



Print Works Bistro

Going *Green* in Greensboro

by Judy Kneiszel

Print Works Bistro, voted “best new restaurant” by Greensboro residents in 2008, has achieved notoriety well beyond its North Carolina hometown. It has been distinguished nationally as the greenest restaurant in America.

The French-inspired bistro, which opened in October 2007, is the first certified LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum restaurant in the U.S.

“It was a great accomplishment,” says Print Works general manager Martin Hunt. “The LEED Platinum certification is really a source of pride for our employees.”

LEED is the U.S. Green Building Council’s rating system for designing and constructing green, energy-efficient, high-performing buildings. Platinum is the

council’s top level of certification.

To achieve the Platinum Rating, more than 70 sustainable practices were implemented in the construction or are incorporated into the daily operation of Print Works and the adjacent Proximity Hotel. The result? A building that uses 41 percent less energy than a conventional hotel and restaurant by using ultra efficient materials and the latest construction technology.

The hotel and restaurant are part of Quaintance-Weaver Restaurants & Hotels, owned by Dennis Quaintance and Mike Weaver. The company also owns and operates Greensboro’s Lucky 32 Kitchen and Wine Bar, Green Valley Grill and the Four Diamond O.Henry Hotel.

Quaintance, Chief Executive Officer of

Quaintance-Weaver, collaborated with subcontractors throughout the design and construction of the Proximity Hotel and Print Works Bistro to make sure the greenest designs and materials were being used. One of those green decisions was the selection of natural gas to fuel kitchen equipment.

Walking the “Green” Walk

Tony Santoro, Commercial Representative for Piedmont Natural Gas Company, the utility that provides natural gas service to the restaurant and hotel, says he was proud to be a part of the team Quaintance assembled to make the Proximity and Print Works Bistro a reality.

“Dennis Quaintance really walks the walk when it comes to green,” Santoro says. “He lives his life that way and he’s not willing to be short-sighted when it comes to his business and the environment.”

Piedmont Natural Gas distributes natural gas to more than one million residential, commercial and industrial customers in North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. Through its representatives and its Gas Cooking Technology Center, the company educates foodservice customers about the efficiency of natural gas realized through reduced cooking times and fuel consumption and increased productivity.

“Throughout the design and construction process it was a real pleasure to work with an owner who had the same goals for himself that we as a utility had for him,” Santoro says. “He wanted a green building and understood the concept of life cycle cost.”

Life cycle cost is the consideration of how much an appliance will cost to operate over the entire term of ownership, not just its purchase price. Energy savings is factored into life cycle cost.

One unique feature of the Print Works kitchen that will pay for itself in three to five years through energy savings is the variable speed exhaust hood system that uses a series of sensors to adjust the power according to the kitchen’s needs. The sensors detect heat, smoke and other effluents and increase the fan speed accordingly to keep the air fresh. Executive Chef Bart Ortiz explains how the system saves them energy:

“A typical exhaust fan is either on or off,” he says. “This one is always on, but starts out at a lower level. When the sensors detect smoke or heat, they ramp up the fan speed until the effluents are exhausted.

“Early in the morning and in the middle of the afternoon when there’s not as much going on, the kitchen is quieter because there’s not that constant hum of a fan. A larger implication is that if you are not exhausting conditioned air from the restaurant to



The Proximity Hotel and Print Works Bistro are the first hotel and restaurant in the U.S. to attain the LEED Platinum certification.

the outside, you are spending less on energy to further condition the air. We're already experiencing savings."

Another green feature of Print Works Bistro is that 60 percent of the water used is solar heated. The remainder of the water needed by the restaurant is heated by natural gas. In addition, geothermal energy is used for the restaurant's refrigeration equipment, instead of a standard water-cooled system, saving significant amounts of water.

"Our customers appreciate what we are doing when they hear about it," Hunt says. "But we're not doing anything that noticeably affects their experience."

Santoro says Print Works is "an awesome restaurant."

"It's a wonderful place to go and enjoy fine dining and wonderful service," he says. "And Bart has put together a really nice, high-production environment in

the kitchen with an array of efficient natural gas equipment."

Santoro says natural gas fits with Print Works overall green philosophy because it's a clean burning fuel.

"It produces fewer greenhouse gases than electricity especially here in North Carolina where the predominant fuel used to produce electricity is coal," he explains. "The fact that Print Works can avoid burning so many pounds of coal, is one of the ways they are helping the environment."

Let the Sun Shine In

In the Bistro's 172-seat dining room, not one chair is more than 16 feet from the outdoors. Floor-to-ceiling windows on three sides provide so much natural light that on many days no artificial light is



(Left to right) Tony Santoro, Commercial Representative for Piedmont Natural Gas, the utility that provides natural gas service to the restaurant and hotel, and Martin Hunt, Print Works Bistro General Manager are shown a sampling of the restaurant's signature items by Executive Chef Bart Ortiz. Flatbread with Bacon, Onions and Cheese; Mussels steamed in wine with fresh herbs, served with fries; and French Onion Soup.



needed in the dining room at all. The windows can be opened in temperate weather as well, giving the restaurant an outdoor-dining feel and reducing air conditioning costs.

In addition to windows in the dining room, there is also a window in the kitchen, which Chef Ortiz says is almost unheard of in the restaurant business.

“You have to walk by the window to get to the walk-in coolers,” Ortiz says. “And it’s amazing how just walking by that window can lift people’s spirits. People comment on it all the time, because often restaurant people come to work in the dark and leave in the dark, so being able to see daylight is wonderful.”

Other “green” features of the Print Works décor include a bar made of salvaged, solid walnut from trees that came down through sickness or storm and tabletops made of walnut veneer over a substrate of SkyBlend, a particleboard made from 100 percent post-industrial recycled wood pulp with no added formaldehyde.

The restaurant’s environmental efforts didn’t stop at the doors, however. Beyond the 80-seat outdoor patio, 700 linear feet of stream was restored by reducing erosion, planting local, adaptable plant species and rebuilding the buffers and banks.

From Farm to Fork

The greening of Print Works extends beyond building construction and mechanicals. It’s on the mind of Chef Ortiz as he goes about the business of creating the Bistro’s menu items too but, he says, it can’t be his only concern.

“Our first mission is to serve high-quality food at a good value,” Ortiz says. “We buy as much as we can from local growers and producers while still meeting that goal.”

Produce is purchased from local growers, much of the seafood served at Print Works is caught off the North Carolina coast, and sausage is purchased from a local maker.

“I’ve always believed the shorter the distance between farm and fork the better and if we could buy even more locally we would,” Ortiz says. “It’s a matter of figuring out how to get larger protein items raised locally and affordably.”

He says while Print Works offers a number of

“Cooking with natural gas is required for a quality kitchen,” says Executive Chef Bart Ortiz. Because French cooking requires a lot of sautéing as well as the light simmering of delicate sauces, natural gas ranges are essential ingredients in the Print Works Bistro kitchen.

French bistro-style dishes, some creative innovations are sometimes made when it comes to ingredients.

“I mean, we’re not in France,” he says. “If we were a bistro in France, we’d take advantage of what is available there. An authentic bistro in France would never buy tomatoes from across the country, but if they had a bountiful crop in their own region they would showcase them. The same is true for us. We use what is bountiful here.”

Cassoulet, a dish made with sausage, duck confit, bacon and white beans, is a \$12 lunch entrée on the Print Works menu. Ortiz says it originated in a region of France where white beans grew well.

“We’re having fun making cassoulet because it’s an authentic French dish,” he says. “But we also have fun with sweet potatoes because they grow well in North Carolina. We roast them and use them as a side dish – you won’t find that in France.”

French Cooking ‘Avec Gaz’

While sweet potatoes may be a seasonal staple in the Print Works pantry, natural gas is a year-round staple in the Print Works kitchen.

“Cooking with natural gas is required for a quality kitchen,” Ortiz says. “You need that ability to control heat. In fact, that’s actually what cooking is by definition ... the ability to control heat.”

The chef says natural gas is integral to traditional French cooking.

“With French onion soup for example, I’ve found the only way to get that nice little crust of cheese that’s thoroughly melted is to use a natural gas-fueled salamander. It’s indispensable. We wouldn’t be able to do it efficiently without that piece of equipment.”

The French Onion soup is a best selling hot appetizer on the Print Works menu, priced at \$5. For those who want an even more substantial starter, the Bistro offers a Duck Ravioli with ricotta, walnuts and cream for \$10.

Because French cooking requires a lot of sautéing as well as the light simmering of delicate sauces, natural gas ranges are essential. Print Works is equipped with a 6-burner range, a 10-burner range and two French top ranges in order to provide all the food for both the restaurant and the hotel.

“With a French-top range, rather than individual burners there are two heat sources that heat up the entire solid surface of the range top,” Ortiz explains. “The heat is intense, but you can shift things around to areas at different levels of heat.

Print Works Bistro

Gas Kitchen Equipment

- 1 – Montague 10 Burner Range with Double Convection Ovens
- 1 – Montague 6 Burner Range with Oven
- 2 – Montague Salamanders
- 1 – Montague Grill/Frytop/Oven
- 1 – Montague Charbroiler
- 2 – Montague French Tops/Oven

“This allows you to have multiple numbers of pans going at the same time,” he continues. “We use the French-top for everything from finishing up soups and sauces to searing and braising meats. I’ll push something that I’m reducing to the back for low and slow heat and have something else on the intense heat toward the front of the units.”

A traditional natural gas range is used to prepare the Bistro’s popular Pan Roasted Trout entrée.

“The trout is pan seared on the range top with seasoned crumbs and that’s it,” he says. “It’s very simple but born out of a very traditional French recipe.”

The trout is served with slow cooked red cabbage and French green beans for \$22 at dinner. The Grilled Salmon, also \$22 at dinner, is topped with creamy leaks and served with polenta and vegetables. Both these fish dishes are offered at lunch in a smaller portion size priced at \$13. The customer split between the two meals is about even at Print Works.

More Than a Restaurant

About 60 percent of the food prepared in the Print Works kitchen is served in the Bistro and 40 percent goes to events at the hotel or room service. The hotel has 7,000 square feet of meeting space, which could translate into the kitchen feeding as many as 400 people at one time. The quality of food is the same for the hotel and the restaurant, Ortiz says.

“We are fighting the preconceived notion people have that you can’t get quality food in an event setting,” he says. “We do not serve ‘banquet food.’



Water usage throughout the hotel and restaurant has been reduced by installing high-efficiency plumbing fixtures, saving two million gallons of water the first year. The Bistro bar is made of salvaged, solid walnut trees.

We are committed to not serving rubber chicken dinners.”

They accomplish restaurant-quality event food by sharing inventories and prep work between the two ends of the business.

“The event menu was born out of the restaurant menu,” Ortiz says. “We have stuck with our core competencies. We don’t cut up 50 pounds of onions for the restaurant and then 50 pounds for an event. We have the same people utilizing the same ingredients so if there is soup for an event, we’ll use the soup from that same batch in the restaurant so there’s not leftover soup sitting on the shelf.”

All this takes a lot of planning, which Ortiz is happy to do.

“If you are planning an event with us at the hotel, you are likely to spend time with me, the executive chef,” he says. “That allows us to personalize events and allows the customers to accomplish everything they want.”

Martin says customers are finding Print Works mostly through word-of-mouth advertising and public relations. The company’s other restaurants are well-known in Greensboro and this newest restaurant got a lot of positive press coverage when it opened and when it was awarded the LEED certification. And new events have been added to the calendar in hopes of bringing more new people through the doors. An “E-cycling” drive to collect old computers, cell phones and other worn out electronic gadgets is on the agenda for this winter and participants will receive a \$10 Print Works gift certificate to reward them for recycling responsibly. Ortiz will also be conducting cooking classes at the Print Works in 2009.



One of the “green” decisions Quaintance-Weaver Restaurants & Hotels made was selecting natural gas to fuel the kitchen equipment.

“If you are going to be a successful community restaurant, you need to serve a utilitarian purpose for people who live in the community,” Ortiz says.

After being at the helm of the Print Works Bistro kitchen for more than a year, Ortiz says he’s still excited and “only just getting started,” especially when it comes to being green.

“It’s a real process to figure out how to be responsible consumers of the earth’s energy,” he says. “We’re always learning.”

And as a LEED certified platinum facility, plenty of other restaurants can learn from Print Works Bistro as well.



Print Works Bistro

Location: 702 Green Valley Road
Greensboro, NC 27408

Adjacent to the Proximity Hotel

Phone: (336) 379-0699

Website: www.printworksbistro.com

Hours of Operation: Lunch: Monday-Friday,
11:15 a.m.-4 p.m.

Dinner: Sunday-Thursday, 4 p.m.-10:30 p.m.;

Friday-Saturday, 4 p.m.-11 p.m.

Weekend Brunch: Saturday-Sunday,
7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Owners: Dennis Quaintance and Mike Weaver,
Quaintance-Weaver Restaurants & Hotels,
Greensboro, NC

Concept: European-style Bistro

Cuisine: French-inspired creative comfort foods
made with fresh, local ingredients

Menu Sampling: French onion soup, pan-roasted
trout, steak with fries, cassoulet

Average Check Per Person: Lunch: \$12;
Dinner: \$30



Upholstered chairs, intimate lighting and floor-to-ceiling creamy white curtains that section off various areas enhance the ambiance of the 172-seat dining room. Energy-efficient windows that surround the restaurant on three sides and can be opened in temperate weather, lend an outdoor-dining feel and reduce air conditioning costs.