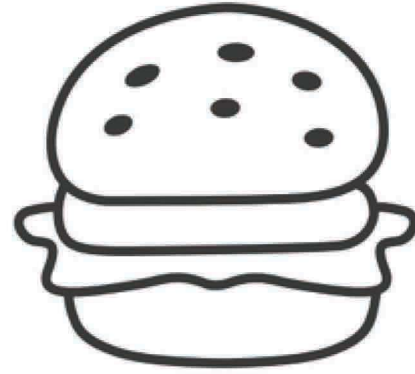


The
New
Fast
Food

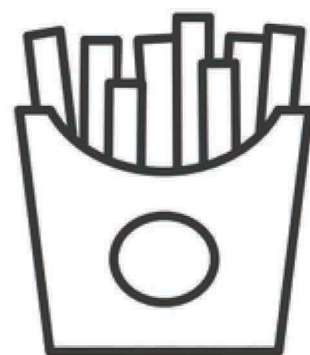


Sure, they are convenient.

And, yes, still fast.

But quick-service restaurants are
upping the design ante the world over,
and customers are taking notice.

By ERIN M. LOEWE





ll over the world, it appears fast-food companies are in transformation mode. Gone are the days when cheap and fast fare were the only things needed to lure repeat customers. Today's consumers want an elevated experience—whether it's fresher food, a modern dining environment, stellar customer service or all of the above. Here are some companies that are driving the evolution.

International Identity





KFC restaurants are doing an about-face abroad. Since 2014, Istanbul-based CBTE Architecture has been working with parent company Yum! Turkey and the KFC global design

team to overhaul and modernize the brand in Turkey. All new and remodeled stores there are being based on a sleek design concept that encourages patrons to linger.

"Most brands certainly hope their customers spend long hours in their restaurants, and that it is reflected in sales growth," according to Cagdas Belen and Tanem Eren Belen, co-founders of CBTE. "As a result, restaurant brands like KFC try to renew their concepts in this direction, satisfying customers' preference for spending time at places where they feel relaxed, where they perceive the place as part of their daily lives with the materials, colors and lighting. Today, the design of fast-food restaurants should meet these needs and remove the perception that it is fast and cheap."

Photos by GÜRKAN AKAY



Hand-Rolled PRETZELS

Snack Savvy



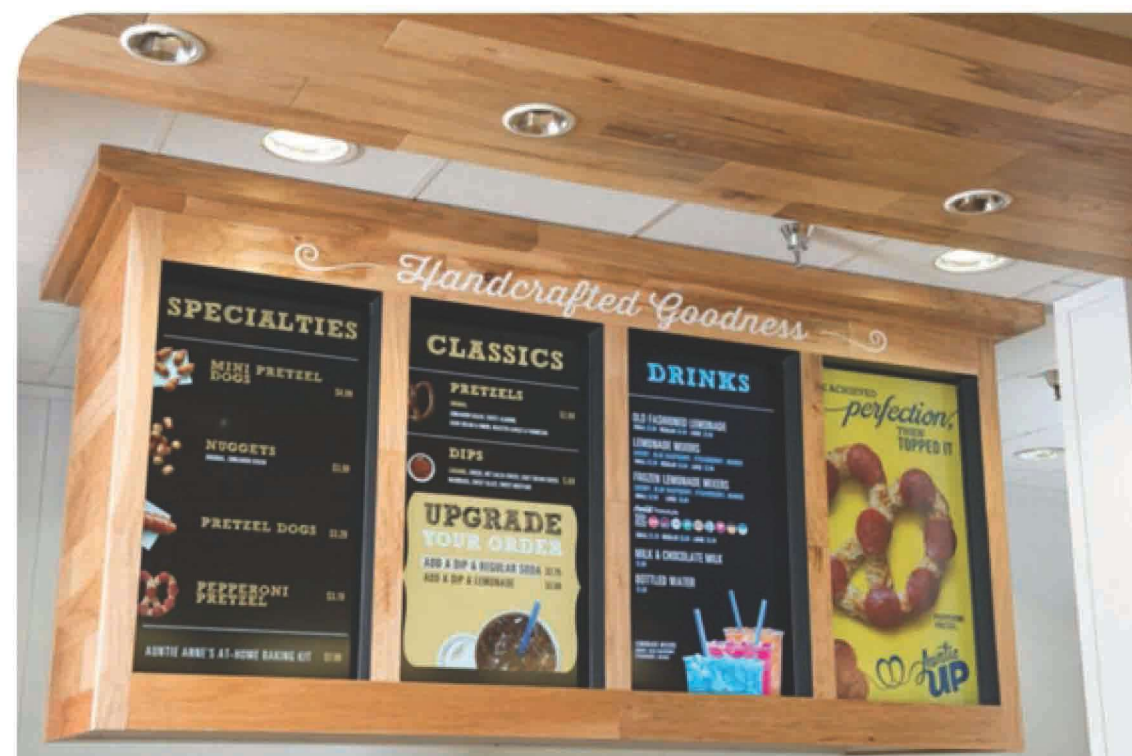
In 2014, fresh pretzel purveyor **Auntie Anne's** unveiled its first store redesign ever, facilitated by San Francisco-based Tesser. Since the new concept was unveiled in Park City, Pa., there are 100 stores as far away as California sporting the fresh look.

Brent White, design director of environments at Tesser, says that focus groups thought the old design of copious white tile was too cold and sterile for the brand. "Auntie Anne's started in Anne Beiler's kitchen, so we wanted to bring back a little bit of that warm story through the environment," he says. "We looked at the brand positioning to highlight the hand-craftedness of the ingredients and the fact that the store makes pretzels from scratch all day long."

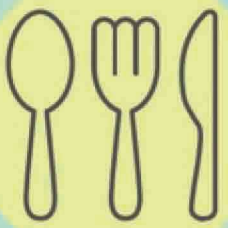
Beyond creating an upscale kitchen feel, the team at Tesser modified Auntie Anne's iconic blue and worked it into some of the kitchen equipment and the ordering area, where a translucent counter emanates blue from within.

"Overall, we wanted to be authentic and true to Auntie Anne's heritage, so we reoriented the design to bring the pretzel-making process to the forefront," says Dana Zipser, director of business development and marketing for Tesser. The result is an interactive, brand-making experience that ties customers directly in to the process of making the product they love.

Photos by DONOVAN ROBERTS WITMER



Local Flavor



Chick-fil-A used to only have restaurants in the Southeast, but it has been expanding into new territories over the last decade. One of its newest locations in Pasadena, Calif., was designed with pedestrians in mind and is located on the Rose Parade route.

"The tastes and expectations of fast-food customers continue to evolve, but one thing never really changes—they want food they feel good about, served by people who care, and they want it fast," says Dwain Cox, director of innovation and design at Chick-fil-A. "We're laser-focused on caring for our guests personally in every aspect of our business, whether we're adding healthier menu items, introducing mobile ordering or localizing a restaurant design to meet the needs of the community."

Photos by **VICTORIA JONES PHOTOGRAPHY**

"We're laser-focused on caring for our guests personally in every aspect of our business."

-DWAIN COX, CHICK-FIL-A





Customizing a Classic



Perhaps no other fast-food company has been more closely watched regarding its changing looks and business model than internationally renowned **McDonald's**. Peter Rivera-Pierola, manager of strategic concepts for U.S. restaurant design

with McDonald's U.S., says that while the brand is constantly striving to modernize its environments to exceed customer expectations, it is also piloting innovative customer interactions.

"A great example is the Create Your Taste custom burger and kiosk ordering experience that we're testing in select restaurants in the United States, Australia and other markets," Rivera-Pierola says. "It demonstrates how we're evolving and experimenting with new techniques of serving our customers in more modern and relevant ways, coupled with new interior design concepts and restaurant layouts."

One of McDonald's newest restaurants in The Netherlands has been receiving plenty of rave design reviews. Formerly dubbed "the ugliest building in Rotterdam," the remodeled McDonald's features a sweeping spiral staircase and glass façade. Iconic gold radiates from the perforated sides, which feature pixilated images of a smiling crowd (the images continue on the interior as well). Designed by Rotterdam-based Mei Architects, it is a show-stopping addition to Coolsingel, one of the city's busiest shopping streets.

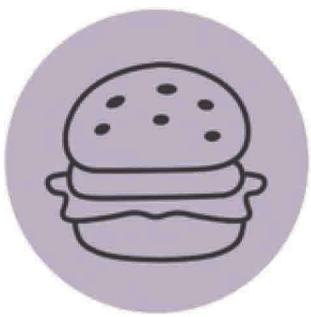
Photos courtesy of **MCDONALD'S**
(unless otherwise noted)



Photo by JEROEN MUSCH →



Shake It Up



At **Steak 'n Shake**, quick table service is giving way to a fast-casual hybrid concept at its Third Street Promenade location in Santa Monica, Calif. The sleek new design is a bit more upscale than previous renditions, merging modern touches with large-scale black-and-white vintage photographs

from Steak 'n Shake's archives.

Sherif Ayad, president of Fort Lauderdale, Fla.-based ID & Design Intl., says his firm was responsible for the interior design and environmental branding of the new prototype, while Cincinnati-based FRCH Design Worldwide was responsible for the exterior. Both firms collaborated with Steak 'n Shake's in-house team at Biglari Holdings to create the updated brand image and concept store. Other remodeled and new stores may retain more sit-down service, fast casual or hybrid service, depending on each unique location.

"The new design connects with today's consumers having higher expectations than ever before for quality product, innovation, value and bold innovation," Ayad says. "The new format delivers these objectives while still expressing the brand's rich heritage in bold architectural interpretations."

Photos by JAIME GUILLEN

