding Employee

Nikki Ervins, Black Jockeys Lounge, Louisville  
Gaelen Genoud, Brasserie Provence, Louisville  
Shannon Grabowski, Martini Italian Bistro, Louisville  
Sharon Guy, Volare, Louisville  
Jordan Hill, Carr's Steakhouse, Mayfield  
Lucas Hill, Carr's Steakhouse, Mayfield  
Courtney James, River House, Louisville  
Kristina Russ, Varanese, Louisville  
Myra White, The Café, Louisville

### Outstanding Supplier

Fisher & Phillips LLP - Presented to: Emily Litzinger  
Gordon Food Service - Presented to: Tom Enyeart  
Klosterman Baking Company - Presented to Nick Perdue  
Patterson & Company CPAs  
Presented to: Melina and Bob Patterson  
Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits of Kentucky  
Presented to: Mike Beasley  
Sysco Louisville - Presented to: TJ Devault  
Weisenberger Mills - Presented to: Mac Weisenberger

### Outstanding Manager

Sandy Allison, Ouita Michel Restaurants, Midway and Lexington  
Max Bloom, Craft Culture Concepts, Louisville  
Stephon Dean, Shoney's, Shepherdsville  
Gabriella DiVencenzo, Ripple Wine Bar, Covington  
Patrick Gosden, Brasserie Provence, Louisville  
Cindy Kennedy, Bristol Bar & Grille, Louisville  
Med Mirkhan, Hall's on the River, Winchester  
Rafael Murray, River House, Louisville  
Wayne Sweeney, Merle's Whiskey Kitchen, Louisville  
Ray Watkins, Selena's, Louisville  
Sean Wilkerson, Volare, Louisville  
Alex Young, Khalil's, Louisville

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Kaylie Love, Sullivan University,

### Outstanding Chapter Member

#### Louisville Chapter

Andy Bennett  
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Rory Wilson  
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#### Northern Kentucky Chapter

Chris Cunningham  
Metropolitan Club









PHOTOS AND ARTICLE CREDIT: OPENTABLE

# 7 TIPS TO GET THE WORD OUT ABOUT PRIVATE SPACES

by JOY MANNING

Certain times of the year, such as the holiday season, bring increased demand for private event spaces, but the truth is that marketing them is a 12-months-a-year job.

“It may seem early, but people start thinking about their holiday spending and planning private events around May or June,” says Marci Liu, co-founder and digital marketing expert at ELMNTL, a Dallas firm specializing in hospitality marketing. It’s never too soon to start marketing your private spaces, Liu says. “Bigger corporate events and weddings are being planned all year round, so you want to make sure that you’re marketing your space to get these events.”

The space itself is obviously an important factor, but capturing private event sales is about more than that. “It’s important for owners to remember that you’re not promoting your space—you’re promoting the potential for an event.” Guests make choices about where to book parties and events based on how they think they’ll feel there.

“A lot of owners think that if they have a beautiful space then it will magically draw customers and they don’t have to do anything else,” Liu says. “Unfortunately that’s not the case.” Below, Liu shares ways that owners and managers can craft excellent private event space marketing that keeps them top of mind for private event planners.

## 1. Use your existing channels

You don’t need to reinvent the wheel when it comes to reaching people who are planning on booking a private event. “The way that we approach marketing is that we tell our customers to use the existing channels that they already have,” says Liu. That means creating content promoting your private event space specifically and sharing it widely across all platforms. “Use your social media pages, your website, and your email list.” All of those channels help you reach existing fans or followers, who don’t always know what you offer for private events.

## 2. Show your space in action

One of the biggest mistakes that Liu sees from restaurant owners is posting photos of their beautiful private event space sitting empty in broad daylight. “You want to make it as easy as possible for people to see themselves and their party in that space,” he says. “Even if the space is beautiful, you want to post a picture that has people in it, enjoying themselves with food and drinks.” It can be a picture from a previous event or you can even stage a photograph, so people get an idea of what their private event will look like in the space. Photos that show people actually using the space help guests picture their own event at the venue. “Always make the content as specific to your audience as possible,” Liu says.

## 3. Convey why you're special

Saying that you have a certain number of chairs or square footage is good, but getting across what really makes your restaurant special is what's going to make you stand out. “Put yourself in the position of a party planner and think about what specifically your restaurant offers that make events extra special,” Liu says. That could be a signature dish, live music, or anything that makes your restaurant stand out from other private event spaces. “Craft a message around that and use wording like you're talking directly to that person about why they want to have their event with you.”

## 4. Share your space with the community

Many organizations and nonprofits need to put on events on a tight budget. Lending space to local writers, artists, and fundraising efforts is a surprisingly effective way to spread the word about your event space. It gives a new audience the positive experience of attending an event at your restaurant, and it makes them more likely to think of you in the future when they need to host an event. Plus, everyone present will tell someone what a great time they

had. Word-of-mouth marketing has been instrumental in building the events business.

## 5. Reach out to past private events guests

“The most likely people to book an event are people who have booked an event before,” says Liu. Guests who have had a past event at your restaurant are likely to do so again. Now is the time to reach out to them since they're likely thinking about where to have



an event when the holiday season rolls around. “Once someone has had an event with you, there's no reason why your relationship should end there. If you keep that relationship going, they're going to become ambassadors for you and your restaurant.” Anytime you host a private event make sure that you capture the contact info of the planners so you can add them to your email list or email them when it comes time to book a private event.

## 6. Measure progress

All too often, restaurants don't measure their progress or track any figures related to private dining. It's a missed opportunity, according to Liu. “You always need to be measuring your progress and referring to it to see what works and what doesn't,” he says. After

implementing a new marketing strategy, track the number of private event leads or bookings that happen as a result. You can also look at private event numbers from the previous year and set goals for the future. “It's a learning process but you won't know what to tweak if you don't have those numbers,” Liu warns.

## 7. Do the unexpected

Take your client's pulse and offer fun—maybe even outrageous—surprises. Proceed with caution: This strategy

hinges on you really understanding what your guest expects, so add those unexpected flourishes only if you're absolutely certain they'll be welcome. You could have your staff dress up to match a party's theme, for example, or use special effects like dry ice or artificial snow to create an unforgettable moment during the event. Dramatic decor, an art installation, or an appearance by the chef can also delight guests. “The unexpected is what people remember.”

Marketing your event space regularly isn't totally effortless, but it's not all that difficult, either. Using these tips can help you keep the private event spaces in your restaurant booked. Consistent marketing can pay big dividends around the holidays and all throughout the year.





## Chefs That **Sizzle**

# ONE WOMAN'S LOVE OF COOKING

by ANN MARTIN

For more than 45 years, Patti's 1880's Settlement in Grand Rivers, Kentucky has welcomed guests from all over the world. Patti's is a treasured Western Kentucky landmark and popular destination attracting more than 350,000 people a year to a town of only 353 residents.

This 1880's recreated log cabin village entices its visitors with quiet, peaceful walkways, beautiful gardens, unique shopping, animals, a miniature golf course, children's play area, wedding venues and amazing light displays - all centered around the main attraction, Patti's iconic restaurant. Recently tag lined "a destination dining experience like no other," visitors drive 2 to 3 hours one way to line up to be seated.

A glance at the 12-page menu sets the stage for a dining experience like no other. Who is the mastermind behind the extensive menu? That legendary person is Miss Patti Tullar. Miss Tullar, a wonderful cook with no "chef" title, transformed her love for cooking and family into an award-winning business. Offering over 21 entrees with its house specialty, a two-inch-thick center cut pork chop seasoned and charbroiled as only Patti's can.

Born in 1925, Patti began cooking at a very early age due to her mother often being bedridden because of a chronic heart condition. Her mother would lie in bed and direct her activities in the kitchen, and in time she began

to develop real culinary skills. Patti received her very own, first piece of kitchen equipment at 14, a Sunbeam Mix Master, and it revolutionized her work in the kitchen.

In 1944, while visiting a VA hospital with friends, she met Bill Tullar. Their marriage in 1944 would endure for 53 years, produce four children and become the beginning of a great American success story. Landing in western Kentucky after years of traveling, Miss Patti and Bill fell in love with the town of Grand Rivers. In 1977 they started Hamburger Patti's Ice Cream Parlor. The restaurant was a block building that was part of a 6-unit motel. The motel units quickly gave way to becoming dining rooms. As Patti's Settlement grew, so

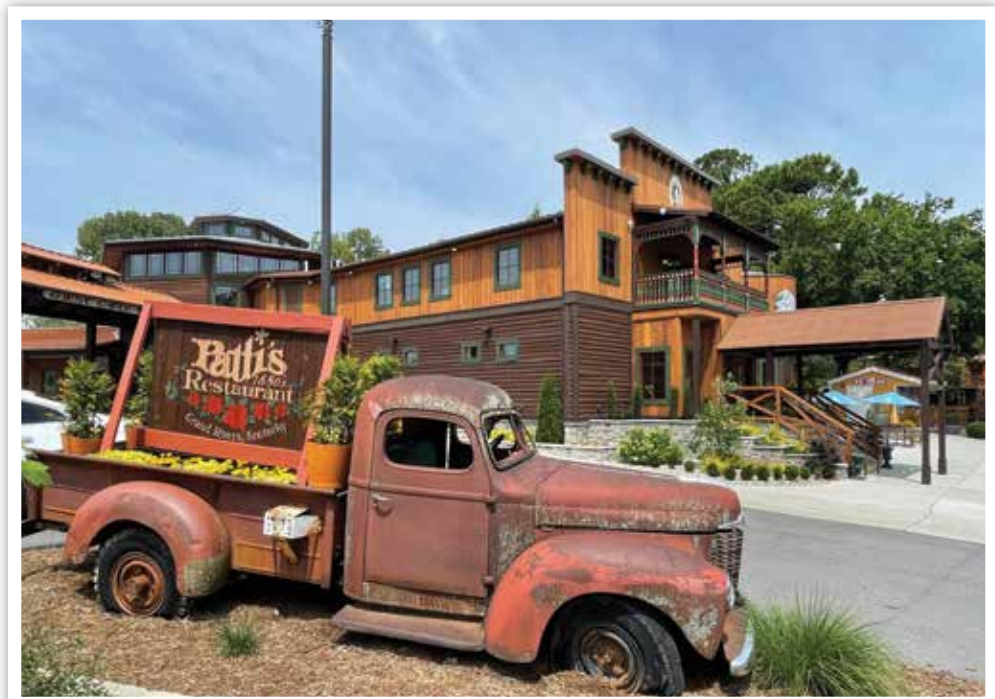
did the number of guests that visited each year. It was time to make Patti's a destination rather than just a restaurant.

Success was not immediate, but the result of painstaking work, with many trials and errors and a vision. Patti practiced recipes in her small basement while Bill found creative ways to market the restaurant. The customer list grew while the fabulous food kept the guests returning. The signature dishes: Don's Chicken, Ella Mae's Chicken and the number one, most popular 2-inch-thick pork chop. No schooling could teach the distinctive items that Miss Patti would dream up, bread baked in flowerpots, served with mouthwatering strawberry butter.

However, it's the extraordinary desserts that continued to raise the bar at Patti's. Each morning, still today, the bakery comes alive making seventeen homemade desserts. Customer favorites are Miss Patti's mile-high meringue pies in coconut, lemon and chocolate. Patti worked for hours perfecting the height of the meringue with the secret ingredient, tartar. Patti was astonished one day when she received a letter from Bon Appetit asking for a recipe for "Sawdust Pie", her own favorite dessert. Normally she did not give out recipes, but she decided as long as it was Bon Appetit she would make an exception. That mention was her first national publicity. A wonderful dessert made with egg whites, sugar, pecans and coconut served warm, topped with layers of bananas and homemade whipped cream.

The beauty of Patti's recipes were their simplicity, use of accessible ingredients and great taste. These same handwritten recipes, safely kept in a fireproof safe and thankfully saved from the February 5th fire in 2018, are still used today. The 2018 fire destroyed the former kitchen and eventually led to demolition of the original restaurant.

40 years later, after the fire, we seemed to be back at that beginning. We're starting over, sadly without Patti, in a brand-new building with new kitchen equipment and new team members. Through trial and error, new cooking



processes had to be developed using Miss Patti's old recipes. Our menu had to remain the same, as our customers would have it no other way. On a cold winter day, on November 25th, we reopened our doors in 2019 offering the same recipes and menu items from the past. It was a challenge recreating the dishes in hopes of achieving the same 5-star reviews from our faithful guests. It takes more than a "Chef" to be able to pull off an amazing feat like that. It takes long hours and strong determination by a faithful team not giving up through the test of time.

Miss Patti knew if she could keep the family entertained as well as fed, she would be able to keep the generations returning year after year. Our events have grown each year with hundreds of thousands of visitors that follow our social media to see what is on the calendar. In the month of December, 60,000 to 70,000 visit that one month alone to experience our annual Festival of Lights display. A million and a half twinkling lights can be seen glowing for miles, also featured on ABC's Great Christmas Light Fight. Recently we decided to continue this light display throughout the year changing over the "Christmas theme" to "Celebrating the USA" with red, white and blue. Themed



dinner events, Yellowstone and Murder Mysteries are selling out rapidly and we have waitlists for Breakfast with the Grinch. Please follow our Facebook page for a list of current events.

Our Patti's team is honored to continue the dream of one courageous woman that transformed her love for cooking and family into an award-winning business, Patti's 1880's Settlement.





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October 3, 2022

Persimmon Ridge Golf Club – Louisville, Kentucky

Registration Form



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**Total Amount \$** \_\_\_\_\_ Check enclosed or charge my credit card:

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As a restaurateur, you're in the business of food. To see more repeat customers, get into the business of fun by hosting weekly live events. As time goes on, Americans are increasingly interested in spending their money on entertaining experiences, and this is the perfect opportunity for your business to provide that entertainment. From running live trivia games to teaching a bartending class, these 12 easy live event ideas will bring guests back on repeat – without breaking the bank for your restaurant.

## HOST LIVE TRIVIA GAMES

Bring everyone together over a little friendly competition. Trivia games are popular everywhere from neighborhood restaurants to sports bars. Here's how to get into the action:

### 1. LIVE TRIVIA TOURNAMENT

You have several options when it comes to hosting live trivia games. Some restaurants hire an outside trivia host. Others do it all themselves, from creating the questions to the hosting. No matter which format you choose, there is one “secret” to success when running trivia: make it an ongoing tournament to ensure repeat business. Invite guests to form teams and compete for 6-7 weeks. Select a great prize, like a sizeable gift card or bar tab for the winning team.

### 2. CORPORATE TRIVIA FACEOFF

Companies are always looking for team-building events and exciting off-site venues for meetings. Invite them to your restaurant and offer

to run a game of trivia. You could also create a tournament where teams made up of employees from different companies compete against each other. The winning company can select a charity – and your restaurant makes a donation.

### 3. TRIVIA WITH A TASTING TWIST

If you want to spotlight some of your beverages or new menu items, you can host trivia games that double as tasting events. To make the event even more engaging, create a special menu and incorporate trivia questions based on the dishes' ingredients.

## EDUCATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT IDEAS

If your customers are eager for interactive fun, you can engage them with these educational events and workshops.

### 4. CRAFT WORKSHOP

No, we're not talking about craft beer. The latest trend in restaurant entertainment is craft night: from painting a masterpiece to planting a fairy garden. (Although, if you have a killer craft brew list, why not call your event “Arts and Crafts?”). Like trivia, these workshops spark socializing among patrons – creating a lively atmosphere that everyone wants to be a part of:

**Build a Terrarium:** Provide guests who have signed up ahead of time with supplies like stones, plants, and soil in order to create their own terrariums. This interactive activity not only keeps your customers interested, but it gives them

something to take home that they can associate with your event.

**Paint and Sip:** Hire an artist to walk your guests through a painting step-by-step as they sip your beverages and eat appetizers. Just like the terrarium event, your guests leave with something and have made memories at your business.

**Pint Glass Painting:** This event could be hosted by your own staff members. Provide pint glasses and painting supplies (look at your local craft store for paint that is specifically for painting glass). Then, let guests get creative!

### 5. CHEF AND BARTENDER DEMOS

Show off the talents of your team with live bartender and chef classes. You give patrons a chance to bond with your staff, which helps to foster loyalty. Once a week, try running these live events:

**Mini Mixology Class:** Ask your bartender to run a short, 15-minute class once a week. The class can be a short tutorial on how to make classic cocktails: from mojitos to whiskey sours. These classes can double as marketing moves. Use Facebook Live to live stream your class: you'll show everyone what they're missing!

**Secrets of the Chefs:** Similar to the mixology course, your chef steps outside the kitchen for a quick demo. She can reveal “secrets” like how to achieve perfect grill marks on steak and how to really know when pasta is al dente.



## MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT

restaurant open mic night

We've covered trivia and classes, but no list of live event ideas is complete without music. There's nothing wrong with bringing in a band or musician, but it can get expensive. You also run the risk of your live music becoming just background music. Instead, try these live music events to add excitement and an interactive element.

### 6. OPEN MIC NIGHT

Invite local musicians or other creatives to take the stage with a weekly open mic night:

**Make Music Competitive:** Just like trivia games, open mic nights are best when prizes are on the line. You can run your open mic night like the hit TV show *American Idol*. Invite a professional musician or two to judge the performers. The winning musician becomes the next week's judge.

**Stand Up Comedy:** Already run an open mic night for musicians? Now, let aspiring comedians take the stage with a comedy open mic night. Create themes like "Best Dad Joke" and let the crowd vote on their favorite contestant.

### 7. RADIO STATION REMOTE BROADCAST

Contact a local radio station that plays music which appeals to your target audience. Cater to millennials? Aim for Top 40. See more seniors at your restaurant? Contact the oldies radio station. Invite the DJ from the radio station to broadcast live from your restaurant. On top of the entertainment appeal, it's great exposure for the radio station and your establishment.

### 8. DANCE PARTY

Dim the lights. Move the tables.

There, you've got a dance floor. Just add music and these live event ideas:

**Offer a Dance Class:** Hire a dance instructor to teach guests at your restaurant. Vary the theme each week from salsa to the foxtrot, hip hop to line dancing.

**Let Your Staff be DJs:** DJs can be pricey to hire. Why not let a staff member create a playlist and emcee a dance party?

**Have Decade Theme Nights:** Each week, play tunes from a different decade. Invite patrons to dress



up for that decade. What about a throwback prom night? Guests can rock that 1990s tux or dress (or find one at the thrift store).

## CREATE A CLUB

There's a reason bars and restaurants create "mug clubs." Clubs give patrons VIP status and a built-in community. You can even invite members of existing clubs to hold their weekly meetings and gatherings at your restaurant and then use these ideas for launching your own clubs.

### 9. GAME NIGHT CLUB

Invite patrons to get their game on at your place:

**Trivia Club:** Trivia lovers may not be satisfied with just one night of

live trivia games! Invite the diehards back on a separate night for extra-challenging trivia. Or, they could be tasked with creating questions for your next night of trivia.

**Classic Bar Games:** Have a dart board, pool table, or shuffleboard? Ask the best players if they'd like to teach newbies how to play in a weekly bar games club. Offer them a small bar tab as a thank you.

### 10. BOOK CLUB

Book clubs are big with everyone from seniors to young adults. While book club members typically meet at a different member's home each week or month, you can bring them into your restaurant instead. You could even ask your bartender to create a cocktail based on the club's featured book.

### 11. BOOZE CLUB

Create a spirited club around a love of spirits, wine, or beer:

**For Craft Beer Fans:** Let craft beer fans be first to taste your new brews. On occasion, invite a local brewmaster in to share tasting notes.

**Wine Wednesday or Whiskey Wednesday:** Run specials on wine or whiskey on Wednesdays and offer exclusive tastings for club members.

### 12. CHARITY MEETUPS

Charities and non-profits need places to hold weekly and monthly meetings. Could you provide the space for free?

**Charity Night:** Take your charitable efforts a step further with a weekly "charity night." Donate 10% of the proceeds to the featured charity. Your heartfelt ways will pay off, because customers may remember your generosity and come back to support more charitable events.

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**Player #1** \_\_\_\_\_ **Player #2** \_\_\_\_\_

**Player #3** \_\_\_\_\_ **Player #4** \_\_\_\_\_

**Questions? Call Rory Wilson 502.966.2564 or email [rwilson@dpwservices.com](mailto:rwilson@dpwservices.com)**





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## 2022 MARDI GRAS FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN

The 31st Annual Mardi Gras for Homeless Children, which was held on Fat Tuesday, March 1, 2022, at the Northern Kentucky Convention Center in Covington, was a party that no one wanted to miss! This event raises money for three homeless children agencies in the Northern Kentucky/Greater Cincinnati area, Bethany House Services, Cincinnati, Brighton Center Homeward Bound and Welcome House Inc., both based out of Covington. The proceeds cover the food budget for these three agencies for a year.

This event, sponsored by Mercedes-Benz of Fort Mitchell & The Wyler Family Foundation, featured Scott Sloan of 700WLW as King, Sheila Gray of Local 12 WKRC-TV as Queen, and Giovani Bernard former Cincinnati Bengals Running Back as the Grand Marshal. Tiffany Potter and JonJon Curl both of Kiss 107FM were the emcees for the evening. There was live entertainment from a local band, Tickled Pink. The Mardi Gras parade was led by Beechwood High School's Marching Band. Over 45 local restaurants and beverage purveyors donated their time and product for this culinary tasting event.

Since the event's inception 31 years ago, over \$2.16M has been raised for these agencies! It is projected that the funds from this past event will raise the proceeds from \$2.16M to over \$2.3M.

The countdown for the 32nd Annual Mardi Gras for Homeless Children has begun and will be held on Fat Tuesday, February 21, 2023!





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# 15 RESTAURANT PROMOTION IDEAS

Tailor promotions to your business by writing down your top 5-10 business challenges, and the top 5-10 things that motivate your customers. Then, connect the dots.

Here are 15 restaurant promotion ideas you should add to your yearly restaurant marketing plan.

## 1. LEVERAGE A BIG LOCAL EVENT

Plan a promotion around a big event nearby, like a local sporting event, concert, or festival. This helps drive business and generate awareness of your restaurant to a large audience. You'll essentially be riding off the coattails of that event's marketing.

*Examples: Offer 5% off to people who have a ticket to a local hockey game, or \$5 off any purchase before a concert that's down the street.*

## 2. CHARITIES & CELEBRITIES

Bringing in a celebrity, even a local

one, can be expensive. But you can potentially entice them by donating a portion of the day's proceeds to a charity of their choosing. Joining forces with a big name will not only draw people to your restaurant, but show the community that you care about a good cause.

*Examples: Have a celebrity bartend from 4-8pm, and give all proceeds from pizzas sold during that time to your local food bank.*

## 3. HOLIDAYS

How can you celebrate the holidays with your customers? What will inspire them to share, link, and tag you in the event content they post on their social channels? Create an event that's so special they can't resist to post about it — and bring their friends back next year.

*Examples: Halloween costume contests featuring giveaways or gifts,*

*a different offering for each of the twelve days of Christmas, a Mother's Day trivia event.*

## 4. LOYALTY OFFERINGS

The key is picking a high enough threshold for a free meal or a discount to make it worthwhile for you. It helps to get your guests to opt in easily with the use of restaurant loyalty technology.

*Examples: Buy nine coffees and get one free, purchase every beer on the list and get 10% off beers for the year.*

## 5. BUNDLING AND FIXED PRICE OFFERINGS

Some restaurant POS systems can help you see how your menu items are faring in inventory reporting, which helps you set up promotions. If a certain dish isn't exactly flying out the door, attach it to one of the more popular ones, at a discounted price.



**Examples:** A reduced-price set menu, featuring a mix of top performers and dishes that need a boost.

## 6. GET THEM IN THE DOORS

Another surefire strategy is to heavily discount a section of your menu that's filled with items that aren't typically eaten by themselves – like sides, snacks, and soups. These promotions are often called the “get them in the doors,” because they're used to get someone in to make their first purchase, and then pushes them to buy more.

**Examples:** Discount salty =pretzels that'll inspire someone to buy beers.

## 7. DOWN TIME

Run promotions during slow times, to draw customers in when your restaurant is near empty and staff is underutilized.

**Examples:** Run drink specials or trivia or music events on slow nights like Tuesday or Wednesday, offer discounts that start at 4pm and end by 5:30, or try out a late night menu.

## 8. COMMUNITY EVENTS

Allowing local organizations to use your space taps into their network and – bonus – they'll do all the promoting for you. If you don't want to host an event, consider doing a profit share for the group in need. Donate part (or all) of the profits you make during a specific time period.

**Example:** Donate 50% of profits from your Thursday happy hour to funding the local sports team.

## 9. BUY IN BULK AND UPSELL

Similar to loyalty promotions, the key here is knowing the average

amount customers spend on a certain item, and then offering a small discount if they spend slightly more.

**Examples:** Knock five dollars off an appetizer with the purchase of a \$50 or more gift card, or give away a free beer for every two orders of wings.

## 10. Launches & Openings

Time promotions with the launch of new menu items or the openings of new locations. It's a great way to earn a bit of money back for obvious investments.

**Example:** To highlight the opening of a second (or third) location, invite regulars to attend the soft opening and preview new menu items.

## 11. TAKEOUT AND DELIVERY SPECIAL EVENT CATERING

Customers that appreciate your food may want to hire you to cater more than just a two-person dinner. Try creating a set holiday takeout and delivery menu — guests are willing to splurge this time of year, and the convenience of not having to cook for the holidays (but still enjoy a cozy meal at home) is priceless.

**Example:** offer a Thanksgiving feast for takeout and delivery, or keep those family-style takeout feasts available year-round and email guests around their birthdays with this offering at a small discount.

## 12. VIRTUAL ACCESS

Whether it's through video, augmented reality, or some other platform, insights on menu or bar prep can increase the emotional investment customers have in your team, your business, and your food.

**Example:** You can offer video tutorials on how to cook favorite dishes or

even offer a virtual tour of the kitchen pre-opening. These can be add-ons or special offerings to customers who visit the restaurant regularly or spend a certain amount.

## 13. COLLABORATIONS WITH THIRD-PARTY DELIVERERS

Is your restaurant still trying to get in-person attendance back to where it was pre-pandemic? Is your new location in a not-so-easy-to-find part of town? A third-party delivery partner can work with you to offer customers in a mega-wide radius discounted dishes, helping to promote the restaurant as well as certain menu items — and with Toast's Third Party Integrations, those orders will come straight to your POS (no more juggling tablets).

**Example:** Designate one menu item as delivery-only and promote it heavily on your social media.

## 14. POP-UPS

A pop-up or food truck parked in a popular area allows people to experience your menu in non-traditional surroundings.

**Example:** Take your new or most popular items to an outdoor brewery, nearby farmer's market, or other open-air setup to engage customers and promote menu items.

## 15. OLD SCHOOL PROMOTION TACTICS

We're definitely in a digital age, but that doesn't make old school outreach obsolete.

**Example:** Send direct mail that previews new menu items. They can contain discount codes to be used when brought back to the physical location.

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# Heartland



# Restaurant


Powerful. Scalable.  
Feature-rich point of sale.



One integrated suite to streamline your entire operations from online to prep line.

- Cloud-based Point of Sale
- Self Order Kiosk
- Mobile Ordering
- Guest Application
- Gift Cards and Loyalty

 **Turn Tables Faster**

 **Skip the Line**

 **Sync Servers and Kitchen in Real Time**

 **Manage Orders From Tableside to Online to Delivery**

 **Access Menus, Inventory and Sales from Any Device**

[go.heartland.us/sra](http://go.heartland.us/sra)  
800-613-0148

[heartland.us/restaurant](http://heartland.us/restaurant)

A Global Payments Company

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