

y Randy DeRuiter and John Champion.
Copyright © 1994, Denali Software Development.
Portions Copyright © 1994, Symantec, Inc.

Introduction

A La Carte™ is a Control Panel Device that adds an extra menu icon to the system 7 menu bar. This new menu consists of the most recently used applications, documents, and folders. Selecting an item from the menu will launch the application, open the document, or open the folder as appropriate. While similar in some respects to other "Finder menu" type applications, A La Carte™ is unique in that the menu is automatically built based on recent user activity. No configuration is required. Of course, you can also lock items so that they always appear in the menu. In addition to this help file, balloon help is also available in the Control Panel.

System Requirements

A La Carte™ requires System 7.0 or later. A La Carte™ typically uses about 50K bytes of memory, and additional memory is required when the Control Panel is opened.

Installation Instructions

A La Carte™ is a control panel. To install it, drag the "A La Carte" file into the "Control Panels" folder (inside the system folder). Also, drag the "A La Carte Help" file into the "Preferences" folder (inside the system folder). After the next restart, the A La Carte™ menu will appear next to the balloon help menu in the upper right corner of your screen.

Shareware Notice

A La Carte™ is distributed as Shareware. It can be freely distributed so long as there is no fee charged. You may use A La Carte™ on a trial basis for up to 30 days. If you wish to continue using it beyond that period, you are required to pay a registration fee of \$20. See the registration details at the end of this document.

Menu Description

The first item in the A La Carte™ menu is always "A La Carte...", which will bring up the A La Carte™ Control Panel in the Finder. The last item is always "Folders" which includes a sub-menu of recently used folders. Selecting one of the sub-menu items will open the folder in the Finder. All other items are applications which can be launched by selection. Some of

the applications may have sub-menus of documents which "belong" to the application. Selecting a document will open it using its application.

Automatic Menu Configuration

A La Carte™ builds its menu by watching user activity. Each time you launch an application, open a file, or save a file, an item will be added to the A La Carte™ menu. The size of the A La Carte™ menu is set in the preferences of the Control Panel. You can adjust the maximum number of applications, documents, and folders to appear in the menu. If the maximum number of items is exceeded, then the "oldest" item (the one that was least recently added) in the menu will be deleted to make room. If an existing menu item is launched or opened again, it effectively becomes the newest item.

Manual Menu Configuration

The A La Carte™ menu can be configured manually by clicking on the "Configure Menu..." button in the Control Panel. This presents a dialog of options, along with a list of items representative of the current A La Carte™ menu. Using radio buttons, the list can be used to view the following items:

- Menu Layout - the current menu layout. Double clicking an item with a sub-menu "arrow" will list its current sub-menu layout. You can use the pull down menu above the list to "back-up" the hierarchy, similar to the standard Macintosh open dialog.
- Locked Items - a list of applications, documents, and folders that have been locked so that they remain in the menu until manually removed (they can not be deleted by automatic menu configuration).
- Standalones - a list of applications that will not be allowed to have a sub-menu of documents. Any items in this list are also locked by default.
- Excluded Applications, Documents, and folders - three different lists of items that are not allowed to appear in the A La Carte™ menu at any time.
- Excluded Types - a list of "file types" that will not be allowed to appear in the A La Carte™ menu. These file types are groups of files that share similar characteristics (i.e., different versions of the same application).
- No Installation Applications - for any application in this list, the A La Carte™ menu icon will not appear in the menu bar while the application is active.

The dialog also has five configuration buttons which are active at appropriate times to allow you to add items, remove items, lock items, exclude items, and make items standalone.

Keyboard ShortCuts

You can do some menu configuration without opening up the Control Panel at all. If you hold down the Command key while selecting an item, that item will be removed from the menu (note that the cursor changes to a "delete" symbol while the Command key is held down). If you hold down the Option key while selecting an item, you will lock or unlock the item (the cursor changes to a small lock while the option key is held down).

Two other keyboard features are also available. If you hold down the Control key while

selecting an item, the Finder will open up the folder containing that item and will highlight the item. Note that the cursor changes to a question mark to help you remember the operation. If you hold down the Shift key and select the A La Carte menu, the cursor will change to a hand and you will be allowed to dynamically change the position of the A La Carte menu in the menubar. This feature only allows you to change positions with the System Help or Applications menu.

Preferences

You can adjust some aspects of A La Carte™ to suit your needs by selecting the preferences options in the Control Panel. In the preferences dialog, you can adjust the maximum number of applications, documents, and folders to appear in the A La Carte™ menu, as well as the maximum number of documents that can "belong" to any one application. Note that the minimum number of items is affected by the number of locked items from the configuration dialog (for example, if you have three applications locked, you cannot reduce the maximum number of applications below three). You can also determine which types of items will be tracked (automatically added to the A La Carte™ menu). Checking the "track" boxes for applications, documents, or folders will determine whether or not those types are automatically added to the A La Carte™ menu. Checking "application folders" will cause the parent folders of launched applications to be added to the menu in addition to the parent folders of documents.

You can also determine whether the A La Carte™ items are sorted by Date (items most recently added to the A La Carte™ menu appear at the top) or by Name (alphanumeric according to file name).

The preferences dialog allows you specify the location of the A La Carte™ menu icon in the menu bar. It can either be to the left of the help menu, between the help and application menus, or to the right of the application menu.

The "Purge Missing Items" check box will cause any items in the A La Carte™ menu that are not currently available on disk to be removed from the menu. Items that are not currently available would be those that have been deleted from the disk, items on a floppy disk that has been ejected, etc.

The "Try Mounting Remote Volumes" will cause A La Carte™ to attempt to mount an unavailable volume when an application, document, or folder is launched. Typically you will want to deactivate the "Purge Missing Items" option if you use this option.

The "Show Locked Items" check box will show a small lock icon to the right of any menu items that have been locked.

The "Show Startup Icon" check box will cause the A La Carte™ icon to appear on the screen during the startup of your Macintosh.

The "Menu Bar Compability" option fixes a potential conflict with other applications, extensions, or control panels that modify the Macintosh operating system in a non-standard way. Although checking this option will prevent the conflict, it will also cause the placement of the submenus in the A La Carte™ menu to be off by a few pixels. This is strictly cosmetic - there are no other side effects of checking the compatibility option. If you are having problems getting the A La Carte™ or other menus to work properly (menus won't pull down, the menubar is empty, etc.) then check the compatibility option in A La Carte™ and reboot. (This change does not take effect until you reboot).

Disclaimer

While we have made an effort to test A La Carte™, we cannot guarantee that it is free of defects. The user assumes the entire responsibility for using this utility, and the authors will not be held responsible for any direct, indirect, incidental, or consequential damages resulting from the use of this product. However, if you're having a problem with A La Carte™, contact us and we'll try to fix it.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our wives, Dawn Champion and Valerie DeRuiter, for their patience. Also we wish to thank our beta testing team:

Zviki Cohen
Dan Morrow
Wayne Walrath
Steve Jovanovich
Bob Beason
Jonathon Jacobs
Rickard Andersson
James Amundson
Atul Barve
Alain Aslag Roy
Dirk Johnson

We especially thank Dair Grant, Tina Femea, and Richard Beecher for their efforts, which went way beyond the beta testers call of duty. Also, thanks to James Walker for his excellent help dialog code.

Correspondence/Registration

Please support shareware! If you choose to keep A La Carte beyond the 30 day free trial period, you are required to pay a shareware fee of \$10. Please send a check or money order in US funds only to the address below. When registering, please specify the A La Carte™ version that you are using (click "About..." in the A La Carte™ control panel). Contact us for site licensing information.

Denali Software Development
John Champion
12430 Caragana Circle
Anchorage, AK 99515-3685
USA

Denali Software Development can be contacted at the address above, or on the internet at:
denali@metronet.com