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Side Dish

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by Patricia Walsh

LIKE PUMPING YOUR OWN GAS, scanning your own groceries and printing your own airline boarding pass, the new economy has tapped into the final frontier of personal service. You can now make your own restaurant reservations without human contact. Most savvy restaurants know it's an efficient way to reach consumers and save money, so they offer guests the opportunity to book directly from their Web sites. You can also go to reservation clearinghouses such as www.OpenTable.com.

Starting this month, the Menu listings in San Diego Magazine denote restaurants that are aligned with OpenTable (look for "OT" at the end of a listing). In addition to making reservations, OpenTable users can accumulate dining points to be redeemed at participating restaurants, a couple of dozen of which are in San Diego. Now if technology could only perfect a way to get the meal served without someone asking, "Are you still working on that?"