



Front & Back of the House

You Can't Beat an Egg (Works)!



Gael Hees

Nov 1, 2018

Pictured is Ashley Heacock - photo by Gael Hees

On a Saturday morning, the scene is a busy food window surrounded by servers, expeditors and bussers. It's early, the place is packed with a line out the door, and the pace is all out. But there's no



IN THIS ISSUE

Hot Off the Grill

Zuma Pairing Great Steak with Great Japanese Whiskey By Max Solano When pairing food and drink, arguably, is there anything that...

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Wine Talk with Alice Swift

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tension on the face of any of the employees. Instead, there are smiles all around, an occasional slap on the back, or even a high five. People are offering to help each other. One person is consoling another, saying, “don’t worry about that, we’ve all done it a time or two. It will be okay.” The atmosphere is highly energized and friendly—and surprising. It’s like a sports team has come into the home stretch.

The scene is the Egg Works in the Park 2000 Shopping Center at Eastern Avenue and Sunset Road. The manager is Ashley Heacock, whose goal is to create a hardworking lineup of employees with a chemistry that begets teamwork and support.

“I consider myself to be a good judge of character,” says Heacock. “Part of my consideration for hiring someone is whether or not they will mesh well with our other employees. We recently won the company bowling

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tournament, and people from other restaurants were commenting on how close we are.”

Heacock has been known to test a potential employee’s helpfulness level by dropping a pen or piece of paper, noting whether or not they bend down to pick it up. It is not a deal breaker if someone doesn’t jump to pick up the item, but it certainly figures into the overall hiring equation.

On the job, Heacock likes to keep it light, while letting her employees know that she has high expectations. “I try to set the example for the teamplay mentality,” she says. “I will buss tables, serve food, seat guests—anything that needs doing. When we’re busy we’ve all got to work together. We have an unwritten rule that no one goes back to the kitchen area emptyhanded or passes a table without pouring more coffee or removing an empty glass.”

The employees are also encouraged to engage the guests in conversation and making them laugh is

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always a plus. “Sometimes I’ll put a child’s plate in front of one of the adults at the table,” says Heacock. “Everyone laughs at the child’s indignant reaction of ‘that’s mine!’”

Employees at Heacock’s restaurant not only seem to be happy, they seem to be content. “We have a few employees who work second jobs, but not many,” Heacock said. “My impression is that everyone is getting the hours they need. Because we are often so busy, tables turn over several times during a shift and tips seem to be good. Also our hours are reasonable, we open early in the morning, but the last seating is at three, giving everyone time to be home in the evenings.”

Heacock is not only a restaurant manager, she is a full-time student at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, majoring in finance. Her work ethic is highlighted by the fact that she just recently started allowing herself to make a “B” now and then. She said her father had to convince her that

Sarah Gage photos courtesy Sarah Gage Since 2016, Sarah Gage has become a USBG Las Vegas staple. She enjoys the Guild...

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“B’s” were decent grades and she didn’t need to push herself so hard.

Although Heacock plays an obvious role in the success of the restaurant, she gives the credit to her boss and the company’s owner, Brad Burdsall. Heacock will tell you that the standards are set by the company and that Burdsall is an example to all of the employees. He is deeply involved in the day-to-day operations of the company, communicating continuously with all six general managers through group chats, weekly notes, restaurant visits and monthly meetings. He continues to hone his chef skills, creating his own spice blends and hot sauces, and he developed many of the restaurants’ signature dishes including the banana muffins, corn beef hash and “gumbobalaya.”

The tagline, “family restaurants” for the Egg Works and Egg and I really says it all. According to Heacock, Burdsall works hard to ensure employee success, both personally and in their careers.

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“Brad has been such a help to me,” said Heacock. “When I had a car accident and was without transportation, he temporarily transferred me to one of the restaurants close to my home so I could ride my bicycle. He also works to ‘save’ employees facing challenges in their current jobs by allowing them to try various locations and positions to see if there might be a better fit elsewhere.”

It is always a pleasure to visit one of the “Egg” restaurants. You can’t beat good food, fast service and servers and others who are truly happy to be there.

Gael Hees is a Las Vegas freelancer, specializing in written, graphic and audiovisual communications. She has written for national publications and has won numerous awards for tourism-related printed materials and videos, is accredited in public relations by the Public Relations Society of America and is a certified hospitality educator. gael.hees@icloud.com

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