

trendlines

the NEW the HOT the UNEXPECTED

Edited by Sandy Kendall

USER RELATIONS

Wireless Winelist

By Stephanie Overby

CAN'T DECIDE what wine will best complement your roasted duck pot-au-feu with foie gras? If you're dining at Aureole in Las Vegas, you're in luck. Chef Charlie Palmer's restaurant in the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino is the first to offer patrons a wireless winelist.

Department of **BIG,** Scary Numbers

119,590: projected number of layoffs in the airline industry through 2002

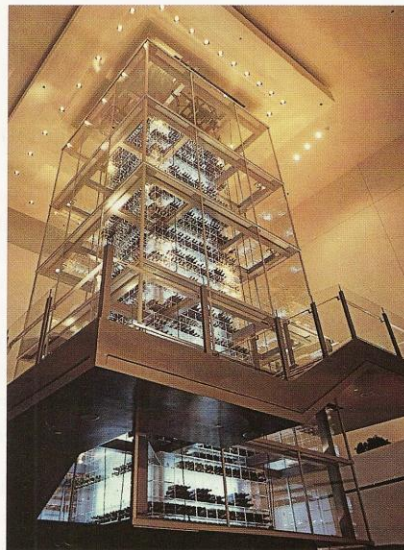
11.7 MILLION: U.S. Internet users who visited news sites the week of Sept. 11, up from 6 million the previous week

\$3.2 BILLION: approximate cost to replace technology lost by securities companies alone on Sept. 11

Sources: Associated Press and NPR Research, Jupiter Media Matrix, The Tower Group

The Aureole eWine Book, launched in June, wasn't pioneered by the restaurant's resident techie, but by its wine director, Andrew Vadjinia. A self-described "computer geek," Vadjinia had been tossing around the idea for two years. He thought it would be the perfect utensil for diners who are intimidated by wine—or who should be. "We're in an industry where a lot of people think they know about wine and don't. Or they're completely scared of it. We have one of the largest selections in the country, if not the world," he explains. "Having all of this information in electronic format as opposed to print lets them take that first step."

Aureole spent \$125,000 on the server network and 30 eWine Books, which offer information on the label, regional origin, producer and reviews for the restaurant's 3,500 wines via a touch screen interface. The device, constructed by Chicago-based CyberPixie, weighs a little less than three pounds, sports a 10.4-inch screen and runs on a Linux operating system. The software was designed by Redoctober Industrie of Seattle, which created an XML content publishing system to allow Vadjinia and his stewards to revise the list on the fly. Frequent guests can build a history of selections they've enjoyed so that they can choose them again. Vadjinia says the e-book will eventually be tied directly to



Towering over diners, Aureole's vast wine selection calls for serious data management.

the restaurant's wine inventory system.

Showcasing the wine collection is nothing new at Aureole. The restaurant boasts a four-story glass wine tower holding 10,000 bottles. When a bottle is ordered, female "wine angels" (it is Vegas, after all) in harnesses are hoisted up via a system of pulleys and retrieve the selection in a mere 10 seconds.

In September, Aureole launched an associated website, www.ewinetower.com, that provides all the information available on the e-books so that future patrons can put wines on reserve for their visit and view webcam shots of the wine tower and angels.

PHOTO COURTESY OF AUREOLE