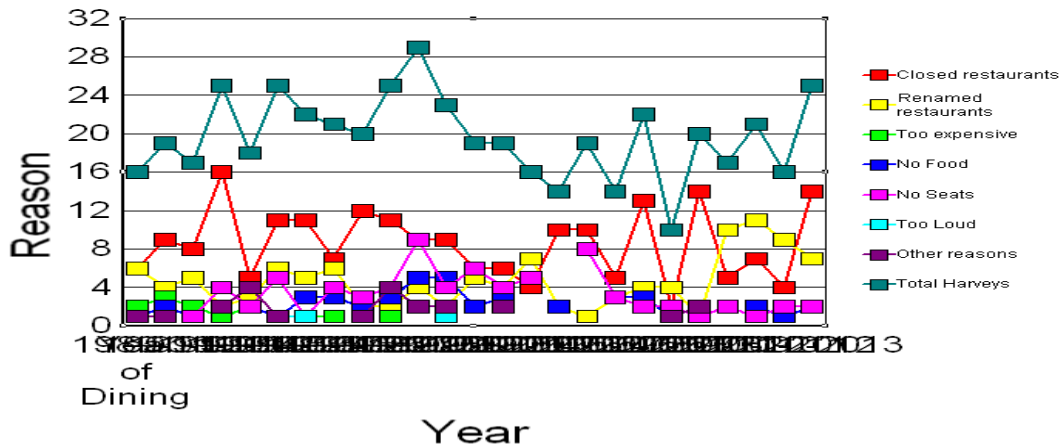


Filling up at Harveys



A report from the Dinermetrics institute, 2014.

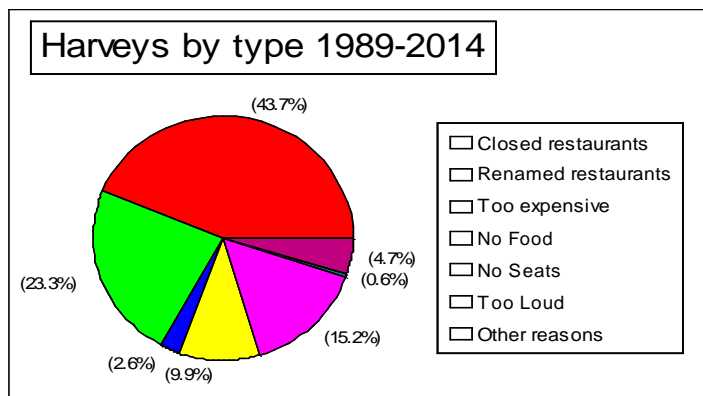
The Dinermetrics institute thought it might be a fitting tribute to their 100th anniversary to produce a definitive report on the phenomenon of “filling up at Harvey’s” since 1989. A previous plan to release the 75 years of reports from 1914 to 1988 entitled “predicting the day when an alphabetical dining group will emerge in Toronto, with reference to social trends and personal mobility statistics in Canada applied to the specific location of Toronto” was abandoned when it was discovered these records had been destroyed in a freak fire in October of 1989. Indeed, it seems that all historical records of the institute prior to 1989 were destroyed in that fire, including a very valuable file of records from 1900 to 1913 entitled “proposals for the formation of a Dinermetrics institute in Canada.”

But we digress. The Institute does have a robust data set on the phenomenon of “filling up at Harvey’s” since 1989. However, as the above chart shows, it has a terrible ability to chart this data. However, the above chart does show the general trend lines over this period.

From 1989 to present, the Serial Diners have filled up at Harveys 494 times. The Diners have been in existence roughly 1295 weeks, so filling up has occurred on 38% of the total weeks. The total breakdown of reasons for this are:

Closed restaurants:	216
Renamed restaurants:	115
Too expensive:	13
No dinner-like meal:	49
Not enough seats:	75
Too loud:	3
Other reasons:	23

Most of the “other reasons” were one-off invocations of rules which did not appear



in the Serial Diners official rules for filling up, including “food court in the middle of a freaking blizzard”, “too cold for sushi”, and such, but this category also includes restaurants whose existence at a location could not be proven. Hence it was unclear whether they had closed, had seats, etc. because they could not be evaluated.

Certain reasons were more prevalent in certain periods. The “too expensive” criteria was last invoked in 1998-1999, “no seats” has been only sporadically a reason since 2006, and “too loud” has not been used since 2001.

The number of closed restaurants has oscillated wildly from a low of 2 in 2008-2009 to a high of 16 in 1992-1993 and 2013-2014. Oddly, the rate of restaurant closure does not seem to follow the general economic trend at the time. Renamed has similarly seen a spread of 1 in 2005-2006 to 11 in 2011-2012, but this spike was probably due to an entire chain of restaurants being renamed at the same time. The new chain restaurant rules of the Diners should eliminate these spikes.

The lowest total of filling up at Harveys was during the year 2008-2009, when only ten incidences were recorded. The highest total was in 1999-2000, when 29 incidences were recorded. These included nine closures, five renamings, five no-dinner-like-meals, nine not-enough seats and two other reasons. This was one of the high points of not-enough seats, indeed the five year period 1999-2004 stands out in the data as a high point for seats to be at a premium, having more recorded incidences (28) than the **ten year** period before (24) or after (23). 1999-2004 is also the only period where no seats and no food approached 40% of the reasons for filling up at Harveys, in no other period did it reach higher than 30%.

Another interesting phenomenon is the relationship between closed restaurants and renamed restaurants. From 1989 to 2003, there were always more closed restaurants than renamed restaurants. This reversed for one year (2003-2004) and then reasserted itself as a fact from 2004-2008, reversed for one year (2008-2009), reasserted in 2009-2010, and then reversed for three straight years from 2010-2013. We can only assume that beer signs had dimmed for that period. 2013-2014 has seen a return to the dominance of closed restaurants.

These are just the most remarkable of the findings of the Dinermetrics Institute relating to its “filling up at Harvey’s” statistics for the last 25 years. Barring another freak fire, this data set is slated to be released as part of the Dinermetrics Open Data initiative as soon as our open data expert returns from his lunch break, which is currently at four years and counting...