



September 12, 2007

## Featured Article of the Week

### Casual Chic Shakes Up The Kitchen

In 1982, Wolfgang Puck opened his now-famous restaurant Spago in West Hollywood. It didn't take long for this elegant-yet-casual space to become a Hollywood hot spot; the menu featured high-quality ingredients that were beautifully presented, and focused on Mr. Puck's unique California-flavored concoctions influenced by a mix of various ethnic cuisines, from American to Mexican to Asian.

By the time Spago became a Hollywood staple, the dot-com boom was re-shaping the American work place. 'Casual Friday' evolved into 'business casual' and even after the dot-com bubble burst office workers kept the new dress code. Suits were out, and casual dress was in. Naturally, restaurants found themselves needing to address this trend as well—hence the rise of "casual-chic" dining.

We are dining out more than ever before, and our collective culinary IQ is rising. Americans are now savvy culinary consumers. Not surprisingly, the restaurant industry now has over \$1.4 billion in annual sales and is second only to the US Government in size and scope.

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