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This Restaurant's Little Free Cookbook Library Is Creating Community

Food is the best way to bring people together!

CASSIE HURWITZ · 23 HOURS AGO



We can all agree that cookbooks are a beautiful, glorious invention. But sometimes, we outgrow the cookbooks we have. They're too nostalgic to get rid of, but what do you do when you no longer have a need for them?

Create a [Little Free Library](#), of course! Little Free Libraries have been popping up all over for the past few years, and the concept is as genius as it is democratic—bring a book, take a book. The books are free as long as you stick to the honor system.

Carl Sobocinski, owner of the restaurant [Table 301](#) in Greenville, South Carolina, had heard about a Little Free Library in town that included some cookbooks. It didn't seem like anything special—until Sobocinski was doing some cleaning and purging in the restaurant's space and noticed a lot of extra cookbooks sitting unused. Thus, Table 301's Little Free Cookbook Library was born.



A few years ago, Table 301 went through a makeover to create a homier vibe. The Little Free Cookbook Library has only added to that feeling. “In 2018 we felt like the restaurant was tired. We had a great clientele, but we wanted to make it more conducive to hanging out, working, meeting for coffee—a gathering spot,” Sobocinski says. “We softened it up and put different seating where people could lounge.” With the cookbook library, the restaurant feels even more like a gathering place.



“I like the idea of giving people another purpose to visit the restaurant,” he says of the library addition, “but it also puts smiles on their faces.” Thanks to Sobocinski and the Little Free Cookbook Library, the restaurant feels like customers' own living rooms—and that's exactly what he strives for. “It really just resonates with what our restaurant is about—being with people, smiling, having a good time, and feeling like customers are at home.”

He's hopeful the idea will take off in other restaurants and bring more people together over a shared love of food. “The overwhelming enthusiasm has been truly amazing,” Sobocinski says. “We're certainly hoping other restaurants take note and add cookbook libraries to their own spaces.”