



The fun and easy way® to understand
restaurant basics and be your own boss

Starting & Running a Restaurant

FOR
DUMMIES®

Michael Garvey

*General Manager and President, The Oyster
Bar at Grand Central Station, New York*

Heather Dismore

Professional writer and restaurateur

Andrew G Dismore

Corporate Development Chef and consultant

Carol Godsmark

UK restaurant critic, consultant, and food journalist



A Reference for the Rest of Us!®



UK Edition



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***Starting & Running a
Restaurant For Dummies®***

**by Michael Garvey,
Heather Dismore,
Andrew G Dismore,
and Carol Godsmark**



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About the Authors

Michael Garvey was, at one time, an unassuming if not innocent soul from Brooklyn before he was grabbed by the clutches of the evil shadow known simply as the restaurant business. Starting as a resort waiter in the Poconos of Pennsylvania, he quickly became smitten by his new work and found himself a genuine masochist at heart. Garvey delved into other facets of the industry, from bartending in saloons to waiting in fine dining atmospheres. He also found time to volunteer in the kitchen of the Marist Brothers in Esopus, NY, manufacturing meals for handicapped and underprivileged children and adults. In 1994, he returned to New York City for some real brutality. He latched on to a small three-unit outfit by the name of Mumbles as a manager. After seeing action in their other locations, Michael landed a job as floor manager at The Oyster Bar in Grand Central Station owned by famed restaurateur Jerry Brody.

The Oyster Bar was a wonderland for the then medium-rare manager. Garvey took advantage of many opportunities including wine cellar stewarding which led to sommelier certification. He was part of the management team that rebuilt the institution in 1997 after a devastating fire. In 1998, he was offered the General Manager position and added President to his titles in 2000. Today, in addition to running the day-to-day operations in Grand Central, Michael has led efforts to franchise The Oyster Bar concept. While writing this

book, he organised the first franchise in Tokyo, half a world and a culture away. Michael currently resides in Long Beach, NY, with his beautiful (and understanding) wife Vicki and their ridiculously cute daughter Torrance.

Heather Dismore is a veteran of both the restaurant and publishing industries. She has published works including such titles as “Indian Cooking For Dummies,” part of the compilation *Cooking Around the World For Dummies All-In-One*, *The Parents’ Success Guide to Organizing*, *The Parents’ Success Guide to Managing a Household*, and *Low-Carb Dieting For Dummies*, all published by John Wiley and Sons. This is her fifth published work.

A graduate of DePauw University, she succumbed to the restaurant business in Denver, Colorado while applying to law school. She rapidly rose to management at such regional and national chains as The Italian Fisherman, Don Pablo’s Mexican Kitchen, and Romano’s Macaroni Grill. She orchestrated the openings of 15 new restaurants and developed the training, procedural, and purchasing systems that were used as the gold standard in numerous concepts throughout her tenure. She currently lives in Missouri with her husband, co-author Andrew Dismore, and their daughters who are her first loves, inspiration, and never-ending source of new material.

Andrew G Dismore, one of the catering industry’s premier chefs, joined the food service marketing agency Noble & Associates in 2003 after amassing critical success and national recognition as Corporate Executive Chef/General Manager of Chicago’s uber-posh Calihan Catering, Inc.

In a career spanning some 15 years, Dismore has amassed an expertise in the catering field few can rival. His experiences are a study in dramatic contrast. He has prepared seated dinners for over 10,000 guests, designed highly profitable operations that have fed over 200,000 diners in three weeks, overseen the execution of over 2,500 events annually, and directed the culinary operations for such mega-volume events as the Indianapolis 500, The Brickyard 400, The NCAA Final Four, The RCA Tennis Championships, and Formula One. He has participated in over 20 openings and has independently designed 12 new food service concepts. Yet he has catered intimate events for many of the world's social, political, and culinary elite.

Carol Godsmark was smitten by restaurants and their culture at an early age having moved from Canada, aged eight, to Europe where she lived in a Communist hotel for six months and chomped her way through goulash, schnitzels, and *kapr na cerno*, Christmas carp with black sauce. She later advanced to lighter, rather more fabulous food, as she travelled the world, eating in all styles of restaurants and seeking out local markets.

Chef and owner of a classical French-influenced restaurant in Sussex which has had entries in *The Good Food Guide*, *The Michelin Guide*, and has gained two AA Rosettes, self-taught Carol turned to journalism after returning to college. She somehow became a restaurant critic, chef interviewer, and food writer for national and regional newspapers and magazines, and a restaurant consultant and teacher. She returned full circle as a chef educator in Eastern Europe, updating Polish chefs on lighter-style cooking techniques. Revenge is sweet.

Her books include *Starting and Running a Catering Business* and *Starting and Running a Successful Gastropub and Brasserie*. She edits *Savour*, the Guild of Food Writers' publication. When not cooking for friends and family, she plays an erratic violin with an amateur London orchestra, sings with the Portsmouth Festival Choir, and is mad about film of any genre. She travels extensively, trying to wrinkle out the best, small, family-owned restaurants along the way, never tiring of the thrill of the chase, the bonhommie, shared meals, and the conviction that simple is often best. She lives in West Sussex.

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Introduction

The restaurant business is an exciting one, full of challenges and opportunities. We're glad you're interested in finding out more about it, and you've definitely come to the right place to get started. Years ago, going out to eat was truly an event - reserved for weekends or special occasions. Today, however, even a Tuesday, just another day, can be an occasion to eat out, especially when busy careers and overloaded family schedules leave little time to cook. Fortunately, consumers have more restaurant choices than ever before. And opportunities in the industry have never been greater. This book can help you minimise the challenges and overcome the obstacles before they overcome you.

We've managed, worked, eaten, mopped floors, run bars, learned to repair equipment mid-shift on a Saturday night, hired, fired, trained, and checked stock in some of the best (and worst) restaurants in the world. We've worked in ultrafine dining, fast food, catering, and everything in between. We've worked dining rooms that sat 30 and catered events that fed 5,000 diners in a single day. Certainly, each of these situations is somewhat different, but many aspects of running a restaurant transcend restaurant size, location, or dining style and fall under the category of universal restaurant

truths. We do our best to bring all that information to you in this book.

Whether you're a seasoned restaurant veteran or just out of catering college, we believe that if you're reading this book, you have the *desire* to run a restaurant. After reading it, you should know if you have a *passion* for it - or what we sometimes call The Sickness.

About This Book

Success in the restaurant business is the dream of many and the achievement of a few. Often, would-be restaurateurs have misconceptions about what running a restaurant is really like. Some folks are quick to see the glitz and glamour without also having the opportunity to see the anxiety and effort that accompany it. Others have seen the business from the inside and are sure that they can do it better than the people they've worked for, without feeling the true weight and complexity of the tasks and decisions that face The Boss everyday. On the other side of the coin, you find people who could do very well in the restaurant business but stay out because of the horror stories they've heard.

We want you to see the full picture - the good, the bad, and the absurd - so that you can make an informed decision about your place in this business.

We wrote this book because no Ministry of Restaurant Operators exists to test your knowledge and skills on the open road to determine whether you have what it takes to get into the business. After you've read the pages between these gorgeous yellow and black covers, you'll have a good idea whether this is the racket for you - and the knowledge to get started on the right foot.

You can find plenty of books that tell you how to open a restaurant, but you won't find many about how to *keep* it open. This book does both. Why? Because even after opening day arrives, you can never stop improving your service, evaluating your product, scoping out the competition, or researching opportunities in the marketplace. Change is the only constant in the restaurant business. To succeed, you must anticipate and act on new trends, new pressures, and whatever else the market throws your way. The spoils go to those who see opportunities before they happen.

Please don't mistake our realism for cynicism. We want you to be in the business. But we're going to make sure that you have the information you need to be a success. We show you many everyday realities that people don't always consider, but should. We hope that you take the information and use it to be wildly successful. You can do this, but you have to look at this business the right way. If you do, save us a table!

Conventions Used in This Book

To help you navigate through this book, we use the following conventions:

- ✓ *Italic* is used for emphasis and to highlight new words or terms that are defined.
- ✓ **Bold** text is used to indicate keywords in bulleted lists or the action part of numbered steps.
- ✓ Monofont is used for Web addresses.
- ✓ Sidebars, which look like text enclosed in a shaded grey box, consist of information that's interesting to know but not necessarily critical to your understanding of the chapter or section topic.

Foolish Assumptions

Just as owners have to make assumptions about the customers who will be eating in their restaurants, authors have to make assumptions about their readers. If one or more of the following descriptions hits home, you've come to the right place.

- ✓ You're thinking about opening your own restaurant, and you want practical, how-to advice to accomplish your goals.

- ✓ You've worked in the business, and now you're thinking about getting in on the ownership or management end of things.
- ✓ You've never worked in a restaurant but you've met with success in other professional endeavours and possess skills that may be applicable to this business.
- ✓ You're fresh out of catering college and thinking about putting those skills to work in your own place.
- ✓ You buy every book that sports a yellow and black cover.
- ✓ You currently own or operate a restaurant, and you're seeking advice, tips, and suggestions to keep things running smoothly and successfully.

How This Book Is Organized

This book is organised into five separate parts. Here's what's on the menu.

Part I: Getting Started

In this part, we give you a crash course in the business, including tips for getting started, understanding your options, creating your concept and picking your name. We help you research the marketplace to determine whether your concept has a shot at success, and provide information on how customers approach the buying decision. We include a detailed timeline from idea to grand opening to get you up and running. We also help you decide whether you have what it takes to make it in the business.