

HOLISTIC HEALTH IN THE NINETIES: A NEW AGE AWARENESS

The *Cutting Edge*

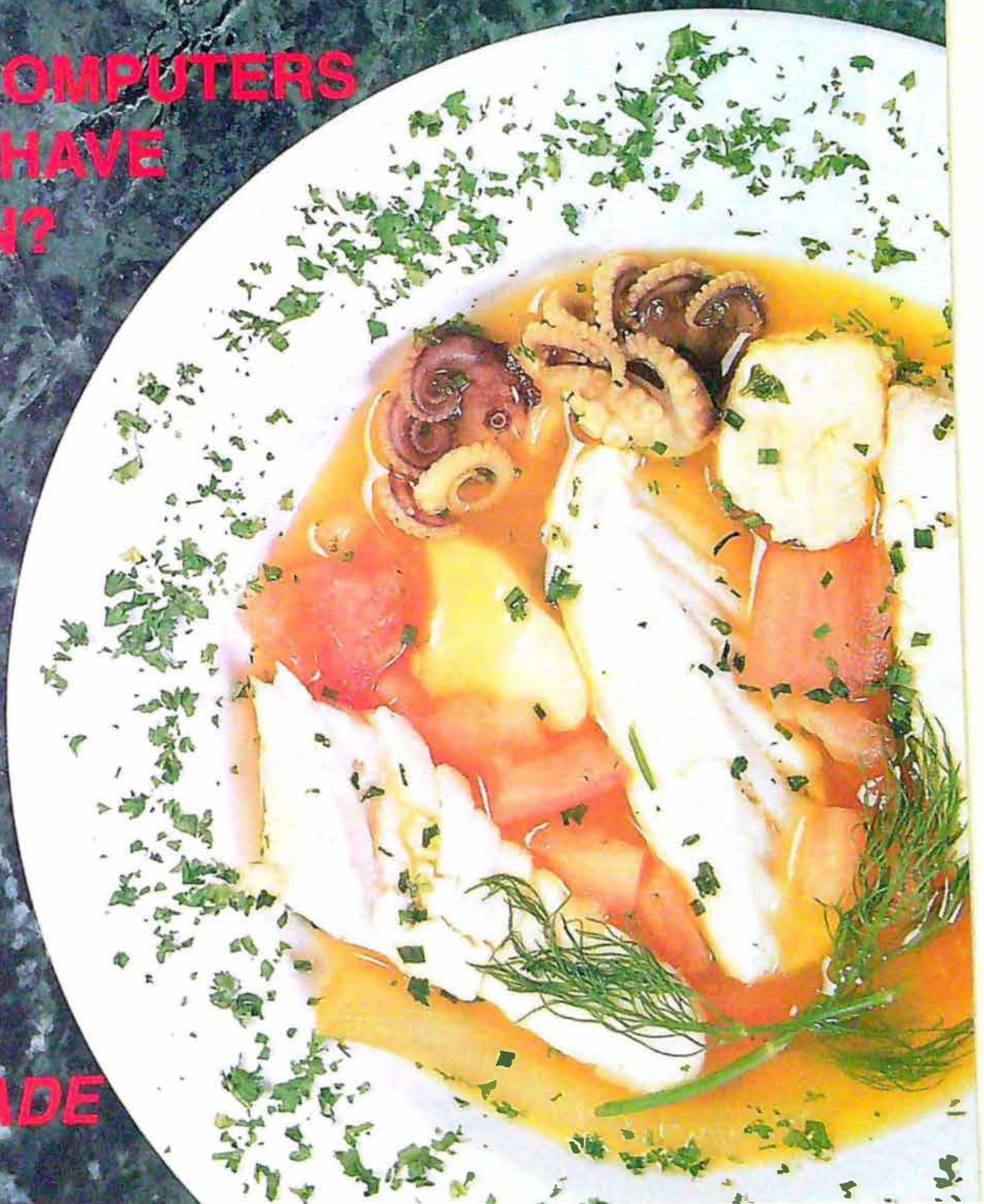
Humber's Hospitality Alliance Magazine

Spring 1994

**WHAT DO COMPUTERS
AND FOOD HAVE
IN COMMON?**

**FOOD
EDITOR
GETS
RAVE
REVIEWS**

**CURTAINS
OPEN FOR
MASQUERADE**





HOSPITALITY

A L L I A N C E



**Greetings
to all our
readers!**

Welcome to our third edition of Hospitality Alliance. The School of Hospitality has earned a strong reputation in the industry and has dealt with the reality that we must turn to collaborate approaches, strategic alliances, and flexible project management concepts.

Bon Appetit!
John Walker
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The Cutting Edge

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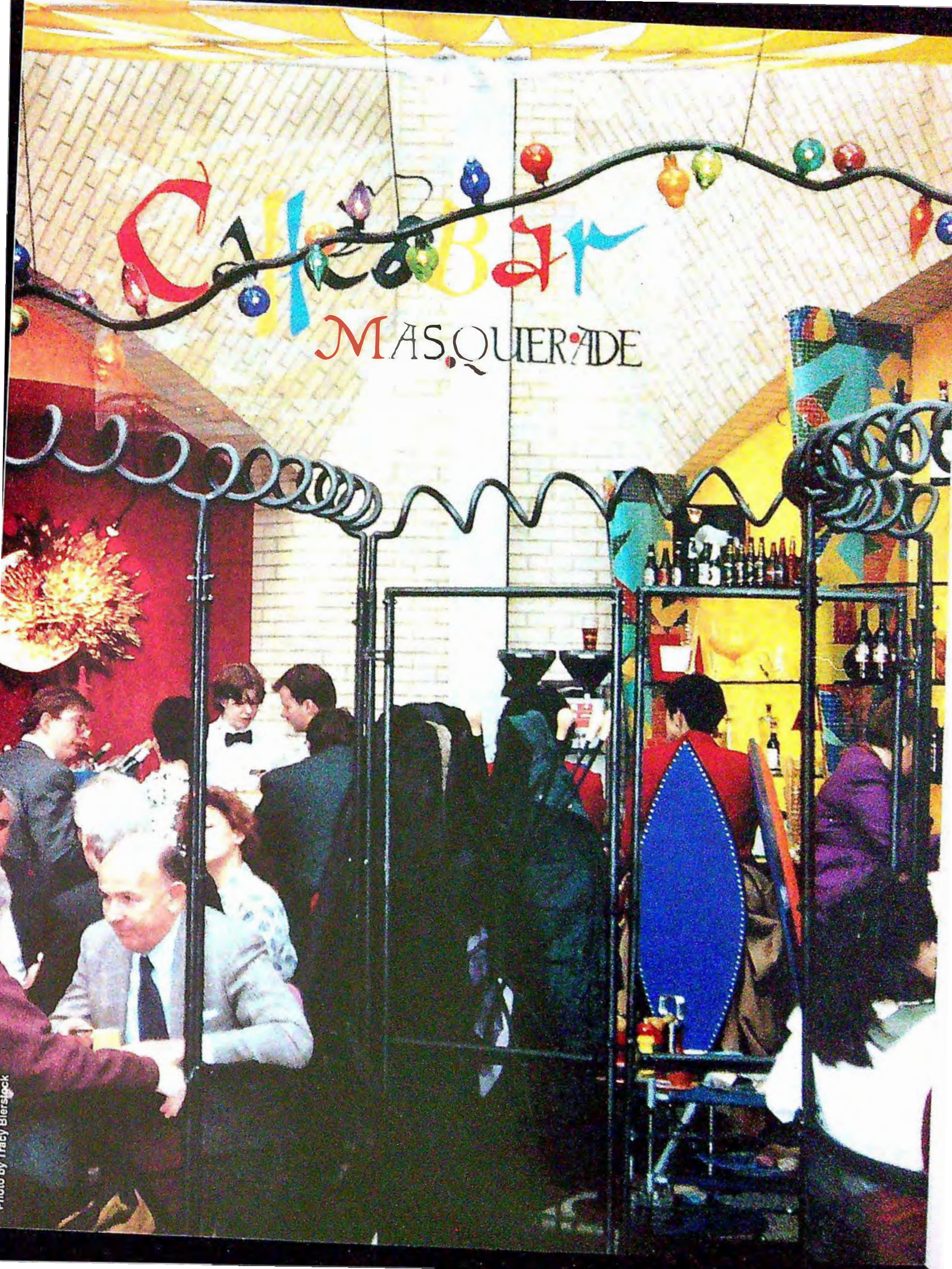
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Celebration

MASQUERADE



You can't do the usual thing in business anymore. It's now time to have some fun. Time to inject some energy into the industry.

— Roberto Tiso, Operations Manager, Masquerade

I Masks Off!

I am standing in the middle of the BCE Place atrium with two friends. We're trying to make a very serious decision – where to go for lunch. On my right is Mövenpick's Marché, and on my left is Mövenpick's latest creation, Caffé Bar Masquerade.

We decide to be adventurous, and try something new. However, our courage is short lived. There is a line-up outside of Masquerade, and it's only one o'clock. Upon first inspection, my friend notices that the tables are very small, and the furniture looks too art deco and uncomfortable for him to digest his food on. Over to the right it is, Marché has won out. But we are the exception.

My second attempt late

Sunday afternoon was more successful. Since it's opening on February 3rd, Masquerade has surpassed everyone's expectations. The Caffé, a veritable cornucopia of colors for the eyes, serves about 7,000 patrons a week. Roberto Tiso, Operations Manager for the Caffé, expects the numbers to continue to rise. Judging from the number of people that are packed into the restaurant every evening, his predictions will probably come true.

The most s-t-r-i-k-i-n-g thing about Masquerade is the interior design, by Moncur Design Associates. Bursts of color, no relief for the eyes. Hoping desperately not to go blind, my eyes slowly adjust to the change of atmosphere, and I find that it's a

by **Tracy Bierstock**

W

ith the sun beating through the large windows at the back of the Caffé, the atmosphere is warm and cozy, the service friendly and prompt, and the food, for the most part, is tasty.

rather exciting place to be, almost like a grand theater. This is the point of the name – Masquerade.

The space, tucked into the corner of BCE Place, is actually quite small, and spills out into the atrium. It is hard to know how to begin to describe the effort and attention that has obviously gone into the design of the *Caffé*. Every single detail has been embraced by a bright jewel color. According to Tiso, there are no straight lines to be found in the decor, this is to avoid rigidity.

The smaller bar which serves cappuccino and tea in over-sized cups and saucers big enough to bathe in, also opens out into the courtyard, and offers a take-out menu for those who don't have time to sit. (They also deliver to offices in the building). Made of Brazilian mahogany, the bar is inlaid with swirls and geometric shapes of vibrant colored glass, wood, and metal. A ruby red moon, an emerald green triangle, a sapphire blue squiggle.

The main bar has 151,000 pieces of wood veneer, each applied by hand. The backdrop for this bar is a high wall covered with a large selection of wines, 90% of which are Italian, and a privately imported collection of grappa, hand picked by Tiso. Scattered among the bottles is a beautiful collection of Murano glass art.

The pillars which stripe the walls are adorned with a mosaic of multicolored tiles. Between the pillars, hang Venetian masks that watch your every move. High above towers the main light fixture, which sprawls its way across the entire expanse of the *Caffé*. It seems to have a life of its own, like a giant octopus flailing out everywhere, its tentacles bulbs of color.

The kitchen has been turned into center stage, in full view for customers to watch their meals being prepared. The three stoves, at a cost of \$25,000 each, are green, blue and red, to match the colors of the chef's hats.

The furnishings and place settings are very eclectic. At first it looks like they may be art jutting out of the ground, too small and awkward to sit on. After one or two minor adjustments it is possible to conquer the stools and sit comfortably.

Glancing down at my feet, I notice the carpet, which, without surprise, echoes all the colors of the *Caffé*, and was specially designed. Last but not least, the bathrooms are also a repetition of the theme of color, with blue walls and red toilets. It's almost a shame to use them, they are so clean.

If you have been able to stomach all the visual elements of the *Caffé*, it's time to eat. They are open from 7:30AM to 2:00AM, seven days a week, and serve breakfast, lunch and dinner. Amongst the noisy crowds, the *Caffé* serves from a menu that changes daily. The main chef, Anja Loewe who Tiso brought in from the Hotel Giardino in Ascona, Italy, specializes in creating mouth watering filled pastas, risotto, and panini (sandwiches). Also available are Italian salads and antipasto, served picollo or grande. For dessert they make a notorious zabaglione. Every dish with the exception of the veal scallopini is under ten dollars.

Back to my Sunday afternoon lunch. The ravioli selection of the day is stuffed with mushrooms in a light cream sauce (\$7.50). It is exquisite and melts in my mouth. Definitely worth the trip. The panini (\$5.75) is really just a sandwich,

(turkey, eggplant, and mozzarella) without the Italian flare, (I expected olives or roasted peppers) and a little dry.

For dessert, the zabaglione has been highly recommended by our waitress. It is served warm, and is a whipped composition of a daily chosen liqueur, egg yolks, and sugar, over fruit (ours comes served over melon). The taste is a bit heavy on the alcohol side for me, however my friend loves it, and so does the lady and her companion at the table next to us, who have also ordered it for dessert.

Relaxing after lunch with a cup of tea seems to be the perfect thing to do here. With the sun beating through the large windows at the back of the *Caffé* the atmosphere is warm and cozy, the service friendly and prompt, and the food, for the most part, is tasty. Theo Geatros, who reviewed Masquerade for NOW magazine, put it well, when she wrote "Masquerade seems like a great idea – a salient space open nearly every waking hour for light eating, drinks or coffee."

Tiso hopes that customers will enjoy the change of venue that Masquerade offers. "You can't do the 'usual' things in this business anymore" he said. "It's now time to have some fun. Time to inject some energy into the industry." I agree wholeheartedly. The concept of an Italian Caffé Bar works well, and is a fun and interesting place for drinks and conversation with friends. ♦

Masquerade Caffé Bar
BCE Place
42 Yonge Street
(Yonge and Front)
Toronto
Phone: (416) 363-8971

C Perhaps this word best describes the advent of the **HCHANGE** nineties. Gone are the boom days of the frivolous eighties. Inherited is a decade that emphasizes three new R's. Reducing, Restructuring, and Recovering. The luxury of unlimited spending in the last decade has left many lasting effects, namely a surplus (of almost everything, including chefs), that has led to today's new way of doing business.

To recoup some of the losses from uncontrolled spending, many industries are drastically streamlining their operations. The only way to gain increased revenue in an age of decreased consumer spending is to maximize efficiency, hence the three R's. Companies are reducing their workforce, and restructuring in an attempt to recover some profits.

The winds of change haven't passed over the chef and culinary occupations, instead it's hit them with a force that approaches a hurricane's. Chefs of the past were expect-

ed to prepare exotic meals for the cellular-tong masses, or to produce good old hearty meals for those who enjoy the simpler things. Today, however, executive chef and culinary manager, John Higgins, of the King Edward Hotel in Toronto, has seen his role expand quite drastically.

In due time, every occupation begins to demand new and greater things from its practitioners, but the uniqueness of the past recession has prompted these changes to come about a lot quicker. A chef, especially an executive chef, now has many more concerns, and has progressed beyond being merely a cook. A chef must now become cost conscious, an engineer in the cost versus quality battle. Once

known and depicted as clever-wielding, human-dicing machines, chefs must now hold a blade in one hand and a keyboard in the other.

An executive chef in a large hotel, is in charge of food costs and preparation for the entire operation. This means feeding the thousands of business people that have rented the meeting halls, preparing menus for the hotel's restaurants, managing the kitchens and its staff, and all the while ensuring that food costs remain under control.

In total, Higgins is responsible for 135 employees; 43 kitchen staff and 92 employed in related food service sectors. Higgins says that in order to become a

chef must be able to understand the changes that will affect his/her role in a successful operation and be willing and able to adapt to those changes.

John Walker, Chairman of the Humber College School of Hospitality, likens new age chefs to business executives.

"An executive chef must be able to run the entire operation efficiently, while meeting several prescribed goals. Hotels and restaurants invest a large amount in their executive chefs, and in return they must show an acceptable profit while maintaining a high level of quality.

Obtaining a new level of efficiency while reducing costs is done in the time honored method of implementing new technologies.

Computer programs can calculate food cost and help to control inventory. Higgins admits that he has only been using computers for a year. Although skeptical at first, he says that he uses his almost everything now and couldn't do without it.

All of this, says Walker, is used in an effort to buy time. The less time spent at a certain task the

more time for another. Improved technology allows chefs to do many more things in less time than was previously possible. A few years ago microwaves were the newest time saving device. Today, they can cook more than one dish including vac. unpacked foods at different temperatures, making them easier and quicker to prepare.

This does not mean that culinary skills are no longer needed. A chef's most prized asset is still his ability to create mouthwatering dishes, and with the ever-changing food trends there will be no shortage of opportunities to create new and exciting menus. Maybe we shouldn't be calling them chefs, but Culinary Technicians. ♦

WINDS OF CHANGE

successful executive chef it is necessary to get the employee's respect and be open-minded.

"A person cannot be myopic when in control of an operation. A person with a narrow view will never succeed. Instead you must have a very open mind, as a manager, the greatest asset is understanding", says Higgins.

Understanding perhaps, is the key to surviving in a changing profession. A

Once known and depicted as clever wielding, human dicing machines, chefs must now hold a blade in one hand and a keyboard in the other.

by **Jerry Compierchio**

Can too many cooks spoil the ... Location?

Hit hard by the recession, cocooning and the GST, small suburban restaurant operators may find that a next door competitor is part of the recipe for increased sales.

With 15 years experience operating fast food outlets, cafeterias, mid-scale and fine dining establishments,

Louis Koikas knew a good location when he saw one. It was early in 1992 when Koikas surveyed a likely spot to open his next restaurant. Koikas planned on riding out the recession by trading in his mid-scale 140 seat establishment in Mississauga for a smaller, more personal operation in Etobicoke.

"The location is ideal," Koikas recalls telling his partners at the time. "The space that's available has been a restaurant for years and can seat 65. It occupies part of the main floor in a four-storey office complex and the basement level has been converted to a Cheers-style pub with room for 45 people. The building is situated on the corner of a busy intersection next to a large residential area with commercial exposure nearby, with lots of parking." And no competitors of any kind on either side of the street for a long city block.

Conventional wisdom holds that absence of compe-

tition will lead to increased sales, but the combined impact of the latest recession, changing consumer buying habits and the GST, places a premium on adapting to new market realities. To survive in the '90s, the independent owner/operator of a small suburban dining establishment faces increasing pressure to select a location in or near anchor malls or other large commercial centers. For restaurateurs intent on maintaining the viability of the neighborhood eating place, filling a niche in a cluster of complementary competi-

tors may prove to be the ideal location.

Koikas eventually leased his "ideal location". Sixty days after his first look at the Dundas and Shaver St. site and after checking the demographics and the traffic patterns of the area, Koikas opened Joanna's Gourmet Grill and Sports Bar.

"Things unfolded pretty much the way I expected they would," says Koikas. "For the first three months business was slow. In the next three months business climbed. Over eight to ten months, sales levelled off and dipped slightly. This told me that at first people didn't know we existed. Once they found out we were in business they tried us out. After the initial exposure they moved on to try out other establishments. In the last six months, sales are up again."

Although Koikas perceives the fluctuations in sales as temporary, he remains vigilant about the area's traffic patterns. Guarding against complacency he continues to upgrade his eatery. In less than 24 months the restaurant has undergone renovations, the below ground bar area has been expanded, group business has been solicited, karaoke entertainment has been introduced, and advertising and events spending has increased. Koikas says that while he has established



by **John Mlynarsky**

close ties with his customers, he's also being pragmatic. "The fact that there's no restaurant next door isn't a consideration. You can hop in a car and in a minute you can be at one of several different restaurants."

Because there is "no restaurant next door" Koikas can't count on overflow business, underscoring the need to keep up a steady marketing campaign in a poor economy.

"Our industry has been decimated by the recession and the GST," says Robin Garrett, director of research and communications for the Canadian Restaurant and Food Services Association (CRFSA). Although Garrett is optimistic for the long-term future of the 11,000 members and 30,000 outlets the CRFSA represents, she cautions that improvement will be incremental. The combined impact of the recession and GST is responsible for the loss of 46,000 industry jobs across Canada, which is all the more reason for people in the food industry to try new approaches. Garrett says the concept of clustering may work, but not in all situations. "It depends on the [local business] environment. If you're beside a complimentary restaurant then it can increase traffic."

That's part of the success behind Apache Burger. The independent fastfood outlet has been serving burgers and fries to a generation of Etobicoke residents. Located three blocks east of Koikas' restaurant, Apache Burger occupies the north-west corner of a busy intersection. The other corners are occupied by other eateries; another hamburger outlet and two table-service establishments. Co-owner George Rallis is philosophical about the longevity of his business. "I think there have always been cases of restaurants locating close to each other. Some survive, some don't. Our business is down 10 to 20 per cent over last year, but that has more to do with the recession and the GST. We still have the same volume of customers coming in as in other years. They're just spending less."

Retail market analysts have dubbed the trend towards reduced spending on meals away from the home - cocooning. Finding ways to convince skittish consumers to spend more on restaurant food poses another problem for

the restaurateur to solve.

"Menu adjustments are made to accommodate tastes," says Toby Singlehurst, director of development for Kelseys Management Services. Singlehurst explains that the location of Kelseys outlets isn't dependent on competitor's locations, but on the parameters of the actual site itself.

"Our most important criteria relates to daytime working populations and parking availability. Because we're destination-oriented [where diners choose a restaurant to go before leaving home], if there's not enough parking it will limit sales right off the bat. If there's not enough people in an area to support an outlet with a strong lunch, it will have average

before they open their doors.

"Too many people get wrapped up in counting the number of competitor's in an area," says George Stogiannis, the original owner and operator of the location that Koikas now occupies. "Sure you have to do your homework and check out an area. That's a given. First you have to know what you're good at. Only then do you try to find the right place to fit your skills."

Stogiannis learned his trade serving as a jack-of-all-trades between 1958 to 1971 for Shopsy's, setting up special events and trade shows, opening deli outlets, and tending to the custom needs of the nation's largest restaurant chains. After leaving Shopsy's, Stogiannis elected to work for himself, establishing two suc-



onventional wisdom holds that absence of competition will lead to increased sales. But the combined impact of the latest recession, changing consumer buying habits and the GST, places a premium on adapting to new market realities.

or less than average sales. Although we need a strong evening component, and we do have a late-night component, if we just have those two and we have a weak lunch, i.e. we locate in an exclusively residential area, we'll hit our average or less than average sales."

For the small independent operator running a sit-down establishment located in the suburbs and away from large commercial attractors, Singlehurst suggests they should focus on a better defined theme. "They have to develop a stronger concept ... become more focused with respect to what they offer. General operators who try to cover all bases tend to get lost in the shuffle."

In some cases, operators are lost

successful family restaurants before opening Mr. Staggs Delicatessen Restaurant in 1978. After 12 years, Stogiannis sold his "life's work" and semi-retired. He still takes on occasional consulting work whenever he isn't dispensing free advice to friends in the trade.

"This recession forced restaurant owners to focus on their customers. Years ago the tendency was to tinker with the menu or try other changes instead of asking customers for their opinions. Now, you won't survive a month if you don't find out what your patrons want. That's the secret about what makes a good location. There's always room on the block for a businessman who is genuinely interested in his customers." ♦

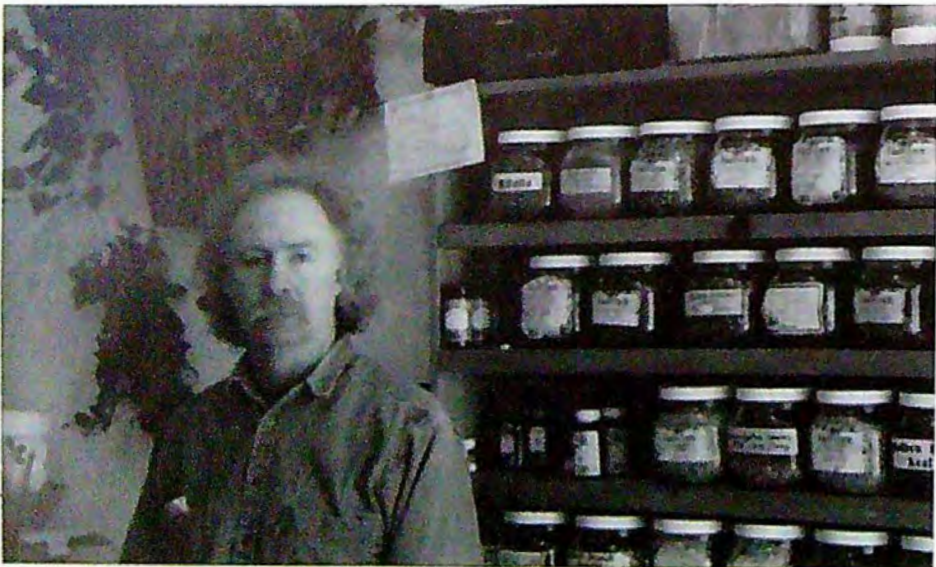
New Age Nutrition

Holistic Health in the nineties

The face of cuisine as we know it is changing: from the ethics of food production to the manner in which meals are prepared. Maybe it's the sobering acknowledgement of pollutants and contaminants in our environment, especially in our foods, that has caused a trend towards vegetarianism and a Holistic consciousness. This change is apparent at Humber College, where the Hospitality Department is offering a Nutritional Cuisine course for the first time. John Walker, Chair of Hospitality, says that, "Humber has always tried to take a leadership role, set precedents. Now that this nutritional information has been revived, people are becoming more

'Organic produce is that which is grown without chemicals, synthetic fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, and not irradiated by machinery ...'

Ralph Ferrier, owner of Eternal Abundance



demanding of the growers, right through to the restaurants."

Neil Cobham, instructor of Nutritional Cuisine at Humber, says "The goals of the course are to explore lighter and more healthy methods of cooking. As you know, the North American diet has chiefly consisted of heavy fats, oils, and heavy sauces."

Where possible, natural substances are used to replace synthetic ingredients. As alternative to wheat flour, arrowroot is used, honey replaces refined sweeteners, and yogurt is used to give sauces their creaminess. Cobham adds, "We try to eliminate fats and salts, we use a lot of fresh ingredients including herbs – there's no calories, and they bring out the flavour. Dietary concerns, ethnic cuisine diversity, and convenience concerns are thoroughly addressed as well, and we try to minimize nutritional loss in the cooking process."

ALIVE magazine of Burnaby B.C., (a Canadian journal of health and nutrition) in its October 1989 issue, gave these reasons for the change: "The pesticide regulations of many countries are even less stringent than ours, and imported produce often contains more toxic residues than that which is grown locally. Avoid concentrated processed foods as pesticide residues tend to be higher in these products." It also advised, "If you are unable to find organically grown produce, be sure to wash both fruits and vegetables thoroughly in a dilute solution of dish detergent and

water. Peeling is recommended, although some nutrients will be lost. Following one or more of these procedures will remove most surface residues, but chemicals like Alar, which penetrate right to the pulp, are impossible to get rid of."

But what constitutes organically grown? Ralph Ferrier, owner of Eternal Abundance, a Toronto Holistic health food store in the Kingsway (Bloor St. just east of Islington) says: "To me organic produce is that which is grown without chemicals, synthetic fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, not irradiated by machinery, and no fumigates or fungicides are used in the storing or shipping of the product." He added that demand for his business has been on the rise since he opened two years ago.

Prior to the first world war all farming was organic. "When I tell people my definition of organics, they say "Oh, ...you mean natural" says Ferrier. Back then the methods used helped to maintain biodiversity and sustainability. "Crop rotation, insects controlling pests, field cultivation, and small crop plots were all standard practices," he says. These practices eliminate some of the problems large-scale commercial farming has created: perpetuation of a single crop raping the soil of nutrients specific to that crop; synthetic chemicals sterilizing the soil, tainting the ground water, and as a result, produc-

ing foods that are more susceptible to disease and insect damage, and lacking nutrients and flavor. On the other hand, organic farming replenishes the soil with naturally-occurring minerals that the crops have depleted for their own growth.

Today, the organic food industry is big business. A recent NOW magazine article stated, "...the industry is in its fifth consecutive year of double digit growth. It hit \$1.5 billion last year." NOW also mentioned how this demand is reshaping commercial large-scale food productions. "In California, Dole and Gallo (large commercial food producers) have gone off synthetic pesticides and fertilizers. The big juice companies are buying out organic competitors. Nestle and Kraft have started attending world gatherings of agencies regulating organic standards."

Where will this take us? Ferrier says he "can see probably 35 per cent of people in North America eating this way. In California, in all the stores there are organic products – it's common. As it grows it brings the prices down for everyone."

"Of course cost is an important factor, many people think organic is much more expensive. This is simply not true, the average price increase for organics ranges from five to 15 per cent higher than supermarkets," says Ferrier. How much is your health worth to you? ♦

by Peter Joedicke

HEALTH WATCH COLUMN

The media pays little attention to the level of pesticides found in food products. But this issue poses an especially important health problem for children.

Health Canada has established standards which provide companies and consumers with sufficient data to make wise purchases. However, acceptable levels are drastically different for children than for adults. Children are particularly vulnerable to foods containing pesticides, given the large quantities they consume in relation to their physiology. Adults on average ingest between three and four pounds of additives each year. This may not seem to be a large amount. However, many vital chemical reactions in the body involve amounts of chemicals far smaller than a single grain of sugar or a speck of dust, and in children under the age of five, a 55% risk of exposure exists.

Traces of pesticides are most commonly found in fruits and vegetables; foods which children consume about six times more of than the average adult. Apples are often sprayed with Alar – a pesticide used to improve appearance and shelf-life – which has been linked to cancer by the National Cancer Institute. Although Alar is no longer sold in Canada, its use is technically legal here, and in 59 other countries.

Physiologically, children are not as well developed as adults, and are prone to more diseases and disorders. In 1989, the Natural Resources Defense Council, a non-profit environmentalist group, looked at data from the United States Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration concerning the effects of certain residual pesticides in children. It found that a large proportion of preschoolers are at special risk to cancer, nerve or brain damage, behaviour disorders or learning disabilities.

Although most people try to make healthy food choices for children, there is more that needs to be done. As Richard Jackson, M.D., Chairman of the Committee on Environmental Hazards of the American Academy of Pediatrics, warned in 1987: "Of all the chemical hazards the public faces from polluted air, water, and food, pesticides in food pose the greatest risk." ♦

– by STEPHEN ANDERSON

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DID YOU KNOW?



French fries are the most popular food item ordered in a restaurant.



Beer is the most popular alcoholic beverage ordered when eating out.



42% of Canadians try a restaurant for the first time based on a recommendation.



13 million Canadians eat out every week.



21% of the tourism dollar is spent on food and beverage.

Source: Canadian Restaurant & Food Services Association

An Opinionated Palate

An opportunity of a lifetime presented itself, and Cynthia David rose to the occasion. An already experienced journalist, this full-time student decided, on her own initiative, to edit the cooking texts at George Brown College. This ambitious student more than impressed her teachers, and won a scholarship to France, where she studied at a cooking school in Paris, and later spent two months in the Loire working in a restaurant.

But for David, currently the food editor to *The Toronto Sun*, her passion for food began much earlier. "I think it had to do with a Lebanese grandmother who was really into food, and an aunt, who was the first one to take me to real restaurants," David said.

Her career-path, however, did not start in the food industry. David initially set out for Queen's University with the hopes of becoming a French Major. But after a disappointing

Toronto Sun food editor, Cynthia David



Courtesy Photo

first year, David set her sights on a journalism program instead, and began studying at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute in 1976.

It was a steady climb towards success after that, but success as a journalist; accolades in the food industry would come later for David.

After graduation, David began working at the *Woodstock Daily Sentinel Review*, covering everything from education to labor disputes, and even the occasional recipe. David explains that in 1983, an opportunity of a lifetime came about that gave her "the best job in the world." A close friend, who had earlier set out for China encouraged David to take the plunge.

Ready for a new experience, David set out for China as well, and became part of an international radio program that broadcast in over 40 different languages. "I even did a cooking show on the radio ... which was very hard to do to say the least ... it was sort of mildly successful," laughed David. But for her, the learning experience was invaluable.

A significant connection between reporting and food began, and David began thinking of enrolling in cooking classes. Determined to learn more about the art of cooking and food, the young journalist applied to George Brown while still in China.

After leaving China for home in 1984, David realized that mere evening classes wouldn't suffice, so she enrolled in school full-time. "If I was really

serious about writing about food, I should spend an entire year at George Brown."

That's when a scholarship for cooking students who wanted to be food writers was offered. "I was already a journalist, and I wanted to be a food writer, that was why I was there! So I worked really, really hard, and won the scholarship," said David. She decided to edit the cooking texts – texts that were written by chefs who weren't particularly good writers, she explained. David's timing was perfect. "The scholarship has never been offered again," she said, "It was a one-time deal."

After returning from France, David freelanced for a hotel and restaurant magazine, then landed a job in London, Ontario, working as a food editor with *The London Free Press* in 1987. At that time, David explained it was easy to find people educated about food, and many journalists, but not one person with experience in both areas. David's background, however, fit the bill perfectly.

What's her favorite aspect of her job? "It's talking to people, and educating them ... I never wanted to be just a restaurant reviewer."

More importantly, David explains that being passionate about food isn't enough, "it's knowing the mechanics of the journalism aspect as well," she says, and for David the combination has definitely been a success.

David continues working at *The Sun*, and hopes her future will include her old training ground – a trip back to Asia. ♦

by **Adriana Suppa**

The moment we enter Medieval Times Dinner & Tournament (Toronto) Inc., my five-year-old son and I are greeted by a servant of the castle in period costume. What exactly does a castle servant do? "Well, actually, I'll be your waiter later this evening," John confesses as he ushers "M'Lady and M'Little Lord" into the Tower to confirm our reservation.

Medieval Times' castle is the largest of six similar dinner/entertainment complexes in North America and two sister restaurants in Spain. The Dinner & Tournament theme, according to a castle press release, is "based upon authentic medieval history and the true story of the noble Perelada family who trace their lineage back to the time of Charlemagne in the 9th century". Each complex offers visitors an equestrian battle and 'knightly' feast.

Under the direction of Andres Gelabert, President and Chief Executive Officer, Medieval Times' North American operations has hosted more than 10 million visitors in slightly less than ten years.

Still, M'Lord and M'Lady remain skeptical. "Where's the horses, mommy? I don't see any stinkin' horses!" M'Lord laments below the ticket counter.

Yet, M'Lady soon discovers Medieval Times is centuries ahead of many high-volume, theme-based attractions in its corporate concern for customer comfort. Despite the symbolic tower, Gelabert's operation is unlike other attractions where customers are left to rot away upon payment of the admission price.

The Count and Countess of Perelada ensure M'Lord and M'Lady are wearing color-coded crowns corresponding to the order in which we'll be called to the Ceremonial Arena for dinner, the section we'll be seated in, and the valiant knight of the realm we'll be cheering for.

M'Lord stands tall as a snapshot of his meeting the Countess is taken. Like our castle servant John, the snapshot will also materialize later in a different form at our dinner table. M'Lord's photo will personalize a program of our evening's events – politely offered at an incredibly reasonable cost of \$7.95.

Meanwhile, in the Hall of Arms (where guests may remain after the show to dance in the Knight Club) M'Lady kicks back with a \$3.50 bottle of domestic brew. The bar maiden continues to address "M'Lady" despite her decline of a glass for the beer, and reveals the indoor locations where cigarettes are permitted before entry to the smoke-free Ceremonial Arena.

Refreshments in hand, we stroll around and check out authentic



Courtesy Photo

Camelot Revisited

medieval artifacts and variably priced souvenirs. M'Lord obtains a color-coded banner for a buck. Albeit impressive, we pass on becoming knighted and carting home a full-length sword and supplementary wall scroll.

"Did you say this is the Hall of End Illusions?" M'Lady asks Kevin Marcotte, the castle's Public Relations Manager, as we peer through glass partitions at the hindquarters of numerous horses being readied for the show.

"No, I didn't. Not at all," a bemused Marcotte replies. "What I

Whenever you are sincerely pleased you are nourished.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

by Debbie Jenkins

said is, this is the Hall of Andalusians – pure Andalusian horses Mr. Gelabert raised on the Medieval Times Ranch in Sanger, Texas.”

Once the show begins, fruit juice and a nutrition conscious, vegetable appetizer are served prior to M’Lord being presented with a bottomless mug of cola. M’Lady peruses M’Lord’s mugshot on our personalized program and digs in to the best Portuguese-style chicken south of College and Crawford Streets.

She listens intently as John recites a hilarious plea for gratuities, which unfortunately, have not been included. “You didn’t write it all down, did you?” John gasps, when pressed for his surname.

“No,” M’Lady assures him, “that would spoil things for those who wish to return simply to hear you recite it again.”

As promised in the press kit, indeed we do: “marvel as spirited stallions perform intricate manoeuvres; gaze in awe as fearless knights on horseback compete in daring tournament games; and erupt with cheers as the Champion chooses his Queen and Love and Beauty from the Kingdom’s fair maidens.”

More importantly, however, (except for the musical accompaniment’s volume that could be turned down a notch), Gelabert’s castle has turned two skeptics into satisfied customers.

“I take it he enjoyed this-stinkin’-

evening?” my beloved queries as M’Lord scrambles up our driveway with his blue banner. “Immensely, but get this,” M’Lady replies. “so did I.” ♦

Medieval Times is located at the Dufferin Gates of Exhibition Place in the former Arts, Crafts, and Hobbies Bldg. General admission: \$32.95 – \$39.95 (taxes and gratuity not included); discounts for children 12 & under and seniors 55 & over; group rates available. Wheelchair accessible; car & bus parking. Open 7 days, show time 7:30PM

Paul Newman Loves Humber

“The program that started out as only an idea two years ago, has developed into a successful business avenue for hospitality students”

by **Adriana Suppa**

The “Paul Newman Restaurant” at the Famous People Players’ Theatre at 45 Lisgar Street in Toronto, is reaping the benefits of Humber College’s Hospitality Alliance.

The Alliance, founded two years ago by Humber’s School of Hospitality, was established to help students integrate classroom learning with the realities of the industry. Placements in the workplace are provided so that students in addition to classroom instruction, receive invaluable, on-the-job training.

Diane Dupuis, President of the Famous People Players Theatre, has been more than happy with the results of the Alliance. “Having Humber students run the Paul Newman Restaurant has been a wonderful success,” she said. According to Dupuis, the students were involved right from the restaurant’s inception; from the initial ordering of plates and cutlery, to the actual serving of customers.

What has most impressed Dupuis is the students’ consistency in maintaining a high degree of professionalism when serving the 60 to 100 patrons who visit the restaurant daily. “They’ve been great in handling all the customers here, even those with special

needs,” she said. The entire cast of the Famous People Players is made up of individuals who are developmentally challenged.

Dupuis also credits John Savard, Co-ordinator of Hotel & Restaurant Services, with much of Humber’s success. Savard, along with John Walker, Chairman of the School of Hospitality, formed part of the task force responsible for creating the Alliance.

Walker explained the purpose for the Alliance was to make the transition into the workplace easier for students. The eight-week program was designed to deinstitutionalize the classroom and operationalize the learning experience. “The program that started out as only an idea two years ago, has developed into a successful business venue for hospitality students at Humber,” he added.

Some other Toronto organizations that support Humber’s Alliance include: The King Edward Hotel, The Granite Tourism Corporation, and Mövenpick Restaurants. ♦

**Famous People Players Theatre
Paul Newman Restaurant
45 Lisgar Street
Toronto
Phone: (416) 532-1137**

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