

# Restaurant 101: The ins and outs of business

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Many people look at the restaurant business as the most glamorous business in the world...greeting people with a handshake or a hug, going from table to table discussing wine and food, relaxing with customers

I don't think that there are many people that don't express the desire to own a restaurant in their lifetime.

after dinner and having a cocktail to relax before going home to bed. If only it was that easy!

The fatality rate of new restaurants is 80 percent, and there are many good reasons for that statistic. So many questions cross people's minds regarding what goes on behind the scenes and many people have questions on the other side of the spectrum...what should I expect from the restaurants that I frequent?

I'm going to attempt a monthly column answering many of those questions. I'm a long-time restaurateur of 20 glorious years and I've got stories and

ideas that many of you will agree with and vehemently disagree with.

I'll cover topics such as tipping, returning dishes, new trends in the food market, wines, reservation policies and share stories with you that will make you laugh or make you say: "This guy must be an idiot!" I will also welcome any questions or comments that you might have.

This week I'll start by dealing with a very disputed subject - tipping on wine during dinner.

Many people feel that bottled wine should be excluded when calculating a gratuity. Please explain to me where this ludicrous philosophy began. I admit that there are exceptions, but serving wine properly during

dinner is much more difficult and time consuming than serving the dinner itself.

If done properly, after a wine is chosen, the server must retrieve the bottle, present the bottle to the client and open the bottle with grace and subtlety. Next, the cork should be presented and after getting an approval, the server must pour a taste for the person choosing the wine. Finally, the wine can then be served. In the case of a chilled wine, a wine bucket has to be obtained. A very astute server will then make sure that all glasses do NOT remain empty! WOW, are you kidding me? That's a lot of work to do without being compensated.

Next time you order a bottle of wine, be aware of what goes on

around you. If your server just plops a bottle down and says "enjoy," then pass on the gratuity. But, if the presentation is commendable, think twice about how much work and expertise you have just witnessed and how it has just enhanced your dining experience.

I hope you will check out my next column, and remember, your questions and comments are welcome.

Bon appetit!

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