

**Questions Posed by *Club Gourmet* Magazine  
To and Answered by  
Gregg Patterson, General Manager  
The Beach Club**

**1. Why have a food and beverage operation in a club?**

The food and beverage experience is integral to every club since the members are searching for an intimate dining environment where they are known and their needs, wants and expectations can receive the personal consideration they deserve; where they can experience an exceptional level of service and of culinary expertise; where they can socialize with their friends in a home like setting without the inconveniences associated with actually serving them at home; a place where they can “escape” the crush of personalities in a public setting; and a place where all of this can be accomplished while receiving great value for the goods and services provided. Food is both a necessity---a “commodity experience”---and an emotional bonding / reflective opportunity---an “intangible.” Both these issues are an integral to a successful club dining experience.

**2. With so many choices for consumers in terms of dining destinations and innovative concepts, how can a club food and beverage operation compete in today’s marketplace?**

Clubs compete not only on the food level but at a deeper emotional level. Members feel they have an “equity / ownership interest” in their club and, all other things being essentially equal, will choose to dine at their “own club” far more frequently than they would at any other commercial operation.

That said, making all other things “essentially equal” requires being tuned into the trends and dining experiences that have captured the imagination of the larger “eating out” community. Clubs have to satisfy a broad spectrum of members and the menu needs to reflect both “cutting edge” and “traditional” needs, wants and expectations. A successful club therefore blends the personality of the private club experience with the variety, presentation and creative thinking that characterizes the extraordinarily competitive dining scene in the surrounding community. The club chef must therefore be tuned into the contemporary hotel, restaurant and fast food experience and know how to blend those trends into the more conservative framework that characterizes most private clubs.

On top of which, the private club needs to accentuate the uniqueness of its facility---its appointments, its views and the like---to enhance the food and beverage experience. Blending a “non-fuddy / duddy” food concept with exceptional surroundings, and dramatizing that pairing to the membership, helps attract and inspire member participation.

In addition, the club attracts diners by providing “value added” opportunities. We often have specialty kids events to attract families; we have a “Great Speaker” series that engages the older crowd; and we feature special events, such as Opera Caberet, that attract a diverse group to the “pre theatre” dining experience. An active “value added” set of programs fills Bistro and Dining Room seats on a regular basis.

**3. How often is your dining facility open for business? Do you feel it should be open more hours or less?**

In the summer months, which is our busy season, the Grill (which is for our most casual diners) is open seven days a week from 10a.m. to 5p.m.; on Sunday evening the Grill stays open until 8:00 p.m.; the Bistro (which is a casual tablecloth environment which serve a menu similar to that in the main dining room but with a distinctly different ambiance) is open for lunch on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 11:00 to 2:30; for brunch on Sundays from 11:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.; for dinner on Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.; the Bar Bistro (which is a uniquely casual “sports bar” type of

location) is open for the same hours as the regular Bistro; and the Dining Room (which is our most formal space and in which the “ritual of dining” is most pronounced) is open for dinner on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday evenings from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m

In the off-season, everything remains the same except for the Grill which is closed Mondays and Tuesdays and is not open after 5:00 p.m. on Sunday evenings.

#### **4. How do you meet the needs of such a diverse dining demographic?**

Each “dining demographic” has need for different dining opportunities at different times during the year. Therefore, we deal in a great deal of “cross over opportunities” that our dining options, as outlined in Question #3 above, are positioned to satisfy.

Families love the casual Bistro environment where kids are entertained and a specialty “Kids Buffet” is available. The entertainments we offer them are appreciated, freeing the young families up to focus on their friends during dinner.

The Bar Bistro attracts that elusive 21-35 year old group who want a crowded, convivial social setting with little of the formality. The prices and the ambiance and the “opportunities” are right for that particular age group.

The Dining Room offers a quieter, more formal opportunity where guest can gather and debate life’s great issues without interference from others. The very formality defines the relationships that flourish in that environment. Yet there are special occasions during the year when the entire family will dress up and dine as a group in this more formal, and dignified, setting.

The Grill is very casual where great tasting, inexpensive “comfort food” is available to the casually dressed or the casually inclined. The Grill is our true “universal solvent” where people of all ages and inclinations can gather without conflict and can interact smoothly. Convivial, extremely casual “thinking” allow everyone to blend in nicely without developing a “rules mentality.” Self order, self serve, paper plates and plastic “silverware” and very reasonable prices, served in a unique setting with immediate access to beach front seating all guarantee that on any given day you will see businessmen in suits, grandmothers with their grand kids, teens in bikinis and bridge players having a “training meal” all eating, talking and interacting together. A true “universal solvent” for the membership and a location that satisfies not only the need for “the tangibles” (food) but for the “intangibles” (tribal bonding) that are at the very heart of the club dining experience.