

Restaurant Business

STREET SMARTS FOR THE ENTREPRENEUR

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Our annual look at
the creative (page 42)
the inventive (page 43)

the just plain smart



(page 44)

and the slightly weird - but

IDEAS

In a good
way (page 45)

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GREAT



In the no-cry zone

Chopping and chopping onions is no laughing matter when you're going through 50 pounds at once. Chewing on a toothpick or match, burning candles and running the water might keep some staffers from shedding tears, but none are foolproof solutions. Now there are the Onion Goggles (\$19.95), discovered and sold by Broadway Panhandler in New York City. "The goggles have a comfortex lens that protects eyes from the irritating onion vapors that cause tearing," says marketing director Heather Lamster. "Plus, they're a totally hip fashion accessory for the kitchen—reminiscent of 1960s designer sunglasses."

The goggles can be ordered online at www.broadwaypanhandler.com.

For day

Winter in Chicago can be brutal, but TK Kitchen offers a novel way to beat the cold: free evenings during which guests can mix and match menu items in celebratory tea. The choices are as diverse as VTK staples like ginger, lemon and dried orange. "We want to see how a tea blend can become a menu flavor," says Johnson. As for the psychic tea leaf, it's coming soon.



Culinary 411

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Forget the Food Network. ChefsLine (www.chefsline.com), launched in April

2006, offers a toll-free hotline where professional chefs give live advice to home cooks over the phone. They'll walk callers through a recipe, help rescue a dry roast, even provide a meal plan based on ingredients on hand. Users pay a fee (\$15.95 per month for unlimited usage; \$10 per consultation of up to 30 minutes) and chefs are compensated, though founder Jennifer Beisser won't say how much because "it ranges." Then there's the promotional value. "If chefs want to promote their restaurant or give a sneak preview of a new menu, we can host them for a conversation with a group of their loyal customers," Beisser says.