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ANNIVERSARY

## SAN DIEGO STATE'S NEW HOME FIELD ADVANTAGE



Snapdragon stadium

BASHOR FIELD

Inside:

HOW TITLE IX  
CHANGED THE GAME

IMPACT: NEXTGEN

EXCELLENCE IN  
CONCESSIONS 2022

INSIDE IOWA'S  
FIELD OF DREAMS

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# EXCELLENCE IN CONCESSIONS AWARDS

FOOD SERVICE OPERATIONS FUEL THE LIVE EVENTS BUSINESS, SERVING AS A CRITICAL PIECE OF THE OVERALL FAN EXPERIENCE. WHILE THE POST-PANDEMIC WORLD GETS BACK ON ITS FEET, WITH STAFFING SHORTAGES, VOLATILITY IN PRICING AND SUPPLY SHORTAGES ACROSS THE BOARD, HERE ARE SOME OF THE STANDOUTS IN THE SECTOR WHO ARE GOING THE EXTRA MILE TO DELIVER THE GOODS.

## BEST NEW VENUE CONCESSIONS OPERATIONS

### MOODY CENTER | AUSTIN, TEXAS

BY RYAN BORBA

**T**he newly formed OVG Hospitality division has more than found its sea legs at the recently opened Moody Center in Austin, with the \$375 million facility its first new account.

With food and hospitality operations led by OVG Hospitality General Manager Derek Marsh and Executive Chef Dave Williams, per-caps at the 15,000-seat arena “have blown expectations out of the water for all shows,” Marsh says.

For the first three public events at the venue, F&B averaged \$40 per cap in food and drink in general concessions as well as premium dining among the venue’s 44 suites and additional club lounges.

Championing the mantra of “keep Austin weird,” Moody

Center’s offerings bridge the traditional and cutting edge, with popular barbeque fare such as ribs and brisket-topped burgers going along with a high-tech Toshiba self-checkout point of sale system that not only reduces lines but also reduces the required number of part-time food service staff.

Food and beverage options include local institutions such as Koko’s Bavarian, Stubb’s B-B-Q, and Tony C’s pizza, along with national partnerships with tequila brands and Shaq’s Big Chicken sandwiches.

Concessions are served on 100% recyclable, disposable material, according to Moody Center officials.

OVG Hospitality President Ken Gaber says the technology has dramatically increased efficiency

within the arena, and the public is becoming more comfortable and accustomed to the self-checkout style systems in place.


“We’ve had more than 40 events so far this year, and we’ve probably had one day with lines,” said Gaber, with the point of sale ratio being one per 46 people for a sold-out crowd. “It definitely moves the people through the lines as fast as possible.” For bar sales, which require more hands-on service, lines are more of a reality, but “better than the norm, I would say.”

Gaber says that while self-checkout and cashless tech have existed for a long time, the challenge is consumer adoption and familiarity.

“The hard part about technology in our business is that the average consumer goes to 1.8

events a year, so we have to make sure the technology fits in with the customer’s comfort zone as well,” Gaber said.

However, there seems to be no slowing down the mobile-first movement, and there is traction in biometric scanning and other methods to eliminate friction when ordering alcoholic beverages, which soon could be similarly simple to order in a self-checkout or “marketplace” setting.

“The next one or two years, you will be able to do that,” Gaber said, noting Oak View Group’s usage of Amazon’s Just Walk Out markets that offer beer and wine, although still requiring a physical ID check. “Eventually, hopefully we can use your palm as a digital ID and you can walk in and grab it and just walk out.” 



**FOOD MOOD:** Moody Center in Austin has combined down-home cuisine with high-tech service, boasting \$40 per caps for its opening events.

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Derek Marsh  
General Manager - Food & Beverage



David Williams  
Executive Chef

**CONGRATS!**  
FROM YOUR COLLEAGUES  
AND FRIENDS AT

**MOODY CENTER**





# EXCELLENCE IN CONCESSIONS AWARDS



**WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS:**  
The Chairman's Club and Champions Cub, each with room for 75 on opposite sidelines, rolled out for last season's NFL season as a purchase option for existing club-level ticket holders.

COURTESY TEAM

## BEST NEW / REFURBISHED SPACE

### CHAIRMAN'S/CHAMPIONS CLUBS | KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

BY JAMES ZOLTAK

**T**urning the coal of unused stadium space into the gold of revenue-generating clubs might sound like venue-industry alchemy, but that's exactly what the Kansas City Chiefs and Levy Restaurants did at GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium.

In 2021, the Chairman's Club and Champions Cub, each with room for 75 on opposite sidelines, were rolled out for existing club-level ticket holders to purchase for about \$500 per person, per game.

The idea was to create an upscale food and beverage experience, said Tyler Kirby, the

Chiefs' executive vice president of business development.

The new club spaces came about following the success of the Foolish Lounge, two separate clubs opened on the club level in Arrowhead's east end zone a few years ago, where 160 guests enjoy all-inclusive food, beer, wine, specialty drinks and non-alcoholic beverages and access to premium parking.

"Those performed really well, so ahead of last season we worked with Levy to open up two other ones," Kirby said. "They've done really well. We sold through the inventory prior to them even being constructed."

The feedback has largely posi-

tive, but there are always logistical things to work through, primarily involving ingress and egress, "but from a food and beverage standpoint and a desire to have things like that for ticketholders, it's all been very positive."

Most of the guests who have bought into Champions and Chairman's clubs have tickets adjacent to them, he said.

The initial design work was done in conjunction with Populous, after which the Chiefs and Levy "were the ones leading the charge," Kirby said. The clubs were built into existing carve outs on the club level that had some view of the field, behind ADA platforms.

The indoor access and club

seating were already in place for ticket holders in that part of the stadium, so the idea was to give them the option of purchasing an add-on F&B experience, with quick, easy access to a full bar and items like rib eye and lobster in addition to traditional stadium fare, he said.

There is some seating in the clubs, but the idea was not about creating a hangout or lounge area, per se.

"The food and beverage really was the priority here," Kirby said. "That was the selling point for adding to a club ticket." The menu changes every game. The Chiefs are lining up potential sponsors for the clubs, Kirby said. ▣



## BEST NEW TECHNOLOGY

### TENDED BAR

BY DON MURET

Facial recognition technology continues its expansion into sports concessions. Tended-Bar is one example, as company officials continue to refine the process for self-serve cocktails at NFL stadiums and other venues.

TendedBar launched in 2019 at TIAA Bank Field, home of the Jacksonville Jaguars. The vendor now has its portable bar units in place at 10 big league facilities, according to Justin Honeysuckle, the firm's co-founder.

Under its business model, TendedBar gets a 20% share of revenue from every cocktail sold, Honeysuckle said.

Initially, the system used RFID technology to activate TendedBar, but during the pandemic, the company transitioned to using facial recognition as part of the movement to contactless operations.

As the technology works

now, users complete a one-time registration through their cell phone. They scan a QR code at the Tended Bar location, which guides them through a process for taking a selfie and photo of their ID, typically a driver's license. The system verifies the validity of the ID and that the person is of legal age to purchase alcohol.

At that point, customers enter their credit card information for payment and in less than a minute, they get a text confirming their registration is completed. To order a drink at TendedBar, patrons hit a button on the machine, which takes a photo of their face and recognizes that individual in less than a second, Honeysuckle said.

Additional buttons provide options for different mixed drinks, whether it's Jack Daniels and cola or vodka cranberry, for example, or the patron can create their own cocktail. Customers must grab a



**HEY BARTENDER**  
Fans line up to pour their own drinks at Empower Field, as the self-serve alcohol model continues to evolve.

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CONGRATULATES  
EMPOWER FIELD  
AT MILE HIGH

# BEST NEW TECH

*excellence in concessions*

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AWARDS

drink cup and fill it with ice before placing it underneath the pouring mechanism. The pour itself takes about three seconds to complete.

In addition, TendedBar features a tip button option and those gratuities typically are forwarded to the nonprofit groups working those physical spaces at sports venues, Honeysuckle said. At the end of the event, the machine automatically closes the customer's bar tab and sends a receipt by text.

In late July, Aramark installed TendedBar at Empower Field, where the Denver Broncos play, in time for a Red Hot Chili Peppers concert. The machines are 10 feet long and can hold 10 liquors and 18 mixers at a time. There are three units at the stadium, including one in the West Club.

The facial recognition element, which Aramark calls digital age verification, is what drove the installation in Denver, said Alicia Woznicki, the concessionaire's vice president of design and development.

TendedBar worked well for the concert and Aramark officials want to evaluate the rate of adoption during football season before determining whether it's driving incremental sales over a standard bar.

"What we're hoping for is to have more repeat users (among Broncos fans)," Woznicki said. "So far, it's been used mostly for concerts. We're asking people to complete an enrollment process, but that's maybe for just one event. We want to grow enrollment and usage in-season."

The quality, consistency and variety tied to TendedBar is another plus, she said.

"The other thing we're playing around with is which locations on the concourses make sense to drive the most incremental value," Woznicki said. "It's about the same footprint as a standard portable, maybe a little bigger."

At Empower Field, it's still too early to see if the technology has increased speed of service.

In Las Vegas, Honeysuckle compiled his own unofficial data during the Academy of Country Music Awards in March at Allegiant Stadium. He did a time lapse test to compare TendedBar's output with a standard bar nearby servicing field level seating at the Las Vegas Raiders' venue.

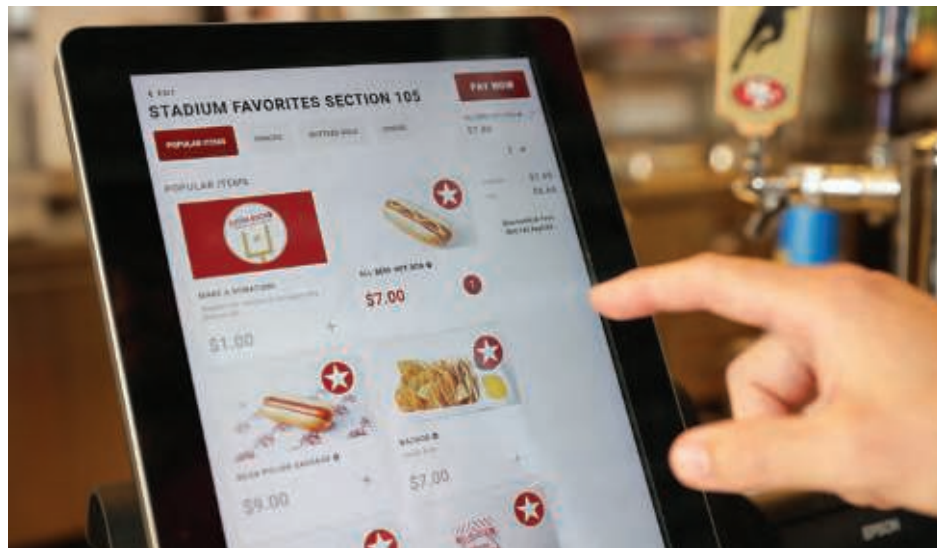
In a span of 11.5 minutes, TendedBar served 63 drinks, tripling the output of bartenders at the portable stand.

Levy, Allegiant Stadium's food provider, decided not to use TendedBar for the 2022 season but that could change next year, Honeysuckle said.

"The comment I got was we did really well at peak times, but when it was slow, people chose to go to the regular bar," he said. "We still have good rapport with Levy and have gone into multiple Levy buildings." ■

**BEST NEW CONCEPT****SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS'  
MEMBER INCLUSIVE MENU**

BY DON MURET



**T**he San Francisco 49ers' entrepreneurial mindset resulted in the NFL team generating the highest revenue for concessions last season in the team's 76-year history.

It's all tied to a new business model for food service.

After delaying the new mobile ordering program for the 2020 season during the pandemic, the team last year made the leap to all-inclusive concessions for basic fare such as hot dogs, nachos, soda, chicken fingers and French fries.

The cost to buy food and drink folded into the ticket price for 50,000 season-ticket holders.

The 49ers brand the program as their Member Inclusive Menu. It's the first time a big league team has made that shift.

"It made an eight-figure impact to our organization," said Moon Javaid, the 49ers' chief strategy officer.

It's an impact that could be felt across the NFL in future seasons.

During the past offseason, the NFL created a new amendment to the league's revenue sharing formula for ticket sales that makes it more amenable for teams to go all-inclusive for general concessions, Javaid said.

To date, no other NFL teams have adopted the all-inclusive model, but some are looking to incorporate pieces of the program after visiting Levi's Stadium last season to see how it works, he said.

At Levi's Stadium, apart from record concessions revenue, the total number of orders fulfilled was the most efficient and fan satisfaction scores ranked the highest in team history, Javaid said.

There's always room for improvement, though.

Feedback from focus groups indicated that sometimes the food quality suffered from

quicker production under the all-inclusive model.

To help alleviate the issue, the 49ers and Levy, their food provider, introduced a bigger hot dog (5 to 1 pound) for the 2022 season. It fills the length of the bun, upgraded to a brioche roll split at the top to fit all the trimmings.

In addition, Javaid said after hearing the stadium nachos "didn't hold well" last season, Tostitos, a team partner, designed a sturdy bag of tortilla chips for fans to pour their nacho cheese sauce for consumption.

Fans also want a greater variety of items under the MIM program. Overall, they like the menu but want to see new items rotated into the mix. As of late August, those items had not been determined, Javaid said.

Plus, the 49ers are investing in new state-of-the-art beer dispensing equipment to become more efficient for serving suds and reducing concession lines overall by adding hawkers roaming the concourses armed with mobile point-of-sale devices.

Beer is not part of the MIM program, but by having more points of sale to buy alcoholic beverages, more opportunities arise to generate incremental revenue while cutting lines down at the same time, Javaid said.

The 49ers also increased its "mimtern" program from eight to 75 individuals. Those college students and recent graduates will walk the stands taking orders from fans who can then go to the concession stand and pick up their items without having to use the self-serve kiosks to order food and drink.

The "line-busting" maneuver is similar to the system Chick-fil-A and In-N-Out use for fast food orders, Javaid said.

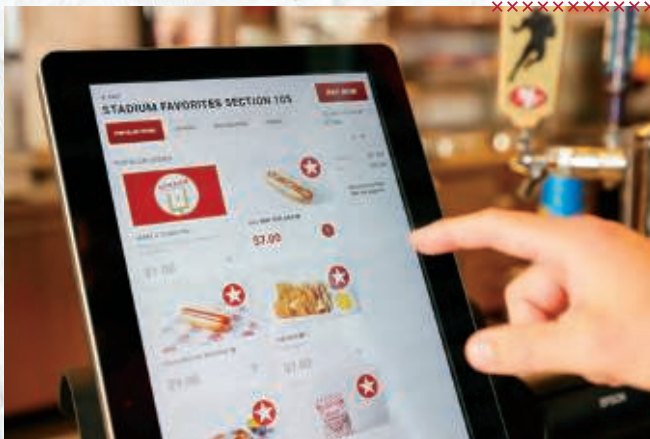
"Our goal this year is not to do anything too crazy," he said. "Last year, launching the program was a little crazy. Our goal is to become more efficient." ■



# Congratulations to the San Francisco 49ers & the Member Inclusive Menu!



The Member Inclusive Menu is the world's first program to provide core food and drinks in all season ticket memberships



× **\$1.9M** in retail value saved  
by season ticket members

× **130K** waters

× **300K** items distributed

× **49K** hot dogs





## BEST SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE

### ENMARKET ARENA | SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

BY JAMES ZOLTAK

**E**nmarket Arena in Savannah, Georgia, has two car-sized, food waste eating machines called ORCAs in the bowels of its concourse, beneath the six-month-old venue's 9,500 seats, but these aren't beached sea mammals.

The two 1,500-pound ORCAs come from a Toronto-based company of the same name, which stands for Organic Refuse Conversion Alternative. The machines work by mimicking biological digestive processes, using air, water and microbes to turn unused/unsold food stuffs into a safe liquid that can be sent down the drain. Grease traps capture anything that's unsuitable to be put into wastewater, ex-

plained Nathan Chambers, OVG Hospitality's general manager at Enmarket Arena.

The idea of bringing ORCAs to the arena was initiated by concessionaire Delaware North, which had the contract at Enmarket prior to it being shifted to OVG Hospitality following Oak View Group's merger with Spectra.

"After a show, a lot of unused food ends up in a garbage bag, and then it gets hauled into a dumpster and taken away by a big truck," Chambers said. Some gets diverted to homeless shelters, but what's unsuitable for donations ends up in the ORCA.

"It's a great way to help save a lot of that process," he said.

Executive Chef David Samp-



**FEEDING THE ORCA:** Enmarket Arena in Savannah, Georgia, employs two 1,500-pound waste eating machines called ORCAs that turn unused food waste into a safely disposable liquid.

son and Chambers monitor what goes in — "We call it feeding the ORCA," he said — and "it helps us for the next show."

"When we have meetings I'll say, 'Chef, how much kimchi or quinoa did we put in there last time?'" Chambers said. "Let's make a little bit less this time."

ORCAs have found use at SoFi Stadium, hotels and the CN Tower.

There are some things that can't go into an ORCA, like heavy bones and some meats that won't break down. The machines, which can process 438 tons of food waste per year, also produce a smell, but after months of using the machines Chambers and company have learned to mitigate that issue.

Chambers said the machines in use at Enmarket Arena, which sit on casters and can be moved, are about the size of a Toyota Camry and cost about as much. There are smaller versions available as well

that could easily fit into a corner.

"There is some maintenance required," he said. "In the beginning it was rough, but now we understand it better."

Enmarket Arena General Manager Monty Jones said the ORCAs are part of an overarching effort at the facility to operate sustainably. Other initiatives include recycling, providing bike parking and electric vehicle charging stations, operating with propane or natural gas, using LED lighting, high-efficiency fans and pumps, an efficient HVAC system, using electric Zambonis, ice making machines and golf carts.

It might not be the least expensive way of operating, but it's the right way, Jones said, comparing it to when someone goes on a diet; they typically eat less, but spend more on the food they do consume.

"It comes down to being good stewards," he said. ▣



## BEST NEW MENU ITEM

### ELVIS SHAKE, COORS FIELD

BY DON MURET

**T**he wacky concessions trend has regained momentum coming out of the pandemic. Aramark leads the pack with its "Dare to Pair" platform across the vendor's nine Major League Baseball accounts.

Just when you thought it was safe to go back to the ballpark and enjoy a kosher hot dog slathered with mustard, Aramark relaunches an assault on the senses, tied to an "opposites attract" theme.

These unlikely combinations included the Elvis Shake, made with banana cream, soft serve ice cream, peanut butter sauce, Cracker Jack

and candied bacon (Coors Field); the PBJ Burger, topped with peanut butter, jalapeno jelly, American cheese and bacon (Citizens Bank Park); and the Flaming Hot Cheesesteak, basically a cheesesteak topped with Flaming Hot Cheetos, chopped onions and Cheese Wiz on a hoagie (Oakland Coliseum).

For Aramark, another winning quirky combo turned out to be the Kansas City "Reese's BBQ Pork Sandwich" served at Kauffman Stadium, home of the Royals. The \$11 sandwich, made with pulled pork, Sweet Baby Ray's barbecue sauce, chopped Reese's Peanut Butter Cups, and of course,

bacon, created the greatest social media buzz of any Dare to Pair item across the cutting board.

In August, Twitter sent the sandwich viral. At one point, there were 60,000 media impressions tied to one post according to Aramark officials. Multiple news outlets ran features on the item.

"It's the best performing, limited time offer that we've done in my (7.5 years) at Aramark, based on unit sales per game," said Alicia Woznicki, the company's vice president of design and development. "Fans gravitate to it. There's always been a strong food presence on Instagram, but the

explosion of TikTok, the pandemic and people experimenting at home, it's got them interested in exploring new things."

It's that sense of adventure that was important to Aramark, according to Woznicki. So much of the narrative surrounding COVID-19 was about streamlining parts of everyday life and getting back to basics in general, she said. Fans were just happy to be back at the ballpark, but Aramark still wanted to bring a fresh take to their menus.

"The important thing for us is we want to make these things over the top but also make sure they're delicious," she said.




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The crazy food craze is nothing new. Every big league concessionaire has delved into the promotion to gain publicity and generate revenue. The advent of TikTok, the short-form video sharing mobile application, along with Instagram, Twitter and Facebook, fans have taken the promo to a higher level of exposure.

“What’s fun is to watch social interaction around it, where half the people are like, ‘Oh no, I would never try that,’ and others are like, ‘I have to give this a whirl,’” Woznicki said. “It might be a bit polarizing, but it has that intrigue of ‘I’ve never had it before and want to try it and can only get it at the ballpark.’”

Next up is football season at NFL stadiums, where Aramark holds 11 accounts. As of late August, no details had been made public, but the “Dare to Pair” theme will revolve around recreating traditional snack items in unconventional fashion, Woznicki said.

“We’re trying to capitalize on the success but continue to make it fresh and different,” she said. 

**FOPPOSITES ATTRACT:**  
Aramark’s “Dare To Pair” campaign has accomplished its goal of creating unlikely pairings for ballpark food, with an Elvis-themed Cracker Jack shake served at Coors Field and the Reese’s BBQ Pork Sandwich served at Kauffman Stadium.



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**BEST  
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THE ELVIS SHAKE