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Recommendation Report for Cayson Design's Bistro Aprons

This report indicates that Cayson Designs bistro aprons are a better and more responsible choice than ChefWorks bistro aprons for Webber Restaurants' Front of House (FOH) staff.

Introduction

For nearly twenty years, the Webber Restaurant Group has prided itself on its responsible choices in obtaining the finest quality product for its business. From sourcing local produce from nearby farms, to buying wine from family-owned vineyards that employ biodynamic and sustainable winegrowing methods, Webber Restaurants believe in making informed, ethical decisions when it comes to its hospitality standards. Their restaurants bake their own fresh bread, rather than buying it from a corporate commissary, and all of their sauces and dressings are made in house, rather than purchased from a large grocery store or a restaurant supply company. Their cocktail program uses only craft ingredients that can't be bought in bulk quantities from corporate liquor suppliers. Therefore, shouldn't their Front of House (FOH) uniforms also reflect their belief in supporting not only small and ethically run businesses, but particularly their own food and beverage industry? Since its service staff interacts directly with guests and represents its core values, they should be wearing Cayson Designs aprons, rather than the ChefWorks aprons they now wear. I have chosen Cayson Designs, over ChefWorks aprons, based on the following criteria: ethics, cost, and functionality.

Ethics

Cayson Designs is a family-owned business, specializing in providing restaurants with high-quality uniforms and aprons that are hand-sewn in their San Francisco factory. Cayson has employed the same exclusive custom, high-quality fabric sources for decades, indicating they do not compromise their standards by looking for lower-priced fabrics elsewhere. Lynette Cayson, a founding member, works closely with company president Katie LaMountain, to ensure that the team doesn't lose Cayson's original vision of providing clients with quality hand-sewn products. Cayson collaborates with local and national chefs and philanthropists like Rachel Aronow and Michael Cramer to create custom designs.

Furthermore, Cayson Designs believes in giving back to their community. Since their inception, they have partnered with several local organizations like Meals on Wheels and Project Open Hands, which provides food for the sick and elderly of San Francisco. Cayson Design's most recent impressive effort involves donating 5% of the sales made

from their Rachel Aronow-designed aprons, to the Community Wildfire Relief Fund, helping families affected by the recent California wildfires.

ChefWorks, in contrast, is a larger corporation and a more well-known uniform supply company than Cayson, and while they have been in business since the 1960s, there is no mention on their website of their connections to charities, to fabric quality, or to their local community.

Since Webber Restaurants believe in responsible sourcing of products and supporting family businesses, this value system should extend to their FOH apparel, as well.

Cost

Servers must pay for their own aprons at Webber Restaurants.

The ChefWorks cotton bistro aprons that they now use cost much less at \$13.99 per apron, than Cayson Design's bistro apron in denim, which costs \$30.00. However, full-time FOH staff report that they replace their current ChefWorks aprons an average of once every two months, costing them a total of almost \$80 per year. A thicker Cayson Design's denim apron, on the other hand, made with quality materials, will last longer than the current ChefWorks aprons, costing the staff less money over time.

Webber Restaurant's FOH staff indicate they would not mind paying for a higher cost apron, like one from Cayson Design, if they can avoid the hassle of replacing their apron on a regular basis. What's more, a nicer apron gives them a more polished look. When FOH staff feel good about their professional appearance, they can make more money, which is good for both them and Webber Restaurants. The current ChefWorks bistro aprons tend to fade and fray over time, causing a slovenly appearance, which can lower staff morale, and by extension, the money they bring in.

Webber Restaurants belong to a fine-dining class of restaurants in the Merrimack Valley area, and their prices, product quality, and service style reflect that. Therefore, the professional appearance of their FOH staff should exemplify those same standards.

Functionality

Currently, FOH staff's ChefWorks bistro apron is 32 inches long, 27.5 inches wide, and weighs 6.2 ounces. It has one pocket in front and two thin cotton side straps that tie around the waist. The pocket is deep enough for servers to hold their order book, pens, lighter, and wine tool. Other FOH staff, like bussers, use the same pocket for holding towels and other items. FOH staff complains that loose threads on the pocket stitching on

the ChefWorks bistro apron has made the pocket unusable. What's more, the thin ties that wrap around the waist have come untied during busy shifts. Even worse, the ties have broken off at times, making the aprons entirely unusable.

The Cayson Designs bistro apron, however, offers superior functionality, in that it has two front pockets, as well as a side towel loop, which is useful for both servers and bussers. This apron, measuring 36 inches, is longer than the ChefWorks apron, but not quite as wide, at 26 inches. However, a front split in the Cayson Designs apron offers more mobility for FOH staff. The cotton webbing straps offer better security as an apron with clips, rather than ties, around the waist. That is, this apron cannot come untied during a busy night. This apron's denim is a bulkier material than ChefWorks' light cotton, but the superior usability and durability of the Cayson Designs bistro apron cannot be overlooked.

The success of Webber Restaurants over the years indicate that their best and busiest nights are yet to come. When the FOH staff has the most useful tools at their disposal, they are guaranteed successful shifts, night after night. Therefore, Webber Restaurants should outfit its FOH employees with Cayson Design's superior bistro aprons.

Conclusion

Based on ethics, cost, and functionality, this report illustrates that Webber Restaurants should replace their current FOH staff ChefWorks bistro aprons with Cayson Design's bistro aprons. Webber Restaurants will be sourcing FOH aprons from an ethical and responsible company in the food and beverage industry. Cayson Designs has successfully operated their family-owned factory in San Francisco for over forty years, and their quality aprons are the result of unique collaborations with chefs and philanthropists in the food and beverage industry. Like Webber Restaurants, Cayson Designs has contributed to important social initiatives and community fundraisers, such as Meals on Wheels and Project Open Hands. While cost may initially be an issue for frugal FOH staff members who can purchase a ChefWorks apron cheaper than a Cayson Designs apron, the latter option will last longer. Lastly, the superior functionality of Cayson Designs bistro aprons, which boast two large front pockets, a towel hook, a front vent for easier movement, and cotton webbing ties secured by hooks, will ensure that FOH staff can work busy nights with confidence. Overall, these criteria indicate that Cayson Designs aprons are a better fit for the Webber Restaurant Group.