

Emerging Concepts: Movers and Shapers

Keep it simple

Shaping the scene: A desire for simplicity. Some economic indicators tell us that the recession is gradually ending and restaurant sales and customer counts are trending up once again. Americans slowly are returning to restaurants. We have questions about values to answer. What do consumers value now, how

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The Culinary Visions™ Panel of industry experts recently described current menu development as “The New Simplicity.” Dining, once again, is being defined by “culinary basics: highquality, simple ingredients, authentic and fresh preparation methods, and time spent with family and friends around the table.”

• “I don’t put anything on the menu I cannot explain to my mother,” said Jimmy Sneed, executive chef of SugarToad Restaurant in Naperville, Ill., as part of the Culinary Visions™ Panel, led by Sharon Olson and her

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of SugarToad Restaurant in Naperville, Ill., as part of Olson Communications’ Culinary Vision Panel.

This celebration of simplicity is reflected in the proliferation of cupcake shops and increase in traditional home-style foods such as macaroni and cheese.

- The *Wall Street Journal* reported in July 2010 that hiring for cupcake bakeries “has now become a legitimate driver of the city’s economy.”
- Upscale burger-specialty restaurants also have flourished. Chicago’s DMK Burger Bar, opened by fine-dining chef Michael Kornick, also offers two varieties of macaroni and cheese as sides. Bakery café chain Panera Bread has added macaroni and cheese to its list of premium-priced “Signature” items. Bakery café chain Au Bon Pain recently added cupcakes.