

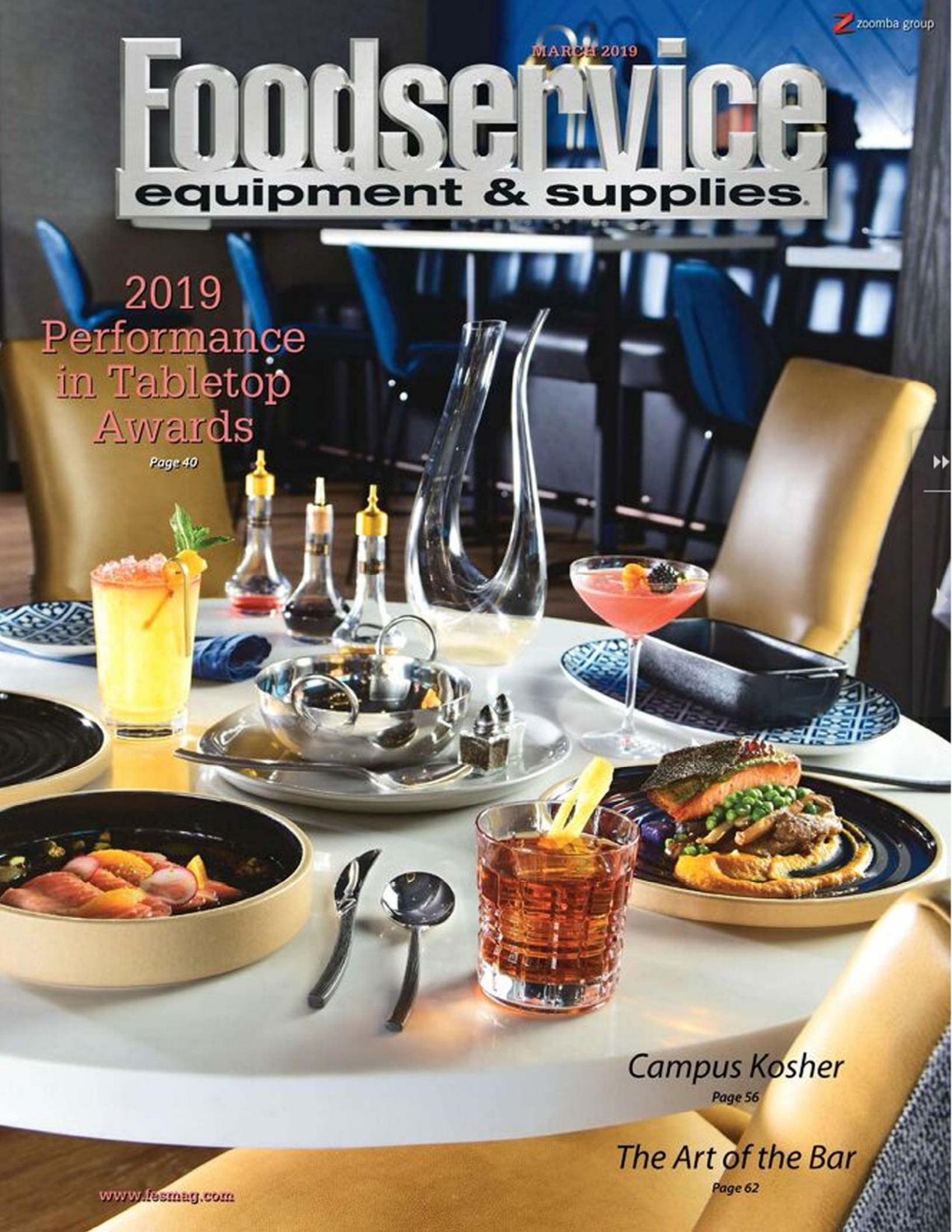
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shelving along the back and far walls provides storage and display space for bottles and glassware.

While concept-enhancing aesthetics are important on the guest side of the bar, Levy says design considerations at Fern Bar shift sharply to ergonomics and efficiency behind the bar. "Bars have long been designed in a certain way — fridges down low, the bar top a little farther away, for example," he says. "It's hard for bartenders to work in bars like that for very long because of the amount of bending and reaching required. For this bar, we made some simple changes. Bringing the bar top a little farther back toward the bartenders than is typical was one. It enables them to spend more time upright and to put drinks up on the bar without having to lean over so far. We've also designed in two stations, which as much as possible put everything each bartender needs within arms' reach. The stations are identical — the same space, tools, ingredients and equipment in the same places. The goal is to have all of your bartenders be able to work any position seamlessly without having to relearn or adjust their systems."

A perforated metal rail fronts each station; it's a system Levy prefers over rubber drink mats that collect drips and debris throughout service. Additionally, hooks keep the strainers bartenders use to prepare various specialty cocktails organized and at hand. And each station includes a beer-

glass-style, jetted washing unit for quick and easy cleaning of shakers, as well as an ice well, bottle rails and a sink for dumping ice and washing hands and tools.

Tucked along the wall at the far end of the bar, away from service areas, is a three-compartment sink and low-temperature glass washer.

"High-temp is ideal for wine glasses because it doesn't leave a residue," Levy says. "But for high-volume cocktail glasses that hold drinks made with ingredients like egg whites and fruit juices, the low-temp sanitized wash is a better system. Ideally, all of the dirty glasses would go to the back, but we have a lot of items that we like to wash at the end of the night, as well as glassware, so we went with a dedicated system in the bar."

A tap cocktail system, which Levy says suits the concept better than beer taps, adds speed and efficiency to Fern Bar's operation. The menu features three cocktails on tap, each held in stackable, 2.5-gallon kegs kept in a low-boy on the back bar wall. A separate cabinet next to it houses the gas unit for the kegs.

"Cocktails on tap is new to us, but we found the right drinks that we think we can sell the most of and put them on tap," Levy says. "I had a guest come in recently and ask why we don't have beer on tap. Well, we're selling some 300 cocktails a day and around 20 beers by the glass. So it's about speed of service and consistent quality."

As for beers, Fern Bar offers a small selection of house-brewed beers which are held in a back-of-the-house walk-in cooler. Staff pour these, along with wines by the glass, in back and bring them out front for service. "We only serve our own beers — no bottles or cans," Levy notes. "I've worked in restaurants with great beer lists, but that takes a lot of space and energy to maintain without a lot of return. As a craft cocktail-focused bar, we dedicate our fridge space and outfit our bar accordingly."

Classic and Iconic: Waterbar San Francisco

Open since 2008, Waterbar capitalizes on its waterfront location and offers an iconic, seafood-centric San Francisco dining experience. Pat Kuleto and his team at San Francisco-based Pat Kuleto Restaurants, a development, design and management company, designed the restaurant. Incorporating a vibrant bar was central to that mission, according to Pete Sittnick, managing partner at Waterbar and director of project development for Pat Kuleto Restaurants.

Situated in a slightly raised area just to the left of the entrance and open to the 6,000-square-foot-dining room, Waterbar's bar and lounge area immediately draws guests' attention. It has become both a popular pre-dinner and stand-alone destination, and for good reason. Guests in the 40-seat, 1,500-square-foot space cannot only enjoy well-crafted classic and seasonally inspired cocktails and fresh seafood, they can do



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