



We hold these truths to be self-evident,

Airport

MAGAZINE

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Retail Spotlight: Shades of Blue, Cibo Bistro and Wine Bar at PHL

People patronize airport retail outlets—from clothing shops to bars—for the same reason they fly in the first place: convenience. But being convenient doesn't automatically translate into being stale or unimaginative. Just like airlines offer first-class cabins and amenities like onboard Internet access, airports and retail developers are catering to the broad spectrum of travelers in an effort to give choices to—and satisfy—one and all.

Two bars in Philadelphia International Airport's (PHL) recently opened International Terminal A-West (*AM*, May/June 2003, p. 64) are examples of this strategy in action.

Shades of Blue Lounge features oversized, welcoming couches and jazz murals to match. A lounge in every sense of the word, even its theme color—blue, of course—is cool, as are the wall murals by artist Rosemary Zwick, the late mother of Shades architect Stephen Zwick. Rosemary Zwick's art has been in major museums, including the Art Institute of Chicago, the San Francisco Museum of Art and the Smithsonian.

Contrasting Shades of Blue's coolness is the heat of the Cibo Bistro & Wine Bar, which features an open kitchen at its focal point. The Italian bistro also has more wines by the glass—32 at this writing—than most bars have beers. Design features include a 45-foot long onyx bar fronting a 20-foot tall back bar, and a 25-foot ceiling.

The two restaurants are grouped together with several others—including a McDonald's and a Famous Famiglia Pizza. Together, the culinary array gives PHL Terminal A-West users a markedly diverse choice of menus.

"What airports are looking for is to increase the level of service and amenity to their passengers," explained Paul McGinn, president of MarketPlace Development, which developed Cibo and Shades. "When you look at demographics of who travels, it is a very wide spectrum. There's no reason in the world, given that broad spectrum, that [airports] shouldn't take the opportunity to provide restaurants and other retail amenities that match up with traveler preference."

Both Cibo and Shades, which are managed by Philadelphia-based OTG Management, have done very well, McGinn said. Being in a city with a reputation for good, upscale restaurants has helped, he suggested. "I think there is an increased demand for [upscale airport restaurants] in major, urban

metropolitan areas that tend to have a more established reputation for restaurants, nightlife, and lifestyle," he said, adding that being in the international terminal has been a plus, although not a necessity. "While the trend or placement of this type of bar and restaurant is not limited to the international terminal, it was a natural idea to put it there," McGinn explained. Among the benefits: "longer dwell times and longer stage lengths of departing flights" associated with international travel, which makes comfortable, sit-down establishments even more appealing to the travelers.

"What it has proven is that there is room in the house for everyone," McGinn continued. "It's not just tap beer and bottles of liquor. There's room for wine by the glass with very well-known labels and designer cooking. When it comes to food, people like to experiment." At PHL, now they can.

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