

Machiavelli

For one of Sydney's highest profile restaurants, Machiavelli, EPSON Point-Of-Sale Technology is leading the fight in maximising turnover in spite of one of the restaurant industry's main concerns – shorter business lunches.

By Jason Whitley



– The Prince of Restaurants

SINCE ITS OPENING AT CLARENCE STREET IN 1988,

Machiavelli has become a regular dining venue for many high profile Australians, including Gough Whitlam, Paul Keating, Peter Costello Mark Taylor, John Singleton, Ita Buttrose and Barry Humphries.

While its ambience, excellent food and wine play a major part in the restaurant's success, Machiavelli manager, Mr Angelo Italiano comments that attention to detail and premium service are every bit as important. Yet, providing high levels of personal service has become more difficult over the years and, according to Angelo, is the result of changing trends in diners' habits.

'It wasn't that long ago that people didn't think twice about starting a business lunch at midday and finishing anywhere up to six o'clock,' states Angelo. 'Now, most lunches last only two hours at the most.'



For restaurants that have traditionally based much of their success on the business lunch trade, this means many things. Key among these, is the need to maintain the same levels of profitability yet within a shorter timeframe. For Machiavelli, technology in the form of a combined EPSON and PalmTeq solution represents that key.

Purpose-Built Solution

Developed and installed by PalmTeq, the solution features PalmTeq's WaiterPad system running on the EPSON SR-600 Point-Of-Sale (POS) Terminal and hand-held PalmPilots, an EPSON U230 Kitchen Printer and two

EPSON TM-T88II Receipt/Coupon Printers.

For PalmTeq's New South Wales State Manager, Mr Stephen Gavan, the decision to propose the EPSON-based solution to Machiavelli management came down to providing his client with equipment and software designed specifically for the hospitality industry.

'The TM-U230 Kitchen Printer is a perfect example of purpose-built equipment,' states Stephen. 'Before they designed the unit, EPSON engineers worked with restaurant kitchen staff to devise a set of unique specifications. The result, as a solution provider in the hospitality industry, I'm now able to offer a printer that can withstand shock, water, grease, heat – anything that a kitchen environment can throw at it.'

For Machiavelli staff, the new system has brought about major, yet subtle, changes to the way they work. Under the 'traditional' model of taking a diner's order, the waiter writes down the order on a pad then takes that order to the kitchen. During the course of a meal, order changes, extra drinks, another diner joining the table and any other number of variables tends to result in multiple order dockets. For restaurant staff, regardless of how diligent and professional staff are, this can often cause bills to be incorrectly calculated when some of the dockets are misplaced.

At Machiavelli, order books have been replaced with WaiterPad electronic pads that transmit the orders via radio frequency communication.

According to Angelo, even a five minute delay in taking an order can result in a patron not opting to buy that extra bottle of wine, or a coffee or after-lunch drink. 'You can never put a definite figure on how much trade you lose by not having a waiter on hand to take an order on the spot,' he says. 'One thing you can be sure of though is that no-one likes to sit in a restaurant and become frustrated because there's no waiter available.'

'With our new system, waiters can spend a lot more time at their stations. Orders are automatically printed out at the kitchen and salad area, which means our staff can concentrate on providing service and pay constant attention to customers. This is what the restaurant industry is dependent upon.'

Training for change

Prior to the system taking full part in Machiavelli operations, staff were given training on the various components by PalmTeq staff. While there was some initial reluctance on the part of some staff members, it quickly became apparent that the benefit far outweighed any 'technology prejudice'.

'People in the restaurant industry don't have a lot of time to learn how to operate new equipment,' explains Stephen. 'So when they see a solution based on the familiar Windows environment, it immediately becomes a lot more attractive.'

The real success of Machiavelli's new EPSON SR-600-based system is best summed up by Angelo: 'When PalmTeq first came to me with this proposal, I kept telling them to come back – I was just too busy to even sit down at talk. For our sake, though, I consider myself fortunate they kept coming back!'