

# Innovative offerings key to f&b strategy at the Platinum Hotel

BY CATHY URELL

LAS VEGAS— The new Platinum Hotel & Spa is striving to be different in almost every aspect of its operation, including its food & beverage department.

Robert De La Rosa, food & beverage manager for the 255-suite condo hotel, which opened here in November, explained the unconventional approach. "It's very challenging to operate in a market that has so many options. Our goal is to offer the most innovative cuisine and a strong cocktail program, and to complement that with great service and ambiance," De La Rosa said.

Guests at the hotel can dine at The Restaurant at Platinum; have a light meal and drinks at STIR, a lobby level café and lounge; or take advantage of 24-hour in-room dining. The non-gaming, non-smoking property, which is owned and managed by Milwaukee-based Marcus Hotels & Resorts, also has a rooftop catering space for special events.

Under the direction of executive chef Brenton Hammer, The Restaurant features "edgy American cuisine" with classic dishes presented in unexpected ways, De La Rosa said. For example, the breakfast menu offers Green Eggs and Ham, which consists of mascarpone and pesto scrambled eggs with smoked ham. A selection on the lunch menu is a turkey club sandwich on basil-pecan waffles; and for dinner, there is South Dakota bison encased in a thin layer of caramel.

Noting that Hammer is "prodigiously talented," De La Rosa said, "he incorporates a wide array of flavors and profiles and

does things differently. For example, he steers away from dense, heavy sauces in favor of foams."

But noting that the hotel's owner is "a conservative Milwaukee company," he said, "We want to offer high-end product that is approachable and accessible."

One concept that is proving popular is micro plates where guests can order samplings of various dishes. "It allows the guest to be more experimental and not have to commit to one entrée," De La Rosa noted.

STIR also offers a variety of small plates, he added, as well as classic and signature cocktails such as the Platinum Moscow Mule made from Stolichnaya vodka, ginger ale and lime.

The Platinum's wine list includes 170 selections with 30

wines offered by the glass.

The average size of a dinner check at The Restaurant runs from \$60 to \$85 per person for a traditional meal while for those ordering tasting dishes with wine, the check is likely to be around \$125 per person.

At STIR, the average breakfast check is less than \$10. In the evening, the average check for cocktails is about \$25 per person.

Since opening, much of the clientele visiting The Restaurant



The Restaurant at Platinum (above) offers classic dishes prepared in unusual ways. The bar area (right) within the Restaurant at Platinum.



noted. Located on the hotel's fifth floor, the interior features warm woods and a blue and silver color palette with a glass wall offering views of Las Vegas.

STIR has the feel of a casual café in the morning when it serves coffee, cappuccino and pastries, and a sophisticated lounge in the evening when the room's lighting and sound system change to complement the cocktails and appetizers that are served.

De La Rosa is looking to expand the clientele at both The Restaurant and STIR. "That will happen as we develop higher occupancy. We tend to

have a high capture ratio now for breakfast, dinner is more a local draw and lunch we're still building," he said. "Our biggest challenge is the Hughes Center across the street. It has the highest concentration of offices in Las Vegas, many of them attorneys, who are accustomed to going to Restaurant Row. We're trying to pull from there," he said.

"We also want to cater to the transient who comes back to Las Vegas every year," De La Rosa added. "One of the best things about Las Vegas is that people are very loyal. Locals attach themselves to a place and you can get the transients returning when they come to town."

Annual food & beverage revenues at The Platinum in the future "may be close to \$2 million, but it will depend on marketing efforts and occupancy levels," De La Rosa said.