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COMMERCIAL Kitchens

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The High Life

How the Twin Peaks brand is
making restaurants fun again

A special supplement to:

COMMERCIAL
Construction & Renovation

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A solution that sticks

Photography by Jacquelyn Brown



The High Life

How the Twin Peaks brand is making restaurants fun again

By Michael J. Pallerino



A scratch kitchen. The ultimate bar experience. One-of-a-kind happy hours. Late-night fun. Oh, and the food. When you enter a Twin Peaks restaurant, you're getting everything you want – and much more.

Billed as the "ultimate sports lodge," the Twin Peak brand was founded in 2005 in the Dallas suburb of Lewisville. Today, with more than 80 locations in 25 states, the brand continues to amass a serious crowd of followers.

With its bevy of HDTVs and name-your-sport-and-we'll-get-it-on mentality, 29-degree draft beer, made-to-order menu and the vaunted Twin Peaks Girls, it's a value proposition you cannot afford to miss out on.

After being acquired by La Cima Restaurants LLC, the chain's largest franchisee, in October 2016, the brand continues to reach down for that something extra in the expansion game.

To get a feel for where the brand is heading, *Commercial Construction & Renovation* sat down with Paul Stevens, director of Design and Construction.

Give us a snapshot of the Twin Peaks brand?

Twin Peaks is the ultimate sports lodge, where you and your group of friends can

expect made-from-scratch food, watch sports on the best HDTVs and sound system in the industry and enjoy 29 degree draft beer. You'll also be surrounded by the playful and energetic Twin Peaks Girls, which are there to make your experience special. Picture all of this with a mountain lodge environment as your backdrop. We use heavy wood timbers, antlers, hand carved tables, comfortable seats, fire pits and man caves to complete the experience.

What type of consumer are you targeting?

The ultimate guy's guy – the sports fan who wants to catch the game, drink freezing cold beer, grab a bite from a great menu and soak up the whole Twin Peaks experience with a group of friends.

How does the design of your restaurants cater to what today's consumers are looking for?

Our front of house is designed with sports viewing in mind. Seating is mindfully put together so that every guest in the restaurant has multiple views. They never miss a play. The booths are wider, the aisles are larger, and the tables are oversized and communal. This is intentional. It makes groups of people comfortable when they come in for any big game with their friends. Many of our restaurants incorporate patios and outdoor fire pits to take advantage of taking the fun outdoors when weather permits. Who doesn't love a great patio?

Walk us through how and why it is designed the way it is?

Because our business is bar-centric from an energy standpoint, we start with the bar and cascade the TVs out and over from that point in the space. Getting the right size and placement of the bar in the restaurant to maximize energy and views is the critical backbone to our brand.

From there, we try to provide multiple seating options via size, height and type. We maximize internal height when we can and insert as many oversized wooden features as we can fit into the building. We want authentic finishes that reflect what every person would want and expect to see in a lodge – stone, rough cut wood and thick live edge table tops.

As we grow across the country, developing good groups of regional GCs will be really important for our franchisees.

Take us through your construction and design strategy.

Many of our restaurants are conversions of previous restaurants. A lot of times in these circumstances, we can get the most bang for our buck with a conversion of an existing restaurant that has good bones to it. When we can be certain we can fit our kitchen and oversized bar into the building and make it not be recognizable as to what it used to be and really make it our own, we go that route. We have also developed ground up restaurants in many markets. The route we take really is dictated by opportunity and economics.





What's the biggest issue today related to the construction side of the business?

It's somewhat different between corporate development and franchisees developing their restaurants. Corporately, we have multiple GCs who we bid to that we know can perform. We rarely go outside of who we know.

Sometimes, in busy construction markets like we see so much of these days, we find that smaller contractors are chasing the bigger projects. Lower bids can be enticing to try an unknown entity, but it rarely works out without a delay or some unforeseen cost impacts. We will venture out of our comfort zone a little less than our franchisees will for cost savings, but only if we have the manpower to manage in a detailed way.

Talk about sustainability. What are you doing?

Mountain lodges scream "green" in a different kind of way because we frequently are trying to bring nature inside the building

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with the oversized openings to our patios. We focus on energy efficient systems and LED lighting. By the way, beer poured at near freezing has an incredible yield, so it's safe to say we have a very low amount of beer waste.

What do you see as some of your biggest opportunities moving ahead?

As we grow across the country, developing good groups of regional GCs will be really important for our franchisees. We will always continue to work on our kitchens and buildings in order to maximize their efficiency and effectiveness.

We are starting to roll out a new kitchen engine that promises to reduce our ticket times and heart of house labor, while maintaining or bettering our service and food standards when the food hits our consumers plate. The chance to constantly learn, grow and evolve is one of the biggest opportunities we have as a brand.



Are you optimistic about what you see today in the marketplace?

There are a lot of really good restaurateurs in play these days. The specialty guys are eating everyone up, because although they only do a few things, they focus on doing them very well. The brands that don't understand this reality and keep their eye on quality and a superb experience are going to wither and die.



What's the biggest item on your to-do list right now?

Our systems haven't previously been set up for large scale development. We are in a position now where we have large portions of the country still to develop. Many are great markets with unlimited potential. This requires us to continue to build our staff, our vendors and our consultants up to be able to give ourselves and our franchise partners the ability to build these markets out as efficiently as possible.

What is the secret to creating a "must visit" shopping environment in today's competitive landscape?

Our goal is to always create both an environment and an experience that makes people want to share it with their friends and coworkers. Our Twin Peaks Girls are the best brand ambassadors in the business.

What is today's consumer looking for?

Today's consumer focuses on the quality of food and service more so than ever before. Almost everything else is simply window dressing. We attempt to insert as much fun into the equation as we can.

Describe a typical day.

First off is 100 emails, followed up with meetings with operations, facilities, franchisees, vendors, moving on to site visits, diving into plan analysis, budgeting the next thing, developing the coordination of a roll out, ending with conference calls, and repeat.

Tell us what makes your restaurants so unique?

Twin Peaks is fun. It's a fun to be at, fun to design, fun to develop and fun to work for as an employee. If you can't have fun creating mountain lodges filled with HDTVs from every angle and beautiful Twin Peaks Girls who serve the coldest beer and really great food, you honestly aren't trying hard enough. **CK**



One-on-One with...

» Paul Stevens

Director of Design and Construction
Twin Peaks

What's the most rewarding part of your job?

Making something that is really complicated simpler for someone is what drives my team. If a member of my group can help a franchisee be more successful by developing easier or quicker, that is my reward. If we can build more restaurants because we chose a better site or spent less because of coordination, I am happy. Opening night, when all the hard work that the development and operations team has put in comes together and a restaurant is filled with happy people enjoying themselves, is pretty special as well.

What was the best advice you ever received?

I had a boss tell me years ago that I should overlook small things to find people who are authentic and have character. I have always tried to surround myself with people, vendors and consultants with value systems that align with mine. At the end of the day, you are only as good and as trustworthy as they are.

How do you like to spend your down time?

I like to get my hands dirty in my garden or wet a line fishing. Anything that involves quiet and attention to one thing suits me best in my off time. The constant battery of multiple inputs that is required to be successful in development, design and construction need to be offset after hours or I would lose my sanity.