

# COMMERCIAL Kitchens

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## It's a '70s thing

Inside the Peachy Keen experience

Photography by Aaron Fedor

A special supplement to:

**COMMERCIAL**  
Construction & Renovation

# It's a '70s thing

Inside the Peachy Keen experience

It takes you back. And even if you were not there the first time around, it feels like it. Peachy Keen, Times Square's latest over-the-top dining experience is all 1970s. The colors. The patterns. The vibe. Everything takes you back to a time when colors, patterns and vibes were everything.

The sprawling Peachy Keen restaurant—with its exaggerated 1970s-inspired interiors, coral, turquoise, orange and pink color schemes, and white ceramic tiles with pink grout and neon signs—is Saturday Night Fever '70s. Designed by Wid Chapman Architects, the hospitality experts wanted to craft a place that could serve inventive comfort food, funky cocktails and memories to last a New York lifetime.

Tasked with rolling out that '70s vibe, Peachy Keen also pays homage to the glamour, glitz and theatrics of its Times Square/Broadway location. The alluring restaurant vibe offers layered experiences, which provide diners with a rich interior and a fresh, memorable feel.

We sat down with Peachy Keen partners Brian Connell and Tony Doyle to get their insights on what they wanted for New York City's newest to-go spot.



Photography by Alejandro Ramos





**Give us a snapshot of the Peachy Keen brand.**

Peachy Keen is a groovy, '70s-inspired all-day eatery and cocktail bar located in the heart of Hell's Kitchen. Modern meets retro in this vibrantly decorated space. Peachy Keen combines disco-era design with a present-day twist through high-quality eats, over-the-top sweets and nostalgic cocktails.

**What type of consumer are you targeting?**

We are a welcoming experience for locals and visitors alike. Whether you're reliving the glory days or experiencing the '70s for the first time, Peachy Keen invokes nostalgia from a time period full of high energy and good vibes.



**One of the things we love most about Peachy Keen is how playful the concept is. The vibrancy and '70s inspiration allows us to tell the story of a different era through food, cocktails, ambiance and design.**





**What are some of the adjustments you made with/to your business model surrounding the recent state of events?**

The pandemic definitely expedited a few digital trends that we were already mindful of pre-2020, including touchless payments and interactive digital menus. We used the opportunity to focus on improving our online presence across the board.

Those efforts continue to resonate today as we near the end of 2022 fully re-emerged from the pandemic-related obstacles. One of our most commonly used buzzwords over the last few years has been "pivot." Operators and guests alike had to realign their expectations to adapt to the evolving environment. We have our surrounding community to thank for helping to navigate this journey with us.

**Give us a rundown of your market's layout.**

Many of the world's top restaurateurs call NYC home, so the competition is inherently fierce. Boasting quality food, a well-executed beverage program, and top-notch service is simply not enough to make a name for yourself. Our guests want an experience and a narrative to accompany their brunch or dinner reservation.

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**What trends are you seeing?**

We have noticed our guests gravitating more toward food over recent years. In the past, we have executed concepts with a bar-centric perspective. But with the development process for Peachy Keen, we felt that focusing on fun, flavorful, approachable cuisine would allow us to reach a wider audience.

Digital platforms such as Yelp and Instagram have been crucial in helping our team amplify that message. Through various social channels, we have been able to reach new customers in neighboring markets.





**Tell us what makes your brand so unique.**

Peachy Keen is undoubtedly a memorable experience. As soon as you walk through the door, your senses are engulfed in excitement. The vibrant colors, textures and curvaceous architectural elements combine with high-energy music and a bustling environment to instantly brighten your mood. The atmosphere is electric, yet uniquely welcoming, unlike anything Midtown Manhattan has seen in quite some time. Peace, love and good vibes.

**What's the secret to creating a "must-visit" restaurant environment in today's competitive landscape?**

Our goal with any new concept launch is to find something we can be best

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known for. One of our strengths is a fun, over-the-top beverage program, highlighting signature cocktail recipes that you could never find at your everyday bar or restaurant. From a beverage perspective, we have shifted our focus to highlight thoughtful and colorful cocktails.

This aligns well with the aforementioned growth of Peachy Keen's online presence. Our Signature Cocktails allow us

to further the concept narrative. We tell our story through playful drink names, colorful garnishes, exotic glassware, and exciting flavor profiles using rare or homemade ingredients. Kim De Jesus, our resident Cocktail Queen, and her team have really hit it out of the park with the beverage program development here at Peachy Keen. The Disco Sally and the Trippie Hippie are a can't miss. **CK**





## One-on-One with... Wid Chapman, AIA

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

At WCA, we believe today's consumer is extremely diverse. Restaurant environments should be inherently inclusive, they should feel inviting and comfortable and relatable to a broad audience.

### **Walk us through how and why the restaurants are designed the way they are?**

Restaurants are designed with a particular owner/chef's vision in mind. They are always seeking to create a very particular dining experience and the environment, ambiance, can either elevate that dining experience or hamper it.

I often ask my clients to remember a wonderful summer holiday where they sat and drank a beautiful Rose watching the sun set over the sea. They loved the wine so much they brought it home to NYC and with great anticipation they open it the first chance they get only to be sadly disappointed, it doesn't come close to tasting the way they recall.

This is the power of the environment, we eat with our eyes and all six senses, so restaurant design is critical in enhancing flavor and satisfaction. Some of our strongest and long lasting memories are created by food and so much of that experience is embedded in the actual design of the restaurant.

We really focus on enhancing the menu experience through our designs and Peachy Keen is an excellent example of this in action. When we saw their colorful menu and ice cream sundaes

we wanted to pick up on the playfulness, the color, the good time vibes we all feel with comfort food.

### **What are some of the trends happening on the architecture side of the design business (for restaurants)?**

Trends is a fleeting word and obviously architecture and design have inherent longevity and have to stand the test of time and yet still speak to the present. Currently, we see significant demand for rich, vibrant almost opulent environments.

There is a level of maximalism that is once again in vogue post the global isolation and austerity experience, consumers are looking for vitality, style, color and fun in their dining experience. We see consumers really engaging with their environments and seeking to be transported. Inevitably, the ante goes up with the demands of restaurant design each year.

The customer today has had exposure to more sophisticated design than ever before- whether in their weekly restaurant outings or through their vacation or business travels. So, the pressure to create unique, multi-faceted and, yes, Instagram-able environments is ever-present.

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

Cost explosion. It is very difficult to gauge costs, things are moving fast, labor shortages, material shortages. We are constantly having to adapt to what is available now versus materials that might take six to 12 months for delivery.

At the same time, clients want their restaurants to be completed in record time. The two trends would seem to be at odds with one another. So, managing expectations is key.

### **Talk about sustainability. What are you doing?**

We try to work as much as we can with existing conditions, and utilize materials that are sourced responsibly.

### **In today's complicated landscape, what type of opportunities do you see moving ahead?**

Restaurants are now destinations and as such the restauranter is providing an entire experience not just a meal. This means clients are generally more daring and seeking to capture client interest as a destination whether it be for coffee or an elegant celebration; the space always matters.

We have worked with numerous hospitality groups that have created destinations and embedded their brand into this concept. Many of the groups we work with we were engaged on their very first project and have thus been central to the development and establishment of their identity and offerings. This is a significant shift for designers in the last decade.

### **Are you optimistic about what you are seeing out there?**

I think it's a super exciting time to design the hospitality sector. COVID was a tough period for everyone, but I think restaurants have rebounded robustly. Sadly, many restaurants went under, but there is a new crop coming up fast—and that's exciting to see and be part of.