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## Menu Redesigns Bring New Life to Restaurants

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As the weather gets colder, many restaurants are ready to add fall favorites back into their menus, retiring the summer berries and cocktails. Menu reinvention can be more than quarterly adding seasonal dishes into the usual fare. Maybe the menus are worn and torn, maybe there are typos, or it could just be time for a change of the physical menu. Two restaurants recently overhauled their menu in two very different ways. Aria in Chicago used their menu revamp as a platform to go from "Asian fusion" to "regional American." Peacock Garden Café in Florida turned a traditional menu book into a colorful magazine-concept with bright colors and a compelling history story.



The Peacock Garden Café turned their menu into a magazine. PEACOCK GARDEN CAFÉ

### Aria

"In a fantastic food city like Chicago, restaurants have to consistently reinvent themselves. We had come to the end of a cycle, and it was time to reevaluate our concept and listen to what our guests were telling us," says David Sher, director of Food and Beverage at Fairmont Chicago, Millennium Park. Chicago, the city's markets and regional farms inspired aria's menu.

It wasn't the cost of reprinting the menus that worried Sher. Instead, he had to justify the time commitment that a menu redesign requires. "We are fortunate to be surrounded by a talented and creative team. Our culinary team jump in to the process with both feet, and just start cooking everything and anything their heart desires! As the process goes on, they narrow it down and down until they see on the plate what they envisioned as a team at the very beginning. It truly is creative process, much like painting or writing a song," Sher says.

### Peacock Garden Café

The Peacock Garden café turned their menu into a magazine full of anecdotes of the past and artwork. Lalo Durazo felt a traditional menu didn't communicate the theme of the restaurant.

"We have found the menus enhance the overall experience at Peacock Garden Café because they offer a clear and entertaining presentation of the history of the land on which we're located. The story of our neighborhood is communicated through our menu. A lot of people are amazed to learn that this is where Miami came about – before anything, it was Coconut Grove where we are sitting today," Durazo says.

Durazo worked with local author and historian, Arva Moore Parks to add the historical elements to the menu. Moore Parks also curated many of the antiques seen in the restaurant.

"[The menu] just like the cuisine, ambiance and décor, it is a key component in delivering the experience of Peacock Garden Café," Durazo says.

By Kirsten Ballard

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