

Snippets from Queensland

Happy blogging

Blogging offers too many marketing opportunities for your business not to be doing it. Ken Burgin has some tips on getting started.



THERE'S ENDLESS curiosity about the secrets and inside stories of the hospitality industry — just another part of the *Masterchef* phenomenon. Why not start an online diary to share some of yours? Linking an interesting, chatty web-diary to your website gives people more reasons to visit, and also boosts the interest of search engines like Google and Yahoo.

A web-diary is also called a weblog or 'blog' — it's a noun and a verb. When you blog you add content to the diary. A website puts a face to your business, and a blog updates and adds detail to your story. You may have attempted a newsletter and found it hard going. Here's the alternative. It's quicker, simpler and online where people can easily find it.

A blog also cuts out delays in promoting your latest news, special deals and hot offers. It's the personal voice the media looks for when sifting through the 'same old' restaurant websites. You can also cut out the 'web guy' as the only one who can update website content.

You can start blogging right now with the free Posterous service — go to posterous.com and sign up. Posterous is great because it's so simple: updates can be done by email, on the site or from your mobile phone. Start with shared moments like food out of the oven, customers having a good time, the barista hard at work or one of those regular funny events in hospital-

ity life. As you build confidence, daily updates will be easy. When you set up with Posterous, you are given an email address where you send the updates — the Subject line of the email becomes the blog title, and the content might be a picture or a few sentences. Photos are the easiest to add and can be almost the complete contents of your blog, making it much like a magazine. If you want to push content through to your Twitter account and Facebook page, they can be linked together so the blog title will turn into a Twitter entry, automatically including a link back to the relevant entry. For inspiration, see the Posterous blogs from Capital Wines (capitalwines.posterous.com), Sydney's Café Bido (cafebido.posterous.com) and the one I keep at kenburgin.posterous.com

There's no shortage of topics to share: attach a copy of your

menu to an emailed update, and a download link is automatically created. If you find a good YouTube video just email a link to it and it will be automatically 'embedded' on the blog. Or if you've recorded some video with your phone or camera, email the file and it will appear in a player on your blog. When you add light-hearted information like this, alternate it with updates of a more serious nature. Then the blog won't be just about selling or announcements and is much more readable. Check out the box below for a few more ideas.

Once you're in the swing of blogging, you'll find there's no end of content ideas.

Ken Burgin is a leading hospitality industry consultant. For more information visit profitablehospitality.com or call 1800 001 353.

Ideas to blog by

- What would you like to see in next season's menu?
- Our favourite events coming up over the next few months.
- Ten tips to make your next group booking or function a success.
- Special coupons and offers for the next two weeks.
- A little bit about us.
- Photos we found in the album. Where are these people now?
- A walk in our neighbourhood - places you may not know about.
- What it's like to work for our company — feedback from a staff member.
- The charities and causes we support, and why.
- Promoting a job vacancy (and the blog gives a much wider view of the business than most advertisements).
- How we handle online comments and reviews, with examples.
- Meet the local supplier of a product you enjoy.
- Profile of a favourite customer.
- We have staff from these 22 countries.
- Travel plans of our staff — what they're doing in the next 6 months.
- How energy-saving equipment saved us \$20,000.
- Favourite cook books our chefs have read lately.
- The store manager's favourite cocktail and why.
- Cooking terms defined.
- What some customers from Germany recently told us about the business.
- Make friends with us on Facebook and Twitter - here's how.
- Best excuses of why customers were late for a booking.



Faye Tabet
Founder of Food Circus



MLA – QLD

The MLA Master Apprentice Program finals were held at Gold Coast TAFE, Visions Restaurant. The products from the MLA Master Piece Program were the highlights in 2010 and the winner was Patricia Till - Jupiter's Training College.

Success for New Restaurants

Award winning Chef, Daniel Ridgeway's "Little Truffle" opened late July and has been packed to the rafters ever since. Enthusiastic diners have likened the food and décor equal to dining Melbourne.

Moo Moos owners have been very busy, opening their two new ventures. One in Brisbane and the other OS on Denarau Island, Fiji. That means they now have 3 successful restaurants up their sleeves.

Sofitel Brisbane's Prive' 249 has been hosting some amazing chefs from around Australia. One recent Chef was Alain Fabregues from Western Australia, and I was one of the lucky one to experience his exquisite cuisine. His latest book DEGUSTATION — a Master Chef's Life through Menus is a must in ones culinary library.

Moving On -

Chef Romain Bapst has moved on from Brisbane's, IL Centro, after being at the helm for more than a decade. Watch this space he is not moving too far.

The Titanium Bar Executive Chef, Chris McIntyre has moved off shore and can be found at The Atlantis Palm Hotel — Dubai. Chris has only been there a minute and has already been promoted to Executive Sous Chef. Well done Chris.

The whisper is Jupiter's Casino Gold Coast is awaiting the arrival of their new exec chef who we have heard hails from Dubai.

Guess who celebrated his 50th in September whilst riding his Harley from Cairns to Cape York. Yes. Folks, it was our favourite "THE CHEF" aka Michael Fletcher.

HOT NEWS

The Gold Coast Food and Wine Show to be held at the end of January will have some exciting new events in 2011. One such event is a Silver Service/White Gloved cuisine experience for those Lovers of The art of Fine Dining.

The Australian Culinary Foundation — Gold Coast Branch has just hosted the 2010 International Secondary School Challenge. Schools from Japan, Taiwan, New Zealand, New Caledonia and Tahiti, plus two teams from Australia vied for the coveted award of the South East Asia rim. This year's culinary competition was won by Taiwan.

See you in the next issue, Happy Dining

Faye Tabet
Food Ambassador for Queensland