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## Food follows fashion

Don Evans, managing director of Compass Restaurant in New York City, noticed the falling price of lobster and figured that could help his bottom line. Taking a page from the fashion world, Compass held a lobster "sample sale," promoting it as such to its trendy clientele.

"We agreed to buy a certain quantity from a Maine vendor, and he agreed to hold the price," says Evans. In turn, he passed along the savings, something the competition was not doing. A three-pound lobster arrived with three dipping sauces at table after table, for \$39. The theme continued with lobster-rabbit cavatelli, BLTs, and more.

"The sample sale promotion drove people into the restaurant," says Evans. "And 18 percent of our covers have been three-pounders."

## 47 Meat me at home

What makes Pera's Meats-to-Go program unique is that the items are prepared, flash-frozen and vacuum-packed in the kitchen of New York's Pera Mediterranean Brasserie. The restaurant dedicates one line to lunch and dinner orders; a second to preparing mail-order meats.

"We attract diners from all over, and while some would purchase their favorites and pack them for travel, others asked why we didn't ship." Now the [Pera Online Store](#) does—offering Chicken Shish, Lamb Ribs, Pera's signature Adana Kebabs and three more items for \$6.95 to \$13.95. Each package comes with tips from the culinary team for outdoor grilling and broiling.



## 46 Efiscent butchering

The term "whole animal cooking" usually refers to nose-to-tail prep of a pig or lamb, but for Chris Pandel, chef of The Bristol in Chicago, the concept also applies to fish. "We try to get in whole fish whenever possible, and when we have one of the fattier, oilier species—like hamachi, tuna or salmon—we'll butcher it for multiple uses," he explains.

"We'll take off the filets for premium entrees, and leave a little meat on the spine, then cure the trim quickly with herbs, lemon zest and capers and serve it with a split grilled fish head. It's for those customers who really like to dig in for the most succulent meat." Other specialties have included grilled hamachi collar and even wood-grilled "fish ribs" from a larger skeleton.

"I can't afford to buy a whole blue fin tuna, but a four- or five-pound Kona Kampachi is a perfect example of a fish you can get several different dishes out of." Pandel's purveyor knows he'll try just about anything, including a 22-pound, six-foot-

long squid that was cut into big steaks to pan-fry and serve with sorrel aioli and chickpeas; the tentacles and other trim went in for a 90-minute braise. "You just have to be willing to work with it," claims Pandel.



## Best bar none

Bartenders are busy enough without having to police seats for customers who have stepped away to smoke a cigarette or use the restroom. That's where the Seat Saver comes in—a hip, easy and multi-functional way to say, "this seat is taken."

The Seat Saver works like a standard coaster when placed under a drink; when a customer wants to hold their place, they simply slip the coaster's martini-olive-sized hole over the swizzle stick or the neck of a bottle to tell the bartender and other customers that they'll be back. Besides that message, the Seat Saver can be logoed with the restaurant, bar or brand name for an effective merchandiser.

"Top of the glass, top of mind," points out Eric Tecosky, who came up with the idea with partner Danny Lane while tending bar in Los Angeles. "Bartenders love it; customers love it," adds Lane. Pricing is competitive with standard coasters and can be ordered from [TheSeatSaver.com](#).

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