



Mike Picetto, owner of 3rd & Ferry Fish Market, Easton PA

Tabit Transforms Operations, But Keeps the Heart and Soul of a Casual Fine Dining Restaurant

When Mike and Rebecca Pichetto opened 3rd & Ferry Fish Market in Easton, PA, in 2013, it quickly became a gathering place. On any given evening, hundreds of regulars and guests celebrating special occasions visit the restaurant in a renovated furniture company building about an hour and a half from Manhattan to enjoy the raw bar and seafood dishes like lobster, king crab legs, paella, lobster rolls, and specialty dishes with a Honduran flair.

3rd & Ferry has a first-floor dining area, a “mezzanine” level, private dining room “lower level” and patio and streetside tables. It features an open kitchen and a 30-seat bar that runs nearly the entire length of the restaurant and serves its own specialty cocktails and infusions.

The building’s unique architecture, however, created challenges for the staff. With so much distance from the furthest table on the mezzanine to the bar, for example, servers had to navigate through the dining area, down the steps, and across the first floor to put in drink orders, taking up to 15 minutes and adding to long table turn times.

Mike Pichetto commented, “Our primary pain point was service staff stockpiling orders and entering them in the the point of sale (POS) system in large blocks. This led to overloads in the kitchen, which led to longer ticket times and, ultimately, unhappy guests.” “If we were going to move into the future of dining, something had to give,” said Danya Kinsman, general manager. “We were falling behind, not because of food or service, but because of speed.”

Additionally, Kinsman said the restaurant’s legacy POS system was difficult for her to use. “The back end was confusing. Putting buttons in was a hassle, and it was hard to find the things I needed,” she said.

The restaurant also needed a better way to manage its gift card business. 3rd & Ferry runs a successful gift card promotion from Black Friday through Christmas Eve each year. However, its legacy gift card system wasn’t integrated with its restaurant system, so Kinsman would receive notifications via email, and then she’d create cards manually and mail them. It was labor- intensive, particularly since the restaurant’s highly popular 48-hour Black Friday flash sale could result in more than 500 gift card sales. “With the old system, it would take five of us five full days to get cards out by Christmas,” she said.

A Solution for Transforming Restaurant Operations

Kinsman began researching restaurant POS systems with features that could help the business overcome its challenges, but nothing seemed to suit 3rd & Ferry’s operation. The restaurant wanted to keep the polish of fine dining, allowing servers to use their knowledge and skill to create truly memorable experiences as well as operate more efficiently.

Mike Pichetto attended a Tabit release party hosted by Gotham Hospitality Solutions, an authorized Tabit reseller, and discovered the solution that would work for his business. Gotham had built a good relationship with the restaurant, understood its needs, and, as a trusted business advisor, was able to show Pichetto how Tabit would address 3rd & Ferry's challenges and pain points.

As a result, the restaurant decided to move forward with Tabit and implemented the solution in October 2021, choosing four modules:

TabitPad

TabitPad replaces a traditional point of sale system with mobile functionality. Instead of servers walking to a stationary terminal, they place orders using TabitPad right from the table. The module enabled 3rd & Ferry to build its menu in the system to reflect typical interactions with guests and create a conversational flow. "They took time to listen to us, help us build our menu, and help us create upsell prompts," Kinsman said. "The support they gave us – and still give us – is outstanding."

TabitChef

This module gives managers visibility into restaurant operations. Kinsman said it allows her to see overtime and manage it in real time. It also reveals which menu items are most popular or to see how features performed over the weekend. She doesn't need to be in the restaurant – she can access information remotely. "I can see numbers related to our sales with just a click," she said. "With our old system, that would have taken me hours."

TabitOrder

3rd & Ferry had accepted online orders through a third party during COVID-19 shutdowns, and although guests have returned to the dining room, the restaurant continues to receive online orders. With TabitOrder, however, now they're transmitted directly to the kitchen. It allows the restaurant to capture additional sales without adding staff and simplifies managing a separate menu with items suited to takeout.

TabitGiftCard

The restaurant implemented TabitGiftCard to streamline gift card issuance and save time, particularly when demand peaks around the holidays. TabitGiftCard is fully integrated with the Tabit system, and customers have the option to send gift cards digitally or have the restaurant create a physical card. The module also allows Kinsman to easily make changes or correct mistakes.

The Benefits of the Right Tools for the Job

Since implementing Tabit, 3rd & Ferry has seen measurable returns on its investment. "With the more steady stream of orders that are spaced out properly, we have decreased our ticket times substantially and reduced stress for servers and the kitchen," Pichetto says. "And our customers

are able to enjoy a heightened dining experience where the products they order are delivered in a timelier fashion.”

He says enhancing dining experiences has also led to more positive word-of-mouth advertising. “This has directly increased our reservation counts and it is evident in our net sales numbers month to month,” Pichetto explains. In the first three months alone of using Tabit, 3rd & Ferry saw an 18% increase in sales year over year.

Additionally, table turns are now 10-20% faster, allowing the restaurant to accommodate more walk-in business, increasing sales totals. Also, drink service is at least 10 minutes faster, and as a result, drink orders have increased from 1 per customer to 1.5. Raw bar orders have also increased. “It’s easy to place orders at the table, and the ticket goes through before guests order appetizers and entrees. Now there’s time for a three-course meal,” Kinsman explains.

Per person average (PPA) has also increased by at least \$10 per shift with Tabit due to higher drink and raw bar orders along with the system reminding servers to upsell. “Tabit prompts them to upsell, and now they’re in the habit,” Kinsman comments. She adds that those sales are profit-makers, not merely revenue-makers.

In addition, upgrading to TabitGiftCard with options for both online and physical cards has helped the restaurant increase gift card sales year-round. However, 3rd & Ferry saw the most gains during the holiday flash sale when gift card sales reached about \$60K in 2021, 50% year-over-year growth and an additional 25% in 2022 to total \$72K for the two-day sale. “It keeps our January and February afloat with people coming in to use them,” Kinsman commented.

Tabit also saves time for the 3rd & Ferry team. The system sends online orders directly to the kitchen, eliminating the need for the host to manage them.

Also, Kinsman spends a half-hour vs. an hour on each payroll and accesses data much more quickly with Tabit. “It changed my relationship with back-end work,” she said. She added that 3rd & Ferry is in the process of adding TabitShift to make managing employees and schedules easier.

3rd & Ferry’s servers have also embraced Tabit. “They have more control over how they put tables through, and the data in the system validates them,” she explained. “It also allows them to stop worrying about technology and focus on customer experiences.”

“It’s skyrocketed their sales and tips,” she said. Kinsman also pointed out that as servers are walking less, they have more energy on the floor and do their jobs more comfortably.

Kinsman commented, “We knew the industry is moving in this direction, that restaurants would rely more on technology, and we knew we’d have to make a move. Tabit is how we could do it and still keep the heart and soul of the restaurant.”

“It’s transformed our business,” she said.