



Best Tools of the Trade

by Phyllis Ann Marshall

PRODUCE PICK
OF THE MONTH



Persian Mulberries

Native to western Asia, this Mulberry variety has been grown in Europe for centuries and in the Middle East before that. Persian Mulberries (also known as Black Mulberries) are far superior in flavor to their many longer-fruited cousins. These soft, juicy berries grow in clusters and are very difficult to harvest because each berry in the cluster ripens at a different time. The harvester must gently remove the ripe berry without disturbing the remaining berries so they can stay on the tree to ripen.

From the minute they are harvested Persian Mulberries are soft and a little wet. Gathered in a plastic tray with their siblings, they melt into each other and weep copious amounts of rich, sweet, purple juice. Chefs revere Persian Mulberries and are more than willing to work with their soft, wet character because the rewards far outweigh the negatives. Available for the month of July and most of August, Persian Mulberries are one of summer's hidden treasures. www.freshpoint.com



Plan your visit to the Western FoodService Hospitality Expo carefully and generate as much money as you spend – maybe more.

The Western FoodService Hospitality Expo, commonly referred to as “The Restaurant Show” is a must. It is the best one-stop shopping for the savvy foodservice folks I know. It provides us with all of the latest tools of our trade on display in interactive style for an incredibly low bargain price and admission is FREE if you are a member of the CRA.

The show is held every August in L.A. at the Convention Center and this year it is August 20-22. There are only two other regional shows; Orlando, Florida in September and New York City in March, along with the national show in Chicago in May.

PLAN AHEAD. The show is huge. They are expecting 18,000 foodservice professionals and approximately 850 exhibiting companies to fill 180,000 square feet of space. The exhibits range from the hottest food products and state-of-the-art services to more technology than you ever knew existed, all designed to help you increase your productivity.

To visit the show and maximize the experience takes planning. Here are some tips and experiences I have had over the years that have paid off.

1. GET YOUR BADGES EARLY

The team working admittance is very efficient, but why stand in line when it is so easy to visit www.westernfoodexpo.com to sign up, or call 800-840-5612 to be taken care of. Do it before August 5 to get a discount.

2. TREAT YOUR KEY STAFF MEMBERS TO THE SHOW

Remember, it only takes one great idea to make a big difference in sales and profits. This could be the greatest investment you make in your restaurant's future and in your people.

Here are SCOUTING IDEAS to turn a visit to this show into a competitive advantage:

- Have a PRE-SHOW MEETING with your whole team including administration, front and back of the house personnel. Brainstorm ideas for growth. Get the team thinking. Consider time and labor saving ideas, food and menu upgrades, décor and tabletop improvements, bar and lounge innovations, anything that could make your business more popular and profitable.
- ASSESS YOUR NEEDS. Inventory small wares, tabletop appointments and eye-candy, check furniture, fixtures and equipment for repairs and replacements. Add a few wants too!
- PAIR YOUR NEEDS WITH AN INTERESTED PARTY.

BARTENDERS: Want to upgrade your beverage selections? Send a key manager to scout out the Brewery and the Wine Garden with the specific assignment to return with at least three new ideas to present to the group. There is a competition of “Showtending” Bartenders with lots of showmanship that could give you the same ideas as hiring an expensive bar consultant from Las Vegas.

CHEF: Send the chef or kitchen managers to visit the Randl New Product Showcase and Tasting Arena. I never miss this one as you discover what's hot and what can boost sales and save on labor. Also check out the menu competition and the winners' for best layout or new idea.

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