

HOT TOPICS

A Newsletter for the Foodservice Industry from



100% Employee Owned — Fall 2011, No. 40

food for thought



by David Rolston
President and CEO

Discovering China

Politically, economically and commercially, China has emerged as one of the world's great powers. Though nominally a Communist country, in recent years it has avidly embraced many of the attributes of capitalism. Economically, its new-found wealth — thanks to plentiful natural resources and an abundant labor pool — has made it a major factor in monetary markets, as well as a principal lender to other countries including the United States. Commercially, it represents one of the largest potential markets on earth for goods and services. No corporation hoping to be a serious contender in the global market can ignore China.

Although Hatco has sold into the Asian (including Chinese) market for many years, it became apparent to us that differences in taste and in the style of food preparation necessitated the development of a parallel product line. In order to facilitate this and to enhance our presence in the marketplace, we established a factory in China staffed by Chinese nationals to produce units destined for the Asian market and to serve as a warehouse for U.S.-manufactured products that we export to China. The results have been interesting to say the least.

Please see **"food for thought"** on page 5

A Plate and Palate for the World

How Ethnic Foods Went Global

From the grocery store to your local fast-food restaurant, there's no mistaking the increased popularity and availability of foods from all over the world. This kind of culinary and cultural exchange has been happening for centuries, but only in recent years has it become possible to truly replicate dishes from faraway lands right in your own kitchen. Whether it's food from Florence being cooked in Florida, or Mexican recipes recreated in Macao, there's never been a better time to try truly *authentic* ethnic food as nearby as your own neighborhood. Here's the story of how food traveled from across the planet, to your plate!



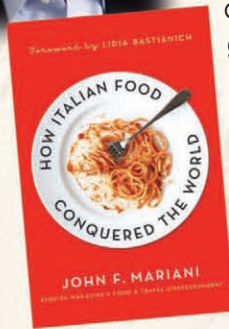
spotlight

1490-Straight-2-You

Throughout history, a country's or empire's cuisine has always been based on available ingredients. In the earliest civilizations, this tended toward the simplicity of a few local foodstuffs. John Mariani, author of *How Italian Food Conquered the World*, explains: "A commoner in the Roman Empire lived on little more than bread, olives, a few vegetables (such as chickpeas and broccoli), and the occasional serving of meat." Even in the first centuries of the Common Era (what we used to call "A.D."), money expanded one's options: "Farmers and soldiers might enjoy additional eggs, fruits, and grain. And, universally, everyone drank wine — usually cut with water."

These examples of the early days of "Italian" cooking (before there really was an "Italy") reflects the Mediterranean diet as it remained for hundreds of years — informed by the local sailing trade. But a major shift was about to take place. We think of Christopher Columbus's landing in the New World as the beginning of an evolution in cultural and political ideas — but the fabled Niña, Pinta, and Santa María also forever changed the way people ate, on both sides of the Atlantic. "The Columbian

Please see **"Ethnic Foods"** on page 4



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on the menu

"Hot Topics" is produced by the HATCO CORPORATION. Edited by Bette Leque. To reach Bette or to be added to the mailing list, phone 414-615-2270 or e-mail her at bleque@hatcocorp.com

THE (NEAR) FUTURE IN FOODSERVICE TECHNOLOGIES

In a service that meets a simple need — human hunger — it can be easy to think that business is unlikely to be affected by trends such as new technologies or social media. But as FSTEC founder and Chairman Rob Grimes explains, nothing could be further from the truth: “Keeping up with new technologies is as vital to foodservice as it is to any industry. The modern consumer expects — and demands — that where they eat be as savvy to modern culture as where they sleep or how they travel.”

tech trends



FSTEC

An Insider's View

Grimes has been a foodservice technology consultant for over 20 years, in addition to having worked back- and front-of-the-house operations. His company, FSTEC, holds an annual “Conference + Showcase” where the latest ideas are introduced, tested, and discussed at length. “Everything that’s popular now centers around one of two goals: increasing speed of service, and connecting more directly with the consumer. Not surprisingly, these are both service-oriented goals — that’s what our industry is all about.”

Some of the most popular items currently doing well among foodservice operations are: cashless systems (such as mobile payment), online ordering and reservations, electronic coupons (online or on mobile devices), “wi-fi” (broadband) connectivity, and an assortment of drive-thru and point-of-sale developments.

Follow the Trends, Not the Fads

“One good example of a transitioning technology,” Grimes points out, “is digital signage and menus. A few years ago they were prohibitively expensive and seemed an extravagance. But as laws about consumer information (especially about nutrition) increase, and the prices of flat screens fall, it puts what seemed like a luxury within reach of your typical standalone restaurant operation. Add to that the fact that it’s a more

green, sustainable solution for communicating with your customer, and it starts to sound even more appealing.”

Grimes believes most of the technologies mentioned above will be seen in increasingly mainstream market segments, but warns that such trends should not be confused with fads: “Those things all have staying power. But not everything does. For example, one hot new thing is ordering through ‘apps’ on the Apple iPad. Using a digital tablet to input orders — from either a server or customer role —

is probably going to be a useful update to ordering, but there’s no need to rush to write the app.

“I’ll be surprised if a more open-sourced tablet, something other than an iPad, doesn’t become the more popular operator choice.”

Already Anticipating

What many operators are wondering about is not just what’s ‘new’ but what’s coming down the pike. There, too, Grimes is a step ahead. “In all industries, but certainly in foodservice,” he says, “everyone is going to want to familiarize themselves with ‘SaaS’ or ‘software as a service.’” Also called “on-demand software,” it uses remote ‘cloud’ storage technology, saving operators from having their computers bogged down in a bunch of programs. “A lot of back-of-the-house record-keeping, surveillance technology, and point-of-sale information, will all soon be available as a service through the internet, with very little on-site demands on the operator — and low overhead.”

“In the end, foodservice providers are right to think that the demand for their product isn’t going anywhere,” Grimes summarizes, “but in order to stay competitive in marketing that product, the modern operator has to try and keep up, not with every ‘new thing’ — but with every important one.”

For more on FSTEC, see fstec.com. ■

A Letter from Billy Booster



Hello again, friends! Are you ready for my close-up? I hope so, because guess who has entered the exciting world of foodwarming film? That’s right — yours truly! The kind folks at Hatco have been educating the masses through their YouTube channel for more than a year now, and they’ve finally given me my big Booster break! I have a starring role in videos about the new Refrigerated Wells, the Booster Water Heater (a topic close to my heart heating element), and how to “build” a Decorative Lamp to your own unique specs! To see more of my stainless steely self on the “big screen” (depending on the size of your monitor, of course) click on over to youtube.com/hatcocorp.

And speaking of online personalization, I should also mention the all-new Hatco Graphics website, www.hatcographics.com, where you can design the perfect signage for your Hatco product — and even upload images of your own to use! I just might personalize mine with a picture of me and the *appliance-of-my-eye*, Tina Toaster!

For more of my adventures in media, as well as up-to-date industry info and jokes to “boost” your mood, follow me on Facebook, Twitter, my blog on Hatco’s website, and now, YouTube! Boy, for a humble Booster Water Heater, I sure do get around... Hope to hear from you soon!

Best,

“Billy”

billy@hatcocorp.com 2



TRADE EXHIBITIONS

September 2011

- Florida Restaurant & Lodging Show
September 8 - 11
Orlando, FL, USA

October 2011

- NACS Show
October 1 - 4
Chicago, IL, USA
Booth #5879
- HOST
October 21 - 25
Milan, Italy

November 2011

- IH/M&RS
November 12 - 15
New York, NY, USA
Booth #1238
- Food & Hotel China
November 16 - 18
Shanghai, China
Booth #3N26



This issue of *Hot Topics* has been printed on recycled paper with non-petroleum inks.

"The place with the goats on the roof!"



**Al Johnson's
Swedish Restaurant
& Butik** Sister Bay, Wisconsin, USA



**specialty
of the house**



Neering Sister Bay on highway 42 in Wisconsin's popular Door County peninsula, it's best to drive with caution. Generations of cars have been slowing down to catch a glimpse of the goats calmly grazing on sod, atop a log restaurant called Al Johnson's Swedish Restaurant & Butik. Just as famous as the goats on the roof, though, is the delicious Swedish fare inside. "We strive for an enjoyably *authentic* cuisine," explains Manager Jaime Blossom. "Chef Freddy is from Sweden, and while the goats are munching above, he's busy below bringing the tastes of his home to our customers. It's Al's dream, come to life."

Al Johnson, a paratrooper with the 101st Airborne Division in WWII, started his restaurant in 1949, to support his new wife, Inger, and the three children they would eventually have. "For years he ran a typical Swedish restaurant," Jaime explains, "but when he built the cabin we now serve in (in 1973), it was the beginning of something interesting." Johnson had commissioned the restaurant's plan and construction from a Norwegian designer, who incorporated a traditional telemark design with a low, sod-covered roof. Then, for his 48th birthday, Al received the gag gift of a goat from his best friend, "Wink." From there it was just a hop, skip, and a jump to Oscar the goat and his future friends grazing on the roof of the restaurant.

Since Al's passing last year, his children carry on the traditions of the restaurant for new generations of tourists and locals alike. Says Jaime, "Anika, Lars, and Rolf all have a hand in running the restaurant, and they're just as dedicated to the animals — who stay each night at Lars's place, and now appear on an online goat cam! — as well as to the food and service in the restaurant. I think many people come to see the goats, but they keep coming back for a small taste of Sweden in northern Wisconsin."

To visit the goat roof in "real time," see www.aljohnsons.com/goat-cam/. ■

Al Johnson's Swedish Pancakes

Ingredients:

- 3 eggs
- 2 1/2 cups (592 ml) milk
- 1 1/4 cups (124 grams) flour

- 2 tbsp (24 grams) sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon (2.5 grams) salt
- 2 tbsp (29 grams) butter, melted

Instructions:

In a large mixing bowl, beat eggs with half the milk. Beat in flour, sugar, and salt until smooth. Stir in melted butter and remaining milk. Heat a griddle or large skillet with a small amount of oil. For each pancake, pour about 1/4 cup batter onto griddle and cook over medium heat, 1-2 minutes. With spatula, turn pancakes over until golden brown, about 1/2 minute. Serve immediately or keep warm while making remaining pancakes.

Best eaten with "Al Johnson's" Lingonberries! Serves 4. ■

Photography in this article courtesy of Matt Normann Photography, ©2010



Exchange, as it's known, brought a wealth of new vegetables, meats, and grains to Europe," Mariani says, "as well as to the Americas." The relatively limited Mediterranean and European diets suddenly had a whole new range of menu and ingredient options — corn, avocados, potatoes, turkey, peanuts, pineapple, tomatoes, and a host of others.

For their part, the Europeans brought to the New World some familiar things from home, which would come to affect cuisine in the Americas as well. Jeffrey Pilcher, a Professor at the University of Minnesota and author of *Food in World History*, points out that "some of the things we think of as building blocks in Central and South American cuisine were first brought over during this time — including things like beef, chicken, garlic, lettuce, onions, rice, and many more." Pilcher's work focuses on Mexican and Mexican-American food and culture.

Food Flights and Food Fights

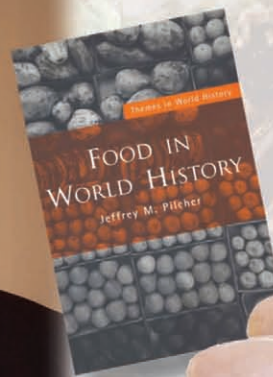
Mariani calls the history of ethnic food "largely a history of travel. Advances in moving people also 'drive' the movement of food from one place to another." After The Columbian Exchange, it would be nearly four centuries before much changed. Around the turn of the twentieth century,

however — with the introduction of trains, planes, and automobiles — the culinary conversation between cultures took off again. Pilcher cites one of the earliest examples of Mexican-American cross-cultural meeting — the "Chili Queens of San Antonio:" "These were Mexican women in the 1880s who would cook their local foods in open marketplaces for cowboys, tourists, and locals alike."

Similarly, Italian cooking in America was strengthened by massive immigration in the early part of the twentieth century.

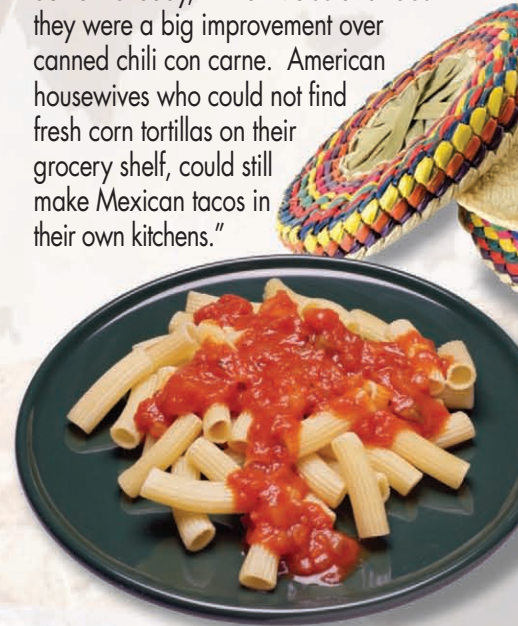
"Though there was a certain discrimination toward Italians in the early days," Mariani mentions, "eventually the appeal of the

simple, delicious food won out over cultural prejudice." Pilcher finds similar roadblocks to Mexican food in the early conflict between pioneers and locals: "The Chili Queens were seen as a threat by some — with their hot, spicy food translating into something akin to a sexual permissiveness." Here, too, though, the universality of the allure of good food overcame intolerance.



Modern Multicultural Menus

For a second time, in the twentieth century, technology helped food make its way from local cuisines into the mainstream. Pilcher explains that advances in industry made it possible to achieve more authentic versions of ethnic foods across geographic boundaries: "Although taco shells might not seem authentic today, in the 1950s and '60s they were a big improvement over canned chili con carne. American housewives who could not find fresh corn tortillas on their grocery shelf, could still make Mexican tacos in their own kitchens."



Mariani, meanwhile, argues that "FedEx® and DHL have done more to make authentic Italian cuisine available abroad than any immigrant traditions before could have. It's no longer a matter of simply pasta and sauce — ingredients like Prosciutto di Parma make a truly local Italian-style food possible, anywhere in the world."

A further help to bringing Italian, Mexican, Chinese, and other ethnic foods into the contemporary kitchen is the late-twentieth-century boom in "foodie" culture. According to Pilcher, "The current interest in street foods such as taco trucks allows chefs to expand their palates in ways that would not have been possible when European haute cuisine dominated fine dining restaurant kitchens." Mariani

adds: "Nearly every new hotel that opens, from Mumbai to Missouri, features an Italian-style restaurant — it's just good business. The appeal of those simple, local ingredients like pasta, tomatoes, vegetables, and now other specialized items — available on a global scale — has made

Italian food one of, if not *the* premiere universal culinary offerings. The language of 'good food' is spoken globally."

Ethnic Foods of the Future

Many people consider the internet a great equalizer in the modern, global world, but there's reason to believe that in terms of cultural communication, our most basic need — food — has helped pave the way for a greater international understanding.

As for the coming years, it would seem there's nowhere to go but up. "Mexican, Italian, and Chinese food are just the beginning,"

Pilcher notes. "We're already seeing major metropolitan areas offer a buffet of authentic foods from around the world. As time goes on, it seems inevitable that we'll continue to see those foods trickle into more mainstream venues — there are



already Japanese and Indian restaurants in most malls in 'Middle America.' The new frontier would be the expansion of these offerings into more and more local cuisines, in more and more conventional places."



With ever-increasing availability of genuine local ingredients, it's only logical to assume that soon ethnic foods will travel not only to your local eateries, but even into your own kitchen. It's no wonder even English speakers declare with gusto, "Bon Appetit!"



For more on Italian food's "Conquering" of the world, see johnmariani.com. ■



"food for thought" from page 1

As an emerging economy, Chinese tastes are rapidly expanding. As personal wealth has increased, a population that was once insular has now sampled and eagerly embraced many of the tastes and products of the West. Increased affluence has engendered a greater interest in dining out. Fast-food restaurants have become extremely popular and American specialties, including fried chicken, are much in demand. Fusion cuisine combining traditional Chinese specialties with new Western variations continues to evolve and increase in popularity. As Western and global influences continue to penetrate the market, the future looks exceptionally bright.

The Chinese experience, however, has not been without its problems. Although the work ethic of the people is exceptionally strong (and they are truly pleasant to deal with), Chinese industrialization — especially as regards manufacturing — is still in its early stages. Many of the quality standards common to the West have not been universally embraced. As a result, goods received from

Chinese suppliers must be carefully inspected and tested, and it is not uncommon to find problems.

Also, relations between Western companies and the political system can be complex. Our executives, both American and Chinese, have frequent meetings with officials. These are often conducted in social settings and can be very enjoyable encounters. On the other hand, the "official" rules demand endless paperwork, insofar as licensing, taxation, and other issues are concerned. This is a considerable burden that can only be handled by individuals familiar with the system.

For Hatco, as for any company doing business in China, it is important to keep abreast not only of day-to-day operations but of the "big picture" as well.

Like the old Soviet Union, the "country" that is China is composed of multiple provinces, the people of which speak different languages, hold to different customs,

and retain separate social structures. While the old Communist system was heavy-handed with regard to maintaining order, the emergence of a wealthier class, and the influx of offshore participants in the economy, has resulted in demands for greater economic and intellectual freedom. Whether ultimately our products will serve a single "Chinese" market or a variety of separate and more specialized entities, or both, remains to be seen. We believe that ultimately our success in China will derive from the same philosophy that has made us successful at home — offering our customers "nothing less than the best."

Sincerely,

David Rolston
大卫 罗士顿

David Rolston
drolston@hatcocorp.com

product profile

It's **Cool** to be Shelf-ish with 's

NEW

Drop-In Frost Top

What's cooler than cool? Providing your customers with fresh, ready-to-eat products chilled to just the right temperature. That's what Hatco offers with its **all-new** Drop-In Frost Top!

Whether it's a **buffet line or point-of-sale**, the Frost Top is designed with style and customers' self-serve convenience in mind. Hatco's latest cooling innovation offers a **full-size sheet pan's worth of chilled space** for your sandwiches, fruit, beverages — or anything else your customers use to keep cool on the go. The Drop-In sheet-pan-sized Frost Top is available in a lateral or vertical orientation, with a **condensing unit that rotates 90° or 180°** (movable in some models), optimizing your serving space to suit your needs.

Of course, all cooling units create condensation, but with Hatco's **unique recessed shelf design**, there's no worry of product slippage. Keeping cold products cold and ready-to-eat has never been easier, or safer.



Other "cool" features include optional auto-defrost, an **adjustable electronic temperature control** (with multiple mounting options), a lighted rocker on/off switch, and **sturdy, easy-to-clean stainless steel construction**.

There's nothing selfish about being shelf-ish — especially when you're offering customers cool products with stone-cold convenience. For more information on Hatco's all-new Drop-In Frost Top, contact your Hatco representative, or visit www.hatcocorp.com today! ■