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FOODBYTES

YOUR FREE DATASSENTIAL
TREND REPORT

TREND ALERT:
color is back

TREND ALERT:
restaurant designs
that give customers a
nostalgic escape

TREND ALERT:
comfy couches
like those found at
California-based
Boozehounds (pictured
here) bring a homey
vibe post-pandemic

step into
**RESTAURANT
DESIGN
TRENDS**

Source: *Foodservice Pro Check-In: Revitalizing Dine-In*



22%

OF OPERATORS HAVE ALREADY OR CONSIDERED **REDECORATING DINING ROOMS** TO IMPROVE AMBIANCE AND MOTIVATE MORE CONSUMERS TO DINE IN

64%

OF OPERATORS **DON'T THINK THEY COULD SUCCEED WITH A SMALLER RESTAURANT FOOTPRINT**



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Restaurant I'd visit for the aesthetics

2d Restaurant, which recently opened in Chicago, offers one of the most unique experiences. It's designed to look like you're stepping into a 2d drawing (a little trippy) and seems made for the 'gram, making it all the more enticing to visit.

Restaurant designs/elements I think will last post-COVID

Personally, I think merging indoor/outdoor spaces is a trend propelled into the spotlight by the pandemic that's here to stay. As we go into the future, expect more restaurant designs to find creative solutions to merge indoor and outdoor dining (think accordion windows over bars that serve guests both outside and inside).

Color is back. A few trending colors we've noticed popping up more and more in restaurant design include turquoise, mustard yellow, terra cotta, emerald and sage green, and soft shades of pink. Minimalism and stark white are out.

In this issue of *Foodbytes*, we dive into all things restaurant design and what's trending post-pandemic. Currently, we're seeing a reaction to minimalism in the form of monochromatic color designs where restaurants showcase just one bold color throughout as well as maximalism, with restaurants featuring a variety of colors and patterns in the wallpaper (that's nothing like your grandma's), seating, tiling, and decor. Another restaurant design trend we're seeing and highlight in this issue is what we're calling nostalgic escape design, which may have come about as a reaction to pandemic-related quarantining and postponed vacations. Restaurants are increasingly embracing designs that echo tropical getaways, but at the same time nod to past decades like the '50s, '80s, and '90s, giving consumers nostalgic vibes. The adage "what's old is new again" could apply here, too, as some of these design styles may be new rather than nostalgic to younger Gen Z consumers.

A pre-pandemic trend that's still going strong are large displays of greenery. In the pages ahead, you'll notice this trend appearing across restaurant designs that at the same time fall in line with other larger trends like maximalism and nostalgic escape. Post-pandemic, elements like clear separators between restaurant booths are also proving to have staying power, and outdoor dining is thriving with operators launching new designs that make patio dining an intentional part of the experience. Little Palm is a prime example of where indoor/outdoor dining can meet (as we show on pg. 8) with its accordion window that opens out onto the poolside patio bar. Elements of home are also making a mark on restaurant designs, with dogs welcome now in some restaurant dining rooms (we'll dive deeper into the rise of pet-friendly restaurants in a future *FoodBytes* issues, so stay tuned) and full couches offering more opportunities to lounge and have meals in a more relaxed posture (according to our *American Meal Keynote Report*, 18% of consumers ate their last meal at home at a coffee table/sitting on a couch).

Jaelyn Marks, Publications Manager

THE TREND:

Maximalist



What it is: "Welcome to the new era of no-holding-back restaurant design," says *Restaurant Hospitality*. Maximalism is looking to edge out minimalism, which has trended for years, but post-pandemic, operators are veering away from it. The often all-white minimalistic designs brought sterile vibes, while maximalism with its generally bright colors and pleasantly clashing patterns tends to promote optimism and fun, two things consumers are increasingly seeking out as they emerge from quarantine and pandemic fear. Restaurants that display a maximalist style generally showcase rich textures, walls covered in artwork and/or patterned wallpaper, as well as patterned floors and loud colors. Unlike minimalism, maximalism is all about more-is-more and layering.

Pictured Top
Restaurant: *Morning Glory*
Location: *San Diego, CA*
Designer: *BASILE Studio*

Pictured Bottom
Restaurant: *MAD*
Location: *Houston, TX*
Designer: *Lázaro Rosa-Violán*

Pictured Top & Bottom Right
Restaurant: *Beatnik On the River*
Location: *Chicago, IL*
Designer: *Maison Bonhomme*



Should I go maximalist? First, consider if maximalism makes sense with your brand and brand story. A brand trying to promote clean ingredients, for example, may actually want to lean more into a minimalist design. However, a concept that's looking to cater to a younger demographic and offer Instagram opportunities may want to lean more into a maximalist design. Maximalism can also make sense for many globally-inspired concepts, as it offers opportunities for showcasing a variety of textiles, found objects/antiques, wall to wall artwork, and more that can help give customers a better sense of a specific culture.

interview

REBECCA KILBREATH
EDITOR IN CHIEF,
RESTAURANT DEVELOPMENT + DESIGN



Published six times a year, *restaurant development + design* is a magazine for those charged with building and remodeling restaurants.

Datassential: What are the top three restaurant design trends you're seeing right now?

Kilbreath: In terms of aesthetics, the trends are all over the place depending on segment type, but the era of industrial chic is largely behind us (unless it truly fits the brand) and nearly every segment type is utilizing lighter, brighter, and even vibrant color palettes. Biophilia (bringing the feeling of being outside indoors) is a huge trend as well. And, conceptually, everyone is designing for flexibility: flexible layouts, moveable furniture, anything that gives the greatest flexibility to operators.

D: What restaurant design trends that developed during the pandemic have staying power? What is happening to all of those outdoor dining spaces that restaurants created?

K: Outdoor dining is still huge. Many communities have leaned into this with

streetside seating and even closing streets to car traffic. Our reader pulse surveys show over and over that outdoor dining is one of the greatest areas of operator investment right now. So that has staying power. And guests seem to love it. Going forward, designers are also incorporating takeout areas and anything they can to accommodate the ongoing demand for off-premises dining across all segments. As I mentioned above, flexibility in design is also huge.

Moveable seating and creating flexible zones is important because so many restaurant operators have found new revenue streams. Being able to transform a private dining space into a classroom for in-person and virtual events, for example, is a common practice now.

D: Now that pickup and delivery are everywhere, including full-service and independent restaurants, have you seen any great ideas or best-in-class examples? What are the pitfalls?

K: Any time there's a dedicated space for takeout and delivery drivers, it improves the experience for on-site diners. Where time and budget allows and demand is adequate, designers are creating separate entrances for takeout and delivery. In fast food and quick-service, they are adding dedicated drive-thru lanes for digital orders and third-party delivery drivers.

The concern is that volume and the solution have to align, or the investment isn't worth it. That said, accepting a volume of orders you can't fulfill will lead to a degraded guest experience for all. Finding the balance is key for operators.

D: What are the next big design aesthetics to keep an eye on? What's after modern art deco or plant-filled "boho chic" restaurants?

K: Specific aesthetic trends are hard to pin down, but I've never seen more new restaurants with pink and emerald green interiors before. This is somewhat related to biophilia in my mind. How often do you browse for a bouquet of flowers without seeing a ton of green and pinks? Vibrant colors and what we used to call feminine touches abound in restaurants right now, including floral flourishes.

Retro colors and looks — think 1980s and 1990s — also seem to be emerging. It's too early to say if it's a full-blown trend, but it's certainly worth watching. I think there's a comfort in familiarity, and legacy brands might start to lean into that. For example, Pizza Hut has

some retro red roof outposts, and it wouldn't surprise me if other brands followed suit. The popularity of 1980s throwbacks (like "Stranger Things" among teens) is sure to result in a greater ripple effect.

D: There's a lot of talk about consumers wanting to get back to experiences again after the pandemic, but what does that look like for modern restaurant design?

K: We talk about this a lot among our editorial team at *restaurant development + design*. And the answer, for us, is that every interaction with a restaurant brand is an experience, including off-premises dining. So designers are looking at it holistically. It starts with defining the brand and moves out from there. So many restaurants are now either part of a bigger experience (think eatertainment, ranging from gaming and golf to pickleball and axe throwing) or are working to extend their own experience into new formats (like to-go cocktails, cooking classes, retail, etc.). All of these things must be considered in restaurant design today.

D: How does branding and restaurant design intersect today? What are the considerations to take into account from a brand standpoint when it comes to a design, from telling a brand's story to creating lifestyle brands that integrate into consumers' lives?

K: Branding is more important than ever, especially because aspects of the brand must be created to carry home with the diner. Having a clear brand vision — defining the brand and then designing everything to fit around that

brand story — can build loyalty and create a variety of experiences for the patron. Storytelling is very important in design. And branding consistency is a difficult discipline for some, but when it all works together (the menu, brand image, and service style), it can mean explosive growth.

D: Is designing for "the 'gram" still a thing?

K: Yes, but designers are trying to move away from selfie walls and other super obvious statements. Operators still want these things, as they do make for fun marketing opportunities. Designing for our phone-centered lifestyle is still a thing. Instead of designing an obvious social media element, though, designers have started designing with customer photography in mind. That can mean spotlight lighting over tables so that food photos look better, using wall coverings or patterns in the design that pop in backgrounds, or featuring upgraded tabletop elements that photograph well.

D: Are there any recent developments or changes when it comes to sustainability and restaurant design? Are you seeing more repurposing of spaces?

K: Sustainability can mean so many things! Most restaurants are in leased spaces, so the operators don't always get a say in the building envelope (which is where you'd see the greatest green building efforts, broadly speaking). Sustainability right now, with supply chain concerns being what they are, can mean repairing equipment instead of replacing.

For the first time in years, operators are using the back-of-house equipment when they take over a failed restaurant space. It's easier than waiting on new equipment.

● This interview has been edited for space and content.

THE TREND: *nostalgic escape*

What it is: "Nostalgia-laced vacation decor is one of the first clear trends we can name looking at post-vax restaurant interior design," reports *Eater*. Post-pandemic, it may not come as a surprise that consumers are looking for an escape or getaway. Delayed vacations have created anticipation, and restaurant operators are fulfilling that need through design that transports diners to what may feel like a throwback paradise. Nods to decades past are increasingly merging with tropical flair (shell-shaped chair backs, wicker seating) to give diners a sense of escape. Mid-century modern elements (arches, circles, curved seating) are trending, as are design elements that harken back to the '50s, '80s, and '90s. Soft shades of pink are often featured as part of nostalgic escape design, as are sage green, terra cotta orange, turquoise, and live plants.

Pictured Left & Below
Restaurant: *Little Palm*
Location: *Charleston, SC*
Designer: *Cortney Bishop*



Pictured Top to Bottom

- Restaurant:** *ZZ's Club*
Location: *Miami, FL*
Designer: *Ken Fulk*
- Restaurant:** *Fandi Mata*
Location: *Brooklyn, NY*
Designers: *Matthew Maddy, Emil Radonic, Marjanne Motamedi, Dragan Ristovski, and Milos Zica*

Restaurant: *Boozehounds*
Location: *Palm Springs, CA*
Designer: *Jenni-Kate Rodgers*



Should I capitalize on nostalgic escape design? Is your brand trying to embrace a getaway vibe? Does merging a tropical getaway and mid-century or '90s elements make sense with the menu and target audience (note that throwback products to the '90s have been trending recently)? There are a variety of ways to approach nostalgic escape design, so don't write it off as not for you — you don't have to go over-the-top with the tropical or throwback. Small nods here and there can go a long way, such as integrating shell-back seating, using a beachy color palette, featuring mid-century-style furnishings, etc.

interview



"RESTAURANTS ARE LIVING SPACES THAT NEED TO BE AGILE. KITCHEN OPERATIONS MUST CONSTANTLY EVOLVE IN REACTION TO CHANGING TRENDS, CONSUMER DEMAND, STAFF, FOOD AVAILABILITY, ETC."

LAUREN CHARBONNEAU
PROJECT LEADER,
REITANO DESIGN GROUP

Lauren brings over 16 years of design and project management experience to the RDG team. With a passion for hospitality design and sustainability, she enjoys helping clients realize their goals through hard work, attention to detail, and a positive outlook.

D: What current trends are you seeing when it comes to BOH restaurant design?
C: Stretching dollars and reducing square footage seem to be top-of-mind for operators. This was certainly the case pre-pandemic, but labor and food shortages along with wage hikes have made it even more critical. High-performance, multi-functional equipment, such as combi ovens and power soak sinks, were once considered too expensive to include in many kitchen designs; however, operators are now seeing the value in saving square footage, labor, and utility costs. Employee satisfaction is also more important than ever, so operators are looking for ways to make the kitchen more comfortable and intuitive. Upgrades, such as adding cooling to hood systems and tech tools to cooking and holding equipment, are also becoming more commonplace.

Sustainability continues to trend, too. Many utility companies have extended up-front savings for switching to Energy Star-rated appliances. This combined with the long-term savings is a win for the operator and the environment.

D: In what ways did the pandemic change BOH restaurant design?
C: Pre-pandemic, online ordering and contactless pickup were rising trends. The shutdowns, along with consumer caution, certainly forced the issue. Many restaurants had to revise menus, stations, and operations to adjust to changes in demand. Kitchen spaces were rearranged to incorporate take-out stations and many added catering components. Point-of-sale software was updated to allow for online ordering, and in some cases, this also brought along additional tools to help manage inventory and food costing. Operators are much more cognizant now of hand-sink locations and counts, reduced operational steps, and multi-functional tools and spaces.

These are all things that foodservice consultants accounted for before the pandemic, but now the greater design team is more acutely aware of these elements and needs as well.

D: Are there any pandemic-related BOH design trends that you think will have staying power?
C: Certainly operators will continue to look for ways to reduce footprint and labor and maximize flexibility. Appliances

like combi ovens (fryers with built-in filters) and quick switch food wells all offer labor savings and increased flexibility.

D: What are some of the unique challenges you face when designing BOH restaurant spaces?
C: Restaurants are living spaces that need to be agile. Kitchen operations must constantly evolve in reaction to changing trends, consumer demand, staff, food availability, etc. Designing a space with heavy infrastructure needs that can also adapt quickly is certainly a challenge, especially without knowing what it might need to adapt to on any given day.

D: Where do restaurant design and functionality (particularly BOH) meet?
C: In the BOH, functionality and efficiency are key, so our designs must focus here first. Even in an open kitchen, the first priority is designing a space that can support the menu and the seat count in an efficient way. It's certainly fun when we have the opportunity to bring the food forward in a space.

The connection between the front and back of house can be beautiful and functional when the design team comes together. A lot of creative solutions are found when you bring together different disciplines to approach these challenges.

D: In what ways does BOH restaurant design play into sustainability efforts?
C: We're passionate about sustainability and the impact this industry has on the planet. Wherever possible we look for ways to reduce utility consumption and better manage waste. Our designs include Energy Star-rated appliances and Water Sense-certified plumbing fixtures. We look to reduce the hood footprint and energy use by selecting equipment that can support multiple functions.

Budgets are real, though, and not all projects can make the up-front investment, but we can work with industry partners to provide ROI estimates to show operators the potential long-term savings. We also start the operational conversations about oil reclamation, recycling, composting, sourcing local, and buying in bulk to reduce packaging. There are many things that operators can do, but the team needs to be on board and the space needs to support their goals. We will continue to pay attention, learn and advocate for positive change in this space.

● This interview has been edited for space and content.

THE TREND: *Monochrome*



What it is: Monochrome restaurants (think all pink, all red, all yellow, etc.) are on the rise, as they can make for highly Instagrammable locales. A monochrome style we're seeing pop up across the U.S. is two-dimensional-style design, where restaurants are created to look like you're stepping into a two-dimensional drawing. Generally, monochrome restaurants go beyond just creating ambiance — they're designed to be a unique experience customers would go out of their way for. They generally bring an element of fun to the table and feel childish in a good way (monochrome designs, particularly the 2d-style restaurants, remind this editor of childhood coloring books).

Pictured Top to Bottom at Left
Restaurant: Pietro Nolita
Location: New York, NY
Designer: Jeanette Dalrot

Restaurant: 2d Restaurant
Location: Chicago, IL
Designers: Vanessa Thanh Vu and Mia Larson

Restaurant: Shuggie's
Location: San Francisco, CA
Designers: Kayla Abe and David Murphy

Pictured Right
Restaurant: 2D Cafe
Location: St. Petersburg, FL
Designer: Chad Mize

Should I capitalize on a monochromatic design? Just like most restaurant design trends, monochromatic design can be leveraged in a variety of ways. For example, Shuggie's in San Francisco features their different dining rooms in different monochromatic colors, while 2d Restaurant in Chicago gives customers the sense they've stepped into a coloring book devoid of color. As we come out of the pandemic, creating an experience is quintessential to design to regain foot traffic, and monochromatic designs offer customers plenty of Instagram opportunities and reason to leave their homes.



interview

LAUREN WILLIAMS
 SENIOR DESIGN MANAGER,
 COOPER'S HAWK WINERY AND RESTAURANTS

Lauren joined Cooper's Hawk in 2017. During her time with the brand she has led the designs of over 25 restaurant projects. She loves the challenge of providing unique experiences through the built environment for wine club members and guests of Cooper's Hawk to enjoy.

"EVERYTHING INCLUDING THE COCKTAILS COMES TOGETHER TO EXPRESS OUR VIEW THAT WINE SHOULD BE DISCOVERED, CELEBRATED, AND ENJOYED TOGETHER."



Datassential: How does branding and restaurant design intersect today?

Williams: Just like form follows function our designs align directly with our brand. As an example, one of our values is, "we create community." The restaurant design must create spaces that are both aspirational and approachable to help foster those community-creating moments for our guests.

D: What are the considerations to take into account from a brand standpoint when it comes to a design, from telling a brand's story to creating lifestyle brands that integrate into consumers' lives?

W: I think I touched on this above, but some additional areas where the brand informs the design: we create wine-driven experiences, we are approachable, we celebrate the entrepreneurial spirit, and we provide access to the good life.

D: How has the design of Cooper's Hawk Winery and Restaurants changed over the years as it's grown into a chain?

W: We continuously reach out to our guests and operators as our most valued tools for feedback. The designs of our kitchens, bars, and even the art of our seating plans have grown more efficient as we continue to leverage our best talent and guest feedback to improve our designs.

D: Can you talk a bit about how design varies from one restaurant location to another? What stays consistent and what differs?

W: Cooper's Hawk is a fusion of familiar elements that are consistent across all locations: think modern casual restaurant, Napa-style tasting room, and artisanal retail market. However, just like the architecture of Napa Valley can range greatly in style, so do our buildings. We look to the communities we are entering to draw influence and then lean heavily into that style to create a different exterior and interior package for

each location. In South Florida, we have a modern artisanal building, and in Arizona, we may go for a luxe modern vibe.

D: How is Esquire by Cooper's Hawk different from other Cooper's Hawk locations?

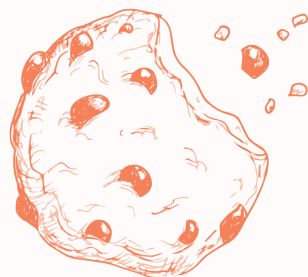
W: Esquire is our tribute to the World of Wine. It boasts an iconic interior space, our wine tasting experiences, and exquisite food and wine pairings. Everything including the cocktails comes together to express our view that wine should be discovered, celebrated, and enjoyed together.

We bring the greatest chefs from around the world to craft distinctive dishes that showcase their unique and varied culinary points of view, and each dish is paired with wine flights. Chicagoans and out-of-town guests have an opportunity to experience the famous flavor profiles that these culinary masters are known for.

D: What are some lasting ways the pandemic changed how Cooper's Hawk locations are designed?

W: We made some updates to our HVAC systems like many restaurants did, but I think the most impactful change is that we developed a curbside, carry out, and delivery program, which had not been a focus for our brand prior to the pandemic.

● *This interview has been edited for space and content.*



A FEW FINAL TREND BITES

As we come out of the pandemic, restaurant design trends are only more important to understand and stay on top of, particularly as the design of a restaurant can play a key role in attracting customers and showing them there's a reason to leave their couches and dine out on-premises. Below we leave you with just a few final ways to take action on restaurant design trends, as well as a sneak peek of what's coming up next month in *FoodBytes*.

3 WAYS TO TAKE ACTION ON RESTAURANT DESIGN TRENDS

- **Capitalize on color.** It isn't anything to be afraid of. Color plays a quintessential role in a number of current design trends, including monochromatic designs (which typically are all one color in varying shades) and maximalism, and can help make spaces Instagrammable and fun.
- **Look to the past for a nostalgic getaway vibe post-pandemic.** Nods to decades past are appearing across restaurant designs, particularly mid-century modern elements (arches, circles, curved furniture), merged with vacation chic or tropical elements (think seashell-backed seats, live plants, palm tree wallpaper, etc.). As we come out of the pandemic, consumers are seeking an escape and restaurants can offer that through a nostalgic getaway design.
- **Mix and match design trends.** The design trends we covered in this issue can mostly be mixed and matched with one another to create something new. Monochromatic designs can be maximalist, as can nostalgic escape designs. There isn't necessarily a clear one or the other when it comes to design, which is why it's OK to take inspiration from multiple design trends and merge them in new ways that make sense for your operation. At the end of the day, a restaurant's design should reflect the brand, its goals, and the menu.

KEY QUOTE

"This sense of maximalism seems primed for the long march out of the pandemic — an anti-Marie Kondo approach to decor, if you will — that's been expanding outside of homes and into the dining world. Rather than the measured, spa-like places that permeated much of hospitality prior to 2020, **now restaurants and bars seem to be exploring more playful, joyful expressions in their spaces.**"

- *Eater San Francisco*

WHAT'S COMING UP NEXT MONTH?

In our next issue of *FoodBytes*, we explore how operators are welcoming furry friends by offering dog-friendly menus and dining rooms. Learn how to cater to not just humans but also their furry best friends, which could help draw consumers back to restaurants post-pandemic.



HUNGRY FOR MORE TRENDS? Check out last month's Report Pro releases!



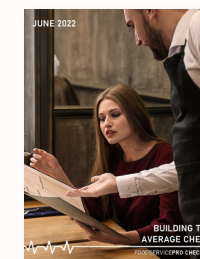
CC: Dollar & Discount Stores
A whopping 94% of consumers have visited a dollar store, making this deep dive into the segment a must-read.

Get the lowdown on what's happened since one dollar giant raised its prices, see what's cooking with dollar store meals, and don't miss our FFF (that's Future-Forward Feature, not us saying a bad word three times) showcasing five ways dollar stores could evolve in the future. You don't have to be a dollar store operator to take inspiration from this issue of *Creative Concepts*.



TW: Beverage Trends
Quench your thirst for non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverage trends in this issue of *Trend Watch*.

Explore the growing Asian rum category; uncover how operators, manufacturers, and retailers are hopping on the hazy IPA train (and get insight into how a brewery in Washington, D.C., positions its hazies and innovates on them); dive deep into the health-forward cactus water trend; and more.




Foodservice Pro Check-In: Building the Average Check
Uncover how to approach building the average check in this *Foodservice Pro Check-In*.

Current operational challenges like inflation and soaring food costs are making the equation of building the average check harder to solve. While menu price increases protect profits in the short term, uncover how operators need to keep a long-term focus on building appeal across the entire menu in order to drive traffic and margins in this report.




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