



PROJECT SHOWCASE 2022

Spotlighting the best in design and MAS projects



Designed to Stand Out

Renovated space brings new vision to life for barbecue operator's third location

By Paul King | Photos by Christina Winkle, Capture the Moment

In an attempt to get a leg up on the competition, restaurants always look for a chance to stand out from their peers. Such was the case when Tulsa, Okla.-based Albert G's Bar-B-Q sought to open a third location.

For this location, which opened in 2021 in Tulsa Hills, some 20 miles south of Albert G's first location, owner Chuck Gawey wanted an appearance and ambiance that were very different from the first two restaurants. What Gawey sought to do was bring the Albert G's concept into 2021, create a venue that would increase company sales as a whole, and make the restaurant stand out in an area of south Tulsa known as "restaurant row."

To make his vision a reality, Gawey turned to SFG Consulting Group, which handled the entire design project from start to finish. And SFG delivered.

From the burnt wood used to add a "smoked" element to the ambience of the dining room, to the buffalo hide seats and raw cowhide booths that adorn

the restaurant and bar, to the new smokeroom at the rear of the kitchen, this renovation screams barbecue.

The end result is essentially a new flagship store. The project touched many areas and offered a unique story for Eli Huff, principal of SFG Consulting Group. "We don't always get to manage an entire project — nine times out of 10 we are under an architect — so turnkey is a neat story for other consultants to realize that they can broaden their scope of work beyond just being the food-service consultant."

It was real estate broker Brian Paine, of Paine Commercial Real Estate, who connected Gawey and Huff. Paine owns the shopping center where Gawey planned to convert a space (previously housing a casual dining restaurant) into his newest eatery. Huff says Paine had used SFG on several projects over the years and was comfortable getting the two men together for a chat.

Modernizing the Space and Concept

"The entire restaurant had been made of wood,

because it was a steakhouse concept," Huff recalls. "So, how do we change that look, make it look new and different, and yet not have to tear down the entire interior? So we painted the entire ceiling, including all the new HVAC ductwork, in the Albert G's red. We had to grind the floor down to the concrete. We painted it different colors, and added logos and texture."

Because sustainability was very important on the project, SFG reused all of the wood it had stripped out of the old restaurant to build out the interior, including the addition that houses the smoker in the back of the building, the bar itself and the liquor storage unit, and the booths in the bar area and dining room. On top of that, Huff says, he was able to employ a technique "we've been wanting to play with for a while" — a Japanese style of woodburning known as "shou sugi ban," which can literally be translated as "burned cedar."

"When we looked at all the wood we had left, we

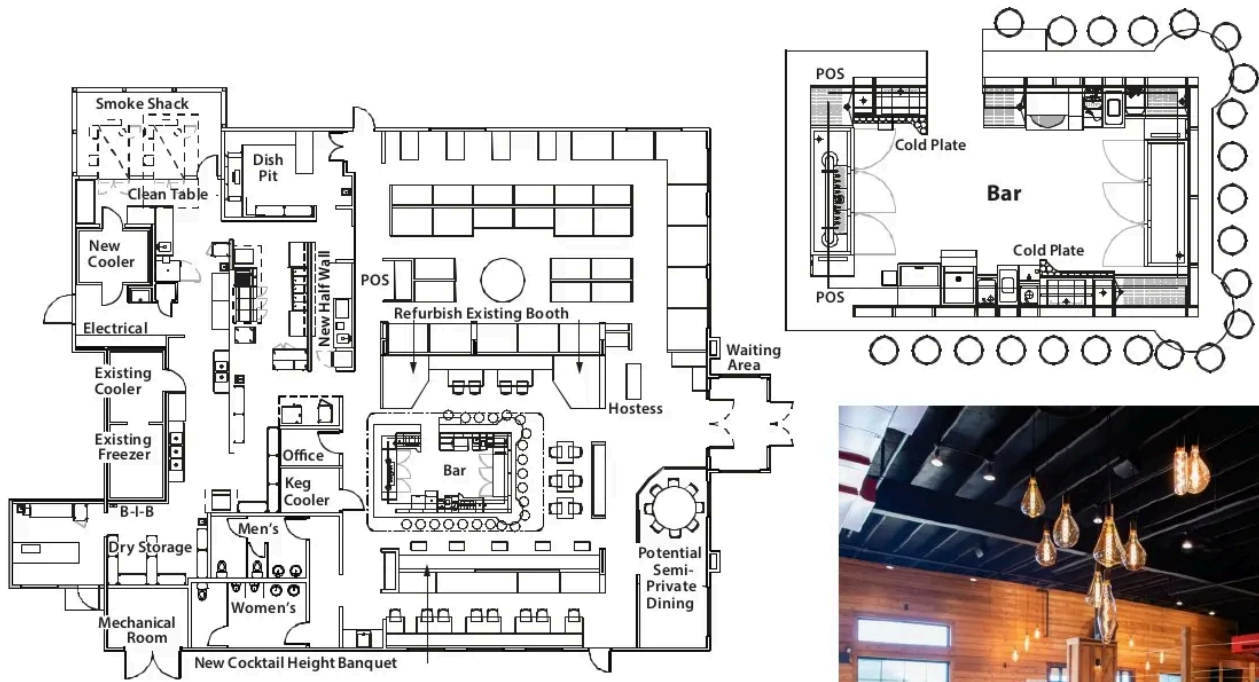
realized that we could sand it down, stain it, and then take a torch to it and have our carpenter burn the wood to give it almost a mahogany burnt brown color. So then when you walk in, you're immediately welcomed into this warm, stained, burned look, but it also fits the theme of barbecue."

A walk-through of the building, from the rear, reveals the new Albert G's look in its entirety, starting with the smoking shack with its two smokers and chimneys that are visible from nearby highway I-75. The rear also houses a new concept for the chain: a grab-and-go room.

"This was designed specifically with COVID in mind," Huff explains. "Off-premises sales are a much higher percentage than before. This area is quick, fast and efficient. In the parking lot, a camera picks up the curbside customer, a runner brings the food out, and they're gone."

The main kitchen area contains a pass-through meat locker, which attaches to the smoking room; a blast chiller; cold prep area, salad prep area and dry





KEY EQUIPMENT

Bar Area

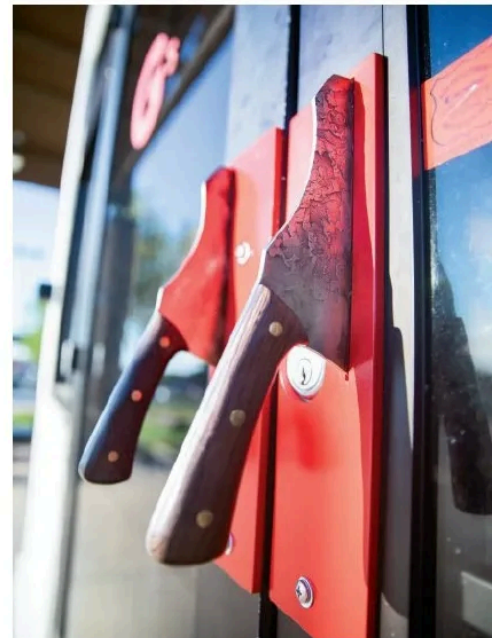
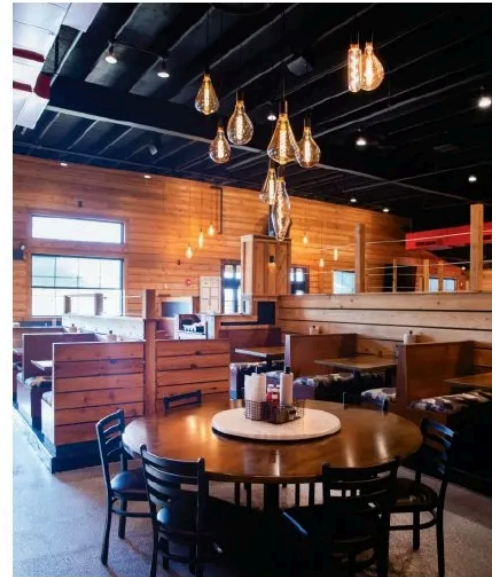
- Backbar blender station
- Backbar glass washer
- Backbar hand sinks
- Backbar ice machine/undercounter
- Beer mug chiller/froster
- Brew pipe drain board with glass rinser
- Bridge trash covers
- Chef base
- Custom liquor shelving
- Dispensing head, draft beer, brew pipe PT tower
- Drain board dish accessory with glass rack holders
- Ice machine and ice bin
- Lockable liquor cabinet storage/millwork
- Modular die wall system
- Server beverage station
- Stainless-steel three-door glass bottle cooler
- Underbar fillers and drainboards
- Underbar cocktail ice chest
- Underbar cocktail insulated bottle wells

Main Kitchen

- Butcher block meat prep table
- Combi oven self-cooking center
- Deep-fat fryers, 75 pound
- Five-compartment steam-table
- Flattop griddle
- Hand sinks
- Heavy-duty dry storage racks
- Hot holding cabinet
- Radiant gas chargrill
- Stainless-steel half-door upright freezer (fry station)
- Stainless-steel prep table (x4)
- Stainless-steel prep table (main kitchen meat cutting station)
- Stainless-steel prep table with 4-inch backsplash and undershelf
- Stainless-steel prep table w/20-inch-by-20-inch work sink
- Stainless-steel sandwich and salad prep cooler
- Toaster

Smoker/Back Kitchen

- Two-bay salad-prep sink with double-side drain boards
- Two-tier overshelf
- Upright refrigerator
- Warming drawer
- Blast chiller
- Chemical storage closet
- Custom millwork counter
- Dump sink with storage cabinet
- Gas-fired, wood-burning rotisserie smoker
- Reverse-osmosis filtration system
- Soiled-dish table with 20-inch-by-20-inch sink and prerinse faucet
- Three-compartment pot-wash sink w/double side boards
- Two-door conveyor dishmachine
- Walk-in cooler (low-profile fans, peep window)



storage; and another walk-in freezer and cooler.

At the front of the kitchen, much of the cooking equipment lies beneath a 16-foot hood: three fryers, a flattop, a griddle, a range, a bread warmer and toasters. Opposite the cookline sits the hot pass station, a custom three-tiered window where staff working the line put food up for the runners. There are two meat-cutting stations, with 4-foot-by-4-foot, 2-inch-thick cutting boards on either end of the line, along with a five-compartment steam well for all the sides, and a refrigerated salad station. Past the salad station sits another cooking area, with an 8-foot hood that contains a double-stacked combi oven.

FOH Wow

In the dining area, the left side of the room features booth seating, done up with buffalo hide and cowskin finishes. A small conference area can host parties of up to 12. In the center of the room is the bar, with its black granite top and 12-tap brewpipe, also painted with the Albert G's red.

"We wanted the wow factor," Huff says. "When you walk in, there is a giant buffalo head right above the door, our Edison light bulbs hanging down and the G's logo right in the floor."

Black steel-pipe bar stools adorn the bar seating area. Black-and-white cowhide covers the stool seats, which have the restaurant's

red "G" logo on the back. Other dining room features include two communal tables with the chain's logo laser-cut into them, golden leather U-shaped booths that seat six, and two-seat banquettes.

Above the bar is a soffit with a chalkboard-style design that features social media links, pictures of butcher knives and bourbon, and even the whole side of a cow showing the various cuts of beef.

"We had it printed on vinyl so it is overlaid, and it hangs over the entire bar," says Huff, "so when you're walking in and you look up, you see this chalkboard-looking effect and it ties into that barbecue theme and feel."

In addition to the unique challenges presented by COVID-19 — employee illnesses and supply-chain issues — SFG faced other obstacles as the project got underway. For example, there was the problem of converting the space itself.

"Sometimes, the challenges from a former foodservice location are even bigger than if you started from scratch," Huff explains. "The restaurant had been there for 12 years, and so everything from the mechanical to the electric to the plumbing had to be reworked. Then there is trying to find the vision of the owner and execute that in the design, while not being led by what's already there. You know, 'the kitchen was here, and the bar was here, so let's just rebuild those.'

If you go too far down that path, you end up designing something that looks like what used to be. But if you scrap everything, you can incur more cost. So there's a delicate balance."

In the end, SFG decided to gut almost everything in the kitchen, except for one centrally located walk-in freezer and four sinks in the rear that could be designed around. The bar was also rebuilt from the floor up.

"We also had to increase electrical loads," Huff says. "The gas that was there for the steakhouse equipment did not meet the pressure needs for all the new equipment, so we had to bring in new gas lines. That always triggers permit issues with the city."

Huff is particularly proud of his team's effort on this project because of how much of the original proposal survived. "The interior design is my proudest moment," he says. "Being able to think of a look that we believe that would take Gaway's concept to a new level and then seeing it executed so well. We hit about 90% of the ideas we presented to him in our original slides. That's rare. Between being able to design some new equipment into the kitchen and bar for Albert G's and the design of the dining room, things really molded together very well."

Huff believes the newly revitalized design will bring the already well-known concept to the forefront of the Tulsa restaurant scene.

AT A GLANCE

Facility: Albert G's Bar-B-Q, Tulsa, Okla.

Project: Renovation of existing space to open third restaurant for barbecue concept

Design consultants: SFG Consulting Group, Tulsa, Okla.

Project budget: \$3.3 million

Foodservice equipment budget: \$1.2 million

Scope of work: Project included running point on design as project manager, including front and back of the house components, menu consulting and some new packaging design for the concept's retail barbecue sauce. Specific areas work included kitchen design, bar design, draft system, meat smoking room, dining room design and curbside grab-and-go design

Architect: Mark Gaway, Tulsa, Okla.

Fabricator: Burrup Designs, Broken Arrow, Okla.

Dealer/foodservice equipment contractor: Curtis Restaurant Supply, Tulsa, Okla.

Contractor: Scott Sneary Contracting, Owasso, Okla.