



Journal-Bulletin/GLENN OSMUNDSON

**CLEARING THE AIR:** Extra Sensory, a restaurant on Providence's Wickenden Street, has been smoke-free since it opened nearly two years ago. Owner and chef Mark Brancato says only about five percent of his customers are upset by the policy.

# Smoking bans top the menu at local eateries

■ Many area restaurants have voluntarily snuffed out smoking in an effort to make dining out a healthier and more pleasurable experience.

By **THOMAS J. MORGAN**  
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

Ever find dinner ruined by the cigar chomper across the room in what many restaurant managers innocent of the principles of physics call the "no smoking" section?

It was 1827 when scientist Robert Brown discovered a property of gases that compels them to mix

thoroughly when two or more are placed within the same volume. That's why the smoke drifts across the room (and seemingly always heads directly for the nonsmoker).

But now, in eateries from Vermont to California, the smoking lamp is being snuffed out by increasing public awareness of the toxic nature of so-called second-hand smoke. Rhode Island dining establishments are no exception.

The tally of restaurants and bars that ban smoking is growing. In Los Angeles, despite protests from a restaurant association that diners

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## Smoke-free dining

These restaurants are rated by the Rhode Island Lung Association as "completely smoke-free."

**Baked Expectations**, 2166 Broad St., Cranston, 781-8010. Cafe seats 24, serves baked specialties and coffees.

**Bluepoint Oyster Bar & Restaurant**, 99 N. Main St., Providence, 272-6145. Seafood restaurant seats 40.

**Boston Chicken Rotisserie**, 1050 Willet Ave., East Providence, 437-0355, and 258 Bellevue Ave., Newport, 849-8990. Restaurants seat 40 and specialize in marinated rotisserie chicken.

**Brown & Hopkins Country Store**, 1179 Main St., Gloucester, 568-4830. Country cafe seats 30 for dinner.

**Brown Street Cafe**, 85 Brown St., North Kingstown, 294-1150. Seats 30.

**Cafe Paradise**, 11 S. Angell St., Providence, 272-2442. Dessert cafe offers 13 tables.

**Cafe Zog**, 239 Wickenden St., Providence, 421-2213. Seats 40 in smoke-free indoors for desserts and coffees.

**Coffee Coffee**, 257 S. Main St., Providence, 273-4047. Light breakfast and lunch for 26.

**East Ferry Market & Deli**, 47 Conanicus Ave., Jamestown, 423-1592. Coffee shop and deli serves 53 indoors and out.

**Extra Sensory**, 388 Wickenden St., Providence, 454-3920. Seats 50 for "all-natural cuisine."

**Italian Village Restaurant**, 195 Main St., South Kingstown, 783-3777. Family-style restaurant seats 110.

**La Fogata**, 722 East Ave., Pawtucket, 722-4804. Mexican cuisine, seats 50.

**Lai Lai Restaurant**, Kingston Emporium, 99 Fortin Rd., South Kingstown, 789-1660. Chinese cuisine, seats 42.

**Main Street Foods & Bakery**, 333 Main St., South Kingstown, 789-0914. Italian cuisine, seats 50.

**Nib Cafe**, 2170 Broad St., Cranston, 941-6180. Coffee and pastries.

**Park Avenue Deli**, 840 Park Ave., Cranston, 785-0020. Seats 30.

**Peurini's Italian Specialties**, 24 Memorial Blvd., Newport, 847-5506. Italian cuisine, seats 50.

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# Smoking

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would move elsewhere, the city adopted a smoking ban in its 7,000 restaurants several weeks ago, and there is no sign of an exodus. Rhode Island restaurants that have announced a voluntary ban report that their business, too, is unaffected — in fact, most have found that customer feedback is positive.

Earlier this month, the Jan Companies of Cranston, owner of 55 Burger King restaurants — including all 29 in Rhode Island — announced they are now smoke-free.

The Rhode Island Lung Association lists 17 other Rhode Island establishments as "completely smoke-free," and 29 others as "nearly smoke-free" or as having "well-defined nonsmoking seating."

"For the most part, 95 percent of the people are appreciative," said Mark Brancato, owner and executive chef of Extra Sensory, a 50-seat restaurant at 388 Wickenden St., Providence.

Brancato said his restaurant has been open almost two years, and he has never permitted smoking. "It was pretty much our own idea," he said. "I don't smoke, and at the time we opened my partner was pregnant. Lots of people felt strongly about it, so it was a combination of personal as well as business reasons."

Of his clientele, "Maybe 5 percent are a little bit upset or unnerved," he said. "My parents would be those kind of people: 'How dare you dictate what I can do or not do!'" But, he said, such problems have been minimal.

Some smoke-free restaurants cited their cuisine as a factor in prohibiting smoking. Brancato said his menu is replete with entrees from his wood grill, which wafts aromas through the dining area. He said he didn't like his creations mingling with tobacco smoke.

At Chez Pascal, 944 Boston Neck Rd., Narragansett, those who wish to smoke may so do — by stepping outside. Diners who do so might find themselves in company with the owners, Lynn and Pascal Lefray.

"Everyone cracks up when they find out we smoke," said Lynn Lefray. "I'm a total social smoker — late at night I'll have a smoke and a glass of wine. We all go outside to do it."

When the couple opened their country French, bistro-style restaurant five months ago they tried to "segregate" the do's from the don't's.

"It didn't work well," she said. "State law says you have to have a nonsmoking section if you have more than 50 seats. We seat 40, so we did it voluntarily. Now people go on outside. We try to make it friendly for them, but we are expecting problems maybe in the winter time."

"Mostly the smokers have been more than willing to accommodate us and everyone else. Before, if it was bothering anyone, we'd ask them to put it out. We adopted the ban because it ruined the atmosphere of our restaurant. We have an open kitchen, and the smell comes out into the dining room. It just wasn't very good for the atmosphere."

The reaction? "Absolutely positive. People say it's terrific, a good calling card for the restaurant. They're thrilled."

So there won't be any misunderstanding, she is up front about the

policy. "I tell them when they make a reservation. If they just drop in without a reservation I let them know."

And Chez Pascal has bigger plans: "We intend to make an enclosed patio outside next year — a table, an ashtray and a chair."

## A nonsmoking bar

Hayscales, a smoke-free restaurant at 1 Broadway, Newport, opened June 7.

"People are really, really happy that we're completely nonsmoking," said manager Sue Garcia. "That's especially true for the tavern. Customers are impressed with the bar. They say it's the only nonsmoking bar they've ever seen."

Garcia said she has received only four complaints about the policy, all from adamant smokers who decided against coming inside.

"When customers come into the bar with cigarettes we ask them to put them out. Smokers can go outside and stand there and have a cigarette. The owners are completely dead set against smoking in restaurants. They want a better environment for their employees and customers. In fact, the whole building is smoke-free."

Heffie's has been serving family-style meals at 1820 Boston Neck Rd., North Kingstown, for nearly 20 years, but the smoking ban there only dates to Feb. 15, according to manager Bob Howard.

Resentment has been confined to "maybe a couple of customers," he said. "Overall everyone accepted it pretty well, and a lot of people made the point that they really like the policy."

"Health reasons," he said when asked why Heffie's made the switch. "We're a family restaurant, oriented toward the family, and it seemed the right thing to do."

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