

## **Chicago: a true insight and inspiration to the hospitality industry**

After winning a place on the Profitable Hospitality Study Tour to the NRA Show in Chicago last May, courtesy of Restaurant & Catering Australia Magazine, I returned home inspired and motivated. This exhilarating experience offered many insights, and observations, which gave me the courage to open a second restaurant. It also reinvigorated my passion and love for the food industry.

The tour attracted people who are at the pulse of the industry and are keen to indulge in the inspirational insights of the hospitality US market. We literally 'taste tested' the industry and saw how modern restaurants, bars and venues really operate.

I had one of the most amazing experiences imaginable. This trip was a fabulous networking opportunity, gave incredible insight into 'back of house', showing how things are done with new equipment, learning about effective processes in order to achieve great results and improved productivity. At every corner and through every restaurant doorway there were ideas, inspiration, and motivation to up the ante on my return home.

Although we met on the other side of the world, the mix of hospitality backgrounds, wealth of experience, and different perspectives of my fellow travellers was fantastic. The chance to share experiences and be inspired by the initiatives and successes of others was a highlight for all.

Attending some of the sixty plus educational seminars on offer was another plus.

"On the menu: What's Hot, What's Not and What's Next" was one of the most popular educational sessions during the show. New menu trends were identified: flavorful foods; ethnic adventures; healthy perceptions; contemporary comfort; convenient options; affordable indulgence; and culinary fingerprints. Presenter Nancy Kruse also confirmed that travel is playing more of an important role in the consumers' culinary journey. Ken Burgin of Profitable Hospitality has also long said it pays to get out of the kitchen, and out of your own country. It seems the New Trends Study Tour is at the forefront!

The 2008 Profitable Hospitality Tour to Chicago and Las Vegas – its fifth year - will be another opportunity to discover the latest trends, socialise and network with smart Australian operators, and see some of the best the US has on offer. While Australians don't follow blindly, American food service is usually the place to find how to do it faster, smarter and with a good deal of success. This is also the chance as a customer and behind-the-scenes to see what we do so well here in Australia, and how we can do it even better.

Many thanks to Profitable Hospitality and Restaurant and Catering Australia in general, and in particular to Ken, Marilyn and Amy for being such great hosts, ensuring this was truly an experience of a lifetime.

**Olivier Normandin, Chez Olivier, Melbourne Victoria**

For more information on 2008 tour visit [www.profitablehospitality.com](http://www.profitablehospitality.com)