

Real insights lie beyond surface impressions

Francis Loughran, Managing Director, Future Food

Food and hospitality has evolved into much more than just eating, it has become part of our customers' lives and the communities in which we serve it

This is an exciting time to be part of the Food and Hospitality industry. Increased focus on eating and drinking from the media, customers and landlords means that innovation, competition and choice have never been higher.

In thinking about where we have been over the last 12 months and where we feel that the next year will take us, Future Food has distilled our observations into a few broad categories.

EXPERIENCES

GREAT RESTAURANTS HAVE ALWAYS HAD A STRONG ELEMENT OF FOOD THEATRE. IN ORDER TO FURTHER CONSUMERS' PASSION FOR EATING, THE FOLLOWING TRENDS WILL GATHER PACE IN THE COMING YEAR.

1. Food, Drinks – Everywhere – The absolute need to create **Point of Difference** (P.O.D) for your project's food story.
2. **Experiential dining** will become more central to people's enjoyment with food origins and provenance providing customer education and adding to customer experience.
3. **Whole environment experiences** providing holistic dining and environment experiences for customers to immerse themselves in. Experience food grown on site, cooked on site and sleep/stay on site. For example Barn by Biota in Bowral NSW (www.barnbybiota.com).
4. **Externalisation of on-grade dining** precincts to create a Garden Pavilion – beautiful ground level dining.
5. **Fun is in** – Deliver Fun whenever possible. For example, visit Little High Eatery in Christchurch (www.littlehigh.co.nz)

LEAN, GREEN AND NOT-SO-MEAN MACHINES

PART OF THE EXPERIENCE OF EATING OUT IS THE DESIRE TO BE PART OF A COMMUNITY. TOWARDS THAT END, HOW WE EAT, WHAT WE EAT AND HOW THAT WHOLE PROCESS WORKS HAS BECOME CENTRAL TO OUR ENJOYMENT OF DINING.

6. Menu price increases to **support "Honest Wages"** for all hospitality employees.
7. **Zero waste movement** will get bigger and bigger, there will be more of a focus on zero impact restaurants.
8. Veganism's popularity is growing. But . . . **vegetarian cuisine is exploding**.
9. Health food will continue to trend, pushing further into **preventative healthy eating** where low carb diets like Ketogenic and LCHF diets will build a strong following to compete with paleo and vegan diets.
10. Where does the salad go from here? Ottolenghi has shown the world that **salads and vegetables are meals in their own right**. 'Bowls' including (the Poke bowl) have seen salads move away from a jumbled mix of fridge cold, browning leaves to highly considered 'deconstructed' plates of colour and texture.
11. A more widespread **focus on the origin** of seafood and its sustainability credentials – in much the same way as we have seen with beef and pork for many years now. Like those animal products, restaurants are beginning to explore using the whole fish and using lesser known varieties. This is happening at the top end (Saint Peter's and Saint Peter's Butchery in Sydney, Ikijime in Melbourne and Fleet in Brunswick Heads). However, expect to see this filter down in to fish retailers, mid-range dining and home cooking.

GOURMET DEMOCRATISATION CONTINUES

THE IDEA OF 'GOURMET' HAD ALWAYS BEEN HIJACKED BY BEING ASSOCIATED WITH HIGH PRICES AND HIGH CONCEPTS. HOWEVER, THE ESSENCE OF GREAT PRODUCE HANDLED THOUGHTFULLY AND WITH CARE IS SOMETHING THAT EVERYONE DESIRES. THIS TREND IS ONLY GAINING TRACTION. NOW, HOWEVER, IT'S NOT JUST FROM THE TOP-DOWN, IT'S COMING FROM THE BOTTOM-UP.

12. **Elevation of service in QSR** – Grill'd to Schnitz and others. Food served fast doesn't mean that service can't be part of the equation. QSR brands are becoming the new restaurants.
13. **Reinvented Concept** - The new face of an old concept. A great example is the new TGI Friday's at Tea Tree Plaza and Eastland and soon to arrive at Chadstone.
14. **Global franchises become local** – Yarra Valley Cheddar in your cheese burger.
15. **Michelin Star holders going into retail food** is on the rise and becoming widespread. The top-down approach.
16. The stars don't just go to places with tablecloths. Michelin Stars are more and more being given to accessible and affordable venues. **The bottom-up approach**.
17. All of this leads to the rise and rise of fast-fine-dining: **Affordable luxury** in a plate – or in cardboard box
18. **Paying attention to the look and feel of an outlet** – whether a kiosk or QSR or Smart Casual. The Farmer's Fridge is a perfect example: It's a vending machine, but due to its design, it's not a vending machine.
19. **Kids dining**. Kids are in restaurants from newborn and more and more parents are expecting that their kids dine in their favourite restaurants with more than just nuggets and pasta on offer. Expect to see restaurants and cafés actively presenting and marketing sophisticated dining options for children.

RE-IMAGINING SPACES

FOOD AND BEVERAGE DOES NOT JUST BELONG IN TRADITIONAL OUTLETS.

20. **Supermarket Restaurants**: shop it, eat-it; in store
21. **Cinema Dining Destinations**; Hoyts ENTX has set a new standard in pre-cinema dining (GCG: 'Go Christchurch Go!').
22. Office lobby cafés no longer cut-it; **lobby corporate dining destinations** offer executives what they want
23. **Farm – Food – Fast**. Gourmet and Heathier Choices Vending Machines.
24. Train stations and Airports. Just because you are travelling and are a captive audience doesn't mean that the food has to awful. \ **Transport nodes are becoming food destinations** in their own right.

FOOD

IT'S AT THE HEART OF EVERY GREAT MEAL AND EXPERIENCE – YOU CAN'T HAVE ONE WITH THE OTHER.

25. With 'foraging', 'fermenting' and 'native ingredients' becoming firmly embedded in the high end dining scene, chefs are also looking at **lower intervention based types of cooking** such as cooking over open fire and in coals. These methods have long been used at Ekstedt Restaurant in Stockholm, Burnt Ends in Singapore and more recently at Longsong in Melbourne.
26. Restaurants will take the **fermenting trend to a whole new level** (like NOMA is doing with their fermentation experimental lab area in their restaurant).
27. **Middle Eastern cuisine will continue to grow**, especially Israeli food. With more Ottolenghi and Miznon style eateries. Healthy, minimal, vegetable heavy, simple, tasty.
28. **Nordic cuisine** and alternative styles will spread further.
29. You choose the movement that allows you to decipher what is good in Food – **Avoid the hype**.
30. Last but not least, **Authenticity. Be true, honest and loving** when providing food and hospitality. It's all about people.