

MSU Extension Publication Archive

Archive copy of publication, do not use for current recommendations. Up-to-date information about many topics can be obtained from your local Extension office.

Atmosphere in the Restaurant

Michigan State University

Cooperative Extension Service

Thomas R. Quinn, District Extension Leader: Resource Development

December 1981

20 pages

The PDF file was provided courtesy of the Michigan State University Library

Scroll down to view the publication.

Atmosphere in the Restaurant



*Written by Thomas R. Quinn
Extension Bulletin E1462*

*• District Extension Leader, Resource Development
Michigan State University
Illustrated by Gail St. Germain
Cover Illustration by Judy A. Schaub*

*• Cooperative Extension Service
December 1981 File 33.3*

Atmosphere in the Restaurant

by Thomas R. Quinn • District Extension Leader, Resource Development
Michigan State University

People are attracted to a restaurant by more than just good food. Though important, good food is only a part of the total dining experience. Equally important is the way people feel while in the restaurant. This physical and emotional response is a result of the atmosphere—the total environment to which customers are exposed.

Atmosphere is made up of everything that makes an impression on people. The building design, decor, interior color scheme, texture of the walls, service, and the food create the atmosphere. The right atmosphere can relax guests and generate good feeling and repeat customers. The proper atmosphere can make the food, service and whole dining experience seem better.

People want a dining experience—an escape from problems and everyday surroundings. The atmosphere should project a feeling of friendliness and comfort, be attractive and interestingly different. The atmosphere is remembered long after the meal is finished. For the restaurant owner this means repeat customers and, hopefully, a profitable operation.

Not everyone wants the same emotional response from a restaurant's atmosphere. After working all day, most people would prefer to eat in a quiet, relaxed, intimate atmosphere. However, for those who have worked alone in a quiet environment, a noisy cafeteria might provide needed contrast. It is, therefore, very important to be thoroughly familiar with the characteristics of the type of people you wish to serve.

Designing the "right" atmosphere takes careful consideration. It should be designed to attract the largest number of people possible from the target market group. The total atmosphere and operation of the restaurant should be geared toward this end.

People's perception makes the atmosphere. The primary factors of sight, touch, smell, hearing, temperature, and tempo combine to give people their perception of atmosphere.

Sight

The perception of sight is a question of acceptability to the eye. Sight perception involves color, lighting, harmony, contrast, order, and space. Many sight needs are subconscious, yet are an extremely important ingredient of the total atmosphere.

A waitress with a dirty uniform and grease smears on

the menu are sights unacceptable to the customer's eye. More pleasing sight perceptions are candlelight, clean linen tablecloths, and a neatly set table.

Touch

The texture of the walls, curtains, tables, and floors have a "feel" to the imagination. Walls that are smooth and hard may reflect a harsh, cold feeling. Fabric covered walls may produce a feeling of warmth and gentleness. The perception of body contact, seat comfort, floor contact, etc. all contribute to atmosphere.

Smell

Smell involves both pleasant and unpleasant odors. Smells can positively contribute to the atmosphere. The aroma of fresh brewed coffee, oven-baked bread, fresh cut flowers, and a pine scented breeze can heighten the appetite. Negative smells involve offensive kitchen odors, body odor, food scraps on the floor and table, garbage, and rancid grease.

Hearing

The noise level of conversations, serving staff, kitchen sounds, and music affect the atmosphere. The level of noise acceptable to the ears is a function of age. The older the age group, the less the intensity of noise which is acceptable.

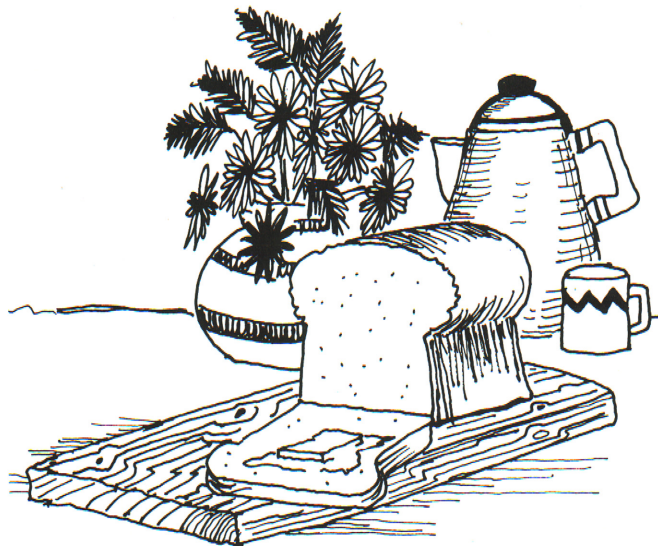
Temperature

The temperature of the dining room and food influences the individual's perception of the atmosphere. A comfortably warm room and hot food portrays a feeling of high quality, elegance and a slow leisurely meal. Fast-food restaurants needing high turnover to earn a profit usually keep the dining room temperatures cooler in the winter to encourage people to eat faster.

Variations from normal temperature are noticed quickly since most people are very sensitive to temperature.

Tempo

Atmosphere is affected by the tempo of service, length of time to produce the meal, and the time given to eat the meal. The tempo of the dining experience should correspond to the image of the restaurant. Normally, the



Pleasant aromas can increase one's appetite.

tempo in a luxury restaurant is more leisurely than the tempo in a fast-food restaurant. There is also a difference between apparent tempo and real tempo. For example, the service personnel may appear to rush about in a great hurry providing fast service. Actually, the service may be quite slow.

People measure the desirability of a restaurant's atmosphere by their senses. It is important that the perception of the atmosphere be one of comfort, ease,

and acceptability. This bulletin will explore many physical components affecting atmosphere and how their use can benefit you.

Location

The restaurant's image begins with its location. The character of nearby buildings, streets, and businesses affects people's perception of a restaurant. The locality will attract a certain type of clientele and determine the price range, type of service, and menu selection. The restaurant's theme should reflect the needs of the people around it, and not be in conflict with its locale. The location indicates the type of service and quality of food people will find there. Location sets the mood for the total dining experience.

The most desirable location for an urban restaurant is on the corner of a block. Here the restaurant enjoys greater visibility and greater flexibility in exterior design. An entrance off each street is best.

The suburban or rural restaurant will gain more visibility by locating on a main highway just before a principal traffic generator such as a crossroad, traffic circle, or a city. Locating on the right hand side of the road in the direction of the main flow of traffic is desirable. There is a psychological barrier to making a left turn across a stream of traffic. Building a restaurant at a very busy crossroad is also to be avoided. It is difficult to maneuver through traffic at a busy intersection.

Locating a restaurant in an area with other restaurants has merit. The existence of competition is not necessarily bad. Potential diners are attracted to an area that features good restaurants. People often have no specific restaurant destination in mind and are usually willing to try anything new and interesting.

Exterior Design

The hurried, impatient passerby makes judgement on a restaurant within a few seconds. The function of the exterior design is to attract customers and invite them in to eat. The design should stimulate the imagination and heighten the curiosity of the clientele group. A square block building leaves little to the imagination, but a restaurant exterior that looks like an old whaling ship or a Mexican villa stimulates curiosity and draws people in.

The exterior design should reflect the character of the locality, but be different enough to attract attention. The atmosphere on the inside should be a reflection of the exterior image.

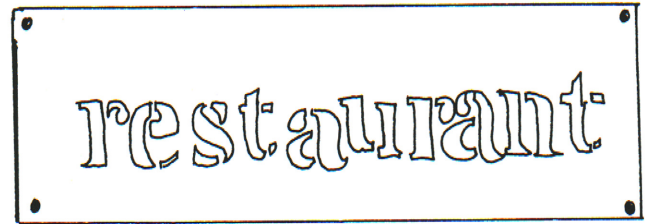
People are naturally suspicious and hesitant upon entering a new restaurant. They are looking for some indication, either positive or negative, as to the quality of the restaurant before they enter. If people are to get past the front door, the exterior design must be attractive and give people confidence in the quality of the establishment. Signs, parking area, landscaping, design and color of the building, windows, curtains, view of the inside, lighting, flowers or plants, and type of door will all be closely scrutinized.

Signs

A good sign should indicate at least four things. First, it should indicate "this is a restaurant." This may sound overly simple, but look around you. To the visitor a sign with the words "The Gallery" printed on it has little meaning. The Gallery could be a clothing store, a gift shop, a store displaying art objects, or a restaurant. With so many signs and store fronts competing for attention, a sign must leave no doubt about what is being sold.

Second, a good sign should indicate the type of food and service that is being offered. People who dislike chicken do not want to find out after they have been seated that chicken is the only dish served. Indicate somewhere on the exterior of the building the type of food being served, but avoid tired phrases such as "steaks and chops", "good food", and "fine dining".

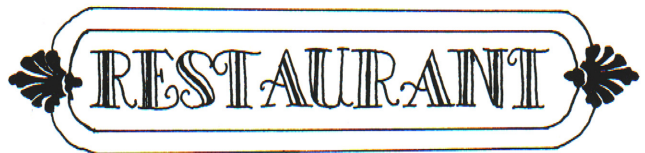
A third piece of needed information is the price range. It is quite an embarrassment for a person to enter a restaurant with only four dollars and suddenly find that the least expensive item on the menu is \$6.95. A good sign dispels doubt by providing needed information. The sign should not necessarily specify an exact dollar price range, but by means of its style, color, size, and shape, it should indicate an approximate price range.



The lettering on this sign projects an image of a low-priced restaurant.



Moderate prices would be expected at a restaurant with this sign.



Lettering of this style would indicate a restaurant in the higher priced range.

The use of the words "cafe", "truck stop", "supper club", "inn", and "restaurant" each project a different image and price range. Likewise, the style of lettering also gives a clue as to the approximate price range.

Families often eat together. The fourth item a sign should indicate is the type of customer the restaurant caters to. Families need to know if children are welcome. Likewise, someone looking for a very quiet, intimate restaurant would not like to eat with fifty cub scouts celebrating a birthday.

The sign should be chosen carefully. The style, design, and color of the sign should follow the same theme as the interior and exterior of the restaurant. Signs should be simple with a minimal amount of wording. The letters should be large enough to be read from at least 200 feet. It takes a car traveling at 55 miles per hour almost 400 feet to stop. At 40 miles per hour 200 feet is needed in which to stop. Signs with 12 inch lettering can be read up to 400 feet away; 8 inch letters can be read at a maximum distance of 250 feet.

The three or four color neon sign, so large it appears that its weight will tip over the building, with flashing arrows pointing to the restaurant's entrance, im-

mediately shouts, "I'm cheap!" Simplicity denotes style and elegance. Signs should be pleasing to the eye.

In locations where many signs are competing for viewer attention, the design becomes even more important. Signs should be eye catching, and unique. If there are eight rectangular signs in a 200 foot stretch of highway, the chances are small that any one of them will be read. But one oval sign among seven rectangular ones will draw attention to the oval sign. Thus, attention can be drawn to a sign by varying the size, shape, color, construction material, height, lighting, or style of printing. By being pleasingly different, it draws attention.

An attitude that often prevails is that if one sign is good, ten signs ought to be ten times better. This is simply not true. The more signs that a restaurant has in one location, the less likely that any one of them will be read. A mass of signs is confusing and signals an unorganized, poorly managed establishment.

The most effective signs are simple and brief. Short and to the point indicates quality and orderliness.

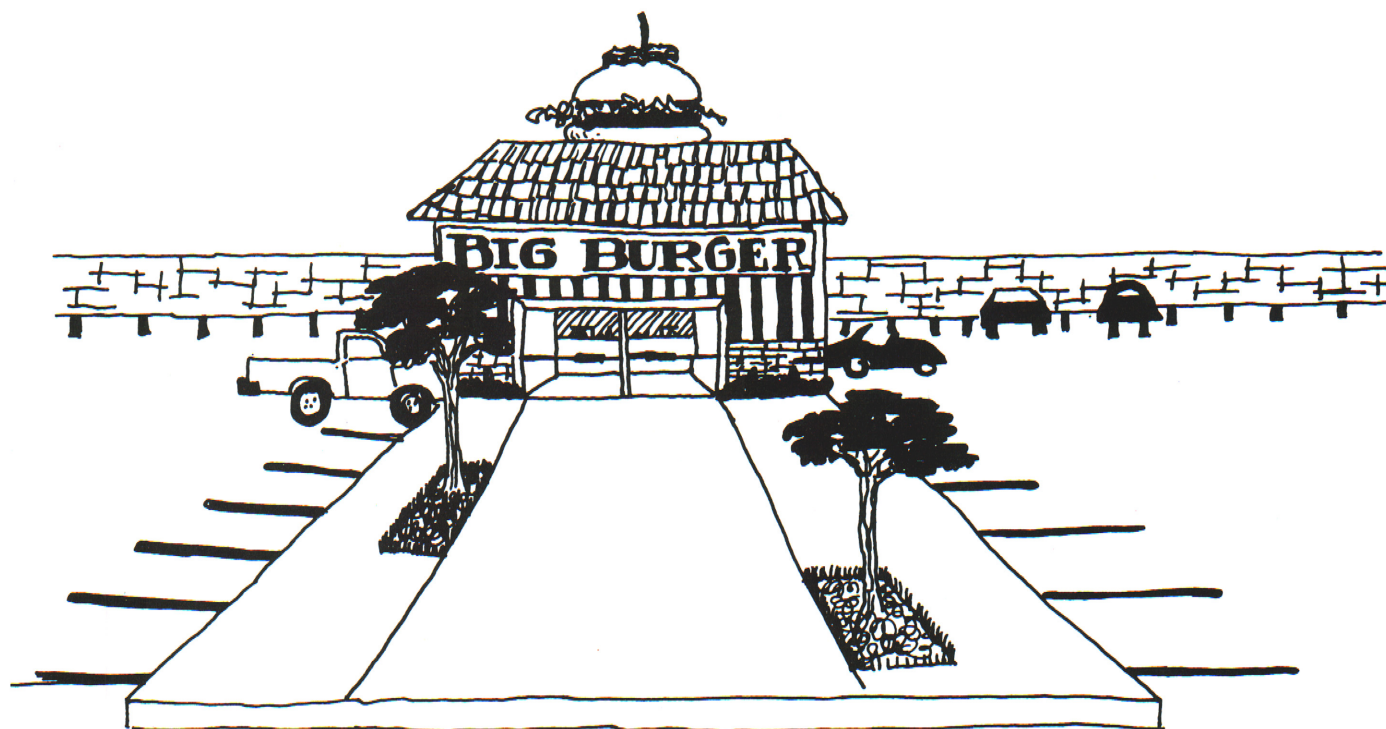
Parking Area

The parking area, assuming the restaurant has one of its own, is another indicator of the quality and image of the restaurant. The materials used for surfacing a parking area are, in order of preference, cement, blacktop,

crushed stone or gravel, and dirt. Cement has an element of permanence about it which reassures the customer of the quality and longstanding nature of the restaurant. Blacktop is less expensive than cement, but requires more maintenance and does not reflect the elegance of cement. Crushed stone and gravel parking areas are acceptable only if well maintained, graded frequently, and without weeds. However, the dirt and dust caused by vehicles driving over gravel and stone parking areas makes them considerably less desirable. Dirt parking areas are never satisfactory; they are soon rutted, weedy, dirty, and often muddy.

The parking area should have separate and well marked entrance and exit driveways. The minimum area needed to park one car is a space 9 feet by 20 feet. The lanes should be approximately 15 feet wide to enable easy parking. The parking area should be large enough to handle the number of cars determined by the seating capacity of the restaurant plus the cars of the employees. Usually three parking spaces for every 10 seats are adequate for customer parking.

The location of the parking area is a point of debate. A large parking area directly in front of the restaurant makes access to the front door easy. But, a conglomeration of vehicles blocking the view of the restaurant and hiding the carefully planned landscape would probably appeal only to a used car salesperson. On the other hand, parked cars are an indication to potential



The location and layout of the parking areas is an important design consideration.

customers that the food is good. Parking areas located to the rear or sides of the restaurant are most aesthetically pleasing, but may mean customers have a greater distance to walk to reach the front door. There also tends to be a security problem when vehicles are parked out of view of restaurant patrons and passing motorists. The advantage of locating parking areas away from the front of the building is that the landscaping and architectural beauty of the building are in full view of the road traffic and can be used to draw attention to the restaurant.

Probably the best location for the parking area is a compromise between locating it in front of the building or on the sides and back. Place the parking lot so it is visible from the entrance, but not a blot on the landscape. One way of achieving this effect is to design a landscaped open area immediately in front of the building with parking areas on the sides. The figure on page 5 illustrates this concept.

Landscaping

Landscaping helps provide the setting and atmosphere for the total dining experience. A well maintained and landscaped exterior attracts customers and hides unattractive service areas from view. It also provides a pleasant vista from the dining room.

The landscape design must keep with the theme of the restaurant and harmonize with the exterior and interior features of the building. By using plants of different heights, textures, and colors, the landscape architect can create an attractive exterior. The use of rocks, flowers, ponds, etc. adds contrast and excitement.

Building Design

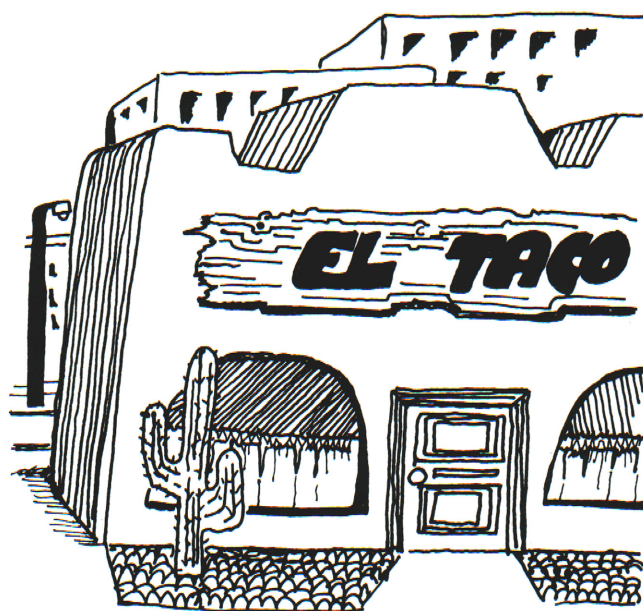
The building's design should reflect the theme and type of food served by the restaurant. For instance, a restaurant specializing in Chinese food should reflect it in the exterior and interior design of the building.

Restaurants catering to children and young families often use bright colors on the exterior to attract attention. Bright colors reflect a happy, friendly, comfortable feeling, and indicate that families are welcome. The psychological effect colors have on people will be discussed later.

Often neglected is the upkeep and maintenance of the building exterior. Peeling paint, dirty windows and doors, and broken light fixtures give a negative impression on the quality and cleanliness of the food being served inside. A run-down exterior makes a bad impression and keeps away many potential customers.

Exterior Lighting

The intensity, color, type, and placement of outside lighting is important for developing the desired at-



The building's design should reflect the theme and type of food served.

mosphere. Proper lighting can add texture, charm, and beauty to a building and landscape. It can accentuate the positive and play down the negative aspects of the exterior design. The intensity and style of light fixtures must also harmonize with the desired atmosphere.

Exterior lighting can attract the attention of passersby and create an impression of the inside atmosphere. Its placement needs careful consideration. Signs, architectural highlights, entrance ways, and parking areas need to be especially well lighted. At night lighting should provide safety by illuminating steps, sidewalks, and other hazards. It should also provide a sense of security.

Avoid glare. Outside spotlights can cause an uncomfortable glare to patrons seated near windows. The direction of the light and the type of fixture must be carefully chosen.

Avoid the use of gaudy, brightly flashing lights. Although they will attract attention, such a lighting scheme will give the feeling of a poor quality, seedy operation.

Entrance Way

The entrance way is the climax of the exterior theme and the transition to the interior decor. It actually leads people inside. It should enhance the total atmosphere of the facility.

The entrance to the restaurant should be unmistak-

ably visible to even the casual passerby. There should be absolutely no doubt as to where the entrance door is located.

Separate entrances should be provided to the bar and dining areas. Some non-drinkers object to walking through the bar to get to the dining area; and some drinkers would rather not advertise that they are going to the bar by walking through the dining area. By providing separate entrances within easy access to the parking areas, both the bar and dining room business can be enhanced.

An exterior door that opens into an entrance area has an advantage to one that opens directly into the dining room. An entrance area adds a sense of spaciousness and elegance to the atmosphere. It also can function as a meeting place for customers and act as a buffer zone in the winter by cutting down on drafts. When the dining room is full, the entrance area serves as a waiting area. People are much more patient waiting in the en-

trance area than they are after being seated.

The entrance area is the customer's first and last view of the interior. People will naturally be apprehensive and critical on entering the restaurant for the first time. They will notice the type of decor, the windows, walls, floor covering, lights, pictures, and the inside view. The potential customer can still walk out at this point, so carefully plan and maintain the entrance area.

Design the entrance so that entering customers are not made uncomfortable by being thrust in immediate view of the dining room patrons. Arrange the entrance and dining areas so that customers do not have to parade to their tables in full view of everyone. When customers leave the dining area, they should not feel that they are being watched by the other guests in the room. Likewise, the design should never place the guests into the uncomfortable disadvantage of not being able to see who is watching them.

Interior Design

In regard to design, the early Greeks believed in order, continuity, and simplicity. Good restaurant design is just that.

Lighting

The interior lighting scheme has a dramatic effect on the atmosphere and mood of the restaurant. It must make a favorable visual impression and provide enough light for the activities of staff and customers. Proper lighting can make dull, plain walls, ceilings, and furnishings sparkle with interest and character. Poor lighting can emphasize poor architectural design and make a mediocre dining area look bad.

A restaurant needs varying levels of light intensity. Bright lights are needed by the staff for cleaning the dining area. The breakfast trade desires a moderately high level of lighting to keep them awake and allow for the reading of the morning newspaper. A moderate level of lighting is needed at noon to stimulate a fast turnover of customers. A low intensity of light creates a leisurely, intimate atmosphere conducive to evening dining. To create these atmospheres, use a rheostat to control the lighting.

The type of clientele patronizing a restaurant has a very important bearing on the intensity of lighting needed. Young people are attracted by low levels of lighting. As people grow older, their eyesight generally deteriorates and brighter lighting is required. The average 60 year old, for instance, needs twice as much light as the average 30 year old. Where a high customer turnover is needed, bright lights and stimulating colors create a brisk atmosphere and fast service. Low levels of lighting are generally associated with higher prices and high quality service.

Candlelight

Candlelight is the ultimate source of light for the dining area. It develops an excellent mood and intense atmosphere. The shadows cast by the flickering flame creates movement in the room and dramatic shadow patterns. The red flame enhances and flatters people's appearances, and makes most foods appear more appetizing.

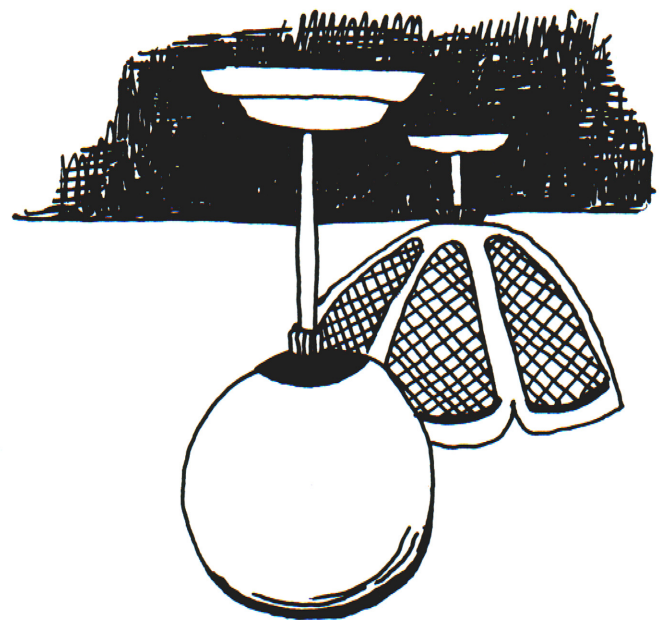
Incandescent lights, the typical household bulb, also emphasize the color of red. They are available in a wide range of sizes, shapes, colors, and intensities. Frosted bulbs are usually preferred over clear bulbs since they diffuse the light and soften harsh shadows. Incandescent

bulbs are available as spotlights, floodlights, and reflector-type bulbs.

Fluorescent Light

Modern fluorescent lighting is very economical to operate and similar to incandescent lighting. Fluorescent light is often combined with incandescent light to provide a variety of lighting textures and intensities. The average life of a fluorescent tube is about 5,000 hours. They give approximately three times as much light as tungsten or filament bulbs of the same wattage. Fluorescent fixtures do require a higher initial investment, but they are more economical when a high level of lighting is needed.

Fluorescent lamps come in a variety of lengths, intensities, and colors. Fluorescent lamps described as "warm", such as GE's White Deluxe, emphasize the colors yellow, orange, red, and red-purple. They produce a warm atmosphere similar to incandescent lighting and are generally recommended for use in restaurants. Lamps designated as "cool", such as Cool White Deluxe, emphasize blue-greens, blue-purples, and yellow-greens. Cool designated lamps enhance all colors and produce a cool atmosphere similar to midafternoon daylight.



The interior lighting scheme has a dramatic effect on the atmosphere and mood of the restaurant.

Types of Lighting

There are four main types of artificial lighting: uplights, downlights, spots, and floods. Uplights shine upward casting pools of light on the surface above them. The pattern of light emitted depends upon the types of bulb (spot, flood, or ordinary bulb) used inside. A spot bulb will give off a rather small but intense beam of light which can be used to illuminate a picture, a plant, or wall decoration. A wider but less intense cone-shaped light will be given off by a floodlight. An ordinary bulb provides soft illumination.

Uplights, when placed on the floor, behind plants, and in corners, add to the atmosphere by creating dramatic shadows and mood. They also add beauty to the room by reflecting light off the ceiling and into the room. Reflected light from uplights is soft, without glare.

Downlights are positioned to cast a circle of light on the floor, table, or any surface below, and can be recessed into the ceiling, ceiling mounted, or hidden behind ceiling beams or dividers. They can be used for wallwashing or pinpointing a specific object. By angling wallwashers close to a wall of paintings, they can create contrasting shadows and a rich, intimate atmosphere. They can also highlight an entrance area, cashier's station, individual dining room tables, flower arrangements, or the salad bar. Ceiling mounted downlights give good over-all light, but the light looks flat unless used with other lighting. Downlights should be antiglare and positioned so customers are not looking directly into them.

Spotlights are used as accent lighting—often as downlights—and provide an intense, direct light. Rheostats or dimmers should be used to control their intensity.

Light fixtures are available in a variety of shapes, sizes, colors, and materials. Some types are better for certain purposes than others.

Lighting is usually the least planned element of the atmosphere, but probably has the greatest impact on it. Fixtures should not be purchased solely on the basis of their shape and looks. It is the effect that the lighting will achieve that is important. Lights should be placed above or below eye level so as not to shine in the customers' eyes. Wall mounted fixtures are best used as directional lights bouncing off the ceiling or wall.

Make a room more dramatic and interesting at night with shadows, by contrasting areas of strong light with areas of dark shadows. Also, use pools of light around tables and serving areas, and a minimum amount of light in areas where it is not needed. However, to avoid glare, make sure that lighting is not much brighter than its backgrounds.

Light can add to the atmosphere by showing off an area, a texture, or an object. A light washing a wall can make a small space appear larger. High ceilings will ap-

pear to be lower by hanging fixtures and keeping the ceiling dimly lit, and low ceilings will appear to be higher if well lit. The texture of a wall covering can be accentuated by positioning a ceiling-mounted downlight close to the wall. A spot shining directly on a textured wall covering will flatten its appearance.

Light can affect a customer's appearance. A light source at or slightly above eye level is most complimentary to the face. Strong overhead lights at sharp angles can accentuate skin wrinkles and deep shadows around the eyes. Table lamps and candles provide a complementary light source if glare is prevented.

Use dim lighting properly. A dimly lit dining area gives warmth and intimacy and at the same time conceals architectural defects. But too little light has a detrimental effect on the atmosphere. Customers may not see properly, or service personnel efficiently perform their jobs. Concentrate light around the seating areas and staff work areas. Downplay most other areas.

Climate Control

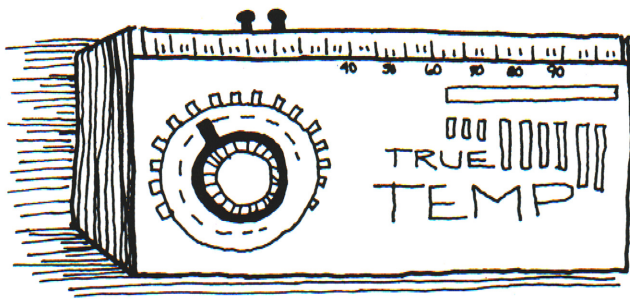
Temperature and humidity are important elements of atmosphere. People are sensitive to changes in both. Conditions that are too hot, too cold, too humid, too drafty, or too stuffy can ruin an otherwise carefully designed atmosphere.

People respond to climate conditions differently. The ideal dining room temperature is between 70 and 75 degrees Fahrenheit with a relative humidity of around 50 percent. The temperature in the dining room should be adjusted to suit the clientele. Women generally prefer warmer temperatures than do men. Children feel comfortable in lower temperatures than do adults. People in physically active occupations prefer lower temperatures than people with desk jobs. The clientele of higher-priced restaurants are generally accustomed to slightly higher temperatures. However, before setting dining room temperatures check federal energy conservation regulations. They may stipulate minimum and maximum temperature settings.

Dining room temperature can also influence the speed at which people eat. Fast food restaurants usually keep their eating areas at a lower temperature to discourage leisurely eating and encourage fast turnover.

Weather influences acceptable room temperature. On rainy days, a warmer inside temperature is needed than on sunny days. During the summer months when light, cool clothing is worn, people prefer a slightly higher room temperature than in the winter when warmer clothing is worn.

Brightness of the lighting can give an impression of heat. The brighter the lighting, the warmer the room appears. To conserve energy, increase the lighting intensity in winter months (while room temperature is



The temperature in the dining room should be adjusted to suit the clientele.

decreased), and decrease in the summer months (while room temperature is allowed to rise).

Color also gives an illusion of temperature. As will be discussed in the next section, blue, green, and violet make a room feel cooler than it actually is, while red, yellow, and orange impart a feeling of warmth.

The best way to test the temperature of a room is to sit in it. If the room feels comfortable, the thermostat setting is correct. If the furnace blows alternately hot and then cold air directly on people, they will always be uncomfortable. Finally, eliminate all drafts.

Large windows can also be a source of discomfort. In the winter, warm air should be blown on the inside of large windows to prevent a cold spot. In the summer the sun shining in a window can quickly raise the surrounding air to an uncomfortably high temperature. Curtains or window shades can help prevent heat build-up.

To check for proper temperature control, watch customer reactions. If people are putting on coats and sweaters, turn up the heat. If people are fanning themselves, turn down the heat. When customers complain, do something, or business will go elsewhere!

Color

Color is a significant contributor to people's impression of their dining experience. The color of the ceiling, walls, floor covering, tables, chairs, tablecloths, dishes, wall ornaments, and table decorations are often chosen without considering their effect on the atmosphere. Dining room color combinations can make people hungry, depressed, happy, agitated, eat fast, or eat leisurely. Changing the color scheme of a dining room can noticeably increase (or decrease) business.

Color can be used to change the shape and add interest to dull rooms. It can direct attention toward a specific object or away from problem areas. The following chart outlines people's usual responses to colors.

Color	Emotional Response
Blue	— A cool color (makes room seem cooler). Calms and relaxes excited people. Makes time seem to pass quickly. Tends to stimulate thought processes and encourage conversation.
Green	— Easy on the eyes. A cool color. Restful and tranquil. Stimulates conversations. Makes time seem to pass quickly.
Red	— Excites. Stimulates. Induces aggression. Makes time seem to pass more slowly.
Yellow	— Cheerful. Feeling of warmth. Happy. Draws attention. Boosts morale.
Orange	— Friendly, warm and vibrant. Exhilarating.
Violet & Purple	— Cool. Tends to lend elegance and sophistication. Royal.
Brown	— Relaxing. Warm.
Gray	— Depressing. Cool.

Warm colors, red, yellow, orange, and colors with red or yellow hues such as yellow-green, beige, peach, brown, and orange-red are stimulating and cheery. They make a room feel warm and intimate. Warm colors make a room seem smaller while making objects in the room appear bigger. A warm color on the end walls of a long narrow room will appear to shorten the room.

Blue, green, violet, and colors containing blue, such as blue-green, and violet-blue are cool colors. Using these colors helps to create a relaxing atmosphere. Rooms decorated primarily in cool colors tend to appear larger and more spacious. Cool colors are especially pleasing in smaller rooms.

A color wheel is a handy tool to use in developing a color scheme for your dining area. The color wheel consists of twelve colors as shown on the back page of this bulletin.

By choosing different combinations from the color wheel, several color schemes or harmonies are possible. Some common color harmonies are listed below. However, there are no absolute rules for choosing and combining colors, only flexible guidelines. Imagination and experimentation will find color schemes that will lend to the atmosphere and attract customers.

Monochromatic color—A single color on the color wheel. Various tints and shades of a single pure color are used. Can be monotonous and boring if used in a large room. Monotony can be reduced or eliminated by the use of varying textures and by accents using blacks and whites.

Example: Walls in light blue with dark blue tablecloths.

Complementary colors—Two opposite colors on the color wheel, such as green and red or yellow and violet. Results in a very pleasing com-

bination of warm and cool colors. Avoid using opposite colors in equal amounts of light and dark combinations, however.

Split complementary colors—Three colors forming a Y on the color wheel. Consists of a base color and one color on each side of the base color's complement (opposite color). A popular color scheme to create interest and richness.

Examples: Yellow, blue-violet, and red-violet.

Blue, yellow-orange, and red-orange.

Analogous colors—Any three or four consecutive colors on the color wheel. Can be used to create a soft and subtle decor and warm or cool effect. This color scheme needs to be used with caution so as not to end up with an overstimulating nor depressing atmosphere.

Example: Blue walls, blue-green carpeting, and green tablecloths.

Triad colors—Every fourth color on the wheel for a total of three colors. A good combination of colors that can create the muted, traditional look as well as more vibrant color characteristic of modern color schemes.

Example: Blue walls, red carpeting, and yellow tablecloths.

To develop a color scheme, the dominant color must be selected. Since a solid color in a room is monotonous, the second step is to decide what colors to put with the dominant color. To obtain a pleasing effect, use an uneven balance between warm and cool colors.

Colors must be considered in view of their surroundings. Color changes dramatically when viewed under different circumstances. A red chair will appear yellower when put next to a blue wall. Next to a green wall a red chair will look purer and brighter. Near a white wall it will be lighter and brighter and beside grey it will be brighter. A dark color placed near a lighter color will appear deeper while the light color will appear lighter yet. Colors are also radically altered by differences in pattern and texture.

Before buying any new fixture or wall covering, consider the type of lighting that it will appear under. Many colors take on different hues under different lighting. So, when you buy that tablecloth from the restaurant supply house, try and match the light and surroundings to that found in the restaurant.

Listed below are some important points to keep in mind when color coordinating a dining room:

1. Colors that tend to stimulate appetites are raspberry, yellow-green, peach, and brown.
2. Research has shown that white walls in dining

areas are psychologically negative and uninviting, but colored walls stimulate food sales.

3. A single solid color in a room is monotonous and boring.
4. Small color samples of paint, wallpaper, carpeting, etc. will appear brighter when applied in a large area.
5. Light colors make small areas look bigger.
6. Dark colors make large areas look smaller.
7. Dark colors make high ceilings look lower.
8. Glossy, highly reflective colors tire the eyes.
9. Use a mixture of warm and cool colors.
10. A warmer or deeper hue of color on the end walls of long narrow rooms will make them appear more square.
11. Black and white can be used to accent and add interest to almost any color.
12. The use of different textures adds interest to colors.
13. Colors change under different types and intensities of lighting. (Pink lights pale lipstick colors, green lights show up wrinkles, amber lights tend to wash out colors.)

Furnishings

Furnishings are extremely important to a restaurant and must satisfy many needs. Since they are the first things noticed by the customer upon entering the front door, they must reflect the desired theme and atmosphere. The customer also expects comfort, quality, and beauty in furnishings. At the same time, the restaurant owner wants furnishings that are durable, reflective of the restaurant's character and theme, low cost, and space-saving.

Tables and Chairs

The type of seating and the layout of the tables and chairs are just as important in creating the proper atmosphere as the softness of the seats.

Booth seating is popular with customers because it provides both privacy and intimacy. People do not like to be seated where they feel exposed to others, and booth seating provides a means of escape from this. Booths also protect customers from being in a traffic area and from being bumped by other customers and or employees. Booth seating also allows management to seat more people per square foot of dining area than does table service.

Tables usually have the advantage of being moveable. Tables for two or four can be connected to accommodate larger parties for greater flexibility and efficiency. In addition, tables are generally regarded as more formal and luxurious than booths.

Part of a customer's perception of the atmosphere is the way the chairs feel and the size and height of the tables. The most comfortable height for chair seats is 17 to 18 inches off the floor. Seat backs should extend to 34" for adequate back support. A seat depth of 16" is comfortable to most people. Chairs with arms add to customers' comfort and are more luxurious. The preferred table top height is 29 to 30 inches. The preferable width across a table is 2'6". Square 2'6" tables are suitable for two to four diners. A two foot square table will accommodate two diners.

Proper positioning of tables can mean more efficient use of dining room space. By positioning the tables in diagonal rather than square formation, more seating per square foot can be obtained. Aisles should be wide enough to permit easy movement of dining room staff and customers. A three-foot-wide service aisle is a minimum. Keep the distance between chairs at different tables at a minimum of three feet.

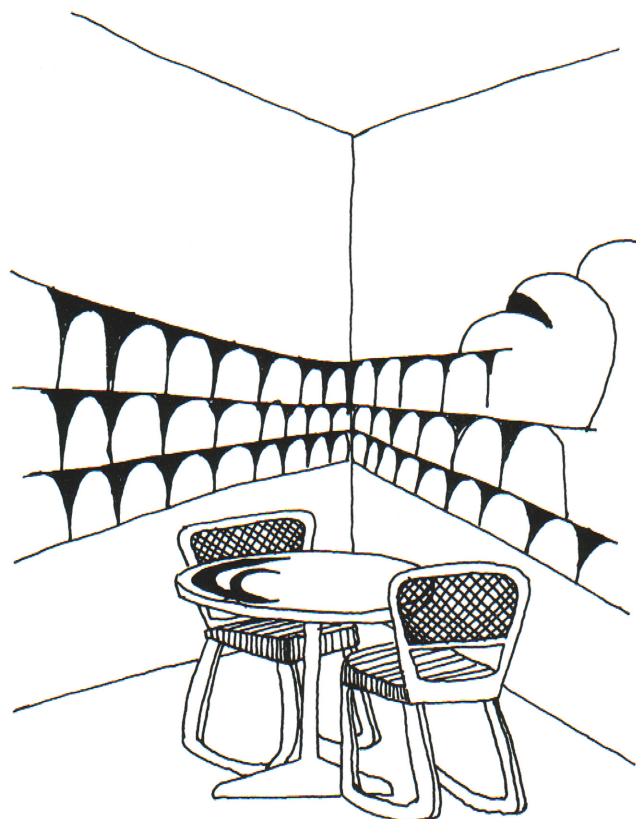
The amount of space needed varies with the operation. Restaurants with moveable tables and chairs should allow 11 to 18 square feet of dining area per diner. The space between tables should increase with the price of the meal and the amount of service. Dining areas arranged in booths should allow 8 to 11 square feet of dining area per customer. Counter service requires 15 to 20 square feet of area per seat.

Type of seating used depends upon your needs. Tables and booths that seat four people are the least efficient. Tables for two that can be connected to accommodate larger parties are the most efficient. Research has shown that 50 percent of the people come to eat in pairs, 30 percent of the customers are singles and parties of three, and 20 percent consist of parties of four or more. Tables can be made even more efficient by using portable, folding table tops that can stretch a table for two into one for three or four. In crowded conditions, single pedestal tables allow more efficient seating and easier cleanup.

Table Setting

Restaurant designers go to great lengths to make sure the walls, floor covering, color scheme, and decorations harmonize with the theme of the restaurant, but they neglect to consider the table accessories. The silverware, dishes, glasses, napkins, tablecloths, and salt and pepper shakers must also enhance the dining room atmosphere. An old fashioned silverware pattern would destroy the atmosphere created by modern decor. Every detail on the table must carry through the atmosphere and feeling of the restaurant.

Much that has been said about color coordination and its emotional response applies here. The silverware should feel and look right when held in the hand. Use variations in texture and colors complementary to food. For example, a smooth white china plate, textured



The type of seating and the layout of the tables and chairs are important in creating the proper atmosphere.

raspberry colored place mat, and soft green napkins provide the necessary contrast in texture and color to enhance the appearance of food.

Remember, while sitting at the table the customer comes into the closest contact with the feel of the atmosphere.

Curtains and Window Shades

Curtains are both functional and decorative. Originally curtains were used on cold walls and open doorways to conserve heat. Today curtains and window shades offer a sense of privacy and protection from the sun. Available in many textures, patterns, and colors, window treatments combine to give a feeling of warmth and coziness. They can blend with or contrast the architectural design of the restaurant and can relieve the monotony of the shape of the room.

Carefully coordinate the pattern, color, texture, and material of the curtains to complement the architectural style and theme of the restaurant. Fit large windows with insulating curtains to conserve heat in the winter and lower the cost of air conditioning in summer. Use curtains treated with a fire retardant.

Many restaurants today use decorative shades and blinds to control light and reinforce the atmosphere. Modern blinds and window shades are manufactured

using aluminum, wood, plastic, and cloth. They come in solids, prints, and decorative scenes. The color, style, and material of curtains and blinds must enhance the atmosphere, but not draw undue attention.

Plants and Flowers

Flowers and plants used as decoration in restaurants can add color and variation. Fresh-cut flower arrangements used to be commonly placed on tables as decoration. They are seldom used now, but can bring a personal touch of freshness if the flowers are simply arranged and regularly replaced before wilting.

Large potted plants are becoming increasingly popular both as decoration and as a screen to divide a room into smaller, intimate areas. They also absorb sound to quiet a noisy room. Many larger cities have florist shops that rent potted plants. This avoids the initial expense of purchasing them and also allows the restaurant to exchange their plants every few months for new ones.

Plants and flowers can be used as an intricate part of the restaurant's theme. By careful selection and arrangement, flowers can blend into the decor and add to the total feeling of the room without becoming the center of interest. The most tasteful arrangements use only two or three bold colors and either blend or contrast them with the color scheme of the room.



Potted plants add color, provide privacy, and absorb sound.

Wall Accessories

Pictures, prints, photographs, sculpture, mirrors, clocks, antiques, and other accessories can contribute and enhance the overall atmosphere of a restaurant. When acquiring accessories, the shape of the accessory, in relation to the wall or area in which they will be displayed, must be considered. A cluster of small accessories would be more favorable on a small wall than one or two large decorative pieces.

The architectural style of the restaurant will determine the type and style of the accessories needed. A Colonial style restaurant might use a tall case clock, pewter lamps, candlesticks, pictures and maps of Colonial times, and lanterns. The accessories should not call attention to themselves, but relate and contribute to the general theme of the restaurant. They can successfully add to the general atmosphere if they contain the color, pattern, and subject of the total design scheme.

The number of accessories to use depends on the type of atmosphere desired. In a formal, leisure dining area limit the use of accessories to avoid a cluttered and hurried look. A tavern or restaurant specializing in a brisk soup and sandwich trade might benefit by using a large number of accessories to create a warm, lively atmosphere. To reduce theft, securely bolt down all pictures and decor items.

The key point is that the accessories and the room must complement each other. The suitability of accessories depends upon their color, style, subject, and placement in relation to the color scheme, shape, and theme of the restaurant.

Walls

The walls and what is put on them are often ignored by the restaurant operator. But a little thought and imagination in the treatment of the dining room walls can greatly enhance the atmosphere. There are many types of wall coverings, including: paint, wood paneling, wallpaper, fabric, stone, mirrors, tile, rough boards, brick—almost any material imaginable.

Paint

Painting is the cheapest way to decorate walls, but the surface must be in good condition before painting. Cracks and imperfections will easily show through the paint.

Hundreds of paints are available that will produce a variety of textures and finishes in an almost unlimited array of colors. Enamel produces a smooth, durable surface and is available in flat, semigloss, and high gloss sheens. Because semigloss and high gloss enamel are highly light reflective, flat enamel is preferred on most wall surfaces. Semigloss and high gloss can be used on trim.

When painting, several different wall finishes are available. Strippling, for instance, produces a rough textured surface and is ideal for large wall areas. It hides brush marks and adds interest and depth. A coarse textured wall surface is produced by a technique known as combing. A steel or rubber comb can combine different colors on a wall or produce intricate patterns. Another finishing technique is scumbling. A base color of paint is applied to a surface. A heavier and more opaque second color, called the scumble color, is applied over the base color. By brushing or wiping off parts of the scumble color, the base color is allowed to show through. This produces a variation in color and a unique design.

When selecting the paint, take into consideration its washability, covering quality, and length of wear. Oftentimes the more expensive paint covers better and wears longer than the budget priced paints.

Wallpaper

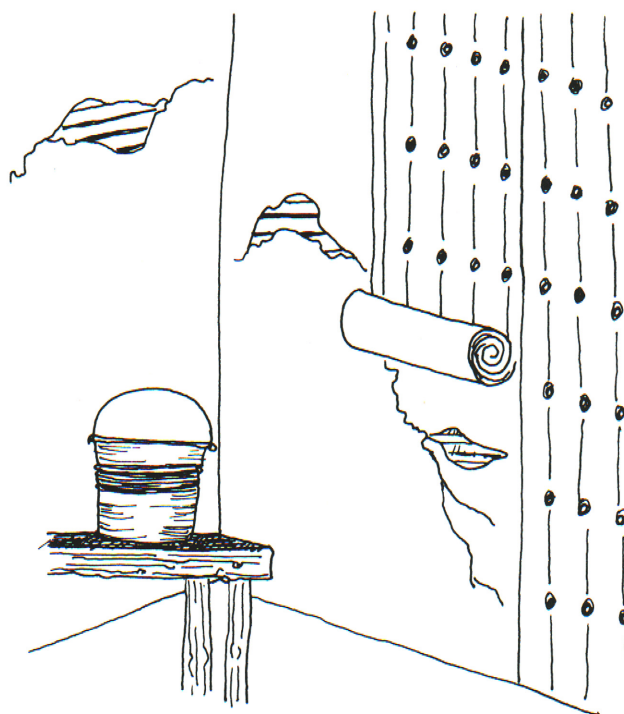
Wallpaper and wall coverings are great mood setters. They can liven up a room and change its proportions. They are also a good way to cover rough, cracked walls. Wallpaper and wall coverings can also unify the theme of the restaurant.

Wallpaper comes in roller-printed, hand-blocked designs, and scenic patterns. The more expensive hand-blocked process produces more brilliant colors and subtler shadows than the roller-printer paper. Machine roller-printed paper is more widely available and comes in a greater variety of colors and designs than does hand-blocked paper. Scenic wallpaper is used to create large wall murals which can enlarge a space or draw attention to it. These are quite effective in creating a mood and emphasizing the theme of a restaurant. Each wallpaper pattern is usually available in a number of color schemes.

Some types of wallpapers are more appropriate than others. Large rooms appear at their best when using wallpaper with large patterns. Small patterns should be used in small rooms.

The pattern and color of wallpaper can give a room a feeling of movement. A heavily patterned wallpaper will cause the room to feel busy. The furnishings, therefore, should be kept plain and quiet to complement the busy wallpaper. A room with heavily patterned wallpaper will appear more crowded and less intimate than one with solid color walls. For this reason often only one wall is papered while the remaining walls are painted.

To ensure a smooth surface, remove all of the old paper before applying the new. A lining paper should be used on rough, badly damaged walls to provide a smooth surface for the decorative wallpaper.



Thought and imagination in the treatment of the dining room walls can greatly enhance the atmosphere.

There are several types of vinyl wall coverings on the market that are ideally suited for restaurant use. They are tough, waterproof, and can be repeatedly scrubbed clean.

Also popular is foil, silver, and copper Mylar wallpaper in plain or with an over-printed design. It is shiny and reflective and adds an illusion of spaciousness to a room.

Grasscloth, made from the honeysuckle vine, is available in a wide range of colors, textures, and patterns. Due to the manufacturing process, there are great variations in color and texture in a roll, and from roll to roll. The variations in color and pattern do create a unique and beautiful effect, although matching the pattern of one roll with that of the next is almost impossible.

Wall Coverings

Almost any fabric can be used as a wall covering. Fabrics from cotton to velvet to suede to felt can add charm and an expression of the restaurant's theme. Carpeting can continue part of the way up a wall and add a feeling of comfort as well as a measure of sound proofing.

Wood is an extremely versatile and varied wall covering material. The inherent beauty of wood creates a luxurious, warm atmosphere that is difficult to match. Ac-

cording to the species chosen, wood comes in a wide range of colors. The grain of the wood also varies greatly with species and the way it is cut from the log. Tongue and groove boarding, weathered barn siding, and rough hewn lumber can be used vertically, horizontally, or diagonally to help create a memorable atmosphere.

Tile, cork, terrazzo, draperies, brick, stone, and plaster are other wall coverings that can change the feeling of a room and set the desired atmosphere.

Architectural blunders, such as exposed pipes and off-center windows, can either be disguised or accentuated. Architectural eyesores can be diminished by painting everything in the area a dark color. This tends to blend everything together and makes design errors less noticeable.

On the other hand, if you can't hide it, bring it out. A wall with a confusion of pipes can be made interesting by calling attention to them. By painting the pipes a contrasting color, attention is centered on them and they become interesting.

Ceilings

Historically ceilings were very ornately decorated with intricate patterns and designs. Today ceilings are often neglected, large blank surfaces. However, much can be done with ceilings to complement the theme and decor of a restaurant. The previous discussion on wall treatments equally applies to ceilings.

Ceilings can be covered with wallpaper, fabric, acoustical tiles, light decorative tiles, ceiling planks,

beams, tongue and groove boarding, and weathered barn siding. Exposed beams placed on a ceiling can break up the ceiling area and provide for a more intimate feeling. Beams will also provide for a quieter dining area by breaking up the sound waves. Exposed joists can be stained, bleached, or waxed to add individual charm to the room. The ceiling can be raised, lowered, louvered, rounded and curved to produce different ceiling levels. This will add interest and help produce that distinctively different dining experience people desire. If heating and air conditioning ducts, wiring, and plumbing are a problem, the ceiling can be lowered with a suspended grid system to conceal them.

Create interest in the ceiling by painting patterns, ovals, and other shapes on it. An especially effective technique is to repeat the floor pattern on the ceiling. A simplified version of the carpet design can be painted on the ceiling. This has a unifying effect and strengthens the atmosphere.

Do not paint acoustic tile. Painting destroys its sound deadening capabilities. If ceiling tiles become stained and dirty, replace them.

Floors

Floors anchor a decorating scheme and pull it all together. Everyone entering a restaurant has direct contact with the floor. Customers consciously look at the floor to see how clean it is. They also consciously or unconsciously equate the feel of the floor underfoot with the atmosphere and dining experience.

The color, texture, material, and design of the flooring must complement the total atmosphere of the restaurant. It must blend in with and add to the theme of the restaurant without calling attention to itself. In choosing a floor covering, give consideration to qualities such as ease of cleaning, estimated life, stain resistance, durability, and sound absorbing characteristics.

Carpeting

Carpeting is widely used today in all types of restaurants. The addition of carpeting tends to upgrade a restaurant and attract a higher income clientele. It adds warmth and a sense of luxury as well as deadening sound. The color, style, texture, and pattern should relate well with the total atmosphere.

Carpeting is commonly manufactured in three methods: woven, knitted, and tufted. On woven carpets the surface pile and backing are interwoven at the same time. This, in effect, creates a single fabric. Due to this interweaving process, the pile yarns will not pull out. On tufted carpeting the tufts are not interwoven onto the backing, but held in place by a coating of latex applied to the backing. Tufted carpeting is available in a wide variety of textures. Knitted carpeting loops together the pile yarn, backing yarn, and stitching yarn



The color, texture, material, and design of the floor covering must complement the total atmosphere of the restaurant.

in one process. The backing is coated with latex to prevent pulls and snags. Knitted carpets are usually solid colors or tweeds.

The color of the carpeting must be selected very carefully. Wall-to-wall carpeting will bring a great deal of color to a room and dramatically alter the room's appearance. Carpeting will usually have a more comfortable feeling if it is of a darker color than the surrounding walls. Generally speaking, the color of the carpet and walls should be from the same color family. Contrasting the carpet and wall colors usually produces too sharp an effect.

Expense should not be compromised when it comes to buying carpeting. The best quality carpeting is a better value in wearability, sound and heat insulation, and direct absorption.

Tiling

Vinyl floor tiling is available in a myriad of styles, sizes, shapes, designs, and colors, and comes in the form of sheet vinyl, vinyl asbestos tile, and vinyl tile. Advantages of resilient tiles are its durability, economy, ease of installation, and simple maintenance.

Glazed and unglazed ceramic tiles can also be used to provide a permanent, natural surface. Many fast-food hamburger chains use ceramic tile flooring because of their easy maintenance and extreme durability. They are ideal where a busy, fast-paced atmosphere is desired. The noise from walking on ceramic tile creates an exciting atmosphere. The disadvantages of ceramic tile are its initial cost and the commitment to one type of flooring for the life of the building.

Terrazzo

Terrazzo is a flooring material made from chips of marble, onyx, or other rock embedded in cement or certain chemical compounds. It is usually poured in place and ground and polished to a uniformly textured surface.

A terrazzo floor is extremely durable and permanent. It requires very little maintenance. Terrazzo is ideal for heavy traffic areas and where customer turnover is high. Many fast-food restaurants have terrazzo floors.

Wood Flooring

The natural beauty of wood flooring offers many variations in color and pattern. Although wooden flooring requires more maintenance and is noisier than other types of floor coverings, its beauty can be a major contributor to developing the atmosphere.

Wood flooring is available in four forms: strip, plank, parquet, and fabricated wood blocks. Oak, walnut, beech, birch, maple, and teak are commonly used as flooring. Colors range from pale gold, through the browns, to nearly black. Combining light and dark colored woods can add interest and be very attractive.

Flooring can be purchased in strips from 1½ to 2¼ inches wide. Plank flooring comes in varying widths from 3 to 8 inches wide. Parquet flooring combines pieces of different sizes of wood. Wood blocks vary in size from 6 11/32 inches square to 19 inches square. Rectangles are also manufactured. Wood blocks are available in patterns such as herringbone, basketweave, small squares, and parallel strips.

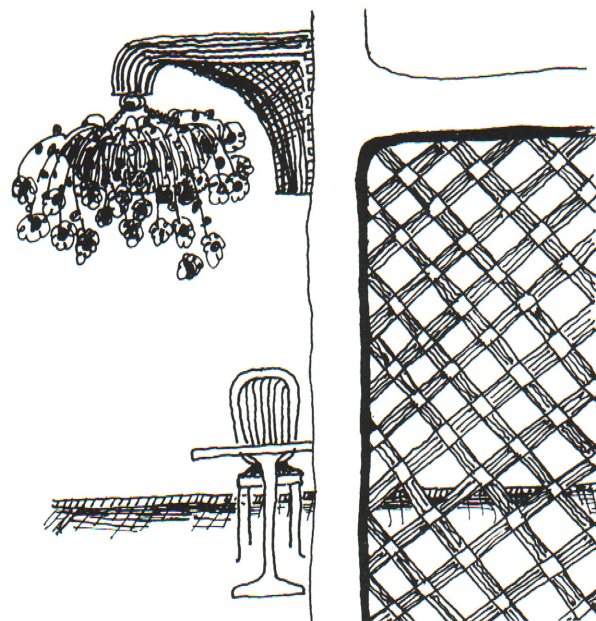
Wood flooring can be finished in different ways. They can be stained, bleached, streaked, varnished, waxed, or painted. The grain can be emphasized or hidden. By varying the finish given to the wood, the appearance and texture can be changed to suit the environment and design scheme.

Brick, Slate, Stone

The durability of brick, slate, and stone makes their use as flooring well suited for high traffic areas such as entrance ways. The charm of such flooring materials can add measurably to the atmosphere. As in tiling and terrazzo flooring, customers' footsteps will be more noticeable than on carpeting. Also the permanence and initial high cost must be considered.

Size and Shape of Rooms

Modern dining rooms must be comfortable and provide a measure of privacy for individual tables. The use of high-backed booths, different floor levels, lighting, acoustics, and color can create the impression of privacy.



Rooms can be divided to provide a sense of privacy by using screens, broadleaved plants, and different floor levels.

Most older restaurants have a single, large, open dining area. People seek privacy in these dining rooms by sitting in corners and along walls. The more vulnerable seating areas usually fill up last. By dividing the large dining room into smaller dining areas, customers can enjoy a greater sense of dining pleasure.

Large dining rooms can be broken up by changing the levels of the floor. Platforms and lowered areas can create a series of smaller dining areas, adding to the sense of privacy. Seating capacity sometimes can even be increased by having multiple floor levels. Tables can be closer together, yet because of the different levels, not appear crowded.

Mirrors can be used to widen a long narrow room and eliminate the feeling that people are eating in a hall.

Rooms can be divided to provide a sense of privacy by using screens, either free-standing, fixed, solid, or see-through. Ordinary wooden garden lattice makes an inexpensive but effective room divider. Portable, sliding or folding screens can be used to divide off rooms. Screens can be covered with wallpaper to adapt to the setting of the room. Broad-leaved plants, either hanging or in stand-up boxes, act as good room dividers. Effective room dividers can also be made using decorative beads of wood, cork, glass, or plastic. The beads can be hung from curtain rods, slit rods, fabric-covered dowels, screw eyes, or moldings. The material used to break up a large dining room should blend in with the atmosphere and theme of the restaurant.

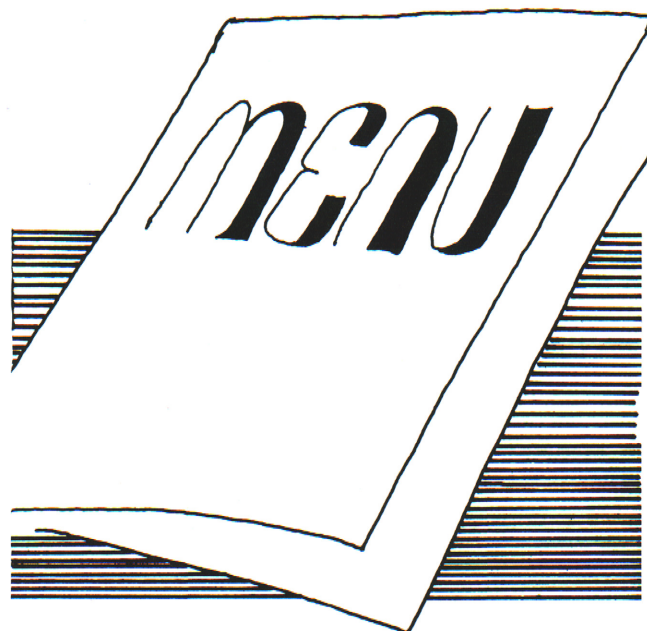
Texture and Pattern

Textures create their own images. It is necessary when designing an atmosphere to consider not only the color of walls, flooring, and furnishings, but also the texture and pattern. Walls covered in burlap, wood, plaster, stone, and foil paper all present different images. The texture must be carefully chosen to complement the atmosphere of the restaurant. Try to imagine how different textures look on floors, walls, ceiling, and furnishings. Contrasting textures go well together. Rough goes well with smooth and matte goes well with glossy. Rough brick walls contrast well with a smooth tweed or a burlap fabric.

If used correctly, a pattern can give added depth and space to a room. Large patterns are acceptable when used in large rooms. Small patterns should be used in smaller rooms. The same patterns in two different colors look good together. Using a very similar pattern in the same color can also be effective. For example, both the curtains and carpet may be in the same shade of brown, but the pattern on the curtains is slightly different than the pattern on the carpet.

Cleanliness

The best food and a well thought out restaurant design cannot make up for lack of cleanliness. A



Menus should be simple and easy to read. They should set the feeling of the restaurant.

favorable atmosphere is quickly destroyed by trash in the parking lot, a dirty floor, dirty silverware, spotty glasses, greasy windows, and soiled menus.

Menu

The menu cover and contents should reflect the design and style of the restaurant. The design of the menu, its details, the style of type used, and the impression it creates all set the atmosphere. A small, simple menu in a color that harmonizes with the decor is desirable. It should set the feeling of the restaurant. Novel, gimmicky menus may attract attention, but the repeated use of awkward, hard to read menus becomes objectionable.

People respond to the color of a menu and appreciate its shape and "feel." Customers are not impressed by dirty, dog-eared menus stuck together with adhesive tape.

Menus should be simple and easy to read. They should carefully describe the food served. A short but descriptive statement about major items served can stimulate the appetite and measurably increase the guest check. A dull menu is a blot upon the atmosphere.

Acoustics

The sounds of a restaurant are part of its atmosphere. Kitchen noises, voices, traffic noises, and dish bussing all add to the atmosphere.

Noise in a dining area is not always undesirable. People who work in quiet places, or are lonely, may seek out noisy restaurants. Business people will sometimes seek a noisy restaurant to conduct business so they will not be overheard. A noisy surrounding can create a special atmosphere which sets people at ease and

stimulates people and makes them eat faster. However, before changing the sound patterns of your restaurant know your customers' needs.

Reducing the noise level is the first step toward dampening down a restaurant's atmosphere to give it intimacy and luxury. Sound proofing between the kitchen and dining room is a must. Dishwashing operations generate much of the noise coming from the kitchen. Partitions separating preparation areas help to deaden the sound. Low ceilings help reduce sound reverberation, but tend to cause lighting and ventilation problems.

A good sound absorbing material used on kitchen ceilings and the upper part of the walls will reduce kitchen noises. Sound waves are absorbed most by any porous surface. Regardless of the material used to cover kitchen ceilings and walls, these surfaces must be easily cleaned.

Acoustic tile is sometimes used to deaden sound in restaurants. It effectively controls sound, but has the disadvantage of not being easy to clean. Painting acoustic tile destroys its sound dampening capabilities.

Carpeting, when used with a sponge rubber pad, reduces noise levels and adds to comfort when standing. Dining room carpeting must be of a commercial grade. The Michigan Health Department does not allow carpeting in food preparation areas, storerooms, wash rooms, or dishwashing areas.

Music

Music can help set the atmosphere in a restaurant. Background music has a strong and direct effect on people's moods. The correct type of background music puts customers in a good mood and helps make the staff more relaxed and efficient. Background music helps to warm up the atmosphere before a dining room fills up with the noise of people. Music should be unobtrusive and never compete with conversations, and felt, but not listened to. Background music should be drowned out by people talking when the dining room fills up.

Background music is available from many sources, such as a designated phone line or leased subcarrier signal system. Playing tapes, records, or using the radio as a source of music for customers is illegal unless royalties are paid. The type of music depends on the mood to be created. A restaurant catering to teenagers would select top ten music while a luxury restaurant would want soft, romantic background music.

The time of day also determines the style of background music to be played. The breakfast crowd likes bright, wake-up music; at lunch the pace of the music needs to slow down; in the afternoon the music again needs a bit more lift; relaxed and discreet cocktail music is played after five o'clock to provide a good background for conversation; dinner music rounds out the evening.

Human Factors

Architecture and decor are only part of the elements making a successful restaurant atmosphere. A warm, friendly atmosphere calls for warm, friendly service. It is the contacts with the waitress, hostess, busboy, manager and cashier that can make a restaurant look great under any conditions.

Restaurants are in the people business. Its atmosphere is a human atmosphere. Customers are more influenced by people, their personalities and moods, than by anything else in the restaurant. Customers are looking for more than just someone who puts food in front of them. They want personal and enthusiastic service.

A restaurant is similar to a theatre. The decor is the stage setting, the service personnel are the actors and actresses, and the guests the audience. The more like the theatre the dining room appears, the more intrigued the customer will be. The customers want personal attention, and want to feel the play (dining experience) is for their exclusive benefit.

The age and sex of customers contributes to the atmosphere. People like to be served by people their own age. A young clientele would prefer to be served by a

young waitress; a senior citizen oriented restaurant would be wise to employ older service personnel. A restaurant with predominantly male customers would be advised to employ mostly female service personnel. Likewise, female customers usually prefer male service personnel.

The dress and appearance of customers and staff are also important elements of atmosphere. Luxury restaurants may require customers to conform to a "coat and tie" dress code. This maintains a high quality of visual appearance and formality to the atmosphere.

The dress of the staff can lend interest and color to the theme of the restaurant. Ethnic, historic, and other theme restaurants can greatly strengthen the atmosphere by dressing service personnel in appropriate costumes. Informal family restaurant staff should be dressed in the same type of uniform to add a sense of orderliness to the atmosphere. Carefully choose style, design, and color of uniforms to coordinate with the decor. The uniforms should complement the wearer and make the staff feel comfortable and able to carry out their duties.

Summary

A dining experience involves atmosphere. It is much more than putting some pictures on the wall and using colorful placemats. Atmosphere starts with the neighborhood in which the restaurant is located and includes the exterior style of the building, the landscaping, entry way, interior design, furnishings, table settings, uniforms of service personnel—every detail of the restaurant.

The importance of atmosphere can be summarized as follows:

—A restaurant with a well-designed atmosphere can

serve mediocre food and succeed.

—A restaurant with a poorly-designed atmosphere serving mediocre food will fail.

—A restaurant with a poorly-designed atmosphere serving excellent food will succeed only if the manager can project personality.

Remember, before undertaking any decor change or remodeling, check with your local health department, fire marshall, units of government, and the Michigan Liquor Control Commission for the current safety, sanitation, and building code regulations.

Bibliography

Atkin, William and Joan Adler. (1960). *Interiors Book of Restaurants*. Whitney Library of Design, N.Y.

Backus, Harry. (1977). *Designing Restaurant Interiors: A Guide for Food Service Operators*. Chain Store Publishing Corp., N.Y.

Campbell-Smith, Graham. (May 1970). "Marketing the Meal Experience". *The Cornell H.R.A. Quarterly*. Pgs. 73-102.

Gilliatt, Mary. (1977). *Decorating: A Realistic Guide*. Pantheon Books, N.Y.

Halse, Albert O. (1978). *The Use of Color Interiors*. 2nd edition. McGraw-Hill.

Hurse, Michael E. (May 1970). "You Sell More Than Food". *The Cornell H.R.A. Quarterly*. Pgs. 103-122.

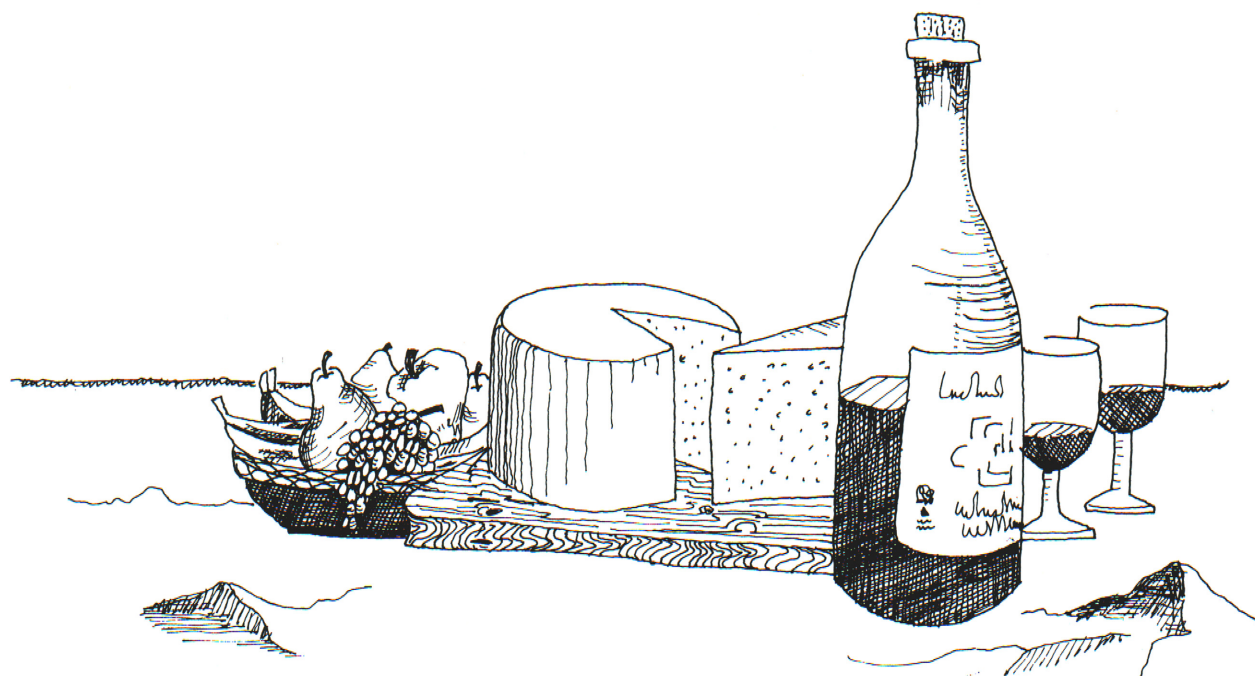
Ireland, Richard C. (1974). *Selling In the Restaurant*. Hospitality Institute, Littleton, Colorado.

Kahrl, William L. (1973). *Planning and Operating A Successful Food Service Operation*. Chain Store Age Books (Lebhar-Friedman, Inc.), N.Y.

Lawson, Fred. (1974). *Designing Commercial Food Service Facilities*. Whitney Library of Design, N.Y.

Motto, Marilyn. (May 1970). "Profit By Design". *The Cornell H.R.A. Quarterly*. Pgs. 113-116.

Newell, Malcolm. (1965). *Mood and Atmosphere In Restaurants*. Barrie and Rockliff, London.



Illustrated by Gail St. Germain



COLOR WHEEL

A color wheel is a handy tool to use in developing a color scheme. Choose different combinations of color to find a color scheme that will lend to the atmosphere and attract customers.