

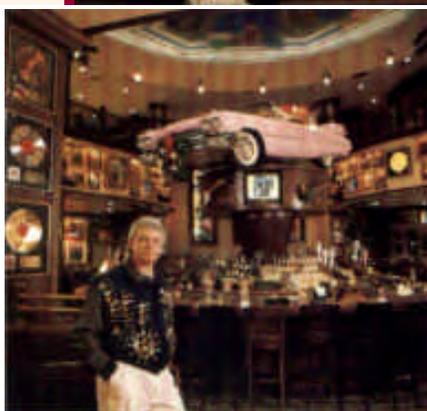
# Hard Rockin' Cafe

**Three high-tech, food-safe kitchens power Orlando's new 90,000-sq.-ft. Hard Rock Cafe, billed as the world's largest theme restaurant.**

*By Emily Pacifico*

**I**t's been 27 years since Hard Rock Cafe, venerable pioneer of "eatertainment," first opened its doors an ocean away in Great Britain. How, stateside in the fun and sun capital of Orlando, Fla., where leisure attractions abound and "theme" is the operative work, the Hard Rock Cafe at Universal Studios, CityWalk is taking eatertainment to the next level.

Yes, theme and sheer showmanship are still the most obvious draw at the newly opened flagship. Even if you're not a devotee of the rock and roll genre, you have to appreciate the surreal whimsy of a pink Elvis-era Cadillac convertible protruding from Hard Rock Orlando's exterior, not to mention its equally life-size counterpart rotating atop the round bar just inside the front doors. These things definitely get your attention. But while sights like those remain de rigueur for Hard Rock Cafes around the world, there's ...



*Of course Hard Rock Cafe is known for showmanship. But behind the scenes at the company's flagship, you'll find the latest in HACCP-think, courtesy of Tom Galvin, FCSI, manager of purchasing and food facilities design.*

more to the latest Hard Rock — in both its phenomenal size and its intensified emphasis on kitchen performance, speed and food safety.

### Hard (Rock) Numbers

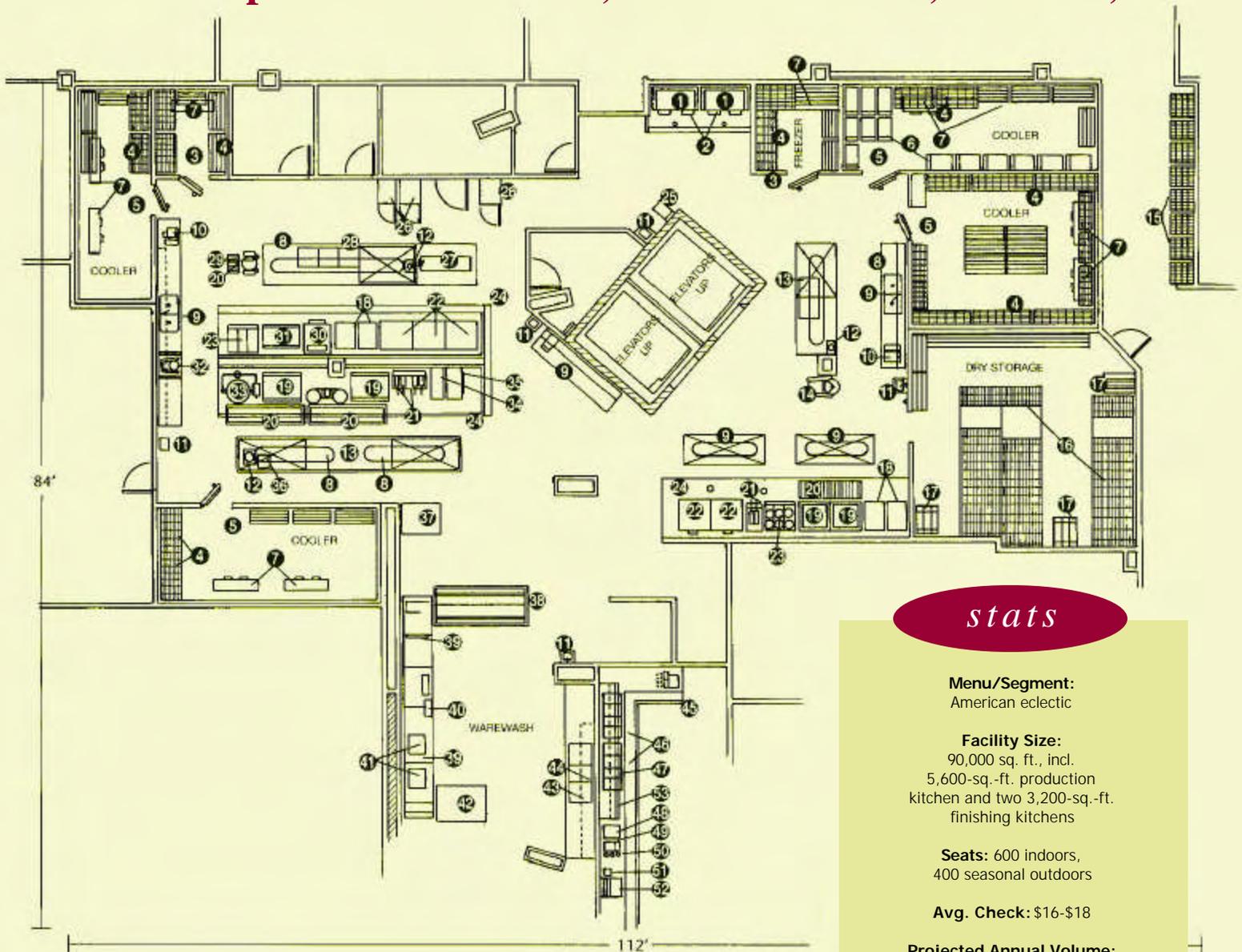
First, yes, the massive size. The goal here was to build a big 'un, for sure. A huge restaurant would be in order in any case to suit the huge traffic at a destination like Orlando in general,

and the CityWalk in particular. But the vision wouldn't end there. Hard Rock execs decided the same site also would house Hard Rock Live, a 40,000-sq.-ft., 2,200-seat amphitheater adjacent to the restaurant that would feature live music nightly. Also part of the amphitheater, a private reception room for up to 900 guests, and opportunities for VIP parties in the lounge and observation deck areas. All of

which would be catered by said large restaurant.

Such traffic volume dictated substantial space, and traffic complexity made it clear early in the conceptual stages that multiple kitchens would be necessary. The result you see here is a three-kitchened, three-leveled extravaganza. At 90,000 sq. ft. overall, including catering staging space for the amphitheater, the new restaurant dwarfs the typical 8,500-sq.-ft.

## *b*asement production kitchen, Hard Rock Cafe, Orlando, Fla.



### *stats*

**Menu/Segment:**  
American eclectic

**Facility Size:**  
90,000 sq. ft., incl.  
5,600-sq.-ft. production  
kitchen and two 3,200-sq.-ft.  
finishing kitchens

**Seats:** 600 indoors,  
400 seasonal outdoors

**Avg. Check:** \$16-\$18

**Projected Annual Volume:**  
\$80-\$100 million,  
incl. merchandise

**Kitchen Equipment Cost:**  
3 kitchens, \$1.5 million, incl. hoods  
and fans, excl. ducting

## equipment

- 1 Hoshizaki ice makers
- 2 Follett ice bins
- 3 Kolpak walk-in freezer
- 4 InterMetro cooler/freezer shelving
- 5 Kolpak walk-in coolers
- 6 Seco mobile plan racks
- 7 OmniTemp evap coils
- 8 Dito Dean lettuce spinners
- 9 (fab.) stainless steel work tables
- 10 Hobart slicer
- 11 Seco hand sinks
- 12 Robot Coupe food processor
- 13 (fab.) stainless work tables w/ sinks
- 14 Hobart 60-qt. mixer
- 15 (vendor) soda system
- 16 InterMetro dry storage shelving
- 17 Seco mobile can racks
- 18 Cleveland 2-comp. steamer
- 19 Cleveland 30-gal. tilt skillets w/ fauc.
- 20 (fab.) floor troughs
- 21 Keating fryer
- 22 Southbend stacked conv. ovens
- 23 Montague 6-burner range
- 24 Captive-Aire exh. sys. / fire supp.
- 25 Detecto receiving scale
- 26 Alto-Shaam cook-hold-smokers
- 27 (fab.) bain marie w/ heater
- 28 (fab.) stainless prep table w/ shelf
- 29 Hobart vertical cutter mixer
- 30 Southbend infrared broiler
- 31 Montague charbroiler
- 32 Hobart 20-qt. mixer
- 33 Groen 60-gal. steam jacketed kettle
- 34 (future) pasta cooker
- 35 (future) pasta shock tank
- 36 Hollymatic vacuum packer
- 37 Traulsen blast chiller
- 38 (fab.) scrapping table
- 39 (fab.) condensate exhaust ducting
- 40 Hobart warewasher
- 41 Hatco booster heater
- 42 (fab.) clean dishtable
- 43 (fab.) 3-compartment sink
- 44 T&S prerinse faucet
- 45 (fab.) serving line
- 46 APW/Wyott 4-well hot serving unit
- 47 (fab.) sneeze guard
- 48 Amana microwave
- 49 (vendor) iced tea brewer/dispenser
- 50 (vendor) coffee brewer
- 51 (vendor) coffee grinder
- 52 (vendor) soda dispenser
- 53 Atlas Met. Ind. 4-well cold serv. unit

### Not shown

- T&S faucets
- Dormont gas connectors
- Perlick beer system & power pack

Fabricated custom pieces manufactured by Florida Stainless.

Hard Rock Cafe unit. Its back of house, at a staggering 12,000 sq. ft., is nearly four times the average Hard Rock's 3,200sq. ft. The new unit's production kitchen alone totals a generous 5,600 sq. ft. of basement space, and the twin finishing kitchens on the first and second levels are 3,200 sq. ft. each.

The Orlando store's seating capacity is more than 600 inside, and can creep up to 1,000 seats when outdoor and deck seating opens up. Remember, that's just the café, without taking into account the live performance venue next door.

## Show Me The Money

Of the 100 Hard Rock Cafes worldwide, a typical food and beverage check runs anywhere from \$12 to \$18, depending on the location and the economy. Hard Rock Orlando runs somewhere around the high end of the range, and the unprecedented volume, seating capacity, and catering opportunities should easily make it a top performer in the Hard Rock stable.

Like all self-respecting theme venues, all Hard Rock stores dedicate a certain percentage of square footage to much-in-demand merchandising. And with good reason—merchandising represents a whopping 50% of therevenues of Hard Rock Cafes across the globe (raise your hand here if you're currently in possession of a well worn and tissue-thin Hard Rock Cafe T-shirt). But since the Orlando store will include the banquet/catering aspect of Hard Rock Live, the food and beverage revenue from that one store may significantly alter the usual 50/50 balance.

The revenue target? Although the store just opened in December, and a sales history doesn't exist yet, the megastore is expected to hit an impressive \$80 to \$100 million annually, including retail merchandise. Any way you slice it, that's a whole lot of burgers and T-shirts. In that context, the hefty kitchen package looks like a drop in the bucket at a "mere" \$1.5 million, including ventilation.

## Slashing Ticket Times

So against this backdrop, how does it all work? Quite well so far, according to Tom Galvin, FCSJ. As manager of purchasing and food facil-

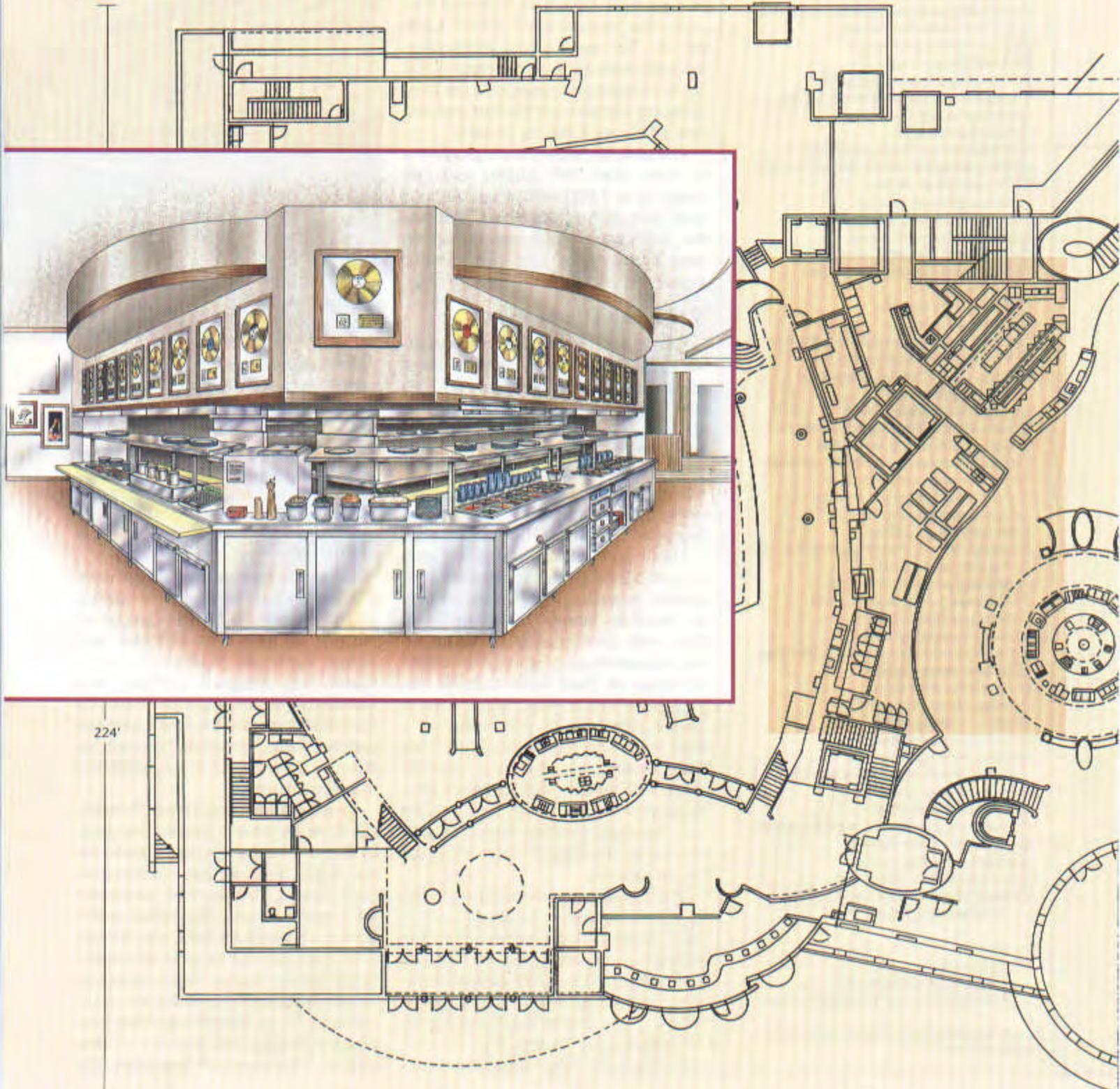


*The L-shaped custom refrigerated chef's table, 5' wide and more than 30' in length, is decked out to move big volume quickly. Decor up top*

ities and design for Hard Rock Cafe Int'l., Galvin has designed kitchens and specified equipment for more than 25 Hard Rocks around the world over the past two years, including this one. He says the newest store is a synthesis of that experience.

Speed, among other things, benefits significantly. One of the primary goals in the new store was to improve on the ticket times of the old Orlando unit, he says. The old store, hampered by congestion and obstructed traffic flow in its single kitchen, was chronically plagued with lengthy 45-minute ticket times. Delays killed turnover, which dragged on revenues, etc. So in the new design, improving ticket time was an obvious goal, but not all that easy in a two-story configuration. The solution, from a food-quality and quick-service standpoint, was to have a complete finishing kitchen on both levels, and let a production kitchen in the basement handle all the prep.

*f*irst floor finishing kitchen, Hard Rock Cafe, Orlando, Fla.



**FINISHING KITCHEN**

**Storage**

Kolpak walk-in cooler  
InterMetro cooler shelving  
OmniTemp evap coil

**Kitchen & Service**

APW/Wyott cheesemelter  
APW/Wyott heated tables  
(fab.) stainless work tables  
Alto-Shaam drawer warmers  
Captive-Aire exhaust system/ fire suppression  
(fab.) wall shelving  
Southbend infrared broiler  
Keating fryers  
BECA refrig. base griddles  
Montague charbroiler  
Montague griddle  
KaiRak center chef's table  
Marshall Air heat lamps  
Montague 4-brnr. range  
Infra ticket holders  
KaiRak chef's table  
KaiRak stainless pass-through shelf  
Amana Microwave  
Alto-Shaam heated holding cabinets  
APW/Wyott toaster  
Coldelite whipper  
Vita-Mix blender

**Beverage Counter**

(fab.) counter  
(not in contract) POS system  
Victory undercounter refrigeration  
(vendor) coffee brewer, blender and tea brewer  
(vendor) soda system

FWE heated banquet carts

**Warewash**

(fab.) soiled dish table  
T&S prerinse  
(fab.) exhaust fan/ducting  
Hobart warewasher  
(fab.) clean dish table

**Throughout / Other**

Alto-Shaam heated holding cabinets  
(fab.) mobile setup tables  
Seco hand sinks  
Amana Microwaves  
(fab.) 3-comp. sink  
Hoshizaki ice makers  
Follett ice bins

**Bar Areas**

Bar Maid brush glasswasher  
BECA filler sections  
BECA drain boards  
Perlick beer towers  
Brass and Stainless bar rails  
BECA ice chest  
(not in contract) POS system  
BECA blending stations  
(vendor) soda guns  
BECA frosters  
Wilch margarita machine  
BECA back bar refrigerator  
Vita-Mix blenders  
BECA bar sink

*Not shown:*

T&S faucets  
Dormont gas disconnects

The tri-kitchen setup would have its upfront costs, yes, but it would get the job done, improve quality, and more than cover itself in increased throughput. Says Galvin, "The day after they opened the new store, ticket times were averaging 12 to 14 minutes."

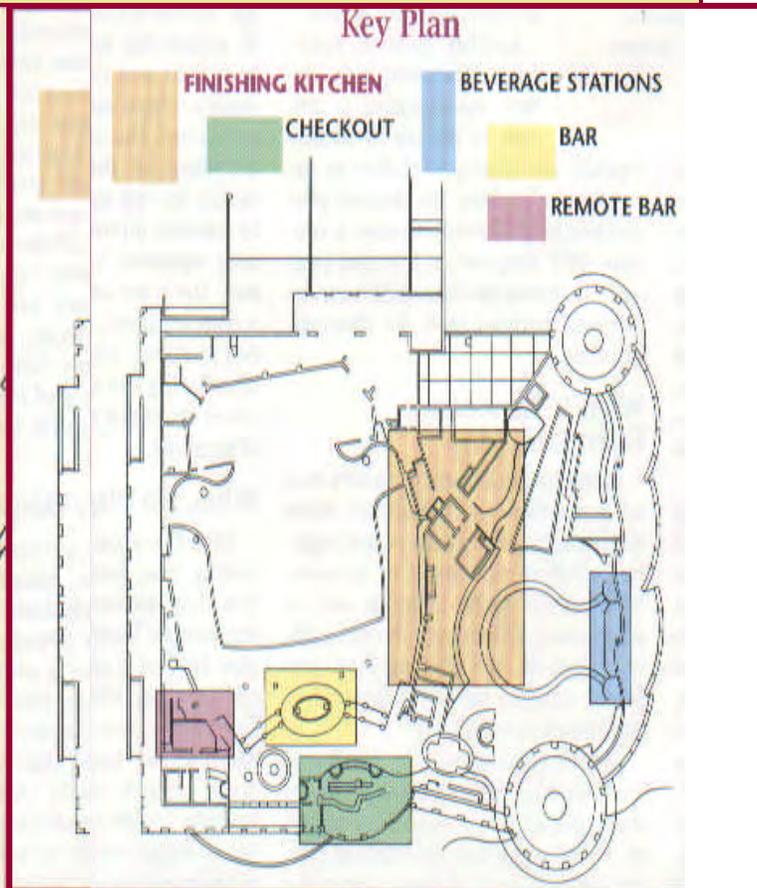
**Three Levels, HACCP-Happy Elevators**

The multiple kitchen concept solved some problems, but it wasn't without its own challenges, not the least of which was the basement location for the production kitchen. "First of all," says Galvin, "you don't see many basements in Florida, for obvious reasons, much less a basement kitchen. It's not exactly traditional from a design standpoint, but a dedicated space to maximize volume output was needed to handle the extreme demands of the café plus catering."

Once Florida's natural soggy was overcome (an intricate series of "French" drains and water pumps were step number one to ensure dryness), a full-blown, 24-hour daily production kitchen began taking shape. With Hard Rock's emphasis on fresh and "scratch" preparation, supplies are delivered everyday and moved from the first floor dock to the basement prep kitchen on elevators. Spacious and well organized, this kitchen takes a page from hotel or big institutional layouts and is fully equipped to handle formidable volume. Like the finishing kitchens on the upper levels, the area is divided into work zones to ease traffic congestion and save steps for the prep staff.

**Blast Chill, Retherm**

Once prepared (varying doneness, allowing for finishing later), products are portioned in vacuum packs, blast





*In a 90,000-sq.-ft. layout, ice transport is a big deal. Here, ice machines straddle wheeled carts carrying totes. A chute system means no-hands, no scoop handling.*

chilled, and stored or directly rethermed in the tilting skillets as needed, to be delivered to the finishing kitchens via a dedicated "food only" elevator. The usual debates about elevators vs. dumb waiters were considered, but volume potential tilted toward full elevators. A separate elevator is provided for trash removal--another safeguard against potential cross contamination. Worthy of note here are a couple of pieces of equipment Galvin considers indispensable in any production kitchen. In terms of volume and safety, he says the blast chiller is key to the operation, and the vacuum packager speeds the entire process. Galvin adds, "It not only saves time, but makes retherm and transport of product easier as well as decreasing food safety risk." Since each of the three kitchens has its own dishwasher, the need to transport soiled dishes (and the attendant mess and breakage of doing so) is eliminated.

Food safety has always been of paramount importance at Hard Rock, and the Orlando store has invested in some unique, if not inexpensive, equipment to ensure consumer safety. Separate elevators for trash and food are just the beginning. Since product is only as safe as the person handling it, hand wash stations proliferate in all three kitchens. Galvin notes that providing numerous sinks is only half the battle, realizing you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him wash his hooves, so to speak. Still, it's a necessary half. The production kitchen itself gets five hand sinks; the finishing kitchens get three apiece. Another element essential to food safety, temperature maintenance is evident in the use of technologically advanced pan chillers in the

custom chef's tables. The recessed pans and refrigerated dividers assure a constant 400F temperature for open pans and the drawer modules below can be removed, without tools, for thorough cleaning.

## What If Tomorrow's Different?

In the restaurant world, today's best seller can turn into tomorrow's white elephant, leaving expensive and highly specialized equipment in its wake. With an eye to flexibility as well as adaptability, Galvin built in extra utility outlets on the cooking lines and placed stainless steel work tables over the capped outlets. "At any given time down the road, if an additional piece of cooking equipment, like a fryer or whatever, needs to be added to the line, the staff can simply remove the work table, uncap the outlets and drop in the piece of equipment," he says.

Also, the hoods are elongated to cover the capped utility space for the necessary venting of the additional piece. Equipment also has to be able to accommodate the quarterly menu changes of the restaurant, as well as adjust to the ebb and flow of seasonal demands and day-to-day variables. Although the kitchens are equipped for peak volume output, equipment can be shut down when the demand is slow without disrupting traffic flow or ticket times.

## An Ice Solution

While the production kitchen hums away in the basement, finishing kitchens on the first and second floor bring it all together. Since beverage is an equal partner in the F&B equation, the extreme demand and physical size of the Orlando store called for speedy and sanitary delivery of ice to the numerous beverage stations throughout the restaurant. To accomplish this, all three kitchens have their own ice dispensing stations using a unique and labor-saving delivery system. The ice machines and bins are raised off the floor, straddling a mobile ice cart equipped with totes to be wheeled underneath. Using a manually operated "chute and gate" system, the totes are filled with ice (no scoops required), and wheeled to various locations. Not only is the system labor saving and sanitary, but it also receives the much coveted OSHA stamp of approval.

## What, No Display?

With the exception of the banquet staging area, located adjacent to the first floor kitchen, the two finishing kitchens are identical. Neither is a display kitchen, a conscious decision. As Galvin notes, the broad vacation-fare type menu doesn't lend itself to particularly showy kitchenwork, and Hard Rock doesn't want the finishing kitchens competing with the elaborate decor visible everywhere else in the restaurant anyway.

Functionally, the cooking line is a study in logical progression and "work-horse quality" equipment, with the refrigeration under the griddle receiving special mention for its NSF 7-compliant drain plug configuration. Flow of product is neatly maintained with the zoning, and even at peak hours separate pickup stations for different items facilitate a smooth progression from kitchen to table.

## Turn Up The Heat And Chill That Pan

Behind the cooking line stand the shining stars of the finishing kitchens, the custom chef's tables with state-of-the-art pan chilling systems and high tech heat lamps. While most kitchens have a single chef's table with access from both the cooking side and server side, the projected volume once again dictated a departure from the norm. Between the cooking line and the main chef's table in these kitchens sits a center table with dual-side access. Not only does this island allow for accessible and temperature-controlled products on the surface, it also provides additional heated and refrigerated storage underneath, reducing the number of trips necessary to replenish the line from the walk-in cooler. By creating the necessary workspace for an extra layer of finishing staff to add sauces, etc., cooks on the line can maximize output and minimize steps. Although Galvin custom-configured the tables here because of the expected high demand at the Orlando store the good news is that the technology that makes them unusually efficient is available in standard products. "They've been able to maintain a consistent 40°F temperature because the pans in the chef's tables are recessed and the dividers between are refrigerated," explains Galvin. "The openings accommodate third-, sixth-, or ninth-size pans, giving them the menu flexibility they had to have." The automatic defrost feature is on a built-in

timer--no need to rely on memory--clean. As an added bonus, the recessed coil in the base of the unit is mounted at the back wall allowing for additional storage capability underneath" something there never seems to be enough of in any operation. That's just the cold story. While keeping the cold food cold, what happens to the hot? Can you say infrared heat lamps? New, "black-faced" heater panel lamps are located on the overself and built into openings at various locations on the tables. These high-tech heat lamps radiate even heat over a large area without heating up the surrounding air, of particular importance for a chef's table, where cold battling hot can translate to lukewarm everything. The short-wave infrared technology does a good job of penetrating food without robbing it of moisture and, because the heat is spread out evenly, the heater panel is expected to have a longer life than standard heating elements. Galvin sees a distinct advantage to the remote location of the illuminated on-off switches for the lamps, as well. Placed near the kitchen exit, he says it's impossible for the last worker out not to notice if a lamp has been left on.



*Above, ample under-counter refrigeration saves steps, while a vacuum packager (L) in the production kitchen adds food safety to easy handling.*

## If You Build It, Will They Come?

So, with all the technology and operational systems in place, Hard Rock Cafe still places primary importance on serving its customers with quality food and timely service. Says Galvin, "Most of Hard Rock Cafes, customers are one-time-only tourists, with the exception of a few of the smaller city locations where repeat business is a factor." Still, is the Orlando store's foray into the world of catering to live theater likely to attract its share of regular customers? They're not making any predictions at this point, but one thing is for certain. Whether you're in Orlando to see the Mouse or hear some music, Hard Rock Orlando aims to give you the best burger in town within 14 minutes.



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