

FALL 2023

# catersource®

## *From Field* TO FORK



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EDUCATION, NEWS, PRODUCTS & IDEAS FOR PROFESSIONAL CATERERS



# The Fall Issue

**L**ong ago, when magazines were almost always paper, the Fall issue was the most anticipated. It heralded the trends of the coming year; it was the thickest of books. I recall editing magazines that were literally 25 signatures—or, for you non-editors out

there—400 pages. But even more than that, at least for the editors-in-chief, those Fall issues that hit a particular rhythm in which all parts fit together, in which one article fed the next—that was the crowning achievement of magazines so to speak, as close to editing a non-fiction book as one can come. It doesn't happen often.

But today, I write this column in celebration of our senior writer, Amber Kispert, who freaking nailed it with the 2023 Fall issue of *Catersource* magazine. Amber started her work at *Catersource* a week or so before the pandemic began, learning her job the hard way: I've never had to train an employee on screen before. Learning typically comes via looking at red pen mark-ups on pages and over-the-shoulder collaboration. I won't say it was easy for either of us. This is—give or take—the 14th issue she has worked on, and by far the best.

But enough of the singular kudos, we had plenty of help on this issue via our regular columnists, as well as our spectacular art director, Sharon Carlson, who takes our words and photos to new levels of readable beauty.

I'd like to direct you to our three features, all written by Amber, which cover everything from self-sourcing of food (page 72) to live-fire cooking (page 18) to technology (page 42).

Moving into our departments, look to Anthony Lambatos to further the conversation about digital transformation and technology (page 40), to Robin Selden to discuss the importance of elevating food and service in a catered environment (page 86), and to Meryl Snow and her ideas regarding the shifting tides of buyer behavior (page 64). The articles all complement each other, leading you through a beautiful and hopefully enjoyable learning experience.

Speaking of an enjoyable learning experience, our conference news section will note that [registration is now open](#) for Art of Catering Food, and Catersource + The Special Event, in Austin, TX spanning February 11–15, 2024. Please consider joining us! It may be scorching hot in Texas right now, but February has mild and incredibly pleasant weather. Your colleagues will be eating all the barbecue, exploring the venues, taking all the classes, living it up at the evening events, walking the exhibit hall floor, and accepting all the awards—you won't want to miss it, and we don't want to miss you.

Kathleen Stoehr, Director of Community & Content Strategy

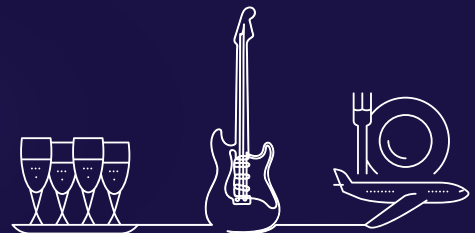
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# Fall 2023 CONTRIBUTORS



Executive **Anthony Lambatos** explores the future of technology, AI, and automation



Sales expert **Meryl Snow** defines the characteristics of modern buyer behavior



Chef **Robin Selden** shares her secret recipe for elevating food and service in a catered environment



Catering consultant **Tara Maxey** discusses how marketing can tap into people's emotions



Caterer **Maya Rotman-Zaid** reflects back on her company's charitable work

*What do you think of this issue? Like it? Love it? Have something to contribute to our website? We'd love to hear from you. Write us at [editor@catersource.com](mailto:editor@catersource.com).*

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# THE ROBOT UPRISING

*Robotics technology offers innovative solutions within the catering and events industry*

BY AMBER KISPERT





**Robots, once limited to the realm of science fiction, are now making their mark in the catering world. These intelligent machines are transforming the way caterers prepare, cook, and serve food, offering unprecedented levels of efficiency, precision, and consistency.**

“I think it’s the logical next step. Robotics have been used for decades within the manufacturing sector, and the synergy between human workers and robotic automation has been of enormous benefit to productivity and efficiency,” says Steve Kane, who works with [Pringle Robotics](#) in their Hospitality Innovation department. “Now, with advances in smaller, more personable service robots, the hospitality industry can reap similar rewards—especially during this time of labor shortages coupled with increased consumer demand.”

So, how can caterers successfully harness the power of this emerging technology? Let’s take a look at the different robots currently on the market and the different ways they can support catering operations.

## BREAKING DOWN THE BOTS

Robots, with their articulated arms, multiple cameras, and machine learning, can lend the ultimate helping hand to the hospitality industry by assisting with many of the repetitive or mind-numbing tasks workers must repeat again and again.

“And guess what,” said Michael Stavros during his Catersource + The Special Event 2023 session, *Caterers, Assemble! - Tantalizing Trends, Captivating Concepts, Inspired Interactivity*, “it doesn’t complain.”

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(Right, top) Chippy from Miso Robotics is designed to fry one or two high-volume products that need seasoning and finishing—such as tortilla chips. Photo courtesy Miso Robotics

(Right, middle) Flippy from Miso Robotics is the world’s first-ever AI-powered robotic fry cook. With its incredible multitasking capabilities, Flippy can fry frozen ingredients and plate finished food with remarkable precision while keeping multiple recipes on the go. Photo courtesy Miso Robotics

(Right, bottom) Pringle Robotics currently offers a number of different service robots including KettyBoT, which can be mapped to an event space and programmed to deliver items such as appetizers, beer, water, and swag; BellaBoT (shown), which can accompany serving staff to tables, carrying multiple plates of food at a time and reducing worker fatigue; and HolaBoT, their dish bussing robot that can carry 120 pounds worth of dishes. Photo courtesy Pringle Robotics



Today's robots range from front-of-house to back-of-house, each with their own specialized functions. Prices can range from a couple hundred to thousands of dollars depending on the model you invest in, and whether you rent or purchase them.

"To grow your business with the ever-changing landscape of technology, I think it's important to embrace the change and at least try it," says Robin Selden, Executive Chef with Marcia Selden Catering & Events. "Change is often scary as we are creatures of habit, but if you don't try it, you'll never know the benefits it will have."

## Super servers

Probably the most prevalent at this current juncture are service robots, which are popping up in all sorts of scenarios such as in hotels (room service delivery) and during events. For example, they are a good solution for butler-passed service during events.

"Bartenders love our bots because when they finish making a drink, they can simply place the drink on the serving bot and send it to the table where it is needed, rather than waiting for the server to return to the drink station to get it and take it to the customer," says Kane.

These types of robots are outfitted with shelving and can be programmed to move along a pre-designated path bringing beverages and hors d'oeuvres to guests.

"Think of it like a Roomba with shelves," said Stavros.

Selden had her first interaction with a service robot in Orlando, FL during Catersource + The Special Event 2023. After requesting some additional towels and bottled water at her hotel, "within minutes there was a buzz at the door. I opened the door and to my surprise there was a robot there, which as you can imagine, blew my mind.

"I was so impressed with this that we ended up calling again the following day as we wanted to video the whole interaction," she adds. "Sadly, this time when we opened the door, we were met with a smile (which don't get me wrong, was great) but we were bummed."

A few of the models on the market include [Matradee](#), [Servi](#), and Pringle's many service robots. These same robots can also be programmed for table bussing as well. There are even models that help scrub floors.

Some of the service robots on the market are outfitted with video screens, which are great opportunities to include directional information, logos, and even descriptions of signature cocktails or bites. Robots can also assist with guest check-in.

"I definitely think that it would elevate the guest experience and create a great memory," says Selden. "After all that is our job as memory makers, right?"

But there's even more potential with robots than just delivery and bussing.

"I can see larger delivery robots being used to transport big quantities of food from kitchen to truck, or truck to venue," says Kane, "and I do see a place for robots to eventually be right in the kitchen, helping prepare the food."

## Robotic chefs

The emergence of robot chefs is a game-changer in the culinary industry, with their ability to redefine the traditional approach to food preparation and service. Early iterations of the robotic chef included such options as burger flipping bots ([Aniai](#)), French fry bots ([Miso](#)),



(Left) Cecilia.ai is an interactive bartender where guests interested in a drink can come up and tell it their order. Cecilia.ai can respond to the order, such as saying a certain ingredient isn't available or suggesting an alternative option. Cocktails are also available on a touchscreen menu, and the drink is delivered through a slot in the machine. Photo courtesy Cecilia.ai



A barista in the kitchen

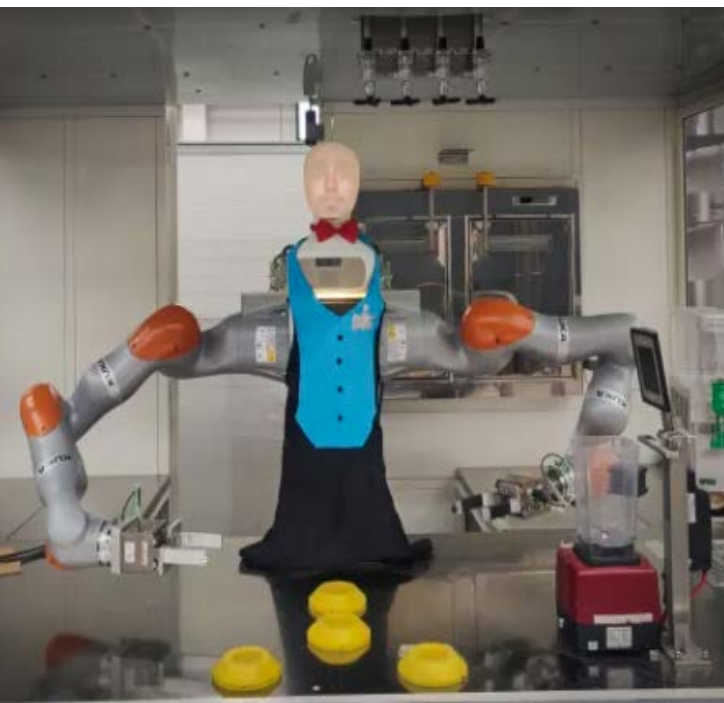


BRILLO in the complex





A robot served up coffee to attendees during the 2023 National Restaurant Association Show as part of the Kitchen Innovations Awards. Photo courtesy National Restaurant Association



PRISCA is an AI-powered bartending robot that's capable of engaging in dialogue with customers. Photo courtesy PRISCA Lab



Bear Robotics displayed its Servi robots during the 2023 National Restaurant Association Show. Servi can help run food or bus dishes. Photo courtesy National Restaurant Association



sandwich and salad bots ([Dexai](#)), and even pizza bots ([Picnic Works](#)). But today's robots can do so much more. With the aid of onboard sensors, optical cameras, and enhanced artificial intelligence technology, these robotic cooks are fundamentally designed to multi-task, executing the actions and movements of professional human cooks in real time.

Most innovative, however, are the fully-automated robotic kitchens being developed by such companies as [Moley](#), [REMY](#), and [Nala](#) that include everything from multi-cuisine-making robots to sushi making bots to dishwashing robots to ice cream scooping bots. Robots who can plate are also emerging. This means the robot kitchen can retrieve ingredients from the fridge, adjust oven temperatures, use the sink to fill pans and pour, mix, and plate up just as a human cook would. The robot even cleans up after itself.

These robotic kitchens utilize AI technology to follow pre-recorded chef instructions and are equipped with multiple sensors and machine learning capabilities, enabling it to precisely measure ingredients and execute complex cooking techniques.

"Right now, the general sense is that there's going to be a lot more robots," said Dina Zemke, assistant professor at

Ball State University, in an article for [CNBC](#). "The recipes are highly standardized. And really, it's mostly heating and assembly. No one's creating just the right secret sauce in the back of the house, all of that is provided through a commissary system."

Beyond robotic chefs, there's also a growing demand for "smart appliances." For instance, smart ovens can automatically adjust cooking times and temperatures based on the type of food being prepared, while AI-powered refrigerators can monitor expiration dates and suggest recipes based on the ingredients available.

According to [Global Market Estimates](#) the global cooking robot market is projected to grow at a CAGR value of 16.5% from 2022 to 2027, with the multi-cuisine-making segment expected to grow the fastest.

In fact, several companies have already started to implement robotic chefs into their operations. For example, Chartwells Higher Education has added Picnic Works' Pizza Picnic Station (an automated pizza assembly technology) to several of its college campuses; and dnata—one of the world's largest air and travel services providers—has implemented Moley's AI-powered cooking robot into its catering operations, serving up identical dishes at scale.



Dexai's robot dubbed "Alfred" can assemble dishes like salads and grain bowls. Photo courtesy Dexai



"Alfred" is a food safe-certified robotic arm that can sit in front of a row of hotel pans of ingredients and can hold traditional kitchen utensils like scoops and tongs. Photo courtesy Lane Turner/[Boston Globe](#)



“I love the idea of a station where somebody walks up to the robotic arm and is telling it what to build for their station item,” Stavros said. “I love the idea of a robotic arm doing a perfectly uniform plate decoration on every single plate that goes out. This is not eliminating the need for chefs, this is not eliminating the need for human touch, but this is offering you that perfect precision piece.”

## Beverage bots

Rounding out the robots are the beverage and barista bots that are ready and waiting to serve up libations to waiting customers.

Cocktail making robots have been around for quite some time on cruise ships and during events. Guests select their cocktails from a pre-selected electronic menu, and then the robotic arm dispenses spirits and mixers from bottles hanging from the ceiling or along the bar top. Today’s cocktail bots are growing in both intelligence and sophistication through such options as [Cecilia.ai](#) or [Rotender](#), which is essentially a cocktail vending machine that has the capability to interact with guests.

Then there’s BRILLO. Developed by researchers at the University of Naples Federico II, [BRILLO](#) can not only



The Artly Barista Bot uses deep learning-based visual inspection to monitor drink quality at each step to ensure a perfect cup with every order. Photo courtesy Kathleen Stoehr



data—one of the world’s largest air and travel services providers—has implemented Moley Robotics’ AI-powered cooking robot into its catering operations, serving identical dishes at scale. With advanced machine learning capabilities, it can recreate recipes by following pre-recorded chef instructions. It is also equipped with multiple sensors that enables it to precisely measure ingredients and execute complex cooking techniques. On top of that, the robot ensures consistent quality and good food hygiene. It can also quickly adapt to changes in real time. Photo courtesy Ulrich Perrey



Moley Robotics’ robotic kitchen features a dexterous robot integrated into a luxury kitchen that prepares freshly-cooked meals at the touch of a button. At the heart of the new technology are two robotic arms featuring fully-articulated “hands” that can reliably reproduce the movements of human hands. Photo courtesy Moley Robotics





With manual labor and responsibilities handed off to robots, staff can spend more time with things that need a human touch, such as interconnecting with invitees and directing the event experience.”

—Karen May, Scottsdale Private Event Venues

whip up a cocktail but can also remember your favorite drink and have a conversation. The robot can gauge whether the tone of a conversation is serious or playful and even ask appropriate questions, or crack a joke, depending on the situation.

Barista bots (such as [Artly](#)), who churn out coffee drinks with mechanical flair, are also trending.

## AUTOMATION MEETS EXPECTATIONS

So, what is driving the growing commonality of robotics in the hospitality industry?

“For one thing, the general public is becoming more accustomed to the idea of robots being part of everyday life,” says Kane. “It’s still a novelty, sure, but a fun one that can be a big draw for businesses that add robots to their operations.

“But on the business side of things, I can’t think of anyone in the hospitality sector that isn’t hurting for staff right now. The labor force just isn’t there. But the show must go on, and service robots have the ability to take care of a lot of the repetitive yet essential tasks that need to be done. This not only helps out the existing staff members, but can actually assist with recruitment if potential employees know that they’re not going to have to clean the floors or carry mountains of dishes back to the kitchen because we have robots to do that.”

### Staffing solutions

Hiring and retaining catering staff is a constant headache given that foodservice and hospitality have one of the highest “quit rates” of any industry. Many catering companies are still struggling to find quality staff following the “great resignation.”

According to the National Restaurant Association, 65% of restaurant owners still say finding enough workers is a central problem, and one surefire way to augment serving staff while wowing guests is by taking advantage of robotic food service assistance.

“It allows us to rethink the customer experience, and redeploy people to hospitality moments,” said Dexai cofounder Nicolas Jammet in an [article for the Boston Globe](#). “The team member gets to be friendly, and the engine gets to be fast and accurate.”

To ensure robots become an ally to service staff, it’s important to set expectations about what these automated co-workers can and can’t do. The most successful way to utilize robots is to have them perform physical, repetitive, and manually straining tasks, thus relieving staff from these duties. All these routine tasks, when handed off to a robot, free up front-of-house employees to do the more important tasks that require interaction with guests, like recommending the right dish, making memorable conversation or fulfilling a more specific ask. The robot allows staff to focus on what matters most: the overall dining experience.

“With manual labor and responsibilities handed off to robots, staff can spend more time with things that need a human touch, such as interconnecting with invitees and directing the event experience,” says Karen May, Chief Experience Officer for Scottsdale Private Event Venues (which deployed Pringle’s service robots during a recent event).

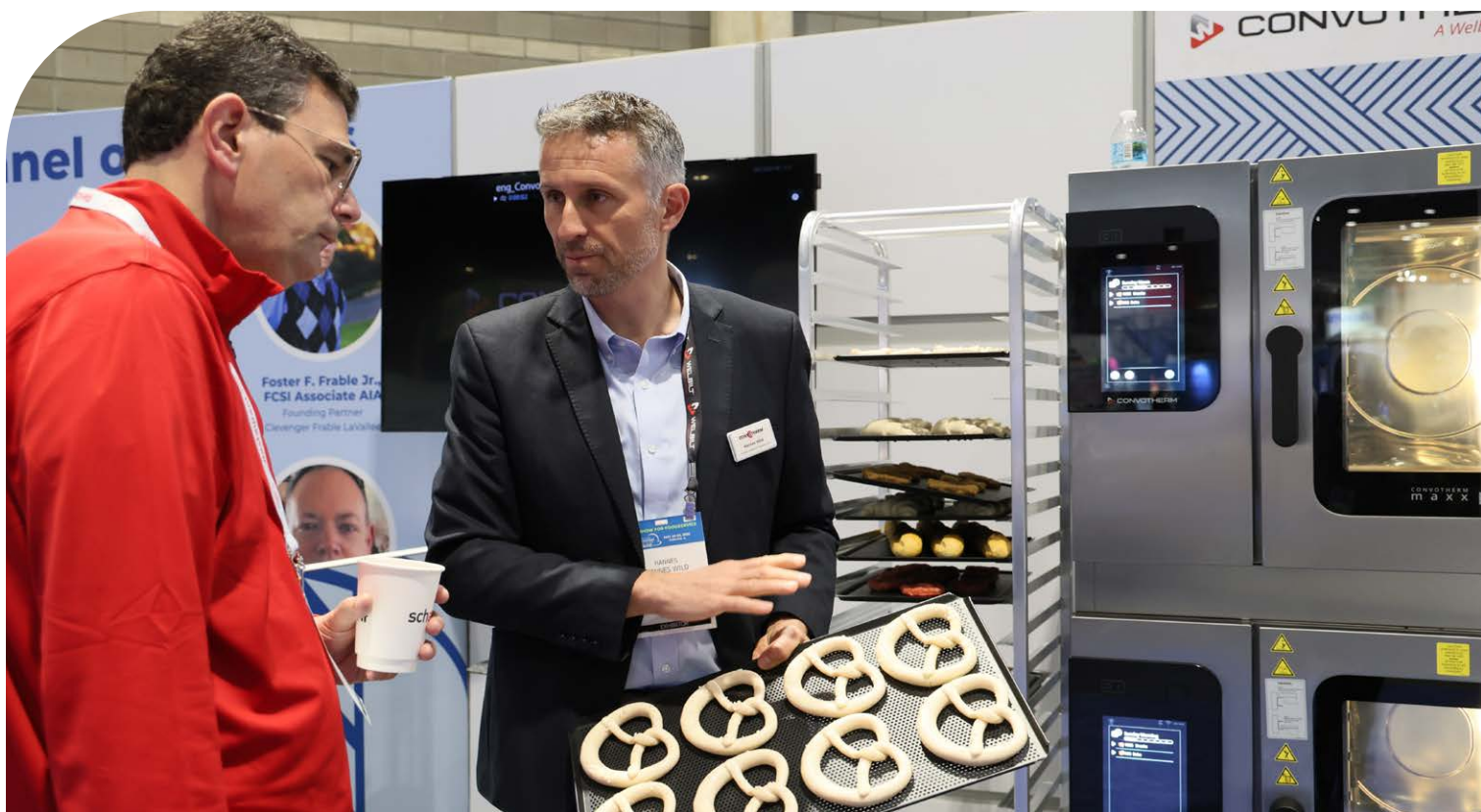
Selden agrees. “This enables the staff to do other jobs that require human interaction,” she says. “I think it would be a really fun ‘marriage’ of sorts. I want one for sure!”

### Increasing efficiencies

Beyond alleviating staffing pressures and utilizing skills more effectively, robots can also be instrumental in enhancing productivity, efficiency, and in some cases even creativity.

With their advanced capabilities, robots can precisely measure ingredients, chop vegetables, mix dough, and perform repetitive tasks with unparalleled consistency. This not only saves time but also ensures uniformity in taste and presentation.

Additionally, robots can play a significant role in automating inventory management by ensuring accurate stock control and reducing waste. Equipped with sensors



During the 2023 National Restaurant Association Show ConverTherm displayed its ConvoSense, the world's first AI-powered combi oven for fully automated cooking. Photo courtesy National Restaurant Association



During a recent event, the Scottsdale Private Event Venues and Pringle Robotics deployed one of Pringle Robotics' service robots (KettyBoT), where it displayed the event logo on its digital display while it delivered chocolate tacos to guests. Photo courtesy Dee Anne Deaton Grooveheads



and cameras, robots can scan shelves and track inventory levels in real-time. They can alert staff when supplies are running low, allowing for timely restocking. This automated system minimizes human error, eliminates the need for manual stock checks, and optimizes the overall inventory management process.

Finally, robots can help to decrease on-the-job injuries. According to Global Market Estimates, every year, more than 300,000 individuals are injured in kitchen-related mishaps (such as burns, cuts, air quality concerns, and even ergonomic issues).

Consider this anecdote that Jiyoung Hwang, Marketing Manager for Aniai, shared following the National Restaurant Show (where Aniai robots teamed up with culinary chefs from Savor throughout the conference): “One of the chefs shared an interesting insight with me. The chef mentioned that during catering events, he often has to cook thousands of burgers. In the past, he used to wrap wet towels around his arm for protection because the heat from the grill was too intense. But with our Alpha Grill, robots handle all the hard work for the

chefs, allowing them to dedicate more time to creatively developing recipes.”

## Making a moment

Lastly, the novel aspect of robotics during events can’t be overlooked. “Robots make us consider our own humanity, so what better way to get a room talking,” says May.

Robots create that Instagrammable moment that caterers are always chasing.

“I know they’re gimmicks,” said Stavros, “but people love gimmicks.”

# THE ROBOT REVOLUTION

As we look to the future, many speculate that robotics in the hospitality industry will move beyond just a gimmick or a novelty, but instead become part of the norm. [A recent study by Lightspeed](#) found that 50% of restaurant owners plan to install automation technology within the next two or three years.

“I believe that if anyone wanted to, they could go see a robot working in a restaurant in 2024, 2025,” said Jake Brewer, Chief Strategy Officer for Miso Robotics, in the CNBC article. “You can go see robots cooking right now and that’s only going to grow week over week.”

Not everyone is 100% sold on robots’ role in the catering industry, however.

“While I find robotics super cool and intriguing, I find it hard to imagine that they will ever replace fine dining service teams,” says Selden. “The level of service expected by our clients, especially in our market, is so personalized and next level.”

Footers Catering’s Anthony Lambatos shares similar sentiments.

“I think we are still a ways off for applications in the catering space,” he says. “I don’t foresee robots putting plates down in front of guests anytime soon,” he says. “[Although] I think we will see some initial applications that will be attention-grabbing and ‘trendy.’”

The robots themselves will continue to evolve from “automation” (where they must be constantly overseen and programmed by catering staff and technicians) to have full autonomy within their respective roles.

“After the pandemic, there’s a new world right now,” said Ajay Sunkara, President and CEO of Nala Robotics. “Let’s



Artosa USA displayed its Intelligent French Fry Robotic Solution during the 2023 National Restaurant Association Show. The six-axis collaborative “co-bot” robot solution provides system adaptability during peak and non-peak times and allows the system to operate entirely manually when needed. Photo courtesy National Restaurant Association



Picnic Works' Picnic Pizza Station is an automated, robotic back-of-house makeline that allows one person to make up to 100 consistent pizzas an hour, while reducing food waste to around 2%. Photo courtesy Picnic Works



Aniai's flagship product, Alpha Grill, is designed to cook hamburgers easily, efficiently, and with consistent quality. Featuring a double-sided grill design and a rapid cooking system, the Alpha Grill is able to cook eight perfect burger patties in under a minute. Alpha Grill is packed with AI components to check and control food quality. With an intuitive touch-screen monitor, users can customize cooking conditions, access real-time quality metrics, operational stats, inventory data, and more. Photo courtesy Aniai


talk about hygiene. Let's talk about the labor shortage. Let's talk about staff not showing up at all because of health issues right now. The best part of [robots] is consistency. You don't have to do training. It always does the same thing.

"If you look at the catering world, I believe it can utilize automation quite a lot—I think it's the best industry that can utilize technology."

When it comes to the catering industry, the future means a symbiotic relationship between robots and humans. The integration of robotics into the catering industry is not about replacing human chefs; it's about enhancing their skills and improving overall efficiency.

"The first-time people see a robot passing hors d'oeuvres they will be snapping pictures left and right, posting to social media and talking all about it. The question becomes—will it be sustainable? Will people continue to appreciate it or miss the connection with an actual person in the process? I believe companies will need to double down on their strategy when it comes to client-facing applications of robotics," says Lambatos. "There will be those that look to highly automate everything and serve a market that appreciates that, and then there will be caterers that realize their clientele appreciates high touch/high service and they will need to invest heavily in that. Understanding the market you want to compete in will be critical when it comes to introducing technology and robots into your business."

Embracing this technological revolution opens a world of possibilities, where culinary creativity meets cutting-edge automation. The future of catering is here, and it's powered by robots.

"Humans do what they do best. Let robots do the rest," says Kane. "Robots, especially service robots, exist to do the dull, dirty, or dangerous jobs that can sap people's time, joy, and motivation at work. Now no one's saying that catering is dangerous, but there can be a lot of repetition, a lot of physical strain, and steps involved in catering and events work. When robots can automatically do some of the not-so-fun tasks, it creates a better environment for workers and their customers. People can focus on the higher-value work that's uniquely human. And they do all of this without tiring. Basically, they allow great catering staff to be even better because they have the time and energy to focus on guest experience." 





# The Recipe for Elevating Food & Service in a Catered Environment

Creating a successful restaurant experience in a catered environment requires a delicate blend of culinary artistry and exquisite service. The dining landscape has evolved, and today's catering clients demand not only delectable dishes but also unforgettable experiences. We are pushed daily to create newness and to elevate what we did yesterday.

I say it all the time, but what we do in the catering world is much like creating a Broadway show. You need to set the stage and in our case it's a culinary stage. There's a beginning, a middle, and an end, and as those moments unfold, they must surprise and delight your client and their guests.

## Step 1: The food

We've found that the first element in this successful recipe is that everything hinges on the quality of the food offerings. We need to establish a strong culinary identity and must curate a menu that reflects our expertise, creativity, and commitment to fresh, seasonal ingredients. Our dishes should be thoughtfully designed, showcasing a balance of flavors, textures, and a stunning presentation. This may sound simple but it's pretty complex. We recognize that it takes a ton of training to have a culinary team see things the way they are designed. As an example, even with a photo to guide them, the way that they see things is often not the way I personally design them. I am an A-personality creative that pays attention to every detail. Not everyone sees what I see and the way that I see

it. Taking the time to train the eyes of your team is a must, as the execution is critical to the success of this recipe to create an elevated restaurant experience at a catered event.

## Step 2: The experience

The second step in the recipe is elevating your client and guests' dining experience which actually extends beyond the plate. Attention to ambience, décor, and music creates an immersive atmosphere that complements the cuisine and sets the stage that you are creating. Aesthetic considerations should align with the concept, whether it's elegant fine dining or even a cozy family-style setup.

## Step 3: The staff

The third step in the recipe, which is the heartbeat of any catered event, is the staff. Staff members must be trained to embody warmth, professionalism, and attentiveness. Timely service, addressing dietary restrictions, and anticipating needs contribute to an exceptional customer experience. Seamless coordination between the kitchen and the front of house ensures that your client and their guests receive a

flawless experience. Never forget that your event team is a direct reflection of your brand. Make sure that they embody your company mission, the core values of your company, and everything that is important to you. They need to speak your language. We recognize this wholeheartedly and therefore put a tremendous amount of time, effort, love, and training into our team. You must remember the adage that you are only as good as your last event. We never take that for granted and neither should you.

Our job is to create delicious memories for our clients and their guests. It's all about the way that we make people feel. At the end of the day, if we accomplish making them feel special, valued, heard, and accommodated, we have done our jobs.


## Step 4: The personal touch

The next ingredient in the recipe here is personalization and customization. We cater to a diverse clientele, each with their preferences and dietary requirements. Providing customization allows your client and their guests to feel valued and accommodated. Whether it's offering gluten-free, dairy-free, nut-free, and vegan alternatives, or tailoring dishes to suit individual tastes, personalization enhances the overall experience. Having multiple menu options that embody all of the potential dietary requirements sets us up for success at every event. To be more specific, we always have vegan,



Attention to ambience, décor, and music creates an immersive atmosphere that complements the cuisine and helps set the stage. Photo courtesy Roey Yohai Studios

with local farmers, utilizing seasonal ingredients, and minimizing food waste not only resonates with the eco-conscious client but also contributes to the overall quality of the food. The taste of the food produced with fresher, local, and sustainable ingredients is far better in so many ways; while more expensive to source, the freshness factor will 100% elevate your dishes and the guest experience when they enjoy your culinary creations. On a personal level, and as a mother of 20-something-year-old twins, being thoughtful of this is of utmost importance to me, as I am constantly thinking of the future for them too... just saying!

Creating a luxurious restaurant dining experience in a catered environment is an art that intertwines the culinary mastery of the kitchen with the grace and precision of an awesome service team. A successful company revolves around quality food that tantalizes the taste buds, creates an inviting ambience that captivates the senses, and service that makes clients and their guests feel truly cherished. By embracing innovation, personalization, sustainability, and a commitment to excellence, caterers can ensure their events become a beacon of culinary delight and exceptional hospitality one bite at a time. 

dairy-, gluten-, and nut-free menu items at every “act” of our events.

### Step 5: The innovation

When creating restaurant experiences in a catered environment, another critical ingredient is staying relevant, embracing innovation, and being adaptable. The culinary world requires continuous innovation. We should be open to experimenting with new flavors, cooking techniques, and global culinary trends. Regular menu updates can intrigue clients and will attract new ones, making the dining experience a dynamic journey for your clients and their guests.

### Step 6: The sourcing

Sustainability and ethical sourcing are the next ingredient. Our clients (social, corporate, and nonprofit) increasingly prioritize sustainability and ethical sourcing. Partnering



**Robin Selden** is the Managing Partner & Executive Chef of Marcia Selden Catering & Events and Naked Fig Catering, where she oversees the culinary and marketing operations for her family's multimillion-dollar company. In October 2019, Robin was honored to be named to the BizBash1000 celebrating the top 1,000 event professionals in the USA in 2019 and to the BizBash 500 celebrating the top 500 event professionals in 2020 in the United States. Selden is in the President's Council as a past President of the International Caterers Association and won their Chef of the Year award. She's a past Innovative Chef of the Year and a current Ambassador Chef for the Greenwich Wine & Food Festival.