

Rapid Fire

with **Geraldine Gracia**

5 questions you have always wanted a professional chef to answer

This week featuring celebrity chef Roger Mooking



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The Refinement of the Restaurant Restroom

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 Author **LISA CARD**



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The Refinement of the Restaurant Restroom

No longer just a necessity, effective restroom design has become an important part of the restaurant planning process.

In many restaurants across the country the restroom has moved from being a building requirement to a topic of dinner conversation. Innovative restroom design has become an integral aspect of the overall design concept of a restaurant. The details and decor in this space can really set the tone for the entire operation. Interior designers must balance creating a strong visual impact with maintaining functionality.

MAC Interior Design Inc., based in Halifax, Nova Scotia is the largest Interior Design firm in Atlantic Canada. Their firm has designed many of the unique and trendy hot spots in Halifax. Dawn MacLachlan the Principal and Owner of MAC Interior Designs Inc. has seen the increasing importance of restroom design first hand with her clients. "People are paying more and more attention to the restroom. Restaurateurs are starting to realize that people will notice the details and then judge their operation accordingly," MacLachlan observes that the increasing availability of materials and new types of technology are pushing this trend. "Twenty five years ago there may have been ten floor tiles to choose from. Now you can get patterned tiles, glass tiles, coloured tiles." Advances in technology have provided MacLachlan's clients with new products such as counter tops made from "granite or man made stone which are going to last ten to twenty years without fading or staining." MacLachlan points out that since the dramatic increase in product selection has hit the market place clients "realize that the investment in the beginning [of new construction] will give them product longevity and the ability to keep the restroom looking good."

According to MacLachlan the current trends in restroom design include "the luxury aspect." Clients are currently investing in details like higher end lighting, beautiful mirrors, faucets, other higher end materials... and more private cubicles as opposed to just a metal partition, [such as]



a solid or full length wall." Televisions are also one of the more unusual new design elements that have been making their way into restrooms, "especially in the men's room." says MacLachlan.

Today's restaurant consumer is looking not only for a delectable meal, but also an appealing atmosphere. Therefore, generating word of mouth marketing by introducing customers to a striking overall design experience is essential to stay competitive. The restaurant restroom provides businesses with the opportunity to make a lasting impression on their guests.

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