

## Tapping into greener dining, eateries table bottled water

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At the restaurant T.W. Food, a black-clad server circulates, pitcher of water in hand. 'Good evening,' she says to a table of diners. 'Can I offer you a glass of Cambridge filtered?'

At Small Plates in Harvard Square, the menu lists "Individual Bottled Water," but instead of a price you'll find this message: "Not sold here because plastic bottles are BAD BAD BAD for the environment & that water is really no better than tap water."

Boston-area restaurants are beginning to climb aboard the no-bottled-water bandwagon rolling in from California, where big-name establishments such as Berkeley's Chez Panisse have sworn off bottled and Mayor Gavin Newsom of San Francisco decreed last summer that city departments and agencies would no longer purchase it.

In fact, 80 Boston restaurants are participating in a UNICEF initiative in which restaurants ask their guests to contribute \$1 or more for their glasses of tap water. Funds for the program, which ends today, World Water Day, go to providing children with safe drinking water.

Until recently, you probably wouldn't even have heard the words "tap water" in a Boston restaurant, and those words are still spoken infrequently. "Can I offer you bottled water or . . .," a waiter might say, trailing off as if the alternative is too shameful to utter. Or, most common, "Would you like sparkling or still?" Unless a customer then specifically asks for tap, the drinking water for the meal will come in a bottle, at \$6 or \$7 a pop for the same product you can buy in a store for less than half that. For restaurateurs, it's a tidy - and easy - profit.

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