FIREBIRDS® ROCKY MOUNTAIN GRILL

The Fire Inside

"TO IGNITE AND INSPIRE PASSION IN EVERYTHING WE DO"

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MARIE COLLINS—EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

MCOLLINS@FIREBIRDSRESTAURANTS.COM

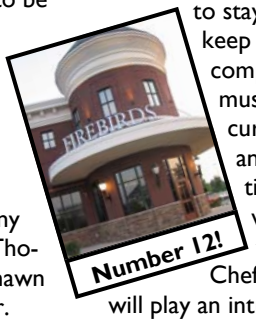
Burning You Up! - by Mark Eason

It is hard to believe that we only have 5 more months left in 2006. Where has the year gone?! There just doesn't seem to be enough time to do the things that we want to do to make our company more appealing to our guests and to our shareholders. There is so much going on right now that I want to take this opportunity to share with you where we've been and where we want to go.

The Firebirds Team Visits the Home of the King!

We held an operations review meeting in Memphis in July where all of the Managing Partners and some home office personnel met. We stayed at the famous Peabody Hotel, toured Graceland, and ate dinner at the Rendezvous Restaurant. President Bush had taken the Emperor of Japan on the same tour just two weeks prior to our visit. We also got to eat dinner at our newest restaurant in Collierville, TN – something the two world leaders missed out on. It is a privilege to be able to visit these cities.

Congratulations go out to Collierville, the newest member of the Firebirds family: Mike Corder – Managing Partner, Scott Montgomery – Chef, Danny Knox – Sous Chef, Mike Thomas – Bar Manager and Shawn Woods – Service Manager. Thank you for your hard work in getting number 12 open. I would also like to thank Charles Blankenship, the Market Partner, and Kelly Parker, the opening Training Manager, as well.



Number 12!

Both took up residence in Collierville in order to ensure a smooth opening.

We opened Collierville with a new one page menu and will also test the one page menu in Omaha, Birmingham and Memphis. We are also in the process of enhancing some current dishes and creating several new items as well...the French Dip sandwich, Turkey Club sandwich, Tenderloin Salad, and Fried Chicken Salad, just to name a few. In order to stay current and keep ahead of the competition we must look at our current recipes and presentations and work to make them better. Chef Steve Sturm will play an intricate role in the menu development as he plugs back in as our Executive Chef.

We are also focusing in on every aspect of operations. The goal is to simplify procedures and automate as much as possible, creating more time for managers to spend with employees and guests vs. the computer. We have made some changes in hostess uniforms and are looking for suggestions on the bartender attire. We are going to plan our feature cards to coincide with seasonal changes such as a fall, winter, spring and summer promotion. Our Cool Colorado Cocktails are a small example of what is yet to come.

We've spent several weeks rewriting all of our training manuals for both employees and management; taking out the complexities and making them current and fun!

There are many more projects we are working on and I hope you are as excited about these changes as I am. If you have an idea that could make Firebirds improve, whether it's behind the scenes or directly involving our guests, please let us know. We appreciate your ideas and want you to be involved.

Go-Getter - by Charles Blankenship

Kelly Parker aka KP, Go-Getter. The title of "Facility Manager" doesn't even scratch the surface. KP does it all! Whether managing renovations and repairs, delivering furniture in the nick of time, painting the office or keeping track of everything in the infamous warehouse, Kelly brings energy and enthusiasm to the task. KP manages a very diverse workload—he even runs shifts in restaurants to cover vacations and shifts while Managers are in training. As a matter of fact, KP has covered shifts in each of the 12 Firebirds. In addition, KP acts as the company photographer for product photos. You all see his handy work when you look at the new POS recipes and Product Photo book. Kelly was also instrumental in helping to rewrite the new training manuals. KP is an expert in the administrative tasks necessary to operate the restaurants. He was tireless at the Collierville opening, offering administrative and computer support as well as helping with training and operations. KP is really in his element at the new restaurant openings. His colorful personality and passion for training give the orientation and class room training a real shot of adrenaline. Kelly is truly a valued and appreciated part of the Firebirds Team. As his grandmother eloquently says, "Pat Kelly on the back and he'll work another eight hours."

Need a blue vase – call Kelly Parker.

Thanks Kelly, for all you do!

Firebirds PRIDE

Trainer Dinners at StoneCrest

By: Kimberly Sebastian

"The Firebirds logo is a constant reminder that one of our most important goals is to ignite and inspire passion in everything we do." When I came to Firebirds, my first goal was to make trainer meetings fun. So, when I got back from OPS in Raleigh, I had a plan. Using the FISH! Philosophy, I started having trainer meetings outside of work. At first I was worried about the response I would get, "You're not allowed to do that", or "Be careful what you do when you're not on Firebirds soil." But all was well and I noticed my trainers were excited to work, just like I was after attending an OPS meeting. And, when others began asking me "What do I need to do to become a trainer?" I decided I had something. We have held meetings at City Tavern, Marble Slab Creamery, Cantina 1511, and even took a limo ride up to the Northlake Firebirds and took the OMM book with us to read along the way. Most of the places we go are willing to do trade outs so the cost is minimal. Next, we've decided to go to 131 Main, a new restaurant in our area, to evaluate our competition. Until then, keep your fish out of water and send them somewhere fun!

StoneCrest Trainer Crew

Proposal

By: Lisa Kozloff

On Saturday night, June 3, 2006, Wes Vanasek proposed to his girlfriend Meghan Wall at Firebirds. The couple was having dinner when Wes got down on one knee and popped the question. Meghan was quick to say "Yes!" and the entire dining room erupted in applause. A regular guest even sent over a bottle of champagne to congratulate the couple. It was a moment that moved some employees to tears. Wes felt it was fitting to propose at Firebirds since that is where the couple first met. Wes was recently promoted to a FOH manager after working as a server, trainer, bartender and shift leader for the past two years. Meghan was a server and bartender with the Raleigh team for over two years until she left to work with autistic children. Everyone in the Firebirds family wishes them both the best of luck in their upcoming nuptials!

Keeping the Fire in Omaha

By: Geo Miller

Firebirds Omaha held its first Beer Garden and Double Black Diamond event at the Village Pointe Vibe Concert Series on Saturday, July 16th. The event was part of Omaha's summer grassroots promotion and was a great success. The team consisted of Mark Rumscheidt, CJ Deppen, Sarah Vanwyk, Jen Millar, Angela Dobmeier, Jenny Bartholomew, and Christian Rumscheidt. The Chris Saub band, which plays on location at Firebirds on Wednesday evenings, provided the entertainment.

The Happy Couple!

Props go out to the team for bringing the hospitality mentality outside the walls of Firebirds, and keeping our commitment of being there for all of our guests, no matter where they may b

A Taste of North Hills

By: Tim Haring

Mixed with New Orleans style jazz, the evening was a great opportunity for the local restaurants to show their stuff. Showing up in true Firebirds fashion, we were the first to set up and the last to break down. We served Lobster Queso in martini glasses, Mini Crab Cakes, Coconut Shrimp, bite size Crème Brule Cheesecake and Brownies. John Thomas, Adam Smith, Tim Haring, Delia Kirkman, Preston Bounds, Katie Self, and Madior Ndiaye were in attendance that evening. Firebirds created a great energy and had a line so long it was interfering with other restaurants. Through hard work and determination, Chef Adam and crew lead Firebirds to be the only restaurant not to run out of food. We received loads of positive feedback and helped to solidify Firebirds as the premier restaurant in North Hills Raleigh.

Smiles All Around at North Hills!

Create a Raving Fan

By: Jim Cone

How do you create a raving fan? First off we must eliminate the word "No," as it states in our Showtime manual. We must open our eyes and ears to the guests' requests and do everything possible to make it happen. Some raving Fan stories in Phoenix are examples of how we can continue to build sales and increase guest counts. I had a guest call and ask if we served sweet potatoes. The lady stated that the only starch that she was able to eat was sweet potatoes and serving them depended on her coming in or not. I let her know that I would personally go to the store to buy the sweet potatoes for her, and in the future to let me know a few hours before arriving and I would have some on hand. She came in with her husband that evening and was blown away by the guest service and the food. She is now a raving fan, bringing her office in for lunch every week!

Another example is when a guest came in and wanted a sugar free dessert for her 25th wedding celebration with her husband. I headed straight over to Maggie Moo's and got them two sugar free scoops of ice cream. She and her husband are now raving fans and her husband is a pastor of a large congregation. Word of mouth has spread, and we have had many guests come in and tell me about the story. We must continue to come up with new ideas and always go the extra mile to create raving fans!

Opportunity of a Lifetime

By: Rebecca Johnson

It's an "Opportunity of a Lifetime" to meet the new lead singer of INXS, JD Fortune, and have lunch with him at Firebirds. Lunch was scheduled for May 24th and we were happy to be a part of it! Community involvement is just another way to show that we plan on growing along side each of the cities where we are located. This event was hosted by Darla Thomas and KSRZ-FM.

JD and Darla

Announcements/Anniversaries

A big thanks and congratulations goes out to Dave Sobieski of Firebirds StoneCrest for being a hero on May 21, 2006 by performing the Heimlich maneuver on a choking guest. Way to go Dave! For his outstanding efforts he was rewarded with an iPod Nano.

Dave and Chef Steve

Happy one year anniversary to Firebirds of Omaha! They celebrated by having a party on July 6th, complete with door prizes and yummy sweets! The grand prize was a $100 shopping spree to Village Pointe won by Georgie Jordan. Congratulations to Georgie and all of the Firebirds Omaha Crew. What great things we expect from you in year 2!

Happy Anniversary!

Cake Anyone?

Hot Off The Grill - by Steve Sturm

When Firebirds' food is executed correctly it is the best in the restaurant industry. Focusing on that execution is our number one priority. Every bun should be toasted from coast to coast. Every potato should be fresh, hot and completely salted. Every steak, burger and chicken should be seasoned to perfection and cooked just right. It is all in the details. We must be fanatical with the quality of the food.

How do we do this? It starts with production. A manager must sign off on every item prepped. This gives us the opportunity to praise or redirect, at the same time ensuring the quality of the product. The line checks should be thorough and without interruptions. And finally, working the window is the time that we get to touch every plate and say "Yes, this is perfection." Every dish that goes out to our guest is a direct reflection on every one of us. Our guests deserve Firebirds' quality every time.

The Operations "*Review*" - by Gerald Pulsinelli

Our goal is to continue to build sales week over week, period over period, year over year. We can achieve this goal through execution of great food and service every shift. It starts with creating an environment where people want to do well. Smart hiring, proper training and practicing the principals of the One Minute Manager allow us to create that environment. We must over-communicate to our managers and hourly employees the reason we use these tools, how to use them, and most importantly, how they affect the guest experience in our restaurants.

We can also build sales by increasing guest counts and by enhancing our guest experience. By enhancing the experience, i.e., suggestive selling, bar salesmanship, and salad and dessert sales, we can increase the check average, thus building sales.

There are many other things happening right now that are also driving sales: aggressive grassroots marketing programs, Wine Down Monday, Happy Hour, wine dinners, and wine tastings just to name a few.

As the fall holidays are right around the corner, we are looking for new and exciting drinks to offer our guests to help build bar sales. If you would like to add your own thumbprint to Firebirds, please send in your suggestions for a specialty drink.

Please send any suggestions to Marie Collins (email address listed on the front of *The Fire Inside*) and be sure to include the recipe, mixing instructions and name of the drink!

Hospitality Mentality - by Steve Kislow

Showtime has taken on new life in Chandler, AZ in the form of a brand new Firebirds production called "The Wine Dinner." Chandler has set the standard for this new genre of sales building initiatives. The actors are passionate about the performance from the preparation to the execution of the dinner itself.

Each wine dinner is scheduled for the first Monday of each month and the menu is designed by Chef Justin using a selection of wines provided by the winery. The winery provides us with a very sharp foyer sign and all other necessary point of sale materials, in addition to discount pricing on the wine. Each carefully prepared course is paired perfectly with a different varietal that keeps you on the edge of your seat awaiting the next masterpiece.

Chandler Guests Enjoying the Wine Dinner!

The first dinner featured great wines from Stag's Leap Winery and for the second act we visited the wonderful country of Australia and the wines of Penfolds. We hosted 37 guests during the opening performance and 53 people came hungry and left happy from the second dinner.

The guests join the opening party at approximately 6:00 pm for a social wine reception. After approximately 30 minutes of mingling and munching on some butler passed starters while enjoying a lighter white wine, the guests begin to choose their seats. Large tables are set up to encourage socializing with new people. Rita and Justin welcome the guests to the event and thank them for coming and introduce the representative from the winery.

The winery representative spends some time introducing the guests to the specific winery, its history, and some fun facts. He or she reviews the selection of wines the guests will be experiencing and spends the rest of the dinner meandering around the room answering specific questions and providing the guests with some intimate "Juice Talk."

Chandler Service Staff for the Stag's Leap Wine Dinner

The Chandler team definitely rolls out the red carpet for these events, with a strong focus on the "Hospitality Mentality" and great service. A team of 5-6 servers and 2-3 GAs ensure that every guest feels like the most important person in the room. Table maintenance and a sincere and genuine attitude are the main goals.

Darral, Rita and Justin Showcasing the Wine

During the second wine dinner we were able to pair up with a nearby retail wine shop and the retail store was able to sell almost 6 cases of wine as a result of the dinner. During the end of the dessert course we passed around the sign up sheet along with the menu for the following month's dinner. There are several very nice details that Rita has included in this process from email reminders to very well done gift bags for all attendees. Thank you Team Chandler for combining your passion for sales building and great execution to continue building the Firebirds brand in the valley.

Dear 'Bird...

Dear 'Bird,
I am currently a bartender at one of the Firebirds locations, and I was wondering why we have to use the jiggers? It seems like the only purpose they are serving me right now is that they are slowing me down!
Sincerely,
A Jaded Jigger User

Dear Jaded Jigger User,
Thank you for taking the time to seek out the true purpose behind why we use jiggers to portion out our liquor. Our goal at Firebirds is to deliver high quality food and service to each of our guests. Achieving great service entails being consistent.

Jiggers actually play a part in maintaining consistency in our drinks. They ensure that each guest gets the same pour each and every time that they dine with us. To illustrate this point, imagine that you are dining at Firebirds restaurant for the first time.

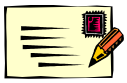
You find a seat at the bar with your best friend. Each of you orders a vodka tonic. Your friend takes a big sip, and instantly frowns. You ask her why she is upset, and she claims that there is little or no vodka in her drink. Your drink, however, happens to be one of the strongest you've ever had! While you may be completely content, your friend is muttering that she regrets ever coming to Firebirds. If the bartender had used a jigger to portion out the vodka, you would both be content with your drinks.

We are also committed to our guests' safety and if the bartender is heavy-handed, without a jigger, a typical two martini drinker may end up drinking enough alcohol for three drinks.

Jiggers also help to maintain bar cost. You are probably wondering how bar cost affects you. It affects every employee in a big way. Firebirds places emphasis on three closely connected categories: people, operations, and profit. It is important to focus on developing people, having great operations, and generating profit during each shift.

Profit is essential to the growth of our company. In order to pay for items such as food, liquor, linen, smallwares, etc., we have to make a profit. Using jiggers ensures that we have a congruent pour for each drink as well as a maintained cost. Just as you bartend to make money, Firebirds is in the business to make money. The next time you use a jigger, you are delivering a consistent and better tasting product which will result in more guests at your bar and more money for you.

Happy Pouring!—'Bird



If you would like advice from 'Bird, simply email your questions to:

mcollins@firebirdsrestaurants.com.

If your letter is chosen to be featured in the next issue of *The Fire Inside*, you will receive a special something from 'Bird !

What's Shakin' - by Tyler Fray

As the temperature continues to rise outside, things are heating up inside the four walls of the restaurants as we head full swing into summer. At Firebirds, we're keeping things cool with our Cool Colorado Cocktails and new table tent set up. The Wild Fire and Boulder Lemonade drinks make use of pomegranate and watermelon juices – both very hot items right now - and the southwest twist of our Grand Summit and Maroon Bells Mojitos offer guests another way to cool off where it's cooler – Firebirds!! By staying in touch with the latest trends, we not only distinguish ourselves from the competition, we also continue to build sales. We become the restaurant of choice and we build our business. That was easy!

We are midway through 2006 with 2 new stores up and running. On April 24th we saw our 2nd Charlotte, NC location open at Northlake Mall. The restaurant has had a very nice reception in the community and is looking to host its second wine tasting this August. Collierville, TN opened with a bang on July 5th. After only 2 weeks of being open, Collierville ranked 5th in the company in total sales and guests counts. When they say it's hot in Memphis, they mean it.

At both new store openings, we hosted a charity event prior to the official opening. This year we added a silent auction as part of the evening's festivities. At Northlake, the auction brought in $1,790 and a total of $7,460 was donated to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Charlotte. One of the most popular auction prizes was a private dinner party at the winner's home for six guests, hosted by our own Chef Michael Farnick. The prize, which was valued at $250, went for $360!! Chef Michael put together an incredible four course menu paired with wines by the glass. The courses were: shrimp and serrano queso appetizer; field greens salad with cranberries, walnuts, grilled red onion, roasted red pepper and a citrus vinaigrette; tasso wrapped filet paired with a goat cheese stuffed salmon and creamy sautéed spinach; and lastly, a triple tiered ice cream pie for dessert. Chef Michael said the Pursers were "blown away" (did I mention Michael did the dishes?) and server Ciara North provided seamless and attentive service for which Firebirds is known. Thanks to Chef Michael and staff for making this such a wonderful event.

Chef and the Purser Dinner Guests

The Collierville opening proved to be our largest grossing charity event to date, with Firebirds generating $10,900 ($4,415 from the silent auction) for United Cerebral Palsy of the Mid-South. A private dinner party with Sous Chef Drew Bryan was auctioned off for $375. We look forward to hearing all the details of the upcoming event!

Check Presentation to the United Cerebral Palsy of the Mid-South

On the marketing front, we have 7 newspaper drops for our Summer Lunch Break with a Friend promotion circulating in the following markets: Omaha, Peoria, Chandler, Tucson, Memphis, Birmingham and Charlotte (Northlake). Numbers for the first week are in and we have seen a dramatic increase in guest counts. We will run this again as an end of summer promotion in late August and come back in September with a limited time offer special to keep building awareness, generating the buzz and reinforcing the value and quality of the concept. Collierville also has a Now Open news drop out in the community and will run another piece later this month.

We are moving ahead with Fishbowl and are looking to go live with our web based marketing by the middle of August. Amidst all of this, we will be strategically planning the rest of

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2006 and looking ahead at 2007 in order to be as effective as possible in all our markets and get the most out of our marketing initiatives.