How Pekarna NYC Improved Front-of-House Operations with TouchBistro

Pekarna NYC is a New American restaurant, mixologist cocktail bar, and private event venue on New York City's Upper West Side. The restaurant's name means "bakery" in Slovenian, which is an homage to the building's first life as a bakery, and to another restaurant Pekarna's Owner and CEO Dean O'Neill renovated and runs in Slovenia.

After sitting vacant for some time, Dean has since transformed the building's humble roots into the largest private event space on the Upper West Side. With an outdoor cafe, private backyard, and 320-seat capacity, Pekarna currently hosts many weddings, birthdays, bat mitzvahs, and more for private parties, as well as entertainment, performing, university, and corporate events.

And it's not just the venue's large capacity that attracts crowds. The restaurant's eclectic menu of empanadas, falafel, chicken schnitzel sliders, wagyu burgers, and other delights represents the melting pot of American cuisine. Its cocktail menu is also a fan-favorite, featuring a mix of classics and inventive originals, which enhance Pekarna's festive spirit.

An industry veteran, Dean was no stranger to New York City's restaurant scene when he opened Pekarna. He previously managed Infirmary, a Cajun restaurant on the Upper East Side, and therefore knew how important technology was to keeping operations running smoothly. For Pekarna, he needed a flexible and robust restaurant management system that could keep up with the space's many uses and be easy for staff to use. Since adopting TouchBistro, Pekarna has since been able to:

- Streamline front-of-house operations with TouchBistro POS
- Offer secure payments through TouchBistro Payments
- Predict capacity and garner rave reviews with TouchBistro Reservations

Challenge: Finding a Multi-Purpose System for a Multi-Purpose Space

Pekarna needed a point-of-sale (POS) system and payments solution that could handle all of the demands of a very large venue. The system had to be flexible, be able to work offline, and offer top-notch payment security. After conducting thorough research, TouchBistro POS and TouchBistro Payments Powered by Chase came out on top for Dean.

"TouchBistro was the leader. It was the most flexible, well-priced, and advanced system for what I needed, which was payment security, which is more important than anything else. The ability to take payments, whether the internet is up or down, is crucial," Dean says.

The POS system's mobile tablets were also a huge selling feature for this sprawling multi-purpose space.

"To be able to control operations through a tablet means that we have greater flexibility. In addition to the POS, those tablets also control the lights and they control the sound. So now our tablets have become multi-purpose centers for the staff because they're able to control different things. So for us, TouchBistro was kind of a no-brainer," Dean says.

Dean also needed a solution that would help Pekarna NYC manage bookings, so rounding out the restaurant's suite of TouchBistro products with TouchBistro Reservations was another no-brainer.

Solution: TouchBistro POS, Payments, and Reservations for Seamless Front-of-House Operations at Pekarna NYC

Equipped with TouchBistro POS, Payments, and Reservations, Pekarna's front-of-house (FOH) team is able to run a multi-purpose restaurant and events venue with ease. Pekarna has been able to adapt the POS and other TouchBistro solutions to perfectly fit each of the different aspects of its business and run its entire operation as one cohesive unit. And as a result, Pekarna's FOH has been able to run significantly more efficiently.

Flexibility, Ease of Use, and Order Accuracy With TouchBistro POS

This increase in efficiency was something Dean noticed right out of the gate. As he explains, getting set up with TouchBistro POS was a piece of cake and was "one of the easiest rollouts that I've ever seen."

Once the system was set up, familiar and user-friendly iPad hardware contributed to the Pekarna staff's quick POS training and easy onboarding with TouchBistro.

"One of the greatest things about TouchBistro is that everybody knows how to use an iPad. TouchBistro doesn't have this unique piece of hardware that is just for them. Therefore, you get the infrastructure of the repair facilities for these Apple devices that are very well priced and very easy to get fixed," Dean says.

Once staff were equipped with iPads, they could immediately begin taking orders tableside, rather than by running to a centralized, stationary POS and inputting orders. As a result, tableside ordering has dramatically improved order accuracy for Pekarna NYC.

"TouchBistro has helped our front of house in many ways. One of the biggest ways is through tableside ordering technology and the efficiency that's tied in with that has been absolutely invaluable to us. Not only can servers take the order, but they can read the order back, make sure it's right, and add modifiers," Dean says.

Tableside ordering has also made it faster for servers to place orders from anywhere in the two-story, 6200-square-foot space – something that has dramatically improved the speed of service and table turn times.

"With TouchBistro, all the features that it has are invaluable to our speed of service, and being able to take an order correctly and then get the money into the till as soon as possible. And what it means is more orders and more accurate orders results in happier people. When you get it wrong, they get angry, and you don't want to get between a hungry customer and their meal," Dean says.

In addition to improving the customer experience, TouchBistro POS has also been a saving grace for servers thanks to its intuitive interface and customization options.

"The staff really enjoy the tablets. Because the tablets are big, staff can pick large font sizes so they can see the writing more easily. They can see each menu item and they can read the descriptions very easily," Dean says.

As the restaurant and event space continues to evolve to accommodate guests' various needs, TouchBistro is flexible enough to help the business keep up.

"The other thing we like is the ability for us to adjust TouchBistro. It's very, very easy to change the floor plan layout, which we've done multiple times to add new rooms. I haven't had the staff complain at all about being able to operate or use TouchBistro," Dean says.

And, whenever anyone at Pekarna has had a question or problem with the technology that they weren't able to solve on their own, they've been able to access customer support pronto.

"If I've ever needed support for TouchBistro, I've been able to get through to somebody very quickly. The people at TouchBistro are really committed. There hasn't been one thing that we haven't been able to solve together," Dean says.

Equipped with TouchBistro POS, Pekarna's staff and customers have been able to enjoy fast onboarding, improved order accuracy, unparalleled flexibility, and premium support.

Improved Credit Card Processing With TouchBistro Payments

The POS isn't the only TouchBistro product Pekarna has implemented to improve operations. The restaurant also uses TouchBistro Payments Powered by Chase, a payments solution that integrates seamlessly with TouchBistro POS.

Thanks to this integration, all data moves seamlessly between the POS and payment system, which simplifies credit card processing by reducing the risk of double-entry errors. In addition to accepting credit cards with TouchBistro Payments, Pekarna can also process debit card, cash, contactless, and digital wallet payments from Apple Pay, Google Pay, and Samsung Pay. And, if Pekarna's internet connection ever goes down, service can continue thanks to TouchBistro Payments' offline mode.

According to Dean, the partnership between TouchBistro and Chase is one that can't be beat.

"If you can do a deal with TouchBistro and Chase as a provider you should. You will not get a better deal on the market. There is no better deal on the market. None," he says.

Glowing Customer Reviews With TouchBistro Reservations

Dean also found a great deal with TouchBistro Reservations. Before switching to TouchBistro Reservations to manage bookings, Pekarna briefly used another popular reservations platform. But Dean says that the other platform's pricing system was expensive and unfair.

"The app we previously used had these boost systems, which makes things very unfair. You've got to pay an extra percentage on top of your bookings and then they will boost you and put you in a position where you actually get views. Otherwise, you're at the bottom of the list," Dean says.

With TouchBistro Reservations, an in-house solution with a flat monthly fee, Pekarna wasn't pitted against the competition and could predict its costs much more easily.

Beyond the equitable and transparent pricing structure, one of Dean's favorite aspects of TouchBistro Reservations is its reviews feature. After each meal, diners automatically receive an email asking them to leave a review of their experience while the experience is still fresh.

"Using TouchBistro Reservations helped us get these great reviews out of the gate and a lot of them. In turn, it's made it easier and more comfortable for other people to make the decision to come in," Dean says.

TouchBistro: Pekarna NYC's Go-To Restaurant Management System

After using TouchBistro POS, Payments, and Reservations at Pekarna, Dean can confidently recommend the platform to other restaurateurs.

"As a restaurant owner, I would recommend TouchBistro because you will not get anything better for the price. In fact, even if you get something for the same price, the features that TouchBistro has are going to be so invaluable for you to grow. And if you want to grow as a business, you need a partner who can flex with you," Dean says.

"I would recommend TouchBistro because you will not get anything better for the price."

Dean O'Neill, Owner and CEO

Want to see TouchBistro's restaurant management system in action at your venue?

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