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REBRANDING & REPOSITIONING: KENTUCKY STATE PARKS RESTAURANTS

A Capstone Experience/Thesis Project

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

The Degree Bachelor of Arts with

Honors College Graduate Distinction at Western Kentucky University

Ву

Jacqueline E. Byrne

Western Kentucky University 2013

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ABSTRACT

The restaurants located at the Resort Parks under the Kentucky State Parks

group have noticed a distinct lack of revenue over the course of the past five years.

Elaine Walker, Commissioner of the Arts and Heritage Committee, approached

myself and fellow student Lavella Hall, with intentions of a complete rebrand and

redesign of their main distributive information outlets: logos for each of the 17

restaurants, a menu redux, additional print mandatories (table toppers, etc.), and

ultimately, the brand image. With the implementation of this project, we intend to

see a 20% increase in guest traffic, guest loyalty and revenue for the Kentucky State

Park restaurants, located at the 17 highest grossing Resort Parks in the state of

Kentucky. Documented within is our process from beginning to end, obtained

research and methodology, and final design conclusions as functions of a semester's

worth of work.

Keywords: Rebrand, Kentucky State Parks, Restaurant, Design, Reposition

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This project would not have been possible without the help, support and wisdom of a number of people. I would like to thank Kelley Coppinger, my CE/T advisor, for her endless encouragement and faith that this project would get done and get done well. Her mentoring and guidance pushed me through many sleepless nights. Countless thanks go to the additional members of my committee—Cliff Shaluta and Ami Carter—for their refreshing insights and dedication to the final product, and their acceptance of the fact that I would flood their inboxes throughout the semester.

I would like give my utmost thanks to Commissioner Elaine Walker for the wonderful accommodations and care we received at the Parks. She went above and beyond to make sure we had everything we needed to complete our project.

I would also like to thank the Honors College for allowing the exploration of knowledge to be possible, and for the endless opportunities they have provided me to better myself as a scholar throughout my time at Western Kentucky University.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my friends and family who shared in many late nights and restless days for their constant support throughout this process to create a project that I am truly proud of.

VITA

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FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Advertising (Creative Print)

Minor Field: Graphic Design

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FOREWORD

Approaching a complete rebrand of an entity, whether it be commercial or personal, for profit or non-profit, can be both an exciting and extremely daunting feat. After the client relays the intended outcomes of the rebranding, the designer is given (almost) complete creative control to achieve their goals. It is one of the truest forms of partnership between advertising, public relations and marketing. A rebrand allows one to change the way, for example, a department store, a restaurant, a politician, or a university is perceived by the public. This may entail a logo or design makeover, a rewrite of the group's mission or brand promise, an alteration of internal functions, or even a name change. These changes, however, have to be for *something*. Adding a feature like a social media page may seem like a great way to stay with the current networking mindset, but what needs are you meeting? What story do you have to tell? These were the questions we intended to answer with our client.

The rebrand for the Kentucky State Parks restaurants spanned an entire semester, and involved many close communications with Commissioner Elaine Walker of the Department of Parks, our client requesting the project. I worked on this project with another student, LaVella Hall, throughout the semester, as we worked through the entire design process together from start to finish.

I often mention "we" in this compilation. We, in each instance, refers to myself and my design partner LaVella Hall, unless otherwise noted.

This case was different from anything I have ever done. I am accustomed to being presented with entities that are small in relation to corporate or government scale, with a minor established customer base, target audience or, most importantly, significant profit. These experiences were mainly class projects, specifically designed to test our creative limits. This project, however, was hard-hitting introduction into the field of real branding for a face-to-face client, whose business was greater and larger than I could have ever imagined. The project involved many research outings, client meetings and group meetings, and ultimately simulated a real-life agency setting.

As is common in the field of Advertising, our project morphed over the course of the semester. It became apparent early on that the problem with our client, the Kentucky State Parks, went deeper than just the restaurants. Due to this realization, the parameters for the project changed, and more people were brought in to rebrand the state parks as a whole. My thesis focuses solely on the work I did for the restaurants of the Parks, though our created image for the restaurants is based on the new brand invented for the parks. For this reason, it will be necessary at times for me to explain in brevity the Kentucky State Park rebrand, as it does have an impact on the design conclusions for the restaurants. Compiled within is an inside look at a design project from beginning to end, from frustration to fascination, and all the Eureka moments in between.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PARKS

To effectively create a brand for the Kentucky State Parks restaurants, it is imperative to understand the Kentucky State Parks and its day-to-day functions. We did a great deal of initial research on this subject to better understand our potential markets, opportunities and bottlenecks throughout the project. The research was gained secondarily from the State Parks website, as well as from overnight site visits to the parks.

In total, there are 49 Kentucky State Parks. 17 of these parks are Resort Parks, with overnight areas consisting of high quality lodges, similar to hotels, with an average of 40-80 rooms, or cottages accommodating up to 8 people each. Each cabin contains a kitchen and dining area, bathroom(s), bedroom(s), a living area, and a porch area with seating. Within these 17 resort parks, there are beautiful vistas, meeting rooms, banquet halls, hiking trails, marinas, fishing spots, golf courses and more activities unique to each park. Additionally, each resort park houses an in-park restaurant – the focus of our rebrand. Out of these 49, there are also 21 purely recreational parks. These parks do not contain lodging or restaurants; however, they offer a variety of activities at each, including Olympic

sized pools, large campgrounds with hookups, hiking trails, forts with pioneer reenactments, meeting spaces, boating areas and much more.

The remaining parks are what the Department considers Historic Sites.

These range from cemeteries, historic cabins and villages, bird watching areas,
discovery trails (educational displays of certain eras in history), historic homes,
museums and more.

The most exciting elements of each of these parks are the various events that they host, from daily to annually. The Jenny Wiley and Buckhorn Lake Parks have Elk Viewing Tours on various days each month, starting at 5:30 in the morning. Transportation is provided on a beautiful trail that allows one to get up close to the elk in their natural habitats. Other events include the Halloween Spooktacular Weekend, Family Adventure Quest, 5k runs, Photography Weekend and the Big Bone Lick Salt Festival (Kentucky State Parks). These events bring in out of state residents, as well as locals, to join in the festivities and keep things fresh around the Parks (Walker).

CHAPTER TWO

THE RESTAURANTS

The Restaurants of the Kentucky State Parks are the focus of our rebrand.

There are 17 restaurants in total, located at each of the resort parks as previously mentioned. The restaurants are as follows:

Music Highway Grill at Jenny Wiley Tieney's Cavern at Carter Caves

Driftwood at Barren River Lake Hidden Waters at Blue Licks Battlefield

Bowlingtown Country Kitchen at Buckhorn Lake Island View at Dale Hollow Lake

Riverview at Cumberland Falls Two Rivers at General Butler

Angler's Cove at Greenbo Lake Aurora Landing at Kenlake

Harbor Lights at Kentucky Dam Village Rowena Landing at Lake Cumberland

Windows on the Water at Lake Barkley Sandstone Arches at Natural Bridge

Mountain View At Pine Mountain Clifty Creek at Pennyrile Forest

Grayson's Landing at Rough River

Each of these restaurants has a sit-down menu that is universal throughout, meaning one can find the same items at Harbor Lights that they find at Two Rivers.

One can expect to see the same menu design throughout each of the parks as well – black text on a white, textured background. Also included on the menu are "Kentucky Favorites," including dishes such as Kentucky Hot Brown and Fried Catfish, which are popular among diners. However, most of the restaurants operate

on a buffet system as well, offering a breakfast, lunch and dinner buffet daily. The buffet usually includes two meats, various sides, rolls/biscuits and additional items such as a salad bar and fruit bar (Kentucky State Parks Restaurants). Desserts are also offered. This buffet-style eating lends itself to a cafeteria-like environment, which we analyzed later on in the project.

One of the main appeals of the restaurants is that they serve Kentucky Proud products whenever possible, as supporters of the program. These include meats and produce that were locally grown, including Purnell's Sausage, Harper's Country Ham, John Conti Coffee and Kentucky Proud milk products. The restaurants mention this in their menu multiple times to make sure their guests can take advantage of locally grown products (Kentucky State Parks Restaurants). This is something we made sure to retain with our menu redux later on in the project. This system gives back to the state of Kentucky in a supportive way, for out-of-state and in-state guests to enjoy Kentucky's finest flavors.

Some of the restaurants offer an additional alcohol menu as well, such as Music Highway Grill at Jenny Wiley. This menu is similar in style: black text on a white textured background, but is not found at every park: only a select few use this menu (Kentucky State Parks).

Similar to the parks as a whole, the restaurants offer seasonal promotions and menus. Rowena Landing at Lake Cumberland offers a popular all-you-can-eat Seafood Buffet, March through October on the third Friday of every month. The buffet is \$24.95 per person, and includes dishes such as king crab legs, smoked salmon, various styles of shrimp and more. Harbor Lights at Kentucky Dam Village

hosts a New Years Eve dinner on December 31st each year, boasting filet mignon and lobster tail for \$39.90 for two, complete with a dessert. Additionally, the parks as a whole offer a Mother's Day Buffet yearly, with menu items including fried catfish, roast pork and beef and a salad bar (Kentucky State Parks). These events bring in an elevated number of guests from in and out of state, and are extremely valuable to the financial sustainability of the parks (Walker).

CHAPTER THREE

THE PROBLEM

My first meeting with Elaine Walker, the Commissioner of Kentucky

Department of Parks and former Secretary of State, was on a rainy night in the

middle of January, at her office in downtown Bowling Green. She met me with the

same excitement I shared to begin the project, and upon the arrival of my professor

and project head, Kelley Coppinger, the first meeting for the rebrand began.

The Commissioner presented us with her challenge. She explained that, ultimately, the parks as a whole are losing money. Though they do have loyal visitors, both local and out of state, for events and off-seasons, they are still not capturing as many guests as they need to stay afloat financially. Park attendance has been on a steady decline over the past five years, with the surge of interest in technology and innovation edging natural fun out of the picture. She notes that typically, when a family takes a yearly vacation, they have been saving up to get out of their own backyard, deterring locals from enjoying the beauty of their state at a Kentucky State Resort Park. Additionally, Kentucky is not on the top of out-of-state travelers' lists either, due to the appeal of the state's natural beauty not reaching a nationwide audience. To combat this lack of revenue, Commissioner Walker is in the

process of upscaling the top grossing resort parks: Lake Cumberland, Jenny Wiley, Carter Caves, Kentucky Dam Village, Cumberland Falls, General Butler, and Lake Barkley. Part of this process involved upgrading the lodging to higher quality accommodations. The beds were being upgraded to a triple-sheet style: a bottom sheet, top sheet, blanket/comforter, and a third sheet on top. The look is cleaner, more professional and adds to the comfort level of the beds as well. In addition to this, the Commissioner is adding higher quality shampoos, conditioners and other bathroom toiletries to the lodging, with a five-star like arrangement to house them. These changes are intended to upscale the parks in the eyes of the consumer and to add to a higher quality guest experience.

However, Commissioner Walker believes that at the root of the parks losing money is the lack of revenue from the restaurants of the resort parks. She believes there are a large amount of missed income opportunities stemming from the restaurants, as they could generate far more than they are currently. This is a facet of the project that we explored in-depth later on. In addition, the restaurants do rely some on the parks' guest traffic for revenue, and this ultimately led us to bring in others to rebrand the parks as a whole, to allow for a symbiotic relationship between the two.

Finally, Commissioner Walker made it clear to us that because the parks have an extremely strict budget, whatever design conclusions and recommendations we came up with had to be cost effective and sensitive (Walker). This posed another level of challenge within the project that we could not wait to dive into.

Throughout all of our initial research, we were starting to see the problem that we were aiming to solve. After diligently monitoring social networking efforts, guest traffic, reviews and mentions of the restaurants and parks around the web, we started to see a pattern. The problem was not lack of awareness about the product, as we had previously begun to think. The problem that needed to be solved was a lack of awareness for the *value* of the product. Douglas Holt, author of How Brands Become Icons, pointedly writes "the ability to build valued myths into the product often distinguished success from mediocrity" (5). And now, we had a clear goal: to create that value in the mind of the consumer.

Site Visit

After completing our secondary research, gathering the information found above on the parks website and through Commissioner Walker, we felt it was imperative to see the parks and dine at the restaurants first hand. We had already begun generating ideas for the rebrand of the restaurants, and plans for the parks as a whole were underway as well. One element of the plan for the parks and restaurants was to tell photo stories that had inclusive, attractive and emotional value. These photos were to capture beautiful moments, comical situations, and development of character, all with the gorgeous backdrop of the Kentucky State Parks and the restaurants contained within, to create that perceived value of the product that Holt described as imperative. This led the group to the tagline for the Parks: Why Haven't You? This tagline was to the point and in your face, asking, even though all of these moments of hilarity, of beauty and of life definition are in your

backyard at 49 locations (the most in the country!), why haven't you gone and experienced it for yourself? We drew again from Holt's book: "Iconic brands function like cultural activists, encouraging people to think differently about themselves...Their myths prod people to reconsider accepted ideas about themselves" (Holt 9). This prodding tagline then governed where we needed to go with the restaurants, and we set out to the Parks to get our photos. We stopped at three State Parks on our trip: Lake Barkley State Resort Park, Kentucky Dam Village State Resort Park, and Mineral Mound Golf Course, in that order.

Upon arriving at Lake Barkley, we headed into the main lodge and down a floor to the Windows on the Water restaurant. We immediately discovered that the name of the restaurant was deservedly given – the restaurant was surrounded by floor to ceiling windows that overlooked Lake Barkley and the breathtaking skyline of pine trees. We ate at the daily buffet, compliments of Commissioner Walker. The food was outstanding – the buffet had a wide selection of meats, vegetables, dinner rolls, salads and fruits, not to mention the banana pudding for dessert. The only facet of the experience that rivaled the food was the service. The wait staff was courteous, attentive and warm, making us feel right at home with their Southern Hospitality. The group grabbed some photos posing as a wedding party, enjoying their special day with the scenic backdrop, while we photographed the meringues and empty plates we had left in our wake.

We went on to Kentucky Dam Village State Resort Park, and were invited graciously by Commissioner Walker to stay in the deluxe cabins for two nights and enjoy dining at the Harbor Lights Restaurant.

Similar to our experience at Windows on the Water, we had to go downstairs to get to the restaurant. We ordered off of the actual menu this time, instead of sampling the buffet, trying the Kentucky Hot Brown, Fried Catfish, various sandwiches and Chicken Tenders. The food was delicious and the service was great.

We returned for the breakfast buffet the next morning and were welcomed with a similarly fantastic experience.

With this site visit, we were able to determine what the restaurants were doing right. They have an incredibly capable and caring staff that caters to the guest's every need, showing that renowned Southern hospitality. The restaurants overlook beautiful Kentucky vistas, adding to the awe of the dining experience. We enjoyed joking with the staff, while enjoying flavorful native dishes in an inviting atmosphere. This was the value of the product, and we wanted to capture it when solving the problem of awareness.

However, this site visit allowed us to hone in on what the restaurants could improve upon to create a strong brand.

First and foremost, the restaurants do not have identities or logos. This is imperative to positioning a product in the mind of the consumer – the product being the restaurants. One cannot hope to create a strong brand without a visual representation for brand recall. According to George Rossolatos, "Brand name and brand logo constitute the very foundations of a brand's identity. It aids in maintaining identity through time, while visualizing a brand name, thus adding up to its synaesthetic image capital" (Rossolatos 23).

Additionally, the restaurants have the same menus throughout. There is no difference in the design or the content of the menu, which lumps them all into the same category with no unique distinguishing features. This poses an additional threat to brand recall, as there is nothing distinct about each site.

The restaurants also have table-toppers and menu inserts, with 2+ pages of text explaining the history of the parks and the state bird and flower. While this is valuable information to some, the placement of the inserts interrupts the menu without substantial cause. Similarly, the text is not visually appealing and is far too long for most people to sit through while they are trying to eat.

There was also no tie-in of the restaurants to the parks. There were no items related to specific parks or restaurants within the gift shop, and more importantly, no prominent signage throughout the parks to direct people to the restaurants. We had to search for the restaurants, finding them downstairs and out of sight, while there should have been directional and invitational signage throughout.

There were no substantial marketing efforts for the events at the restaurants either. The Seafood Buffet and New Year's Eve dinner bring in a healthy amount of guest traffic solely by return visits and word of mouth (Walker), but they could be bigger and better if marketed to a wider audience with an emphasis on *value*.

CHAPTER FOUR

SITUATION ANALYSIS

We composed a situational analysis of the Restaurants of the Kentucky State

Parks that compiled our research thus far.

Situation Analysis

a. Purpose:

i. Kentucky State Park Restaurants are an outlet for the target audience to find quality food and a desirable, Southern environment. The main goal is to establish the restaurants as a separate entity with a unique and worthwhile dining experience.

b. Industry Analysis

i. Financial:

 The Kentucky State Park Restaurants have restricted funding. The budget is very small, at approximately \$100,000 per year; what is set aside for restaurants is even smaller (Walker).

ii. Social Media:

- 1. Kentucky State Parks utilize Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Due to state restrictions, there is only one overall account on each promoting the 49 state parks and restaurants. The Twitter account, @KYStateParks, tweets often, promoting specials on lodging and events happening at the different parks. It has 381 followers and follows 0 people. Although the tweets have been posted more consistently, they lack interaction with the audience. In 2013, there were 7 tweets promoting food at KY State Parks. The tweets promoted food/events at a certain location. None of the tweets mentioned the name of the restaurant (@KYStateParks).
- 2. Kentucky State Parks has 21,150 likes on their page and 1,045 people have talked about the page. On March 22, 2013 Kentucky State Parks offered a special Facebook promotion for a last minute spring break vacation. The post received 36 likes and was shared 11 times. After that post from March 22 · 27th KY State Parks Facebook saw a huge increase in traffic: jumping from 1,460 people talking to as high of 2,925 people talking. On the Facebook page, the About section and the Company Overview contains the same text. Neither of the sections mentioned the restaurants. Few posts are featuring the

restaurants specials, and none say the name of the restaurant (Kentucky State Parks Facebook).

iii. Technological:

- The resort restaurants are up to date on technology, and atmosphere is up to date. Also, the restaurants offer Wi-Fi while you dine.
- 2. On the website, the Kentucky State Park Restaurants are hidden within the individual state park tab. The about section of the restaurant is limited, non-descriptive, and very generic. Limited hours are posted, and "call for hours" appears on random days with no number listed to call (Kentucky State Parks).

iv. Legal:

1. The Kentucky State Park Restaurants are under the state government and have many restrictions on technology and funding. Due to statewide smoking ban, some counties allow smoking inside restaurants. Also, some counties are prohibition or dry counties banning consumption of alcohol on park premises (Walker).

v. Environmental:

 Each of the restaurants offers a beautiful view of their location. The space aids the view, with huge windows allowing you to appreciate the surroundings while you dine. Some of the restaurants include indoor and outdoor seating during the warm seasons. Many of the restaurants are supporters of Kentucky Proud program, and utilize locally grown meat and produce when available.

c. Competitor Analysis

- i. Direct competitors for The Kentucky State Park Restaurants are other sit-down restaurants located in the same area.
 Having fast accessibility, a pre-established perception, and constant influence in the media, these competitors are likely to draw in the local audience. Local restaurants are likely to offer similar food options, cheaper or equal prices, and are located within small towns. These competitors have a smaller impact on the State Park visitor. Visitors staying overnight typically want to enjoy the whole park experience and will dine on park grounds. Day only visitors will more often choose an off-site restaurant to dine at (Walker).
- ii. Indirect competitors include grocery stores, RV's with refrigerators and coolers. These indirect competitors have an impact on The Kentucky State Park visitors due to their

convenience, cost efficiency and their ability to be prepared when needed. Many visitors will pack lunches or bring food to last the entire weekend, only eating at the restaurant one or two times a visit. Often, advertising promotes visiting parks with images of people roasting hotdogs, grilling burgers, or making s'mores. This impacts people's packing and planning when they visit.

d. Company Analysis

- i. All 17 of the resort parks have restaurants. Each of the restaurants has a name, and few have logos. These restaurants are seeking to establish an identity that is linked to the State Parks but separate. The Kentucky State Park Restaurants need to establish themselves as restaurants consumers want to visit on a typical night out. This identity would still allow visitors to enjoy the convenience and good food, but would also create a relationship with the local audience.
- ii. KY State Park Restaurants offers a unique experience to a typical park visit. The restaurants allow consumers to enjoy the outdoors without being totally immersed in it. The restaurants take pride in their menu, scenery and atmosphere.As a supporter of the Kentucky Proud program, the restaurants utilize locally grown meats and produce when available. The

restaurants also encourage consumers to embrace Kentucky by promoting traditional native cuisine.

e. Consumer Analysis

- i. A typical guest of The Kentucky State Park Restaurants is loyal. The restaurant's demographic are young adults, families, and seniors citizens. The typical consumer has visited multiple times prior and wants to partake in a comforting environment. Customers are likely to view the park and restaurant as an escape from their occupation and their home. The younger patrons spend time using the restaurant as a lunch between park activities while, the older patrons use it as a quite place or an evening out. The Kentucky State Park Restaurants is seen as a part of their visiting tradition (Walker).
- ii. The target audience consists of three segments: young park visitors, family visitors, and local seniors.
 - Young park visitors: People in this persona category are
 typically very active. They often travel with groups,
 visiting and exploring everything the park has to offer.
 The consumers often camp out while staying at the park
 and eat at the restaurant once during lunch on their
 visit where they will order off the menu.
 - 2. Family visitors: These consumers are young adults with young children. They typically visit for a couple days

either camping out or staying in an RV. These consumers visit the restaurant one evening after a long day of activities with their children. These consumers will indulge in the buffet offered.

3. Senior citizens: These consumers are loyal. They have been coming to the park for years and have memorized their order. They enjoy the restaurant year round.
These consumers typically order off the menu.

f. Brand Audit

i. In the past the restaurants have been solely associated with Kentucky State Parks, having their own name but lacking a separate identity. The restaurants have specials for different holidays and events hosted at the parks. Hours are consistently changing at the restaurants; they are dependent on the season and popularity of the park.

II. SWOT

a. Strengths:

i. The Kentucky State Parks Restaurants are local restaurants that provide a unique experience compared to that of chains. They have a beautiful resort location and open space that is only provided at their restaurant rather than in a standardized environment. Along with reasonable prices, the quality of their food draws in both park visitors and the local community.

b. Weaknesses:

i. The Kentucky State Park Restaurants are not branded. This creates a very low awareness, and no established expectation. Having an out of town location, the restaurant becomes a place that requires commitment and time. The constant buffet style food expenditures are causing restaurants to lose money due to lack of guests. Without a website, customers are limited on their knowledge of the restaurants, which is low because of the absence of brand recall. They are then obligated to be a part of a social networking site to find out specials and other information, which are not posted frequently.

c. Opportunities:

i. The Kentucky State Park Restaurants have the capability of providing its customers with a friendly and comfortable environment along with quality food. The scenery and food establishes an environment that can be reflected in its identity: menus and logos. Having a partnership with Kentucky Proud programs also leads to the possibility of competitions or shadowing for students of Bowling Green Tech Culinary School. This also leads to the possibility of creating fan bases for certain chefs at specific restaurants. Another opportunity is to provide catering for weddings and events held at The Kentucky State Parks. Also, events held at parks could aid to promote

restaurants in a symbiotic relationship, for example:

Geocaching throughout the parks with coupon codes for restaurants.

d. Threats:

i. The Kentucky State Park Restaurants budget is limited. With minor state funding, reaching consumers will pose a threat to advertising effectiveness. With consumers being more economically savvy than ever, they want to invest their money in locations that have established expectations. Many consumers perceive buffets as "cafeteria" like settings and as an evolving target market, most find this less desirable.

III. The Challenges

- a. Establishing /increasing brand recognition/awareness.
- b. Positioning the restaurants as an associated but separate entity from the parks, with a unique dining experience.
- c. Launching and maintaining a presence on the Internet and social media.
- d. Creating awareness and establishing expectations with a limited budget.

CHAPTER FIVE

DESIGN CONCLUSIONS

After completing our research, site visits, and situational analysis to compile everything, we were ready to start designing based on our determination of what the restaurants needed.

We began with the logos to determine the main styles of the subsequent pieces. We stuck with fairly neutral colors because we have a large scope of target consumers. Color means something different for each person, so by sticking to calming pastels and warm darks, we were sure the subliminal messages within each would not be misinterpreted (Fraser and Banks 10). We designed seven unique logos for the top grossing park restaurants as relayed to us by Commissioner Walker. The top grossing restaurants are as follows:

Music Highway Grill at Jenny Wiley

Tierney's Cavern at Carter Caves

Windows on the Water at Lake Barkley

Harbor Lights at Kentucky Dam Village

Two Rivers at General Butler

Rowena Landing at Lake Cumberland

Riverview at Cumberland Falls

For Music Highway Grill (Appendix A.1), we stuck to a classic "grill" design, with retro type in a badge shape. The park has many young visitors, as it is one of the many few that serves alcohol, so we chose to create logo that would appeal to a demographic of 21-34. We used black and white for the type and surrounding circle, and used a light gray for the distant trail in the background to aid to that classic look. The park has many hiking trails, so we chose to include that element in the design. Overall, the design is asymmetric, but the surrounding circle balances the slanted type in the center, leading to an overall stable design (Lupton and Phillips 30).

Tierney's Cavern (Appendix A.2) restaurant at Carter Caves is named after the retired park naturalist John Tierney. The park's most popular attraction is the caves, so we felt it necessary to include this in the logo with the band of stalactites underneath the type. The font we chose was a grungy aged serif style that we felt captured the essence of the caves. We felt that this font did not require a lot of color, as caves are dark and earthy. We accented with browns and grays for this reason (Fraser and Banks 10).

Windows on the Water (Appendix A.3) is a restaurant at Lake Barkley with a beautiful view. There are floor to ceiling windows surrounding the whole restaurant that allows the guest to see mountain ranges, exotic birds and Lake Barkley in one place. We felt that this logo should be more upscale and simple, so we used a traditional serif font, the oldest type style (Cullen 42). We included a heron, a typical sight in that area, to tie the clean serif type together. We chose to do an open design, rather than contain it in a badge, to be reminiscent of the grand open view.

Harbor Lights (Appendix A.4) is another restaurant with a great view. Again, we wanted to capture that scenery in a classic yet natural way. We came up with a logo that included a vista that contained various receding values, based on a basic theory of art that value has a direct relationship with the illusion of distance (Lauer and Pentak 250). Finally, the design was surrounded by a ring and a banner with the restaurant's name.

Two Rivers at General Butler (Appendix A.5) is a restaurant overlooking the Ohio River Valley, where Ohio and Kentucky rivers meet. The park itself has charming, warm lodging, typical of a small river town. For the logo, we stuck to warm colors: deep purple and a warm gray to offset (Fraser and Banks 10) and included a graphical suggestion of "two rivers."

Rowena Landing at Lake Cumberland (Appendix A.6) was a particularly fun logo to design, because of the imagery associated with landings. Landing, meaning harbor or dock, suggests nautical imagery, such as anchors or ships, but we did not want to be that obvious with our choice. We decided on an iconic image, of someone holding a lantern, waiting for a ship to come in. For consistency, we included the text in a nautical-style banner and surrounded the scene with a porthole to complete the logo.

For the final logo, Riverview at Cumberland Falls (Appendix A.7), we stuck to simple panoramic shape with a river icon at the top. We used serif type for a professional look (Cullen 44) with mute colors.

To address the fact that all of the logos needed to exemplify that they were all a part of the Kentucky State Parks, the secondary type, with which we identify in

which park the restaurant is located, is all the same font and style. We used Hoefler type, and used capitals for each logo, to create the consumer perception that this is a product of the Parks. Consistency is key to maintaining a whole brand image (Rossolatos 32).

The reasoning behind only designing the top seven restaurant logos was that we, along with Commissioner Walker, wanted to upscale the restaurants that were already making somewhat of a profit to lead to opportunity for more revenue as a whole. As said previously, the Parks are losing money and they do not have a large budget with which to fix everything at once. Upscaling the restaurants that are already bringing in guests is a logical first step, which will ultimately allow for more improvements in the future (Walker).

However, we did not leave the remaining ten restaurants out. We created a single treatment for the ten restaurants (Appendix A.8), which included a half circle from the new logo that the class a whole created for the Parks (Appendix A.9), the name of the restaurant, and the name of the park. In doing this, we brought the remaining ten restaurants up a level as well, to allow for increased profit in those areas.

In addition to creating 17 logos, we also created a menu template. By creating a template, we were sensitive to the Parks budget and time constraints, instead of creating a menu for each restaurant. Additionally, at a later date, the parks are revamping the menu and this allows a quick turnaround not involving another party.

The template we created was organic in style. We used natural textures and earth tones as we felt they were indicative of a State Park and captured their naturalist qualities while still appearing professional. We paid careful attention to the organization of the menu, as the original menu was well organized but lacked design impact. We wanted to retain its easy-to-read quality, for two of our main demographics: seniors and children. For this reason, the body type in the menu is a serif type, while the headings are sans-serif (Cullen 42-43).

We also wanted to continue to showcase the Kentucky Proud products, mentioning in the menu frequently that certain menu items used those products. We also included the logo on the back with a comprehensive list of all the Kentucky Proud products the restaurant offers. We also kept the "Healthy Option" indicator, but adapted the design to fit the menu as a whole.

The front page of the menu contains a photo from the park that the restaurant is in, as well as the logo for the restaurant, also featured on the inside of the cover. These items can be changed for each restaurant, but we used the Rowena Landing logo and a stock photo of a marina to exemplify how to use the template.

This new menu offers a design solution on par with the Parks' budget. Each page is set to be individually printed and will slide easily into the booklets that they already have. Also, this allows each restaurant to have a unique menu that guests will be excited to see, but as it is a template, it remains consistent throughout all parks to create a memorable, impactful brand.

To reinforce this brand further, we also created a table-topper template that can also double as a menu insert. Rossolatos notes "brand identity is not about the repeating the same message over and over, but about maintaining a signification kernel through variable communicative manifestations" (16). We created three examples to enforce how they should be used: Rowena Landing's Seafood Buffet, Harbor Light's Mothers' Day Buffet, and the Park's New Years Eve Dinner at every restaurant.

The events at the Parks' restaurants are times for families to come together in a comfortable and exciting atmosphere, for delicious food, all at a great price.

However, we felt that these events were not advertised as widely as they could be.

They were present on the Events Calendar on the State Parks website, but not found anywhere else. We decided to design table toppers to encourage return visits and elicit brand recall with an easy to read format.

In the beginning stages of the table-toppers, we decided these events were *valuable*: emotionally, socially, and economically. The class' work as a whole centers on this facet, and was expressed, as stated earlier, by photographs taken at the parks of unforgettable moments. We chose to go this route with the table toppers by using meaningful, attractive photos to create a connection with the guest, leading them to say, "I want this experience too!" while maintaining that "signification kernel" (16).

For the design of the template, we used earth tones from the class' Kentucky State Parks logo to create consistency between them and the menu. We chose some stock photography to demonstrate what type of photos would be applicable and powerful in various situations. These photos were situated at the top of the

template, spanning the width of the piece, and were followed by the title of the event in large type, and a cursive subtitle noting what park restaurant is holding the event. We allowed a section for appropriate copy, the date and time of the event, and finally the logo of the restaurant in the bottom right corner. As stated before, this was a template that can be easily changed using a drag-and-drop system, to fit all of the restaurant's needs.

We believe these events can be bigger and better, generating more revenue for the restaurants and adding to the bottom line for the Parks. They just need to be consistently advertised in a powerful, personal and comfortable way.

In addition to a menu redux and the complement of table toppers, we also created a series of front and back coasters to be used in the restaurants. This addition was made from our revisiting of the awkward, gaudy text about the history of the park that broke up the menu with no significant gain. The idea behind it was charming and prideful of Kentucky, but it was executed poorly.

We created coasters in three categories: Branding, Promotional, and
Kentucky Pride. For the branding coaster, we used the logo the class had created for
the Parks on the front, and the tagline, "Why Haven't You?" on the back. This coaster
is meant to reinforce the brand and constantly remind diners that they are at a
Kentucky State Park, in case other indicators are not present or go unnoticed
(Rossolatos 16). The second coaster example we created was a promotional piece
for the Seafood Buffet at Rowena Landing, to work in congruence with the tabletopper. The front included bold type with the name of the event, and the back briefly

describes the event and when it takes place, complete with the logo of the restaurant. The final two coasters we created fell into the Kentucky Prideship category. These are the pieces that we created to replace the informational menu insert. Instead of long-worded histories, we instead stuck to the basics: The state bird and the state flower. We designed a coaster with a cardinal on the front, and on the back, a poem to emphasize the *value* of the cardinal to Kentucky, for the guest to enjoy. We did the same thing with the Goldenrod coaster.

These charming pieces of Kentucky are free for guests to take home, and it should be encouraged. In taking something like this home as a souvenir, it keeps the brand fresh in this consumer's mind to keep them coming back the following year and even serves as a reminder of events. In addition, it is something they can show off: in a scrapbook, to friends, or tacked to an office bulletin board. This is a cost-effective way to allow the brand to travel from state to state autonomously!

CHAPTER SIX

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important to note that in advertising, not everything is solved with design, even if that design has a strategic battle plan behind it. We came up with a few additional recommendations during the rebrand that do not involve design, but we felt they would help the rebrand be successful.

Firstly, we suggested a more prominent Internet presence for the restaurants. On the Kentucky State Parks website, the descriptions of the restaurants are generic and repetitive, offering no images of the food or restaurant itself. We called for a rewrite of the descriptions with strong, impactful and unique copy, accompanied by the logos of the restaurants.

To further assist this Internet presence, we advocated for more mentions of the restaurants on the Parks' social media sites: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. As mentioned in the Situation Analysis, there were only 7 tweets about the restaurants in 2013; however, none of these posts mentioned the name of the restaurant (@KYStateParks). Due to state restrictions, the restaurants cannot have their own social media pages (Walker), so it is important to create this distinction on the main site as much as possible. For instance, creating a separate album for photos of the restaurants and their food on Facebook would bring in more

awareness to what the Parks have to offer. To combat this further, we recommend the Parks create a hashtag on Twitter and Instagram for the restaurants, easily dividing which tweets are for what aspect of the Parks. These tweets can be promotional, informative, or just a fun photo of a young child diving into their Kentucky Hot Brown. Finally, the Parks need to produce a higher volume of tweets and Facebook posts, begin following other State Parks to concurrently help with improvements on the home front, and begin interacting with their fans on these sites. Since the new brand is primarily focused on reaching a younger demographic, it is imperative to use social media to connect with those people. Additionally, the "fastest growing segment of social networking users is between 35-49 years of age," so this method would help engage that group as well (Goldman 7-8). Generating conversations is crucial to the success and necessity of social media outlets, and can ultimately determine the success of the brand.

One of the main issues we noticed on our site visits was that none of the restaurants had prominent, visible signage to direct the guest to that restaurant. Both restaurants we visited were downstairs and took a while to find. Signage with the logos needs to be present in the restaurants themselves, and outside of the lodges, which house the restaurants, with a directional statement.

We also assessed the restaurants' menu. Because it is the same menu throughout each park, there is no value in traveling to each restaurant; there is no expectation of a unique dining experience. This is fine for a restaurant franchise, but these restaurants all have different names, suggesting different menus. We recommended changing the menus for each park, but keeping the "Kentucky

Favorites" in all restaurants. We also suggested having one or two items per menu that were exclusive to the area: seafood at the Parks with lake vistas, Bison Burgers at the Parks that are in Bison territory, etc. The Parks already viewed this menu item revamp as an eventuality, so we basically enforced this as the right way to proceed.

Along with this menu rewrite, we recommended cutting back the buffet operation. The restaurants are losing money due to an over abundance of food preparation with no guests to match the costs (Walker). By cutting down the buffet to perhaps just weekends when it is the busiest, the Parks will save money. The buffet also contributes to a cafeteria-style dining experience that is not consistent with the upscaling of the restaurants. However, we did not think it was best to get rid of the buffet all together, but we recommended adding another element to the restaurants for people to look forward to, if the buffet was solely on weekends. This is based on the basic economic principle that if the supply is cut, the demand will rise. Additionally, this allows people to explore the menu and experience the native dishes of Kentucky. This would encourage brand recall: "They have the BEST Hot Brown!" by word of mouth advertising.

Finally, while still in the research stage, there is little connection to the Parks and the restaurants as one "family." This branding plan is striving to create a symbiotic relationship between the two. In order to create this mutually beneficial set up, a few things need to happen first. For one, there needs to be heavy advertising of the restaurants *within* the Parks to create a feeling of solidarity. Secondly, as mentioned above, social media congruency will aid in this as well. Finally, events that the Parks usually hold need to also benefit the restaurants.

Geocaching, the act of going on a scavenger hunt using GPS, has recently become a big deal within young culture, and the Parks do offer it. We suggested something as simple as placing a few coupon codes in the geocaches, so that when guests find them, they can redeem the code for a free or discounted item at the respective park's restaurant. This will capture guests in the restaurant that originally came to solely visit the park. This is just one example we came up with, but establishing solidarity between the two is crucial to the success of the brand image. To further create this solidarity, we recommended more merchandise for the parks, as well as the restaurants. The class as a whole created merchandise for the golf parks and brand as a whole to be sold at the Parks' gift shops, which currently have very little, if any, branded merchandise. We recommend this based on the Kentucky Unbridled Spirit brand for the state of Kentucky as a whole, as their merchandise sales alone were \$600,000 for the first three years of the brand's use (Commonwealth of Kentucky).

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Kentucky State Parks as a complete entity displays a number of already established facets that make up their day-to-day business. They are a government owned body with loyal visitors and beautiful landscapes. They have 49 state parks, 17 of which are resort parks with lodging, restaurants, golf courses and other accommodations. Guests travel to see Kentucky's woodland paradise and mountain ranges, and the parks showcase those vistas. They have an incredibly caring staff that caters to your every need and makes you feel at home, even though you're in somewhere, Kentucky. Their restaurants serve great food in convenient locations for their visitors. They were doing a lot of things the right way. They just needed our help.

We assessed the problem as a lack of awareness of value. We created this value through upscaling the top seven grossing restaurants, and bringing the remaining ten up a level as well with new logo treatments. We designed a new menu template to create a consistent look across the park but with the opportunity to be unique. We made table toppers with impactful photography to reinforce the brand's value by doing in-house promotions for restaurant events. We created coasters as a take-along piece for guests, to spread our brand in a creative and passive way.

We also made recommendations to make this transition smoother, such as limiting the buffet, building a stronger online presence, and displaying prominent signage for the restaurants.

The brand we created was organic in style, natural, powerful and caring. It had the appeal of Kentucky charm but on a professional and clean level. Over time, guests will be reprogrammed to realize that Kentucky is a beautiful state that cares about the local community and strives to bring the best service possible, in a fun and unforgettable atmosphere.

The bottom line is this: If the food and atmosphere are terrific and the brand is a reflection of those characteristics, people will visit – and return.

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APPENDIX A
LOGOS

A.1 Music Highway Grill Logo





A.3 Windows on the Water Logo



A.4 Harbor Lights Logo



A.5 Two Rivers Logo



A.6 Rowena Landing Logo





A.8 10 Single-Treatment Logos





















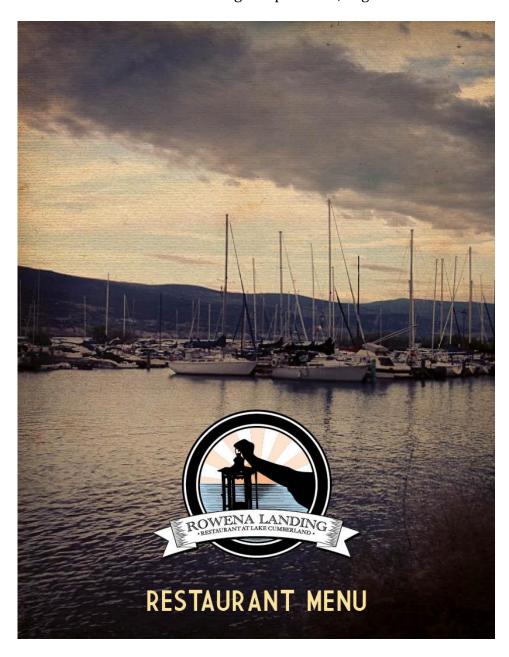
A.9 Kentucky State Parks Logo



APPENDIX B

MENUS

B.1 Rowena Landing Sample Menu, Page One



B.2 Rowena Landing Sample Menu, Page Two



B.3 Rowena Landing Sample Menu, Page Three

LUNCH M

Appetizers

Assorted cubes of domestic and imported cheeses accompanied by a fresh cut vegetable assortment. Served with ranch dip and crackers. \$7.99

Creamy mozzarella cheese sticks, rolled in a crumby breading, fried to a golden brown and served with a rich marinara sauce. \$5.49

Boneless strips of white meat chicken breaded in our special seasoned flour, fried to perfection and dipped in buffalo sauce. Served with bleu cheese dressing and celery sticks. \$6.49

Slices of green tomatoes dipped in buttermilk and rolled in a seasoned meal, fried and served with spicy ranch dip. \$5.99

Chicken Ouesadilla

Grilled flour tortilla stuffed with grilled chicken, diced tomatoes, green peppers, onions and shredded cheddar cheese. Served with salsa and sour cream. \$7.49

Soups & Salads

Mixed salad greens topped with diced tomatoes, croutons and shredded cheddar cheese. Served with crackers and your choice of dressing, \$2.99

Chicken Strip Salad

Fresh mixed salad greens topped with fried chicken strips, shredded cheddar cheese, bacon crumbles, croutons, tomatoes and served with your choice of dressing. \$8.99

Fresh mixed salad greens topped with grilled chicken strips, shredded cheddar cheese, bacon crumbles, croutons, tomatoes and served with your choice of dressing. \$8.99

Fresh mixed salad greens topped with sugar cured ham, roasted turkey, Swiss and American cheeses, bacon crumbles, croutons, tomatoes and served with your choice of dressing, \$7.99

Soup of the Day
Ask your server for today's variety of our homemade soup. Cup \$2.49 Bowl \$2.99

Soup and Salad Bar

Help yourself to our all you can eat soup or salad bar (when available) \$6.99

Sandwiches

Our 6-ounce hand-pattied fresh ground beef burger on a toasted Kaiser Roll, served with fries. \$6.49 with cheese \$6.99 with bacon and cheese \$7.99

Veggie Burger
Seven vegetable blend burger served on a toasted bun with lettuce,
tomato, onions and pickles. Served with steamed vegetables. \$6.49

Grilled Chicken Sandwich

5-ounce boneless, skinless chicken breast in our special marinade, grilled over an open flame and served on a toasted Kaiser roll. Served with fries. \$7.49

Southwestern Veggie Wrap
Flame roasted corn, black beans, onions, peppers, lettuce, tomato and shredded cheese in a tomato tortilla. Served with fries. \$7.49

Grilled flour tortilla stuffed with your choice of grilled or fried chicken, shredded cheddar cheese, tomato, lettuce and ranch dressing, and your choice of white, wheat, or tomato tortilla. Served with fries. \$7.49

Mild catfish fillet rolled in our seasoned meal and fried to a golden brown. Served on a toasted hoagie roll with fries and

Thinly sliced Penn's Country Ham, topped with melted Swiss cheese on a toasted hoagie roll. Served with fries. \$7.99

A toasted triple-decker classic with sliced turkey breast, sugar-cured ham, crisp bacon, American cheese, lettuce and tomato on your choice of bread. Served with chips. \$7.99

Grilled marbled rye with tender sliced corned beef, melted Swiss, saurkraut and Thousand Island dressing. Served

Our version of the classic Philly Cheese Steak served on a hoagie roll with Swiss cheese, grilled onions and green peppers. Served with fries. \$7.99

B.4 Rowena Landing Sample Menu, Page Four

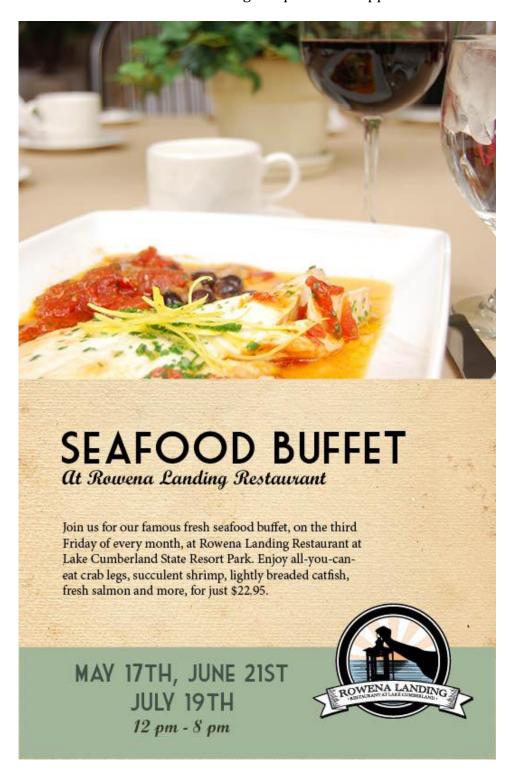


B.5 Universal Drinks Menu

BEER Domestic Bottles White Budweiser Wente Chardonnay Bottle \$28 **Bud Light** \$3 Chateau St. Michelle Miller Genuine Draft \$3 Coors Light \$3 Riesling Bottle \$26 Miller Lite \$3 Ecco Domani Michelob Ultra \$3 Pinot Grigio Bottle \$24 Salmon Creek Premium Bottles White Zinfandel Chardonnay Glass \$4 Pinot Grigio Bottle \$18 Corona Heineken \$4 BBC Nut Brown Ale \$4 Red KY Bourbon Barrel Ale \$6 Samuel Adams \$4 Hogue Merlot Bottle \$26 Kentucky Ale \$4 Sierra Nevada Pale Ale High Note Bottle \$28 Malbec 7 Deadly Zins Zinfandel Bottle \$30 Robert Mondavi Private Reserve Forest Edge Riesling Shepherdsville, Kentucky Gold Medal Winner 2011, KY State Fair Cabernet Sauvignon Bottle \$28 Bottle \$21 Salmon Creek Glass \$4 Cabernet Sauvignon Brooks Hill Vidal Blanc Bottle \$18 Merlot Brooks, Kentucky Silver Medal Winner 2011, KY State Fair Sparkling Bottle \$18 Freixenet Cordon Milla Nova Cabernet Sauvignon Bottle \$28 Brut Mt. Washington, Kentucky Gold Medal Winner 2011, KY State Fair Douglas Hill Bottle \$20 Bottle \$28

APPENDIX C TABLE TOPPERS/MENU INSERTS

C.1 Rowena Landing Sample Table Topper



C.2 Harbor Lights Sample Table Topper



C.3 Kentucky State Parks Sample Table Topper



APPENDIX D

COASTERS

D.1 State Bird Coaster



front back

Suddenly then the brilliant cardinal all at once took flight
With feathered wings opened up and a flying path, very bright.
A quiet wonderland for all, lasted in powdery white.
The world beckoned with shimmery hands, and its silvery might.

Gayle Sweeney

D.2 State Flower Coaster



front back

When August sunset's yellow blaze
Streams out o'er meadow, field and lawn,
It seeks some shrine wherein its rays
May linger till returning dawn,
And touching gently with its sheen
That graceful plumage of the sod,
Its constellated gems of green
Are changed to glorious Goldenrod

Jared Barhite

D.3 Promotional Coaster



front back

All You Can Eat Crab Legs, Shrimp, Catfish, Salmon and More!

Third Friday of Every Month



D.4 Brand Recall Coaster

