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Pat Whitley Restaurant Show
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FREE ONLINE NEWSLETTER
 HIGHLIGHTING AREA RESTAURANTS



Inside this edition:
 NEBO, Cranebrook Tea Room, Nick's on Broadway

Pat Bando, Jim Koch, Tom Galligan and The DeVirgilio Family

MRA-NRA Inducts Four Greats Into 2007 Hall Of Fame



The Mass. Restaurant Assn. (MRA) and the National Restaurant Assn. (NRA) honored three individuals and a family who have exhibited superb dedication and superb service to the hospitality industry in Massachusetts.

The 18th annual Mass. Hospitality Hall of Fame Awards Dinner was held Monday, Nov. 19, at Anthony's Pier 4 in Boston. The 2007 inductees to the Mass. Hospitality Hall of Fame were Pat Bando, associate vice president of the office of auxiliary services of Boston College; Tom Galligan III, chairman, president, and chief executive officer of Papa Gino's Holdings Corp.; Jim Koch, brewer and founder of The Boston Beer Co.; and the Accardi Co. operated by the DeVirgilio family.

As she was remarking about her own honor, Ms. Bando noted in a humorous way that the night honored people working with pizza and beer.

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Joe Milano (left) of the Union Oyster House congratulates Jim Koch, brewer and founder of The Boston Beer Co. for his induction into the MRA-NRA sponsored Mass. Hospitality Hall of Fame. See page 21 for other photos.

Joe Piantedosi Jr. Named To Food Industry Hall Of Fame

Personable Leader Noted For Industry & Community Work



When Joe Piantedosi Jr. of the Piantedosi Baking Co. was inducted into the Mass. Hospitality Hall of Fame in 2006, his presenter, Billy Costa of TV Diner, said Mr. Piantedosi may be the youngest Mass. Restaurant Assn. (MRA) member ever inducted into the select group.

Mr. Costa also began his remarks by saying that Joe is his best friend but that many people are also friends of Joe. "He truly makes you want to be a better person and friend," said Mr. Costa.

Mr. Piantedosi's selection into the Griffin Publishing Co. Food Industry Hall of Fame is based on his work as executive vice president of marketing and business development for his company; along with his work with the Mass. Restaurant Assn.

(Continued on page 23)

Joe Piantedosi Jr.

YFS Newsmaker of the Year

Karen Bressler Accepts On Behalf of AGAR

In the past few years, Yankee Food Service has awarded Newsmaker of the Year Award to Roger Berkowitz of Legal Sea Food and to the comeback of the New Ground Round franchise restaurants.

This year's winner is Karen

Bressler, chief executive officer of AGAR Supply of Taunton, Mass. Ms. Bressler won the Regional Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award and was the only female chief executive officer honored by Ernst & Young out of New England

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Nina Charley (left) regional president of the Bank of America and sponsor of the Ernst & Young Award program, presented the regional Entrepreneur of the Year Award to Karen Bressler of AGAR Supply Co.

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Veteran Food Broker Rings Up Sweet Sales By Fine Tuning Sales Concept

BY DOUGLAS GLENN CLARK

Your commission checks grow every month, food service operators treat you like royalty, and you dance down the street with a cloud at your feet. Scuzza me, signore, you say that doesn't describe your life as a food broker?

Let's face it, anyone who willingly serves a life sentence in the fast, fabulous and fickle food service industry knows that there can be some, shall we say, ups and downs. But just like the chef who samples the sauce, if too much of a bad thing has put a nasty taste in your mouth, it's time to rewrite your recipe for success.

Veteran food broker Frank Szojka has spent more than 30 years perfecting his approach to an industry that can roast you like a chicken or toast you like a king. He knows from experience that the foundation for a successful enterprise can grow from something as simple and humble as a pizza pie crust.

"If a broker is looking for items that will help make more income, find a manufacturer that offers products that complement other items they sell. Selling whole pizza pies with sauce and cheese means you're not only selling the crust but the labor, which translates into better income for the broker," said Mr. Szojka, who owns and operates B. Franklin Food Service in Lansdale, Pa.

Mr. Szojka said building on the success of one product benefits everyone: broker, food distributor, and operators, such as restaurants, hotels, resorts, sports stadiums, hospitals — in short, any venue that consumes food in large volume. With a good product, sales beget sales, which reverberate up and down the food chain.

Ready-to-go products fulfill important needs of food industry operators. The products save them the trouble of buying expensive

equipment, or, in the case of pizza, setting up a special workstation in an already busy kitchen. Also training staff or hiring more staff is not necessary. And there are no concerns about consistency of quality. This creates what Mr. Szojka calls a "no-brainer" decision for buyers. This is as close to nirvana as a broker may find in the food service arena.

Mr. Szojka also advises brokers to see themselves as detectives. Large operations with the potential for big sales, such as casinos and restaurant chains, obviously draw him like a magnet. Yet he is always in the hunt for that proverbial diamond in the rough operators: convents, B&B's, religious retreats, hotels (room service), even fine Italian restaurants that don't want to bother with the preparation of pizza but have clientele who harbor a taste for it.

And his golden rule — "I always ask people what kind of operator they are and outline to the operators how to utilize products in their specific operation" — has led him to some fine commission checks. Mr. Szojka recalled meeting a tavern owner in his region who allowed customers to bring in food from a neighboring pizzeria. When the owner revealed that the pizza restaurant closed at 9 p.m. but his tavern remained open until 2 a.m., Mr. Szojka saw an opportunity and quickly sold the proprietor on his idea of selling pizza after 9 p.m.

"Suddenly the operator can offer a high-quality pizza. It's a real time saver," said Mr. Szojka, who brokers for 15 manufacturers. "What I sell is the value-added product — the traditional pie crust with sauce and cheese. Then you're really selling a concept. That requires creative selling."

Simply put, concept selling means a broker is active in developing business and knows which operators might benefit from a quality ready-to-go product. Ten years ago, Mr. Szojka

said brokers spent most of their time meeting with food distributors. These days, meeting directly with operators is the name of the game. For brokers who fail to follow this simple rule, the end result should be obvious: no sales!

"Concept selling means knowing where to go with your products. If you don't understand where to sell the product, what are you going to do with it? It'll vegetate in your freezer," he said.

But talking about a product is not enough. A broker must literally put it in the mouth of an operator. This is where many brokers fail in their quest for fat commission checks. Mr. Szojka regularly hits the streets — and trade shows — doling out generous samples of pizza pies.

Only one person knows better than Mr. Szojka the effectiveness of this strategy. And that's Poppi AI's owner, **Sandy Firestone**.

"I can always tell when a broker isn't working. Frank works. He is out there and he pounds the pavement. He takes samples out," said Ms. Firestone, whose company began as a pizzeria and deli in the early 1970s. "I write the checks, and I can see a direct correlation between the amount of samples that go out and the size of commissions."

Crooner Dean Martin was not a food broker. But maybe he was offering sage advice when in song he described the onset of love — amore — as "When the moon hits your eye like a big pizza pie..." In other words, to succeed brokers must make an emotional connection with the products and concepts they sell. Call it love at first bite.

"Brokers have a huge job, and I have enormous respect for them. To succeed you've got to have a lot of belief in your product and just plain love this industry," Ms. Firestone said. ■

RESTAURANT BITES

BY KIM MCGRATH

Mohegan Sun Announces Another Opening - Birches Bar & Grill

One of Mohegan Sun's 30-plus dining outlets, Birches Bar & Grill, offers guests signature dishes and an atmosphere inspired by Native American design. Birches will offer guests a family dining experience in a unique atmosphere that incorporates elements of Tribal heritage. Diners can enjoy entrées like cedar plank salmon and turkey potpie, as well as contemporary dishes like gourmet wood stone pies and lobster macaroni and cheese.

This new eatery also offers guests an American classic, Birch Beer. This soda is made from herbal extracts, usually from birch bark, and varies in

color pending on the species of birch tree from which the sap is extracted. The addition of Birches Bar & Grill is just one of recent property enhancements underway prior to the opening of the multi-million dollar Project Horizon expansion.

SolToro Tequila Grill also opened this summer. The new authentic Mexican restaurant is co-owned by basketball legend **Michael Jordan**, making it his third restaurant at Mohegan Sun. Mohegan Sun opened Sunrise Square, an expanded Asian area offering an authentic Southeast Asian cuisine food court in August.

HARU Comes to Boston

HARU, an exciting Japanese restaurant that already has six

locations in Manhattan, opened at 55 Huntington Avenue in Boston's Back Bay in late October. The sushi chefs work on a state-of-the-art surface, and there are feng shui touches like water ropes, a wooden footbridge and green gardens throughout the 4,000-square-foot space.

HARU's signature cocktails like The Komodo Dragon or Green Tea Margarita are sure to entice the after-work crowd. General Manager **Patrick Sansac** is proud of the restaurant's sparkling new double kitchen; the extra space is dedicated exclusively for takeout and catering.

Z Square Heads to Boston University

After just celebrating its first

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