

Top Twenty Must Have Cafe Songs for 2008

Have you ever walked into a restaurant and immediately felt at ease, found yourself really enjoying the atmosphere, or walked out whistling to yourself and in a generally good mood, but had no explanation for it? If so, you're not alone.

Alyson Vidoli, music coordinator for GO Music Services, a Los Angeles based company that selects music for television shows such as House, M.D., Weeds, Dexter and Entourage, says that "A lot of restaurants have that 'can't put your finger on it' phenomenon about them, and 9 times out of 10, it is because of the music playing in the background."

Music selection profoundly impacts a customer's dining experience, however many restaurateurs underestimate the power of music to complement the atmosphere of their restaurant. Music has the ability to spark memories, evoke powerful emotions and even define an era. Think back to how you felt the first time you heard your favorite song, or the last time you sang along at the top of your lungs to a song that was playing in your car.

Market trends indicate that corporate use of high quality and cutting edge music is expanding. Major companies are beginning to harness and use to their advantage the power of music to enhance a product, create an image or to generate sales. Television shows and commercials have developed a near cult following with several websites exclusively devoted to answering the inevitable question "what was the name of that song?"

"The power and ability to choose the background music that everyone in a restaurant hears is a powerful tool that every restaurateur has, but one that is rarely used effectively," says Vidoli. In fact, studies show that relaxed and happy customers spend their money far more effortlessly and generously than tense customers. "That's just common sense," Vidoli points out.

Potential customers have an innate sense of the aura surrounding an establishment, and will be drawn in to a place with an energetic vibe. Creating this mood or "buzz" can be accomplished with a well thought out music selection. If you're looking to expand your music repertoire and maximize the full potential of your establishment, here are a few tips and a top 20 list to help get you started.

First, invest in a good sound system. You will never realize the full potential of your playlist without a good system to back it up and nothing sounds worse than muffled sound coming out of old or broken speakers.

Second, decide what type of background or experience you are trying to establish. Objectively listen to the songs you are playing, you may personally like them and think they are good, but make sure they fit into the vision you have for your dining area and the mood you are trying to create.

Third, keep your ears open for new songs. If you hear something you like, make a note of it, find out who the artist is and listen to other songs by that artist. Compile a playlist that really expresses your vision. Ask your customers for suggestions -- everyone has a favorite song or artist, and you may discover that many of them are quite good.

Fourth, listen to the music. Does the music make you tap your foot, sway your head or whistle along? If so, that's a good sign. Next, try playing the music over the soundsystem. Songs can sound very different when played loudly or in a noisy environment.

Last but not least, update, update, update. Make sure you are not playing the same music over and over again. If your music becomes stale and boring, so will the impression of your restaurant. Make sure you frequently change and revamp the playlist. New music comes out everyday, so stay tuned and keep abreast of new trends and consumer preferences.

A good playlist is more than just ambient noise. Ideally, music should generate a buzz, and perhaps even become a topic of conversation. At a minimum, music should put your customers at ease and create a happy atmosphere.

So what are the best songs to play? "Well, simply put, there are thousands, and it all depends on what you're trying to do with the music" reports Vidoli. A good song has the ability to capture and amplify an existing emotion.

To demonstrate the potential of good music in a particular niche, we have put together a list of what we think are the top twenty "must haves" for any daytime restaurant or café. Keep in mind that different styles of music and songs are appropriate for different situations.

The following list was narrowly tailored using the following criteria for selection:

- 1) the release date must be 2007 or later
- 2) the sound and volume must be consistent
- 3) the song pace must be relatively uniform (not too slow or too fast)
- 4) the song must be upbeat and light hearted
- 5) the song must be appropriate for play over large sound system and in a loud atmosphere

The right playlist will ensure your customers spend more, come back often and leave in a better mood than when they walked in. So give these songs a listen and use them as a springboard of inspiration to generate your own compilation.

	Artist	Song	Album	Release Date
1.	Linda Good	Love Is	n/a	Not Yet Released
2.	Dub Sweden	On Your Telly	Done With Loveless Days	July 10, 2007
3.	The Bird and The Bee	Man	Please Clap Your Hands	September 25, 2007
4.	Of Montreal	A Sentence of Sorts in Kongsvinger	Hissing Fauna, Are You the Destroyer?	January 23, 2007
5.	Jose Gonzales	Killing For Love	In Our Nature	September 24, 2007
6.	Vampire Weekend	Cap Cod Kwassa Kwassa	Vampire Weekend	January 29, 2008
7.	Gabriella Cilmi	Sweet About Me	Lessons to Be Learned	April 1, 2008
8.	Georgie James	Cake Parade	Places	September 25, 2007
9.	Angus and Julia Stone	The Beast	A Book Like This	September 18, 2007
10.	Sea Wolf	You're a Wolf	Leaves in the River	September 25, 2007
11.	KT Tunstall	Hold On	Drastic Fantastic	September 18, 2007
12.	Math and Physics Club	Baby, I'm Yours	Baby, I'm Yours EP	November 26, 2007
13.	LCD Soundsystem	Someone Great	Sound of Silver	March 20, 2007
14.	Pinback	Good to Sea	Autumn of the Seraphs	September 10, 2007
15.	Manu Chao	Me Lllaman Dalle	La Radiolina	June 27, 2007
16.	Rilo Kiley	Silver Lining	Under the Blacklight	August 21, 2007
17.	Travis	My Eyes	The Boy with No Name	May 8, 2007
18.	Lykke Li	Little Bit	Youth Novels	March 11, 2008
19.	Ween	Blue Balloon	La Cucaracha	October 23, 2007
20.	Air	Mer du Japon	Pocket Symphony	March 6, 2007

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