

Boutique hotels embrace local vibes to find F&B success

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Upscale hotel food and beverage outlets face the challenge of bringing guests an exceptional and unique dining experience, while often competing with local restaurants that do not also have to run a hotel. Creating restaurants with a unique appeal is a must for hotel F&B programs to be profitable and not drag down hotel profits, industry insiders say.

Hospitality Ventures Management Group is able to generate about 20% percent of revenues from F&B outlets by creating unique experiences prized by guests and locals alike. HVMG hones in on each individual market where it operates to create successful dining venues.

“Build for locals, and hotel guests will love feeling like one while they stay in your hotel,” Garron Gore, corporate director, food and beverage innovation at HVMG tells SmartBrief. “In Denver, we are not going to open a place serving 60 gins because it is lost in the community. No, we open a place like Hearth & Dram attached to the Hotel Indigo Downtown Denver, housing 465 selections of whiskey.”

Whether in the US or abroad, hotel F&B programs draw from the local community to enhance the dining experience.

Authentic Restaurant in De.Light Boutique Hotel in Mykonos, Greece, “serves up local dishes that are inspired by a combination of Ancient Greek gastronomic experience and Greek hospitality,” writes reviewer Kerry Kolasa-Sikiaridi in this Greek Reporter article.

Atlanta-based HVMG recently announced the opening of the **163-key Plunge Beach Hotel in Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, Fla., the company's fourth recent hotel opening. The property has several custom foodservice outlets: Backflip Beach Bar, Octopus Lobby Gastropub and the Barnacle and Bean Coffee Shop.**

“Boutique hotels think about what kind of story the restaurant and bar are trying to tell, and how it ties into the local community,” Gore said of HVMG’s approach. “Does the F&B outlet have a voice? Does it have a brand? Typically, more outlets and more dollars are used and spent in boutique hotels. While it becomes an F&B wonderland for hotel guests, when done properly, it will hold equal appeal for locals.”

At the 40-key Lora Hotel in Stallwater, Minn., the Feller restaurant has capacity for 130 diners inside and on its patio in addition to a semi-private dining area with room for 40. Chef Sam Collins, executive chef and culinary director of Elevage, says Feller sources locally and features a “hunter- and gatherer-inspired menu,” according to the this Pioneer Press article.

“The menu is my take on what the founders of Stillwater would have eaten, mixed with a bit of my own family traditions and recipes,” Collins said. “Everything will be local and fresh and should feel familiar to Midwest diners.”

HVMG’s Gore points out that today’s hotel F&B outlets are well-served by setting the stage for Instagram-able moments that guests can create.

“I see menus and chefs becoming smarter and realizing they do not have to cater to everyone, and smaller menus are ok as long as they are executed properly,” he said. “Focused concepts transport guests away from their everyday lives, even if only for a second while having that perfect Mai Tai.”