

Long Island Sound salt marsh view through open garage doors draws customers and flying insects, but Berner Air Curtains save the day.

While the air curtains solved flying insect health code concerns, they also add to The Stand's bottom line. ***"Openness to the outdoors dramatically enhances the ambiance, which in turn leads to optimum profitability,"*** said Roche.

Combining Barbecue and a Breathtaking View Raises Door Challenges at Roadside Restaurant



Berner Industrial Direct Drive 12 Air Curtain on Garage Door

The barbecue cuisine stands out at The Stand, however equally important for the one-year-old Branford, Conn., restaurant's popularity is the breathtaking view out of its two 10 x 10-foot garage door openings.

The Long Island Sound's natural shoreline salt marshes, the 65-seat back patio and The Stand's large produce garden it cultivates in-house for its menu and retail are best viewed when the glass overhead doors are raised, not closed. In addition to the view, the open doorways enhance the total dining experience by invitingly drawing patrons into the property's backside to stroll among the one-acre of surroundings.

The view, menu and interior design create a unique synergy co-owner Eamon Roche conceived when buying the property anchored by a historic circa-1938 Mobil filling station and a decades-old produce stand. Eamon, who is also president of Manhattan-based restaurant and residential design/construction firm, Roundtable Builders, gutted the former two-bay service station down to the building envelope. A rustic open-architectural ceiling and 75-seat interior uses local recycled barn wood and replicates the rustic timber design of the neighboring, 50-year-old roadside stand that still sells produce.

"I've designed and built many restaurants where I've tied together the interiors with the ambiance of a great outdoor view," said Roche, who ensured the iconic Mobil Pegasus roadside signage remained, as well as dozens of well-used, rusted car repair tools that he saved from the scrap yard to accessorize the interior walls.

Continued on back.

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THE STAND Berner Air Curtain Saves Energy

Besides keeping out flying insects, the air curtains also have an energy savings effect, according to Roche. The air curtains enable the restaurant to keep the doors open three additional months during the change of seasons without exceeding the capacity of the new rooftop HVAC units manufactured by Carrier Corp., Syracuse, N.Y.

“The air curtains keep the conditioned air in and prevent uncomfortable outdoor air from infiltrating regardless of season,” said Roche.

Flying Insect Challenge

While the open doorways played an important role in the restaurant’s early success, the nearby salt marshes’ inherent flying insects threatened to keep the doors closed and diminish the ambiance of faux outdoor dining. Furthermore, local health inspectors disapproved of the open door flying insect infiltration potential. “Customers who experienced the open doors prior to insect season were disappointed when they returned weeks later and anticipated the same open door experience,” said Roche. “When the doors were closed, people constantly asked us when we were going to open them.”

Roche and his investment co-partner Greg Nobile, who is the youngest Broadway producer to win a Tony award, looked at a variety of screen doors, magnetic screens, clear PVC strips, and other options to keep flying insects out, but none of them combined aesthetics, efficacy and operational convenience.

Instead, the local health department recommended air curtains to protect the doorways from flying insects, but still allow them to remain open for views and access. Foodservice equipment distributor HAFSCO, West Haven, Conn., and manufacturer’s representative Pardee, Freeman Inc., Gloucester, Mass., specified two air curtains manufactured by Berner International, New Castle, Pa. HAFSCO, a full service foodservice distributor which also installed the two 10-foot-long Industrial Direct Drive series IDC12 air curtains. “We’ve specified many smaller air curtains for restaurant pedestrian doors and walk-in cooler entrances, but a 10 x 10-foot opening led us into the unfamiliar territory of industrial air curtains we hadn’t seen before,” said Austin Capobianco, vice president, HAFSCO, which specializes in restaurant, country club and high-end foodservice applications.

The air curtains feature remote 24 volt control panels and heavy duty floor-mounted magnetic reed switches that automatically activate the air curtain when the door is opened for foolproof doorway protection. The highly-engineered combination of blowers and motors in a white powder-coated metal cabinet mounted above the door’s exterior discharges a controlled stream of air through field-adjustable (+/-20 degree) linear nozzles. **The nozzles create a laminar, non-turbulent air stream that meets the floor approximately at the door openings’ threshold and creates an invisible barrier that flying insects can’t penetrate.**

“The automatic operation we built into the project eliminates the potential of employees forgetting to turn on the air curtains, which also met the health inspectors’ approval,” said Roche.

The air curtains’ low profile requires only 16 inches of door header space. They’re high enough where diners don’t notice, and the low decibel motor operation is undetectable during busy dining periods. “If you’re standing beyond two feet of the air curtains, you can’t hear them,” Roche said. “We’ve created a laid-back honky-tonk rural type of atmosphere where I didn’t want a lot of unsightly and noisy machinery and ductwork.

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