



CHAPTER 1:

THE BASICS OF  
**HOSPITALITY**  
AND **SERVICE**

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**SETTING:** A formal French restaurant

**THE PLAYERS:** Four ladies from New York on a visit; the maître d'hôtel

The dinner guests had thoroughly enjoyed the food and wine and were pleased by the service, but they'd already missed the next-to-last train from Poughkeepsie to Manhattan, and the departure time of the last train was drawing close. As they paid their check, the maître d' phoned a local cab company to take the ladies to the train station. They left in a rush of thanks and well-wishing, hoping to catch their train.

The foursome had been the last customers for the evening, and the maître d' left soon thereafter. Pulling out of the parking lot, he saw the ladies still waiting and knew that if the cab didn't arrive that instant, they would miss the train. But no cab could be seen down the road. There was only one way to get the ladies to the train station on time, and so he squeezed them all into his rather small car and made a beeline for the station. The car was not built to accommodate that number of people, and each bump they hit brought a gale of laughter and references to who had eaten the most dessert. At the station, the guests scrambled out of the car, calling their thanks as they dashed into the nearest car of the train. He didn't hear from them again. He didn't need to.

Admittedly, this was a rather extreme circumstance, and one that is not likely to happen on a regular basis. However, it is possible to apply the same principle of hospitality almost every day. For example, guests are sometimes in a hurry to get to the theater and don't have time for dessert. I have known waiters who would pack up some cookies or petit fours and hand them to the guests as they rushed out the door. It's a simple, thoughtful action that takes little effort but shows true hospitality.

## WHAT IS HOSPITALITY?

**BECAUSE I TEACH HOSPITALITY,** I spend a lot of time in class dis-

cussing the concept. The H-word is used a lot at the school—perhaps a bit too much: “We’re in the hospitality business”; “Let’s show the guests some of our famous hospitality.” Despite such constant use of the term, students often arrive not knowing exactly what it means. And it’s not all that easy to pin down: I can teach students the smallest details of fine table service, but the concept of hospitality extends beyond the mastery of such professional skills.

To help bring the concept to life, I begin with an example that draws upon the students’ own memories and emotions. I ask them to recall an extra-special gather-



**HOSPITALITY** (*hospi'tælitɪ*).  
[*a. OF. hospitalité* (12–13th c. in *Hatz-Darm.*), *ad. L. hospitalitas*,  
*f. hospitalis* (see *HOSPITAL a.*),] 1.  
*a. The act or practice of being*  
*hospitable; the reception and*  
*entertainment of guests,*  
*visitors, or strangers, with*  
*liberality and goodwill.*  
(Definition according to the  
*Oxford English Dictionary*)

ing at their home—perhaps a holiday meal, friends from far away arriving for a joyous celebration, or Mom or Dad's boss coming over for dinner. Most of the students have experienced such an occasion. Then I ask them what their house was like for the couple of days beforehand. They recount stories of long shopping lists and the back of the car filled with groceries. Cleaning took on a new dimension, perhaps requiring the use of nontraditional implements such as toothbrushes and Q-Tips, and the scent of Lemon Pledge hung in the air. Martial law reigned in the kitchen as parents prepared dishes that weren't run-of-the-mill dinner fare. Then, the main event: taking

guests' coats at the door, remembering what everyone wanted to drink, carefully carving the turkey and arranging the meat on an enormous platter, and each member of the family hustling around the house to make sure that none of the guests wanted for anything. Every activity pertained to making the guests feel comfortable and welcome. Recalling this, most students immediately understand, on an emotional level, what hospitality is all about.

The joy of planning and executing a terrific party, of being a great host and participating in your guests' delight, is one of the great pleasures in life. When students ask me what draws people into the restaurant business, this is what I tell them. And this, in fact, is the reason I teach hospitality for a living. What I learned in my family about treating guests well—especially from my mother, who is a master of the dinner party—is what spurred me onto this career path.

At its best, when everything comes together, running a dining room feels like you're giving the best dinner party ever. Trained cooks and a great chef send out delicious food; beautiful surroundings and the right music coax guests into an expansive mood; a professional, highly trained staff brings the guests whatever they need, ideally before they know they need it. In the dining room, we are presented with the opportunity to bring complete strangers into our warm, welcoming space and make them feel part of our family, so that they want to return over and over again.

So this is hospitality—inviting guests in and ensuring that we have done everything within our control to make them happy. This task is difficult enough for any

person to carry out at home two or three times a year. The kicker is that we do it for a living every day. We are in the hospitality *business*. And making hospitality a business involves identifying those aspects of a fabulous special occasion at home that can and should be reproduced in the restaurant, and then reliably performing those actions whenever necessary.

## HOUSE STYLE

**EACH OF US HAS OUR OWN STYLE** when it comes to taking care of guests in our homes, and the same is true of restaurants. One factor that goes into determining a restaurant's house style is the type of establishment: fine dining, with luxurious surroundings and a leisurely pace; bistro or trattoria, which encompasses a wide range of restaurants, all with a simple, cozy feel; or family-style or casual, which may range from diner to theme restaurant and beyond.

Another factor is the restaurant owner's personality. Just as some people may be huggers and others air-kissers, some restaurant owners prefer that the house style be a formal one, while others embrace a more casual feel. For instance, in a family-style Italian restaurant it might be appropriate for the owner or waiter to warmly greet a guest by his or her first name. However, in a high-end French restaurant, it is likely that the guest will be greeted more formally, with the *maître d'* or owner using a courtesy title and the guest's surname. There are, of course, many possible variations along this spectrum—for example, some formal places are more relaxed than others while still maintaining an elegant, polished feel.

A third element is the restaurant's intended clientele. Just as someone giving a dinner party at home would tailor the event to the guests—perhaps a catered white-glove dinner for members of a charity organization's board of directors, a taco buffet for families from the neighborhood—a restaurant proprietor has to decide what kind of establishment he or she wants to run and establish a style that matches. I've worked in formal restaurants where any waiter who touched his or her nose while in the dining room would be polishing silverware for a week. Conversely, I've also worked in a family-run Italian restaurant where there was lots of hugging and kissing. In each case, the house style was both appropriate to the guests and a reflection of the owner's personal style.

Not to be left out, the style of your restaurant can also determine which service model to use.

# THE HISTORY OF SERVICE

BEFORE DISCUSSING  
the different types of  
service, it might help to know how service of food has evolved through the ages.

## THE EARLY STAGES

Some of the earliest writings on serving food describe dining in Greek high society. There weren't many public dining places, so entertaining took place mostly in the home. Rather small rooms with couches for the guests were used for the purpose.

Food was brought out in large dishes from which the guests served themselves, tossing shells and bones onto a small table in front of them. As the courses progressed, the tables would be removed and quickly replaced with clean tables.

The Romans borrowed much from Greek culture and developed more of their own. Roman food was much more complex, with many more spices and seasonings. Exotic spices were, of course, a sign of affluence because most of them came from the Far East. Diners sat in places determined by status—places of honor being reserved for the host and important guests. The room they ate in was called a *triclinium*, with three benches in a U-shape. Each couch held three reclined guests who leaned on their left sides, leaving their right hand free to grasp food. Again, servants brought out food in a series of courses. The reclining thing sounds comfortable, but it probably wasn't too good for the digestion.

**CATERINA DE' MEDICI** is credited with bringing the fork into widespread use as a dining utensil. By using a fork to pick up bites of food, guests could keep their hands clean throughout the meal. This allowed use of finer napery, and even better table manners.

**THE SIZE OF DINING ROOMS IN GREEK HOMES** was referred to in terms of the number of couches within. “Yes, my husband Nikos and I are building a new house with a five-coucher!”

## THE MIDDLE AGES AND THE RENAISSANCE

Anglo-Saxon banquets during medieval times were rather large affairs held in the main hall of a castle. The tables were in a large U, with the host and prominent guests seated at the head table. The tables were covered with a white cloth, and the salt cellar was placed in front of the most important person at the table—salt was highly valuable then. You could tell how important you were by how close the salt was to your place at the table. The food was served from large bowls on the table; guests brought their own knives for cutting food into serving pieces and would often share a plate among three or four diners. French banquets differed in that the tablecloth hung over the sides and was used by the diners to wipe off their hands and faces. How civilized!

French banquets became more and more lavish, with huge displays of food and decoration. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, only the aristocracy was eating this way . . . but not for long. The French Revolution in 1789 toppled the French monarchy and nobility, and left a lot of chefs unemployed. This was a major factor in the growth of restaurants—the chefs had to ply their trade as businesspeople. Restaurants had been in existence before the revolution, but the growth of the middle class created more demand for them.

As the fourteenth century ended, food service was becoming the subject of study and began to be respected. Taillevent (Guillaume Tirel) was cook to both Charles V and Charles VI, and he wrote the book *Le Viander*, which codified the cooking of the day.

However, the first signs of fine dining appeared in the sixteenth century in the court of the Medici family of Florence, Italy. The dissemination of fine dining habits began when Caterina de’ Medici (1519–1589) married King Henri II of France and brought a phalanx of trained cooks, chefs, servants, and sommeliers with her. She also introduced the habits of fine dining to the French. Her cousin Marie de’ Medici, as wife to Henri IV, took over where Caterina had left off. One of the most famous chefs of all time, François La Varenne, received his training in the kitchen of Henri IV, and he wrote a book in 1651 that looked to the future, *Le Cuisinier François* (François the Cook).

# TYPES OF SERVICE

## AMERICAN SERVICE, FRENCH SERVICE, RUSSIAN SERVICE, MONGOLIAN SERVICE: only one of

them requires the use of yak pelts. The other three types of service (and a few additional ones) are used in professional dining rooms these days. The style of service that you choose depends on two things: the demeanor of the dining room and the demands of the situation. A formal restaurant is a more likely place for French service to be used, and having twelve people at a banquet table would be a good time to break out the platters for some Russian or butler service. While the basic tenets of each style are pretty well defined, there is some blurring of the lines between them—and some disagreement about which is which. In fact, while researching this subject I found Russian and French service described in the exact same words in the same book!

Below you will find some relatively simple explanations of the styles along with some advantages and disadvantages of each.

As the world moved into the Industrial Revolution in the 1800s, the world of food service moved quickly to fulfill the needs of workers. Factories drew large numbers of workers who had to be fed. The tight mealtime schedules caused a need for fast, efficient service. Counter service became popular, and the first Horn & Hardart Automat opened in Philadelphia in 1902. Fine dining wasn't dead, though. Delmonico's (opened in 1837) had a 100-page menu with 370 dishes and catered to New York's elite. In less than a century, fine food service went from being the province of the wealthy and powerful to being much more egalitarian and democratic. As Americans continue to seek out sources of prepared food, food service will become increasingly part of their lives.

## AMERICAN SERVICE

This is a very popular style of service used not just in America but in many other countries. Its hallmark is efficiency, and thus it tends to be used in more casual and high-volume restaurants. Its efficiency has, though, attracted many purveyors of fine dining and led to its use in many formal restaurants.

In American service, the food is cooked and plated in the kitchen. The waiter delivers the food, one plate at a time, to the guests at the table, ladies first. These days, most service professionals agree that the guest should be served from the right side, with the waiter's right hand. Clearing of plates is also performed with the



**ONE OF THE FIRST RESTAURANTS** (as we think of them) was opened by A. B. Beauvilliers in 1782. It was La Grande Taverne de Londres, and it offered a true à la carte menu; until then, most dining establishments offered a fixed menu, or table d'hôte. The option to choose for themselves was obviously a great attraction for guests.

right hand from the right side. This goes against my earlier training, in which I was taught to serve from the left with the left, and clear from the right with the right. Whichever one you choose, train the staff to do so consistently. When the right hand is used for serving or clearing, the waiter should move around the table in a clockwise direction; it is more efficient (and safer) because the waiter is, by definition, walking forward rather than backing up. Conversely, any task performed with the left hand should lead the waiter around the table in a counterclockwise direction.

In most American restaurants, the service brigade consists of waiters, runners, and bussers. The waiter interacts directly with the guests and manages his or her station. Runners bring food from the kitchen into the dining room, and bussers clear and reset tables, pour water, refill bread, and assist the runner. Rather than three-person teams, most restaurants have more waiters than runners, and more runners than bussers. This is because the runners' and bussers' jobs are more general and can cover more territory in the restaurant—their work isn't as guest-specific.

## **FRENCH SERVICE**

Originally, French service was used with meals that consisted of three courses, one of which was already set on the table when guests entered the room (hence the term *entrée*). Subsequent courses were brought into the room on silver platters and served from gueridons. Between courses, the guests would get up from the table and it would be cleared—not exactly a turn-and-burn.

While the current incarnation of French service is not quite as time-consuming as the original, this style has been relegated to the formal dining rooms of a few restaurants and hotels around the world. Not only does it require a large amount of

expensive equipment, there is also the need for a highly trained service brigade to carry it out. This brigade is made up of the following personnel:

- **THE CAPTAIN** almost never leaves the dining room. He or she is always in sight of the guests and is their main contact. The captain takes most of the orders, prepares the tableside items, and runs the station with the assistance of the rest of the team. The captain must have a profound knowledge of food and wine and be able to translate that knowledge into language that is understandable to each and every guest. As a mixture of salesperson, confidant, and advocate, the captain is the most influential person with regard to the quality of the guest's dining experience.
- **THE FRONT WAITER** is the captain's lieutenant. His or her duties include regular table maintenance such as pouring water and clearing plates, as well as assisting the captain with tableside cooking and tending to the guests while the captain is occupied, either at the gueridon or at another table. Occasionally, the front waiter will take drink or dessert and coffee orders, but the dinner order (because of its importance and intricacy) is usually taken by the captain. The front waiter helps to coordinate the delivery of food to the table with the back waiter; the same team does most of the table clearing as well. The front waiter's position may not be as glamorous as that of the captain, but the captain relies heavily on the front waiter's efficacy.
- **THE BACK WAITER** is also sometimes called a runner, but the terms aren't exactly equivalent. A runner is someone who brings food from the kitchen anywhere in the dining room. A back waiter, though, is part of a team that is responsible for a specific set of tables and brings food from the kitchen to those tables. In addition to running food, the back waiter will assist the front waiter as needed, perhaps pouring water, serving bread, clearing tables, and the like. So a true back waiter does more than just run food; he or she is responsible to the service team.
- **BUSSER or GUARD** is a position that some people, unfortunately, look down upon. Needless to say, the busser is an extremely valuable member of the service team and can be integral to that team's success. Primary responsibilities include basic table maintenance (bread and water), clearing, and the resetting of recently vacated tables. A great busser can lighten the burden on the rest of the service team, enabling them to concentrate more on serving the guests.

In French service the various staffers have to work as a team. Each member has both primary responsibilities and secondary responsibilities—for example, the captain will sometimes pour water when the front waiter is helping the back waiter deliver food to a table. The captain, though, should not be running food from the kitchen to the dining room unless the situation is dire. I remember being chided by Waldy Malouf for going into the kitchen when I, as a captain, should have been in the dining room: “How do you know if they need something if you’re standing in here?” Waldy, of course, was right.

The hierarchy of the classic service team works very well, but there are limitations. First of all, the restaurant has to be big enough that four-person teams can fit in the dining room. Second, the prices have to be high enough that all the members of a four-person team can make enough money to live on. Lastly, it has to fit with the demeanor of the dining room—you’ll probably never hear “Welcome to Charlie’s Chili Bungalow. I’m Jean-Pierre and I will be your captain this evening.” In the right place, though, a well-trained, experienced team can be a joy to watch at work.

## **RUSSIAN OR PLATTER SERVICE**

Definitions of Russian service vary, but the most common involves platters of food being prepared in the kitchen and brought to the table, with the server placing the food on the guest’s plate from the left side with the right hand. Sauce and garnish are served either by that waiter or by another one following right behind.

Advantages of this model include the relatively quick and personal service of hot food to a large number of guests. It also shows off the abilities of the service staff with relatively simple training. One disadvantage is that servers have to learn how to use the service spoon and fork in combination as a sort of tongs. Also, by the time the waiter gets to the last guest at the table, the platter can start looking a bit ragged. Portion control can be a bit tricky, especially if a guest asks for additional food, leaving the waiter without enough food for everyone at the table. This rarely happens, though, so the other two potential problems loom a bit larger.

These days, it is rather common for waiters in many types of dining rooms to use Russian service to place bread on guests’ plates. Additionally, being handy with serviceware can be helpful when splitting menu items onto two plates for guests, either on the gueridon, on the side stand, or at the table. While it might take a bit of practice, the effort will pay off, at least in the form of confidence at the table.



## **BUTLER SERVICE**

Take Russian service and let the guests serve themselves from the platter. That's butler service. The service utensils are on the platter for the guest to use, and the waiter still walks around the table counterclockwise, serving to the guests' left side (starting with the lady to the host's left).

## **ENGLISH SERVICE**

This is a style of service that I have never seen in use before, but I am still fascinated by the idea of it. Essentially, it is Thanksgiving dinner in a restaurant. The food is fully cooked in the kitchen and sent out on platters to the dining room. The host carves the meat or plates the main course and hands the plates to the guests, who pass the plates around the table. Side dishes are sent out for the guests to help themselves, but the wait staff performs the other aspects of table maintenance. It would be used in a country club or some other venue where the guest wanted to mimic a home-style setting while still being waited on.

## **FAMILY SERVICE**

Family-style service is quite popular in some value-oriented restaurants, and also in places where the style fits with the theme. For instance, some Italian restaurants feature large platters of food that are brought to the table, where the guests serve themselves onto empty extra plates. It is a remarkably efficient style of service that can make a lot of sense (and money) for you in the right situation. The waiter's job is made easier in a number of ways: the order is easier to take, the food is easier to deliver, and individuals largely take care of themselves. The kitchen is also helped by the fact that a table of four can be served with three large platters of food instead of four appetizers and four main courses—three large plates of food take much less time to prepare than eight single servings.

Family-style service can be used in other types of casual restaurants. If it is appropriate to the demeanor of the restaurant, I highly recommend giving it a shot. Customers enjoy the chance to serve themselves, it can lighten the burden in both the dining room and kitchen, and it can lower labor costs.

As you can see, house style can function in two ways—both as a marketing tool, to attract a certain type of clientele (for example, businesspeople, or teens out with their friends), and as a way of creating regular business, by enticing back people who feel comfortable there.

## THE BUSINESS END

**TO BE SUCCESSFUL**, any business must establish and maintain a consistent level of quality. On any given night, customers should be able to walk into a restaurant and experience the type of hospitality the restaurant has established a reputation for. In the restaurant business, as in any field from sports to media to manufacturing, reliability and consistency are achieved through training and practice. To take a very different example, in basketball a winning team will always have more than one player who can be counted on to score free throws consistently, especially when the game is on the line, and that sort of consistency is due almost exclusively to hard work and practice between games. In the restaurant business, a successful restaurant has a trained staff who not only can manage an average night in a way that keeps customers satisfied but also can handle just about anything that's thrown their way, such as a large last-minute party with many special requests on a busy night, an equipment malfunction in the kitchen, even a waiter suddenly becoming ill and other staff having to pitch in to cover his or her tables.

Occasional flashes of brilliance are all well and good, perhaps drawing a lot of attention from food critics, but making quality a habit—establishing a routine so that every guest is greeted warmly within thirty seconds of entering the restaurant, giving waiters the information they need about the food so that guests' questions about the menu can be answered on the spot, making sure the dining room illumination and temperature are always at specified levels—is what brings customers back.

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HOSPITALITY AND SERVICE

**WHILE, AS WE HAVE SEEN**, hospitality is a concept that depends on feelings and impressions, the essence of service resides in action. Service is being able to carry four dinner plates without spilling the sauce, or open-

ing a bottle of Champagne without spewing foam onto the floor. Restaurateurs do these things to make people feel comfortable and attended to. While the tasks themselves do not involve emotion, they enable it, in the sense that carrying them out in a professional manner evokes positive feelings in guests.

Satisfying the instinctual need to take nourishment is the reason people eat. But why do they go to a restaurant to do so when good food is so widely available and can so easily be prepared at home? With over half of Americans' meals originating outside the home today, that is no trivial question. There are many factors that contribute to the rise in dining out, such as increasingly busy schedules, greater mobility, and larger amounts of disposable income, but a primary answer is that dining out feels good: nice people bring you delicious things to eat and drink, and then wash the dishes after you leave. Restaurant folks take care of you. If hospitality is the final destination, service is the road map and the car.

## IS HOSPITALITY TRAINABLE? CAN RESTAURANT STAFF

be trained to provide good service? Yes. But the first step is to identify exactly what good service means in a particular restaurant setting.

The first step is to identify what feelings and experiences you want a guest in your establishment to have, and then determine what specific actions on the part of the staff will help to bring them about. Let me use an example from a home dinner party to show what I mean here.

A friend had invited a number of interesting people to dinner and spared no expense with regard to food and drink. Yet somehow the evening just didn't come together. None of the guests had ever met before that night, and the awkward silences were amplified by the absence of background music. While the food was of very high quality, the various menu items were all very complicated and difficult to eat, and they did not complement each other well. The guests were left on their own to rummage through the fridge for any beverage other than water. Every minute felt like an hour, and many guests seemed vaguely ill at ease. As the evening progressed, I compiled a mental checklist of a few changes that would have made this a much more pleasurable evening for everyone (though I never did relay that list to my friend, mostly because I didn't want to hurt her feelings). Some quiet jazz on the stereo, a simple bar with some wine and mineral water, and a few changes to the





menu would have enhanced the experience, making for a more relaxed, convivial atmosphere that would have encouraged us all to get to know each other.

This, of course, was a home dinner party, but the lessons apply to the restaurant business as well. Specific actions can lead to desired feelings and emotions on the guest's part, and these actions can be singled out, defined, described, and put into simple, trainable terms—for example, anticipating the pace of a meal and bringing successive courses at just the right time, making suggestions of menu items that will complement dishes already ordered, and presenting the check at just

**WALDY MALOUF**, chef/partner at Beacon Restaurant, New York, notes:

*“Is hospitality teachable? Yes, but it’s difficult. You can train it when someone doesn’t understand the fulfillment that they can get out of being hospitable. Sometimes there’s a preconceived attitude, when [the staff members] just haven’t experienced the pleasures of providing pleasure. And if you show them that and they start to experience it, then it’s teachable. I mean, a lot of times people have a preconceived notion that they’re just going to be a slave, thinking they’re not going to like waiting on people. But if you show them through training and creating a pleasurable workplace, and maintaining a level of professionalism where the level of respect is equal from the customer to the staff and vice versa, you can show them that being hospitable feels good.”*

Another perspective comes from **ANTHONY SCOTTO JR.**, proprietor of Fresco by Scotto, also in New York City:

*“Service you can teach. Hospitality is in you, and it’s a born, bred thing more than it’s a situation where you can actually train someone to do it.”*

the right time after the meal is done. The thing is, how do you motivate the staff to perform these acts?

Many of the actions that can result in a guest's satisfaction are simple enough that almost any employee could be trained to perform them. For instance, getting your maître d' or host to address incoming guests with a smile and a greeting such as "Good evening. How may I help you?" rather than the all-too-common "Do you have a reservation?" is relatively simple, and it starts the customer's dining experience out on a pleasant note. Yet getting your employee to do so with a certain level of warmth and desire to please—which guests will certainly pick up on, just as they will notice its absence—is not quite as simple. You need to make sure the individual greeting guests at the door really enjoys contact with many different kinds of people and shows his or her enthusiasm appropriately. The hiring process for all front of the house employees should include a portion of the interview when the manager can get a sense of the interviewee's personality. Experience is great, but finding a nice person is often more important.

Can hospitality be trained? Sure it can ... but the employee must have a desire to please the guest for the efforts to ring true.

## USING SERVICE TO CREATE HOSPITALITY

### BEYOND THE FACT THAT IT HELPS TO HIRE NICE PEOPLE

with a desire to please the guests, there are tasks that you can train the staff to perform that will enhance your restaurant's atmosphere of hospitality. The overall type of service depends largely on the kind of establishment you work in; the specific things the staff are asked to do should fit seamlessly into the restaurant's overall demeanor. In the following chart are a number of feelings and reactions that you would want your guests to experience. Listed adjacent to each of those feelings are specific actions that can bring about those feelings.

At the end of the night, when all of the guests and staff members have gone home, you can stand in the middle of your dining room and relive the experiences, good and bad, of that night. One table had the best meal of their lives, while across the room was a person who will never come back because there weren't any meatballs on the menu. There can be euphoria from the series of minor victories that,

**A FEW TIPS TO ASSESS A POTENTIAL EMPLOYEE'S PERSONALITY** during the interview: take note of the person's handshake, seek out eye contact and see how he or she reacts, and tell a bad joke to see if the person laughs.

taken together, form the mosaic of a perfect night. There can also be the nagging memory of a forgotten birthday candle, the lack of which soured a guest's dinner. Make note of all of these things so that you can share them with the staff before service begins the next day.

All in all, our success and our happiness in this business depend on the delight of our guests, and it's possible to ensure that guests are served in a way that will maximize their pleasure. That is service. That is hospitality.

# FEELINGS YOU WANT A GUEST TO HAVE

## WAYS TO EVOKE THAT FEELING

**WELCOMED** Offer a smile and a warm, genuine welcome at the front door, such as “Good evening. How may I help you?” Make sure the host's desk faces the door, not the back wall.

**PAMPERED** Provide valet parking and someone to hold the door open. Make sure guests' coats and umbrellas are taken and stored securely. Have staff pull out chairs for guests as they seat a party.

**IMPORTANT** Remember and use returning guests' names, and greet them with “Welcome back.” Keep track of regular guests' preferences and important dates.

**COMFORTABLE** Make sure the dining room's heat, lighting levels, and music are appropriate and consistent. Ensure that the dining room is spotlessly clean and that furniture is attractive and in good repair.

**ENTERTAINED** Offer entertaining tableside preparations or live music, if appropriate. Provide a variety of menu and beverage items, including some novel items unique to your restaurant, and describe them in an enticing way on a menu that is visually interesting.

**RELAXED, AT EASE** Make sure the reservations process is clear and efficient. Provide waiters with enough knowledge about menu items so that they can answer questions and make suggestions with confidence, and train them in how to read guests' body language so that they can address needs that guests may not feel comfortable expressing. Offer diners choosing wine the expert assistance of a sommelier.

**SATIATED** Ensure that portion sizes are appropriate (not too big or too small), and instruct waiters to offer guidance if diners seem to be ordering too much or too little food.

**APPRECIATED** Maintain a “thank you” mailing list. Ask guests for their opinions, and listen carefully to the responses. The key to all the elements in the chart above is that each specific action can be trained. For example, you can train your reservationist to say “May I put you on hold?” and wait for the caller to answer before doing so, so that the potential guest does not feel as if he or she has been dismissed or treated rudely. This is the essence of service—doing things that will lead to a guest's satisfaction.